

# *the stars before we herd them into conversations ...*



*you are invited to share conversation – anyone can take part  
the duration of each round is approximately 20 minutes*

*you will be given a seat of your own and an armband to wear –  
the seats are arranged in the shape of the constellations today, 2 July, 2005  
on the armband is the name of a star – your given star*

*when your conversation is over please leave the armband for the next person –  
you can collect a woven name tape with the name of your star as a keepsake*

*the subject of each conversation is set beforehand, though what you choose to share is entirely open  
choose a 'star', someone whose life has influenced yours and who is now in some way removed from you –  
they are your star to share in conversation*

*the performance will be recorded in photographs and sound –  
if you wish your conversation to remain private ask for the microphone to be taken away*

*the performance may be repeated by anyone at any time –  
configure the available seats according to the star map for the meridian and date of their conversation –  
the title of the work is always 'the stars before we herd them into conversations ...'*

*it is seeing one another conversing within the same frame of time and space  
that completes the work – the work is not just looking at the work*

*your conversations trace patterns of influence over the hothouse of celebrity*

*my star is Hans Waanders, a Dutch artist whose work was all about kingfishers –  
Hans' art was a beautiful record of his search for an ecstatic encounter  
when Hans died his Dutch friends printed a card with a constellation in the form of the kingfisher.*

*the artist Ian Wilson worked with conversations  
first in 'Oral Communication' (1969–1972) and later in 'Discussions' (ongoing) –  
Ian Wilson will have a 'Discussion' in London later this year*

*John Cage used star maps to compose non-intentional music – Etudes Boreales I–IV –  
I took the name for this performance in a poem by Cage's friend Joan Retallack –  
'the stars before we herd them into constellations ...'*

*Alec Finlay*

*for 'Open Systems'  
The Turbine Hall, Tate Modern  
2.07.2005*