



**posters**

a poster installation  
buckland city  
20 september - 14 november 1996  
by fiona jack

*This book is the documentation of a series of posters that I produced and displayed in Auckland city during October/November of 1996.*

*Each week I hand screen printed 70 posters, 200 flyers, and laser printed 100 stickers. The posters were pasted up all over town, the flyers left in cafes and shops, and the stickers stuck to poles, bus seats, footpaths etc.*

*Each poster offers a contemplation about aspects of our daily existence - things that are so common to us that we rarely think about them.*

*This book discusses why I did each one, the response I got to each one and to the series as a whole.*

*Thankyou very much to:*

*Profile Plus - for generously donating their poster paste up services  
AIT - for supplying the paper and inks  
Michaela, Nick, Paul, Klayre, and Kate - for helping me to print them*



poster



20 - 26 september

The idea for this, the first poster, came to me one night as I was watching a film on television. The hero was shown shooting his enemy but the swear words he was saying at the time were deleted and replaced with the obligatory 'beep'. This seemed completely absurd to me - that the murder of a human being was fit to be shown on television, but the swear words were removed - presumably because they were believed to be unfit for the ears of children. But what about the eyes?



do you think it's strange

that 'swear words'  
are censored from TV,  
but rape scenes aren't?



As this was the first poster I produced I watched closely for responses as they would determine the path that the series took from there. I had a large collection of ideas and questions that I had written over time which I was to draw from for the posters. Initially I intended to plan the whole series before I began, but instead decided to create each poster as I went, taking into consideration the response and general feeling of the last one so that the series could direct itself and flow smoothly.

Almost everyone agreed with what this first poster said and were surprised they had never noticed the irony of the situation before. Within my hearing it seemed to spark off many debates and discussions about television censorship and tv as a whole.

At this stage no-one knew that this was the beginning of a series and were therefore confused as to how to receive it. Some conversations I had with people who didn't know the posters were mine (and I didn't tell them) thought they must be teaser ads for a new product or concert.



poster **2** 27 september - 3 october

*This statement was a result of my continual fascination with the interaction of people, especially within a city environment. 'How are you' is now as much of a question as 'hello'. Rarely is an answer waited for and even more rarely is an answer sincere. It has become yet another colloquialism which allows the peaceful coexistence of vast numbers of people in a small space. We only have a real interest in the people belonging to our close social circle, but we use niceties such as 'how are you' to keep our broader social networks within reach.*

do you really mean it  
when you say

'how are you?'

do you really mean it when you say  
**'how are you?'**

do you really mean it when you say  
**'how are you?'**

**THE TRACY CHAPMAN BAND**

MONDAY OCT 21  
QUEENS WHARF EVENTS CTR  
WELLINGTON

TUESDAY OCT 22  
NORTH SHORE EVENTS CTR  
AUCKLAND

THE SMASH ALBUM  
OUT NOW

AN EVENING WITH  
**TIM and NEIL FINN**

MONDAY OCT 21  
QUEENS WHARF EVENTS CTR  
WELLINGTON

TUESDAY OCT 22  
NORTH SHORE EVENTS CTR  
AUCKLAND

THE HAZARD  
NZ SHOW ONLY  
7th NOVEMBER 8 PM

do you really mean  
it when you say  
**how are you?**



Overall the response to this particular poster was interesting. Even weeks after it went up, I would rarely have a person asking me how I am without them stopping to make sure they obviously waited to hear the answer. Also I can't get away with asking someone how they are without the reply being 'do you really mean that?'. Many people got quite defensive towards me about this poster too - asking me if it really mattered - 'what is wrong with colloquialisms?' etc. I would reply, as I did for all of the posters, that there wasn't necessarily anything wrong with it, just that it was interesting to think about it. And yes, I too say 'how are you' and do not particularly mean it sometimes. Not often, but sometimes.

The photos on the page opposite show what was the beginning of a series of posters that were put up anonymously at AIT in response to my posters. These posters, and my own, were continuously removed. No-one knows (students or tutors) where or why they were disappearing. They were just vanishing - which was a shame because it was the first verbal/visual interaction that I had seen during my years in the corridors of AIT.

