

THE CHAPEL ON THE HILLSIDE - OUTSIDE THE PADDOCK

Carl A. Mears

How to deal in a meaningful manner with "the ordinary"? It has seemed for a while that this is one of the most pressing concerns when trying to come-to-terms with art-practice in the 21st Century. It is a given, that art-practice is a human activity. Neither dogs nor narwhals do it as far as we know, and as a necessarily human activity, of enormous complexity, it lacks a singular designated form and/or function. The non-specific nature, but the savage insistence of practice, allows divergence over time through every aspect of both form and content and the lack of functionality has long been taken as a sacred trust.

Over the past 120 years, a proliferation of media foible, has followed technological invention. Even more marked in recent years has been the pursuit of scale, large scale – size. In size, form and production, art practice is now a rival in the areas of science, entertainment and gargantuan financial enterprise. We have come to inhabit the age of 'the Spectacle' as Debord would have it.

More than this, conscience and consciousness of spirit has been overtaken, annexed, corrupted, bought and then sold as a pup, by the forces of capital and government. Using the bogus scent of democracy and egalitarianism art is widely traded on the market-exchange of fashion and national ego. Product placement abounds with prestige consumables and automobiles and global formulaic fantasies of sporting competition, dominated by team sports each touting singular jousting athletes.

It is strange to think how, in spite of so many young artists now playing with digital aesthetics, it was actually Warhol who saw it coming most clearly. The massive shift from depth to surface that Warhol explained with celebrity culture and advertising has now taken hold of language itself and spread across the planet. It's no wonder that since the 1990s the political, social, and economic aspects of artistic production have become increasingly interchangeable and hard to distinguish from one another.¹

Institutes of learning have become industries of national capital, and a self-cancelling occupation for punters doomed to spend their lives in servitude paying off their tuition fees. Vague generalities, posing as cutting edge attitudes of progress and newly invented disciplines, appear in international advertisements for new degree courses, symposia, journals and job placements. The avenues of tradition in the arts have been blurred to such an extent where even the vestiges of historic paths of learning and practice are obscured. Fashionable and radical demands for advances in media, have allowed the Introspective Quest to become a kaleidoscopic training ground for the most banal of vanities, and to generate vanitas for psychopaths, sociopaths and good time Charlies. Art schools too, as the academy at large, are culpable in this masquerade of the Demands of Capital. Out of all of this, misunderstood carnivals emerge in every second country or every third city, Biennales, Triennials and old fashioned Annuals. Congregations of curators, academics and theorists quibble over remote control units in the mediated world of A.R.T.

It is a time of 'Spectacle' and the cashing/crashing in on the integrity of Art, which in the past generated its own values through praxis, gaining respect through the time it took to insist on the necessary proof which it took, over time ... under the aegis of the Academy – though increasingly less through the twentieth century.

Somewhere in all of this risible activity, self-designated artists frantically wrestle to choose the criteria which they

feel suits them, or re-invent simulacra to suit their misunderstandings. Neologisms abound freely and are instantly adopted from the Lexicons of Learning or arcane Teutonic Texts and Gallic gimmicks. Others are happily tried on without a mirror as cast offs from video games, techno jargon, newspeak from un-social media or gratuitously accrued from the spittle at the back of the school bus.

The Chapel into Motel, the Motel into an Arena of Conjecture, scathing wit and independent thinking:

There was a Chapel. It was just as austere as it should have been; a dash of Calvin and with a touch of Malt for comfort. It was set on a city-corner on two angles; lengthways uphill, and sideways - down. The altar had been east and uphill where steep-stacked houses stretched and crouched against the forty degrees of tilt. Across the road were mirrored more prim pursed-lip dwellings and notices on the lamp posts recommended unorthodox parking instructions. The entry had been on the uphill while at the western end were raised steps seven rises high.



