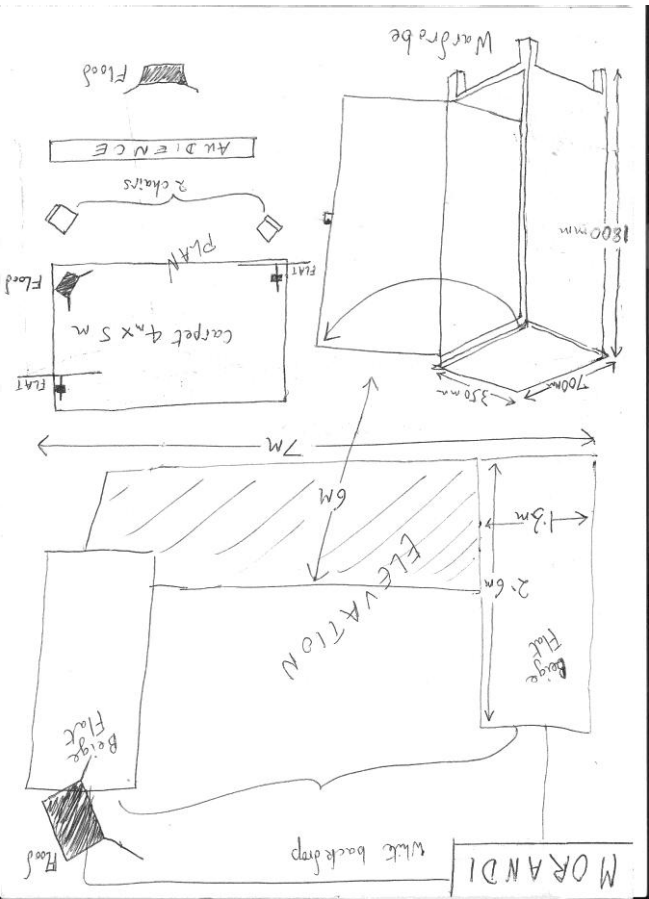


Diagram stage set *Homage to Morandi* @The Theatre of Mistakes



Digital Masks

DIGITAL MASKS

- Employ one or more of the fingers of one hand to create a mask by hiding or distort ing part of the face.
- Employ one or more of the fingers of both hands to create a mask in the same manner.
- Create a mask in this manner either for yourself or for another performer or for yourself and another performer.
- Employ JOINTS EXERCISE to move fingers, hands and arms up to or away from the face. Keep movements crisp, with long pauses between each movement.



Anthony Howell performing *Digital Masks*, one of many *exercises* from the *Gymnasium*
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Doors

