

# stings

The North

ay August 20



ns

**EXHIBITIONS** The Annual Programme is an exemplary independent venue initiated and run by artists for artists. *What Is It That You Do?* is the current show by a group calling themselves, with typical enigmatic evasion, Since 1963. "An element of mystery up front is critical to its impact," they state. So, enough to say the mix-up of found cultural fragments here include records of Yuri Gagarin's visit to Manchester and quotes from the currently ubiquitous French philosopher Maurice Blanchot. Peek and ponder. **ROBERT CLARK**  
*The Annual Programme, Manchester, until August 29*

ation to:  
e, 292 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 1AE.  
Fax: 0171 963 7800/7801.

at  
e. Please confirm with venue before setting out.  
, call Artsline on 0171 388 2227

The  
**guide**

North The Guide 1

visual arts Listings compiled by MARTIN VINCENT

## reviews



### What is it that you do? by Since 1963

The Annual Programme, to 29 August.

Before entering the gallery, an encryption on the glass front cautions the visitor to mind the broken glass and rubble covering the floor inside. The sign is wisely positioned at the bottom end of the window pane - people do seem to walk around with their heads down. But this show entices us to look so far up and beyond the immediate space. All the way, in rather radical fashion, out there!

It's quite a revelation to be able to enter a gallery and unashamedly declaim, "what a load of old rubbish." Trying to avoid the mess, the visitor stumbles opposite a black and white blow-up of a solemn looking Yuri Gagarin. The lone crusader - or was it enforced labourer? - who manned the human race's inaugural space flight in 1961. It only took him 108 minutes to orbit the earth. Quite an achievement then, which simultaneously jettisoned him into the immortal league of universal consciousness. Or at least it kind of did. Talk around the technology of space flight usually recalls Messrs Armstrong and Aldrin's lunar landing for a quick game of golf and a reaffirmation that this is America's first century of pre-eminence on planet earth. Suddenly Gagarin looks a bit forlorn. With his head bowed, he overlooks the detritus in the gallery as if to acknowledge his part in it, and that he will be endlessly part of it.

In point of fact, the artists who have collaborated on this show, Michael McGinley, Martin Grimes, and Malcolm Evans, have included a poignantly inspirational poem by Maurice Blanchot. It neatly compliments the show itself, with the poet ruminating on the resonance of Gagarin's feat, amidst the universal apathy of mankind. That's all of us.

This is high, or perhaps 'interstellar' art, and should be circumnavigated for at least 108 minutes.

TIM BIRCH