

Michelangelo Pistoletto
100 Exhibitions in the Month of October
1976

This book of mine doesn't have a written title, the title of this book is the image of a cube.

These are the opening words of a book I began in June 1970, and I have not yet finished. A month earlier, at Galleria dell'Ariete in Milan, I had presented an exhibition which developed over a period of exactly thirty days. It was based on a passage of the book *The Minus Man*, which I had composed on the 365 pages of a diary, in exactly one month.

These events in turn stemmed from an exhibition held at Galleria L'Attico in Rome in 1968. This, too, lasted one month, opening with an evening of "audience participation," and closing with two evenings of film shows during which the ten films which I had made with as many directors during the course of the exhibition were screened.

Going back still further in time (to 1967), the *Mile-Stone* at Galleria Sperone, and the manifesto with which I announced that I was throwing open my studio, converted space into time, brought the place of exhibition into my studio, and carried my studio into the outside world.

This new work of mine comprises one hundred exhibitions thought up and described during October of this year. I have chosen to present it in the form of a book.

The image of a cube represents the ideal space in which I think out each exhibition, in relation to the interior as well as the exterior.

The cover in blotting paper lends a real thickness to the ink which outlines the cube (just as a cube drawn and placed between two sheets of white acrylic material announced its own real thickness in a work of 1968). Whereas the multiple, *cubes* of 1971 is a precise reference point for the implosive and explosive meaning of this work, considered also in relation to the exhibitions entitled *The Rooms*, which ended in October of this year.

The space in which *The Rooms* unfolded was made up of a series of three intercommunicating rooms, which developed into twelve exhibitions, over a period of one year.

The hundred exhibitions comprising the present work have been condensed into a single month and into a few square centimeters of paper and ink. But they contain a capacity for expansion in space and time.

These exhibitions were planned in exactly the same manner as the *Minus Objects* of 1966, where each individual element is the direct fruit of a contingent need. The moment (if any) of execution in full scale, though it may seem to be at odds with the contingency, in fact obeys the logic of planning (which in my process occupies but one place in a hundred). Indeed, the last exhibition is reserved for the stimulus provided by actual presence on the spot. This truth is capable of absorbing, one by one, all the other ninety-nine truths, except for that of the planning itself.

1

Ten centimeters from the wall, build a false wall with a window opening on the real wall.

Facing this, a real window opens on to a false wall, built outside, ten centimeters from the real wall: the room, therefore, moves ten centimeters.

2

Glass partition - Veranda built ten centimeters within the walls of the gallery. The veranda has open curtains that show the walls of the surrounding gallery instead of the view outside.

3

Three different rooms, one inside the other, each one at ten centimeters' distance from the others, as though, inside the preceding project of the veranda, there were still another room with various types of openings toward the outside, that is, toward the other two envelopments of space.

4

"Black projection". Because one always identifies light in relation to darkness, as with the stars in the sky, I want to project a black, rectangular form on the wall in order to point out how darkness can be recognized in the midst of light.

5

Transfer to canvas a piece of plaster or paint torn from the wall of a gallery. Place this canvas on the wall of another gallery. Transfer to canvas a piece of plaster or paint torn from the wall of the second gallery, facing the preceding canvas, and place this other canvas facing the wall from which the plaster or paint was torn in the first gallery.

6

A very large pyramid, built with cubic stones. As soon as a group of men lays the top stone, another group of men takes it away, so that it stays in its place for just a few seconds, after which the rest of the pyramid can be, at leisure, demolished.

7

Videotape: "Who are you?"

This written phrase, alternating, from white on black to black on white, lasts throughout the whole length of a tape, on the monitor. The passage from positive to negative must be very rapid. At the same time, my recorded voice lists all the nationalities I don't belong to. This recording is repeated throughout the entire length of the tape, at the same time as the written phrase, "Who are you?"

8

“Subconscious”. Leave eight-tenths of each wall empty, then trace some marks, above a non defined, imaginary line, as though they belonged to drawings that would otherwise fill the entire wall.

These marks will appear as though above the level of the subconscious, which hides a great part of them.

9

“Temporary freedom”

Large public place fenced in like a prison or insane asylum, with small open doors. On each door, if you look from outside, you can read a plaques with “Temporary freedom” engraved on it.

10

Large metal chain-link maze with a lion lowered in the center. The way out is open. Space visible from above.