Documentation

Disappearances

Digital Masks

Diagrams

Deborah Howell

Death

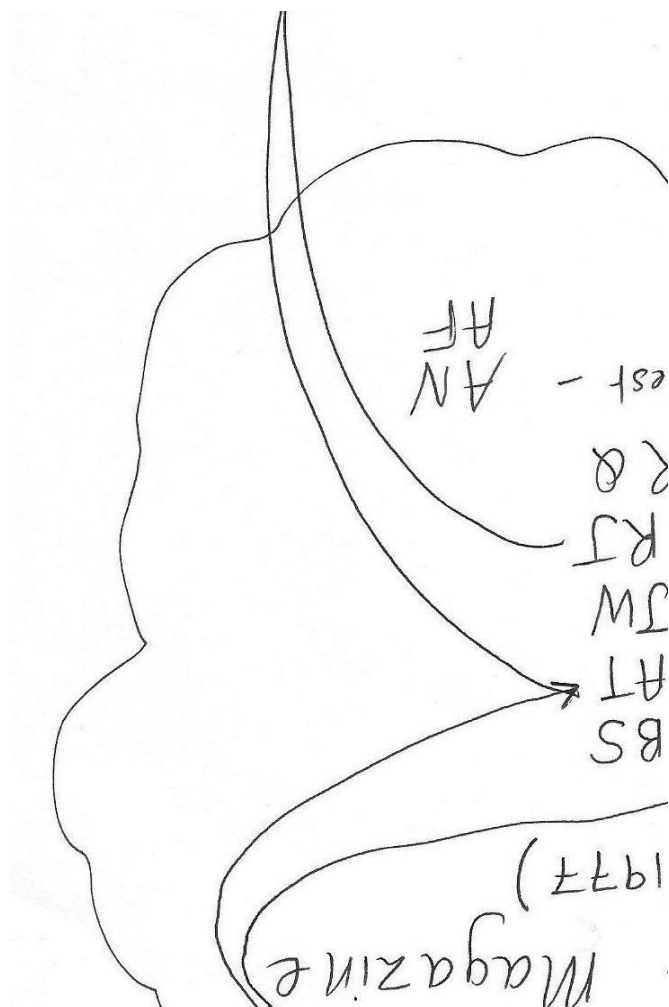
Dance

Dairy, The



An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – D

Marie-Anne Mancio



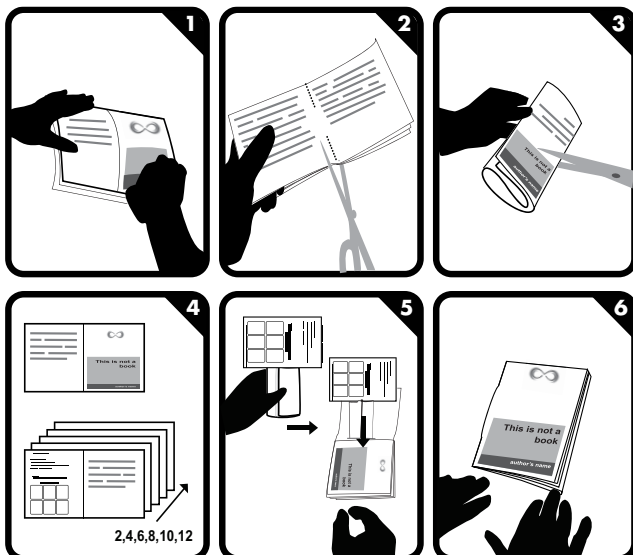
2009-09-03

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The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an **A-Z**

D

Marie-Anne Mancio

Dairy, The (13a Prince of Wales Crescent, London)

A large, 'empty', dilapidated building that was occupied by Space and artists such as Jane Clark, Robert Janz, Annabel Nicholson and the London Film-Makers Co-op [1971-5]. The Ting met here in 1973/4 for workshops.

See also: Anthony McCall

Dance

I have decided to use 'dance' as a reference point for my activities, in an attempt to create a recognisable focus or basis for concerns which I feel apply to other areas of art activity.

Although for the last three years or so I have been functioning in areas loosely defined as 'performance art' (whatever that might be) I have a long historical involvement with dance as a specific area. I do not feel the problems dancers have are exclusive to dancers, although I think a certain amount of specialised attention has to be given to the form in order for it to develop a radical identity which other progressive artists can recognise, and respect. Many artists seem to regard dance as an admirable but naive activity, many dancers seem to regard the theoretical discussion in the field that it will destroy the pure physicality of dance. I feel there has to be both, a physical revolution (breaking away from restrictive techniques etc.) and a theoretical revolution (analysing the oppressive structures and institutions which support it).

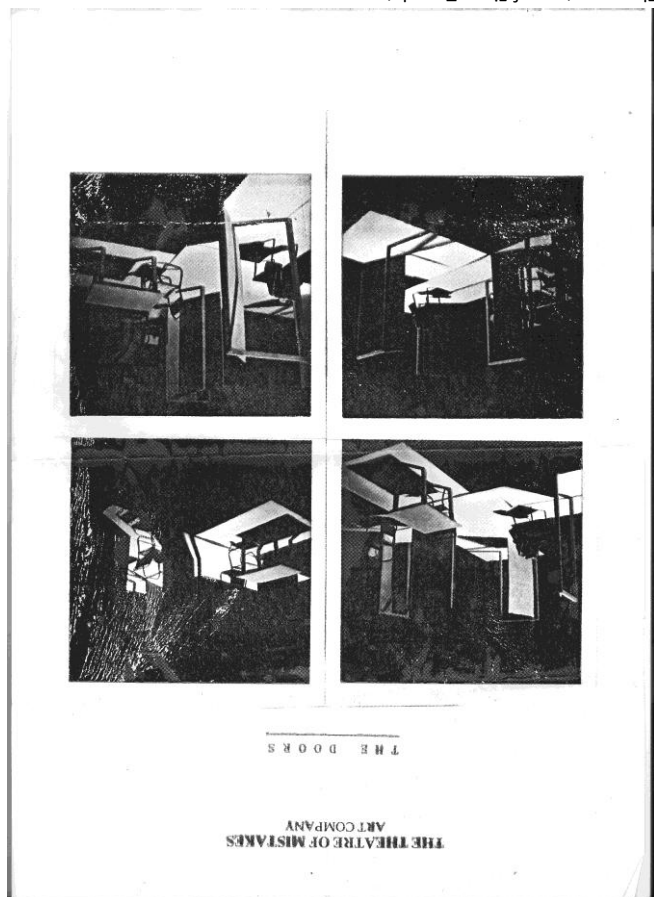
It is difficult to find critically active contexts in which to explore some of these issues, for the obvious reason I suppose that they do not as yet exist, although there are a few beginnings such as X6 Dance Space (before Unit M.C.1, where a nucleus of people concerned with dance (of which I am one) are organising themselves in an alternative way. However, as I said before I do not feel the questions are exclusively concerned with the 'dance venues'.

I am therefore going to present what I do in 'The Art Room' as a series of dances, not that I will necessarily do any dancing, but then what is dance?

