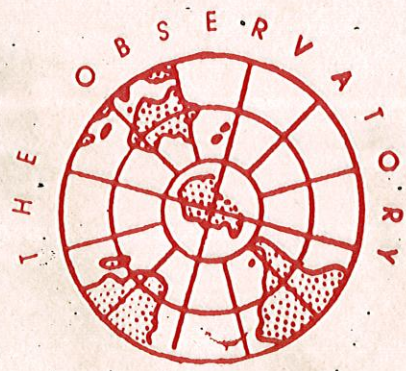


**Demolition Show:** final exhibition, The Observatory Gallery; addressing the demolition of this contemporary artist-run-space; assessing historical, social, political implications.

**document:** v.t. prove by or provide with documents or evidence; hence **-ation:** n., (esp.) accumulation, classification, and dissemination of information, material thus collected. (f.prec.)

Fig. 1.



**Demolition Show~**  
**A Documentation:** a curatorial accumulation of evidence, (esp.) photographs, video, writings; dissemination of information, material thus collected....



# Demolition Show ~ A Documentation:

1~26 Sept 1986

Queensland College of Art  
Gallery

## CONTENTS

### Essays

Peter Anderson .....	1
Sarah Follent .....	3
Caroline Stalker .....	6

### Artists

Penny Algar .....	9
Michelle Andringa .....	10
Virginia Barratt .....	10
Lindy Collins .....	11
J. Hurst .....	12
Bryan Law .....	13
Rose Mere .....	14
Alan Owen .....	15
Wayne Smith .....	16
Mark Webb .....	17
Jay Younger .....	18
The Observatory Collective .....	19

## GALLERY CO-ORDINATOR'S STATEMENT

The DEMOLITION SHOW which took place at The Observatory Gallery, Little Roma Street, Brisbane in March, 1986 was an exhibition that confronted a number of 'arts related' issues under the banner of demolition. Not only was The Observatory building about to be destroyed, the rasing of a complete city block physically and (symbolically) denied contemporary visual artists and others access to studio space, and a community. A sense of history, purpose and place was lost.

DEMOLITION SHOW — A DOCUMENTATION is an analysis of the first DEMOLITION SHOW. By a process of video/slide, writings and photographic presentation, the original SHOW has become "decontextualised", and documented.

The Queensland College of Art Gallery's role in this exhibition is to provide avenues where further discussion and debate on the 'issues' can take place.

Craig Douglas  
Q.C.A. Gallery Co-ordinator  
July, 1986

## CURATOR'S INTRODUCTION

The expedient arms of hydraulic excavators crashed through the walls of The Observatory Gallery in Little Roma Street, Brisbane on April 12th 1986, violating several carefully considered and well planned pieces of contemporary art. Such were the final poignant moments of both the 'Observatory' and its final exhibition, aptly titled the DEMOLITION SHOW.

The decision to abandon this work, to destruction by contract demolishers, was not simply some naively defiant or nihilistic gesture on the part of disgruntled alternative art practioners. It was a conscious choice to highlight the difficult circumstances of local contemporary art practice.

Artists seeking studio space and an alternative to the commercial or 'state-sanctioned' systems of exhibiting, have relied upon renting older style economically viable inner-city buildings. The dilemma with these suitable buildings is that usually they are let with a 'one-month' demolition clause attached. The current climate of extensive inner-city redevelopment in Brisbane (with scant regard to heritage), frequently dictates a relatively brief tenancy for artists and other alternative community groups, whose operation depends upon cheaply rented premises.

The 'SHOW' which comprised essays, political theatre, film, static installation and performance works attempted to address this condition as well as the wider social and political implications which affect the operation of young and 'unestablished' artists working in Brisbane. In the absence of significant case-history of prior artist-run-spaces or strategies, it was important not to let this exhibition, or its events, pass inadequately recorded. Thus DEMOLITON SHOW — A DOCUMENTATION re-presents as a contemporary reference, accessible for further scrutiny and research.

Its rationale is to disseminate more widely this information, in print and photographic media, to create a wider awareness of contemporary artists working in Brisbane and their strategies, as well as to highlight an instance of political and social art practice in this state.

The DEMOLITION SHOW helped promote a re-assessment of local contemporary art practice and has contributed in some way to the recent upsurgeance of performance, short term duration events, mail art and mobile galleries. DEMOLITION SHOW — A DOCUMENTATION in a broader context, may continue to stimulate assessment of artist-run-spaces and their role in the community.

John Stafford  
Curator  
July, 1986

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

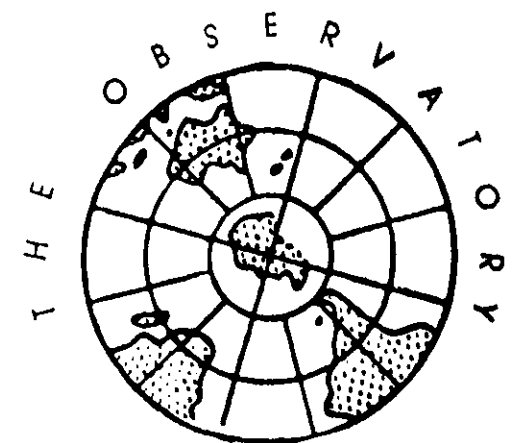
The Observatory Gallery was an artist-run non-profitmaking gallery, formed in 1985 by Robyn Gray, Leanne Ramsay and Anna Zsoldos. We had all recently completed courses at the Queensland College of Art and had emerged from the College to discover that so far as contemporary art was concerned in Brisbane, there was very little happening to support it. So we sat down together and discussed the idea of establishing our own gallery aimed at promoting young and unestablished artists of Brisbane for minimal cost to them.

At the time of establishing The Observatory, procedures for the demolition of the area were already underway. Businesses were already beginning to relocate, and there had been an accompanying drop in rental. It was an ironic situation; we could only afford to be there because it was cheap, and it was cheap because it was not going to be there for much longer. So the whole project began on a note of impermanence.

The issues highlighted in the Demolition Show affected us on a very personal level, and we considered it important that we should be involved in some kind of direct confrontation with them. Any chance of establishing a strong art community in Brisbane seems to us negligible in the face of the lack of space available and the fact that what there is, faces imminent demolition anyway. Projects are formulated and are then forced into an early demise, or in many cases, never even make it that far. Defeat is such a certainty that many people do not even bother trying, and pack their bags and head south, to places where they know they will be given more support.

The six months that The Observatory had been established in Little Roma Street were for us very much a trial. We have learnt, often the hard way, the many facets of running a gallery. And the support we have received from the art community of Brisbane has persuaded us that we were providing a much needed service.

Robyn Gray  
Leanne Ramsay  
Anna Zsoldos  
Directors  
July, 1986



## PRESENTATION AND REPRESENTATION

"Today we see the art of the past as nobody saw it before. We actually perceive it in a different way."

John Berger<sup>1</sup>

### Presentation

THE visible object is so frequently a quotation of the work of art. Similarly, the representation of the presentation is also a form of quotation. It is the (re)staging of an invisible event, so that it becomes visible for the first time, and for always. The demolition of the object is the key point in the process of production, allowing the work to materialise at the moment of its disappearance. The camera steals the soul of the work, causing it to fade to nothing. So we do not see the art of the past, even though we perceive it (in a different way).

### Representation

#### "THIS MAKES IT HAPPEN LIKE THIS....."

...is a sketch, a few frames, some snapshots, fast and slow writing, a list of names. This is another space. What else can be said about this? "Nothing really happens if it can't be recalled".

Peter Anderson<sup>2</sup>

is, the recent past of Brisbane art *only* seems to exist through an unstable collective memory.

Even so, is this memory any more unstable than the barrage of images, the fast writing, fast deals and fast bucks of the international art market? In many ways the REEBOK wearing, limo driven, fast artist might just as well be a character in next week's episode of *Miami Vice*, blown away when the deal goes down wrong. A body in a plastic bag.

However, there is nothing to prevent Brisbane becoming the next exotic location. The cleanly edited scene of the action, rather than the uncertain flicker of a home movie, or a pack of badly framed holiday snaps. But the scene of the action is just that, a scene, a staging. The history of art is no more than a series of such stagings. A Sequence of "events" constructed "after the fact" from loose collections of memories, notes, objects, photographs and official documents. Under these circumstances the *art* object, the original work, does not really need to exist "in the flesh".

The speed of change, and the mechanisms now available to the artist allow for the HISTORICAL Production of yesterday, today. In general terms, what happens in a day is compacted into a thirty minute news broadcast, an artist's work into an exhibition list and a box of slides. Such a situation allows artists to strategically manipulate the centre, to make any space THE space.

Within a local framework, the work of Q Space (Brisbane 1980-81) may be located within this area. This often mentioned (remembered) project, primarily involving John Nixon and Robert McPherson, was not concerned with a general *local* audience, with presenting exhibitions to a gallery going public. Rather, in a complex set of references to certain key revolutionary moments of the modernist period, the work was produced through a set of productive documentation processes. The space, as a physical location, was not of particular importance, as the true site of the work falls into that non-space at the intersection of the actual space, the documentation, and the mechanisms of historical reference and recollection.

As a strategy for pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps/REEBOKS, Q Space can be seen as an important local model. In an exhibition to be held later this year at the Institute of Modern Art, a portion of this work will be made accessible to a general audience for the first time. For although Q Space is an important element of the local collective memory, it has remained at the periphery of its vision. It has existed while remaining invisible, like a picture plate torn out of an art history book.

On the other hand, the I.M.A. has maintained a consistent presence throughout its ten years of operation. However, to ensure its continuation it has in recent times been forced to develop a structure which is far more rigid, and become locked into a number of "non productive" administrative procedures. At the present time it is in the process of being further inserted into the quite formal funding policies of the Visual Arts Board. While such a "locking in" to the V.A.B.'s Contemporary Art Space system will provide the organisation with assured financial resources, a good proportion of its energy will need to be spent "accounting" for those resources.

Clearly, a well funded organisation like the I.M.A. is able to engage in activities that are beyond the means of other art structures. However, the maintenance of the system of Contemporary Art Spaces at the

proposed funding levels, will consume a good proportion of the limited public sector funds available for contemporary art. As a result, government support for other production or exhibition structures is likely to be severely limited. But of course much can be achieved with very few resources, certainly without the necessity of a permanent venue, and in many respects, possibilities may in fact be limited by the demands of simply maintaining a longterm accountable structure.

One of the ways around such a problem is to operate on a short term basis, to develop a limited fixed program which takes both financial and time constraints into consideration. The A ROOM project (Brisbane, June-December 1984), a loose "artel" of seven local artists, Ted Riggs, Barbara Campbell, Bronwyn Clark-Cooler, Hollie, Brian Doherty, Christine Henderson and Dianne Heenan, worked on such a principle. The project was established to allow members to produce/exhibit new work without any of the organisational encumbrances required by more permanent structures.

A ROOM recognised that a room provided the basic necessities for the exhibition of art in both a local and national context. It provided a space for the viewing experience while also paying attention to other elements of the art legitimization process. It provided a central site (name/space) in and through which work could be located and fixed. The mechanisms of publicity and documentation drawn into play by A ROOM were a clear recognition of the fact that exhibiting is as important a process in the production of art as making marks on canvas or a sheet of paper.

A looser model, or set of models, has been provided by the O flate (one flat) group. This title has operated over a wide range of activities and production structures. While built around a core of personnel, notably J. Hurst, Adam Boyd, Russell Lake and Zelico Maric, "membership" has fluctuated dramatically between projects. Rather than developing organisational structures based on a single strategy, O flate has drawn on a great variety of mechanisms for the production and presentation of their work.

