

Longhi, Pietro

London Film Makers Co-op

London Exhibition

London Calling

Line  
Letters

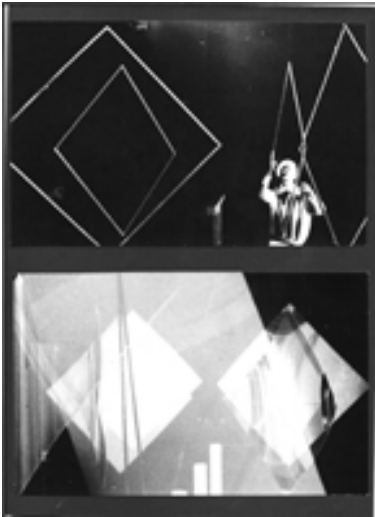
Leick, Gwendolyn

Legacy

Lecture Performance

Lansley, Jacky

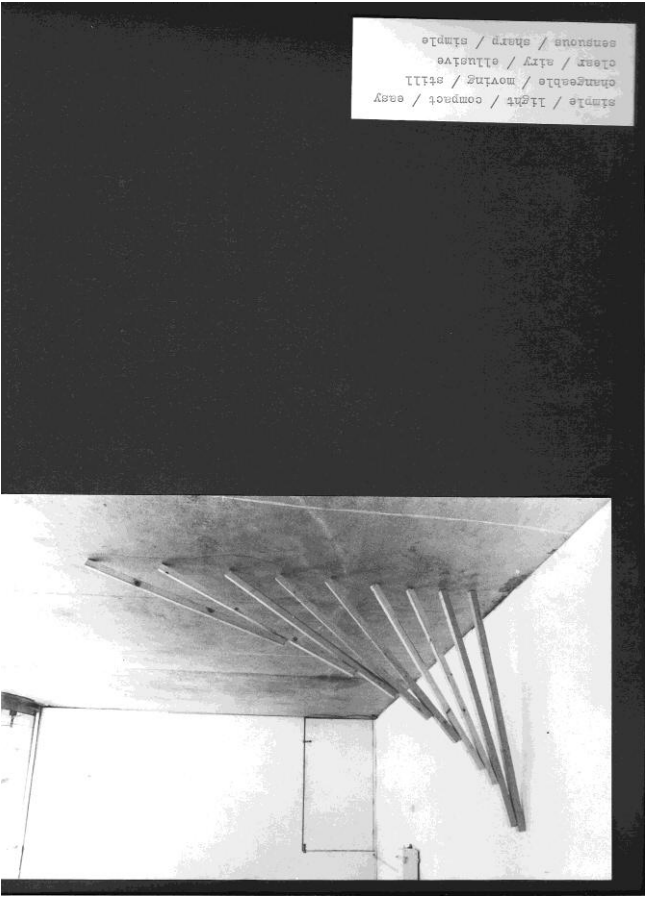
# U I S I O N



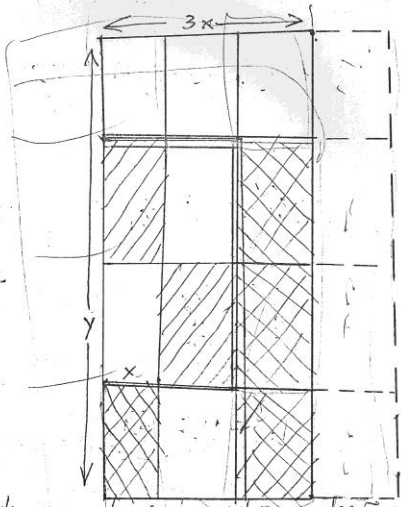
## An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – L

Marie-Anne Mancio

Robert Janz work documented by The Ting, c. 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

