DISCUSSION DOCUMENT

NATIONAL
arts & media
STRATEGY

INTRODUCTION

Within this folder is a discussion document produced as part of the process of putting together a national strategy for the arts and media. It does not form part of the strategy. Neither does it express any sort of 'official' view. It was written in order to focus discussion and stimulate ideas.

WHY?

The arts and media in Britain are in renaissance. Over the last decade, they have shown a confidence and diversity never seen before. In quality of work and audience demand, the arts and media have never looked healthier or more central to people's lives. More than ever before, the arts are a source of civic pride as well as personal enrichment.

The arts and media in Britain are in crisis. Scarcely a day goes by without press stories of theatres facing closure, grants being cut or audiences declining; of a lack of good innovative work in all art forms; of the absence of a sense of direction, purpose and adventure.

These views may not be incompatible, and each has some truth. What is beyond doubt is that ideas of what is art have expanded; that demand has rightly grown for access to the arts, film and broadcasting to be the right of all rather than the privilege of the few; and that resources, both public and private, have struggled to keep up. Growth in the variety of the arts contains its own problems. So how can the stategic injection of public money, and the growth of partnership with the private sector, encourage new developments? What should the priorities be? How do we make sure that the opportunity to enjoy the arts is spread ever more widely throughout society?

This is where the national arts and media strategy comes in. In 1990, the Minister for the Arts asked the arts and media funding bodies (the Arts Council of Great Britain, the British Film Institute, the Crafts Council and the Regional Arts Associations/ Regional Arts Boards) to prepare a national strategy. One of its purposes is to provide the basic framework for their work. The Scottish and Welsh Arts Councils are conducting parallel exercises; and the local authorities and museums funding bodies are also associated with the strategy.

A further purpose is to consider whether the public money spent on the arts and media has been used to best effect, and how those responsible can do better in the future. It is important that all those with experience of and a passion for the arts and media provide support, assistance and advice to get the strategy right. Most important, it must be seen as a strategy for the arts and media, not for the bureaucrats.

HOW?

The paper in this folder is part of this process. It is one of a series of discussion documents; each is available free on request. Responses to them will be collated by the National Arts and Media Strategy Unit. Arising from this, a draft of the strategy will be prepared by Spring 1992. This too will be available for comment. The final version of the national arts and media strategy will be completed by Summer 1992. The hope is that the resulting document will be slim, challenging and readable - and that it will provide a mission statement for the arts and media over the next decade, as well as setting out clear goals and targets.

The national arts and media strategy will not write a single novel, put on a single play or make a single film. What it can help bring about , if the funding bodies receive the help of those who care about the arts and media, is the maximum opportunity for such creativity to flourish and for it to enrich the lives of ever more people. Your contribution to this process will be valuable and valued. Please send your views on this discussion document to the address below, to arrive by 30 November 1991.

For further information on the national arts and media strategy, please contact:

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LIVE ART

Lois Keidan

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY: DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON LIVE ART

This paper has been written in order to generate discussion and debate. It is not a chapter of the national arts and media strategy or a definitive statement. The views it expresses are those of its author.

We should like to hear what **you** believe may be the key issues in the field of live art (formerly known as performance art) over the next few years. With the paper as background, we should welcome views on all or any of the following questions, as well as on any other matters connected with live art on which you wish to comment.

The paper

1. Does the paper raise and deal adequately with the key issues? If not, where and how could it do better?

Developments in the art form

2. What have been the most exciting developments in live art over the past five years, in Great Britain or elsewhere? What may be possible exciting areas for development over the next five?

3. How has live art practice influenced other art forms over the past five years? What areas of influence do you predict over the next five years?

Public funding

4. Is the current public funding of live art spent to best effect? If not, how could it be improved?

5. If there were a significant increase (say, 30% in real terms) in the public funding of live art, what should be the priority areas for these additional resources? What effects might this have?

6. A common complaint is that the public funding bodies focus resources too much on arts organisations and do not concern themselves enough with artists as such. Do you agree with this view, and what would it mean **in practice** for live art if this emphasis were shifted?

Live art in society

7. What is the relationship like between live art and the published and broadcast media? How would you like to see it develop over the next ten years?

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8. What are likely to be the key effects on live art in this country of international developments within Europe and elsewhere?

9. Is enjoyment of, or participation in, live art related to levels of education and social class? If so, how might the effects of this be countered?

10. What will be the main issues over the next ten years in relation to live art and non-professional participation, cultural diversity, women, and disability?

Management, training and resources

11. What are the major needs in terms of physical infrastructure (such as buildings and equipment) if live art is to achieve its full potential? How are these needs likely to change over the next ten years?

12. What will be the major issues in the areas of training and management for those who work in the area of live art over the next ten years?

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY UNIT
AUGUST 1991

NATIONAL ARTS AND MEDIA STRATEGY

DISCUSSION DOCUMENT ON LIVE ART

LOIS KEIDAN

Summary

This paper maps out current practices and provision for Live Art (formerly referred to as performance art) and identifies some key issues for Live Art in the 1990s.

Central to the debate on Live Art is the issue of categorisation and definition. For an area of practice which cuts across and subverts traditional art form boundaries, this is not a new problem, but it continues to have serious implications for effective funding, production, representation, artistic development, education, training and critical debate.

Live Art has developed from a visual arts base. It began when artists turned to themselves as a source or primary material, when the process or live action of manipulating images became integral to work 'as a way of breaking down barriers and indicating new directions' (Rose Lee Goldberg).

Live Art represents a challenge to received ways of doing, thinking and seeing; a rejection of single art form practice; a way of opening frontiers to any political, social or cultural agenda. As Live Art itself has grown, its influence has spread across, and been incorporated within, other art form disciplines. It has both affected and been affected by innovative mixed media work from other cultures. The old terminology, and old aesthetics, are of their nature unable to capture its essence: Live Art constantly renews itself, and the ways of appreciating it must renew themselves also.

Because of its open frontiers and flexibility of approach, Live Art is arguably the must responsive art form to the complexity and intensity of ideas and images that confront us at the end of twentieth century. Unfortunately, much of the cultural world continues to operate to rigid structures and fixed categories. So where does Live Art fit, who owns it, who writes about it, who funds it? This clash between Live Art and the structures within which it has to operate leads to its being marginalised, vulnerable and inadequately represented.

It is vital that attention be paid more to the artists and their work than to preconceived notions of art form. Those concerned with supporting the arts (in funding bodies, education authorities and the media) must develop a more flexible approach and thinner walls between art form areas. Investment must be made

consciously in exploratory and risk taking endeavours; emphasis must be placed on the training and development of artists and promoters at the cutting edge.

The health or otherwise of Live Art, and how it is treated by institutions, the media and audiences, are measures of the capacity of our culture to adapt and develop.

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A. Background

1. Introduction

In a Leeds pub that regularly presented Performance Art in an upstairs space during the 70s, an elderly gentleman was overheard commenting that "there's men up there who talk to string". If one goes by similar, and more recent, dismissals from the press, mainstream arts organisations and even some funders, the public perception of Performance Art has not changed a lot since then. This paper hopes to begin the process of redressing this perception and to address a number of key issues for consultation and debate in the process of the formation of the National Arts and Media Strategy.