One of the most important aspects of this work has been a continuing interest in investigating various art related legitimization processes. Work has been sited in a range of locations, from a low key studio/exhibition venue in a block of old flats in West End, to two city buildings. Other more permanent venues have been utilised, as well as various publication and non specific event processes. Rather than allowing the instability of studio/office/exhibition space to become a problem (or even a cause for concern) the group has manipulated both forced and planned changes to work in their favour, allowing the opening up of new areas for investigation. Every new beginning is thus able to inject new energy into the project, rather than being a source of despair and failure.

This process of demolition followed by new beginnings need not be conceived in negative terms. Nor need the uncertain future of buildings and organisational structures prevent the ongoing production of a powerful, interesting and viable art. While the temporary nature of many local art projects may work against the development of an instantly recognisable scene, it may also be understood as a major mechanism for sustaining interest. Strength develops in the struggle against adverse conditions.

The site of this writing, the DEMOLITION SHOW, fixes itself to the end of a particular stage of a galleries existence. It observes the passing, the demolition, of The Observatory. It serves as a node point within the shifting formation produced from the already existing documents, images and recollections. It works against a

loss of memory.

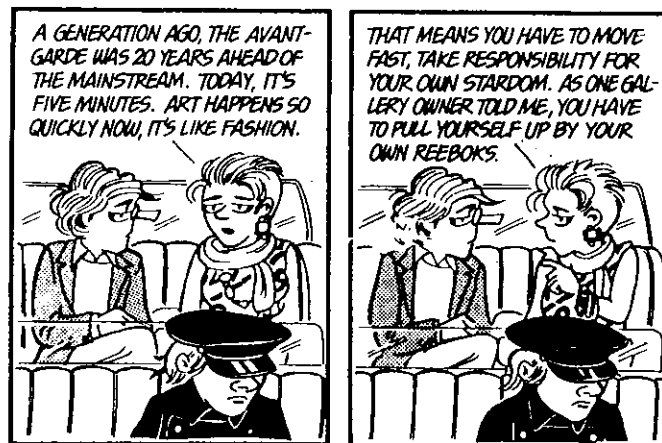
Of course OTHER things are always "going on". In this writing much else could have been noted, discussed, "made to happen" — THAT, Red Comb House, The Wool Stores, 40 Charlotte Street, The Artworkers Union, Zip. But this is only a selective memory, picking out bits and pieces, from amongst the rubble and the buildings still standing. This is a sketch, a few frames, some snapshots, fast and slow writing, a list of names. This is another space. What else can be said about this? "Nothing *really* happens if it can't be recalled".

Peter Anderson

### Footnotes

1. *Ways of Seeing*. British Broadcasting Corporation & Penguin Books Ltd., 1972. p.16.
2. "THIS MAKES IT HAPPEN LIKE THIS" in DEMOLITION SHOW (exhibition cat.). The Observatory Gallery, March 1986.
3. Reprinted from DEMOLITION SHOW (exhibition cat.). The Observatory Gallery, March 1986.

## THIS MAKES IT HAPPEN LIKE THIS<sup>3</sup>



The statement of the young up-and-coming cartoon character/"New York" artist/rising STAR indulging in a little "pre-success positioning" sets up contemporary art as a kind of crazy demolition derby, a self-consuming pick-em-up knock-em-down selfpropelled spectacular of marathon proportions. NOW international art is constructed as a set of shifting scenes, arriving in Australia flashily packaged, limo driven, a little bit bizarre. Everything is cut fast to the beat, like another video clip. The art world is reduced, shrunk to a global (East) Village, a 26 inch colour T.V. screen, a minimalist gallery advertisement, a few frames from a DOONSBURY cartoon.

But here in Brisbane, we know we're on the periphery. Things operate on a different economy of scale — a different economic scale. In some senses, nothing that happens here ever *really* happens. Even when it does, it only happens *here*. Things here don't really exist. Activities are tentative, always beginning. One off events, given a false sense of permanence by scattered archival fragments and a confused oral history. As it

## DEMOLITION AND CARNIVAL

Writing about the 'Demolition Show' is a paradoxical activity. Extending it making it live in memory and on paper is to give it *another* existence, a reified life, but remains a contradiction. For essentially this show was about its own present. It was a momentary refocusing, an elision of a number of ideas, issues and histories which in the dominant and normative cultural text are seen as disparate. In this, it provided a realignment which reaffirmed the possibility of change.

The show itself marked the demolition of The Observatory Gallery, a short lived artist-run-space. With it would go 5 more buildings listed by the National Trust as being of historic interest, and another block of the fast vanishing old inner city.

This was the old market area (the traditional site of many a carnival) and its generous spaces had recently housed art, recording and dance studios, some of our more creative clothes shops, inner city C.Y.S.S., the Wilderness Society, a number of long term boarding houses, Brisbane's last genuine old leather shop and more. It was an untidy area, buzzing with life and memories, where young and old, the historic and the determinedly new coexisted.

The loss of the area highlighted the critical scarcity of reasonable studio space in this demolition drunk city, and not just space for an alternative art practice but for any non-profit organization or for groups undertaking even the most limited social critique.

In an artscene notable for its bright beginnings which flourish briefly, fragment and are forgotten; for its lack of documentation (and therefore knowledge) of previous activity' for its factionalism which has meant a limited exchange of information and ideas and a lack of collective clout; and for its subsequent and disproportionate drain of practitioners to more nourishing cultural climes, this demolition could simply have represented a repetition and reinforcement of the same old cycle. Yet the cycle was dislodged, it was nudged off course and the neat categories were collapsed.

This was demolition as celebration, it was laughter as well as tears, comedy as well as tragedy and an end which spoke of beginnings. In this collapsing of exclusive oppositions, in its inherent contradictions and its affirmation of change, the 'Demolition Show' and all it meant had affinities with the notion of 'carnival' as elaborated by the Russian literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin<sup>1</sup> and more recently by Julia Kristeva.<sup>2</sup>

I do not propose to describe the 'Demolition Show' in terms of carnival or to do the reverse, since neither can fully explain the other, and to do so would deny many possibilities of each. I want to simply make connections between the two and thereby hopefully add to an understanding of each.

As did the 'Demolition Show', 'carnival' marks a transition or time of change, occurring traditionally at changes of season, or just before lent. For Bakhtin it was

"the true feast of becoming, change and renewal. It was hostile to all that was immortalized and complete."<sup>3</sup>

In medieval times some of the main forms of carnival were play acting, mimicry, masquerade and role reversal. Le Roy Ladurie<sup>4</sup> cites popular carnivalesque engravings of children spanking parents, the cart being put before the horse, the general sweeping the barracks courtyard, the maiden serenading at a man's window, the King going on foot.

As Kateryna Arthur explained,

"Clearly it was a time when the nature of the

customary cultural script could be seen for what it was, as a convention rather than as a natural order."<sup>5</sup>

It's in these terms that the 'Demolition Show' was carnival. Arthur continues:

"By disclosing the vulnerable fissures in the body of the prevailing system, the carnival attitude recovers for the whole system the possibility of change and becoming where normally there is an illusion of sealed completeness...Carnival is a fiction, an untruth which turns the tables on official truth by exposing its fictionality."<sup>6</sup>

Bakhtin, Kristeva and Arthur extend the concept of carnival from the marketplace to linguistics, literature (and art), but wherever it occurs the carnival attitude is always embedded in the social and political fabric of its time and place. Kristeva calls it,

"a kind of political journalism of its time. Its discourse exteriorizes political and ideological conflicts of the moment."<sup>7</sup>

and

"Carnivalesque discourse breaks through the laws of a language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time is a social and political protest"<sup>8</sup>

It's paradoxical, in that it's a socially sanctioned protest which exposes the system while operating within it, and which, while employing play and fantasy, describes social reality and is deeply serious.

Whether it occurs in literature, art or in the wider culture, social and political context carnival always exposes the *relativity of things*.

The 'Demolition Show' operated in and made connections in all these areas. It was a three week event which included film, political theatre, static works and installations, performance, writings. It existed in the gallery, in the street, in a broad cross section of the community, in the mind and in memory. It made multiple connections between cultural, economic and political scripts, and the loss of the buildings, loss of history, loss of literal and metaphoric space to work.

Like carnival it was a *self-conscious* fiction, a deliberate response to local issues. The impending demise of the building was well known before The Observatory Collective — Anna Zsoldos, Robyn Gray and Leanne Ramsay moved in. Curator John Stafford planned the show from the outset, calling for submissions last November. The group he selected formed a complex interweaving in which each work fleshed out another angle of a cultural and political map.

The huge opening party set the atmosphere with each of the participants donning a protective plastic helmet — in carnivalesque terms a token masquerade costume combined with a playful reality.<sup>9</sup> The political connection was brought in at the opening, by the *Order By Numbers* theatre troupe in their 'Tall Tales from the Altered State' which voiced protest in rollicking burlesque, mimicry and bawdy satire. First nighters also saw in different and equally fictive code, a 'documentary' film by Rose Mere and the Film Facts collective which made the connections between a loss of local history, the dehumanization of the area and the inhumanity of indiscriminate progress, by juxtaposing images of the area, interviews of soon-to-be-displaced residents with scenes of frenetic building.

The thread of historical and social documentation was taken up by Penny Algar in a complex and intriguing relief collage of photocopy and painting. It was a melange of old images of the area, of passages from directories listing who lived where and did what, of human and architectural fragments, of the solid and

the ephemeral, of public and private space. It was a simply stated protest at the loss the area, and with it a loss of a sense of history, of place, of cultural depth, richness and diversity. As well it made a plea for the deployment of architecture in making living and liveable public places, rather than channels to simply move people about. It was a multi-perspective cellular structure, a sort of aerial city view. Over it a "real" photographed view was projected — a collage of different codes which attested to the cultural diversity of the area. It was impossible to take in all of this work at once, or to read the multiple parts in the same order each time, as they were placed so densely and their meanings were so interdependent. Collage is itself an inherently relativising medium, making meaning through juxtaposition and metonymy, and Algar's work uses this to advantage, exposing the necessarily fragmented view we have of history and social interaction.

Allen Owen's installation *Eclipse of Vision* also takes up the issue of loss of heritage and of the necessary interdependence of the past and the future, but he takes this into a broader cultural sphere using imagery from his native Egypt. He sets up a complex interplay of notions of the 'gaze', of vision, and the local political lack thereof. He parodies the usual heritage trail with his 'Demolition trail', and he underscores its economic base in the form of a game — the monopoly board with dice, — a carnivalesque combination of competition and chance.<sup>10</sup>

Like Algar's work, Jay Younger's posters are documentary — this time of contemporary art related issues. In a series of simple juxtapositions of question, answer and image she locates the difficulties faced by many artists (in finding space, in financing their work) and cites the politic-economic underpinnings of these. The six posters form a cryptic narrative sequence which is directly expository of the system. In a type of carnivalesque inversion the questions were asked of rather than by the system — in this case the statutory arts funding and policy making bodies which, prior to the show, were sent the questions. Their complete written answers were included and these in themselves reveal the fissures in the system — the inconsistency between state and federal policy which has meant no local V.A.B. representative for a year; the fact that Queensland receives a disproportionately low percentage of federal arts funding. Younger's Tiger, dotted-in, in outline only, and half out of its frame, alludes to the artist leaving the state and, the undernourished art body fading away, but also to the latent strength of the local scene. In similar vein her fading image of that icon of revolution and cultural change Delacroix's 'Liberty leading the people' invites one to fill in the dots, to nourish the lady and see what occurs! And again there is a clattering of representational codes in these concise, overdetermined and open ended works.

Peter Anderson's creative contextualizing in his essay *This makes it happen like this* adds another historical dimension to the map of the alternate art gallery scene, and stresses (as does the whole show) that visibility through documentation is what ensures 'existence', and indeed makes 'scenes'.

