

**Interview with Larissa Hjorth and Paul Quinn – STRIPP****December 1997**

SB My main acquaintance with Stripp has been through Stephen O'Connell and I think I spoke to him about it in 1996, last year when it opened. He spoke about a space where rather than potential exhibitors sending proposals to you to select from, the members of Stripp would instigate the choices for the shows, so you had a slightly different structure to some of the other artist run spaces in Melbourne. Could you talk about what your premise was when you started up the space?

PQ Just to rewind for a moment, it was as much about who was on the committee, the committee members are offered absolute trust, regardless where they're coming from, in fact most of the people on the committee met each other through Stripp, an example would be Felicity Colman, who is on our committee and Larissa – we wouldn't have known one another prior to that, Jonathan Nichols hadn't met Felicity before, and really my job was to actually introduce all of these people. From there they introduce each other to new committee members etc, etc, etc. Each person on the committee generally recommends maybe two artists to the program, two artists – maybe three artists to the program. There's a series of meetings where we negotiate with one another how those artists fit into the gallery, how they fit with one another as a broader set of shows.

SB So its almost as if you are using the same kind of means you would use to select people to fit into a group show or something, the program for exhibitions is like balancing an aesthetic over time.

LH It's about being reflexive, taking responsibility for the artists you are interested in and therefore you represent them in a sense by following it through; so you are representing them in conversations with committee members, talking about their work and other committee members are talking about other artists work.

SB But the proposals come from the committee rather than coming from the artists.

PQ That's right, yep.

SB And how do you follow through then? What sort of service do you offer to the artist, I am wondering because it sounds as if you do support the artists, but is there a specific service you aim to provide?

PQ It's quite open ended because every artist needs something different. And as much as anything, its about what the artist brings to us as well, an example would be, one of the first shows up was Greg Ades; Greg had a body of work that he'd been accumulating as an artist in residence for about two years.

SB Where was he an artist in residence?

PQ Graham Street Primary, in Port Melbourne, he's still there now in fact. Greg is a very resourceful person and he knows the art business in Melbourne very well, and part of our objective was to bring a St Kilda audience to this part of town, Greg was able to do that. What we wanted was an audience that normally wouldn't bother to cross the river.

LH In particular we exhibit a lot of interstate artists, and the way that we help them is through gallery minding, because usually they can only stay long enough to install the work. Our Program has sought to amalgamate Victorian with interstate artists; to break down those sorts of barriers of sites and therefore audiences, so if we have someone from interstate we combine that with a local exhibition to draw in the audience for the interstate people.

SB That's a really interactive process isn't it?

PQ These current works in Stripp are a good example of that; Christopher Chapman is from Adelaide and Scott Redford is from Brisbane. Lisa Young lives here, but she's lived here for twelve months, and my show here is the only one here from town, so because Lisa and I both live here we'll sit the shows, look after the shows. Where they are invited to come down, I think... (looks around) one, two, three, separate committee members invited these shows; where probably they wouldn't have shown in Melbourne, they probably wouldn't have thought about it very much, so its a matter of getting in front of them, saying, 'Would you like to have a show in Melbourne?'. Well, all of these people had heard about this space in advance, and it already seemed attractive to them; it gives them an opportunity to come here, without having to spend a lot of time making an application, it saves them a lot of trouble.

SB Yeah, I think that can be off putting to some people. Do you think that the space reflects the core group as authors of a taste?

LH I think that's what we sought not to do, in so far as "house styles". We have accepted proposals before, the way that we set out to represent artists isn't something that's really rigid and defined, and it's something that's negotiated. We accept group proposals or curated exhibitions; we have quite a few in next year's programme (1998), so the liminality does shift, in a sense. But it depends on our committee, because we've had a lot of changes, starting initially with some people from Ether and consisting of approximately fifteen people.