11

“The Art Sign”

This sign is revealed through, or made of, different materials: wood, earth, glass, neon, marble, etc. It is imagined by me. This previously unknown sign manifests itself in various media without identifying itself with any of them in particular.

12

“Restoration of the world”

Instead of drawing on the road or on the sidewalk as beggars do, I fix broken pieces of public places, taking, as one does when restoring works of art, a color Polaroid before and one after the job. Next to the photograph I explain how my father, besides being a painter, also taught me restoration and how I now make art restoring the world where it is broken.

I leave my hat next to the finished job in the hopes of a penny or two. Besides showing a global view of the world, this work attracts attention to minimal details. It also shows the evident separation between the artificial world, which can be restored, and the natural world, which is always perfect and therefore cannot be restored.

13

“Wall with holes”

Wall made of bricks laid in a lattice pattern, forming regular full and empty spaces. The bricks are held together with plaster and cement. This perforated wall runs all around the gallery at ten-fifteen centimeters’ distance from the actual gallery walls.

14

Different objects placed in various spots around the gallery in the air, on the walls, on the ceiling, on the floor. These objects are joined to each other by written words that seem to form some sort of connecting lines. The words refer to the symbolic aspect of the objectual presence. Some of these symbols are derived from tradition, others are arbitrary.

15

The gallery space is entirely black and absolutely without light. A point formed by one millimeter of incandescent electric wire is placed in the exact center of the space.

16

The gallery space is entirely black and absolutely without light. A point formed by one millimeter of incandescent electric wire is placed in each corner. 8 points.

17

Two spaces linked by a tiny hall which is so narrow that one can only get through by walking sideways.

18

The art sign shallowly etched into the floor on a large scale, proportionate to the space. Sand strewn all over the floor. As you walk the sand accumulates where the engraving is and your feet feel parts of the sign. The same thing can be done with glue, instead of an etching, and the two systems can abide together in neighboring spaces.

19

Old painted canvases, of all ages, almost totally peeled and chipped by now, with just a few extant traces of paint. These canvases, hung on all the walls, as in a traditional exhibit, can also be sewn together in order to form very large canvases.

20

Seven screens placed in a semicircle: from left to right they show the same movement as a pace ranging from maximum slowness to maximum speed. The central screen shows the movement at its actual speed, that is, its film travels at normal pace. The film shows a person who, by rotating his arms and stopping them at regular intervals shows the number of the following interval with his fingers, starting from one and going up to ten.

On the screens to the left of the central one, the diminishing speed as one moves from right to left will permit a steadily lower number to be reached, whereas on the screens on the right the hands will steadily increase the times they count up to ten, reaching an almost dizzying speed.

21

Exhibit in a museum with several adjoining rooms, photograph of the curator of the exhibition, blown up so as to cover the entire floor space of the museum. Thus the walls will cut his image and you'll see only a part of it in each room.

22

Room with two opposite entrances divided in half by a wall with a hole half a centimeter in diameter at eye level. Two eyes may happen to look at each other.

23

Profile of a face made of marble that crosses the space from one wall to the other.

24

Substitute an artist for a month while he substitutes me.

25

Make an "S" with some television monitors. Turn the camera, mounted on the ceiling, on to them, so that each monitor will show the design that all of them make together.

26

Two rooms, next-door to each other, divided by a passage. One room is 20° centigrade below zero and the other is 40° above.

27

Completely empty gallery. There is a sign at the entrance saying: "Each person, before entering, must write in the book which part he is going to play inside the room."

28

A water pipe, drilled with holes, goes through the gallery in the middle of the ceiling. Small drops of water fall continuously and are caught by cans, jars or pails placed on the floor.

29

A ten-centimeter white line runs along the horizontal perimeter of the gallery. A ten-centimeter black line runs along the vertical perimeter, crossing the first line. The two lines bleed into each other for a short distance after crossing.

30

Dining room and bed room next door to each other in two exhibition spaces. Every piece of furniture is turned upside-down in its usual place. A mirror substitutes the underside of each piece. At home these pieces of furniture can remain in their traditional position. In order to see the mirrors you will have to look under the furniture.

31

Blue neon bars on the windows.

32

Light against the light, against light, against light. Starting with a very strong light, put gradually less intense lights facing each other so that each one is absorbed by the stronger one.