Discussion of Performance/Live Art as an "artform" immediately presents us with an intriguing variety of problems. To begin with it is a practice that is, by definition, impossible to define. Primarily in Britain at the close of the late twentieth century, Performance/Live Art is not an artform per se, but an attempt to embrace the activities of a broad church of artists who often have their roots in, and indeed, turn to, many disciplines in their professional work. Furthermore, Performance/Live Art activity is often inter-disciplinary and covers gallery, theatre, time based installation, environmental, endurance, site specific, film & video, poetry and sound based work. Even writers, musicians and dancers are making mixed media, image based works that can be found in theatres, galleries, warehouses, clubs and a wide range of non-arts locations. As free spirited as all this may seem it inevitably poses problems of representation for funding bodies, promoters, critics and audiences where often more emphasis is placed on the artform than the artist.

With its rejection of single artform practice and its challenge to received ways of seeing, thinking and doing, Performance/Live Art is at the cutting edge of ideas and expression. "Performance is a medium for making art about space and gesture, action and ritual, subjectivity and language, the necessary means of addressing what has been unspoken and disregarded in a divided and divisive culture...it is a means to transgress the boundaries of culture, society, meaning" (Griselda Pollock, May 1991). Because of its "open frontiers" to not only all areas of artistic practice but also any political, social or cultural agenda, it is, arguably, the most responsive medium to the complexity of ideas and images that face us at the end of the twentieth century. Performance/Live Art's extraordinary flexibility and exploratory nature is a joy and a strength, but inevitably places the sector and the practitioners concerned in a position of marginalisation and fragility within a culture that has a conservative attitude to artform categories. As Richard Layzell observed, the establishment's desire to define Performance Art "is symptomatic of the very problem that Performance Artists should be trying to overcome".

The "categorisation crisis" or "definition factor" that faces contemporary Live Art practice is not new, but it continues to have serious implications for effective funding, production, representation, artistic development, education, training and critical debate.

2. History/development

Historically it is difficult to pinpoint the beginnings of Performance Art. Possibly, it began with the Futurists or Dadaists or Surrealists. Others would claim it is a post war phenomenon. Its roots lie, however, as Rose Lee Goldberg points out, when visual artists chose to turn to performance "as a way of breaking down categories and indicating new directions". In its pure, or traditional, form Performance Art is an area of visual arts practice where the artist utilises him/her self as their source or primary material and where their live presence, in the process of creating and manipulating images, is integral to the nature of the work. "..pressing my vision closer to an audience..an active exchange of attitudes and sensibilities with a living audience. The end is less perfection, as in sculptures, than action, process" (Claes Oldenburg).

Parallel to this tradition in which visual artists have drawn on the intimacy, tension and process of live action, has been the development of a "new" theatre that has developed out of the aesthetics of visual arts practice. With this area of theatre the traditional rules of play - the supremacy of text, narratives, directors, actors etc - have been rejected in an attempt to reinvent the nature and possibilities of a "theatrical experience". For many avant garde theatre practitioners of the late twentieth century the stage has become a canvas on which are "painted" a host of aural, visual and movement based images that combine to create a conceptual and emotional whole. In Britain, Performance Art and "experimental" theatre, coupled with developments in performance poetry, the mixed media work of carnival, exploratory movement work, experimental video art, sound sculpture, environmental performance etc, have developed syncretistically and symbiotically, influencing and inspiring each other to a position where, in the 90s, the areas of practice can in many instances be virtually indistinguishable. In other words, works based on <u>image</u> and <u>concept</u> that are not bound by traditional contexts can be found emerging from, and merging into, many innovative artform practices.

These evolutions of form, coupled with the need to acknowledge innovative, challenging practices from diverse cultures beyond Eurocentric monocultural traditions (see cultural diversity), have prompted the Arts Council's Performance Art Advisory Group to propose that we in Britain change our terminology from the "restrictive practice" of Performance Art to the flexibility and responsiveness of the term Live Art.

3. Status of artists

Live Artists tend to be a marginalised, misunderstood and misrepresented group. Existing at the front line of artistic developments, defying received conventions and structures, they are outsiders to most cultural systems. More famous names like Andrew Logan, Bruce McClean, Gilbert and George, Lindsay Kemp, Derek Jarman (and in the States, Laurie Anderson and Robert Wilson) are lauded and appropriated by both commercial interests and more traditional cultural activities, but the majority of Live Artists remain poorly rewarded and undervalued. Live Art continues to be seen by many as a "fringe" activity suggesting that it only has value in its relationship to more conventional activities and not as work in its own right. Moreover, Live Artists operate across disciplines and are not bound to the singular contexts and systems of galleries or theatres.

This appears to present enormous problems for our culture as to how we respond to artists who work in the sector and where we place them. It often seems easier to ignore the problem than address it. An example might be the Bow Gamelan Ensemble; they are musicians, they are visual artists, they are performers. They work in theatres, in galleries and in site specific locations. So what are they and where do they belong? The answer is that they <u>are</u> the Bow Gamelan Ensemble and they belong everywhere and nowhere simultaneously. Comparisons are meaningless and they can be viewed in no other light than their own.

In other words, Live Art has a relatively low status within our culture because the work is perceived as marginal or "different" and is "fitted in" wherever is appropriate, virtually unprotected by policy or priority. Some potential promoters refuse to commit themselves to the possibilities of Live Art because it is "messy" - they do not know how to place it in their market or how to provide the resources to support it. Promoters must begin to recognise and respond to the enormous and exciting opportunities of new and uncharted artistic territories, just as fashion, pop music and television have successfully done. Funding bodies must begin to develop a degree of flexibility in their approach to and support for Live Art and begin to value the <u>artist</u> as much as the <u>artform</u>.

There is no national association for the advocacy of Live Art and few artists are members of existing professional associations. The National Artists Association or the Independent Theatre Council might welcome practitioners but cannot adequately represent the needs of such a broad church of work. Thus, artists in the sector are not protected by established codes of practice but tend to adopt the codes for whichever form is dominant in the work (gallery based artists might use exhibition guidelines, theatre based artists follow Equity/ITC guidelines - neither of which are entirely appropriate or practical). This combined lack of unified support and national representation lessens artists' ability to gain equitable fees or assert their rights to work in the way in which they choose.

Artic Publications' "Live Art Handbook" will provide an invaluable guide for equitable Live Art support, and the Live Art Advisory Group has drafted guidelines on the terms and conditions of Live Art creation and presentation. The Arts Council should seek consultation with a range of bodies on a wider code of practice for Live Art. Codes do not provide or define status, but they may be a way of ensuring better treatment for a larger number of artists.

4. London and regional developments

Whilst London continues to be the home base for the majority of artists who work in the sector, provision for the production and presentation of Live Art in the capital is becoming critical. After a period in the eighties under the GLC in which there was a relative profusion of activities in the capital, including LIFT's biennial celebrations of new international theatre and performance, the National Review of Live Art at Riverside Studios, the Chisenhale Collective's pioneering work and the ICA's presentations of Jan Fabre at the Albert Hall and La Fura Dels Baus in Docklands, the current annual programme of events is a less than adequate reflection of the promise of the sector. Even "underground" actions and events are scarce.

