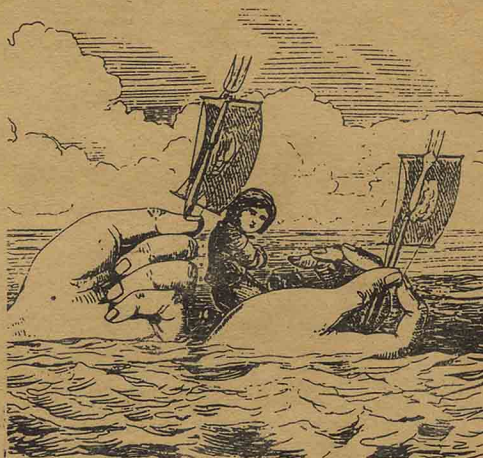


# *The Ship of Fools*



Jane Cavanough, Anne Gaulton, Helen Pynor, Michelle Ivory, Anna Tow

Jane Cavanough  
3rd February – 20th February



Anne Gaulton  
24th February – 13th March



Helen Pynor  
17th March – 3rd April



Michelle Ivory  
&  
Anna Tow  
7th April – 24th April

Design by: Helen Pynor & Joanna Howse  
Layout by: Joanna Howse

Thanks to Mark Jackson

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## *The Space of the Fold*

Gilles Deleuze concludes his little book on Foucault:

Force always comes from the outside, from an outside that is farther away than any form of exteriority. So there are not only particular features taken up by the relations between forces, but particular features of resistance that are apt to modify and overturn these relations and to change the unstable diagram. ... The most distant point becomes interior, by being converted into the nearest: *life within the fold* ... in this zone of subjectivation: the boat as interior of the exterior.<sup>1</sup>

His final reference here is, of course, to that celebrated figure in Foucault's *Madness and Civilization*, the "*Stultifera Navis*". Foucault himself notes:

He is put in the interior of the exterior, and inversely. ... He is the prisoner in the midst of what is the freest, the openest of routes: bound fast at the infinite crossroads. He is the passenger *par excellence*: that is, the prisoner of the passage.<sup>2</sup>

While this referencing to the "Ship of Fools" no doubt is drawn to the evocation of a titular head which names a multiple series of events, four exhibitions by five artists at Selenium Gallery, February to April 1994, the thematics of force and resistance, interior as fold, passage and crossroads are uncannily apt in beginning to follow the weave of threads which bind these artists to the mast. Blanchot, too, writes of the ship in "The Song of the Siren", the ship and the work of art, and of Ulysses going just a little mad.<sup>3</sup>

There's nothing between these five artists, nothing, that is, which would constitute a common project, an overarching thematic, a delineated series of agendas, which would name the works shown over three months as exemplary of such and such. The five artists are women and all recent graduates of Sydney College of the Arts, which has the force of collectivity akin to finding oneself in the same lifeboat as the Titanic disappears. The mediums, approaches, thematics, concerns, scales of work vary dramatically between the five. This makes all the more intriguing the force which folds these exteriors and which points to that unstable diagram of relations between forces, constituting the taking place of the event, already divided and multiple, of exhibition.

There are a number of strategies in accounting for this space of exhibition. It may be configured as the ground which reductively discovers the locus of the same in what appears to be a play of difference, that space of the seen as the denominator which names the very possibility of the event as such. However, this would give the architecture itself a concrete determinism, which it seems is already called into question by the architectonics of the works exhibited. For with these five artists questions of the body's spatialising, its crypting and exteriorising, the opening of vision and visibility as such predominate. Again, in Deleuze's terms:

If different examples of architecture, for example, are visibilities, places of visibility, this is because they are not just figures in stone, assemblages of things, combinations of qualities, but first and foremost forms of light that distribute light and dark, opaque and transparent, seen and non-seen.<sup>4</sup>

The space of exhibition is neither a repetition of an everyday topos nor some utopic closure excluding what is living, though these extremes get played out in the little empty battles



fought between museum and community. Rather, we may consider this space of exhibition in relation to the spatial plays of the heterotopic, those entities which Foucault suggests make it impossible to name, shattering and tangling common names, destroying syntax in advance, "not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and opposite one another) to hold together".<sup>5</sup> Foucault also writes elsewhere:

The ship is the heterotopia *par excellence*. In civilizations without boats, dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure, and police take the place of pirates.<sup>6</sup>

Mark Jackson

January 1994.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*. Trans. Séan Hand. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p.123. Deleuze's notion of the fold may itself be related to Foucault's spatial problematic of the heterotopic, a theme underlying this essay's attempts at accounting for the displacements which occur within the *Ship of Fools* exhibition events.

<sup>2</sup> Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, New York, Vintage Books, 1965, p.11.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Blanchot, "The Song of the Siren" in *The Gaze of Orpheus*. Trans. Lydia Davis. New York, Station Hill Press, 1981.

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, op. cit. p.57.

<sup>5</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York, Vintage Books, 1973, p.xviii.

<sup>6</sup> Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" *Diacritics*, Spring 1966, p.27.

*Helen*

*Pynor*

*Intestinal membrane; embroidery thread; excerpts from Amy Porritt's letters, 1993; fan-blown air*



Monday

DEARS , IT IS NOT QUITE SO  
POLICE RECOVER BANGS & I AM LO  
& CANT BELIEVE I AM TERRIBLY SMOKE & I  
! INSTEAD OF A M DRESS MAY MAKE A  
2 EASY BUNG COKE SPARKING -

LINDA'S ADDRESS IF YOU DO  
by Counsel then

Thank you Linda's Address & in the  
as I don't know the name to trust for a-2 P  
in order to keep the 21 Pils & Don't to the 20 years  
free. PANTS CAN I'd as a better than & then to the  
! Always to the best to you the