SB I was trying to get my head around the transition of this space from Ether to Stripp, as Stephen O'Connell was describing it to me, because it seemed that there was a different purpose and structure for the place that Stripp wanted to set up to achieve than what Ether had going. Was there a grey period where you were in between definitions of the space, either Ether or Stripp, because you inherited shows from Ether as well, didn't you?

PQ Specifically what happened is I came to the Ether committee because I could see that they were approaching burn-out, because they had been here for three years, and that three years usually spells trouble.

SB Does it?

PQ I think so.

SB Not the seven year itch, the three year itch.

PQ The only predictable element is burn-out, but why that happens in each gallery is quite different each time, but I could see that they were floundering, and I came along and I said, here's a three part plan, that if you pursue this, it will pull you out of the mess you're in.

SB Did they appreciate this advice?

PQ Yeah, the committee voted for it quickly, and part of the agenda was to introduce some new committee members which would relieve the responsibilities of the people who were here, give them the chance to take a break, have a holiday etc. etc. The first of whom was Jonathan Nicholls and about that time they had left their run a bit late, they resigned, walked off. Jonathan and I inherited the lease.

SB So they may not have instigated the space closing without the opportunity being given to them.

PQ So we unwittingly inherited the space, it was never actually our intention to run it, and we had to make a really quick decision, because the lease had run out, somebody else was interested in the space and we had to make a very quick decision about the time and effort that we had already invested in the earlier space and whether

it was worth pursuing that plan alone, without the earlier committee. So we then set about building a larger committee.

SB Physically this space is quite a large space to commit to running, isn't it? It's quite unwieldy.

PQ In a lot of ways it's really top heavy, just juggling the program is quite a commitment in itself, let alone paying the bills. I guess in terms of space and overheads and things like that, I can only imagine the next nearest thing to this in Melbourne would be West Space. Which again is approximately half the size, so the commitment was really to run with the earlier investment. Now I've been here for – it must be going towards two years – and I've seen people come and go from the committee, which I think is actually a good thing, as long as people on the committee understand there are investments that they're going to get back out in some form. God only know what that is, but presumably people come along to the committee because there is something they can see that they can get for themselves.

SB An activity that's related to, but is outside your own practice is a good thing.

PQ You see that do-gooders don't last very long – people who just think they'll come along and lend a hand, burn out very quickly. So the committee was structured like that from the beginning and there was an overlap, I suppose of about six-seven months. The first meetings with the Ether group were when their program actually petered out, which was about this time last year, and we made the commitment to the earlier program wherever we could, because in the mean time we had to completely re-structure the gallery and there were a lot of people on the earlier program, with Ether, who just simply didn't want to deal with the space the way it was, they had planned things. So they left and we just simply filled in the spaces, which also gave us time to prepare what we thought was an interesting program.

SB I was going to ask if that changeover time was like a buffer whilst you learnt the skills of administrating the space, and could come to terms with the problems of it.

PQ Not at all, because if you were to see the names of the committee, all of those people bring different skills. Felicity for example, she's sometimes the program coordinator of Swinburne School of Art, so that's handy, Jonathan had just finished managing a multi-million dollar development project.

SB So you've got professionals on board.

PQ Stripp TV, which was a pilot for a program which started just recently, came from Martin Foley who was an accountant, so our accountancy problems are solved that way.

SB Very useful.

PQ So there's a really high degree of professionalism in here, and that's in our experience now which is much more so about "hands on". Dealing with the artists which we show – I think that's really the sort of expectation we have of the artists, that level of professionalism. Sometimes we miss.

SB Yeah, I was wondering, because, in our experience with our space anyway – people – especially if they have a first exhibition in an artist run space, they don't know what to do, you have to spell it out, maybe write it down and verbalise it as well, so they know clearly what their responsibilities are, otherwise they are like babies, you are put in the position of reprimanding them for not cleaning walls, or not knowing when to hang the show and what is entailed in taking a show down and cleaning up and maintaining the space.