33

A shiny white inclined plane substitutes the floor. From the entrance it rises noticeably toward the opposite wall.

34

Deform with some kind of artifice (stucco for instance) the walls or corners or openings of the space in which an untreated, yet deforming sheet of reflecting stainless steel, measuring 120x230 centimeters, is exhibited.

35

Reconstruct physically the image of a photograph, possibly some sort of entrance, without ever having seen the real thing the photograph reproduces.

36

A dining room, studies, living room and bed room made of canvases and stretchers.

37

Corridor which, while following the walls, closes in on itself like a spiral with straight sides. This corridor becomes narrower at every turn towards the center until the visitor can no longer get through. An elastic thread, above the viewer's head, runs down the middle of the corridor, following the entire spiral. The elas-

tic, dipped in brown paint, is snapped against the walls of the corridor so as to leave a bit of color on them. Beyond the point the visitor reaches, the thread continues and gets nearer and nearer to its mark on the walls, until it too gains immobility. But the eye cannot see it anymore.

38

A skirting board, with shiny blue enamel, 1.10 meters high, on sketching paper measuring 1.20 meters attached to the walls with double adhesive tape.

39

A large, heavy iron circle built in proportion to the space with some rings soldered to it. Heavy chains are fastened to these rings and to the doors and windows. The chains should be drawn tight holding open the door or window in such a way that when one door is opened, the door or window opposite will necessarily close with a clatter of iron and chains.

40

“Around the world”. On one wall the word “Start” is written as though for a race. On the facing wall on the same scale is written “Finish”, only backwards, that is, readable coming from the wall.

41

Half clean and half dirty space. Perpendicular division.

42

The first quarter of the room is free, then there is a division, made of iron bars, so that a man cannot go through. Then a series of divisions, made of net, which becomes finer and finer, in order to make it impossible for smaller and smaller animals and insects to get through. On the wall, at the end, beyond the division, is written: “Art is still free.”

43

“The swing”

Two reflecting sheets of stainless steel, applied on the two sides of an aluminum frame, measuring 1.20 x 2.60 meters, with two rings soldered on the upper side of the frame. The object is hanging on an iron bar that crosses the room. By making the mirror go back and forth you get the sensation of a swing.

44

The gallery lights turn on and off at regular intervals of fifteen seconds each.

45

“Dark room”

Room which reproduces the inside of a camera. Through a hole the images are turned upside down on the far side. You can only see the room through the hole.

46

Square table, placed in the middle of a large room, its sides parallel to the walls. A wall is built along each side of the table. Each wall starts by leaving in full view one of the table legs and proceeds along the side of the table until it meets one of the room's walls. Each wall goes from floor to ceiling. This creates four rooms, each one with a gap in a corner, from floor to ceiling, which corresponds to the corner of the table. Thus from each room you'll be able to see a fifth space defined by the table itself, in addition to the leg of the table.

47

A drawing on the floor of a large schematic bird, on a piece of paper covering the whole gallery. Walls built up to the ceiling all along the drawing, which can still be seen on either side of the wall, on the paper. Use a large flat paint-brush, wider than a brick, dipped in black paint.

48

“Mortuary Chapel”

In the middle of the exhibition space stands, a smaller room that can be taken in at a glance upon entering. This little room ought to be made of such thin polystyrene that you can see light through it. Inside this room there is a lighted candle. The entrance of the little room should be opposite the entrance of the gallery, which should be dark.

49

A small brook made of tin foil runs through the whole gallery. A little cardboard bridge crosses the little brook. On the floor, on one side, there is a sphere of shredded newspaper 30 centimeters in diameter. On the other side, hanging on the wall, a photographic enlargement of a face on paper measuring 1x2 meters.

50

Buy four mirrors from four different glassmakers. Their backs have each been painted in a different color. Imitate the color of each mirror on each of the four walls. Lean each mirror against the same color wall with the reflecting side turned toward the wall. The mirrors are thus centered against each wall, slightly slanting and touching the floor.

51

Invent and manufacture five objects in five different factories and show each one in its own factory.

52

Small mark indicating the use of most of your time in mental activity. The small mark is obtained by tapping your little finger, dabbed with black paint, against the wall of a white and empty room. The hand must be held stiff, with fingers close together, and turned upwards and tapped against the wall like a blade.

