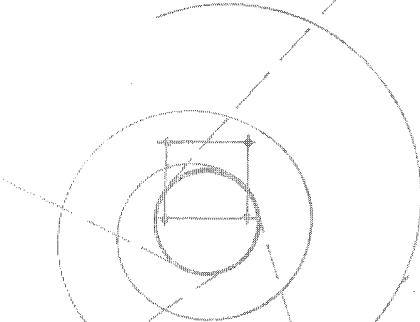


SPACE 90



CATALOGUE CREDITS

Queensland College of Art Gallery
Telephone (07) 395 9161 Fax (07) 399 7419
Address: Clearview Terrace, Morningside, Qld 4170

Curators and exhibition co-ordinators:
Marlene Hall, QCA Gallery, Lehan Ramsay, Chasm
Studio, Art Assistant: Alf Harris.

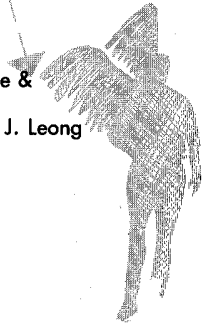
LIVEWORM for their creative design and layout work

CREDITS

Produced by LIVEWORM Studio
Designed by Emma Minchin, Nicole Taske &
Annamarie Uhr
Finished Art by Wendy E. Brough & Lee J. Leong

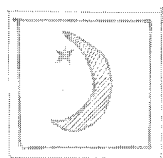
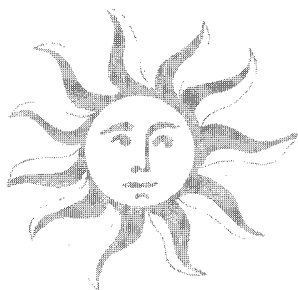
SPACE 1990

Queensland College of Art Gallery
3-26 October 1990

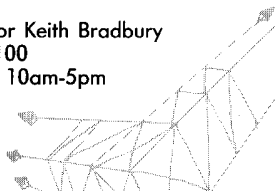


SPACE 90

Space 90 is an exhibition of works by Brisbane studio-based artists. The studios represented are BAFStudio, The Flaming Star, Chasm and Artcast. Collaborative studios remain one of the most successful examples of Artist run initiatives. All works will be for sale.



3-26 October
QCA Gallery, Clearview Terrace, Morningside
Q 4170
Contact: Marlene Hall or Keith Bradbury
(07) 395 9161 / 395 9100
Gallery Hours: Mon-Fri 10am-5pm



INTRODUCTION

Space 90 is a quick glance at the "What's On" pages of Brisbane art practice; a look at the grassroots level of our burgeoning culture industry.

Collaborative studios have a long and strong history in Brisbane, though much of this history has been lost through lack of documentation. It's interesting to note that despite the constant re-creation of the city, spiralling rents and continued public resistance to contemporary art, these studios are thriving. It's obvious that as a base in which to pool information and resources, the collaborative studio remains one of the most successful examples of "ARI's"*

It is hoped that this exhibition will mark a moment of recognition of the importance of this kind of activity, and be an encouragement to artists to document all aspects of their art practice.

Many thanks are due to Marlene Hall and Keith Bradbury for their tireless assistance, to LIVEWORM Studio for the Catalogue and Invitation, to Peter Anderson for his writing, and to the artists participating in this exhibition.



Lehan Ramsay

* Artist-Run Initiatives



ART WORK SPACE

Local History/Local Practice

Over the past decade the Brisbane contemporary artworld has witnessed the rise and fall of a wide array of artist-run ventures; galleries, publications, co-operative projects, advocacy organisations and studios. While some of these activities have had a reasonably high profile, others seem to have passed almost unnoticed. However, irrespective of the form of activity or its public recognition, all have had an impact on the overall texture of the local artworld, influencing not only what is produced, but also *how* it comes into being. Often, the creative work of organising, discussing and maintaining particular ventures has seemed as important as any of the individual artworks produced. In many cases, it has been almost impossible to clearly separate the production processes from the final "product".

