

**Radical/Basic/Actual. 1970s Experiments in Print Media: Felipe Ehrenberg, Latin American Artists and the Beau Geste Press (Devon, 1970-1976).** Exhibition. 10<sup>th</sup> October - 14<sup>th</sup> November 2016. Alison Richard Building, West Road, Cambridge.  
Centre of Latin American Studies in Association with Cambridge University Library and Trinity College.  
Curator: Erica Segre.

### **Curator's Introduction.**

The Mexican mixed media, conceptual and performance artist Felipe Ehrenberg and Martha Hellion co-founded the *Beau Geste Press* collective in Devon (1970-1976) with English artist and art historian David Mayor. It became one of the most influential avant-garde independent presses of the post-war period and is regarded by art historians and contemporary artists as one of the most significant transnational collaborative projects of the 1970s. This unconventional workshop/taller and community of printers became influential by producing and publishing print objects of a new, heterogenous, radical aesthetic that was often engaged in the counterculture and in the blurring of disciplinary boundaries across creative media, gender and politics. In collaboration with international and national artists many of whom were associated with the Fluxus movement, the BGP produced diverse limited edition works, concept booklets, pamphlets, magazines, flyers and postcards using experimental techniques of graphic design including inserts, folded pages, stecil signage, applied materials, photographs, stamps and collage while also revisiting the artisanal in printing styles of production. Through this vital creative centre, Ehrenberg, a self-confessed 'neologist' created a multidimensional web of collaborations (often eclectic and intermedial) predicated on experimental and alternative processes of image and textual interplay centred on the UK. In 1972 it launched the legendary *Schmuck* – a periodical of ideas and anti-authoritarian art practice organised around a specific culture or region (*French Schmuck*, *Teutonic Schmuck* etc). Key artists, poets, musicians and theorists such as Cecilia Vicuña, Ulises Carrión, Helen Chadwick, Carolee Schneemann, Claudio Bertoni, Michael Nyman, Opal L.Nations and Ben Vautier created pioneering print artefacts that have become landmarks of the international dimension of a dissident art practice exemplified by the Beau Geste Press. The exhibition showcases a collection of these provocative and original limited editions often made using unconventional materials and 'arte povera' techniques of production and distribution in an unusual variety of small-scale formats. It explores the legacy of indiscipline of the BGP's uniquely communal and discrepant artefacts. As the 1973-74 catalogue of BGP publications declared self-sufficiency and international synergies underpinned the experimental artists' press:

“Beau Geste Press is not a business. It's a way of life. We exist because you exist. Our activities serve as a link-up, stressing contact between Britain and Latin America as well as East European countries. We are political though not politicized. Our editions are limited because we print, bind and distribute ourselves.”

Individual artists were encouraged to take an active role in every stage of printing and financing the production of their work. The range of unorthodox collaborations produced books, pamphlets and ephemera by concrete poets, conceptual and performance artists, neo-dadaists, experimental composers, fiction writers and members of the group Fluxus (which

Ehrenberg had joined in 1968). The aim was to function independently of conventional art circuits, to challenge the authoritarian grip of art institutions and to promote irreverent or disturbing acts of expression that questioned the consumerist and political mainstream. Chance, play and serendipitous collisions of the personal and the found, the documentary and the poetic, of drawn doodle and photograph, collage and cut-out, typographical sign and accidental trace, characterized the unsettling diversity of imprints. The text and the book were treated as bodies, as vehicles, as performances, as architectures, as spatial apertures, as precarious materiality, as mock bureaucracy, as testimonies and as environments for transgressive or perplexing encounters. Another key gesture of plurality and displacement at the BGP is evidenced by the playful and inconsistent bilingualism of its textuality and typography alongside the pastiche of Victorian printed ephemera and other imperial branding. Adopting the pseudonym 'Kyosan Bajin', Ehrenberg designed and provided the prologue of the catalogue *Fluxshoe* (1972) which accompanied a year-long exhibition of performances and documentation by Fluxus artists which includes poetry, photographs, satirical questionnaires and administrative forms by countercultural figures such as feminist artist Carolee Schneemann. A notable feature of the production of the BGP, was the collective's early involvement in opposing the military coup against the government of socialist president Salvador Allende in Chile on 11 September 1973. Chilean conceptual artist, poet, performer and eco-activist Cecilia Vicuña's multipart book *Sabor a mi* (1973) was produced at the BGP during the unfolding crisis. Ehrenberg's *Pussywillow: A Diary of Conditions* (1974), despite its random diaristic appearance, contained explicit allusions of protest against the Pinochet regime and its US backers. Vicuña co-founded with art critic and curator Guy Brett and US artist John Dugger Artists for Democracy. She spearheaded acts of protest in London to which David Mayor, Felipe Ehrenberg and others at the BGP contributed.