Figure 1. (Image from Google Earth)

Photographer Mandy Barker's online appeal for old footballs washed up on the world's beaches resulted in Penalty, a series of four images designed to highlight the impact of plastic having accumulated in the world's oceans. The balls were photographed as they were found, unwashed and unaltered, some containing seawater, others drained. Some were home to creatures, which included a shrew, an ants' nest and a family of crabs, while others showed signs of having been bitten by turtles and fish.²

So we find the chapel poised. It has stood there for over one hundred years. It ignores the tidal flow of office working traffic; sporadic shoppers, uncertain about parking fines. Children teeter run and jump, squealing. For the last ten years, its existence has moved from sacred to secular: Crimson has changed to aubergine, lime wash to latex bright-white, the scent of altar candles to that of Mr. Sheen, and the rant of rectors to the chase of team sports on the giant field plasma screen.

And the choir-loft has become a decorous balcony, which communicates with the en suite bedrooms, scraggled into the odd shaped corners of the gables. From the balcony a view below onto life at its most mundane and tacky. Red, raw cheap leather; rolled and tucked to bursting, ranges about a large low coffee table, a small square stage whose only accoutrement is a rack containing plastic toy letters. They relate to an anagram used in an older schema, but they sit there as obdurate as the artist (in residence) in a grumpy mood - small, glowering, and slightly malevolent.

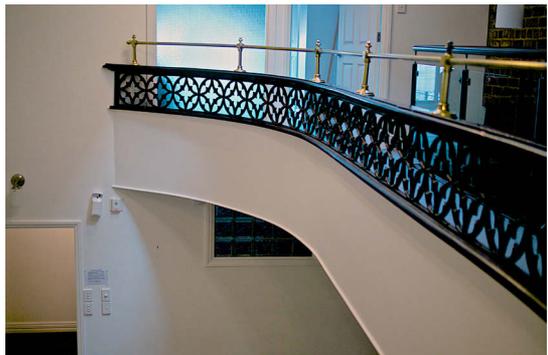


Figure 2

Stout looking cardboard and black plastic laminate furniture, is arranged for glasses, bottles, plates and food prepared in the modern display kitchen, adjacent to the sprawl room. Or more than likely hasty-tasty take-out, from the restaurants nearby for consumption in front of the television altar of twenty-six living channels. It was and is, as modern and stylish as the magazines and advice from Ikea savants on the World Wide Web at a certain time.

It was a great pleasure to make a studio visit with the wonderfully generous Fluxus pioneer Jean Dupuy this afternoon in Nice, France. We talked about forgetting in order to 'lighten' the brain and achieve greater creative agility; and the power of suggestion rather than heaviness and of pushing a point....³

The chapel-function has long faded, deminished to a solitary rose-red stained roundel in the apex. The 'feature' window, high above the Panasonic Plasma and the visual clatter of kitchen devices, now offers pleasure and promise to travelers who pay handsomely to sample pseudo-sophistication beyond the homely.

"Tacky", says the artist.



Figure 3

On the hugely generous main wall of the Chapel Guest House, had been two huge painterly paintings of much slash and dash. Of dingy palette, these U.S. scale paintings had been installed in the original design as a foil to enhance bright furnishings. They had occupied a large vertical expanse of planar space and were not intruding upon the AMBIENCE of people and the furnishings. These and other art-full artifacts had been REMOVED, by the ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE for the duration of time she was to be installed in this space and during this time she had insinuated HER world, into the Chapel – this Chapel Guest House. One small painted work - of no merit, was found to be functional in concealing a broken window. It was from an early period of chapel history, and was left revealed. The artist: KIMBERLEY McALEVY; but in truth her names had become several.

During the time of her occupancy, the Chapel became an artwork of a sculptural nature. It was a TRANSFORMATION more profound than the de-sanctification, which had accompanied the transformation from sacred to secular complete with the licence of fitness for hospitality purposes from the Dunedin City Council.