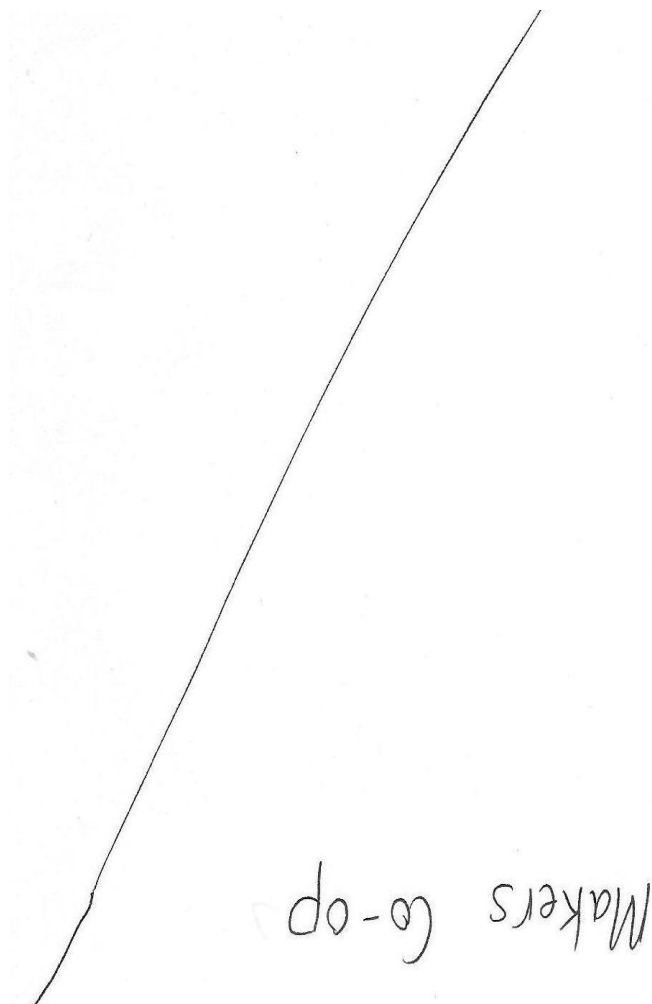


rate of expansion



rectangle may only expand when number of performers make an expansion possible however the rectangle shape of the expanded rectangle should tend towards the proportions of the original.

Diagram relating to *The Street* in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, nd, c.1975



2009-09-03

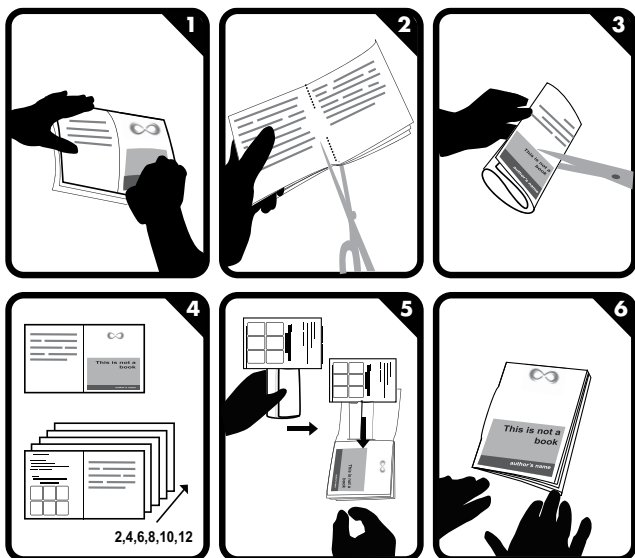
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C Marie-Anne Mancio & contributors 2009

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i) The theorising of British Performance/live art as a discipline was still in its infancy in the mid-90s, so was not present to anything like the same extent in the 70s and 80s. At the time of writing *Maps for Wayward Performers*: feminist readings of contemporary live art practice in Britain, (Marie-Anne Mancio, unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Sussex, 1996), for example, the majority of literature had a strong American bias and prospective publishers were concerned that British work was not as marketable.