**Captions for exhibits:****Claudio Bertoni, *El cansador intrabajable* (BGP: 1973).**

The first book by the experimental Chilean poet and visual artist (dedicated to partner and collaborator Cecilia Vicuña) combines the influence of anti-poetry, haiku and free jazz in an informal and confessional mode (clearly in dialogue with the Beat poets as well as the idiosyncratic Chilean avant-garde represented by poet Nicanor Parra's ironic 'prosaicism' and Alejandro Jodorowsky's delirious *Teatro pánico*).

The book design pays tribute to the notebook and the haphazard jottings of a responsive and open-ended existential engagement. The epigraph to Part I cites American Blues legend Lightning Hopkins 'but I won't be blue always'. There is a conflicted outlook towards the tradition of the avant-garde in the midst of the unfolding political emergency in Chile, as a younger socially radical generation questions the credibility/authority of pioneers of alternative aesthetics to whom they also inevitably pay tribute:

'Antipoema'/Antipoem'.

Que mala suerte

Para mí

Que Nicanor

Parra

Mi poeta favorito

Mi antipoeta favorito

Mi existencialista favorito

Mi cantante de tangos favorito

Mi cantante de blues favorito

Mi energúmeno favorito

Mi marciano favorito

Mi teólogo favorito

Haya metido

Tan hondo

- Y en tan  
mala hora-  
la pata.

[Londres, VII/73]

[What bad luck/ for me/that Nicanor Parra/my favourite poet/my favourite antipoet/my favourite existentialist/my favourite singer of tangos/my favourite blues singer/my favourite lunatic/ my favourite alien/my favourite theologian/ has placed his foot/so deeply and at such a bad time/in it.]

**Helen Chadwick (1953-1996) and David Mayor, *Door to Door* (BGP: 1973)**

This concept book designed as a three-dimensional structure records a photographic performance devised by English sculptor, photographer and installation artist Helen Chadwick in collaboration with BGP's David Mayor: 'In Croydon, two doors face each other across a lawn. These photos were taken while walking from one door to the other. Fluxshoe/Croydon 26<sup>th</sup> January 1973'. Chadwick's mixed and multimedia works in the 1980s and 1990s explored perceptions and cultural representations of the female body, problematizing gender, female sentience, agency and subjectivity. Her explicatory texts were often conceptual and written in a poetic idiom. The book in *Door to Door* stands as a threshold and a place of transits but also of enclosure and concealment. The fleeting passage from point to point marks the operations of reading from page to page, cover to cover. These are not sliding doors and the notion of adjacency and correspondence is interrupted rather than illustrated by the disjunct duality of Chadwick and Mayor.