Opposite Jay Younger's posters Mark Webb's photocopy installation, *Welcome aboard* connects the lulling and neutralizing effect of depoliticized "coffee table" art, with the lulling sense of 'normalcy' of the dominant system. We are welcomed aboard by a composite photocopy figure resembling a caricatured 'Captain Joh' whose ship bears a disturbing resemblance to the Titanic. We sit to read the accompanying art book, and witness in it, the sinking

of the ship and the final text — 'The ship of fools'. This work draws one in with a sense of tongue in cheek humour, but ends with stinging satire — we also were lulled and are complicit. A fool among fools, very much in the spirit of Heronymus Bosch or Alexander Barclay. Webb's work connects the political system and the manner in which art and politics are depoliticized by the dominant system. As well, he questioned the hegemonic local art language — the individualized manipulation of paint. Like Kristeva's definition of carnivalesque discourse it,

"...breaks through the laws of language censored by grammar and semantics and, at the same time is a social and political protest. There is no equivance, but rather, identity between challenging the official linguistic codes and challenging the official law"<sup>11</sup>

In more didactic vein Wayne Smith's starkly dramatic performance *Spectre of progress* mimiced 'a demolition' in abbreviated narrative, mapping the relationship between demoliuion, capital and economic and political expediency. The real sense of tension generated by his build up to, and eventual demolition of a brick wall which turned out to be a styrofoam fake, elaborated the relativity of our notions and constructions of 'reality'.

Bryan Law's similarly didactic political fable linked demolition, the capital economy, increasing social depersonalization, and a loss of heritage and of individual rights.

In their dance/performance *Gun Crazy: you gotta laugh* Virginia Barratt and Michelle Andringa weave multiple threads connecting the 'gaze', the gun, its pleasures, targets and patriarchal power. These threads overlap, branch out, circle back forming narratives within narratives which underscore the relativity of time, the ambiguity of beginnings and ends. In doing this, their work hints at the 'potential infinity' of carnivalesque discourse where, in Kristeva's words,

"on the omnified stage of carnival, language parodies and relativizes itself, repudiating its roles in representation; in doing so it provokes laughter."<sup>12</sup>

The self referential nature of the show was elaborated by the Observatory Collective at the gallery's entrance, in photodocumentation of the exhibition in the making. Yet, although it was self referention, the 'Demolition Show' was not self contained. Rather, in the spirit of carnival, it denied unity and totality; it was a discourse of becoming, of changing, of inter and outer connectedness. It denied completely a dichotomy between high and low art. Its borders were blurred and it spilt out literally onto the streets.

This was a deliberate strategy used by J. Hurst and Associates in their performance *Viva reconnoitre*, in which in the space of three minutes an audience of 200 — 300 were evacuated from the gallery. Once outside the participants were confronted by the spectacle of Hurst suspended high up on the building which was now alive with simulated flames — the artist as artwork going down with the building. In the street the spectators became part of an extra-terrestrial/police invasion. The distinction between author and spectator was abolished and as Kristeva puts it, everyone became "subject (by this she means author-producer) of the spectacle, and object of the game"<sup>13</sup>

The single point 'perspective' if authorship was questioned throughout the show. The static works, for instance all used mediated imagery, some from low art or non-art sources, like Algar's directories, Owen's monopoly board, Anderson's 'Doonsbury', Younger's use of childrens 'dot' drawing books. Most works were mechanically reproduced, and all demanded to be

'read' in some way. They thus probed in a variety of ways the conventional grammars of art consumption.

In their later performance O'flate (J. Hurst, Adam Boyd, Russell Lake and others) elaborated a game which inverted the patterns of 'normal' social discourse. Surrounded by cardboard 'dodgem cars' they ran into each other, the audience and everything in sight (the more usual pattern being to miss obstacles). Virginia Barratt's and Michelle Andringa's song "Give me space, don't fence me in" was a pertinent backdrop to the carnivalesque breaking of normative strictures and demands for freedom. The farcical spectacle of the 'Contessa Roberta Ravioli' leading the crowd in an 'Arvederci li'l Roma' can be best situated in Bakhtin's words,

"For thousands of years the people have used these festive comic images to express their criticism, their deep distrust of official truth, and their highest hopes and aspirations. Freedom was not so much an exterior right as an inner content of these images."<sup>14</sup>

This dichotomy between exterior and interior freedom points to one of the paradoxes of carnival, because as an attack on the law from within the law its possibilities of real transgression would seem to be limited. However it did seem with 'The Demolition Show' that exposing the system was transgression enough. To wit — Lindy Collin's bright banners were hung on the outside of the building, each one paradoxically commemorated the loss of one of the 30 or so buildings listed by the National Trust, which have been demolished since 1979. The gallery was asked to remove them so as not to draw attention to itself, the show, or the loss of the building. So although the show was socially sanctioned, and did not literally transgress the law it still had power to threaten vested interests. Likewise Jay Younger's posters which were posted up around the city were reported to have caused some offence and to have been aggressively removed. It gives an indication of the neutralizing effect the gallery space has on art as compared with its power in the streets.

While each work included presented its own culturally dense discourse, it was in the total correlation of these discourses, in their myriad possibilities for permutation and combination that the carnivalesque potential of 'The Demolition Show' was realized. As a group these works formed a polyphonic utterance, a complex merging, overlapping, separating and colliding of different voices and contexts which, like carnival, was unpredictable, capable of violent twists. This occurred in the defacing of the static works by participants before the building was demolished, giving the whole event a sense of implosion reminiscent of the conclusion of medieval carnival when the licensed transgression is halted by the trial and execution of the Mardi Gras effigy.<sup>15</sup>

However this was a 'destructive genesis' a function of the 'perpetual instability' of carnival, not a farcical gesture of impotence. For in simply making the connections it did, in rearranging the cultural scripts, and in casting doubt, the Demolition Show created a liberating awareness of the relativity of all scripts, and of the possibility of change. During its present it created a fertile matrix of new meaning which formed new crossroads, new intersections in the old grid, so that, although its tangible potency went with the show, the building and the area, the old course can never be regained. In this the Demolition Show was indeed an act of transgression.

Sarah Follent

## Footnotes

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2. Kristeva, Julia: 'Word, Dialogue and Novel' in *Desire in Language*, ed Leon S. Roudiez. Trans. Thomas Gora, Alice Jardine, and Leon S. Roudiez. Columbia Uni. Press 1980. p. 64-91.
3. Bakhtin. *Rabelais* op. cit. p.320
4. Le Roy Ladurie, Emmanuel: *Carnival. A people's uprising at Romans. 1579-1580*. Trans. M. Feeney. Scolar Press. London. 1980. p. 191.
5. Arthur, Kateryna; 'Bakhtin, Kristeva and Carnival' in *Art and Text*. II. Spring. 1983 p. 49.
6. *ibid.* p. 50.
7. Kristeva. op cit p. 83.
8. *ibid.* p. 65.
9. Thompson, Graham. 'Carnival and Calaulable. Consumption and Play at Blackpool' in *Formations of Pleasure*. Routledge and Kegan Paul. London 1983 p. 133.
10. *ibid.* p. 130.
11. Kristeva. op cit. p. 65.
12. *ibid.* p. 79.
13. *ibid.* p. 78.
14. Bakhtin. *Rabelais*. op cit p. 269.
15. *Laudrie* op cit p. xx.

## A LANDSCAPE OF REPLACE AND REVALUE

"Beware of saying to them that sometimes different cities follow one another on the same site and under the same name, born and dying without knowing one another, without communication among themselves. At times even the names of the inhabitants remain the same and their voices' accent, and also the features of the faces, but the gods who live beneath names and above places have gone off without a word and outsiders have settled in their place."<sup>1</sup>

The 'centre' of Brisbane is under seige: it reconstructs itself with a fervour that is almost religious in the pursuit of a uniform, crease-free, moderne, and appropriately touristic *absolute* condition. It is replacing itself with another city centre called Brisbane; in the other Brisbane the nature of change was hesitant, clumsy, without singular direction — such a contrast to the Brisbane of the last decade which is calculating, disagreeably urgent and all but predatorial in its intentions and direction.

Change in the city centre has accelerated and increased exponentially, but this is no preordained event as those who espouse the myth of "inevitable progress" would have us believe. Town planning and architectural strategems in our city centre *enforce* change to actualize particular ideological intentions, thus notions of "inevitability" serve to reinforce the inherent "rightness" of one set of intentions and preclude the possibility of others — "inevitable progress" does not tell us what *can* be done. In this vein of presenting only one option ("progress") to the people in the city, major urban decisions of the last few years have been *announced* to us (consider Expo, Roma Street Railway Station) rather than presented to an effective public forum for debate — and have been carried out with great expediency once we have been informed.

In the new Brisbane City Centre, then, we are confronted with the predicament of more change, less time to understand it, and little opportunity to effectively question it. Consequently, criticism of change, apart from sporadic outbursts of anger, has been a rather impoverished exercise. Not only do we have to contend with the erosion of intentions in the city centre other than the "inevitably progressive" — places like the Little Roma Street community which provide invaluable bases for thought and action — our archives of criticism, debate and alternative models are at best fragmentary (and at worst may mistakenly reveal wholesale public complicity with the urban disasters of the last decade). The context for this writing is archival as much as it is contemporary.

Replacing the city centre involves the unfolding of an image of the city which is of a complexion that matches the new city's ambitions. Consider Lord Mayor Sallyanne Atkinson's opening remarks in her address to the 'planning and development industry' — "Brisbane is Australia's land-mark city for the 1990s and beyond. If you've got money to invest, or a future plan, Brisbane is an opportunity too good to miss."<sup>2</sup>

Apparently the touristic and speculative paradise that we can anticipate will be of giant monolithic proportions — appreciable, perhaps, only from a distance? The "landmark" image of Brisbane city centre is one that has become potent from overuse; consider tourist brochures, posters and T.V. commercials of "our city" ("love you Brisbane") which invariably favour the birds-eye view of the city as the most glamorous and prophetic. The cameras glide over urbanity as they would scan Mt Kiousiosko or the D'Aigular Range. The "geological" metaphor of

these images is certainly effective in its suggestion of inexorable growth; change on a grand scale in such a geographical milieu becomes something reliable, like a bushfire or a landslide. Yet these images completely fail to remind us that we also must confront the city at human level — from the streets, on the ground. What is lost in the geographical view is an image of those spatial organisations (on the ground) which historically have lent themselves to meetings of city-dwellers — a life in the city other than the purely functional. Here an image of Brisbane city centre as sustainer of a public culture falls by the wayside.

Another potent image which springs from viewing the city centre at great heights is that of the city as a complex of functions rather than lives. The camera picks out the salient features of tower and freeway in their most abstracted "activated" form — efficient movement systems (the romance of freeway slicing through the landscape), high level energy consumption (excitement of office towers lit up at night) etc. etc. Brisbane has been so careless in its uncritical acceptance of international models of what a "real" city should look like, rather than having an understanding of how an urban centre should offer opportunities for diverse expressions and intentions. It seems that the city centre now has ambitions to eradicate those aspects of the city's life which do not conform with the image of the 'landmark city' and as a result sets about destroying that which gives a city powerful identity — the embodiment of multiform culture.