Whilst Live Art events can be found dotted throughout the year in the most likely and unlikely, small and large scale locations, there is, apart from the Institute of Contemporary Arts, no centre in London with a clear policy for Live Art. Live Art finds itself presented within one-off festivals/seasons, as "special events" or as cuckoo style adjuncts to other areas of programming. Ironically in London now there is an unprecedented degree of expertise amongst independent producers and promoters but increasingly less monies, infrastructures and outlets to resource them. With increasing competition for audiences across the capital and investment in buildings rather than expertise, the exciting possibilities of Live Art, and, more importantly, work in its developmental/emerging form, are denied in favour of proven and tangible work that offers greater door receipts. (Paradoxically, at a time when the National Theatre is beginning to open its doors to new forms of theatre and when the Royal Court is eventually presenting the work of Rose English, "Dogs In Honey", and Graeme Miller through the excellent Barclays New Stages Scheme, the provision for the seedbed of artistic development has virtually dried up in the capital.)

After over twenty years of growth and the popular success of international and British artists like Gilbert and George, The People Show, Rose English, Bow Gamelan Ensemble, Station House Opera, Neil Bartlett, Stephen Taylor Woodrow and Leigh Bowery, culture in London appears to have turned its back on the "challenging" and even LIFT is struggling to survive. If London continues in this way its cultural future will look remarkably similar to its past. As we approach 1992 the funding bodies for London must address this lack of challenge and the potential for innovation; for a capital city in Europe such lack of risk is little more than embarassing.

The balance of provision between London and the regions is, compared to other artform areas, alarming. Across the country there are building and non building based promoters with clear policies on Live Art, who commit themselves to taking risks and working with new artists in new ways. Projects UK and Edge Biennale Trust in Newcastle, Hull Time Based Arts, Third Eye Centre and Tramway in Glasgow, Museum of Modern Art in Oxford, Magdalena Project and the Centre for Performance Research in Cardiff, Richard Demarco Gallery in Edinburgh, the Quarter Club and Green Room in Manchester, Phoenix Arts in Leicester, Kettles Yard in Cambridge and the soon to open extension to Ferrens Art Gallery in Hull, all commission or present Live Art in their programmes throughout the year in ways which London organisations seem unable to do. In addition to this, many organisations of different persuasions turn to the possibilities of Live Art at regular intervals - Rochdale Art Gallery, the Junction and Cambridge Darkroom, Cornerhouse in Manchester, Arnolfini in Bristol, Ikon Gallery in Birmingham, Cleveland Gallery - to contextualise their work and explore new alternatives in ways that are often inconceivable in similar organisations in London.

Why is this the case? Is it because audiences in the regions are less fickle, less dependent on the proliferation of "surefire" alternatives listed in Time Out or City Limits? Is it because regional promoters have developed a trust in their audiences through clear and "visionary" programming that few London organisations seem able to do? Or is it because the funding policies and politics for London, and especially the lack of a governing body, are making it impossible for the arts in London to take any form of risk or invest in the future?

And, more importantly, how can a more equitable balance between London and the regions be reached? Organisations like Edge do operate both within the capital and the regions, but have set themselves up with the autonomy to do so. More London and regional organisations should persuade themselves, and be encouraged by inter-regional funding provision, to develop closer links and co-operate in commissioning and programming. Promoters in the regions are operating, but in regional isolation. Promoters and potential promoters in London are struggling to operate at all in the face of resistant and unsupportive funding bodies, unsympathetic media and fickle audiences. This needs addressing in the National Arts and Media Strategy and by the Arts Council and Regional Arts Boards before further damage is done.

5. European connections/developments

Artistic practices have never respected national boundaries and promoters and artists have been operating internationally since long before the British Council's

Visiting Arts Unit and Arts Council's International Initiatives responded to internationalism. It is only the obstacles created by governments and funding policies that have prevented a greater flow of work, artists and information in the Western world and Eastern bloc (the Eastern bloc is a particularly good example in that exchanges have continued throughout the Cold War period through relationships forged, artist to artist rather than through middlemen or quangos).

From its visual base, to its infinite capacity of form and content, Live Art speaks across most national barriers and can be a vital social, political and cultural communications system. It is no suprise therefore that British artists have been welcomed, rewarded and often lauded in Europe, USA, Australia and Japan for many years. Indeed because of the imbalance of provision between funding in Britain and Europe many, more established, artists undertake European tours and commissions not only to address larger, and often more sympathetic, constituencies but in order to survive at all.

Throughout the seventies and eighties, an extraordinary and exciting diet of international work could be found in Britain through the pioneering of Richard Demarco and his work with Beuys and Kantor, the ICA's presentations of Jan Fabre, Laurie Anderson and La Fura Dels Baus, the work of Projects UK, Art Angel, Chapter Arts Centre and Cardiff Laboratory Theatre in Cardiff, Edinburgh's Assembly Rooms and LIFT's innovative festivals. The influence of international artists and the exchange of ideas and aesthetics opened up enormous possibilities to relatively isolated British artists and energised a generation of audiences. It is said that Impact Theatre changed overnight having seen Jan Fabre. How many artists found new directions after experiencing the work of Joseph Beuys, Liz Le Compte, Sankai Juku, Meredith Monk, Laurie Anderson and Pina Bausch?

However, internationalism is expensive and the increasingly high costs involved in international relations and presentations (travel, accommodation, per diems, realistic fees, production costs, materials and the extremely problematic Foreign Entertainers' Tax etc) can impose economic barriers for increasingly underfunded British organisations. The resources, state and private subsidy required to present comparatively expensive small or large scale international work are, in real terms, diminishing.

Organisations like Edge, Third Eye Centre, LIFT, Richard Demarco Gallery, Performance Magazine, Centre for Performance Research, Artsadmin, Projects UK, Art Angel, and a dozen or so independent promoters continue to operate and expand at an international level and are creating a dialogue and flow of work between Britain and the rest of the world in dynamic and challenging ways. The value of these and other innovative initiatives, such as Ikon Gallery's recent contribution to the global Miralda project, must be recognised as central, not marginal, to the modern world, be encouraged and more realistically supported by the British Council, Foreign Office and Arts Council. Moreover state bodies must recognise that their role is as facilitators, and that the most effective exchanges and partnerships are created promoter to promoter and artist to artist as they develop networks and contacts based on their own agendas and strategies.

Because of, some would say excessive, safety legislation in Britain it has been difficult to present Live Art events by many challenging, but consummately professional, international artists. Building control or fire regulations often prevent or compromise work that contains a whiff of "danger". Consequently much Eastern European work (and its symbolic use of fire) suffers, artists like La Fura, Els Commediants, NSK, Royal Deluxe are banned and the work of artists like Survival Research Laboratories is never seen at all. Fire and safety authorities, whilst maintaining standards, must begin to recognise both the "European experience" and the professional record of promoters and become more liberal in their approach to "unusual" work.