Now, for the first time it had been revealed as a 'set'. Various artefacts, tools and histories remained, and it was that which Kimberley imported into it which RE-MADE it. There was no category nor label. It was identifiable now by all the things that it was no longer: Clearly it was no longer a chapel. Nor a motel, nor even a gallery, though there were elements of all those things present, as there was also of being a modern domestic dwelling.

Undoubtedly curating is a new discursive formation, as defined by Michel Foucault, which has rapidly developed since the 1970s. This new profession has as its main tasks the production, the distribution and the reception of cultural meta structures through the combination of cultural products. Also it instituted a now hierarchical formation, when taking over the creative side of organising projects and shows from the self-organisation of artists' communities in the '60s.⁴

There were other imported utilities for living; cooking, eating, drinking, relaxing; the artist was after all in Residence, and as such she was so, all the time - an artist, a doyen, a prima donna, a labourer too. Labour was well evident from many hours of handpainting and script; a work-table; littered from activities of annotation, nomenclature, labeling and addressing. There were mighty lists of persons unknown, of correspondence, of mailings. There were references to intense activities of charting, mysteries of seemingly deep-seriousness. After the oversize grubby canvasses were taken away they left a wall as high as the sky, white and over two storeys tall. There were things which might have been drawings, construed from documents, from extended experiences of living to be installed on that wall. They tended to the factual, as records of historic mysteries, crisp and compelling, and expensive serious frames.

An old joke about "sculpture being something which you tripped over when you stepped back to look at a painting" may have been the cause of Duchamp's quip: "stupid as a painter", but in fact the inanity of both comments obfuscate any serious examination of any inherent truths. To dismiss each one needs to remember the Jack Kerouac character, Japhy in *The Dharma Bums* and his admonition that "comparisons are odious".⁵ His argument being, that experience and concomitant realisation, are the core of understanding. Through the untrammelled questioning of her practice, Kim enacts in real-life the conundrums of living, for/as her self.

The chapel was chosen well, a point to stay to review the journey so far; an extraordinary vulgarism of ordinariness. Louche, but comfortable. McAlevy had searched the city in order to find, and choose the right place, for her intercession and occupation. She had investigated, researched and deliberated over half a dozen potential venues of a similar nature, and also considered and rejected several bone-fide gallery spaces for her transformation.

That existence should be palpable is the essence of sculptural activity. It evokes the actual and enacts the sensational, deploying sensations to the sensate-self, without coding, with no illusion, no collusion. The 'tripping over' is a wonderful thing. Perceptions and sensations are ignored - to the backward-walking person's peril. At a recent show of the septuagenarian Marina Abramovich⁶, for instance, she passes a handbag-mirror to a visitor in an empty gallery space instructing him to hold it and look behind him for "reality lies behind you." This is the late blooming realisation of a septuagenarian. A mid-twenties artist can only bundle in the accumulated stuff, itemise it over the many years, and let it be how it seems: dense, convoluted, precious, trite and considered. A snail trace of delicate hoarded ephemera with little intrinsic meaning except that we might all have produced a similar trail, had we been so aware at the time. McAlevy's deliberate fossilising of a lifetime of observation, is a magnificent gesture; recognition, of the minutia of existence, most particularly - of the **very ordinary**.

There was a table once, for dinners and debate, in the Chapel on the Hillside. It displayed evidence of these activities which would have been mundane in any secretarial office in the once-Chapel. Extraordinarily though in its currently furnished state as executive lair; here are addresses, piles of stationery, evidence of packing, boxing and posting and also the tract of constancy: The Dictionary. Documents and detritus of a life, make their way into an unpredictable



Figure 4

They erupt into or from the bedroom - that the artist currently occupied. We were invited to explore the en suite bathroom, and witness the female arcana of her every-new day. She too, had offered the other bedrooms to colleagues and friends to share in the mystique - of a life truly poised in review.