Michel Foucault, in his essay "Heterotopias — des Espaces Autres"<sup>3</sup> discusses the "other spaces" of society — that is the spaces of society which diminish, contradict the "real" or dominant spaces of society by virtue of the fact that they are structured by a different order of knowledge — by a different set of intentions. Heterotopias juxtapose themselves against society, and are at once inverse and converse to the "real" image of society. Foucault postulates cemeteries, asylums, gardens as a few sites where such an "other order of knowledge" gives definition to the place. While this is a very abbreviated account of Foucault's work, there is no doubt that the notion of heterotopias is a very provocative contribution to the debate on cities in general, as it pertains very much to the idea of *place*. The "place" of any city becomes defined by a multitude of places that have an irreducible relationship to one another, for example, city square, student quarters, brothels, bingo halls, etc. In the 'place' of Brisbane city centre, it is the heterotopias which are under attack. I consider the heterotopias in Brisbane city centre to be those places which have not aspired to be part of the larger order of "the landmark city", for example, the Observatory and Little Roma Street Community, the forgotten parts of the River's edge (freeway-less and tower-less), the Ritz Ballroom, Her Majesties, the old Roma Street Station, "That" Contemporary Artspace, and Entrepot (soon to fall under the hammer, rumour has it). Invariably, when these sites of "other" urban culture are erased, they are replaced with the privatised, profit orientated edifices of large companies. So the city centre becomes the site of one-dimensional urban culture — one dimensional in the sense that it refuses to support the various layers of cultural possibilities — the other orders of urban knowledge — that currently exist in the metropolis.

Other comments in the "Report to the Planning and Development Industry" reveal that Lord Mayor



Sallyanne Atkinson believes Brisbane should be a "comfortable and convenient city to live in." "Comfortable and convenient" is a rather banal description of a city, suggesting *no* risks, *no* tricks, *no* protests — a state of complacency. Rather than "comfortable and convenient", Brisbane city centre could be "sullen and gregarious" or "wild and sordid", "extreme and Italian", "ordinary and extraordinary". Can an office tower be say, "gorgeous and sleepy" rather than just impossible? The task at hand becomes one of reclaiming the heterotopian possibilities of the city centre, of making emplacements which offer qualitative multiplicity in their relationship to one another and the city as a whole. We have to hunt for the dazed remnants in the promised landscape of the free-standing monolith and the serpentine freeway, and intervene in the blind spots of motopia (one-place).

Suggestions for such strategies have, in fact, begun to emerge. A short piece by Michael Keniger<sup>4</sup> — "At the Lost Edge" (soon to be published in "Versions" magazine), submits the view that one of these blind spots exists at the river's edge, under the freeways... "The lack of interest in the lost edge allows for intervention through installation to provoke, promote and shelter the temporary and the fringe. Hidden from the hard gaze of the towers above, a melee of chance and event could arise in a Piranesian underworld of intricacy and individuality..."

As a stance, this idea is extremely valuable as it starts to look for sites within the city centre; for the location of "other" places for "other" lives. Some more forgotten sites that immediately come to mind are roofscapes, the spaces in between buildings and at the centre of blocks and *on* the river. Notions such as these offer a framework for a vocabulary of ideas about Brisbane's problems that are hopeful rather than despairing, for they belie the notion that the exclusive profit-orientated "landmark city" is inevitable.

With a store of 'other' ideas for the city, we can without hesitation ask the question "What can be built out of the rubble?" And by not abandoning the life that the rubble once sheltered we can ask "How can the value of it be sustained?" The context for this writing — "Demolition Show — A Documentation" stresses this point by saying *this must not be forgotten*, and more; *this must not be depoliticised*. There is a fashion currently emerging in the city which involves retaining or "recreating" the facades of old buildings once the vitals of them have been demolished. A clumsy gesture to try to hide banality.) We have to be very wary of this type of re-presentation of history, as it is almost always based on a sentimental notion of the vernacular good old days — a romanticisation of the past that is without dates and without significant events. Such a depoliticised past renders the 'place' vulnerable to the machinations of vested interests in the most Orwellian sense of "those who control the present control the past." One example of the past being adulterated to serve the short term interests of the present in this vein is the propensity of real estate agents, architects and developers to seduce clientele on the basis of "Olde Worlde" character: economic value increases proportionally to the amount of sentimentality a new building can engender about the past. The intention of the Demolition Show to retain a record and an understanding of the events surrounding the life and death of the place is one effective strategy for inhibiting the onslaught of non-history. Certainly there is little opportunity to seriously undertake such a task within the framework of our Lord Mayor's "landmark city" administration...

"Brisbane will be a city of the world."<sup>5</sup> Does this

mean that our "landmark" status will enable the city to claim a strong identity which is *different* to the other cities in the world like Venice, Vienna or Paris? I suspect not. Given the latest results of Brisbane's preoccupation with the image of an 'international city', it means that these days, to be a city, we have to be the *same* as other cities in the world, to take part in the myth of "universal culture". "Universal culture" does not acknowledge the differences between places, but is emphatic about the sameness — same prosaic office towers, same cocktail bars, same junk hamburgers, same multi-national corporate power, same hotel rooms, T.V. shows and high-tech trinkets.

The town planning departments of the Brisbane City Council (with, of course, the State Government looking on) are bureaucratically organised to seduce financial input from more wealthy Australian cities and overseas. (Typical north-south developers dialogue: "Build in Brisbane — it's so easy.") The planning priorities are to cater for an "international market", to render Brisbane as part of the international cultural and spatial continuum that does not vary from place to place. The mythological entity of "universality" subsumes all locales under the banner of international uniformity. The effect of a politicised history which springs from local interest is to counter this myth of universal culture because it emphasizes *differences* between places — it offers knowledge about the circumstance of a city's life and particularised accounts of 'other' intentions in the city — it records diversity and *local* culture which contradicts any promise of uniformity.

The effect of community-based resistance to "universal culture" is also to highlight *differences* and thus counter the myth; a community is politically specialised to meet the demands of the lives in a concrete location — an effective community will not be organised against the people who live there. The idea of "community" is significantly attached to the idea of place because its polity arises from the circumstance of the place, and this is, in the end, what makes it cohesive — a shared understanding of the values of the place. In Brisbane 'community life' and communities intentions are always relegated to the fringes — at the very edge of existence — and rendered subservient to the demands of 'universal culture' and local politicians avaricious consumption of it. The sites of and locations for community-based activities (and, for that matter, any activities that do not conform with the morality of "landmark city") are becoming so scattered, so removed from the city centre, that such activities can only make themselves manifest in a very fragmentary way. This leaves Brisbane's 'other' culture in a seemingly perpetual embryonic state — never able to make a spectacle of its genius in the centre of the city with a large and permanently transfixed audience.

It is vital that we work against such an impoverished urban culture, because what is taken away from us in the landscape of replace and revalue is the liberty to claim places in the heart of the city which give our own diverse and local intentions concrete expression — perhaps more succinctly phrased by J.B. Jackson; "... to identify ourselves as active members of the political community and give some permanent creative form to our gregariousness."<sup>6</sup>

I have only outlined ideas for the city centre, being emphatic about needs rather than courses for action — the need to propagate an image of the city which sustains a desire for a public mode of expression, to have emplacements in the city centre which do not limit the possibilities of the life within, to retain a sense and knowledge of history which can instruct and inform us, and reclaim a wisdom about our locale, to be able to

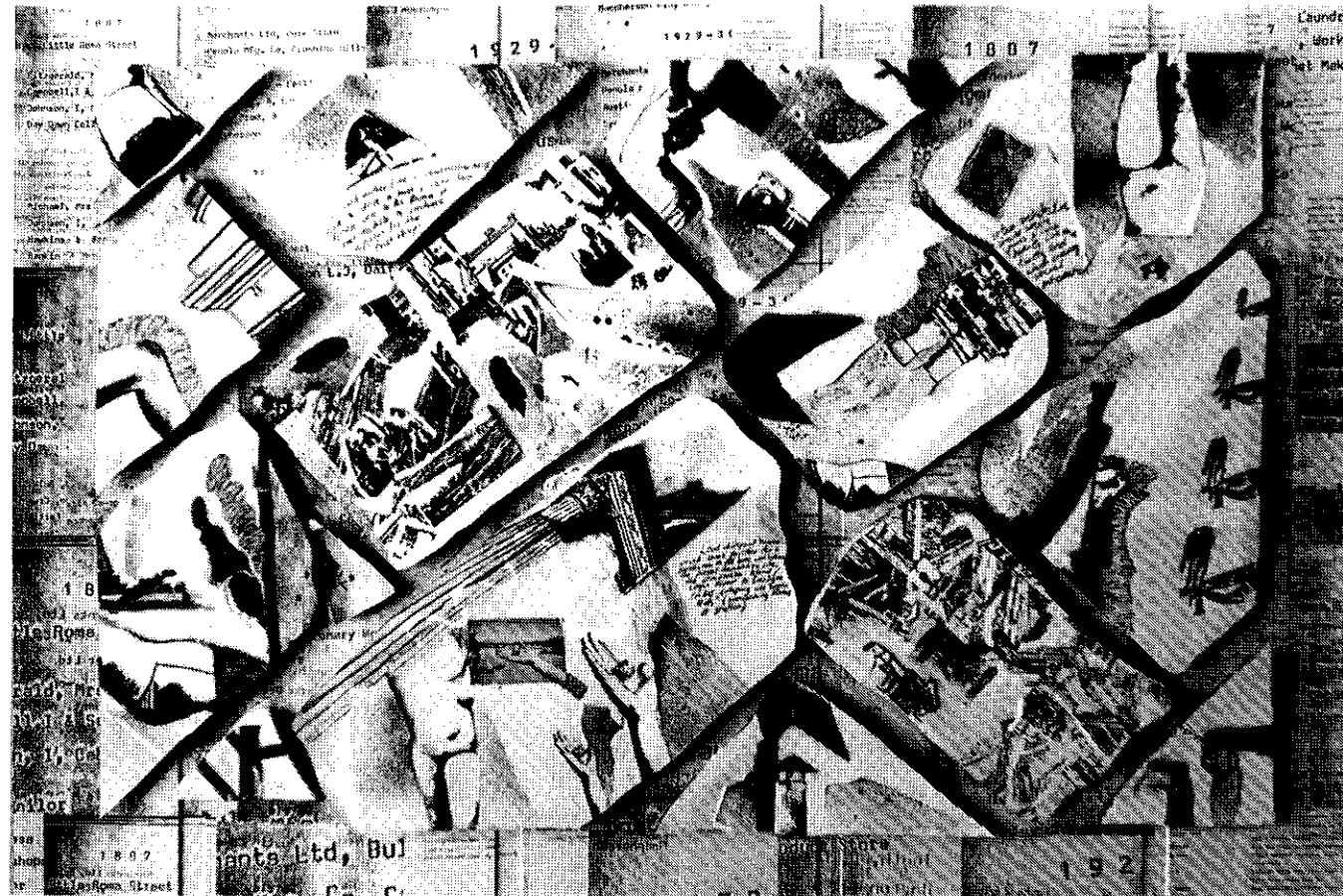
perceive the city centre as a place which engages local and diverse culture.

Courses for action may only arise from criticism, exchanges of ideas, records of dissent and articulation of discontent; we need to develop our own potent qualities of perception about the possibilities of Brisbane's city centre to override the bigotry of "universal culture" and "landmark city".

Caroline Stalker

## Footnotes

1. Italo Calvino, "Invisible Cities", Pan Books, London, 1979, p.27.
2. Sallyanne Atkinson, "Report to the Planning and Development Industry", Brisbane City Council Publication, January, 1986, p.1.
3. I have been unable to locate the exact source of publication. However, a very rigorous account of Foucault's work on "Heterotopias" is given in John MacArthur's thesis, "Foucault, Tafuri, Utopia; Essays in the History and Theory of Architecture", Master of Design Studies Thesis, Department of Architecture, University of Queensland, 1985.
4. Michael Keniger, Lecturer, Department of Architecture, University of Queensland.
5. op.cit. Atkinson, p.8.
6. J.B. Jackson, "Landscapes — Selected Writings of J.B. Jackson", Ed. Ervin H. Zube, University of Massachusetts Press, 1970, p.8.