53

White pieces of cloth (large sheets) hanging on four laundry lines with clothespins. The lines cross each other so that the sheets form a small square room.

54

“Inquiry upon the sign”.

A few small drawing pads. Get a certain number of persons to each draw three different signs on a page. These signs, they must be told, should have no relation whatsoever with other signs that could come to mind at that moment. This inquiry, besides being an independent exhibit, can help me to explain the reason of my choice of a particular sign.

55

Substitute doors and windows with other doors and windows of different dimensions and materials. The materials should be chosen among reflecting, absorbing, luminous or transparent ones.

56

The whole gallery - walls, ceiling, windows and lights - is coated with a veil of mica.

57

"Obstacle to the infinite"

Two large mirrors face each other in the gallery. Between them stands a sheet of plexiglass or glass glazed with gray paint so as to make infinite reflection among the two mirrors difficult.

58

Exhibit of old paintings restored with mica.

59

“The man with the bag”.

Performance done by me, in my studio in 1967, exclusively for the friends of The Zoo. Repeated and recorded on videotape with four persons in the foreground on the screen that conceal a large part of my

action. In this action, I myself turned my back on my spectators, who couldn't see the part of the actions hidden by my person.

60

Upside-down room: grey on top, white all around and below. The door is an opening that, starts at the ceiling and ends at the height of the viewer's chin so that he can't get through.

61

"Three works":

1) Double mirror measuring 120x230 centimeters with a 5 centimeter hole at penis height. The object must be usable from both sides.

2) Stretcher with cross-bar, measuring 120x200 centimeters. In the middle of the cross-bar there is a round hole 6 centimeters wide. A photographer places two cameras one on each side of the stretcher and photographs it, focusing, through the hole on the oppositely placed cameras. The two resulting photographs are enlarged to life size and placed one on each side of the stretcher.

3) Color slides of a girl and a boy photographing each other at the same time are projected one against the other. Two pieces of glass with a little round piece of paper sandwiched between them are in the middle of the projections. The little round piece of paper shows the view of the lenses in the middle of the two projections, while the rest is dispersed into space.

62

36 newspapers announcing Mao's death are placed all around the walls. A letter is printed on each paper in order to form this sentence with the others: "The bee-hive is governed by its own natural laws." A bee-hive is placed in the middle, and, next to it, on a stand, there is a square shape of natural wax bearing the deep print of a hammer and sickle oozing honey.

63

A light bulb is hanging from the ceiling. A system of photo-electric cells dims the light and turns it off, following the lowering of natural light.

64

On each wall draw the same points as on this book's cover.

65

Put some grass in the corners between the floor and the walls and disconnect the gallery from all technical services (like telephone, light, mail, etc.)

66

Large sonorized platform. Row of folding chairs all around it.

67

White, funnel-shaped space opening outward. The white floor slant downward and the far wall is missing, instead, there is only the view outside. The space must be at least on the first floor.

68

“Didactic art”, is written on the first step of a staircase to the upper floors of a building. As you go up on the landings, where there would normally be doors, place a canvas 1.20 meters wide and 2.30 meters high, touching the floor; a canvas 0.60 wide and 2.30 high attached to a mirror of the same size to make a picture half canvas and half mirror with the shortest side on the floor, and a mirror measuring 1.20x2.30 meters with the shortest side on the floor, the latter next to the door of a room. Inside the room a small staircase with six or seven wooden steps. “Didactic art” is written on the first step. Place two shoes full of cheese on two stairs as though they were steps going up.

69

Exhibit of Polaroid color landscapes. In the center of each one there is a road-post which divides it in half. These photographs are taken in any part of the world where I can find a round post.

70

A mirror on the wall above which is written “wall”. On the wall opposite the mirror is written “space”. Beneath it is written, backwards, “This space does not exist”.

71

Negative silk-screen of the man walking in Kline’s empty space, on a black mirror in a black room, illuminated only by black light. The mirror is as large as possible.

72

Mount canvases 20 centimeters wide on stretchers placed side by side to cover the walls of the gallery. Paint only one canvas with an acid pink-red.

73

An artist’s easel 50 centimeters from the wall, turned toward the opposite wall, holds a mirror edgewise, so that it crosses the room and sticks into the wall opposite the easel. Upon entering you see only the back of the mirror with its randomly chosen color.

