An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – I, J & K



016605106

Inconsistencies

bətdəbrl

səɔuənlɨu

Instructions

Vinenilqissibnetul

Introduction

tinerary

Janz, Robert

nemwoß .3 nosel

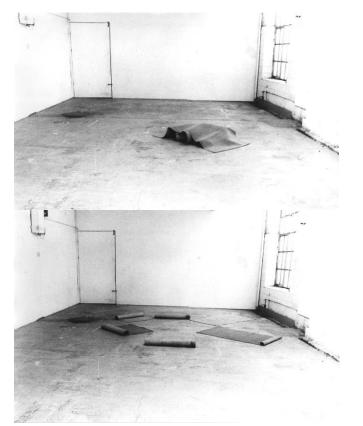
Johnson, Glenys

Kελ

sbiX

kisses

sueoy



:oibuts sid ni photography, that there are records of Ting's early performances Wallpaper's Summer Pieces. It is also thanks to Janz's sticks. He was also involved in The Street, and a contributor to 10ft of where it fell. Rugs and chairs were also substituted for it, they could move at normal pace again, placing it upright within minute then move in slow motion to pick up the stick. On touching



Theatre of Mistakes Archive The Ting c.1974, Photo: @Robert Janz?/The Theatre of Mistakes, The

.(lmth.B-LR/strits/RJ-B.html). Kotter and is represented by Cheryl Palavin gallery (see Janz currently lives in NYC with his partner photographer Jennifer

14

τ



Marie-Anne Mancio

I-K

an A-Z

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

seioneteicoonl

.tuodguordt besu elements reflects the shifting organism it is), various versions are Mistakes (it sounds more fluent and the incorporation of both Therefore although my preferred name is The Ting: Theatre of -A prefers to mimic, rather than resolve, inconsistencies. with Signe Lie Howell and the looser group prior to the core. This an element of politicking here too, Ting being associated more writing press releases and so forth (see Roles). Perhaps there was different individuals took on responsibility at different times for that these inconsistencies arose in part from the fact that themselves The Theatre of Mistakes, Art Company. It is possible catalogue for the 1977 Paris Biennale. By 1978, they are calling the name "Fing" being used after 1976 and yet there it is in the always "The Theatre of Mistakes"; Peter Stickland did not recall "The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes"; Fiona Templeton claims it was Documentation of Preparations for Displacement (1975) refers to a Vicki and a Vicky; Michael Greenall is a Mik and a Mikey. 'collective' and its participants. For instance, Victoria Chick is both participants, there are inconsistencies in the naming of the As evidenced by both the Soundings and the memories of

See also: Two Freedoms

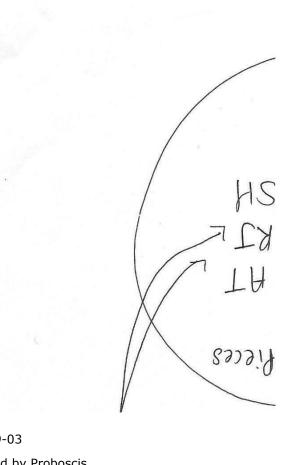
pətdəbri

.9ldeulevni continued willingness to contribute to the debate have proved throughout our ongoing research process. Their insights and The Theatre of Mistakes (and related artists) for their generosity :sniT to stredibitized and like of beddebrid and like participants of Ting:

səsuənjjuj

Ashbery, writer Gertrude Stein, and performance director Robert Several members of The Theatre of Mistakes cite poet John

3 Wilson as influences. Others include:



2009-09-03

Published by Proboscis C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009

Part of Proboscis' Diffusion Residency Programme

http://proboscis org.uk | http://diffusion.org.uk



74

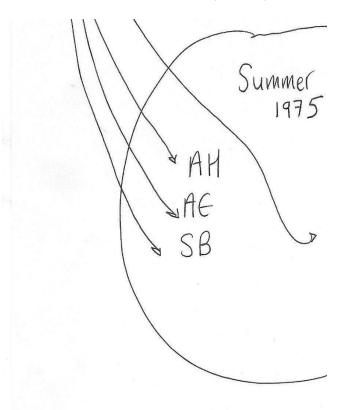
25

©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive Extracts from Waterfall (1977) making use of koans



βibliography

Further reading: Sitting with Koans by John Daido Loori, see Imth.seibuts neok/sege9nieM/moo.etieneseht.www For an introduction to koans:



⁴ Although Ono's book of instructions *Grapefruit* was published in 1963 in tandem with her first exhibition in the UK at the Indica Gallery in London.