The arrival of the single European market in 1993 is welcome; it will hopefully facilitate the freer flow of work by reducing the bureaucracies of permits, taxes and other legislation and will open up wider critical debates, production systems and cultural partnerships. However if the current imbalance in provision for the arts between Britain and most of mainland Europe continues, the flow of artists post 1993 will be more out of, and less into, Britain. Furthermore, the advent of 1993 poses the threat of a myopic Fortress Europe raising cultural and economic barriers against crucial links with African, Asian, Australian, Caribbean, North and South American cultural developments.

6. Cultural diversity

"The colonized cultures are sliding into the space of the colonizer and, in doing so, they are redefining its borders and its culture...we need to find a new terminology, a new iconography and a new set of categories and definitions" (Guillermo Gomez-Pena 1989).

Because of problems of representation and marginalisation, in 1989 the Arts Council's Performance Art Advisory Group commissioned Michael McMillan to look at two simple questions relating to cultural diversity: why there seemed to be so few Black (here used in its political sense) Performance Artists and what common areas of interest there might be between work defined as Live Art and the innovative work of African, Afro-Caribbean, Asian and S.E.Asian visual artists and performance practitioners. Michael McMillan's resulting report "Cultural Grounding: Live Art and Cultural Diversity", although rooted in the Live Art debate, has wide ranging implications for all arts practices and cultural systems. It proposes a radical shift in the understanding of, and policy for, innovative Black artists and organisations working in Britain in the 1990s and beyond.

Michael McMillan argues that Black artists practising innovative mixed media work hold a similar position to Live Artists in their rejection of single artform practice and ideology and their position at the cutting edge of cultural representation. Traditional definitions of Live Art have been monocultural and Eurocentric, but the innovatory work of these artists must now be embraced in our cultural grounding and cultural industry's policy and provision for, Live Art. Black artists must no longer be assessed by the colour of their skin but by the nature of their work and that work, in turn, must not be seen as token but as a major contribution to a new culture in Britain and indeed Europe.

The diverse culture of contemporary Britain must be recognised and represented in national and regional policy and networking initiatives, in training schemes, in information systems, in critical debates and in the policies and staffing of British organisations and institutions. Moreover, both public and private funds must begin to address and support Black-led as well as White-led projects and organisations.

Michael McMillan concludes that to raise the consciousness of, and empower, cultural practitioners and workers requires a radical evaluation of awareness, information, access, networking, funding, training, education (both formal and informal) and terminology that the Arts Council, Regional Arts Boards, institutions, organisations and individuals must begin to address.

The Arts Council published Michael McMillan's report in 1990; it has been widely circulated and has been met with a strong and mostly welcome response from artists, organisations, promoters and funding bodies alike. The Visual Arts Department has set up a small steering group to consider its key issues. The issues of policy, networking, training and awareness of diversities of practice are currently being addressed. But one of the major recommendations of both the steering group and Performance Art Advisory Group is that the National Arts and Media Strategy has a key role to play in the state's recognition and implementation of the report's findings and recommendations (copies of "Cultural Grounding: Live Art and Cultural Diversity" by Michael McMillan are available from the Arts Council's Visual Arts Department).

B. Structure

1. National policy and support

The Arts Council's policy for Live Art is based within the Visual Arts Department, where emphasis is placed on advocacy, supporting innovation and provision, widening access, advancing educational work and improving information, debate and professional practice. Funds, currently at £55,000, are available for Live Art commissions (see commissions/residencies) and additionally £18,000 is allocated for archiving and documentation initiatives, training, Live Art education schemes and research initiatives. The department considers its advocacy role as vital and as well as organising media and training initiatives also holds information and databases on all aspects of Live Art provision.

Additional support for appropriate Live Art projects can be found within Visual Arts projects and, for more theatrically based work, drama projects. The Live Art post with its prioritisation of, and autonomous policy for, all manifestations within the sector is effectively an essential door in the "thin wall" between visual arts and drama policy.

The Arts Council has also recently set up a welcome new pilot fund for innovative inter-disciplinary work, the New Collaborations Fund, which specifically addresses the needs of projects that challenge and redefine traditional artform practices.

Regional Arts Association responsibility for Live Art is found as an additional role for, already overburdened and underbudgeted, visual arts officers (excepting South East Arts where it is represented by drama). However policy, commitment and expenditure vary region to region. Because of the diverse and indefinable nature of Live Art, it tends to be marginalised and underfunded within other RAA artform areas and not always specifically addressed in policy and provision. In the restructuring of the Regional Arts Boards, distinction between the performed and exhibited arts must recognise the value, peculiar nature and needs of Live Art and maintain thin walls and flexible approaches in both policy and provision.

Local authority expenditure and support for Live Art is difficult to determine. Traditionally, local authorities have had conservative attitudes to artform categories but support for recent innovative initiatives in Glasgow (1990 celebrations, National Review of Live Art, Tramway etc), Birmingham (Civic Monument, Miralda's Honeymoon Project), Nottingham (Contemporary Archives) and Newcastle (Tyne International, Edge) must be welcomed. Through the Arts Council's Arts Development Strategy, local authority gallery provision for Live Art is encouraged, and Hull's Ferrens Gallery, Walsall's Garage Arts space and Cleveland Gallery are but a few currently developing Live Art programmes. Local partnerships such as Nottingham's Contemporary Archives consortium between local authority, Regional Arts Association, local promoters and educational establishments are also ideal models for future development.

2. Education and training

Because of its implicit rejection of traditional notions of form and content, its integration of theory and practice and its relationship with "art" and "life", Live Art has a valuable place in our education system.

Live Art can play a significant role in the new National Curriculum in which some of the prime concerns are ways of combining theory and practice and making meaningful connections not only across the curriculum but between the curriculum and the wider world. This has been hampered by strict subject boundaries, both between the arts and sciences and within the arts themselves. Live Art can make an important contribution to breaking down these boundaries.

Live Art opens up a broad cultural map and offers children an understanding of, and access to, contemporary cultural issues. Live Art also, by its very nature, integrates theory and practice and frequently addresses issues of social concern. Live Art is not primarily about making a "product" but of experiencing and participating in the process of devising a "statement". Furthermore, Live Art can contribute to wide areas of the curriculum from art, drama, English, media studies through to history and the sciences. Recent educational residencies by artists have explored issues of cultural identity and diversity, ecology and industrial pollution, architecture and social structures, and notions of personal and community place. Such broad based references and levels of pupil involvement have very obvious and significant educational rewards.

The Visual Arts Department of the Arts Council recognises the benefits of Live Art practice in schools and recently commissioned Richard Layzell to produce a resource pack and accompanying video to offer encouragement of, and advice on, Live Art residencies in primary schools. The National Arts and Media Strategy must also acknowledge the role Live Art can play and address the development and provision for this key issue in restructuring.

The roots of Live Art lie within a visual art tradition, and fine art courses have traditionally produced the artists who work in and contribute to the sector - the fine art courses at St. Martins and Leeds in the sixties and seventies spawned a generation of artists who revolutionised the way that art/theatre is created, produced and placed in our culture. Although Live or Performance Art is not addressed as a priority by education authorities it is recognised, and often encouraged, as an option or specialisation in the small range of fine art departments that continue to provide the resources and grounding in aesthetics with which young artists can explore new practices and contemporary issues. Indeed, first generation artists, like Stuart Brisley, Alastair McLennan, Rose Garrard, Rose Finn Kelcey and Robert Ayres, are now teaching in institutions themselves and the influence continues.

