

100 Reviews

Backwards

**Matthew Arnatt · David Batchelor · Kate Bush · Alex Coles ·
Tommaso Corvi-Mora · Sacha Craddock · Alexia Defert ·
Emma Dexter · Dustin Ericksen · James Faure Walker · Dan Fox ·
Mark Gisbourne · Penny Govett · Mark Harris · Charles Harrison ·
Matthew Higgs · Susan Hiller · Peter Lewis · David Mollin ·
Niru Ratnam · Andrew Renton · John Roberts · John Russell ·
Julian Stallabrass · Gilda Williams · Andrew Wilson**

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In this book Matthew Collings, Cornelia Grassi and I chose the writers. We also chose (on the basis of their supplied lists) what shows the writers wrote about, from the period 1987–2002.

The bare minimum was done to the writing in terms of editing – some rationalisation of name/date styles etc. and some cuts from the longest texts. I'm grateful to all the writers for their time and concentration.

I supplied two reviews when one of the proposed writers became ill.

Matthew Arnatt 2002

37 **15/1** (Malania Basarab Gallery, 1992 (curated by Denise Hawrysió). Shows in people's apartments weren't as big a phenomenon in the early 1990s as people imagine. For the most part people didn't – and probably still don't – want people traipsing through their homes. Denise Hawrysió's Elephant & Castle council flat space, along with the earliest days of the Cabinet gallery in Martin McGeown's Brixton walk-up, were two of the more distinguished attempts to negotiate the public/private thresholds inherent to such enterprises. Hawrysió's '15/1' was probably the best exhibition ever inspired by a television quiz show. One at a time, Denise invited 15 artists to install a work in her apartment/gallery, on the clear understanding that the artist who would install next would have full rights to completely change the installation of the works by all of the preceding artists. Clearly artist Number 15 would have almost total power to reinstall the show to their advantage. The show seemed to be, on the one hand, about trust, mutuality and comradeship, whilst on the other it was about, deviousness, one-upmanship and in some instances plain spitefulness. (A microcosm of the art world no less.) Which of course made for a great spectacle for the viewer, akin to hearing your grandmother swear or watching nuns fight.

Matthew Higgs

36 15/1 (Malania Basarab Gallery, 1992 (curated by Denise Hawrycio). Denise Hawrycio ran a gallery in a top floor council flat in Vauxhall for a couple of years. 15 artists were invited to install an exhibition over two days, as is normal. What was different on this occasion was that the artists who came after other works had been installed, were permitted, if they wished, to alter/interfere with the already placed works. Obviously everybody who took part had to sign up to the ethos of the exhibition. What resulted was that some works acquired a certain patina provided by another hand, or were moved or even obliterated. As a result 15/1 conveyed a sense of infinite possibility – there was none of the sense of closure associated with conventional exhibitions. It spawned a lot of dreaming on my part and some discussions with Denise about ways of dismantling the whole structure of an exhibition – something that happens surprisingly rarely, even within 'alternative' or 'artist-run' spaces. Which leads naturally to a question that needs asking regularly: "who is an exhibition for?" 15/1 raised the taboo subject of the implicit egotism that operates within every exhibition.

Is an exhibition there to make the artist's work look good, or is it there to stimulate and challenge an audience? Of course everyone will say both, but more often the former comes into play, and the result is that exhibition formats become dull at times when they should be at their most disarming. I wondered why no one had done this exhibition before – I believe there is an historical precedent perhaps within the Fluxus movement in New York, but this was not known to Hawrycio at the time of making the show.

One had to admire the bravery of those taking part – did some wince with pain on finding out what had been done to their work? The most memorable contributions were those of Anya Gallaccio and Denise Hawrycio herself. Anya added a filmy surface to other people's works, and Denise set about demolishing a plasterboard wall with such fury that the work has stuck in my mind for 10 years.

The other artists were: Sean Dower, Clare Tindall, Peter Lloyd Lewis, Pauline Daly, Brendan Quick, Andreas Ginkel, Amikam Toren, Graham Ramsay, Richard Makin, Adam Chodzko, Wendy Elliot, David Griffiths, Patrick McBride.

Emma Dexter