

Limerick: Infusion/Fix 2000

Robert Ayres: *Manifesto*,
performance over three days;
photo Eoin McCarthy

Dorte Holbech: *The 2nd Tale of the White Flesh*,
Belltable Arts Centre; photo Eoin McCarthy

A banner advertising **Infusion/Fix 2000 - Millennium Review of Live Art** sways above O'Connell Street in Limerick. To afford this, our friends at the Real Art Project, in collaboration with Catalyst Arts in Belfast, must have received a boost in cash from their targeted funders. In the past, **EV+A** was one of very few shows that could run with this type of advertising. Informing the masses in this way is not the only thing that **EV+A** and **Infusion** have in common. Both continue to explore new media, challenging the boundaries of fine-art practice and its audiences. There are, however, very noticeable differences.

From its inception in 1997, Infusion organisers always insisted that the participating artists were paid, even though fees were understandably minimal in the first year. This concept seems alien to **EV+A** and unlikely to change in the future. Chosen artists for Infusion are regarded as the major contributors to the success of the show. **EV+A** on the other hand places a much stronger emphasis on the adjudicator.

Much credit must be attributed to the organisers and volunteers of **Infusion/Fix 2000**. Compared to **EV+A** they worked on an extremely tight budget, making sure everything ran smoothly and still having plenty of time to speak with yours truly.

Humour this year was a key element in many of the performances I saw. Robert Ayres' work *Manifesto* opened proceedings and took place outside a vacant retail unit near the city centre. The piece was split into three individual performances, which ran each day for approximately 45 minutes. Ayres layered various colours of paint onto a window while simultaneously chanting his beliefs from everything simple in life to "long horny e-mails."

Michael Fortune's eagerly awaited *Local Anaesthetic* did not fail to overwhelm. The performance, which was in the style of stand-up comedy, looked at the small-mindedness of people living in rural Ireland. Fortune recalled his first multicultural experience when he started national school: "There were people from townlands like Schrule, Clonevin and Ballingam." If Fortune could further develop his own unique style of stand-up comic performance, perhaps integrating more video or still imagery, it will not be long before he becomes noticed by the international arts community.

Staying with humour, although somewhat violent, the Towel brothers Derek and Darren delivered the shortest performance of the weekend. A three-minute piece entitled *The New Rock and Roll* considered art as the joke's joke. The work involved throwing a television out of an apartment window, smashing and setting fire to a guitar. All this in three minutes? Yes, it can be done but only when Don McClean's *Vincent* is playing in the background. It was difficult to interpret this work but at the time of the performance I didn't care: it was the Towel brothers and worth waiting for.

Ciarán O'Doherty's durational piece combining specific investigative disciplines was like a meeting of Mr. Bean and the Mad Professor. It took place in the Limerick Print Studios, which was a perfect location for this work. I might add at this point that many of the performances I saw could have been better if the artists considered location more carefully. O'Doherty's installation consisted of blocks of moulded ice, water hoses and tubes of various sizes, a medical drip bag and two large photographic transparencies. With the assistance of artist Seán Taylor, O'Doherty clumsily and without success attempted to run water through the maze of tubes, in and out of the ice moulds. A performance that didn't work for the artist, but did for me.

Danish artist Dorte Holbech performed *The 2nd Tale of the White Flesh* in the Belltable Arts Centre. The piece, which explored the relationship between food and getting fat, looked like it was taken straight off the reels of Channel Four's deliberately tacky Eurotrash. It may have a wider appeal to the mainland European audience but those viewing it at the Belltable seemed unimpressed, while Holbech's attempt at been funny failed miserably.

Other performances worth mentioning were Sandra Johnson's *Stranger than Fiction* and

the electro-acoustic ensemble Repetitive Strain Industries. John Byrne payed a visit to Limerick promoting his very exciting *Border Interpretive Centre*¹ which was recently shown on RTE's *Nationwide*.

Of course, **Infusion/Fix 2000** would not have been complete without its video, and also the interactive multimedia installations. Tony Patrickson's *Terminal Island V 2* was a highly technical multimedia piece. Although impressive to view and engage with, it lacked artistic concept. Ciara Moore's surreal video installation explored identity, dreams, memory and reality. I liked this piece a lot even though two video monitors and one video projection playing together in one room was too much for this work.

Infusion/Fix in Limerick was a huge success due mainly to the organisational skills and talent of the Real Art Project members, not to mention the artists. Both Aileen Lambert (RAP administrator) and Michael Fortune (RAP co-ordinator) deserve a special mention due to the huge efforts and sacrifices they made to make this year's event the best to date. **EV+A** and similar events can learn a lot from these artists who voluntarily take on the extra roles of co-ordinators, administrators and even social-entertainment officers. **EV+A** in my opinion is not Ireland's premier open-submission show, as suggested by a number of commentators. By combining the youth, energy and talent of RAP members with the experience and knowledge of the **EV+A** committee, Limerick could become host to all kinds of major visual art events.

¹See page 30-31 of this issue - Ed.

²Tony Patrickson's project can also be seen at www.recirca.com/online_projects/patrickson/index.htm - Ed.

Infusion/Fix 2000, September 29-October 1 in Limerick; October 6-8 in Belfast

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