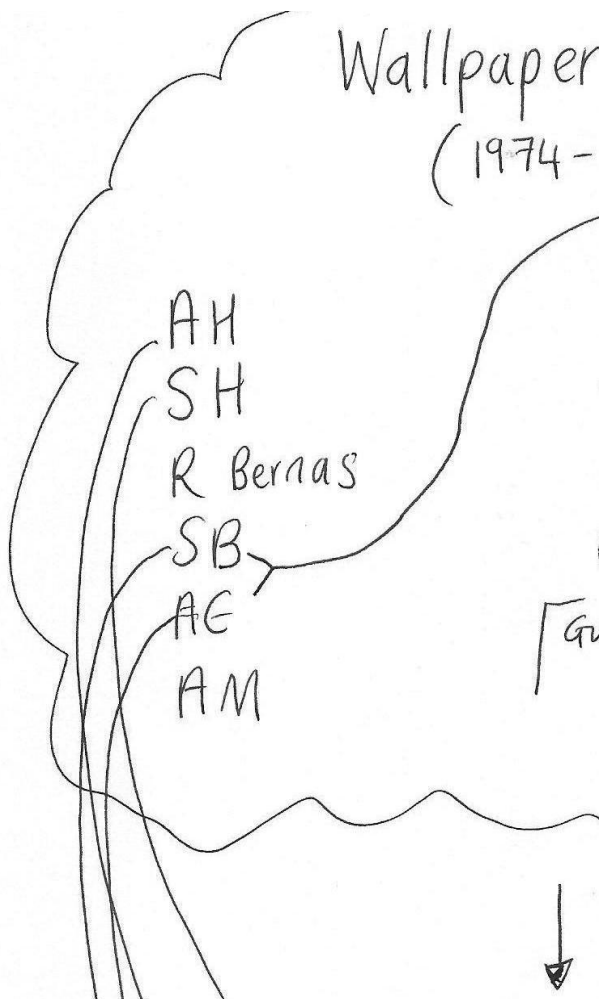
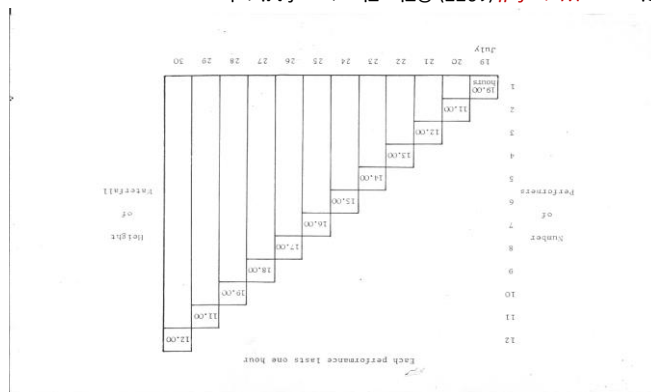
Jacky Lansley

Statement by Jacky Lansley for the Art Room, c. 1976
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Flyer courtesy of Fiona Templeton



The Doors
Late performance piece by The Theatre of Mistakes.

Diagram *Waterfall* (1977) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

See also: Peter Stickland
and have become artworks in their own right.
space, these 'scores' facilitate recreation of their performances
intricate **notations** of movement, representations of time and
structurally where they may be used to reading for meaning.
BEING PERFORMED. These invite the audience to read
OFTEN INCLUDE DIAGRAMS RELATING TO THE WORKS
THE THEATRE OF MISTAKES' PROGRAMS/POSTERS
(SEE ALSO KEY FOR THE DIAGRAM ON THE BACK OF THIS A-Z.)
DIAGRAMS

Deborah Howell, see Howell, Deborah

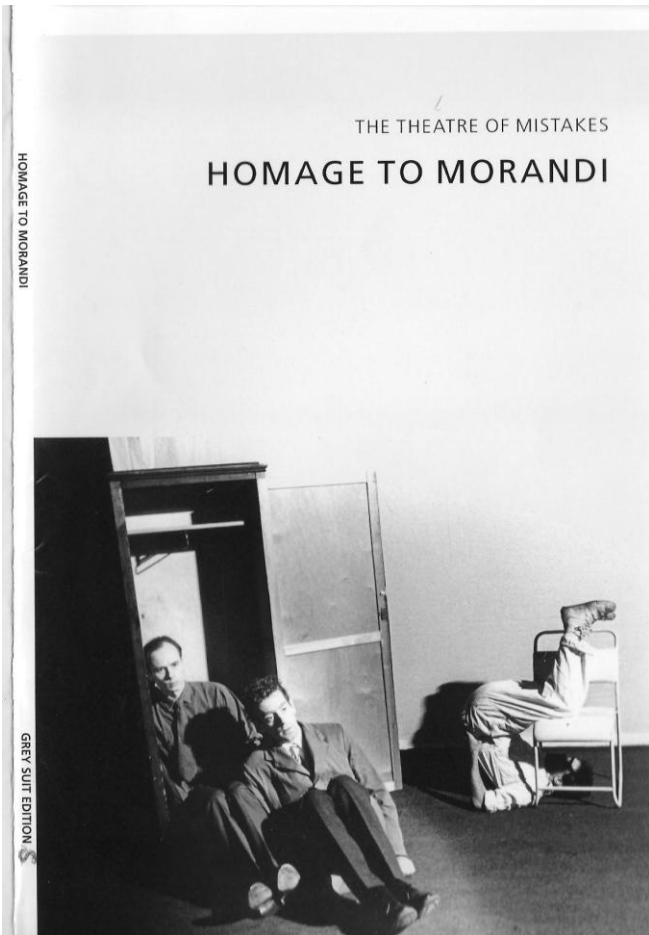
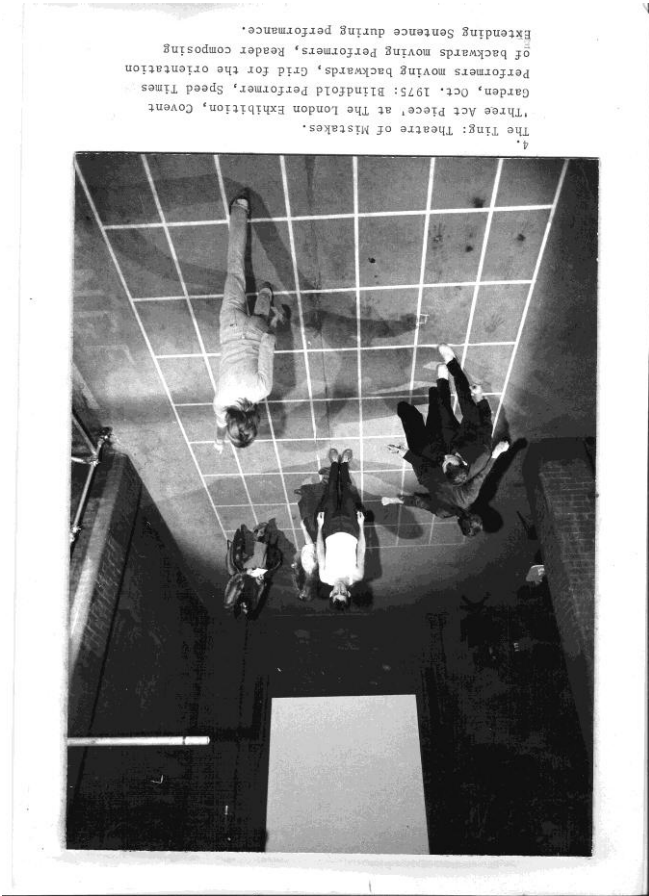
Death
Sadly, Michael Greenall is the only member of The Theatre of
Mistakes who is no longer alive. His friends and colleagues have all
remembered him with great respect and affection.