The exercises from the *Gymnasium*, used in *Ting/The Theatre of Mistakes* workshops and then collated by Anthony Howell and Fiona Templeton in *Elements of Performance Art*, were the basis of instruction by live art practitioners in the devising of performances throughout the 1980s in institutions such as Dartington and Manchester Metropolitan University. Howell's former post as Senior Lecturer in Time Based Studies at University of Wales, Cardiff Institute and Templeton and Stickland's current academic roles at Brunel University and Chelsea School of Art respectively saw their influence extend into the 1990s. That the legacy of The Theatre of Mistakes has not been sufficiently analysed is due to several factors:

#### Legacy

**Lecture Performance**  
First performed Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1975 at the Roundhouse, Camden by: Charlotte Crozet, Mikey Greenall, Anthony Howell, Marita Ludlum, Julian Maynard Smith, Lindsay Moran, Miranda Payne, Eilan Reichel, Fiona Templeton

Lansley, Jacky See: **Dance**  
Gave a lecture-demonstration at the Art Room.

## The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an **A-Z**

**L**

Marie-Anne Mancio

(85)

'I think we should find him some clothes,' said Dorothy. She sat next to Monika on her pink towel by the poolside. Monika was fully dressed, while Dorothy still wore her costume. Behind them, Derek remained naked, and the younger dalmatian lay outstretched in the shade beneath the deck-chair. 'Where are his own?' asked Monika. 'I put them in Judith's bath.' 'Then they can go through the washing-machine - though after I have finished with the wash.' 'Yes. In the meantime, what can he wear?' 'I will have to find him something from Vyvan's clothes,' Monika concluded. 'Two dragonflies were hovering over the pool. She glanced down at her masking-tape-banded palms. Carefully using both hands, she raised a mug of tea to her lips. Dorothy pushed at the crescents in her nails. Over the rose-bordered fence, at the far end of the lawn below the terrace, Lavinia sat on the children's swing. She was still wearing her bikini, and only her back was visible beneath the overhanging branches of the gnarled apple tree on the other side of the fence. Beyond the paddock sloping away in front of her, mares and foals were drifting past, tearing at grass and whisking tails in the large field beyond.

'At what time will the guests arrive?' Dorothy asked. 'How should I know? In time for tonight's performance, I suppose,' Monika sighed. 'Ach, it is so annoying now. I wanted to be gone from here tonight. I hate it that the house has fallen through. I do not in the least enjoy these parties.' 'Why is that?' asked Dorothy. 'Monika raised her shoulders. 'Because it feels so empty to me. They endless chat about art, you know. Always the same faces. We have all heard it before.' 'I disagree,' said Dorothy brightly. 'Something new might well turn up.' She smiled and nodded her head. 'But what is it for, to live in hope? Why should all this

2 p.m.

London Film

AN  
MC

JC

Aim to separate all empty chairs that seem too close together - always obeying the performance laws.

If a chair becomes occupied while you are progressing towards it, reverse your progress back to the chair you vacated; should somebody be seated in that chair as well continue progressing backwards and forwards between the occupied chairs until one or the other becomes empty again.

Describe aloud every move you make—unless seated in a chair. If touched while moving between chairs: freeze all parts of your body except your mouth while you describe to each other your method of moving and describe the empty chair you were heading towards before touching.

Exchange your method of moving and exchange your choice of empty chair.

Progress between as many chairs as you wish. Then sit down and remain seated until you have identified the first set of touching chairs that becomes apparent in the room. Move your own chair so that it is directly touching only one of these chairs.

Sit down and remain seated, whether or not another person places a chair so that it is also directly touching your own.

Discuss with those sitting next to you the identity of "the winner" until no chair is isolated from the emergent series of chairs.

When you wish to depart from the lecture performance, having placed your chair so that it is directly touching another chair, times. Then leave your chair in its position in the series and, continuing to obey the laws of speed and height whilst turning only at right angles, make your way towards the exit.

#### THE LECTURE PERFORMANCE

On first sitting down, read the instructions once to yourself, and then as many times aloud as you wish.

