

These notes accompanying the 'script' for *Going* (see *Bibliography*) attest to the complexity of the structure and variations on the mistake

Suggested Deliberate Swoons and Mistakes:

Act 1: orthodox.

Act 2: Scene 2 (mistake necessitating reversal):

When the performer of Primary Scene A looks, with his or her hands on the shoulders of the performer now in the first position on the line, at the performer of Primary Scene B, the other performer still on the line calls a "Hold It" to freeze all performers. The performer who called goes to the Metronome and, hands on the Metronome's shoulders, moves him or her slowly back to the corner at the beginning of that side (corner d).

Meanwhile the two performers who have already entered the square perform backwards and silently all that they had just done in that scene until they, the performer who had moved up the line, and the Metronome return simultaneously to their positions for the start of that scene. The performer who called tells the Metronome "You do not know how to leave", and returns to position. The adjacent performer calls "O.K." and the scene begins again with the Metronome's "Yes".

Scene 4 (swoon):

Performer 5, frozen beside the table, swoons as performer Primary Scene B, to push the performer of Primary Scene A to the ground. This may be a double swoon, if the performer of Primary Scene C is knocked out of position

Act 3: Scene 5 (wrongly corrected mistake):

As performer 1 steps from being frozen beside the table into Primary Scene C, performer 5 should do so simultaneously. Just as both are about to cough "Ahem" performer 5 calls "Hold It" to freeze all performers, returns performer 1 to the position beside the table, corrects him or her by giving him instructions for his

- Mutuality
- Muse
- Murphy, Pat
- Mullet
- Mud Man
- Morandi
- Moran, Lindsay
- Mistakes
- Minimalism
- Mickey Greenall
- Metronome
- Memory
- Meeney, Ed
- McCall, Anthony
- Mathematics
- Maynard Smith, Julian
- Manifesto
- Maidstone
- Mancio, Marie-Anne

U O I S N F I P



- Q: Why Theatre of Mistakes?
- A: If you can see the mistake you can begin telling how things should have gone had they gone right. Identify the mistake and you have identified the sum. The swifter the recognition of an error, the swifter the realisation of the intention. When things are going really well we always seem to be admitting lots of mistakes.
- I suppose we all hope that the methods by which we go about matters are methods proven beyond phrases of avowal or disavowal—but the principles by which we live, born of traditional procedures or enlightened hunches, have to be confirmed via the rigours of experiment. So here, hopefully, is a company expecting the drama to be revealed by its flaws; a company which continually adjusts the drama in accordance with the proofs of better ways to do things.
- Thus a theatre of mistakes, like an operating theatre or a theatre of war, is a place where a specific job is going on: it is a theatre where adjustments are to be made, faults recognised—as much on the part of the audience as on the part of the performers.
- A theatre effectively based on the principle that change is the norm—that would be a classical theatre, something to last for all time.

A.H. April '77

Statement by Anthony Howell, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

An A-Z of The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes – M

Marie-Anne Mancio

See also: **Mutuality**
Manifesto
 Avantgarde 'groups' of the early twentieth century adopted the manifesto as a challenge to orthodox forms. A site for intersecting revolutionary and aesthetic discourses, these documents enabled a critique of modernity whilst promising to protect the autonomy of the individual within the collective. (See the Vorticist Blast Manifesto, 1914; Dada Manifesto, 1916, and so on). The 1960s and early **Seventies** saw a proliferation of manifestos influenced by the emergent radical feminist and Civil rights initiatives. Artists who deployed the manifesto include the Situationists, Claes Oldenburg, Fluxus, Valie Export, and the British, politically-engaged theatre collective, Welfare State. According to Fiona

Maidstone See Art Schools

Mancio, Marie-Anne (1969-) is a writer/critic who trained as an artist in performative practice at Manchester Metropolitan University prior to undertaking her D.Phil (*Maps for Wayward Performers: feminist readings of contemporary live art practice in Britain* University of Sussex, 1996), and a subsequent M.Phil in Creative Writing (Glasgow University) for which she was awarded a Distinction. A multi-folio practitioner, intrigued by the interface of fiction and critical writing, she is interested in developing processes that relate to the potential of contradiction. Her fiction deploys historic metaphor to comment on the present and to explore the impact of site on identities. In 2009, she was invited to join innovative practitioners DesignKommander and is currently investigating the deployment of the sensory in architecture. Select writings can be found on www.hotelalphabeta.net.
 See also: Jason E **Bowman** whose invaluable insight and generosity continue to inform my thinking.