While the history of much of this art activity has quickly slipped into the awkward space of a constantly fluctuating "collective memory", occasional attempts have been made to develop a set of stable sites and practices, to assist the long term maintenance of a more coherent record. There have been a number of exhibitions documenting particular "aspects" or "moments" of local activity, such as "Know Your Product" or "The Demolition Show". While the publication of *Eyeline* since 1987, has clearly worked to limit the spread of "cultural amnesia". Artists have also begun to take the documentation of their activities more seriously, recognising that they have a role to play in constructing the history of their own practice.

During the 1980s many important changes took place within the arts industry, some generated by direct shifts in public sector funding policy, others as a result of more "grass roots" initiatives. At the beginning of the eighties, activities which fell outside either the commercial system, or the major state and regional galleries, tended to be grouped together under the name "Alternative Spaces". Locally, this meant that projects as different from each other as One Flat and the Institute of Modern Art, tended to get classified together, in opposition to some mythical "main stream". However, during the 1983 ANZART "Open Sandwich" Alternative Spaces




conference in Hobart, a division emerged between Visual Arts Board funded spaces, and self-supporting artist-run spaces. This prompted two VAB (VACB) "spaces" reports, leading eventually to changes in funding policy and a new art spaces "structure", based around a stable national network of Contemporary Art Spaces.

This new structure, which positioned funded spaces against a more fluid set of "Artist-Run Spaces" or "Initiatives", clearly had an impact on the sorts of new projects that were developed by artists. Locally, the Institute of Modern Art began to function as a "main stream alternative", against which some artist-run activities developed their programmes and approaches. Of course, these initiatives were not simply oppositional, but involved a complex set of complementary and co-operative practices as well. At times, work within the Artist-Run Initiative context has been perceived as a possible stepping-stone to future "recognition" by the CAS network, or even inclusion within the state gallery or commercial systems. A significant number of artists who now show with commercial dealers, first produced and exhibited work within the context of Artist-Run Initiatives, and many have maintained their involvement in this field.

For many artists working within the ARI framework, the division between processes of production and exhibition is far from clear. In many instances these two activities take place in the same physical space. Thus, a dominant tendency for ARIs has been the combination of exhibition and studio spaces, or a constantly shifting use of space; from work space, to public display space or performance space. In some instances, the actual "work" is what happens when things are subjected to particular "artistic" protocols, or "legitimization strategies" such as sending out invitations or giving objects and activities a "title".

While clearly a lot of artist-run activity has taken place locally over the past ten years, it is in fact quite difficult even to simply list the various projects, spaces and other initiatives. In many instances the buildings used as studios or galleries have been demolished. With documents and other records lost, or scattered amongst the general ephemera of individual's "personal archives". Thus, any attempt to produce a full history of local Artist-Run Initiatives would require a substantial use of private as well as public resources. However, the following quick sketch of some of the main



initiatives, vague and partial as is, provides some context for current activities.

Of all the activities of the early eighties, the most frequently discussed now is "Q Space", although during the time it "operated" few local artists or members of the public were actually involved. However, its emphasis on documentation, and the involvement of a couple of key contemporary artists, ensured it a significant place as a model for later activity. In contrast, the work of "One Flat" and its various permutations ("O flate") between 1982 and 1986, was both more directly public, as well as open to a much wider range of artistic involvements. While "One Flat" initially tended to function as an exhibition space, following the shift of operations from West End to various sites in the city, it functioned as the focus for a more complex mix of activities from exhibition, to performance, publication and other multimedia projects.

Numerous common approaches and concerns linked "One Flat" with "Red Comb House" and the magazine "Art Wonder Stories" while some overlaps of personnel from these latter projects provided a link to the more focussed 1984 exhibition space "A ROOM". Most of the seven artists involved in "A ROOM" had also been active at the Institute of Modern Art during its important "guest curator programme" (1982-84). However, the aim of a "A ROOM" was to provide a space for the participating artists to produce/exhibit work without the organisational encumbrances required by more permanent institutions.

