

# What's the point?

AFTER a video which tells you how to kill yourself, where does contemporary art go?

But, and to some people that may be a but which is hard to swallow, Jenny Lu's *Seven Basic Methods to Commit Suicide* is only one small part of an arts festival which should be regarded as an affirmation of Nottingham creativity.

Home-grown, and rooted in a website of the same name, *You Are Here* entered its second year with ambition and substantial backing from the Arts Council.

And yet... too many YAH events are insubstantial. There has been cabaret, things to buy and a great opening night party, but in the end you were left looking for any cohesiveness or big statement.

One venue where the dots did join up was historic St Mary's Church, where four artists contributed work in a mutually beneficial relationship.

Paul Matosic's polystyrene arch looked like the triumphal gate of a Roman city with

## YOU ARE HERE FESTIVAL

Mark Patterson

fairylights; Tabatha Andrews' video *In the Presence Of* suggested the beginning of the cosmos; Derek Sprawson's paintings suggested animals of the Ark; and Mikhail Karikis' film portraying a breath carried, in the context, hints of the breath of God.

Put together, there was a spiritual message to the show, conveyed without heavy-handedness.

Elsewhere, Natasha Kidd's plumbing-based Rising Main installation at the Bonington Gallery (still on-going) underlines how contemporary art refers back to painting; and Ellie Harrison's exhibition *Sneezes*, at Lakeside Arts Centre (on-going), is modern in its entertaining marshalling of useless information.

But while badged as YAH, both these events were separate from the festival.

Where was the heart of YAH?

Surely not Daniel Lehan's *Second Chance*, in which he claimed to have bought items from charity shops, turned them into 'art' and returned them to the shelves. I went looking for them and found nothing. Was that the point?

Or was YAH the woman exercising in the window of the festival's 'central venue'?

Which brings us to suicide and Jenny Lu. Dry and deadpan, and lacking any recognisable artistic qualities, Lu's video was possibly vaguely interesting providing you've never known anybody who's actually killed themselves.

Her point is that this information is available over the Web. So what, she infers, are you upset by? Unfortunately, the deliberate shock value managed to erase that point, leaving the uneasy feeling that this was just masquerading art.