Sitting in a chair provides immunity from all performance laws. However, the space in which you are now seated will turn into as much of a performance area as anywhere else once the reading of instructions becomes either inaudible or confused: at that point, therefore, move your chair as far as possible from any other chair and sit down.

Whilst moving, obey the laws of speed and height shown on the diagram and displayed at the corners of this room.

If anyone approaches with another chair while you are seated get up and move your chair again: an isolated position will be the best vantage point from which to see and hear the rest of the lecture performance. Do not sit against the walls as the wallspace may also be used.

Having sat down in a new position, remain seated. While seated you may turn your head once from one side to the other each time you see someone turn theirs. By so doing, choose an empty chair of which you have an uninterrupted view. Remaining seated, think of a method of progress which allows you to move from your own chair to the empty one while obeying the laws of speed and height.

Progress towards the empty chair. If you reach it while it is still unoccupied sit down and remain seated until you have chosen another chair to progress towards and another method of moving according to the laws of speed and height.

However, if you consider that the chair you have just reached is not positioned as far as possible from any other chair move it to another position until it is as far as possible—from any other—then sit down.

See also: *Lost Farm*

(ed.) *The Babylonian World*, Routledge, 2007.

photographer and author of:  
history faculty at Chelsea School of Art, Leick is also a  
anthropologist, and currently part of the research staff in the art  
Mistakes' European tour. A Doctor of Philosophy, an  
farm around the time of *Orpheus and Hermes* and The Theatre of  
Purdies

Leick, Gwendolyn

Anthony Howell is also investigating participation, through tango.

Julian Maynard Smith claims working with The Theatre of  
Mistakes showed him an oppositional way of working.

Peter Stickland has continued his investigations into narrative and  
structures.

at *Purdies* and in *Summer Pieces*.  
With Susan Bonvin were developments of explorations carried out  
Andrew Eden's *Shared View* (1985) and his later collaborations

audiences and participation.

Fiona Templeton's practice displays an ongoing interest in

(Response to Questionnaire, December 2008)

Memory work I was doing in the early 70s."  
kind and inspiring about the fragmented writing/Rituals of  
feeling for where everyone was. Also, I remember Anthony being  
real sense of presence/awareness. You would really develop a

ii) *Performance, Live Art*, and the short-lived *Hybrid*  
magazines – in which UK performances were reviewed and  
discussed – were established in 1979, 1993, and 2002  
respectively by which time The Theatre of Mistakes had  
performed most or their works or disbanded.

iii) Anthony Howell established *Greysuit* (1993-5), a video  
magazine with an interdisciplinary bias. However, apart from  
*Going* (which Howell was reluctant to show because he felt it  
did not do the work justice) and later versions of *Waterfall*,  
The Theatre of Mistakes' work pre-dates the eponymous use  
of video as a medium of documentation.

iv) The Theatre of Mistakes *Archive* is not currently  
available to the public and has only recently been catalogued  
which may have deterred researchers.

Despite the mass of other documentation (including an excellent  
sound recording of *Going* – see *Bibliography*), held by The Theatre  
of Mistakes, it was the next generations of performance  
collectives – *Station House Opera*, *Forced Entertainment* – who  
have been able to take advantage of video; the internet; the  
growth in performance criticism and performance making as  
academic disciplines; the platforms pioneered by the National  
Review of Live Art, *New Moves*, and the *Live Art Development*  
Agency to write themselves into the history books.

