

There are many organisations now, more than ten or fifteen years ago, which address the needs and promote the practice of artists who wish to work outside the gallery, but there are differences of purposes and intention. The majority of these organisations are informed by the political and critical orthodoxies of the dominant exhibition structure (a structure, moreover, which excludes artists from equal and integral participation); the original ideological and intellectual impetus for artists to develop different strategies is subservient to the curator's needs for peer group and establishment acknowledgment. This conflict and process of absorption, or appropriation of practice, creates the impression that social or political intervention achieves critical validity only when sanctioned by the institutional and museological mainstream. It removes opportunity through predetermined expectation and demands that necessary, but conflicting, needs are reluctantly renegotiated; control and ideological context are bartered away. Furthermore, the status of acceptability, within a broader cultural overview, is only granted with historical and emotional distance. This removes the most potent element in the armoury of contemporary artists; the immediacy of relevant engagement (with the attendant risks). For most artists, particularly those addressing constantly shifting social and political issues, or working as catalysts and activists, being able to predict or desire a position in a distant future perspective is irrelevant (if not impossible).

Locus + is a visual arts facility that recognises the partial incompatibility and imbalance in the relationship between

contemporary artists and the exhibition mainstream. As part of an established history within the Northern region, Locus+ places the artist at the centre of production and provides logistical and financial support to those who wish to work in different contexts and/or across formats. This book records the artists projects of our first year and as a document it has to function as an archive, an arena for (limited) critical debate with exposition and as an advocate for, or evidence of, motive and method. This indicates the opening of a cultural space, albeit a small one, for the creation of new works that challenge issues both formally and conceptually. Locus+ is not an organisation that promotes the interests of one area of practice or the issues of a particular exhibition or production methodology. Rather, through collaborative relationships with artists and organisations, seeks to create opportunities and frameworks that are in response to artists initiatives.

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