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes

an **A-Z**

M

Marie-Anne Mancio

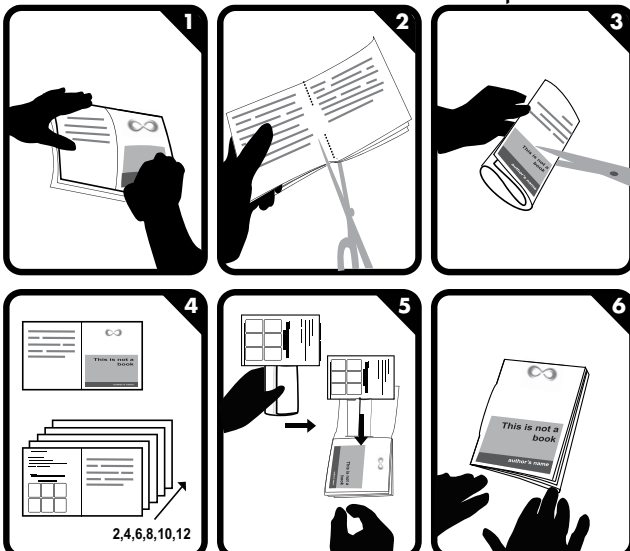
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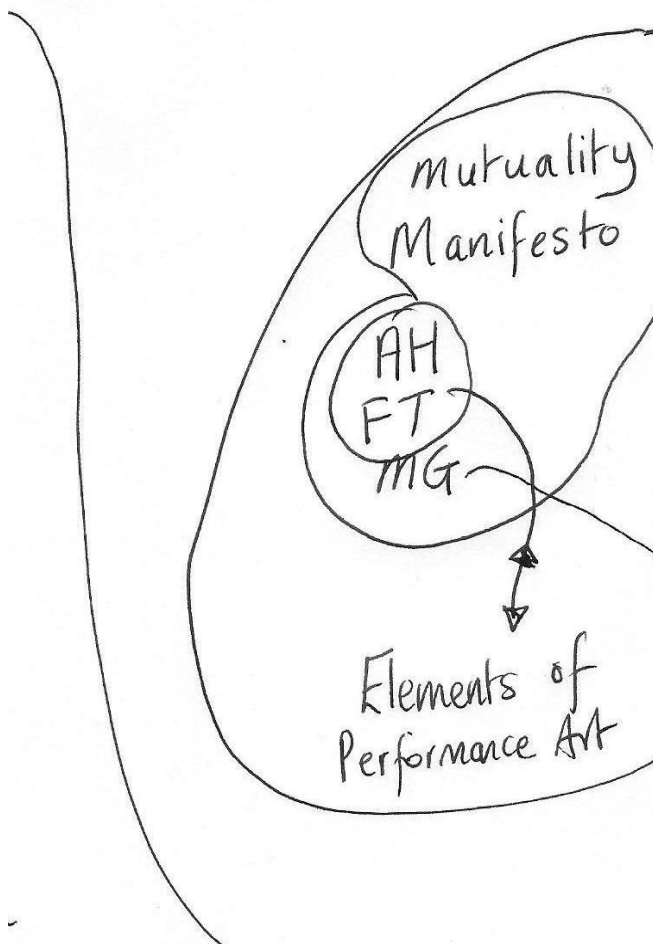
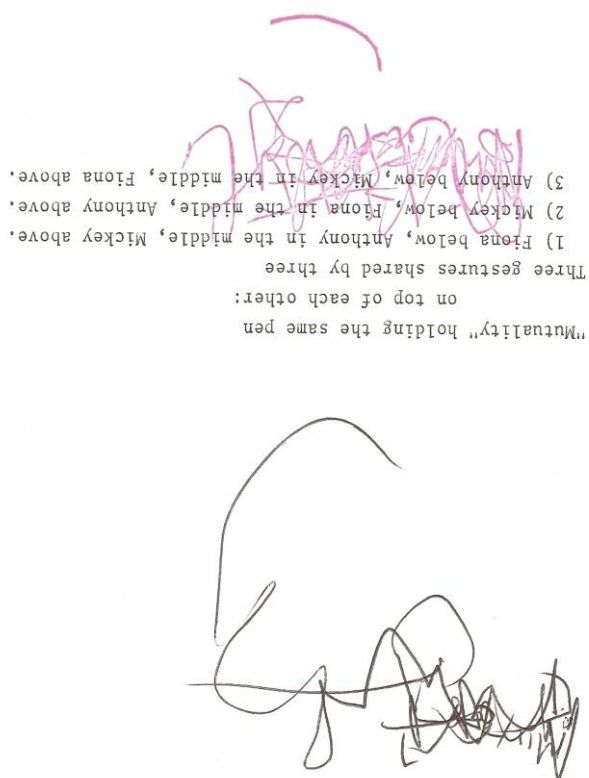
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Artwork: Mutuality Signature, 1976: Fiona Templeton, Anthony Howell, Mickey Greenall, unframed, A4 size, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Extract from *The Manifesto of Mutual Art* (dated Sept 1975, adopted Jan 1976) ©The Theatre of Mistakes