Aside from Anthony Howell's involvement with the Royal Ballet (pre-Ting), The Theatre of Mistakes' interest in the **architecture** of space and **notations** of performances, the New Dance scene burgeoning in the UK throughout the 1970s is an important context in which to consider Ting's practice. In its departure from traditional forms and its leanings towards the kinds of minimalist practices embraced by some conceptual artists and musicians, and in its collaborative strategies, it afforded a far better model for making work than traditional theatre.

Inspired by developments in the U.S. such as Judson Dance Theatre, the British radical collective X6 was established by Maedée DuPrès, Emilyn Claid, Mary Prestidge, Jacky Lansley, and Fergus Early, and resident in its own space in empty Butler's Wharf by 1976. Before that, there was the use of intertextuality and interdisciplinarity in the dance company Moving Being; then from 1974-5, Lansley and Sally Potter were the Limited Dance Company, performing choreographies that combined quotidian movements, text, surreal imagery, and a feminist sensibility. There was an interest in performing in public spaces – galleries, schools, parks, pavements, prisons... There was the anti-expressionism of Richard Alston's Strider – a democratically run group where participants could take it in turns to choreograph; there was Mary Fulkerson's anti-technique; Rosemary Butcher's improvisation and instruction-led processes and use of real time, and performance artist Rose English/ film maker Potter's collaborations which subverted gender roles. X6 may have been more politically motivated (seeking to engineer social change) than The Theatre of Mistakes, but there are parallels nevertheless in their methods of devising.

Further reading:

Stephanie Jordan *Striding Out: Aspects of Contemporary and New Dance in Britain*, Dance Books, 1992



Script available to order from Amazon, Grey Suit, or 77books.co.uk ISBN
no 1903 006 015