LH That's probably one of the reasons why we took on the role of committee members representing the artists just to develop the communication, that understanding

is a generative thing – we support them, therefore they support the space, and so you get an infrastructure built through people as oppose to an infrastructure built through bureaucracy, because we don't want the funding, so it really is about in-kind support.

SB So the committee members working in tandem with the artists with the physical space as well as the ideas and getting the whole show together. Is it the committee member's role to help artists hang their shows?

PQ Exactly.

SB That's a good idea.

PQ Largely having been responsible for building the committee, I've chosen to leave the committee much to its own devices. Now my job really is to help people hang the shows, I live here so if there are problems people can phone me and I can come in, but I usually spend a day per show.

SB So the space doesn't run itself, it does still have to be hands on doesn't it, the actual maintenance?

PQ Yes. In the case of less experienced artists too, it's true, we don't steer away from less experienced artists, and it just takes a lot more time. One psyches oneself into working with them, and hopefully they're prepared to do the same.

SB Its interesting seeing how different spaces deal with these problems, and if you recognise that the problem is going to stay, then maybe being with the artist and helping them is the way to deal with it rather than getting disappointed every time that the sort of artist run space etiquette rules aren't being followed.

LH Well they don't really teach at art schools a good understanding of artist run spaces and commercial galleries and notions of the traditional hierarchies.

SB A young artist will only learn what is involved by doing it really, or perhaps being shown what's expected of them.

LH So it is a tricky thing. I think the reason why our committee is so interdisciplinary, if I can use those terms, is to allow a shifting of understanding of artist run spaces, because it is such a phenomenon, which really is particular to Melbourne.

SB Do you think so?

LH For example – the Australia Council with their Emerging Artists Fund. Only in Melbourne did they have a problem, because they believed that they could just delegate the same amount of money to each state regardless of the percentage of artists. Now every other state was fine because, say I think Adelaide has two, Sydney has four, and they didn't actually consider that Melbourne has more artists per head of population, they didn't even equate it into the scheme.

SB Even Sydney?

PQ Well Sydney's actually losing spaces, Pendulum, CBD – if it hasn't already gone is about to go, and the places that are replacing them, like 151 Regent Street, which is no slight on 151 Regent Street, but it is probably closer to the earlier phases of Sydney artist run spaces.

SB Like First Draft.

PQ Exactly. So it can't actually be seen to be becoming more professional (Sorry)

SB Why do you think Melbourne?

LH Well, Melbourne is cheaper to live, so therefore if you're an artist – you can have some kind of a job to sustain their 'habit', live in and be able to imbue some sense of art practice.

PQ I think that's got a lot to do with it.

SB Rents for spaces are more affordable here.

LH It's easier logistically, and that's one of the reasons why we have so many artists; but it's not really understood politically and economically how this phenomenon has become, and is continuing to become.

SB I think also Artist Run Spaces here are being looked to as a guide in some ways, as a taste guide as to what will be hot in commercial galleries.

LH Poaching!

SB If it's not a mutual exchange, then I guess it they are benefiting from our experience and our risk taking in selection of exhibitions.

LH I do think it's interesting – people are starting to become more aware of the importance of artist run spaces, but it's not showing. Australia Council is back fifteen years before, before the 1987 crash, before artists started realising that they had to find other means of making work seen.

SB Because there used to be specific VACB money for artists initiatives, wasn't there?

LH Whereas now it's like; slap, slap, slap, slap.

SB And now this small fund for artists initiatives to be spread over so many spaces, it's a bit of a tokenistic gesture, isn't it? If they don't realise there is this number of artist run spaces in Melbourne, then they can't have been looking very hard in the last – seven years or so.

I was wanting to ask you about how you document the activities of Stripp, do you have an archive, and what other sorts of products do you have that come out of the space, apart from exhibitions?

LH As far as archives – we don't have the money to document shows like a lot of spaces.

