

MEDIA - SPACE

2-5-83

OPEN SANDWICH

EXPERIMENTAL ART FOUNDATION

Dear Stephanie, Jude and Christine:

The following is a draft of an overview of MEDIA SPACE, operations, structure etc., to be given at the ANZART Conference.

MEDIA SPACE is a visual arts organization located in Perth, Western Australia. The group was formed in February, 1981, and is now composed of nine financial members who contribute toward the rental of two locations in Perth.

The initial location is at 444 William Street, the Print Workshop, managed by Jeff Jones. The Workshop has equipment to produce silk-screen and etching prints originally purchased with a grant from the West Australian Arts Council in 1975. It is a community access workshop open to any artist.

The second location is at 51-53 Goderich Street, the MEDIA SPACE Studio, managed collectively by the nine members. The Studio has a photographic darkroom, a Cannon N300 reduction photocopier, a small exhibition space (10 by 20 feet), sound recording facilities in four track with a studio synthesizer, and A-Z ART LIBRARY, managed by Allan Vizents. The open facilities at the Studio are the Photocopier and the library. The library presently contains 700 volumes and some 300 periodicals from world-wide sources.

Media Space also publishes printed material by local artists and members of the group in off-set lithography, silkscreen, photocopy and audio tape. This material is mailed free of charge to a wide audience in Europe, Great Britain, North and South America as well as Australia.

During January and February of this year we constructed a theoretical model representing the parameters of inquiry of the group. We have now begun a specific project within that model. A complete overview of our philosophy would require a description of the Inquiry Model and its meaning in practice.

Our philosophy does not include payment or subscription for the work we produce, we seek a method of exchanging ideas that is an alternative to the commodity base of the commercial art gallery. MEDIA SPACE originated two years ago as a group response to the lack of critical dialog in Perth. We began meeting once a week to present current work for discussion. These meetings were and still are taped on audio for reference. Discussions range over social, political and aesthetic roles that art activity describes. The work often discussed is of an experimental nature although some participants carry on a traditional practice.

At various times the work which evolved from or was presented at a discussion level was produced in printed form or on tape and mailed to the list of individuals and organizations we maintain. This work attempts a departure from 'aesthetic qualities' to involved communication of ideas and to create links (seeks response) rather than demand attention. Thus it may not be visually 'grabbing' but appears to be simply information or data-based.

Media Space is funded at a primary level by the members themselves (rent, utilities etc.) We have tried to avoid an institutional development beyond the needs of the group and regional priorities (access to our library and equipment). Our primary aim is not self-perpetuation but rather the space and time to pursue a philosophy. Thus we seek limited funding for specific projects and resource

development.

Networking: MEDIA SPACE has been mailing printed matter and audio tapes to 150 locations in Australia and overseas for the past two years in an attempt to elicit dialog. We often receive not response but advertisements in the form of art 'junk mail'. This material seeks to publicize rather than inform, is centered on individuals or committees and their 'accomplishments', raises no questions, is not based on inquiry, provides answers without questions or generally supports the existing myths of subjective art activity. We would support networking of objective information that opened channels of response in which participation was encouraged.

Future directions for alternative spaces: This topic seems highly contentious. The present is our most accurate measure of the relationship between the needs of the artist and the alternative space. A group or conference can anticipate the future through a complex examination of the present in depth. We would prefer to exchange with a group of Australian spaces working toward a clarification by their members of their own theory and practice.

The OPEN SANDWICH conference as proposed presents some difficulties in its structure being similar to those organized by mining companies educational institutions, etc. It seems that even in the area of experimental art in Australia, there is no experimenting evident. It is entirely possible that without realizing it, we are attempting to create an alternative art establishment.

MEDIA SPACE:

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