Involvement with *Ting*: The Theatre of Mistakes influenced  
practitioners:

Pat Murphy says: "I would say that the Ting was very important to  
how my work evolved. I still use some of the early Ting exercises  
when working with students, or rehearsing with actors. These  
exercises – and indeed the performances were characterized by a

becoming embroiled in any of the internal thought processes of its  
decade at the farm into one day. It seeks to show action without  
Anthony Howell's unpublished novel compresses the events of a  
Julian Maynard Smith, Miranda Payne  
See also: Deborah Howell, Gwendolyn Leick, *Orpheus and Hermes*,  
*Lost Farm*

Pietro Longhi *The Quack* (1757)



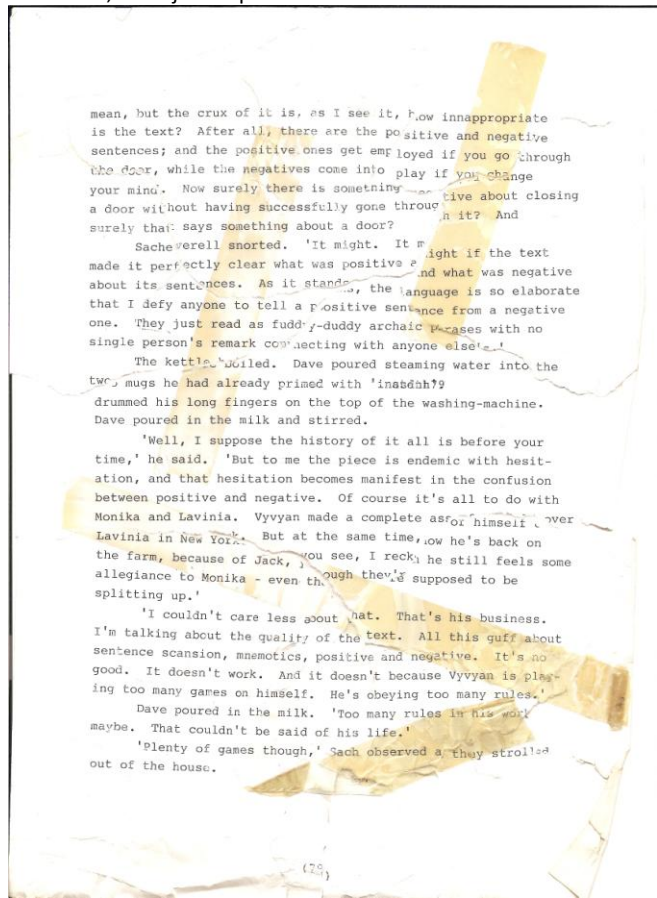
1976)

Program Notes: The Theatre of Mistakes *Homage to Pietro Longhi* (Nov

Scenes at a Table is dedicated to the painter Pietro Longhi  
(1702-1785), whose many variations on a single theme or a  
single posture, reappearing in dozens of his works, have been  
a source of inspiration to the company during the year. A  
number of the ideas exercised by the performers have been de-  
rived either from Longhi's use of similar angles in figure  
drawing or from his employment of eye glances as a geometry  
by which to establish the focal centre of a picture. Origin-  
ally, several of Longhi's paintings were inspired by scenes  
at tables in the performances of 18th century Venice.

Longhi, Pietro (1702-1785)

characters. Together with photographs and participants'  
memories, it conjures up a vision of *Purdies*.







### London Film Makers Co-op

"A loose group of friends and colleagues, many recently out of art school, who were interested in filmmaking and began to work together. The Co-op was based in the old Camden Town dairy, and in retrospect what was so important was that there was film production going on as well as exhibition and distribution. So work was made, printed, screened, argued about, and an aesthetic emerged. Perhaps a number of aesthetics: structural-materialist film, landscape film, expanded cinema, and so on. It was a very productive situation for those who were part of it. The filmmaking culture was at the time a related but parallel universe to that of the art world, though they did overlap at certain moments" (Julia Peyton-Jones and Hans Ulrich Obrist, Interview with Anthony McCall, New York, September 2007)

According to Anthony **McCall**, Anthony **Howell** was a member by adoption. (Interview: Anthony McCall, Jason E **Bowman**, Marie-Anne **Mancio**, London, 26<sup>th</sup> Sept, 2008 )

"The hardcore 'structural / materialist' filmmaking that characterised much of the work produced at the LPMC in the early 1970s can be very challenging for the viewer. Anyone wandering in from the street, with the expectations of commercial (they used to call it "dominant") cinema would not understand these films at all. Not only is there no narrative, but there's most likely no people, no sound, no editing and sometimes no discernible imagery at all [...] British work was much more loosely contrived [than US structuralism], and really concerned with the raw physicality of the film medium and the inherent properties of the celluloid strip."

