



NOT A REVIEW  
A REMINISCENCE

Photo: Ryszard Dabek

*Martina Copley is a freelance curator and arts writer living and working in Melbourne. She has completed post-graduate degrees in psychology and museum management. Martina was arts assistant at Linden gallery for several years and Australian ambassador at the Venice Biennale 2001, and is presently gallery manager at Gallery 101, Melbourne.*

*NOT A REVIEW,  
A REMINISCENCE*

*by Martina Copley*

I collected nearly every issue of *Dialogue* with a nostalgic desire determined to some extent by my fascination with archives, or the way in which the original finds a currency that trails and transcends its origins. You can't touch a network of ideas: rather, you engage with its manifestation. *Dialogue* reveals this underbelly of voices. As a document of local cultures and currents in contemporary art and thought, the publication lives on. As a forum that plays with the elusive flow and exchange of ideas, it may be endlessly revisited and repositioned. Finding lucidity and looseness, this time-travelling offers an unexpected vantage point.

*On Dialogue*

The grotesque form of the book attracted me. I liked its unevenness and openendedness—the juxtaposition of varying densities sharing a thematic focus. Reading it was an open engagement with the ready-made. A solitary pursuit. Sometimes the issue—which was sent to me as part of a subscription deal—would lie unopened for a while. There was that sense of anticipation on receiving an unexpected letter in which you notice the writing style, finger the texture and weight of the envelope and page. Word as image ... thought as word ... Flipping the pages brought awareness of process and translation, of shifting space, of the figure-ground relationship, of motion and the time-space of reading.

*Word*

A printed page ... with and without words ... The design is a frame that recognises the shape of the space it creates. In *Dialogue*, the vulnerable origins of the blank page remain palpable. A rectangle of pearl grey sky—its silence is never obliterated by an insistence on formulated meaning. Its language is grounded and concrete. We recognise the scheme of the printed page as an interstice—a space to explore the relation between language and things spoken of at the intersection between idea and expression.

*Edition*

Crossing idioms of performance, music, writing, curation, installation, image and screen in a self-reflective and often amusing reinvestigation of form, content and context ... There are voices that claim and deny authorship, ponderings and asides, correspondences, philosophy, critical thought, fiction and poetry in a convergence of academia and everyday. Each page reveals a new slant, window and method of approach. Reading the whole is similar to taking a meandering line through a familiar landscape that includes corners, peaks and blind alleys.

*Of Its Time and Beyond*

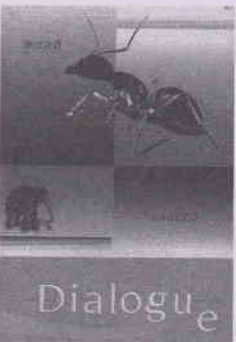
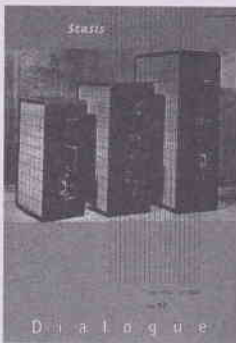
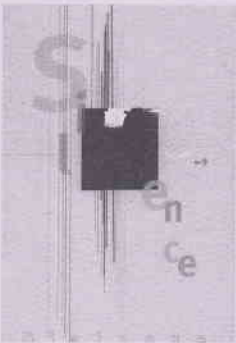
Art draws from our ideas about ourselves. In the terrain of *Dialogue* there is recognition of art as local, individual and ortho

*Locus*

Artistic communities are made connections that evolve to strength. Within the changing shape and territories, we discover a multitude of traces. *Dialogue* created an awareness of an artistic milieu. It articulated in order to suggest new paths to a new audience of practitioners and as participant in the communication

*No Gloss*

We are accustomed to seeing art as retailers or stars in the world of magazines. Contemporary art as a thinking about how visual art is of abstract ideas, the genres of publications that circulate and reviews, artist profiles, historical monographs, exhibition catalogues that the collaborative focus of art independently and without gloss artwork more palatable or desirable career, or claiming ground but a composition and reflection ...



d without words ... The design  
the shape of the space it  
vulnerable origins of the blank  
rectangle of pearl grey sky—  
ated by an insistence on  
language is grounded and  
e scheme of the printed  
space to explore the relation  
ings spoken of at the  
and expression.

nance, music, writing, curation,  
een in a self-reflective and often  
f form, content and context ...  
n and deny authorship,  
correspondences, philosophy,  
d poetry in a convergence of  
Each page reveals a new slant,  
approach. Reading the whole is  
bring line through a familiar  
corners, peaks and blind alleys.

#### **Of Its Time and Beyond**

**Art** draws from our ideas about the way we see our world  
**and ourselves.** In the terrain of options presented in  
**Dialogue** there is recognition of the context of developing  
**art as local,** individual and orthodox.

#### **Locus**

**Artistic** communities are made up of amorphous  
**connections** that evolve to strengthen and dissipate.  
**Within** the changing shape and focus of these associations  
**and territories,** we discover a myriad of threads and  
**traces.** *Dialogue* created an awareness of the voice  
**of an artistic milieu.** It articulated a sense of community  
**in order** to suggest new paths to change, identified a  
**new audience** of practitioners and recognised the reader  
**as participant** in the communication process.

#### **No Gloss**

We are accustomed to seeing art as advertising and artists  
**as retailers** or stars in the world of corporate glossy  
**magazines.** Contemporary art and the printed page ...  
Thinking about how visual art is broadened into the realm  
of abstract ideas, the genres of arts writing and the various  
**publications** that circulate and each find a niche—critical  
**reviews,** artist profiles, historical features, biographies,  
**monographs,** exhibition catalogues ... It becomes clear  
**that the collaborative focus of Dialogue—**published  
independently and without gloss—is not about making  
**artwork more palatable** or desirable, or furthering a  
**career, or claiming ground** but about thinking, engaging,  
composition and reflection ...

#### **Endnote**

*Dialogue* is a substantial publication that took oceans  
of commitment, volunteer collaborative effort and passion  
to get made. It articulated the level of silence surrounding  
the space of visual art—to elucidate the architecture  
of voices through which we discourse, and to translate  
disparate personal practices into a common archive.

Some of my favourite things ...  
yours will be different ...

Eighteen love songs on CD-rom by Dom de Clario;  
'Pouring Oil and How to Steal the Sassetta from the  
Musée du Louvre', by Gregory Pryor; Suzie Attiwill's  
'Room of Materialities and Air'; Nik Papas on 'The Fiction  
of Splendour'; Stephen Haley's facsimile of an essay on  
Andy Warhol, complete with corrections; Susan Purdy's  
love letter photograms; Andrew Seward's cyanotypes ...

