

CONTEXT IS HALF THE WORK. A PARTIAL HISTORY OF THE ARTIST PLACEMENT GROUP

Artists include Ian Breakwell, Roger Coward, Garth Evans, David Hall, John Latham, George Levantis and Barbara Steveni and others

Curated by Naomi Hennig and Ulrike Jordan in dialogue with Barbara Steveni

The Artist Placement Group (APG) was founded in the UK in 1966. The group initiated and organised placements for artists within industry and public institutions where they would research, develop ideas and projects in-situ. According to the APG principle, artistic practices and knowledge no longer needed to be confined to the studio, but the reach of the artist could extend to commercial, industrial and government contexts in order to contribute to social and organisational processes at all levels.

Context is Half the Work. A Partial History of the Artist Placement Group explores seven paradigmatic APG placements; it includes research material, video works, art works and documentation of the group's activity, raising questions still relevant for present day context-based artistic practices. These include sculptor Garth Evans' two-year fellowship at the British Steel Corporation (1969-70), David Hall's *TV Interruptions*, broadcast on Scottish Television in 1971, George Levantis' journeys on the container cargo ships of Ocean Fleets Ltd (1974-75), Roger Coward's placement with the Department of the Environment (1975) where he worked with inhabitants of a Birmingham neighbourhood, and John Latham's association with the Scottish Office (1975-76). Negotiations with the UK Department for Health and Social Security (DHSS) led to two placements for Ian Breakwell, and other artists associated with the APG.

The first took place within a psychiatric hospital (1976) and the second was an interdisciplinary APG/DHSS research project which led to the development of an audio-visual therapy method for dementia-afflicted patients (1978-79). In addition, a selection of Barbara Steveni's contextualizing video walks and interviews with women protagonists of the time will be shown.

The acclaimed exhibition curated by Naomi Hennig and Ulrike Jordan in dialogue with APG co-founder Barbara Steveni debuted at Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin in 2015 (12 September – 8 November). The second iteration of the exhibition staged at Summerhall is the first Scottish exhibition giving an overview of this seminal group and related works, and is reworked in order to highlight the APG projects that took place in Scotland.

The corresponding public engagement programme discusses the APG's central concepts with a view on current debates and practices surrounding artistic work in social and planning contexts. The events highlight selected aspects of the diverse practices of the group; delivered in collaboration with those who have a strong interest in the work of the APG. For further details please see website.



Above
The Sculpture - Vacant State, exhibition view
between 6, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, 1971 Courtesy:
Barbara Steveni

Left
George Levantis on board of a cargo vessel
during his placement with Ocean Fleets Ltd., 1975
Courtesy: George Levantis

Right
Art as social strategy in institutions and organisations
APG panel discussion with Austrian artists and
corporate and government representatives, Museum
Moderner Kunst, Palais Liechtenstein, Vienna, 8. June
1979 Courtesy: Rolf Sachsse and Ros Sachsse-Schadt