(Mark Webber "Shoot Shoot Shoot" [http://www.Luxonline.org.uk/tours/shoot\\_shoot\\_shoot\(7\).html](http://www.Luxonline.org.uk/tours/shoot_shoot_shoot(7).html))

View: Valerie Export who was there circa 1972.

### List of letters

05-Dec-73 George Mattingly to AH re *The Hour Book*  
12-Dec-73 ? to AH  
31-Mar-73 Anthony McCall to AH

(extracts of letters in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

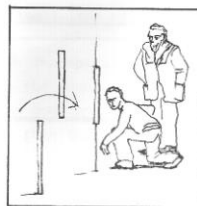
dear anthony - I heard at the last meeting that you had written a letter to me about the book. I'm up to my eyes with reading at the moment - authors seem to have delivered commissioned books all together - but I've taken time off to look at the manuscript of ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE ART which you left in here. Certainly this could make an interesting book but once again I regret to say I don't, rightly or wrongly, see it as something which an educational publisher would regard as something they could sell well as to whether any publisher would be willing, and I'd have my doubts. This would mean that the advance would be minimal, and I'd have my doubts that your art show project (and remember correct name-- have definitely lost 50% of my english vocabulary for the dubious benefit of gaining a few words in hindi-bengali-urdu...maybe it will all come back to me when I get back to London; maybe not...was a great success; and that one of the post card which you've guessed it extends even to all's that...  
I hope they'll like. Have also given David 2 pages for Wallingmag which I noted in a column I have in a French mag. If end  
5th March, 1976  
Dear Anthony,  
I'm up to my eyes with reading at the moment - authors seem to have delivered commissioned books all together - but I've taken time off to look at the manuscript of ELEMENTS OF PERFORMANCE ART which you left in here. Certainly this could make an interesting book but once again I regret to say I don't, rightly or wrongly, see it as something which an educational publisher would regard as something they could sell well as to whether any publisher would be willing, and I'd have my doubts. This would mean that the advance would be minimal, and I'd have my doubts that your art show project (and remember correct name-- have definitely lost 50% of my english vocabulary for the dubious benefit of gaining a few words in hindi-bengali-urdu...maybe it will all come back to me when I get back to London; maybe not...was a great success; and that one of the post card which you've guessed it extends even to all's that...

The Theatre of Mistakes Archive contains many letters, postcards, aerogrammes, typed, illustrated, hand-written... to and from friends and business associates including: Anthony **McCall**, Susan **Hiller**, The Arts Council, literary agent Giles Gordon, poet John **Welch**....

Of the painter Barnett Newman who loved to write vitriolic letters. However Newman never sent his.

### Letters

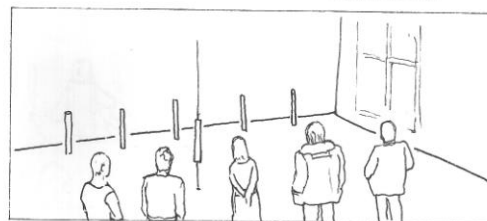
Apart from its greater complexity there is another point which makes viewing as part of an organised group different from viewing casually with a few friends and that is the shared view now lasts a definite length of time, instead of tending to appear as a series of glimpses.



4. George's pole leaps over Jack's.



5. Jane and John swing their poles round the other side of the room to pass George, Sally and Jack's poles.



6. Each encounter involved a different pair of persons and so the problem of passing was solved differently. The plan was constant but the action was varied.

Andrew Eden *Shared View* (1985) exhib. catalogue

Now get this  
London calling, yes, I was there, too  
An' you know what they said? Well, some of it was true!  
London calling at the top of the dial  
And after all this, won't you give me a smile?

