Installation Art Practice and the 'Fluctuating Frame'.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis describes an investigation into installation art, the frame and the changes made by seven art practitioners who shifted artistic activities from studio-based fine art painting practices to installation art practices. A combined approach of literature study and case studies was adopted. There is a discussion of the frame and the relationship between selected artworks and their display settings. The reflective and problem finding processes undertaken by the artists in the research are discussed in relation to the changes in their practices. The artists' exploration of extended media, materials and processes, delayed closure, and their reflections on the relationship between the artwork, the viewer and the display setting are discussed.

Seven case studies of artists from Liverpool, Manchester and Sheffield were carried out. One of these was a self-investigation in which the researcher studied himself. A programme of interviews, observations, informal discussions, artist's slide talks and feedback sessions was arranged by this researcher over a period of three years to provide an assessment of the changes in creative practice of the artists in the case studies. The practices were further examined in the light of other people's commentary.

The study revealed that:

1. The artists in the case studies found the material and conceptual boundaries and perceived linear processes of production and display in their studio-based painting practices to be limiting.
2. Perceived conventions and limits of studio-based painting practice were explored by the artists in the case studies through processes of self-reflection and problem finding. The thesis advances the notion of the 'studio without walls'. The installation art practices of the artists in the case studies were characterised by the 'absence of stoppage' and 'unframing' processes.
3. The artists circumvented conventional curatorial systems by curating their own shows and projects and using other display spaces.
4. The main features of installation art are contingency, viewer engagement and provisionality.
5. The main feature of the material and conceptual frame in installation art is provisionality. The artwork's relationship to setting and the provisionality of the frame in installation art is characterised by material fluidity and conceptual responsiveness to specific situations. The provisional approach to the artwork and its setting advances the notion of the 'fluctuating frame'.

Future research is discussed at the end of the thesis.

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CHAPTER ONE: Installation Art and the Frame.

1.1. Introduction.

This thesis is about the transition from largely studio-based, painting practices to installational practices; it is about the way creative practitioners in the study have re-evaluated the material and conceptual limits of their artworks and re-considered the contexts of their practices. It is not the intention of this thesis to produce an all-inclusive historical survey of the whole of installation art but to describe and discuss each artist's re-assessment of his or her creative practices. However, to put the thesis in context, an account of installation art, notions of the frame and the relationship between the artwork and its display setting is required. Chapter one, therefore, introduces installation art and the relationship between the artwork and its physical and conceptual boundaries. Chapter two contains a discussion of the research methods considered and selected for this investigation. Chapters three to nine contain the seven case studies and chapter ten provides conclusions and considers possible future research.

Chapter one contains a discussion of the 'first' and 'second' frame and the provisional nature of the boundaries around artworks. This discussion is followed by some historical and contemporary examples of artworks; illustrations of the artworks referred to are provided at the end of the chapter.

1.2. Installation art.

Installation art is suggestive of 'exhibition' or 'display'. According to Barker, E. (1999) the term installation has a double meaning:

> "referring, on the one hand, to the picture 'hang' or arrangement of objects and, on the other, to a type of artwork that has developed since the 1960's, which may be site-specific and typically has to be disassembled in order to be moved" (Barker, E. 1999 p. 13).

The term installation art is often used as a generic term to cover a large area of creative art practice (de Oliveira, N. et al, 1994). There is uncertainty about an 'ultimate definition' of installation art but according to one art dictionary definition, installation art consists of:

> "Multi-media, multi-dimensional and multi-form works which are created temporarily for a particular space or site either outdoors or indoors – in a museum or gallery. Installations only exist as long as they are installed, but they can be recreated in different sites. The works are perceived 'in time' as they cannot be looked *at* like traditional art objects, but are experienced in time and space, and are interactive with the viewer" (Stangos, N. (Ed.) 1994 p. 184).

Installation art is an artform that includes the background space of the exhibition, be it inside for example in a gallery or in the outside environment, as fundamental to its display.

There is uncertainty about the origins of installation art. Davies, H. M. (1997 p. 8) claims that the origins of contemporary installation art lie in the activity of cave painting such as the cave paintings of Lascaux, France. The activities, such as hunting, were depicted directly onto the cave walls and became a part of the 'architecture' of that place rather than portable art objects.

Onorato, R. J. (1997) suggests that installation art began during the 1950's when artists such as Jackson Pollock (1912 – 1956) shifted the emphasis in their artwork from production of paintings to the physical process of painting; Pollock "choreographically recorded his locomotion through space on canvas" (Onorato, R. J. 1997 p. 13).

The shift in emphasis towards 'process' combined elements of theatre; time and place where the artworks became carefully planned 'events' or 'Happenings'. The early 'Happenings' of artists such as Jim Dine, (b. 1935) Allan Kaprow (b. 1927) and other artists of the 'Pop' era, blurred the distinction between artworks and their surroundings (see Figs. 1.1. & 1.2.). Happenings included opportunities for performance, audience participation and, although carefully directed, often included an element of spontaneity and:

> "further obscured the line between real time and space and the fiction of art. Once Pop-era artists of the 1960's engaged the real world, artworks that inhabited and inflected real spaces began to appear everywhere. Even when the artwork was a prime object – a painting or sculpture – considerations of site and associated contextual references were crucial to understanding the work" (Onorato, R. J. 1997 p.13).

Onorato, R. J. (1997) provided a useful description of installation art; he said the fundamental aspects of installation art are:

> "its habitation of a physical site, its connection to real conditions – be they visual, historical, or social – and often, its bridging of traditional art boundaries: public and private, individual and communal, high style and vernacular. The aesthetic power of installation art does not reside in the singular commodified object but in an ability to become, rather than merely represent, the continuum of real experience by responding to specific situations."

Installation art's "connection to real conditions", bridging of boundaries and representation of the "continuum of real experience" Onorato, R. J. (1997) makes use of the display space; the space between the viewer and the artwork.

According to Archer, M. (1994 p. 8) installation is a relatively new term used to describe:

> "a kind of art-making which rejects concentration on one object in favour of a consideration of the relationships between a number of elements or of the interaction between things and their contexts".

Archer, M. (1997 p. 98) claimed installation art is a term that has gained in currency since the 1970's to account for:

> "the increasing frequency with which spectators found that they had to be *in* an artwork in order to see and experience it".

He went on to say that during the 1960's the terms 'environment' and 'assemblage' were most commonly used to describe artworks in which the artists had gathered together various materials and objects and arranged them in a given space. However, the 'art of assemblage' has increasingly been referred to as installation art due to the possible confusion of the term 'environment' with artforms such as Environmental Art and Land Art.

Artists such as Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), George Segal (b. 1924) and Ed Kienholz (1927 - 1994) gathered together materials to create mixed-media tableaux or scenarios to explore the gap between art and life. Their artworks used the surroundings as a necessary part of the artwork to create an image of contemporary society (for examples see Figs. 1.3. - 1.5.). Other artists such as Christian Boltanski (b. 1944) and Ilya Kabakov (b. 1933) brought together various memorabilia and objects to try and recreate the traces of people's lives lived out in a particular situation (see Figs. 1.6. & 1.7.). Both artists use photographs to evoke a particular situation (Lucie-Smith, E. (1995 p. 20 - 24).

According to de Oliveira, N. et al (1994) installation art is a hybrid discipline that has its origins in several disciplines including visual arts, architecture and performance art and one of the features of installation art is a tendency to cross the frontiers between different disciplines:

"The prominence of installations in specific non-art sites also continues to figure among the concerns of installation artists. The activation of the place, or the context, of artistic intervention suggests a localised, highly specific

reading of the work and is concerned not only with art and its boundaries, but also with the continual rapprochement, or even fusion, of art and life. Installation must therefore also represent the artist's desire to extend the area of practice from the studio to the public sphere. By laying claim to territory beyond the private sphere, the artist is seen to widen the control that he/she has over the display of work" (de Oliveira, N. et al 1994 p. 7).

According to Lucie-Smith, E. (1995 p.19) the hybrid nature of installation art where artists use different media and methods explains the 'a-stylistic art' of the period from the 1960's onwards. Hybridity and variety of approach amongst artists led to the frequent use of the term 'pluralism' (Lucie-Smith, E. 1995). Pluralism, he claimed, best described the extreme contrasts in style of artists who were working in the same artistic milieu and their release from the stylistic conventions of that milieu. The release from stylistic bonds was related to the increased popularity of installation art and issues-based art. Lucie-Smith, E. (1995) referred to a 'matrix' holding together the artistic content of the various components of an installation. The matrix linked the components or objects that the artist brought together within the space of display.

The term installation art might be relatively new but some of its concerns with extended media, and a tendency to test material and conceptual boundaries, are shared with earlier art forms such as collage. Collage is discussed later in this chapter.

1.3. Between the 'first' and 'second' frame.

Traditional boundaries that come between the viewer and the artwork, such as the frame around a painting or the plinth on which a sculpture might stand, are problematised in installation art. The boundary that demarks the limit of the artwork in installation art is blurred (Onorato, R. J. 1997 pp. 13 – 29).

In essence the material frame is what makes the artwork apparent to the viewer. According to Norris, C. (1988, p. 17), the frame is:

> "A marker of limits, that which establishes – or so we might suppose – an impermeable boundary between the artwork and everything that belongs to its background, context, space of exhibition".

1.3.1. Installation art and the frame.

In installation art this 'impermeable boundary' is blurred via its 'temporary-ness' and the use of 'multi-media, multi-dimensional and multi-form' works (Stangos, N. 1994). The blurring process, together with its relation to background and space of exhibition, is that which distinguishes installation art as an artform. The blurring of physical boundaries achieved via the 'multi-dimensionality' of installation art changes the relationship between the artwork and the viewer (see Fig. 1.3.). Installation art removes the 'first frame'. In his 'One and Three Chairs' (1965) Kosuth represents a chair in three ways. This artwork refused a one-for-one match between signifier and signified (Norris, C. 1988 p. 10). He

juxtaposed the image of the chair with other ways of signifying the chair; a dictionary definition of 'chair' and the real chair represented in the image. Kosuth, J. (1977) reinforced the suggestion that there is more than one frame in operation around a work of art when he said "breaking out of the first frame (painting and sculpture)" was a "liberating gesture". Welchman, J. C. (1996 p. 204), claimed that this 'fundamental liberating gesture', achieved at the outset of conceptual art, was later extended into an awareness of the 'second' or institutional frame surrounding cultural activity. He said:

> "The layering of the horizons of the enframement and transgression of art suggested by Kosuth, and the consequences of the shift to the "second frame", suggest that this redirection of production activity subtends one of the most convincing explanations of the emergence of a postmodern condition in visual practice" (Welchman, J. C. 1996 p. 206).

This shift in the framing of art has implications for the viewer since the shift from the material (first) frame to the institutional (second) frame would in some way implicate the viewer within the work (Lebenszteijn, J - C. 1994). The use of an artwork's surroundings as part of the work situates the viewer within the second frame. The next section discusses the 'permeability' of the 'first' frame around an artwork.

1.3.2. Painting and the 'first' frame.

According to Welchman, J. C. (1995 pp. 44-45) putting the people (the viewer) in the picture is not a new thing. He referred to Wassily Kandinsky's desire to somehow dissolve the barrier between the viewer and the painting. Welchman wrote:

> "In his *Ruckblicke* (Reminiscences) of 1913, Wassily Kandinsky recollects that he has 'for many years searched for the possibility of letting the viewer stroll in the picture, forcing him to forget himself and dissolve into the picture'... Kandinsky's metaphor of pictorial-subjective dissolution and active engagement with, even entry into, the painted domain, remains residually avant-gardist precisely through its perpetuation of a border-breaking rhetoric" (Welchman, J. C. 1995 p. 45).

Welchman (1995) went on to describe another example of the artist's desire to dissolve the material border of the painting. He discussed the 'drip paintings' by Jackson Pollock (1912-56) and referred to the way the paint was not only applied to the surface of the canvas but that it continued 'around the corner' as an "intimation of borderless infinity". He said:

> "In the drip paintings of Jackson Pollock, for example, the inch-thickness of the canvas edge is elaborated as a miniature zone for the continuation of his pictorial vitalism" (Welchman, J. C. 1995 p. 45).

Despite the desire to somehow dissolve the material border, however, Welchman conceded that it was always governed by physical parameters.

1.3.3. The provisionality of the first frame.

Duro, P. (1996, p. 2), quoted Norris's qualified claim that the frame forms "an impermeable boundary between the artwork and everything that belongs to its background or we might suppose" (Norris, C. 1988, p. 17). This qualifying statement "or we might suppose", Duro claimed, alerts the reader to the fact that the frame might not be such an impermeable and static thing.

According to Derrida, J. (1987) the frame was always fragile. It forms another piece of art or a 'by-work' or 'parergon'. He said:

> "The frame allows us to define the requirement of formality, the opposition of the formal and the material, of the pure and the impure, of the proper and the improper, of the inside and the outside".

He said this analysis of the frame determines it as 'parergon':

> "which both constitutes it and ruins it, makes it both hold... and collapse. A frame is essentially constructed and therefore fragile: such would be the essence or truth of the frame. If it had any" Derrida, J. (1987 p. 73).

It is because of its provisional nature but important ability to at once 'hold' and 'collapse' that Derrida claims the parergon to stand out as a 'by-work' of its own accord. Derrida said:

> "The parergon stands out both from the ergon (artwork) and from the milieu, it stands out first of all like a figure on a ground. But it does not stand out in the same way as the work. The latter also stands out against a ground. But

the parergon frame stands out against two grounds, but with respect to each of those two grounds, it merges into the other. With respect to the work which can serve as a ground for it, it merges into the wall, and then, gradually, into the general background. With respect to the background which the general text is, it merges into the work which stands out against the general background. There is always a form on a ground, but the parergon is a form which has its traditional determination not that it stands but that it disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy. The frame is in no case a background in the way that the milieu or the work can be.... Or at least it is a figure which comes away of its own accord" (Derrida, J. 1987 p. 61).

Norris, C. (1988 p. 10) claims that, according to Derrida (1987), there can be no ultimate definitions, including for example the frame, since "definitions are reductive in the sense that they assume some ultimate one-for-one match between signifier and signified". The assumption of one-for-one identity between signifier and signified refuses the unique relationship between artworks and their display settings. Each display situation is unique and to assume an ultimate definition that treats that which is intrinsic to the artwork and what belongs to or outside the frame as entirely separate, refuses the relationship between the artwork and its setting (Norris, C. 1988 pp. 17 – 18).

According to Norris, C. (1988) doubt about separating what is inside the frame from what is outside the frame:

> "extends to the discourse of aesthetic philosophy, a 'framing' discourse whose chief concern (at least since Kant) has been precisely to legitimise its own existence by fixing the boundary between art and other modes of knowledge, including – paradoxically – art history and theory" (Norris, C. 1988 p. 18).

The 'second' frame is discussed in the next section.

1.3.4. The grip of the 'second', institutional frame.

According to Buren, D. (1987 pp. 200 – 207) once an artwork has left the studio (the original place of its inception and manufacture) it is an object 'subject to infinite manipulation'. He claimed:

> "it may become what even its creator had not anticipated, serving instead, as is usually the case, the greater profit of financial interests and the dominant ideology" (Buren, D. 1987 p. 203).

(Dan Buren is a French artist who is discussed in more detail later in this chapter, in section 1.4.4.). He claimed it is in the studio that the artwork is closest to its own reality and beyond this place it is prone to endless manipulations to serve various purposes of museum curators etc., in locations foreign to it (Buren, D. p. 203). Notwithstanding non-studio-

based practices, practitioners still have to reconcile the fact that the artwork will be influenced by its ultimate placement. Buren claimed:

> "The following contradiction becomes apparent: it is impossible by definition for a work to be seen in place; still, the place where we see it influences the work even more than the place in which it was made and from which it has been cast out. Thus when the work is in place, it does not take place (for the public), while it takes place (for the public) only when not in place, that is, in the museum" (Buren, D. 1987 p. 204).

The frame of the museum or gallery bestows values upon the artwork selected for exhibition (Krauss, R. 1989 p. 428). According to Phillipson, M. (1995 pp. 202 – 217), institutional interests, for example museums, operate such an enclosing grip on the representation of cultural production that it is a constant and difficult task for the creative artist to operate outside a culturally institutionalised framework. Phillipson considers whether there might such be a place, he wrote:

> "Under the intensity of creative experimentation (the situation and challenge of artists' practice) each work asks itself (and therefore us, too) whether there might be a 'place' where culture has not yet reached; it hopes to be that 'place' – an elsewhere that is not yet a 'place' on culture's terms" (Phillipson, M. 1995 pp. 202 – 203).

According to Barker, E. (1999 p. 13):

> "the final arbiters here, the people who make the judgements justifying the acquisition of a work for a collection or its inclusion in an exhibition, are museum curators and directors".

She referred to Buren, D. (1989) who had been commenting on an exhibition in 1989 that identified contemporary artists as 'magicians'; he suggested that the real magicians of contemporary society were the museum curators.

According to Barker, E. (1999 p. 13 – 14) over the last century gallery and museum curators have become increasingly involved with the visual effect produced by the display of artworks. She referred to a sense of the display of the artworks achieving the same status as the artworks themselves, saying:

> "the artfulness of modern display can produce an intensified aestheticisation: careful spacing and lighting isolate works of art for the sake of more concentrated contemplation" (Barker, E. 1999 p. 14).

She claimed alternative strategies of display seek to recontextualise artworks outside the world of the museum, recreating the material setting in which they might have been originally seen.

According to Barker, E. (1999 pp. 8 - 12) another example of an alternative strategy for display was the French writer André Malraux's 'La Musée Imaginaire' (The Imaginary Museum) (1947). She referred to how 'La Musée Imaginaire' became a useful shorthand

for the diffusion of artworks beyond the museum by means of photographic reproduction (see Fig. 1.8.). According to Madsen, A. (1977 p. 277):

> "The 'imaginary museum' immediately entered the French language.... through photography and the modern printing techniques twentieth-century man was heir to a ubiquitous imaginary museum containing the art of all times".

Benjamin, W. (1973) claimed photographic reproduction caused a profound change to both the production of artworks but also to their relationship with the viewing public. He wrote:

> "Around 1900 technical reproduction had reached a standard that not only permitted it to reproduce all transmitted works of art and thus to cause the most profound change in their impact upon the public; it had also captured a place of its own among the artistic processes (Benjamin, W. 1973 p. 221 – 222).

According to Barker, E. (1999 p. 11):

> "Photography (and, more broadly, the mass-media) has undoubtedly thereby contributed to the vast increase in visitor levels at art museums and galleries that has taken place since the mid-nineteenth century."

The 'museum without walls' was conceived by Malraux as referring to the massive expansion of art beyond the classical canons of taste in the museums since the nineteenth century, to embrace artworks previously unknown or unappreciated, via the means of photographic reproduction (Barker, E. 1999).

Malraux, A. (1967 p. 16) said:

> "a 'museum without walls' is coming into being, and... it will carry infinitely farther that revelation of the world of art, limited perforce, which the 'real museums offer us within their walls".

He continued:

> "The creation of an expanded audience for art is the corollary of this: 'a new field of art experience, vaster than any so far known.... Is now, thanks to reproduction, being opened up. And this new domain... is for the first time the common heritage of all mankind" Malraux, A. (1967 p. 46).

'La Musée Imaginaire' was intended to carry artworks farther beyond the walls of the museum. Malraux was France's first minister of cultural affairs (1959 – 1969) and in that time he attempted to provide a national, institutional network of cultural centres. However, according Bourdieu, P. and Darbel, A. (1991) the appreciation of art depends upon the viewer's possession of class-specific cultural capital; Malraux assumed a level of knowledge of art and experience of art, on the part of the viewer. According to Barker, E. (1999 p. 10) Malraux's attempt to bring art to the public backfired because of this oversight.

Barker, E. (1999 p. 9) claimed that in reproducing artworks from all cultures and periods and treating them in the same way i.e. photographically reproducing them, artworks were 'homogenised' and each artwork was decontextualised. In stripping away the relationship

between art and its context and subjugating all the different artworks in the imaginary museum to a common style, Malraux was engaged in a kind of cultural imperialism.

Barker, E. (1999 p.12) claimed however, that although Malraux's 'La Musée Imaginaire' as national, cultural policy was a flop, it contributed to a wider definition of art and, in addition, to the wider definition of the second frame. However, she claimed the institutionalised effects of the museum continue to uphold the distinctions between what is art and what is not art. Buren, D. (1987) claimed this act of differentiation is the sole right of the artist. He suggested the studio is the filter which allows the artist to make these initial decisions about what is art and what is not art, because the studio is the place where the artwork is closest to its own reality.

1.4. Interpretations of material and conceptual limits.

The following sections discuss examples of artworks by artists who have considered the artwork's 'own closest reality' - the artwork's setting, and its material and conceptual boundaries. Installation art shares some of its concerns with earlier examples of artworks such as collage and constructivist techniques (Archer, M. 1994). Therefore, the following section relates the discussion of the first and second frame to historical and contemporary examples of artworks. The section contains examples of artists whose artworks engage with their setting.

1.4.1. Braque and Picasso and the Cubist Collage.

This section considers examples of two artists (Georges Braque 1883 – 1963 and Pablo Picasso 1881 – 1973) who questioned the conventions within their practices and explored their accepted boundaries of their artworks. Braque and Picasso extended the range of the media, materials and processes and constructed assemblages that included real objects that they found in their surroundings. They developed a technique called collage; objects, materials and, occasionally, the surroundings that these assemblages were displayed in, were included in their artworks. The boundary between pictorial space and real space was made ambiguous via the use of real objects; collage provides an illustration of an artwork that makes links between the first and second frame.

The invention of photography and its increasing popularity in the late 19th century heralded changes in the way the world was depicted; as an image-maker it challenged the position that visual art had held (particularly painting) for many years (Benjamin, W. 1973 pp. 219 - 253). Challenged by the mechanical apparatus of photography, painting had to redefine its status as a relevant artform. This redefinition of itself has become characteristic of modern art movements (Bois, Y-A. 1990 pp. 229 – 244). One such modern art movement was Cubism.

Braque and Picasso proposed a complete dismantling of traditional perspective. In Cubist paintings the depth of field was 'compressed' to produce a very narrow picture plane from which the subject of the painting appeared to be bursting forth (Waldman, D. 1992 p. 16).

The introduction into the artwork of more than one perspective and viewpoint, and the narrow picture plane, served both to compress and fracture the subject matter (see Fig. 1.9.).

Russell, J. (1981) said that Braque and Picasso wanted to 'build' their pictures as much as to paint them. Braque was quoted as saying:

> "If we want to show a man reading a newspaper, why do we have to fake it up with brushes and oil paint when we could just as well get the newspaper itself and stick a bit of it on the canvas?" (in Russell, J. 1981 p. 113).

According to Waldman, D. (1992) the cubist collage was jointly created in 1912 by Braque and Picasso. Waldman said the artworks of Braque and Picasso were:

> "Deadly serious and at the same time tongue-in-cheek, they methodically re-examined painting and sculpture and gave each medium some of the characteristics of the other. In the process they invented collage" (Waldman, D. 1992 p. 13).

Collage is a term used to describe artworks where extrinsic material such as scraps of paper, fabric, sheet music, newspaper, and bus tickets, are incorporated onto a flat surface. Assemblage is a term also used to describe artworks that are constructed out of everyday objects that are often 3-dimensional. Cubist collages often have a 3-dimensional effect due to, for example, the build-up of materials. The incorporation of real objects and materials into the picture plane disturbed the traditional single-point perspective of the image.

For example, Figs. 1.10. & 1.11. show two collages by Braque and Picasso. Braque's collage, built in his studio, has become a still-life wall relief. According to Waldman, D. (1992) Braque experimented with 2-dimensional constructions using pieces of paper and card that were cut into the shapes of violins and guitars. These fragments of card shapes were clustered and pasted down and incorporated with painted and drawn elements suggestive of the different viewing angles the artist took of the subject matter. Fig. 1.10. shows the 'frontality' that Braque preferred; the paper relief is constructed in one corner of the studio and although 3-dimensional, the viewing of the artwork is restricted as with a painting. However, in using the real space of the studio as the pictorial space of the relief (i.e. the corner) the artwork occupies both real space and pictorial space. Picasso also constructed still-life wall reliefs (see Fig. 1.11.) but in this example, instead of using card cut out shapes he opted for scraps of painted wood taken from furniture and domestic interiors. The picture plane protrudes out into the viewing space and the materials used in the relief are similar to those found in its surroundings.

The technique of collage had a lasting effect on painting in the 20th century, for example on the 'combine/painting/assemblages of the artists American artists Robert Rauschenberg (b. 1925), and Joseph Cornell (1903 – 1972) and the constructions of the British artist Peter Blake (b. 1932). Collage and assemblage had a lasting effect on installation art. The placement and manipulation of materials such as paper, wood etc. in the realm of the pictorial (i.e. in collage) is analogous to the physical placement of objects in real space (i.e. in installational art) operating as it does in terms of a procedure of collage (Finch, M. 2000 p.48).

The endeavour to extend the content of the canvas beyond paint brought into question the perceived boundaries of the artwork (Rush, M. 1999). The collages of Braque and Picasso rendered the frame permeable by the introduction of materials from the real world. The real and pictorial elements within a collage were at once a part of the artwork and part of the surroundings. These elements were both pictorial and 'real'; they crossed-over between the first and second frame. Archer M. claimed:

> "Collage interacts with the real space of the gallery by pulling material from the surrounding world and building it up on the painting's surface out into the spectator's viewing space" (Archer, M. 1994 p. 12).

According to Lucie-Smith, E. (1969 p. 115) in the latter half of the 20th century, collage was increasingly a means of creating artworks totally out of pre-existing objects and became known as the 'art of assemblage'. The next section considers the work of Marcel Duchamp who was one of the main originators of the art of assemblage.

1.4.2. Marcel Duchamp and 'Etant donnés' (1946 – 1966).

This section considers an example of an artist (Marcel Duchamp 1887 – 1968) who discarded the conventions of art altogether, extending from painting to mixed media and constructing artworks entirely from found objects. He made working in several different media seem a very natural thing to do; he emphasised the importance of the idea behind the artwork over the accepted notions of artistry, and stressed that the viewer completed the artwork (Rush, M. 1999 pp. 21 - 25). He challenged the basis upon which distinctions are

made between the world of art and what lies outside it (Archer, M. 1994 p.11). The section discusses an example of an 'environment' artwork in which real space is used to construct a pictorial space.

Marcel Duchamp was a leading member of the New York Dada group of 1915; he had a profound influence on art of the late 20th century especially installation art (Archer, M. 1994). Dada was a movement of artists and intellectuals; it was characterised by cynicism and buffoonery and was launched in Zurich in 1916. During the First World War, Zurich became a haven for refugees of all kinds – writers, artists – people who felt pessimistic about the state of chaos in Europe. Dada signified an attack on the meaning of any cultural endeavour and gave rise to a re-assessment of cultural values and to the discovery of new approaches to meaning, for example 'automatic drawing' (Hobbs, J. A. 1985 pp. 267 – 270). Dada faded away in the early 1920's leaving a lasting legacy in the form of Marcel Duchamp's 'Ready-Mades'. Dada anticipated the art of assemblage such as in Kurt Schwitters' 'Merzbau' (which is discussed in the next section) and was a forerunner of 'happenings', 'environments' and the automatic drawing of Jackson Pollock.

Duchamp questioned the individual creativity associated with art production: he took mass-produced objects and declared them works of art by the act of naming them and signing them as such (Richter, H. 1965 pp. 87 – 97). He called these artworks 'Ready-Mades' and often signed them in an invented name. For example 'The Fountain' (1917) was a white porcelain urinal, turned on its back, placed on plinth and signed 'R. Mutt' after a firm of sanitary engineers (see Fig. 1.12.). Other examples of artworks that were made out of found

objects were his assemblages in boxes. For example, 'Box in a Valise' (1963) functioned as a mini-museum; it was intended to provide the viewer with a catalogue of his work and contained miniature reproductions of his earlier artworks (see Fig. 1.13.). Duchamp also made artworks which used the space of exhibition for example, 'First Papers of Surrealism' 1942 (see Fig. 1.14.) was an exhibition organised by Duchamp and André Breton in which Duchamp invaded the entire exhibition space with a 'labyrinth of string' (Armstrong, R. 1993).

Duchamp considered both the artist's and the artwork's relationship with the viewer as vital; he also liked to keep the viewer guessing (Russell, J. 1981 p.366). For example, the artwork 'Etant donnés: 1er La chute d'eau', 2me Le gaz d'éclairage' ('Given that: 1st The waterfall, 2nd The Illuminating Gas') (1946 – 66) was an installational project that Duchamp worked on for 20 years, and had been kept entirely a secret. The artwork's existence was only made known publicly after his death in 1968; Duchamp had prepared a set of instructions in 15 steps for its posthumous assembly (Ramirez, J. A. 1998 p. 187). Duchamp intended the accompanying 'Instruction Manual' to be a work of art in its own right as he did with earlier artworks which contained 'instructions' for example 'Box in a Valise' (1963).

Ramirez, J. A. (1998 pp. 199 – 248) said 'Etant donnés' was a "complex three-dimensional ensemble" which was conceived while Duchamp was residing in New York and eventually was installed in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Fig. 1.15. shows what the viewer would see on entering the gallery space; an old, weathered Spanish style door in a brick frame.

Fig. 1.16. shows what was seen on looking through the holes in the door that are at eye level and Fig. 1.17. shows a diagrammatic view of the whole installation.

On looking through the eyeholes in the door the viewer first saw an irregular hole on a brick wall. Through the hole in the wall there was a country landscape in which lay a female mannequin which held a lamp in its left hand. Beyond the woman was a waterfall in continuous motion. According to Ramirez, J. A. (1998) 'Etant' donnés' was related to an earlier work by Duchamp - a painting on glass called 'The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even' (1915 – 1923). This artwork (otherwise know as 'Large Glass') consisted of two sections (a male half and a female half) and had an erotic theme.

'Etant donnés' consisted of three spatial areas "connected up longitudinally by the glance of the 'voyeur'" which was how the viewer was described in the Instruction Manual (Ramirez, J. A. 1998 p. 200).

The three spatial areas of 'Etant donnés' were:

1. The space outside the Spanish door where the viewer stood.
2. The rectangular room between the door and the hole in the wall (measuring 40" x 33" and with a checked linoleum floor, which extended into the final space beyond the hole in the wall).
3. The final space beyond the hole in the wall (79" in length) which contained the disturbing sight of a naked female dummy lying in the grass and a large landscape photograph suspended behind.

The waterfall consisted of a spinning mechanism with a viewing hole mounted on the rear wall; the spinning mechanism gave the illusion of running water (when viewed through the peep hole in the door) via the optical effects achieved using fluorescent light and a perforated aluminium disc. The connecting spaces were draped with black velvet to cut out unwanted light from outside the environment.

'Etant' donnés' was a tableau which organised real space into pictorial space according to specific and highly personalised rules, but Ramirez, J. A. (1998 pp. 214 - 227) claims 'Etant' donnés' has many parallels with the world of art. For example, he suggests that 'Etant' donnés' had strong connections with the subject of love and light in art and gives Rodin's 'The Kiss' (1898) as an example. He makes a connection between 'Etant' donnés', and the female nude and the male gaze, and anatomical theatre, giving the painting 'Venus Asleep' (c. 1510) by Giorgione and Mantegna's 'Dead Christ' (c. 1466) as examples. In addition Ramirez (1998) makes the connection between 'Etant' donnés' and such optical devices as those found in art history (for example Albrecht Durer's viewing device for perspective drawing), the Camera Obscura, and peephole theatre associated with 20th century popular erotic iconography.

Duchamp's montage demonstrated an increasing desire for theatricality in his artworks and for an interaction with the viewer directly through the Instruction Manual and through the use of real space. The use of architectural devices, together with the use of real space, and constructed pictorial space, serve to situate the artwork between the first and second frames.

1.4.3. Kurt Schwitters and 'Merzbau' (1923 – 43).

This section considers an example of an artwork by Kurt Schwitters (1887 – 1948). Schwitters was a member of the Dada movement; Dada was a movement of revolt by European and American artists and writers (first appearing in 1915 and losing impetus by 1923), which took an anti-rational, anti-aesthetic and anti-establishment stance (Russell, J. 1981 p. 191). Schwitters constructed collages and assemblages using found objects; he called them 'Merz'. Merzbau is an example of an artwork that grew in size, from a relatively small collage idea, to using the entire surroundings as part of the artwork. Schwitters' artwork 'Merzbau' (1923) is seen as an early example of installation art, illustrating the transition from the first to the second frame.

According to Piper, D. (1984), 'Merzbau' was a construction which Schwitters started in his house in the Waldhausenstrasse 5 in Hanover 1923 which he had to leave in 1935 when he left Germany, and which was destroyed by allied bombing in 1943. The construction was largely made out of junk and found objects; 'Merzbau' began as a simple wall relief but grew 'beyond itself' to occupy a number of rooms of the house in Hanover (see Fig. 1.18.).

Russell, J. (1981 p. 190), provided a description of Merzbau:

"The house was taken over, room by room and later upward through the ceiling. It was reshaped in various radical ways and filled slowly and consistently with material objects which were neither architecture, painting,

> nor sculpture, nor reading matter, but an as-yet-unnamed amalgam and crossbreeding of all four of them".

He went on to refer to Schwitters' sense of irony and how Schwitters wanted to create a sense of healing through the totality of the environment he had created. He quoted Schwitters (1926) as hoping that he had:

> "somewhat enlarged the domains of art, without thereby endangering the standing of the great works of art in any age".

According to Archer, M. (1994), the original Hanover 'Merzbau' (1923), was a very private and personal artwork which Schwitters believed to function:

> "as some sort of container for a variety of objects which bore commemorative and autobiographical significance".

Schmied, W. (1985 p. 43), claimed that Schwitters' aim was to produce:

> "a new type of *Gesamtkunstwerk* [total work of art], in which he wanted to combine all the disparate, fragmented, disunited parts of our life. It was a construction which had to be preceded by destruction. His collages, montages and assemblages were combinations of completely unrelated elements, objects and materials. We can describe them as poetic constructions but they were constructions whose components had had to undergo a process of 'deformalisation', 'decontamination' metamorphosis."

Schmied, W. (1985 p. 44) said Schwitters saw his art as a way to bring together the elements which modern civilisation "had separated, torn apart, disunited, alienated".

Schwitters began to make collages and reliefs from junk and found objects in 1918. These were known as 'Merz' constructions – this was a meaningless syllable taken from a scrap of paper (which had part of the word 'Kommerz' printed on it), which was randomly included in one of his collages in 1919. Schwitters' final 'Merzbau', begun in 1947 in a barn in Langdale, Cumbria, has been re-assembled in the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Schwitters made his collages, and later his Merzbau, by gluing and nailing together the things that he found; in the gutter, the rubbish tip and from dustbins - used and worn-out things; tram tickets, chocolate wrappers, beer mats, old newspaper fragments, pieces of string, wire, old pram wheels and tin lids. He reclaimed the objects that society had discarded and deemed useless and worthless. Schmied, W. (1985) described Schwitters' work as creating "a new cosmos out of all these discarded, miserable, dirty things. They appear in that cosmos as kindred equal elements in the work of art". It is this idea of creating a cosmos – using the available space to install the artwork – which is important here.

Schwitters' *Gesamtkunstwerk* shared a common denominator with later, more contemporary installation art; and that was its use of space and its sense of theatre (Archer, M. 1985 p. 14).

In addition to using the space to organise the visual elements of his artworks, Schwitters extended his media to use sound. According to Russell, J. (1981), Schwitters was the

consummation of Dada in that he achieved the Dadaists' fundamental aim of fusing art with non-art. His poems were constructed from wordless sounds. For example 'Ursonate' (1922-32), lasts over 41 minutes, consists of 4 movements and is "by turns hilarious and terrifying, elemental and precisely engineered" (Russell, J. 1981 p. 187). Schwitters preferred his audience to hear the poems live rather than to read them. The activities he did in the name of 'Merz' often included himself as part of the artwork.

The next section considers an example of a contemporary artist whose influences lie in collage and whose installational artworks have a close relationship to the institutional frame of the museum.

1.4.4. Daniel Buren and 'tableaux'.

The distinction between the aesthetic space of art and the social space of the real world remains an important feature of much of the art of the past 100 years (Archer, M. 1994). The following section considers an example of a contemporary artist (Daniel Buren b. 1938) who made collages but extended the materials and processes to include the space of display in his work. The section discusses examples of Buren's often temporary constructions. Buren's artworks, which often rely on interaction with the space of display and the viewer, provide an illustration of the relationship between the artwork and its surroundings; between the first and second frame.

The French installation artist Daniel Buren made an artistic practice out of the idea of "framing.. of the institutional frames" (Krauss, R. 1989). For example, in his installation 'Within and Beyond the Frame' (1973) he suspended 19 grey-and-white striped canvases at intervals and in a line. They were suspended in a line 190 feet long from one end of the gallery in which it was exhibited, out of the window and across the street to a building opposite the gallery (see Fig. 1.19.). Unconventionally, the canvases were not stretched on wooden frames (stretchers) and they were not framed. The frame referred to in the title is the frame of the gallery; the institutional frame: "a frame that functions to guarantee certain things about the objects it encloses" (Krauss, R. 1989). Krauss, R. (1989) referred to the institutional frame of the gallery as guaranteeing the objects it encloses with attributes such as rarity, uniqueness, authenticity and originality. These are the values that separate art objects from other objects in our culture, other objects that do not have rarity and uniqueness.

All the canvases in 'Within and Beyond the Frame' have the same stripes, in fact Buren's artworks all have in some way or another the same vertical stripes such as those seen on the fabric shop and café awnings. The stripes are his 'motif'; he has been using the same 8.5cm wide stripe as a visual tool since 1965. Prior to 1965, Buren's work was very much to do with making paintings; he employed collage and décollage techniques (gluing things down and peeling or tearing them away). He was interested in the relationship between the limits of the canvas stretcher and the dominant shape on the canvas (Finch, M. 2000 p. 48 – 51).

Finch refers to how in 1965, Buren began to buy striped material (the same sort used for

shop awnings); he stretched the material onto canvas supports in order "arrive at degree zero" in his painting. Finch wrote:

> "the canvas and its support would become more active in terms of their relationship to a location, their presence demanding that their articulation within a given space should become a further specificity of the work itself" (Finch, M. 2000 p.51).

Influenced by the artists' group the *affichistes* of the 1950's, Buren began making *in situ* projects such as 'Within and Beyond the Frame' 1973 and '120 peintures pour 15 tableaux' 1967 – 81 (see Fig. 1.20.). Finch (2000) claims Buren "repeatedly places the spectator in a position where the public domain, be it institutional or social, is the dimension of the work itself". The *affichistes* were a little known group of artists whose practice involved a performance aspect of ripping down posters from the walls of streets and metros of Paris. According to Finch, M. (2000) the boundary of the studio was called into question by the *affichistes* who claimed that art should be made on the streets, he said:

> "the act of décollage and collage became something between appropriation and vandalism, broaching the margin between collage as a purely formal pictorial operation and as a social manifestation" (Finch, M. 2000 p. 48).

Buren's *in situ* projects were temporary installations related to his process of painting (collage and décollage) in that the action of moving objects from one place to another was the manipulation of material in the realm of the pictorial and:

> "to lose sight of the operational terms of such a displacement is to consider the pictorial field solely as a stage for illusory effects" (Finch, M. 2000 p. 48).

'120 peintures pour 15 tableaux' was executed between 1967 and 1981. The project shows the durational aspect of Buren's installational projects. In 1967, 15 canvases were each given a coat of white paint on the outer white stripes of the awning material. The following year 14 of the canvases were given an additional coat on the outer white stripes. The process was repeated until 1981 giving the sense that the 120 paintings effectively form 15 tableaux. The viewer was forced to confront the process of the works i.e. the physical build up of paint on some but not all of the 'paintings', which were simply propped up against the wall (Finch, M. 2000).

Related to the *in situ* projects (which are site-specific) were the *cabanes*, which were not site-specific. The cabanes also involved the striped material but in addition used materials such as mirror glass, plastic, wood and fluorescent light. They were three-dimensional, cabin-like structures with 'exploded' sections that were moved out from the centre of the structure (see fig. 1.21.). The walls of the cabanes were similar to the wooden supports of Buren's paintings and the walls were striped in the same way as the striped canvases in '120 peintures pour 15 tableaux, 1967 – 1981'. The walls acted as screens and the spaces between the walls acted as windows to enable the viewer to move through. The viewer

saw an ever-shifting background through the gaps and experienced a constantly shifting environment. The function of the cabane's walls/screens/windows was pictorial; they were tableaux (Finch, M. 2000). Fig. 1.22. shows a rare variation on the striped theme but work utilises both the central space of the gallery and the wall space further demonstrating Buren's insistence that the artwork exists in a one-to-one relationship with context; the location of the artwork becomes the frame. He said:

> "the location... where a work [of art] is seen is its frame (its boundary)"
>
> (Buren, D. 1970).

According to Harrison, C. & Wood, P. (1993 p. 196 - 208) modernist preoccupations with largely internalist relations of an artwork, and their potential to engage the viewer, were eclipsed by an interest by artists such as Buren, to propose artworks that examine the external relations between the artwork and its circumstances.

According to Harrison, C. & Wood, P. (1993) p. 202:

> "It is Buren's intention the work should thus draw attention not simply to itself but to the circumstances of its – and by implication of our – containment".

1.5. Conclusion.

According to Archer, M. (1994) installation art is coming to terms with the tendencies exemplified by the artworks in this chapter. The term installation art covers a broad area of artistic activities and has its roots in 20th century artforms such as: the Cubist collage; Marcel Duchamp's assemblages; Dada and the constructions of Kurt Schwitters; Happenings; the Pop tableaux of Ed Kienholz; and Land Art.

Archer, M. (1994) classified installation art into four main areas of activity: site, media, museum, and architecture and provided examples of artists' works in each category. He designated an influential contemporary 'figurehead' artist to each category. He referred to them as follows:

> "Robert Smithson did much to crystallise the central concept of 'site' and to provide a way of thinking about the relationship between the space of the gallery and the surrounding environment; Fluxus artists such as Nam June Paik seized upon the newly available technology of mass communication in order to investigate its possibilities; Marcel Broodthaers, in continuing on from and subverting Duchamp's radicalism, provided a critique of the museum which was at once powerful and amusing; and Gordon Matta-Clarke, by cutting into the fabric of buildings, gave concrete expression to issues of community and urban life which a number of artists have subsequently explored through an engagement with architecture" (Archer, M. 1994 p. 30).

Installation art is characterised by the provisionality of the material frame between the viewer and the artwork, and the use of the display setting as a part of the artwork. Archer (1994) claims the collective efforts of installation artists' activities:

> "to render permeable that barrier which separates us – that is, the everyday world of mass-production – from the realm of the artwork has succeeded, it has allowed meaning, the content of the work, to seep out into its surroundings. In breaking open the 'artistic realm' and making it one with social spaces, the observer of the work of art becomes implicated with it in a manner that differs considerably from the conventional relationship between viewer and painting or sculpture" (Archer, M. 1994 p.13).

According to Rush, M. (1999) one of the characteristic perceptions of the 20th century has been a persistent tendency to question the long tradition of art, for example, painting. However, he goes on to say that this is too generalised and fails to take into account the breadth of practices in the art of the 20th century. Another characterisation of late 20th century art practice is its experimental nature and inclusiveness; there is an almost frantic extension of media, methods and contexts of art (Rush, M. 1999 p. 7).

1.6. The research investigation.

It was not the intention of this researcher to re-investigate a history of installation art or to classify installation art according to predetermined types. The thesis is about the individual efforts of artists who have re-evaluated the material and conceptual limits of their practices and their artworks; artists who have been preoccupied with what Archer, M. (1994) referred to as 'breaking open the artistic realm'.

An attempt to identify research into installation art was made by searching indexes, catalogues and journals for example the 'Journal of the National Association for Fine Art Education'. A search of the 'ASLIB Index to Theses', revealed that much of the recent PhD level research into art practice had not focussed on artists' reassessment of their studio-based practices such as proposed in this investigation.

Much of the PhD research in the area of art practice was found to be largely retrospective and based on literature and art criticism. For example Wood, W. F. J. (1998), in his PhD thesis explored a critical history of English conceptual art; Wilson, C. (1998), in her MPhil thesis explored artists' (Matisse, Baselitz and Tapies) intrinsic methodologies; and the relationship between pictorial space, narrative and the spectator was the subject of O'Riley, T.'s (1998) PhD thesis.

O'Riley, T. (1998) in his thesis, explored representing illusions of space, narrative and the spectator and focussed the study upon well-known artists, film and literature. The final

section of his thesis contained a section on his own creative artworks related to the main sections in the rest of the thesis. O'Riley (1998) considered the relationship between the construction of narrative and meaning in the mind of the viewer, and the framing of pictorial space in painting, installation art and lens-based media.

At the time of writing this thesis there seemed to have been no attempts at evidence-based research into installation art practice. Many discussions of installation art seem to have been retrospective, focussing on existing literature and art criticism.

Hurlstone, N. (2000) in his PhD thesis explored the relationship between installation art and the presentation of history with particular reference to the historicisation of Nazi oppression of homosexuality 1933 - 1945. Through critical analysis of the work and documentation of the installation work of five artists, and his reflections on his own creative practice, Hurlstone, N. (2000) focussed on identifying and describing the essential components of 'historicising' in installation art.

There is a need to provide insights into creative and reflective processes, the methods, materials and contexts of installation art practice and to identify artists' re-evaluations of material and conceptual limits of their practices and their artworks. An investigation focussing on the seven practising artists in the case studies, their artworks' relationship with the viewer, their problem finding and re-evaluations of their practices, provides insights into installation art, the provisionality of the frame, and the propositional nature of the residual artworks.

The focus in this investigation, upon installation art practice, the provisionality of the frame and the artwork, provides a suitable addition to the subject area of Fine Art. In addition, the result of an examination of the artists' re-assessment of their creative practices in each of the case studies is a suitable addition to the literature in the subject area. The research also adds to the debate about the provisional nature of the frame and 'parergonality' as proposed by Derrida (1987).

Possible methods for achieving the aims of the thesis are discussed in the next chapter.



Fig. 1.1. 'The Smiling Workman' (at Judson Gallery New York) 1960 Jim Dine (Happening)

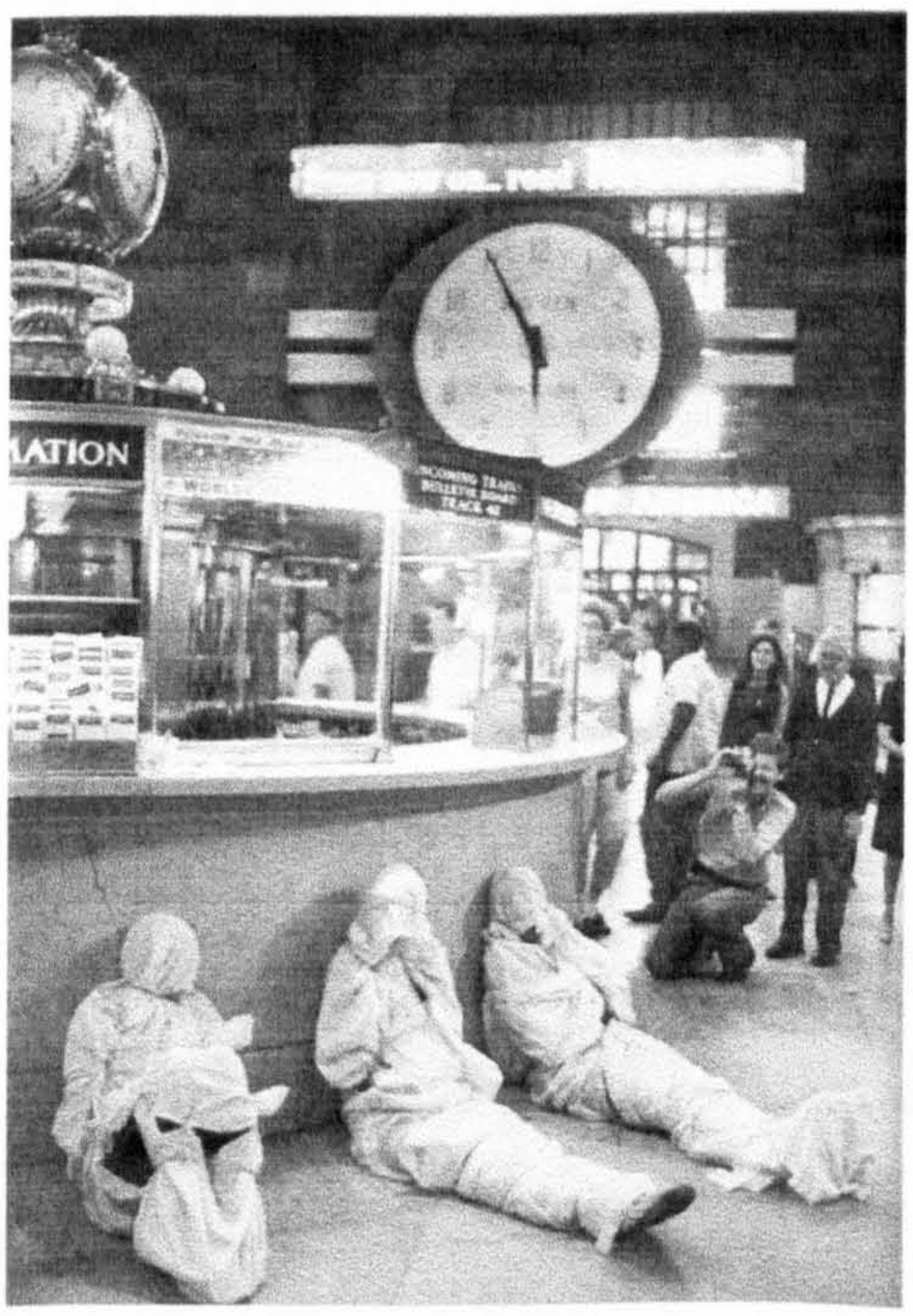


Fig.1.2. 'Calling' (Grand Central Station New York) 1965 Allan Kaprow (Happening)

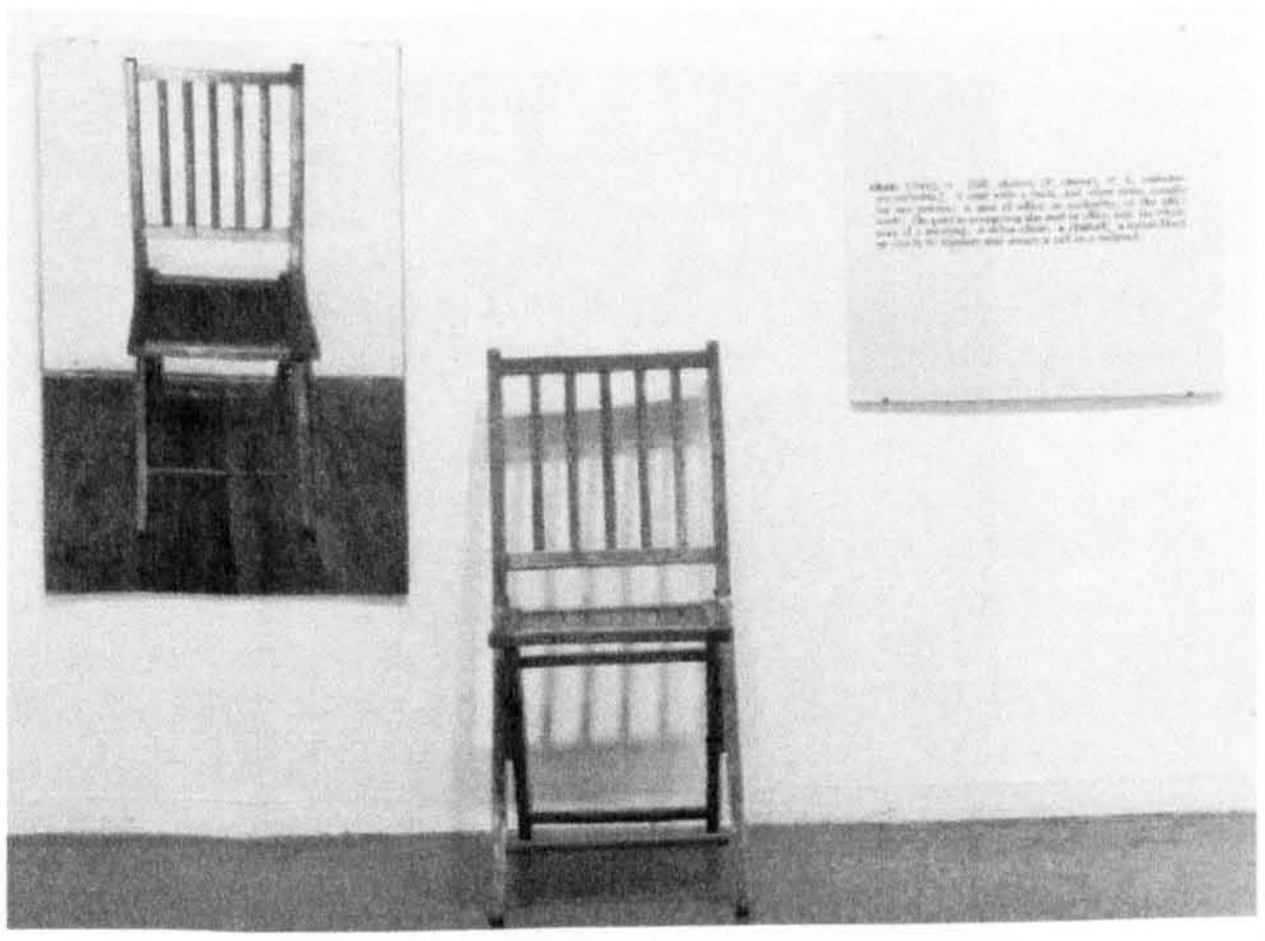


Fig. 1.3. 'One and Three Chairs' 1965 Joseph Kosuth (photograph, chair, text)

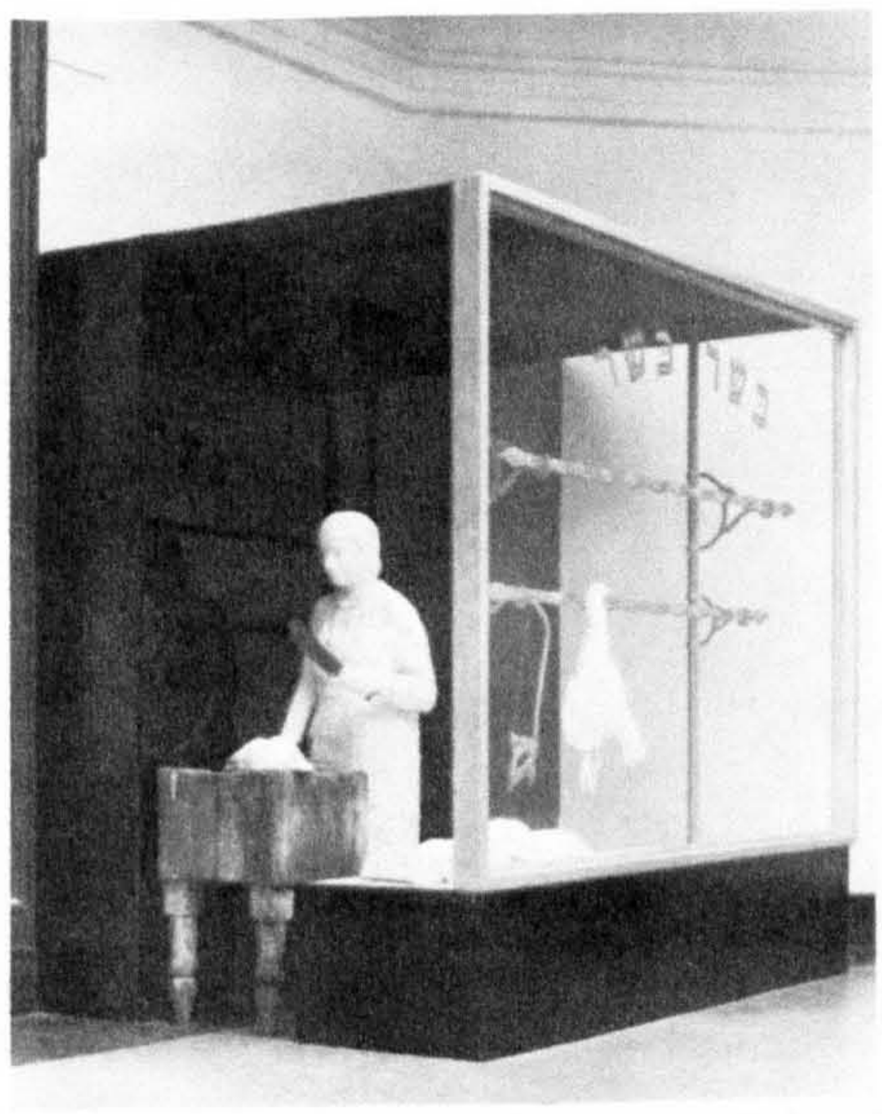


Fig. 1.4. 'The Butcher's Shop' 1965 George Segal
(plaster, wood, vinyl, metal and Plexiglas, c. 7' 10" x 8' 4" x 48")



Fig. 1.5. 'Roxy's' 1961 Ed Kienholz (various found objects, dimensions vary)



Fig. 1.6. 'Angel of Accord' 1986 Christian Boltanski
(copper, feathers, projector, metal base, dimensions vary)

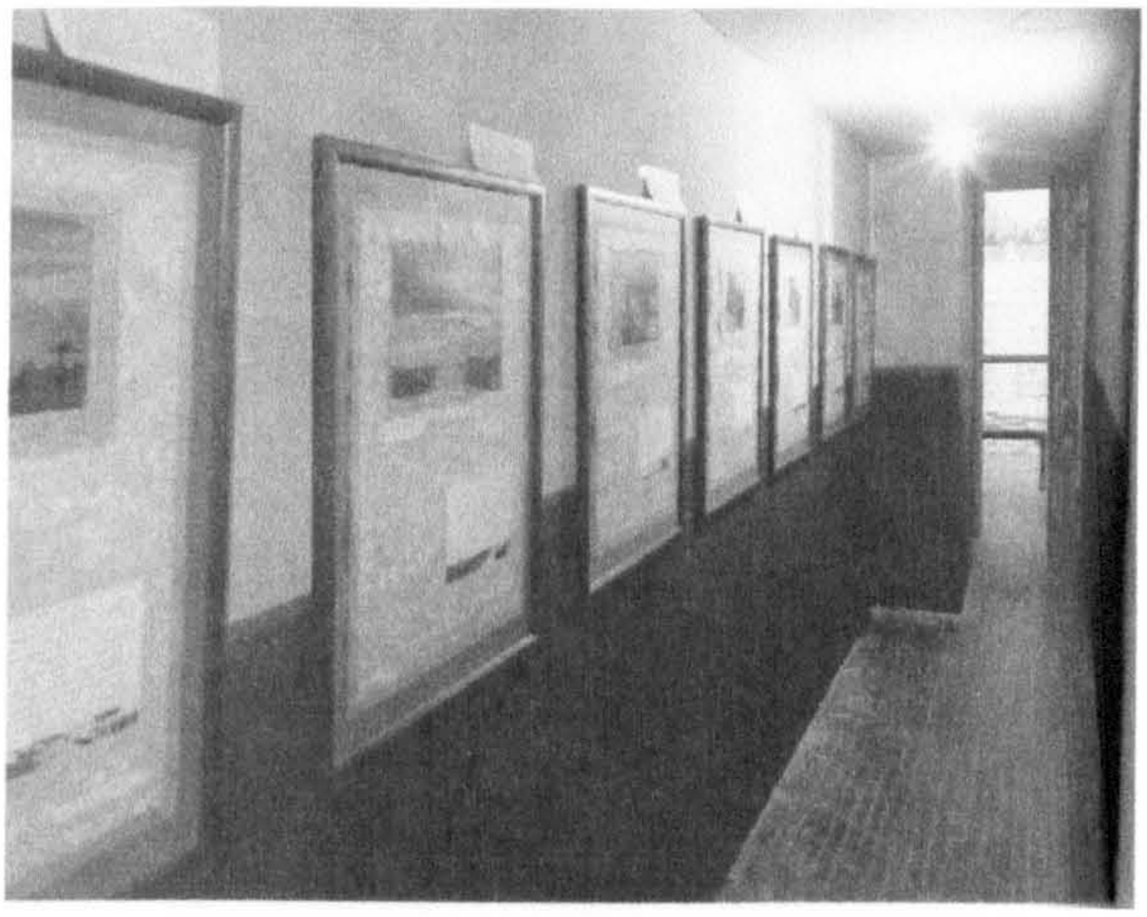


Fig. 1.7. 'My Mother's Life II' (detail from the installation 'He Lost His Mind, Undressed, Ran Away Naked') 1989 Ilya Kabakov (frames, photographs, text, various objects, dimensions vary)



Fig. 1.8. André Malraux with the illustrations for 'La Musée Imaginaire' 1967
(Photo: Paris Match/Jarnoux)

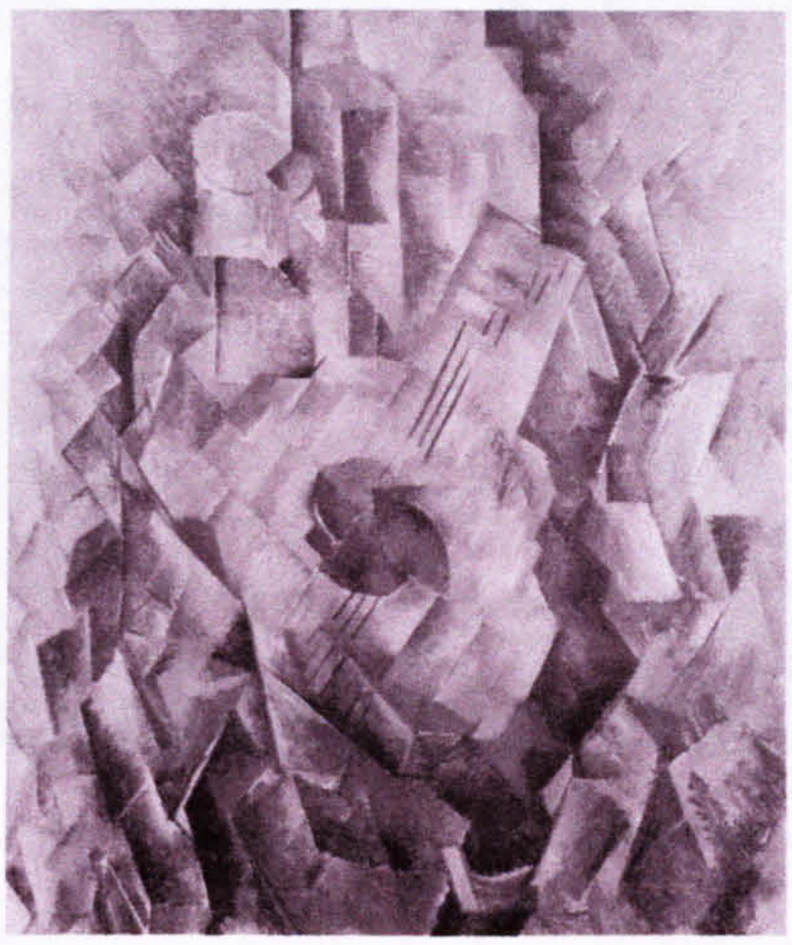


Fig. 1.9. 'The Mandolin' 1910 Georges Braque (oil on canvas, c. 28" x 23")

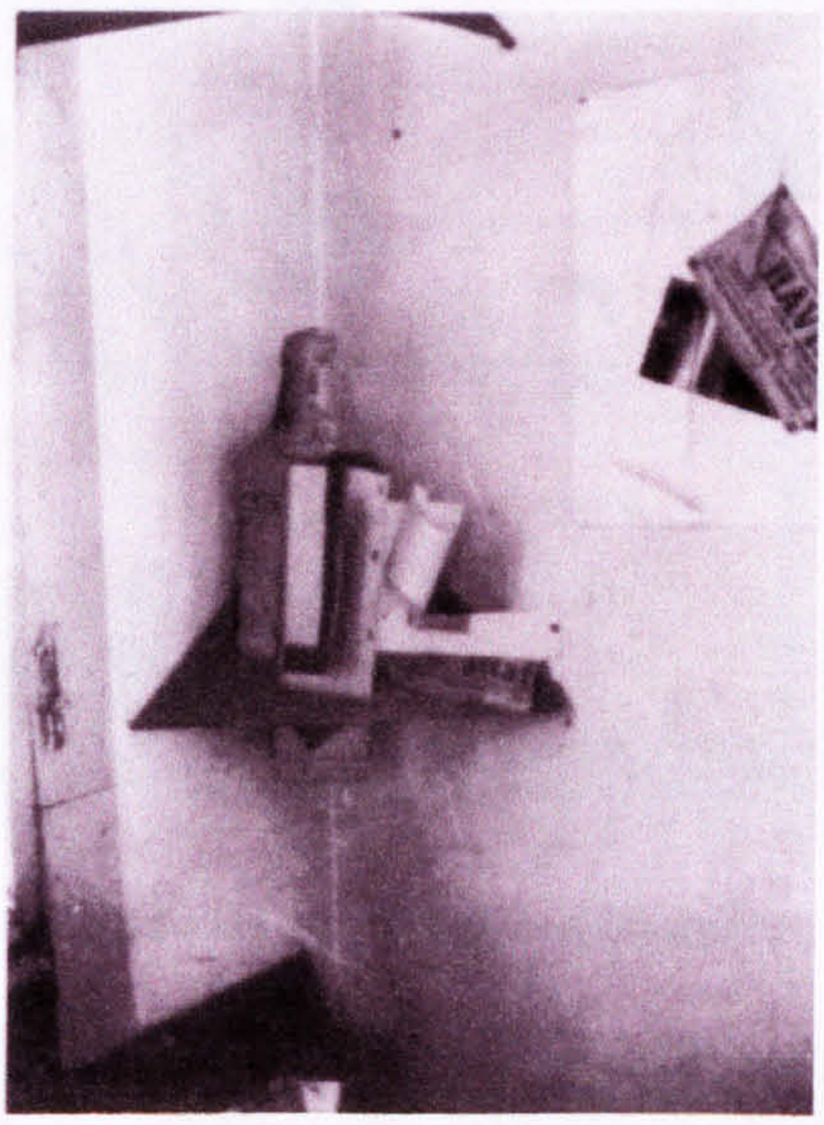


Fig. 1.10. 'Untitled' (wall-relief construction in Braque's studio at Hotel Roma, Paris)
1914 Georges Braque (card, paper, newspaper)

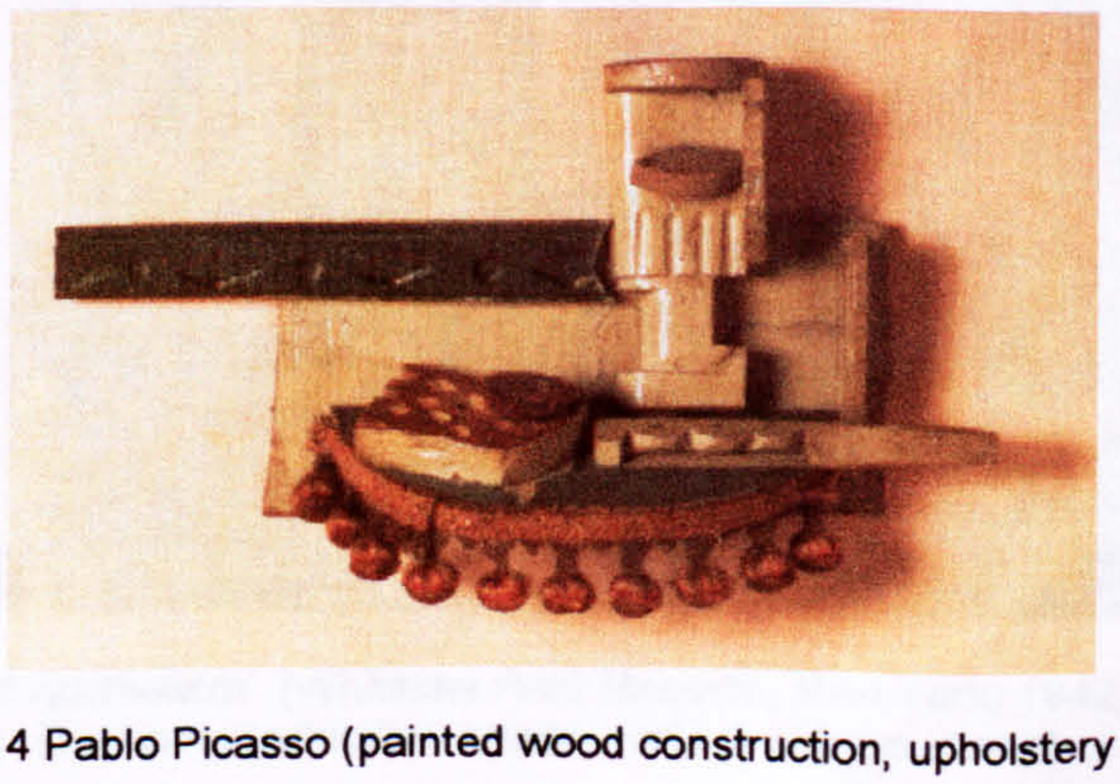


Fig. 1.11. 'Still Life' 1914 Pablo Picasso (painted wood construction, upholstery fringe, 10" x 8" x 3.5")



Fig. 1.12. 'Fountain' 1917 Marcel Duchamp (ready-made, 24.5" x 14" x 19.5")



Fig. 1.13. 'Box in a Valise' (Series E) 1963 Marcel Duchamp (box with 68 objects)

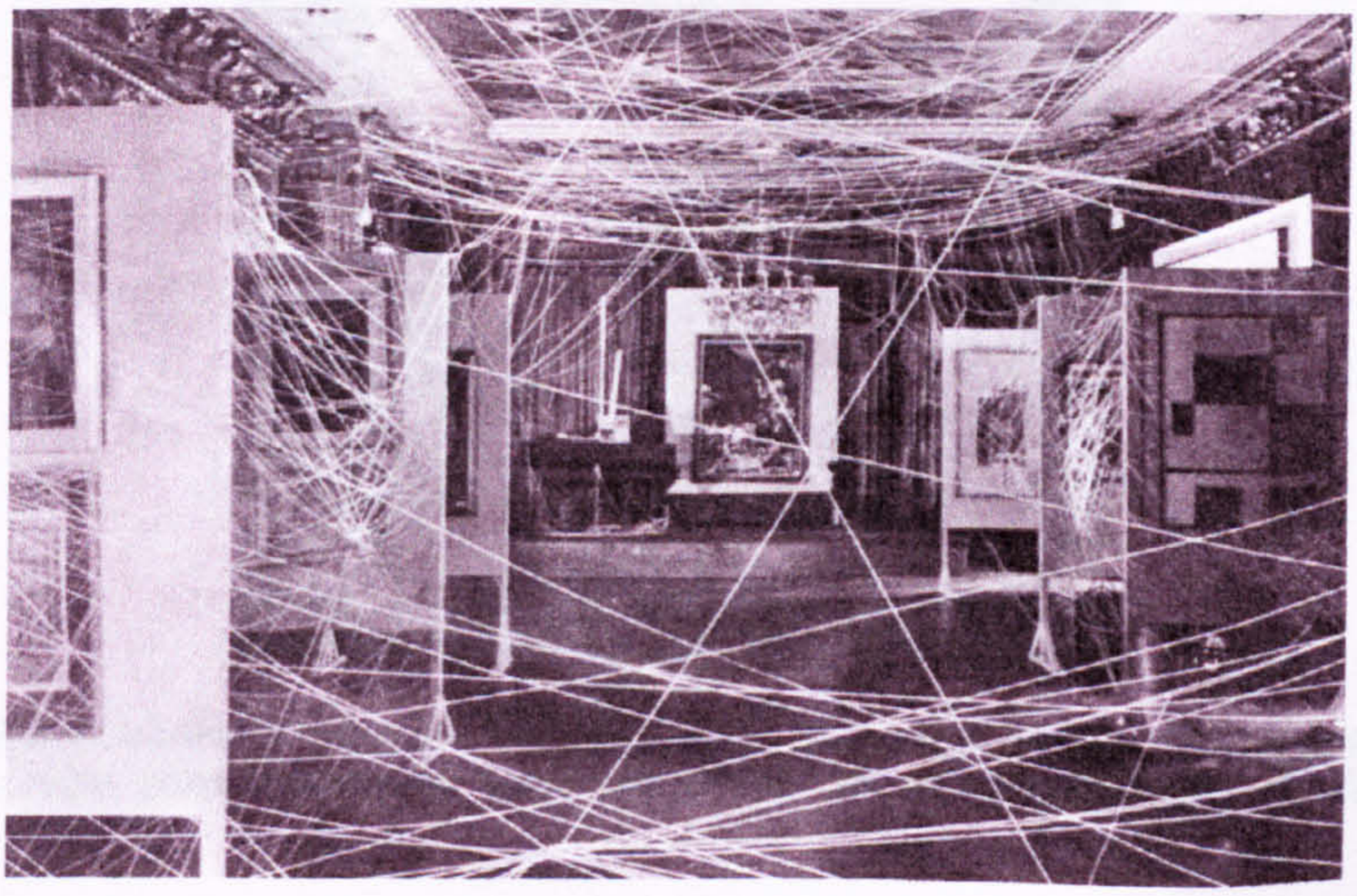


Fig. 1.14. 'First Papers of Surrealism' (Whitelaw Reid Mansion, New York) 1942 André Breton & Marcel Duchamp (exhibition space, various objects, string)