“Work for the Demolition Show”

Born Melbourne 1954, currently living and working in Brisbane.

- 1979 Graduate Sculpture Diploma, R.M.I.T. Melbourne
- 1982 Daad Scholarship, Hochschule Der Kunste, Berlin

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

- 1984 Christine Abrahams Gallery, Melbourne
- 1985 “Slide Works”, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 1978 “Contemporary Sculpture and Performance”, Latrobe University
- 1979 “Australian Women Artists”, Niagara Lane Galleries
- 1981 “Australian Sculpture Triennial”, Latrobe University
- 1982 Klasse Tajiri Group Show, Quergalerie, Berlin
- 1984 ArtSpace, Sydney
- “Hugh Williamson Prize Exhibition”, Ballarat Art Gallery
- 1986 Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE**

- 1986 Community Arts Centre, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

My interest in the area bounded by Roma, George and Little Roma Streets is generated by a sense of history rarely felt in the city of Brisbane. The social interaction and acknowledgement of a common interest evidenced

in the present community must devise at least some of its “strength” from the progenitors of the area. Aspects concerning the original inhabitants and the interrelationships between architectural fabric/structure and mobility of individuals within and around this will provide raw materials in my contribution to the Demolition Show.



“Gun Crazy: You gotta laugh”

**MICHELLE ANDRINGA**

Born Brisbane 1961, currently living and working in Brisbane

- 1983 Bachelor of Arts, University of Queensland
- 1984 Diploma of Drama, Victorian College of Arts

**PERFORMANCES**

- 1984 “Fisch Klub”, La Bamba, La Boite Theatre, Brisbane
- 1985 “Lonesome Coyotes”, La Bamba, La Boite Theatre, Brisbane
- “Too Darn Hot”, Brisbane Hot, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
- “Boistrous Oysters”, Q.P.A.C., Brisbane
- “What it is, is...(Is it That?), THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane
- 1986 “Gun Crazy...”, Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane
- “View to Spring”, THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**CURATORSHIP**

- 1986 Performance Week, THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**VIRGINIA BARRATT**

Born Britain 1959, currently living and working in Brisbane

- 1980 Diploma Performing Arts, D.D.I.A.E., Toowoomba

**PERFORMANCES**

- 1984 “Fisch Klub”, La Boite Theatre, Brisbane

- 1985 “Lonesome Coyotes”, La Bamba, La Boite Theatre, Brisbane
- “What it is, is...(Is it That?), THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane
- 1986 “Gun Crazy...”, Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane
- “View to Spring”, THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**CURATORSHIP**

- 1986 Performance Week, THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

“We are all terrorists in our post modern present”<sup>1</sup>.

Gun Crazy is a simple story that has grown out of local “Zones of Anxiety”<sup>2</sup>. Tensions that exist between characters and roles, local media and artist, cityscapes in our landscape. The form is a departure from the classical dramatic to the use of conventional forms in a different space — playing to different rules. It is the physicalization of an idea between floor and wall. Placing the physical arts in a visual realm.

“One ascertains with the aiming instrument in order to receive something into possession... This aiming is a process of primitive consciousness; orientation in space means finding a balance”<sup>3</sup>.

1. “Zones of Anxiety”, Studio International.  
 2. ibid.  
 3. Gotz, A *Joseph Beuys Life and Works*, Barrons Educational Series Inc., c. 1979



**Lindy Collins**



**“Bye Bye Brisbane Banners”**

Born South Africa 1960, currently living and working in Brisbane.

- 1975-77 Certificate in Art, Durban, South Africa
- 1978-80 Diploma of Art, Queensland College of Art, Brisbane
- 1981 Graduate Diploma of Teaching, Kelvin Grove, Brisbane

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

- 1985 Ralph Martin Gallery, Townsville

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 1980-81 Pacific Festival, Townsville
- 1984 Women and Labour Conference, Schonell Theatre, Brisbane
- 1985 Le Scoops Cafe, Brisbane  
Gladstone Civic Gallery, Gladstone
- 1986 THAT Contemporary Art Space  
Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane  
Townsville Art Society, Townsville

**STATEMENT**

Art does not exist in a cultural vacuum: our heritage as a community should include the needs of both the artist as commentator and the viewer as an active participant in the arts. The needs of people in this city are not being thought out carefully. We need areas such as George Street for young artists and galleries to operate in creating a special atmosphere in an otherwise rather desolate city. As individuals we have no say in the destruction of our city. So far since 1977 in the inner Brisbane city area 24 buildings registered with the

national trust have been demolished. Many more buildings which will not be remembered have been lost. We travel and visit other lands to enjoy their heritage and culture. With the great international flavour Brisbane has developed there is nothing left but a McDonalds style taste in our mouths.

**J. Hurst**



**“Viva Reconnoitre”**

Born Brisbane 1957, currently living and working in Brisbane

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

- 1982 One Flat Exhibit, Brisbane
- 1983-84 One Flat Exhibit, George Street Branch, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 1982 Red Comb House, Brisbane  
Intramundane Art Exchange, Brisbane, Sydney, Fremantle
- 1983 Anzart, Hobart, Tasmania  
Gallery Office Exhibit, George Street Branch, Brisbane
- 1984 One Flat Exhibit, George Street Branch, Brisbane  
Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
- 1985 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane  
Anzart, Auckland, New Zealand  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane  
Queensland Works 1950-1985, Queensland University Art Museum, Brisbane  
O'flate Studios, Brisbane  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane  
Gladstone Civic Gallery, Gladstone
- 1986 Le Scoops Cafe, Brisbane  
Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane  
O'flate Art Safari National Tour

**PERFORMANCES**

- 1982 Queensland Cultural Centre Site, Brisbane  
La Boite Theatre, Brisbane

- One Flat Exhibit, Brisbane  
Pontoon Brisbane River, Brisbane  
Anzart, Hobart, Tasmania
- 1983-84 One Flat Exhibit, George Street Branch, Brisbane (11 Performances)
- 1984 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane  
Mark Foys Building, Sydney Biennale  
Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane
- 1985 La Boite Theatre, Brisbane
- 1986 THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane  
Le Scoops Cafe, Brisbane

**CURATOR**

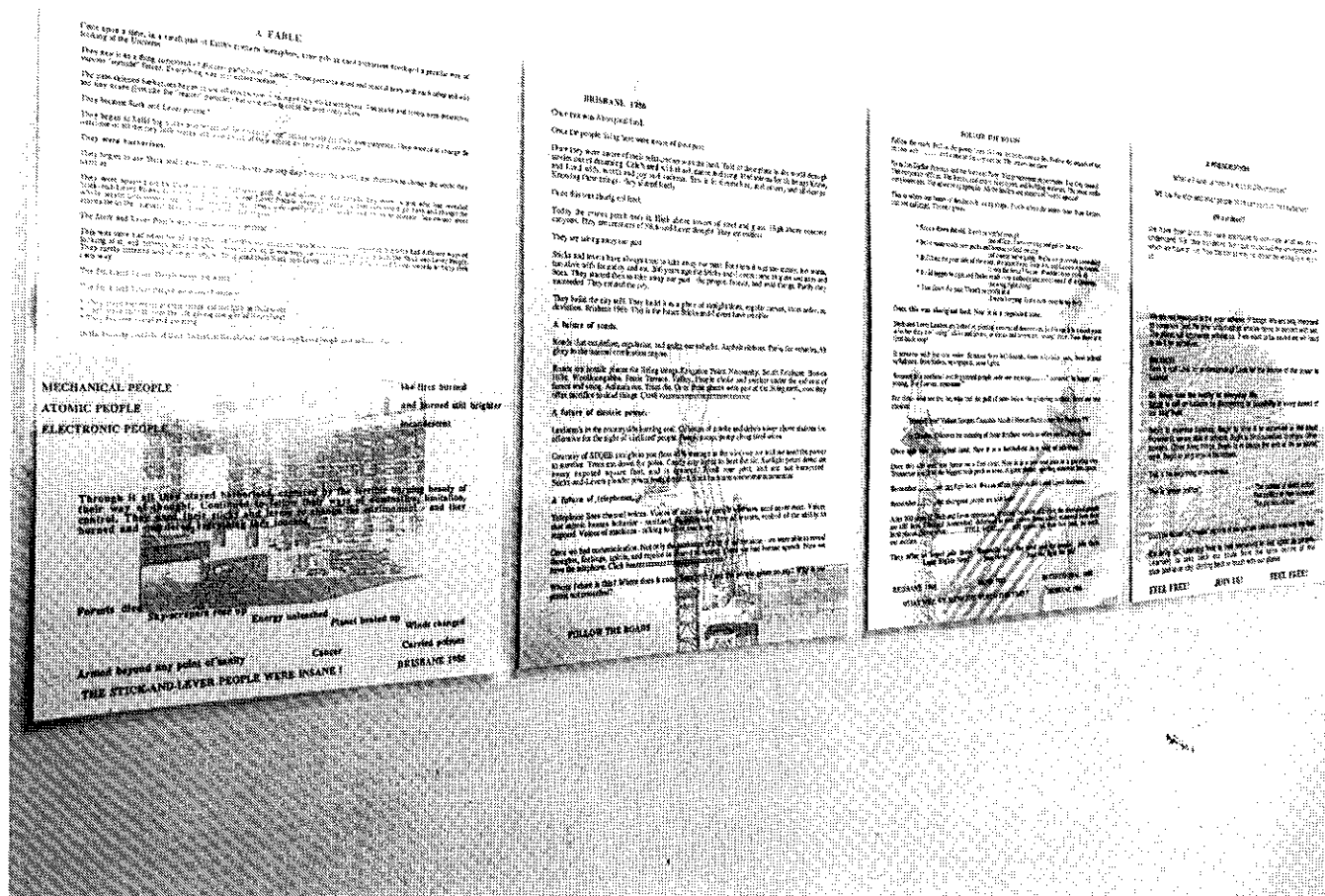
- 1982 Intramundane Art Exchange, Brisbane, Sydney, Fremantle
- 1984 One Flat Exhibits, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

**DIRECTOR/EDITOR**

- 1982 Director of Red Comb House Project  
Co-Director, One Flat Exhibit  
Co-Director, Art Walk Magazine  
Co-Director, Gallery Office Exhibit
- 1983-84 Co-Director, One Flat Exhibit, George Street Branch, Brisbane  
Co-Editor, Art Wonder Stories Magazine
- 1985-86 Associate Director, O'flate Studio

**STATEMENT**

VIVA RECONNOITRE

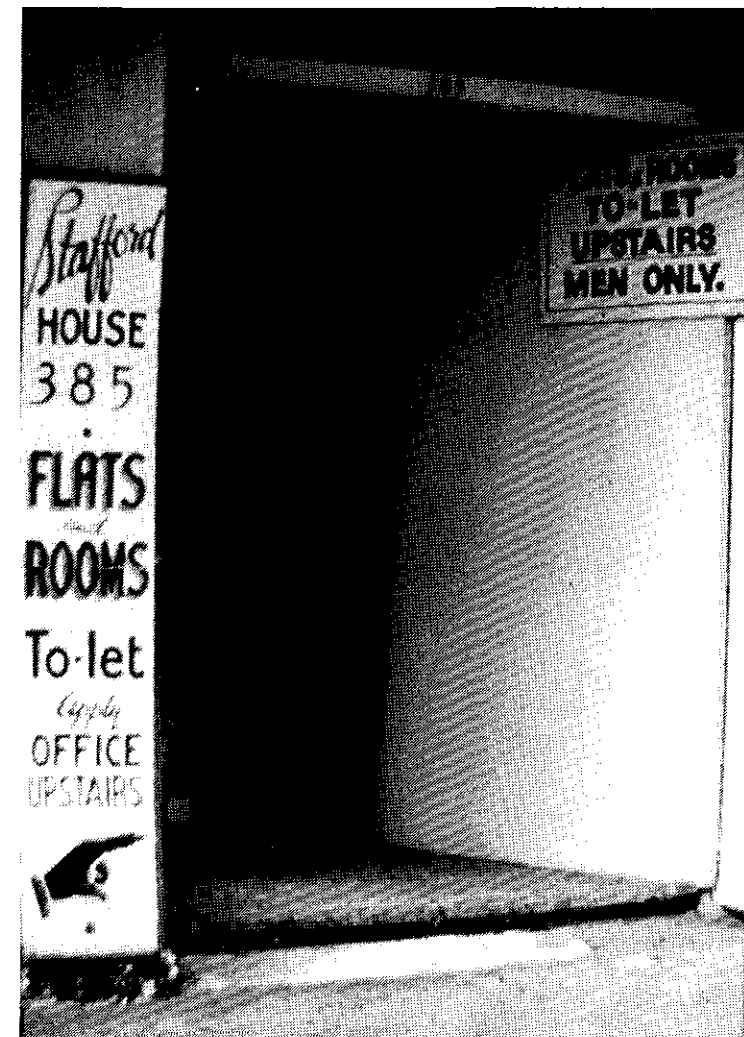


Born Brisbane 1954, currently living and working in Brisbane.