³ Trained as a fireman Stephen Cripps became British pyrotechnic sculptor.

⁵ American critic Reise moved to London in 1966. She favoured minimal and conceptual art in her writings. She took her own life in 1978. Her estate was recently purchased by Tate Britain.

 - syneq edit ni senugit edit zew gninniged edit mont "One of the things Anthony talked about right

"Punk; avant-garde French new wave fiction; systemic music and composers such as Robert Ashley, Philip Glass¹, Terry Riley and Steve Reich; the theories of Fluxus poet Henry Flynt and

concurrent works by other performance artists including Stuart Sherman², Steven Cripps³; or the legacies of instruction based

works by Sol LeWitt and those distributed in London by Yoko Ono⁴; early incarnations of expanded cinema by early manifestations of the London Film Makers Co-op; and the art

the late Barbara Reise⁵, Stuart Morgan, Gregory Battock, Jeff

(Jason E. Bowman "Accidentally on Purpose: The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" Unpublished paper by Jason E Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio, PSI 15 Conference, Zagreb, June 2009)

¹ Philip Glass and Robert Janz were members of the artist collective

² The American performance artist Stuart Sherman, companion of Carson McCullers was a practitioner of monologues and minimalist performances.

Continuum which pre-empted Art and Language.

criticism of writers such as

Andrew Eden noted:

He died in 2001.

He died in 1982, aged 29.

Nuttall and RoseLee Goldberg."

people throwing kids over their heads, that sort

(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).

notes seemed to be instructions to viewers on how to read the viewer may insert themselves into the action. Later, program program for Preparations for Displacement explains how the In the early days, this facilitated participation. For instance, the Mistakes often provided detailed instructions for their audiences. As well as instructions for performers, Ting: The Theatre of

(Anthony Howell in Nick Kaye Art Into Theatre, Harwood Academic,

exercise would also be our servant or somebody else's servant in

possibly could, on the understanding that the person who set that

an exercise and we would all adhere to its rules as rigidly as we

art by creating instruction recipes and we were all the servants

"The initial workshops [at the Dairy] of our group, The Ting:

Instructions see Conceptualism, Exercises, Fantasy, Kisses

and masters of each other. In other words, anyone could suggest

Theatre of Mistakes, were based on the idea that we were making

"That kind of physicality... the interest in gravity?"

". the event of another exercise being set."

:uəp_∃

"səy"

4

S

MOLKS.

(051, 0961, mebratemA

Marie-Anne Mancio:



Peter Stickland; Anthony Howell kisses Fiona Templeton; Mickey Greenall in Going. Photo: C The Theatre of Mistakes

Koans

22

See also: Poetry, Waterfall, Ritual

"Koans may be understood as psycholinguistic riddles, capable of generating a certain type of experience or as a literary genre with a complex history, embodying centuries of religious and philosophic discourse."

(Barry Stephenson 'The Koan as Ritual Performance' Journal of the American Academy of Religion June 2005, Vol. 73, No. 2, 275-496)

In the Zen tradition, the posing of seemingly meaningless questions which may be used in a meditative state or to encourage deeper thinking. There are no sole answers. E.g. from The Gateless Gate:

- Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?

- No
- Does the dog have Buddha-nature or not?
- 23 Yes

....blidh though this is not a real child....



(9vid3re of Mistakes Archive) Early Ting workshop, nd, c.1974. Photo: @The Theatre of Mistakes, The

C) A kiss on the Cheek signifies Primary Scene

B) A kiss on the Brow signifies Primary Scene B,

ssilingiz (djuom sdj no) zzis sjulozda nA

Instructions for performers in the script of Going (see Bibliography)

disclosed. Kisses exchanged outside of performances are not being

Primary Scene A,

(V

KISSES

Reverse side of Program for Preparations for Displacement Corn Exchange,

anyone or be bumped into by anyone, freeze and remain motionless retracing the path by which you entered. Should you bump into

of this building. Exit by crawling backwards very slowly indeed, long as it would take you to crawl all the way along all four sides of the spokes of a larger wheel. Freeze, and remain prone for as

edge of the circle-as if the circle were the hub and you were one legs straight, hands by sides, with your feet just touching the

before you reach the edge of the circle and lie down on your back, shaded area surrounding circle B by crawling very slowly. Stop After watching the performance for an hour anyone may enter the

long as it would take you to crawl all the way along one wall of

any time while in this area, freeze and remain motionless for as walking backwards very slowly indeed, retracing the path by which you entered. Should you touch anyone or be couched by anyone at

to walk all the way round the outside of this building. Exit by

completely motionless for not less than the time it would take you Stop before you reach the edge of the circle. Freeze, and remain

circle A by walking very slowly.