This poster also marked the beginning of a brief period of accusations that I was trying to copy Barbara Kruger, and even some enquiries as to whether they were quotes from her. This was probably due to the fact that I use the typeface Futura which Barbara Kruger also uses. I was conscious at the beginning of my poster mission that this issue may arise but I chose to go ahead anyway. I like Futura and use it often and felt that I shouldn't have to compromise my style just because I was using it in the poster medium as did Barbara Kruger. I'm sure she uses it for the same reasons that I do - it is easy to read, strong, simple, uncluttered and aesthetically pleasing.

poster 3  
4 - 10 october

*My motivation for this poster came from my observations of the contradictions that are so apparent in many people who eat meat. It seems so odd that people get so upset if they hit a sheep in a car and kill it, but will quite happily eat lamb.*

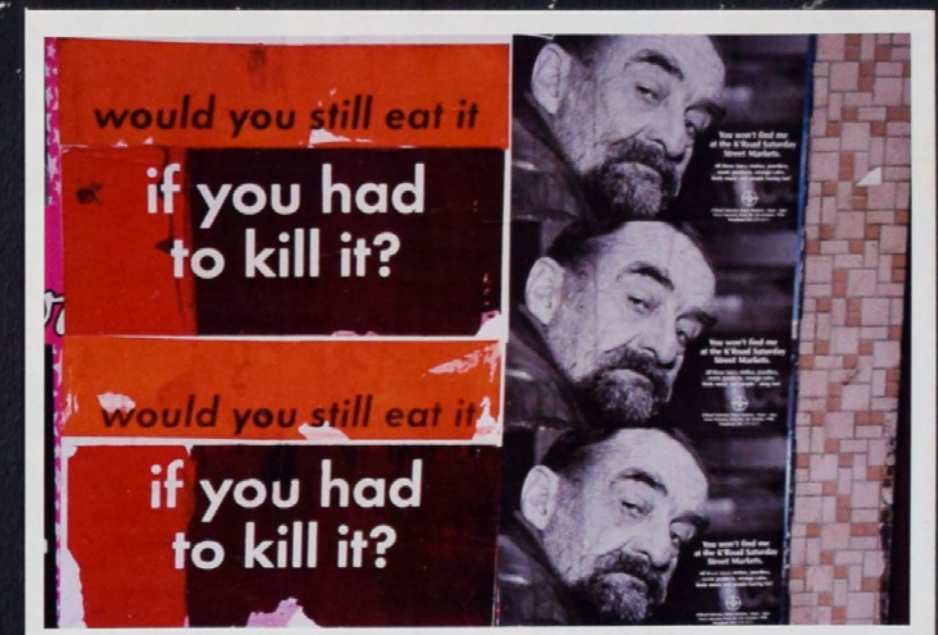
*Likewise the heated debate that surrounded the killing of the Kaimanawa wild horses seemed tremendous considering that 14 million animals are killed every single day for food in the United States alone.*

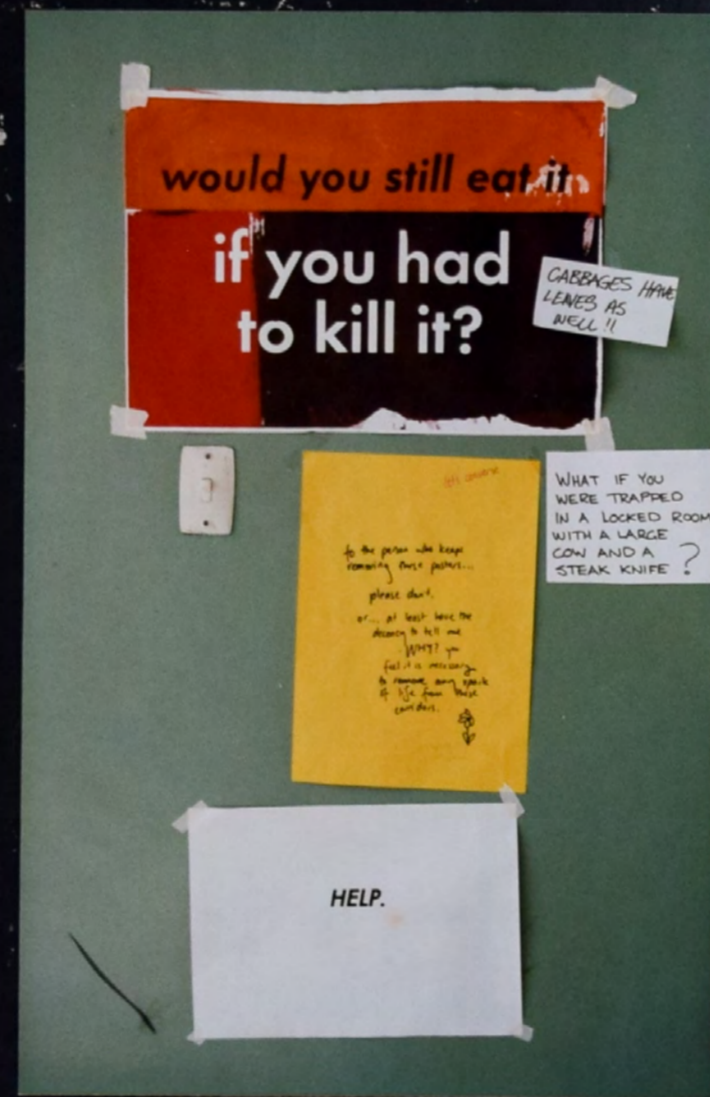
would you still eat it

if you had  
to kill it?

would you still eat it  
if you had  
to kill it?

would you still eat it  
if you had  
to kill it?