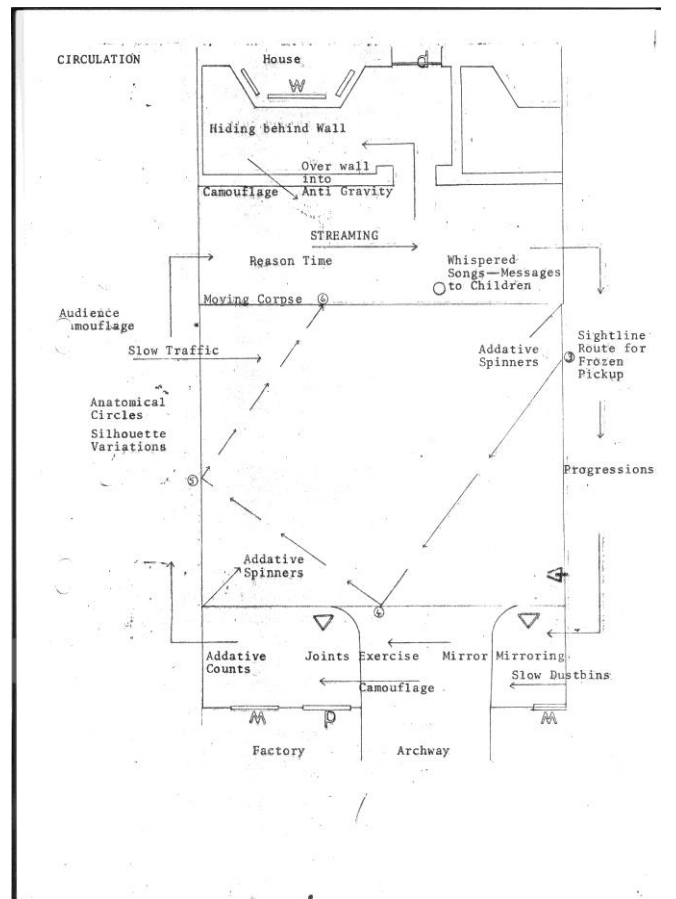
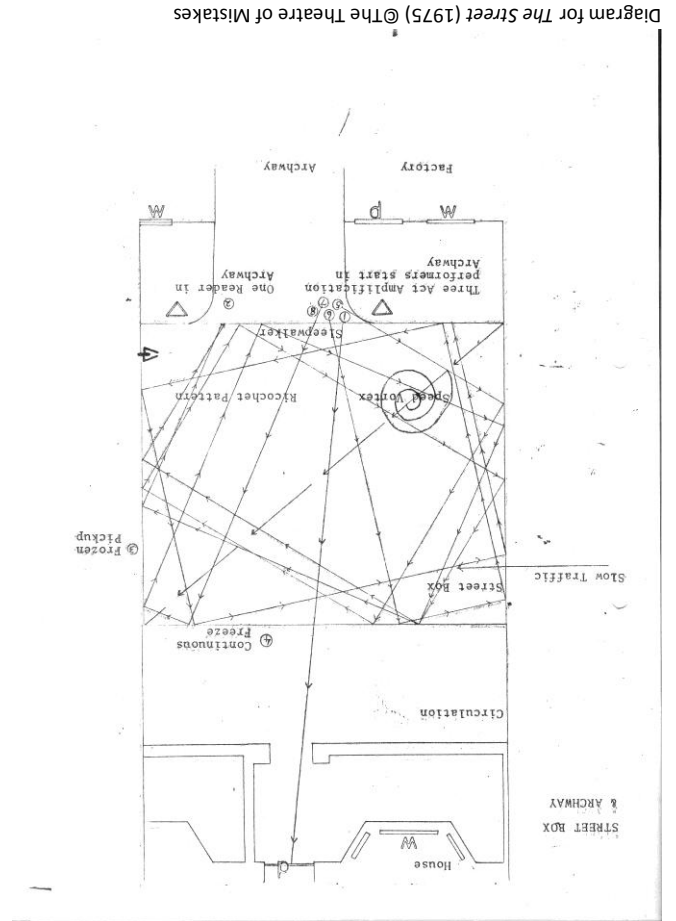


Diagram for *The Street* (1975) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Diagram *Two Journeys* (May, 1976) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

