

# LOOM OF ARACHNE

Performance by Barbara Campbell

Sound by Jamie Fielding

7 & 9 February 1991

First Draft West

It is a narrow street, hardly enough room for two cars to pass in opposite directions. The footpaths are also mealy proportioned. There are no awnings to offer protection.

Wheels screech and an engine revs as a car mounts the footpath - the only place to park. A baby throws its rattle from the pram. It breaks up on the unforgiving surface and hundreds of little plastic beads run down the street. Pebbles bounce around an empty jam tin as some boys test their marksmanship from across the street. A footsore mother slaps her barefoot child for insolent comments. Brief silence while ignominy and pain take effect, then a howl. Rope slaps the pavement and a girl begins her skipping rhyme,

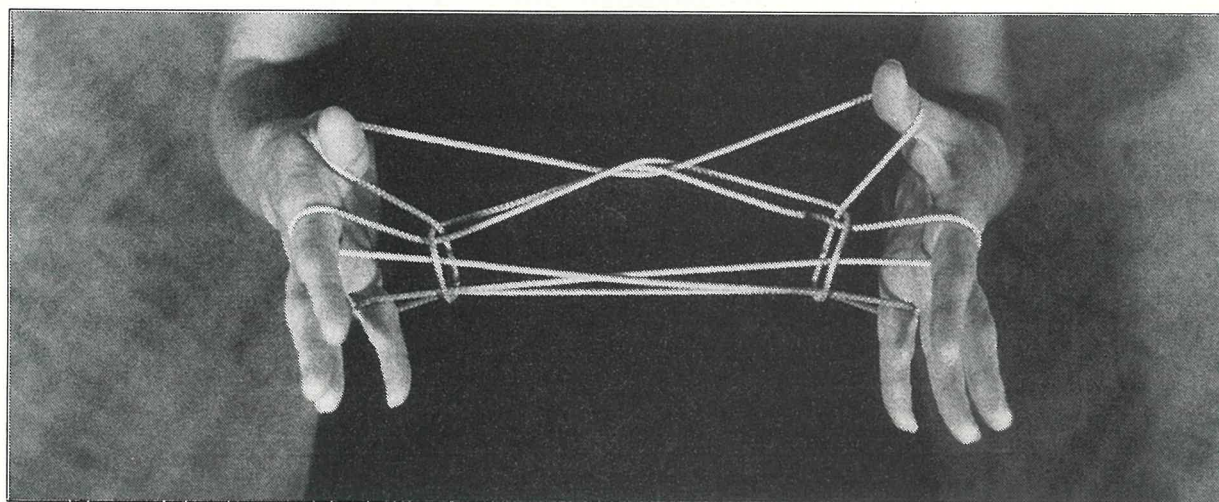
*Lizzy Borden took an axe,  
And gave her mother forty whacks.  
When she saw what she had done,  
She gave her father forty-one.  
One, two, three, four...*

The room fulfils the conditions of a golden section. Its walls and ceiling are unadorned. There are no windows or doors. The only opening is a three-inch-in-diameter aperture cut out of the external wall. Plugging this hole is an omnidirectional microphone with a black foam head. It feeds the sounds of the narrow street onto a large revox in the centre of the space. The tape passes over the recording heads and is wound onto a spool in the shape of a shuttle.

The warp fills the room from floor to ceiling and wall to wall. It has the texture of hair, but very coarse and smelling of sweat. A woman glides along its breadth on a castored stool, using the shiny quarter inch tape as her weft. Her movements are regular and incessant.

Her tapestry of chaotic sounds is an unbroken surface, the colour of magnetic tape.

Barbara Campbell  
1990



## Selected Performances 1984-90

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|------|---|------|--|
| 1984 | <i>Culture/Vulture</i> , Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane                   | 1988 | <i>Nature/Culture</i> , Experimenta, Melbourne                     |
| 1986 | <i>The Seduction of Art</i> (with Ted Riggs), The Performance Space, Sydney | 1989 | <i>Carmen (privately)</i> , Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney |
| 1987 | <i>Beam</i> , First Draft, Sydney   | 1990 | <i>Ariadne's Trace</i> , The Performance Space, Sydney             |
| 1988 | <i>Carmen (prelude)</i> , First Draft, Sydney                               | 1990 | <i>Loom of Arachne</i> , Experimenta, Melbourne                    |

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