"THE MANIFESTO OF MUTUAL ART"

To arrive at a mutually expressed set of statements (see note 1), a minimum of three persons gathered together for an initial meeting should employ choice by chance (see note 2) to decide upon the ultimate form of those statements and their order.

It is suggested that if less than eight persons (but never less than three) gather together for this initial meeting each person at that meeting should be free to make two statements on the first page (see note 3) or employ two choices as to the order of those statements on subsequent pages, and the same for any comments (see note 4) on subsequent pages arising from those statements, until such time as the number of persons contributing statements at later meetings be doubled. At later meetings up to double the number of persons contributing statements at the initial meeting should be free to employ two choices as to the order of the statements and be free to make two comments on any subsequent page and in general to have the same rights as to the making or choosing of statements or comments as any who attended the initial meeting provided that those statements and comments remain within the prerequisites (see note 5) decided upon at that initial meeting: should the number of persons gathered at the initial meeting be more than doubled at a later meeting all persons gathered at any such and only such a meeting should be limited to one statement, choice of statement or comment each, regardless of whether or not they attended prior meetings.

It is further suggested that if eight or more persons gather together for the initial meeting each person at that meeting should be limited to one statement, comment or choice of statement or comment each.

At no time should statements, comments or pages or the order of statements, comments or pages be altered subsequent to the conclusion of work on that page.

Templeton, The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes' "Manifesto of Mutual Art" was "written during several meetings with artists August 1975-January 1976, London and Hampshire." It is seven pages long and almost parodic in its dense language. Detailing how art might be made mutually – a concern jointly investigated by Templeton, Mickey Greenall, and Anthony Howell – it allows for two possibilities to determine outcomes: unanimous decisions or, where this is impossible, Choice by Chance. Whilst some members of the Core group have no recollection of this Manifesto -

"I don't remember it... [laughs] I don't know if I would have signed that!"

(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

other artists involved with Ting do:

"it [was] the main subject of conversation one time at Ascham Street..."

(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan Bonvin, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).

It was also the subject of correspondence between Anthony McCall (resident in New York by then) and Anthony Howell:

"The virtue of the Manifesto is that it is immediately workable. It doesn't require the fulfilment of special circumstances before it can begin. It already, in the fact of its regular meetings, demonstrates another way of doing art."

(Anthony McCall, letter to Anthony Howell, 17th February, 1976, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive)

The Ting: Theatre of Mistakes performs a vital role educationally and artistically in providing a manifestation of how individual possibilities may become mutual action—without either the individual action or the mutual act losing its integrity.