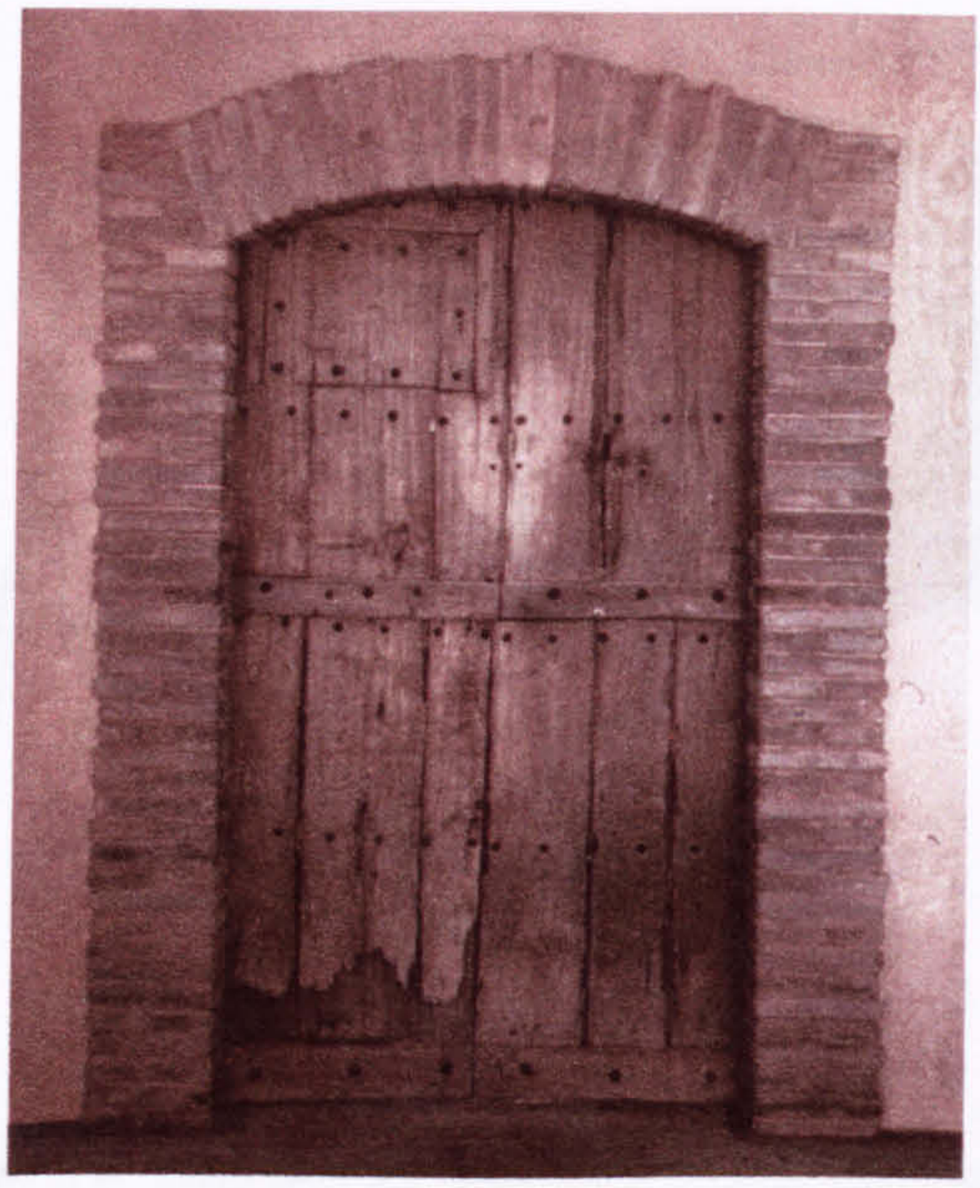


Fig. 1.15. 'Etant Donnés: 1st La chute d'eau 2nd Le gaz d'éclairage' ('Given that: 1st The waterfall, 2nd The Illuminating Gas') 1946 – 1966 (Philadelphia Museum of Art) Marcel Duchamp (old wooden door, brick frame, whole installation space c. 8'h x 6'w x 10'd)

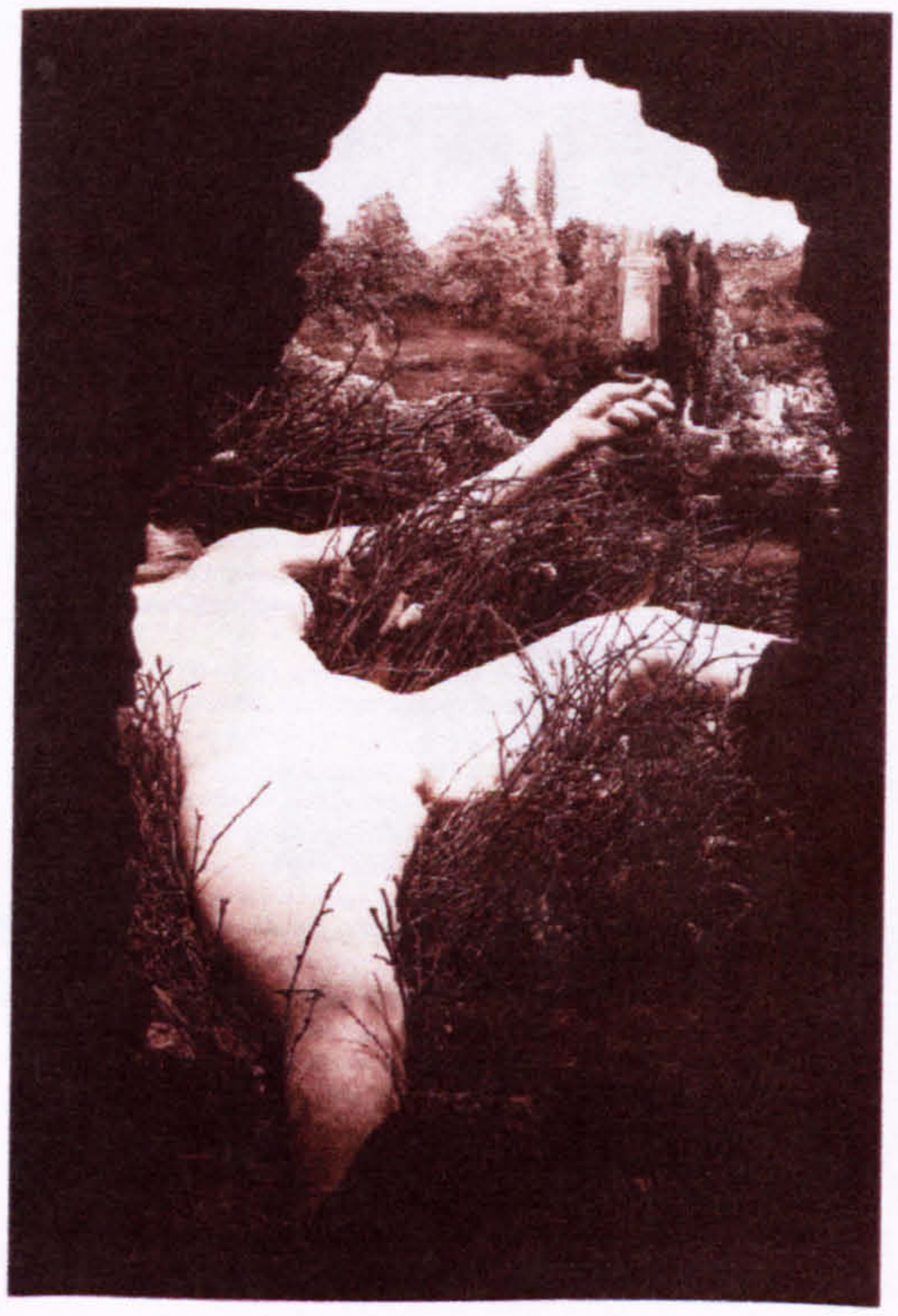


Fig. 1.16. 'Etant Donnés: 1st La chute d'eau 2nd Le gaz d'éclairage' 1946 – 1966 Marcel Duchamp (tableau, table, grass, mannequin, landscape photograph, gas lamp, 'mechanical waterfall')

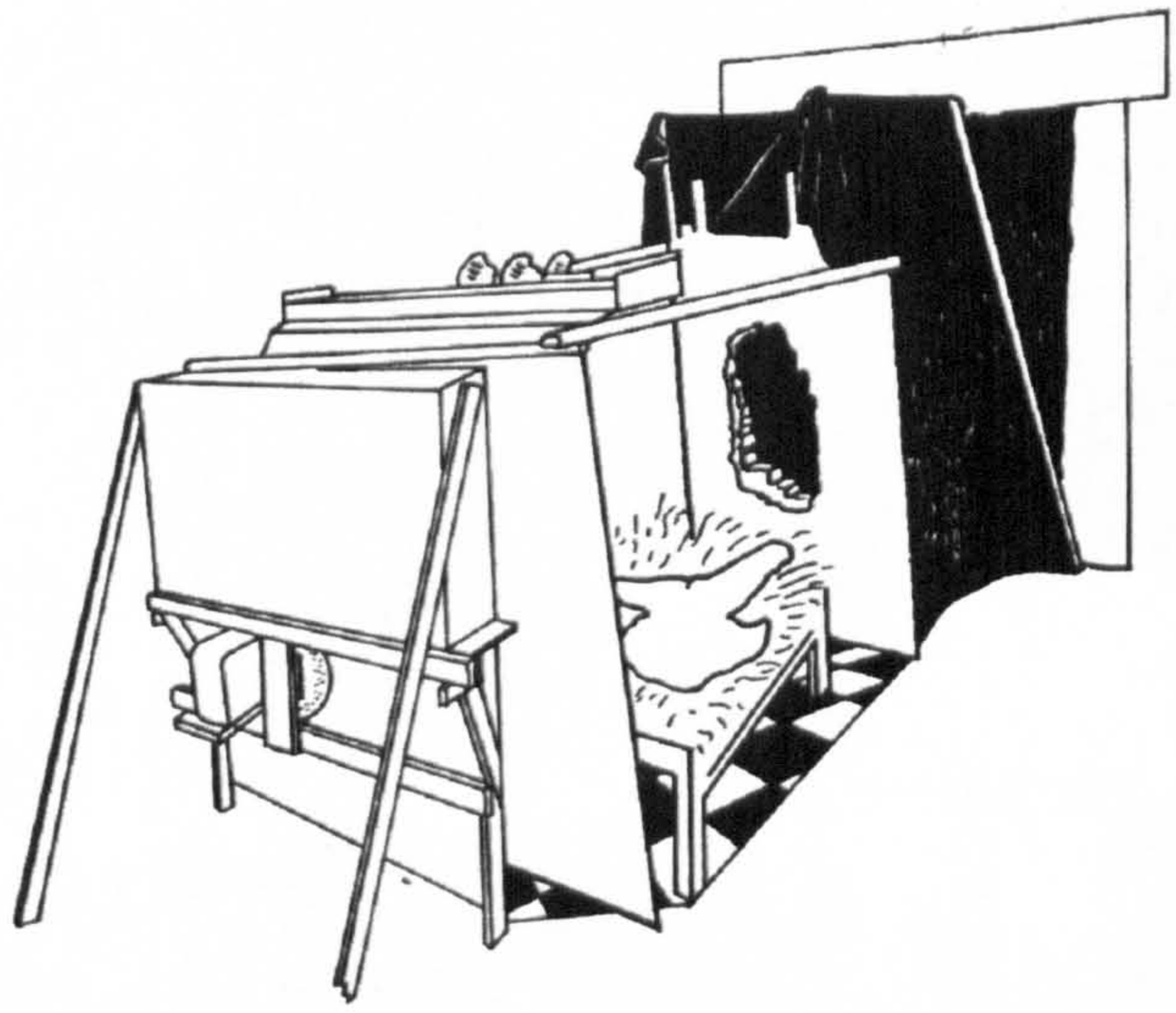


Fig. 1.17. Schematic drawing of 'Etant Donnés' (from Juan Antonio Ramirez 1993 p. 204 'Duchamp: Love and Death Even' Reaktion)

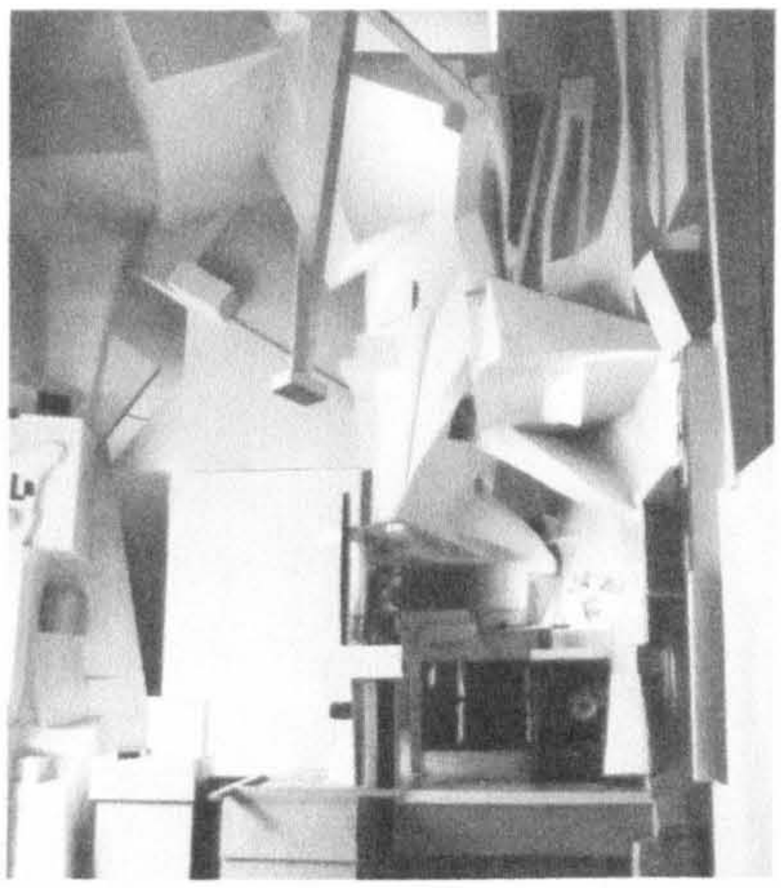


Fig. 1.18. 'Merzbau' 1923 – 1943 Kurt Schwitters (painted wood, card, found objects, house interior Waldhausenstrasse 5, Hanover)

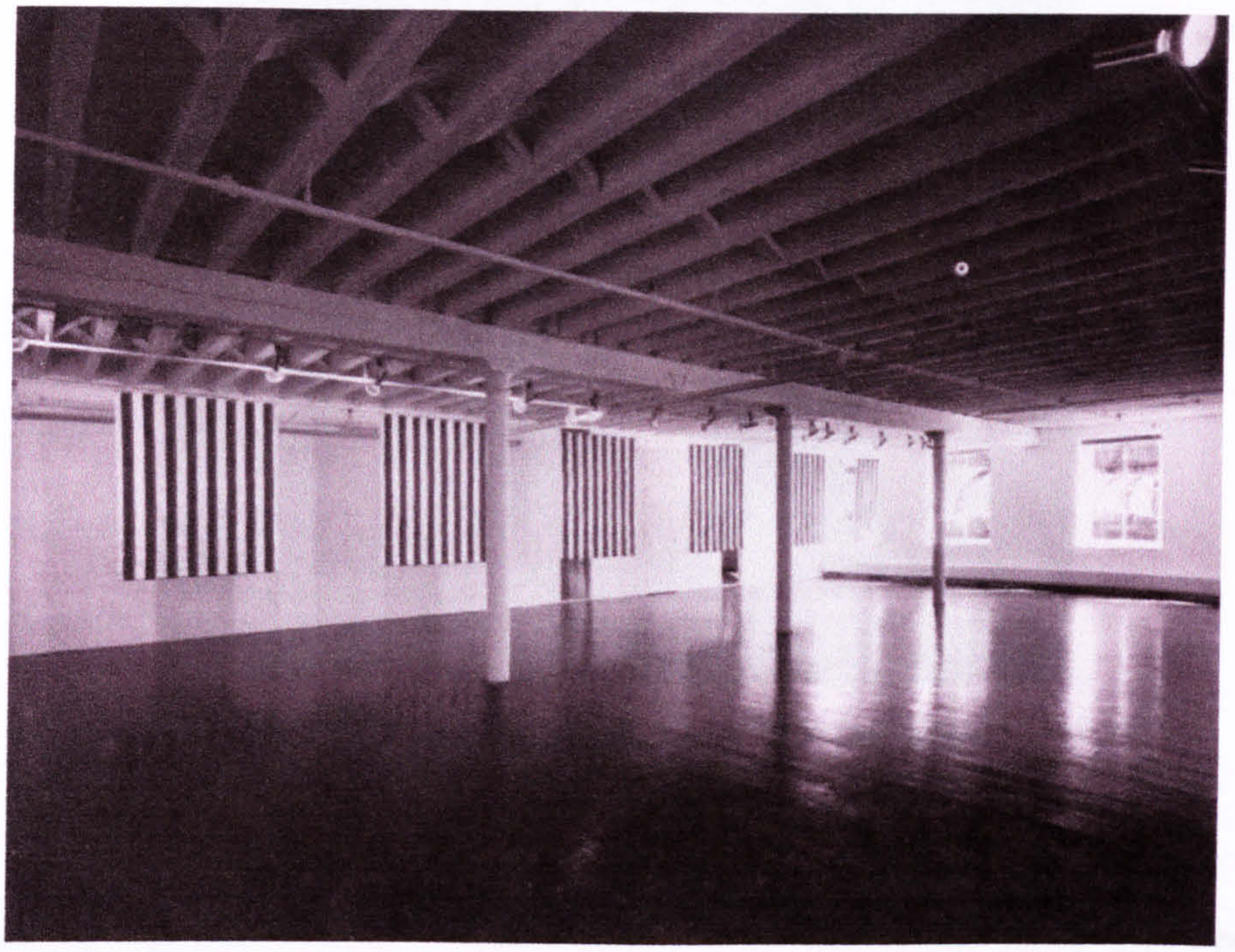


Fig. 1.19. 'Within and Beyond the Frame' (Leo Castelli Gallery, New York) October – November 1973
Daniel Buren (190' long row of nineteen grey-and-white striped canvases)

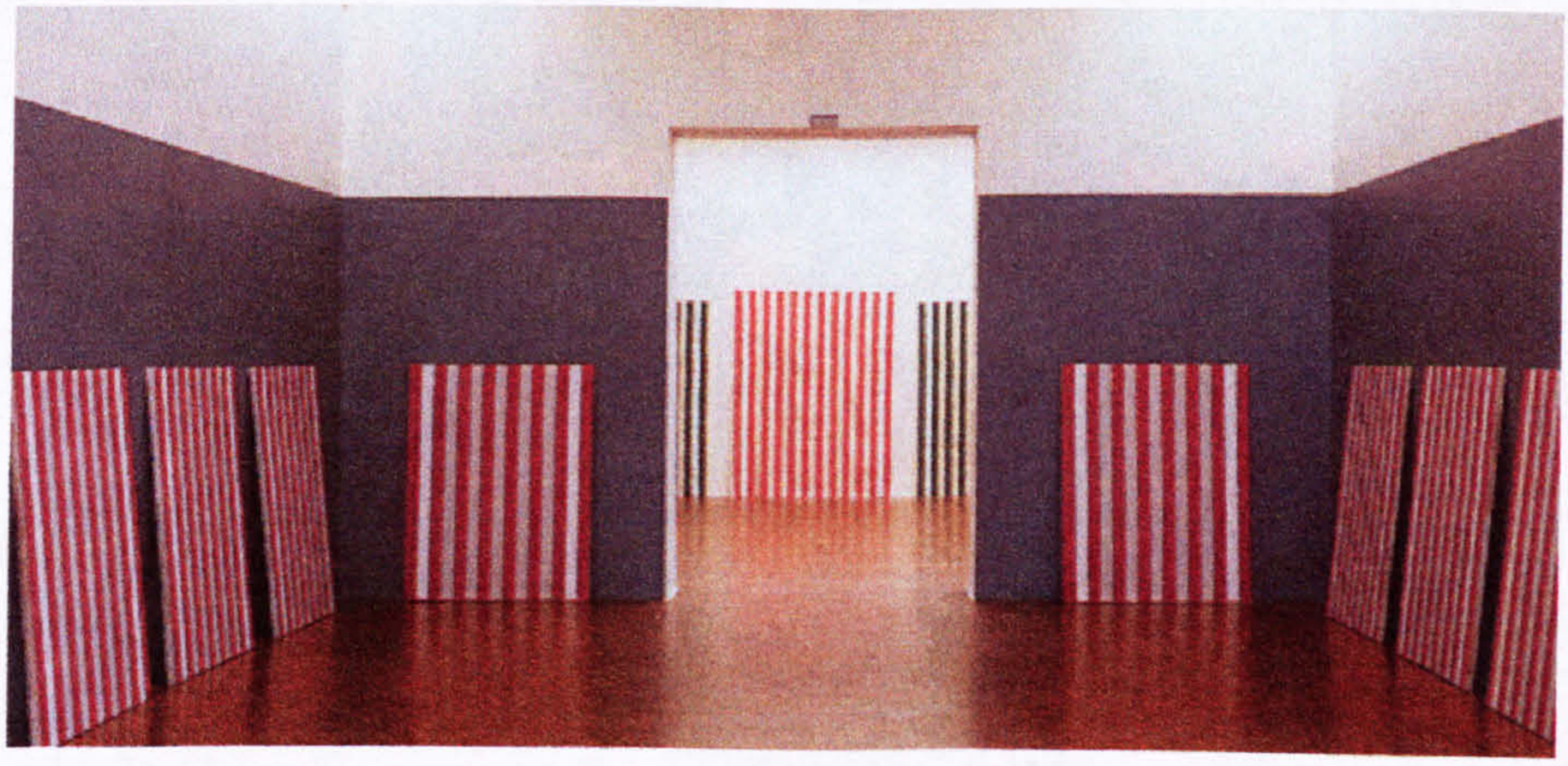


Fig. 1.20. '120 peintures pour 15 tableaux' 1967 – 1981 Daniel Buren
(15 striped canvases, wood, paint, dimensions vary)

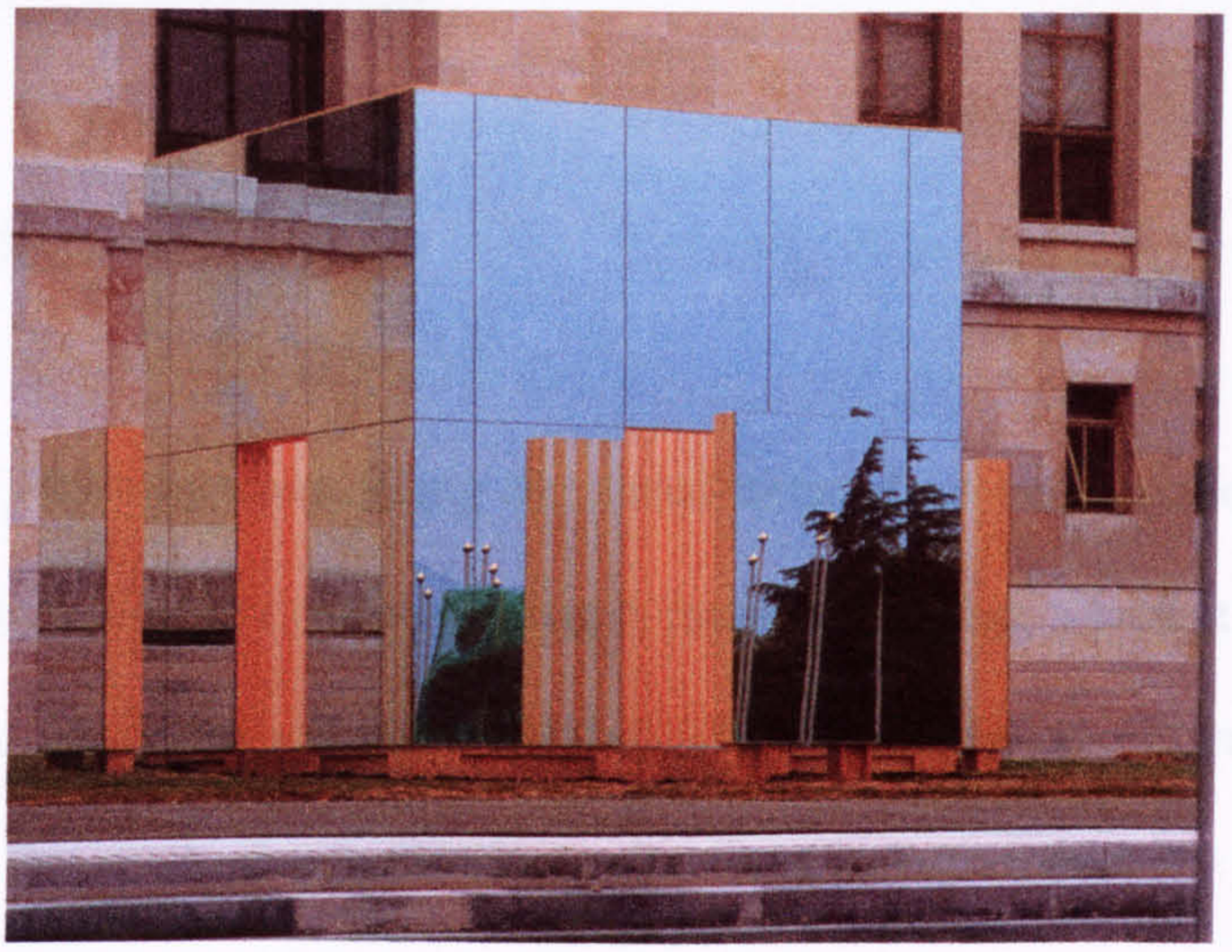


Fig. 1.21. 'Cabane Éclatée aux Mirroirs' 2000 Daniel Buren
(work in progress, wood, mirrors, paint, awning, artificial light c. 11.5' x 11.5' x 11.5')

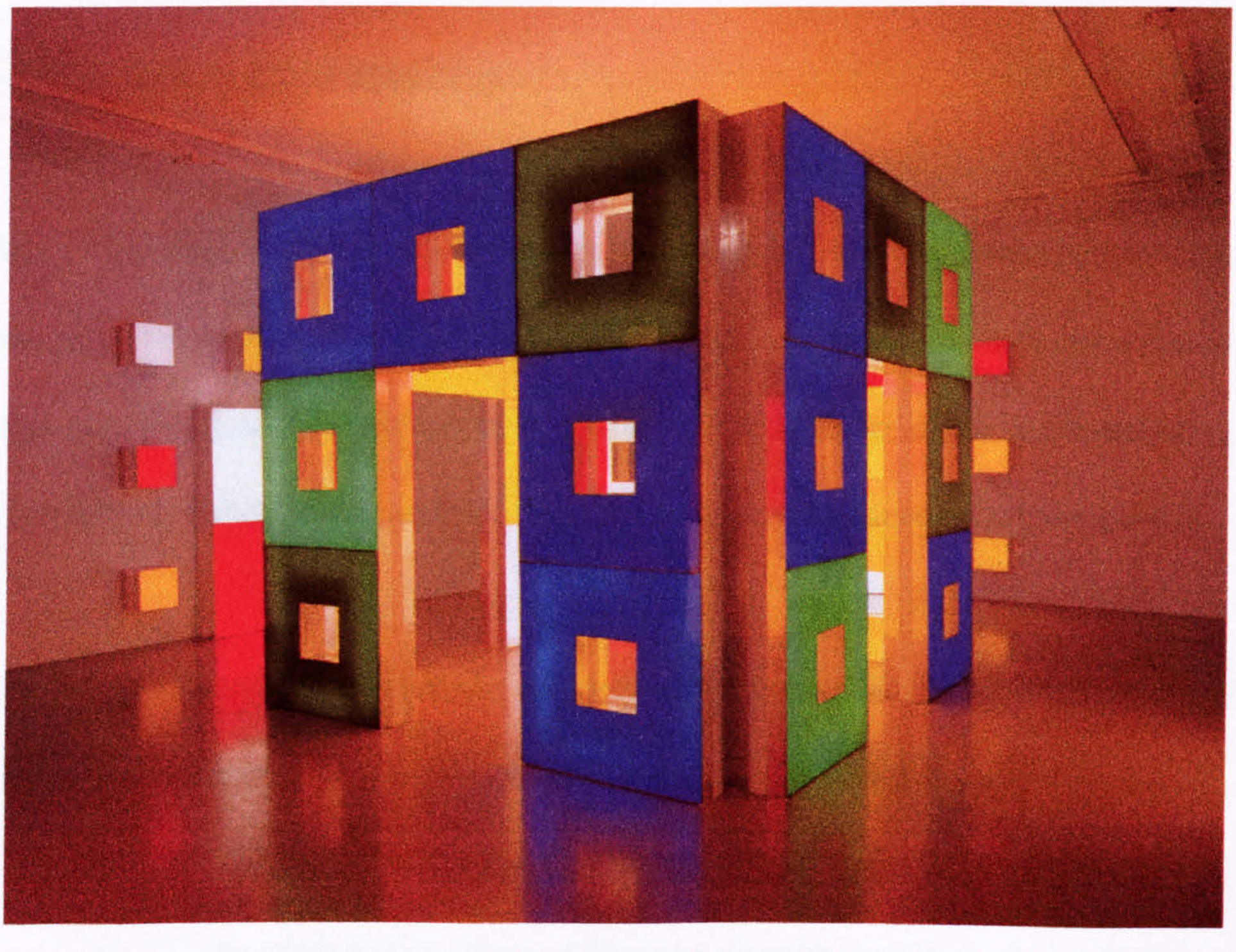


Fig. 1.22. ' La Cabane Éclatée aux Caissons Lumineux Colorés' 2000 Daniel Buren
(wood, aluminium, white fluorescent tubes, coloured transparent plastic materials, white self-adhesive vinyl, artificial light, c. 10' x 10')

CHAPTER TWO: Methodology

2.1. Introduction.

This chapter starts by considering the stated aims of an investigation into art practice and then considering the various research methods through which it can be made. The methods used are described and discussed. The role of the practitioner as researcher as proposed by Donald A. Schön (1983), is described and discussed.

Seven art practices were studied in the research.

2.2. The aims of the investigation

One of the aims of this research was to find out how and why some painters have felt it necessary to question and reflect upon their practices and move into more installational-type art practices. In addition this researcher wanted to make a contribution to this relatively new area of research by organising the investigation into case studies.

The aims of the investigation as originally approved by the Research Degrees Committee were as follows:

1. To identify what is meant by the frame in contemporary art.
2. To identify the effect of framing upon the practice of installation art.

3. To establish a theoretical framework which demonstrates how installation art employs architectural space as part of its evolution.

4. To develop a taxonomy of notions arising from the relationship between the work and the frame.

5. To add to the debate about the frame in contemporary art.

2.3. Changes in research aims as a result of the investigation.

Diverse approaches to the notion of the frame formed a key feature of the initial research and the definition of the term was expanded during the investigation. Through reflection each respondent was seen to 'frame' his or her 'situation' (Schön, D. 1983). Through this reflection each respondent considered the perceived physical and conceptual frames. These reflections upon the practices and the art works being produced occurred to such an extent that more data than anticipated became available. The relationship between these reflections and their effects upon the practices and artworks became the focus of the investigation. These reflections provided rich sources for insight into creative art practices and the art being produced.

The initial aims were found to be difficult to achieve. As discussed in chapters three to nine it was found that the respondents were less concerned with framing than with 'unframing' i.e. not imposing preconceived limits on artistic thought and artworks.

The respondents were immersed in intuitive and analytical questioning of their art, its conceptual and physical framework and the conceptual boundaries around the practices. This questioning gave rise to opportunities to problematise the situation and generated new ideas and artwork. This problematising of the 'whole situation' was found to be more complex than anticipated since the idea of framing was seen in itself as a problem and became immersed in the new art being produced. It was found that each respondent was involved in a far more complex activity than had been anticipated (as discussed in Chapters three to nine), and this made the initial aims too difficult to achieve.

The respondents were found to be moving *from* a certain way of making art, one which was governed by its own conventions (such as the 'figure/ground' relationship in painting as described and discussed by Bois Y-A. (1990, pp. 104-5), *towards* a new way of making art. During the investigation it was found that the respondents were perhaps more concerned with maintaining the exploratory approach than with 'arriving' or with 'solutions'. This process of 'delayed closure' (Getzels, J. W. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1976), provided impetus for new work and involved a great deal of critical engagement by each of the respondents within their respective practices and is further discussed later in the section on Problem Finding and Delayed Closure. The 'movement towards...' and the introduction of new things into the practice led to an approach to making art which had a kind of fragmenting or 'elementarising' effect upon the practice and its products (Bois, Y-A. 1990 pp. 103 – 105). The respondents were engaged with the fragmenting as a result of problem finding and included this process as part of the 'new practice' and

in this sense the practices were seen as fragmentational as opposed to merely fragmented.

The investigation found that the respondents were questioning, probing, problem finding, and focussed upon a practice which revealed these 'questions'; questions that the respondents explored through an engagement with a wider range of materials, equipment, audiences, discourses and a desire to 'undo' perceived notions of boundaries in their practices.

It was found that a detailed investigation into the processes in which the respondents had immersed themselves would be a far more interesting and relevant topic and case studies were seen as the most appropriate research method. The aims were therefore changed to:

1. To identify the features of reflection and problem finding in installational art practices
2. To examine the process of problem reframing and fragmentation within installational art practices
3. To provide insights into the reflective processes in creative art practice
4. To identify notions arising from the reflective process in making installational art
5. To add to the debate about the boundaries of art

2.4. Some differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

According to A. Bryman (1988), there are some key differences between qualitative and quantitative research, which outline the appropriateness of a research method (see Fig. 2.1.). A quantitative researcher either "confirms" or "disproves" a hypothesis that he or she has proposed whereas a qualitative researcher looks, listens and learns about the example being investigated, looking for emergent categories in which to 'ground' theory.

Fig 2.1. Some Differences Between Qualitative and Quantitative Research, (Bryman. A. 1988).

	Quantitative	**Qualitative**
Role of qualitative research	Preparatory	Means of exploration of actor's interpretations
Relationship between researcher and subject	Distant	Close
Researcher's stance in relationship to subject	Outsider	Insider
Relationship between theory/concepts and research	Confirmation	Emergent
Research strategy	Structured	Unstructured
Scope of findings	Nomothetic	Ideographic
Image of social reality	Static and external to individual	Processual and socially constructed by individual
Nature of data	Hard, reliable	Rich, deep

Rawlings, B. (1996), claims that the term 'outsider' is kind of a false distinction because the researcher is still part of the same 'language culture' as the subject of the research which serves to emphasize the importance of the stance of the qualitative researcher in relation to the subject.

2.5. Qualitative research.

It was decided to use qualitative research methods due to the diversity and difference of creative art practice and because this approach revels in the diversity and difference of examples. It was seen as the most appropriate research strategy to identify emergent categories and analyse data. In qualitative research there are opportunities to see 'what people do' and to 'meet' data, witness events, observe processes, probe deeply into the examples, become 'immersed' in the investigation and arrive at unexpected answers. This is preferable to being driven by preconceived hypotheses. In phenomenological research, witnessing and ordering provide the basis of emergent categories and inform the structuring of a taxonomy.

The quantitative researcher either 'confirms' or 'disproves' a 'hypothesis' that s/he has formulated, whereas a qualitative researcher looks, listens and learns about the subject and aims at finding 'emergent' concepts through the 'purposive pattern recognition factor' or 'click' factor which will determine the patterns, similar and different, within the 'things' being looked at (Abu-Risha, M. 1999). This is fundamental to the discovery

of 'grounded theory' which generates new hypotheses rather than tests existing ones (Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. 1968).

According to Mottram, J. (1988) the collection of quantitative data assumes the existence of a clearly formulated hypothesis with predictable variables and inherently stable control. As in Hunter, I. (1992), it was clear from the preliminary research that the variable nature of the working processes, materials and artistic approaches in the examples in this research would have made any quantitative data analysis statistically inappropriate or even invalid.

The statistical nature of quantitative research is inappropriate to this research owing to a number of factors. These factors include:

- the nature of reflection in action in the creative processes of the respondents
- the varying nature of specific artistic activity within any installational practice
- the different types of contexts within which practice manifests itself
- the elements of chance, risk and unpredictability associated with installation art and the creative process as a whole.

However, given these apparent constraints, it was considered that the 'availability' of several practices, collectively termed installational but each with their own individual, idiosyncratic, artistic approach, would provide data for qualitative analysis providing insights into the subject.

2.6. Some problems in analysing qualitative data.

According to Rawlings (1991), one of the biggest problems in qualitative analysis is the 'boredom factor'. This arises through asking so many questions, and obtaining a mass of interview transcripts, that the researcher can become overwhelmed by the sheer volume of the undertaking and, as it has become so familiar, can even become bored by it. The mass of data can also get a bit messy. In her paper 'Analysing Qualitative Data', Rawlings outlines various techniques to solve this problem, all of which involve varying degrees of objectivity and proper management and control of the whole research project. Rawlings goes on to describe how 'content analysis' can solve problems in the analysis stage. This is a form of quantitative analysis where descriptions are looked for in the data collected, and the frequency of key words counted. In this research, the protocol of the data collection stage itself provided a structure for data analysis and helped with the recognition of emergent categories.

People do not always tell the truth and the data collected in the investigation were triangulated with what other people had said about the examples in order to add validity to the research. According to Bryman, A. (1988), the scope of the findings in quantitative research is nomothetic in that it provides the 'law' and can be generalised to a wider field, whereas in qualitative research the scope is limited since the findings can not be generalised because of the 'softness' of the evidence. However, Rawlings, B. (1992), argues that in practice this kind of research is generalised to the wider field

because of its 'real life' contexts, its insights into the subject matter and its richness of description.

2.7. Unstructured method.

Sapsford, R. J. and Jupp, V. (1996) claim that a less rigid, or less structured method of investigation and data collection will minimise the 'procedural reactivity' which more structured methods will inevitable entail. In order to get at 'the truth' of any situation being explored, it is necessary for the subject being investigated to feel 'at home' to enable the researcher to collect and represent 'real opinions'. The reasons largely focus upon the doubts many social scientists have had about the validity of highly structured, and often as a result, more intrusive methods. Highly structured methods can lead to respondents withdrawing from wanting to talk about their situation and offering insights into it. Sapsford, R. J. and Jupp, V. (1996) said:

> "Many social scientists have long held doubts about the validity of highly structured methods of social investigation and data collection. The attempt to study the attitudes, beliefs and perceptions of respondents using artificial, unnaturalistic procedures is held to entail an unacceptably high degree of reactivity, no matter how well it is done. And to reduce what the respondent says in reply to a question to one of a set of predetermined answer categories is unnecessarily constraining of the respondent who may feel that his or her 'real' opinions have not been correctly represented. Clearly, office coding of responses to open ended

questions goes some way to meeting these criticisms, but there still remains the artificiality of structured methods of data collection and the *procedural reactivity* that such methods entail. Procedural reactivity means that the very artificiality of highly structured methods leads to the respondent withdrawing from the situations in which they normally act" (Sapsford, R. J. and Jupp, V. 1996, p. 111).

Clearly, part of the problem inherent in a highly structured method which processes data into predetermined categories may well prove a preconceived theory by 'reduction' but fails to address the 'real' situation of 'complexity' on the ground, which can lead to a distorted representation of this complex reality. According to Langrish (1993), complexity can be messy but that does not mean variety cannot be fun! He suggests that the "biological approach [to research] glorifies diversity" and that a lot of fun can be derived from discovering diversity and identifying patterns within that diversity. Langrish goes on to say "in the biological approach, randomness is subjected to selection either 'natural' (itself partly random) or 'artificial' i.e. guided by human choice" (1993). This investigation into the examples of art practice, and the reflective processes within and across those practices, focussed upon how the apparent randomness of these reflections is subject to selection. The emergent pattern can form a 'theory' or model of what is happening rather than the other way around as can be experienced with categorisation of data into predetermined hypotheses.

2.8. The practitioner as researcher.

The practitioner as researcher model proposed by Schön, D. (1983), adapted for the purposes of this research to gain insights into 'real life situations', aims to provide an intuitive and artistic approach in which the problem is discovered and defined by trying out a variety of possible solutions (Hunter, I. 1992). In this research the researcher was also a practising artist himself and familiar with the terminology of this subject area. He was also one of the respondents included in the research. The research included respondents who had been practising painters but who had latterly moved into the field of installation art practice. This 'targeting' of the research was seen as the best way of achieving the aims of the research and not least because this field is the "source of my freshest examples" (Schön, D. 1983 p. 243).

The practitioner as researcher approach, as adopted by Judith Mottram (1988), studied Fine Art students engaged in studio art practices. Mottram's study was carried out under the relatively stable conditions of the art school and was regulated by timetables and assessment procedures. There was ready access to respondents since all the subjects of the investigation were students at the art school.

The practitioner as researcher approach adopted by Ian Hunter (1992), studied himself and was carried out under less stable conditions such as different outdoor sites and locations where he was working on projects.

The practitioner as researcher approach adopted in this investigation studied respondents who are professional artists (of whom one of the respondents is the researcher), and with similar variable conditions (such as location, context etc.), as in Ian Hunter's investigation.

2.9. Problem finding and delayed closure.

In their research into artistic practice, Getzels, J. W. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1976), suggest that there are five stages observable in an intuitive problem finding approach in which the practitioner:

1. experiences conflict in perception, emotion or thought.
2. formulates the problem as a means of articulating a previously unarticulated conflict.
3. sets about expressing the problem in a visual form.
4. leading to restoration of the conflict in symbolic form.
5. and finally achieves new emotional and cognitive perspective.

In this way finding a 'problem' leads to a new 'situation' this new situation forms part of the new 'perspective' and finally a part of new artwork. Maintaining this problem within the 'new situation' i.e. keeping open the problem finding and, therefore, the problem solving process provides impetus for new work. This is 'delayed closure' as a strategy in art practices, (Getzels J. W. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1976).

The researcher in this investigation found that problem finding and delayed closure formed a key part of the respondents' practices. It gave rise to a shift in the focus of the investigation and the research then focussed less upon the limits of practice but upon how the respondents were actually 'opening up' their practices by the introduction of new things to it. This was as a result of the respondents' experiences of "conflict in perception" (Getzels J. W. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1976). The artists in the case studies reflected on what their practices consisted of and this conflicted with how they wanted them to be. The introduction of new things alongside existing things multiplied and complicated the processes the artists in the case studies were involved in, leading to a more fragmentational approach as described and discussed in chapters three to nine. Processes of reflection, problem finding and delayed closure manifested themselves visually within the art practices of each respondent. The relationship between respondents' problem finding and how each respondent set about expressing the problem in a visual form provided the data and structure necessary for the investigation to achieve its aims.

2.10. Case studies.

2.10.1. Introduction.

Case studies "entail multiple methods – interviews, observations, document analysis, even surveys... over long periods of time" (Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. 1999). Case studies were seen as the appropriate method in this research, providing

opportunities to find out 'what people do' and to 'meet' data, witness events, observe processes, probe deeply into the examples, to become 'immersed' in the investigation and arrive at unexpected answers. Case studies "take the reader into the setting with a vividness and detail not typically present in more analytic reporting formats" (Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. 1999). According to Rawlings, B. (1998), "such work cannot be generalised (although in practice it often is), because the small number of cases studied might be idiosyncratic". However, even though the case studies cannot be verified in a generalised sense, Rawlings (1998), goes on to say that this research can "lead to major new insights into subject matter, producing work which is rich in description". This researcher would add that case studies are not only providers of rich description but also rich, explanatory detail.

According to Yin, R. K. (1989):

> "In general, case studies are the preferred strategy when "how" and "why" questions are being posed, when the investigator has little or no control over the events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context" Yin, R. K. (1989, p.13)

Yin, R. K. (1984) also claimed that 'how and why' questions are more likely to reveal explanations and are of more use in case studies, histories and experiments, as the preferred research strategy:

> "This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies of incidence" (Yin, R. K. 1984, pp. 18-19).

This seemed to be of particular importance since the research aimed to gain greater understanding of the creative work and processes of the respondents and this meant tracing back over time, through each respondent's account of their involvement with their art to the present day practice.

Below is Yin's table showing the relevant situations for different research strategies.

Fig. 2.2. Relevant Situations for Different Research Strategies (Yin, R. K. 1984).

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what*, where, how many, how much	No	Yes
Archival Analysis	Who, what*, where, how many, how much	No	Yes/No
History	How, why	No	No
Case Study	How, why	No	Yes

* What questions, when asked as part of an exploratory study, pertain to all strategies.

There is a great deal of overlap between research methods; for example, the case study relies upon many of the same techniques as a 'history' but with:

> "Two added sources of evidence not normally included in the historian's repertoire: direct observation and systematic interviewing" (Yin, R. K. (1984).

Yin went on to say:

> "but we can also identify some situations in which a specific method has a distinct advantage. For the case study, this is when: a 'how' or 'why' question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control" (Yin, R. K. 1984, pp.18-19).

Yin, R. K. also claimed that case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research and that there are at least four different applications of the case study as the preferred research method. He suggests that the most important application is to *explain* the "causal links in real-life interventions that are too complex for the survey or experimental strategies." The second application "is to *describe* the real-life context in which the intervention has occurred." Thirdly he claims that an "evaluation can benefit, again in a descriptive mode, from an illustrative case study of the intervention itself." Fourthly, "the case study strategy may be used to explore those situations in which the intervention being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes" (Yin, R. K. 1989 p. 25). In this research the 'intervention', as Yin describes it, is the actions or behaviour of each artist observed in each case study.

According to Langrish, J. (1993), there are two research traditions or approaches to research. These two approaches or 'world views' are the 'physics' approach and the 'biological' approach. The former looks for underlying principles or laws and seeks to

formulate and apply mathematical equations and the latter revels in diversity and difference and seeks out taxonomies.

He suggested that case studies can be compared with biological studies in that observations can be made in case studies as to the survival strategy of each 'animal' being investigated. In this study, each artist *and* their art practice was taken as the 'animal' to be investigated: to observe and note the different and similar ways the respondents have adapted and changed their practices, according to circumstances and new knowledge of their environment, to ensure the survival and flourishing of the art practice. This is analogous to studying animals and their behaviour.

Langrish, J. (1993) outlined a problem in methodological approach, which is to do with identification of the 'system boundary'. This is where one 'thing' ends and another 'thing' begins. Langrish, J. wrote:

> "The system boundary of a rat or an apple tree presents few problems. Both rats and trees take in materials from their environment and expel other materials, but it's pretty obvious where the rat ends and the environment begins" (Langrish, J. 1993 p. 3).

In a sense the comparison of art practices to one another should present no greater problems in defining the system boundaries but the plethora of available boundaries within such 'systems' became the focus of the study. It is worth noting that the system boundary and the respondents' approach to their 'perceived system boundary' or

'model' of their practice was the focus of a great deal of the change and adaptation referred to previously. Each respondent had developed a reflective conversation with his or her own situation and its 'system boundary' (Schön, D. 1983). The reformation of a new situation with new boundaries arose out of the competition of ideas within these conversations and in this way it was 'biological'.

System boundaries became a major factor not so much in determining a methodological approach to case studies but in describing and explaining the similar and different ways in which the art practices in this research changed. The changes in practices of the artists in the case studies are discussed in chapter ten.

One of the methods of this research was to observe variety and note how ideas compete for survival. The biological approach to case studies was seen as most appropriate since it emphasises the existence of variety, competition, and evolution. There was also a fun factor in discovering variety and the recognition of patterns.

This research was exploratory in its intentions and careful design, direction and selection of the examples ensured a meaningful comparison and fruitful pattern recognition. Pattern recognition and organisation were the basis for the taxonomy.

2.10.2. Explicating the storyline.

Strauss and Corbin (1990, p. 119) provide a thorough account of the decisions and choices facing the researcher when conceptualising a descriptive story about the central phenomenon of the study. This researcher conceptualised seven descriptive stories in the case studies. Difficulties arose due to the amount of data to be sorted through before a story emerged (and everything seemed equally important), but an appropriate line of questioning during the interviews helped in this situation.

2.10.3. Selection of case studies.

The seven examples were selected after referring to Langrish, J. (1993), and the 'Cor! Look at that!' method of selection. He said:

"A lot of fun and interest can be obtained from picking unusual examples. The 'representative' can be boring; the unusual can offer surprise and perhaps challenge the conventional wisdom. An example of this approach is in 'The Role of Design in Museum Management' (Maria Brunelli, 1992). The author was interested in designers doing more than responding to a brief. An exploratory study showed that most museums had little idea of what a designer could do but some detective work led to six cases of designers doing more than responding to a brief. These cases were far from representational but allowed the claim that where a senior person was aware of design and where there was an organisational

> structure to allow design to contribute then some interesting things could happen" (Langrish, J. 1993 p. 8).

The selected examples were all seen (by this researcher), to be active and making interesting work. They were all within easy reach and were all of a certain 'type', i.e. each was involved in installational-type work and in a dynamic situation with their art and art practice which involved the kind of problem finding discussed earlier in this chapter.

During the initial investigation it was found that the respondents 'fitted' the requirements of the study in that they were all painters who had moved into installation art. They each had their own individual, idiosyncratic, artistic approach (interesting enough to prompt a 'Cor!' response), and would provide enough data for analysis.

The artists are: (1) Sheffield-based collaborative artist, Steve Dutton; (2) Manchester-based artist, Dave Mackintosh; (3) Liverpool-based artist, Geoff Molyneux; (4) Liverpool-based artist, Duncan Mountford; (5) Manchester-based artist, Martell Linsdell; (6) Liverpool-based artist (and this researcher), Alec Shepley; and (7) Liverpool-based artist, Alison Jones. Artists' backgrounds and further information (i.e. demographic data, types of circumstances, source of income, art school training, collaborative or 'sole practice'), will be found in chapters three to nine.

2.11. Data collection and the semi-structured interview.

According to Rawlings, B. (1998):

> "they [unstructured/semi-structured interviews] enable the researcher to collect data which is far less contaminated by the interviewer's assumptions and presuppositions; the respondents are able to put their stories across in their own way, and can choose how to tell them. In that way, unstructured interviews are considered to have a high degree of validity".

Rawlings here is comparing the unstructured/semi-structured interview with the highly structured interview, designed for statistical information.

The semi-structured research interview was selected as an appropriate method (as opposed to structured or unstructured types), because it was seen as the most effective way of encouraging the respondents to 'open up' and talk about their work, values and experiences (Rawlings, B. 1998). This method, Rawlings suggests (1998), would lead to a more probing, deep and revealing interview, one whereby the interviewer and interviewee are listening to one another in a more interactive, natural and dynamic way.

It was the intention of the research to gain broader and deeper understanding of the subject; the semi-structured interview encourages respondents to elaborate on their answers and allows the researcher to probe more deeply into the various aspects of the

subject. The interviewer has more control over the interview but the respondent controls the answers and can direct talk into areas that he or she feels to be more important. There is an additional benefit in that the choice of respondent usually depends on those who are willing and appropriate.

Advantages, disadvantages and approaches to different types of research interviews are further outlined by Rawlings, one such disadvantage (of semi/unstructured interviewing), is that only a small number of interviews can take place because they can last so long. However, there is a large amount of information that can be acquired from the interview transcript and the feedback if the researcher knows how to extract it in the data analysis stages.

It could be argued that it is very difficult to compare directly the results of interviews because each interview is unique but in this research a guiding set of questions was used and this provided structure for comparison and analysis.

According to Rawlings, (1998), there are advantages to this type of semi-structured interview. These include: the promotion of an informal and relaxed atmosphere; the ability of the interviewer to pursue further lines of inquiry opened up through the respondent elaborating on a subject of importance to them; and the obtaining of accurate information about the respondents' creative work, ideas, attitudes, values and opinions.

According to Sapsford, R. J. & Jupp, V. (1996):

> "The face to face interviews in a free format: these are conducted, approximately, like natural conversations between two people. They are often tape-recorded in full for later analysis; although the interviewer may take continuous and contemporaneous notes, this is difficult to do while concentrating on the management of the interview. Note taking can also be more obtrusive than tape-recording. Although 'naturalistic', interviews such as these are managed to a large extent by the interviewer, who sets the agenda of the questions".

There are more opportunities to take advantage of certain points of interest and the interviewer:

> "probes more deeply into issues of interest with supplementary questions and records the answers and the discussion. They do not use standardised schedules but the interviewer will use a list of topics even if the wording of specific questions is not standardised" (Sapsford, R. J. and Jupp, V. 1996 pp. 94-95).

2.11.1. 'Checking' the interviewing process.

Yin's advice (1984) is to review the literature surrounding the subject and to do a lot of preparation in relating the questions in the interview to that literature. This is not meant as an end in itself, but as a means to an end - to sharpen the questions about the topic.

It is essential to maintain a list of the key questions, such as the 'how' and 'why' type questions but Yin, R. K. (1984), says that to stick too closely to a formatted list of questions may cause the investigator to 'not listen'. Opportunities for deeper probing may be lost or missed through an over rigid regard for keeping to a fixed list of questions.

2.11.2. The questions.

Semi-structured, face-to-face interviews were conducted in a relatively free format. A set of questions provided structure in the interview and enabled more efficient structuring during the data collection stage. It is worth noting that the questions were largely designed to investigate change in creative practices over recent years, if and how the painters' practices had 'evolved' into their current, more installational form and to elicit qualitative insights into the reasoning behind these changes. Additionally, although a more conversational 'style' was adopted to create a more informal setting, this in no way must be confused with a conversation. The main aim of this research strategy was 'listening'. Without proper listening, both to 'live' interviews and to the various tape-recordings and the post-interview feedback, a lot of data can go unnoticed.

The types of questions that were employed in the face-to-face interviews are outlined below and informed the case studies in chapters three to nine. Generally speaking the questions are 'who, what, why, where, how' type questions as in the list below, which implies a predetermined structure to help with the analysis stage (Yin, R. K. 1984).

- How/why did involvement with installation come about?
- Were there any factors that prompted it?
- How has the practice changed as a result?
- Have there been changes to media and materials used?
- Have there been any changes to the types of venues or sites used?
- How does the viewer figure in it?
- Are there any problems or opportunities?
- Why installational type work?
- Have there been any changes in who you work with i.e. collaborations?

This line of questioning resulted in the interview transcripts, the 'dynamic checklist' (which is discussed in the next section), and the resulting analysis. The methods adopted all contribute to solving the problem of distortion of the facts and to addressing the problem of 'truthful' findings.

2.11.3. 'The dynamic checklist'.

A 'dynamic checklist' is one that changes with experience. The dynamic checklist evolved during the data collection stage. It is necessary to list the changes between one interview and the next in order to develop the "dynamic checklist" (Langrish, J. 1997). Key words or notions will build from close reading of transcripts and these will be added to and taken away from the dynamic checklist, as they become more or less important as further interviews are held.

A 'dynamic checklist' evolved through the interview stage and was a result of recurrent themes cropping up in the interviews and later being added to the list (Langrish, J. 1997). As themes became more apparent through the build up of data they were added to the list and as they became less important or 'redundant' they were dropped from the list. For example, during the initial research, direct questions such as, "how do you frame your work" or "where are the boundaries to your work" seemed to confuse the respondents and did not elicit answers about the boundaries of the art. These questions were dropped from the list and replaced with questions about materials, site and the viewer, as these seemed to provide answers about the boundaries of the art. In addition to this, terms like 'installation art' were found to be problematic (given the lack of agreed definition for this term), and were dropped from the list and replaced with more appropriate and generic terms such as, art practice or installational type art.

This unstructured approach with a dynamic checklist allowed a free form of 'conversational interview' and limited the 'intrusion factor' of the researcher and his paraphernalia. I believe it also allowed for a less inhibited interviewee who was responsive to more probing questioning. The dynamic checklist was also very useful in providing a starting point in structuring the emergent factors during the data analysis phase and cross-referencing the data across the seven case studies. A feature of the dynamic checklist is that it can reflect the relevance of certain data especially useful in the data analysis stage.

2.11.4. Focus and corroboration.

Yin, R. K. (1984, pp. 84-85), stated:

> "Overall, interviews are an essential source of case study evidence, because most case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs should be reported and interpreted through the eyes of specific interviewees, and well-informed respondents can provide important insights into a situation. They can also provide shortcuts to the prior history of the situation, so that the investigator can readily identify other relevant sources of evidence. However, the interviews should always be considered *verbal reports* only. As such, they are subject to the problems of bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulation. Again, a reasonable approach is to corroborate interview data with information from other sources".

The use of tape-recorded interviews is one way of ensuring an accurate transcript of the interview exists. All the examples in this study were tape-recorded with the prior consent of the interviewees. However, there are several points to be aware of as Yin pointed out:

- Interviewee's discomfort in their use or even refusal to allow their use.
- No plan for listening to or transcribing the tapes or notes from the tapes.
- Clumsy use of the tape recording device so as to cause a distraction.
- Interviewer uses the tape recorder as a 'substitute' for listening.

There are a couple of other things to watch out for, which are more common than one might think:

- Check that the tape-recorder works and has enough power in its batteries or that there is a mains adapter and a supply at the place of the interview.
- Some of the smaller Dictaphone-type recorders pick up a lot of 'atmospheric' noise and this distorts the playback.

Approval of any transcript by the interviewee is another vital safeguard to misrepresentation but therein lies a problem in agreeing a systematic control over how amendments are made. The 'truth' from the interview may indeed be different upon reflection and the question arises whether a second interview or discussion of arguable points would be needed. Follow up interviews and a discussion about any transcript amendments would address this issue of 'reinvention' of what was said. Mottram (1988), showed that some artists distort their past to the extent of denying the importance of an influence identified by the researcher and that the reinvention of the past can be a key factor in the development of the creative artist.

2.12. Data Analysis.

In phase one of the research there were three main interviews followed by respondent feedback sessions. The researcher and respondent developed a 'closer conversation' with one another over the time period of the research. The first interview was a semi-structured one as described earlier in this chapter. The second was a discussion with

questions arising from emergent patterns in the transcripts and the feedback from the respondents. The transcripts and feedback (the results) were compared with one another to look for emergent patterns in the answers together with similarities and differences. The third was in the form of a slide presentation, which the respondent made to the researcher, and this involved a discussion with questions relating to the results of the first two interviews to visual aspects of the artwork. After this 'pattern recognition stage' further feedback was sought from the respondents. This was further added to by the introduction of commentary from other people. This meant finding out what other people had said about the work of the respondents and seeing if that related in any way to what the respondents themselves had said, people such as art critics, writers and journalists etc. The respondents also provided unadulterated 'artist's statements' that they had made about their work in the past. Artist's statements are usually used in press releases, in exhibitions, curriculum vitaes and in publicising contexts.

Various methods were devised to identify the 'bits' that were relevant to the research. One of these methods was a method of quantitative data analysis. Each time a respondent mentioned a key word or concept or problem it was written on a card. A set of cards was made for each respondent. This was a form of the dynamic checklist discussed elsewhere in this chapter. The cards were grouped according to these concepts or key words, forming categories. This process of grouping and regrouping, looking for the 'click factor' shaped and formed the thesis.

The wealth of written and visual data categorised through pattern recognition and feedback in the analysis stage provided a picture of how each respondent was 'problem finding' through a 'conversation with their situation' and how the 'reframing' of this 'new situation' (with its problems identified) was leading to new work.

2.13. Including the researcher as an example.

Including myself as an example has enabled me to consider my own 'history' and understand the relationship between critical reflection and problem finding and fragmentation within my practice. Doing the research has had the effect not only of allowing detailed reflection but also of focussing on fewer projects as more of my time has been taken doing the investigation. Including myself as an example and including my own creative work within the research project has been interesting and exciting and the objectivity afforded by being, in a sense, 'two people' has added focus to my creative work.

In fact, this investigation partly came about because interviewing myself had become a part of my creative practice. Invented, imaginary 'alter egos' that were anagrams of my own name such as, Shelley Cape, had been used in projects such as 'Vignettes' (1995), which is discussed in chapter eight. 'Imagined others' allowed for another, possibly more objective point of view – an outsider's point of view – and this helped the development of my work and practice.

For example, the following quote taken from one such interview reveals the part Shelley Cape played:

> "Sometimes I feel like I am going in several directions at the same time or that I am several different people. I really don't mind this at all – in fact this was how I was introduced to my alter ego Shelley Cape. Shelley Cape (and this is a secret), is an anagram of Alec Shepley and I use her/him, when appropriate, to make comments or pass judgements on my work. Sometimes I have acted under Shelley's direction, as a kind of apprentice, to make work for her, such as: 'I Shot B-By'" (Shepley, A. 2000).

There were problems with including myself: for example it was difficult maintaining a separation between 'myself as researcher' and 'myself as practitioner'. This had 'knock on' effects, for example, during the interviews there was always the possibility of answering questions that have not been asked. However, with hindsight, this can be true of the other respondents, too.

However, through looking at other studies where the researcher was also an example, for example Hunter, I.'s study into Environmental Sculpture and Landscape Architecture (1992), I was able to maintain enough objectivity so as not invalidate the findings. Objective, self-critical appraisal has been fundamental to artistic training for many years and this research was like a logical extension of that.

2.14. Validity.

Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, G. G. (1981, pp. 101-127), claim that there are a number of conditions which any systematic enquiry (such as a case study), must satisfy in order to claim validity. They suggest the application of "naturalistic analogues to the four major criteria of rigour that have systematically evolved with respect to scientific inquiry", (Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, G. G. 1981). The four main concerns in establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative or 'naturalistic inquiry' can be seen in terms of its truth value, applicability, consistency; and neutrality (see Fig. 2.3 for the way these terms relate to each other).

Fig. 2.3. Scientific and Naturalistic Terms Appropriate to Various Aspects of Rigour (Lincoln Y. S. & Guba, G. G. 1981, p. 104).

Aspect	Scientific term	Naturalistic term
Truth Value	Internal validity	Credibility
Applicability	External validity/generalisability	Fittingness
Consistency	Reliability	Auditability
Neutrality	Objectivity	Confirmability

It should be noted, however, that the case studies in this investigation are not a 'sample'. They are examples selected because (in part) of their geographic location as much as

their innate qualities. A study carried out in London or Edinburgh, for instance, may have different results, obviously. Nevertheless, in order to establish trustworthiness, Lincoln, Y. S. and Guba, G. G. (1985, pp. 290-327) further detail the four main categories which reflect the assumptions of qualitative research and which must be taken into consideration. They are contained in the following sections.

2.14.1. Credibility.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. (1999, p. 193), suggested that a rich description of the complexities of the processes and interactions within each case study is embedded with data derived from the setting so, "that it cannot help but be valid". This researcher took the advice of Lincoln and Guba (1981), who suggest that research boundaries be clearly placed around the respondents and their practices within the case studies. The data and interpretations of the data are taken back to the sources (the respondents) and checked for accuracy. Data collected, the interpretations of that data and the feedback, are cross-referenced across the examples. The process of 'member checking' is a vital part of establishing the truth value criterion, as is prolonged engagement with respondents and persistent observation of (or at least very regular contact) with respondents, together with triangulation of data and observations (use of multiple sources), (Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, G. G. 1981). To avoid obvious flaws in this process it is necessary to continuously check and corroborate and it is preferable for this to be done with 'stealth' to eliminate further 'layers' of interpretation or 're'-interpretation.

2.14.2. Transferability.

In the strictest sense the findings in case studies cannot be generalised to a wider worldview (Langrish, J. 1993). This is not to say that they are not comparable with other situations or that any comparisons are not valid in terms of qualitative research. From the view point of making precise statements about external validity, (i.e. statistical results being transferable to a larger population), it is problematic to attempt to transfer results from an investigation such as this to a larger population since the descriptions in this study are very closely linked to the time and context in which they were found (Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, G. G.), 1985). However, it is incumbent upon this researcher to show that the findings will be useful to others in similar situations and with similar research questions and it is anticipated that the storylines described and discussed in the case studies will provide enough rich description to make transferability judgements a possibility. Chapter ten provides a discussion of the data from the case studies in chapters three to nine, so that the findings can be further considered as being relevant to the wider field of creative art practice.

Changing conditions resulting from an increasingly refined understanding of the research setting by this researcher led to a shift in the focus of the research aims. The new research aims take into account the nature of the changing 'situations' in each case study. The ever-changing nature of the world problematises the process of replication but qualitative research does not claim to be replicable and this researcher purposefully

avoided 'controlling' the research conditions in order to make it 'fit' a preconceived theory, (Marshall, C. and Rossman, G.B. 1999).

The theoretical parameters of this investigation were provided by the selection of the case studies. The respondents all 'fitted' certain specific selection criteria. In this sense the study can be replicated and those considering the transferability of this research can determine whether or not the cases described can be generalised for new research and transferred to new settings.

2.14.3. Dependability.

"Since there can be no validity without reliability (and thus no credibility without dependability), a demonstration of the former is sufficient to establish the latter". This is the 'weak' argument according to Lincoln Y. S. and Guba, G. G. (1985, p. 316). Any solution to the dependability problem must deal with it directly. One of the ways to do this is through 'overlap methods' or, 'triangulation' of the data (Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, G. G. 1985), i.e. the data collected from the respondents is triangulated with data collected from other sources, for example, what other people may have said. In this way quality research establishes validity and strengthens the claims of dependability. A good supervisory team - one which has been selected for individual and combined strengths, further corroborates dependability. Tasking the supervisory team with the role of 'auditing' and examining the process of the investigation attests to the dependability of the research, (Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, G. G. 1985).

2.14.4. Confirmability.

In this research the findings and implications are provided by the data collected from various sources. So, how can the investigation claim to be confirmable or 'objective' if the findings simply 'emerge' from the data?

According to Scriven, M. (1972) the difficulty of qualitative research, such as this, claiming objectivity stems less from the characteristics of qualitative research and more from the term 'objectivity':

> "The term *objective* and *subjective* are always held to be contrasting, but they are widely used to refer to two quite different contrasts, which I shall refer to as the *quantitative* and *qualitative* senses. In the first of these contrasts, 'subjective' refers to what concerns or occurs to the *individual* subject and his experiences, qualities, and dispositions, while 'objective' refers to what a *number* of subjects or judges experience – in short, to phenomena in the public domain. The difference is simply the *number* of people to whom reference is made, hence the term *quantitative*. In the second of the two uses, there is a reference to the *quality* of the testimony or the report or the (putative) evidence, and so I call this the 'qualitative' sense. Here, 'subjective' means unreliable, biased or probably biased, a matter of opinion, and 'objective' means reliable, factual, confirmable or confirmed, and so forth. Now it would certainly be delightful if these two senses coincided, so that all reports of personal experience, for example,

were less reliable than all reports of events witnessed by a large number of people. But as one thinks of the reliability of reports about felt pain or perceived size, on the one hand, and reports about the achievement of stage magicians and mentalists, on the other, one would not find this coincidence impressive" (Scriven, M. 1972).

Need more be said? The assumption that the findings of the study need to be qualitatively confirmable by, and transferable to, large numbers of people is misplaced. The assumption that the experiences and thoughts of small numbers of people are biased and confirmable is not necessarily true. To take the analogy of the magician further (that the reports of one magician standing in the wings during another magician's performance would be more acceptable than the reports of a large audience, all of whom had been systematically deluded), the reports of one artist observing another artist are more inclined to be acceptable than the reports of an audience who also might not be getting 'the full picture'. Even better when the research includes both kinds of reports!

Each of the following chapters contains one of the seven case studies in this investigation.

CHAPTER THREE: Case Study One: Steve Dutton

3.1. Introduction.

Chapters three to nine contain the seven case studies in this investigation. The case studies draw upon the multi-method approach and data derived from a variety of sources - semi-structured interviews, observation, document and artefact analysis, and other people's commentary (Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. 1999). The case studies are informed by the responses to the interviews, the respondents' critical thinking about their creative practices, processes and artefacts. Other people's commentaries are included where relevant.

The respondents' probing into and questioning of their creative practice is described, illustrated and discussed. Respondents' reflectivity, the cyclical nature of the probing into practice, and the strong relationship between reflection and creative art practice are described and discussed.

Each case study provides an introduction and background to the respondent. Respondents' reflections upon the perceived limits of creative practice and their responses to interview questions, together with changes in artistic repertoire, are reported and discussed.

Earlier creative work, undertaken by the respondent prior to any shift towards more installational type work, is described, illustrated and discussed. The earlier creative work is presented as a 'flashback' to the period of time before problem finding led to any shift towards more installational-type work. The flashback provides the reader with a 'backdrop', against which to consider the respondents' problem finding.

The respondents' exploration of extended ranges of media, materials and processes within their creative practices, together with their reflections upon work done with others, the display of the work and the role of the viewer are described and discussed. Individual projects or exhibitions are described and illustrated.

Each case study has been produced through 'listening' to the commentary of practising artists, in relation to artefacts, documentation, and other peoples' commentaries.

The rest of Chapter three contains the case study of Steve Dutton.

3.2. Case Study One: Steve Dutton.

3.3. Background.

Steve Dutton (born 1961) gained a BA in Fine Art (painting), at Sheffield City Polytechnic (1979-82). He did an MA in Fine Art Painting at The Royal College of Art (1985-87). He is currently a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art and MA (Fine Art) Course Leader at Sheffield Hallam University (formerly Sheffield City Polytechnic). Steve has a studio space at S1 Art Space in Sheffield's Devonshire Quarter.

3.4. Introduction.

This case study contains an example of an artist who, through reflection and problem finding, 'moved' his practice from one which Steve felt to be limiting and confining, to one in which he felt he could admit new media and processes. The extension of the practice into more installational type art is considered and discussed, together with Steve's earlier work. Unless otherwise stated, Steve's quotations (e.g. Dutton, S. 1997), are taken from interviews with this researcher, between 1997 and 2000. In addition, the new media and processes are examined, where appropriate, in relation to other people's commentary. Insights into the collaboration with a fellow artist, Percy Peacock, are provided. Examples of specific projects are described and discussed at the end of the chapter. Illustrations referred to in the text can be found at the end of the chapter.

3.5. Redefining the limits.

In an interview with this researcher, Steve spoke of a feeling of being 'held' in a fixed position or a fixed viewpoint, in relation to, for example, a painting. The process of being 'tied' into the 'figure - ground' tradition of painting was confining, (Dutton, S. 1997). In this context, this researcher understood 'figure' to signify subject or image, and 'ground' to signify the surface of the painting (Piper, D. 1988 p.234, and Bois, Y-A. 1990 pp.104-105).

This created a sense of something lacking. According to Steve, painting seemed to lack something - it did not signify the actual complexity of its 'life'. It appeared to be less than representative of the sum of its total parts. He said:

> "It's not that I'm wanting a plot...I just can't attain the complexity or sophistication of what I see as a reality within the confines of a painting. It seems just impossible" (Dutton, S. 1997).

Steve described how he was probing into questions to do with space and time (Dutton, S. 1997). He described how he is being continually attracted to painting but said he was:

> "not sure whether the attraction was about the notion of space, or possibly of time".

Steve said that he believed it to be more of:

> "an affirmation of time, when I was painting, and how traditionally that painting was to be about solutions - trying to resolve things but that

> ironically, the more time spent the more 'problems' or complexities arose" (Dutton, S. 1997).

In the same interview Steve went on to say he did not want to be confined by having to 'come up with solutions' but wanted instead to make apparent his ideas about the complexity of practice:

> "a way of creating complexity or making it apparent - more apparent than in 'a painting'. To get away from the ground which caused too much simplification of what was going on" (Dutton, S. 1997).

Steve confirmed (Dutton, S. 2000), that the process of change in the practice was by and large to do with redefining by "allowing things in". Steve found a problem with defined limits. Steve said he placed no material limit on the work:

> "the work is not the material, the work is a task, the activity of working" (Dutton, S. 2000).

Material limits were open to interpretation, Steve said:

> "You can't put a limit on 'the work', material or any kind of frame, because the work is totally up to any individual who wants to experience it" (Dutton, S. 1997).

In fact the only 'limits' seemed to be a 'conversation' that Steve was having with the artist with whom he shared a studio space, Percy Peacock. Steve began collaborating on occasional projects with Percy in 1996, (see section 3.7.). Steve said he found a problem

in accepting notional models of traditional easel painting and that he found a problem in accepting definitions of practice since there were so many possible variants, each open to interpretation (Dutton, S. 1997). However, he said that the limits of the collaborative practice with Percy were the conversations and arguments they had together about notions of space: the space of the painter and the space of the sculptor (Dutton, S. 1997). Steve reached out beyond the picture plane to explore the sculptor's space but from the point of view of a painter. This problem finding was an influencing factor in moving towards installational-type art practice.

The next section provides a 'flashback' which considers and discusses Steve's earlier painting.