Yet more posters appeared in response to this one. Also at the time of this poster I began to have problems with posters going missing - both at tech, and around town. I'm still not sure of where and why they were disappearing, but they were.

The main thing I noticed as a response to this poster was that people felt a strong need to tell me their answer to the question in my latest poster. Many people would walk past me and say 'yes I'd still eat it' or 'hell yes, it'd taste even better'.

I would point out that I didn't personally want an answer to the questions, just for people to think about what I was suggesting. I use the format of a question because I feel that it involves the viewer directly if it is addressed towards them. I also prefer using questions in a lot of my work because it is a less aggressive way of communicating an idea. It is more of a suggestion/contemplation rather than a statement of 'fact'.



poster4

11 - 17 october

This is something that has astonished me ever since I was young. That entire rooms in houses - often the only communal space - could be devoted to the usually moronic ritual of television watching. Usually in these rooms none of these chairs will face each other so talking is more of an effort and strain on the neck than watching the little box.

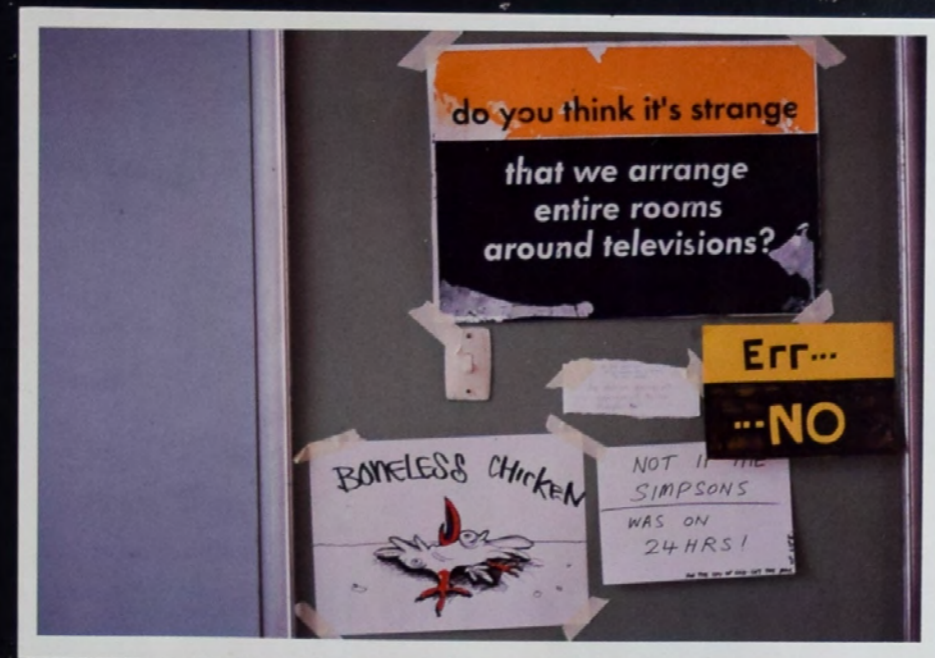
This is just one aspect of my overall dislike of television as it exists in our society. I believe the television to be responsible and barely accountable for a substantial proportion of society's ills. The abundance of violence, the hunger for money, and the creation of myths that monopolises the worlds tv screens is obscene. People now view TV, and specifically the 'news', as reality. For most people it is their prime information source and their most significant experience of the rest of the world. But it is a filtered reality - we only see what the producers want us to.

do you think it's strange

that we arrange  
entire rooms  
around televisions?

do you think it's strange  
that we arrange  
entire rooms around  
televisions?





Once again anonymous posters went up in response to this one in the corridors of AIT. The overall response to this poster was again many people astonished that they had never noticed/thought about it before. Many people didn't think it was strange at all, just practical.


By this time in the whole series of posters I was beginning to get amazing feedback. I heard tales of people discussing the posters at dinner parties, and of people who had been seeing the posters and were now always on the lookout for a new one.

poster

5  
18 - 24 october

I first thought of the idea for this poster when I was writing my dissertation and investigating the construction of desire and ideals that is integral part of the capitalist structure.