Program notes from *Two Journeys*, May, 1976



An event at The Dairy in 1974 with Anthony Howell and John White. Whilst this prefigured Ting, it attests to Howell's interest in interdisciplinarity.

Mutuality

Anthony **Howell**, Fiona **Templeton**, and Mickey **Greenall** devise a Mutuality signature and stamp; there is a **Manifesto** of Mutuality. There are some beautiful Scene **Diagrams**, coloured in gold and felt tip pen. The latter are Mickey's work, Anthony is certain. Fiona is equally certain she made them. Mickey is no longer around to ask. In a sense it does not matter.



Mutuality drawings, 1976 Photos © courtesy of Fiona Templeton

See also: **Poetry**

Titles: **Two Journeys**, **Three Act Piece**, **Three Movements Exercise**, **Waterfall** **Three**, **Four Artists**, **Five Concert Pieces**, **Summer Show 5**, **Six Sticks** (Robert Janz), **Nine Units Exercise**, **The Ninth Method**, American artist Richard Quarrell (see **Wallpaper** – made audio works of ascending and being an example of pattern)

Through its deployment of **additive** and subtractive **structures**, The Theatre of Mistakes perpetuated the lengthy relationship between art and mathematics (Renaissance painting and perspective; architecture and Platonic solids; Islamic patterning etc.)

Mathematics

See **Exercises**, Peter **Stickland**, Fiona **Templeton**

(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)

"flexible, more descriptive."
from something that already existed in the world. So it was more House would take on a much more natural system - extracted over, it's still tied in to a kind of dance-oriented idea. Station know, you physically couldn't do it anymore and then you'd fall you would do something, where you'd hold a position until, you the vagaries of the system. There would be certain cases when to do something a bit looser and freer. It never took into account 'inconsistent behaviours' was extremely tightly ruled. We wanted "The Theatre of Mistakes, although it had things it called Mistakes:

difference between Station House Opera and The Theatre of

House Opera with Alison Urquhart in 1980. He said of the Maynard Smith and Miranda **Payne** went on to form **Station** Julian Maynard Smith (centre) in *Homage to Morandi* Photo: Ray Smith

Maynard Smith, Julian (1951-)

See also: **Lost Farm**

Maynard Smith graduated in Fine Art from Hornsey (see: **Art schools**) in 1978 but performed with The Theatre of Mistakes before this after doing a **workshop** with Fiona **Templeton**. He participated in various works between 1975 and 1981 including **Lecture Performance** (November 1975), **Two Journeys** (May 1976), **Waterfall** (1977), **Orpheus** and Hermes (1979), and **Homage to Morandi** (1980). His major contribution was in shifting the company's direction:

"he has helped clarify many of the company's concepts - Especially in **MORANDI**"

(Theatre of Mistakes Program for Jeanetta Cochrane Theatre, March 1981)





Mickey Greenall *The Mud Man Lecture* nd c.1975
The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

Another practitioner of the art of conversation is Pat Murphy. A student at Hornsey College of Art, Murphy strings 5 minute slots of conversation together on a reel to reel. The nice thing about her tape is that it can just run on and on, and people can't stay listening to what's being said for long because every 5 minutes they stumble into a new situation. So after a while they just stop listening. But later on, when they've started their own conversation, one or two drop out of that and drift into a comparison of the two conversations—the live one and the one recorded. Then a fresh 5 minute slot takes over.

Anthony Howell, essay "The Art of Conversation," The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See also: **Art Schools**, Jane **Clark**, **Influences**, **Introduction**, **Legacy**, **Memory**, **Mistakes**, **Purdies**, **Theatre**, **Women**

Muse

See **Orpheus** and **Hermes**; Miranda **Payne**

Music

See also: Michael **Nyman**, **Unattributed**

"Obviously, some of the Theatre of Mistakes' structures were identical to the ones being used by Philip Glass"

(Julian Maynard Smith in www.vizlang.co.uk/readings/Smith)

Composer John White collaborated with Anthony **Howell**, Andrew **Eden**, and Fergus Early in **One Rule Game** (Hampstead Heath, 1974).