**Ulises Carrión (San Andrés Tuxtla, Veracruz, Mex 1941- Amsterdam, 1989), *Looking for poetry/Tras La poesía* (BGP: 1974).** This is an early work by cult writer, poet, visionary book-maker and occasional performance artist who experimented with visual and other contemporary media – including printing, telecommunications, radio, video, cable television, cinema and theatre – producing interdisciplinary works that sought to operate in an alternative space beyond the conventional classifications of art. He was a member of the collective In-Out Center (Amsterdam, 1972-1975) and founded Other Books and Co (Amsterdam, 1975) a place where gestating works could be gathered freely before being re-designated and categorised as meaningful objects by the discourse of art critics or the practices of cultural consumers. Carrión studied English literature at the University of Leeds and his work, despite many anti-literary provocations, operates at the intersection between conceptual art, performance and poetry. The poem weaves English and Spanish words for connective things in a visible pattern of parallel textual objects on the page. The couplets eventually create a confluence of words relating poetry's lines, the marks on the page, to the space of movement, flow and relation.

1. Lines

líneas.

Wires

alambres.

Strings

cuerdas.

Cables

cables.

Hairs  
cabellos.

Canals  
canales.

Rivers  
ríos.

Roads  
caminos.[...]

5. Lines  
líneas.

Trajectories  
trayectorias.

Courses  
direcciones.

Distances  
distancias.

Latitudes  
latitudes.

Spaces  
espacios.

Relations  
relaciones.

Symbols  
símbolos.

Metaphors  
metáforas.

Poetry.  
poesía.?’

**Ulises Carrión, *Arguments* (BGP: 1973).**

Carrión's passion for books as three-dimensional objects, spatial dwellings, intermedial forms and happenings prompted a liberating act of vandalism against the library he had amassed: he discarded his 'old books' and launched a manifesto 'El nuevo arte de hacer libros'/'The New Art of Making Books' (1975):

Un libro es una secuencia de espacios.

Cada uno de estos espacios es percibido en un momento diferente:

Un libro también es una secuencia de momentos.

El lenguaje escrito es una secuencia de signos desplegados en el espacio, cuya lectura transcurre en el tiempo.

El libro es una secuencia espacio-temporal.

Un libro puede ser el recipiente accidental de un texto [...]

Un libro puede existir también como una forma autónoma

y suficiente en sí misma, incluyendo acaso un texto que acentúa,

que se integra a esa forma, aquí empieza el arte nuevo de hacer libros.'

(published in *Plural: Crítica y Literatura, Excélsior*, vol. iv, no.41, Mexico City, February 1975).

[A book is a sequence of spaces./ Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment – a book is also a sequence of moments./Written language is a sequence of signs expanding within space:/the reading of which occurs in time./A book can also exist as an autonomous and self-sufficient form,/including perhaps a text that emphasises that form, a text that is/an organic part of that form: here begins a new art of making books.]

Felipe Ehrenberg, *Pussywillow: a Journal of Conditions* (BGP:1974).

Escaping from the wave of repression that followed the 1968 Student Massacre in Mexico City and what he terms a ‘very stifling and incestuous art scene’, Ehrenberg explained in a recent interview (2016) that London ‘to the eyes of the newly arrived, energetic iconoclast from Mexico was quite the most exciting, stimulating and democratic place. I was already a disobedient artist and my incipient unorthodoxy required an urgent change of scene’. Away from a Mexican context intolerant of anybody “‘arting” differently than the way things were being “arted” at the time.’ His interest in group art (which would prove very influential on his return to Mexico) was first explored by the short-lived experiment of the Polygonal Workshop which he co-founded in London. He provides a revealing insight into the underlying significance of the means of reproduction at the BGP when interviewed in relation to an exhibition dedicated to an alternative history of graphic design shown at De La Waar Pavilion in 2015. Ehrenberg acquired an inexpensive duplicator in London before settling in Clyst Hydon, a hamlet just north of Exeter: ‘I suddenly felt I needed it because a very close friend of ours had been arrested and sentenced to 14 years in jail for having used a mimeograph in Mexico, allegedly “for subversive reasons”, so for me, it was a very dangerous tool. That’s how I got into printing.’ The tactile quality of the magazine *Schmuck*, for example, was due to the process of using IBM Selectric typewriter which enabled the user to make typographic decisions and to be in control of the design.