The three years following middle of the decade saw a great deal of interaction between artists involved in "That Space", "The Observatory", "John Mills National" and the establishing of the Queensland Artworkers Alliance. While "The Observatory" had only a short life, it played a crucial role in developing interstate exchanges around photographically based art work. Its demolition in April 1986 drew attention to the complex relationship between property speculation and the provision of studio and exhibition space — five years later, "The Observatory" site is still an undeveloped "car park". The photographic emphasis of "The Observatory" was matched by the dominance of performance as the key concern of "John Mills National", although many static exhibitions also took place within the space.

While there were numerous studios within the "John Mills" building, they were not as closely linked to the exhibition space as those at "That Space". Established in mid 1985, "That Space" operated with both a studio and exhibition programme, with the aim of promoting and exposing young Queensland artists. In addition to local exhibitions, "That" also exhibited some work by both interstate and overseas artists, produced a regular newsletter and ran a range of other events from lectures to performances. The demise of "That Space" in early 1988, again just in advance of the demolition gangs, left Brisbane without any public artist-run "space", although the QAA and *Eyeline* were by this time quite established.

Over the last couple of years two other exhibition based initiatives, "Arch Lane: Public Art" and "Bureau" were set up, but for various reasons have ceased to operate. "Arch Lane" began with a good deal of promise, however, budget and personnel constraints tended to restrict its ability to network or develop its programme. "Bureau", a shop-front space in the City Plaza, was made available through the QAA with the aim of developing short-term experimental projects. While the initial period of the project seemed quite active, overall interest in the possibilities of such a public space was not sustained. During the last twelve months two artist-run exhibition spaces "Brutal" and "AGLASSOFWATER" (recently renamed "Site"), have been showing a variety of local and interstate work, as well as organising occasional other events.

Interestingly, while quite a range of other non-site-specific projects and events, such as ZIP, Axis or "Interface", have developed identifiable public profiles, there are few records of activities which have been primarily oriented towards studio practice. Even published material produced by "mixed" spaces such as "That", is almost totally dedicated to exhibition activities. Thus, while there are fairly clear indications of links between artists in the exhibition context, the important artistic associations that occur within studios are almost totally invisible. Similarly, while quite a range of creative activities often take place in any single studio, the relocation of individual works within the art gallery tends to eliminate this diversity. Clearly, while there is still much to be done to construct a full account of local art practice, this exhibition provides another important "moment" in that process.



Peter Anderson
August 1990



Photo by Leihan Ramsay

BAFStudio
F2/331 George Street Brisbane City Qld 4001



BAFSTUDIO

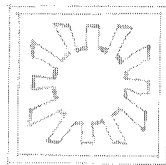
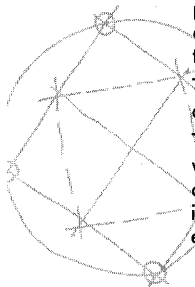
BAFStudio has been operating since May 1989. The group comprising this studio has been together for about 2½ years — since the demise, in late 1987, of THAT Space and the John Mills building (Entrepot and John Mills National) as studio and gallery spaces. At that time we established a studio in Margaret Street. Five of the founding members of the Margaret Street studio now form the BAF collective.

The studio comprises Mark Davies, Sharon Jewell, and John Waller, who use the studio on a full-time basis, and Tony Adams (architecture student), and Sebastian Di Mauro, who use the studio on a part-time basis.

Although there has been no over-riding policy dictating the specific format for the collective or the direction of the studio, the long term tenure (6-10 years) allows for the development of a distinct studio identity and for the instigation and realization of long-term projects. One such project is the establishment of a part-time gallery space, adjacent to the main studio area, to exhibit, primarily, the work of studio members.

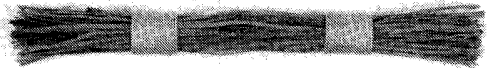
The particular character of the studio remains open to change and extension.

The studio also functions as a convenient point of contact with other members of the community. This allows for a range of critical dialogue and the cross-fertilization of ideas — which we feel is important to an informed and evolving art practice.





di mauro



Sebastian Di Mauro

Ritual

acrylic on canvas, bleached tree roots, sisal rope (187 x 102cm) 1990