3.6. Earlier work.

In an interview with this researcher Steve said the earlier paintings, from the late 1980's (see Figs. 3.1. – 3.4.), for example 'Townscape' 1986, (Fig. 3.1), were about:

> "memories of being 'up-North'... they were kind of mythical in a way, about feeling out of place in London and about doing something 'light' about that" (Dutton, S. 2000).

He said up until moving to London to study for his MA, he felt his work was quite heavy-handed. He described the way he began working more quickly, creating layers in

the paintings which were overpainted if they became too laboured. He described the way he was attempting to make them appear:

> "fresh, immediate, spontaneous – clear" (Dutton, S. 2000).

The paintings were derived from his observations walking around, for example 'Sleeper 2' (Detail) 1990 (Fig. 3.3.), is based on a porcelain model seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the tree in Fig. 3.4. is taken from a print by Samuel Palmer.

He said he began working in series trying to show a relationship between the images rather than working on single canvases. Steve described how he was interested in the relationship in painting, between the figure and its background, what he referred to as the "figure ground relationship" (Dutton, S. 1997). However, he said he became more interested in the:

> "difference between an image and a painting" (Dutton, S. 2000).

Steve said his "desire for something light was somehow more tied in with the idea of the image rather than painting" and referred to the tradition of painting as somehow bringing with it 'excess baggage' that got in the way of the image (Dutton, S. 2000). It was a problem about which he felt unsure but he "became immersed in it" nevertheless and began to change his practice via speculating upon this problem.

For example Figs. 3.5. – 3.12. show works done in 1992/93, which are to do with the desire for something light and trying to pull free from 'tradition' or convention that Steve associated with painting.

Steve said he was:

> "trying to disentangle myself from all the 'supposeds' and all the 'oughts' "
>
> (Dutton, S. 2000).

Steve explored the problem of painting and the image in his work. Figs. 3.13. – 3.17., show work from an exhibition at Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery in 1992, that Steve did with an artist called Dave Alsop. Steve said he "curated himself" in this exhibition to try to separate himself from his own conventions and to play around with the assumed rules. By curating himself Steve hoped to get some distance or objectivity from his situation and make new work from it. He tried to deliberately separate the two roles in order to gain some distance from what he was doing in his practice.

The show comprised computer print-outs framed up as works of art, Steve said the show was:

> "a diagrammatic exhibition; more like a list than anything else" (Dutton, S. 2000).

He described the way he made a catalogue of "imagined art", deliberately doing this on a relatively low quality computer package called 'Gem Draw'. This researcher understood this to mean that this exhibition was a kind of light systemising of the problem: there was a sense of 'serious fun'. In addition it was the first example of Steve making 'art scenarios'. He was beginning to objectify the reflective conversation he was having with his practice.

Working in this way and working with Dave Alsop encouraged Steve to explore the conventions of his practice further, and the next section considers one such exploration of practice; his collaboration with Percy Peacock. Further examples of earlier work from the 90's are discussed in section 3.8. (Alternative Media).

3.7. Working with others: 'voice versus voices'.

Steve began working in installational-type art in a collaborative practice with Percy Peacock (born 1953), with whom he has shared a studio space in Sheffield for several years. Percy, now a sculptor, originally trained in ceramics at Bristol Polytechnic (1972-75), and then studied for his MA at The Royal College of Art, (1975-77). Percy is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art Sculpture at Sheffield Hallam University. Steve and Percy began collaborating on occasional projects in 1996. It is worth noting that Percy had begun to explore the use of other media and processes in his practice in the early 90's. Fig. 3.6. shows 'Installation Shot' (1994), which comprised a heap of old clothes on a table, including (under the table), a drum machine playing a very loud drum beat.

In response to the question about how the practice has changed and how involvement with a more fragmentary approach has come about, Percy began by saying that his collaborative work with Steve had largely arisen out of (often quite fierce) arguments that the two had "had in the studio about the way things should or should not be" (Dutton, S. 1997). The two respondents had declared an interest in arguing with each other a lot; these arguments formed limits. Limits of the argument (or debate), formed

the co-ordinates of a practice. The 'argument' had arisen out of a debate the two had had about the notion of space - the real space surrounding a sculpture and the illusory space in a painting.

The difference in Steve's and Percy's approach to the product or art object, had led to arguments about the two different realities. Percy talked about how, as a sculptor, he always dealt with material reality. Steve, as a painter, had hitherto been dealing with figure and ground relationships. The key difference was that the latter signified a 'window' to another dimension whereas the former was firmly in real space and could be viewed as an object from any angle both during the making and the viewing of the finished work. The viewing was always held, so to speak, from a particular viewpoint, i.e. from the dimension which was not the dimension of the picture plane.

Percy went on to describe how he had felt limited by the scope of the sculpture establishment, he was lacking a sense of belonging and yet was confined by its influences. Percy's 'arrival' at installational-type work was via sculpture but he had originally trained in the field of ceramics.

However, a more pragmatic reason for the collaboration with Percy was described in an interview with Karen Watson (Artist's Newsletter, Nov. 1999, pp. 12 – 15). Steve said about the collaboration with Percy:

> "We began collaborating on certain projects (Dutton & Peacock) in 1996 having already exhibited individually at a national and international level.

The collaboration started at YAS [Yorkshire Art Space]. The studio there was so small that individual work was kind of physically merged anyway, so we thought we would formalise it. Our initial collaborative work was truly awful but after about a year, and when we had moved into S1, things started to gel more. Since then, we have shown fairly widely including the inaugural show of the new Museum of Installation in London, along with shows in Sheffield, UK and Canada" (Watson, K. 1999 pp. 12 – 15).

The problem of the small studio caused the work to 'physically merge' and then, after having noticed it, the two artists decided to 'formalise' it.

'Voice versus voices' seemed to be a recurrent theme which underpinned Percy's and Steve's collaborations. Steve voiced concerns about:

> "the way his practice would be consumed, progressed, focussed or appropriated by the nature of the collaboration"

but that it was a:

> "helpful way of getting outside what my practice really is" (Dutton, S. 1997).

Steve said that there are a number of agendas within the collaboration between Percy and Steve and one was:

> "to look at painting, through a collaborative practice, but that is not to say that that is the agenda of the work, but it is within the work" (Dutton, S. 1997).

Steve expressed concern to this researcher about accepting preconceived notions or 'models' of 'traditional studio practice', 'easel painting' or 'traditional sculpture'. He found a problem in accepting a definitive 'model' of these practices since there were so many possible versions and was anxious that the collaboration was not construed as being about such oversimplifications. Steve also referred to a 'critique of authorship and mastery' as perhaps not so much as an aim of the collaboration, but more as a concern of the collaboration, together with a desire for more "democratic experience or relationship" within art practice.

Steve went on to say it was more about allowing things in to the collaborative practice that would add to the complexity and complicate the situation rather than simplify or objectify it. Problematising was an influencing factor in moving towards installational-type art practice. He said

> "working collaboratively was like a way of saying it is okay to be complicated and the friction could be a way of creating complexity or making it apparent" (Dutton, S. 1997).

The following section considers how problematising the practice and allowing new things in to the practice, meant admitting new materials and media.

3.8. Alternative media.

In an interview with this researcher, Steve described two paintings from the early 90's which are illustrated in Figs. 3.9. and 3.10. (Dutton, S. 2000). The painting in Fig. 3.9. is made using the bristles from a paint-brush. In an interview with this researcher he said he was:

> "trying to make a painting out of the stuff, the material of painting; the paint dispersing the brush - as opposed to the brush dispersing the paint (Dutton, S. 2000).

Steve referred to the act as being "totally within the field of painting" but he was beginning to "paint without paint" and subvert some of the assumed conventions. 'Hannah and Barbara', 1992 (see Fig 3.10.), is about trying to make a painting outside the realm of painting. There was a dry sense of humour and a desire for something light in the title 'Hannah and Barbara' 1992, which Steve said, was an attempt at making not so much a painting but a cartoon painting.

The desire for something light, and something 'outside painting', was emphasised in these two pieces both via the media and the processes.

For example Steve said the 'Velvet Half-Painting' (see Fig. 3.14. & 3.16.) was about falling into the picture plane, it was about being sucked into the window of the picture. The deep black velvet reflected no light: it simulated a void. The fact that the painting

was only half a painting seemed to signify the lack of an edge to the image but Steve said the piece was flawed right from the start: "because the painting always had an edge – when there shouldn't have been one", i.e. even on the side which was not there (Dutton, S. 2000). Steve did not seem to mind this problem, perhaps because it was inescapable, but he did say that this feeling of the "uncanny" in his work was a good thing (Dutton, S. 2000).

Steve continued to experiment with other media, for example Fig. 3.20. shows a piece of work from 1994 called 'Study For No Because', where, besides canvas, he used MDF and a fluorescent light. The floor is the place for exhibiting this painting. This piece was included in an exhibition of work by the Fine Art and Design Staff working within Sheffield Hallam University School of Cultural Studies. The exhibition was at the Graves Gallery, Sheffield (15th October – 26th November 1994), and was entitled 'Work/Ethics'. Accompanying the piece was a catalogue text which had been written by Steve for the exhibition. The text shed some light upon what the actual piece was about. In addition, it provided insights into Steve's reflections upon his installational-type work. He wrote:

> "No Because... Our gazes are mediated. What we are seeing is mostly theatre. Just off the virtual stage of institutionalised thoughts, sympathies, cults, ideologies and rhetoric, at least art has the capacity to parody, to celebrate or to move to other rhythms in the wings. While the main players are strutting centre stage (where there is little room for error or speculation) art is gleefully playing with the scripts.

"If it is the case that art is weak and does not care if it embarrasses itself then it is in the nature of art practices that its production and reception will often be laden with difficulties.

"Art comes in the form of an infinite number of voices, dialogues, discourses, images and objects at the margins of decipherability and the extremes of difference. Sure, there are identifiable bodies of knowledge, methods and discourses which can be taught but art emerges finally from these discourses, often proceeding from intuitive and energetic refusals of those bodies of knowledge" (Dutton, S. 1994 p. 37).

Steve used the analogy of the theatre as an arena for making art, referring to the 'margins', the 'offstage' areas, as places to celebrate difference and parody institutionalised forms of knowledge.

An insight was provided into the media associated with Steve's installational-type practice. Steve referred to the: 'infinite number of voices, dialogues, discourses, images and objects'; 'playing with the script'; and acknowledged the difficulties and problems associated with an art that refused these bodies of knowledge; problems which were conveyed via an extended range of media and materials. This researcher noted that the analogy provided insights into the selection and arrangement of the 'other media' that Steve was exploring.

In an interview with Karen Watson, concerning the collaboration between himself and Percy, Steve described the fluid nature of the use of media within his practice and referred to the collaboration with Percy to illustrate the point:

> "Media-wise, our work veers all over the place. I'm still very much into painting but we are currently focussing on the use of large-scale (and often inverted) photographs and video. Text is coming into the work now in a significant way" (Dutton, S. 1999 pp. 12 – 15).

In an interview with this researcher, Steve described how questioning the process and product of the practice, within the collaboration, led to alternative media being explored, such as video. Steve said about video:

> "it allowed me into the window into the other dimension that fantasy resides in and to the plane that the sculptor moves in when he makes the sculpture and painter's space also" (Dutton, S. 1997).

The problematising of the art object formed a core to new work. Problem finding allowed a certain amount of complexity into the practice. Studio experiments in other media, together with new approaches to documentation of these processes, were considered and explored. The other media being explored included: video, photography, and object-based work such as model-making and making dioramas.

For example, Steve made some works in which drawing pins are used in conjunction with small diagrammatic images of a room (see Figs. 3.5. – 3.8.). Steve said these

'working drawings' were about reflecting the viewer (in the pins), whose body would be fragmented and dispersed across the large space of rooms by the number of pins (Dutton, S. 2000). The pins played a double role – they were seen as holders of the image both physically and conceptually. This 'constant disturbance' was to form a key feature of Steve's installation art practice (Dutton, S. 2000).

To make painting not painterly space and to confuse such limits, seemed to be a motivation behind Steve's problem finding. He could not say whether or not it was a methodology, in the strict sense of the word, but conceded that it may be a 'strategy' (Dutton, S. 1997).

It was unclear as to whether it could be seen by Steve as a methodology since the practice did not consist of things other than those associated directly with the work i.e. no critical rigour exists beyond the 'normal' artistic practice of criticism, sketchbooks etc. He said it was:

> "unmethodological, but that it might be 'a drive' to find out what it is that constantly seeks to appeal when it comes to thinking critically about painting" (Dutton, S. 1997).

Thinking critically about painting and problematising the object of art and the art object had led to more questions arising and one such question that Steve posed, during a reflective conversation with himself, was:

"What happens if the object of the art is not necessarily the object of the art? If the actual aim of the art might be 'via' a thing or that there could be a more democratic relationship between the thing, the process, the context, the materials – the whole thing? A bit more honest or truthful. It always has been democratic...the reason that it's not is because of the market. The market always ensures that there is a 'thing'. To be bought and sold" (Dutton, S. 1997).

He went on to describe his circular argument or 'entrapment' - being constrained or trapped within a certain language and its concepts (in this case art language and art concepts), and the way it gives no alternative other than to express that 'trapped-ness' in the very language which encircles it.

Steve reflected upon the possibility of trying to say something in a language other than art 'art language' and it remaining 'art'. In other words, did talking about process result in a something? (Dutton, S. 1997). Steve claimed that what he ended up with was a document of this process. Following this line of enquiry Steve began to 'see' painting as a kind of rhetoric, he began to see it diagrammatically or as a scenario of itself:

"How can you continue painting outside the rhetoric of painting, well that is to say, all painting is rhetoric, so how could that new practice be? What would it look like? Can you paint without putting paint on canvas? That version of rhetoric is what I am trying to work out from and the more I move that way, the closer I feel to the centre of painting".

He concluded:

> "If there could be a diagram of what painting is, I would be closer to its centre than when I was actually putting paint on canvas" (Dutton, S. 1997).

The diagram or scenario of painting seemed to 'bring together' the notions of process, product and practice, almost like a model of what practice is or could be. Steve said:

> "If everything that was ever made and presented as an art object could always be seen as a kind of scenario, you would see it from another angle, it would be seen as framed in another way. It could be seen as a kind of endless set of reframed scenarios" (Dutton, S. 1997).

This researcher observed that there seemed to be examples of these 'scenarios' that Steve referred to, strewn over the floor of the studio. These scenarios took the form of small models which recorded Steve's actions over time. These actions would also be recorded photographically and in video by the artists and represented as part of an installative project. An earlier example of the scenarios within scenarios can be seen in Figs. 3.17. & 3.18. where models of different scales are juxtaposed with one another.

3.9. 'Staging the work' - site and audience.

This section considers the link between the site of the work and the role of the viewer.

In an interview with this researcher Steve described how the viewer could be, to paraphrase, 'implicated within the work' by the lack of limits to it (Dutton, S. 1997). In other words the boundary between the two, where the 'art' stops and 'life' began would be blurred.

In the final paragraph of the catalogue text from 'Work/Ethics' (1994), which accompanied the piece 'Study for No Because', 1994 Steve, said:

> "Perhaps what any institution has to do instead is to turn its gaze, if only occasionally, and look to the wings, even if it means facing a bawdy parody of itself or glimpsing a space it cannot claim, for nothing is harder to possess than art's refusals" (Dutton, S. 1994 p. 37).

For example, the 'drawing pin' images (see Figs. 3.5. – 3.8.) allow for the possibility of a reflection to take place between the viewer and the piece of artwork. These "working drawings" included a room repeated many times, uniformly in a grid pattern within the rectangle of the image. In the centre of each room was a single drawing pin with actual room of exhibition reflected in its convex surface. Steve referred to the way the body of the viewer could be:

> "fragmented and dispersed across this large space of rooms" (Dutton, S. 2000).

In addition, there was an element of humour in these working drawings: each 'cell' had a drawing pin at its centre and at every block of four cells there was a nail (see Fig. 3.5.). The nails were a visual pun on the pins as holders of the image: the pins were literally holders of the physical image and holders of the conceptual image (Dutton, S. 2000).

These drawings were placed either on a wall on their own, or on a wall with an accompanying floor piece (see Fig. 3.8.) again, this was to allude to the presence of the viewer as an integral part of the piece.

The implication of the viewer within the piece of art was a fundamental part of the newer work. The careful choice of media would create the sense of the looking being turned back on itself. The gaze was returned. The viewer became aware of viewing themselves via their reflection or by recognising the space they were was similar if not the same as the one being looked at in the image, for example see the drawing pins' reflections in 'Working Drawings' (1992) (Fig. 3.5.) or in the large photographs of the display space in 'Vesuvius' 1999 (see Figs 3.30. – 3.34.)

Steve and Percy used sound. In addition to the use of sound, they adopted a strategy of 'geographical distribution' of art within a space. In an interview with this researcher, Percy and Steve agreed, in terms of exhibition spaces, that they "are looking for interesting situations" (Dutton, S. 1997). Recent spaces used for public project displays included a vacant shop unit in Merseyway Shopping Precinct, Stockport (project: What

You Are Seeing Will Not Be Here Forever' 1995) and the old bus depot in the Cultural Industries Quarter of Sheffield (project: 'Depot' 1997).

Steve and Percy agreed that the element of 'chance' was an important part of the work and that the practice was very open to the idea of 'chance' (Dutton, S. and Peacock, P. 1997). Given that both artists had made very rigorous testings of ideas, materials, image, time and space etc., it seemed that the work was very open to the idea of chance. The idea of using sound and the way sound would work with the display space, was seen as very important, since sound crept through material borders and physical frames and because the architecture of the space became intrinsically involved with the work (Dutton, S. 1997).

This researcher noted that a piece of work which featured sound would in part, cross the physical boundaries of the space in which it was situated. As the sound drifted through the space, the chance of someone hearing it became a part of the installation. The work would reach out beyond its material limits. This researcher understood this to mean that the use of sound had a 'strategic un-framing effect' - it 'unframed the work' – since the sound crept out beyond the physical confines of material.

With regard to the video works, Steve said "they force an engagement", they were about the notion of spending time. Percy said they were also about the differences between the movement seemingly demanded by sculptures and the stillness associated with viewing paintings (Dutton, S. 1997).

The following sections contain detailed examples of installational projects.

3.10. Project One: 'Apocotropes', 1997.

In an interview with this researcher (Dutton, S. 1998), Steve said 'Apocotropes', was a rough amalgam of two words – 'apocalypse' and 'trope', and it suggested an affinity or a tendency towards the apocalyptic.

In the 1997 exhibition 'Apocatropes', each piece consisted of several parts distributed throughout the space (see Figs. 3.21. - 3.29). For instance, the work about the studio consisted of approximately 70 canvases, some just stacked in the gallery space, and included several photographs. There was no linear progression from the 'first to last' image or art object, instead the arrangement was seemingly 'open' and the intention was to promote a less 'managed' or chronological movement through the exhibition but a more 'matrixical' or 'map-like' orienteering process. This researcher noted that this certainly had an effect on the subliminal connections between the elements of the installation and on the time spent in the gallery.

Steve also said in an interview with Karen Watson (Artist's Newsletter, Nov. 1999, pp. 12 – 15), that the work that he and Percy produced was influenced by the architecture of the space itself, and that it acted as a kind of backdrop to the work.

Karen asked: How much of your practice is influenced by the studio dynamics?

> "Our own practice (Dutton and Peacock) was very influenced by the space itself, to such an extent that our first pieces used the space as a kind of mis-en-scene, where we played out and photographically recorded various events. We've used this method since and applied it to other spaces so it could be said that it has been very influential. There's also an interest in space and architecture running through the work" (Dutton, S. & Peacock, P. in Watson, K. 1999 pp. 12 -15).

The various activities Steve described were acted out and recorded in large-scale photographic form as seen in Figs. 3.22. & 3.23.

The idea of scenarios within scenarios, and the relationship between the art object in the studio context and the gallery context, was further emphasised by the way the photographs in Figs. 3.22. & 3.23. were displayed in the gallery; they were leaning against the gallery wall much in the same way the objects depicted in the photograph were.

In an article in 'The Guide' (North, September 27 – October 3 1997), it said about 'Apocotropes', that the installation had a "rare poetic restraint". The article talked about a:

> "collaborative installation show by Steve Dutton and Percy Peacock in which rural grace and urban mania are potently contrasted and combined. 'Plague-Orgy-Time' is a photographic and video projection work in

> which warehouse interiors seem to be haunted by dream traces of dust and debris. The less convolutedly titled 'Magnolia' juxtaposes florid imagery with the ambient white din of the city centre of Sheffield".

This would appear to concur with Steve's view that "media-wise, our work (the work of the collaboration with Percy), veers all over the place" (Dutton, S. 1999).

A version of one of the photographs included in Apocotropes also appeared at the Museum of Installation inaugural show in 1997, entitled 'Musée Imaginaire'. This converted shop on Deptford High Street, London, has been devoted since its opening to contemporary, more installative-type work. Izi Glover, reviewing the show for Frieze Magazine, wrote that 'Musée Imaginaire' was in two parts and the first part took place during the remodelling of the gallery space. This gave the opportunity to the exhibiting artists to use the space's architectural qualities in a state of partial reconstruction; the partially stripped plaster work; missing skirting boards etc., were used as part of the work "the installations meld with the developing state of the building". Glover went on to say:

> "in Steve Dutton and Percy Peacock's piece, entitled 'Apocotropes' (1997), further remains are visible: in a large photograph of a studio whose space is punctuated by scattered evidence of artistic activity, and in an accompanying video which shows a series of accretions of things. A sign declaring 'NIGHT OUTSIDE NOW' indicates that scenes are being set. Furniture for the little people is scattered amongst the propped-up stirling board rectangles" (Glover, I. 1997).

Colette Tougas (1999), in the catalogue introduction to a variant of Apocotropes entitled 'Mockapocalyptics', at 'Optica' (Centre for Contemporary Art, Montreal, Quebec, Canada), referred to their work as 'uncanny'. This collaborative project was a three-way collaboration between Steve and Percy and Mandy Barber, who was also a founding member of S1 Artspace/Projects in Sheffield. Tougas described the use of the entire space of the gallery and the deployment of objects across the space:

"Presented in the space of the gallery, playful model scenarios tinged with hints of extreme violence repeat endlessly on video loop. Props appear upon a tabletop, suggesting the construction of some model townscape or landscape. Occasionally movement takes place upon the table, a model house is moved here, a 'mountain' placed there; buildings are constructed out of poor materials, bits of wood and dust, and then trashed jubilantly in a spirit of recklessness and glee.

> "In the presence of this cycle of construction and deconstruction are also a series of large scale photographic and digital works. Dutton and Peacock's photographs of seemingly banal municipal interiors are displayed upside-down.....the uncanny photographic works of Dutton and Peacock present spaces which appear simultaneously possible and impossible; wavering between the recognisable and the unnameable."

She went on to suggest that with the photographs: "Turned upside-down, the suffocating weight and blandness of the institutional space expands into something lighter but more difficult to grasp" (Tougas, C. 1999).

A similar response to the disturbing nature of the work was experienced when exhibited at the Lewisham Arthouse Gallery 1997. The press release described the construction, destruction and reconstruction, especially in the photographic and video projection piece 'Plague-Orgy-Time' (which was in Apocotropes), as suggesting an 'unsettling and compelling' process, and that this 'process of continual disruption':

> "serves as a response to the 'massive urban re-generation programme currently underway within the artists' (Dutton and Peacock), adopted city of Sheffield' [it] is clearly influential but the work also suggests a kind of mirror to such generalised visions of utopia, and that written within the language of building and planning there is a more ambiguous image of an internalised and often violently repressed imaginative realm" (Lewisham Arthouse Gallery Press Release, 1997).

The 'suffocating weight and blandness of the institutional space', the (often violent) acting out and recording of various scenarios, the gleeful destructiveness and the uncanny effect of the fragmentary spatial organisation, inspired Sharon Kivland (1997), not merely to review 'Plague-Orgy-Time' at the Lewisham Arthouse Gallery and at the Museum of Installation Art but to respond in a more poetic vein:

> "Two works, four parts, two sites, day and night. One work here, two parts, night. A set of continuous actions, an approximate finale. One set, where action either attends or is completed. Ornate staging in a former public library, under the influence of texts and their boundaries, as much as any spatial organisation. Delinquent. An ambivalent circumscription,

traverses, cuts across, elaborates then forecloses. An empty room, twice filled by the least thing, last things. Let me describe: a video projection which never stops, a large colour photograph propped upon the ledge of a skirting board, extended beyond any relation yet nothing more than the product of an encounter. Shorthand, abbreviations, action but unsignified, performed according to an undisclosed script.

"One, to be studied: Please me? Interest me? Intrigue me? Without special acuity, an application which punctuates the means of participation. Studio, set, frame. A still stilled, unfulfilled, the photograph of the film, residue of an unseen screen, provides the scene. Withdrawn, on the shelf, an uncertain text, unlit, opaque. Details proliferate while purpose remains obscure; anything could start it, a wrong number. Something has taken place in time but not in the time of action. Without incident, and leading to accidents. Before and after, but not now: the impossibility of a photograph. It is too easy to mis-understand the situation. Operator. Spectator.

"One, to be studied: Attract me? Distress me? Give myself up? Watched over time, in time. Narratives of construction, destruction and reconstruction. Ought to come first, but seems to come second, after the fact of the photograph. Incompatible relation of projection and still, duplicating incompatibility of two participants in an act of collaboration. Something combative, hostile forces, giving way to absurdity. Synecdochal, dense. Disconnected, shrinking. Push. Pull. Dust, debris,

objects balanced momentarily, unstable, give way. Ridiculous struggle, over-amplified. Tableaux vivants.

"Two, a relation in formal terms. One speaks, the other speaks in a series of articulated operations. A campaign of strategies, of manipulations, one upon one, one to one, always other, barred by the history, the symptom of each. One addresses another without retaining occupation of a position; it cannot be held, beyond singularities, and not of an immutable nature. There, here, an importance of placing which reinterprets formal logic and finds the limits. In moving this or that to there or here, something that could have been but never was comes into being. Constituting positions are at stake. Put to work, conjunction, disjunction, in a compromise between a text and a place, a topology and a topography. A playing out of deformation, and discontinuous transformations, continuous distortions.

> The work of the work results in the production of surplus value, if there is any value in exchange, and reinvents what is given, while ruining any propositional content, master, slave. It makes a hit far more than it describes one" (Kivland, S. 1997).

Read closely in conjunction with looking at the relevant illustrations included at the back of this chapter, this researcher found that Kivland's text seemed to resonate with the disparate nature of the installative work. This piece of writing seemed to allude to the 'veering' quality Steve described the work as having.

3.11. Project Two: 'Vesuvius', 1998.

This exhibition was a 'Photo 98' commissioned installation for Rotherham Arts Centre (see Figs. 3.30. – 3.34.). Steve, had described the installation in the interview with Karen Watson, as "a high spot...which led to a lot of rabid local press coverage". One quoted reaction to the exhibition had been: "this kind of work might be okay in some trendy London gallery like the Serpentine but the people of Rotherham don't want this kind of stuff".

The press release said:

> "Rotherham Art Gallery's main contribution to Photo 98, the UK Year of Photography and the Electronic Image, is about to erupt.
>
> "For their Photo 98 Commission the artists' collaboration Dutton & Peacock have made a work which involves large scale photography and video. They have chosen to focus on the gallery space at Rotherham as a generator of forms and ideas. For this new body of work the artists have returned to the space several times while making the work, each time making slight shifts and interventions. Photographs were taken of the space and of these interventions, then printed up to a large scale and re-presented in the space. The status of these 'documents' is ambiguous; although they clearly operate as works in themselves, they also operate as ciphers for an 'original' work, text or event, which existed somewhere else.

"Meanwhile, a video camera drifts around a model of the space, scanning the space for something to latch on to, as Vesuvius threatens to erupt. The work builds over time, like the accumulations and accretions which happen in the photographs, and the meanings and references within the photographs slowly begin to unfold as the work refers to itself and to the visitor across the gallery space.

> "Dutton & Peacock are keen to foster and create disturbances in the 'natural' flow of visual information and the resulting work for this project could, perhaps confusingly, be described both as a document of an art work which never really existed and as the art work itself."

The complexity and risk associated with the collaborative practice was not without its consequences and Steve's concerns about the way the practice might be 'consumed' were well founded. Eileen Brooks (1998), said in a 'Yorkshire Post' article about the collaborative show 'Vesuvius', that "the show had left visitors scratching their heads". According to Brooks, part of the 'puzzle', as she put it, was the 'juxtaposition' of "giant colour photographs of the empty gallery and a video of dumper trucks running up and down a spoil heap – all turned upside down" and "monitors constantly showing views of the empty gallery and mock indoors lava flows" with the exhibition catalogue which said:

> "Vesuvius is an instrument of posthumous reflectors continuously dissipating and diffusing, whose very existence is determined by and through these unstable relationships that threaten to rupture.

"Vesuvius comes to us pre-recorded, phenomenalised in the tissue of spatio-temporal agencies which have a strange condition of after-life, both transmitting the avowal of inscription that is always already there and seeking beyond pre-inscription with over-lapping double reflections of some 'marginalised remainder' which presently can only regress towards the proximate" (Swindells, S. 1998).

Steve said the text was not merely an accompaniment to the exhibition but was a vital and integral part of the exhibition (Dutton, S. 2000). It was written by Steve Swindells in close collaboration with Steve and Percy. Steve Swindells is a Sheffield–based artist and a lecturer in Fine Art at University of Huddersfield.

Steve (Dutton S. 2000), said the text was meant to be "awkward" and added to the feeling of "strangeness". Steve went on to say that Vesuvius was "the most about the space that we've ever done" (Dutton, S. 2000). He explained that it was about pointing "everything back to the strangeness of the institutionalised space, therefore the Rotherham furore was appropriate".

Brooks described this as being one of the easier passages in the catalogue and continued, describing some of the more negative experiences of some of the gallery-viewing public. Some of the comments in the visitors' book gave an impression of public reaction. For example one person is quoted as saying:

> "Whoever wrote this [the above extract from the catalogue] needs putting in an asylum" and,
>
> "I always thought artists were pretentious weirdoes, now I know my preconceptions were spot on".

It is worth noting that the Yorkshire Post article was more of a politically motivated piece of journalism aimed at provoking a debate between Rotherham Council's chairman of Culture and Leisure, Reg Littleboy, and the deputy chairman of Rotherham Conservatives, David Nuttall, about the funding of public art works. David Nuttall is quoted as saying:

> "It is another scandalous waste of public money. The ordinary council taxpayers of Rotherham will be furious at their money being spent in this way. They are hard-working folk in Rotherham who struggle to pay their council tax then see it thrown away on rubbish like this when schools, for example, are desperate for resources".

In defence of the exhibition, Reg Littleboy said:

> "People who don't like it [the exhibition] are entitled to their view and I admit it won't suit everyone but we have to cater for all tastes. We are not wasting money. The cash to stage the exhibition has come from our exhibitions budget and it really hasn't cost that much".

This researcher noted the difficulty of reconciling the language of the catalogue with the collaboration's stated desire for a more democratic approach to making and consuming

art, especially since both Percy and Steve did not want to impose limits upon their work's interpretation and actually wanted to cause 'disturbances' (Dutton, S. 2000).

The exhibition seemed to cause controversy and this brought publicity, publicity that this researcher doubts would have been found unwelcome by Steve and Percy. According to Steve, the vast majority of the money required to execute the work in this exhibition either came from the artists' own pockets or from funding sources other than Rotherham's (Dutton, S. 2000).

But the result must outweigh the risks of causing confusion or disturbance and Steve conceded that the collaboration provided the most clarity to date in approaching his practice. The collaboration has also provided Steve with the ability to challenge the notion of the 'single voice' of the artist.

3.12. Conclusion.

This chapter contains the various changes that have taken place in Steve's practice, from his experiments in 'painting alternative' using bristles from paint brushes to his use of architectural space and large scale photography in the late 90's.

Steve found the conventions of his painting practice limiting and confining. These limits were redefined within the context of new work. For example, Steve found the complexities of the process of painting either mostly absent, or not apparent enough, in

the final product. So, he reflected upon resituating this problem through a shift in approach. He began making scenarios of his situation. The practice became more installational because his scenarios depended upon the use of real space to 'work across' (Dutton, S. 2000).

The limits Steve found and reflected upon became resituated and redefined within the arena of a changed practice. The new situation involved exploring new media and processes. This researcher found that Steve often referred to 'margins' as a site for speculation, a place to explore "room for error" (Dutton, S. 1994 p. 37), and that he preferred to explore problems 'via outside' the perceived centre stage area i.e. outside the arena where one would expect art to be.

Key to the development of Steve's work has been his collaboration with Percy Peacock or rather the energy and dynamism that was created by the arguments the two artists had about the 'way it should be'.

An early project in 1992 with Dave Alsop introduced Steve to the idea of creating more than one voice within the work and within the practice. He decided that the problem of being in a 'singular practice' did not have to continue and that he could resituate his practice to include this problem of 'voice and voices'.

The combination of reflective surfaces and photography, careful use of site and subject have allowed Steve to promote the idea of implicating the viewer within the work.

Drawing pins were employed as reflectors of the 'viewing space' and his later work used large-scale photographs of the viewed space to make this process apparent. The viewer became aware of viewing themselves via the process of looking at art, through careful selection of site, media and materials. In a sense the viewer became engaged in a process of looking *for* the art. This researcher noted that Steve was attempting to turn the (perceived) subject back in upon itself. This was done in various ways in the installational-type work, for example through parody and via photography or the construction of scenarios. In his earlier work Steve explored the problems he found with his painting via alternative materials. Problem finding and problem resituating extended the practice and choice of media and materials.

The extension of media has grown to include video and photography, constructed models of spaces and dioramas depicting the scenarios which "put the space back into the image" (Dutton, S. 2000). Text has become an important feature of the practice and Steve has begun to explore, through further collaborative projects, the use of text as an integral part of the installational type practice.

Through problem finding and problem reframing Steve's practice has changed to allow in an extended range of media, materials and processes and a growing list of collaborators. The contents of this case study and the possibility for future research are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies, in Chapter ten.



Fig. 3.1. 'Townscape' 1986 Steve Dutton (oil on canvas, c. 42" x 48")

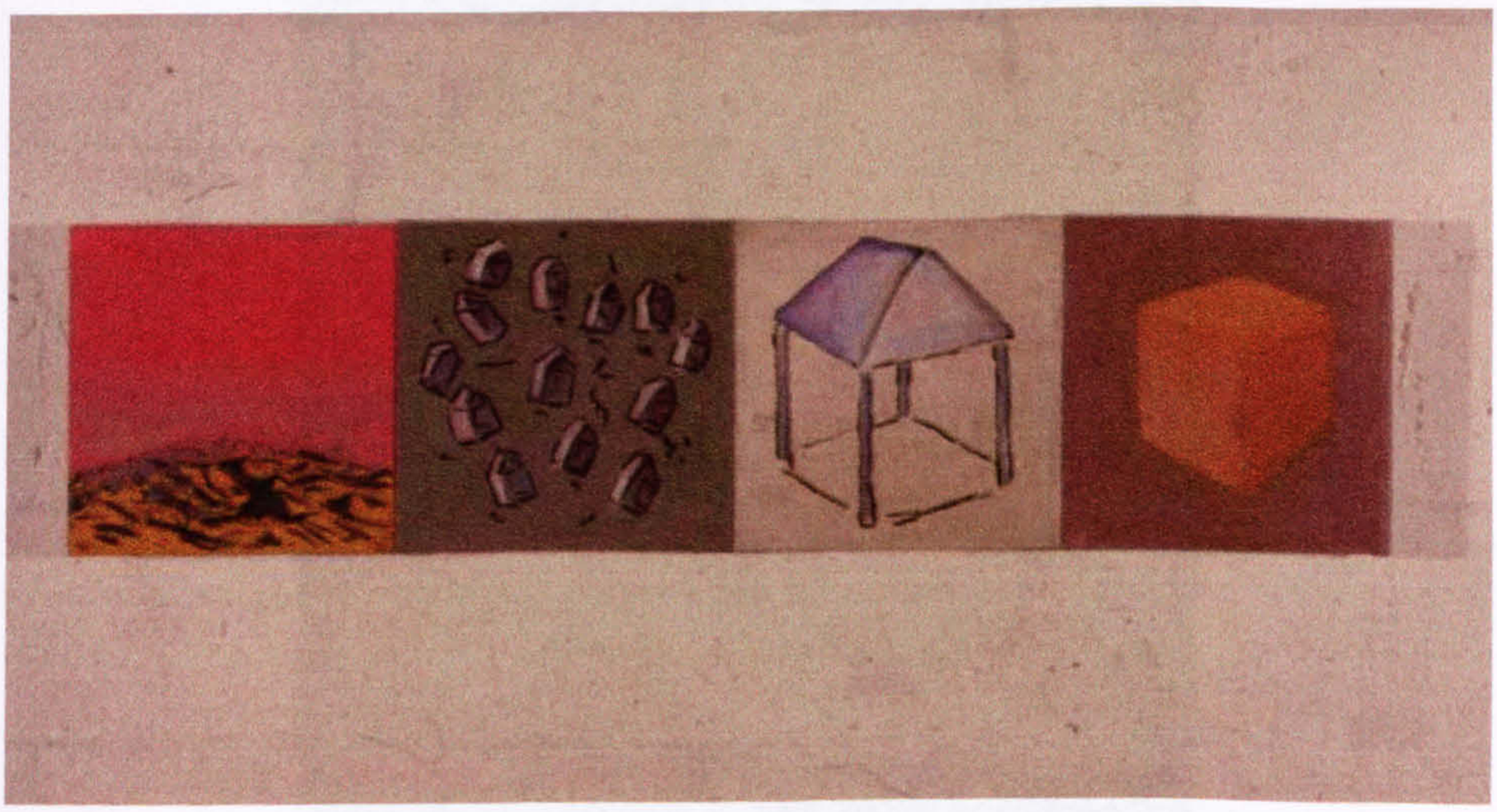


Fig. 3.2. 'Memory System 3' 1987 Steve Dutton (oil on canvas, c. 1' x 4')



Fig. 3.3. 'Sleeper 2' (Detail) 1990 Steve Dutton (oil on canvas, c. 10" x 10")

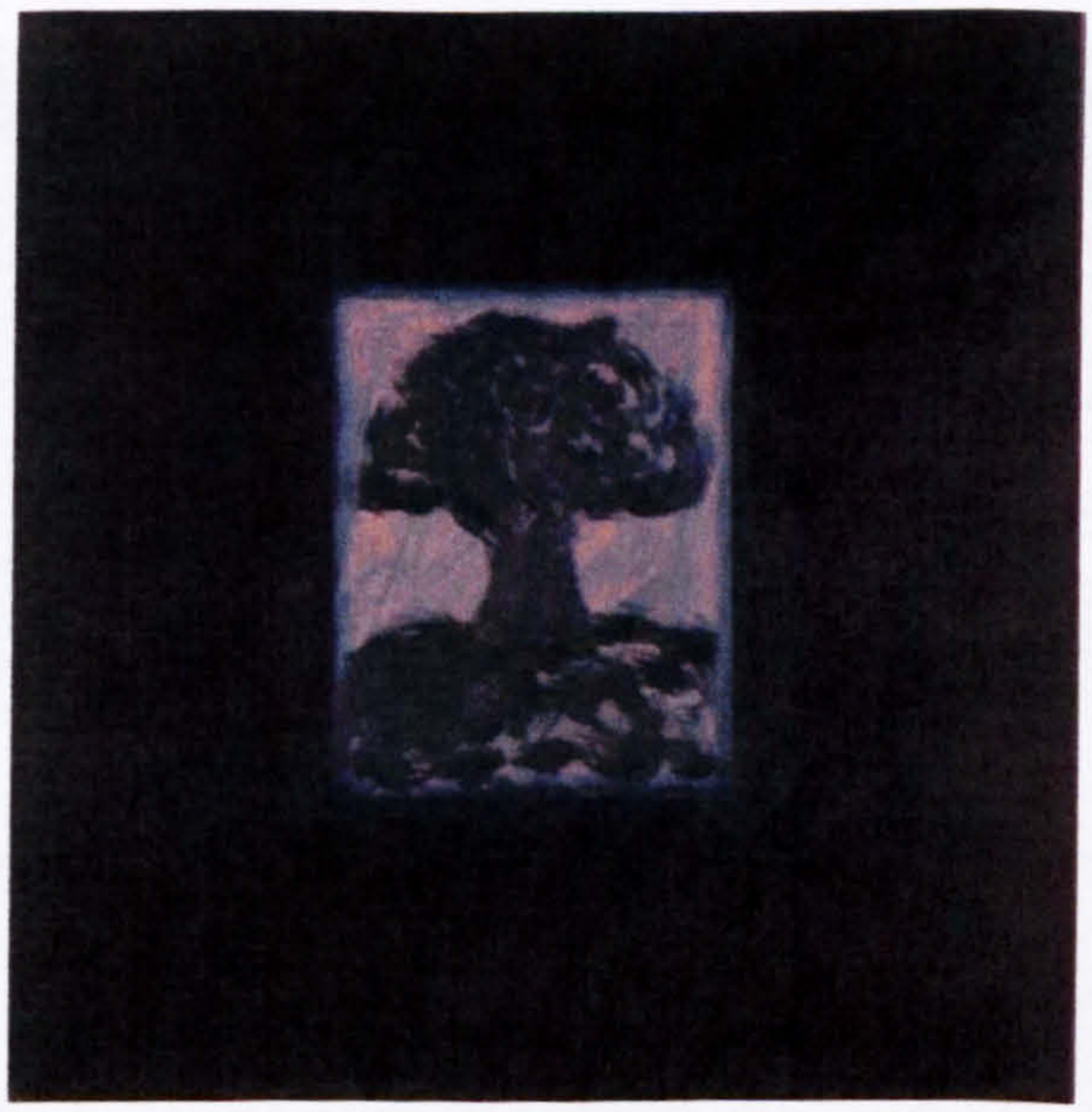


Fig. 3.4. 'Sleeper 2' (Detail) 1990 Steve Dutton (oil on canvas, c. 10" x 10")

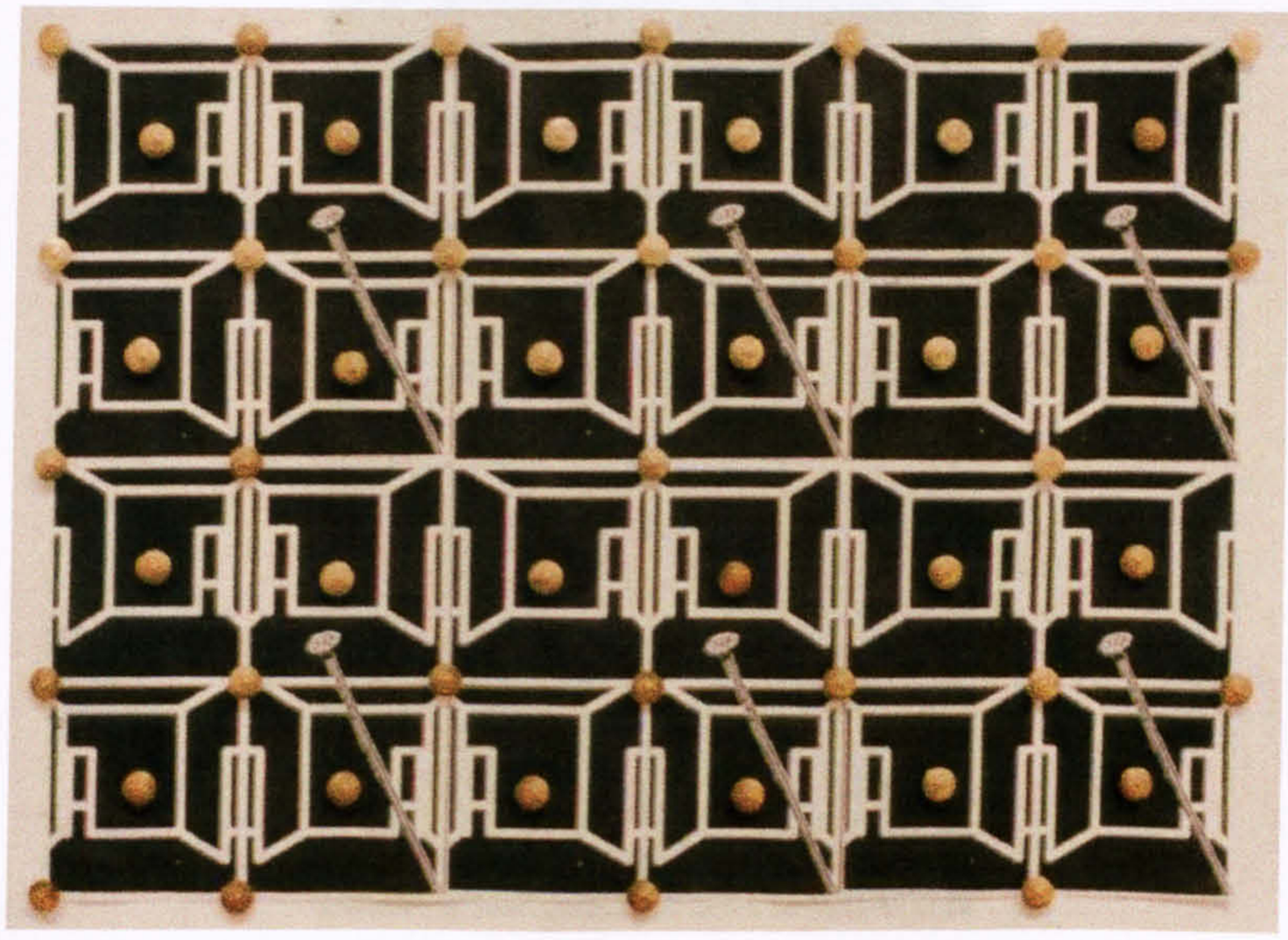


Fig. 3.5. 'Untitled' Working Drawings 1992 Steve Dutton
(digital images, drawing pins, nails, c. 14" x 16")

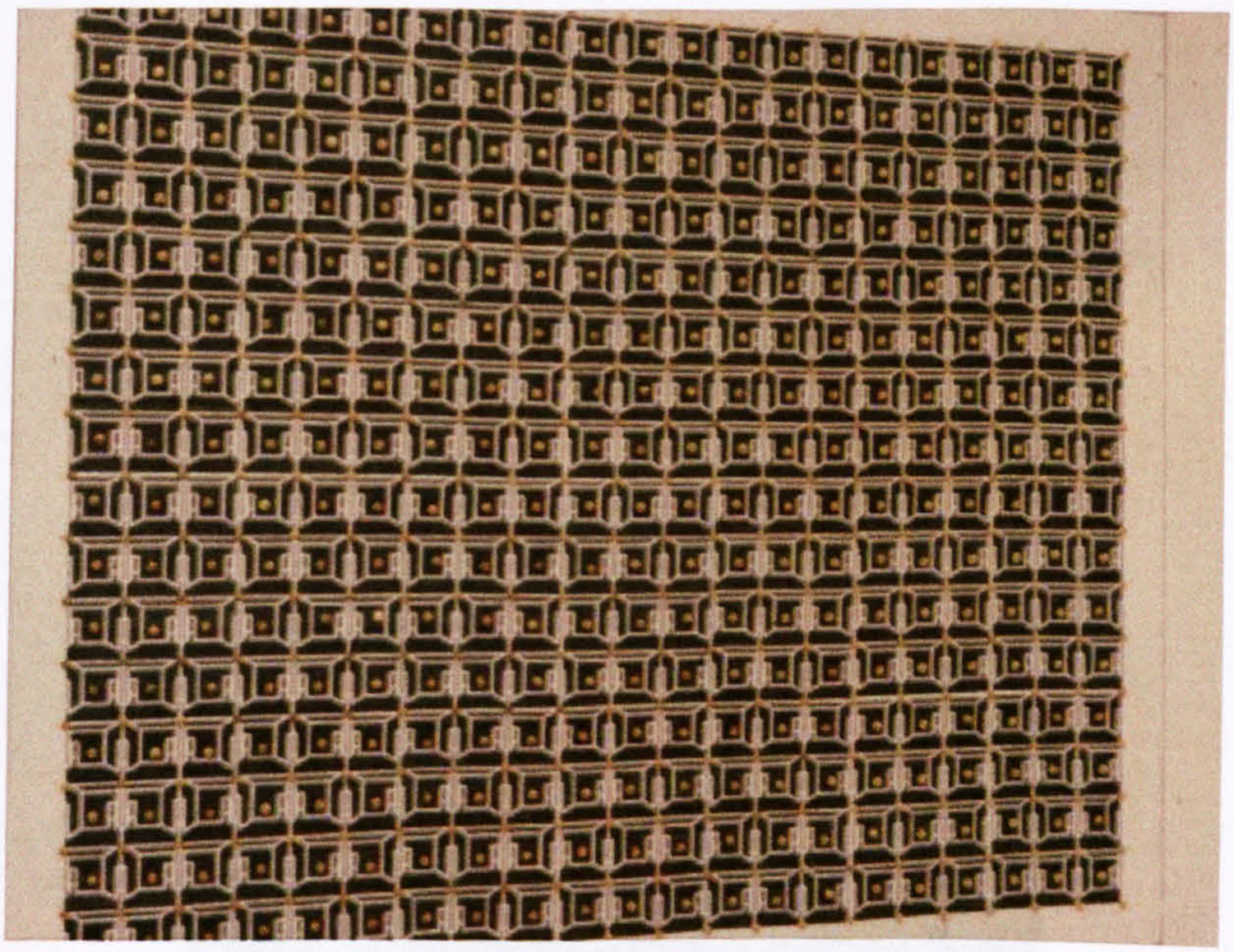


Fig. 3.6. 'Untitled' Working Drawings 1992 Steve Dutton
(digital images, drawing pins, nails, c. 34" x 42")

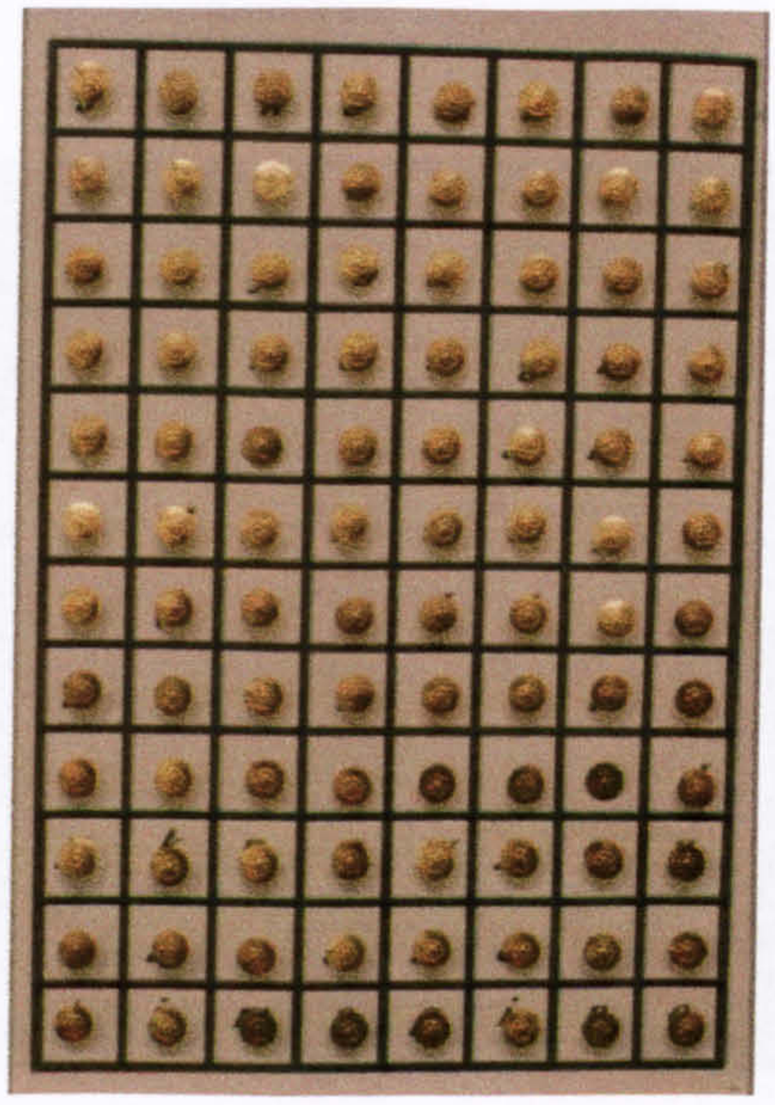


Fig. 3.7. 'Untitled' Working Drawings 1992 Steve Dutton
(digital images, drawing pins, c. 10" x 8")

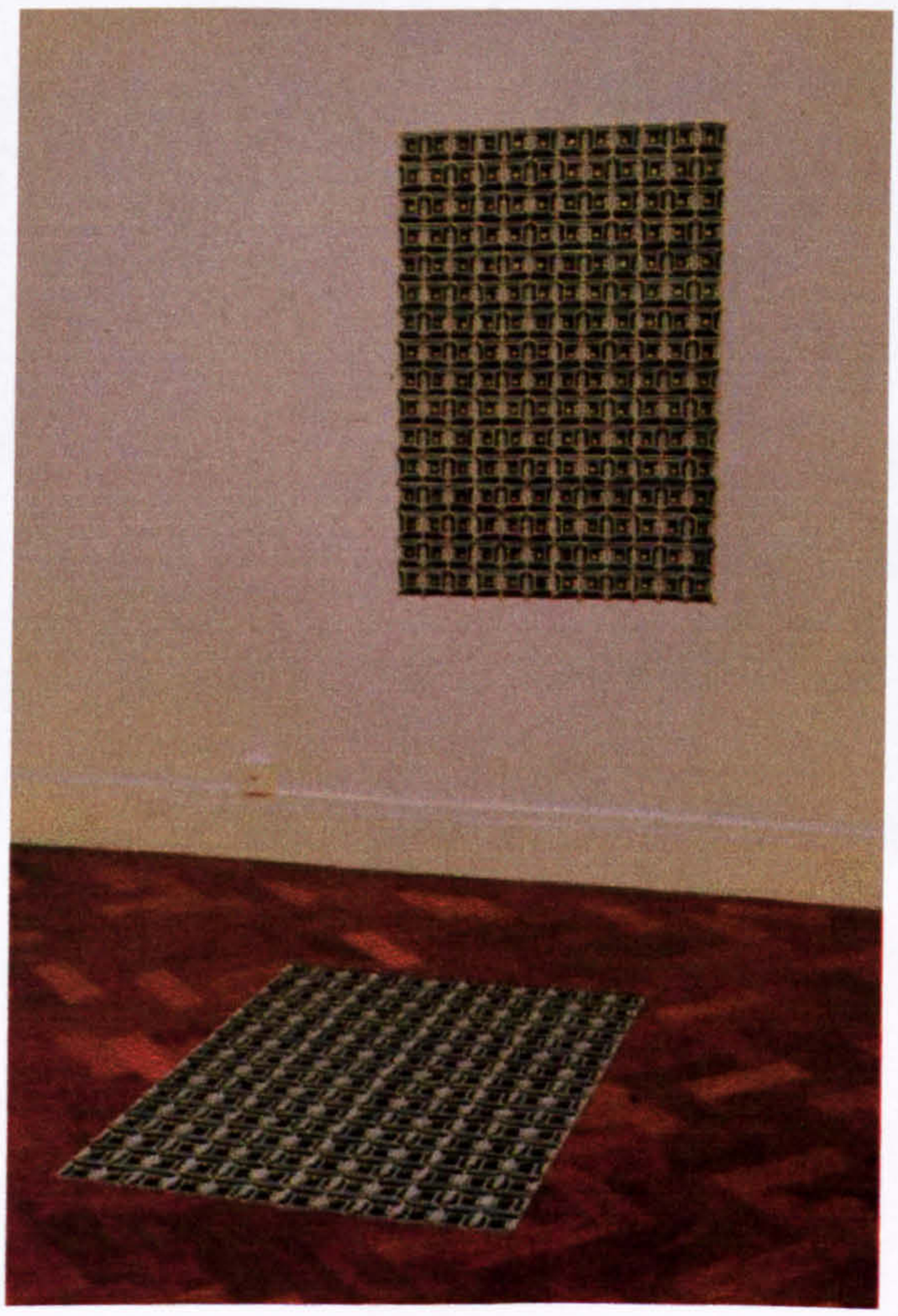


Fig. 3.8. 'Untitled' Working Drawings 1992 Steve Dutton
(digital images, drawing pins, nails, c. 2' x 3')



Fig. 3.9. 'Untitled' Bristle Painting 1992 Steve Dutton (oil paint, canvas, hog bristles, c. 30" x 36")

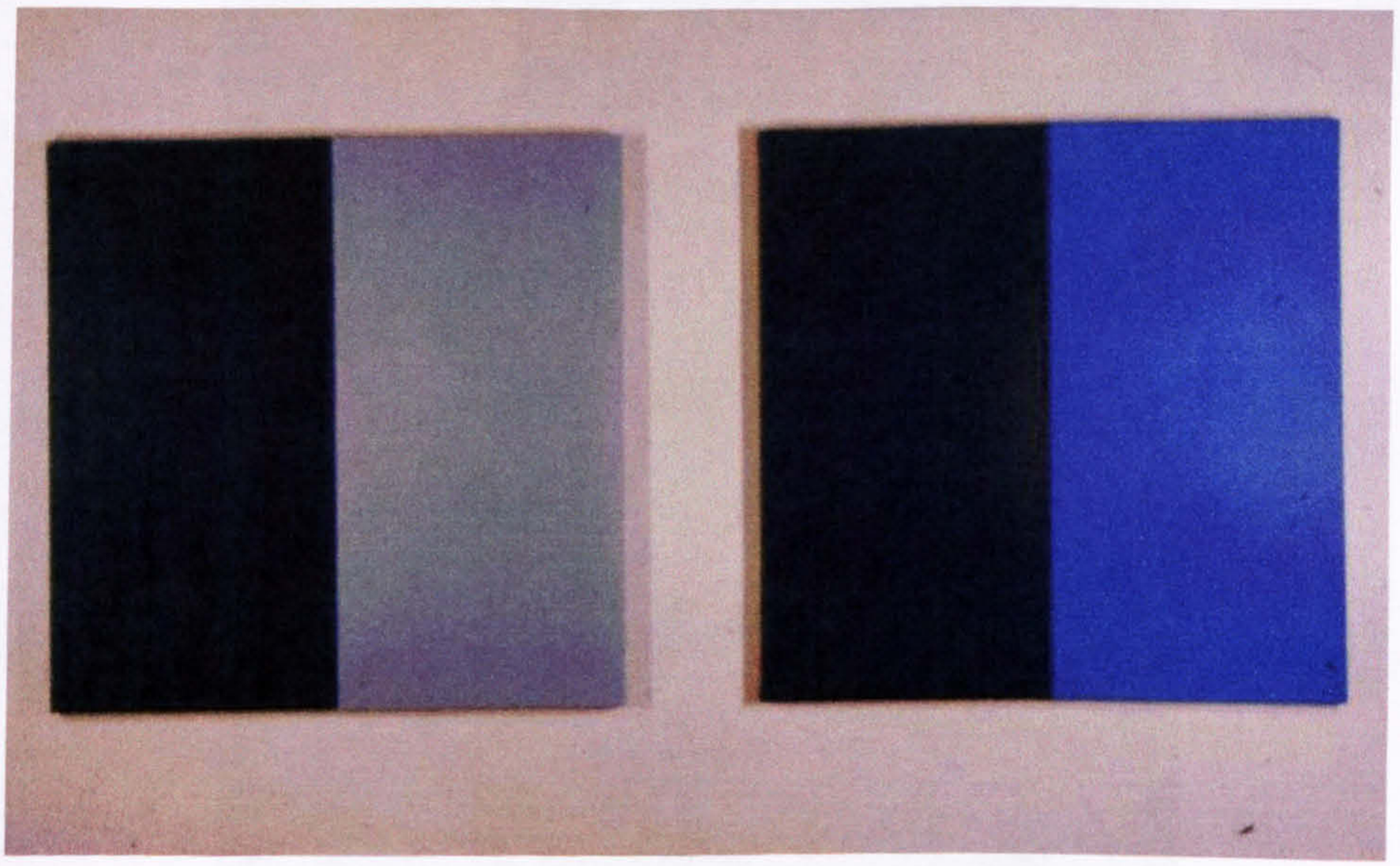


Fig. 3.10. 'Hannah and Barbara' 1993 Steve Dutton (acrylic on canvas, c. 24" x 24" ea.)

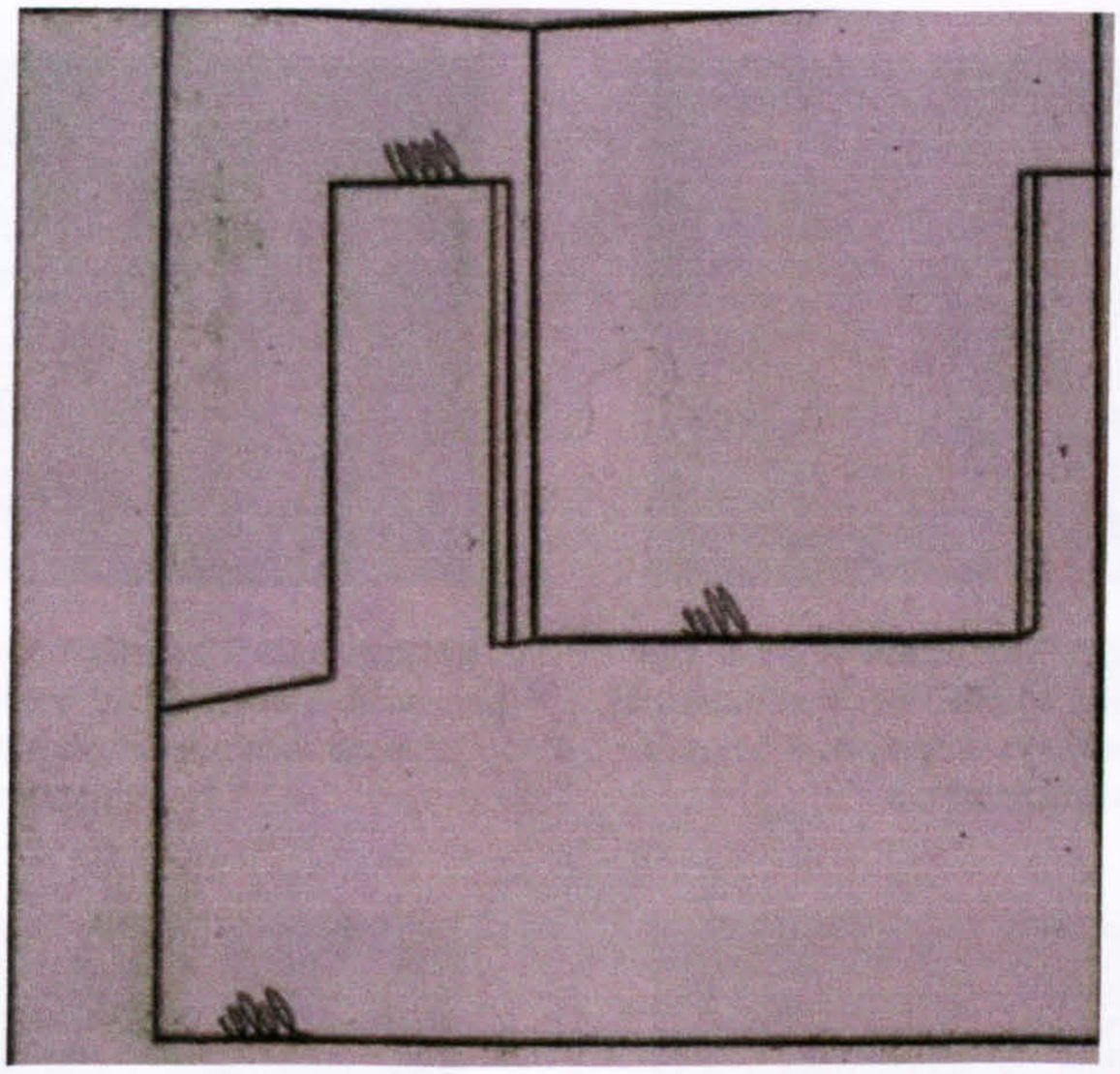


Fig. 3.11. 'Untitled' Carbon Drawing 1993 Steve Dutton (graphite on paper, c. 16" x 16")

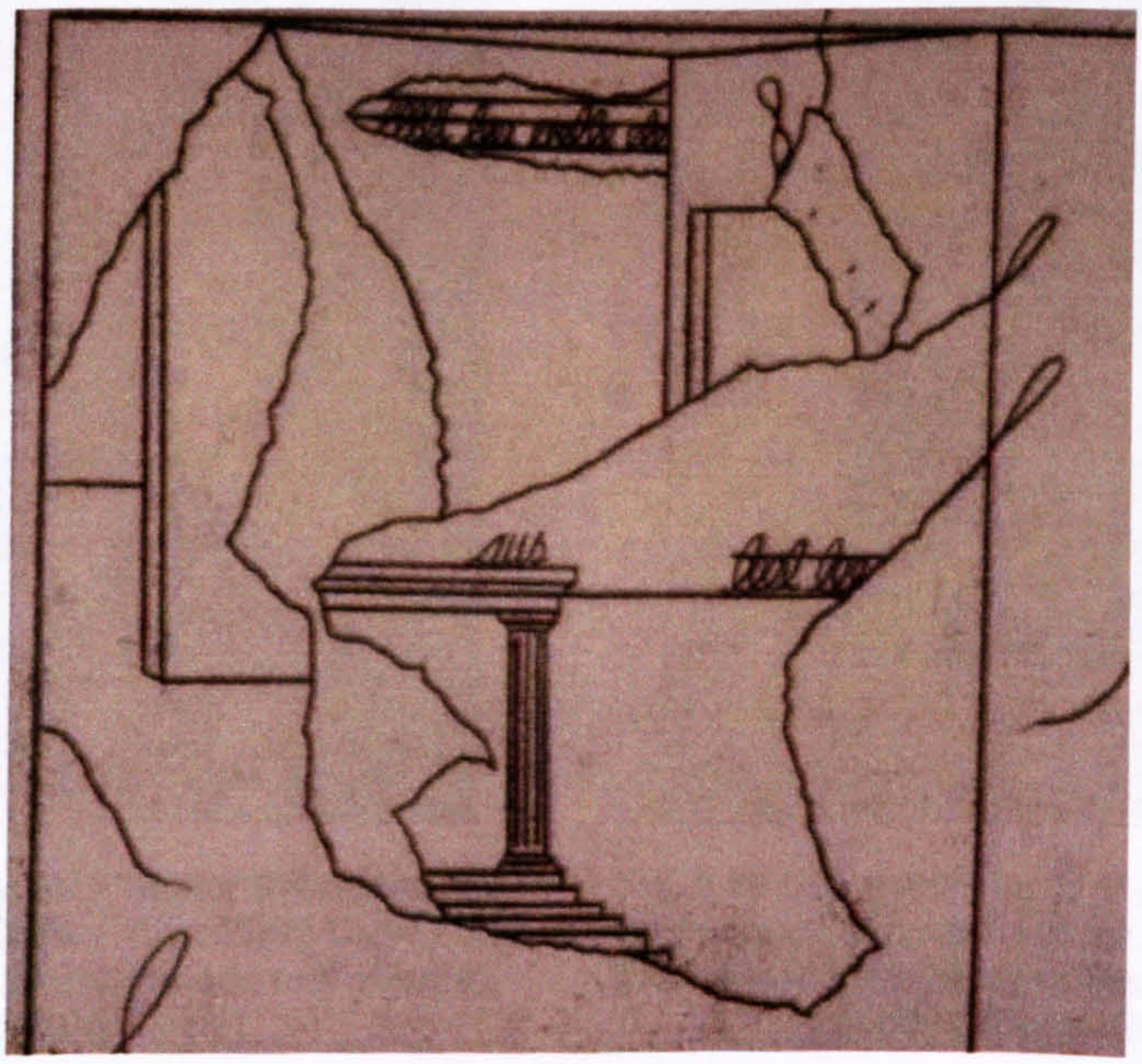


Fig. 3.12. 'Untitled' Carbon Drawing 1993 Steve Dutton (graphite on paper, c. 16" x 16")



Fig. 3.13. '7 Flags for 7 States' Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery 1992 Steve Dutton and Dave Alsop (digital images and mdf objects, dimensions vary).

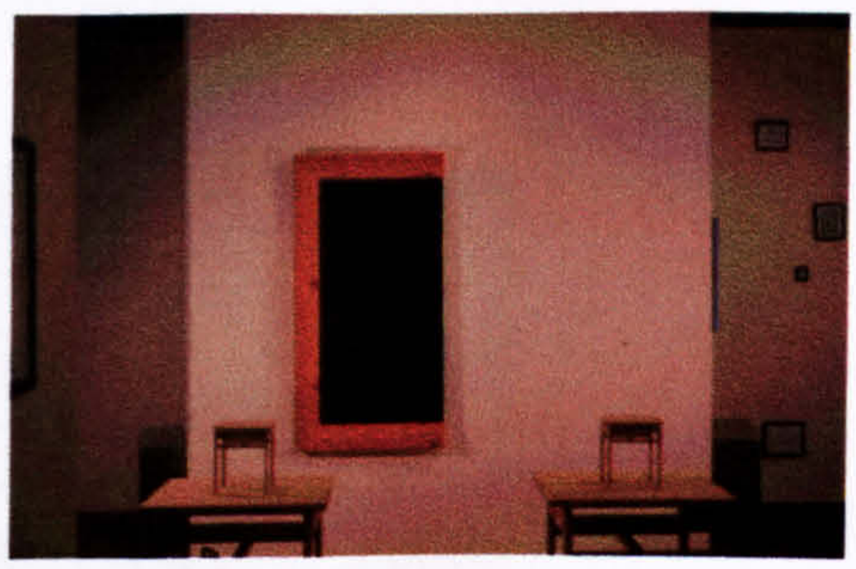


Fig. 3.14. '7 Flags for 7 States' Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery 1992 Steve Dutton and Dave Alsop (digital images and mdf objects, dimensions vary).

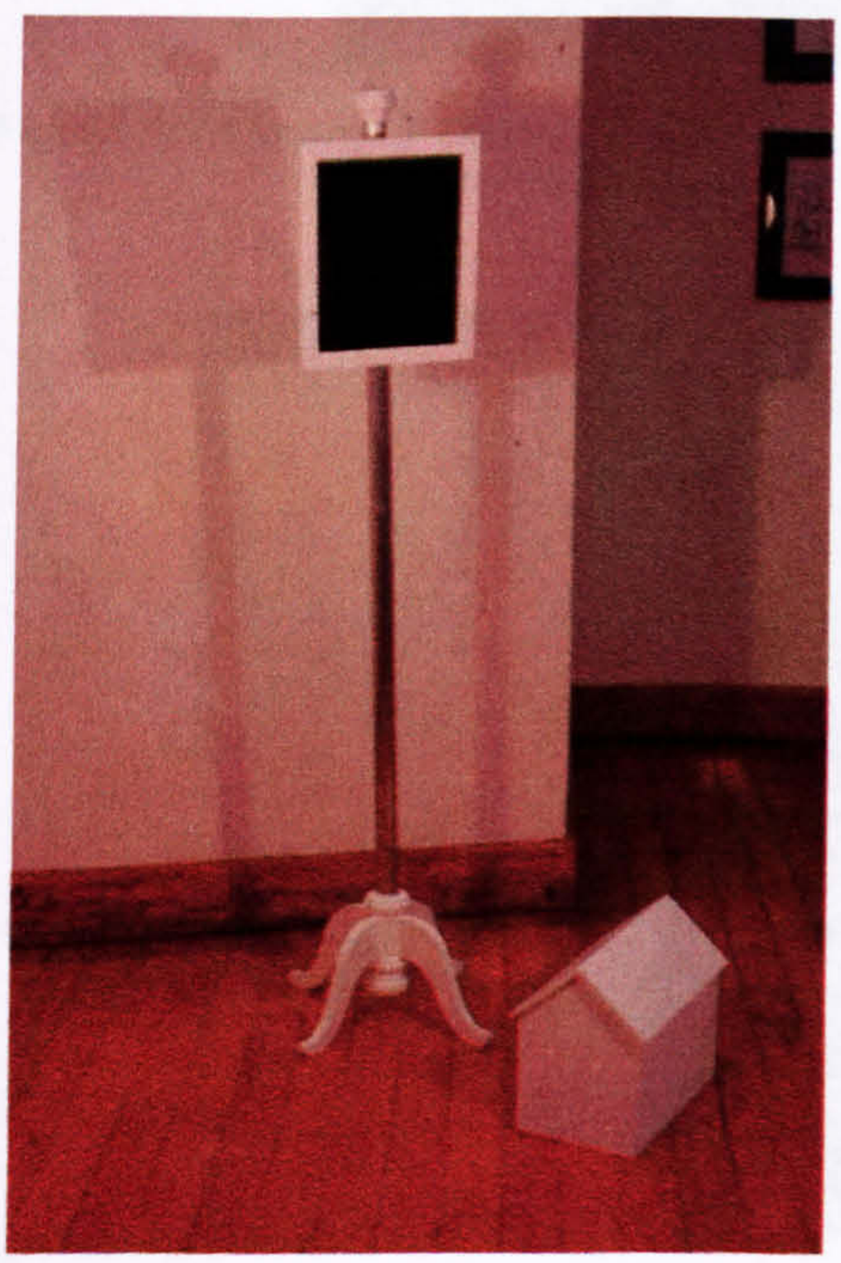


Fig. 3.15. '7 Flags for 7 States' Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery 1992 Steve Dutton and Dave Alsop (digital images and mdf objects, dimensions vary).

