

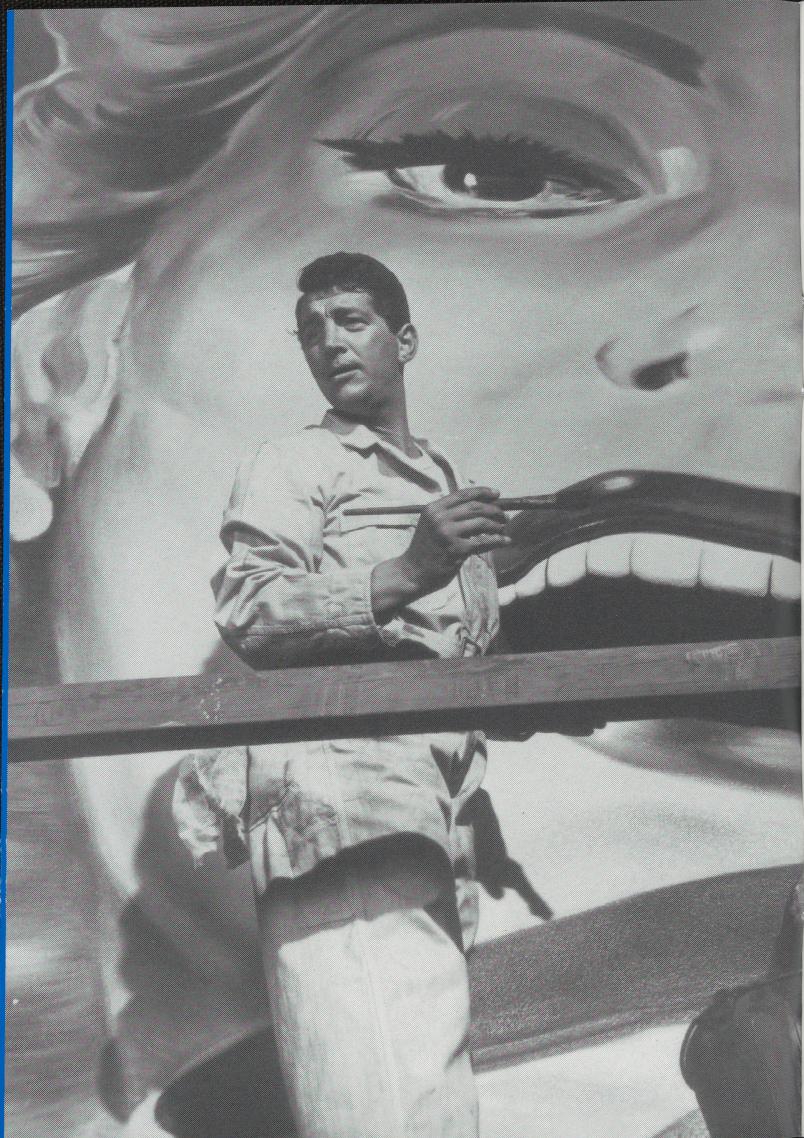
WHO  
DO I  
THINK  
I AM

WHO  
DO I  
THINK  
I AM

curated by JIM BARR

and MARY BARR

with ROBERT LEONARD



‘... only those who have personality and emotion know what it means to want to escape from them.’

— T.S. Eliot

< Dean Martin



**persona** — a character assumed by an author, performer, etc, in his or her working, writing, etc; an aspect of the personality as displayed to others.

**ROBERT LEONARD:** Identity has been a real watchword for art in the 1990s, with a spate of shows celebrating the authentic and laudable selves of the culturally othered. But this show is not so worthy.

**JIM BARR:** Quite the reverse. Here we are interested less in true selves, than in the way some New Zealand artists have toyed with the expectations that they will reveal themselves in their work, and have often forged fictitious identities in the spirit of R. Mutt, alias Rrose Sélavy, alias Marcel Duchamp.