74

Wall marked with an incision that divides it in two parts. At a certain distance, on the opposite wall are a camera and a gun pointed toward one half of the wall; and a movie camera and a loaded machine-gun pointed toward the other half.

75

Row of bathrooms with mirrors placed over them so as to show all the space of each bathroom to a viewer, standing outside.

Or else, various objects created expressly to be placed underneath the furniture of an apartment.

76

Radiator placed in the middle of the room with the piping coming from the wall as though a wall partition were missing. But the floor is all black, made of very shiny square tiles. The radiator must be hot.

77

A naked man and woman in a cage at the zoo, visible to the normal public.

78

Row of nails around the walls of the gallery at 2.20 meters from the floor and 50 centimeters' distance from each other. A 50 centimeter wide x 120 centimeter long mirror hangs from one of the nails.

79

Large table with an enormous cloth, like a calico table cloth. The very large squares are made by stripes painted with transparent glue, which stiffens the cloth where it is spread.

Large canvases on the walls with stripes made with transparent glue, as on the table cloth.

80

Large cube of mirror-polished stainless steel, built on the top of a hill.

81

Point of an obelisk calculated in terms of the base. And an upside down obelisk.

82

Triumphal arch (outdoors). Large parallelepiped made of marble or some other stone, rectangular doorlike opening surmounted by the words: "to Pistoletto", in metal letters, or else:

Large parallelepiped without an inscription and a mirror glass inserted in the rectangular opening. The same view will be visible on both sides.

83

Large mirror with a large colored papier-mache nose next to it. Trying to see the nose in the mirror is like trying to see your own nose.

84

Space divided by a horizontal plane with a hole you can put your head through to see the upper part.

85

Lots of dots made with a felt-pen on a wall with the words: "The dots are scattered but each one has its own center".

On the opposite wall other slightly larger dots with a little white space in the middle and the words: "The emptiness is inside and out". On the other two walls the two different marks are mixed together.

86

Two doors are placed as though they were openings in a wall that would divide the gallery in half, but only the doors are there and there is no wall.

87

An enormous hall, the floor covered with tin foil except for a path left to cross it.

88

Metallic lines strung in the space that continue outside the doors and windows for a few centimeters.

89

Hang a hundred mirrors to a hundred trees in the woods. The back of each one will be a different color.

90

Large cage of iron rods without any entrance. A plaque is fastened, outside, in the middle of each of the four sides, saying "The free space".

91

Table with a few projectors on it showing the same slide of a straight, black line on a white background. This line is transformed by the room. Corners, mouldings, perspectives, odd volumes, etc.

92

Pull up a metallic netting between two walls and variously all colored rags against it on one side and white ones on the other side.

93

Series of different materials with different forms, each one leaning against its own material in its own form.

94

In a square room build four identical curved stretchers, covered with hemp or linen, from the floor to the ceiling, in order to form four segments of a cylinder with a diameter the same length as one side of the room. Between one stretcher and the other leave a 50-centimeter space. By turning the entire cylinder each day, you will obtain its slow rotation, visible through the empty spaces between the stretchers that show the square.

95

Let the flock from a piece of woolly material "fall-out" and stick to a series of large stones which seem fit to lie and sleep on.

96

"The foot-kissing"

On a pedestal one-and-a-half meters tall place a tile with two casts of feet made of bronze. The big toe of the foot further forward is as shiny as a mirror, where as the rest of the bronze is dull.

This sculpture can be presented by itself or else among objects from "Zoo" shows.

97

Three lighted oxyhydrogen flames are placed in a triangle in the space, fastened to iron frame 120 centimeters high with the flame turned upward. Each viewer must wear a fencing mask and hold a fencing foil. The mask will be fitted with darkened glass in order not to be blinded by the flame, and the point of the foil may be held over the flames to make sparks, if desired.

98

Two walls touch each other at the bottom, reducing the extent of the floor to zero. The entrance can be through the two triangular walls or in the middle of one of the slanting ones.

99

Square formed by four coarse boards measuring 30x250 centimeters, nailed to each other like a fence, placed on a 5x5 meter floor. Inside and outside the fence, are numerous pairs of shoes of all types. The shoes should occupy a lot of space inside as well as outside the fence, but should be evenly distributed.

100

The exhibition will be suggested by the place.

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