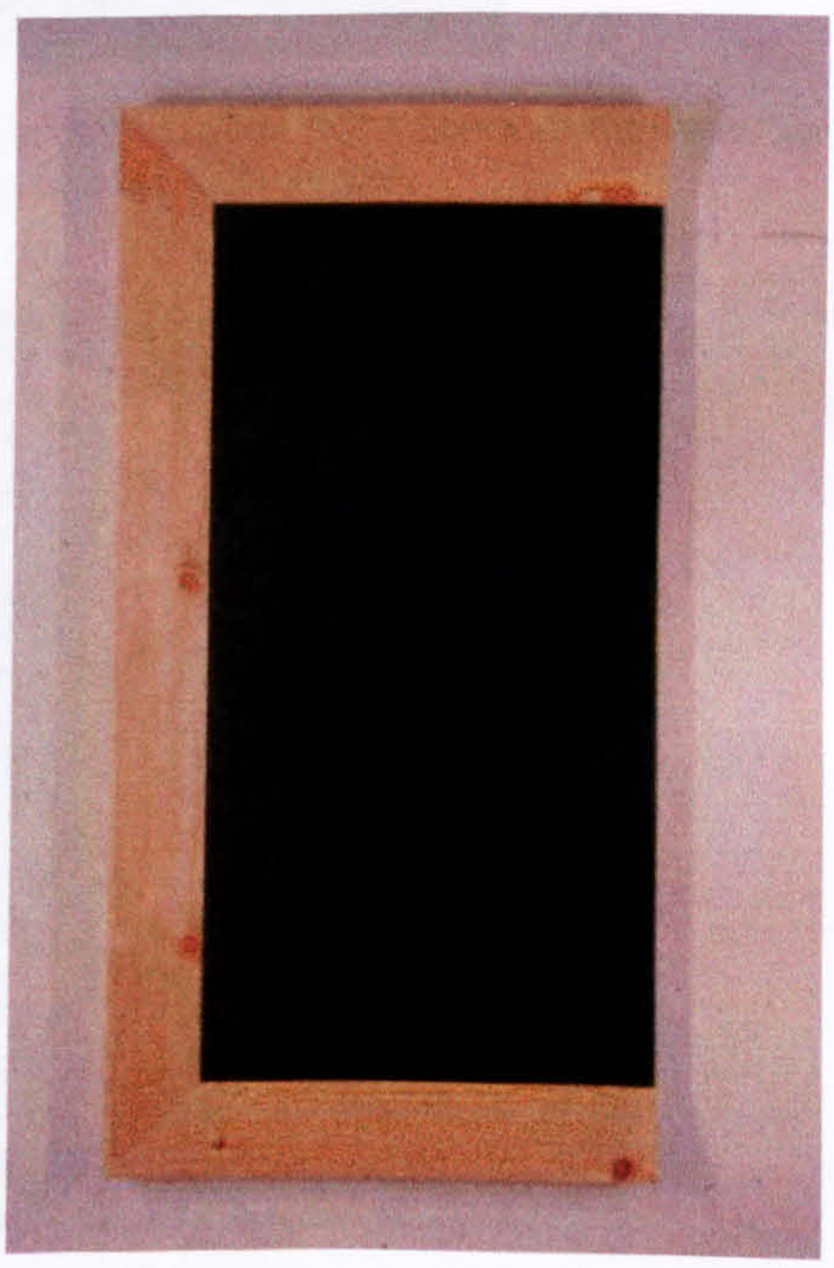


Fig. 3.16. ' Half Painting' in '7 Flags for 7 States' Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery 1992 Steve Dutton and Dave Alsop (digital images and mdf objects, dimensions vary).



Fig. 3.17. '7 Flags for 7 States' Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery 1992 Steve Dutton and Dave Alsop (digital images and mdf objects, dimensions vary).



Fig. 3.18. 'Untitled' Studio Assemblage 1993 Steve Dutton (mdf, various objects, dimensions vary)

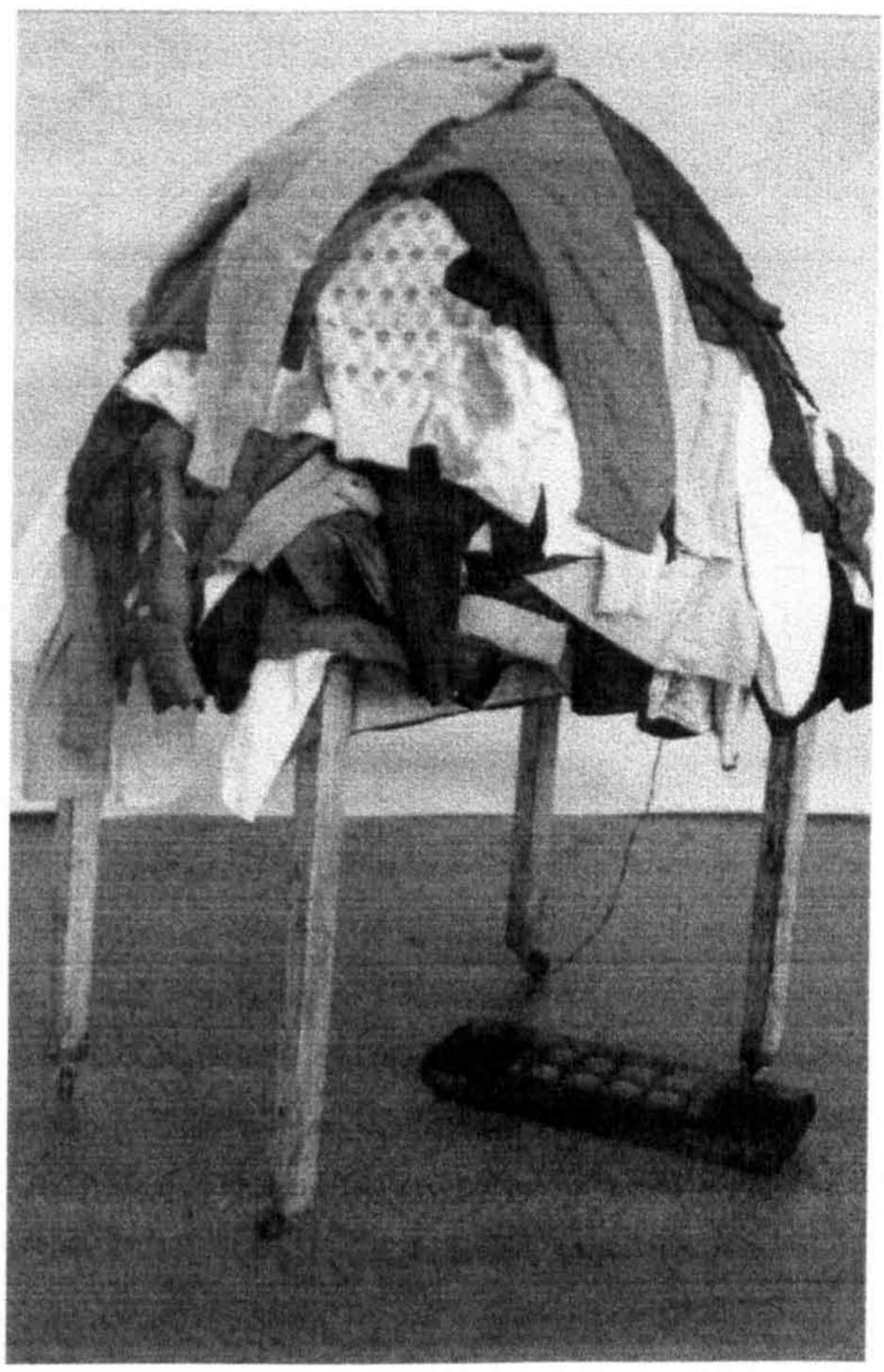


Fig. 3.19. 'Installation Shot' 1994 Percy Peacock (items of clothing, tables, drum machine)

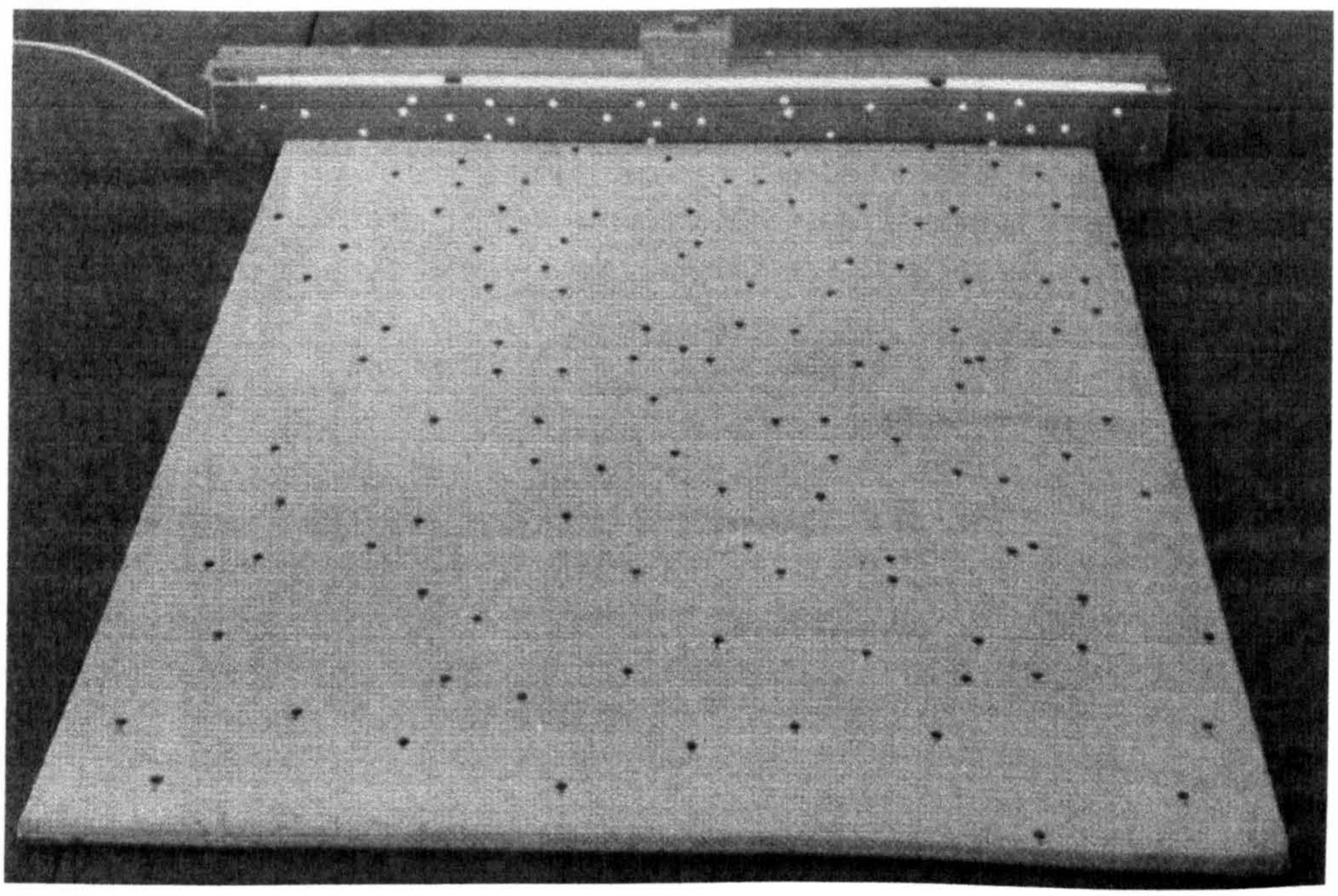


Fig. 3.20. 'Study for No Because' 1994 Steve Dutton (mdf, fluorescent light, canvas, c. 4' x 5')

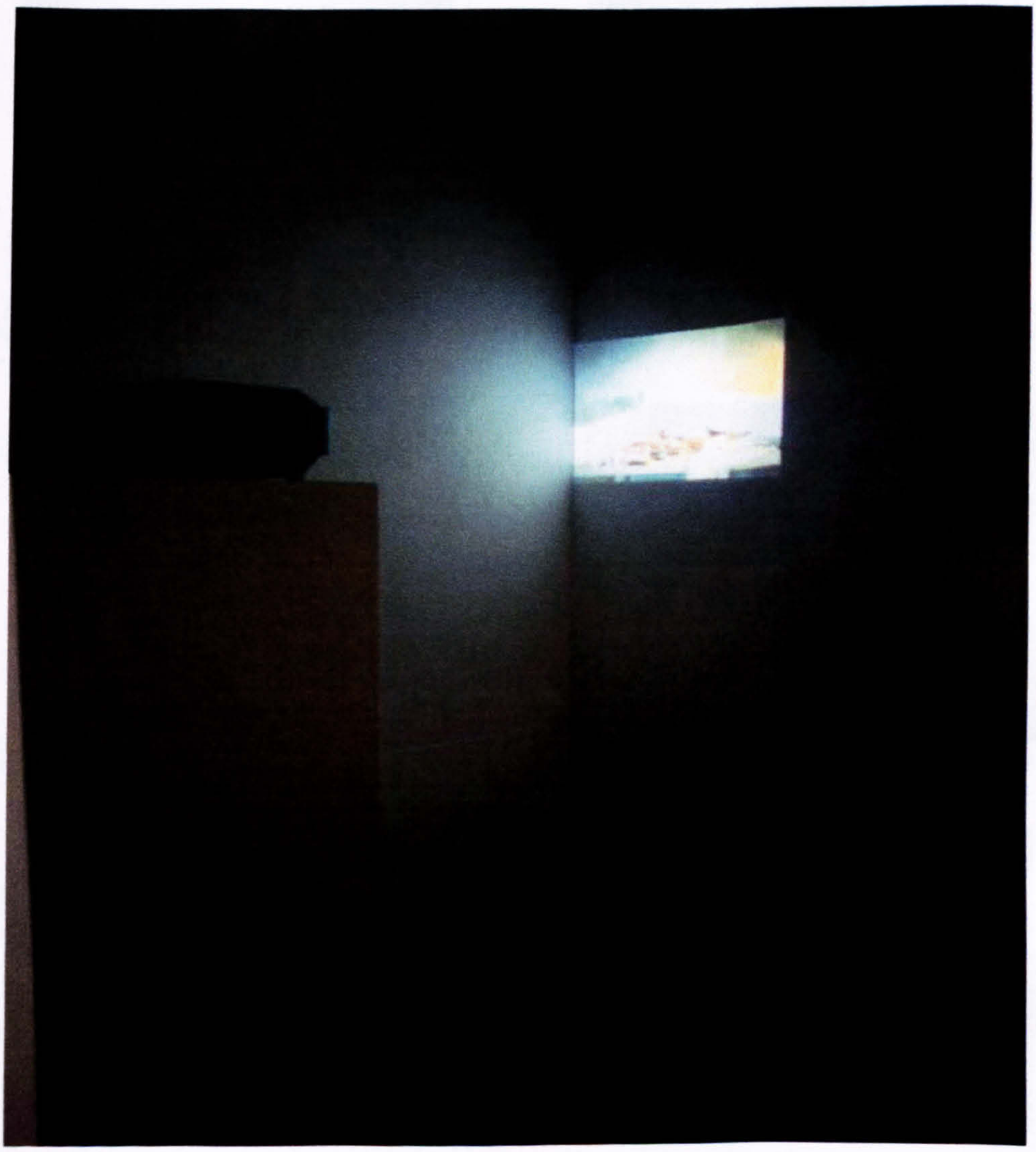


Fig. 3.21. 'Plague-Orgy-Time' in 'Apocatropes' Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield 1997 Dutton & Peacock (video projection)



Fig. 3.22. 'Apocatropes' Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.23. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.24. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.25. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.26. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.27. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.28. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.29. 'Apocatropes' 1997 Dutton & Peacock (photographs, mdf, video, dimensions vary)

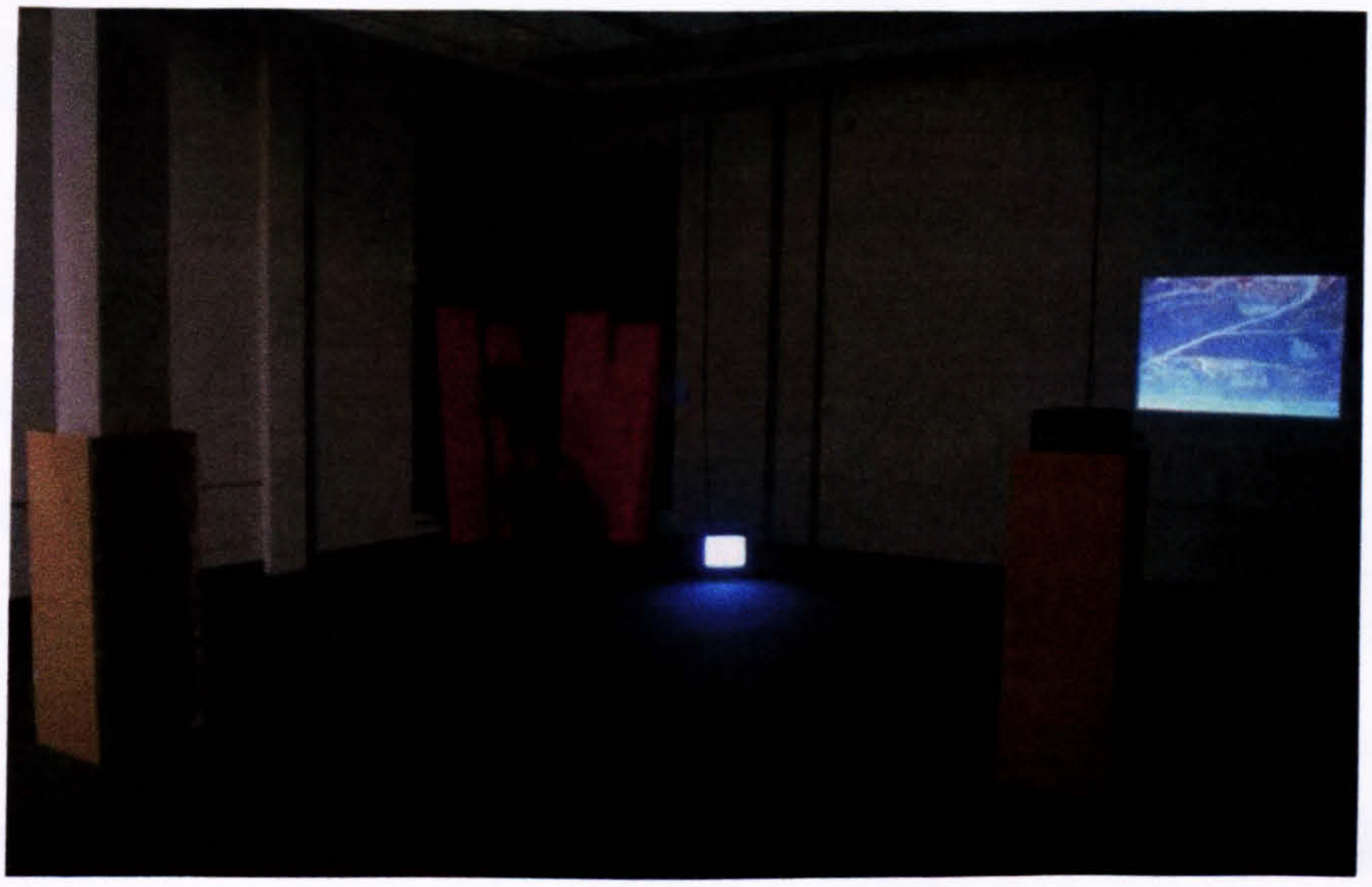


Fig. 3.30. 'Vesuvius' Rotherham Arts Centre 1998 Dutton & Peacock & Steve Swindells
(mdf, photographs, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.31. 'Vesuvius' 1998 Dutton & Peacock & Steve Swindells
(mdf, photographs, video, dimensions vary)



Fig. 3.32. 'Vesuvius' 1998 Dutton & Peacock & Steve Swindells
(mdf, photographs, video, dimensions vary)

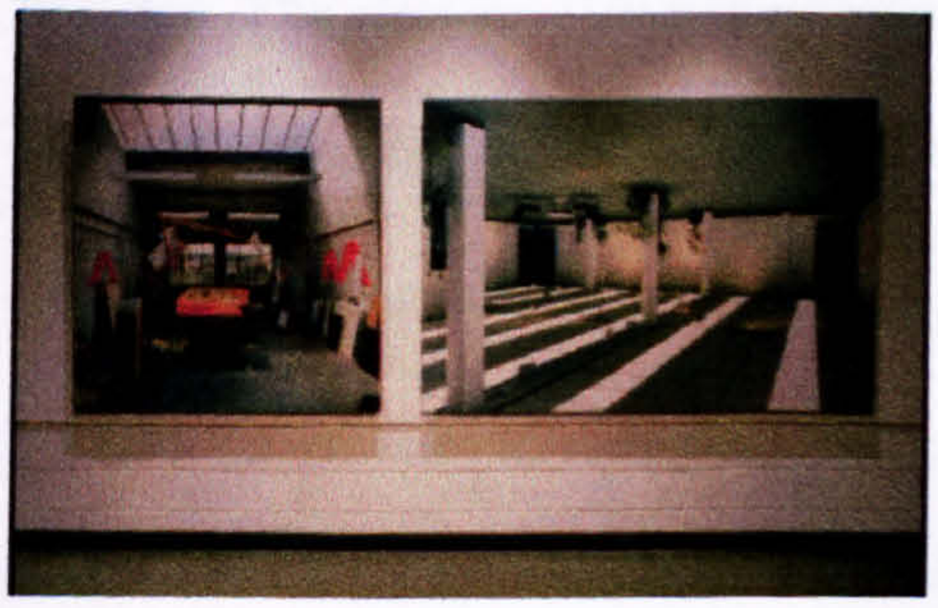


Fig. 3.33. 'Vesuvius' 1998 Dutton & Peacock & Steve Swindells
(mdf, photographs, c. 5' x 5' & 5' x 7')



Fig. 3.34. 'Vesuvius' 1998 Dutton & Peacock & Steve Swindells
(mdf, photographs, c. 5' x 7')

CHAPTER FOUR: Case Study Two: Dave Mackintosh

4.1. Background

Dave Mackintosh (born 1966), trained in Fine Art (Painting), at Sunderland Polytechnic (1986-89). He is a full-time artist working both in collaboration with other artists and alone at Manchester Artists Studio Association (MASA). He is an associate lecturer in Fine Art at University of Central Lancashire. He has been visiting lecturer on the BA and MA Fine Art courses at the Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) and the BA Fine Art course at Goldsmiths College, London. In addition, he has taught on the Architecture Course which is jointly run by MMU and the Victoria University of Manchester. Dave has been a part-time carer (20 hours per week), for Salford Care Services and has done freelance work i.e. project co-ordinator for 'Manchester Bookworks'.

4.2. Introduction.

This case study considers the problems Dave found with his largely studio-based practice. The chapter contains insights into his exploration of limits and the extension of practice into more installational-type work. Dave's 'reaching out' beyond the perceived limits of practice and product, via an extended range of media, materials and processes both in the making and display of his art, is investigated. Earlier work is described and discussed. The use of video as a medium for making art, seeking out an audience for his

work, and collaborative projects are considered and discussed. Specific projects are examined in detail in the final sections of the chapter. Illustrations referred to can be found at the end of the chapter. Dave's quotations are taken from interviews given to this researcher during the period 1997-2000 (e.g. Mackintosh, D. 1997), unless otherwise stated. Other people's commentary is considered and quoted where appropriate.

Dave said installational type art to him meant making 'fictions' (Mackintosh, D. 1997). He made fictions when he made paintings and the installational-type work that he undertakes are now the same - he still makes fictions. The difference is now he does not have to have all the work, or even the ideas, resolved before he takes it away from the studio to the place of installation. There is more risk in installational-type art practice, but this more fluid arrangement suits Dave, since this process allows for more spontaneity and freedom. The idea of constructing visual fictions is considered.

This case study is an example of an artist who explored the limits found with his studio-based practice and resituated these problems within a more liberating approach to art practice.

4.3. Reaching out: beyond the rectangle and beyond the studio.

Soon after graduating and setting up in MASA (Manchester Artists' Studio Association), Dave soon realised that being in an art studio was very different to being at art college. For instance he described the feeling of insularity within the group (everyone keeping their art to themselves), the mechanical nature of the art-making/studio/gallery set up and the lack of dialogue amongst the artists (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

According to Wright, S. (1998, p. 38), Dave had:

> "got bored with being in a studio, piling up paintings – he just wanted to have a show".

Dave had found that the event was as important as the piece of work, he said:

> "satisfaction comes through interaction with others – taking it to them or inviting them to join you".

Dave said that he felt uncomfortable with the notion that painting was somehow special or high art and that he wanted to make:

> "art that was punk" (Mackintosh, D. in Wright, S. 1998).

He said he wanted to:

> "make work quickly and cheaply and deliver to an audience to get a response" (Mackintosh, D. 2000).

Dave spoke about his feelings of confinement in terms of the rectilinear format of his paintings. Dave described the way he had felt 'confined' by the limits not only of 'the

rectangle' and the processes which resulted in the rectangle (the format of his paintings), but also by the debates going on around him to do with the intrinsic and formal aspects of painting.

Dave said he had trained as a painter because that was what he had always wanted to do (Mackintosh, D. 1997). After graduating from Sunderland Polytechnic in 1989, he came to Manchester to set up studio but said he was aware of becoming 'entrenched' and he wanted to take a peep over the parapet. He said that he became dissatisfied with merely painting, as he had:

> "had some shows and sold some drawings, but it seemed that there was something ...else going on. There was an art world outside of my studio, and I wanted to take part in this" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described the way the art studio 'thing' was set up:

> "what painters do, what I always thought painters do, the people I know who are painters do, the art studio - they work *in* the studio, then make the work and then try and get shows, or find ways of showing the work using this stretched canvas of varying formats but it would always be this rectangle" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described strong feelings of tension, the tension between belonging and feeling confined by that thing he wanted to belong to. Dave felt constrained by 'the scene' and the studio set-up with all its petty conventions and this was compounded by a feeling of 'not belonging' to the 'entrenched scene'. Dave described a feeling of being cut-off or

isolated in the world when he was asked about the concerns that prompted the changes in his art work and the transitions in his practice from paintings to a broader approach to making art (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave said:

> "I felt like a regional artist when I didn't really have to – I could do something about it" (Mackintosh, D. 2000).

He described the feelings that he had of being amongst other artists but confined within an insular practice:

> "no-one used to talk, there was no discourse, there was no sitting around talking about work, or about the art world" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave added later:

> "ignoring something you aspire to was just plain stupid" (Mackintosh, D. 2000).

According to Wright, S. (1998, p.38), Dave said:

> "I don't want to lock myself away in an ivory tower, and make beautiful things. I want to comment".

There was a certain amount of resentment at the seeming provinciality of being in Manchester; Dave perceived others as seeing Manchester as provincial and this seemed to provide a limit that he wanted to work against (Mackintosh, D. 1997). According to Dave there was a feeling of being cut-off as an artist working in Manchester and of

resentment at being labelled a 'regional' artist and a second class version of the London-based artist. He said:

> "When I first came to Manchester no artists talked, there was no creative discourse. Only a kind of work ethic and an inferiority complex about being regional. This still exists. In a recent review of "Eastenders", a show curated by Annual Programme (with which I have a strong association), Phil Griffin described some Annual Programme artists as "talking a good show" without acknowledging what they were doing - raising the profile of North West artists among other things. This is an example of an extreme reaction from a high formalist work ethic stance, to any kind of ambition in Manchester" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave also made reference to one member of the selection panel of the British Art Show, Dean of California Arts who, in response to the criticism that all of the artists in the show were from London, was quoted as saying that any artist who takes himself seriously would move to London. This 'official denial' of any serious art being made in the so-called provinces seemed to reinforce the sense of being cut off, but far from taking it lying down, Dave's response to this was:

> "Only an artist, through working, can change the perception of a city in the broader art world" (Mackintosh, D. 1998).

Dave said he wanted to do so much on this rectangle but felt constrained not only by the rectangle of the canvas, but by the 'scene' - Dave said the Manchester Artists' Studio

Association (MASA), was set up very much as a painting studio and he felt constricted by this. Dave acknowledged that the studio served a purpose, but he wanted to include a lot more of what was going on in the city and in his life, the way the work was informed, for example by his 'conversations down the pub' (Mackintosh, D. 1997). He wanted to be involved in new ways of working, ways of working he had seen on his frequent travels to London, during his close contact with other artists and friends around Manchester and London and his work on the selection panel at the Castlefield Gallery, Manchester.

Dave described the way these feelings of isolation and social pressure seemed to be at the opposite end of the scale of where he wanted to be as an artist and a prime reason for change. Confronting the situation and changing his approach, Dave restarted the practice but with a new approach and in a new context. He stopped just making paintings and began afresh; resituating the process of painting alongside other ways of making visual art. He became interested in exploring video as a means of making art. He realised:

> "Once I stopped painting, piling them all up in a pile in the studio, and it's easy to say I'm a painter, but once I stopped that I felt like I was really doing something when I was walking around making videos" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave's use of video is discussed further in sections 4.5 and 4.5.1.

The next section provides a 'flashback' to Dave's earlier work. His approach to drawing and the way he constructs images are considered.

4.4. Earlier work: automatic drawing and painting and random fictions

During a slide lecture, which Dave gave about his art work done over the last 10 years in Manchester, he described the way he had always made drawings on a daily basis (Mackintosh, D. 1999). (For an example of one of the drawings, see Fig. 4.8.). Dave described the difficulty he had experienced with trying to make his paintings as immediate and fresh as the way his drawings felt, and that he was continuously thwarted in this aim. The drawings were more immediate and not 'precious' and the paintings always felt less immediate and more precious. He attributed this to 'tradition'. By this he meant that the tradition of painting weighed heavily upon him and he described how, at art college he had been "taught a 'linear' history of art from Renaissance to Abstract Expressionism" and when he came to Manchester to set up studio he felt that he had transported this history with him and that he was to "add to this linear continuum" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described how the paintings from the period (late 1980's to mid 1990's), for example see Figs. 4.1. – 4.4., were derived from the drawings that he did every day such as in Figs 4.8. & 4.23. In spite of his apparent dissatisfaction with them, Dave acknowledged that the paintings had an 'automatic' feeling to them and this he attributed to the influence of his regular drawing practice. For example see the paintings in Figs. 4.1. and 4.2. "Painting with Aeroplane" 1990 and "Paintings with Cyclops" 1990. These paintings are constructed with layers of drawing, painting and collaged bits of newspaper. They are composed of juxtapositions of the quite different elements to

which Dave referred to observing and recording in his daily drawing routine. This researcher noted that the images appeared spontaneous and freely drawn and painted. Dave said that this was because he wanted to get the same feeling of immediacy and randomness, and even capture the failings or 'throw-away-ness' of the smaller A4 drawings, which he made in the snippets of time in the day when he would catch glimpses of the so-called random fictions (Mackintosh, D. 1999).

The term random fictions was used by Dave to describe the way he randomly constructed a spontaneous narrative in a painting which was made from the drawings he did during his daily drawing practice. The drawings were juxtaposed to create couplings of images that would otherwise not be seen together and in this way Dave made random fictions by putting these things together. It was a kind of auto-suggestion using images and it created the possibility of a new narrative.

Dave called these images, especially the paintings, 'Random Fictions', in which he placed "two or three elements or images next to each other to try and make a visual dialogue which was open to interpretations" (Mackintosh, D. 1998). He came across the term 'random fictions' in a book once and said "yeah, that's what I do – make random fictions!" and the name stuck (Mackintosh, D. 1998).

The paintings (see Figs. 4.1. – 4.4.), show Dave's attempts to involve the same kinds of thought processes, in that largely disparate or random shapes and colours, derived from what has been observed, are 'thrown together' in the painting. Ultimately Dave felt that

the paintings failed where the drawings succeeded. Interestingly this 'problem' led to a lot of work being produced.

Dave said that he did not see the drawings as the 'art' but that that was how it manifested itself. He thought that this was more to do with 'where' the art was, and he was interested in how to represent what he called the 'aesthetic of failing' in his work. This aesthetic of failing was quite an important feature of Dave's paintings in that often they appeared to have been made very quickly and could, therefore, appear quite roughly-made but this was a desired effect and often what was seen was the 'out-take' from a vast production of work (Mackintosh, D. 1999).

Later on in the chapter the high art/low art cross over in Dave's work is considered. However, there were indications of this kind of aesthetic in the paintings from the early to mid 1990's (see Fig. 4.3. "Fun Box", 1993 and Fig. 4.4. Untitled (Skateboard Apparatus), 1994). Very immediate brushwork and intuitive line is used in the paintings to depict the kind of street furniture used by skate boarders. Vincent, M. (1995, p.34), said that street furniture was a recurring motif in Dave's paintings and drawings:

> "Mackintosh's collection of motifs includes kerbs, railings, steps and urban trees. These appear in almost diagrammatic form, painted outlines drawn freely on brown linen, perhaps arranged according to some hidden narrative. With elements highlighted and enlarged to show detail, co-habiting with areas of sparsely scrubbed-on colour, the paintings reflect

> qualities in objects and environment through both depiction and emulation" Vincent, M. (1995, p.34).

The choice of canvas to work on, the use of an immediate and swift brushwork was quite deliberate, as was the leaving of large areas untouched and apparently unfinished. This sketchy appearance added to this 'aesthetic of failing' to which Dave had referred, in that the paintings appeared to have been given up on before they had even got started. The images appeared to be almost like graffiti that had been interrupted.

In an interview with this researcher Dave said he still draws on a regular basis and still regards it as an important feature of his practice, (Mackintosh, D. 2000).

The next section describes Dave's interest in making art associated with urban spaces and considers his use of materials associated with graffiti, i.e. stencils and spray paint. Dave's explorations of alternative media are examined.

4.5. Alternative media: high art/low art crossover and the 'last paintings'

The trials of trying to make his paintings appear as random and immediate and as fresh as his drawings, together with his attempts to realise an aesthetic of failing, had led Dave to produce the 'Last Paintings'. These paintings were made with stencils and in this set of works Dave attempted to create 'immediate paintings' and to recreate the 'throwaway' feel of the sketches and drawings. He said he wanted to make "instant

paintings" and to remove "the fear of the blank canvas" with which he was confronted at the beginning of each painting (Mackintosh, D. 1997). Images were selected (initially at random and for their associations within, for example a random fiction, see Fig. 4.7. "Motorway", 1995), they were drawn onto card and then cut out into stencils. These images were then stencilled onto surfaces i.e. canvas. Dave got the idea of creating the high art/low art crossover through the act of stencilling images taken from Old Masters' paintings. There was a useful association to be made with street art – the use of stencilled graffiti was a common phenomena within urban spaces such as Manchester, London, Paris. In addition, Dave made these stencilled Old Master images into an art guessing game for the audience. Dave's 'art quiz' is discussed in section 4.6.

In a slide talk, Dave talked about the lack of debate amongst his fellow artists and the patronising overtones of any debate that did take place (Mackintosh, D. 1999). On reflection he felt that there existed an elitist attitude amongst painters towards other media. On reflecting upon his studio-based painting practice, Dave began to recognise his anxiety over the exclusive nature of painting, more particularly the hierarchical stance of the practice towards the 'end product' and the singularity of its presence at the end of the process. To him it all seemed connected too much with notions of high art. Dave opened out his repertoire and began to let new things in and then used other objects in his work such as large wooden cut-out figures, photographs and video work alongside the canvases (for example see Figs. 4.12. – 4.15.).

Dave described how he had had some success as a painter but:

> "I was changing my discipline every other week, but within the confines of a rectangular canvas" it would always be subject to "the format of this rectangle and that always niggled me" (Mackintosh, D. 1999).

Dave said that he had always felt awkward about the 'privileged' role of the artist and this kind of "pompous, high art idea". He felt that his newer work, in a way, made comments about these notions and were less 'untruthful'. He was referring to the way his practice has changed in response to the way he felt about what he was doing and making and how it had felt 'wrong' for some time.

The anxiety over the confines of practice and being 'held' by the rectangle and the desire to engage with things beyond his studio, prompted Dave to make changes. He wanted to be more 'active in the world' as an artist, to go out onto the street, to engage, to move away from high art ideals and to experiment with 'low art' - graffiti, street art, stencils and popular visual culture:

> "in an attempt to take my ideas into the world I had experimented with graffiti and using stencils". He said he wanted to: "realise my ideas in different ways. The way the work was informed was not reflected in the work and the rectangle was causing problems" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He went on to describe how he felt in relation to painting. He said "the main problem was feeling that there must be more" which revealed a certain desire to be 'outside' his notions of painting (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

One such project, where Dave experimented with so-called 'low artforms' such as graffiti, was the 'British Bulldog' piece. It is described by Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (1997 pp. 41-43.), as a family of dogs stencilled in a skateboard park:

> "Hierarchy is depicted by size, the British Bulldog – referring to the oversized maps of Imperialist Britain – towering over the other breeds".

In addition Dave began experimenting with the video camera as a drawing tool. He saw it as a direct way of getting an image, an immediate or instant image, which could be manipulated at a later stage in the process. The next section considers Dave's use of video as a medium.

4.5.1. Drawing in video and drawing in space.

Dave said he:

> "started exploring alternative strategies for making art, more interesting but not necessarily subversive – more popular or populist, less aggrandised or precious, like radio, pop music, video and performance or collaborations" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

For example, video was used to document events and performances (see Figs. 4.9. and Figs. 4.26. & 4.27., 4.30. & 4.31.) for video stills from performance pieces; these pieces are described in detail in sections 4.9. and 4.10., respectively). In addition video was used as a tool for drawing, (see Figs. 4.10 and 4.11.), the video stills are from a collaborative video piece which is described in section 4.8.

By reaching out beyond his normal repertoire Dave attempted to achieve his goal of bringing life and art closer together. He described the way he had simply replaced the paint and the pencil with a video camera and solved the problem of the 'object versus process' or at least had begun to make some work about that problem. Dave said he realised that he was still having to deal with the rectangle i.e. the rectangular viewing frame of the video camera and monitor, but this was offset by getting 'instantaneous images' (Mackintosh, D. 1997). Dave said about using video:

> "Although you're getting a moving image and there's time involved, it's still a visual thing and that's how I saw it. Using a video camera was a way of absorbing stuff and talking to people. But instead of absorbing stuff and then bringing it in to the studio to make it into something like a painting which is an object, I was bringing those two processes together" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave described the way he felt that he was learning again (not 'stagnating'), and not cutting himself off anymore. He wasn't bored or boring himself anymore. He was collecting imagery and then re-presenting it in as raw a form as possible, especially in the earlier days. He described how he felt that this was good because he "did not have any choice" in that it was a more 'automatic' way of working.

In a sense using this raw form of collecting images increased choice because it reduced the need for editing and value judgements:

> "I didn't have any choice as to whether it was beautiful or not. The video just recorded what I saw. If it was interesting it was interesting, if it was not then it was not" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described the way he used the camera to record conversations, things that he found difficult to include in paintings. He also described the way that the pressure of being confronted by the flat, rectangular canvas and constantly having to edit and re-edit stuff out in order to arrive at the essence (i.e. the painting), had been relieved. When he was drawing he did not have this pressure and making videos was the same and a way of linking the two processes - painting but in an unpressured way, like drawing. He said "I don't edit, it's just there, that's why I felt it was closer to drawing" Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave described the way he had simply replaced the paint and the pencil with a video camera:

> "the first attraction of video to me was it is far removed from the contemplative quality painting has. It is time-based" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He went on:

> "I wanted to draw with the video camera, after all the video camera is just another tool. It's a drawing tool. That's how I see it. It's a way of

collecting information. It's a way of getting information out that you see. That's what I always think I'm doing. When you install things you're drawing with objects" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

The contemplative nature of painting which Dave described seemed less interactive than Dave wanted.

He seemed to be 'moving away' from 'aestheticised objects' and the commodification of his painting. It was the first time that he had stopped painting and turned to something else – an alternative to paint. It was also the first time that something had been written about his work in the form of a critical review and he regarded this as a success. The effect of this was that he wanted to continue. Letting go of what was becoming a problem i.e. the feeling of being confined, seemed to provide a sense of release and this gave impetus for a renewed approach to his practice.

He described a 'letting go' of the confines of his old repertoire and an embrace of alternative modes of art production. He felt that his practice was now more of a 'rummage and a skirmish' and the product reflected this approach. Dave said that he felt it was like:

"going out into the world, reaching out and finding things out, you know, not just finding formal things out as you do in your painting but more of a constant discovery and I wanted to express this in different ways" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Dave continued:

> "I decided I could do.. anything, and that I should not confine myself in the studio again" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He said that from then on:

> "everything was *in*. Everything was material for art" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described a broadening out of his practice into a wider discursive field as "an on-going skirmish" to make connections with more than just the 'art crowd'. He sensed a feeling of freedom saying he could do what he liked and call it art if he wanted to. He said:

> "I'm just rummaging around, having a skirmish. Your whole practice is this on-going skirmish. When I make a painting now it is not an end and it's the same in whatever I do, it is not geared up just to painting but I do still make paintings but everything now informs everything else" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He related how he used material from videos to inform his paintings and other work:

> "Things I start now can end up not just as paintings like before but they might end up as a song, or something on the floor, whatever. I'm completely off the hook as far as the rectangle is concerned. Completely open" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described the way that everything before had to be in the rectangle, he did not know why; it could have been something to do with art college:

> "maybe I went to a shit art college, I don't know. But now I'm completely liberated" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

However, this new feeling of freedom was not without its elements of chance, contingency and risk but it seemed that this was actually part of the attraction.

Dave said he could go to a place now with some bits and make it work as art and that there was a new 'built in' contingency and risk present within the new work because of its fragmented nature. One such piece was "The Sheer Devastation of the South" (Cable Street Gallery in London, 1996 – see Figs. 4.12 – 4.15.). This piece comprised a set of almost life size wood cut-outs of cowboys, rather like stage sets, along with a video projection and a sound track. It was all to do with the situation. He said it had the feeling of chance, the elements of risk, but the more satisfying feeling of chance and risk:

> "I get a lot more from it" (Mackintosh, D. 1999).

The images were 'drawn' in space: a jigsaw was used to cut out the drawing and the shapes in the piece make use of the surrounding space as a background. This researcher noted that the background would be always changing for the viewer as they moved around the space. The viewer would be no longer 'held' in a particular relationship to the piece: the viewer would be free to roam around and look at the piece form several

viewpoints and angles. The work was not held by the rectangle anymore (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

He described how taking his practice out into the world and installing it - making art in this way - was much more interesting. Dave said he still loved painting, but merely making paintings for galleries was a stale and limiting situation and he wanted to immerse himself and his practice in the 'real world' (Mackintosh, D. 1999).

He described the way that in practice things could still be rather mechanical or repetitious, with one thing happening or being made after the other, as in a production line. The difference was that the work did not 'exist' until it had been installed, and that this 'specificity' was much more interesting. This was a conscious decision to move away from just making paintings (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

4.6. Finding an audience

In an attempt to gain wider appeal Dave reached out beyond the context of the art gallery, setting out to find the 'accidental' audience.

For example, in 1995 Dave invented a game or quiz which comprised a guessing game for any audience looking at this particular set of works. The works in question were the 'Old Master stencil' paintings discussed in section 4.5. The quiz comprised a questionnaire and combined the 'games' with 'art'. Each image in the game was a

stencilled image derived from an 'Old Master' painting. To play the game the viewer was required to guess which old master the image came from. For example two such works were "Stencil Painting: (Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist, after Michelangelo)", 1995 (see Fig. 4.6.) and "Stencil Painting: (Sacred and Profane Love after Titian)", 1995.

Dave said he thought that his work would be received by a much broader public "because it is no longer contained by the gallery" (Mackintosh, D. 1999). He began to take advantage of increased opportunities within the region for artists willing to explore alternatives. Opportunities such as Video Positive 1995 for which he made a video with Martin Vincent. It was the first time that he had stopped painting and turned to something else. It was also the first time that something had been written about his work in the form of a critical review and he regarded this as a success. This was a significant moment.

He also described the use of video as a way in to a less elitist art form and so access to an alternative audience, an audience that he himself felt a more akin to. He described the way that sometimes the audience can 'find him' – often by accident. He described a commission/residency in a housing development:

> "I was asked to be an artist in residence at a development in Manchester called Manhattan Loft Development, where huge warehouses on Sackville Street were being turned into posh apartments. They gave me

£500 to go there and work for 6 weeks so I had this massive studio in this building" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Prospective apartment buyers had the opportunity to see an artist at work.

He took all the opportunities and increased chances to make new work and in doing so felt liberated and that working outside the rectangle with new media and new spaces had a 'democratising' effect, in that painting no longer exerted such a powerful grip on his practice. Painting was now part of a broader, inclusive practice (which included more elements of chance), and not at the pinnacle of it. He said: "each work grows out of this process of chance" - this chance or series of chances determined the piece of work's evolution and was best described by such projects as the temporary 'stencil' piece (Mackintosh, D. 1999). These works are temporary and involve the viewer as a part of the work. Chance encounters with the viewer are a part of the work – the viewer is requested to actually play a part in constructing the work. Dave made stencils of buildings in Manchester, viewers bought them for £10 each and then they used them to go and make an image on a wall by spraying paint through the stencil onto the building (see Fig. 4.5.). They would then record it by taking a 35 mm slide of it (Dave would, if necessary, provide the camera). This slide was given back to Dave and he gave the £10 back. Effectively this meant the potential art viewer was actually making the work. The viewer played a part over and above just looking.

Dave liked the way the work was unresolved right up until the last possible moment:

> "I get a lot more from it..I don't want to make art just for artists or for people who go to art galleries... I like it when art and life collide" (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

Another example of finding an audience and a high art/low art cross over was the exhibition 'Private View' (Velvet, Manchester, 1997). Velvet is a café bar on Canal Street in Manchester's so-called gay village and above each urinal in the gents', and in each cubical in the toilet, there is a small video monitor which usually is showing, for example, the Home Shopping Channel. The exhibition 'Private View', which Dave curated, involved artists showing specially commissioned films via these monitors:

> "18 artists have created video works to better entertain those powdering their nose. Films include a giant animated penis tying itself into knots and a lingering shot of the voyeuristic gaze of a dirty old man (who turns out to be none other than Chuck Berry)" Clark, R. 1997).

McGee (1997, p.23.), pointed out that such projects had the added advantage of a guaranteed audience:

> "The best thing about this location, from the point of view of the artists, is that they are quite literally guaranteed a 'captive audience' – what's more, many people will pay repeated visits over the course of the show or even in a single evening. Hopefully, installations like this will push the

boundaries of venues for visual arts and bring video to a much wider audience" (McGee, K. 1997, p.23.).

Dave's contribution to this special project commission was that he co-curated it alongside fellow artist Mark Pearson. In all, 18 artists from Manchester, London, Utrecht and Newcastle were involved in it and:

"there's a dark humour and playfulness in many of the videos on display – but also an emphasis on the creation of 'short fictions' and the use of available low tech" (McGee, K. 1997).

Sound was a feature in this show and although the sound quality was reported by McGee (1997), as rather poor;

"the technique of putting soaring and dramatic soundtracks over everyday things is used to good effect".

Time was a key feature of this project and each video (roughly three minutes duration), allowed enough time for any would be viewer to visit the lavatory, and view the film on display, before going back to the bar! The film that Dave included in the show, 'Active Jennifer' (video installation, 1997), was of a tableau composed of a 'windswept' Barbie doll, sitting in front of an electric fan, apparently 'listening to' a transistor radio. According to Wright (Mackintosh, D. in Wright, S, 1998), the thing that Dave liked the most about the Velvet Bar piece was that is was "gentle, lightweight" and "didn't impose".

4.7. Working with others.

This section considers Dave's involvement with others. Joining a team seemed to be one of the most significant impulses that had prompted Dave's moves beyond his studio practice. In an interview with this researcher, Dave said:

> "I think now it is much more interesting, especially collaborating with other people. I felt much more capable of taking part in something, of functioning as an artist" (Mackintosh, D. 1999).

Two examples of Dave reaching out beyond the confines of his studio bound practice, to work with others, were the stencil painting projects which are discussed in more detail in section 4.6. The first example was when Dave got the audience involved in the Old Master guessing game. The second example was when Dave got the audience to actually complete the work for him by spray painting one of his stencil images on to the side of a building.

Another example of an 'art game' that Dave entered into with the audience, and his interest in a high/low art cross over, was the 'jigsaw' project, see (Fig. 4.16.). In a slide talk (Mackintosh, D. 1999), Dave said making a jigsaw of his own work was inspired by seeing a jigsaw of the painting 'Guernica' by Picasso. He described how the kitsch aesthetic and the high art/low art cross over appealed to him. Dave manufactured wooden jigsaw sets; each was based on one of his projects and was sold for what he saw as an affordable price. The audience could buy a boxed set, which comprised a jigsaw

set based on one of Dave's projects or, a single piece from a jigsaw which could be bought for a lower price of £35. He described how he liked the idea of the work being fragmented, sold off in separate units and dispersed randomly.

Collaborating with the audience broke the perceived barrier between artist and audience and it had the added advantage of allowing Dave to break with the rectangle. The audience were engaged with directly, to actually 'complete' the work and to bring it into existence as art. Dave collaborated to make the art 'an event' and this was to have a significant effect on his later work for example see section 4.9. 'Dave's Evening on Wheels', 1997.

In addition to collaborating with the audience, Dave also took opportunities to collaborate with other artists, makers and curators. In a slide talk (Mackintosh, D. 1999), Dave described a significant collaboration with a group of artists. The collaboration was entitled 'Annual Programme'. This was an example of Dave teaming up with 'like minded people' and was part of his attempt to reach out beyond the confines of the studio and the limiting conversations that went on there. Annual Programme was an informal arrangement between twelve Manchester-based artists. The arrangement was to curate shows/projects for each other, the artists formed into pairs and took it in turns to curate a show or project, at their house, for the artist they were 'partners' with. The cycle of the project would be twelve months; one project per month. The arrangement had to be informal in case, for example, an artist moved out of the area to go to another job or project. The project resulted in the 'Annual Programme' gallery being set up by

Martin Vincent and Nick Crowe, on Tib Street, Manchester. This gallery space became a feature within the 'gallery landscape' of Manchester. The artists (including Dave) who ran the gallery curated shows especially for the space in addition to showing exhibitions of artists' work. Dave said setting the gallery up was a direct result of artists' collective effort "to create an artistic infrastructure in a city that had very little" (Mackintosh, D. 2000).

Dave has done collaborative projects with other artists such as Martin Vincent in Video Positive 1995 and Bill Longshaw in an exhibition entitled 'Diverse City' (1994, Castlefield Gallery, Manchester), in which the two artists collaborated with two Manchester-based architects, making a "mythical underground passage" video piece about the underground system of diverted rivers flowing beneath the city of Manchester.

In his move into a more installational approach to making art and in his desire to explore the possibilities of sound in art, Dave collaborated with several musicians. This resulted in the formation of bands such as, 'Die Kunst' and 'Mutt' and several performances in Europe and the U.S., and formed part of a "tidal wave of artists forming bands and playing in art galleries" (Mackintosh, D. 1998 p. 21). In a slide lecture (Mackintosh, D. 1999), Dave said forming a band was part of a general trend of "artists using popular cultural strategies – using the galleries as a place to play". He described a network of artists/musicians, doing similar things in places such as: London, Glasgow, Amsterdam and New York. This interest had resulted in Dave's band 'Die Kunst' doing performance

pieces in the late 90's such as, 'Bring Your Own Walkman', at The Three Month Gallery in Liverpool.

However, Dave went on to describe his anxiety about this activity, he said it ultimately failed as art because they simply formed 'a band' and played their instruments in a traditional sense. However, he referred to how the collaboration had resulted in 'happenings' and not simply another art object and he was happy with that. Dave said that the band will only do special projects now and do not do songs anymore (Mackintosh, D. 1999). He referred to two projects: the first involved the band doing a soundtrack to a film about the 'Golem' from Jewish folklore; and the second involved the band in a performance of the 'Lamb Lies Down on Broadway', New York, 1999. Dave made a link between these collaborations and his visual art by making what he referred to as "crap merchandising" (Mackintosh, D. 1999), in the form of small cut-outs of the band (see Figs. 4.17. - 4.19.). In an interview with this researcher Dave described how collaborations meant meeting and working with like-minded people (Mackintosh, D. 1997).

The following three sections consider some of Dave's recent projects in more detail, especially in terms of his collaborations with others.

4.8. Project One: 'Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars)' 1996 (in 'Offside! Contemporary Artists and Football', City Galleries, Manchester, 1996).

'Offside!' was an exhibition organised by Manchester City Art Galleries in collaboration with the Institute of International Visual Arts and comprised thirteen national and international artists. The exhibition was in celebration of football and comprised new work by the artists using photography, video, painting and installation. According to Gill, J. (1996):

> "the exhibiting artists reference the imagery and text of football to explore the cultural environment of the game; the works identify the football stadium as an arena for the public display of national aspirations and anxieties, and the players as focuses of individual and national fantasy".

"Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars)", 1996), was shown alongside other artists' responses to the theme of football in 'Offside! Contemporary Artists and Football', Manchester City Art Galleries, 1996. The catalogue for the exhibition said:

> "Martin Vincent and David Mackintosh present a contrasting view of game sites, more particularly stadia, which dominate their environments by physical scale and by the roar of the crowd. During March, the Collaborative artists, who recently worked on *Video Positive* 1995, made a brief but hectic visit to Germany to film each of the German first division stadia. *Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars...)* is a

newly commissioned video made by hand-held camera from a moving car. The artists keep up a dialogue during the filming, discussing the team they are visiting, German football, English and German culture, and much else. *Bundesliga* visits the sites of cultural exchange; because of Bayern and United, the distance between Munich and Manchester is less than European geography indicates." (Gill, J., 1996).

Gill (1996), invited the audience to view the works in this exhibition a second time:

> "Many of the works in the exhibition complement one another, working together with differing approaches technically and conceptually, and there are resonances between them which will repay a leisurely visit....the imposing architecture of the *Bundesliga* stadia in Vincent and Mackintosh's video diary both excites and excludes us" (Gill, J. 1996)

Dave said this video piece comprised five minutes' footage of each of the eighteen stadia in the German Bundesliga which added up to ninety minutes i.e. the duration of a football match (Mackintosh, D. 1999). There was an anticipation that there would be an increased chance of opportunities for increased engagement with audience and time spent with his work in doing so – or least focus attention upon this aspect of engagement with art. The intention was to engage the found audience *via art*, on a broader level. In a slide talk (Mackintosh, D. 1999) described the way the piece was not merely about aesthetics, although that clearly was important, but it was also about the wider cultural

subjects of high and low culture. The researcher understood the piece alluded to a cross over between popular culture and visual art.

Dave described the video as a "rather clumsy attempt at making conceptual art... but felt more active" (Mackintosh, D. 1997). He gave the impression that he was not altogether unhappy with the term clumsy and that it might emphasise the aesthetic of failure. In fact he went on to describe his "stumbling around with a video camera" was "clumsy but closer to drawing.. stumbling into something and responding". The video camera has become a new sketching tool.

In the collaboration the work of the project was shared and done on a democratic and relatively informal basis: one drove and the other held the camera. The two artists engaged with one another in natural and spontaneous conversation as they drove around filming. The final editing of the ninety minute film was done to a 'minimal level'. This was to achieve a natural and spontaneous feel to the film and related to Dave's ideas about creating instantaneous images (see Figs. 4.10 and 4.11.).

Dave became involved in further collaborative projects and more installational-type work as it gave him the liberating feeling he wanted. The next section contains details of a project in which Dave made art into an 'event'. The project was part of a much wider collaboration with other artists where they curated one another's work.

4.9. Project Two: 'David's Evening on Wheels' (House of Good Things, 1997).

Initially Dave wanted to make a Camera Obscura at his house but on seeing a poster for a David Hockney exhibition in New York, he decided to make a roller skating rink instead. The poster that Dave saw, he described as having a beautiful pencil drawing of a pair of roller skates on it, with the caption: "David's Evening on Wheels".

He decided to 'appropriate' the title and have his own evening on wheels. Dave made all the 'props' that would be needed to stage his 'happening' i.e. a circular skating rink painted to look like a map of the world, glitter ball lighting, skates etc., and decided that the opening night, or 'event', would be the art, (see Fig. 4.9.). Dave said:

> "Having an event puts me in contact with like-minded people. It recognises that you function quite well with people and I like to use that as part of the work. I've had parties that are art. I built a roller-skating rink into a map of the world, bought some cheap skates from the flea market and gave them to people as they arrived. I videoed that for 5 hours. Everyone was tentative at the beginning but by the end of the night everyone was pissed and falling all over the place. That's the idea of making an event. Meeting people and existing" (Mackintosh, D. in Wright, S., 1998 p.38).

According to Dave, the seeds of this project were sown during 'Ha!', the 'cheeky alternative' to the 'British Art Show 4' 1997, that was on in Manchester at this time and

1995

in which Dave was included. 'Ha!' was curated by Nick Crowe and Martin Vincent and was, according to Gordon-Nesbitt, R. (1997), the first high profile warehouse show to take place in Manchester and was, in part, a response to the failure of 'British Art Show 4' to include any artists from the North West in its show.

The gathering momentum of 'Ha!' led to the twelve artists curating one another's shows in one another's' houses. This was what led to the event, "David's Evening on Wheels", and the formation of the artists-run collective and gallery 'Annual Programme'.

Secretly, Dave wanted to make the visiting curators look a little silly but he believed that this was his best work, because he had taken these elements and constructed an event and it "felt the most like a drawing and most like one of the random fictions".

Dave said in the press release for the event:

> "the issue of time for play has become a serious matter. In the future, technology will eliminate the drudgery of work and leisure-based societies will achieve full potential through play".

The researcher detected a clear sense of fun but with added mocking and ironic undertones.

4.10. Project Three: 'Bono and Sting' (The Turnpike Gallery, Leigh, October - November, 1999).

The researcher saw this project as the culmination to date of Dave's involvement in installational-type art, coming as it did at the end of the millennium. The show was at The Turnpike Gallery, Leigh, and comprised the work of two artists: Dave Mackintosh and Graham Parker. Graham Parker, from Northern Ireland, is an artist who has exhibited widely and whose work spans public art, electronic art, video and installation. 'Bono and Sting' was the ambiguous title the two artists assumed when working together. Even after an interview with Dave (Mackintosh, D. 2000), it was unclear to this researcher which artist was Bono and which was Sting.

Clue - Mackintosh is from the North East Parker is from Ireland

The show consisted of drawings, wood cut-outs, photography and video pieces distributed throughout the large white gallery space at the Turnpike (see Figs. 4.20. – 4.33.). The work in the show was done either as a collaborative project and involved the two artists or it was done by each artist individually. The labels on the works in the exhibition enabled the viewer to distinguish between the 'kinds' of work. (For the purposes of this investigation and for the sake of clarity it is not the intention of this researcher to go into detail about the work of Graham Parker unless it is directly relevant to the work of Dave Mackintosh).

The exhibition catalogue ('Bono and Sting', 1999), described the background to the exhibition and the collaboration between the two artists:

> "Bono and Sting is the title used by artists Graham Parker and David Mackintosh to refer to the work they make in collaboration together. Whilst both share the factor of diverse working practices, albeit in different fields, the element of their work that comes under the banner of Bono and Sting is most characterised by their use of resourceful and irreverent interventionist tactics, often informed by their readings of the logistics of popular culture" (Vincent, M. (1999 p. 23).

It was also apparent from the catalogue, that the artists picked upon two of the music industry's most "sincere pontificators" for a "cynical motive, their tone was one of high sarcasm" and that they viewed the "horror and desolation of the world, which in Mackintosh and Parker provoked the bitter rage that fuels their collaboration"(Vincent, M. 1999).

The Bono and Sting collaboration stemmed from the regular conversations the two artists had in the pub and was:

> "conducted in a spirit of antagonism and cynicism, which draws on an escalating resentment of all who are richer, more successful or more famous than the artists" and that "they take revenge on the world by coming up with quixotic and wilfully futile ideas...One of these was

'Bono and Sting's 24 hour table tennis marathon for Help the Aged'"

(Vincent, M. 1999).

'Bono and Sting's 24 Hour Table Tennis Marathon for Help the Aged', 1999 ('From Space', Salford), was a performance piece organised by Dave Mackintosh and Graham Parker in the guise of Bono and Sting (see Fig. 4.26. – 4.28.). The piece comprised a video documentary of a live, twenty-four-hour table-tennis marathon. The performance piece was actually sponsored and £163 was raised in aid of Help the Aged.

Vincent, M. (1999), helped to provide an explanation of the relationship between the collaboration's title 'Bono and Sting', sarcasm, and the form and content of this piece ('Bono and Sting's 24 hour table tennis marathon for Help the Aged', 1999) when he said:

"It poked mordant fun not only at the self righteousness of rich and famous do-gooders, but also at more humble charity raising, which depends on ordinary people determinedly seeking publicity by doing something exhausting or extraordinarily daft for a good cause. This might seem rather cruel if the piece did not simultaneously turn in on itself, problematising the conventions of the durational performance art event simply through coupling it with the charitable sphere (and successfully raising £163, making it irrefutably all worth while)....It gains greater breadth from the inescapable fact that it actually happened."

The fact that the table-tennis performance actually happened, Vincent claimed, seemed to lend the piece a kind of irresistibility, and indicated the kind of desolation depicted in Dave's drawings in the show, 'Bono and Sting'. Vincent referred to this futility and a sense of bleakness, in the catalogue. He said Mackintosh draws:

> "endless scenes of desolation: a pathetic tree, a person being kicked to death on some waste ground, cowboys, bleak sexual encounters", (Vincent, M. 1999).

These are the same drawings that Dave used to scale up into the wood and card cut-outs, some of which were included in the show. One of these large wood cut-outs reinforced the ambiguous positive/negative outlook of the show. It was entitled "The Triumph of Evil Over Good", 1999 (see Figs. 4.32. and 4.33), and comprised two wooden cut-outs of the wrestlers Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy in the respective roles of 'Evil' and 'Good'. The evil Giant Haystacks (who was cut out as a positive shape) stood astride the vanquished Big Daddy (who was cut out as a negative shape), and was lying, beaten upon the floor. The arrangement of forms in this large sculpture (cut out from two 8' x 4' sheets of ply board), was seen by some gallery goers (it was reported by gallery guards) as a fairly 'phallic' sculpture. This observation, when presented to him, amused Dave but he admitted it was an unintended 'extra'.

The piece 'The Triumph of Evil Over Good' (1999), was similar to the wood cut-outs in the installation entitled 'The Sheer Devastation of the South' (1996). The interplay between positive and negative shapes in this piece, this researcher noted, reversed the

'good' and 'evil' referred to in the title (during the wrestling bouts of the late 1970's and the early to mid 1980's, Giant Haystacks was always depicted as the bad guy, and Big Daddy was depicted as the good guy). The piece echoed the stencils in the graffiti project described in section 4.5. and 4.7., but, in addition, used the interplay between the rectilinear nature of the wooden sheet and that of the architecture of the gallery space as a 'framing device'. This researcher noted that the piece seemed to be a throw-back to the rectangle which Dave had described as being always something that he needed to confront.

The positive and negative shapes in 'The Triumph of Evil Over Good' (1999), reinforced the 'existence' of the work in a particular space since the viewer would be aware of the space acting as a background for it (Mackintosh, D. 1997). The rest of the gallery and its pieces could be viewed through the gaps created by this piece. The piece also worked on two opposing picture planes and also related visually to the way the jigsaw piece (see Fig. 4.16), interlocked.

This collaboration was one of the results of Dave reaching out beyond the confines of the studio-based painting practice. It has led him to become the artist he wanted to be and to curate and write about art. According to Vincent, M. (1999), this has become commonplace practice for British artists where, in a city like Manchester, artists are their "own infrastructure". He has suggested this status comes with the territory and that it can be closely linked to the social role artists play in the work of others around them and in the community of practice in the city (Vincent, M. 1999). He also claimed that:

"this mass of negativity, though heartfelt, is also a subterfuge. Mackintosh and Parker are acutely aware of their position as artists living in a particular place (Manchester) at a particular time (now), and their practice responds to the contingencies of this context" (Vincent, M. 1999).

The "finely channelled provincial sarcasm" and "targeting the flaws of others" described by Vincent (1999), in the final paragraph of the catalogue essay may reflect on the artists' "own humanity" but it did not go unnoticed by the local press nor by the gallery goers at the Turnpike in Leigh, who reacted either negatively or "not at all" as one gallery worker put it. This 'non-reaction' amongst gallery goers would appear only to add to the feeling of 'self-mockery' referred to in 'The Guide' (November 20, 1999 p. 25), where the show 'Bono and Sting' was described as: "Manchester-bred irony and self-mocking pop-nihilism".

Gregory, J. (1999), was less sympathetic and wondered why, when he visited the Bono and Sting exhibition, the two pop artists were not present at the Turnpike Gallery. He dismissed the entire exhibition (and while he was at it, Sting's records), as "a complete load of old rubbish", accusing the two artists of stealing a living!

This researcher noted Dave's genuine regard for playing an active role in the development of the arts in his adopted home town of Manchester, despite his 'self-mockery' and 'cynicism'. Dave considered the art/music crossover to be a useful

vehicle, but he was also hoping that some of the city's energetic and resourceful infrastructure demonstrated by its music industry, would rub off on the traditional arts infrastructure (Parker, G. 1999 pp.44-45).

Fellow Manchester artists have suggested this collaboration was preoccupied with 'Infrastructuralism' (Wright, S. 1999). In an interview with this researcher Dave described the way all the art work done under the title Bono and Sting (i.e. by Dave Mackintosh and Graham Parker), was documented and filed (Mackintosh, D. 2000). This researcher noted that each piece and each project, by Bono and Sting, was given a number, for example "Bono and Sting's 24 Hour Table Tennis Marathon for Help the Aged" (1999), was documented and filed under the acronym BS3 (Bono and Sting 3). The researcher noted the similarity between Bono and Sting's acronym and the BS numbers used in the 'British Standard' kite mark system. This similarity, whether intended or not, seemed to amuse Dave and add weight to the claim that the collaboration's preoccupation was with 'infrastructuralism', (Wright, S. 1999).

Wright, S. (1999), suggested that the artists' work was not so much informed by an 'aesthetic concern' but was informed more by the actual city, the surroundings, living and working and negotiating with the city and survival techniques for artists. This researcher noted that there was more of a balance between pessimism and optimism in the 'Bono and Sting' project than met the eye.

In an interview with Wright, S. (1999), in Flux Magazine, Dave and Graham said:

> "the 'idea' of the city, runs through the work. So, there's a constant sense of flow of the city and the numerous fictions of power, desire, commerce that occupy any one space at once. The work has this constant balance between a wide-eyed belief in modernist aspiration and the inevitable compromises and folly of human activity. It's ultimately not pessimistic".

This collaborative venture between Dave Mackintosh and Graham Parker can be traced back to when the two artists first met in 1995, at an exhibition entitled "Ha!" (10a Little Peter Street, Manchester). "Ha!", was one of the first exhibitions co-curated by the group of twelve artists at one another's houses mentioned earlier in the chapter, and which led to the formation of Annual programme. Not accurate.

In an article describing the Bono and Sting show at the Turnpike, Wright, S (1999 p. 47), said:

> "the show attempts to offset the inherent playfulness of the B & S (Bono and Sting work), with work that has been considered, researched and produced at a different pace to the B & S work".

According to (in Wright, 1999 p. 47), there was a strong, but bleak, sense of humour that became apparent in the Bono and Sting exhibition and underlying this was a resistance to reverting to a former, 'less open to outside influences', kind of art practice.

Not Barnett, M, but Hunter, P.,

Barnett, M. (1999), claimed to feel excluded by "a very crudely contrived series of jokes" and that the "naive conceptualism" displayed by the show 'Bono and Sting':

> "Can have a certain transient attraction, but this show so drips with it that it becomes utterly charmless. So, I am quite prepared to accept that the much vaunted life-size hardboard cut-out, of the wrestler Giant Haystacks, should look nothing like him; and that a photo essay shot in New York in which a businessman standing in a bear's costume staring down the bronze bull that dominates Broadway in New York's financial district, is really a rather clever comment on bigger issues. It's just the slipshod nature of so many of these joint offerings that I take exception to".

According to Vincent, M. (1999), the divergent practices of Dave Mackintosh and Graham Parker, should not be viewed as overtly negative and he encouraged a more forgiving reading of the project, suggesting that their affliction might be due to a certain melancholy. Both artists, Vincent suggested:

> "allude to thwarted aspirations and tainted idealism – so beautifully rendered modernist dream houses are graffiti tagged... a frivolous 1920's postcard text is visible only from the church tower next to the gallery".

'Mutt' (1999), was a video of a band called 'Mutt'. Graham and Dave had formed the band especially for the 'Bono and Sting' exhibition at the Turnpike. The two artists selected the word 'Mutt' as a reference to Marcel Duchamp's famous urinal piece.

Duchamp's 'readymade' was a urinal which was signed R. Mutt (after the plumbing merchant who manufactured the particular urinal that Duchamp used). The piece was originally entitled 'Fountain'.

The multi-media and multi-dimensional approach in 'Bono and Sting' served to illustrate Dave's move away from a confining and exclusive practice to a more liberating practice, one with a more installational nature.

4.11. Conclusion.

This chapter reveals the transition from a studio-based practice, largely comprising painting and drawing, to a more installational type practice. Dave found the studio-based painting practice confining and limiting. Problems and limits were explored via new installational-type work and through making art into 'an event'. Dave reached out to explore the rectilinear format of his paintings and drawings in real space. He reached out beyond his studio-based practice to a wider audience and engaged them in his creative process, for example, in the 'art quiz'. This process of reaching out included doing interactive art projects where the art was completed by the audience (the stencil painting project) and making the art into a performance ('Dave's Evening on Wheels' 1997).

Dave explored the boundaries of his practice and its products in various ways, by using various media, materials and processes. These are discussed in the case study but this

researcher noted that one of the most significant ways he explored the boundaries was through making them ambiguous, by 'blurring' or fragmenting them.

For example, one way in which Dave blurred the boundaries of the artwork was by making the work time-based or by making the art interactive or into 'an event'. He performed art works and made videos, sometimes with quite precise running times, for example "Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars)" (1996), which lasted ninety minutes.

In addition he fragmented the boundaries by starting the art work off himself and then passing it on to the viewer for completion, for example the stencil project. The actual completion of the artwork was given over to chance – Dave relinquished control over events. Relinquishing control livened things up for him: it had a liberating effect and introduced an extra level of spontaneity to the work and to the practice.

In an interview with this researcher Dave referred to the elements of risk when leaving things to chance and the satisfying feeling of this element of risk. Dave was exploring the 'aesthetic possibilities of failing' (Mackintosh, D. 1999). In a sense what Dave was doing was carefully managing the risk by setting the parameters of the artwork via a set of instructions for stencilling or rules of the quiz. In transforming his practice from painting to installational art, Dave altered the rules of engagement with his practice. The audience, rather than looking *at* a painting would be required to engage with the installative work.

An example of moving from a confining practice to a more liberating one was through collaboration with others. This promoted new methods and processes and of course new work, but it also enabled him to reach out and meet 'like minded people'. As discussed in this chapter, Dave collaborated with artists and with his audience: he explored new parameters of practice via installation art and explored the possibilities of blurring the 'edges' of his work by various methods. These methods included 'allowing the audience into the work' by using free standing drawings in space (wood cut-outs), and by letting the audience actually make the work (the stencil project and the jigsaw project).

Key to Dave's practice was the construction of 'Random Fictions', the use of spontaneous drawing, and his "seeking out of like-minded people" (Mackintosh, D. 1997). Dave decided that he could investigate spontaneous drawing using video as the medium and investigate making art via collaborative projects with other people. He experimented with installation art as it allowed the opportunity to "draw with objects" (Mackintosh, D. 1997), and to construct random fictions in real space. He used the opportunity to explore the inside/outside nature of the rectangle which he found confining in his earlier painting practice.

Works such as 'The Triumph of Evil Over Good' (1999) and 'The Sheer Devastation of the South' (1996) drew the viewers' attention to the time and space of the exhibition. These pieces, which were cut out from large sheets of wood, invited the viewer to look through the negative shapes created by them, and relate the non-rectilinear to the

rectilinear. The 'backgrounds' to these 'drawings in space' would change as the viewer moved around the space and as the venue of installation changed. The viewing process changed as a result of the context changing.

The reflective conversation Dave had with his creative practice was an essential part of the process of change he introduced to his practice. Probing the confines and limitations of the studio-based practice, problem finding and problem resituating through the reflective conversation were key features in the transition to a more installational-type art practice. The problems found were explored through the installational approach to making art i.e. resituating problems within the newly defined practice via exploring problems in new art forms (Schön, D. 1984). The contents of this case study and the possibility for future research are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies in chapter ten.