**MARY BARR:** *People have this idea of artists as authentic, expressive, original and true — in short, as full of themselves. But this is a show about artists who have taunted and twisted that thought, presenting contrived or convenient selves; pumped up and professionalised, or deflated and debilitated personae.*

Of course, while the selves we're exploring here are pointedly contrived, all personae are necessarily fictions. Identities don't simply emerge from the sheer authenticity of our true selves, but are projected over us by others, out from us to others, or both. Identity is always about being-with-others:

< Marcel Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy

it's transactional. And that's a dynamic played out in a lot of the work in the show.

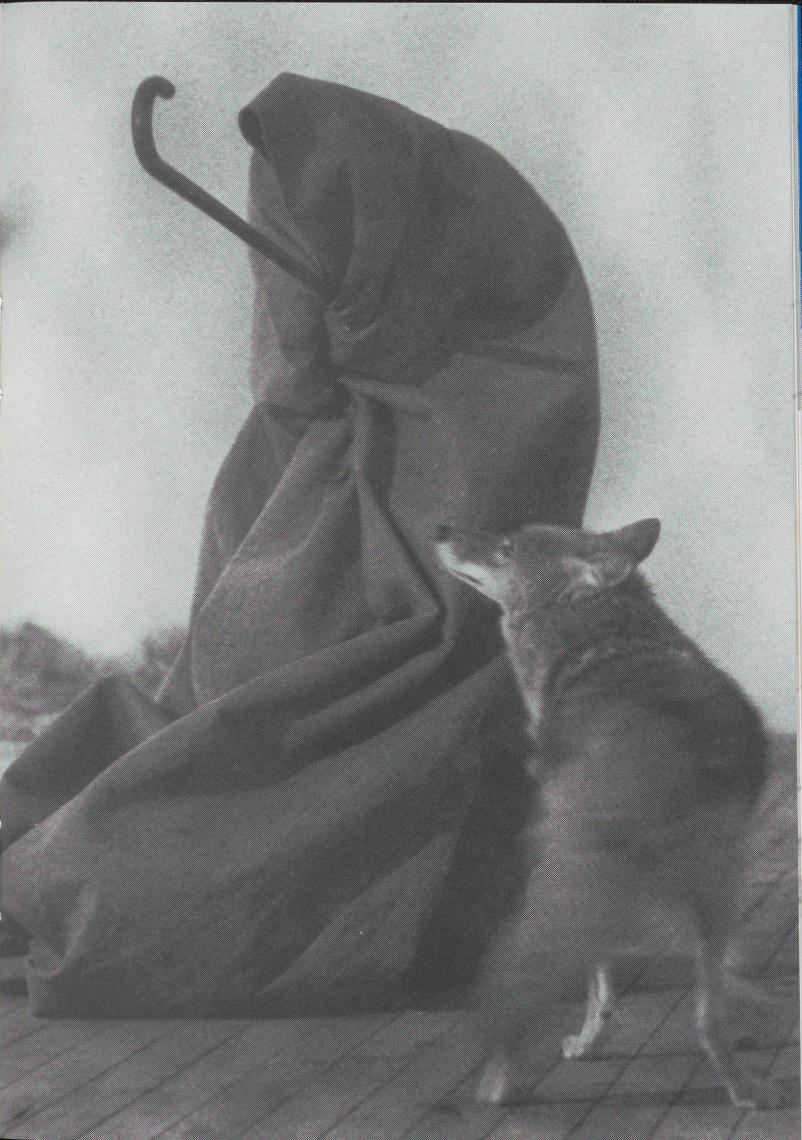
It's a dandy thing. Savvy dressers carefully select each attribute and gesture before presenting themselves to the world, but those choices are made with the world in mind. How we look is how we're seen.