There was also public accounting-graffiti, on the walls of institutional 'restrooms' which she took as her offices. They spoke eloquently to scores of visitors who had other chores in mind. One sedate 'office', became unusable for any other users for some time, through her having changed the lock on it so a protracted graffiti account could be inscribed in tortured italic.



Figure 5

and unknowable future from a charted past. There is a personal history throughout the edifice, which seems to be being presented and or charted again through a resurrection of detritus and 'of having existed'. Her history of accumulated documents, diverse mailing, texting, and other covert actions over many years; suggested a shape for a well lived life. She had been charting progress through obliquely viewing these actions and activities of her life lived so far; to bear witness, to scrutinise, to itemise and to pillories. The corridor is strewn it seems with every recipe and certificate of a childhood progressing into adolescence and then into adulthood.

Here the word 'dollar' was written once for every dollar she had spent during her time within the institution. It was wall paper - patterned and tasteful. Another room was painted a particular blue which had been specified by Ron Mueck, artist, on the walls of the Christchurch Art Gallery and everywhere else in the world for his international tour of super-figuration. Kimberley sourced the make and shade by mail in order to replicate it correctly in her own subversion. Her reality warp, gave cause for public wonder; however as Don Judd once said "all an art work had to do was be interesting ..."

Through all that spells 'wilful', McAlevey identifies her need to be an artist in her own terms. In old-speak 'to find her self'. Through all her living - with all her life. A destination is hardly planned. Rather the evolving process has become increasingly relevant, even essential to her being. It is complex while constant. She allows herself to take advantage of every situation, recognising every domestic opportunity or absurdity, taking and examining the curious juxtaposition of unique moment and enjoying their juxtaposition in the greater world outside of that moment. It is a vision as complex and complete as that which might have been of J.M.W. Turner or William Blake, or as stridently necessary as that of Van Gogh, or as independently drawn as is the uncompromising Kimberley McAlevey.

It is a perspectival view from the inner-eye of a text-liberated young woman of her time, almost one-fifth through the twenty-first century. She is being pushed and shoved by historical and generational expectations, by fashion, religion (and what must inevitably replace it), male-management, class consciousness and class expectations in a 'classless' society and textual romancing! She delicately manoeuvres to examine these things she is asked to accept and she pushes back, questioning. Probing deeper into more perplexing issues, which refuse to sit quietly, for she cannot continue to take them for granted. And now the arena of art practice, of course, has to be redefined, wilfully and deliberately. It is elastic, resilient and most subject to 'pure will'. **The Academy must crumble.**

She eschews the common-place social-media and technical affectations of her generational contemporaries. She will not accept shoddy substitutes; she accepts the reality of her own working-class background as the material she works from, and her work-ethic as being part of that reality. She loves to look at it; she loves to consider it as a snail trail of substance, as real as the stones encountered on the journey. And how it looks - all spread out and in process is, how it was in the Chapel on the Hillside, way outside the Expanded Field⁸ or of our humble paddick. Kimberley has in fact through this one great (and big) work in the Chapel managed to encapsulate her cognisant life until that point AND delineated accurately the International aspiration of sculpture work.

She captures the activity concerned with the reality of living her life and maintaining her self through menial labours. The female category of labour of whatever nature has all been considered, for she is a practical and evaluative person. These are truly avant-garde considerations. She has imagined, invented and realised her self-role, as 'person' in the menial world of employment, in the academic world as it was for her; and so too in the art world; each with fuzzy, inadequate edges for each category. She illuminates these categories a little more in the challenge she throws at them all.

The Chapel, with its physical edifice as a statement of sacred and religious ritual and now repurposed as a commercial motel; is almost a joke upon the "no room at the Inn" event, more than two millennia ago. The artist had attended a Catholic School. More word sub-version surfaces here. There was almost no room for her at the art-school - she had pushed the parameters and eventually had found her own inn from which to consider her own journey.