The same flexible approach cannot be generally found however in drama courses where text and traditional methods of practice reign supreme. Exceptions to this rule are the innovative models of performing arts courses at Dartington College of Arts, Bristol University drama course, Leicester and Nottingham Polytechnics. With their innovatory residency programmes, challenges to traditional artform definitions, involvement in the process of devising "real" performances and collaborations with professional promoters, they have produced a considerable number of accomplished young artists making a vital contribution to the sector.

To raise the status of, and advocate awareness of and the potential for, Live Art in higher education, the Arts Council's Visual Arts Department launched its Live Art Education Scheme in 1986. Initially three, followed by six more residencies by artists of differing genders, races and practices were commissioned and undertaken in the fine and performing arts courses of polytechnics. The process of the five week residency from its conception, development of skill sharing and collaborative work to the final performances was professionally documented on video. A final report and introductory videotape is due to be completed in late 1991 and will be used to lobby higher education authorities on the educational and inter-active benefits of Live Art practice.

Parallel to issues of formal education in the restructuring of the arts must run a recognition of informal education and training programmes to improve professional Live Art practice and provision. Michael McMillan clearly identifies the need for improved training and awareness of practice and provision for Live Art amongst Black arts workers and the same for innovative Black mixed media work amongst existing Live Art promoters. The same must also apply to innovative inter-disciplinary arts by and with people with disabilties.

The Arts Council's Visual Arts Department has run several schemes for the training and development of promoters, including a trainee promoters scheme in 1986 (based at the Midland Group and Projects UK) and the Performance Art Promoters Scheme (which ran from 1985 to 1988). To develop training of promoters and redress the balance between Black practitioners and the Live Art sector, the department is currently in the process of setting up a year long traineeship in Live Art promotion and production particularly targeted at an African, Afro-Caribbean, Asian or S.E.Asian candidate.

Training or resourcing initiatives should also be encouraged for promoters in marketing, media, production, documentation, fund raising and curatorial skills on national and regional levels. Similarly awareness of other practices and possibilities and the development of diverse skills could be encouraged by travel and residential bursaries for promoters both inter-regionally and internationally.

Furthermore, initiatives to develop skills and professional practice amongst Live Artists are essential for the healthy growth of the sector. Training and travel bursaries, access to skills workshops, summer schools and schemes like the Visual Arts Department Live Art placement programme (placements for younger artists with established practitioners over a period of three months) must be encouraged and developed by funding bodies and sponsors.

3. Creation of artists

Unlike painters, sculptors, dancers, musicians or actors, artists who work in Live Art are not created so much as they create themselves. As I have indicated under "Education", Live Art is not commonly addressed as a discipline in our education system although it is often acknowledged as an alternative means of taking challenging new directions.

Often trained in other disciplines, and frequently untrained, artists tend to choose to turn to Live Art as a means of expression by influence, out of frustration or by necessity. This again affords the sector an extraordinary flexibility of form and content, as artists approach Live Art on their own terms, with their own agendas and often with little precedence for their own particular work. Indeed such freedom from tradition and patriarchal cultural baggage is of course one of the reasons why Live Art has proved such a significant medium for women artists. An example might be Bobby Baker. Trained as a painter at St. Martins, she found her formal training did not allow her the form or context to address the issues that concerned her in her position as a woman and an artist. She turned to performance as her medium and food as her materials to explore the status and context of her role as woman in a predominantly male-dominated culture.

But where do artists who turn to Live Art begin to show their work? Where is the first rung of the ladder? For the last five years the National Review of Live Art has held platform events in collaboration with promoters throughout Britain to select emerging artists on a national basis for the platform section of the festival. The regional platform events have not only provided a local focus and outlet for younger artists and indeed audiences but have encouraged many promoters to consider Live Art work seriously. But the platform aspect of the festival has also provided an invaluable national showcase for a broad selection of artists; the list of now established artists who first came to attention through the risktaking of the National Review is too great to list here. Similarly the pioneering work of the Chisenhale Collective during the eighties provided a seedbed for the development of artists and artistic practices that brought great benefits for the cultural life of London.

Similarly platform or showcase events such as Chisenhale's current weekend platforms, the Green Room's Quarter Club, the ICA's now defunct Ripple Effect, Leicester Phoenix's Days Like These, LIFT's 1991 new British Live Art commissions and Projects UK's open submission policy for commissioning new work provide valuable and essential springboards for the next generation of artists and often a welcome change for local audiences. More and more promoters and organisations must be encouraged to invest in younger artists and provide a supportive context for developing work.

The National Arts and Media Strategy must address the basic requirements of emerging artists in terms of facilities and structures that make their growth and ultimate contribution more efficient.

C. Presentation/distribution/representation

1. Promoters

Except in extraordinary circumstances, Live Artists are dependent on promoters. Promoters are their enablers and the interface between their work and their spectators. The relationship is crucial, but, because of the variables in Live Art practice, there cannot be a single proven way of getting it right.

The majority of Live Art promoters in Britain are building based gallery curators or theatre/events programmers who prioritise or incorporate Live Art practice in their overall programming policies for exhibitions, theatre, dance, music or even cabaret. The status and role of Live Art in programming policy vary enormously throughout the country depending on individual visions, resources, organisational needs and national and regional funding provision and encouragement.

Given that funding provision seems to be geared towards buildings, it is slightly ironic perhaps that some of the most successful promoters of Live Art in Britain seem to be independent non-building based organisations who have the flexibility to turn to the appropriate space and context for the appropriate work. Similarly it often appears that it is site specific presentations (beyond the bounds of galleries or theatres) that interest and excite audiences and critics with their unusual locations/contexts and their freedom from the baggage of preconceptions attached to traditional art spaces. The Edge festivals in London and Newcastle in 1988 and 1990 respectively are prime examples of site specific success stories and indeed the Bow Gamelan Ensemble, Station House Opera, Alastair McClennan, Keith Khan, Welfare State, IOU, are but a few artists who have established their reputation through working with independent promoters to appropriate "other locations" for their work.

However, in the context of Live Art practice a promoter is not always a professional gallery curator or theatre programmer but can take many forms - local authority workers, teachers, arts workers in a community organisation, education officers in institutions.

Because of the often diverse nature of their roles, "informal" or "occasional" Live Art facilitators are not always equipped with the necessary skills and resources to appropriately meet the needs of such art and artists. Promoters must be encouraged through a range of training schemes, guidelines/resources, access to information and national and regional advocacy to develop professional and responsible standards in order to represent artists successfully, enrich audiences and reap the full benefits of projects.

2. Networks/presentation/distribution

There is not a formal network of promoters for the presentation and distribution of Live Art in this country. There are informal relationships between most Live Art practitioners, producers and promoters but often the relationship does not extend beyond information exchange because of financial and practical constraints. Moreover, such relationships are mainly mobilised by the energies, committment and vision of individuals involved rather than expressed as policy or encouraged by external agencies or funding bodies. North West Arts' recent initiative to overcome these obstacles by creating a regional network for innovative work must be welcomed and encouraged.