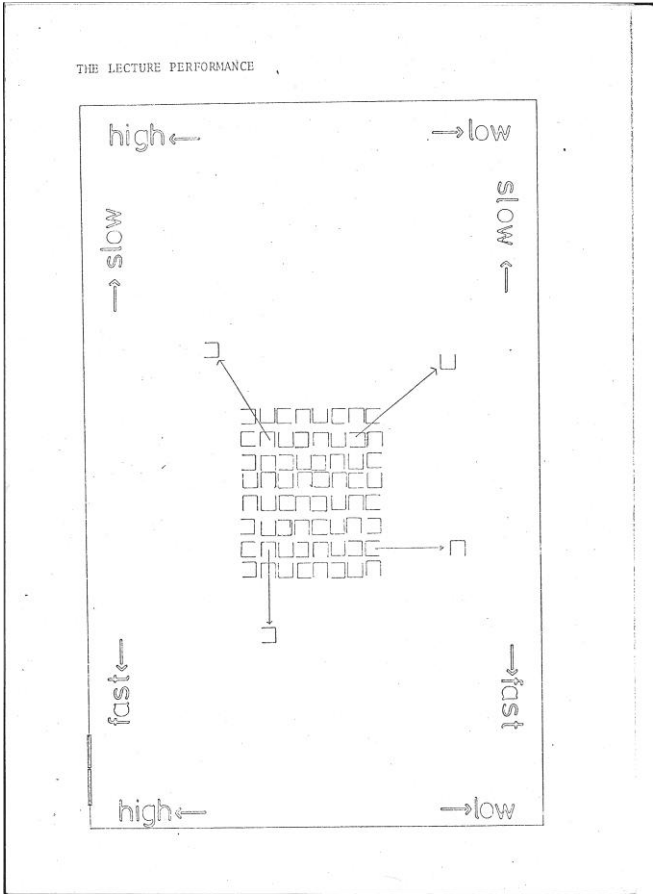
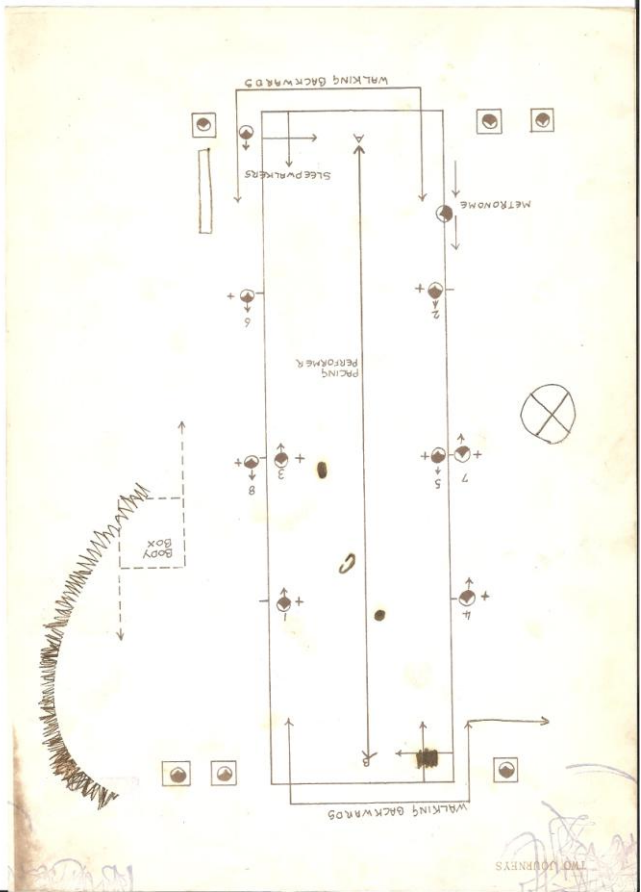
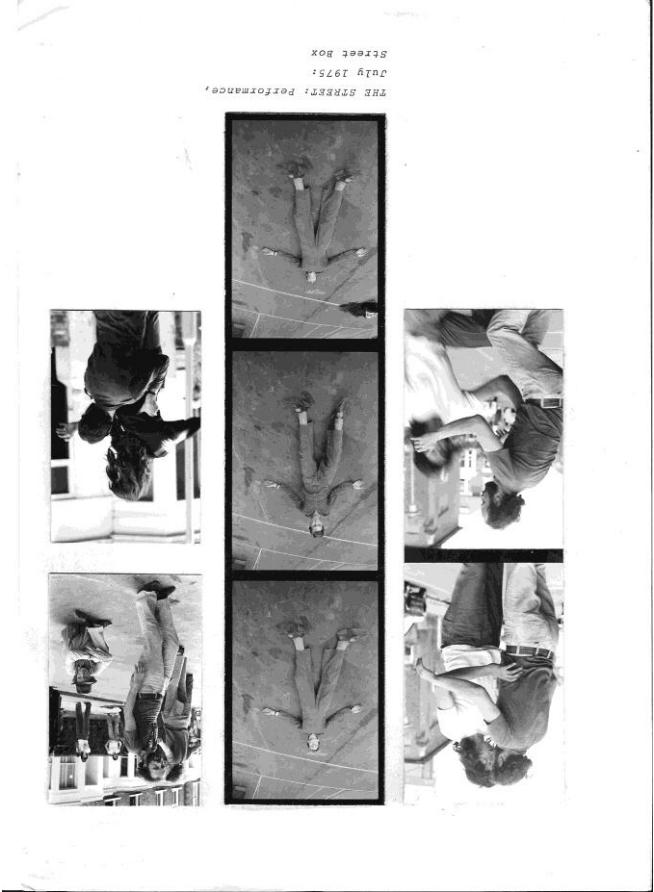
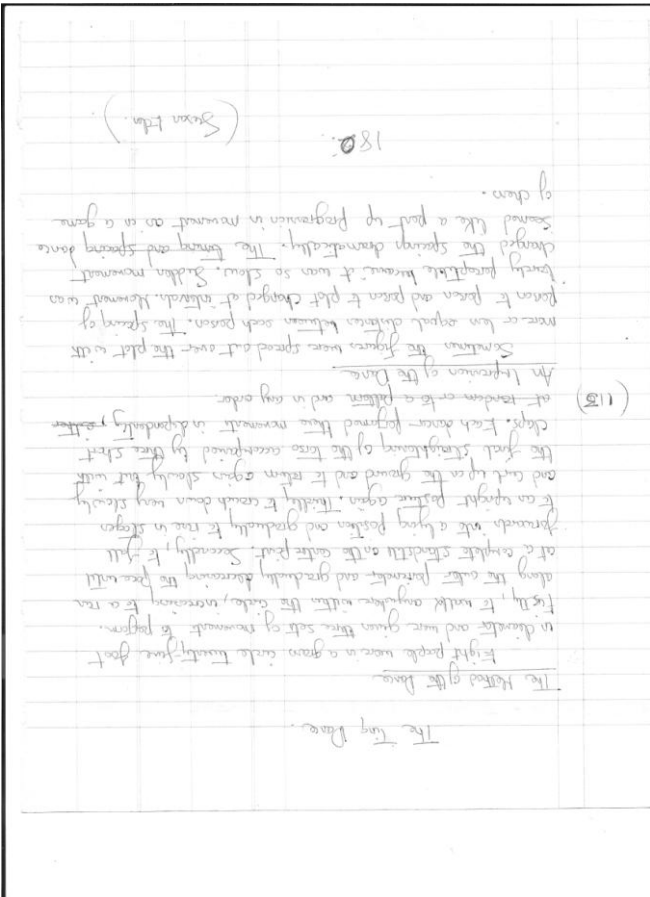


Diagram *Lecture Performance* (1975) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Documentation of *The Street* showing movement sequences.



Two Journeys at the Slade, Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Documentation of *The Street* (1975) was very thorough. As well as the numerous diagrams and photographs (some with captions), the whole was organised into comb-bound books for sale.