We are asked in the Chapel, to consider the tasteful and expensive isolated detritus of living and writing an academic submission. We discover a modest smudged photocopy of an interior; professionally float mounted behind two millimetre thick glass within white gloss frames and hung tastefully upon the gallery-white walls (from which the delightful designer décor artwork has been removed). It is modestly revealed as the reverse of the actual 'parchment' gained as a Bachelor of Art. It represents thousands and thousands of dollars of debt, and is anonymously displayed, as a poverty stricken support for a traditional looking drawing, which happens to be a photocopy. If nothing is ever what it seems - then Kimberley picks at it to make sure, with heavy green painted nails. Those drawings are also

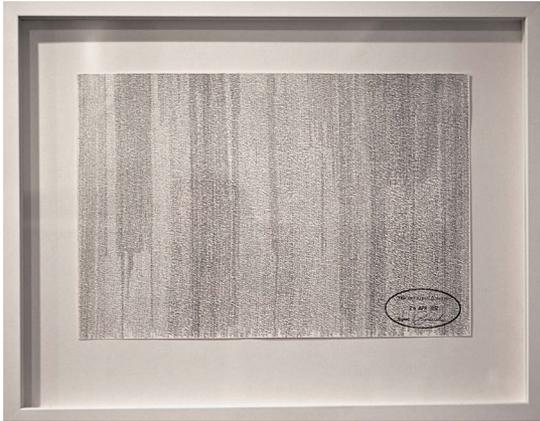


Figure 6

NOT drawings. That rubber-stamped document is not really either. As neither is this not a church nor a gallery.

The bedroom seems pillaged and rifled through. Personal items such as used underwear; have been treated as the ephemeral documents of daily living, like the receipts individually bagged by the score. They are strewn about in a pastiche of a frothy wake after the female vessel has moved on. There are primary school documents also. The time span and time-line apparently inconsequential so as to NOT distinguish that moment then, from this moment now, also at this moment – then.

The Academy must crumble. Of course there was much to see - quantities of visual materials -

inventive, even tasteful graphics which managed effortlessly to mimic traditions of graphics through the centuries. Photo documents of actions and quasi-personal, quasi-rituals which had engendered actual mythologies within the community. Actions had happened which perverted the academic intents to reveal the true absurdities underlying their own solipsistic rituals. There were mortar-boards and magnificently medieval black serious gowns.

It is well known, but discussed little, that we identify things from the depths of our experience by what they are NOT. In micro-seconds, our synapses crackle as visual data is processed against templates to verify the known qualities of a thing, and eliminate those elements of which it is not. Fleetingly the mental debate is resolved; that those are not potatoes because they are yellow. But they are not daffodils because they are spheroid. Perhaps at this point different sensory input is sought, perhaps scent. A nose is flown in - a sniff and then - mmmmmm - sweetish but sourish. What then of touch? Gently fingers are employed which can, on the pads at the tip identify with movements of only one twenty-fifth of an inch. The finger discerns that the surface of the thing is granular, textured, slightly sticky, the scent becoming stronger with pummeling and prodding. And then the nose enters into play again with another sniff to recognise the lemon scent, whereupon the mystery is solved. A lemon! Later the particular hue of lemon is remembered so this becomes a primary identifier from a distance, even for a strange dandelion.

All those sensation seeking processes and more are at work at every moment of our lives. Sound clues are identified as instruments or echoes from architectural spaces such as alleyways or motorways. There are delicate nuances for Night and Day, urban or rural places and through the various combinations of them all. Sometimes memory is under pressure to become the prime identifier. Then during sleep all these mechanisms are still utilised through the external stimuli, which then help to load up dreams. This is not photography; this is not the academy -