SB So you don't have slides?

LH We don't, but we stipulate to the artists that they are supposed to supply us with a couple of slides and a CV for our files. So we have, if somebody comes in, an understanding or a context for the artist that's there.

SB And writing – is there any adjunct activity, textual activity?

LH Stephen O'Connell was the writer in residence.

PQ My angle is this – all archives, for example catalogue essays and stuff like that, are really quickly retrievable, because we know the people who do collect stuff like that.

SB But you're not preoccupied with making an object of the information about the space.

LH I think it's firstly to do with logistics; we don't have the money so therefore we find other ways of solving the problem, and I think we rely on other esoteric forms of collecting, like we do know people that do come to Stripp every opening and do collect the stuff.

SB Terry Whelan type personalities. Well he's doing a good job, I think.

LH So it's a lot more esoteric, which suits our purposes, in a sense, because the committee members are representing the artists anyway – they have a very direct line to them so there is always this contact. Contact can be made, if you need to chase somebody down, we know who on the committee would know where they were, so it's very quick and direct.

SB Do you make it a practice to go out and find new work, new artists etc? Do you keep your eyes and ears open?

LH Some of the committee members are interested in going out and curating, so they would be actively going out and looking at shows, so it really is about people's own agenda.

SB It's often reflecting a particular point of view that they have too, or extending it.

PQ Back to the committee again, but since I've been involved in the space, I think there have been around thirty committee members.

SB Over time?

PQ Including the latter committee of Ether.

SB And how many at a time would there be?

PQ No more than ten or twelve, so there's a constant change of the interests in the program, for example, we have two new members to the committee that have just become committed to the program, so there is a constant change of ideas.

SB Do you have regular meetings, or do you just have them when you need to?

LH It's pretty casual. There are points that you get to where we need to have meetings, such as when proposals come in, because we do get sent proposals, and general dialogue about what's going on, what's happening.

PQ The earliest policy was that committee members would write their own job descriptions, and if they want to be involved in programming then they point that out, and they go on a separate list. So if you want to contact people who are on the programming committee, all their phone numbers are available to everyone on the committee. So, if there's a programming meeting, whoever, at that time is largely responsible for programming, doing documentation and sending contracts, will ring around, and usually within around five days a meeting can be organised, that really only necessitates those people on the programming aspect of the committee meeting. So people who don't meet at a programming meeting, might be: the accountant, the book keeper, the producer of the TV program or whatever. So if a meeting was necessary to talk about the TV program, then the producer will ring all those people, but it doesn't necessitate everybody else coming along.

SB It would become a bit cumbersome.

LH Well everybody doesn't really get to say anything; it's like an umbrella with holes.

SB A juggernaut. And so do you work out a calendar, do you have a particular time frame for a calendar?

LH The calendar is six months.

PQ Six months ahead on paper, but twelve months ahead in terms of shuffling. That usually coincides with the sense of longevity that any person that's on control of contracts etc, etc is prepared to spend programming. That's probably a long way around it, but for example, Jonathan was in charge of doing contracts for the first six months until he went overseas. He's been overseas for six months, and in that time basically Felicity Colman took on that job and then again in the last six months Larissa has taken that job. So that's the full eighteen months up until the middle of next year, so it's a six month position.

SB And are all the shows the same length of time?

LH Three weeks. Except for "Feeling Machines" and Terry's show was one week.

SB Was that because there was a gap in the calendar?

PQ No, we actually knocked a week off another show so we could fit it in.

SB So Terry's show was brought up on the spur of the moment and slotted in?

LH It was talked about for a long time.

PQ We'd actually talked about it for about two years, it mutated and evolved into that particular kind of show, where it started as a different idea earlier on and eventually became that type of show it was just the point that it felt comfortable to do it.

LH Because Terry hadn't actually participated in that way in the arts, he usually does take the representative role as spectator and archivist, and thus for him to shift roles and to suddenly be –well he wouldn't want to call himself curator – but a coordinator, was something that he needed to –

SB I think there is a difference between those two things.