In the preamble of *Pussywillow*, Ehrenberg roughly weaves together, in an improvisational freeform, sentences in English and Spanish which explain how the book sustains ‘a spur of the moment greatly lengthened’, expanding an impulse into ‘a wild shot in the dark’. The book uses retractions and black-outs and mostly uncaptioned images in and out of sequence alongside collaged newspaper print, frantic fretwork ink scratches in a radical reworking of the wordless graphic books of the 1920s and 30s: ‘esperando que se entienda en cualquier idioma’/‘hoping that it may be understood in any language’. The use of impoverished and recycled material combined with the eroticization of the book object itself and the embodied relations leading to its production: ‘This edition of *Pussywillow* was printed on waste wrapping paper and bound in used corrugated cardboard. It was designed and printed by the author (me) and an old offset machine called Ophelia’. Title of the first pseudo chapter in *Pussywillow*, that follows a cover showing a shallow impression of an ill-defined matt torso, goes on to transpose letter and vaginal cavity to open the labia of the book’s epidermic-toned pages. The pigmentation of paper, blotting and other porous or absorbent grains here and in Vicuña’s *Sabor a mí* allow for the liquefactions of the bodily to leave flecks, stains and other impressions, secretions on tissue, and we may think as reader-viewers that it offers a practice of aesthetic impropriety based on contact-objects.

Cecilia Vicuña (Chile, 1948-), *Sabor a mí* (BGP:1973). Bilingual edition.

Vicuña's *Sabor a mí* (BGP:1973) emerges in the immediate aftermath of the Pinochet coup in Chile as a visibly undisciplined and libertarian response to what was termed 'the New Disorder now in power'. This book-object or portable installation reworks a diaristic scrap-book form of loose thoughts in process. The graphic invention based on verbal play, irony and parody as well the inclusion of found material displays and documents sought a raw exposure to the actual while aiming to effect a posthumous moment for the 'history of art' itself. As Vicuña explained from within the dossier of reproduced paintings included in the multiple spaces of *Sabor a mí*: 'Considero a mis cuadros una artesanía ritual, objetos que existen independientemente de la "historia de arte", como si ésa historia hubiera muerto o nunca hubiera existido.' / 'I consider my paintings ritual craftwork, objects that exist independently of the "history of art" as if it had died or never existed.' For Vicuña associative hazard in the collection of materials, especially as regards the photo display, indicates an armature made of ruins but also the residual combinations and liberating associations which she identified as the workings of socialism -- 'una combinación para la dicha' / 'A combination for happiness'. This informal work of testimony and protest used the embedded notebook as a micro ambience, stitching in epistolary inserts and postal composites, pasting in and applying images along with dried organic matter such as a petal or leaf pressed in the pages of a book. Like many of the BGP imprints, it cultivated the imperfections of blot and blur of artists' or printer's proofs, delighting in the preliminary, hasty and unfinished in a wide spectrum of amateur-like effects. Vicuña a pioneer of land and eco-art delighted in the precarious means of production, based on the artisanal and the workshop collective. Ehrenberg's 'Explanatory words' that open Vicuña's *Sabor a mí* (literally 'Flavour/Taste of me') clearly show the power of resistance invested in this fragile paper object: '*Saborami*, a taste of Cecilia Vicuña, is an untranslation from the Spanish. Appearing as it does 2 months after Chile was carefully raped by starry striped militarists, *Saborami* is the very first howl of pain to emerge from the rubble under which Chile's conscience lies stunned. This book is sheer irony; the result of converging chance happenings: it collects nearly 10 years of work by Cecilia and was planned as a celebration. Now it symbolizes the contained fury and the sorrow of her country's present.'

Cecilia Vicuña, *Palabrar/arms/Wurdwappinschaw* (Edinburgh: Morning Star Publications, 1994). Translated by Edwin Morgan (1920-2010). Edited and designed by Alec Finlay.