Along with works by Umberto Boccioni, Marcel Duchamp, and Raymond Duchamp-Villon that mark the point of departure for Lens-Based Sculpture, works created since the 1960s form the core of the exhibition. The exhibits range from hyper realistic to immaterial sculpture, from sculptural spatial installations to fictitious sculpture, from performative sculpture to preserving traces, and to photomedia investigations in the form of sculptural apparatus. Works by Tony Cragg, VALIE EXPORT, Gilbert & George, Duane Hanson, Rebecca Horn, Joan Jonas, Edmund Kuppel, Ron Mueck, Bruce Nauman, Giuseppe Penone, Roman Signer, Kiki Smith, and other artists show the degree to which photography and film have expanded sculptural work in the direction of new experimental and social contexts. In *Lens-Based Sculpture* . . . artists and art scholars jointly develop unaccustomed forms of presentation. Thus, Marcel Duchamp's *Porte Gradiva* (1937) is shown in its original form—as a traversable doorway. . .⁹

All sensations were at play in "The Chapel". There was no shortage of clues for the viewer-participant as the large glass table was covered with work in progress. Envelopes, empty, but demanding to be filled. Rubber stamps ready to be used, documents and letters, lists of addresses, and things for writing. Cue machinations of office-letter assembly, but it was NOT an office desk, nor office space, but one could expect the young woman to be seated there and to be busy.

"Tacky", again it seemed.

Throughout the twentieth century avant-garde artists prodded the status quo. The celebratory function morphed into a kind of philosophy to do with the pragmatics of being. We were to seek how to understand more of what we were, and how and why. Such personal commentary began with Goya and afterwards Blake and Turner for example. We were to make something which made sense to us and not necessarily a facsimile of things deemed important by society.



Figure 7

Official categories of art have split at the seams as our means of 'doing', have exponentially increased.

We have become more aware of sound stimuli other than natural sounds; visually, sonically, experientially and every single sensational way. Our restlessness is a symptom of curiosity and a path of knowledge and experience.

The Academy shall crumble.

Art, science, and technology are all ways of knowing and changing the world. These disciplines frequently draw from one another; yet their practitioners rarely take the opportunity for high-level intellectual and cultural exchange. "Seeing / Sounding / Sensing" [was] an event in 2014 at M.I.T. that invited artists to join with philosophers, cognitive neuroscientists, anthropologists, historians, and scholars from a range of disciplines in discussion about knowledge production. The goal was to challenge conventional certainty about "what is known," "how we know it," or "how we can know more," and to stimulate new issues for possible cross-disciplinary scholarship of the future...¹⁰

The point is simply that reality - existence - existing, is the real point of what might be called sculptural activity. The "tripping over" is a wonderful thing; perceptions and sensations have been ignored to the backward walking person's peril, much as the mirror passed by Marina Abramovitch to the visitor in the empty space with instructions to hold it and look behind him for "reality lies behind you".

The assumptions we make momentarily are there to be challenged by an artist. Through the challenge - other things become clear, or irrelevant. All art happens in the mind - the most profound or accomplished *scène vérité* - (Rembrandt or Canaletto or whomsoever) takes effect internally, within the mind of the observer/participant: the person experiencing the induced phenomenon. That experience is evaluated in the mind; tragedy or comedy, pleasure and so on. There is no artwork whose impact can be measured objectively, as every emotion, every nuance of assimilated meaning must take place through perceptual mechanics, and through mental processes ... The creative decisions made to induce these subjective feelings in the Chapel are the subtle manipulations of the artist, and in this way they create a kind of magic including the setting in a structure which once had been a church.