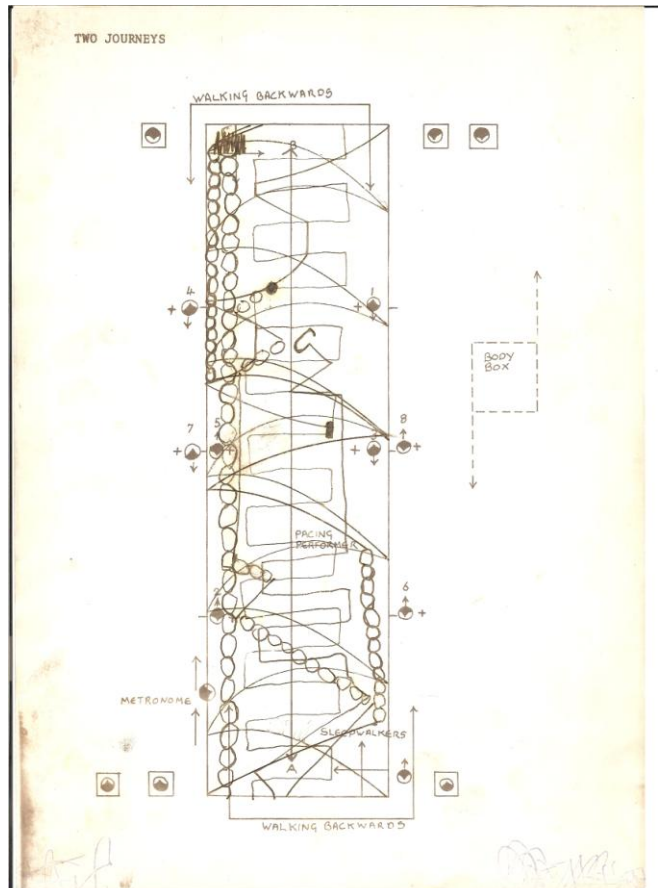
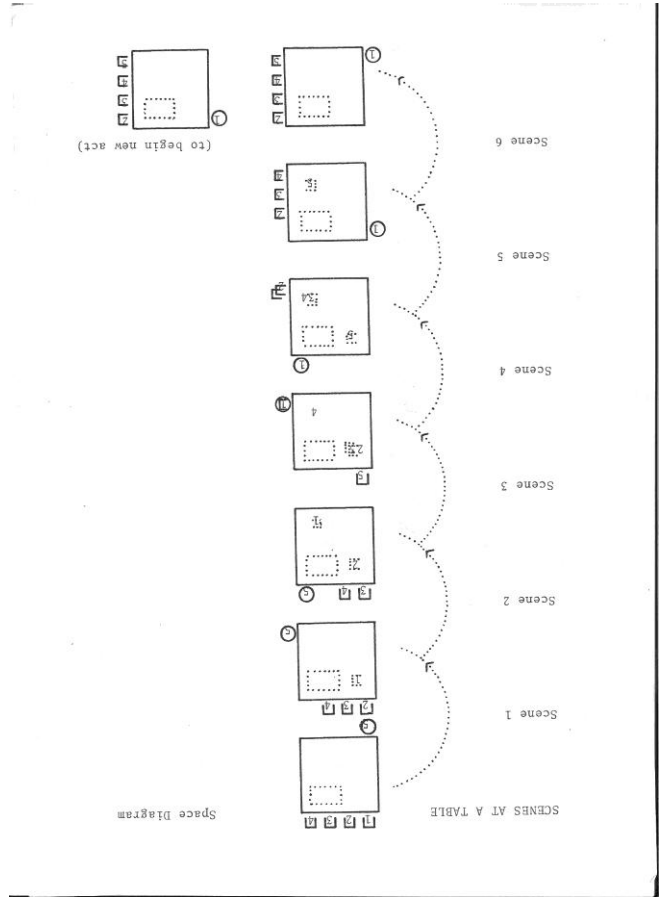
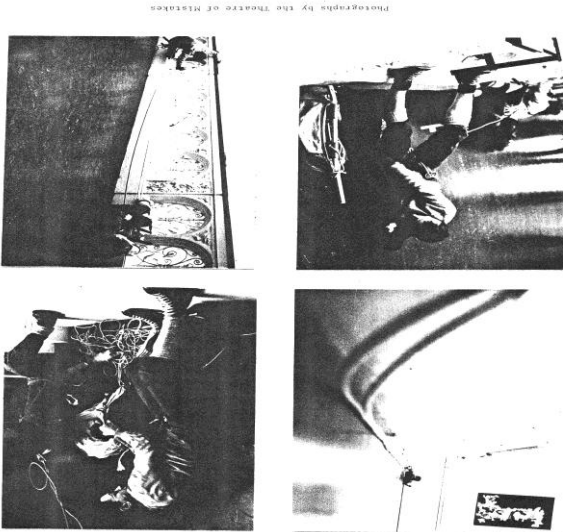


Diagram *Two Journeys* (May, 1976) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

Disappearances...

When questioned, none of the performers could remember the contents of the capsule deposited on the ledge at the end of their performance *Ascent of the Stedelijk* (November 1976). As of 2009, despite the museum's refurbishment and the efforts of the curators, this canister has not been found.