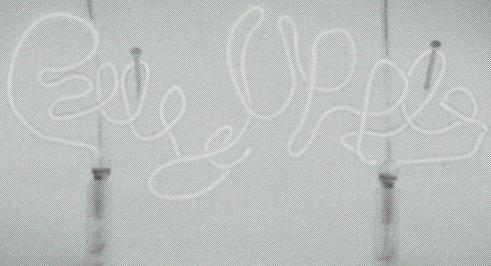
*It's like that Sartrean image you're always talking about, Robert. The guy is walking through the garden alone, happy as Larry. King of all he surveys, until he sees another, discovers he's not alone, and is suddenly ashamed, because now he sees himself mirrored in the eyes of another. Now he knows himself, and it's not nice.*

Yes, and one response to this sorry state is to hide, and a great way of hiding is to forge an enhanced self, a cool and consummate identity for the regard of others, a self-mythology, a look for going out in public. Sartre would say that's 'bad faith', but he only gets it half right, because there's always a kernel of truth in the deception.

It's like that old joke: 'My client may look insane, he may talk insane, he may act insane, but don't be confused, he is insane.'

Joseph Beuys, Stateside >



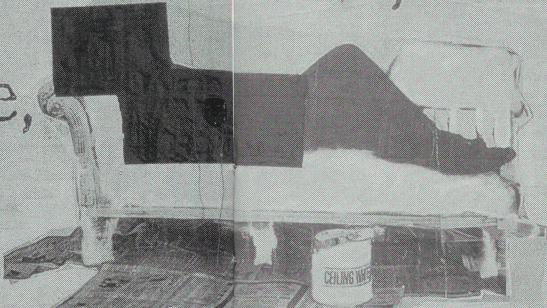


## BILLY APPLE

In November 1962, Barrie Bates, an expatriate New Zealander, recently graduated from London's Royal College, launched his art career with a personal rebranding. He changed his name as a company might update its corporate colours or refine its livery. He became Billy Apple, and, with the help of Lady Clairol Instant Creme Whip, a blond. He went on to produce a body of work marketing his good name: paintings and prints of apples, cast sculptures of apples and other fruits and vegetables, and a series of deadpan self-portraits. For the portraits he offset-printed mug shots, front and back, first correctly, later out of register and in the wrong colours, routinely generating new identities: a bronzed Apple, a skull head Apple, a lycanthropic Apple, a mutant alien Apple. His *Self Elimination Portrait* (1970) consists of a series of proofs as his self image is progressively erased from the plate. This work gets to the heart of the assertion and denial of self at the heart of Apple's corporate identity. Similarly, *Neon Signature* advertises the reduction or distillation of the artist's authenticating mark into a logo: Brand Apple.

< *Neon Signature* 1967

GREAT, beautiful, wonderful  
wide, world,



Marlene Cubewell and William Brighty Rands

"ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING UNIQUE FILMS OF THE YEAR" THE WORLD KNEW

for Popular Productions AT A CINEMA NEAR YOU FROM NOV 13

RP16

#### L BUDD ET AL

In 1992 the artist formerly known as Marlene Cubewell was installing her show at Wellington's Peter McLeavey Gallery. New Zealand's eminent dealer was away, leaving the artist in charge. In his absence she took the opportunity to 'blond' his prized chaise longue with white paint. On his return, an unappreciative McLeavey cancelled the show and trucked the work back to Auckland, save for his distressed chaise which went in for a facelift. For her contribution to Artspace's 1994 billboard project *Changing Signs*, the artist decided to heroise her bad behaviour, promoting it as if it might be the

subject of a major motion picture, meriting the attention of the hundred thousand who drive by daily. In the image, the troublemaker basked innocently on the chaise in the grand manner of Madame Récamier contemplating her 'great, beautiful, wonderful, wide, world.' The billboard has been recycled for this show. The artist has censored herself from the image using black gaffer tape, in the manner normally used to protect the privacy of criminals, and has added speakers playing a rare, muffled recording of Marcel Duchamp explaining himself.

