Robert Janz

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Howell, 14th June 1975, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

for text al

Tearly un sof can fear par me that

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Reedy, Carlyle (1938-)

The place from which the teret was derived.

Notes after attending rehearsals of The Street (1975). Letter to Anthony

Reedy is an experimental poet and performance artist who moved

to the UK from the U.S. in 1964 and was involved in an exhibition organised by Circles with Pat Murphy, Annabel Nicholson, Jane

London Exhibition

Everything, including, The Ting & Free Session to be vehearsed at least twice

Table piece to be rehearsed Ascham St

Bob Janz to be employed to create Barriers et some point - Free Session or solos or Ting or even table prece.

Extract from the notebooks of Anthony Howell, nd, The Theatre of

By Five Concert Pieces and a Free Session at the 1975 London Exhibition, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes claimed "some of its projects are rehearsed for periods as long as a year." Going was 'fully rehearsed' complete with mistakes.

Performance art duo Thom Puckey and Dirk Larsen who

the-reindeer-werk-period for chronology and images)

15 Tong recalls a performance in which Genesis P.Orridge [see

performed at the Art Room; influenced Howard Tong. Puckey describes their work as "pure, non-theatre based performance

art" (see www.thompuckey.com/index.php?/works/1973---1981-

Besider sue of by I am saying you have alread

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Clark, Susan Hiller.

Mistakes Archive

Reindeer Werk (1972-80)

Rehearsal

See: London Film Makers Co-op, Poetry

5 times.

Ritual

Reviews

Reversal Research

Repetition

Reindeer Werk

Rehearsal

Reedy, Carlyle

Rape of the Mind

Sain Dance

Quotidian Quilting Bee

Quarrels

Questionnaire

Question (Curator's) Question (Writer's)

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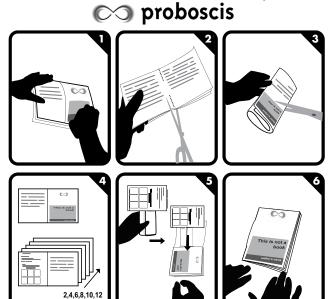
An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre

of Mistakes – Q & R

Marie-Anne Mancio

fiddeA

Q-R



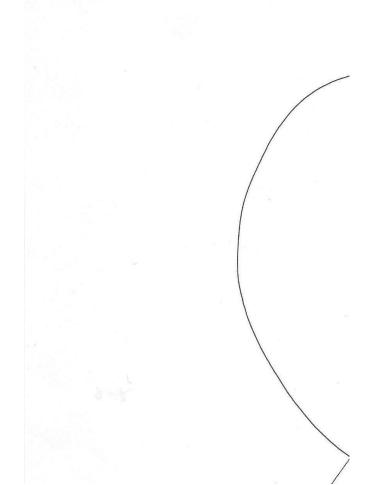
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2009-09-03



an A-Z

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

Quarrels

2

10 We read to be personally tactful - come to some depth terroutedge and prescience of each attents heavier attitudes on faultings however quincley they may seem, heavener ewaily we may be able to critice these quirks. Quarterly, also

Notes from unpublished <mark>notebook</mark> of Anthony <mark>Howell</mark>, nd, C. 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

All the interviewees have attested to the sometimes volatile nature of interactions within The Theatre of Mistakes that resulted in various periods of estrangement between members. Notwithstanding, the idea of opposition was incorporated into works.

SZ-A ns ydW

Question (Writer's):

The format of the A-Z allows for unexpected entries to be placed in proximity. (Any comedy value derived from this is not always unintentional).

Although habit implies reading should begin at A, there is no more reason to start there than at XYZ. In fact, for the reader in possession of the entire set, a variety of reading patterns might be suggested. For example:

for those seeking a basic introduction to Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes:

Begin with a contextualising Seventies, followed by the Introduction for curator Jason E Bowman's essay; Chronology, Core Group, then move on to the performances: Preparations for

74

Contrary to perceptions of the A-Z as a closed set, the circuituous nature of this one means it is always open-ended, never complete. With its potentially irritating instruction to "See also:" each entry attempts to entice the reader to continue their search. Since further reading inevitably entails additional "See also"s (which may ask the reader to read on or even to return to their start point) it becomes apparent this is a narrative without conclusion. (See also: Gossip) This way of reading reflects the entangled nature of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes and the fact that some lacunae in the fabric can never be mended in the

Manager, Kings College, London) who urged me to resist the academic propensity to order. I began instead to relish the fact the same diagram, for instance, appeared in several contexts (on the back of a program; as part of a funding application...) and to appreciate how my readings of it shifted accordingly. Suddenly links and overlaps become clearer, the depth of social and professional relationships revealed.