Fig. 4.1. 'Painting with Aeroplane' 1990 Dave Mackintosh (oil on canvas, c. 3' x 2')

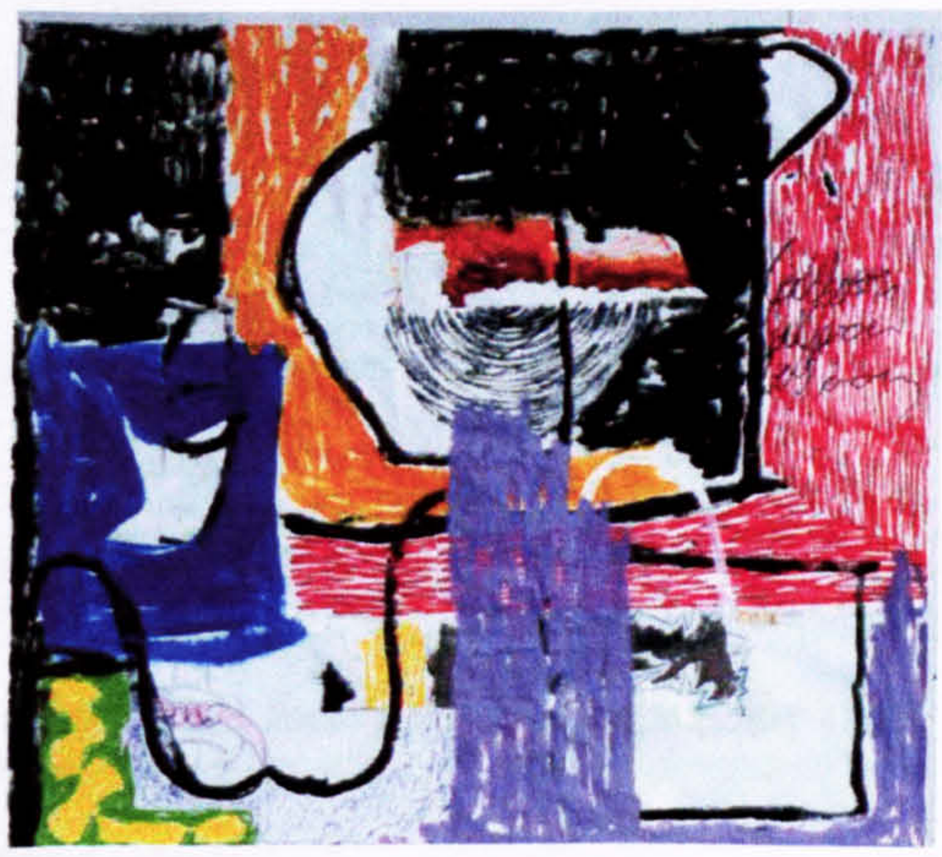


Fig. 4.2. 'Painting with Cyclops' 1990 Dave Mackintosh (oil on canvas, c. 3' x 5')



Fig. 4.3. 'Fun Box' 1993 Dave Mackintosh (oil on canvas, c. 18" x 24")

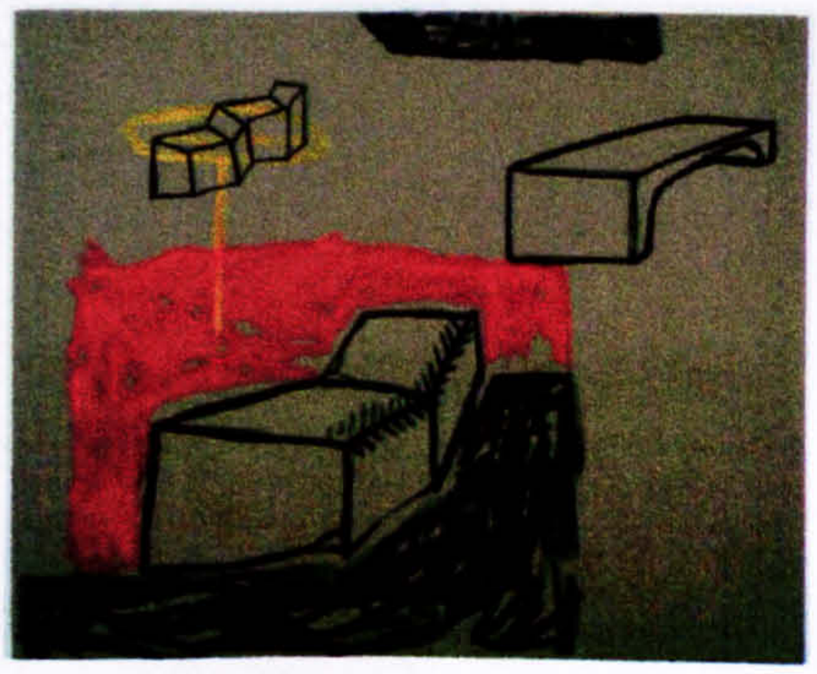


Fig. 4.4. 'Untitled' Skateboard Apparatus 1994 Dave Mackintosh (oil on linen, 4' x 5')



Fig. 4.5. 'Old Master Stencil Painting' (between the poster and the window) on Palace Theatre wall, Oxford Road, Manchester 1995 Dave Mackintosh (stencil image, c. 6" x 10")



Fig. 4.6. 'Stencil Painting (Madonna and Child with St. John the Baptist, after Michelangelo)' 1995 Dave Mackintosh (stencil image, c. 10" x 10")

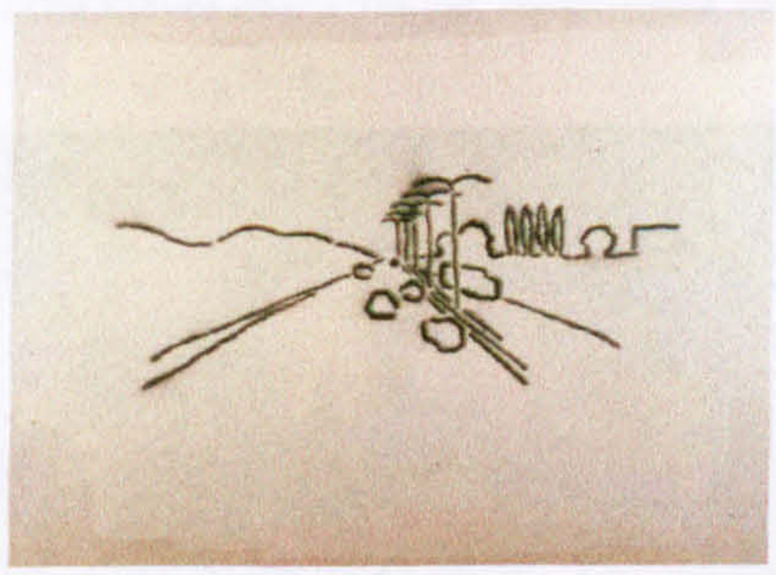


Fig. 4.7. 'Stencil Painting (Motorway)' 1995 Dave Mackintosh (stencil image, c. 18" x 24")



Fig. 4.8. 'Untitled Drawing' 1996 Dave Mackintosh (poster paint on paper, c. 24" x 18")



Fig. 4.9. 'Dave's Evening on Wheels' 1996 Dave Mackintosh
(mixed media performance, dimensions vary)

David's

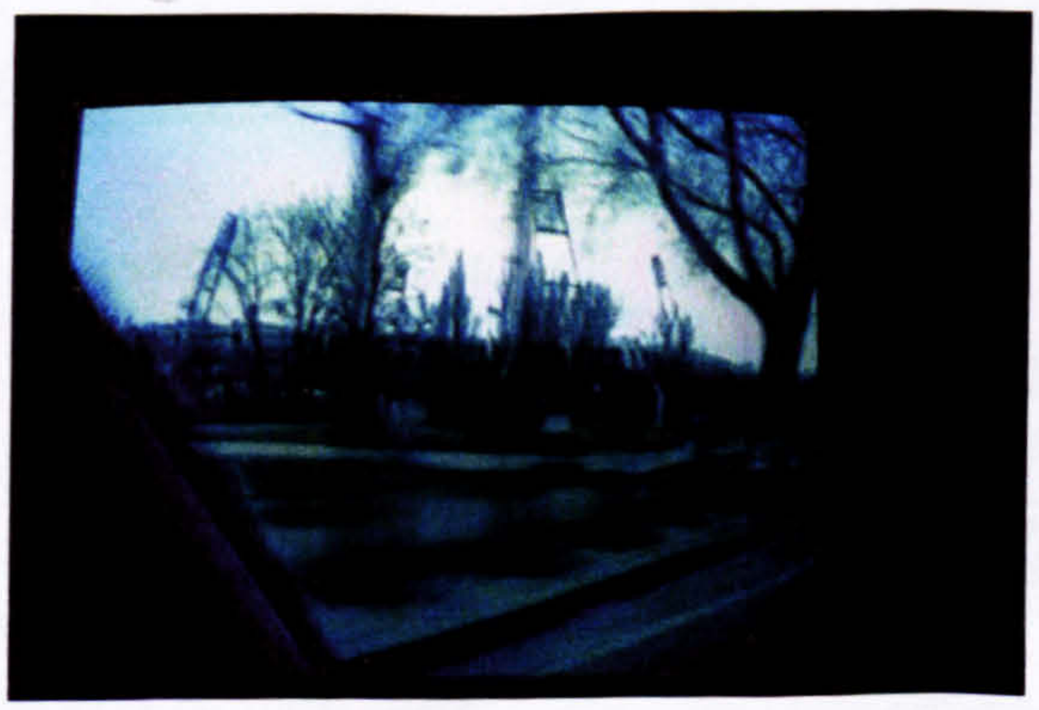


Fig. 4.10. 'Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars)' 1996 Dave Mackintosh & Martin Vincent
(performance & video)



Fig. 4.11. 'Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars)' 1996 Dave Mackintosh & Martin Vincent
(performance & video)



Fig. 4.12. 'Sheer Devastation of the South' Cable Street Gallery, London, 1996 Dave Mackintosh (mixed media, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.13. 'Sheer Devastation of the South' Cable Street Gallery, London, 1996 Dave Mackintosh (mixed media, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.14. 'Sheer Devastation of the South' Cable Street Gallery, London, 1996 Dave Mackintosh (mixed media, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.15. 'Sheer Devastation of the South' Cable Street Gallery, London, 1996 Dave Mackintosh (mixed media, dimensions vary)

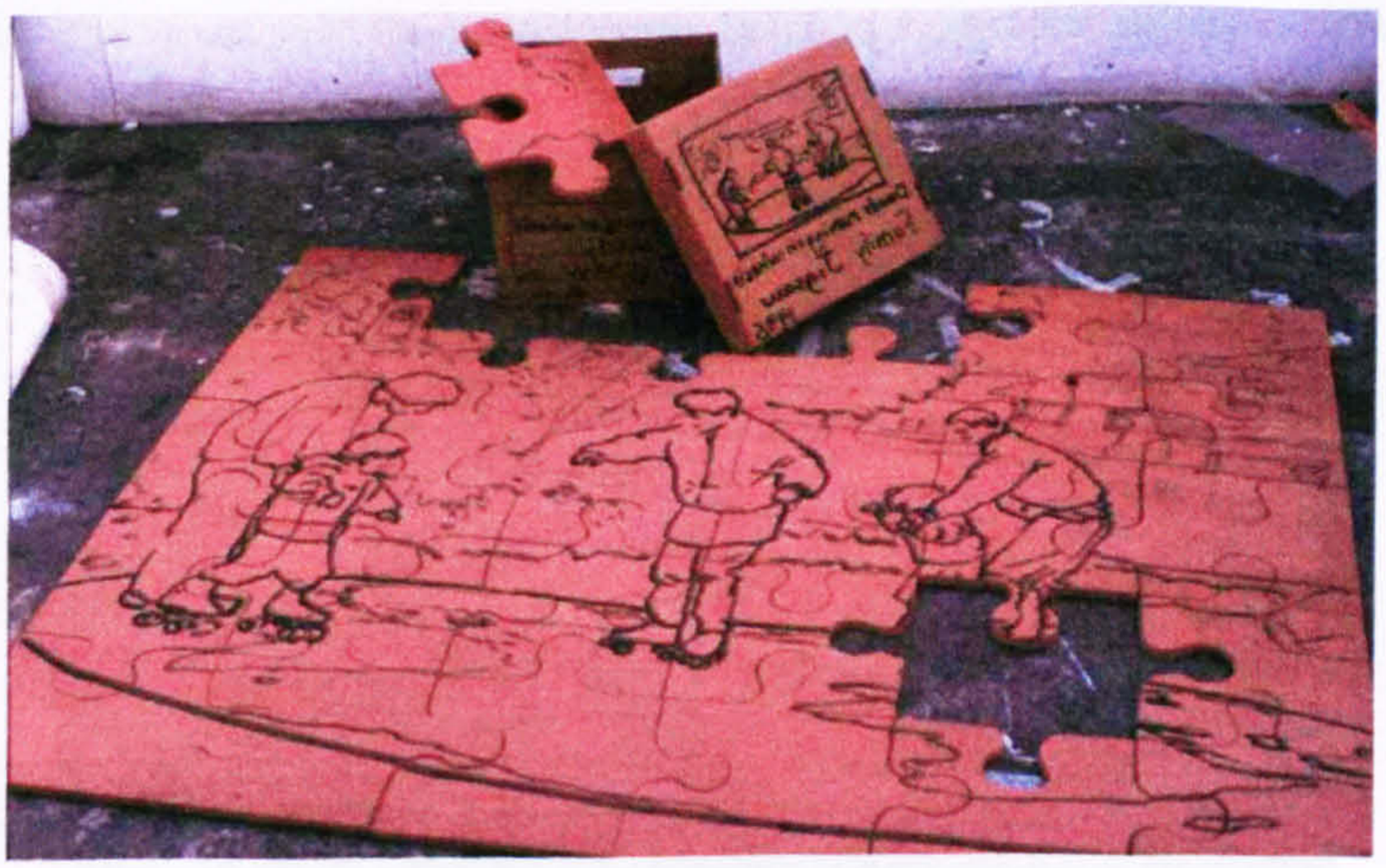


Fig. 4.16. 'Jigsaw Piece: Dave's Evening on Wheels' 1997 Dave Mackintosh (wood, paint, cardboard boxes, c. 5' x 5')

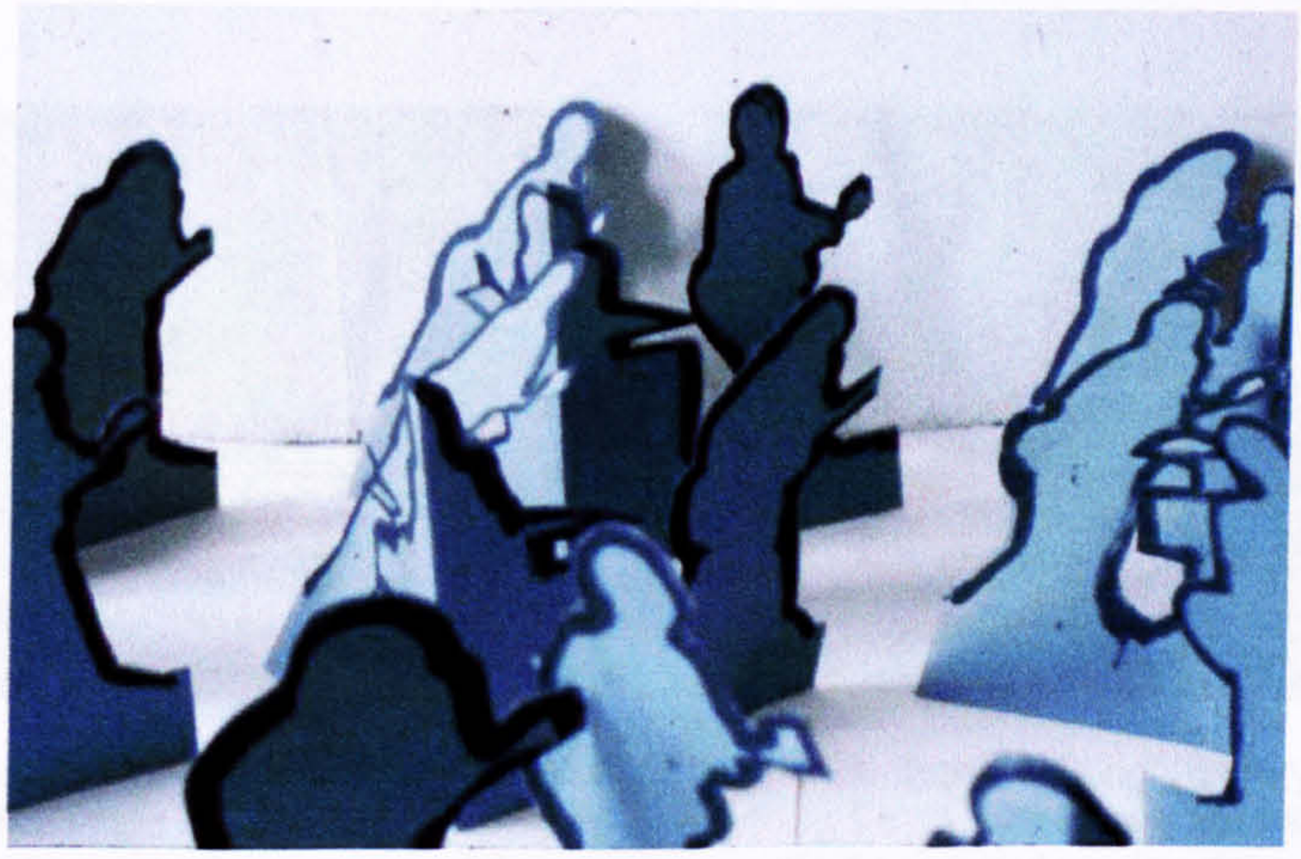


Fig. 4.17. 'Die Kunst' 1997 Dave Mackintosh (cardboard cut-out multiples, c. 10" x 8" ea.)



Fig. 4.18. 'Die Kunst' 1997 Dave Mackintosh (cardboard cut-out multiples, c. 10" x 8" ea.)

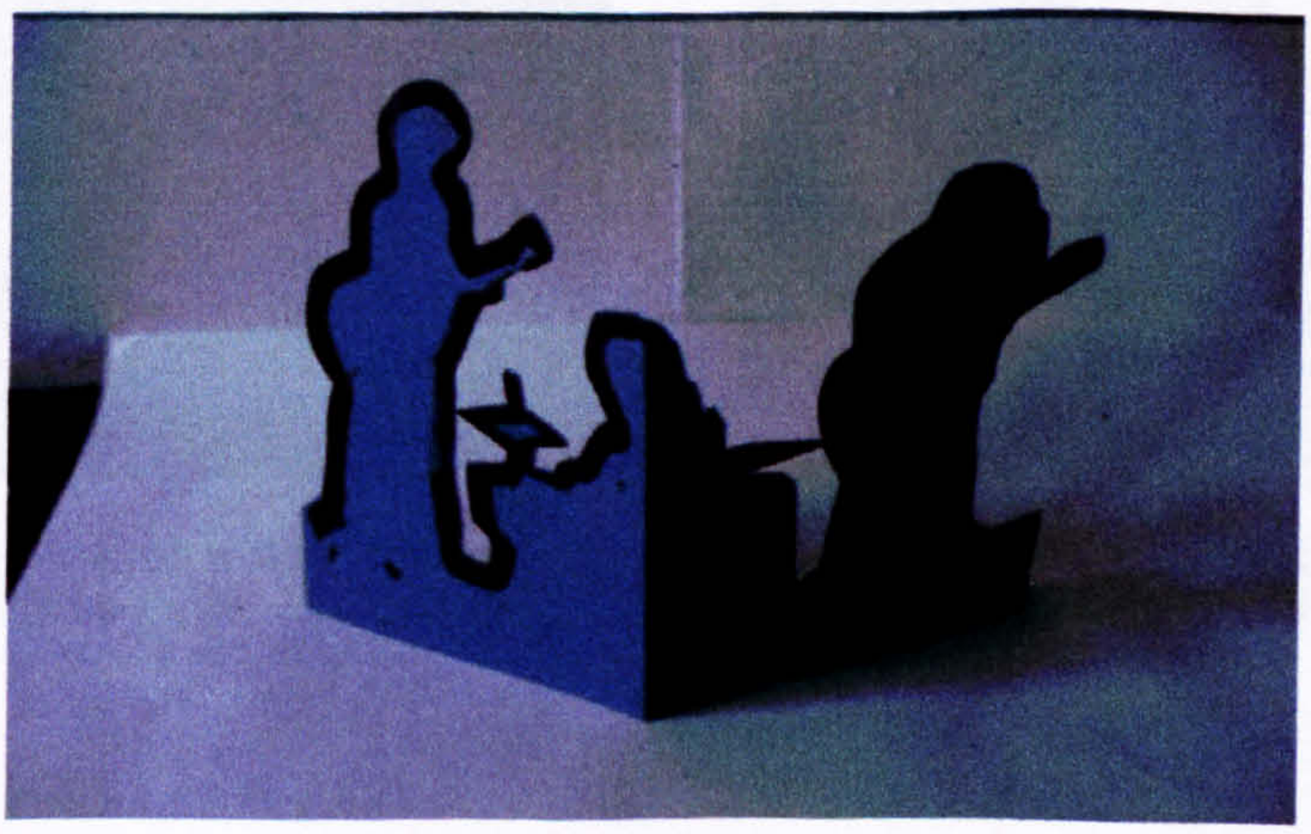


Fig. 4.19. 'Die Kunst' 1997 Dave Mackintosh (cardboard cut-out multiples, c. 10" x 8" ea.)



Fig. 4.20. 'Bono & Sting' (gallery view) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (mixed media, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.21. 'Bono & Sting' (gallery view) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (mixed media, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.22. 'Bono & Sting' (gallery view) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (mixed media, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.23. Untitled Drawings (in 'Bono & Sting') Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh (mixed media on paper, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.24. 'Saloon' (in 'Bono & Sting') Turnpike gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh (plywood, c. 8' x 16')



Fig. 4.25. 'Pithy' (in 'Bono & Sting') Turnpike gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh (plywood & marquetry, c. 4' x 8')



Fig. 4.26. 'Bono and Stings' 24 Hour Table-tennis Marathon for Help the Aged' Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (performance, video monitor, display case containing table-tennis equipment used in performance, dimensions vary)



Fig. 4.27. 'Bono and Stings' 24 Hour Table-tennis Marathon for Help the Aged' 1999 Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (detail of video monitor)



Fig. 4.28 'Bono and Stings' 24 Hour Table-tennis Marathon for Help the Aged' 1999 Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (detail of display case)



Fig. 4.29. 'I Put Stalin Back' (in Bono and Sting) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1998 Dave Mackintosh (Cibachrome, c. 14" x 18")



Fig. 4.30. 'Melancholy Geology' 1999 (in Bono and Sting) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (video)



Fig. 4.31. 'Mutt' 1999 (in Bono and Sting) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh Dave Mackintosh & Graham Parker (rock band performance, video)

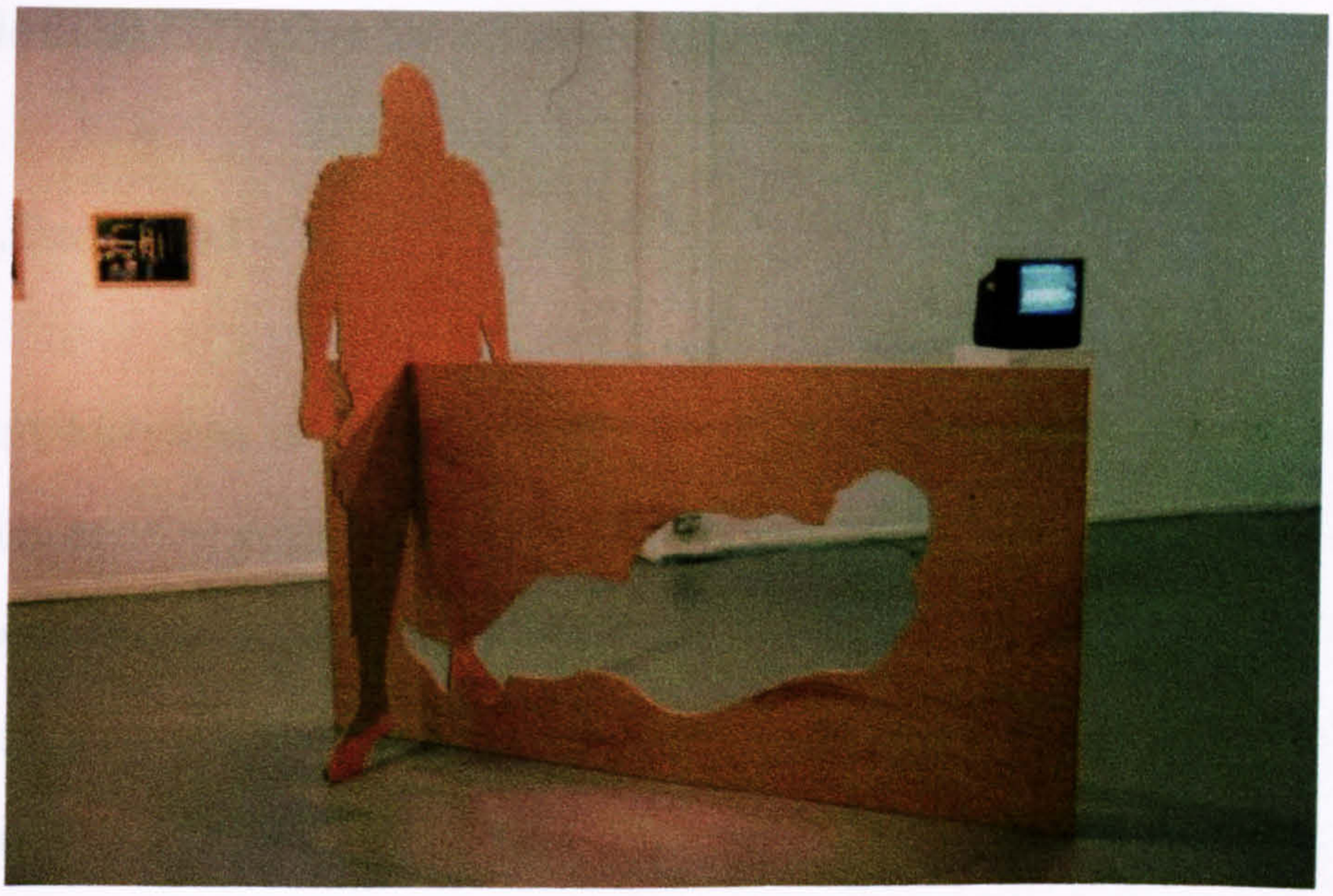


Fig. 4.32. 'The Triumph of Evil Over Good' (in Bono and Sting) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh (plywood, c. 4' x 8' panels)



Fig. 4.33. 'The Triumph of Evil Over Good' (in Bono and Sting) Turnpike Gallery, Leigh 1999 Dave Mackintosh (plywood, c. 4' x 8' panels)

CHAPTER FIVE: Case Study Three: Geoff Molyneux.

5.1. Background

Geoff Molyneux (born 1951) was originally in the paint and wallpaper retail trade before deciding to return to higher education to study art. He became a mature student in Fine Art Painting at Liverpool Polytechnic 1976-79. He works as a full-time lecturer in Fine Art & Mixed Media at The Liverpool Community College and has a 'sole practice' as an artist at Rogue Studios in Manchester.

5.2. Introduction.

This case study contains an example of an artist whose practice has changed from one largely concerned with painting within the context of a studio-based practice to one which has become more installational (one in which painting is one process amongst several). The case study describes and considers the changes in Geoff's practice in relation to his reflective conversation with the practice, processes and products.

The case study reveals Geoff's reflective conversation with his practice, problem finding and his reaching out beyond the confines of studio-based practice. Changes in approach are discussed in relation to the reflective conversation Geoff had with his practice. The chapter considers Geoff's experiments in making art outside the picture plane, his

explorations in various media, materials and processes, together with his attempts to visualise his paintings in 3-D and in real space.

Geoff's use of alternative exhibition space is considered and the relationship of the artwork to the site is explored and discussed. Finding new audiences via a more installational approach to making art is considered and discussed. Geoff's desire to be a "less self-indulgent artist" and work with others, for example in collaborative projects, is identified and discussed.

Insights are gained into examples of specific projects. These are described and discussed in relation to the main themes of the case study in the final sections of the chapter. Illustrations are referred to in the case study where appropriate, and these can be found at the end of the chapter.

Geoff's quotations are taken from interviews with this researcher during the period 1997–2000, (e.g. Molyneux, G. 1997), unless otherwise stated. Other people's commentary is referred to and quoted where appropriate.

5.3. Reaching out into real space: beyond the picture plane.

In an interview with this researcher Geoff said he wanted to refer to the "spaces outside the picture plane" in his work (Molyneux, G. 1997). This had led him to explore diptychs, triptychs and multiple forms of painting and the ways in which these forms

could be visually arranged to show this (see Fig. 5.1.). He described how he wanted to "enter the space differently" so he began exploring 'real space' in 3-dimensional work and experimenting with computer images (see Figs. 5.4. & 5.5.).

Geoff regularly included more than one painting within a painting, often grouping these 'rectangles within rectangles' with others from the same project, a process which was observed by this researcher at his Walker Gallery Residency, 1998 (see Fig, 5.17. – 5.20). Besides painting these 'multiple' images, Geoff also uses related objects, associated with the paintings or the ideas behind the paintings. These objects, together with the multiple images seem to 'complicate' the viewing process in that the viewer is presented with more than a single object to look at and the objects are distributed throughout the space available. By 'immersing' the viewer in this process of looking, in a sense within the 'constellation' of the installation, the viewer would be 'mapping' their way around, trying to determine which object relates to which (as they might when viewing forms within a painting), as if they are within the pictorial space (see the paintings in Fig. 5.17 'Creetown Quarry Painting', 1991 and Fig. 5.18. 'Fence Painting', 1996). Geoff referred to these as 'combine paintings'. This was because real objects were combined with paint - incorporated into the painted surface. This researcher noted that the American painter Robert Rauschenberg first coined the term 'combine painting' in the 1950's (Archer, M. 1999 p.9).

The next section is a 'flashback' which describes and considers some of Geoff's earlier work and his reflections upon it.

5.4. Earlier work.

Geoff referred to his earlier work, (i.e. paintings and drawings done prior to an engagement with more installational type work), as being a lot to do with the art education system. He said that in many ways the earlier paintings related to 'other paintings' and were to do with the 'baggage' of art history (Molyneux, G. 1997). He emphasised the importance that drawing has always had in his practice and that it remains so. Geoff described his work as very much to do with landscape. He said he often worked in series or multiples including a lot of:

> "non-figurative works; diptychs and triptychs, paintings in the form of cruciforms and paintings with religious overtones" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Interviewed in an article about an exhibition of his landscape paintings and drawings at 'Galerie im Alten Kloster', Cologne, Germany (Kirsters, J. 1998), Geoff revealed an indication of some of the influences behind his paintings and installational type works. Geoff talked of being influenced by the landscapes remembered from his childhood around Northwich, Cheshire, and referred to how these landscapes have changed over the years.

In the article about the exhibition at 'Galerie im Alten Kloster' the interviewer reported how Geoff's remembered landscapes have:

> "lost their heavily segmented structure which was once a typical quality. To allow for larger scale farming and large scale industrial development, the early fences and natural stone walls were pulled down – a structural purification...along with characteristic detail disappeared the familiar landscapes of his childhood" (Kirsters, J. 1998).

Geoff said that he was a very "impatient painter" anxious to get a lot done (Molyneux, G. 1997). It was observed that he divided his time between his studio in Manchester and his home in Liverpool and this meant he was working on a lot of images all at once, only using acrylic (as this is quick drying). Geoff referred to the enjoyed experience of travelling between these places of artistic production and said he was very interested in the:

> "spaces between the paintings or spaces outside the paintings – or the 'apparent spaces or voids' between the canvases" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff referred to being interested in the spaces between the canvases and the gaps between their shaped edges (see Fig. 5.1 'Squadrapartite', 1989).

Geoff described how he had always liked to create a sense of complexity and ambiguity in his paintings, drawings and prints, (Molyneux, G. 1999). He referred to trying to create "clear ambiguity" in his paintings and he reinforced this through giving the painting, print or drawing a title that had nothing to do with the image's visual content.

For example, the drawing 'Afternoon Theatre' 1989 (see Fig. 5.3.) had no literal connection with afternoon theatre but Geoff said he remembered listening to the programme 'Afternoon Theatre' on Radio 4 when he was painting (Molyneux, G. 2000).

Although happy with the output of paintings, drawings and prints, Geoff began to feel confined by his own conventions. He wanted more and more to "try out his paintings in 3-D". Geoff wanted to break free from his feelings of confinement, from the restrictive nature of his own convention of painting. Geoff also wanted to 'break-out' from the painted surface and 'illusory space' to try things out from different viewpoints and to realise things in three-dimensional space. Geoff's probing into the 'two realities' changed the nature of the outcome. He said he wanted to:

> "realise things done in illusory space, in real space.... having trained as a painter, a lot of the things that I was doing were things I wanted to realise in 3D, especially one or two pieces that were very geometric and the content was more to do with space. So it seemed appropriate to realise them in real space rather than the flat space of a painting or a drawing" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

He described the complex process of visually constructing the geometric forms in his earlier work, and referred to this process as a fundamental part of the experience of making art (Molyneux, G. 1999). The resulting image would suggest a very complex 3-D model or, for example, a 'maze-like' structure. He experimented with different colour

ways and obverse printing techniques to explore and emphasise this process of complexity in the image (see Figs 5.1. & 5.2.).

These experiments in illusory 3-D techniques were precursors to an exploration into making art outside the picture plane. He described the way he had been playing around with computers and various 3-D packages, constructing things on the screen and concluded:

> "the next step after that was to make the things themselves" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

The next section contains Geoff's attempts to move into 3-D work and his thoughts and feelings about this process.

5.5. Release from pictorial conventions: permanence and transience.

Geoff had certain doubts and anxieties about making three-dimensional work and felt as though he first had to overcome the assumptions that 3-D work had to be permanent. He described his feelings of a lack of confidence and a fear of failure and of not wanting the responsibility of permanent works of art (other than paintings), but through probing this area of permanence and transience in his work, he began to explore it within the context of his more installational-type work (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff described how his practice had also been confined by a certain lack of confidence. He described a lack of confidence in making things that he had wanted in 3-D, but because he had not trained in three-dimensional art he felt 'unqualified' to practice in it (Molyneux, G. 1997). He said he was not versed in the critical language of sculpture and was not interested in calling himself a sculptor and preferred to remain a painter. He went on to describe how most painters, in his experience, tended to think in 2-D and that most sculptors he had met thought in 3-D and, possibly, had a better spatial awareness.

Geoff referred to his hesitancy over working in 3-D. It had caused him to work mainly in 2-D in the first instance, and then develop or translate the 2-D images into three-dimensional forms. It had also prompted him to make less permanent work. He said making temporary work appealed to him:

> "it led me to explore temporary works. Because there's no fear of failure then. If it's temporary you know its only going to last a short period of time and you can explore quite a bit of freedom" (Molyneux, G. 1998).

Tied in with his feelings of doubt was one of responsibility which he found to be confining. The feeling of being responsible for permanent works of art or 'fixtures' was confining. He referred to some of the public sculpture found in urban spaces and said:

> "I suppose the other thing that worried me about working in 3-D is that with paintings you can take them away. You can take them down. I'm not sure I wanted to be responsible for any other 'bad 3-D pieces' which are more or less permanent fixtures" (Molyneux, G. 1998).

Geoff said that other people had suggested his feeling of freedom arose from not being governed by the conventions of a formal training in sculpture (Molyneux, G. 1997). He said this may have caused formal problems with his three-dimensional work but he enjoyed feeling oblivious to the rules and conventions of a formal training in sculpture.

An example of one such 'transient' was the work that he did at Rydal Hall, 1992 (see Figs. 5.12 & 5.13.). This consisted of using available materials in the vicinity and constructing a geometric form on the lawn outside the hall. Geoff described how he was exploring how a drawing can be transferred from paper to another surface – in this case the lawn. Using simple tools he drew out the basic shape of a cross and used the fallen leaves from the surrounding gardens to give the line drawing its shape. The following morning he noticed that there had been a fairly heavy frost and that this had changed the nature of the 'ground drawing'. Geoff found this 'intervention' of the weather pleasing because it had changed the drawing's appearance and added something new to the overall effect. He noticed that the frost had not penetrated through the leaf carpet to the grass underneath, so he swept the leaves away to reveal the shape of the cross on the grass in 'negative' (Molyneux, G. 1998).

The use of available materials and simple drawing tools to delineate the image (i.e. string and stakes), together with the accidental event of the frost, added to the sense of transience. This was something that Geoff wanted to explore further in other projects and via an extended range of media and processes and this is considered in the next section.

5.6. Alternative media: 'painting without paint'.

Geoff painted various images which were associated with his ideas and constructed larger, rectangular paintings which were made up of smaller paintings. He began to introduce real objects, everyday 'ready-made' objects and materials which suggested associations with the subject, and he incorporated them within the images. For example, he used rocks in the series of paintings about Creetown Quarry, Dumfriesshire, Scotland (see Figs. 5.17. & 5.19.). Geoff explained why he had introduced real objects into the paintings in terms of making a connection or bridging the gap between real and pictorial space, in addition to reaching out beyond his normal repertoire. He wanted to:

> "give the paintings a different kind of framework and to give them a different kind of existence in time. A different kind of framework from the walls they are usually stuck on" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff referred to this as his way of avoiding what he described as being labelled "a history painter" or a "stereotypical narrative painter" or "an illustrator" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

This extension of media (from just using acrylic paint and simple drawing media in the earlier works to using an extended range of materials) came about through a reassessment of the way he painted and what he painted. Geoff said he is still trying to work with painting ideas but without paint and in 3-D form (Molyneux, G. 1998).

He said working with an extended range of materials, equipment and audience, enabled him to address things that he could not address within the confines of a painting. For example, he could make connections between the form and content of the work via the extended materials, for example see Fig. 5.18. He said:

> "I didn't want to just make paintings and I didn't want to just make illustrations. A lot of the work I had been doing was too rooted in art history and knowledge of painting, inside painting" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff said he was aware of associations of certain objects and how it affected the work, especially when he first started introducing new materials into his paintings (Molyneux, G. 1997). He said he used whatever materials were appropriate to the time and place and the idea behind the work, or materials which could be associated with the idea or concept behind the work. He also claimed that it was not just the materials but also the objects and their associations and what they brought to the overall meaning or experience of the piece. Geoff said that he tries to use materials when making both installational-type work and painting that he thinks are appropriate. For example, he used real fencing in a series of works about landscape (see Fig. 5.18.) which refer to the segmentation of the landscape and reinforce the association with the boundaries that are found in the landscape. He said:

> "it is largely to do with the kind of content the material has got and its relevance or its meaning in that place" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Another example of using alternative media is the 'camouflage series' of works which Geoff has been working on since the mid to late 1990's. He referred to experimenting with subverting the associations of the objects he had introduced into his repertoire and creating: "a different reading by applying a different covering or skin to the object, such as the camouflage". For example in a recent piece about landscape he used military-type, camouflage material (see Fig. 5.25.) 'Landscape/Installation' Chair on platform with postcard of a landscape' 1997). He said he used this because it was:

> "derived from landscape, I've not just used one type, I've used about ten or fifteen types. It has an obvious militaristic link but it has to do with an 'appropriation' of landscape...almost a national identity from the type of camouflage pattern" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

He added that the objects were not camouflaged but covered in camouflage material and therefore perhaps more visible, especially in a gallery setting.

5.7. Distance and closeness

In an interview with this researcher (Molyneux, G. 1997), Geoff described an added dimension to his interest in the spaces between paintings, in that his interest extended beyond the formal relationships between the images, to the actual spaces between things.

Geoff said:

> "I was doing a lot of things that seemed to be outside of painting. A lot of things like the experience of landscape - I do walk quite a lot and I like to climb mountains" (Molyneux, G. 1998)

He said it was this distance from the jumble of the studio that gave him the room to gain objectivity and reflect upon his circumstances with more clarity. It was this distance that gave him the opportunity to look more closely at the situation. Distance and closeness were considered to be somehow intertwined.

Geoff stated that he spent a lot of time in landscape and that it was a place to think - back in the studio – about painting 'problems'. He said that the places where he thought deeply were not always in the studio. He said:

> "If you haven't got the work with you, you've only got thoughts of the work with you, it helps to clear your mind a little bit more.... you can work at something and work at it and you're not resolving it. Maybe because you're trying too much and if you walk away from it for a while. To get distance and almost free your mind" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff found that he liked the closeness of the installational-type work, the actuality of it, the way you could walk through a piece. He said:

> "If you're doing a painting it's a painting *about* something, it's still a painting but when you take objects that are real they are not

representations - more physical reality or a different kind of real. More tactile" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff said he still saw his more installational-type work as 'paintings', but executed without paint, exploring a set of visual codes and language other than the visual codes and language he associated with painting. For example, he said his work was about dealing with the 'readings' of visual language, he was subverting the meaning and interpretation of objects by covering them with camouflage material (Molyneux, G. 2000).

He described how his painting and his more installational work were linked and how he found it difficult to separate them. He said it was more to do with his thinking and doing in 3-D and in 2-D. He said that the content would be the same:

"but dealing with it in a slightly different way. Not having the solutions that paint would give me but having to think around it" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

He said that painting and installational-type work were not separate activities; it didn't distance him from painting but actually made him feel closer to painting. He also said that some of the problems that he came across in the three-dimensional type work would be taken back to the painting side of it. He said:

"The content goes throughout, the same kind of questions are there...it is more one thing in a number of ways" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

He said working in different ways on one thing was a good way of getting more out of an idea when time is precious. Geoff referred to the distance gained from one work, by the closeness of working on another, as being helpful in gaining an objective viewpoint.

5.8. Site relevance.

Geoff described the way his installational projects tended to be site-relevant but that the paintings tended not to be so dependent upon site (Molyneux, G. 1997). The paintings were portable and could be moved: they were 'self-contained'. The installational pieces tended to rely on the surrounding space for the physical and contextual/conceptual backgrounds. The relevance of site to the work, and the way the content of the work could be relayed to the viewer via the relationship between site and materials, was seen as important to Geoff's installational practice. Geoff emphasised the importance of site and location or 'sense of place' in his practice, in a catalogue statement for the exhibition 'Cross Currents' (1999), he said:

> "My recent work is concerned with the 'appropriation' of landscape. I am interested in how man has interacted with geography. As a civilisation we take ownership of landscape by naming geographical locations and sites creating mythologies and histories. This can alter the perception of a location just as much as physical change" (Molyneux, G. 1999).

Referring to an activity of moving rocks and stones from one mountain to another, Geoff said he made:

> "personal interventions of materials to the places I journey to, or make work in. Many pieces I make are temporary in nature. Some more 'relateable' than 'recordable'" (Molyneux, G. 1999).

Geoff described the activity which he referred to as 'relateable rather than recordable'. The activity comprised moving rocks and stones from one hilltop to another and he said he had been involved in it for some years. He described how for example, when walking in Snowdonia, he would pick up a stone off the mountain he was on, put it in his pocket, keep it to deposit it on another mountain, and replace the stone with one from another hill or mountain. The stone he kept from Snowdonia would be placed on another mountain in for example, the Grampian Mountains in Scotland. Rocks and stones would be swapped so on and so forth (Molyneux, G. 1997). He said that he did not record the activity in anyway or keep track of which rock he put where, and he accepted that he might have unwittingly put rocks back where they came from.

Geoff described the way the installational-type works tended to be site-relevant but that the paintings tended not to be so dependent upon site (Molyneux, G. 1999). He said that what he tried to do was to make work for a specific time and place, he said it had to be temporary, and that this had had an impact upon the making of the work. He went on to describe how the work is affected by its ultimate location. He said the work is not just affected by the site, the site was equally affected by the work. This researcher noted the visual interplay between the work and the site (for examples see Figs. 5.6. - 5.8., 5.12. &

5.13., 5.21. – 5.24.). He also said that another reason for this way of working was that he had more questions than answers:

> "which is why I'm working in this way. I never know how the work is going to turn out before I start it. I have many ideas of how it might, but the work does tend to find a way of resolving itself" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff described the way that a painting could end up in an environment that is alien to its origins with an additional frame around it. He went on to say that a lot of his work was to do with landscape and more specifically to do with boundaries. He said his work was about both the physical boundaries within a landscape i.e. fences, walls, etc., but that the content of the work was more concerned with the less physical aspects, i.e. the notional or abstract boundaries between properties which demarcate ownership or access rights. Geoff was making paintings of redundant boundaries in landscape and about what is contained within the boundary or what is excluded from that area. He said that this was the reason that he had introduced real fencing around his paintings. The use of fencing had affected the overall context of the work, he said the fencing pushed out conceptually from the painting, to refer to real, physical, landscape (Molyneux, G. 1997). Geoff thought that certain material and objects added to the art work, or changed the context in which it might be viewed, i.e. brand-new and shiny razor wire carried a different connotation than weathered, rusting and broken down barbed wire and rotting fence posts (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff described his work as related to the site that he was working in or looking at, especially in the residencies at a particular site. He referred to how he used materials available or indigenous to the area, and extended the content or concerns of his work via their inclusion within the work. He said that for a number of years he has been working on the idea of the 'appropriation of landscape'. Geoff went on to describe this as an idea about the appropriation of landscape being somehow tied up with notions of identity and ownership through identifying (with) a certain landscape through its 'naming' or 'labelling'. Geoff thought that this process of labelling landscape (perhaps as types, or as having certain mythologies associated with that landscape) was a form of ownership or appropriation through a way of perceiving the landscape. He referred to 'The Giants Causeway' and 'Fingal's Cave' on the island of Staffa as examples of this process of myth and landscape and how stories are invented to put forward one way of thinking and that sometimes this is superseded by what we know about the geography. These two landforms have been recurring subjects in Geoff's work for several years.

Kirsters, J. (1998), wrote this passage in response to Geoff's landscape work:

> "Here in the mountains he discovered his fascination for rock formations which have become a main theme in his work. There is the example of the white granite extracted from Creetown Quarry on the west coast of Scotland, which was once shipped along the British coast to Merseyside and used for the building of the Liverpool Docks. And there is the example of basalt from the Giants Causeway in Ireland, whose fields and planes are transformed in Geoff Molyneux's paintings into the holders of

the mystery of ancient myths. Treacherous goings on and hidden secrets lurk in dark passages. Reality is made visible in the form of an impenetrable block of rock in which the contrast between life and death become indistinguishable for a moment. In Geoff Molyneux's landscapes there are no people, no obvious time. The colours render the rocks witnesses of lasting nature, shrouded in the cloak of eternity. The iron objects, which are also often painted into the landscape, appear merely as nameless relics of a culture that has long ceased to exist. What remains is just landscape, just 'nature'.... Naturally even in this landscape, void of humans, one still encounters one human being - oneself. Exterior landscapes and interior landscapes of the emotional state of mind become one. There is only a narrow path running between Geoff Molyneux's rocky landscapes, suspended between feelings of familiarity and mystery.

> And it is in this 'tranquillity' that equilibrium and solitude are separated by only a thin ridge. The wind is screaming or whispering over the silent stones: 'Speak! Who am I? What is man?'" (Kirsters, J. 1998).

Geoff used real fencing in and around some of the paintings. The introduction of these elements affected the work, "pushing out" the overall context and associations of the work beyond itself to another dimension (Molyneux, G. 1997).

The next section describes how Geoff reached out beyond the studio practice to find an audience.

5.9. Finding an audience

In an interview with Dawson, M. (1999), in 'Flux' magazine, Geoff said there probably was not a place where he would not exhibit, provided he could have complete control over what he produced and exhibited. In an interview with this researcher, Geoff said he wanted to reach a wider audience through chance encounters and "intervention in public spaces". 'A Conversation Between Two Chairs' (1998), was a piece of original artwork especially made for Flux magazine. It comprised a rocking chair and a dentist's chair facing each other. Both chairs were upholstered in military-type, camouflage material, on a large rectangular 'carpet' of camouflage material.

Flux's exhibition space was a 'conceptual exhibition space'. It comprised selected pages of the magazine and artists were invited to apply and show their work in photographic form i.e. in a form which can be contained within the magazine. The chance encounter and wider audience would increase Geoff's opportunities for engagement. In the Flux interview (Dawson, M. 1998), when asked about what the audience could expect from his work/practice, Geoff said:

> "essence is the indispensable element – it's the dialogue that results from the work – the questions one asks oneself and the discourse that follows, with others" (Molyneux, G. 1998).

In an interview with this researcher Geoff said he has made work for specific sites, sites which are not traditionally associated with art exhibitions such as the Flux piece (Molyneux, G. 1997). Another such 'intervention' was the 'Manchester to Liverpool

Railway piece' (see Figs. 5.14. - 5.16. '60 Railway Sleepers', 1991). Commissioned to mark the merger of North West and Merseyside Regional Arts Boards, this comprised two installational projects, one at Oxford Street Railway Station, Manchester and the other at Edge Hill Station, Liverpool. Each piece used materials from their location, i.e. railway sleepers, and involved working with the rail authorities who were co-sponsors of the project.

By making work in a public space there was an increased chance of its being seen by people other than the usual 'gallery crowd' and with the work being temporary Geoff felt that there was not the same kind of pressure of having to be 'successful'. Geoff described the way many of his installational pieces are site-specific and therefore are perhaps not best sited in a gallery space. He said that they have to be 'made on location' often using materials indigenous to that place or associated with that place (Molyneux, G. 1997).

He was very interested in the reactions of people as opposed to his own preconceived notions during the making of the work. Whilst Geoff claimed that he had a certain amount of ambivalence towards audience response, he enjoyed the differences in viewers' responses to his work and said that often the reception and the reaction of the viewer actually completed the work (Molyneux, G. 1997).

He said he enjoyed the increased elements of risk through making work which was dependent upon a particular place and the opportunities for the chance encounter, whether it be with a viewer's opinion or a chance find. This risk was carefully managed

via the selection of site, material and through assessing the audience's potential role in the finished project. Geoff wanted to enjoy the increased elements of risk, but offset the anxiety of failing by making temporary work or by testing out the project beforehand (e.g. the '1000 Boxes' Project at the Rodney Centre, 1989, see section 5.11.). Alternatively, work would be made in a quite 'private' public space (e.g. 'Rydal Hall' Project, 1992, see Figs. 5.12 & 5.13.)

However, Geoff also made work for which there was no apparent audience. The activity of exchanging stones and pebbles from mountaintops that he has climbed, described in section 5.8. has no audience other than the accidental one. Geoff said there is no visual record or representation (hitherto) of this process and that he "just does it" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

The next section considers Geoff's desire to be a less self-indulgent artist and to work with others.

5.10. Working with others

In an interview with this researcher, Geoff said he wanted to be a less 'self-indulgent' artist and reach out and work with others beyond his conventional sphere (Molyneux, G. 1997). The introduction of an extended range of media into the practice and looking for alternative spaces and materials have led him to meet other people not usually associated with the 'art world', such as the people from British Rail and other

companies affiliated to the 'Manchester to Liverpool Railway Installation' project 1991. This was an example of Geoff managing a public installational arts project.

In addition Geoff curated an exhibition which brought together artists from Israel and Germany. The show was entitled 'Discourse' and was at the 'Static Gallery', Liverpool, 1999. In the catalogue Geoff said:

> "My own practice has benefited from visiting (these) artists and engaging with them in their own countries and cultural environments. It has enabled me to challenge my preconceived ideas and reassess the weight of baggage that I, like many others, carry around" (Molyneux, G. 1999).

Besides conversing with other artists and curating projects, Geoff wanted to work with other people on his more installational projects. One of the first examples was when Geoff began experimenting with computer imaging. He had decided he wanted to explore his geometric form or 'maze-like' paintings, referred to in the section 'Earlier Work', via digital imaging software. He made several digital images based on the subject of 'hedgerows'. In the early 90's he worked with landscape architects on a proposal to install a garden maze at the Gateshead Garden Festival (see Figs. 5.4. & 5.5.). This led to a similar project, but using cardboard boxes instead of hedges, at the Rodney Centre, Liverpool in 1989, (see Fig. 5.6. and section 5.10. Project One).

Geoff described the way he liked how he was forced into being a less self-indulgent artist by the interactive nature of installation art, especially the more site-specific work

that he has done. He said working with installational art allowed for an engagement with other people, i.e. property managers and other staff associated with the site he happened to be working at. He described the way the actual nature of installational art allowed for an engagement with the public and in a sense the work evolved during that collaborative, embedded process – he said he felt like he was not cut-off from the world any more. He referred to how he could have temporary conversations with people while he was working on site (Molyneux, G. 1997).

In a slide talk (Molyneux, G. 1999) Geoff described a collaborative project called 'Ready Steady Sculpt'. This was a light-hearted project initiated by Bankley Studios, Levenshulme, Manchester (see Figs. 5.31 & 5.32.). Artists were invited from other studio spaces in Manchester to collaborate with one another on their own self-initiated installational projects using Bankley's studio spaces. Geoff, together with colleagues Peter Jones (sculptor & 3-D designer) and John Hamilton (painter & printmaker), from Rogue Studios, were amazed to win the competition with what he referred to as a "committee piece" (Molyneux, G. 1997). He said he enjoyed the interaction with other artists and the good atmosphere amongst the competitors. The researcher noted Geoff's enjoyment of the contrasting conversations he had, the regular nature of the conversation with the artists in the project and the temporary conversations he had with people passing by whilst he was constructing a temporary public piece, such as '60 Railway Sleepers' 1991 (see Figs 5.14. – 5.16.).

5.11. Project One: '1000 Boxes' (The Rodney Centre Maze), 1989.

This project was an example of Geoff 'realising' a drawing, which was originally done in pictorial space (see Figs. 5.1 – 5.5.), in real space (see Fig. 5.6.). He worked with other people and made a non-permanent or 'transient' work of art.

Geoff described (Molyneux, G. 1997) this as a very tightly scheduled project, which comprised 1000 cardboard boxes, constructed in the Rodney Centre (which was a Youth Centre in Liverpool), on the sports hall floor area. Geoff said, as there was no cash funding for the project it was all done through good will and sponsorship. The Rodney Centre agreed to lend the space to Geoff for the project, and he worked with the users of the youth centre, on building the piece. Geoff received the cardboard boxes through sponsorship from a local packing firm. The project took 4.5 hours to build and 'lasted' for 1.5 hours. The design of the piece was based upon the geometric drawings and subsequent computer drawings, and the idea was to physically "enter the space of the picture" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

Geoff described the making of this piece as very much like: "sitting down and saying – I want to make a drawing", but the difference being that it involved more people than usual.

The piece was subsequently re-installed, but in a different configuration, using 800 boxes, and during various festivals for example, at the Upper Campfield Market,

Manchester (see Fig. 5.7.) and in the front courtyard of the Bluecoat Art Centre, Liverpool (see Fig. 5.8.). Geoff described this work as interactive and non-permanent. Although, initially, the project may have been to do with trying to address the formal issues of a transition from 2-D drawing to 3-D 'drawing':

> "it isn't a formal piece, it is to do with transience and has connotations of the homeless and a cardboard city" (Molyneux, G. 1997).

This researcher noted that the careful selection of materials and their connotations and a careful choice of site reinforced the content of the work. The choice of the entrance of the Bluecoat Art Centre, where people constantly are on the move, coming and going from the gallery all day, or just walking past, particularly emphasised the transient effect.

5.12. Project Two: Herzliya, Tel Aviv, Israel & Wiesbaden, Germany 1998

In an interview with this researcher Geoff (Molyneux, G. 1997) described a piece made in Germany the previous year, where he had used images of landscape and domestic objects (i.e. suitcases and a chair, see Fig. 5.25.), wrapped in camouflage. This piece was sited outside the gallery, in the open air, on a loading bay. The domestic items suggested associations with 'home' and the suitcases suggested associations with travel and referred to the idea of the relationship between distance and closeness discussed earlier in section 5.6. The camouflage cloth surfaces of the objects and their placement suggested different things to different people. In the 'Discourse' catalogue, Geoff

referred to the way he willingly passes over the burden of interpretation to the viewer (Molyneux, G. 1999). In a slide talk Geoff referred to the way the viewer is involved in the completion of the work to which Geoff referred to earlier, by bringing their own 'baggage' to the work (Molyneux, G. 1999). He said:

> "When I talked to some of the Israeli artists also exhibiting in the same exhibition they immediately saw connections with the Holocaust, but when I talked to some of the German artists about it, those associations were not uppermost in their minds" (Molyneux, G. 1999).

He went on to say work 'demanded to be made' out of certain materials, and it was the relationship between the choice of materials and the effect of the site upon the work that interested him. The work was affected by its ultimate location. He said a studio-based installation in camouflage material constructed in the studio in Manchester was far less emotive than the same thing installed in, for example, Tel Aviv (Molyneux, G. 1999).

The piece installed at Herzliya, Tel Aviv, Israel, used the windows of the gallery because they were reflective windows (see Figs. 5.21 – 5.24.). Viewed from the outside the piece has 'natural background' produced by the landscape being reflected in the mirrored windows. In addition to this, the viewer also becomes a part of the piece, whether they are inside or outside, because of the use of the window. The use of the window allowed Geoff to explore his ideas about positive and negative space (as discussed in section 5.3.) and make them an active part of the work.

Geoff said that "context, site, relevance" were central to this piece and he emphasised this through the location of the piece and its dependence upon site and also through the choice of camouflage material. This time he used 'desert storm' type camouflage to allude to the long-standing border and land disputes in this part of the world (Molyneux, G. 1999).

5.13. Project Three: 'Are You Being Served?' 1999 (Lewis's Store, Manchester and Liverpool), 'Mart' (Manchester Visual Arts Event) and 'Tracey', Liverpool.

Manchester Visual Arts Event (1st – 31st October, 1999), was a "month long celebration of visual art made in Manchester", (Mart, 1999). According to the press release (Flux, 1999), Mart comprised 15 exhibitions, 48 artists and used 'alternative venues', i.e. non-gallery spaces such as vacant shop units, hotel rooms and café bars. Mart was organised by 'The Mart Network Limited' which was, according to the accompanying exhibition catalogue:

> "a network of Manchester-based artists set up to highlight and promote the strength and diversity of artistic practice in the city. Mart 1999 aims to encourage and enable artists to collaborate on new projects and events" (Mart, 1999).

The projects (which were all artist-initiated, curated and run), were selected by a selection panel which consisted of the artist David Mach and the art critic Sacha Craddock.

'Mart' in Manchester, coincided with 'TRACE' in Liverpool. 'TRACE' was 'The International Exhibition for the Liverpool Biennial of Contemporary Art' (24th September – 7th November, 1999), and was curated by Anthony Bond (Chief Curator at the Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney Australia).

In addition 'Mart' coincided with 'Tracey' (also in Liverpool), which was a series of artist-initiated projects in and around Liverpool (24th September – 7th November). There were local artists (from Liverpool), together with national and international artists, in 'Tracey', and they were interested in showing their:

> "work in 'found spaces' such as car parks, abandoned warehouses and back street alleys among the architectural splendours of the City" - work which "blended the more traditional definitions of art such as painting, photography and sculpture with a new breed of video, film, electronic media, performance, sound and even smell" (TRACE, 1999, p.3).

Geoff was part of 'Mart' and 'Tracey'. In the flyer for 'Are You Being Served?' (which took place simultaneously in Liverpool and Manchester's Lewis's Stores), it said about Geoff's installation:

> "(Geoff) has transformed items of furniture and luggage using camouflage material, intended as a commentary on the political and social appropriation of landscape".

The catalogue described the installation as an "intervention" which referred to the choice of artists in Tracey, to show work in 'found spaces' and 'intervene' in spaces otherwise not connected with the showing of art (see Figs. 5.26. – 5.30.).

Geoff installed work in the Lewis's department stores alongside two other artists, Louise Byrne and Mark Pearson. Their projects were not physically connected in the same way that a collaboration might connect the work of different artists, but the use of the store as a context for the work had similarities. In the 'Tracey' Catalogue for the Liverpool Biennial, it says about the 'Are You Being Served?' installation in Lewis's department store:

> "Insinuates their work into the infrastructure of the retail environment. This intervention between shoppers and the artists' work will be as physically and visually accessible as existing merchandise."

The siting of Geoff's pieces in this exhibition was quite deliberate. Items of ordinary domestic furniture, covered with military camouflage were displayed as domestic scenarios similar to the furniture displays already in the store. Geoff's scenarios were displayed in the furniture department of Lewis's Store with little attempt to separate the art works from all the other shop displays already there (Molyneux, G. 2000).

Geoff was interviewed by Kirsty McGee for 'The Big Issue', but he would not be drawn on whether or not this show was about consumerism, preferring to sit back on the camouflage settee and enjoy the 'clear ambiguity' caused by the installation. McGee, K.

(1999) referred to the confusion caused amongst the viewing public by this installational project and described one woman's query over the price of the camouflage items in the exhibit in the Manchester store. Geoff was described as being amused by this encounter with the woman who had 'mistaken' the camouflage objects, particularly the beanbag, as an item for sale just as any other item in the other furniture displays in the department. This had the effect of reinforcing the sense of 'clear ambiguity'.

This researcher noted that the title of the show alluded to perhaps more fundamental questions about the perceived role, function and context of art objects. In an interview with this researcher Geoff referred to the suitcases and chairs in his 'military camouflage works' as suggesting the "absence of people" and that they were about 'staying and going'. He described how the viewer might be insinuated within the work via the function of the object – the viewer might imagine himself or herself sitting in the chair or picking up the suitcase. The chairs could be associated with 'staying' and the suitcases were associated with 'going'. Geoff described another level of meaning which could be interpreted from the work – he believed the different types of chairs and suitcases, together with their different shapes and sizes suggested a hierarchy or a 'class structure' (Molyneux, G. 2000).

5.14. Conclusion.

The study shows how, through problem finding and a reflective conversation with practice, Geoff reached out beyond the two-dimensional space of the picture plane and beyond the confines and conventions of his studio-based practice.

Geoff investigated the problems and limits he found through a more installational approach to making art. The study shows how Geoff saw an art form that crossed the normal boundaries as important and demonstrates his regard for careful use of material and site as a way of making this apparent in the work. Physical boundaries within the urban and rural landscape such as fences, together with ideas about the less obvious ones, such as notional or abstract boundaries of ownership between properties, were incorporated into the work.

Geoff experimented with new processes and explored an extended range of media. He also explored the possibilities of making temporary works of art, ones which would be 'site-relevant' and which would use materials found on that site. For example the project '60 Railway Sleepers' (1991) was a temporary arrangement of forms and it used materials from the site. Likewise, the beach drawings (1990), and the Rydal Hall drawings (1992) used materials indigenous to those places.

Making new works which were temporary and/or site-relevant and moving out beyond his studio-based practice of painting, Geoff was enabled to work with other people.

Whilst collaborative projects with other artists did not become a major part of the installational art practice, working with others had an important effect. Geoff networked with the other people he had worked with and this led to opportunities to get involved with more installational-type work and more group-based projects such as the Lewis's Store project, 1999. Geoff confronted his anxiety of working on public pieces of art through problem finding and resituating the problems within a more installational approach to making art and working with others on site-specific works.

The case study reveals how, through exploring the 'picture space' in three-dimensions, Geoff became involved in installational type work. i.e. making temporary public artworks. The case study demonstrates how this process released Geoff from certain conventions which had become confining and how this had a liberating effect on his practice and led to new work. In addition, this process of making work in 3-D helped to inform his paintings. Geoff continued to draw and paint but the materials that he explored in the three-dimensional work became incorporated into the paintings i.e. the Quarry paintings done throughout the 1990's.

Importantly, the case study describes how Geoff still considered the works 2-D or 3-D, in terms of pictorial rules. Geoff said he considered the compositions of his installational works in the same ways he considered the compositions of his paintings i.e. all things were considered pictorially (Molyneux, G. 1997). Geoff seemed to 'hold' a conversation between his paintings and his installational works. In other words both types of work helped and informed each other. This conversation that Geoff was engaged in between

his paintings and his installational-type work, created a dynamic situation that perhaps the practice was lacking prior to problem finding and reaching out beyond the conventions of the studio-based practice.

The contents of this case study and the possibility for future research, are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies, in chapter ten.



Fig. 5.1. 'Squadrapartite' 1989 Geoff Molyneux (block print and mixed media, c. 4' x 8').