LH Yeah, power, notions of speaking for...

SB and a text for it or something, I would say I generally co-ordinate things, which is create a space, a specific space for people to then play out in, I think maybe a curator is overlaying a text over a work, interpreting it.

LH I'm thinking of the criminology metaphor, the curator is the investigator and the artist is the accused and they just use whatever is on their agenda at the time to frame the artist.

SB I think its applying other words to somebody's work, at worst.

LH I think its interesting for example, the term 'exhibition designer', this is interesting in relation to ideas of what a curator does, and when you see shows that are unsuccessfully curated, the first thing you say is, this person had just drawn in all these artists and hasn't really grappled with a sense of whatever each practice is imbued with. So I'm just interested in where notions like, 'exhibition designer' and how is that different from the discussed framing references? Firstly, you think of in terms of aesthetics, but when curators are curating and they're not too familiar with artistic practice then they're doing the same thing as well but just using a textual aesthetic or framework.

SB I would say artists curate differently, they can at least marry the ideas behind the work and the material process of making them.

LH They understand ideas of process rather than the end product.

SB Stripp TV, is that a part of documentation is it/was it an adjunct to the space, what was it and how did it come about?

PQ Martin Foley and myself identified, at our first meeting actually, and this prior to ABC's "express" as well, –

SB I don't think I would use "Express" as a model necessarily – I want to do something like THAT!

PQ "Express" was yet to come about, but "Review" was floundering, clearly, and we simply identified the missing elements of that show and thought, yes well we could do that on our own.

SB What were the missing elephants – I mean elements?

PQ Most of the 'elephants' were clearly missing, you know, and we were actually upset that "Review", for example, was always missing out Melbourne, bypassing it and that was the dominant feature of it, very rarely did I see anything on television that I knew.

SB "Review" had a different peer group didn't it? It featured very established artists, the magazine format that would appeal firstly to a very broad public and not necessarily to the art community; it didn't represent the art community to itself.

LH I think also about the reviewers, it was always, say, Bruce James talking about Bruce James talking about an artist. I think Stripp TV was actually trying to have artists and people who were interested perhaps from a premise of discourse, not diatribe and it was actually to generate quite a few different reviewing techniques. So it was trying to bring people of a common interest to talk about things rather than talking behind someone's back.

PQ So, in a sense it was a pilot a test rather than a trial. What we learned is that it can be done, and so we've got this second show up at the moment which is called 'Watch This Spot'

SB That Vito Manfredi is organising. So is that allied with Stripp is it?

PQ The connection between Stripp TV and 'Watch This Spot' is that when Martin Foley left, he had other commitments, he handed the resources over to Vito and what we anticipated was some sort of funding that we could offer Vito and that conspicuously didn't come about, and so Vito is fronting that. Where Vito is still on our committee, his preoccupations are now with that TV show.

SB So that's more his baby now rather than Stripp's?

PQ Exactly, so where we can actually initiate projects like that, the downside is that it's impossible to sustain them without some sort of funding

SB Well it's a huge energy commitment, and it's almost like it has to be someone's sole project to carry it off.

PQ So we hope that Vito can run with that, and certainly we'd always be supportive where we can be, but without funding, it runs on a budget of about \$30.00 a fortnight.

SB You've mentioned a few times your funding or your budget, people pay to have shows here do they? They are invited and then they have to pay rent.

PQ They realise they have to pay rent before they are invited.

SB Right, I guess people should know these things.

PQ So you are not sponsoring them.

LH No.

SB How many shows are on here at a time?

LH Four. But we do tend to play around, in that the main room one and two tends to be either one solo show or a curated exhibition because those rooms are quite intimate the partition wall can be moved to create more dialogue between those rooms.