Photographs by the Theatre of Mistakes

Documentation

See also: [Critics](#), [Diagrams](#), [Photographers](#), [Soundings](#)

Documentation of events appears to have been important to The Ting and thereafter to The Theatre of Mistakes. Despite the prevailing notion that 1970s performance was an **ephemeral** artform whose integrity is compromised through the act of recording, The Theatre of Mistakes allocated responsibility for it by defining it as a **core** group role. In the beginning, this took the form of snapshots and reviews – some handwritten – undertaken by artists of events they had witnessed at **Purdies**, most probably at Anthony **Howell**'s urging. Later, with the input of Howard **Tong** and Fiona **Templeton**, The Theatre of Mistakes' visual language became more sophisticated; **exercises** were collated and edited into the **Elements** book; in *Three Act Piece*, for example, photographs were annotated devising a clear notation system for the performance.

Under Mickey **Greenall**'s influence a decorative element was introduced into documentation and under Peter **Stickland**'s, drawings shifted from basic stick figures representing movement and placement to elaborate, technical plans or little sketches that became artworks in their own right. The comb-bound books of *Preparations for Displacement*, *The Street*, and *Waterfall* progressed to published, illustrated scripts (see [Bibliography](#)) their publication still largely self-funded. Individual members' commitment to contributing to, preserving, and storing The Theatre of Mistakes **Archive** also attests to a collective recognition of documentation as a perpetuation rather than negation of the live moment.

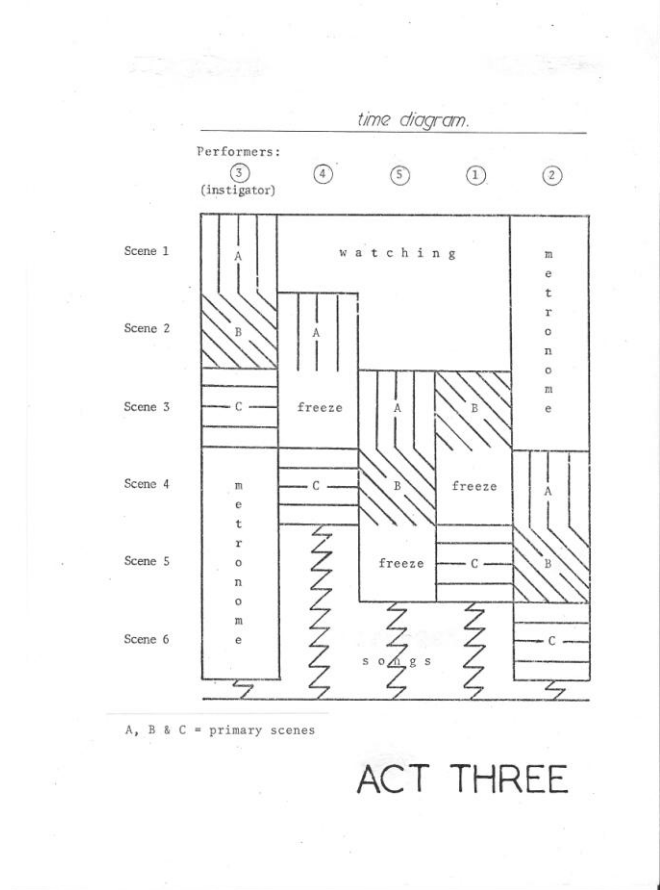
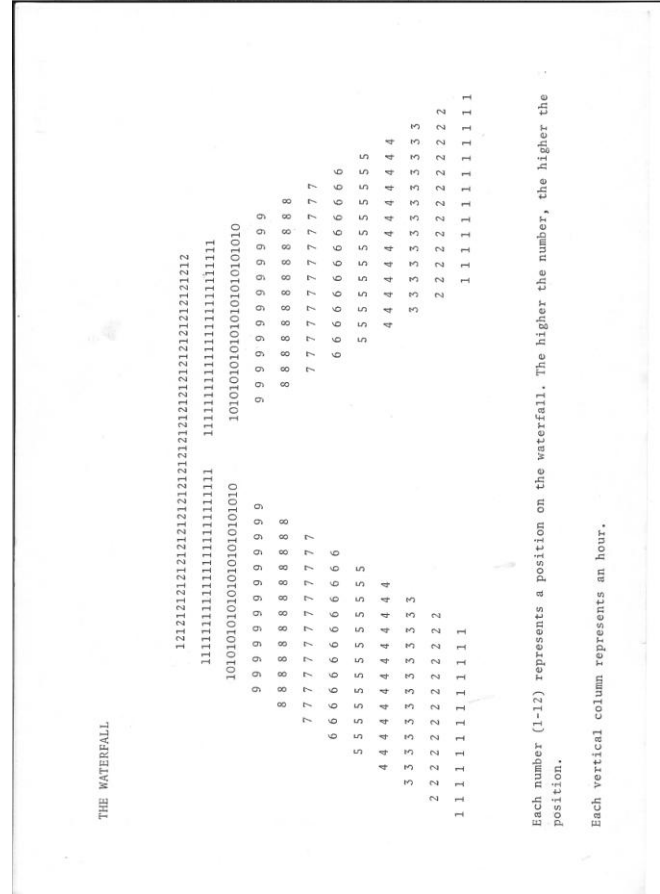


Diagram *Going* (1977) ©The Theatre of Mistakes