The interdisciplinary poet and visual artist, exiled from Chile moved to Bogotá Colombia in 1974 and New York in 1980. The experience of being uprooted turned the small sculptures and installations constructed of found objects (or 'basuritas'/'bits of rubbish') that she dubbed 'Precarios' (with which she had been experimenting through site-specific interventions in Chile), into a more meditative preoccupation with displacement and marginalization. She shared with Ehrenberg an interest in word play, coining neologisms and excavating etymology across the languages of her creative deliberations and works – Spanish, English, Mapudungun (spoken by the Mapuche of Chile and Argentina) and other indigenous languages such as Quechúa, Aymara and Nahuatl. 'Palabrar' conjoins in a bundle 'word' in Spanish with the plural for 'weapons' echoing with the English term for limbs - 'arms' - and coins the spillage of words 'palabrar' as an active verb which contains 'abra' the imperative for 'open!'. The theme of weaving and interweaving, threading and unthreading, recurs in textual works, poetic performances and installations that borrow the mystical/cosmic 'oral writing' and accounting system of the Andean *Quipu* and its network of knotted threads to explore identity, culture and gender issues through the connective fibres of embodied languages.

Cecilia Vicuña, *Palabra e hilo = Word & Thread* (Edinburgh: Morning Star Publications/Royal Botanic Garden, 1996). Translated by Rosa Alcalá.

Numbered edition of 300 copies signed and lettered by the author and translator on the occasion of Vicuña's exhibition *Precario/Precarious*. (Copy no. 108). The unbound design of this text-object, its tactile surfaces and the umbilical-like cord that holds its loose pages together speaks eloquently of the kind of relational reading that requires a physical as well as mental performance.

Yukio Tsuchiya, *Works in progress* (BGP: 1974). Translations and illustrations by Felipe Ehrenberg. 2nd edition [1st edition 1972]. Text in Spanish, English and Japanese. 250 copies.

Japanese artist, designer and educator best known as the author of the post-war children's classic *The Faithful Elephants: A True Story of Animals People and War* that relates the episode during the bombing of Tokyo in 1943 in which the keepers voluntarily slaughtered the animals of the capital's zoo. An annual ritual involving school children takes place at the monument on the site where the animals are buried. The title of his BGP collaboration combines Joycean process and Marxist praxis towards an artistic end.

**Michael Leggett, *Wayward Action!* (BGP: 1974).**

Broadside by the English cineaste that explores, in the face of a conservative mass media, alternative broadcasting and televisual play. Leggett produced documentary footage of the participation of Artists for Democracy in the protest rally held in Trafalgar Square. An 'Arts Festival for Democracy in Chile' was held in London at the Royal College of Art, 14<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> October 1974. Vicuña's appeal to the creative arts community took the form of a type-written letter which concludes: 'We call on your solidarity as artist and human being to help us turn the present suffering of torture, imprisonment and exile into creative energy, in order to make again of Chile a fertile land for love and creation' (30<sup>th</sup> July 1974).

**David Mayor, *Extra: Some words and visions* (BGP: 197).**

The format reprised the notebook of random and careless doodling to imagine preposterous juxtapositions, peculiar diagrams and wild reconfigurations rendered in a childish hand. The ordinariness of the material support emphasized the creative impulse in the contingency of the everyday while poking fun at diagrammatic thinking and planning.

**Michael Nyman (1944-), *Bentham and Hooker* (BGP: 1973).**

Celebrated British composer and champion of experimental music (through his journalism), Nyman coined the term ‘minimalism’. In 1974 he published his classic study *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*. This BGP experiment constitutes his first non-musical artwork and was hand-written. Nyman is well-known for his intermedial collaborations with filmmakers, artists, dancers and writers. He moved to Mexico City where he now lives attracted, he explained in a recent interview, by the depth and speed with which darkness falls without gradual transitions.