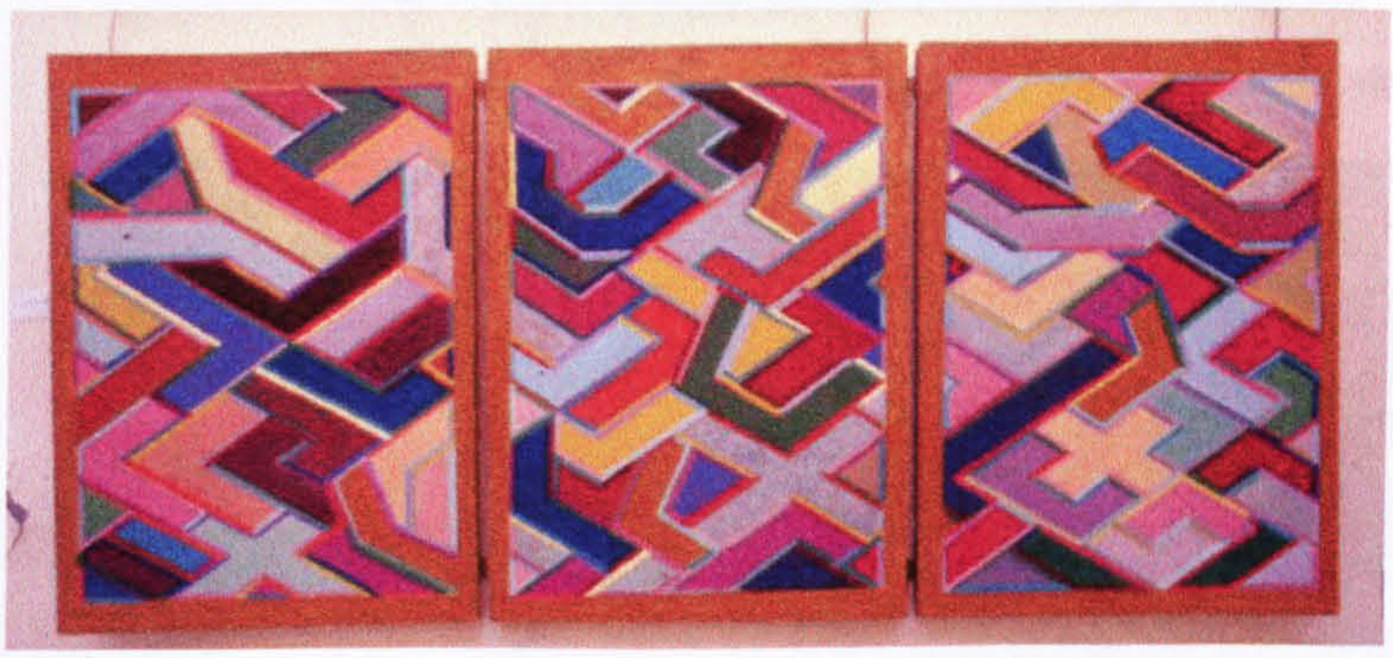


Fig. 5.2. 'Triptych' 1989 Geoff Molyneux (oil on canvas, c. 2' x 6')

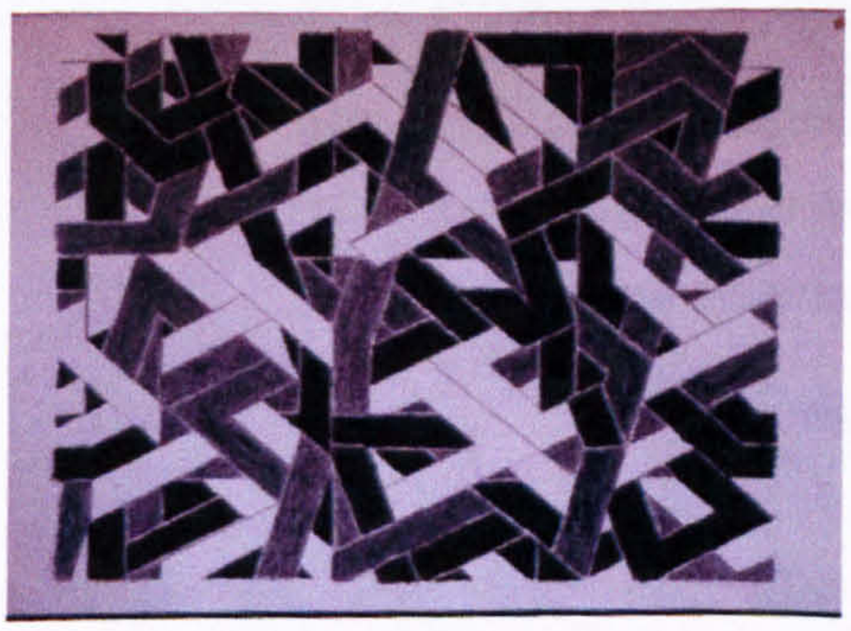


Fig. 5.3. 'Afternoon Theatre' 1989 Geoff Molyneux (charcoal & pastel, c. 24" x 36")

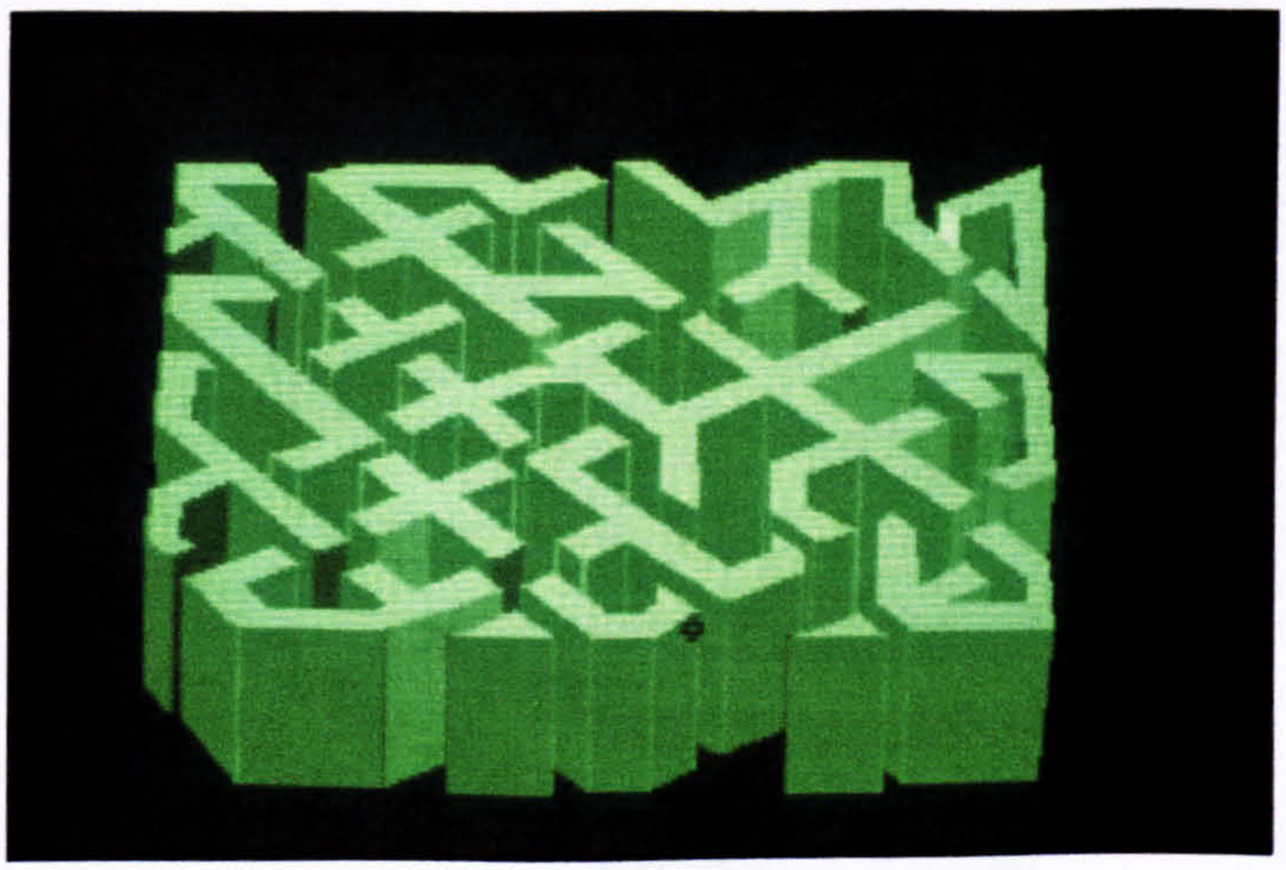


Fig. 5.4. 'Untitled' Computer Generated Drawing (for Hedgerow Proposal) 1989 Geoff Molyneux

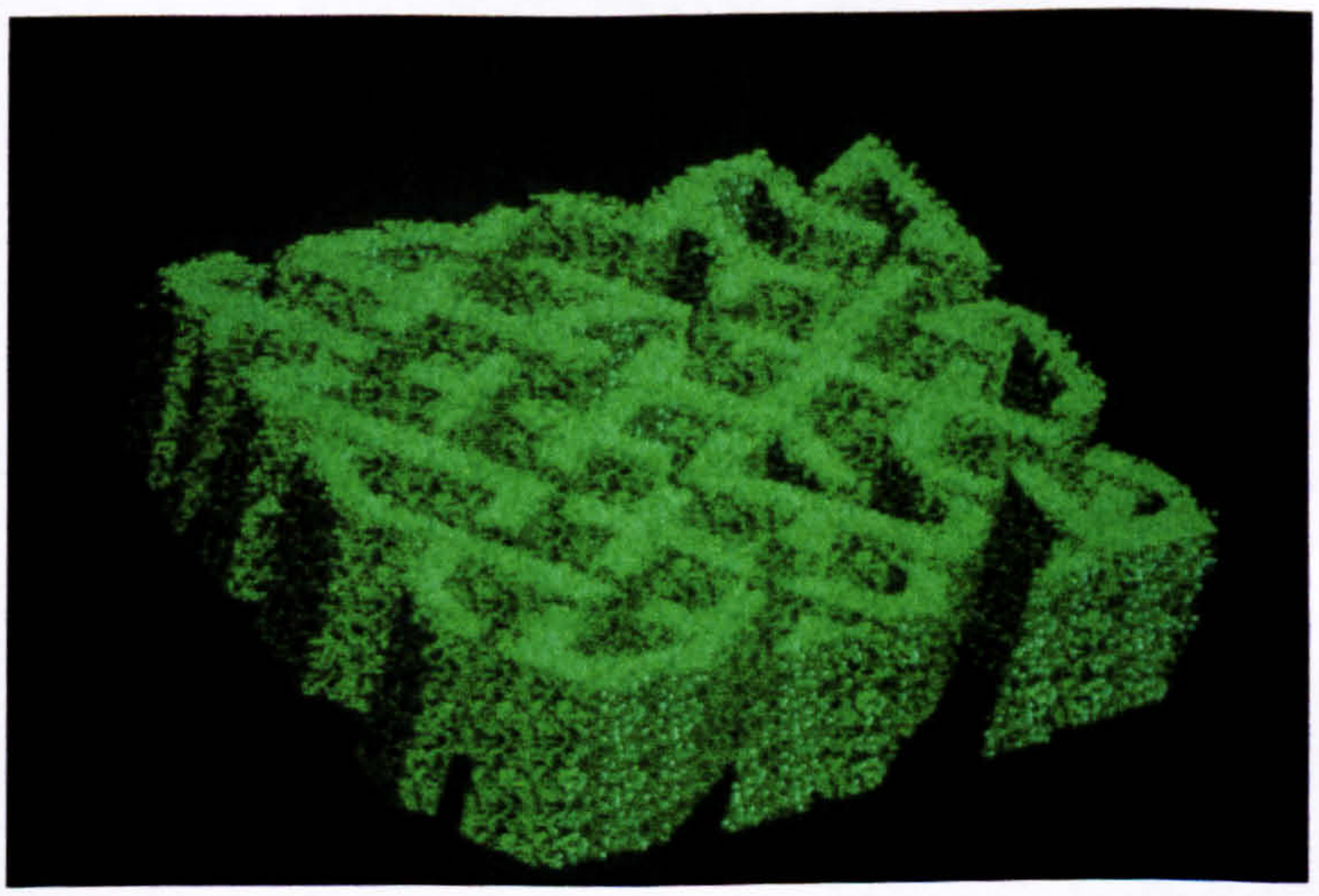


Fig. 5.5. 'Untitled' Computer Generated Drawing (for Hedgerow Proposal) 1989 Geoff Molyneux



Fig. 5.6. '1000 Boxes' Rodney Centre, Liverpool 1989 Geoff Molyneux
(cardboard boxes, c. 40' x 60')



Fig. 5.7. '800 Boxes' Upper Campfield Market, Castlefield, Manchester 1989 Geoff Molyneux
(cardboard boxes, c. 100' x 100')



Fig. 5.8. '800 Boxes' - Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool 1989 Geoff Molyneux
(cardboard boxes, c. 40' x 70')

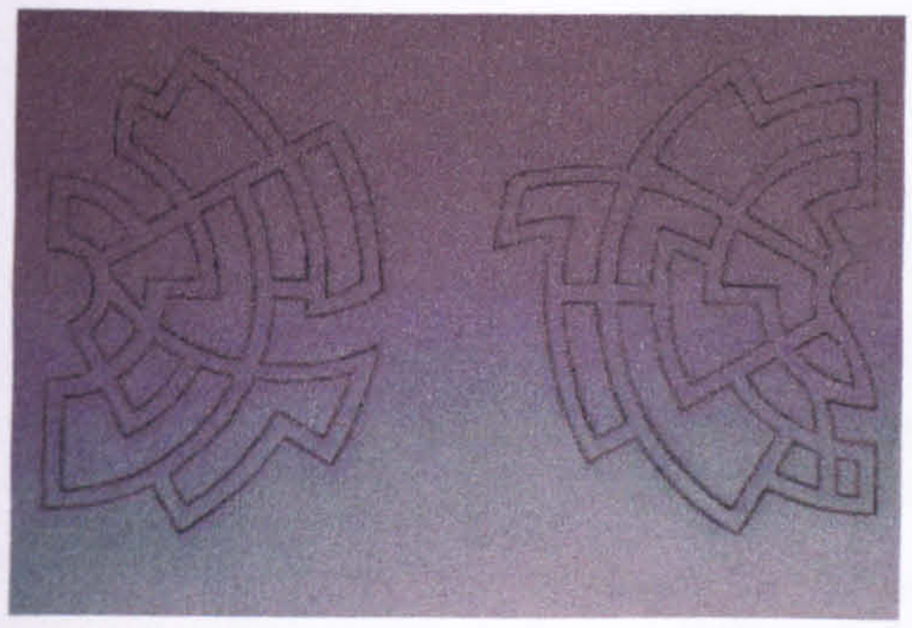


Fig. 5.9. 'Study from Beach drawing' 1992 Geoff Molyneux (charcoal, c. 24" x 36")



Fig. 5.10. 'Beach Drawing' Formby Point, Merseyside 1990 Geoff Molyneux (aerial view of image drawn in sand, c. 100' x 100')



Fig. 5.11. 'Study for Rydal Hall Drawing' 1992 Geoff Molyneux (paint on paper, c. 24" x 36")



Fig. 5.12. 'Rydal Hall Drawing' Rydal Hall 1992 Geoff Molyneux (leaves, c. 25' x 25')



Fig. 5.13. 'Rydal Hall Drawing' Rydal Hall 1992 Geoff Molyneux (leaves, c. 25' x 25')

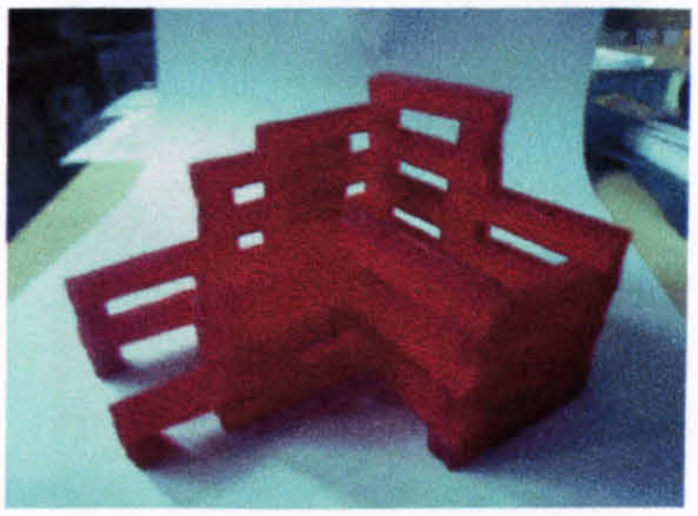


Fig. 5.14. 'Maquette for 60 Railway Sleepers' 1991 Geoff Molyneux
(wax model, c. 15" x 15" x 15")



Fig. 5.15. '60 Railway Sleepers' Edge Hill Railway Station, Liverpool 1991
Geoff Molyneux (railway sleepers, c. 30' x 30')



Fig. 5.16. '60 Railway Sleepers' Oxford Road Railway Station, Manchester 1991
Geoff Molyneux (railway sleepers, c. 30' x 30')

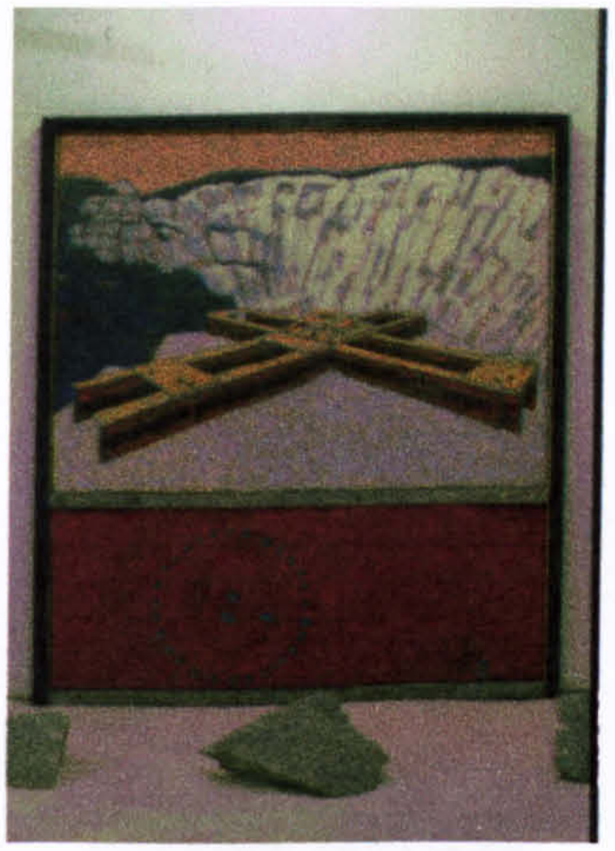


Fig. 5.17. 'Creetown Quarry Painting' 1991 Geoff Molyneux (acrylic on linen and mixed media, c. 8' x 6')



Fig. 5.18. 'Fence Painting' 1996 Geoff Molyneux (acrylic and mixed media on canvas, c. 9' x 30')

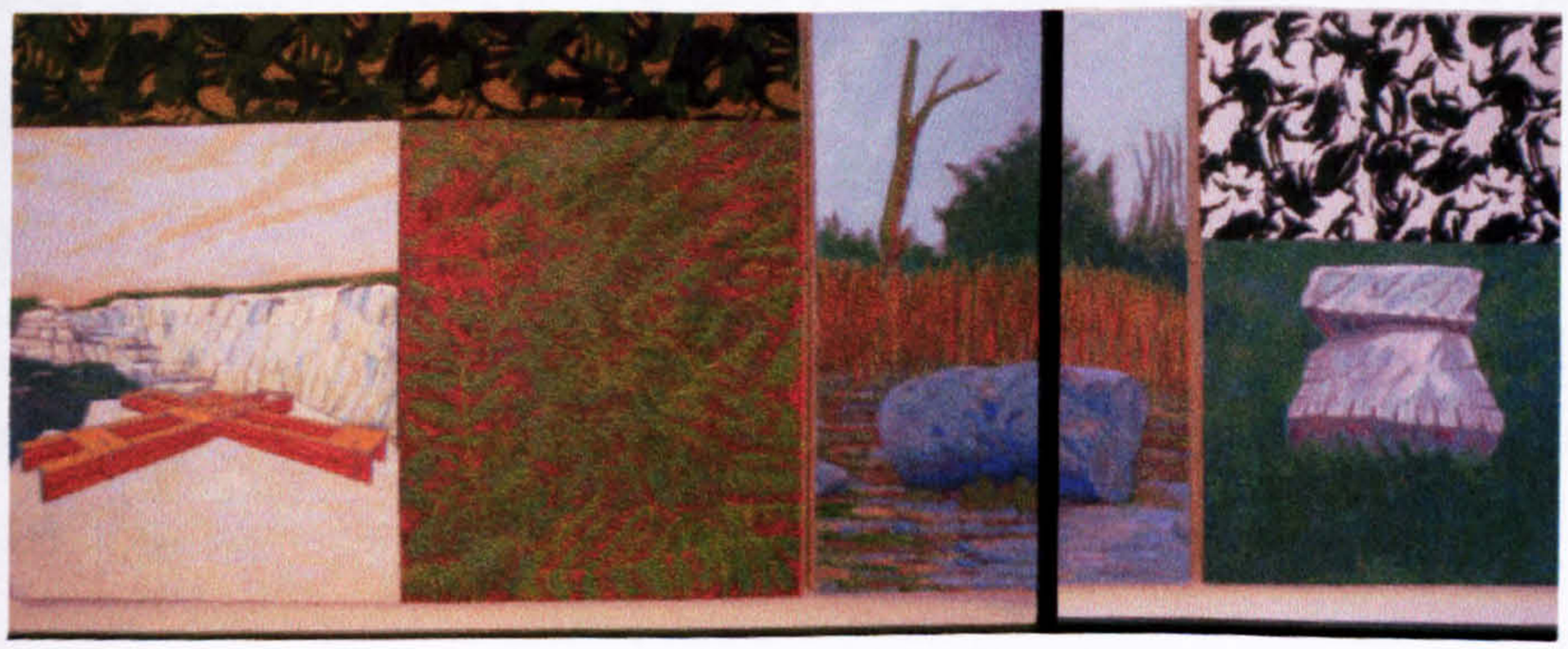


Fig. 5.19. 'Creetwon Quarry Painting' 1998 Geoff Molyneux
(acrylic on canvas and camouflage material, c. 8' x 20')

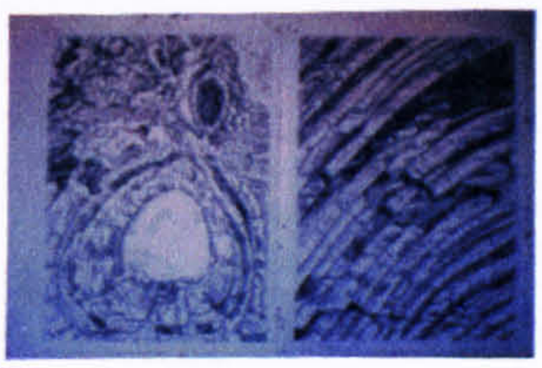


Fig. 5.20 'Fingal's cave Drawing' 1985 Geoff Molyneux (charcoal on paper, c. 24" x 48")



Fig. 5.21. 'Herzliya Installation' Tel Aviv, Israel,1998 Geoff Molyneux (mixed media, c. 80' x 40')



Fig. 5.22. 'Herzliya Installation' Tel Aviv, Israel, 1998 Geoff Molyneux (mixed media, c. 80' x 40')



Fig. 5.23. 'Herzliya Installation' Tel Aviv, Israel,1998 Geoff Molyneux (mixed media, c. 80' x 40')



Fig. 5.24. 'Herzliya Installation' Tel Aviv, Israel, 1998 Geoff Molyneux (mixed media, c. 80' x 40')



Fig. 5.25. 'Landscape Installation' 1997, Geoff Molyneux (camouflage material, chair & suitcase)



Fig. 5.26. 'Are You Being Served?' Lewis's Store, Manchester 1999 Geoff Molyneux (various furniture, objects, camouflage material, dimensions vary)

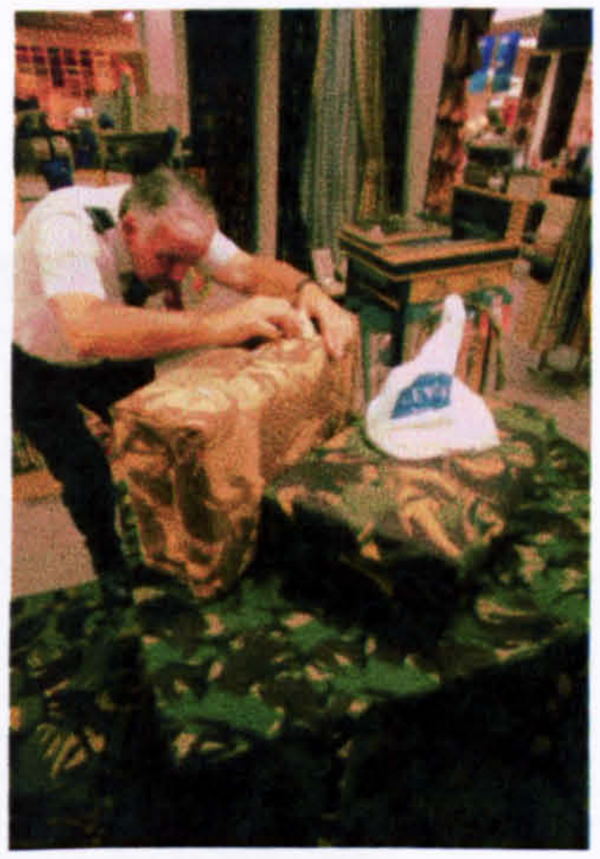


Fig. 5.27. 'Are You Being served?' Lewis's Store, Manchester, 1999 Geoff Molyneux (various furniture, objects, camouflage material, dimensions vary)



Fig. 5.28. 'Are You Being served?' Lewis's Store, Manchester, 1999 Geoff Molyneux (various furniture, objects, camouflage material, dimensions vary)



Fig. 5.29. 'Are You being Served?' Lewis's Store Window, Manchester 1999 Geoff Molyneux (various furniture, camouflage material, dimensions vary)



Fig. 5.30. 'Are You being Served?' Lewis's Store Window, Manchester 1999 Geoff Molyneux (various furniture, camouflage material, dimensions vary)



Fig. 5.31. 'Ready Steady Sculpt' Installation, Bankley Studios, Manchester, 1997 Geoff Molyneux, Peter Jones & John Hamilton (mixed media, c, 12' x 12' x 12' space)

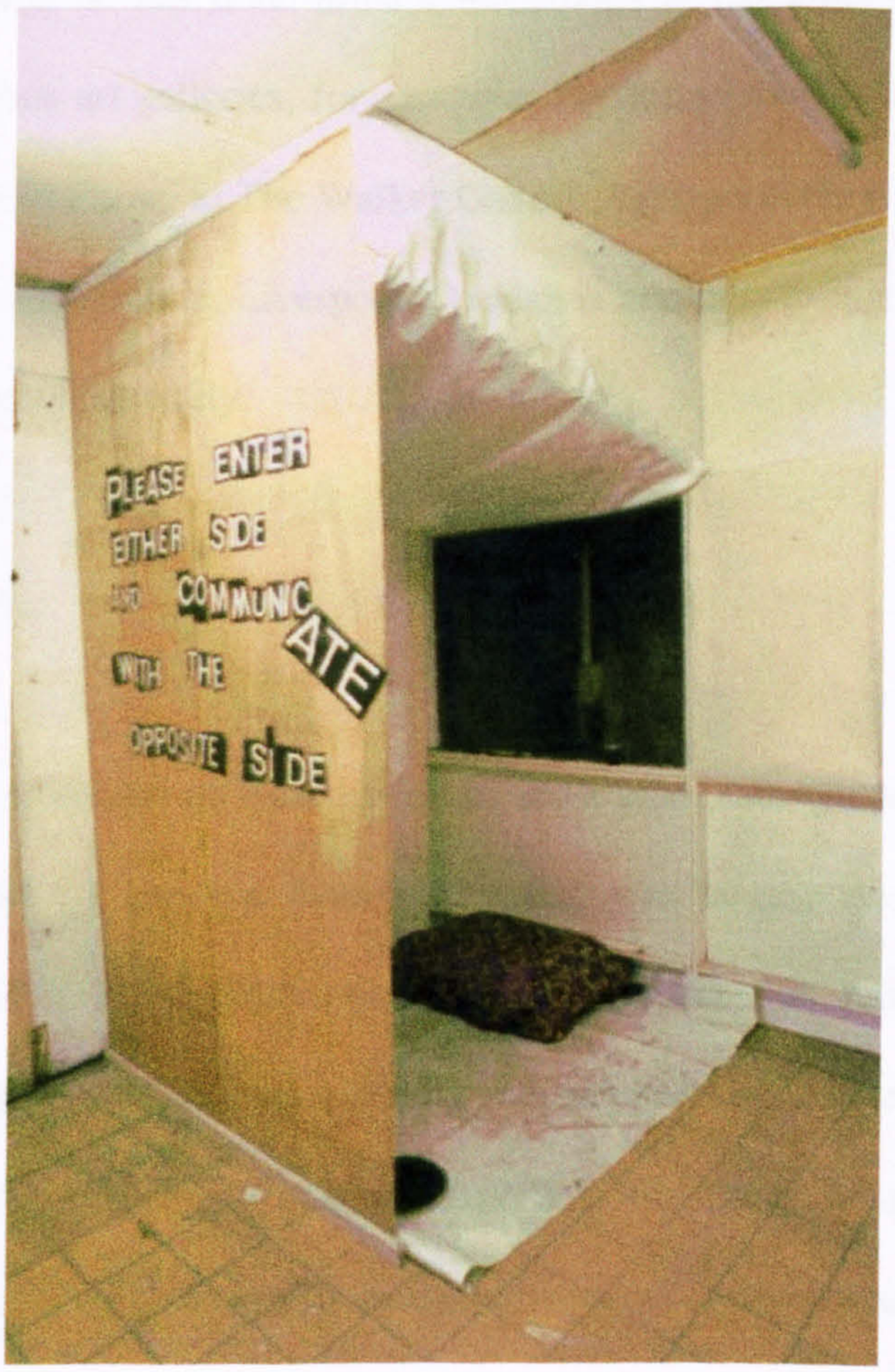


Fig. 5.32. 'Ready Steady Sculpt' Installation, Bankley Studios, Manchester, 1997 Geoff Molyneux, Peter Jones & John Hamilton (mixed media, c, 12' x 12' x 12' space)

CHAPTER SIX: Case Study Four: Duncan Mountford

6.1. Background.

Duncan Mountford (born 1954), trained in Fine Art (painting), at Coventry City Polytechnic (1973-76) and obtained his MA in sculpture at Winchester School of Art 1993-94. Duncan is a full time artist and has a studio at Arena Studios, Liverpool. Duncan has done part-time tutoring and lecturing at various art colleges in the North West. In addition he has done artist's workshops at the Tate, Liverpool and he has worked at various art galleries, for example, handling artwork for exhibitions such as 'The John Moores Show' at The Walker Gallery, Liverpool. He is Installations Manager at the Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool. Duncan is currently doing research for a PhD, at Nottingham Trent University.

6.2. Introduction.

This case study contains an example of an artist who, through reflection and problem finding, changed his practice from one which was largely concerned with making paintings within a studio-based practice to one which was more installational. The chapter considers how Duncan reached out beyond the conventions, confines and limitations of a studio-based practice and how the range of media, materials and processes were extended. Duncan's collaborative work is considered and discussed.

Insights are gained into examples of specific projects. These are described and discussed in relation to the main themes of the case study in the final sections of the chapter. Illustrations are referred to in the case study where appropriate, and these can be found at the end of the chapter.

Duncan's quotations are taken from interviews with this researcher during the period 1997–2000, (e.g. Mountford, D. 1997), unless otherwise stated. Other people's commentary is referred to and quoted where appropriate.

6.3. Redefining the limits.

In an interview with this researcher Duncan described how he considered the practice of studio painting to be 'insular' and the paintings to be somehow 'singular'. He said the paintings seemed to have too much dominance within the process (Mountford, D. 1997). Duncan said there was a feeling of unhappiness with "being 'contained' within the picture plane's rectangle" and frustration at the "limitations of a flat surface" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan referred to never having felt entirely at ease with the limitations of a flat surface and feeling limited by the picture's rectangle. He referred to a desire to allow into the practice new ways of thinking about this problem and the problem of the perceived insularity of a studio-based practice.

Duncan described the way he felt uncomfortable about:

> "the kinds of conversations and discourse about painting because by and large, a lot of it dealt with notions of interiority, ideas of form to do with the particularities inherent to painting and there was not really enough about the exteriority of painting, its context and what went on outside its boundaries" (Mountford, D. 1997).

However, he said that it was ironic that more affinity was felt with painting and painters, once he moved away from his studio-based, painting practice. He referred to this as something to do with gaining distance from painting. He said he could:

> "look at painting in a much more dispassionate way and see ways in which paintings would be done but it wouldn't be because they're paintings, they would be part of something else, in a sense similar to the way Allan McCollum does those plaster surrogate pieces - the painting as framed by a particular place" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan said he reflected upon the relationship between what was inside the frame and outside the frame, together with the feeling of insularity. The inclusive/exclusive nature of the frame was seen to be of significance and the nature of the frame was explored via installational work. The problem of the frame as a limit became something to be 'crossed over' in the more installational work: the problem became resituated and explored within the new installational practice.

Duncan gave the impression of wanting to become more of a processual artist; wanting to make links between objects, people, and places. He referred to his unease with the exchange in value when something 'made' by the artist becomes somehow endowed with a different value as a 'commodity' or the 'dumb object' in the alien environment of the gallery. He described a feeling of wanting to make art about the relationship *between* things rather than make 'dumb' objects. He talked of the way the work became more fragmented as elements within it were separated out, and he went on to describe how it tied in with his notions of how:

> "the art world is not just a thing bounded by itself, it does not simply exist in the midst of nothing, it actually exists in a whole range of social, cultural and political contexts. And in a similar way the art object does not exist in a gallery isolated from the world at large, it too exists within a series of differing social contexts as well" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan said that, through distancing himself from what he thought painting was, he had formed a critical opinion now about painting but on his own terms. Duncan described being fascinated by the deceptive nature of the frame around a painting. Duncan could not go back to painting simply because of the perceived frame and the singular nature of painting i.e. the way a painting stopped at its edges. He said once he had begun to move away from a studio-based, painting practice towards a more installational-type practice, he always saw painting in the sense of it being a 'scenario'. This was because he could not accept the edges of a painting as being 'actually true'. To him the edge was not really the true end of a painting. He referred to how he could not divorce himself from

the idea that the frame was a kind of 'deceit' and his fascination with the notion that the 'actual frame' lay beyond its material border. He described how the 'conceptual frame' became a key part of the practice and this frame was the way that the work implicated the viewer within the work, but with stealth (Mountford, D. 1997). He said:

> "When you are painting you are at a kind of distance from what you're trying to paint, but if you could actually build spaces then instantly people are within it and you cannot stand back because the work is surrounding them and they are a part of the work because they are there. It's important, in the sense that they're there to complete the work" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan went on to describe how various attempts had been made to visualise this idea in the form of 'mini-museums' or dioramas or models imitating the spaces found in galleries, museums and very particular kinds of spaces by using materials similar to those found in such places. Duncan described how the idea of the art object carrying a particular sense of aura had led to a strand within the work being about museums and what Duncan describes as "museum languages".

Problem finding with the limits or edges of the artwork began when Duncan became preoccupied with seeing his paintings as objects. This is described and discussed in the next section.

6.4. Earlier work.

Prior to the more installational approach to making artwork, Duncan described his practice as being largely to do with painting (Mountford, D. 1997). He said the subject matter varied but "by and large it was of a social or political type" (see Figs. 6.1. & 6.2.). Duncan described the way the frame was always an important consideration and, as such, became an important visual feature of his work to the point of it being included, and painted, as part of the image. He later experimented with the inclusion of found objects. He said he used things that were ready to hand, for example, things that were lying around the studio were collaged onto painting and 'found objects' would be incorporated into the image (Mountford, D. 1997). In addition to using objects found by chance, he sought out particular visual material, for example, books and magazines (Mountford, D. 2000).

Duncan described how the works grew in size as a result of his interest in using found objects and the process of collage (Mountford, D. 1997). Work that started out as a single image was developed into diptychs and triptychs (see Figs. 6.1. & 6.2.). Duncan described how he liked the idea of their being more 'interactive' than flat paintings in that they could be opened and closed. He said, "they were no longer 'dumb' objects to be hung on a white wall - a white wall which may have been alien to the image's 'natural' surroundings" (i.e. the place of its making). Duncan began viewing them "more as objects than paintings", and he noticed that he was spending more time building the framework than making a painting. He described how he became more

interested in the edges or limits of the image and the interaction between this and the surroundings. He began to regard the back and surroundings of the image, the space in which the image was exhibited and that was when he came to regard the images as 'objects' (see Fig. 6.3. & 6.4.).

In dealing with diptychs and triptychs he began thinking about their associations with icons, sacred objects and sacred spaces. Duncan said that he was never entirely happy with the notion of art having commodity value but realised that "that was 'a bind' that a lot of artists have to deal with". He referred to the way galleries and museums bestow value upon art objects as a process which he regarded as similar to the way religious artefacts are bestowed with value according to their setting or context. He referred to the way:

> "galleries treat objects as relics or similar objects thereof...the object is a sacred thing which is treated with a particular awe and reverence" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Earlier painting had given way to diptychs and triptychs and Duncan described the realisation that he could start to make commentary in his new work about the kinds of value perceptions he was thinking about.

A turning point came when, in 1993, he had exhibited some large, free-standing triptychs, in a show entitled 'My Subject is War – Wilfred Owen Memorial Exhibition', at the Williamson Gallery, Wirral (see Figs 6.1. & 6.2.). Duncan said the 'particularity'

of the Williamson Art Gallery space, which he described as a typical municipal type gallery space of roughly 1920's design, had 'echoes of church architecture'. The combination of the connotation of 'sacred space', and the fact that Duncan was studying for an MA in sculpture at Winchester School of Art, confirmed his feeling that the painting 'History' 1993, (see Fig. 6.2.), was going to be his last painting (Mountford, D. 2000). Duncan described how he became more interested in the interaction between the works and the large white gallery space they were exhibited in, and how this relationship might become included in his art practice. There was a realisation that in his attempt to do a "history painting" he had made his "last history painting". Duncan described how he thought there was nothing left for him in just painting and that he had come to the end of his painting practice (Mountford, D. 1997).

The next section describes and considers Duncan's collaborative work.

6.5. Working with others: democracy and dialogue

Duncan's first involvement with installational-type art began via the reflective conversation with his practice. He explored the possibilities of a more installational approach in conversations with fellow artist Janet Farahar (born 1959). Janet trained in Graphic Design at Coventry City Polytechnic, (1977-78). Both Duncan and Janet have studios at Arena Studios, Liverpool. Janet has worked as a part-time art tutor, visiting lecturer and has gained employment doing artist's exhibition workshops e.g. at the Tate Gallery Liverpool and from gallery exhibition work, such as handling artwork.

In the conversations, Duncan referred to the desire for a less insular and less didactic attitude and more democratic approach to practice (Mountford, D. 1997). Duncan and Janet's conversations informed their collaborative work. These conversations, the dialogue between two voices, was one of the concerns of the collaboration between Duncan and Janet. Duncan described some of the thinking behind the collaboration:

> "It is because of the 'plurality', or at least the critique that it would form of the single voice of the artist, it is about discussion, argument and conversation going on about the work and whether it is successful or not. It is beneficial in terms of objectivity and also the idea of actual *collaboration* is appealing and addresses certain key issues we want to address within the work i.e. the single voice, the isolated artist, mastery, artist and muse etc. etc. etc." (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan referred to the way he felt about his earlier work as somehow being didactic (Mountford, D. 1997). He felt the relationship between the viewer and the artwork was somehow not democratic: the process of engagement was held by a dualistic coupling, for example 'painting and viewer', and he wanted it to be more open, democratic, or more honest. There was only one point of view being put forward and a single painting, diptych or triptych seemed to emphasise this and a more installational approach would increase the chances of a more open engagement with audience: making the process less didactic (Mountford, D. 1997). This researcher understood this to mean that an installational approach to making art would offer the viewer more 'points of view' and

the viewing process would be more open or 'matrixical'. Duncan said the chances of a more open engagement could be assisted:

> "By providing the conceptual space for multiple readings, these being dependent upon the viewers' knowledge, perceptions, feelings, etc." (Mountford, D. 2000).

The collaboration is described in detail in a paper from the collaboration entitled 'Current Working Practice' (Farahar, J. & Mountford, D. 1997). In it the two artists made a joint statement:

> "The development of the joint working method is the result of the recognition of the contribution to the other's individual work.
>
> "By pursuing this method the desire to be too didactic or specific is negated by the tension between the differing viewpoints. The differences are amalgamated to produce, but not compromise, a third position. This position resists single readings [of the work]".

For example when Duncan and Janet start a new piece, Duncan said they would visit the space and talk about what each was getting from that space (Mountford, D. 1997). The work starts immediately with this conversation which, they find, limits the chance of overly didactic pieces being made, which is of over-riding importance to the collaboration. Duncan said this process:

> "produces much more openness. Openness of interpretation and it is not tied down to one particular viewpoint or way of seeing things. It is more

> democratic and it is more about a dialogue. It has also led to a much less lazy approach, more critical and more collaborative ventures with other people outside the partnership" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan went on to describe how he has found from experience, that installation artists all seem much more willing to cooperate with each other and network, pass on information and swap spaces and ideas, than the "traditional painters and sculptors... what you might call the purists" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Both Duncan and Janet said they found this interactive approach to practice more helpful than the insular and largely studio-based practice of painting. There was a feeling of having a lot more freedom and confidence to explore creative art practice.

6.5.1. The provisional nature of the artwork.

Along with the desire for a more open dialogue in art practice came a more open approach to art making. In a slide talk, Duncan described how the work is often seen as only provisional and open to change or modification (Mountford, D. 1999). He was not sure when the finished object was finished in installational-type work, because there are two people playing around with the project and always questioning it. He described how two people looking at it from a different angle, proposing a new viewpoint - physically or conceptually - led to a certain difficulty in not only deciding when it became a finished object but if it ever became a finished object at all.

Duncan said:

> "It never has a point when it stops, only pauses, it never has a point when it is a single framed object since a lot of it is process-based or reliant upon a certain space or set of criteria which only come together, or converge, at certain times. It can be changed, constantly played around with" (Mountford, D. 1997).

In an artists' statement for the collaborative practice (Farahar, J. & Mountford, D. 1998), Duncan and Janet describe the use of lighting as a way of achieving a temporary feel to the work:

> "The temporary lighting in parts of the work alludes to similar senses of unfinished business."

This researcher noted Duncan's intentionally high level of craft in the production of the objects, especially the constructions and cabinets used to display or contain the found objects or house the video monitors (see Figs. 6.20. - 6.27.). This well-crafted appearance gave the work a solid and permanent feel. The appearance of the work being permanent (and the impossibility of this being so, given the siting of the works), only served, paradoxically, to heighten the provisional nature of the work.

6.6. Alternative media.

In an interview with this researcher Duncan talked about how different 'values' could be placed upon different objects, for example unique objects with a perceived high cultural value and mass-produced objects with a perceived low cultural value. He referred to how the gallery context could bestow a value upon an object with a perceived lower value simply by "labelling it as art or authorising it as art", and to the openness of interpretation of value, according to differing perceptions (Mountford, D. 1997). Duncan said he wanted to make commentary on the relationship between objects and their containers, values and contexts, via the collaborative practice, using 'display' as a vehicle (see Figs. 6.3. & 6.4., 6.10. – 6.12.). In expanding the visual language of the practice, Duncan also expanded the range of media and materials. He extended the range of media to include similar objects, found in galleries and museums, found objects display furniture (cabinets, display cases, model museums); and methods of documentation and display, such as video and photographic media (see Figs. 6.5. – 6.7., 6.21. & 6.29.) (Mountford, D. 1997).

In a slide talk, Duncan described how, through installational art practice and through collaborative work, he wanted to somehow "democratise" this process by making the media, material objects and the methods of presentation, equally important (Mountford, D. 1999). Using 'museum languages' and exploring the notions of "preciousness and non-preciousness" and particularly the ideas of permanence and value, he hoped to

produce 'false narratives' which would disrupt any preconceived notions of value. In the 'Current Work Practice' paper, (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1997), it said:

> "Current practice is based on two methods of approach to the production of sculpture/installation.
>
> "One approach involves an on-going process of collecting material, from books to discarded/lost objects (this will expand to include sound and text). These are the points of departure for works that will contextualise the objects within containers, systems, that relate to museological or scientific methods of presentation and ordering. An extension of this is the object as mediated via photographic slide and this representation treated as a further object. The objects and the methods of presentation are of equal importance.
>
> "Relating to this collection strategy is the production of site-specific works that contain contextual material. This second strand of practice, together with the construction of specific spaces (rooms), follows on from the museum/scientific language employed within the final form of the collections. The spaces also function as sculptures.
>
> "The conclusions that can be drawn from the work are never didactically signalled, there is always the opportunity to produce false narratives" (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1997).

The reflection upon the practice and its products gave rise to new conceptual considerations and a 'reframing' of the situation. In a sense, the old way had to be let go

of in order to accommodate the new way - a kind of giving up and starting again. This opened up the whole situation and new perspectives - it increased the opportunities for chance encounters i.e. happy accidents. Duncan described the way that 'giving up' and starting again, "opens and is opening so much more possibility", possibilities for other, alternative, materials to those traditionally associated with the painting practice (Mountford, D. 1997).

The range of media was extended to included found objects, MDF (medium density fibreboard) and glass constructions to form display cases, video and photographic media. For example, 'Obsessive, Compulsive Disorder' (1998), (see Figs. 6.25. – 6.27.) comprised ten wash stands, in two rows of five, either side of a single central stand with a video monitor mounted in the top. This installation combined several common materials often found in Duncan's installative work and in the collaborative projects produced with Janet i.e. MDF and other construction materials, photography or video and PVC. The wash stands were made of MDF and had clinically white, padded PVC surfaces. The wash bowls were stainless steel, similar to the type found in institutional-type buildings e.g. hospitals. The video was a short film on a continuous loop depicting two hands endlessly washing themselves in a sink similar in scale to the bowls on the tops of the stands.

Most of the materials that were used were ones which were quite readily available and things which did not involve a lot of changing, for example 'readymades' such as soap, towels, gloves, electric lighting, storage cabinets, and things with an appropriate surface

quality, applicable to a variety of situations, for example, MDF, ceramic tiles (see Fig. 6.19. & 6.20.).

Duncan described how more materials, the increased opportunity of 'chance finds', and increased ideas, contributed to a new, more inclusive, practice in which he challenged his perceptions of painting as an 'exclusive' practice. Duncan said:

> "When you are using paint to construct, in a sense, a false notion of the world, you're transforming the material of paint to make this kind of simulation of what you perceive. Whereas the objects and materials used now remain very much as they are, what changes is the context" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan referred to how the objects are 'housed' or 'placed' within very obviously architectural contexts as a way of circumnavigating the frame which had become so limiting in his painting practice. The release from the frame allowed Duncan to use the architectural space to make apparent the contextual connections and to involve the viewer in this process Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan said the context of these found objects was altered or subverted by his and Janet's inclusion of them as art. However, they were very often used in their found state and not changed in any way. These items were chosen according to a strict set of criteria, which Duncan and Janet applied according to the project they were working on. For example, the gloves, which were collected by Janet over a number of years and used for 'Lost and Found' (1996) (see Figs. 6.10. - 6.12.), had to be:

- domestic or fashion gloves and not work gloves.
- found by accident and not looked for.

Another example was when Duncan and Janet found three medical trolleys which prompted them to design and make a museum space in which to exhibit them. A kind of mini-museum or showcase which gave the objects certain attributes such as exhibits in a 'design museum' might have. This is a way of accessing the 'visual information' inherent in the 'accidental find' and the ensuing 'testing' of ideas (Mountford, D. 1997).

The medical trolleys used were found by accident and they were selected not only for their obvious inherent connotations, but also for their inherent systemising and ordering of whatever contents they would have once contained.

Duncan said:

"This is because they already contain within them the kind of qualities and feelings that you want. They already give certain kinds of feelings. The idea is not so much to change the material or item collected but to change the way you actually present these things. There are certain ramifications of doing that. In a sense it is about building a context round those things or objects using the selected materials" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan described the desire to decrease the didactic nature of the work and to increase the chance of a more open or democratic dialogue within the work and with the viewer

(Mountford, D. 1997). He referred to how installational work could enable this process. Careful selection of media and materials, together with a close attention to the actual fabric and appearance of the architecture of the space in which a piece was installed, blurred the distinction between the object and its display. The distinction between scenario and 'the rest' of the surroundings was problematised through this choice of materials in the hope of 'undoing' any preconceptions on the part of the viewer and would hopefully allow the viewer fresher readings of the art on display.

The next section contains further reflections upon the relationship between site and audience.

6.7. Site and audience

Increased utilisation of alternative spaces and engagement with the 'accidental audience' became a focus for Duncan. In the installative work, Duncan broadened the use of exhibition spaces, he still uses gallery and museum spaces because that is a vital context of the work, but he has used alternative spaces such as; warehouse spaces and mill-type buildings, foyers of public buildings (i.e. 'Tate Gallery', Liverpool, 1993, 'Traces', South Trafford College, 1996) and, quite recently, Duncan installed 'Museum One' (1999) in the Fine Art Department at Nottingham Trent University (see Fig. 6.30. - 6.34.).

Duncan said that if he felt there was a sense that a potential space for display was appropriate to the work, it would be used - along with its indigenous audience. Duncan said that the main thing is that the viewer is no longer perceived as external to the work. He said, "a lot of the didactic and 'heavy handed' imagery which was part of the paintings has gone and the process is a lot more subtle or even democratic" (Mountford, D. 1997). He also said:

> "hopefully the work provides gaps whereby the viewer can 'access' what is being experienced" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan described a feeling of being 'inside the work' when working on installational-type projects. He referred to its difference from painting being about its edges – when painting, he was separate and distant from the painting but when making installational work he was involved in it. He said:

> "that is where you have to work until the work is finished and you cannot come out of that in order to objectify, until the project is finished" (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan used the available space to install or 'deploy' objects, videos and images. He said the time spent assessing what is going on in a given space was what forced an engagement (Mountford, D. 1997), but it was also:

> "a way of breaking down or questioning the value judgements made in gallery spaces or when it comes to viewing art. It takes away the notion that 'the viewer expects'".

Duncan thought that this might be disruptive for the audience, but the anxiety or doubt that might be caused was a good thing, "a healthy thing". In a slide talk Duncan said:

> "The lack of a didactic view also enables the viewer to engage in a 'dialogue' with the work. They are not given a 'take it or leave it' position with no room for their views or experiences to become a part of the work" (Mountford, D. 1999).

In the paper 'Current Working Practice' (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1997), it said:

> "There are a number of starting points (visual and conceptual) for the work. The site of the installation can affect and focus these ideas, producing a discourse between site and initial intention"

It is this discourse in which the viewer finds himself or herself involved.

Duncan described how the architectural space gives the work its material frame but:

> "it largely depends on how much control you, as a maker, can exercise over the space. However, it does always pull back further and further away from the core. If there is such a thing" (Mountford, D. 1997).

By this he meant that the edges of the work continually fell away from one perceived boundary to the next, and so on. John Newling, (1999) referred to this peeling away of the boundary as 'camouflage merging', he described 'Museum One' as forming:

> "a kind of autonomy in this situation. In its production, its physical presence held a kind of camouflage, merging as it did with other

productions happening around it.... the antechamber allowing a sense of place started this process, the museum section with its lit empty containers furthered this sense of place in transience whilst alluding to the rigours and rules of the museum or the office" (Newling, J. 1999).

Moy McCrory (1994), gave an insight into what it was like to wander around one of Duncan's installation projects, when she wrote a response to a walk through a piece entitled 'Interregnum' (1994), installed at Winchester School of Art (see Figs. 6.5. – 6.7.). She wrote:

"I went straight through the first room feeling some maniac had ransacked a library: shelves all at odd angles, metal-ministry-of-defence-type storage, all pulled out of order and a tangle of electric wires, one bulb working to see by.

"I shot through into the relief (I thought) of the light from the corridor. This took me to a stark, white tiled area like the shower block from Hell-or-Gestapo, where with mounting alarm I believed 'they' were after me. Whatever had been forcibly removed from the first room was anything 'we' and I were responsible for" (McCrory, M. 1994).

McCrory constructed and seemed to become implicated in some kind of drama which unfolded as she moved through the piece. She 'engaged in a dialogue with the work'.

The following sections contain examples of installational type projects from 1995 to the present. Details of the form and content of selected projects are considered and discussed in relation to the changes in the art practice in the following sections.

6.8. Project One: 'Dislocate', 1995, Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool.

This piece was installed at the Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool in January 1995. It consisted of a life-sized construction of a room which was clad with white tiles and had electrical conduit running up and down the walls to supply the lighting for the piece. The constructed room was installed in one of the gallery spaces within the Bluecoat galleries. The conduit and tiling were integral parts of the whole piece (see Figs. 6.19. & 6.20). The scale of this piece invited the viewer to enter and wander around in it. According to Henri, A. (1995), 'Dislocate' was a piece where lighting played a major role in the overall emotional effect. This researcher noted that the 'overall emotional effect' was rather sinister. The piece had the sanitised appearance of an institutional space such as a laboratory or a clinic but, because of the items within the space, the whole things took on the appearance of a place of torture or even a place of execution.

'Dislocate' was part of a much larger project called 'On Stream' which (funded, in part, by the 'P. H. Holt Charitable Trust'), was a series of exhibitions from 1995-97. The series was in two-parts, the first of which included the installative project by Duncan and Janet, at the Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool.

Henri, A. (1995), described the contents of the piece in his review:

> "A white bed with restraining straps may connote both birth and torture, a gleaming surgical device reveals a crimson velvet interior; two electric candles burn in a gilt shrine".

Davis, R. (1995), reviewed 'Dislocate' quoting Duncan's catalogue statement which describes the piece as:

> "a shrine, with echoes of a Lady Chapel, to the political ideal of the family, and the dark undertones of desire and hypocrisy therein. The shrine to the woman as provider of children faces a bed on constriction, a bed that echoes many 'values' that patriarchs hold precious" (Mountford, D. 1995).

According to Key, P. (1995), the piece presented a "real challenge". This challenge, which Davis, R. (1995) also referred to, had the potential to make the public feel inadequate in its attempt to determine meaning from the apparently disparate set of artefacts in the exhibit and wondered whether the work was simply ironic.

This researcher noted that 'Dislocate' was, if anything, complicated and contradicted itself through the considered use of collected and made objects. The text which supported the piece alluded to childbirth but provided the piece's overall emotional background with 'dark undertones of hypocrisy' and possibly a feeling of claustrophobia.

The distinction between the 'work' and the gallery was made ambiguous through the selections of materials and through the high degree of craftsmanship in building the piece itself. It was not clear where the former ended and the latter began. Duncan referred to the way he "wanted the work to creep up on the viewer" and to make a more democratic and process-based art (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan said by disturbing perceived boundaries between artefact and container, value judgements might be delayed long enough to attract and engage an audience (Mountford, D. 1999). Fig. 6.26. shows a brass museum plaque which Duncan proposed to install on any building he wanted to draw into his exploration of museum languages. Through placing the plaque 'Museum' on a building Duncan hoped to explore the perceived boundaries between artefact and site, the nature of a place, and perceived value of its contents.

6.9. Project Two: 'Lost and Found', 1996, The Glass Box, Salford.

This piece was commissioned by the Glass Box Gallery, Salford, which according to its own guide literature: "is a small dedicated space with walls constructed entirely from glass. It provides an ideal environment for installation, sculpture and three-dimensional work". The Glass Box is literally a glass room, within the foyer of the Atherton Building, Salford University.

According to an artists' statement released by Duncan and Janet:

> "The collected object (lost gloves encountered on city walks), has become the starting point for a series of works. The initial intention was to display the gloves within an installation that related to objective enquiry, whilst recognising the memorial implication of the isolated personal object. The installation 'Lost and Found" took its formal language of glass, mirrors and the white, neutral construction from the space, whilst using the changing light to turn the ambience from bright and cold to that of the shrine lit by points of light at dusk" (Farrahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1996).

The gloves were photographically recorded in the place where they were originally found For example Figs. 6.13. – 6.17. illustrate five gloves found on the street and photographed in situ. Fig. 6.18. shows how some of the gloves were later labelled and displayed. This became a documenting process and built up into an archive of both the found gloves and a photographic archive of found gloves which could be included in a future exhibition or installation project. In the case of 'Lost and Found' it was the actual gloves that were displayed.

The press release for Duncan and Janet's show 'Lost and Found' (1996), said:

> "Lost and Found features gloves collected from the streets of Liverpool. A selection of these are preserved in glass caskets and shelved like relics. The gallery assumes the appearance of a laboratory where we are invited

> to investigate the identity of the wearer. Could we be witnessing an archaeological study or perhaps the aftermath of a disaster?"

The piece comprised five shelves on castors (or trolleys), each with 5 gloves sandwiched between glass sheets, reminiscent of biological slides (see Figs. 6.11. & 6.12.). These 'trolley displays' were in rows, quite low down and displayed the gloves close to the ground where they were found. The gloves were labelled and 'held' under controlled conditions as if required for some experiment or at least for scrutiny. Facing the five low trolleys was a higher shelf unit with a stacked arrangement of similar but empty glass shelves. There were small piles of gloves and labels on the floor adjacent to the large shelf unit, either having just been discarded or waiting to be installed – it was unclear. The evidence of activity (an ordered activity which had been interrupted) created an air of suspense. The whole arrangement was reminiscent of theatre - audience and stage or of pews and an altar. Indeed, in a statement for his MA show in 1994, Duncan alluded to the layers of visual language within the installative type work when he said:

> "The work articulates responses to political, social, historical and personal issues, and incorporates the language of religion, museum display and bureaucratic power structures" (Mountford, D. 1994).

The construction of any possible meaning from what was being displayed as art was also open to interpretation. Objects were re-presented to invite the viewer to construct their own narrative to accompany the work.

Duncan said:

> "the observer (consumer) of such archiving is equally subjected to manipulation, presented with the discarded as precious relic – evidence of the true version of events – or with the residue, detritus of an assumed event".

This researcher noted that the intended ambiguity of the piece, placing it somewhere between an 'archaeological study or the aftermath of a disaster', was emphasised by the choice of materials, and the cold, austere effect of all the glass, white tiled floor and white trolleys merely added to the overall disturbing effect. Gathering together of a lot examples of a particular type of item was reminiscent of a clean-up operation, for example after a disaster when the possessions of humanity are sifted and sorted through, recorded and ordered. The disturbing effect of this process was most apparent in this piece.

The 'Glass Box' itself was mimicked by careful selection of appropriate materials i.e. glass and objects with white surfaces, but this was emphasised by a careful attention to the scale and shape of the items in the box. Duncan referred to the way he used the form of the museum cabinet and the contained context to give clues to possible narratives for the gloves, giving a clear signal that interpretation is provisional; meaning is invited and 'under construction', rather than pre-determined (Mountford, D. 1997).

6.10. Project Three: 'Traces', 1996, South Trafford College, Manchester.

In 1996 Duncan and Janet won a competition to do a site-specific installation in the foyer area at South Trafford College, Manchester. The brief, advertised in 'Artists' Newsletter' (May 1996), was to propose a piece of installative-type art which responded to the college site in some way and which referred to the college's function, its buildings and the people who used these buildings. The brief requested that the work used 'light' in some way and that the work be interactive.

'Traces' (1996), was about involving chance encounters with the passive viewer of art, in the process of constructing and installing the piece (see Figs. 6.22. – 6.24.). This group of people included the staff, students and members of the public who frequented the college. Each person who happened to be passing the front foyer area of the college who agreed to become part of the piece, had photocopy handprints made from the palms of their hands. These images of people's palms were formed into hand-made books, put on 10 lecterns and became part of the installation. Each page in the book was made of tracing paper and when the books were open several pages of palm prints could be seen at once through the layers of tracing paper. The books were made from board covered in goat's hair canvas. In the books there were also pages showing photographic prints of aspects of the fabric of the building – door frames, vent grilles, light switches etc. The ten lecterns were constructed out of MDF and had white padded PVC tops on them.

Duncan described how the viewer was 'set up' by the placement of the elements in the installation and 'framed within the work'. He referred to the electrical conduit as serving two purposes: he installed it to carry the electrical power to the various lights deployed in the piece, and as a way of drawing a line on the wall - it acted as a compositional element in the installation. This researcher noted that the conduit related both physically to the space via a visual connection with the other conduit which could be seen in the building, and conceptually as a metaphor for lines of energy within the institutional structure. Duncan and Janet said in a press release:

> "the conduit acted as a device to draw the eye around the work thus describing the space. In effect the building frames the work in the same way a gilt frame or a plinth frames traditional art" (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1996).

The viewer was almost 'invited' to interact with the work, to place themselves amongst these elements and objects and that in this way they were already becoming a part of the work as they approached whatever it was that attracted them towards it in the first place. As they approached the immediate space surrounding the installation, because it was constructed of several elements and each element was distributed across the space, they found that there was no defining 'edge' to the piece.

The edge or boundary of the work was deliberately ambiguous. In an interview with this researcher, Duncan described how the frame worked conceptually rather than physically because the frame was not actually there (Mountford, D. 1997). The artwork was

dependent upon the actual space in which the viewer and the piece found themselves. This researcher noted that the building acted as the frame of the work – the viewer passed through the work. In a slide talk Duncan said the frame worked as a 'zone' (Mountford, D. 1999).

Where the work began and ended was ambiguous and this ambiguity was a deliberate way of including the viewer. He described the way the viewer already began to 'enter' the work when they began to perceive the work. This researcher noted that the work existed as a kind of zone and relied upon the transience of the audience, passing through this zone, for its existence. Duncan said:

> "One of the ways we have done that is to use light. What we would do is to turn all the lights off and the lights that are in that piece of the installation act as a frame" (Mountford, D. 1999).

Duncan referred to how the piece was related to the transient nature of the institution and the nature of the activities e.g. the passing of information, *via* its form e.g. the use of lecterns in the piece provided certain connotations to the viewer. Duncan and Janet described in an artist's statement how 'Traces' alluded to the kind of place the college was and the kind of activities that occurred, perhaps in some of its classrooms and offices. The statement said:

> "an obsessive network of electrical conduit linked a series of lecterns, lights and books, reminiscent of flowcharts and evolutionary diagrams" (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1996).

Duncan and Janet also said:

> "it is the intention that the [site-specific] work should exist as if a continuum of the space, constructed so as to be integral with the elements of the space" (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1996).

The press release gave a clue as to the thinking behind this work and shed light on other installational work by Duncan:

> "The physical materials used within this piece reflect institutional architectural language, and comment upon the individual/mass relationship to place and permanence/transience" (Farahar, J. and Mountford, D. 1996).

'Traces' was intended only to last for the duration of the summer festival at the college (roughly one month) but, because the piece was so enjoyed by the people of the college, and it created such a 'pleasant disturbance', it was kept in situ for several months longer than planned.

6.11. Conclusion

This chapter reveals the various changes in Duncan's artistic practice during the 1990's. The practice changed from one which was, by and large, studio-based and largely to do with making paintings for gallery spaces, to a newly situated practice, concerned with an installational approach to making art. The study reveals how Duncan's exploration of

the limits of the practice, process and products and the extension of media, processes and materials allowed for problems found to be resituated within the new practice with a more installational approach.

Duncan related problem finding and the reflective conversation with his practice, to the conversations he had with his colleague Janet Farahar, and incorporated this into his more open visual language. The case study shows how the conversations with Janet, concerning the problems found and the limiting nature of the studio based practice, led to collaborative installational projects. The study shows how a need for dialogue to be present within the installational-type works, was made apparent through a careful selection of site and media. The types of 'dialogue' were manifested in the mood and lighting of the pieces.

There was a desire for a less didactic, a more democratic, open and interactive relationship with the viewer via an extended range of media, materials, process and product. The study shows the ways Duncan tried to make apparent the democracy and dialogue referred to in the interviews with this researcher, within the installational type work.

The case study reveals how, through a reflective conversation and problem finding, Duncan reached out beyond the confines of his studio-based painting practice to a more installational approach to making art. The case study demonstrates how Duncan investigated the problems and limiting visual language conventions within the studio-

based practice and reveals how he explored what he referred to as 'museum languages', through an installational-type approach (Mountford, D. 1997).

Duncan explored the boundaries of display by using various media, materials and processes: usually ones associated with the fabric of the building in which the installation found itself. For example Duncan used processes of display within the context of the gallery space, building his own display cabinets and even rooms. These 'containers' which held the 'work' for display ('Lost and Found' 1996) actually were the 'work' on display ('Museum One' 1999 and 'Dislocate' 1995) or combined these processes of object and display context ('Traces' 1996).

One of the most significant ways Duncan explored the distinctions between object and context, or the boundaries of display, was through 'blurring' or fragmenting these boundaries. In addition to experimenting and exploring an extended range of media, Duncan explored the possibilities of constructing temporary installational projects, ones which would be relevant to their location, ones whose visual appearance mimicked the surroundings. Duncan explored the limits of his artwork by blurring the distinctions between where the installation finished and the 'background' architecture took over.

The study shows how the problem of being confined by the perceived edges within painting and the recognition that this could become a part of the practice, led Duncan to make artwork which used the space or context as actually part of the artwork. Any 'limits' to the artwork were reliant upon the space in which it found itself. The artwork

became bound only by the space it was in. The visual language of the work expanded to include the 'language' of the space it was in, i.e. the gallery or museum space. He referred to his artworks as being somehow imitative of museum spaces. Making more ambiguous any enduring distinctions the viewer might have between art and not art became an important feature of the new installational art practice.

This process of blurring the perceived boundaries between art and not art released Duncan from the conventions which had become confining and this had a liberating effect on his practice and led to new work.

The contents of this case study and the possibility for future research are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies, in chapter ten.



Fig. 6.1. 'Requiem Triptych' 1991 Duncan Mountford
(oil on plasterboard panels, c. 8' x 16')

Fig. 6.2. 'History Painting Triptych' 1993 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(oil on board, knitted fabric banners, c. 8' x 20')



Fig. 6.3. 'Bureaucratic Shrine' 1994 Duncan Mountford
(electric lighting, found objects, display cabinet, c. 7' x 3')

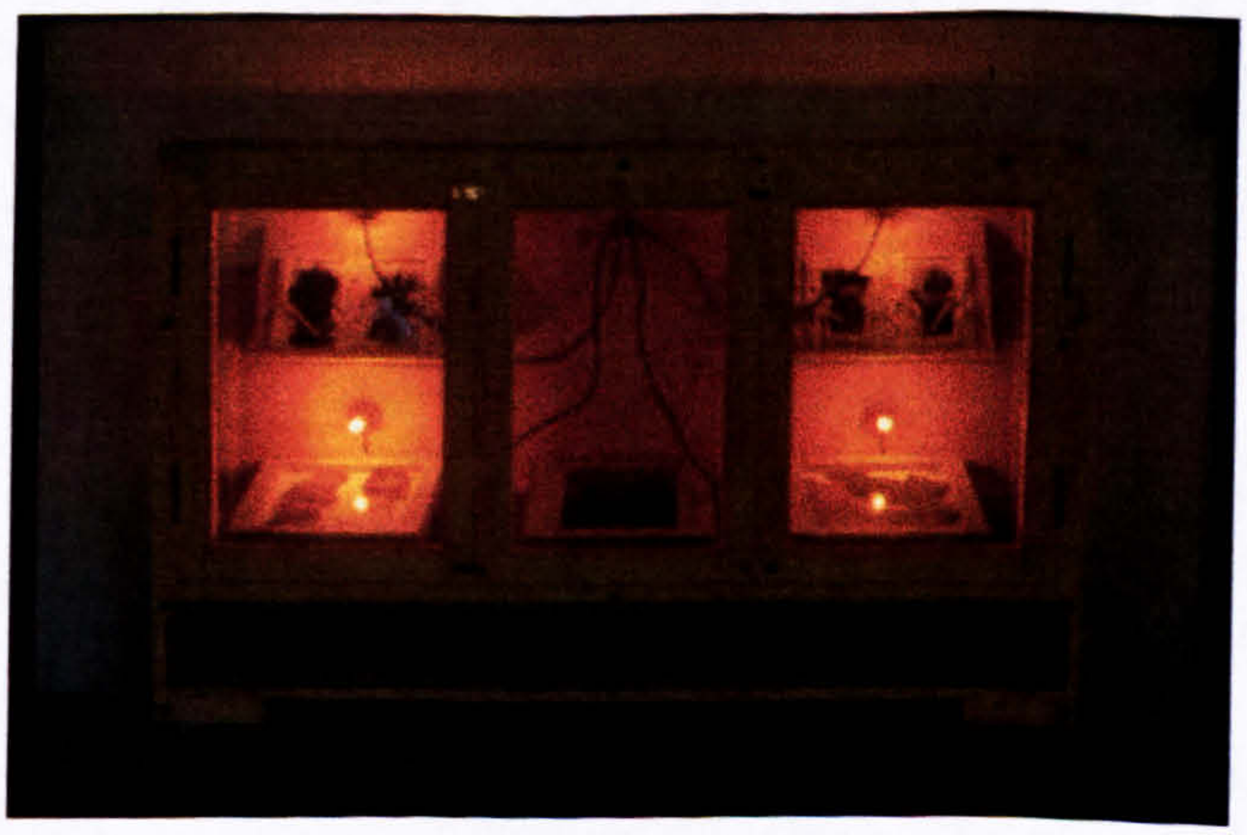


Fig. 6.4. 'Keeper' 1996 Duncan Mountford and Janet Farrahar
(display cabinet, found objects, electric lighting, c. 4' x 5' x 2')

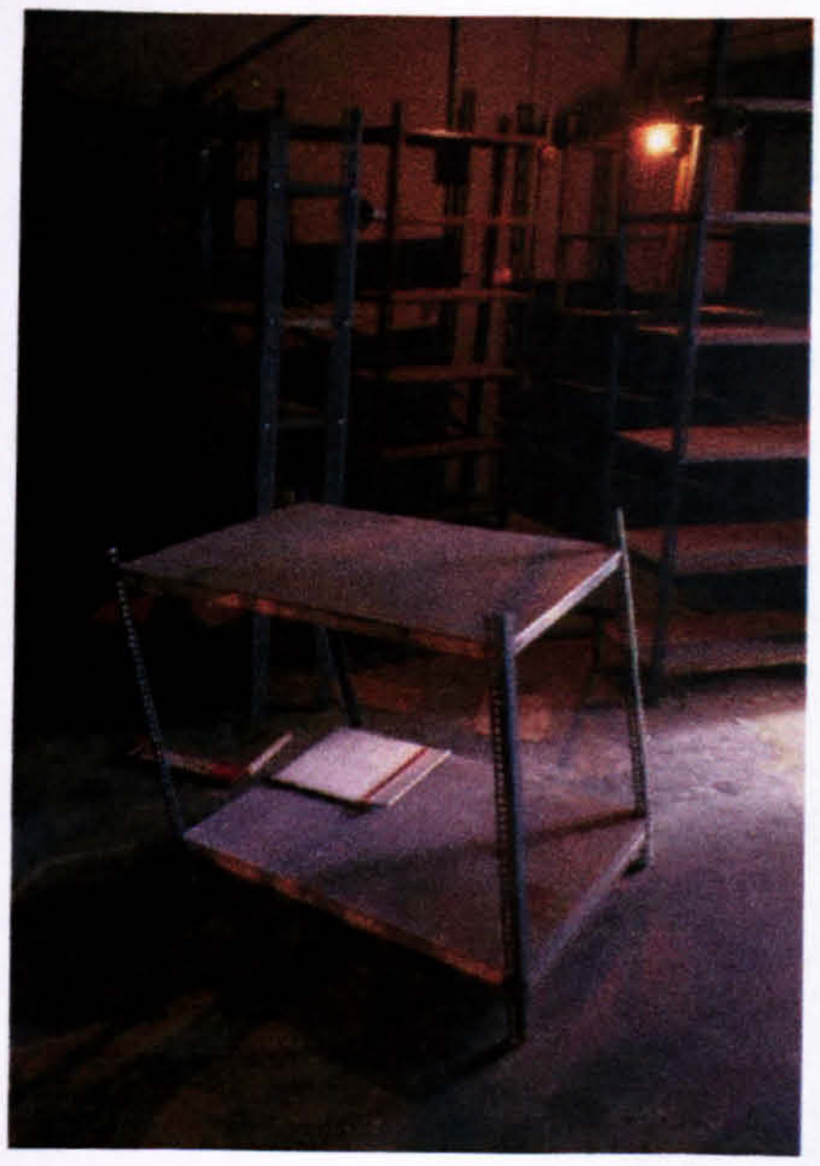


Fig. 6.5. 'Interregnum' 1994 Duncan Mountford
(storage cabinets, racks, shelves, warehouse space, dimensions vary)

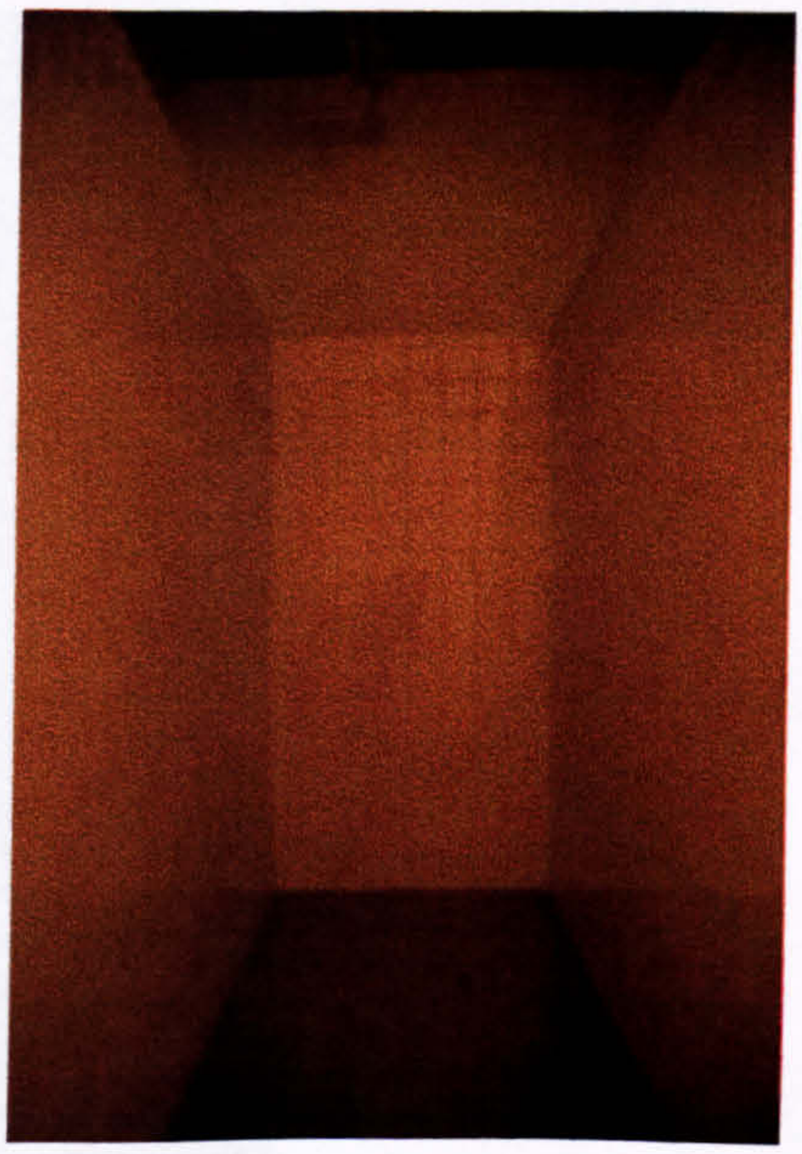


Fig. 6.6. 'Interregnum' 1994 Duncan Mountford
(storage cabinets, ceramic tiles, racks, shelves, warehouse space, dimensions vary)



Fig. 6.7. 'Interregnum' 1994 Duncan Mountford
(storage cabinets, racks, ceramic tiles, shelves, warehouse space, dimensions vary)



Fig. 6.8. 'The Institute' 1995 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(found objects, electric lighting, constructed room, c. 12' x 12' room-space)



Fig. 6.9. 'The Institute' 1995 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(found objects, electric lighting, constructed room, c. 12' x 12' room-space)



Fig. 6.10. 'Lost and Found' Glass Box Gallery, Salford 1996 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(display units, electric lighting, found objects, c. 20' x 20' space)

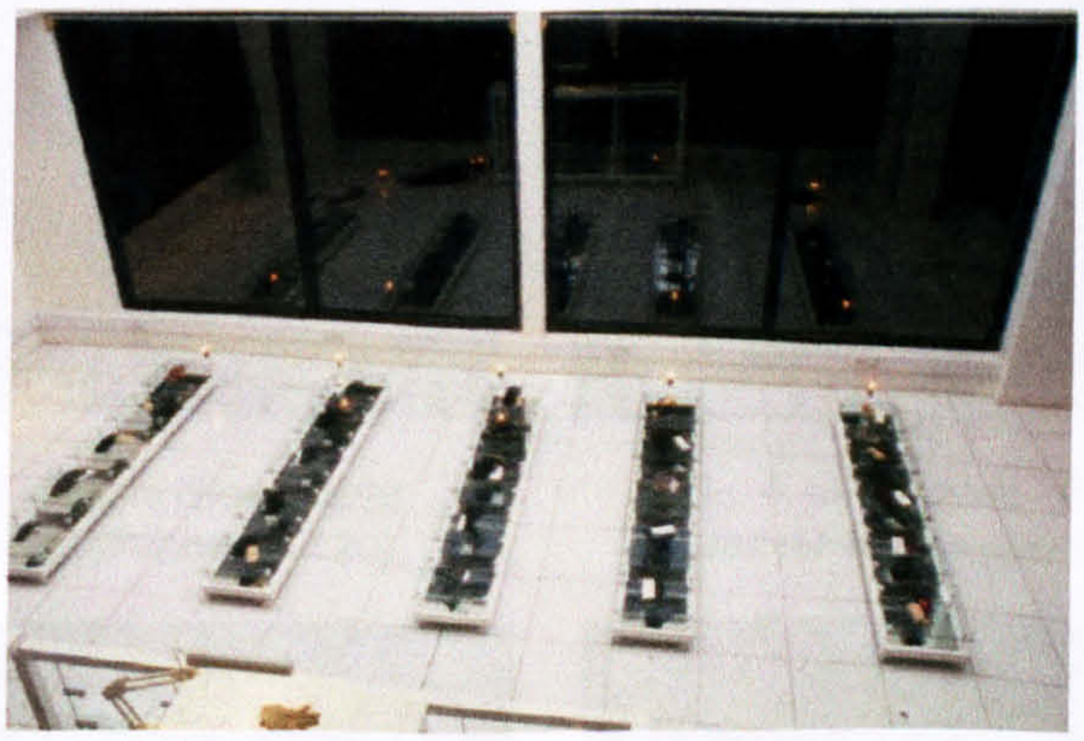


Fig. 6.11. 'Lost and Found' Glass Box Gallery, Salford 1996 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(display units, electric lighting, found objects, c. 20' x 20' space)



Fig. 6.12. 'Lost and Found' Glass Box Gallery, Salford 1996 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(display units, electric lighting, found objects, c. 20' x 20' space)



Fig. 6.13. 'Untitled - Found Glove' 1996
Janet Farrahar (photographed in situ)



Fig. 6.14. 'Untitled - Found Glove' 1996
Janet Farrahar (photographed in situ)



Fig. 6.15. 'Untitled - Found Glove' 1996
Janet Farrahar (photographed in situ)



Fig. 6.16. 'Untitled - Found Glove' 1996
Janet Farrahar (photographed in situ)



Fig. 6.17. 'Untitled - Found Glove' 1996
Janet Farrahar (photographed in situ)



Fig. 6.18. 'Last of England' 1997
Janet Farrahar (3 labelled gloves)



Fig. 6.19. 'Dislocate' - Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool 1995 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar (mixed media, c. 10' x 10' space)



Fig. 6.20. 'Dislocate' - Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool 1995 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar (mixed media, c. 10' x 10' space)