The decision to cross-reference across the 16 books often results in the replication of information: something reflected in The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. Before attempting to catalogue the latter, I consulted archivist Jan Booth (Archives and Records

Ballet, Dance, Diagrams, Conceptualism, Seventies Or one could begin with Chance, then throw 3 dice to dictate which book to read next (A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4, E=5, F-G=6, H=7, I-K=8, L=9, M=10, N-O=11, P=12, Q-R=13, S=14, T-U=15, V-Z=16) and 4 dice to determine the page number; and so on.

Displacement, The Street, Homage to Pietro Longhi, Going, Rape of the Mind, Orpheus and Hermes, and Homage to Morandi, for those interested in the relationship to dance:

viewer to draw their own conclusions. (see Roles) are little more than photo essays which require the whos, wheres, whats, whys - are not answered at all. Some entries another (see Mistakes and Solution). And some questions - some Sometimes questions posed in one letter begin to be answered in one letter missing. The only entry under Y is you. absence of performer Michael Greenall. There is always at least

Question (Curator's):

nemwoß E nosel

is a collection of ephemera, documentation, and artworks?" particularly if the group has disbanded and the starting point decision-making with regard to an exhibition's content, "So how does the curator develop a methodology for

Questionnaire

Smedt dtiw How and when did you first hear of Ting and become involved

could you describe their main contribution? Who do you think of as integral to The Theatre of Mistakes and

performances evolve? was the creative process; how were decisions taken; how did Group dynamics of Ting - who - it anyone - instigated what; what

How would you describe the nature of your involvement?

session/conversation/performance? What do you see as the inception of Ting? Was it a

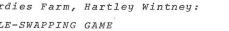
What was your background?

What was your prime contribution to Ting?

What do you think Ting contributed to your evolving practice?

A3HTO, SNOLLIONOS SONIANNOS/O 9 BODY/AURAL A3HTO. M.A NOLLIONOS SONIANAOS 0 S MOUTHE SAWAN BODY/AURAL NOITATOA ROLE

23





Ansight in Fred Revenues, Thing in have been PERFORMANCE & EXHIBITION 150/ JOB (MOHS JHI · Shoilth's 34 INAL GNII ZHL SONARY . Y.I HEE REGOMAT HAN STEDN MOEL-TOORS + 'SBAND & SANIAG RECREATION 531/155373N 76NOS23 KESI, KOMANCE o BHK & GOINGS OUT FOR THE GOUR. "HOOMONA HEAVE SLEERING ACCOMODAL RETINGS, TIME RETINNERS SANINGARY (NOIL UXUTA) (SNINNERA MOGERSHODS' JING FXCERERZED ROOK MOGROUTS, PERFERMINNCE, REHEARSAL - JW45 to ILSNH 'GNIGHONS NEWJINO (SAMOTED) (SPNIL PORTUMES, Security KALUH COOKING' OOD JOBS' KEELING US ALL SNOI/ICINO, PRODUCTION, HOUR KETSING, MEDICAL NON- REPE. FIELES. ARTWORK SENIGNOO עסכחשותאוניניט - פבסמאחניבצ' נאכני לאני LORRESPONDENCE EENSCIENCE Maconviva, Essimini-NOBHI 1 there - ma

bne aldeagned, change within the group, changeable and

Page from The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, nd, c. Summer 1975

determined by chance

What were the limitations or failures of Ting? In retrospect, what was its legacy in art historical terms? The above questionnaire was devised by Jason E Bowman and Marie-Anne Mancio as a basis for questioning participants and

observers of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes in

encouraged to reconfigure and digress. See: Gossip.

conversations. (2008-ongoing). However, interviewees were

mistake?

How was Ting perceived by its audiences and who were they? What levels and forms/models of participation could you identify? The mistake: what do you perceive to be the function of the

Which works impacted on you particularly as a performer/observer?

To what extent did personal relationships inform the work? Of the Roles, which did you enjoy?

Role of women in the collective – in retrospect was there any differentiation?

see it as relevant? Purdies Farm – describe it. What do you associate with it? Describe a typical day there. What performances do you remember seeing there? What was its function for you?