For Live Art works that are more theatrically based it is not too great a leap to fit into the studio theatre system and the informal network of such spaces around the country. The provision here, however, apart from a handful of spaces, can be inadequate, with low or unrealistic fees, little respect paid to the particular needs of this work, an unwillingness to comprehend its nature and an inability to market it to its potential audience. For work that cannot adapt to theatres, presentation poses a different set of problems and work that does not fit into existing gallery systems often suffers as a consequence. Galleries can be ill equipped or unprepared to provide lighting, sound and other technical resources, preparation spaces or accommodation for audiences or spectators. The work itself is often not considered as a possibility for galleries as its relationship with the visual arts is misunderstood or deemed inappropriate.

For multi arts spaces both the above problems are exacerbated because of the often difficult relationship of studio theatres to gallery spaces. Where, in such circumstances, does Live Art, especially work from a visual base, sit - under whose "ownership" and for whose "audience"? This in turn, highlights the lack of cohesiveness or united vision in many arts centres where their artform territories are as deeply mapped out as in the rest of our cultural industry. The National Review of Live Art at the Third Eye Centre is a case in point. The festival extends across the building, through studios, galleries and foyers. However, it is programmed exclusively by the Performance Director with the Exhibition Director simply relinquishing use of the gallery spaces. This, of course, is not a major problem for artists or indeed audiences, but it does touch at a deeper problem of ownership of Live Art in this country.

Sound artists and performance poets can and do turn to other means of presentation and distribution of their work: broadcasts or recordings which are marketed and distributed on cassettes and albums. However this form of presentation is dependent on committment by broadcasters and specialist outlets and often involves prohibitive costs.

The distribution/touring of Live Art is often fraught with difficulties. Firstly, it is not always appropriate as many, especially commissioned, Live Art works can be site specific both conceptually and literally and simply could not exist in another context. The site specific nature of much Live Art must be recognised and respected by funding bodies and all concerned with the sector. Beyond the pioneering and vital production role played by London based Artsadmin and a further handful of specialists, there are few agents in Britain representing the vast pool of artists who work in the sector. Hence it is often left to artists to facilitate their own distribution/touring and the obvious problems of self representation to, often resistant promoters need not be spelt out here. The Arts Council's Visual Arts Department, in collaboration with the Gulbenkian Foundation and Artsadmin, is shortly to undertake a research project examining the provision for time-based work that does not "fit" into existing gallery or theatre structures and systems. It is hoped that the research will produce a valuable map of current policy and provision and might lead towards the creation of an agency for this area of practice.

As emphasised at the beginning of this paper, Live Art covers a whole range of different manifestations. Often, and in its simplest form, Live Art can be self contained and suprisingly easy to present. In the case of performance poets or artists like Bobby Baker or Silvia Ziranek, many spaces are the "right" spaces and the performance is not dependent on complex technical resources. Not suprisingly such works do attract considerable interest in promoters - Bobby Baker's work, for example, is accessible on more than one level! Whilst some, more complex, pieces are "repeatable" other works are site specific or one off by definition. The costs and resources involved in recreating works in a variety of locations can often be prohibitive and it takes a considerable degree of committment on the part of artists and promoters to mount complicated and expensive works. An example might be Marty St. James and Ann Wilson's massive structure for Civic Monument or Station House Opera's Bastille Dances with its thousands of breeze blocks, tons of scaffolding and cast of twenty performers. Such committment is rarely rewarded and therefore the desire to exploit fully successful works in other regions or locations goes unfulfilled in the face of desperately underresourced organisations throughout the country.

Perhaps a national scheme, or series of regional schemes similar to North West Arts', should be considered to provide a circuit of sympathetic promoters. Artists with existing work that they would like to have a wider distribution could apply to the scheme for support in underwriting the costs of recreating, distributing and marketing the work in close collaboration with mutually selected promoters on the circuit.

Whatever the solution, the successful distribution/touring of Live Art in the future structure of the arts must recognise the complex nature of the beast involved, and any response to the need to increase distribution must be as flexible as the nature of the work itself.

3. Commissions/residencies

Commissions are one of the most appropriate, practical and rewarding ways in which an artist can create live work in this country. Commissions are also the most effective and relevant way in which promoters and organisations can benefit from Live Art practice. Live Art is, arguably, the most responsive arena to the complexity of ideas, images, influences, emotions, politics, technologies and mediums that surround us in this information laden global village. Live Art addresses any subject or concept, pulls on any shape or form and responds directly and honestly to the world and our particular concerns within it (however local or global they may be).

Recognising the importance of commissioning, in 1988 the Arts Council remodelled its Performance Art Promoters Scheme into a Live Art Commissions Scheme. Open to any professional and committed promoter, the scheme allocates funds for all aspects of commissioning new Live Art works. By devolving expertise and selection of artists to promoters and by encouraging audience development, diversity of culture and inter-regional distribution, the fund provides an excellent model for Live Art funding. It is a non prescriptive means of addressing the flexibility and demands of the sector. More importantly, it is a way of responding to promoters and organisations with differing needs and of enhancing their status and autonomy.

The growth of individuals and organisations who are turning to Live Art as as means of addressing ideas and issues is impressive. In 1991/92 there were over £250,000 worth of applications for the £55,000 Live Art Commissions Scheme funds from organisations ranging from established promoters to new galleries, environmental groups, puppet organisations and even nightclubs. In recent years Live Art commissions and residencies have been offered in schools, hospitals, commercial exhibitions, street festivals, shopping centres, nightclubs, warehouses, on trains, boats, rivers and beaches and in carparks, zoos, swimming pools and the remote countryside.

Commissions provide artists with a freedom to create the work they wish in the way in which they want to make it, be it of their own initiative or as a response to a given brief. Commissions mean that artists are provided with the invaluable security of knowing that their ideas and skills are recognised and appreciated. On a practical level commissions mean that the facilitation and production of the work are undertaken by a professional and well equipped support structure.

The terms and conditions under which commissions occur can, however, be fraught with difficulties and misunderstandings. As many artists and promoters continue to undertake commissions "in good faith", funding authorities must endeavour to encourage the importance of a thorough contract. A mutually agreed contract is a vital pre-production process that establishes the aims and intentions of the commission, responsibilities entailed and the working parameters for both parties.

Similarly residencies can provide an excellent context for both artists and promoters. Residencies enable an artist to develop work in a secure and sympathetic environment, but also allow them space to communicate their ideas and processes to a broader constituency through workshops, visits, talks and open access to their working methods. There has been a steady growth of residencies in recent years - Alastair McLennan in Grizedale Forest, Stephen Taylor Woodrow at South Hill Park, Rona Lee at the Junction, Neil Bartlett at the Third Eye Centre, Forkbeard Fantasy at the Hornpipe to name but a few. Similarly there has been an increase in participatory residencies creating work with people drawn from local communities - Charlie Hooker and Richard Layzell in Cambridge, Paul Burwell in Hull, Michael Mayhew and Becky Edmunds in Manchester, Keith Khan in Liverpool. For promoters, residencies afford the opportunity to place the work in a broader context, enable greater "community" links and develop valuable relationships with an artist of their choice.