**Ben Vautier (1935-), *Me Ben I Sign* (BGP: 1975).**

French neo-dada artist and provocateur active in Mail Art and well-known for his text-based paintings or *Écritures* begun in 1953, involved in Fluxus, Ben has experimented with graffiti, performance, anti-art and outsider art embracing minority causes and continuing intermedial creative projects through video and electronic media to the present day (see ben-vautier.com). In this explosive booklet produced at the BGP the artist provides a delirious identity-kit that is meant to deflate the ‘auteur’ and originality but also manifest an irreverence that cuts both ways – aiming at self and public. Any attempt at self-definition collapses into incoherence and heterogeneity. From performative self-portrait to radical ideas for a post-aesthetic art (‘Stains’ (1958)) rendered as aphorisms, it helps to satirize what may be narcissistic and self-publicizing in the publication of rebellious texts.

‘Who is Ben? Civil status: ‘Born 18 July, in Naples, has lived in Turkey, Switzerland, Greece, Egypt, Italy, France. Profession: second-hand dealer and rag-and-bone man. [...] Teeth decayed. Love: Nothing. Atheist. [...] Grandson of painter Benjamin Vautier. Inconsistent. Thin. Genius. Treated for megalomania at St Mary’s Asylum.’

‘Moral Status: Whatever I am, I must be.[...]

I endeavour to do what has not been done.

I am afraid of being a failure.

There are others and me and that’s all.

I’m fed up with myself.

I’m a cunt.

Thief, liar, idiot. [...]

I suffer from being pretentious.

I have to be important.

I am a genius.

Everyone else can fuck off.

So can the reader.

I am God’.

**Endre Tót, *Night Visit to the National Gallery* (BGP: 1974)**

Hungarian conceptual artist associated with Fluxus and an early proponent of Mail art (Ben Vautier was one of his correspondents in this postage exchange), who had already established a reputation for his DIY artist books in 1970s Hungary before his collaboration with the BGP. Tót, turned his back on figurative art and painting as an expressive medium in particular with a hypothetical work that was never realized, 'My unpainted canvasses' (1970). *Night Visit to the National Gallery* is a ludic extension of the blank canvas motif through which a nocturnal gallery guide blacks out canonical fine art collections. This parodic map/manual of the fine art collections by room, period and provenance has blotted out all the reproductions in this inventory of Western masterworks while leaving the categorizations and other descriptive labels as empty frames for an invisible corpus. The micro-cosmic virtual intervention into the national museum provides a maquette of infractions of such spaces by performance artists using the instructive printed guide as mnemonic device. Felipe Ehrenberg, Tót's collaborator at the BGP, had notoriously engineered a demonstration in the Tate Gallery, London on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1970, as part of the *International Coalition for the Liquidation of Art*. Wearing a white calico hood with an opening for one eye he tape-recorded the gallery attendants' efforts to prevent him gaining access. Dubbed 'A Date with Fate at the Tate', the absurd verbal exchanges and slapstick that ensued exposed the normative ambience that prevailed in such high cultural institutions. The anti-authoritarian and anti-art-establishment vein was again in evidence when Ehrenberg contributed to the artist campaign against and boycott of the Sao Paulo Biennial in 1971 on the grounds that the prestige event was promoted by an anti-democratic regime and upheld cultural imperialism.

**Opal L. Nations, *The Man who entered Pictures* (BGP: 1972)**

With 'interpretations' by Felipe Ehrenberg. Ehrenberg pioneered mimeography as a graphic art (against established convention that regarded it as a coarse-grained and low-end utilitarian technique). This complex book artefact (combining narrative and figurative images) with wooden covers and hand-colouring teased the refined expectations of collectors of livres d'artistes in which only the finest materials and exceptional production values prevailed to create a unique, rare or exclusive specimen of enduring avant-garde art with its value measured according to cultural capital but also the market place: 'First mimeographed in a numbered edition of 150 [...] 30 copies of this book have been bound inside wooden covers, signed by Opal and Felipe. This is copy number 21.' Unwittingly or perhaps inescapably the conservation practices involved in any contemporary exhibition of period materials mimic this process of rarefied showcasing. The meta-textual irony at the expense of the publishing project, deliberately begging what might usually enhance its value, is characteristic of the self-deprecating gags of a seemingly implausible publishing venture such as the BGP.