Note: the use of **koans** in **Waterfall**; also songs in **Going**.

What is the role of memory in the work of The Theatre of Mistakes?
Vicki Chick recalls being asked how The **Ting** remembered all the intricate choreographies. (They didn't; they were improvised.) In phenomenological terms, the absences that follow presence differ from those prior to it; the latter are concerned with anticipation, the former with memory. The memories of the participants and observers of Ting: The Theatre of Mistakes are riddled with contradictions that range from the use of their name (Fiona **Templeton** and Peter **Stickland** recall "The Ting" was dropped early on; performance flyers and reviews show

Anthony Howell, essay "The Art of Conversation," The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

"drama".
part by heart prior to the performance: memory thus becomes integral to the remembering what has been said earlier, rather than learning a speech or a would, should, must (et alia). In these terms, a play becomes a matter of copulative positions (i.e. the verbs to be, to have, to do, plus could, names in conjunction with those verbs commonly employed in auxiliary and/or it is suggested that the vocabulary be limited to pronouns and the players' the query) are dealt out to the players on conventional playing cards, while in the list above with any other (Make a command out of any previous negat- from the matrix of possibilities obtained by combining any one instruction version Cards (first performed A.M.P. November 1974) single instructions used in order to confer a unity of style to what is being said. In con- ing performers to create their own dialogue while limiting the vocabulary My interest in conversation stems from an attempt to find a way of allow-

Memory

(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

initiatives around Ting.
disparate again" and indicative of the openness of the art
and Lindsay **Moran** in 1976, a grouping Moran refers to as "totally
Whitechapel in 1973 and at the **Art Room** along with Susan **Hiller**
American abstract painter who had an exhibition at the

Meenley, Ed

descending numerical sequences. E.g. *four sums with the same answers*.

McCall, Anthony (1946-)

See also: **London Film Makers Co-op**, **Wallpaper**

"The other Anthony" Long-standing friend of Anthony **Howell** whose first fire work – *Landscape for Fire I* – occurred at the wedding of Howell and Signe Lie (**Howell**). His then partner was performance artist Carolee **Schneeman**.

Andrew **Eden**: "Anthony [McCall] was the most connected person except for Annabel **Nicholson** with the [London] Film Co-op"
(Interview: Andrew Eden & Susan **Bonvin**, Peterborough, 24th Nov 2008).

McCall left London for **New York** in January 1973 but recalls early Ting performances in the **Dairy** and at Michael McKinnon's studio. He describes them as highly structured pieces containing ritualized movement and rules, in which all participants were deemed authors. "People were the medium."

(Interview: Anthony McCall, Jason E Bowman, London, 26th Sept 2008)

His work shares The Theatre of Mistakes' concern with **structures**. This is what he wrote about his 16mm, 30min film *Line Describing a Cone* that begins with:

"a pencil of light that runs through space from the projector to the wall. The image on the wall at that point is just a dot with white lines. That dot on the wall gradually traces a circle leaving a trail behind it. It traces it very, very slowly. It takes half an hour to define an entire circle and in the end you have a complete hollow cone of light in space. This has a certain drama to it as it completes its circle as it turns around and of course there are no surprises: everyone can see where it is going and then they kind of begin to quite eagerly wait for it to complete itself."

<http://www.tate.org.uk/tateshots/episode.jsp?item=9117>

David Hockney was given his own private view of *Some Matterhorns*: more than one person has suggested Hockney appeared to have been influenced by what he saw.



Morandi (1890-1964)

Italian painter known for his exquisite still lifes.



See: **Homage to Morandi**

Mud Man

A performance created by Mikey **Greenall** and Howard **Tong**.

Mullet David Spathaky (see **Performers**) had one.