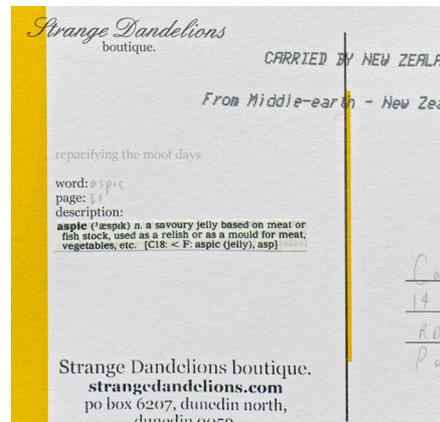
From the banquets and tables of Daniel Spoerri, well located in the Biennale Fairgrounds¹¹; to the plebeian coffee tastings, and low key dinner events of the mid-nineties Synapse group in Sydney¹² whose "artist-camps" out of the city in the bush, grew in uncertainty without use of either the A.R.T. word, nor the S.Culpture word. Other actions and experiments took place then - without the need for categories. Because of this there was no need to

compromise, with examples which might be used as illustrations, nor models of how it should be, but they may have been referred to as 'actions', 'installations', or perhaps 'performance'. There were artists there at that time, who also would have considered the interaction of the persons present more than salient. For others their focus would be the situation of bush and weather; leeches and cooking-fires – were they satisfactory, substantial or even even substantive to the occasion? Others would have been more conscious of the histories of colonisation, or wished to address suburbanisation through simply being or sifting responses through their practice. This was a fluid consideration of the act of trying to understand - through pragmatic "doing". Artists everywhere continue to do what they have always done - to speculate without fear, about the pedestrian nature of simply 'being', and however it might feel to be that person. In this mental space proliferators of spectacle, the art-market, institutions for baby curators and the academy, cannot prevail.

A creative strength of Kim McAlevey manifests using her other seven or eight legal names. Her extensive 'other' activities range from subversion in the Supermarket, to the kidnapping of the Head of her art school as a part of an extended seminar; to personal graffiti on her body, the greater body politic, the walls of rooms of convenience city wide; her personal bulk of mailings across the nation, and her sub-contracted drawing projects. These all test the fabric of the institution, and society, and tradition alike. *She has colonised her own life and has taken aggressive occupation.*

Individual words for instance are lifted and pulled from the dictionary for examination, inversion, anagrammatical exercises, textual debasement, and poetic riddles. The processes are convoluted, involuted and spawn nothing new except through them, for the hardy - new realisations about - *the ordinary*. In the time since her occupation of the Chapel on the Hillside her practice has continued - recognising only that which is available, but spurning the obvious and proceeding as stubbornly as ever. While the evidence of living quietly proliferates, nothing seems mourned or shed, or cast aside. Painful memories are more grist for the mill of reflection and the weapons of revenge: truths of experience and proof of living.

Notions mutate – a returned image from years ago is incorporated into another scheme of arbitrary postal works. It has the air of an innocent enquiry of an arbitrary citizen; a posted letter to be pillaged and the phrase "strange dandelion" which seeds a mysterious online "boutique". This has then engendered another postal box and another clearing centre of ever spreading actions and mythologies - names, characters and identities proliferate from anagrams and private jokes. Sometimes these too seem to be acts of revenge. 'A good life', says Olga Fiedo 'is hard to define'.¹³



Figures 8 & 9

The dictionary becomes a rosary of striving, through snail mail again, where the physicality of the posted item, is savoured through collage elements (from the dictionary itself for instance), and the inherent trust engendered in the service is similarly exercised - in one instance involving the transportation of a packaged, framed drawing, left in the city centre telephone box, half addressed only; to a rural police station where the duty officer exercised his nascent detective skills to telephone a possible recipient of the donated drawing; successfully as it happened.

The verb “curate” derives from the Latin *curare* and means to attend to something and thus to take responsibility—for an exhibition, for the artists participating in it, for the works presented, for audience didactics. In the business world, the “code of ethics” acknowledges the need for guidelines to safeguard against the inherent rapacity of commerce. Likewise, a record 51 billion EUR in art market sales in 2014 casts the curatorial field in new light. Important parameters are shifting... The imperative is now to talk about a curatorial code of ethics: where are the boundaries between public and private, what grey areas cloud thinking.¹⁴