It is through residencies and commissions and shared ways of working and thinking that key relationships between artists, facilitators and audiences develop and flourish.

The Arts Council's Performance Art Advisory Group has drafted model contract guidelines for both commissions and existing performances and will also be considering residencies. More importantly, the forthcoming Live Art Handbook from Artic Publications will provide a valuable tool for the commissioning and residential needs of Live Art practice.

4. Festivals

The National Review of Live Art, Edge and Contemporary Archives are the most established and successful festivals of Live Art in Britain, with high profile programmes created around commissions and presentations in studio, gallery and site specific locations. Such festivals offer a focus for the sector and offer a rare forum for meetings between artists, promoters, critics and funding bodies. Additionally throughout the year there are also festivals or Live Art weeks/fortnights/months providing a context and focus for promoters without the resources or policy to address Live art regularly.

Festivals often provide an ideal context for audiences and Live Artists in terms of the relationship of their work to other artists and cultural trends. Moreover, Live Art can range from a ten hour spectacular involving twenty or more people to a five minute solo action, and the "package" nature of festivals affords a freedom to present such work without worry about satisfying audience demands or, dare one say it, value for money. It is often prohibitive, even unthinkable, for promoters to present a ten minute performance piece or a forty eight hour installation in isolation because of the pressure of public expectation and the cost effectiveness of the resources involved, but it is no problem to present such work if it is surrounded and contextualised by a range of other events.

An interesting development in recent years, perhaps inspired by the pioneering work of LIFT, has been the incorporation of Live Art into the programmes of more established festivals and exhibitions such as Brighton Festival, Edinburgh International Festival, Mayfest, Nottingham Festival, Liverpool Festival of Comedy, British Art Show etc. Part of this trend may well be the need to create more exploratory, broad based programmes in order to "be different", but it is also because Live Art practice offers unusual, surprising, ocassionally large scale and site specific events that create an excitement and demand amongst audiences. But the trend does reflect the increased status of Live Art and the need for established festivals to address the cutting edge and new frontiers of arts practice and its relationship to the mainstream in order to keep moving forward and prevent cultural rigor mortis setting in.

5. Documentation/archive

Compared to other performing arts, Live Art seems to be a well documented area of practice. Because of its ephemeral nature, artists have traditionally been highly responsible in capturing the moment and recording their work (there was a school of thought in the 60s and 70s that felt that documentation was a betrayal of a necessarily transient form, but records of the work were usually preserved in some shape or form). Historically, documentation has taken the form of accompanying, occasionally autonomous, publications and photography, but in recent years with the arrival of new and accessible technologies, many artists and promoters have turned to video for a truer record. Live Art is, by definition, action based and often only video or film can honestly capture the full experience of the work.

Why do artists document their work? Partly for a record of a transient event, partly as a "promotional" tool to exploit the work further, partly to provide a context for their practices and partly as a testament or contribution to our cultural history.

However in Britain we make poor use of this wealth of documentation and do little to encourage its exploitation and development. The public history of Live Art is an unwritten and unrecorded one. Histories tend to be local, personal and anecdotal and there is no central archive or register which can be referred to for records of specific events or general histories. There are archives of material - both formal and informal, personal and institutional, excellent and inadequate - scattered around the country but it is largely material that sits on shelves. Britain needs an archive of Live Art as a true reflection of our cultural heritage, as an educational and critical resource, as a testament to artists' work and as a reference point for all areas of arts practice.

As a starting point for a national archive, Britain needs to develop a national register of material including slides, photographs, publications, films and videos and critical coverage. This is essentially a simple task but would require in depth consideration of material sought, carefully prepared questionnaires, considerable research and follow up work and the development of a reference system that is flexible, accessible and has the ability to update itself regularly. The next stage would be the development of an actual archive of material, similar to the National Sound Archive or the African and Asian Visual Artists Archive or Projects UK. Considering the range of forms represented and the many types of documentation undertaken, the logistics of this would be complex and costly, but it is essential.

There are archiving initiatives in progress: Projects UK have a massive amount of slide material, Nottingham Polytechnic is beginning a register, Fran Hegarty of Sheffield Poytechnic is being funded by the Arts Council's Visual Arts deoartment to devise a resource pack for higher education, the National Sound Archive is developing a video register for the performing arts, the African and Asian Visual Artists Archive will hopefully expand to include Live Art documentation. Parallel to these developments must run the continuation of documentation as a record of artists' achievements.

Artists and promoters should be encouraged to document work as a matter of course. Perhaps documentation, to certain agreed standards, should be included (and funded) within the terms and conditions of grant aid.

6. Assimilation into other forms

It is hard to think of a cultural form that elements of Live Art practice have not been assimilated into. Pop music, advertising, fashion, opera, ballet, dance, theatre, broadcasting, contemporary music have all appropriated or been influenced by the developments and challenges of a range of Live Art work.

Pop music has obviously recognised Live Art as a sympathetic activity and vehicle for exploratory work. The Velvet Underground's Exploding Plastic Inevitable, Test Department's performance works, Physic TV's mixed media shows, David Bowie's image and movement explorations, Madonna's use of Cindy Shermanesque archetypes and icons, the list is endless. The advent of pop videos led to increasing appropriation and assimilation of the avant garde as the visual language of our culture was pillaged by pop artists desperate to make videos that "went a little bit further". Indeed, many experimental video makers and artists found themselves thrust to fame through their work in the music industry. The radical change heralded by the arrival of punk in the 70s, assimilated the worlds of music, fashion, politics and art into one glorious alternative culture, and the practice of many younger Live Artists in this country owes a lot to the legacy of that cultural revolution.

The work of many designers and fashion notaries (Vivienne Westwood, Pam Hogg, Leigh Bowery and Simon Fraser) takes the front line of avant garde aesthetics onto the streets and into the clubs. Andrew Logan's Alternative Miss World is a simultaneous celebration of fashion, performance art, drag and the right to party.

Michael Clarke and Lindsay Kemp create visually overpowering dance-performance works that grace the most respectable stages in the world. The dance work of DV8, The Cholmondeleys, The Featherstonehaughs, Rosemary Butcher, Second Stride and Yolande Snaith have their roots in the performance art and visual theatre vocabulary of recent years. The influence of Neil Bartlett, Impact Theatre and the incorporation of other "languages" such as new technologies, design and movement have influenced the style of traditional theatre practice throughout the land, often being the watering hole for refreshment for West End culture. Even opera has had its fair share of assimilation with Peter Sellars, Tim Albery and Robert Wilson having their roots firmly in visual theatre and performance art practices. Indeed, there are some who would claim that the most radical pieces of new opera are almost "performance art with a budget"!

Perhaps advertising has taken most advantage of the cutting edge of Live Art practice and has boldly stepped through the doors opened by artistic explorations. Advertising is increasingly less of a marketing device and more of an extravagant, witty and stylish "Readers Digest" of cultural pioneering in recent years. Advertising's incorporation of the avant garde can be overwhelming at times - one could simply refer to the current adverts for Vanity Fair, Audi and Ariston to confirm the point.

In broadcasting one need only look at the visual style of "yoof" programmes and the complexity of imagery and ideas in, say, The Singing Detective and Twin Peaks to trace the family tree back to performance and visual theatre practice.