CHORUS x2

The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in  
Engines stop running, the wheat is growing thin  
A nuclear error, but I have no fear  
Cause London is drowning and I, I live by the river

Except for that one with the yellowy eyes  
London calling, see we ain't got no high  
But while we were talking I saw you nodding out  
London calling - and I don't wanna shout  
Quit holding out - and draw another breath  
London calling to the zombies of death  
Forget it, brother, you can go at it alone  
London calling to the imitation zone  
Cause London is drowning and I, I live by the river

CHORUS

The ice age is coming, the sun's zooming in  
Engines stop running, but I have no fear  
Melt down expected, the wheat is growing thin  
Cause London is drowning and I, I live by the river

## 1. Song by The Clash London Calling

London Calling

I never felt so much alike, like-a, like-a...

## 2. See: **Fiver Show**

### London Exhibition (Covent Garden, October 1975)

See also: **Waterfall**

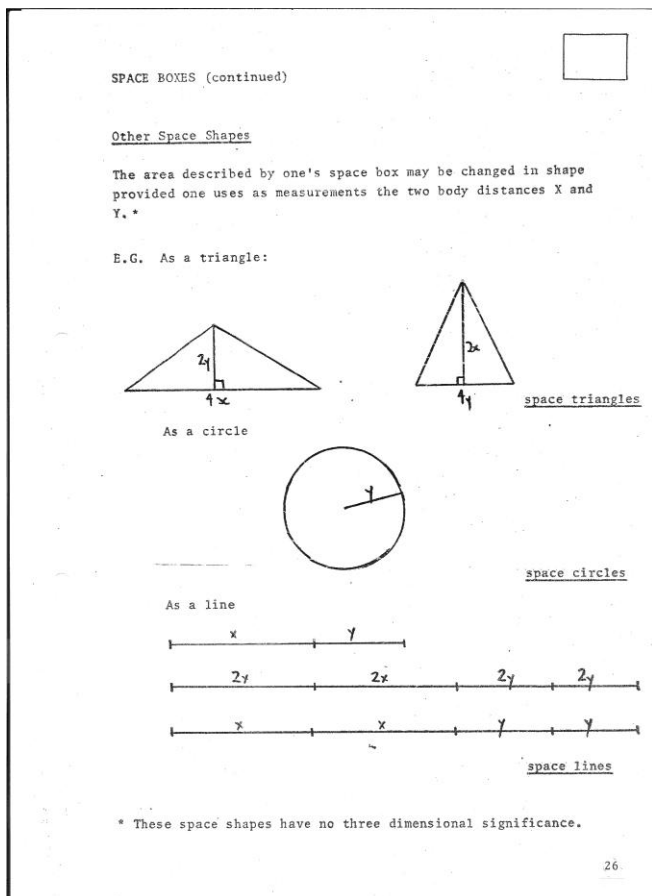


The Theatre of Mistakes at the London Exhibition  
©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

**Three Act Piece** by 'The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes' was performed at the London Exhibition in 1975 as part of their **Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session**.

18-Dec-84 Lady Lodge Arts Centre to AE; h/w note AE to AH  
17-Aug-79 Peter Bird ACE to AH  
12-Sep-78 Douglas Baxter to AH re PC Gallery Nov 11  
28-Nov-78 Paul A Rolin to Dr Katz re **Going** (prison)  
Dec-78 Box office receipts **Going** Theater for the New City  
30 Nov-10 Henry Meyric Hughes, British Council to AH  
20-Oct-78 Ron Padgett, Poetry Project to AH  
19-Oct-78 Andrew Dempsey, London Exhibition  
01-Dec-78 Don Marinelli, Uni of Pittsburgh to AH  
31-Aug-78 Ray Smith, Uni of Southampton to AH  
16-Nov-78 Henry Meyric Hughes, British Council  
05-Oct-78 AH reply to above  
01-Sep-77 reply to above  
23-Aug-77 AH to BBC re **Waterfall**  
19-Aug-77 Reply to above  
17-Aug-77 AH to BBC re **Waterfall**  
16-Aug-77 Anthony McCall on Manifesto of Mutual Art  
17-Feb-76 Sue Grayson at Serpentine to AH re Summer Show  
23-Mar-76 Graham Snow to AH  
nd Susan Bonvin to AH re Ting  
nd John Welch to AH, FT and Ting re Slade  
nd Susan Hiller to AH  
nd GLA re financial assistance  
02-Jun-76 re unreturned library book on Longhi!  
Maidstone College Library to AH  
03-May-76 Typed Invoice University of Wisconsin Wallpaper  
09-Jan-76 Giles Gordon to AH  
nd Susan Bonvin? to AH re Wallpaper and Fiver Show