- 1986 Essays for Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane
- "A Fable"
- "Brisbane 1986"
- "Follow the Roads"
- "Prescription"

BIOGRAPHY/STATEMENT

Born of poor but honest parents in the cold war period, Bryan learned to hate communists until he discovered he was one. Got involved in politics in the early 70's. Marginally active in the civil liberties campaigns of 77-78, in various issues of Peace and Conservation. A major influence of the 80's has been Non-Violence, drawn from Ghandi, King, the Women's and Anarchist movements. Now prefers to work developing radical, activist, communities against a background of green, pluralistic (Art, Culture, Politics) — works against the creation of false divisions based on convenience or tradition. Has good relationship with police as people, but a widely recognized problem with "authority". Absurdly optimistic, Bryan believes in the possibility of a more balanced, more environmentally aware, and more human society. Believes the future is in our hands.



Born New Zealand 1948, currently living and working in Brisbane.

- 1986 Writer/Director, "Going About Their Business", Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery Brisbane

For the past 16 years I have been working with the production of images — in professional theatre, ballet, music, in writing poetry and prose, photography, in the theory and analysis of images as both student and teacher and now, as film maker. If we do in fact live in a symbolic universe then to work directly with images, to analyse, to create, to produce, then we are involved directly in the creation of the universe at each moment.

STATEMENT

Film — The Illusion of Movement

What happened to the living, breathing space recorded? It has gone in its own time and space, and where that has gone, who knows? This area, threatened by demolition, is also moving from one point to another and, in the hoopla of 'development' again is produced an illusion. It is an illusion of progression, of moral 'goodness' of moral 'rightness'. When we reach this final point we are in danger indeed.

This film is a series of moments, of points. Moments of the life and death of a space. Moments of the inhabitants of the area. Moments of the film maker.

FILM FACTS COLLECTIVE

Film Facts is a collective of, at present, eight women film makers. The collective evolved from the Film Facts Makers Course held in October 1985, Brisbane.

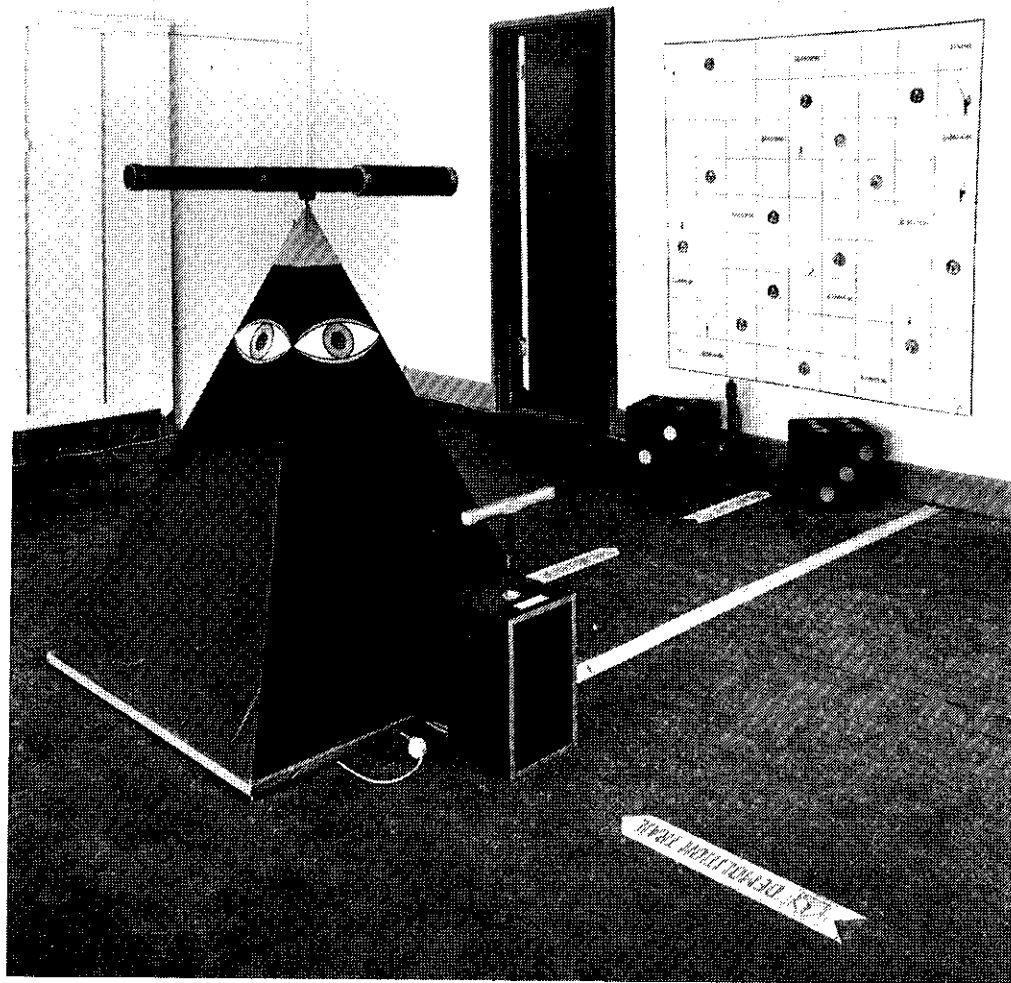
"Going About Their Business"

The skills of the eight in the group include cinematography, sound, editing, production and writing. "Going About Their Business" is the first production by Film Facts and several others are in the pipeline for 1986.

- Rose Mere — instigator and co-director
- Wendy Rogers — co-director and camera
- Jenny Chirnside — camera and graphics
- Carol Line — sound
- Atlanta Francis — camera
- Marion Redmond — camera
- Sue Ward — editor
- Leanne Boulton — assistant
- Camilla Cassidy — assistant



**Alan Owen**



**"Eclipse of Vision"**

Born Egypt 1950, currently living and working in Brisbane.

- 1969-70 Studied literature and philosophy, North Western Polytechnic, University of London
- 1978-80 Diploma of Fine Art, Queensland College of Art
- 1981 Post-Graduate Diploma of Education, Brisbane College of Advanced Education, Kelvin Grove

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

- 1980 Schonell Gallery, University of Queensland

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 1981 'Bon a Tirer', Emerging Australian Printmakers, University of Tasmania
- 1983 British, Australian and Japanese Printmakers, The Intaglio Gallery, London
- 1984 Arts Festival, St. Johns Cathedral, Brisbane
- 1984-85 Brisbane Institute of Art, Brisbane
- 1985 Labour Day Exhibition, Australian Railways Union
- 1986 Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" — William Blake

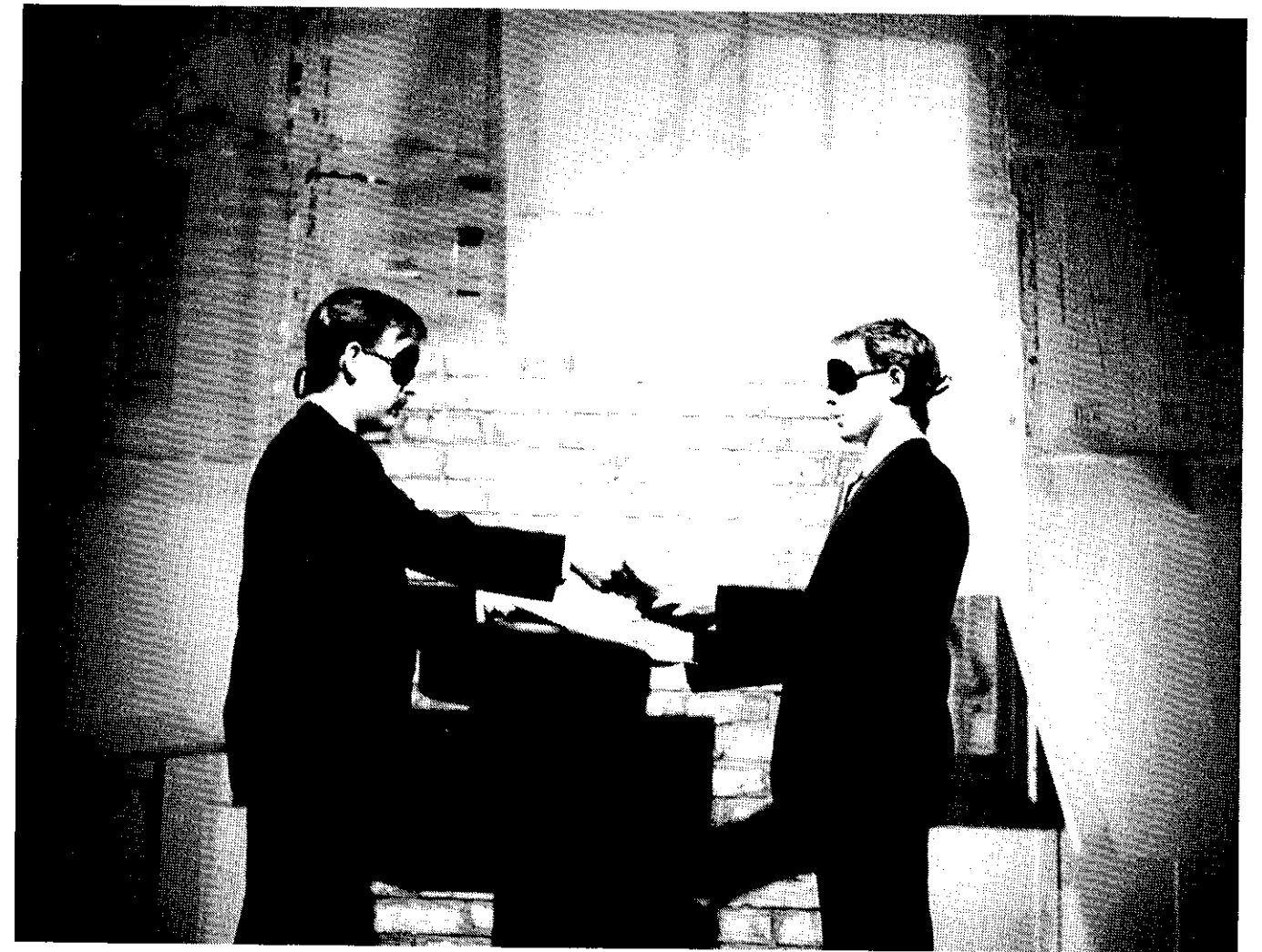
There is a prevailing misconception that to express concern for the preservation of our environment and cultural heritage is to negate the concept of progress. As artists we respect the achievements of the past as well as the possibilities of the future and are conscious of the interplay of these polarities in the historical process.