corridor more than once during ing. Please do not cross the -bliud sidt to dygnal adt Alaw long as it would take you to and remain motionless for as jumps. Pause between each jump neves nadi seel on to seites the performance space in a the corridor at either end of tor an nour anyone may cross After watching the performance

Please read these instructions

DANCERS ON THE DAY

Straight lines

Mistakes Archive

the shaded area surrounding for an hour anyone may enter Атсетияторгод еле детсоглалсе

the performance.

: hTTNJƏJED

the left. Do not walk on the red lines.

the smaller circle painted in red.

"alk along straight lines with hands by your sides, very slowly. sausing with both feet together between each step. Always keep to

2. Walk sideways with hands on hips along the outside of the large circle. The circle always moves anti-clockwise. Do not walk along

ig to the let

3. When you feel you have completed your part in the dance follow the

Exercise from The Street book, ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of

Dance silently. Freeze for as long as you hear music.

lines to the second door which leads to the S chamber.

Excerpt Program for Birth Ballet Chorale (1974)

The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

MUSICAL FREEZES

large circle

Cambridge Poetry Festival ©The Theatre of Mistakes

·Suipting stua

ENTRANCE

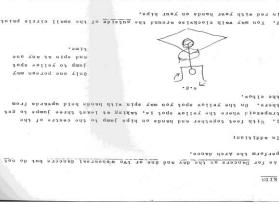
L

necessities':

It is also clear from the notebooks of Anthony Howell (nd c. 1974-5) that at least one of the performers in The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes considered their role as part of their 'personal



sbiX

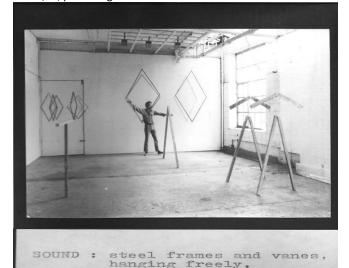


the door into the S. Chamber gpen you feel you have completed your part in the dance follow the

Extract from Birth Ballet Chorale (1974), The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Ting: Theatre of Mistakes, in The Street (1975) for instance. Children were welcomed as performers in the early work of The

> chime when they Photo: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, nd, c.1974



The ethos of events at Purdies farm and the creation of Wallpaper were also instrumental in this. Interdisciplinary practice enables one to be both inside and outside. It disputes the need for either/or, preferring 'and' and both.

early as 1971 in a document for the Association of Creative Arts, instigated by himself and film maker Mike McKinnon. Their proposal for a workshop project suggests weekly meetings to exchange ideas and "break down the barriers existing between the arts, which at present deny an artist the opportunity to comment on work outside his or her own field."

Anthony Howell's concern with interdisciplinarity is evident as

Interdisciplinarity

Introduction

Curator, Jason E Bowman:

.1891 ni bebnedzib 1977 under the shortened moniker The Theatre of Mistakes, they participation created its dynamic and then its works. Practising by processes were informed by the individuals whose interaction and dancers, economists, film makers, visual artists° and architects its interdisciplinary collaboration. Populated by writers, poets, Mistakes was inspired by chance and the possibilities of proliferation of cultish behaviours The Ting: The Theatre of inpending background of Punk, Thatcher, D.I.Y culture and a post 1968. Active in the UK's recession of the 1970's against the the milieu of collective practice and artist-led operatives occurring ot gnitudition 1974 in London in London in London in London in London to "Writer and dancer Anthony Howell⁵, founder of Wallpaper

eponymous notebooks⁵) explored and refined by advertised open games-based exercises (known as The Gymnasium and recorded in through devising multiple performances from a series of rules and [....] In 1975 The Ting became The Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes

interdisciplinary work. Howell left the Royal Ballet in 1966 to pursue his poetry and interest in

.snoifib9 7 beussi fl .7791 in noiteoildug beseed bin 1970 in 1970 in verseed publication in

arts schools such as Hornsey and Falmouth. extraordinary potential to consider experimentation in particular British The training of certain artists engaged with The Ting also reveals an

Gymnasium has not been tound in the cataloguing undertaken to date. It 6 Book/s of notated exercises and experiments 1974-1976. The

strike

19

potentially no longer exists although it is believed that the majority of the exercises it recorded remain documented in other forms.