▲ Columbia 1999

#### JULIAN DASHPER - GROUP EXHIBITIONS CONTINUED

1999 P House Gallery - Tokyo - *The Bible of Networking*  
Herman Molendijk Stichting - Amersfoort - The Netherlands - *Ongevraagd drukwerk en andere vormen van artistieke vrijgevigheid (publ)*  
Exporatorium Vrije Universiteit - Amsterdam - *Ongevraagd drukwerk en andere vormen van artistieke vrijgevigheid (publ)*  
Het Wilde Weten, Rotterdam - *Ongevraagd drukwerk en andere vormen van artistieke vrijgevigheid (publ)*  
Galerie Stadt München - Amsterdam - *Later!/Updated*  
Sue Crockford Gallery - Auckland - *Gallery Artists*  
Sarah Cottier Gallery - Switzerland - *Basel Art Fair 30 (publ)*  
Star Projects No. 7 - Kunstakademie Udstillingssted - Copenhagen  
Sandberg 2 Hoorn - The Netherlands - *Ongevraagd drukwerk en andere vormen van artistieke vrijgevigheid (publ)*  
Room - Rotterdam - The Netherlands  
SCA Gallery - Sydney - *On Painting (On the Edge of Painting) (publ)*  
Sarah Cottier Gallery - Sydney - *Gallery Artists*  
rm3 - Auckland - *Photographies*  
Stedelijk Museum - Amsterdam - *Glad IJ*  
Artspace - Auckland - *Who do I think I am (publ)*

#### JULIAN DASHPER - ADDITIONAL REVIEWS (not listed in selected bibliography)

1981, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990,	:	N.Z. Herald
1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998	:	Evening Post
1984, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1992, 1995	:	Dominion
1984, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1993	:	Christchurch Press
1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1992	:	Waikato Times
1987, 1990	:	National Business Review
1987, 1989, 1989	:	New Zealand Listener
1987, 1994, 1995	:	Sunday Times
1987, 1992, 1994, 1997	:	Otago Daily Times
1993	:	Flash Art (European) (News)
1993	:	Flash Art (News)
1995	:	The Canberra Times
1994	:	Muse (Canberra)
1994	:	Sydney Morning Herald
1996, 1999	:	Monica
1996	:	

#### JULIAN DASHPER

**curriculum vitae** — an account of one's life or career especially as required in an application for employment.

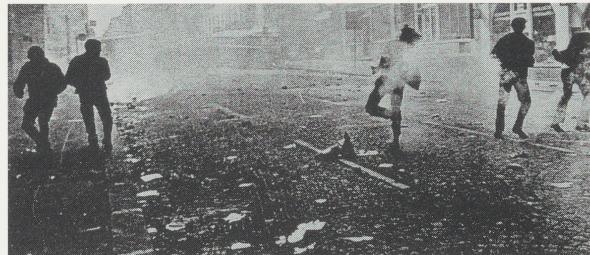
When you visit galleries, you often see artists' C.V.s pinned to the wall, documenting qualifications, awards; listing solo and group shows; contextualising and legitimising the work on display. Attaining a lengthy and comprehensive C.V. can be an artist's pride and joy, their life's work so to speak. Here Julian Dashper offers up his pedigree pages as his work, inviting our contemplation, appreciation or critique. This artist is known for placing the paraphenalia, devices and legends of the artworld at centre stage, as though these supplements were the main event and the art itself simply an alibi.

## RONNIE VAN HOUT

An anti-hero, Ronnie van Hout frequently names his exhibitions after his feigned fragility. His shows include *Multiplying Personality*, *I Forget* and *I'm Not Well*. Van Hout always seems to be dwarfed and overwhelmed – 'in the land of the giants', suffering a mental crisis, or experiencing voices in the head. He presents himself less as authoritative – an author; than as susceptible – a medium. But he makes this pose his calling card. Many of his works involve impersonation. At art school he made a film about an Elvis impersonator in the style of Andy Warhol. Here he is represented by a painting of a self help slogan – BE SOMEONE ELSE. There's also a documentary video, in which a depressed Van Hout ponders his lousy life and creative block, from which he is only freed by donning a monkey head and hands. Freedom, suggests Ronnie Van Hout, only comes through aping oneself.