SB You can move these spaces very easily and it does become confusing the edges of the work sometimes. With the actual building that Stripp is in, there seemed to be a bit of a hex on it prior to Strip inhabiting it. Now that you are in residence it is certainly a more attractive space, I think, its opened up more, there are the windows to look out now rather than being boarded up and the spaces are now less bitsy than the former arrangement of spaces.

PQ Well Michael Agard, who's a local arts accountant, has some interesting things to say about that, because he's in some sense managed the finances of every committee and every director who's ever worked out of the space as a gallery.

SB Reconnaissance bombed in a bad way, didn't they that was the gallery where the director did a bunk to Europe with the money.

PQ We're the only ones who have stayed; everyone else has split, disappeared.

SB So, did you have a candle burning ceremony when you took over to ward off the hex?



LH Get the evil spirits out!

PQ But again I think that says something about a three year burnout period, I think there's a consensus within the committee that there should be this ongoing exchange of committee members that ultimately, the space is worthwhile keeping.

SB So you'd like some longevity for Stripp.

PQ Yes, we'd like to think that we could groom people, a new committee, before it becomes a pain in the arse for all the people that started out here.

SB So are you thinking that you have your own time limit with Stripp as well?

PQ Yeah.

SB So your's is a three year limit before burnout.

PQ Burnout usually happens long before it's obvious.

SB It's interesting, because in a few of the interviews I've been asking people if they are suffering from end of year fatigue, because I think I have. I think the pressures do build up from not being able to take a break, so things become burdensome. What do you think gets in the way? What are the dilemmas that you face when running a space? Is it trying to marry two practices that one person just doesn't have that much creative energy for, or

LH I think it's that you take on as much as you want to, and you have to be very clear about your choice in taking on things. Stripp doesn't have a phone, so whoever has taken on organising the programme committee, so logistically their phone bill rises. There is also that feeling that there is never a time where there is no Stripp, you always have a phone call or something to deal with in regards to Stripp, so I think you can actually get exhausted by the fact that you can't stipulate a time where there's space for yourself because you have to respond to people.

SB And the balancing act that an artist in Melbourne has to negotiate is always having to find your own money to live on and then time for your art practice, so being integrally involved in a space is like splitting your life another way again.

PQ I've found that I can maybe juggle five different projects simultaneously for six months.

SB That's not bad.

PQ And I found I can manage three projects simultaneously for perhaps eighteen months, and the three projects would be for most artists who run artist run spaces, they would have a job, and they would have an art practice which would be separate from that and they would be running a gallery. Three quite separate full time jobs, but actually trying to make connections between these three galleries is another full time job.

SB Well, seeing a gallery like GO-GO, it's interesting because it's a hairdresser as well and Peter Richards who went to the VCA to do sculpture there and then set up this hairdressing salon. I thought it's an interesting mix of disciplines, but also a nice pragmatic way of mixing the two things together, quite lively to. But most people can't do that for one reason or another. And Grey Area, they mix the studio practice with the gallery as well.

PQ I can imagine that just operating two projects simultaneously would be quite a pleasant thing to do.

SB So the burnout is not having recreational time – time not to do these three to six things.

PQ Exactly, when we started out here for example, I think I did perceive helping to run this place as recreation, relatively speaking, and you discover later that, no, it's not.

SB You are slightly more stressed than you are on your holidays, aren't you.

PQ Just not getting paid for it

SB What kind of success, because I remember at the artist run initiatives meeting at Arts Victoria, you were wondering if the money coming for the ARI's was going to impede any grant applications that you were making –

LH And it did because no artist run space got any.

PQ There was no intention to ever give us any money anyway so of course there was a guarantee.

SB Yes, that small amount of money was designed to say that at least artists initiatives got something so what are they complaining about? Have you ever had any luck with grant applications?

PQ Well we've only been around long enough to – this is our second period of applications, and no. The first application we hadn't established the business, it was in anticipation of the business, and the most recent applications to the Australia Council – the result this time has been negative, and I think most of us would anticipate that would be the result into the foreseeable future.