Murphy, Pat

Studied Fine Art ("moving from a painting/ printing/ photography practice to performance and film") at Hornsey where she met Robert **Janz** who was lecturing there. In July of her final year (1974) Janz took her along to the **Ting's** inaugural meeting. She recalls her participation in the following: *The Street*, The Roundhouse Studio, *Preparations for Displacement*, Regent's Park (1975), Hornsey College of **Art** (June 1975), *Two Journeys* (May 1976). Murphy's response to the **Questionnaire**, notable for its clarity and the depth of its insights, is cited throughout this A-Z.

Documentation of *The Street*, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive



Mistakes

[not to be confused with Robert Venturi: *Less is a bore*]

Of Dieter Rams: *Less but better*

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe: *Less is more*

Minimalist maxims:

choreography of Yvonne Rainer...

The music of Michael **Nyman**; objects of Donald Judd; the

See **Conceptualism** and also: **Economics**

Minimalism

Mickey Greenall: see **Greenall**, **Mickey**

Instructions for the metronome in *Three Act Piece* (February 1976)

end of the first act. In act two walk at the same regular pace
the reciter is seated and ending up in that same corner at the
Walk entirely round the performance space from the corner where
Metronome: -

Homage to Pietro Longhi (1976), and *Going* (1977).

It reappears in *Three Act Piece* (1976) and in *Scenes at a Table*.
The Theatre of Mistakes. In *Preparations for Displacement* (1975).
The metronome is a device evident from the early work of Ting:

Metronome

See also **Mistakes**.

otherwise) to who did what (was it Templeton or **Greenall** who painstakingly coloured in Scene Diagrams for *Homage to Pietro Longhi*? Was it Howard **Tong** or Anthony **Howell** who invented the concept of *The Doors*?) It is hardly surprising. The memories in this text were mostly collated in 2008-9 and relate to events beginning in the early **Seventies** through to the early Eighties. There was hindsight and forgetting; forgiveness or elision in between.

This is partly due to the fluid nature of the co-operative (even that word has too many connotations to be accurate): between the initial Ting and the later core group, The Theatre of Mistakes. This movement epitomises The Theatre of Mistakes – performers involved in very intense periods of engagement then not at all; others consistently there in supportive roles as audiences, collaborators, critics; the blurred boundaries between artistic practices and social/romantic encounters... Then there is the importance of **mutuality**, epitomised by the stamp and signature created by Howell, Templeton, and Greenall, which suggests it is paradoxical or at least irrelevant to apportion credit for this or that idea. (Whose idea was it to focus on mutuality?)

Even the **documentation** held in The Theatre of Mistakes' **archive** is an unreliable narrator since it is more a testament to the company's constant need for redefinition according to the multiple uses of the same texts: as publicity, as Arts Council applications, as attempts to hone conceptual strategies, as program notes.

Participants' memories also have different qualities: from the evocative linear analysis of Pat **Murphy** to the fragmented, impressionistic flashbacks of Howard **Tong**. Yet there are enough repetitions. Memories take on the quality of music, of variations on the same theme. Of choruses.

Photo: © The Theatre of Mistakes
Lindsay Moran (centre) in *Three Act Piece*, Covent Garden, October 1975



Lecture Performance, Two Journeys.

Moran was recruited by Fiona Templeton (see *Art Schools*) and stayed with The Theatre of Mistakes for exactly one year, from July 1975–July 1976, performing in works such as *Three Act Piece*, *Lecture Performance*, *Two Journeys*.

Anthony Howell in the *Fiver Show* introduction, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive
it takes him.
buy is to invest in a future I have great faith in whichever direction
young, one doesn't know what he intends to do, can't tell, but to
create an almost 3d effect and the high drama of the work. Quite
in Stowell's exhibition 1975. I like the way he uses outtime to
artists, won Scottish young contemporary prize in 1972, exhibited
Lindsay Moran works with ting theatre of mistakes. Young Scots

Moran, Lindsay (1952–)
Not to be confused with former CIA officer and author of *Blowing my Cover, My Life as a Spy*.