BE  
**SOMEONE  
ELSE**



### GIOVANNI INTRA AND MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI

14 May 1968 reproduces a news photo of the Paris riots taken one day after Michael Parekowhai and a day before Giovanni Intra were born. Two versions are presented, one a mirror version of the other. But it is impossible to tell which is correct and which is the erroneous reversal. The piece was made for *Stop Making Sense*, a show of curatorially driven collaborations by pairings of Maori and Pakeha artists, at Wellington's City Gallery in 1994. All the other works in the show involved the explicit juxtaposition of one voice, signature or gesture against

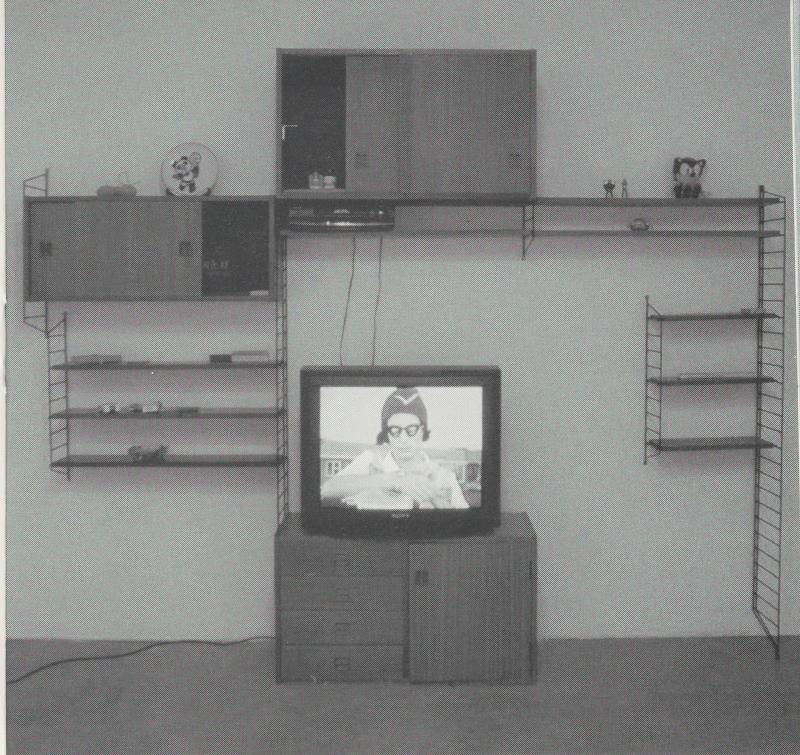
another: Maori against Pakeha. But Intra and Parekowhai played the game differently, showing up curator George Hubbard's desire to contrive fractious marriages. Here it is impossible and meaningless to distinguish each artist's contribution; the whole work must be read through the practices of each: Parekowhai has appropriated photos from the 1960s in his work, and Intra was a fan of the situationists. Take your pick. Here two distinct identities or intentions coexist in the same text, frustrating Hubbard's view of biculturalism as clash while paradoxically picturing a riot.