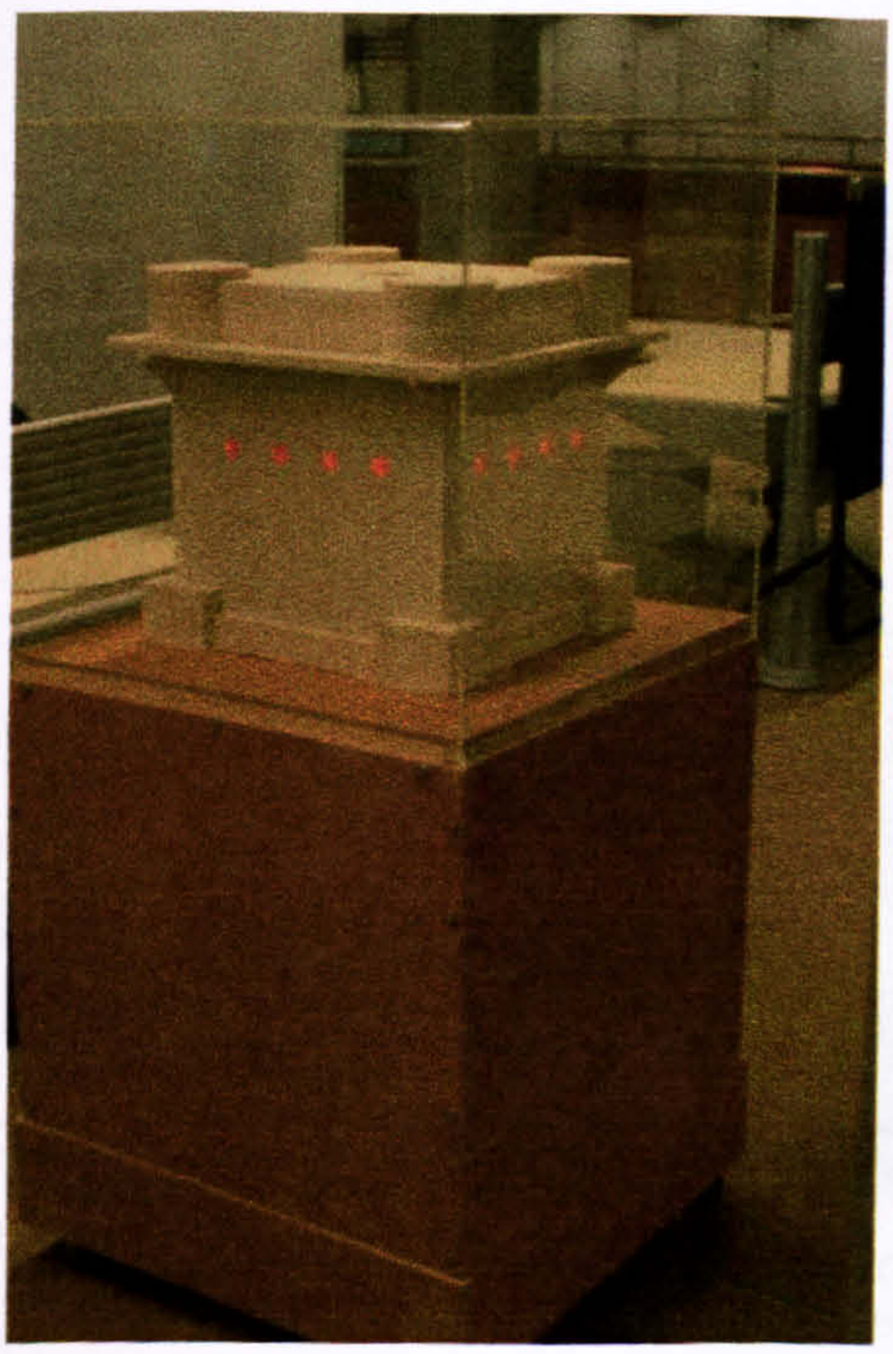


Fig. 6.21. 'Untitled Model Building' ('Boots' Headquarters, Nottingham) 1998 Duncan Mountford (display cabinet, model building, c. 4' x 2' x 2')



Fig. 6.22. 'Traces' South Trafford College 1996 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar (display lecterns, tracing paper, electric lighting, c. 12' x 35')

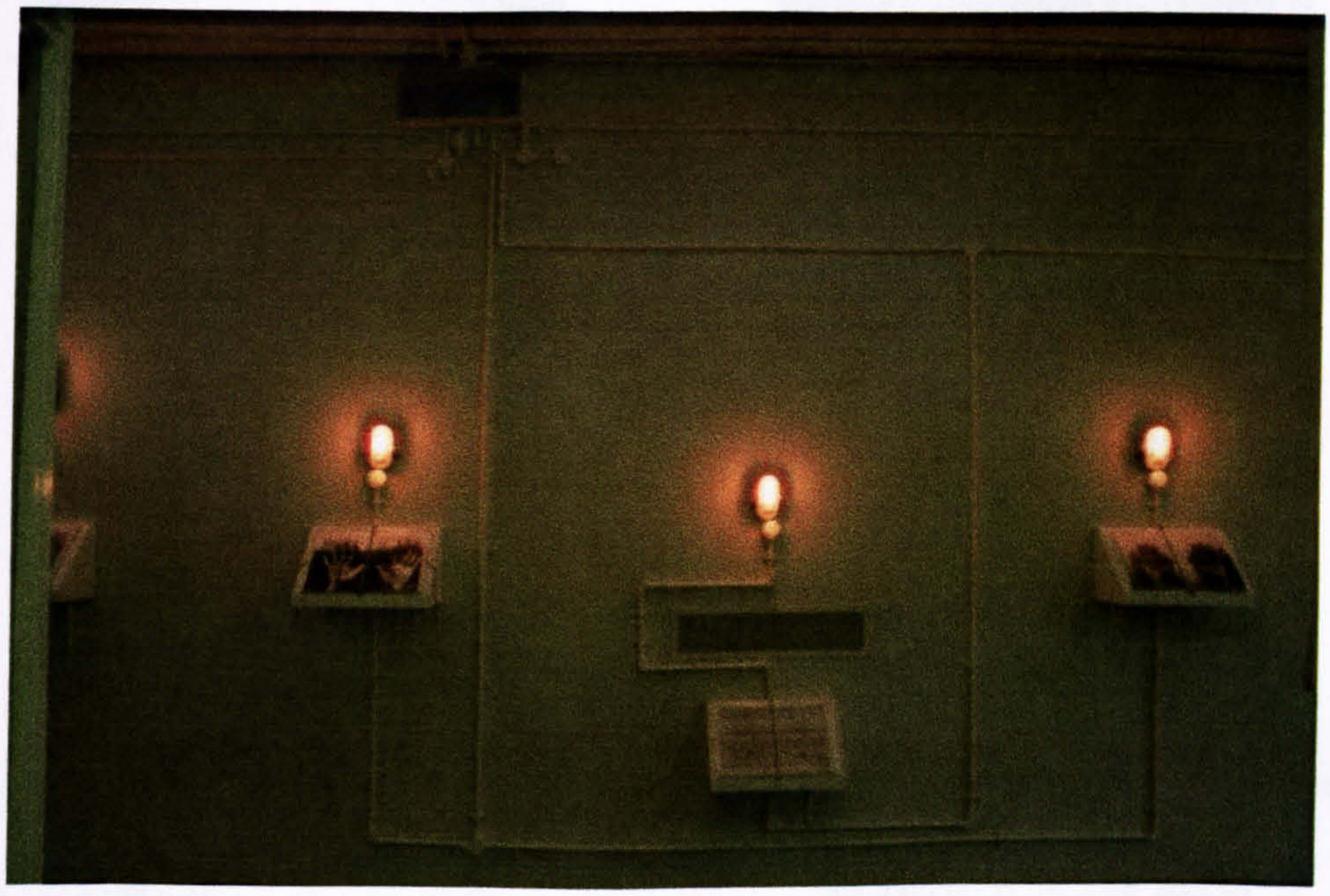


Fig. 6.23. 'Traces' South Trafford College 1996 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(display lecterns, tracing paper, electric lighting, c. 12' x 35')

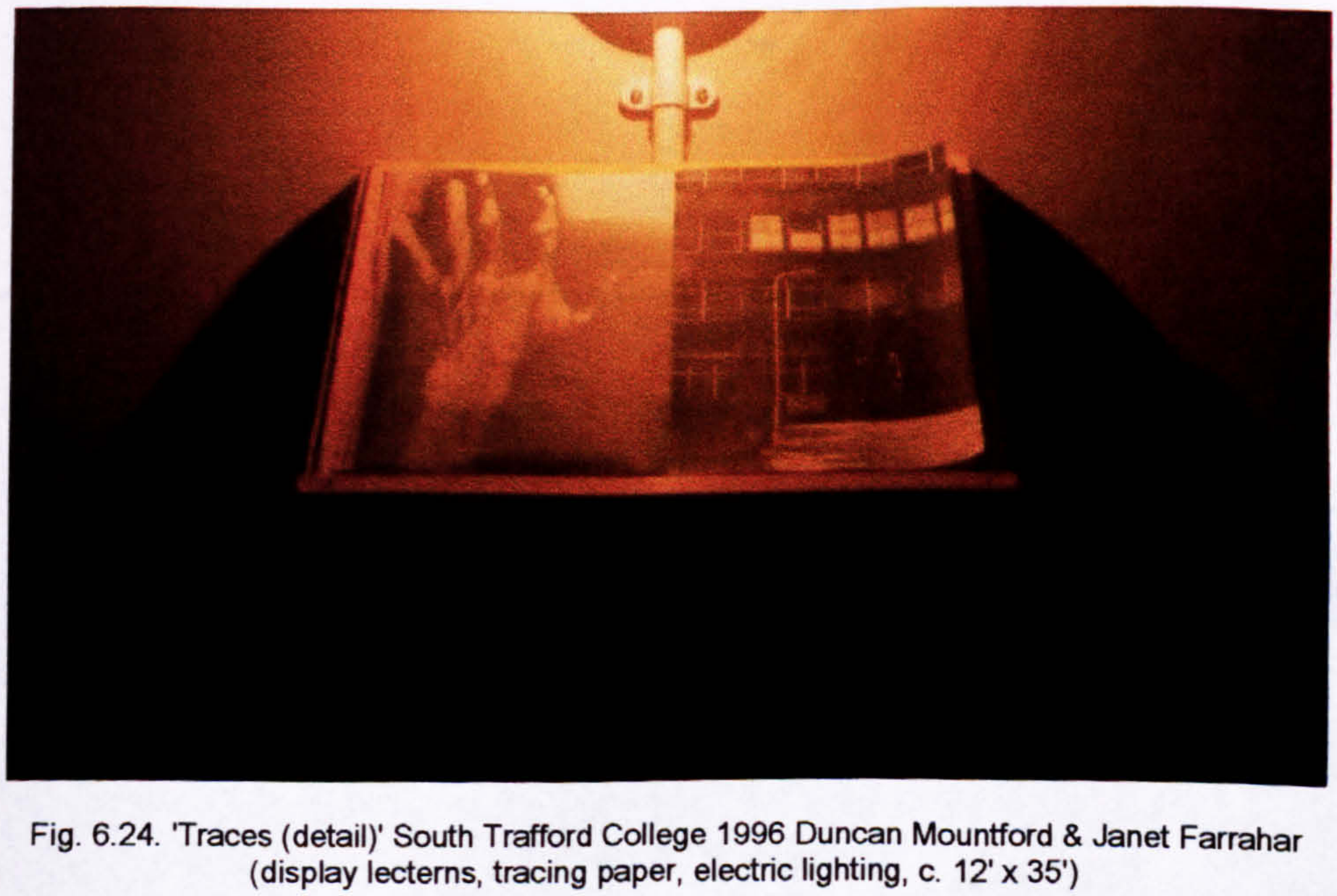


Fig. 6.24. 'Traces (detail)' South Trafford College 1996 Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(display lecterns, tracing paper, electric lighting, c. 12' x 35')



Fig. 6.25. 'Obsessive Compulsive Disorder' 1998
Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(video, display units, towels, racks, soap,
photograph, c. 18' x 15' space)



Fig. 6.26. 'Obsessive Compulsive Disorder' 1998
Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(video, display units, towels, racks, soap,
photograph, c. 18' x 15' space)

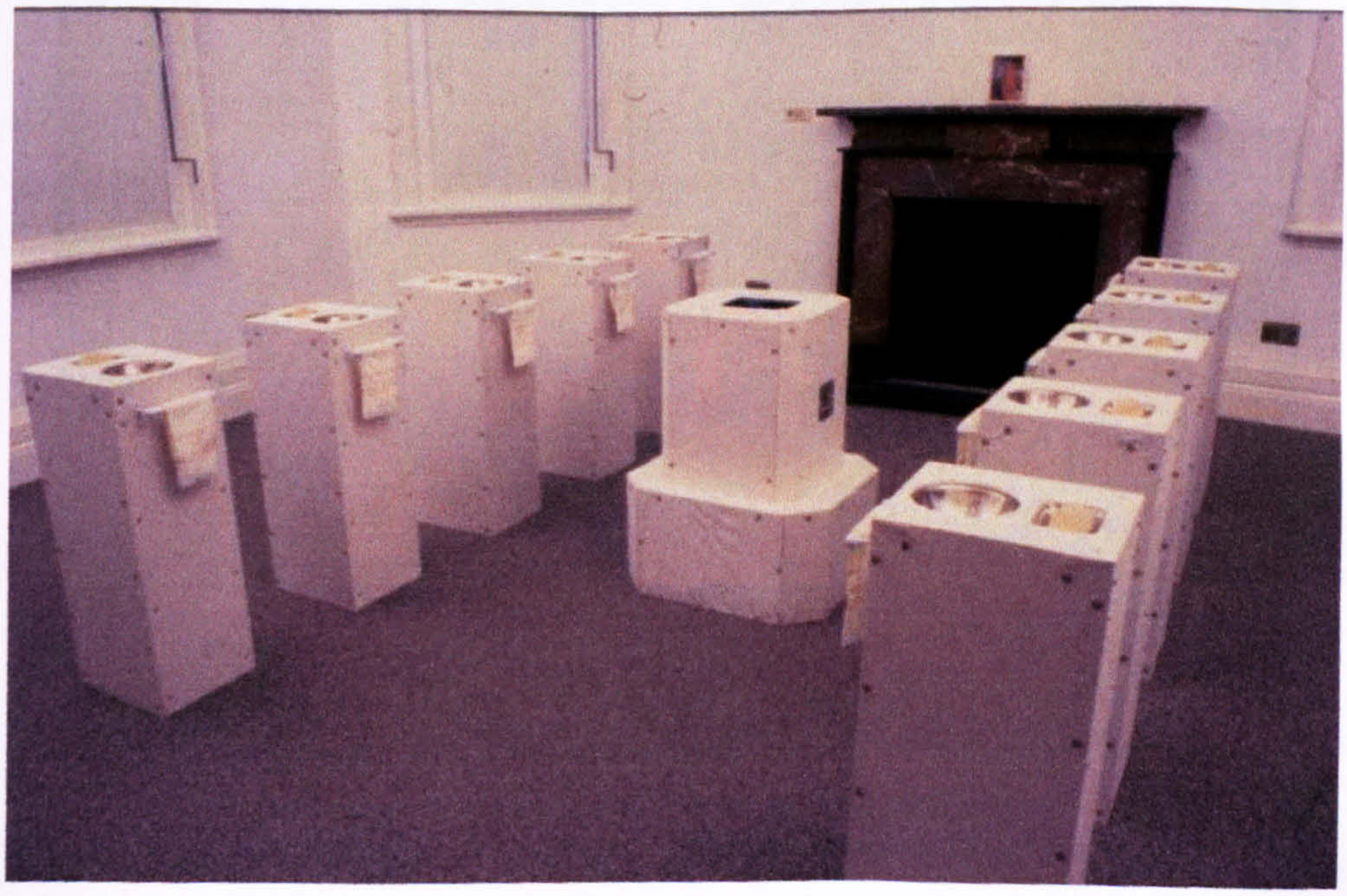


Fig. 6.27. 'Obsessive Compulsive Disorder' 1998
Duncan Mountford & Janet Farrahar
(video, display units, towels, racks, soap, photograph, c. 18' x 15' space)



Fig. 6.28. '24 August 1994' 1996 Duncan Mountford
(filing cabinets, electric lighting, office furniture, c. 40' x 40' space)

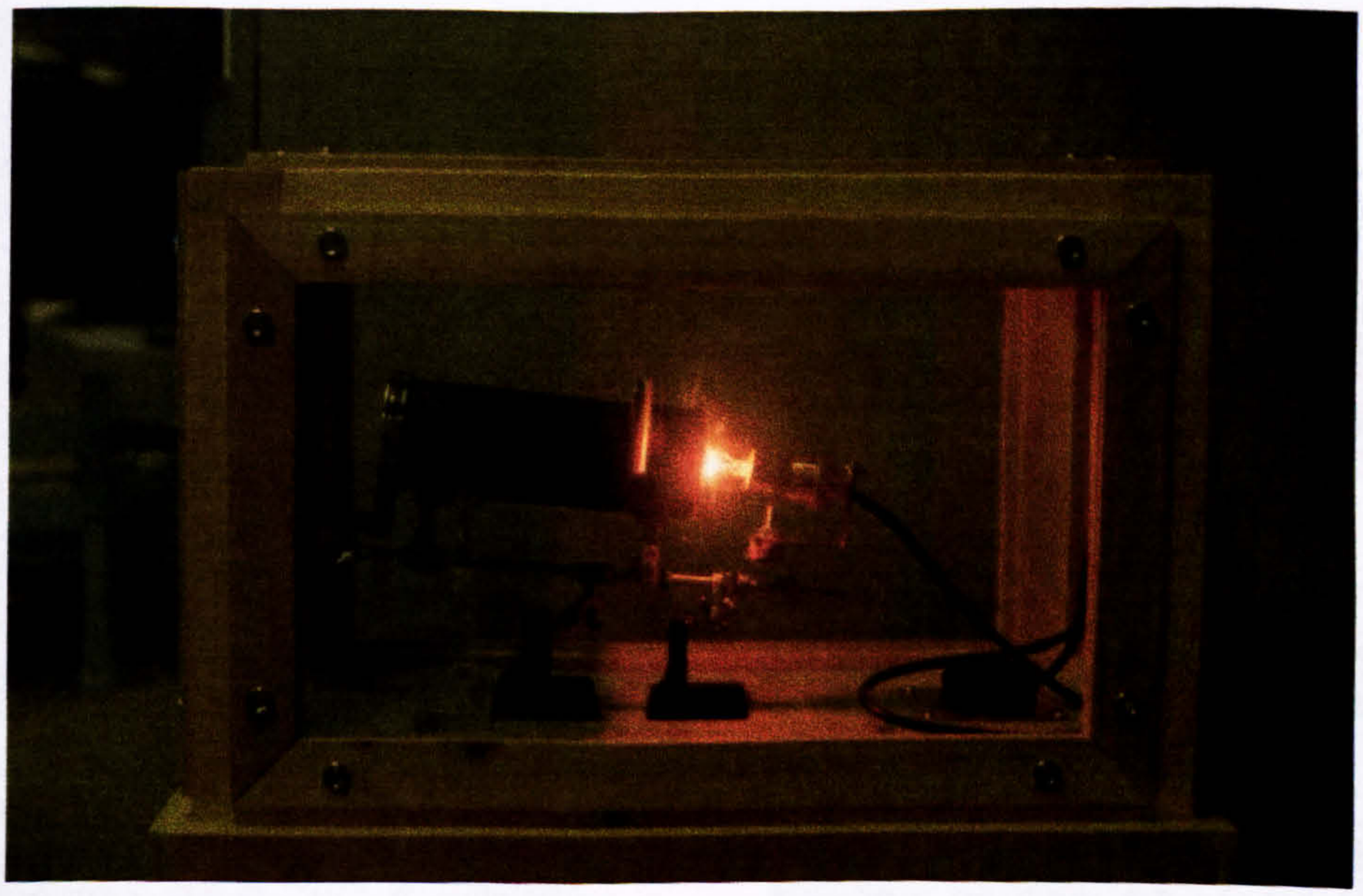


Fig. 6.29. 'Possible World' 1998 Duncan Mountford
(electric lighting, slide transparency, display cabinet, c. 18" x 12" x 12")

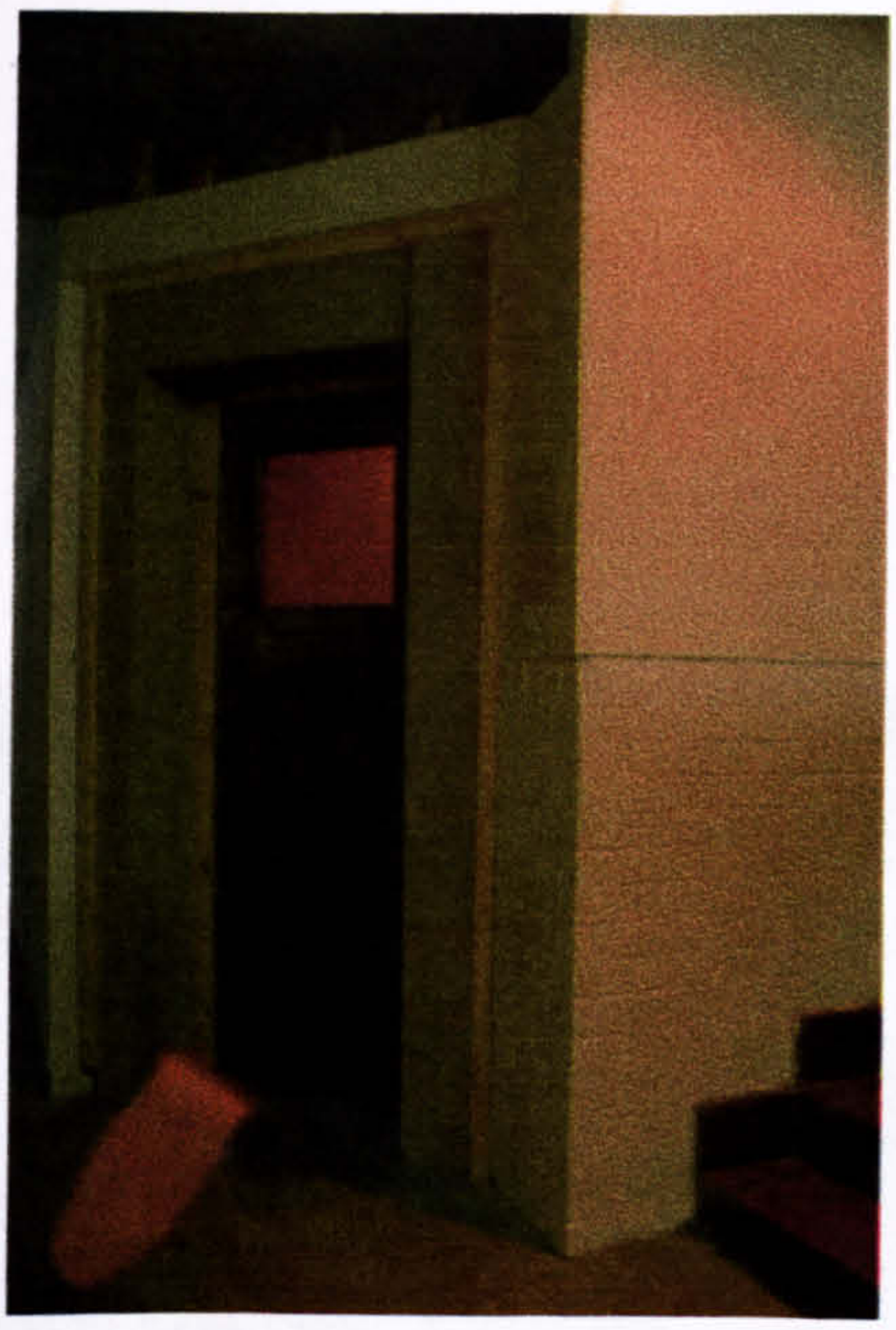


Fig. 6.30. 'Museum One' Dept. Fine Art Nottingham Trent University1999 Duncan Mountford (timber & construction materials, c. 30' x 30' space)

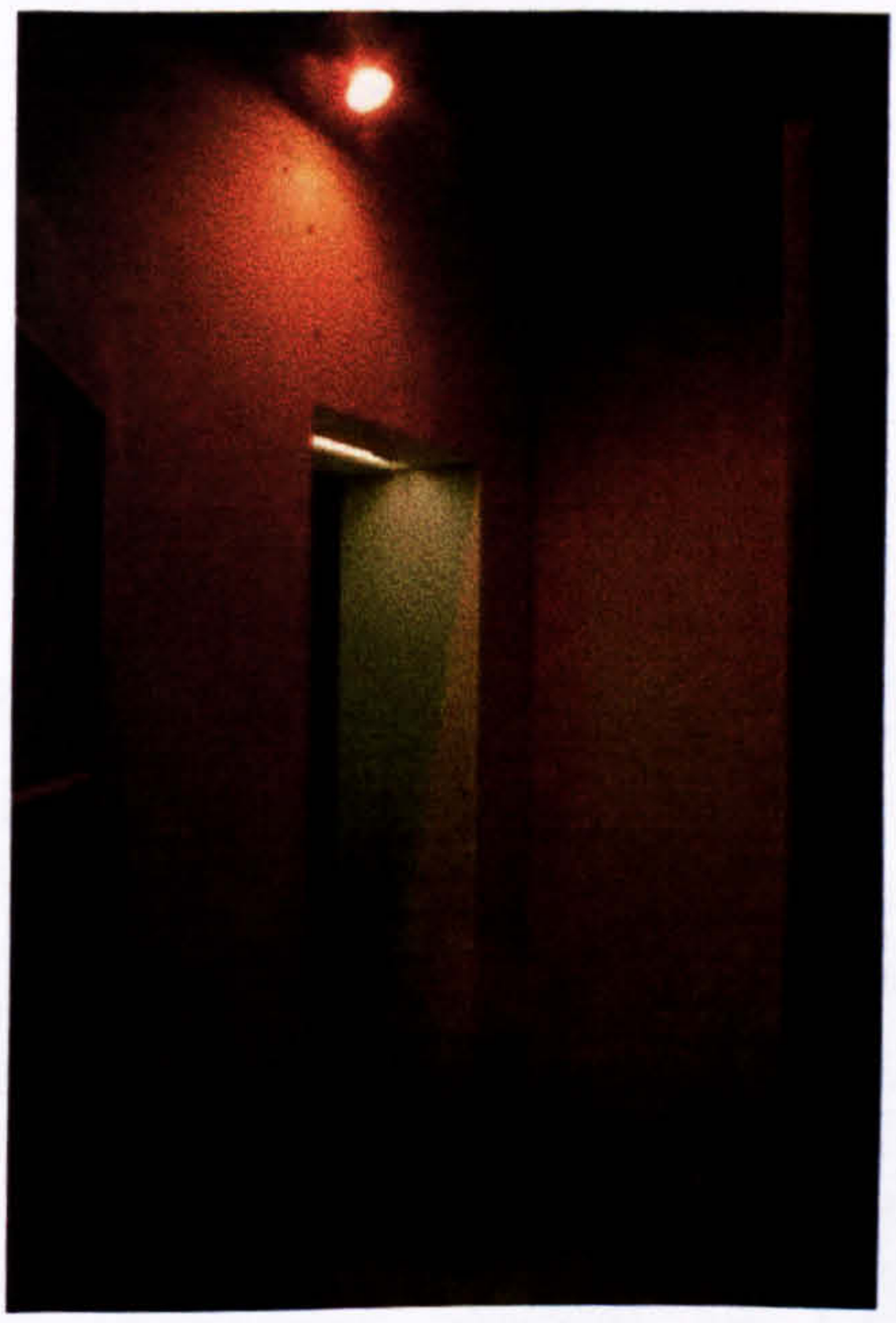


Fig. 6.31. 'Museum One' Dept. Fine Art Nottingham Trent University 1999 Duncan Mountford (timber & construction materials, c. 30' x 30' space)

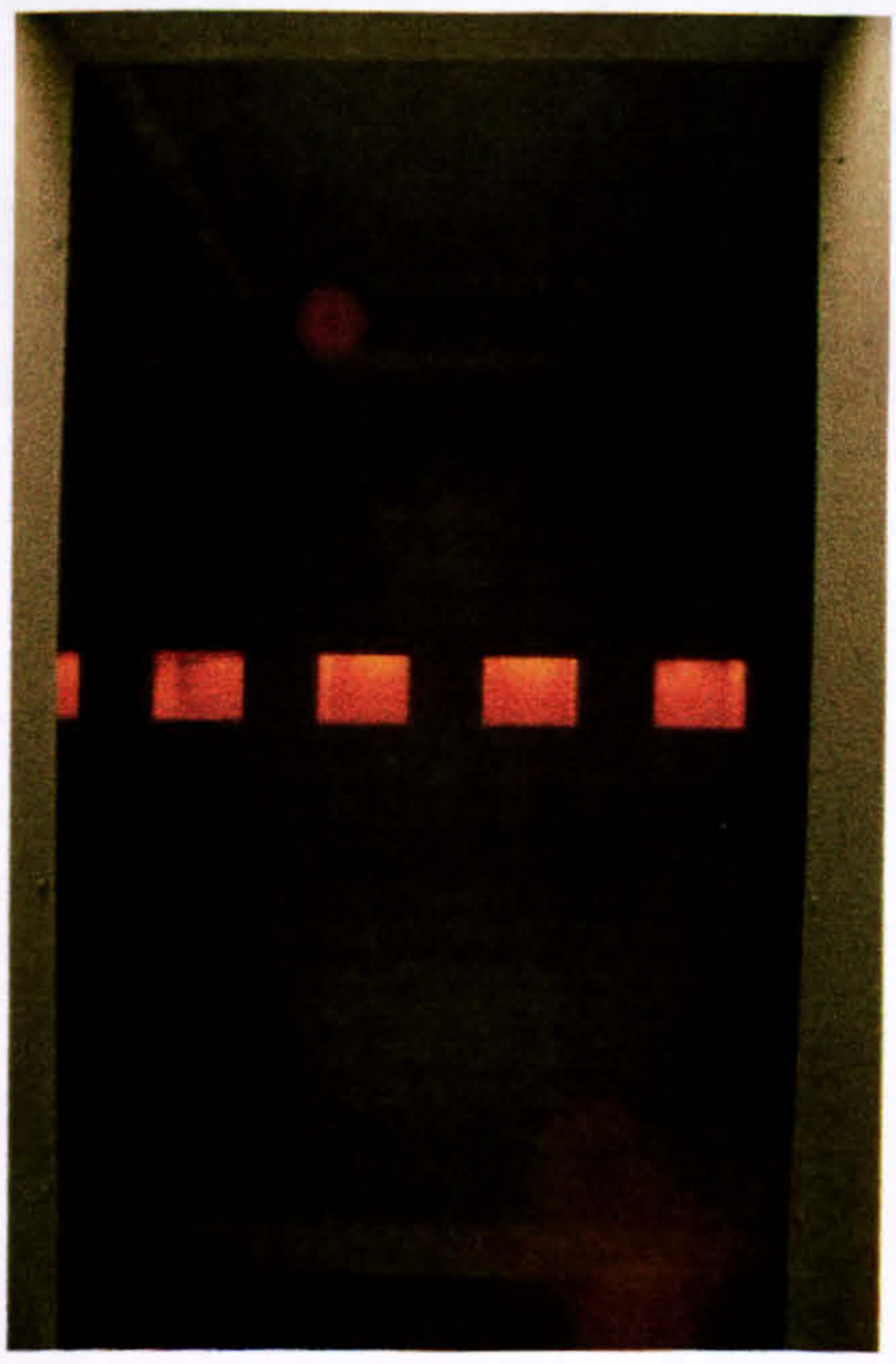


Fig. 6.32. 'Museum One' Dept. Fine Art Nottingham Trent University 1999 Duncan Mountford (timber & construction materials, c. 30' x 30' space)



Fig. 6.33. 'Museum One' Dept. Fine Art Nottingham Trent University 1999 Duncan Mountford (timber & construction materials, c. 30' x 30' space)



Fig. 6.34. 'Museum One - Plaque' Dept. Fine Art Nottingham Trent University 1999
Duncan Mountford (brass plaque, c. 3" x 12")

CHAPTER SEVEN: Case Study Five: Martell Linsdell

7.1. Background

Martell Linsdell (born 1959), originally trained and worked in diagnostic radiography (1977-83). She worked at various institutions including King's College London, before deciding to return to higher education to study art. She obtained her degree in Fine Art painting and printmaking at Sheffield City Polytechnic (1989-92), and later gained her MA in Fine Art at Manchester Metropolitan University (1996-97). Martell is a practising artist and has been a part-time lecturer at various colleges in the UK, particularly in the North West of England. Recently she has been teaching on the MA (Fine Art) course at Manchester Metropolitan University.

7.2. Introduction.

This case study considers how Martell's practice changed from a studio-based painting practice to an installational type practice, one in which a broader range of materials, processes and display strategies are employed. The chapter contains Martell's reflections and problem finding in relation to examples of her work and processes and in relation to other people's comments.

The case study describes and discusses how, throughout the 1990's, Martell extended the boundaries of her work and resituated her practice to include the reflective

conversations within her work. This process resulted in testing the definitions of her practice, the artefacts being produced and the process of display. This has meant letting go of any preconceptions about art practice for a more installational approach, one which allows in a wider range of materials, processes, venues for display and opportunities for working with other people, both artists and non-artists.

Earlier work is considered, together with Martell's exploration of the perceived limits of both practice and artefact. The role and effect of alternative media, site and the passive audience are discussed. The transition from the insularity of 'sole practitioner' within the studio context to an art practitioner concerned with a more collaborative and installational approach is considered. Examples of specific projects are described and discussed in relation to the themes outlined within the chapter. Where appropriate, illustrations are referred to within the text and can be found at the end of the chapter. In this chapter, Martell's quotations are taken from the tapes of the interviews (e.g. Linsdell, M. 1997) with this researcher during the period 1997-2000, unless otherwise stated.

This case study is an example of an artist who claims to have changed her practice from one which was confining and limiting to one which is more open and liberating. The next section describes and discusses Martell's reflections upon the perceived limits of practice.

7.3. 'Crossing over': the physical and conceptual limits

This section contains Martell's reflections upon the limits of a studio-based practice of painting. The reassessment of the painting practice in relation to the perceived physical and conceptual constraints and the move to a less 'fixed' and more open practice are considered.

In the early 1990's, Martell was testing the definitions of her practice, experimenting with pictorial limits and exploring the effects of including found objects and made objects in the paintings, juxtaposing these things with the images, both on the canvas and later adjacent to the canvases. For example, she explored the pictorial effects of incorporating a set of drawings into the painted surface (see Fig. 7.2.). The drawings had been made to accompany the painting but Martell had bound them up with cord (Linsdell, M. 2000). She combined the package with the painted surface and this researcher noted that this inclusion of a real object within the picture plane had the effect of interrupting, or adding a new dimension, to the pictorial reading of the image.

In her MA Fine Art synopsis 'Maelstrom' (1997), Martell said:

> "My previous practice has tended towards the creation of finished pieces to place within a relatively neutral space of the gallery" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

In an interview with this researcher Martell described her:

> "frustration at how painting could not convey everything – I was trying to get it to say everything – it's a very frustrating medium... painting did not contain the physical element of what I was trying to address" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

Martell described how, after graduation from Sheffield City Polytechnic in 1992, she became interested in a practice that would engage in probing the limits and definitions of being a painter.

She described her desire to "break away", to break the rules that had become a convention in her practice, referring to:

> "crossing over the boundaries of painting - breaking away" and "changing the progress of my practice".

She said she was resisting her perceived notions of the confining definitions and rules of engagement in her painting practice. Martell described feelings of a certain amount of 'resistance' to being defined as a painter. She referred to her preference for a more generic or open categorisation of being an 'artist' over being labelled 'painter'. She expressed her:

> "annoyance at being tethered, being held within your practice."

She referred to how she was:

> "resisting definition as a painter. I didn't want to be labelled 'painter'. I wanted to be labelled 'artist' and the only way through is that I keep shifting the rules. Changing the progress of my practice so that it's

> always refreshing, challenging and new to me. It doesn't become repetitive, predictable" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

There were also physical confines which were being addressed by Martell, one of which was the notion of being a studio painter and having the encumbrance of the studio. Martell described how she "cannot stand still", she admires "people who still paint but [I] cannot be happy with that - it's not enough". She described the way she felt about the "solitary focus of studio activity" and how this was unsatisfactory. She thought having a studio was too much of a burden. It was a burden in more than one way: it was a place that needed to be managed and it became a place that Martell felt guilty about when she was not using it. She referred to the guilt she felt when not at the studio and the guilt she felt when at the studio. To be at the studio and cut off from all her other responsibilities was unsatisfactory. Crossing over from having the encumbrance of a studio to a more itinerant approach to art practice had a liberating effect. She said:

> "Now that I haven't got the encumbrance of the studio I just convert where I am, to work. So it could be the kitchen table, the garden, or I acquire a space if I need one...I feel that I can adopt whatever working process I want to, what will, for me, best demonstrate what I am researching at the moment" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

Reassessing the practice of painting for Martell led to a breaking out from the physical frame around the paintings and the aesthetic frame of reference. She had a reflective conversation with the perceived conceptual frame that she felt had ring-fenced her

practice. Freedom from the conventions of her studio-based practice allowed for a different approach to practice and the opportunity to further explore the range of materials she had introduced into her studio-based painting practice. She referred to having been in many exhibitions, and how, following this she had reflected on the feeling as though she was in a 'static' situation, on a production line. She said:

> "you begin to wonder where it's going to lead you to. As a painter you're ending up manufacturing a whole series of objects which stockpile within whatever storage space you have and they become too cumbersome, too much like luggage. I think that maybe it's a reflection of what's happening now in the contemporary art world - is that you have an opportunity, you use that and then you move on. And shift. And it's that - do something - shift, do something - shift - as *you* change" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

The site of the practice changed as a result of reflection upon the limits of the studio-based practice and problem finding led to a re-situated practice which was less confined or confining, involving the extension of the range of media.

The next section contains a 'flashback' to Martell's earlier work. It describes and discusses Martell's reflections upon the perceived static nature of the earlier work.

7.4. Earlier work.

Martell's earlier work comprised painting and printmaking and was, by and large to do with the theme of 'landscape'. Her earlier work was influenced by the landscape of her native Cornwall, the various effects of industrial exploitation upon the landscape and, to a certain extent, she said, some of the 'more macabre aspects of being involved in radiography'. In an artist's statement (1992), Martell said:

> "As an artist I am involved in the research and investigation of the landscape as a theoretical concept. Through my painting activity the canvas has become synonymous with the landscape that physically surrounds us".

In an interview with this researcher (1999), she said she was not interested in merely copying the landscape but was engaged in a practice which was attempting to make apparent the layers within the landscape - physical layers and the layers which indicate the passage of time and mankind's effects upon the landscape. In the same statement she described the mark-making activity on the canvas and alluded to its analogy with marks made upon the landscape :

> "The action of mark-making becomes a document in the making of the decisions taken, where the initial mark will consequently influence the second and third approaches to the piece.
>
> "Archaeologically speaking, if the viewer reads the canvas as 'the landscape', the correlation between the activity and analytical approach of an archaeologist and that of an artist becomes apparent. The landscape

itself is a document where the stratification reveals to the trained eye a narrative about events that have previously occurred.

"The more informed and experienced at looking, at the artwork or the landscape, consequently will mean that the viewer (whether archaeologist/artist or otherwise), can interpret more of the subject under scrutiny, in depth" (Linsdell, M. 1992).

Martell's work was described in a review in 'The Field Archaeologist' (1991):

> "The processes of layering and fragmentation, through which archaeological deposits are created, and by which we (re) create a record, were the focus of Martell Linsdell's considerations, punctuated by a series of visual collages. In seeking to explain and justify the selection of themes in her own work, she raised questions on the production of knowledge pertinent to archaeological endeavour generally, and the way in which each of us employs this labour on the past to find our own voices in the present".

This researcher noted that the scarring of the landscape caused by industrial processes and the background radiation levels present in the Cornwall landscape, informed the layering of images and textures, collage and décollage, within her paintings. Martell's inclusion of non-pictorial references, for example, non-pictorial objects to refer to the effects of time or radiation upon the landscape, promoted the extension from painting. She even introduced the element of fire into the work at one point when, in 1992 at a performance at the Rocheside Arts Centre, Staffordshire, she set fire to a triptych

entitled 'Referential Perspective' (1992), (see Fig. 7.5.). In an interview with this researcher (1999), she said:

> "Literal representations of landscape would give a physical impression but it wouldn't give an idea of the levels of contamination or pollution, quarrying or radiation, man's mark on the landscape" (Linsdell, M 1999).

The presence of real objects, for example, books (see Fig. 7.1. – 7.3.), incorporated into the surface of the painting, changed the pictorial function of the painting and disrupted the way the visual space within the image was to be read and drew attention to the physicality and tangibility of the real world. In addition to collaging material on to the surface of the paintings, Martell also made incisions into the surface of the image. The incisions into the image, together with the build-up of collaged materials on to it (and often arranged around it), seemed to be making a link between 'real space' - three-dimensional world - and the illusionistic world of pictorial space (see Fig. 7.4.).

Martell made the connection between illusionistic space and real space in her work, via these processes and through explorations of the limits of her painting. The limits of pictorial space were 'pushed back' through the extension of the media i.e. through the inclusion of real objects from 'real space' which were put alongside the images depicted in the pictorial space. The extension of media and processes is considered in the next section.

7.5. Extended media and processes.

This section considers the extended range of media and processes in Martell's practice.

Martell described how, in her paintings of the early 1990's, she used wax, emulsion and inks and scarred the canvases with metal and other tools that would incise and cut into the painting's surface. These processes and use of materials were to allude to a similar effect of scarring and staining of the landscape and to the presence of residues in the physical landscape caused by quarrying, for example, in such places as Geever, Cornwall, which Martell knew well. She described how she wanted the paintings to have an 'equivalence with megaliths' and how she constructed very thick stretchers which made the canvases stand proud from the wall and appear more as objects than images. In an interview with this researcher she referred to the paintings as "Events or monumental forms themselves within the landscape" (Linsdell, M. 1999).

In the summer of 1994 she took up a post as a 'Resident Artist' in the Education Programme, at the Tate Gallery in St. Ives, Cornwall. This residency was linked to the gallery exhibition and education programme, entitled "Equivalents for the Megalith" (after the painting which lent its name to the exhibition, made in 1935 by the British landscape artist Paul Nash). The residency programme included the use of one of the Porthmeor studios in St. Ives and Martell's work initially comprised landscape drawings, paintings and prints done in the studio. Martell described how she was drawing on canvas in response to the ancient landscape of West Penwith and exhibiting

her work within the areas of the Tate Gallery which were designated for artists in residence. She developed the theme of the post-industrial legacy within the landscape and began putting the drill cores from the tin-mining era into display cases within the gallery, in addition to the 2-D work she had derived from observations of the landscape. The crossover between two and three-dimensional work helped make the connection or allude to the relationship between the real and the depiction of the real.

The inclusion of alternative materials allowed variants of new work to be explored on the same theme. Martell revealed some of the thought processes behind the decision-making in such paintings as in Figs. 7.4 and 7.5., she said:

> "I think that it's perceived practice of what you are looking at, of other artists and their practice as well. And you're pushing personal boundaries, your own personal boundaries. How far will I go this time? How far can I take it this time? What happens if I break away from the frame? Or break out on to the surface or pour out onto the floor? Or incise into the canvas? You are breaking the rigidity of the box, the frame, the hard edges to the frame, and bringing it out into the space" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

In order to include this process of reaching out from the restrictions of the painting's surface, Martell began to experiment with an extended range of media, materials and processes, for example, video. She said she moved from painting just with paint, on to canvas, to 'painting with video'.

Martell said:

> "And that's where I started and then shifted away, I started doing some video work and.. you looked at it and...I was still painting" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

Martell said when she was involved with a studio-based, painting practice, she realised that she never just saw it as a picture of something, separate from its referent - she saw it as something in relationship to its referent, not just a picture *of* something but a response *to* something, she said:

> "The way I approach my canvases, it's much more than just a picture, it was more than a response to 'X' or, a gut reaction. So I think when I started painting I was axing into the surface and cutting into the surface" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

The introduction of alternative materials increased the variants of responses to the subject. In other words it increased the possibilities in a way that hitherto had been unavailable. Martell said that she started to experiment with the format of her canvases, exploring alternative shapes, materials and thicknesses of stretcher to see how far out she could push from the wall. Martell referred to work done during a residency at the Mappin Art Gallery in 1995 for an exhibition entitled 'Year of the Bronze Age'. She made trapezoid-shaped stretchers and worked on different surfaces such as plastic window blind material, (see Figs. 7.13. & 7.14.). She described the way she was referring to the context of the artefact in an exhibition and how she wished to comment upon the context of artefacts.

Martell said she was:

> "drawing comments on the presentation of archaeological artefacts such as in a museum, where they are presented on shaped panels of beautiful pink felt, almost like consumer items of jewellery or something like that and they were stripped of their previous context i.e. the archaeological site in the landscape" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

She referred to how the increase in the range of media and material, and the inclusion of real objects, made physical connections through their 'resemblance' to other places. The researcher understood this to be a strategy of visually communicating 'outside' the conventions of her 'old practice'. In this way the work began to use 'other languages'.

Martell described some of the extended range of materials and processes she used:

> "metal, natural rusting and weathering by leaving it outside, varnish, metal paint, fire and more recently video, computer-generated images and internet exhibitions, real objects (drill cores, even canoes!), and display cases, fixing objects chronologically, in time" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

Martell said in one work 1992 (see Figs. 7.4. & 7.5.), she used large metal sheets instead of canvas and referred to cutting into them with a plasma cutter (which is a very precise metal cutting torch, which uses intense heat directed onto a small area), instead of painting on them with a brush.

Martell also referred to how she had used actual landscape by:

> "fixing grids onto an organic and flowing landscape. I was looking at fossilisation traces in landscape" and how some of her landscape work was analogous to a "landscape of knowledge, very influenced by readings of Foucault and Popper" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

In an interview with this researcher, Martell described the importance of trying to cross over 'between' the actual and the imagined, i.e. between 'real' landscape and the 'pictured' landscape (Linsdell, M. 1999). The work seemed to be about the relationship between things as much as the things themselves. She referred to how she used the actual landscape in a piece in 1992. She used a piece of land, which was viewable from above (from a fourth storey window of an adjacent building), she measured and marked it out clearly with a grid. Figure 7.6. shows a photograph of the grid marked out on the piece of land. She used the photographs and the observations from the window to inform the painting. She described how she 'enacted the artwork', acting out something she had been considering conceptually as a site-specific installation (Linsdell, M. 1997). This was in order to inform the paintings being done at the time but the activity of marking out the grid on to the actual landscape took on an unexpected significance in its own right as a piece of art work.

She described various exhibitions she had been involved in which used a whole space. Martell described this as a logical step once she had gone beyond the frame of the painting and the studio-based practice. She referred to how she started to try to 'activate'

the space, for example by using the drill cores at the Tate Gallery Residency (1994) or actual pieces of rock from the landscape (see Figs. 7.7. – 7.9.), and how this led to other opportunities:

> "I made 'interventions' in museum collections, using drill cores for instance, within the Manchester Museum 'Diverse Memories' exhibition" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

'Diverse Memories: The Company of Things' (1996), was an international exhibition which infiltrated the Manchester Museum collections during the spring of 1996 and included forty artists. Chris Dorset who was at the time Research Fellow at the University of Northumbria at Newcastle curated it.

Allowing in new things made Martell happier with the practice and she continued to experiment with extending the range of media and materials, using more real objects and making more use of video.

In a slide talk (Linsdell, 1999), she described how she explored video for its inherent visual qualities, such as colour and texture and as something to draw with and as a medium to simulate painting. In an interview with this researcher Martell (1997), described the process of video as synonymous with the painted surface and how each split second was an image which could have been a painting, (see Figs. 7.15. - 7.17.). Martell seemed to like the fluidity of the medium and the fact that it was 'less static' than paint.

Martell said:

> "it was liquid painting" and referred to "the 'graininess', the quality of the marks, and the composition within the frame, but which changed and were less static" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

She also used video for its time-based aspect. It allowed Martell to explore time and process-based work. She explored narrative possibilities in her work, such as in her MA show 'Maelstrom' (1997) and in the video performance, 'The Waiting Game' (1998). (See section 7.5. 'Site and Audience' for a description of 'Maelstrom').

'The Waiting Game' (1998), was a video piece by Martell. It was installed in the exhibition 'Our Night at the Palace' (1998), which used the Palace Hotel in Manchester as the exhibition venue. According to the catalogue (1998), accompanying the exhibition 'The Waiting Game' is a twenty-five minute long video piece in which:

> "Linsdell waits for twenty-five minutes for an unspecified arrival or event. The bustle of the hotel forms a backdrop to the continuing monotony of the wait. In this piece, expectation mingles with a sense of futility and of marking time. As she reads, flicks through magazines, sleeps, fidgets, paces up and down, etc. the viewer is offered a glimpse into the private wait of a stranger" (Lewis, et al. 1998).

In addition to using video on its own Martell often selected accompanying objects and materials for the connotations they would bring to the work. Martell referred to how, in one project ('Human Transcript' in RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects), Manchester, May 1997), she used her own bodily fluid (such as urine). This was placed in rows of test tubes and each one also contained a bronze object, each of which had been modelled using squeezed wax (see Figs. 7.19. & 7.20.). In an interview with the researcher, she said:

> "some of them oxidised and became green or orange but they were like contained forms, like amputated bits of body or things that are in the foetal stage" (Linsdell, M. 1999).

Martell referred to how she started to use photographic processes (not just as a way of documenting the work, photographing the objects described), but as elements of new exhibitions and installations (see Figs. 7.18. & 7.23. – 7.30.).

Martell said that although the form of the work has changed over the recent past, the content she is working through is similar:

> "themes of taxonomic classification, placement, layers of history, layers of the past, traces within a 'landscape' whether that be a traditional landscape or a 'society'.
>
> "You have a blank canvas. You make a mark and that mark begins to talk back at you and then you make other marks and this...dialogue and this

> canvas becomes evidence of a series of decision-making by the artist according to how they felt at that moment in time" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

She considered there to be a 'dialogue' within her work, between the "new, object-based work and the old practice of painting". When asked if there was still a link to her 'former' practice of painting, Martell said: "the compositional decision-making was still very painterly" but the 'container' of the work has changed.

She referred to how alternative media are linked with her exploring the installational aspects of her practice. She said:

> "I'm always looking for different projects so I can explore different areas of practice. I think gradually that's why I've shifted through paint into installations and objects, into video and computer work" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

The extension of the Martell's practice into installational type work has been accompanied by reflections upon the site and reception of the work. These reflections are considered in the next section.

7.6. Site and audience.

This section contains Martell's exploration of different venues and audiences. Martell described in an interview with this researcher (Linsdell, M. 1997), how she had always

worked against the idea of artistic beauty as 'prettiness'. She referred to the way she felt her more gallery-oriented work had provided for a viewing of a particular kind of art but how, as time had gone on, the work had changed and the spaces where the work was shown had changed. In addition to this, the audience had also changed. Martell referred to the way she does not pander to the audience. She referred to the demand that is placed on the viewer to: "catch up. As opposed to me catering for the viewer" (Linsdell, M. 1997). Martell said she was more interested in 'challenging' the viewer. An article in 'The Packet' (August, 1994), said in reference to the residency at the Tate, St. Ives:

> "Work produced during her residency will explore the former uses of and occupancy of the Penwith area such as the prehistoric sites and field patterns which challenge the viewer's notion of what actually constitutes a natural landscape" (Article in 'The Packet', 1994).

In an interview with this researcher Martell said she was interested in audience perceptions (Linsdell, M. 1999). She has experimented with subverting the truthfulness of an exhibition's assumed narrative content, by mingling her own work with a museum collection (see Figs.7.10. – 7.14.). In an interview with this researcher (1997), she described how she was interested in the idea of passive viewing and 'alternative audience' and Martell has made work especially for alternative spaces such as vacant shop areas (see section 7.9.), hotel rooms, cafés, the internet and cyber cafés. The internet exhibition 'Mark-ing Up Language', 1996, changed the way Martell had hitherto interacted with audience. The exhibition comprised photographs held on a web site and, according to Bryning, L. (1996), the web site's images could be downloaded by

web browsers, manipulated and returned for inclusion in the exhibition. The relationship between the artist and viewer was changed. Martell referred to the way this artwork disturbed the process of 'cut-off' when an exhibition is 'finished' at which point the artist's work is complete and the public enter.

Martell expressed an interest in the 'passive viewer' as a way of limiting preconceptions about looking at art. Martell described how she wanted to place certain demands on the viewer, demands which, if the viewer was forewarned, might be resisted in some way. Martell said that she had developed a more "stealthy approach to the viewer" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

The use of real objects often in display cases, associated with the depicted images placed upon the wall, were intended to change the reception of the work and the audience's reaction to it. For example she had an exhibition at Stockport Art Gallery in 1994, based on mining and landscape. A Geiger Counter was displayed alongside drill cores from the mines (see Figs. 7.8. & 7.9.) together with the canvases on the gallery walls which depicted the quarried landscape. She described the way the 'beeping' Geiger Counter displayed the background radiation of relics of the tin mines. The inclusion of the Geiger Counter changed the nature of the exhibition form one assumed to be about landscape to one which seemed more sinister. She said:

"the Geiger Counter 'activated' the whole piece because it made people aware of another dimension of that object. Of an invisible radiation that couldn't be seen". She described the way people were making

> connections with radiation, nuclear fall-out, Chernobyl, nuclear power stations and how it triggered the viewer "along a pathway of thought" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

Martell referred to the use of readymade objects and the way they interfered with the viewer's expectations of art.

The press release describing the exhibition of large charcoal drawings, pure pigment and oxides gathered from the sites themselves, said there is:

> "a resonance of contemporary archaeology; as that site decays, plant life struggles in the contamination of arsenic, cadmium and zinc; concrete columns topple, reinforcement bars oxidise within the concrete masses, iron oxide dumps contrast to the verdigris staining of water flowing from the excavations and workings" (Linsdell, M. 1994).

The gallery curator, John Sculley, was quoted in the local press as saying the inclusion of radioactive drill cores "sent a few alarm bells ringing" amongst the staff and viewing public, but he stressed that the public were not at risk.

Martell described the way she has extended the site of exhibition venue partly for her own reasons but partly because change has been forced externally. She referred to how artists need to keep up with an ever-changing art world. In an interview with this researcher (1997), she suggested this might be "because I think people and environments are changing more rapidly". She added that the site of the work "has changed, but it has not been just me seeking to change it" (Linsdell, M. 1997).

Experimenting with the site of the art experience included exploring the possibilities of using the space and the architecture of the space of exhibition. For example, Martell's MA show at MMU, 'Maelstrom' (1997), comprised two video monitors and a self-contained, 'domesticated' space, creating an environment which was a part of, and separate from, the main MA exhibition space. One video was situated inside the domesticated space and is described in the quote below. The other monitor, which was outside the domesticated space but still within the exhibition space as a whole, depicted "a monumental task of paper organisation" which was hindered by the papers being blown about in a breeze, resulting in a kind of "bureaucratic maelstrom" (Linsdell, M, 1997). She described the work referring to what the viewer could expect:

> "the person entering the space observed an activity over 40 minutes, if they bothered to stay that long, where I was in a domestic interior. I was dealing with a sense of journey, mapping or navigation and also drinking whiskey and then that activity gets subverted into self-abuse by using drawing callipers to scratch the word 'Maelstrom' (confusion) into my arm. So you're very much incising, a very precise activity and it's dealing with the notion of a journey, or an impossible journey - because of containment within a domestic interior I was unable to do" (Linsdell, M. 1999).

Martell described the way that she was well aware that by placing too many demands on the audience she would repel them, but that was something she was not prepared to compromise:

> "I was very aware that a lot of film and video gets the point over in five seconds in order to maintain the attention of the viewer whereas I was treating the video as a fly on the wall documentation of an activity, in that, if you were observing an activity in an interior, you would have to stay there and there would be a long stretch of time, so in a way that piece of work was shutting out the viewer or the viewer wasn't allowed to enter because it made demands on them" (Linsdell, M. 1999).

The introduction of a time-based element to the practice i.e. video and slide projection, coupled to a broader approach to the siting and display of the work, have contributed to a change in the relationship between the art and the audience. Martell adopted a more pro-active role in dealing with audience and she attempted to reach a wider cross-section of audience. In addition to exploring aspects of site and audience, Martell attempted to work with other people, by engaging in collaborative projects. These are described and discussed in the next section.

7.7. Working with others.

The image of the artist as explorer seemed to be what was providing motivation for Martell to reach out beyond the conventions and methods of her studio based practice.

Martell described the way she was "always looking for different projects so I can explore different areas of practice", referring to how this has led her to collaborate with other artists. Martell referred to working with other people, for example in the 'metal burning' piece (Fig. 7.5.), with artists and technicians to produce video projection installations, create digital imagery. She has also worked with gallery and museum curators for her 'interventional' projects, such as 'Year of the Bronze Age' 1995, (see Fig. 7.10. – 7.14.) (Linsdell, M. 1997).

For example, she collaborated on a virtual exhibition on the internet, called 'Mark-ing Up Language' (1996), at the cyber café, 'Cyberia', Manchester, with the visual artist Taylor Nuttall. This collaboration provided Martell with the opportunity to explore issues that were common to both Martell's work and Taylor's work: "exploring the concepts of boundaries, inside and outside and control via monitoring and surveillance" (Linsdell, M. & Nuttall, T. 1996).

Martell described the nature of the collaboration with Taylor Nuttall. She said both artists contributed video footage to the project. The two images were juxtaposed side by side, on a monitor which had a 'split screen'. This created a 'visual dialogue' between the two images. They spent time collaborating together on the video editing process, negotiating on the selection, order and aesthetic of the images. Some jobs were divided between the two artists. For example, Taylor did the web page design and Martell provided the images for the interior of the building. Martell referred to the collaboration

as a process of "not knowing the individual characters within the piece" (Linsdell, M. 2000). This researcher noted that it was a process by which the individual artist might become anonymous

A collaboration later that year resulted in a new version of 'Mark-ing Up Language II', at Folly Gallery, Lancaster, where viewers could call the images up on their computers, manipulate them and send them back to the artists. In a sense the viewer also collaborated in the project by changing the art works in the exhibition. In addition, the project meant working with the café owner, which was different to working with gallery people and meant that the conversations involved talking about more than just the art content. For example, there were discussions with the café owner about how the art would be conveyed to the audience/users and how they might interact with it and there were more technical discussions about the digital nature of the work. Martell's role within the exhibition was extended from merely 'exhibiting' artworks to more of a project management role, talking to several people each with different interests in the project.

Another example of working with others to address similar research issues was Martell's association with the all-female, Manchester-based, artists' group 'Brass Art', which was formed in the late 90's and of which Martell is a member.

According to the press release for a Brass Art exhibition entitled 'Dream Inspires' (1999), the artists in Brass Art:

> "have worked individually, collaboratively and collectively... The group works in a variety of traditional and time-based media including – video, film, photography, slide projection, performance, text and new media".

In a conversation with this researcher one of Brass Art's members, Chara Lewis (1999), referred to the 'fluid' nature of the group where the member artists choose to collaborate or simply work together sharing the workload on exhibitions and projects. 'Brass Art' currently comprises: Helen Brandon, Jo Lansley, Chara Lewis, Martell Linsdell, Kristin Mojsiewicz and Anneke Pettican. In this collaboration, Martell was involved in extending her practice further into the variety of traditional and time-based media associated with the group.

One of the first projects Martell was involved in was 'Our Night at the Palace', 1998, Palace Hotel, Manchester, in which Martell showed a video piece 'The Waiting Game' 1998 (see section 7.5.).

The group project comprised each artist responding to the hotel and resulted in a site-specific installation using various media such as video and digital images. The overall theme was guided by their collective and individual investigation of an "urban experience from a female perspective", a "re-evaluation of the social environment" (Brass Art, 1999), and the "idea of watching, and being watched" (Lewis, C. 1998). Brass Art managed and co-ordinated the project and the publicity material and the exhibition contained individual projects by each artist within the group. The exhibition

lasted for one night only and 'existed' in various locations, public and private, within the hotel. Similar to the 'Mark-ing Up Language' project, conversations took place both on the subject of the art and its content but also on a more technical level, with hotel management, technical and safety staff in addition to the conversations with the funding bodies involved with the project. Extending the range of people Martell worked with meant extending the types of conversations she would have with the groups of people with interests in the project.

Martell sought out opportunities to work with others and to engage with fellow artists about common research issues and engaged in projects where she can explore new media. This process has meant sharing examples of good practice, sharing skills and experience, getting involved in curating projects and also sharing the workload (i.e. fundraising), and the expense associated with art projects (especially those expenses such as publicity, catalogues etc.). Particularly during 1998/99, Brass Art developed into a relatively significant feature within Martell's practice.

The following sections contain examples of installational-type projects from 1995 to the present. Details of the form and content of selected projects are considered and discussed in relation to the changes in the art practice, in the following sections.

7.8. Project One: 'Out With It!' ('Year of the Bronze Age'), 1995, Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield.

This was an 'exhibition within an exhibition'. Martell's exhibition, 'Out With It!', (1995), was in response to the Year of the Bronze Age exhibition at the Mappin Gallery, Sheffield (see Figs. 7.10. – 7.14.). In this installational exhibition Martell explored the distinctions, the gallery/museum context, between two different types of artefact – the artwork and the archaeological exhibit. Martell juxtaposed images, alongside real objects. For example, one part of her installation comprised images of Bronze Age canoes, alongside real (20th century), kayaks, (see Fig. 7.10). Martell was invited to be artist in residence for this project at the Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield. She was, according to the press release (1995), involved in the planning of it right from the start.

The press release said the work in her show "Out With It!', was Martell's response to the city's archaeological collection and:

> "It also reflects Martell's contact with archaeologists and the way she has used the practice of archaeology as a visual and conceptual resource".

According to her own artist's statement accompanying the exhibition, Martell wished to:

> "explore the common ground between art and archaeology and the practice of the archaeologist as documentor of traces and relics of our distant past" (Linsdell, M. 1995).

She wanted to generate a body of work which explored this relationship by intermingling her own work with actual museum relics. Martell's work was based on responses to actual artefacts on display in 'The Year of the Bronze Age'.

Tadman, J. (1995), quoted Martell as saying:

> "What I am doing is responding creatively to archaeological practice".

In this exhibition Martell included the large 'pink trapezoid canvases' depicting bronze age axes and other implements, over-sized representations of bronze age pins on 8ft. tall white panels, together with the two modern kayaks alongside two prints of Bronze Age canoes described earlier in the section.

In an interview with this researcher Martell (1999), described how she wanted to juxtapose the objects both in and out of context. She referred to how she wanted to draw attention to the commodification process inherent in any exhibition, whether it be art or archaeology. The artefact is always 'quoted' out of context and in her work she hoped to make commentary on that process. In the accompanying catalogue to 'Out With It!' Martell said:

> "The artefact accrues a value on merit of its selection to be on public view over and above that of other archival material that remains confined to the backroom. It becomes the public face of archaeological practice, the apex of a pyramidal system" (Linsdell, M. 1995).

She described how she wanted to implicate all those involved in the process of display, the staff, the keepers, the conservators, the specialist researchers and the excavators. She wanted to draw attention to the sites and structures of display themselves, through the relationship of the object and its site/context. Tadman, J. (1995), quoted Martell as saying:

> "It's fascinating how the visitor has to interpret what is behind the glass, all the implications of that object – the fact that it was buried 4000 years ago and then discovered, for example. That's what my exhibition title 'Out With It!' refers to, it's an ebullient statement suggesting the unveiling, the unearthing, the disclosing of something".

Martell was aware that once the show was opened the actual challenges to the viewer are beyond her control and the work is opened to interpretation. However, she took full advantage of promoting the contextual side of her work by including a variety of workshops, aimed at different groups of the population of Sheffield, throughout the exhibition. For example, she ran educational workshops, family workshops and walks and talks both at the gallery and at the archaeological dig at Gardom's Edge, Baslow, near Sheffield.

This was an important aspect of the project and was a key feature in Martell fostering, "an holistic understanding of landscape", demonstrating its "susceptibility to scarring, incision and contamination by human intrusion" and relating how this process:

> "can be a metaphor for physical harm to the body but also for the action, gesture and dynamism of an artwork" (Linsdell, M. 1996).

Martell had referred to an 'holistic' approach previously, in an interview with Tadman, J. (1995), when she said:

> "It's what I call an holistic understanding of landscape which is important to me, not just appreciating something on an aesthetic level, seeing beyond to its history".

This researcher noted that Martell's holistic approach to landscape was analogous to her transition to an holistic approach to creative art practice.

7.9. Project Two: 'Panoptic Pindown' 1997 Glass Box Gallery, Salford.

'Panoptic Pindown' (1997, see Fig. 7.21. & 7.22.) was an installational exhibition at the Glass Box, Salford. The Glass Box Gallery is situated in the foyer area of the Allerton building in Salford University and is a small space, constructed entirely of glass and dedicated for more installational type artwork. The installation comprised several racks of test tubes each containing grey, model human figures, some on wall racks and some in laboratory type cabinets. The installation was about the ideas of: 'humans under surveillance'; the feeling of being scrutinised or observed by anonymous third parties. It also alluded to the possibilities of human cloning. According to the catalogue

accompanying the exhibition (1997), the main focus of the installation was the increased feeling in our society of being monitored. It said:

> "The insidious nature of a society obsessed with surveillance is the focus of this installation, 'Panoptic Pindown'. Linsdell constructs a pseudo-laboratory of racks of test tubes containing grey figures, ready to be categorised, scrutinised and monitored, their identities removed".

The catalogue went on to suggest that the presence of these grey figures in test tubes alluded to the increasing possibilities of human cloning, quoting Martell:

> "from conception to death and leaving residual traces beyond, we are monitored, documented and filed – pinned down by huge files of data that construct alternative identities" (Linsdell, 1997).

In an interview with this researcher (1999), Martell said the installation was an opportunity to use some of the newer media she has introduced into the practice and these included test tubes, model figures and text. The Glass Box itself added to the whole idea of the project which was influenced by Jeremy Bentham's 'Panoptican'. The panoptican was an architectural device, such as those used in prisons, which allowed the surveillance of all its aspects, as they would all be observable from one single point. In an interview with this researcher Martell (1997), described the piece as suggesting the anonymity implied by such behavioural and social controls, referring to the writings of Foucault (see Foucault, M. in Sarup, M. 1988 p.74).

According to a press release for the exhibition 'Mark-ing Up Language' (1996), which is described in section 7.7., Martell was interested in: "exploring the boundaries, inside and outside, and control via monitoring and surveillance".

The installation seemed to allude to similar issues: the feeling of human behaviour and activity being monitored in our society. There are many ways in which human behaviour is monitored. For example, behaviour is observed very obviously via the increased presence of C.C.T.V. (Closed Circuit Television) in the environment or, more discreetly, by, for example, the monitoring of credit card transactions. Martell seemed to be making commentary via her work on this process when she talked about being "monitored, documented and filed" (1997). This researcher noted in this installation the juxtaposition Martell had made between Bentham's Panoptican (a device which was used for the efficient monitoring, observation and control of prison inmates) and the anonymous monitoring of human activity that people are subject to whilst at liberty. The artwork seemed to pose a fundamental question, 'What constitutes freedom?' The piece also alluded to a sense of alienation. Hundreds of miniature, plastic human figures were assembled together within the confines of the Glass Box. Individual plastic, human forms were placed within test tubes, side by side but separated by the glass walls of the test tubes. A large group of plastic figures was placed on the floor of the gallery apparently 'walking around' as if in a model civic square, for example. One group was 'at liberty', socially interacting with one another, on the gallery floor and the other group was 'imprisoned above' looking down upon the figures below. This sense of alienation or insularity was compounded by the whole installation itself being separated

from the viewer behind the gallery's glass walls. Martell indicated that the sense of alienation was a throw-back to her time as a radiographer. She said her work was informed by the experiences she had in that field, she said:

> "In much of medicine and science people lose their identity, these figures in test tubes represent that sense of alienation" (Linsdell, M. 1998).

The next section contains a similar project. It refers to monitoring and surveillance. However, the context of the 'everyday', urban environment is made more overtly a part of the work.

7.10. Project Three: 'Observing the Observer' 1999 (in 'Stalk' in Mart (Manchester Visual Art Event, 1999), Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester.

To this researcher, 'Observing the Observer' (1999), signified a culmination of the changes and developments in Martell's work and practice. 'Observing the Observer' (1999), was installed in a vacant office in the Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester City Centre as part of 'Stalk' (1999). 'Stalk' was an installational project based in the city centre and it comprised six female artists from 'Brass Art'. 'Stalk' was part of the 'Manchester Visual Arts Event' ('Mart'). For a description of 'Mart', see Chapter 5, section 5.12.). The six artists involved in 'Stalk' are from 'Brass Art' (see section 7.7.), and according to the Mart Eventguide (1999, p.18), they:

> "exhibit a series of works which investigate the complexity of urban experience from a female perspective. By transposing private spaces,

gestures and routines into the public realm, the artists emphasise the potential for an intellectual interaction and re-evaluation of our social environment. The work encompasses surveillance techniques, fictional journeys, anthropological studies, anonymous encounters, exploring the public and private spaces within the matrix of the city".

Martell's project was entitled 'Observing the Observer' 1999, and comprised a 'slide dissolve' projection upon a large white rectangle. The piece was an installation comprising a projection of two slide sequences where each image dissolved into the next. Both sequences were projected onto a white screen. Each slide was projected one at a time for a few seconds before the next slide was projected overlapping directly on to the previous one before it 'disappeared'. Each image 'dissolved' into the next in the sequence, there were two carousels each containing 80 slides and the projectors were set on a continuous timer. Each image consisted of Martell in a sequence of different 'poses' photographed in a room situated above the site of the installation; a room which afforded a relatively panoramic view of the city outside (see Figs. 7.23. – 7.30. for a sample of the sequence). The viewer of the art installation was observing Martell:

> "undertaking a monitoring exercise of the behaviour of the populace as they undergo their daily lives" (Linsdell, M. 1999).

The siting of 'Stalk' was an important feature of the project. Piccadilly is in the centre of Manchester, it comprises a large, busy public square, Piccadilly Gardens, where the central bus station is located and a major tram intersection. There are many shops, hotels

and restaurants, there are the gardens where people relax, eat their lunch or read a book, and there is often a fair situated in the central square. Piccadilly has a very distinctive architectural appearance and it is the place where many people meet or cross each other's paths.

The Eventguide (1999, p.18), said:

> "The siting of the work in Piccadilly has a particular resonance. A point where journeys start and finish, where thoughts shift between reality and the imagination, as people lose themselves in books, engage with the wider world, daydream, isolate themselves within a chosen sound track".

Piccadilly is the backdrop to Martell's piece 'Observing the Observer' (1999). The busy scene of traffic, of people coming and going, can be seen in each slide in the projection sequence. The tracery of people's movement, can be discerned via the dissolve technique employed in the slide sequence projection; figures appear and then fade away to be replaced by others, who themselves fade away, and so on.

In a press release for 'Stalk', Martell said:

> "The installation itself is silent, it is a slide projection of images that dissolve into each other, the pacing of the art work becomes as a memory rather than a documentary record" (Linsdell, M. 1999).

Martell deliberately selected the first floor window to photograph the scene, alluding to the surveillance cameras' positions around the city. This researcher noted the selection

of black and white photography which seemed to mimic the black and white images seen on security cameras and but which also created a sense of nostalgia. It reminded this researcher of 'Daguerreotypes' and the very first examples of street scene photography, where the movements of people and animals were often recorded as 'blurs' and where only the faintest trace of a moving human form was discernible. Even the photo caption accompanying the information in the event guide showed the blurring effect of moving people and traffic. The blurring caused by the movement of people and objects was a vital part of the work. The feeling of transience and the provisional nature of the work were reinforced through the techniques of time-based photography, 'blurring' and dissolve slide sequencing, site-specificity and the use of a temporary exhibition venue.

7.11. Conclusion

This chapter reveals the various changes in Martell's artistic practice during the 1990's, how the practice changed from one which was, by and large, studio-based and mainly to do with making paintings for gallery spaces, to a newly situated practice, concerned with an installational approach to making art. Martell reflected upon the static nature of the studio-based practice and the cumbersome 'build-up' of paintings within the studio. Her interest in a less static approach and a more process-based or time-based approach to making and displaying art led her to explore video and more installational/site-specific projects.

The key to these changes was Martell's reflection upon the problems and limits within the studio-based practice. The problems were reinterpreted into a newly defined practice which incorporated these 'problems' into a new practice and new art forms. The case study shows how the 'situational frame' surrounding the studio-based practice was changed to allow in new ways of making art (Schön, D. 1983). The practitioner had a reflective conversation with the situation and the problem became reframed within a reshaped situation. An important feature was the introduction of video as a medium for exploring possibilities. It was enjoyed for its inherent qualities and for its connotations of 'painterliness'. For example, the fluidity of the video medium was analogous to the fluidity of paint and the picture plane was analogous to the video screen. The analogy with painting was an attraction but the 'less static' result allowed further investigations of the medium and its importance within the newly situated practice.

The study shows that the work's provisionality was another important feature of the new practice, as was the introduction of materials and media, contingent to the issues within each project undertaken by Martell. The context of the artwork and its relation to place were explored through a carefully selected range of media and processes. Martell explored the possibilities of making temporary art via 'events' and 'interventions' in non-gallery spaces. These installative projects often involved working with others and Martell demonstrated a willingness to work on projects with others who had similar research interests.

Through problem finding and reframing, the practice is now more dynamic, and less static. The contents of this case study, together with the conclusions, are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies, in chapter ten.



