

Plain Language – Entry wall text

***Entities: The Concepts and Post Object Exhibitions***

This exhibition is titled 'Entities: The Concepts and Post Object Exhibitions'. Entities is a collection of old photographs, letters, and writing showing the history of two important art galleries in Adelaide. ACE was established in 2017 and previous to ACE there were two galleries.

The galleries are called The Contemporary Art Society of South Australia and the Experimental Art Foundation. These galleries were important because they were set up by artists and art educators for the purpose of supporting experimental art locally and nationally and led to Adelaide becoming well known for presenting experimental art.

Entities focuses on one exhibition from each gallery to highlight the importance of both of these galleries today.

The first exhibition was titled 'Concepts'. This exhibition was presented at the Contemporary Art Society in 1974.

The second exhibition was titled the 'Australian and New Zealand Post Object Show' presented at Experimental Art Foundation in 1976.

These two exhibitions were important because artists in these exhibitions made very experimental art including performance, film and video. This new approach became known as conceptual art and post-object art.

## **1. Installation view, *Australian and New Zealand Post Object Show - A Survey* at Experimental Art Foundation, 1976**

On 5 May 1976, the Experimental Art Foundation opened its first major exhibition, called *Australian and New Zealand Post Object Show - A Survey*. The exhibition included many different types and styles of art by forty artists. These artworks included performances, photography, video, dance and more. This was a very big and important international show. The exhibition was co-curated by New Zealand artist Jim Allen and the EAF's director Noel Sheridan. Allen organised the NZ artists and Sheridan organised the Australian artists.

The exhibition was presented in the basement of an old Jam Factory, a space that was EAF's home for 8 years. They added more work to the exhibition each week and extended it for a longer period of time. The black and white photographs here show the many different activities that took place, including performances and lectures. It was a very dark place and often packed with audiences and the photographs are not very clear. They capture a moment in time and a feeling rather than information.

Many artists made work in this space. One famous performance was called *Jam of Your Life* and involved a performer with jam in and on his body. This was because the building had once been a jam factory.

The public weren't sure how to feel about this exhibition. Some people liked it, and other people hated it. The idea of art that is not about objects like paintings or sculptures is hard for some people to understand. However, at the time it was quite popular amongst artists and people who write about art. And now, when we look back today, we can see it was a very important moment in Australian art history.

## **2. Dear Post Object People - Letters**

These are letters about the money troubles that the Experimental Art Foundation was going through when it started. One early letter was printed in a magazine called *Broadsheet* to let people know and get their support. Another letter showed that some money had come in and people were very happy about it. These letters show how happy people were that money was coming in, as making and showing art can be very expensive.

Because the EAF received money they could start a small art gallery. Like EAF, some other art galleries in other parts of Australia also got money.

## **3. Pam Gilbert performance *Ritual Integration Performance* at Experimental Art Foundation, 1976**

The exhibition, *Australian and New Zealand Post Object Show - A Survey* first opened on May 5th 1976 at 8pm. On the opening night an artist called Pam Gilbert did a performance titled *Ritual Integration Performance*. In the performance two people wore white robes and moved around a space. The performance was about people's shadows and how they connect to the person.

There were only a small number of female artists included in the exhibition, compared to how many male artists were included.

#### **4. *Concepts* exhibition catalogue**

The *Concepts* exhibition opened on 9 March 1974. It included many artists and many different types of artworks, like performance and video. At the opening event there was a music group, a presentation, and performances. A university teacher wrote about art for the exhibition. What he wrote was important because it influenced many of the artists to make different art.

One of the artworks in the *Concepts* exhibition was by artist Ron Rowe. Titled *Yalc piece*. The artwork was different as the audience helped make it. In the gallery was a mannequin and some clay. People could put the clay on the mannequin. They took photos of the mannequin as it changed. People that saw the exhibition were surprised as they hadn't seen artwork like this before. It had an impact on other artists too.

#### **5. Broadsheet May 1974 - Tony Kirkman *A working week***

A magazine included information on the artists in the *Concepts* exhibition. One of the artists was Tony Kirkman who did a performance that took four days. During the four days he didn't sleep. The performance was called *A working week*.

In the magazine Kirkman has a list of the things he wants to do each day. He also writes a list of what he actually does and how his body feels. On the first day of the performance, he builds a wall by stacking big bricks on top of one another. He does this while remembering a time he helped his uncle who was a builder. On the next day he sits down with people and talks to them. At first the artist wanted the performance to last five days, but he became so tired he could do only four days. Although the performance wasn't as he planned it was still a great artwork.