The Street, Performance for the Blind, Rape of the Mind, Secret

¹⁰ Manifesto of Mutual Art, 1975 Unpublished, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Public exposure came via the diverse distribution systems of the time such as the experimental Artslab spaces, the eclectic Cambridge Poetry Festival, the Serpentine Summer Open exhibitions, The Hayward Annual, the Paris Biennale and tours of the United States including penitentiaries in tandem with artistled spaces such as The Dairy; shared by The Ting and London Filmmakers' Co-op and home to the studio of sculptor Robert Janz. In parallel to public performances obscured, interdisciplinary processes developed intermittently over ten years at an isolated farm informed early versions of works such as Hiller's Dream Theatre of Mistakes core members including A Waterfall, Going,

Its core members Michael Greenall, Anthony Howell, Howard Tong, Lindsay Moran, Glenys Johnson, Miranda Payne, Peter Stickland and Fiona Templeton continued to develop its extraordinary internal logics and structuralist bias throughout its ten year history. Each project came to contain an internalised mistake which would corrupt pure concept and yet be coddled in the crucible of its structure.

sessions and interdisciplinary happenings. Decisions were made either unanimously or through chance including by the roll of dice and resulted in concepts such as the co-created Manifesto for *Mutual Art*¹⁰. David Coxhead, Michael Craig-Martin, Susan Hiller, Robert Janz, Anthony McCall, Michael Nyman, Julian Maynard-Smith, Pat Murphy, John Welch and Amikam Toren were associated with its initiatives.

performance art practice relates to the overlooked history of of performance art, allowing for a unique reconsideration of how of Mistakes defies the orthodoxy of body art within the art history Pregnant Women Chorale etc. The work of The Ting: The Theatre Performance, Ascending [Ascent of] the Stedelijk, Ballet for research for performances later to be realised by The Ting: Maps¹¹, McCall's Fire Pieces¹², Toren's Performance for Cars and

Mistakes, Towards A Retrospective" PSI15, Zagreb, June 2009) (lason E Bowman "Accidentally on Purpose, The Ting: The Theatre of ".Art and towards Punk."

contributions from the legacy of Minimalism through Conceptual

Writer/Researcher, Marie-Anne Mancio:

fluid group of behaviours) to The Theatre of Mistakes, a dedicated Templeton was instrumental in the shift from The Ting (a more responsible for the visual development of The Ting; or, Fiona Howell and Signe Lie co-created The Ting; or, Howard Tong was I feel compelled to add other equally plausible narratives: Anthony organizing." She thinks this was in July 1974. Instead of that story, kind of inaugural meeting of the group Anthony Howell was Norse Ting myth. Pat Murphy recalls Robert Janz inviting her "to a Norwegian anthropologist, Signe Lie who introduced him to the interrogation of systemic art; and conversations with his then wije, by his interest in chance and seeing Robert Wilson in New York; his goes something like this: Anthony Howell instigated Ting inspired I begin writing a biography of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes which



Below: Johnson in her studio, courtesy of the James Hyam Gallery

Templeton) nd, c. 1976. Photo: ©Glenys Johnson Above: The Theatre of Mistakes in rehearsal (Mike Greenall, Fiona



Key Text typed in this colour refers to cross-referenced entries. E.g Homage to Pietro Longhi: the reader can go to e-book H, Homage for more information and/or to e-book L, Longhi for different or perhaps the same information. Other abbreviations include nd for no date/ undated document. The key to the Diagram on pp25-6 of this A-Z is as follows:

AF Alan Fuchs AH Anthony Howell AMc Anthony McCall AN Annabel Nicholson AT Amikam Toren **AU** Anita Urguhart DC David Coxhead **DS** David Spathaky **FT** Fiona Templeton GJ Glenys Johnson **HT** Howard Tong **JMS** Julian Maynard Smith LM Lindsay Moran MC Marc Chaimowicz MO Mike Owen MP Miranda Payne **PM** Pat Murphy **PS** Peter Stickland **RB** Richard Bernas **RO** Richard Quarrell **RJ** Robert Janz SB Susan Bonvin SLH Signe Lie Howell SH Susan Hiller

AE Andrew Eden

at Purdies Farm, 1974 ¹¹ Hiller tested and made diagrams and drawings for her first Dream Maps

^{1701, 3}nibe9A, beoA blaifni2 ¹² McCall's first Fire Work was for the wedding of Anthony and Signe Lie at