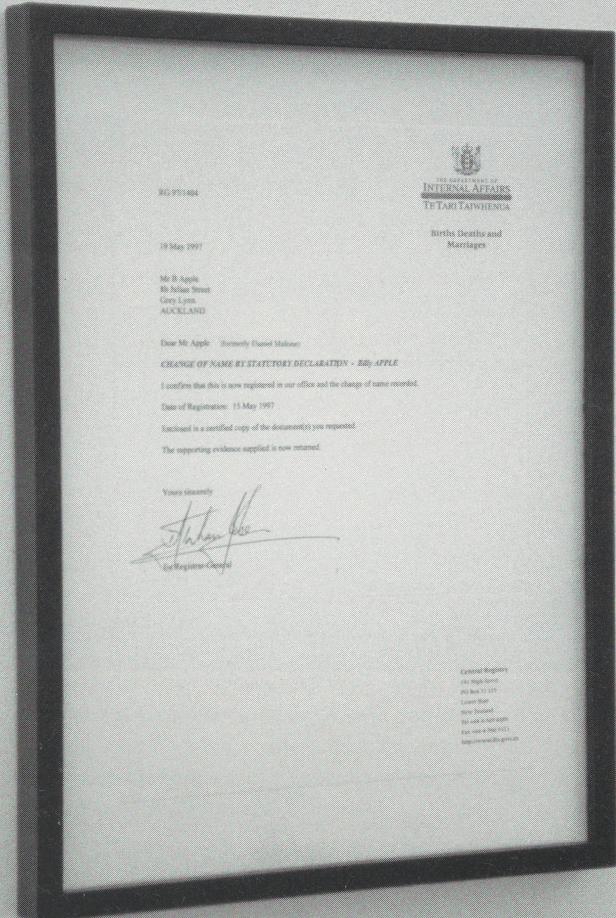
^ 14 May 1968 1994

## DENISE KUM AND DANIEL MALONE

In recent years Asian immigration has changed the face of Auckland. The video for *Kum of Sum Yung Gai* includes found footage of an English-As-A-Second-Language lesson, introducing Chinese students to Western ways. On the blackboard is written, 'Go West'. However, with Denise Kum – a Chinese New Zealander – behind the camera, we watch Daniel Malone instead 'Go East'. We follow him on a flanerie through Chinese areas of Auckland city and then out into its Eastern suburbs, which have become home for recent Chinese immigrants. Just as New Zealand is being translated, so is Malone. Kum, a professional make-up artist, has orientalised him using prosthetic eyelids. With his new Fu Manchu identity, enhanced with toy paper glasses and watch, Malone blends in, trying out CDs, eating at a noodle house, visiting the markets, checking out the new house. The work is crammed with cheap preset video effects, bad puns and parodic intent. It opens with a rising sun and closes with a setting sun; the title is lifted from a tacky racist phone gag from the movie *Wayne's World*. The video is presented on an outsized monitor installed in an elaborate wall unit of a kind favoured by Chinese immigrants. It is crammed with tell-tale chattels, including mandarins, incense, majong tiles and a Sonic Hedgehog. *Kum* is the epitome of identity art.

*Kum of Sum Yung Gai* 1997 >





## DANIEL MALONE

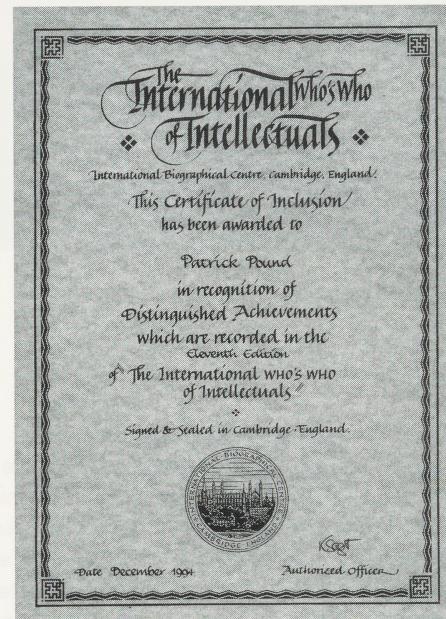
For the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery's 1997 fetishism show *Sharp and Shiny*, Daniel Malone changed his name to Billy Apple by deed poll, exhibiting the confirmation letter from Internal Affairs. While Apple's work is routinely characterised as aesthetically *advanced*, his underlying and constant obsession with cleaning is deeply fetishistic. In characterising Apple's cleaning and correcting of spaces, his body and his persona as enlightened improvements, the underlying irrational *fixation* has gone unmentioned. By appropriating Apple's first work (his name change, the ur-work that makes all the others possible), Malone implicates Apple within a discussion of fetishism while apparently excusing himself from it. However in pointing to Apple's unacknowledged interests, Malone – who has made several works where he adopts the signifiers of others' identities – raises the question of his own motivations, his own recidivism.