10-Sep-74 Richard and Philippa Quarrell to AH and SH  
07-Sep-74 Anthony McCall to AH and SH  
08-Oct-74 Marion Boyars to AH re **Wallpaper**  
15-Apr-74 Anthony McCall to AH  
23-Jun-74 Anthony McCall to AH re **Wallpaper**  
17-Nov-74 Richard Quarrell to AH  
Susan Bonvin to AH re  
nd **Device for Looking at Landscape**  
nd Postcard unsigned (AM?) to Ting  
nd Sylvia re **Ting** and masks  
nd Susan Hiller to AH re Dreams  
nd Christopher Hobbs and John White [bio]  
16-Nov-75 Pippa, Emma and Dix to AH  
18-Mar-75 Abrul Hadi to AH and SLH  
nd Susan Hiller to SLH  
31-Mar-75 David Coxhead  
17-Aug-75 Tom Lowenstein? To AH  
nd Michael Karl Ritchie to AH  
nd Graham Snow to AH re Ting  
20-Oct-75 Michael **Greenall** to ? Wales  
14-Jun-75 Carlyle **Reedy** to AH re **The Street** rehearsals  
30-Aug-75 AH to Adrian re Philippines  
27-Nov-75 Bill Shepherd to AH re Ting and **Wallpaper**  
Nd AH to ? re contribution for Fiver Show  
Nd AH to Keith Burgess? - re Fiver Show  
Nd AH to Anthony McCall - re Fiver Show  
01-May-76 Paul Buck to AH  
05-Mar-76 Giles Gordon to AH re **Elements**  
nd Susan Bonvin to AH re Amanda **Welch** work



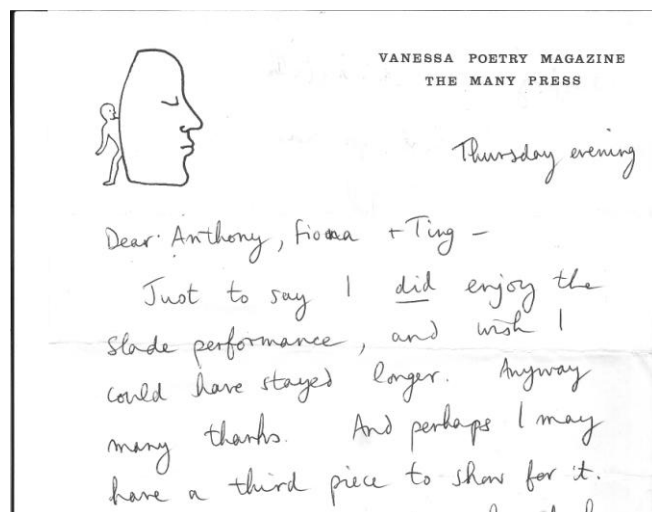
Mickey Greenall and Fiona Templeton in *Head Turns*  
Photo: © The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Line

01-Jun-85 AE to AH

See also: *Rape of the Mind* (1978) the text of which is composed from letters Anthony Howell had written/received.



Extract from letter by John Welch (see *Poetry*) to Anthony Howell, 1976. The pieces referred to would have been Welch's poems inspired by Ting performances.