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# Anything goes at the Paris Biennale

From Fergus Pyle

WORK BY HUNDREDS of young artists from more than 40 countries can be seen, heard, touched or (with ill-luck) walked on at the seventh Paris Biennale, which opened a few weeks ago. Ireland is represented by three imposing sculptures by Michael Bulfin and three paintings by Tim Goulding, as well as by "Mouvement pour Orchestre à Cordes," by W. Derek, which is being played in one of the music programmes.

There are also sections for the theatre and cinema and odd omnipresent *interventions* (happenings) — the man strolling in front of you with a pretty girl who looks as though his head is in a rudimentary wooden box really has his head in a rudimentary wooden box; or all of a sudden, a girl dressed in black stops you and hands over a black cardboard container filled with crumpled paper, rough sketches, chunks of graphs and a bit of a map of God-knows-where.

## All sorts

The Biennale has work in every conceivable material: work meticulously elaborated, or the inspiration and production of a moment.

The day before the opening is probably the best one to go, it was generally allowed, because many of the exhibits are not only being given a finishing touch but are being delicately constructed from the start — like the huge area of sand sensitively laid out by a young man to represent the surface of the Moon, with a large perfect circle made of soot somewhere in the middle. The place is overflowing with ideas such as the invention by a Yugo-Slav of two pendulums moving at different speeds which can turn out an infinite number of different designs, or the projects in the environment section for dyeing the canals of Venice or Amsterdam green — and why not: outside in the floral park that surrounds the exhibition hall at Vincennes, is a fountain spewing bright green water, and it could look a lot worse.

The three chief themes in the exhibition are Hyperrealism, Concepts and Environment, which might suggest that just about anything has been admitted. In fact, one of the Spanish artists claims that three of his paintings were turned down by the organising committee (no one in the committee was there to comment) and among the countless leaflets and manifestoes being handed around is one pointing to the curiosity of the Minister of Cultural Affairs, M. Duhamel, being the exhibition's patron while at the same time it is contended he is discreetly engaged in abolishing art schools.

But nobody seems to be bothered very much about the protests when there is so much else to say — violently, with large panes of shattered glass and heavy pieces of stone; or peacefully, with 40 small blocks of granite laid out in order on the floor lit by four small candles. Or in any of the hundreds of other means of expression; some conventional enough, others obscure and still developing.

The Biennale closes early in November.