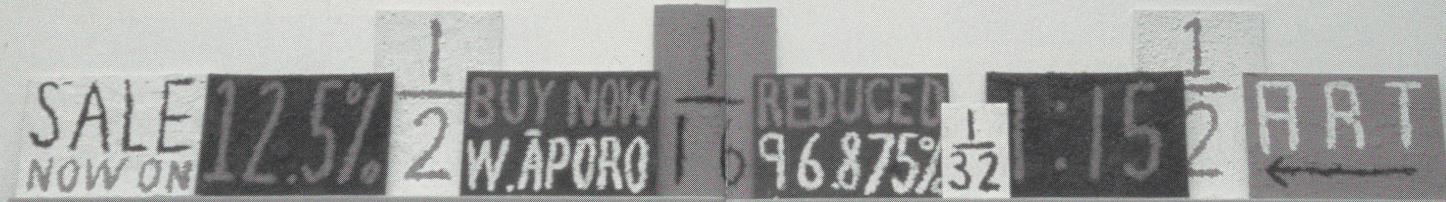
< Untitled (Activity for a critical interpretation of the 'attribution of a self sufficient (or magical) power to a (usually) constructed object'.) Or, Framing work in an exhibition / a value system within a discourse on fetishism 1997

## PATRICK POUND

We want to be important, and an industry has developed to cater to our vanity. We can buy our place in bogus compendia, purchase degrees, certificates and aristocratic titles. Taking up the artworld's obsession with pedigree, Patrick Pound has paid to have himself made Man of the Year. He's bought his way into the *World Who's Who Of Intellectuals*, *Five Hundred Leaders Of Influence*, the *International Dictionary Of Biography*, the *Asia Pacific Who's Who*, *Five Thousand Personalities Of The World* and most recently *The First Five Hundred At The Millennium*. He has a Research Fellowship coin, a Man Of Achievement certificate, a Silver Medal for 20th Century Achievement, and an International Key of Success. He is an Honorary Board Member and Fellow of the International Biographical Association, giving him the right to use the letters 'FIBA' after his name. Embroidering his biography for publications, he is accredited with setting up FAF, an organisation dedicated to uncovering of fakes and forgeries in the arts. Where a photo is required, Pound routinely substitutes a mugshot of Lester Gaba, a 1950s soap carver of art masterpieces.

from C.V. – a work in progress 1990 – >

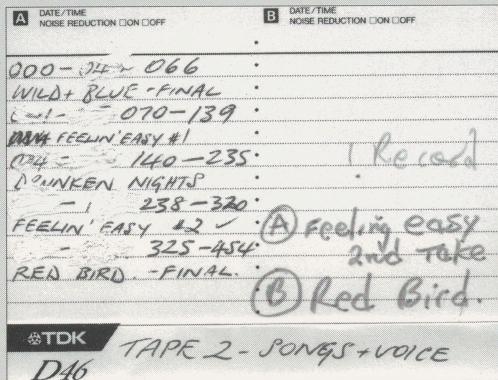




### PETER ROBINSON

We value authenticity, we want the Real McCoy. If we are going to have some Maori art, we want it to be made by a real Maori in a really Maori way. Peter Robinson taunts this attitude with his percentage paintings. In an apparently foolhardy sales pitch, this merely 3.125% Maori Maori artist declares his hand. Parading the watering down of his Maori blood over the generations, he conflates a reduction in blood percentage with a reduction in value. These pointedly gritty, robust signs seem remote from the diplomatic presentation of Maori as creative, spiritual and natural, but close to the vernacular use of 'Maori' to imply dodgy workmanship, a rip-off. Robinson's play on the relation between identity and value is underlined in a personal tribute. One panel reads: BUY NOW / W. APORU. In Maori, Billy Apple would be Wiremu Aporo.

^ 100% 1994



## MARIE SHANNON WITH TERRY ALLEN

Marie Shannon has been a mercurial presence in her work over the last ten or so years. Part-shy, she hides in the foreground of her photographs, modelled, like other members of her cast, as a generic pipe cleaner figure. A highlight of this deportment had to be her cosy set-up of two 'Phone Friends', communicating long distance, in an affectionate homage to 'the twisted pair' – Telecom slang for phone lines. So successful was Shannon's projection of multiple persona onto her wiry little cast that a large insurance company put it on staff to promote *their* corporate identity. This public outing of 'Pipe-cleaner Erectus as Everyman' appears to have put an end to these theatrics. She has now teamed up with country artist Terry Allen to release a couple of songs: *Feelin' Easy* and *Red Bird*. Shannon has toolled around the fringes of the country scene for years as a fan. For a time, her answerphone played C&W to curtain-raise the we're-not-here announcement. The two songs are as generic and toe-tappingly familiar as the pipecleaner folk that preceded them. To paraphrase Frank Sullivan, if this sound ain't fake – it's a damn clever original.