**Opal L. Nations, *Banners death* (BGP: 1972).**

Mimeographed, wire-stitched limited edition with hand etched stencil drawings and text. The fantastical and nonsensical humour of Brighton-born Nations made for eccentric reading. He had founded his own independent and experimental press, *Strange Faeces*, and his textual work appeared in many independent presses and magazines of the 1970s. As a performing musician with a long-term interest in American popular music such as soul-based R&B and gospel, he experimented with radio plays and other sound-based art.

**Victor Musgrave (1919-1984), *First Lecture by the Intermediary* (BGP: 1974)**

British poet, art dealer and curator, Musgrave ran the influential *Gallery One* in London (1953-1963) that was instrumental in promoting the work of Fluxus artists as well as giving the first solo exhibitions in Britain to Yves Klein and Rufino Tamayo. Musgrave not only championed Brut Art but also showed and collected outsider art. The Musgrave Kinley Collection of Outsider Art was given to the Whitworth Art Gallery at the University of Manchester.

**Jaroslawn Kozlowski (1945-), *Lesson* (BGP: 1975).**

Well-known Polish conceptual artist whose multimedia installations revolving around the mechanisms of perception and self-reflection in art have frequently incorporated light, drawing and photography as well as objects, playing with the boundaries of the material and the cognitive. He ran the Galeria Akumulatory 2 in Poznan (1972-1990), a space for experimental synergies between Polish and international avant-garde practices. Kozlowski would go on to hold a British Council Fellowship in London in 1979. In *Lesson* the artist creates a portable installation piece which explores through the printed photograph and the interrogations of the text the mediated relations between presence and image, photography and reality, perception and scepticism.

By creating visual and semantic riffs using series of repetitions with slight variations and alterations, the 'Lesson' with its Socratic questions deprived of any didactic conclusions, ends up demonstrating not an exemplary act of reasoning but the indeterminate character of thought process and speech acts--despite the material support of a recognisable reference book and verbal syntax.

'15. What is a photographed situation in the presence of what has been said?

What is it that has been said in the presence of a photographed situation?

16. What is a photographed situation in the presence of reality?

What is reality in the presence of a photographed situation?

17. What is a [sic] photography in the presence of reality?

What is reality in the presence of a photography? [...]

22. What is a lesson in the presence of reality?

What is reality in the presence of a lesson?'

**Allen Fisher, *Taken the days after we had beef curry between 28.7.72 & 28.10.72* (BGP: 1974).**

Prolific poet, painter, (self-) publisher, editor and art historian, Fisher has been involved in performance since 1962 and his wide range of past and present collaborations signal his transdisciplinary approach and his anti-aesthetic tendencies.

***The Fluxshoe* (South Cullompton, Devon: Beau Geste Press, 1972).** Conceived by Ken Friedman (Fluxus West, California) and Mike Weaver (American Arts Documentation Centre of Exeter University). It was realized and coordinated by David Mayor.

The visual/verbal ('fluxshoe') pun of the title captures the peripatetic and nomadic inclinations of the informal association behind Fluxus that made for a semi-anarchic clustering of artists. Introduction by 'Kyosan Bajin' aka Felipe Ehrenberg:

*"The Fluxshoe* was originally conceived about 2 years ago as a small travelling show, with the intention of exhibiting the published work of the many artists, non-artists and an-artists who have published or performed with Fluxus. It is impossible to define Fluxus: it exists as a name yet it is not a movement; it exists as an organisational framework, yet has no manifesto; it could be taken that it exists as a group, yet the term has been adopted and used sporadically by many other individuals living in far-off places (far from N.Y., of course.) Most of these new activities, these "new manifestations of culture", were absolutely incomprehensible, in their bumbling newness, to the uninitiated, let alone to the gallery owner, or the theatre producer, or the concert hall organizer, or any of the established outlets of even the most avant-gardist art. The new works were games, jokes, doodles; bitterly happy, satirically spontaneous. [...] And who takes games, jokes, instructions, riddles and diatribes seriously, even nowadays? And in the case of many others who produced what seems to be anger and even obscenity, their work again since it did not conform with the recognisable ways of presenting such emotions in art, was also dismissed. Games, and the playing of them, transcended into the realm of culture.