It is now very common, especially in certain areas of Auckland, for people to buy landrovers - when the closest they will probably get to rough terrain is the curb outside Country Road. The landrover is just one of many examples of unnecessary consumption and the excesses of fashion that is so prolific in our society.

A hand is visible at the top of the sign, holding it. The sign is divided into two horizontal sections: a pink top section and a dark blue bottom section. The text is printed in white on both sections.

do you think it's strange

that people buy  
landrovers  
to get to the shops?

do you think it's strange  
that people buy landrovers  
to get to the shops?

do you think it's strange  
that people buy  
landrovers  
to get to the shops?



By this stage interest in the posters was becoming overwhelming. People started asking me if they could have some, and if I had any complete sets for sale etc. I was also receiving a lot of comments from people who had been seeing the stickers on crossing buttons throughout the city and thought that these were almost more effective than the posters.



poster 6  
25 - 31 october

I did this poster because of the ridiculous stage that this whole inner-city living initiative has got to. The initial motivation for the promotion of inner city living was to bring life to the city but all it is serving to do is kill it. Not only are these endless skysrise atrocities only affordable to the upper classes, but when the garage doors go down that is where the 'life' ends. These new city-ites are complaining about everything from the noise of the rubbish collection, the noise of the pigeons and about parties that take place in the middle of the city. They are robbing our city of life after dark, certainly not giving it life.

why do people move  
into city apartments

and then complain  
about the noise?

why do people move  
into city apartments  
and then complain  
about the noise?

why do people move  
into city apartments  
and then complain  
about the noise?

do you think it's strange

do y **GARAGELAND**

why do people move  
into city apartments  
and then complain  
about the noise?

THURS 31 OCT  
PAPA JACKS

**GARAGELAND**

why do people move  
into city apartments  
and then complain  
about the noise?

FRIDAY REMEMBER LIST OF THE BOOK  
READ THE BOOKS AND YOU'LL KNOW  
FRIDAY REMEMBER LIST OF THE BOOK  
READ THE BOOKS AND YOU'LL KNOW

**LIQUID LIQUID**

THURS 31 OCT  
PAPA JACKS

**GARAGELAND**

October 18th  
November 9th

**True West**

why do people move  
into city apartments  
and then complain  
about the noise?

why do people move  
into city apartments  
and then complain  
about the noise?

the **ARC**

the ALBUM  
the PARTY  
OUT NOW ON CD

**BILLY WALK**

**GARAGE**

**GARAGE**

**GARAGE**

I got a lot of encouragement when I did this poster. It is an issue that seems to be annoying a lot of people at the moment. At this stage in the whole development of my poster people started getting quite involved in the whole thing. People began being quite adamant about whether they liked/disliked, agreed/disagreed with the latest poster. I also started getting endless suggestions of what I could do the next one about.

poster  
7

1 - 7 november

The irony of this whole situation first occurred to me in 1995 when I was involved in a street performance on a Friday night in Queen Street in which I was playing my violin. The abuse I witnessed being thrown around amongst the drunk partiers that passed by, some of which was directed towards us, went practically unnoticed by the general population who thought that we were complete freaks. As the police stood watching us it struck me that we were doing something illegal but the fools behind them weren't.

**why is it acceptable to stumble  
along the street drunk,**

**but to play a violin  
on the same stretch of road  
requires a busking permit?**

why is it acceptable to stumble  
along the street drunk,  
but to play a violin on the same  
stretch of road requires  
a busking permit?

why is it acceptable to stumble  
along the street drunk,  
but to play a violin on the same  
stretch of road requires  
a busking permit?

man

Again with this poster I got a lot of people amazed that they had never noticed the irony in the situation before. Some people argued that it was because buskers were asking for money which is why the law required permits to be issued. Buskers seldom ask for money, they usually just leave a hat or case out as a gentle suggestion that you might donate something if you feel like it. It seems absurd that one needs to register with the council, and in some cases pay a fee, to entertain people on the street. In my opinion a drunk is much more of an invasion of public space than a busker.



poster

8

8 - 14 november

For the final poster in the series, I wanted to bring it to a close but **not** to try and make any broad statements or conclusions. Many people would (**and do**) think that it is **strange** that I have been doing these posters, but I have **only pointed out** every day habits of our society which I find **strange**. So with this poster I ask **who** people think is stranger 'you or me?', so that people may **rethink their perception** of what strange behaviour is understood to be in our society.

who do you think  
is stranger...

...you or me?

who do you think  
is stranger...

...me or you?

who do you think  
is stranger...

...me or you?