SB So we're in dark times.

PQ There was no obvious will on the part of the Australia Council to offer us anything.

SB So in a way, the artist run spaces are servicing the art world, providing venues where galleries can select tried and true young talent, but otherwise they are bypassed.

PQ We're still calling it 'poaching'.

LH The really interesting thing about artist run spaces –to get back to what we were talking about say, an hour ago in relation to how many artist run spaces there are in Melbourne, it's really fascinating that artist run spaces are so diverse now that the term can umbrella everything in a sense, and yet the hierarchy is still being kept in place by something like the Australia Council. It could be conceived as keeping artist run spaces in their place by not giving them any money.

SB It is still seen as a marginal activity, and as Brett Jones says, it can hardly be seen as marginal any more when there are so many of them.

LH Exactly, but by having infrastructures like the Australia Council not funding artist run spaces it's trying to reinforce non-parity which is redundant, so it's oxymoronic equation, if they changed the funding bodies to address artist run spaces then they have to redefine how they define spaces in general which would mean a lot of juggling and in particular it would be hard to change the current top heaviness.

SB Which is why artists have had to work out that they have to create these spaces for themselves because no one's going to provide them for them.

LH See the interesting thing is in somewhere like Norway or anywhere in Scandinavia, they don't have artist run spaces. The model they have is very much like happenings, but the difference is because they actually have funding which is based on education, you get money, it's like Social Security, depended on the more degrees you have – the more degrees you have the more money you get but once you go through an academy you actually do have some corporate sponsorship, so they've already devised an infrastructure which allows artists many ways of representing and they do it through the form of happenings.

SB Well that's legitimising the pursuit.

LH That's legitimising artistic representation, and that's what's not happening in Australia.

SB Artistic pursuit is still seen as a vaguely radical choice. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

PQ Like a last cigarette.

SB Before we put an end to this. Talking about burnout and the lack of space for recreation and things –

PQ Is this a health and safety question?

SB Yeah, do you think you can incorporate the recreation into the gallery, you were saying that your initial thought was that you could but is it possible and is that why you might want to set up a gallery is it for social connections?

PQ My social existence now is basically restricted to openings, I don't have time any more and no, it's not very satisfactory, and I wouldn't recommend it.

SB You need to 'get a life'.

PQ It's definitely not about getting a life, but again everyone on the committee here has their own particular objectives and I wouldn't think that my attitude was particularly representative of other people on the committee.

SB Larissa?

LH Yeah, I fell a little bit burnt out, but I'm just blaming it on end of year collapse.

SB It's an ideal perhaps.

PQ I find it difficult to imagine now, if you're an artist who's never worked with a gallery, most artists come out of some system of education, so they've got a grasp of what that's about, most artists apply for grants, they've worked out what that's about, most artists have shown work in galleries and to a certain extent they've worked out what that's about, but as an artist having worked, say in television all those conventional that artists make a living, taught in tertiary institutions, primary schools etc, etc, running a gallery is a learning curve, just as another example, of how these things fit together and ARE very educational.

LH Where's the handbook?

SB It's more reality based, I think, than an individual practice for some artists; for some people an individual practice is actually the thing they hide away from the world with., in this you can't you have to communicate, you have to maintain the walls of the space– you have to meld all of these aspects as well as the creative, whatever that is, moment.

LH I think being an artist and being involved in an artist run space is very productive and very generative, but because it is getting two forms of communication working at once, there's bound to be some point where everything is miscommunication, because it is so based on communication which is so subjective that you naturally do get burn-out. You are looking at people and thinking 'I can't say anything, I've said it all', you start to think about ideas of nothing or no-thing, but I think that's all part of it because you have to be retrospective as well.

SB You need to have time out to be able to put things in perspective again, so it's lucky it's holiday time coming up.