The parameters of the New Zealand postal service has been tested in many ways, over the last ten years, far beyond the happy ingenuity of packaging and imagery employed by impoverished “mail-artists” of the sixties and seventies, pushing concepts of space and time around the world under the lick of a gummed stamp. The scale and spacial diversity of McAlevey’s projects are far more extensive than of forty years ago. Underpinning them is the spatial knowledge and communication expectations of the text-phone-teen ager. But there is choice, not necessity. The busy mischief of McAlevey, chooses to touch the receptors of myriads of strangers whom she nets and networks with, as they respond unwittingly and sometimes wittingly, to the curiosity induced by McAlevey, with the insouciance of a child releasing maltesers down a steep city street in a gravity race.



Figure 10

Planetary networks have become places of profound confusion and dislocation. We know from the start that we probably won’t find what we’re looking for; so we learn to search sporadically and asymmetrically just to see where we end up. This might look and feel like drifting, and traditional or conservative notions of substance will always try to dismiss its noise, its cat videos and porn, bad techno and bombastic contemporary art, but one should be careful not to underestimate the massive distances being crossed in the meantime.¹⁵

The detritus which she irrepressibly engenders seems as spontaneous as that of a public graffiti artist, and then it is revealed that the structure underlying all these procedures and processes, is also as conscious and contrived as the notebooks of Basquiat. We could start with the commissioned sculptor; Bernini, and then question the point of his meticulous craftsmanship at the rear of a carving too removed from any experience, and too high even to glimpse. Who would know except the artist? That knowledge, secret but powerful would engender through that belief of the maker; a palpable conviction in the viewer without necessarily any visual proof. Except through experience of the reality of other works, and the presence and feeling of some kind of truth. In an engendered trust. Singer; humanist, and singer Paul Robeson spoke of ‘artists being the radical voice of civilisation’ as they have the gift and power, “to

change the way global humanity trusts itself.¹⁶

Both of these artists have groomed their sensibilities and personalities into activities of enquiry - to the point at which they simply are – they “are”, because of what they do. This is the existential equipoise of any serious artist throughout history; they contemplate their present - and the world in which they find themselves. They breathe on the mirror of their time; they watch their footwork as they stumble and trip. And they pick themselves up acknowledging the sparks of recognition they strike off other fellow humans. Such sparks illuminate paths and progress for others through revelation and debate, as they have done for all contributing artists throughout history. There are no absolutes merely glimmers of light and sound, sought and shared, then mulched once again into common spirit - a questioning and curiosity which plagues and feeds our creative restless spirits.

This practice of McAlevee's is as cohesive as dried dung, it is as coherent as tooth-brushing, nail-paring, or tea drinking. Regular, necessary and as much a part of the world outside her door as her new baby is, inside. One can only wonder about the emergent new practice of Mother Kimberley, contemplating the mystery of the boy-child, Orson...

Carl A. Mears hailed from New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A. sometime in the mid-sixties. He gleaned a lot in the ambiance of a great university, and from its superior art-collections and libraries gained a love of culture, learning and librarians. He is a Veteran of a Foreign War, and served in a junior officers' mess somewhere or elsewhere. Until recently peripatetic, he lives now at Walden Pond.

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1. Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle, *The Internet Does Not Exist*, e-flux journal and Sternberg Press 2015, <http://www.sternberg-press.com/?pageId=1580> [accessed 13 March 2015]
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13. A Good Life”, says Olga Fiedo “is hard to define” was during a conversation at Dunedin with Carl.A Mears, December 2013. Legal names and non-de-plumes of the artist include: Kimberley Anne McAlevee, Amelea-Lynne Ivy Berckem, Amelea-Lynne

Ivy Wood, Dr. Tait Charteris-Rite, Olga Fiedo, Ruth Ebbis-Quinto, Annabelle Everick, Mia Stefano, Eugenie Mortimer-Fuston and Ruth Ebbis-Quinto, Olga Fiedo, Tait Charteris-Rite.

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