Were you involved in the documentation process? If so, did you

How did economic considerations impact (on the aesthetic of the work/ on your decision to join/leave?)

you conscious of belonging at any point?

How would you contextualise Ting in relation to conceptualism/post-Minimalism/systemic art/performance? Were

More generally, how do you remember the cultural landscape of the Seventies? What other artists influenced you/ were you in proximity with/ witnessed your work?

(A111 Guilting Bee (1974)

6

Knopf, 1983, 32-43) Lucy R. Lippard writes: (in The Artist and the Quilt. Ed. Charlotte Robinson. New York: Purdies farm. In "Up, Down, and Across: A New Frame for Quilts," Signe Lie Howell initiated this artwork at a weekend of events at

(78) "seniity within monotony of women's routines" bétrayin", "noitonu[sib bne viimnofinu" gniverted "culture"; a diary of touch" c :"enutur metaphor for women's lives, for women's 1970, the quilt has become the prime visual bnuone neged fre feminist fo evew wen eff estimated

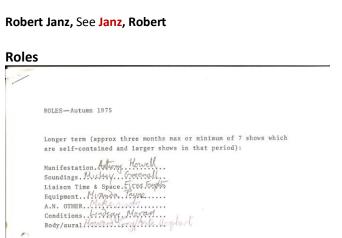
correct to note the quilt has multiple centres of interest. Cf Grids si ans , sizyland s'braqqi Lippard's analysis, she is

(Interview: Victoria Chick, London, 4th Nov 2008) "I did a few squares. I'm terrible with a needle."

(Conversations: Oslo, 13"-14" October 2008) that she grew tired of it in the end. Signe Howell remembers having to urge everyone to finish it but

(Conversations: London, November 2008) "All the women." And he telt himself unwelcome. duilt making. "That's who she means by everyone," he says, drily. into a silent room and the women in there all looked up trom their Amikam Toren recalls Quilting Bee differently, saying he walked

Longer term (approx three months max or minimum of 7 shows which are self-contained and larger shows in that period): Manifestation Automy Howell Soundings, Michay Greenal. Liaison Time & Space . Fiona Tompto Equipment .. Mirayda A.N. OTHER. Mike Grown. Conditions. Lindsay, Morran. Body/aural Hanand. Cong Ante. Maghard Longer term roles for the following period to be decided unanimously. No person should have the same role more than twice in succession.



And for a more general consideration of ritual: On Ritual Performance Research, no.3, Winter 1998

Further reading: 'Performance Art and Ritual: Bodies in Performance' Erika Fischer-Lichte Theatre Research International 22(1) 1997:22-37.

Theatre of Mistakes Archive) unpublished interview with Christopher Hobbs and john White, 1974, The ritualistic drumming for the sense of timelessness it induces. (See some systemic music (such as Reich's or Glass's) with primitive, Hiller's Dream Mapping). Anthony Howell compared listening to

reveal, this interest in ritual was not unanimous or uncritical: However, as notes from Anthony Howell's unpublished notebook

than an adding of some be verenter on Explanan of Recordenty avoidance of Rum gestinal and problems of demestic and interior genus and

disappeared, to be replaced by structure as the over-riding dreamlike that may have been present in events at Purdies has language is so formalised that any notion of the mystical or rituals of leave-taking), but by now the group's performance Later works such as Going also draw on ritual (in this instance, the

concern.

death, Fiona Templeton wrote: Montano about her own relationship to ritual with respect to When questioned in the 1980s by performance artist Linda

rituals, so think about them more, make symbolism a task until it holds but that's what it's for. Americans are jealous to create no questions, or I still asked. Automatic form distracts from what "Ritual has been automatic and gave answers that seemed to have

(Performance Artists Talking in the Eighties, University of California, 2000, ritual only symbolizes the need for tradition"

423).



The guilt was not 'completed' - though perhaps completion was never the point - but has been perfectly preserved and is in the possession of Prof. Signe Lie Howell, Oslo. The above polaroids,

dating to 1974, do not do its colour justice.