Our social-cultural milieu is less than two hundred years old, the natural environment millions of years older and both are equally vulnerable in the face of technological change. However, in the guise of political and economic expediency this city has become a monopoly board for the property developers and the multi-nationals and we are witnessing the metamorphosis of Brisbane into a pastiche of the International Style.

It is a sobering observation that the pyramids of Egypt still stand as sentinels of history while in Brisbane the buildings of historical interest and architectural merit, erected less than a century ago, are being demolished overnight. And what is taking their place? A conglomeration of mirrored monoliths, distinguished only by the inscrutable logo projecting from the executive suite on the seventeenth floor. And what do these executives know of the impact of this new order on the social fabric of the people on the streets below?

It is significant that the Demolition Show takes place in one of the few remaining enclaves for artists in the inner city. It is also apropos in this year of the Comet, that this exhibition takes place at The Observatory Gallery which is soon to be demolished. If our vision has not already been eclipsed by the blinding light from the mirrored facades, we should look through the telescope not only at the stars but at the social, physical and political environment in which we live.

**Wayne Smith**



**"Spectre of Progress"**

Born Queensland 1953, currently living and working in Brisbane

- 1982-84 Diploma of Art, Queensland College of Art

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

- 1979 Four Worlds Gallery, Eastbourne, Britain
- 1985 THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

- 1983 Commonwealth Bank, Mineral House, Brisbane
- 1984 "12 Directions", Brisbane Community Arts Centre, Brisbane
- 1985 THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane Gladstone Civic Gallery, Galdstone
- 1986 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane Installation, University of Queensland, Brisbane THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

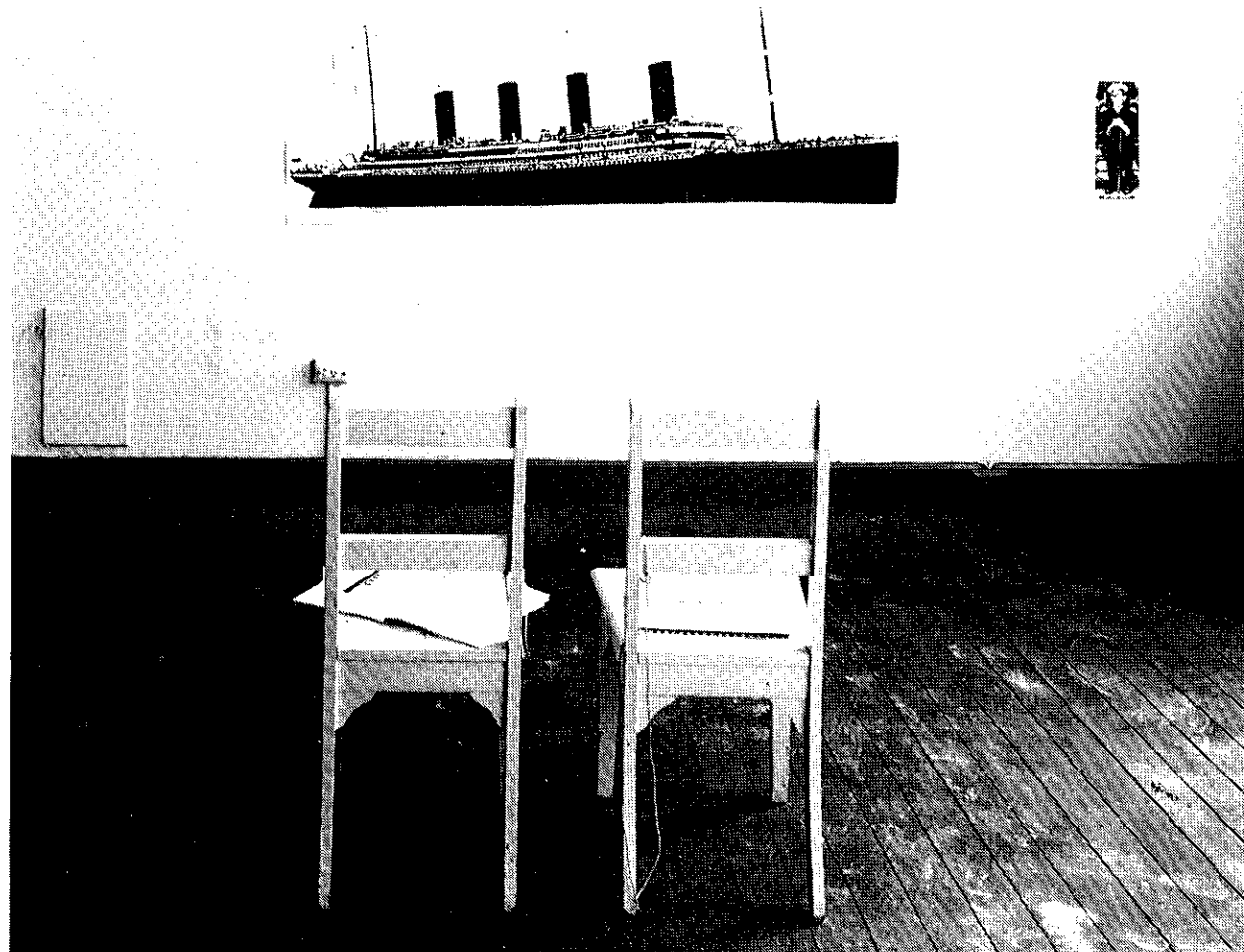
**PERFORMANCES**

- 1986 Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

Due to the overwhelming amount of public apathy the demigods of private capital expansion present for your fear and loathing a saga of power and dust. Witness the transformation of an entire city block into a pile of rubble. Hours of action packed demolition. Coming to your neighbourhood soon!

**Mark Webb**



“Welcome Aboard”

Born Melbourne 1957, currently living and working in Brisbane

1980 Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology  
1982-84 Diploma of Art, Queensland College of Art

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

1985 Installation, THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

1984 Brisbane Community Art Centre, Brisbane

1985 Noosa Regional Art Gallery  
Anzart, Auckland, New Zealand  
Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

1986 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane  
Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

**ARTIST IN RESIDENCE**

1985 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane

**DIRECTOR**

1986 This Space and Type Space Gallery, Brisbane

**EVENTS AND PUBLICATIONS**

1986 Aqueous Event, Resistance Event, Sublime Event, Heat Resistant

**ARTIST-IN-EXILE**

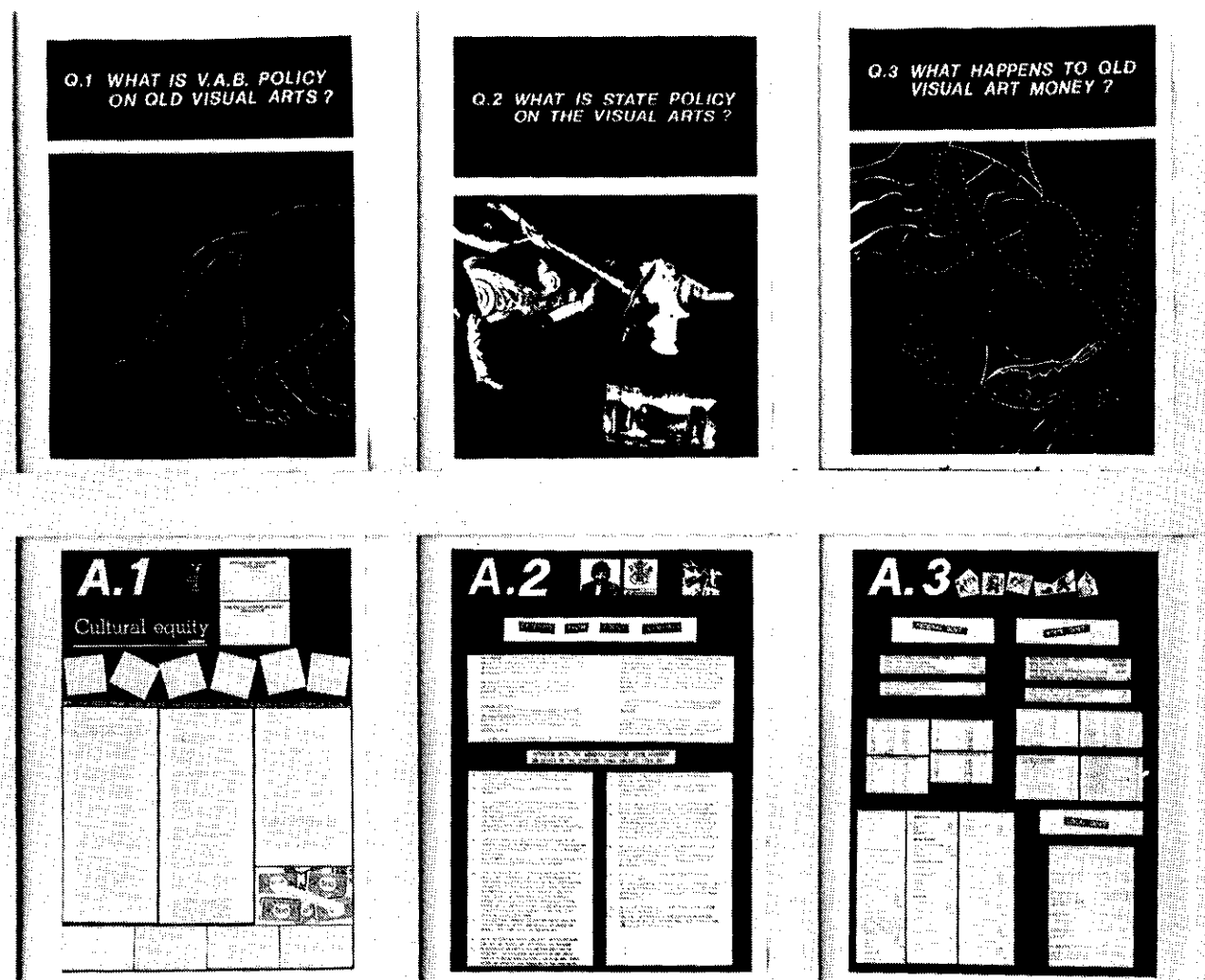
1986 May-June, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

“Don’t you worry about a thing”, the words sweetly caressed him, a lethargy crept over his reclined body. Was it the tropical sun, or the Captain’s reassuring

words lulling him into this torpid state?  
“One thing’s for sure”, he said to himself “I couldn’t give a damn even if this ship was sinking”.  
And it was.