Belfast-born artist, formerly married to Pat Murphy. His Six Sticks formed part of Preparations for Displacement which The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes performed at the Corn Exchange, Cambridge Poetry Festival in 1975. "Sculptor 1" was required to arrange these sticks in the space at the beginning of the performance. If a performer knocked a stick over, they had to freeze for about half a

Janz, Robert (1932-) See also: Birth <mark>Ballet</mark> Chorale, Jane Clark, Dairy, Ephemeral, Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session, Purdies

The Theatre of Mistakes itinerary 1978, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

| .sease contact the venues. | | | |
|--|---------|------|--------|
| | | 100 | |
| | | | |
| MAC TODO2 Sup WAE & JOFF 2L 2L* WARK, 2 CHINGH LIHE DORLIKA DROIECL | | | |
| Introduced by John Ashbery | | | |
| AN EVENING OF NEW BRITISH POETRY | 419 | DEC' | |
| Pgh, Pa. 15260. UNIVERSITY OF PITTEBURGH 99c FLOATING THEATRE FESTIVAL | | | |
| COING | 4181-11 | 'AON | |
| | | | |
| FRANKLIN FURNACE | | | |
| AN EVENING OF NEW BRITISH POETRY | | 'AON | |
| NEM KORK TOOTS' | | | |
| JZZ MOOZLEK ZLIKEEL BUNTY COODER CVITTEKA | JCU | | |
| XIS TTMENELVM | | 'AON | |
| | | | |
| XAAABNITI | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | > |
| | | | 1 |
| | | Å | เคาอาก |

core group of performers; or Fiona Templeton co-founded The Theatre of Mistakes...

Introductions are suspect. Is it not paradoxical to position yourself outside of the thing you are writing about if you have spent so long immersing yourself in it? My own introduction was perverse: an uncatalogued collection, an archive of performance documents in which the live performance itself was represented by the photographic still, the post-event review, the instruction. There was no live element at all aside from the conversations to be had with former performers. The Theatre of Mistakes had disbanded, there were no performances to see. Yet, I soon came to realise that these conversations, these hundreds of pieces of paper, these photographs, these diagrams, these texts were perhaps the best introduction I could have hoped for because they required a specific form of reading, a formal reading. So Jason E Bowman and I sat on a flight (London-New York) with the script of Going and manipulated a series of objects from the in-flight food tray (a sachet of pepper for A; a plastic fork for the metronome) until we had the measure of the work's structure. Listening to the sound recording enabled us to appreciate its rhythms without the distraction of the visual. It almost doesn't matter that I have never seen Going in its entirety.

I did not have one introduction to The Theatre of Mistakes. I had have - endless introductions. Each conversation with a participant, each interview, poses a new perspective. An introduction is always inevitably a work-in-progress (and so preferable to a conclusion....) Take a workshop with Fiona Templeton, read her poetry, see The Relationship's *Going (with Coming)*; track down a copy of *Elements of Performance Art;* order the script of *Homage to Morandi;* read Anthony Howell and Peter Stickland's novels; read this *A-Z*, don't read this *A-Z*, just look at the images... throw a pair of dice.

See also: Empirical, Gossip

Hester Van Royen Gallery 52a Waizon 51. London 5W3 wil: 01-569 0726 0189 - Friday 10-6, Saturday 10-6

97er 8 Horam - Of Yraures

curves for changing spaces

ZNAL TREBOR

where, in the instance are entitled results on utilization is barrentized or (in complex states) the order and the state of the state of the order of order of determing interact states. The order of the states are states and states of the states one circle and another are the state it adaption to each different size.

Show it is a set of '1' stawn burn of Barrier and a set of '1' stawn burn and 'n' and an available on my official the set of the burn plane of the solitation for the solitation the burn black course of the solitation the solitation will be some of the solitation the burn of the solitation of the solitation of the burn plane of the solitation of only n, and set of larger.

c projektoré partis de javégué la partis de la partis de la partis de la participación de la part

The drawing in parts is an arc of a circle the prevention of the providence of the prothe price are are bung on the well or walls stretches the space by refering back for the stretches arc.

Rep stations

Janz sculptures taken circa 1974. Photos: ©Robert Janz?/The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Jason E Bowman see Bowman, Jason E Johnson, Glenys (1952-)



Going

Painter who performed with The Theatre of Mistakes, notably in *Going.* An accomplished photographer, Johnson also took photographs of the group in rehearsal at Purdies, distinctive for their use of innovative angles.

See also: Bibliography, Two Journeys