## YUK KING TAN

Once surveillance cameras were only installed to prevent bad behaviour. Now miniature cameras over changing rooms, inside toilets and under work stations, are themselves tools of wrong doing, enabling recreational, low-level invasion of female space and fuelling ubiquitous 'upskirt' voyeur websites. In *Changing Room*, Yuk King Tan teases the pervy logic of male voyeurism, presenting snaps of herself in various changing rooms as though she were the unsuspecting object of scopophilic intent, but really fulfilling some exhibitionist intention all her own. The changing room is a place of transformation, where we try on different identities until we find one that fits, before going back out in public. In this cubicle we morph between looks, and make judgement calls about self-image. Tan's Muybridge-like breakdown of this activity into gestures of undress and redress implies the controlling, defining gaze of the voyeur, and yet she is not known: no satisfactory identity or look is captured. Here Tan offers herself as a quick change artist, while denying us the opportunity to get to know her better.

*Changing Room* (detail) 1998 >





## TERRY URBAHN

We know how to behave in art museums — quietly, soberly: no running or jumping. In 1998 Terry Urbahn confounded this expectation when he curated a museum exhibition in the form of a karaoke bar. Karaoke is an entertainment favoured by Japanese salary men, who relax by drinking excessively and publically singing along to pop songs, sometimes badly, sometimes consummately. Where art museums demand the original and distinctive in art, Urbahn and nine friends supplied karaoke video cover versions, permitting gallery-goers to participate in a relay of *Stars In Their Eyes* mimicry. Urbahn's own karaoke clip involved explicit impersonation, with the artist transforming into a glamorous punk, then, in the lounge at home, bass playing

and lip-syncing to *sPEECHless*, his own not-half-bad rendition of the old Stranglers' hit *Peaches*. In the Artspace installation, Urbahn combines his *Karaoke* clip, playing on a big television, with another video of surveillance-style footage showing a bad-suit worker-bee Terry, apparently caught unawares during a dismal drinking, tele-watching binge at a Wellington food hall. Two monitors presenting mirror images are positioned so these Terry-twins – quite unimpressed – appear to watch punk Terry strut his stuff. A mike stand and inflatable toy 'air guitar' are provided in case we want to join in. In *Karaoke SaLOON (Ugly Music)* Urbahn splits and doubles himself to incorporate the heads and tails of a new japonisme: bored salary man reality meets his would-be after-hours rock-star alter-ego.

< *sPEECHless* 1998  
V *SaLOON* 1999



## WHO DO I THINK I AM

Published by Artspace, Auckland, as a record of the 1999 exhibition *Who Do I Think I Am*, curated by Jim Barr and Mary Barr with Robert Leonard. Edited by Kelly Carmichael. Designed by Jacinda Torrance/Verso. ISBN 0-9582103-4-9. Copyright Artspace, the curators and artists, 2000. Thanks to the artists, Chris Fitzpatrick, Sue Crockford, Darren Knight, Ivan Anthony, Richard Dale and Jennifer French.

### Collateral illustrations:

Dean Martin in Frank Tashlin's *Artists and Models* 1955 (Paramount). Courtesy Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Man Ray *Marcel Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy* 1920-21, black and white photograph, Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Samuel S. White and Vera White collection. © Man Ray, 1920-1/ADAGP. Permission of Viscopy Ltd, Sydney, 2000.

Joseph Beuys *Coyote, I like America and America Likes Me* 1974, action, Galerie René Block, New York.

Cover: Ronnie Van Hout.

ART SPACE

creative  
nz  
ARTS COUNCILS OF NEW ZEALAND / TAU AOTEAROA

A R T S P A C E