Lindsay Moran's response when pressed to analyse his contribution to The Theatre of Mistakes:

"I was a good performer. I didn't mind if it was painful or whatever and I was game and he [Anthony Howell] knew that. Whether it was standing still for ages or jumping up and down till it hurt... really pushing it.... I enjoyed that aspect. And when it came to doing stand-up, there was an element of that which I never forgot from The Theatre of Mistakes."

(Interview: Lindsay Moran, London, 6th Nov, 2008)

Howard Tong recalls being very much in awe of his ideas. Moran also exhibited at the *Art Room* with his solo show *Some Matterhorns* and took iconic *photographs of Going* (see below), wrote and performed stand-up comedy, and has recently returned to painting.



Photo: © Lindsay Moran, The Theatre of Mistakes Archive

See Solution

MIRANDA PAYNE
Born 1954. Worked with the Bird in Hand Theatre Company on two plays performed at the Hoxton Hall and at the Mercury Theatre. Studied at Maidstone College of Art. Performed with the Theatre of Mistakes in "Preparations for Displacement" (Cambridge Poetry Festival 1974), and "The Street" (Kentish Town 1974). Created "Pairs' Game", which was first performed by the company in 1974 at The Southampton Performance Show. Performed with the same company at The London Exhibition 1974, and "Pairs' Game" was performed at the Slade in 1975. I then worked on a production of "Rank"—a play about the Windsor Festival—in 1976: this was performed at the Roundhouse Downstairs and went on tour in Devon and Cornwall. I also performed in "A Waterfall" at the Hayward Gallery 1977.
I enclose The Theatre of Mistakes '75 brochure, which has photographs of "Pairs' Game" taken at the Southampton Performance Show.

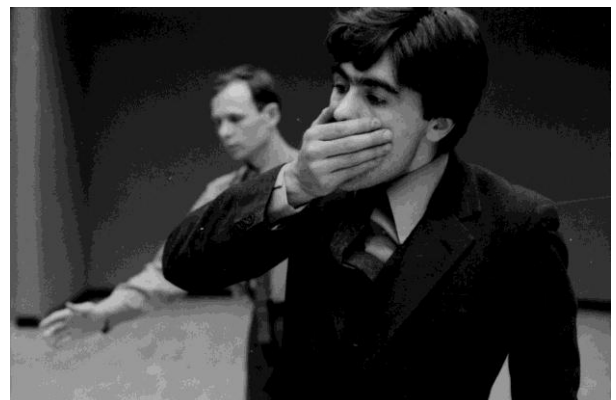
where is the mistake in the following?

Amongst the papers of The Theatre of Mistakes Archive, are several undated (c.1978) biographies of performers including: Fiona Templeton, Howard Tong, Peter Stickland, Julian Maynard Smith, Brigitte Roth [photographer and performer], and Miranda Payne. The latter and Tong's bios contain similar mistakes.

(Pat Murphy, response to *Questionnaire*, December 2008)
"the built in, calculated flaw in the perfect carpet, the way you know you are human, the trickster element subverting best laid plans, the place where conflict intensifies outside narrative context and the place where narratives might begin."

Traditionally, the performance mistake might comprise the missed cue; lack of synchronization; failure to enter or exit at the correct moment; limb raised to an incorrect height; faulty rhythm. It makes a comedy or a tragedy of technique: stumbled pirouettes, flat notes, collapsing sets, jokes without punchlines... A mistake can be corrected/ atoned for/concealed.

The mistake, whether accidental or deliberate, creates a rupture in form. Assuming form is rarely read until it is broken, The Theatre of Mistakes are practiced at looking for the mistake, at asking: what are the best errors to make to highlight structure? The historiography of the mistake in The Theatre of Mistakes' work alters. It begins as the only thing they can say; to being seriously on the surface (*Homage to Pietro Longhi*); to becoming the fully rehearsed mistake which has retreated from the surface (*Going*); to the mistake that occurs "in the thinking before the work has even been devised" (Peter Stickland on *Homage to Morandi* Conversations: London, Nov 2008).



Peter Stickland *Going* Photo: © Lindsay Moran