Quilting Bee Signe Lie [Howell] Photos: ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive





Quotidian

8

of milk becomes transformed. Vermeer where the simplest gesture of a woman holding a pitcher Anthony Howell has compared Waterfall to the paintings of



Vermeer The Maid Servant c.1658

Orpheus and Hermes; the 'costumes' and 'props'. instead on everyday movements; text - with the exception of use of movement which did not require trained dancers but drew The quotidian is also apparent in The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes'

Anthony Howell dressed as a silver rabbit. Rabbit (random memory courtesy of Fiona Templeton)

11 Nd ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive Fiona Templeton and Mickey Greenall perform Rape of the Mind



claiming: "The words were mine but the thoughts were theirs." participating in biological wartare. He later repudiated this, during the Korean War. Schwable contessed under duress to Frank H. Schwable who was captured by Chinese Communists advertising, propaganda, tear etc. It cites U.S. Marine Colonel and mass submission - forced contessions, brainwashing, in 1956 and explored concepts such as techniques of individual instructor in psychiatry at Columbia University) was last published Menticide and Brainwashing by Jooat A. M. Meerloo, MD, (an The Rape of the Mind: The Psychology of Thought Control, Rape of the Mind (1978)

Rain Dance See Active Circles, Englishness The News, September 1976

Bizarre dance brings rain -as forecast!

RAIN fell just 12 hours after the end of a bizarre "rain dance" on a village green.

Members of the Ting Theatre of Mistakes, a modern art company, carried out an eight-hour dance marathon at Hartley Wintney to bring rain.

Although a spokesman for the group said he was not too certain of success the next morning rain fell on the tinder

dry countryside. The company, which per-forms all over the country at festivals and art galleries, carried out the marathon dance as part of normal rehearsals. Group spokesman Pete Stick-land told the "News": "Some

eople may think we're odd.

They don't understand it. "We put together move-ments similar to those per-formed by Druids in the early times. Many people come to watch us

Mr. Stickland said that last Thursday's rain dance was a

"one-off thing" in a bid to end the drought.

The group of four men and three girls aged between 24 and 30 live at a farm at Hazeley Heath.

SURPRISES

There, another member of the group said last Friday: "We're nicely surprised with the rain, but will have to wait and see just how long it lasts. We are all very pleased with our eight hours' work." At the met office at the

Royal Aircraft Establishment, Farnborough, a spokesman said: "Friday's rain was quite expected. It was on the cards and we had it in sight for a long time.

tribe (1950-2; and again in 1953-4), defines ritual thus: Victor Turner, who studied what was then Rhodesia's Ndembu (9vinc)A

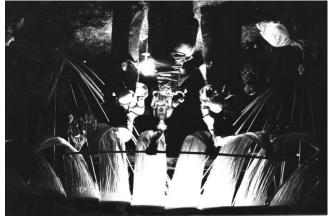
(Unpublished review labelled 'lans', August 1974, The Theatre of Mistakes

*STTEGIING WOOJUSNU TO

and OH FUCK pourse over with sacred glue. Flesh is eaten in form sacrifice. The innitiate is called forward, stripped, laid out, noiteitinni rol noitersquer Long preparation for invitation By taper, a coalescense of ritual, reverberations of Noh. The drumming, shimmering rythms on hubcap cymbols, steel barrel drums. Expectation rises with the moon. Masks, moving sounds: flute,

".errel store tet = let - let." .noonstis get more ferns." forest are gathered. Altare, tapers, veils come into focus. cluttered barn, arranging spaces and shadows. Mushrooms from Snow drifts in with Wick. Quiet warm smiles. Gradual clearing of

The Theatre of Mistakes Archive Performance at Purdies Farm, nd Photo ©The Theatre of Mistakes,



See also: Susan Hiller, Signe Lie Howell, Anthony McCall Ritual

"a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, [e.g. masks] performed in a sequestered place, and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests" (V. Turner 'Symbols in African Ritual' in JLDolgin, DS Kemnitzer and DM Schneider (eds) Symbolic Anthropology: A reader in the study of symbols and meanings, New York: Columbia University Press, 1977, 183)

Turner alluded to the transformative power of rituals, wherein symbols (which comprised, for him, objects, activities, words, relationships, events, gestures, or spatial units) with a multiplicity of significances were manipulated in order to unite individuals within the social order or to fulfil psychological needs. Ritual then, as a form of social drama. Turner influenced Richard Schechner (see By Means of Performance: Intercultural Studies of Theatre and Ritual which Schechner edited along with Willa Appel, University of Cambridge, 1990), as did Allan Kaprow's The Seven Qualities of Happenings (1966). Schechner sees ritual as belonging with theatre, play, games, and sport. These activities are linked by - amongst other things - their attitude to time and their adherence to rules. He asserts:

"performing onstage, performing in special social situations (public ceremonies, for example), and performing in everyday life are a continuum" (Performance Studies: An Introduction, Routledge 2002, 116). cf Erving Goffmann The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, 1959.