Because of its "sans frontiers" to all artistic practices Live Art inevitably draws from and feeds back into other forms. But its influence does not come easily. The seedbed of such work must be nurtured, artists must be allowed to experiment and develop their practices - they must be recognised as the pioneers who chart the new territories for us all.

7. Critical development

Just as promoters are artists' facilitators and interface with the public in an immediate sense, so it is the critics who take the work to a broader audience and into history.

The Arts Council-funded quarterly Performance Magazine is the only journal that deals exclusively with Live Art and related issues in Britain and more recently, under the editorship of Gray Watson, in international developments. Beyond the advocacy and championing by Performance Magazine, the critical history of Live Art in Britain is not a particularly happy or prolific one. Whilst other artforms enjoy a high media profile and critical status, Live Art remains in the shadows of mainstream attention and debate, seemingly misunderstood by establishment critics.

Live Art was not, as some critical debate would have had it, a passing and possibly relevant sixties fashion. It may be possible to list a galaxy of key figures in its history who may no longer follow Live Art practice, but they have influenced future generations of artists and prepared the ground for continuing artistic experimentation in all fields. However in terms of mainstream critical coverage, it continues to be seen as a marginalised and curious activity clinging to the fringes of contemporary visual art and theatre practices. It is a practice that challenges, questions and alters received definitions of art and whose discourse feeds into and enlivens mainstream culture. The critical context and language of Live Art practitioners demands and deserves a status and an acceptance on its own terms. The sense one often gets is that if a work is located in a gallery it will be covered by a visual arts critic and if in a theatre then by a drama critic. This effectively denies the interdisciplinary nature of much performance work. Moreover, it seems that often the critics are not familiar with or even aware of the often complex vocabulary or nature of the work. Live Art is often seen against values and rules that hold true for one artform but not necessarily for the work they are witnessing. For example, one does not go to the work of Mayhew and Edmunds or The People Show or Forced Entertainment Theatre Co-op for their realisation of plot and character but for their striking tableaux and complex images of contemporary urban life; their work cannot and should not be seen or judged as a "play" and all the expectations that accompany reviewing traditional drama should be left at the door.

In other words, most contemporary Live Art seems to be valued critically against preconceived notions of its context. The work is therefore marginalised by mainstream notions of artistic form and is often seen as an idiosyncratic deviation from "a norm" rather than as a profound and rich area of practice worthy of serious consideration.

Live Art does have a critical tradition in Britain. The Arts Council's Visual Arts Department has funded Performance Magazine for many years. Coverage can also be found in Artscribe, Art Monthly, Feminist Art News, Artists Newsletter, MTD, Variant Magazine and occasionally in the nationals (especially The Independent), City Limits, Flash Art, The Face, Blitz and a handful of other publications. There are also a wealth of freelance writers who possess the cultural grounding and critical vocabulary to cover Live Art and who are occassionally called upon by mainstream arts media. However for the main part critical debate remains pedestrian and in the rearguard of contemporary issues. Informed coverage of Live Art by mainstream arts editors is rare and the work is still perceived as "odd". Perhaps our critical establishment could take a leaf out of the music industry's book whereby new writers, perhaps more in tune with contemporary practice, are encouraged and adopted.

As stated earlier in this paper, many Live Art initiatives take place regionally and often because of both their site specific nature and the inability of London organisations, the work is not performed in the capital. For a critical tradition that is metropolis-orientated this poses enormous problems. National editors and critics must begin to acknowledge work that only exists "outside" London and recognise its "national" significance.

Aware of the above problems the Arts Council's Visual Arts Department recently organised an informal meeting with arts editors to address coverage of the sector. The lunch was well attended and editors expressed concern and welcomed initiatives. The Arts Council also organised a training day for promoters to improve and develop their skills in media relations. A similar session is to be held by Northern Arts shortly. It is hoped that such advocacy and practical initiatives will continue and contribute to critical debate at national and regional levels in the restructuring of the arts.

8. Audience Development

Through its assimilation into other forms, its often spectacular or unusual nature and its incorporation into more mainstream arenas through festivals, commissions and residencies, Live Art is reaching increasingly wider audiences. More and more artists are understanding the complexities of marketing in order to represent more accurately their work to potential audiences and those audiences in turn are looking for and demanding the shock of the new in their cultural experiences. The capacity audiences at the National Review of Live Art, the thousands who attended Edge 90 in Newcastle, the thousands who flocked to the South Bank to see Station House Opera and Bow Gamelan in LIFT 1989, the capacity audiences at Test Department's Second Coming in Glasgow 1990, the thousands who attended Stephen Taylor Woodrow's Living Paintings, the thousand who turned up at the Blackpool Grand theatre to see Neil Bartlett's Sarrasine, the capacity audiences at

1990's Voiceover Festival and 1991's Brighton Festival Performance Showcase weekend prove that audiences for Live Art do exist and do appreciate the work.

However, beyond the "spectacular" and the "special event", Live Art does have a problem with "market representation". Promoters often find it difficult to define or describe the nature of the event in terms that will attract audiences and generally audiences appear reluctant to take a risk with something that appears difficult or unfamiliar. Perhaps it is time that terms like "different", "difficult", "provocative", "radical", "challenging" and "controversial" lose their negative connotations and are reappropriated as exciting and enticing qualities. More outreach and educational work should be undertaken around Live Art events to contextualise the work and provide a cultural grounding for potential audiences. Promoters should be encouraged, by schemes similar to the Arts Council's Live Art Commissions scheme, to develop marketing strategies which are understood to include the whole frameworking of their programme.

However, the term "audience" in this context can be misleading when often we are referring to involuntary "spectators", if indeed there are "witnesses" to the actual process and performance at all. Certain forms of installation, time based, endurance and interventionist work are conceptual pieces that exist without the prerequesite of audience collaboration. Alastair McClennan's time based installation work, Stephen Taylor Woodrow's Triptych Man and Birds that took to the streets and intervened in the lives of ordinary people in ordinary places, Rita Pacquee's disguises and infiltration into "real-life" situations, Marina Abramovic's voyage along the Great Wall of China, Chris Burden's Deadman in a sack in the middle of an LA boulevard, Richard Layzell's invention of tycoon Bailey Savage who imposed himself on the unsuspecting citizens of Cambridge, Fiona Templeton's You The City, a citywide performance for an audience of one. Such radical and significant actions contribute to the debate of not only what art is and can be, but where art is and what it is doing there.

It should also be emphasised in this paper that audience development and programming are inseparable, and promoters who are beginning to undertake Live Art and develop audiences, must carefully select the most accessible, pertinent and vibrant work in order to create communication, interest and demand. This might seem blatantly obvious but there are numerous examples (Channel 4's Club X is but one example) of ill conceived, obscure and uncontextualised work being placed before unsuspecting spectators that has done irreparable damage to the sector and to audiences', funders' and critics' expectations of a Live Art experience.

Suggested additional reference material:
Live Art Now (Arts Council 1987)
Cultural Grounding: Live Art and Cultural Diversity (Arts Council 1990)
Live Art Handbook (Artic Publications, available September 1991)

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