

Q: What is the rationale behind these shows?

A: Well, in a literal sense there is no real 'rationale'. There is no coherent philosophy, as such, that ties together the work. We are not illustrating any particular set of ideals.

Q: Well what is the point of putting on these shows then?

A: Err, well, I guess we are, in a sense, taking the "scenic route to obscurity" in that there is no obvious reason for putting on these shows - as The Arts Council pointed out when it turned down our request for £1,000 - "the exhibition proposal lacked a strong rationale, above and beyond the availability of the venue." I mean, as Michael Craig-Martin said in a lecture at The I.C.A in 1990?, he felt the only time he had sensed this type of group "frisson" was at Saint Martins in the 1960's (when he was there) at Goldsmiths in the late 1980's (when he taught there) - as reflected in The Modern Medecine and Freize Shows and one other time? It is difficult to know how this group rationale comes to be, it obviously can't be manufactured, I mean, as Ian Davenport said - I think it was in The Daily Telegraph (August 29 1991) - "This isn't just a group of different artists exhibiting. These are all my friends. What we had at Goldsmiths was unusual. We were always discussing ideas, spending time together" and this dialogue evidently continued once they left, when they shared a 17th century school on the Albert Embankment - "Most enjoy long drinking sessions, during which they discuss each others work".

Q: Does a group of drunken artists sitting around discussing things add up to a group rationale?

A: I think there is a problem with the whole idea of "rationale" because in the end it doesn't seem to mean anything.

Q: What do you mean?

A: I don't know, but, err, our show doesn't seem to have any over-riding rationale or theme. In some ways it is to do with the absurdity of trying to put on such an event in the first place, I mean, it isn't even original to put on a show like this any more. It's like two lines that don't meet. A sort of idealism without ideals.

Q: Ideals? What do you mean by ideals?

A: Well, the idea that putting on a show of 'art' is necessarily a good thing, a positive thing or wether it isn't just a sort of capitalist romanticism.

Q: That's interesting, I've heard you mention this before. You don't think then that Space International is a good or positive thing?

A: Given that the conventional gallery scene is a limiting option, run on the dinner party circuit, you can either hang around waiting for the right people or try and do something where

you are more in control. Whether you make the space look like a conventional gallery (a white cube) is secondary - though what was most impressive about The Modern Medicine Show was that it really did look like a top-notch gallery space, and this affected the work accordingly - though we've (Bank) been most interested in spaces where it's been impossible to do that. This hasn't been any big deal or protest - it's just more interesting using what's available rather than trying to do it "properly" (ie taking on The Saatchi Gallery.) This means that the work itself is formed in part by the space - it can't any longer be about a polite movement from the white cube of the studio, to the white cube of the gallery (which came first?) as the space usually bears no relation to "the ideal". It's the challenge of this difficulty that has been the most interesting thing about doing these shows, for better or worse. It hasn't meant that the work has illustrated the space but that the work only gets made at all for the space.

Q: You have mentioned these ideals before, could you be more specific?

A: Well, it's to do with the age old paradox of "church or circus". Everyone's jumped out of the (admittedly problematic) notion of (general) public. To avoid it completely by celebrating the opposite in a total acceptance of the fact that if only two people see the show, so long as those two people are important and powerful enough to advance your career ie critics or collectors, then that's ok. That's understandable - it's what the art world is built on - but it's almost as easy to get loads of people along, which is what we want and if that is at the risk of being seen as "entertainment" that's fine - a circus is more fun than a church (extended hilarity).

Q: So if you accept that your rationale is 'anti-rationale', let's say, are these shows just a group of friends throwing art in the public's face?

A: Certainly, to a degree - but that's no different to practically any other group of artist's. But anyway it isn't really like that. We have curated this show to a certain degree, sort of 65% curated and 40% wild cards.

Q: That doesn't add up.

A: What doesn't?

Q: 65 + 40.

A: Oh sorry (laughter) 65% curated and 35% people whose work were not 100% sure of but reckon they might come up with something interesting. Because if you over-curate you can kill a show dead, like something like "Broken English".

Q: To move on to another point? About the painting of the space? Did you intentionally decide on the badly painted look?

A: Well we decided to paint it white. What we have here is a reasonably well painted ruin. The 'improvements' in terms of

Saatchi 'perfection' are endless, depending only on time and money available. The finish of the space is determined by space itself. In any white painted space there is always something else you could do, or something you could remove, to make the space still more white and minimal. Even at Saatchi's there will be some unpainted or slightly worse section or perhaps some pipe that could perhaps be removed. The process is endless and ultimately futile - the pursuit of zero. There is in a sense a Plato's gallery space of which all other space's are versions. The white cube.

Q: You mention Saatchi's a lot do you hold that up as some sort of ideal?

A: It's a good gallery, though we don't relate to the exhibitions. We see this show more as a better version of Documenta.

Q: How much does the space determine the work?

A: On all levels. The environment is obviously an influence and the work is shaped in all sorts of ways, from what is practically possible and aside from bland references and associations with past uses of space and environment???, what can be afforded, how the interaction of ideas changes through the love/hate relationship one develops with space.

Q: What do you mean?

A: Well the task of making the space ship-shape and all the work involved in organising shows brings one into such a close relationship with the space, it sometimes seems like a love affair and this relationship is a major influence on the work.

Q: So you see the whole show as a love affair with the space?

A: Yes.

Q: Should I switch off the tape recorder now?