The influence of ritual in performance art can be seen in Beuys' exploration of shamanism and his non-verbal actions; the exorcisms of Hermann Nitsch; Marina Abramovic's durational works. Ron Athev's mutilations, and so on. Evidence of an interest in ritual occurs in the early practice of The Theatre of Mistakes,

particularly in activities around the Ting and Purdies farm (Susan 19

17

12

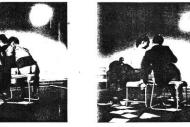
Program, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: Letters

ADMISSION FREE

Rape of the mind is the term for the insertion of subliminal images into film — a technique banned in advertising. In this play, a text derived from letters' is read by a man and a woman who meanwhile exchange clothes (that look as ordinary on the one as on the other). Glimpses of inner life (the letters) are juxtaposed with glimpses of parts of the body. Each constitutes a continual distraction from the other and either the image or the meaning fails to register echoing the illegal technique.

RAPE OF THE MIND



The Theatre of Mistakes' Rape of the Mind deploys an additive and subtractive structure. A man and a woman seated at a table

read from a letter, adding, removing, exchanging clothes.

.mzimijqo io gnilosi s issig ooi tohosgas oi jon Ylqyi J'hob scall 0158 things up for you too much, but things my end have got suddenly restantingly complicated. An irvoir, a l believe hat I and evoured It would be nice to see you. Sincerely... Susan her wer had hers on Monday. Many happy returns. Truely. I hope I haven't messed second hand for about 5650, so we are asking you for this and lots of Misses. Love to Pletro. In the evenings lavid and I sit around the sit conditioner, talking of the old days. We would be grateful fiy you would let us have these as soon as possible. Forgive me for being somewhat prolix. Anywhere. Any echoes? Photo essential for toply, Mill exchange. A frank full lotter (what is there to loss?) for meaningful relationship. Let me know when and where. It would be nice to see you. Sincerely., Susan has pust had here to loss?) for meaningful relationship. Let me know when and where. be able to reply properly in the near future. Please write your friend. Let me know what you think. We know that we can obtain a In or near London. Photo a must. Hope that it does not inconvenie you. We are very sorry to have to dolay. There is someone, some-whore, perhaps very near. I am certain. At present I am secing if we can get a little help from similar allocations, and hope to to make the climb. Confidences respected. Hope it all goes well. Siven preliminary consideration here jast week and has now been passed on to the assistant director who hopes to put your request beings you would trug to clarify this and ist me how exactly when you wigh to make the finh (ontidances tenessed when you wigh) Tell me about anything you do and what you are writing. Photograf returned, promised. Anywhere. I love you. Your application was Рротодгарћ hearing from you in the near future. Let me have further information on other aspects as soon as you can. Please write with photo. Is there such a person? Otherwise I look forward to .nok wor the elite need apply. I can also supply reading material etc. Sand photo undraped if possible. Daytime preferred. Try me. Thank-you more again for all your help. I shall look to hearing In any event, the trustees' interest is secured by mortgage. (the elite need apply. I can also supply reading material etc. both love. «Anyway, extra pages of your super photography would be very welcome. David said you were going away for a couple of weeks. It appears from our records that an account for the amount stated as not been paid. I don't know what to say eacept to say the

Annotated extract from script ©The Theatre of Mistakes, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive. It is probable that the 'Susan' and 'David' referred to are Susan Hiller and David Coxhead.

Research See: Empirical Reversal

Poster for Reindeerwerk, nd

".noizzezdo diw bestioozze zi noititeqen

see Bibliography)

Repetition

Occurs in many exercises and works. See Three Act Piece (Act 2 and Epilogue) where actions are reversed and speeded up.

(The Analysis of Performance Art: A Guide to its Theory and Practice, xiii,

performance art] similar to a primary colour in painting (in that it cannot be created by a mixture of any other elements). In analysis

Described by Anthony Howell as "a primary element [in

caught fire, only to be rescued by Reindeer Werk. (Conversation: Howard Tong, London, October 2008)

ham Street, Londo

bne sitselq ni flezmid beqqerw [mos.egbirro-qzizeneg.www

June 1976

At the time set for a performance to a local and invited audience, the performers reversed all their actions of

REVERSAT

the previous half hour.

9T

T3 201200 Hiller and David Co