## **6. Contemporary Art in South Australia: An oral history - Dean Bruton and David Dolan interview**

In 1985 Dean Bruton talked to lots of people who had helped the Contemporary Art Society (SA) and recorded them so this information could be preserved. One of the people he spoke to was David Dolan who wrote about art. In the recording Dolan speaks about the *Concepts* exhibition, how important it was, and what people thought after seeing it. He also tells a funny story about an artist who wanted to be included in the exhibition and so painted a picture on the front fence of the gallery. Although it was a good painting the people in charge painted over it.

## **7. *First exposition Royal S.A. Society of Arts Associate Contemporary Group* exhibition catalogue - Ipad**

In July 1942 an exhibition called *First exposition Royal S.A. Society of Arts Associate Contemporary Group* was held. It was the first time artists of the Associate Contemporary Group showed their artwork together. The group was interested in modernism, an art movement that moved away from classical and traditional forms, which was seen as radical at the time. Because of this they were called rebels. Many other artists were only interested in painting and sculpture. Because their art was different they were not included in exhibitions, so they decided to create their own. This exhibition is the starting point of the Contemporary Art Centre of South Australia, although it was only called that later on.

There was a booklet made to go with the exhibition. It had information on each of the artworks and on the group and the things they were interested in. Some of the information in the booklet was directed at the people who had excluded them from exhibitions. They say that their art is the old art and that the exhibition and group is the new art.

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The people who saw the exhibition were shocked to see this new style of art. Lots and lots of people went to see it. One of the paintings that was in the exhibition is currently hanging in the Art Gallery of South Australia in Gallery 5.

### **8. Jam Factory on Payneham Rd, St Peters photograph**

The Experimental Art Foundation (EAF) was started by a group of friends including Bert Flugelman, Ian North, Donald Brook, Richard Llewellyn, Clifford Frith and Stephanie Britton. In 1974 the group were given money from the Government to start a gallery in an old Jam Factory on Payneham Road in St Peters. The group had lots of ideas about what the gallery should do. The most important idea was that art was about experimenting. The gallery had a copy of the ideas in the front room so people could see it when they came in.

### **9. Collection of writings and images from the unpublished *Post-Object book***

EAF wanted to make a book for the *Australian and New Zealand Post Object Show- A Survey* exhibition. They wanted to have the artists share ideas, information, stories, and/or pictures for the book. The people involved in organising the exhibition and others, including Noel Sheridan, Donald Brook, Ann Stephens, Wystan Curnew, and Peter Kennedy also added their ideas and information. Some of the parts of the book are shown here in the gallery. In the end they didn't have enough money to make the book. Because of this we're not exactly sure how the book would have looked and what it included. Since that time the EAF has made lots of books, and had its own library.

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## **10. Installation view, *Australian and New Zealand Post Object Show- A Survey* at Experimental Art Foundation, 1976 – Slide projector**

This slide projector shows photos of the exhibition. A slide projector was one way you to look at photos in the 1970s, which was when these photos were taken. The photos show lots of different types of art that were in the exhibition, including performance art, video, sculpture and dance.

The projector is on a table of concrete bricks. This is because there was a performance in the *Concepts* exhibition called *A working week* in which the artist, Tony Kirkman built a wall using concrete bricks. They also put equipment on concrete brick tables like this one.

## **11. Closed Room #2 Ask me Anything about John Forbes**

They made posters for the *Concepts* exhibition including the ones hanging here. An artist called Tim Burns made two posters about his two artworks in the exhibition. One of his artworks was called *Ask me anything about John Forbes*. John Forbes was a poet from Sydney who had come to Adelaide to be in the artwork by Tim Burns. For the exhibition, Forbes stayed in a locked room at the gallery. There was a video camera in the room that recorded what he was doing and saying. People visiting the gallery could watch a tv to see what Forbes was doing, and talk to him. Lots of people asked him questions about himself.

In the *Concepts* exhibition there were pages hung on rope with pegs as part of an artwork by an artist called Mike Parr. The artwork was called *Inhibodress Archive Dept Information Centre Adelaide*. It was like a library full of information and books that the artist had collected from other artists and while he was on holiday in Europe. Parr laid out the information on tables and hung it on walls, and on rope for people to look at.