The work in *Fluxshoe* is a work that involves thinking, writing, behaving, instructing, making sounds and music, making silence, mailing. It participates and demands participation. It is whimsical, philosophical, spontaneous and well-thought-out. It is didactic, intransigent and aloof. It is scientific, prophetic and nostalgic. It is a solemn lark and lively serious. It is a club and open to all. It is a result of culture. The critics invent their labels and categories, usually without further justification than a misguided feeling that they exist to interpret the artist's behaviour, and hurriedly slot in as much as possible the work produced by individuals who are creating anywhere from Argentina to Zanzibar. Much of the work being produced throughout the world remains "uncategorizable in a strange new way". Since most of the activities being presented at the *Fluxshoe* lie in the future, it is obviously impossible to comment on them at the time of this writing. What happens at each stage of the Shoe's journey though will be recorded in a supplementary folder to this catalogue, and it is up to us, all artists or all non-artists, to delve and discern".

**Fluxshoe: Add End A! (BGP:1972/73.) Folder with dossier of texts, photographs and other reproductions, including a poster by Chris Welch:**

“Presentation of a year-long journey round a small country: words, works, ideas, jokes, playings, doings, mailings, playthings, givings and other – ings (no sms, please) past and present by present and past Fluxus people, their friends, co-workers, acquaintances and others. And an influx invasion of some of the crazy-serious artists, non-artists, jesters and disruptions and disturbances, geniuses creating and performing their demonstrating doodles, drinks, dances.”

**HUMPHREY IS HERE! Being a BROADSHEET OF THOUGHTS gathered when Beau Geste Press christened its M.A.N. two rev. Letterpress cylinder.**

The celebratory consecration of the newly arrived equipment took the form of poetic thoughts by diverse hands expressed in English and Spanish. Ehrenberg chose a code of elementary symbolic shapes ending in a peace sign.

**Stephen Levine and Felipe Ehrenberg, *Lovebeast and other incarnations* (Sausalito, Calif.: Unity Press, 1968).**

Ehrenberg’s illustrations for countercultural poet Stephen Levine explored a mystical shedding of masculinity in favour of a transcendent body-being unlike any single gendered self, the eponymous ‘Love-beast’ whose many incarnations were interpreted by Ehrenberg as a playful dance pose of indeterminate yet polysemous nude bodies- as angel, silhouette, shadow, radiation -- with genital indexicality artfully hidden from view by a raised leg.

**Margaret Randall (poems) and Felipe Ehrenberg (drawings), *WATER I SLIP INTO AT NIGHT* (Mexico City, 1967).**

Ehrenberg’s drawings for feminist poet Margaret Randall’s exultant, sexually promiscuous verse in *Water I Slip Into At Night* of 1967 includes a suggestive correlation in a poem between free love, *guerrillas* and the Cold War and his drawing of a female nude seen from behind exposing a genital slit in a repeated composition in which the female orifice is combined with an anal slit to complicate the eroticization of anatomy. As co-editor of the Mexico City-based bilingual alternative poetry journal *El corno emplumado/The Plumed Horn* for which Ehrenberg designed covers, Randall’s own ‘unsexed’ sexuality was part a broader range of deviant aesthetics and political engagements. Claudio Bertoni and Cecilia Vicuña published work in *El corno emplumado* along with other experimental poets such as Ernesto Cardenal, Margo Glantz and Lawrence Ferlinghetti.