**Jay Younger**



Born Muttaborra, Queensland 1960, currently living and working in Brisbane

1980 Diploma of Visual Arts, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education  
1983-84 1st & 2nd year Diploma of Arts, Queensland College of Art

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

1981 Brisbane College of Advanced Education, Kelvin Grove Campus, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

1980 Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Toowoomba  
1982 Brisbane Community Arts Centre, Brisbane  
1984 Women and Labour Conference, Schonell Foyer, Brisbane  
Queensland College of Art, Brisbane  
1985 Le Scoops, Brisbane  
Brisbane Institute of Art, Brisbane  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane  
The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane  
Gladstone Civic Gallery, Gladstone  
1986 Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane  
State of the Art: Art of the State, University of Queensland  
Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

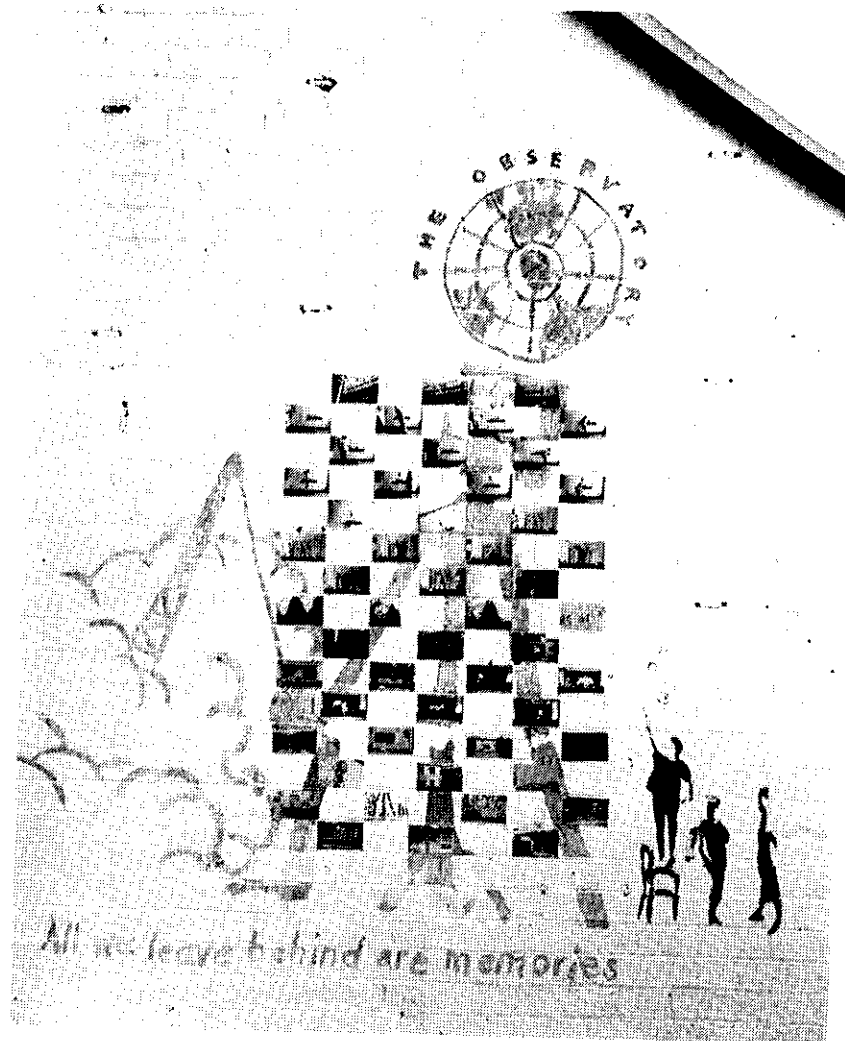
The work produced for The Demolition Show is

“Q.1 What is V.A.B. Policy on Qld. Visual Arts?”

designed as an active educative stance to alert the art community here and elsewhere to the circumstances surrounding contemporary art practice in Brisbane. The basis of the work addresses the issue of the drift of practitioners southward and the consequent erosion of Brisbane practitioners’ resources and potential resources for a sense of identity. The works look to the broader political causes for such a situation to eventuate and specifically government funding and policies. The demolition of The Observatory Gallery, an artist-run-space committed to showing young ‘unestablished’ artists working in Brisbane seems the time when such issues should be discussed.



**The Observatory Collective**



**ROBYN GRAY**

Born Queensland 1960, currently living and working in Brisbane.

1983 Certificate in Photography, Queensland College of Art

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

1983 Graduating Photography Students Exhibition, Queensland College of Art  
"Behind the Post Office", St Stephens Cathedral, Brisbane

1984 Australian Institute of Photography Conference, Queensland College of Art Gallery, Brisbane  
Women and Labour Conference, Schonell Theatre, Brisbane

1985 Four Women Photographers, Le Scoops Cafe, Brisbane  
An Exhibition of Brisbane Photographers, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

1986 Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

**LEANNE RAMSAY**

Born Melbourne 1964, currently living and working in Brisbane

1981-84 Diploma of Art, Queensland College of Art

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

1984 Graduating Photography Students Exhibition, Queensland College of Art Gallery, Brisbane  
"C'EST FOURMIDABLE", Community Arts Centre, Brisbane

**"No Salvage"**

1985 Four Women Photographers, Le Scoops Cafe, Brisbane  
An Exhibition of Brisbane Photographers, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

1986 Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane  
THAT Contemporary Art Space, Brisbane

**ANNA ZSOLDOS**

Born Sydney 1964, currently living and working in Brisbane

1982-84 Diploma of Art, Queensland College of Art

**INDIVIDUAL EXHIBITIONS**

1986 "A Happy Girl", The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

1984 Graduating Photography Student Exhibition, Queensland College of Art Gallery, Brisbane  
"C'EST FOURMIDABLE", Community Arts Centre, Brisbane

1985 Four Women Photographers, Le Scoops Cafe, Brisbane

An Exhibition of Brisbane Photographers, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

1986 Demolition Show, The Observatory Gallery, Brisbane

**STATEMENT**

The work produced in The Demolition Show by The Observatory Collective is a Work in Progress, documenting the show and the artists involved from the formulation of their work, to the installation, and then reaction to it. We will be providing a continual visual narrative which will not only document the show, but be a part of it.

None of the photographs, however, will be straight documentary pieces. They will each be a personal interpretation of the situation by one of us, under a collective name.

Our photographs will in a way act as commentators to the show, and in our capacity as both exhibitors in the show and directors of the gallery, we should be able to offer both an intimate view and a dispassionate one.

Our involvement with the show lies not so much with the issue of demolition, but what we can build out of the destruction.



## APPENDIX

### ORIGINAL WORK — DEMOLITION SHOW

#### STATIC EXHIBITS

ARTIST: Penny Algar  
TITLE: Work for the Demolition Show  
MEDIUM: Reliefwork and visual projection: Photocopies, cardboard, paint, charcoal  
SIZE: 1.6m x 2m

ARTIST: Lindy Collins  
TITLE: Bye Bye Brisbane Banners  
MEDIUM: Coloured Calico Material Banners  
SIZE: 26 Banners, each .5m x 1m

ARTIST: Alan Owen  
TITLE: Eclipse of Vision  
MEDIUM: Installation: 3D objects and wall image, wood, metal, paint and card, o/h transparency and projector  
Wall image 1.8m x 1.8m, Installation area 2m x 3m  
SIZE: 1.8m x 1.8m, Installation area 2m x 3m

ARTIST: Mark Webb  
TITLE: Welcome Aboard  
MEDIUM: Installation: Photocopy mural, two chairs and two A4 photocopy books  
SIZE: Mural .8m x 3m

ARTIST: Jay Younger  
TITLE: Q.1 What is V.A.B. policy on Qld. visual arts?  
Q.2 What is state policy on Qld. visual art?  
Q.3 What happens to Qld. visual arts money?  
MEDIUM: 6 screenprinted posters  
SIZE: each .9m x 1.1m

ARTIST: The Observatory Collective:(Anna Zsoldos, Robyn Gray, Leanne Ramsay)  
TITLE: No Salvage  
MEDIUM: multiple photographs, paint  
SIZE: 2m x 2m

WRITER: Bryan Law  
TITLES: A Fable, Brisbane 1986, Follow the Roads, Prescription  
MEDIUM: photocopied text over colour photocopied image  
SIZE: each A3 (42cm x 59.4cm)

#### PERFORMANCE ART

ARTIST: Michelle Andringa, Virginia Barratt  
TITLE: Gun Crazy: You gotta Laugh  
MEDIUM: Performance, slide projections, sound

ARTIST: J. Hurst and Associates  
TITLE: Viva Reconnoitre  
MEDIUM: Performance, video, film, sound

ARTIST: Wayne Smith  
TITLE: Spectre of progress  
MEDIUM: Performance, 3D props, image and text. (1.5m x 2m)

### DOCUMENTED WORK — DEMOLITION SHOW/A DOCUMENTATION

#### STATIC EXHIBITS

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: Work for the Demolition Show  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph, 1 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm, 20cm x 25cm

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: Bye Bye Brisbane Banners  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph, 1 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm, 20cm x 25cm

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: Eclipse of Vision  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph, 2 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm, each 20cm x 25cm

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: Welcome Aboard  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph, 1 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm, 20cm x 25cm

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: Q.1 What is V.A.B. policy on Qld. visual arts?  
Q.2 What is state policy on Qld. visual arts?  
Q.3 What happens to Qld. visual arts money?  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph, 1 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm, 20cm x 25cm

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: No Salvage  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm

P'GRAPHERS:Richard Stringer/Robyn Gray  
TITLE: A Fable, Brisbane 1986, Follow the Roads, Prescription  
MEDIUM: 1 B&W Photograph  
SIZE: 70cm x 105cm

#### PERFORMANCE ART

P'GRAPHER: Anna Zsoldos  
TITLE: Gun Crazy: You Gotta Laugh  
MEDIUM: 5 Photographs  
SIZE: each 30.5cm x 40.6cm

P'GRAPHER: Anna Zsoldos  
TITLE: Viva Reconnoitre  
MEDIUM: 10 Photographs  
SIZE: each 20cm x 25cm

P'GRAPHER: Anna Zsoldos  
TITLE: Spectre of progress  
MEDIUM: 10 Photographs  
SIZE: each 30.5cm x 40.6cm

#### ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONED WORKS AND DOCUMENTATIONS

ARTIST: Penny Algar  
TITLE: Sequences for demolition  
MEDIUM: Slide work  
DURATION: 10 minutes

ARTIST: Lindy Collins and Alan Owen  
TITLE: Untitled  
MEDIUM: Photographic Map-work  
SIZE: 15 Minutes

ARTIST: Rose Mere and Film Facts Collective  
TITLE: Going about their business (Part 2)  
MEDIUM: 16mm film (colour)  
DURATION: 15 minutes

ARTIST: Jenny Chirnside and Carol Line  
TITLE: Demolition Show — chronological excerpts of its public events.  
MEDIUM: video  
DURATION: 45 minutes

ARTIST: MURRI IMAGE  
MEDIUM: video (of Penny Algar's slide-work for touring purposes)  
DURATION: 10 minutes

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS DEMOLITION SHOW

The Institute of Modern Art  
Community Arts Board of The Australia Council  
The Queensland College of Art  
Griffith University  
The Brisbane Institute of Art  
Inner-City C.Y.S.S.  
Woolloongabba C.Y.S.S.  
Queensland Coalition for Democratic Rights  
Film Facts Collective  
Order by Numbers

Adam Boyd  
Jenny Chirnside  
Verity Culley  
Chris Field  
Sally Hart  
John Jiggins  
Heather Johnson  
Robyn Johnson  
Anne Jones  
Henry Kernaghan  
Russell Lake  
John Manfield  
Fleur McDonald  
Wendy Mills  
Sue Pavasaris  
Joan Sherriff  
Patricia Stafford  
Lindy Stokes  
Richard Stringer  
Michael Taylor  
Jeff Waits  
Adam Wolter

## DEMOLITION SHOW ~ A DOCUMENTATION

A.B.C. Radio Brisbane  
4ZZZ  
Liveworm Studio, Queensland College of Art for  
production, Peter O'Malley for design, Jenni Jonsson  
and Mark Biasion for finished art.  
Murri Image  
John Arlidge  
Graham Coulter-Smith  
John Duckmanton  
Carl Fisher  
Robyn Gray  
Lindy Johnson  
Glenda Pares  
Chris Peacock  
Leanne Ramsay  
Steve Sharp  
Jay Younger  
Anna Zsoldos, Richard Stringer for catalogue  
photography.