Fig. 7.1. 'Communication' (detail) 1992 Martell Linsdell (oil and mixed media on canvas, c. 6' x 5')

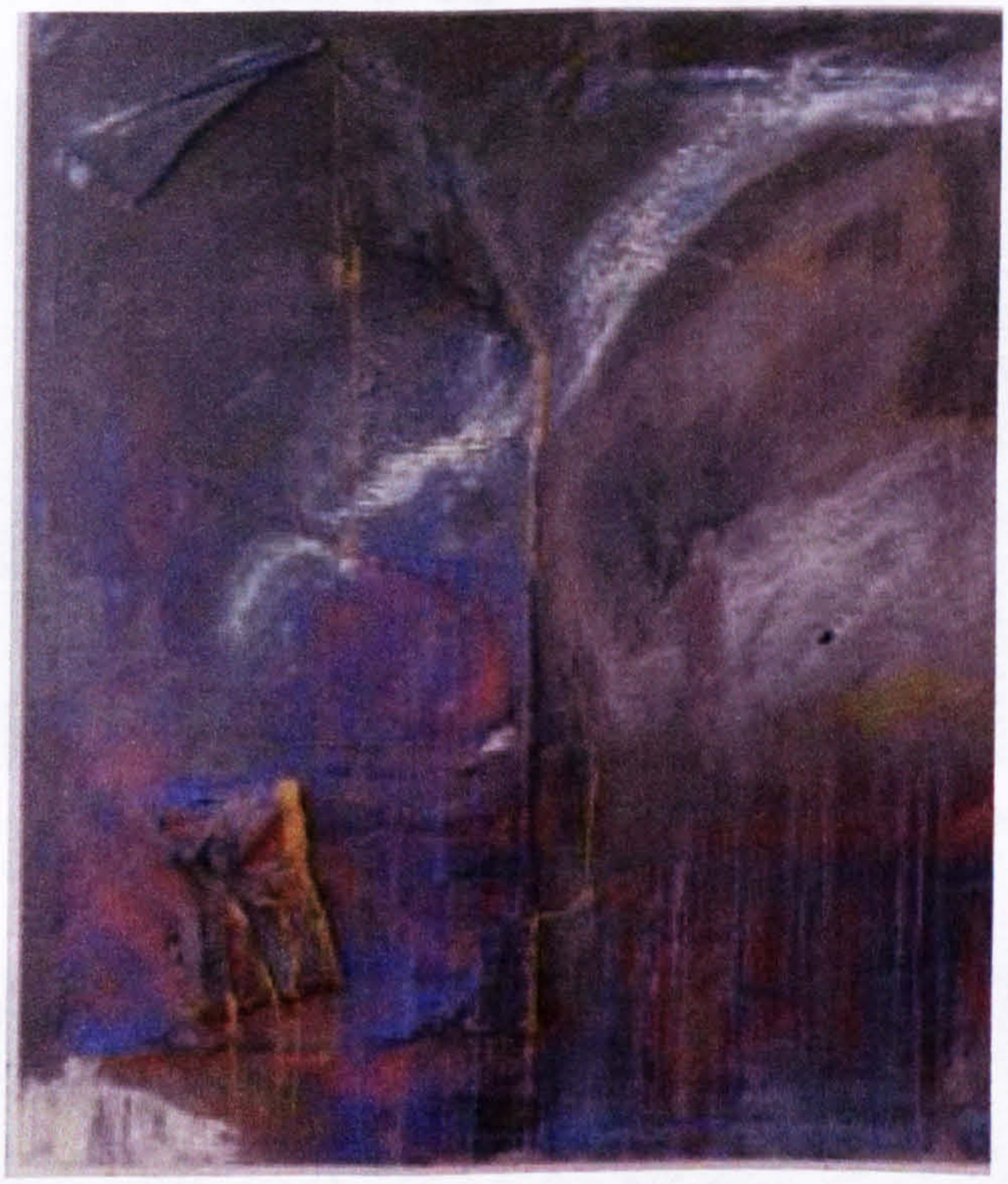


Fig. 7.2. 'Communication' 1992 Martell Linsdell (oil and mixed media on canvas, c. 6' x 5')



Fig. 7.3. 'Communication' (detail) 1992 Martell Linsdell (oil and mixed media on canvas, c. 6' x 5')

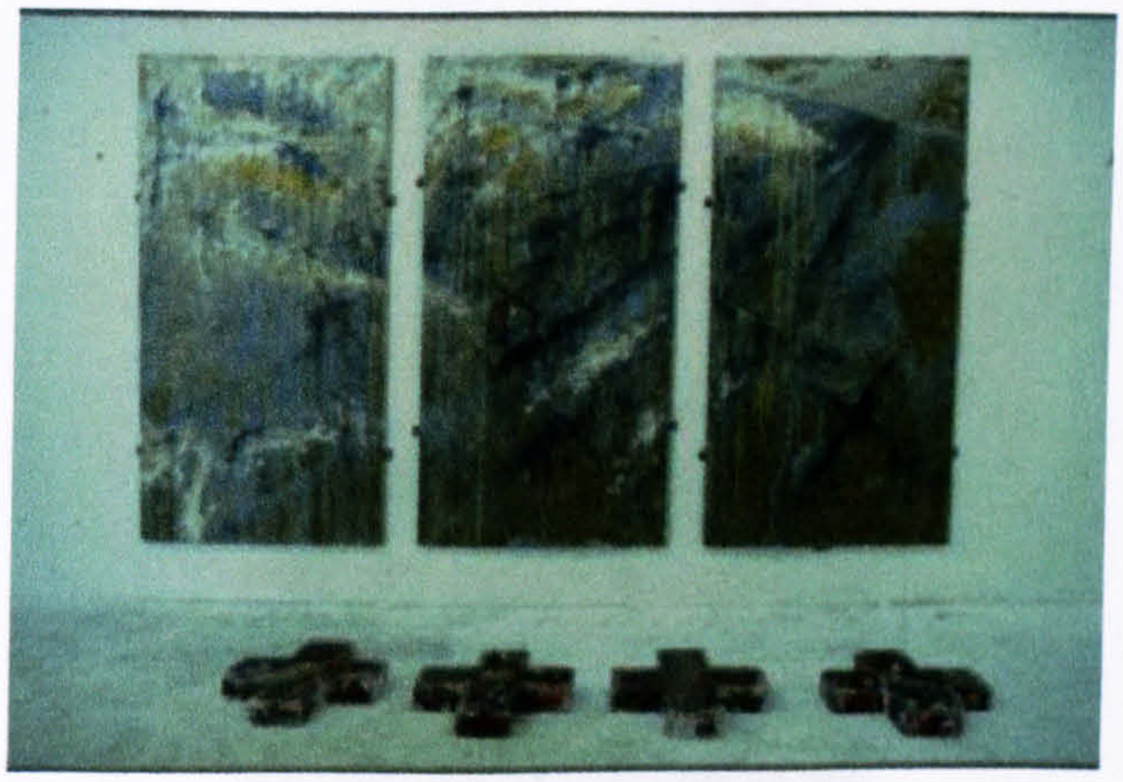


Fig. 7.4. 'Referential Perspective' 1992 Martell Linsdell
(steel panels, plaster, varnish, oil and oxide, c. 7' x 11')

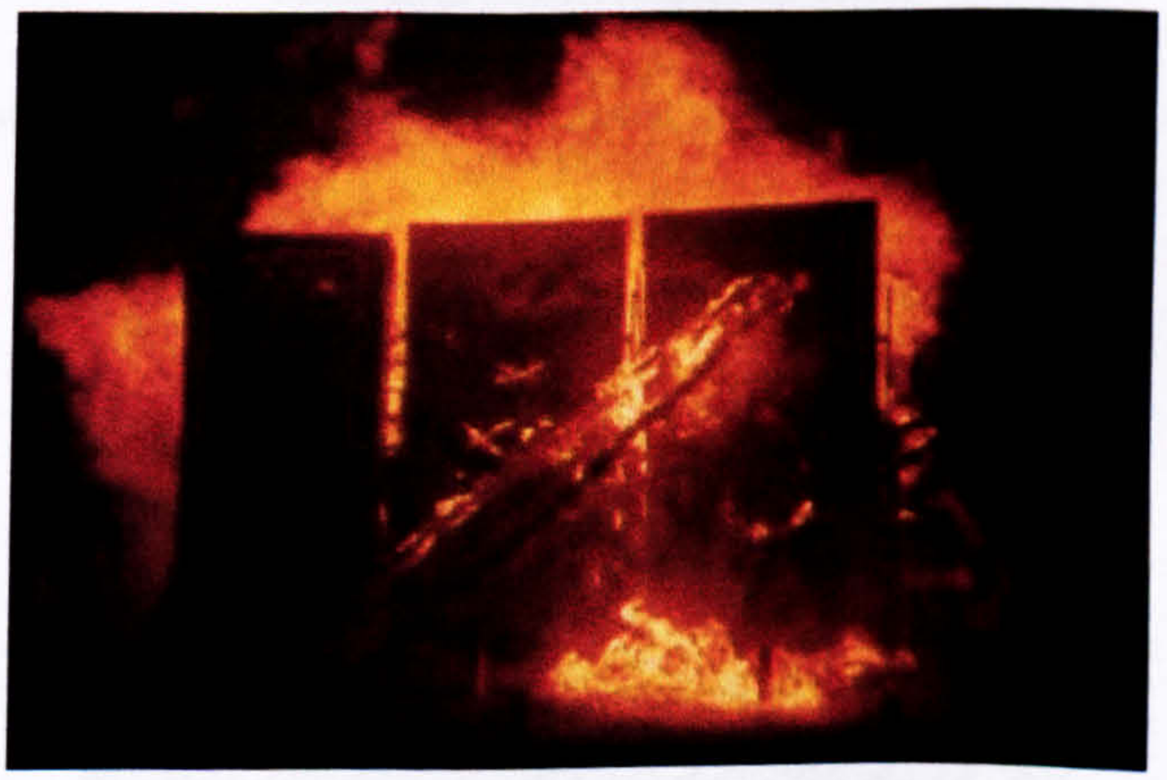


Fig. 7.5. 'Referential Perspective' Performance, Rocheside Arts Centre, Staffordshire 1992
Martell Linsdell (steel panels, plaster, varnish, oil, oxide and fire, c. 7' x 11')



Fig. 7.6. 'Gridding the Landscape' in 'Sheffield Media Show' 1992 Martell Linsdell
(pegs, plot of land, c. 200' x 200')



Fig. 7.7. 'Site Specific Decay' 1994 Martell Linsdell
(photo silk-screen prints, inert schist from Geever, Cornwall, steel and Perspex, c. 9' x 7')



Fig. 7.8. 'Time-based Decay - Half-life' 1994 Martell Linsdell
(drill-core test-bores, Geiger counter, display case, c. 2' x 4')



Fig. 7.9. 'Time-based Decay - Half-life' (detail) 1994 Martell Linsdell
(drill-core test-bores, Geiger counter, display case, c. 2' x 4')

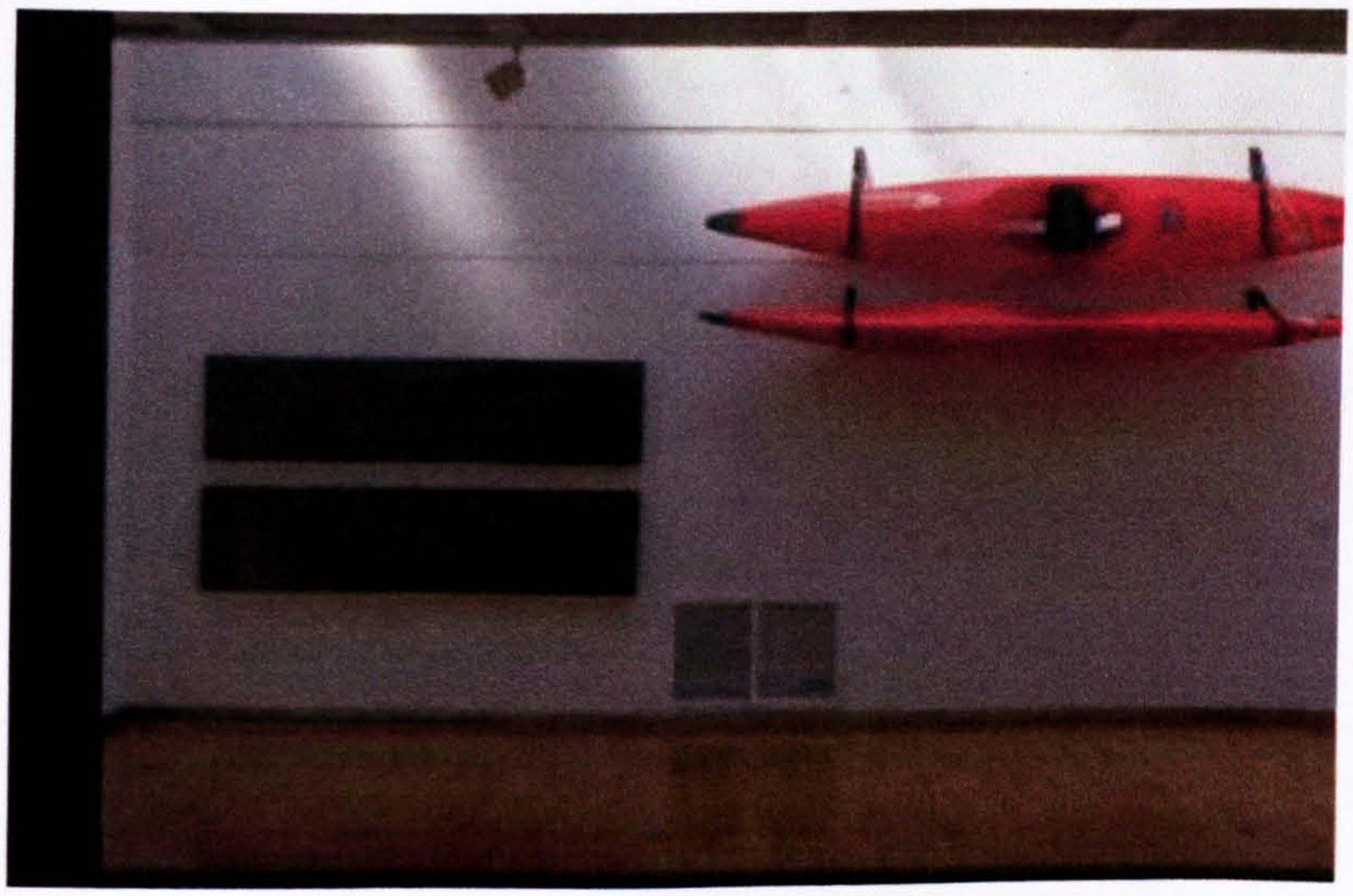


Fig. 7.10.'Comparative Technology' in 'Out With It!' ('Year of the Bronze Age')
Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield 1995 Martell Linsdell
(2 x fibreglass kayaks c. 12' ea. 2 x monoprints of Bronze Age canoes c. 18" x 96" ea.)

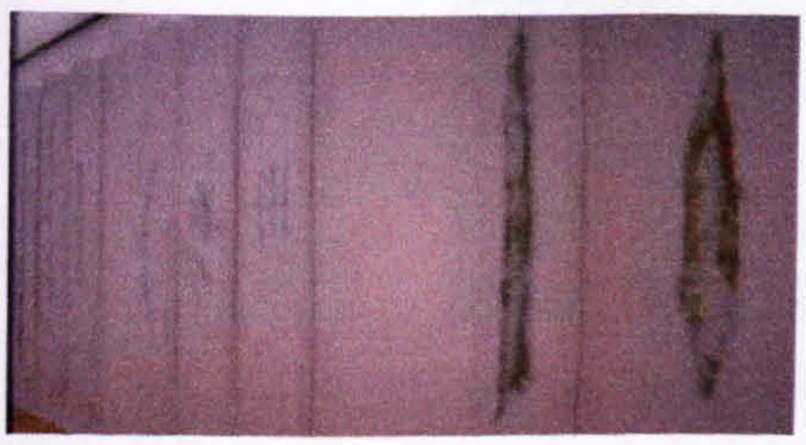


Fig. 7.11. 'Untitled' Mappin Art Gallery 1995
Martell Linsdell (mixed media drawings on panels,
c. 72" x 12" ea.)

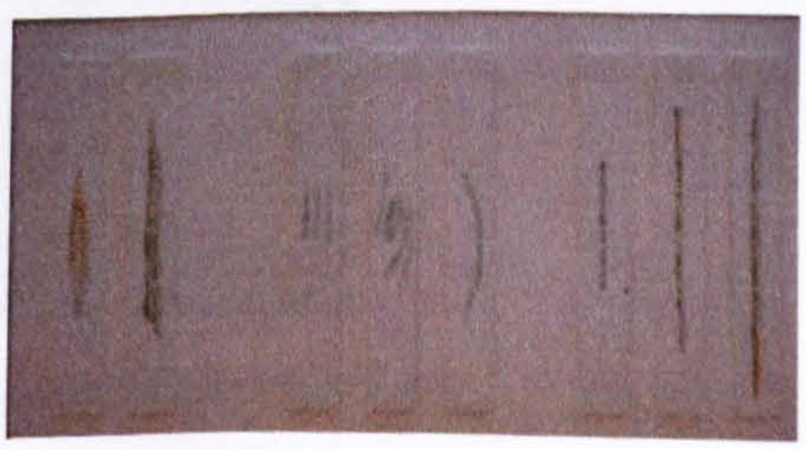


Fig. 7.12. 'Untitled' Mappin Art Gallery 1995
Martell Linsdell (mixed media drawings on panels,
c. 72" x 12" ea.)



Fig. 7.13. 'Untitled' Pink Paintings Mappin Art
Gallery 1995 Martell Linsdell
(oil on roller blind fabric, c. 5' x 9')



Fig. 7.14. 'Untitled' Pink Paintings Mappin Art
Gallery 1995 Martell Linsdell
(oil on roller blind fabric, c. 5' x 9')

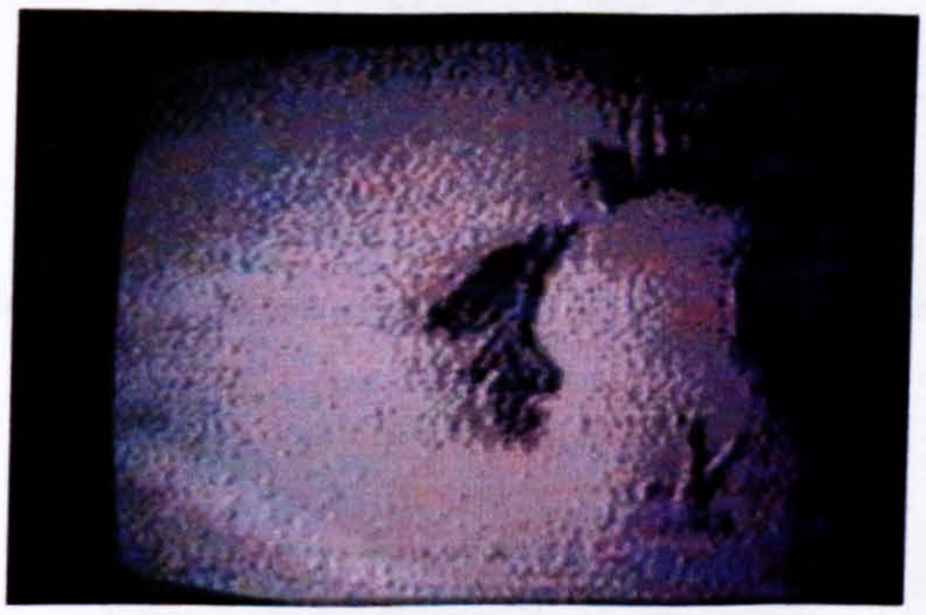


Fig. 7.15. 'Untitled Video Still' 1996 Martell Linsdell

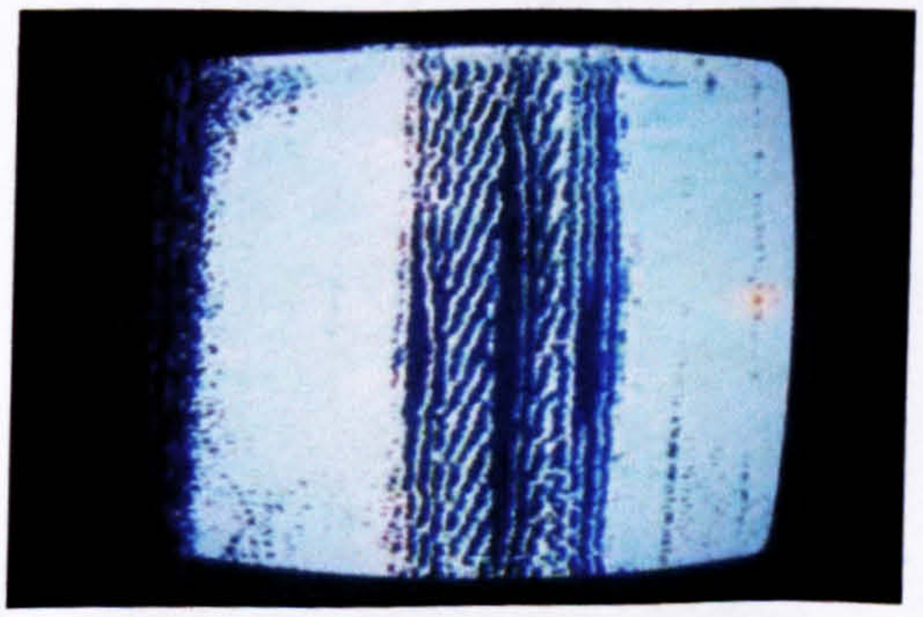


Fig. 7.16. 'Untitled Video Still' 1996 Martell Linsdell

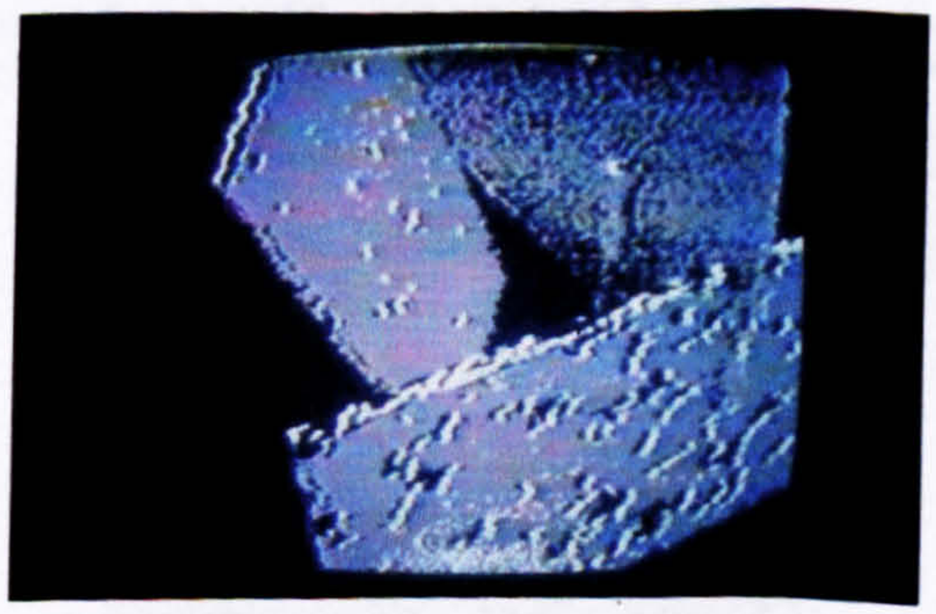


Fig. 7.17. 'Untitled Video Still' 1996 Martell Linsdell

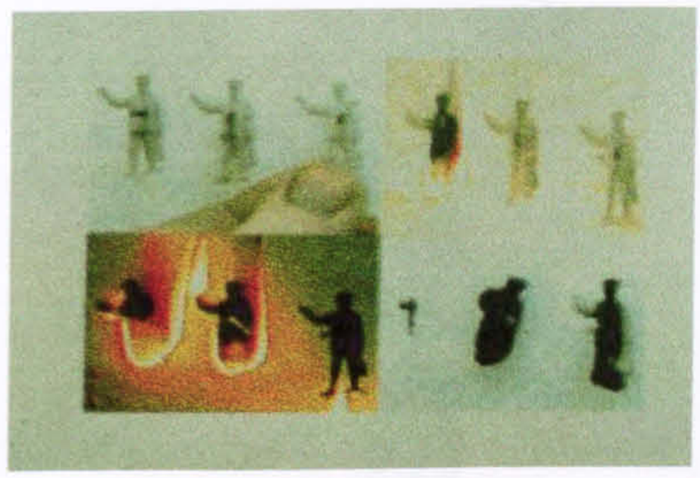


Fig. 7.18. 'Untitled Study' 1996 Martell Linsdell (4 x photographs, c. 10" x 14" ea.)

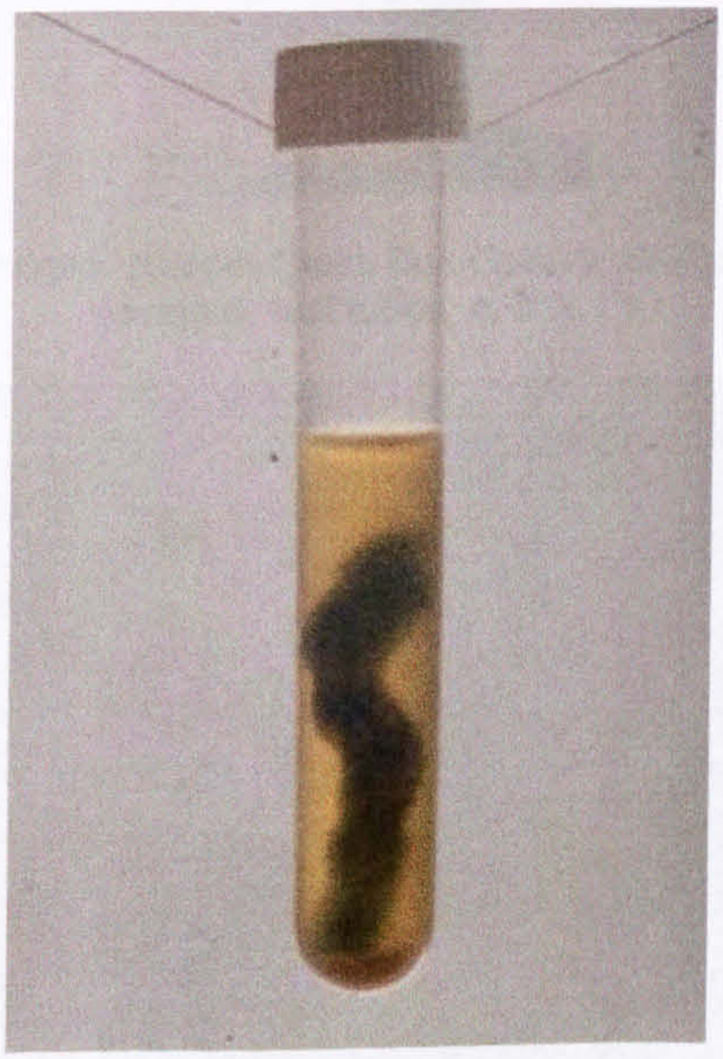


Fig. 7.19. 'The Human Transcript' Royal Institute of British Architects, Manchester 1997
Martell Linsdell (test tubes, urine, bronze objects and photographic images, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.20. 'No Frills' Staffordshire University 1997 Martell Linsdell
(test tubes, racks, dimensions variable)

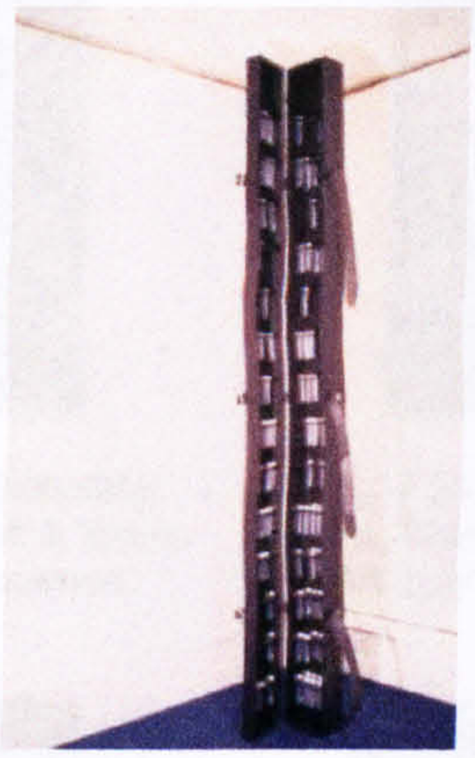


Fig. 7.21. 'Panoptic Pindown' (detail) Glass Box Gallery, Salford 1997 Martell Linsdell
(cabinet, test tubes, c. 8' x 1')

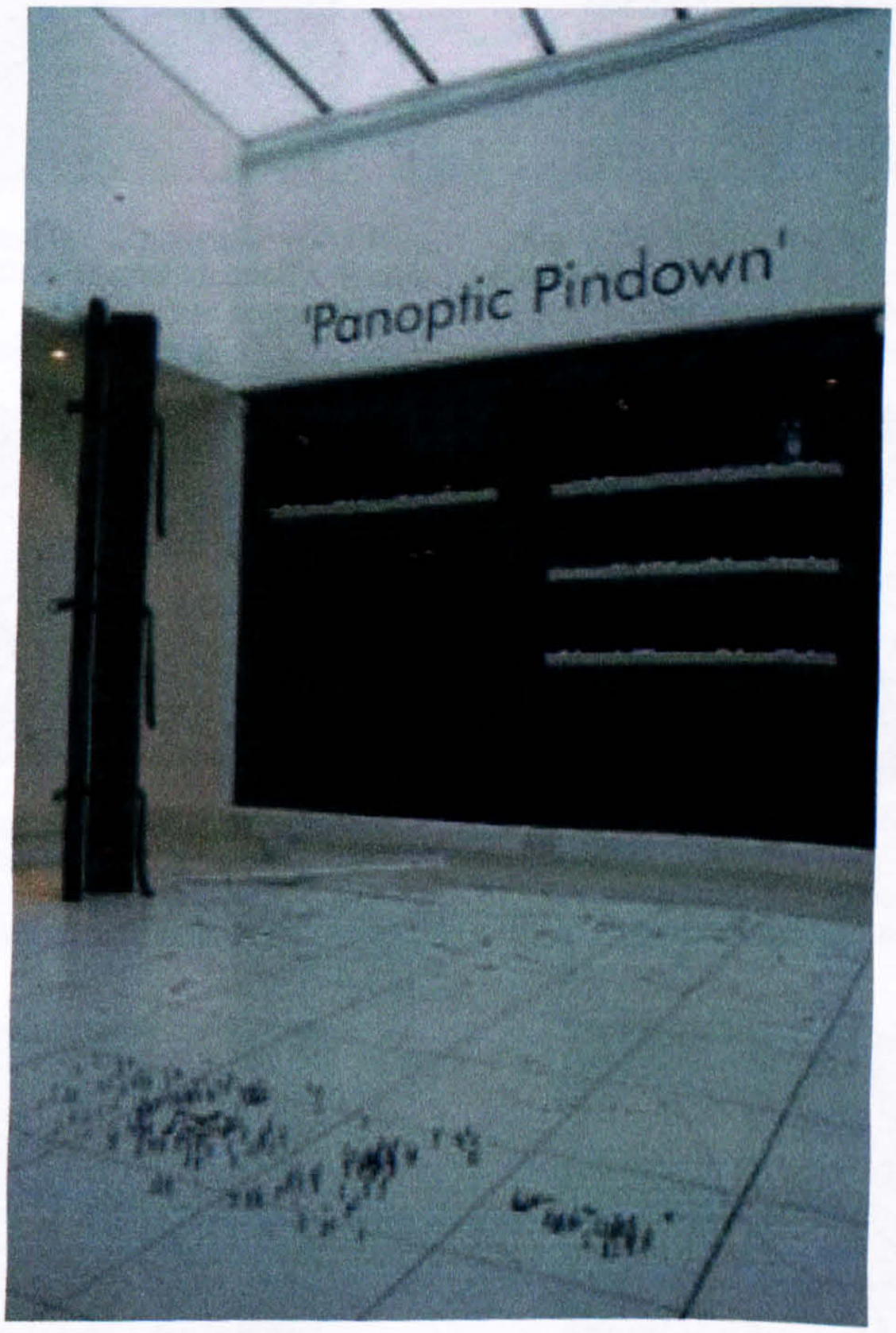


Fig. 7.22. 'Panoptic Pindown' Glass Box Gallery, Salford 1997 Martell Linsdell
(cabinet, test tubes, racks, model figures, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.23. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.24. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.25. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.26. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.27. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.28. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.29. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)



Fig. 7.30. 'Observing the Observer' Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester 1999 Martell Linsdell & 'Brass Art' (performance, dissolve slide sequence, dimensions variable)

CHAPTER EIGHT: Case Study Six: Alec Shepley (the researcher).

8.1. Background.

Alec Shepley (born 1963), obtained his degree in Fine Art painting at Wolverhampton Polytechnic (1983-86), and later gained an MA at Sheffield Hallam University (1991-93). Alec is a practising artist, largely working in a sole practice and occasionally working with others on certain projects. He works full-time as a senior lecturer in Visual Arts at Edge Hill College of Higher Education.

8.2. Introduction.

This case study is another example of an artist who found problems with his studio-based painting practice. The chapter contains insights into his exploration of the limits of his practice and its products and processes and into the extension of his practice into more installational-type work. Alec's 'reaching out' beyond the perceived limits of practice and product, via an extended range of media, materials and processes, both in the making and display of his art, is described and considered. Earlier work and its relation to later, more installational-type work, is described and discussed. Alec's interest in 'process', his use of video as a medium for making art, his search for an audience for his artworks, and collaborative projects, are considered and discussed. Where appropriate, illustrations are referred to within the text and these can be found at the end of the chapter. Specific projects are examined in detail in the final sections of

the chapter. As discussed in chapter two, this researcher interviewed himself for the purposes of this case study. Alec's quotations are taken from artist's statements, slide lectures, and the interviews with this researcher during the period 1997-2000 (e.g. Shepley, A. 1998), unless otherwise stated. Other people's commentary is included and quoted where appropriate.

This case study contains an example of an artist who explored the limits encountered within the context of his studio-based practice, and resituated these problems within a more installational context and more liberating approach to art practice.

8.3. Questioning the limits.

In an interview with this researcher (Shepley, A. 1998), Alec described how, through reflection upon his practice, he found there was an increasing dissatisfaction with the growing commercial or 'mechanical' nature of the studio-based painting practice. He said he found this too narrow, unsatisfying and linear a process. He said his preoccupation with outcomes was becoming increasingly replaced by a preoccupation with process.

In a slide lecture (Shepley, A. 1999), he said:

"The commercial success did not go any way to satisfy me artistically. There was always something missing, it seemed 'not quite right' and it seemed too much like a business. At this point I was on the Enterprise

Allowance Scheme so I did have to make money and balance the books, but when that was all finished I had this studio full of paintings and I felt like I was stuck. I was on treadmill, pedalling out loads of paintings. It all seemed too easy - there weren't enough problems associated with it and I like problems. Not that it was without problems. But they were mainly extrinsic and I wanted intrinsic ones. Art problems" (Shepley, A. 1999).

Alec felt that the product did not reflect the process enough. Alec described how he wasn't happy with the idea of 'finishing' a painting and having to start all over again on the next one. He referred to being unhappy with 'the end product' which did not reflect what he saw as the 'complicated business' of painting. He said there was a tendency in his work towards 'an oversimplification of the real situation' and referred to a lack of 'problems' being evident within the work. The paintings he made, he thought, did not 'reveal the truth about themselves'. He said:

> "I was unhappy with the 'cosy' situation I had set up. The mode of practice, the linear sequence of events from idea, through working process to outcome. It didn't seem to reflect my true feelings or reflect honestly the way I wanted to reflect what I actually did in the studio" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He referred to a finished painting as not representative of the whole process, and not revealing enough of the 'situation' when and where it was made; he wanted to reveal the processes undergone in the making of the artwork.

Alec said:

> "I wanted to investigate ways of representing an open ended system i.e. process, as opposed to a closed system i.e. product" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec described the way that he found a problem with the 'frame' - the rectangle signified the material limit of his work. He referred to it as his Achilles' heel because it signified the 'end' of his work and yet:

> "it wasn't the actual end of it because of the space outside the painting, the relationship between me and the painting, the place where it had been made, the processes and time involved were all excluded from it. The frame separated stuff that shouldn't be separated" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec said he felt contained and restrained by the perceived boundaries of the work and the practice. He described a sense of having 'painted himself into a corner'. He said:

> "I had painted myself into a kind of cul-de-sac or a hole and I felt confined by the kind of practice I'd engaged in" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He referred to feeling constrained by the 'problem of the rectangle', how this rectangle or framed painting seemed to signify containment and how this was in opposition to the creative process which had produced it. He said:

> "I began to walk about with an imaginary framing device welded to my head or some kind of rectangular hologram governing my field of vision" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He described the way he wanted to break free from the rectangle. He said:

> "I realised the painting's limits and I recognised its shortcomings and I realised that it did not reflect the sophistication that had gone into making it. It did not reflect the real time and real space of when I was 'playing' in my studio more" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec described how he felt cut off from the rest of the world in the studio and referred to the loneliness of the practice. He said:

> "I was extremely lonely in that studio, I felt like I was cut off from the rest of the world. I felt that I was occupying this strange position of a person who observed the world, who stood on the side-lines, watching and then scurried off to his studio to produce work and then show it saying 'here, this is how I see you lot.' It seemed a bit arrogant and distant. Stuffy. It was not the way I wanted it to be" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec described how there was sense of tension between feeling confined by his conventions and what to do about it, referring to how he tried to look upon his situation as if he were an outsider to it. He said this was something that he had been trained to do when he was a student, referring to it as being a very helpful way of being objective about a problem situation.

In an artist's statement (Shepley, A. 2000), he wrote:

> "I began to notice more and more in the early 90's – the things that would get pushed to one side in my studio, while I was working on the

'art'. I began looking at how I could represent these things. I wanted to make art about the times 'when things went wrong'; the things that went on 'off camera' so to speak – outside my usual frame of reference".

This researcher observed that the questions about his work and the problems he had experienced became the subject of his new work and the practice began to reflect the conversation he had with his practice. Alec said the major turning point came when he decided to represent this reflective conversation and to 'represent the situation'. For example, Alec referred to the painting 'Monsieur Shepley Finding an Arresting Composition in the Grounds of Knole House' 1993-94 (see Fig. 8.5.) as a 'self-mocking self portrait', where he viewed himself as an historical figure viewing compositions through a framing device attached to his head. He said he began to depict himself looking at his own situation.

Alec said:

"I started to try to paint the real situation. To look at myself looking at myself, not quite satirising but something like that" (Shepley, A. 1999).

He said about the paintings:

"their place within the practice changed, now they were only as important as anything else" (Shepley, A. 1999).

In an interview with this researcher (Shepley, A. 1999), Alec said he realised depicting the process of 'looking at himself looking at himself', was crucial. He referred to his

situation as a scenario, and said he began playing with the boundaries and edges of his paintings (see Fig. 8.6.). Alec said:

> "By blurring the edges of where I'd normally stop a painting and seeing it only as one part of the whole thing, I could depict the real situation as I saw it".

Alec said most of the problems he encountered with the limits within his studio practice had arisen from the hierarchy that had developed over time, one in which finished paintings held the pinnacle point. He said that by playing with the frame he could flatten this hierarchy (Shepley, A. 1999). The next section contains a 'flashback' which describes and considers the earlier work which led Alec to question the perceived hierarchy and limits in his studio practice.

8.4. Earlier work.

In a slide talk (Shepley, A. 1999), Alec said when he was a student, on the Foundation course at Tameside College, and on the BA course at Wolverhampton Polytechnic (1983-86), he always seemed to hover between painting and sculpture. He said he would make painted constructions or assemblages, which were somewhere between paintings and sculptures: collages that juxtaposed found objects with painted objects and surfaces. However, upon graduating from Wolverhampton, he described how he eventually set up as a studio-based artist in 1987, specialising in painting. In an interview with this

researcher (Shepley, A. 1998), Alec described what his studio-based practice consisted of and the subject matter that he was engaged in. The subject matter included still-life, landscape, interiors, portraits and figures, and the process he was engaged in consisted of mainly oil painting, using sketches, drawings and photographs from real life to work these larger compositions in the studio (see Figs. 8.1. – 8.4.)

Alec described his work in an exhibition catalogue from a show entitled 'Recent Work' at Dean Clough in 1991. He wrote:

> "I work in closely related series, each painting developing out of another, nourished by the many studies I make of the surroundings in which I find myself. The main themes running through my work are landscape, interiors, and figures – often portraits. The problem lies in drawing these elements into a successful series of compositions, without undermining my concern that the working process comes before any preconceived outcome" (Shepley, A. 1991).

One press release described his work as:

> "possessing a macabre sense of humour" (Davies, A. 1990).

In an interview with this researcher (Shepley, A. 1998), he described how he used to practice technique, frequently going out drawing and painting from life, or looking at the work of artists whom he admired such as Rembrandt, Vermeer and Velasquez. He described the materials that he used:

"I would use traditional painting materials i.e. canvas, linen, oil paint, various oil mediums etc. I was very concerned with trying to come to terms with mastering those materials. The traditional craft of painting" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec spoke of how a finished painting would result from a fairly chaotic process of drawing, collecting sketches and photographs, and pooling these things together in order to work from them. He said he would then make sense out of the chaos (Shepley, A. 1998). He described how he felt happy with this for a while because he believed he had become relatively proficient. He referred his feeling of success at having both regional and national exhibitions for example at the Mall Galleries and The National Portrait Gallery, London, and how he had gained a commission from the Sackville-West family to paint some family portraits.

However, as described in section 8.3., Alec became dissatisfied with this kind of practice, referring to how "some of the chaos was lost somewhere along the way and I wanted to get it back" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec said the paintings came to be seen as part of the scenario that he was reflecting on. He said:

"the paintings were part of the scenario and so was I, and I needed to think about how I was going to show all that" (Shepley, A. 1999).

A major turning point came when he decided to caricature his problem of feeling confined by his studio-based practice and the rectangle, through making satirical artwork about his situation. He said:

> "I realised I was taking myself far too seriously and I needed a few more laughs" (Shepley, A 1999).

He made a painting called 'Monsieur Shepley Finding an Arresting Composition in the Grounds of Knole House' in 1993 - 94 (see Fig. 8.5.). This painting was based on an exhibition caption he had seen which referred to a landscape painting by the 19th century French painter Corot at the City Galleries, Manchester. Alec referred to 'stepping outside' his situation and how this provided him with a way to make new work.

He said it became apparent that an extended range of media, materials and processes was inevitable if he was to move away from just painting. These are described and considered in the next section.

8.5. Extended media and processes.

Alec referred to two events in January 1991 that allowed him both the economic freedom to explore a new approach to practice, and the opportunity to explore new media and processes (Shepley, A. 1998). He gained a post as a full-time art lecturer and he began a part-time MA course, at Sheffield Hallam University. He referred to a feeling that he had last experienced whilst a student at Wolverhampton Polytechnic – that of 'hovering' in an unknown and exciting situation.

Alec said he began exploring ways to 'show process' in his work:

> "I looked at people like Kurt Schwitters and Robert Rauschenberg again, and the ways they'd tried to include process through collage" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec said he broadened out his 'field of vision' to try to include things that were going on in the studio, the processes and the associated objects: he thought this was 'where the art was' (Shepley, A. 1999).

Alec referred to the way he always tidied up the studio before working and how a fellow artist had referred to this process as part of 'Alec's ritual'.

Alec said he began using materials from his ritualistic 'pre-working', studio tidy-up, i.e. the mess, rubbish and litter from around the studio (see Fig. 8.8.). This researcher thought he was trying to 'get the chaos back in the work' (Shepley, A. 1998). Alec decided to document these processes (see Figs. 8.10. – 8.12.). The materials and processes that were contingent to the studio practice, but hitherto had not necessarily been found in the products of his earlier practice, became a fundamental part of the new approach to art practice. The inclusion of the process was a significant element in Alec's involvement with a more installational approach to art practice (Shepley, A. 1999). He said:

> "I started to look at my own practice as a 'model' for testing out ideas. As a breeding ground, as a spawning ground, as a way of investigating and being self-reflexive - a kind of detective, investigating and thinking

> about different ways to represent the process of the studio and all the things that went on in there" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He described how painting became one process or medium amongst many and that he began considering his practice in terms of a scenario or series of scenarios. He said he began:

> "using photography or video to try to document and record these things. Painting became just one element within these ways of representing" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec described the kinds of materials he used and their strong associations with construction or architectural models. In an interview with Alec, the Canadian artist Cliff Eyland, suggested that ever since the advent of Cubism, the materials Alec was using had strong associations with high art (Eyland, C. 1999 p.17). Alec said he felt a strong affinity between the fragmentation he felt within his own practice, and the fragmentation of the picture plane in the dada and cubistic collages and constructivist drawings. He described the way he wanted to do a similar 'demolition job' using his 'old practice' as a "model for deconstruction" (Shepley, A. in Eyland, C. 1999 p.17).

Alec said the materials he used, were ones he associated with places like construction sites or demolition sites – places that were 'unfinished'. He referred to using materials that were cheap and common, everyday materials, which were associated with building sites. He said he started to use:

"materials that were lying around the studio; palettes, dust, the detritus and crap that I'd scraped off the palette at the end of the day, all those things that were contingent upon or surrounding painting, scraps of canvas, jars and phials with different substances in them, pigment, oil mediums, fragments of photographs. Things like that. I tried to bring in elements of thinking or of time. Because process and painting involves time as well a space. I wanted to position or place things in real space and involve real time...I wanted to represent the problem of trying to represent that situation. I use things to represent the processes going on in that place; the fabric of the building. An actual place where real things happen. To make the situation more 'real' " (Shepley, A. 1998).

He said he started to see these 'events' as 'the work'. The placement of objects became part of a new extended vocabulary (see Figs. 8.13. – 8.18.).

Alec described how he began to refer back to the diorama and models he had made when he was a boy. It seemed to him that these would provide a vehicle to represent the problem of 'how to represent the situation' that he was reflecting upon in his conversation with practice. He said:

"The idea of trying to make 'models' of practice or scenarios of a practice was very, very crucial because it represented the kind of process or relationships I was on about" Shepley, A. 1998).

He described how he started to use real objects, photographs, video, empty frames and alternatives to the frame and canvas such as scaffolding and debris netting (see Figs. 8.16. – 8.18.). He said:

> "the frame or rectangle that formed the edge of the painting seemed to me the most significant thing. Over a period of time it slowly dawned on me that the frame was 'where it was at'. It was neither the product nor the process; it was the difference between the two. I started to invent ways of levering this thing wider to accommodate my new ways of thinking and working. So the frame or boundary, that kind of no-man's land became, became the new work itself. Or rather the disintegration of the frame, material or conceptual, and how to represent that 'problem' became the art. My first view would be one of the 'art' being contained within the boundary of the rectangle. My second view would be the 'art' spilling out into the studio and even beyond, on to the street. Into 'real life'. My problem became 'how to represent this process?' " (Shepley, A. 1998).

The next section describes in more detail Alec's preoccupation with representing process.

8.5.1. Preoccupation with process.

Alec described his increasing interest in 'process' and how to include the element of time and 'involvement in process'. He said:

> "process, wasn't really a 'thing'. It interested me quite a lot to investigate ways of representing an open-ended system i.e. process, as opposed to a closed system i.e. product. I started to fragment all the elements in a painting and I started to produce, instead of single pictures, multiples, in various states" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec described how he started to think about how to represent ' art-as-action' and not as a product (see Figs. 8.10. – 8.12. & Figs. 8.25. – 8.27.). He described how he began trying to represent the process behind the work:

> "the being there, the doing, the seeing, the thinking and all the connections I made when I was in the studio thinking about my work. I started to see my work as a space rather than an object. This idea of it being a single item, an 'It', a single object, I realised, was not the 'truth'. The idea that a painting was only one component of a 'relationship' between itself and the viewer excited me and I had to change my work to accommodate the way I felt about it 'now'. I used these questions to make new work" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He decided to explore methods of representing or documenting process. He said he used photography. Another of the ways he decided to document process was to keep a video

sketchbook to record 'situations - processes and time rather than just snap-shots' (Shepley, A. 1999). He also made attempts to visualise what he was thinking, by making small models and dioramas (see Figs. 8.19. – 8.24.). He said:

> "I thought one of the best ways of trying to represent process was to try to present mock-ups or models or scenarios of situations. The models were also made for a very pragmatic reason - they don't take as long, don't involve as many people and so are less fraught with problems, they serve as visuals for getting projects off the ground and getting proposals accepted and they don't take up as much space. I wanted to involve people in real space and real time" (Shepley, A. 1998).

This researcher thought that by 'involving people in real space and time' Alec was considering the relationship between the artwork and the audience and this relationship is discussed in section 8.6.

Alec referred to practising neon sculpture whilst a student at Alfred University, New York (1985), and he began to reintroduce neon into his practice in 1998. According to Johnson, D. (1999), Alec found the neon to be an 'attractor':

> "The neon lighting, Shepley explained, was an element that he found very seductive. He is arrested by it and speculates that it transfixes the viewer's gaze, drawing one into the space. It highlights the shapes and angles moving the eye through the interior".

In an interview with this researcher Alec said the neon was a way of reminding the viewer of their situation, he referred to the neon effect as 'live' – it was a real experience and hopefully the viewer would be aware of the processual element of the work via this 'real experience' (Shepley, A. 1999).

Alec said he was involved in 'process' in his installational work, especially the work done in public spaces (Shepley, A 1999). He referred to when, in one of his slide lectures, a comment by a fellow artist had planted the idea that his work might be moving towards performance. He said he began to think about the 'performance aspect' or ritualistic nature, of his installational work. He began to consider whether the work 'existed in time' rather than being solely embodied by objects.

For example, in 1996, Alec became involved in a project entitled 'The International Sculpture Symposium'. The symposium (which lasted approximately 10 days), was organised by staff from the Art Department at Salford University, and involved 10 artists from Australia, The Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Macedonia, The Netherlands, Sweden, and the UK. Each artist was allocated a workspace for the duration of the symposium and the resulting work was displayed in the Chapman Gallery at Salford University. Alec (Shepley, A. 1999), said he took the opportunity to explore process, just working with materials he could find or borrow (see 'Dis-Assemblages' (1996), Figs. 8.25. – 8.27.). He said he was interested in implicating the viewer in the work (this is described in section 8.6.), (see Fig. 8.26.), and in making the work temporary - an event. He referred to the art as being a live event to be witnessed

by an audience and that the art could exist as a document of the event. In an interview with Jakubic, N. (1998), he said:

> "I want to enjoy the chaos. My work is speculative. I can't bring myself to complete it, so it's temporary. You're endlessly repositioning things" (Shepley, A. in Jakubic, N. 1998 p. 20).

Although he said he was very hesitant, and indeed anxious, about calling his work performance, but that he was very aware of the time-based element of the work. The way he publicly staged certain projects suggested an informal, performance-based aspect to the work (Shepley, A. 1999). The next section describes the relations with the viewer, and considers how Alec reached out beyond his studio-based practice to find the audience.

8.6. Finding an audience.

In an artist's statement Alec wrote:

> "Viewing art is as much a part of the thing as making it.... and through my practice and processes I hope to 'implicate' the viewer in the process by playing around with an indistinct boundary, where people might visually (or even physically) wander in and out of the art" (Shepley, A. 2000).

In an interview with this researcher (Shepley, A. 1998), Alec described a feeling of wanting to get out and interact with people, and not just confine himself to an insular practice of studio painting. He said:

> "I wanted to get out and mix with people. Talk to people 'in my work', rather than 'show them what I'd done'. Interact!"

Chance encounters with the viewer have become a feature of Alec's practice. He said that the audience would be whoever was around at the time: for instance, his project 'Interventions' in Stockport shopping precinct attracted shoppers or passers-by. He said that "there isn't a target audience" and he went on to describe how he wanted his work to become more 'open' to engagement, less staged and less official. He said this has led to him 'performing' time-based installations where people can talk to him while he is doing the project, such as the project 'I Shot B.. By', which was Gallery 111, University of Manitoba, Canada, 1999 (see Figs. 8.40. – 8.45.). He said he had also:

> "worked in garden sheds, garages, vacant shop units or derelict buildings. Buildings which were available and did not involve too much hassle but ones which had a ready audience such as theatre foyers, etc." (Shepley, A. 1998).

He described the way he wanted to include the viewer in his work to "implicate the viewer within the work" (Shepley, A. 1998), and to try to represent the relationship between the viewer and the art object. He described the way he:

> "started to use the frame as a device for creating a real space which was a sort of living painting. It had both sides of the frame in it. A bit like in

Jean Cocteau's film 'Orphee' when Jean Marais goes through the mirror to the 'other world' - the underworld. So, I started to use construction and model-making materials to build these things. But because I wanted to make things that were open-ended and process-based instead of product-based and because the frame was something 'between' these two areas of interest, I started to make things that looked like they were neither here nor there, 'hovering' or 'between'...and the frame is a kind of window between the two" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He said he now engaged the audience through time-based media, such as video, projection and more performance-based activity. He described the way he tried to appeal to people's inquisitiveness by 'staging things'. He said he tried to make a 'set' as if there was something 'going on', as if there was work being done by someone who had gone off for a break or something. In an interview with Jakubic, N. (1998 p.20), Alec said he made tableaux, or scenarios of paintings and that he was trying to catch the viewer 'in a place somewhere between demolition and building'. He said he:

"tries to make a zone where it looks like there's something going on. Something in a state of flux. Like the frame I was talking about before. Where it looks like there's some kind of process underway but there's a lunch break or something. That's the main difference, it looks more. But the work for me is now more open and exciting and it has no limits. The only limits are the time of its existence and the change in its form from the real to document" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He said he made the edges of the work ambiguous to make the separation between the viewer and the 'art object' ambiguous by using the display space as a container of the artwork. He said this helped in promoting the chance encounter between the viewer and the work since the work 'spilled into the space'. He said:

> "I don't really frame the work any more. That's the point...the frame is a dotted line...it's constantly shifting" (Shepley, A. 1998).

He said that the work was framed more by concept than material and that this felt like a more honest approach:

> "the material border did not really capture the totality of the painting anyway and was therefore a bit of a 'cheat'. As such it was only a conceptual element of a painting. Or was it a part of the wall space? Because of its ambiguity it couldn't have been permanent. The frame was always a temporary structure" (Shepley, A. 1998).

Alec said (Shepley, A. 1998), this was one of the reasons behind using video projection because it involved time but also because, when it was projected across a space, the viewer was caught in the light and became a part of the piece. In this way, he said, the viewer became a part of the 'event' of the artwork. He said that neon was a good way of:

> "touching the viewer.... It gives off a warm glow. It is real...it is tangible and because it is light and because I wanted to use materials which were alternative to paint...the connection between light and painting was there

and... the light hits your skin and draws you in. And that was my Venus fly trap if you like" (Shepley, A. 1998).

The next section considers Alec's work with others.

8.7. Working with others.

Alec said that he looked for projects, ways of joining a team, or collaborating with people on arts projects. He said that installational-type work seemed to offer alternative opportunities such as the chance of collaborations and the chance to move in the direction he wanted to with his work.

For example, in 1999 Alec became involved with other artists in the final stages of a collaborative installational art project called 'Give Battle in Vain', at the 'CUBE Gallery' ('Centre for the Understanding of the Built Environment'), RIBA, Manchester. The original collaboration was between Prof. John Hyatt and Tracey Sanders-Wood (Manchester Metropolitan University), and Dr. Steven Twigge (Salford University). The project was curated by an invented persona called Doria Hemming (an anagram of 'Indigo Hammer'), who issued instructions to the team via e-mails. Alec said that he became involved in the project after a conversation with John Hyatt, about the dioramas he (Alec) had made, and was offered the opportunity of including some of them in the installational project.

According to Vincent, M. (1999 p.45), the show was about the alleged existence of an underground tunnel (called 'Guardian'), under the City of Manchester, and the British nuclear deterrent during the 'Cold War'. In an interview with Vincent, M. (1999), Hyatt, J. said the show comprised seven 'stations' each corresponding to a colour from the colour spectrum. Each colour had a direct connection with the British nuclear warheads. Hyatt, J. said:

> "The structure of the exhibition comes from the fact that the British nuclear warheads had names like 'Red Snow, 'Orange Herald', Indigo Hammer' Violet Vision'".

He continued:

> "There are seven colour stations based on these names. Hemming's idea was to use Manchester's link with computing and breaking code – through Alan Turing and the Enigma Code. Each section has a poem made up of anagrams of the missile name, and from these anagrams were created these futile visual poems of war" (Hyatt, J. in Vincent, M. 1999 p.45.).

A book, in which the sections were coloured according to the 'stations' in the gallery accompanied the exhibition 'Give Battle in Vain' (1999). According to Hemming, D. (1999) the 'Guardian' tunnel was used to crack secret Nazi codes to speed the end of the Second World War; this researcher noted that the book shows a mix of related visual and textual codes to accompany the visual poems of war referred to by Hyatt, J. in Vincent, M. 1999).

Alec referred to the sense of fun in working on this project and making a contribution to the accumulation of artefacts, found or made, included at each station. He said he enjoyed the way the project was managed and the informal basis of his role in the project because it provided freedom (Shepley, A. 1999).

In addition, Alec has curated projects. For example, he described how, in 1996, he organised a competition to produce a site-specific installation for the summer arts festival at South Trafford College. The project was entitled 'Traces', and is described in detail in chapter six.

In addition to conversing with other artists and curating projects, Alec wanted to work with other people on his own projects. One example of working with others was initiated when Alec began experimenting with digital artwork.

In an interview with this researcher (Shepley, A. 1999), Alec described a project called 'Latitude 53', which he began in 1995 and which he had been working on ever since. He described how the 'Latitude 53' project occurred to him when he was sat in his studio, looking out of the window at the sunset, and thinking about how to represent his 'situation'.

He said he realised that the studio must be on the same latitude as the college where he worked and, having checked the atlas, he found the locations to be approximately along

latitude 53. He described how he considered the liberating effects of this idea and the prospect of a lifetime spent engaging in projects in all the places he could find along this line (Shepley, A. 1999). One of these projects is discussed in more detail in section 8.8.

He said he became interested in working on a digital version of the project, with fellow art lecturer, Jon Warmisham, who also worked in the Art Department at South Trafford College. Jon had trained in Fine Art (painting and printmaking), and he was lecturer in Computer Aided Art & Design. The collaboration combined Jon's knowledge of digital imaging, web-page design and HTML (HyperText Mark-up Language) with Alec's ideas, texts and images, and together they formed a web page about the project, Latitude 53.

The web-page project enabled Alec to begin to use e-mail as a way of organising projects along the Latitudinal line 53 degrees north. He said he had completed projects in the UK (Stockport 1995, Sheffield 1996, Salford 1996, Manchester 1997 & 1999), and the Netherlands (Leeuwarden & Groningen, 1996), and Canada (Edmonton 1999, Winnipeg (1998 & 1999), and one planned in Nova Scotia, 2000). The projects in Canada resulted in 'return' visits by fellow artists, where Alec has worked on, for example, Canadian artists' projects in the UK. Examples of these projects are described and discussed in sections 8.8. – 8.10.

Alec worked on a project with Scott Thurston who was a colleague and an English Research Fellow at Edge Hill College of Higher Education. This project involved Scott

and Alec in building and demolishing a tableau over a period of 12 weeks. Alec said the idea was to explore interactions of image, text and performance, via a tableau and that the activities would be documented using video and digital images. This collaboration consisted of an informal and 'intuitive' reworking of one another's ideas, via the introduction of things to the tableau or their removal from it. He described how each person could bring whatever they wanted to the tableau (and take it away), and that there were 'no rules' of engagement other than those imposed by the site of engagement (which was a store cupboard in the Art Dept.). The antagonism and harmony, and the ups and downs caused by the agreements and disagreements about the direction of the project, provided the energy and impetus for the work. The work became a document of this process (Shepley, A. 2000).

He described how working on projects and becoming a more itinerant artist presented more opportunities for interesting interactions. Collaborations were important if they were 'fluid' because of the exchange of ideas, the testing of materials etc., within the collaboration (Shepley, A. 1998).

8.8. Project One: 'Vignettes' 1995, (Royal Institute of British Architects Bookstore, Manchester).

This installational project consisted of a series of seven wall-mounted constructions which were reminiscent of architectural models (see Figs. 8. 28. – 8.35.). The installation was at the RIBA Bookstore, Manchester in November 1995.

The wall constructions were made of MDF (medium density fibreboard), painted with white emulsion paint, to mimic the visual characteristics of the walls within the display area. Alec said he made drawings and photographs of the buildings in the district surrounding the gallery and each model was a three-dimensional, geometric representation made according to his drawings and designs. The perspective in each model was deliberately distorted.

Alec said each MDF model had a black and white photographic image on its surface. The images were taken from buildings and architectural details found in the surrounding district. The perspective in each of the images was deliberately slightly distorted. Each image was transferred on to the surface of the model by using 'liquid light' photographic emulsion. This was to ensure that the photographic images seemed a part of each models' surface (Shepley, A. 2000).

A grey broken line, painted on the wall and partly on the model, formed one edge of a hollow, four-sided shape. This signified a provisional border or frame. It did not

correspond to the 'edges' of each model and appeared as if it had been shifted and bent into an irregular shape and placed in random association with the MDF form. The interdependence of the geometric forms, their being 'part of the wall', together with the distorted lines of the broken frame, were intended to suggest a 'lack of limits to the work' or at least a break in the boundaries around each construction. Alec referred to a dictionary definition of 'vignettes' to describe the wall pieces, or 'assemblages'. He said they were "small embellishments in what would have been a blank space" (Davidson, G. W. et al, 1988 p. 1112). This was how the title 'Vignettes' was settled on (Shepley, A. 2000).

In an interview with this researcher Alec said he began discussing the project in late 1994 and he began the manufacture of the models in the project in the spring of 1995, after his ideas were accepted by the bookstore manager (Shepley, A. 2000). According to the booklet, which was published as part of the installation:

> "This exhibition and publication is the result of a collaboration between; a photographer (Diane Goodwin); a carpenter (Richard Greaves); and an artist (Alec Shepley)" (Shepley, A. 1995).

In an interview with this researcher Alec described the roles of the various people involved in the project (Shepley, A. 2000). Diane was a photographer and her role was to transfer the images of the architectural detail on to the surfaces of the models using liquid light. Richard made the models according to Alec's designs and maquettes. Alec said he compiled the booklet, which consisted of the interview text that ran down the

left-hand side of each page with the list of places on Latitude 53 on the right hand side of the page. As discussed in Chapter 2, the text derived from an interview between Alec Shepley and Shelley Cape. The booklet described Shelley Cape as a writer and art critic (Shepley, A. 1995). The booklet was an integral part of the installation. It was intended to add something other than the visual to the installation - something that the viewer could take away, read, and refer to the installation (Shepley, A. 2000).

Alec said Shelley Cape was "an invention, not an alter ego or an imaginary friend, but just a person who I can talk to, in my head" (Shepley, A. 2000). The name Shelley Cape was an anagram of his own name and he described how having this 'extra member of the team' allowed him to enjoy bringing a little humour to the project and to his practice. He said it also meant he had en extra member of the team 'in his pocket' which gave him a little extra clout in the project (Shepley, A. 2000).

Alec went on to describe the wall-pieces installed in the display area:

> "Each one was about as big as a small TV. And each was given a surface or finish, to mimic the walls of the display area so as they'd blend in. I wanted the wall pieces to look as though they were protruding from the walls – like as if they were poking through a skin and pushing out into the space of the viewer" (Shepley, A. 2000).

The conversation in the booklet described an obsession with the frame and the way it separated art from life (Shepley, A. 1995). In an interview with this researcher, Alec

(2000) referred to this project as an exploration into the possibilities of 'undoing the frame and putting the viewer in the art'.

In an artist's statement Alec described how he blurred the frame or edges of the art. He wrote:

> "In my work I explore the enduring distinctions between art and 'not art'... The boundaries are blurred through my choices of material and location" (Shepley, A. 2000).

In an interview with this researcher Alec said one of the main motivations behind the work and ideas in the project was influenced by a significant event at a conference on 'De-Traditionalisation' that he went to in 1993, at Lancaster University (Shepley, A. 2000). He said he heard a paper by Michael Phillipson (1993), on 'Managing Tradition: the Plight of Aesthetic Practices and their Analysis in a Technoscientific Culture'. Alec referred to the way Phillipson, M. described the way art and tradition had become managed by national and global cultural institutions and how he argued for a move towards an art that operated in the gaps that the so-called cultural machinery could not reach (Phillipson, M. 1993 p.). Alec said he was very excited by what Phillipson said, and he quoted the paper in the Vignettes booklet:

> "Could there be minuscule chinks between the enclosing grip through which infinitesimally small traces might seep away from 'Art' to Art, from 'Tradition' to Tradition?" (Phillipson, M. 1993 p.2).

Alec described the project as a 'very humble attempt' at providing 'small traces' that might seep away from 'art' to 'not art' (Shepley, A. 2000). He said this project was one of his early attempts at 'going public' with his new involvement with a more installational approach to making art, and one of his first attempts at displaying art using the architecture of the place as the limit of the work.

He said 'unframing' the work made it reliant upon the place and made it possible for the viewer to 'wander in and out of the work'. He said he was very excited by the experience of the project, referring to working with other people, different media, compiling the booklet, and the fact that it marked a beginning to the 'Latitude 53' project, as key features (Shepley, A. 2000).

8.9. Project Two: 'Testing... Testing... Testing... Watch the Birdie' 1996, (Psalter Lane Campus Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University).

'Testing... Testing... Testing... 1 – 2 - 3' was organised and managed by Steve Dutton (Fine Art Department, Sheffield Hallam University). Selected artists were invited to use the gallery space over a period of two weeks to test out some of their ideas. The gallery space, appropriate equipment and technical support were provided and the artists were free to bring in any equipment or materials they required for their project. The Psalter Lane Campus also housed the various visual arts programmes at the university and the 'testing testing' artists allowed access to staff and students at agreed times, to engage in discussions about the work in progress. 'Testing... Testing...Testing... 1 – 2 – 3', was

the first series (1995), and the second series was entitled 'Testing... Testing... Testing... 4 – 5 – 6' and this was the series that Alec was selected for.

Alec said that during the time in the gallery, he tried out different ideas and materials and the project culminated in a video projection onto a large 'cube' constructed from building scaffold titled 'Watch the Birdie' (see Figs. 8.36. – 8.39.) (Shepley, A. 2000). Alec described a video sketchbook that he had been keeping over the months prior to 'Testing Testing'; he said it contained snippets of things from his studio, things he found visually interesting and what he referred to as "rather crude experiments in video effects". For example he said the video footage for 'Watch the Birdie' was shot from the living room of his house. Starlings that were roosting in the tree opposite the house were filmed, the footage was played back on the TV monitor, and this was filmed. Alec said he liked the visual effect of the degraded image, which was a result of this process of filming the TV screen. He referred to the way the images appeared 'accidental' and rough (Shepley, A. 2000).

He said he wanted to use materials associated with building sites but to refine some of the ideas via a more selective approach to the choice of images and material. He decided upon building scaffolding and managed to get as much as he needed, free of charge, from a local scaffold supplier in Sheffield. He referred to this as an excellent opportunity because scaffold was usually only for hire at an expensive daily rate.

With the aid of a student volunteer (Ian Foottit), Alec experimented with constructing the scaffold in different arrangements, exploring the workings of the video projector and the effects of projecting different images on to the different surfaces. He said:

> "It was hard, physical work but you could see different results quickly and the different results suggested a time-based element to the work. The work kind of evolved, I made loads of mistakes or things I didn't like, but through this the thing just gathered a pace of its own and I seemed to be working it out as I went along, just like in a painting or anything else like that" (Shepley, A. 2000).

In order to represent the process or time-based element, Alec said he set up a video camera on a tripod, in one corner of the gallery, and recorded the various stages of the project. He said he made slides but also used the video footage to make a short video piece of the project. He said the video was both a "document of the process and something that could be used as evidence to support an exhibition proposal, and as a piece of art in another project or display" and that it served both purposes.

In a slide talk Alec referred to the way the video projection helped him get 'inside painting'. He described how the image was projected onto the scaffold cube in the centre of the gallery. He said:

"After we messed about with the scaffolding, having it in different positions – like at one time it was against a wall like a canvas, and playing with the various bits of video stuff from my video sketchbook, I

hit upon the idea of just putting it in the middle of the gallery, like a climbing frame.

"This took a while to do but after we'd built it and put the debris netting over it, we turned the lights off and turned the video projector on.

"Something great happened – there were three images in the space – the first one was where the video image hit the first side of the scaffold cube, the second was where it hit the back of the cube and the third was where the image came to rest on the back wall of the gallery. It was nice because each image was bigger, each image was further degraded because it had left part of itself behind on the last surface and the whole gallery space was like this massive birdcage.

"The best thing though, was the feeling of being inside something" (Shepley, A. 1999).

This researcher observed the way the viewer was 'implicated' in the piece as soon as they entered the space. This was because the viewer was caught in the image being projected across the space. The image fell across their bodies and their shadows fell across the walls and scaffolding. Alec described the main reaction, from people coming into the space at this final stage of the project, was to the way the video image worked on people's bodies. He said it seemed to cause a good reaction in people (Shepley, A. 2000).

Alec said working with other people, in the gallery, in the media department and obtaining different materials and equipment from various sources, fulfilled his ambition to get out of the studio and interact with people. The next section describes and considers another project where the gallery space is used over a period of time to focus upon process.

8.10. Project Three: 'I Shot B-By' 1999, (Gallery 1.1.1., School of Art, University of Manitoba, Canada).

To this researcher, 'I Shot B-By' (1999), signified a culmination of the changes and developments in Alec's work and practice. 'I Shot B-By' was an installational type project which took place over a three-week period, at Gallery 1.1.1., at the School of Art, University of Manitoba, Canada (see Figs. 8.40. – 8.45.). The project had arisen out of a conversation over the internet that Alec had with a Canadian artist, Ken Lulevich, who lived in Winnipeg, Canada. Alec referred to how he had been researching contacts for the Latitude 53 project and had 'accidentally reached' Manitoba via the CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation, Manitoba). Alec said he made a trip in July 1998, to engage in an installational project during the Winnipeg Fringe festival 1998. After seeing Alec's project, the exhibition selection panel from Gallery 1.1.1. offered him their gallery space for a month in March 1999.

Alec said the Gallery 1.1.1. project had come to be known by several titles, for example 'The Neon House' and 'Art <*in/as*> Process'. Alec said the title 'I Shot B-By' was an

anagram of 'hobbyist'; the anagram of hobbyist was a self-mocking reference to a conversation he had with Prof. John Simons (who was Head of the School of Humanities and Arts at Edge Hill where Alec worked), about what constituted an artist. John Simons claimed that there were only about ten 'real artists' in the world and the rest were merely 'playing around'. Alec said he found this a strange point of view and he wanted to include it in his show to further the debate at Edge Hill. In addition Alec said the title 'I Shot B-By' related to the provisionality of the project and the stammer in the title signified his anxiety over making 'art' (Shepley, A. 2000).

According to Jones, S. (1999 p. 10), the installation consisted of:

> "a life-size neon and timber-framed construction of a collapsing house. The piece was created in situ at the university gallery, using a kit for a small shed and readymade materials, combined with maquettes, miniature figures, sketches and photographs, brought over from the UK".

The miniatures and models were made in his studio in the UK and were to provide a starting point or 'opening scene' to the project (Shepley, A. 2000).

According to the artist's statement, this project resulted from the changes in his practice and methods and a desire to meet artists and to seek out new audiences. He said:

> "Focussing on the unofficial bits of my practice – the bits in my peripheral vision - and re-presenting this as 'art', has resulted in me changing media and surroundings on a fairly regular basis. The move from a studio-based practice to one where I feel more like an itinerant

artist has helped me meet a lot more artists and seek out new audiences. Changing media a lot and moving around a lot was part of a deliberate de-centring or destabilising process I wanted to explore, one where I could allow in new things" (Shepley, A. 2000).

The press release for 'I Shot B-By' referred to Shelley Cape as an elderly artist who was too old to travel but that the project was to be completed by Alec Shepley, who was acting as her apprentice and technician. Alec referred to the similarity between the two alternative personalities, John Hyatt's 'Doria Hemming' ('Give Battle in Vain' 1999) and his own 'other persona', Shelley Cape. He said he also knew of the alternative identities used by Graham Parker and David Mackintosh, 'Bono and Sting'. Alec said there were a lot of artists who used such 'strategies' for making art. He referred to the other persona employed by Marcel Duchamp (R. Mutt), to disturb notions amongst the viewing public of authorship and the 'uniqueness' of art (Archer, M. 1997 p. 10). Alec said one of the first times he had encountered artists using another persona in their practice 'in real life and not in art history books' was when he saw some work by Sir Stuart Farquar (1897–1979) – a persona invented by John Hyatt (1989) during his Henry Moore Print Fellowship (Leeds Polytechnic 1988-89). Alec said he liked the idea and thought he might like to try it himself (Shepley, A. 1998). Alec said, although the idea was not new, he hoped to one day bring other North West artists' characters together and curate a show of alternative identities (Shepley, A. 2000).

Alec said he used the alternative identity as another method of blurring the boundaries in his work, referring to distinctions between 'artist' and 'audience' in order to pose the question 'who makes or completes the work'? He said it was all part of the 'deliberate destabilising process' (Shepley, A. 2000).

Donalda Johnson (1999), who was Gallery 1.1.1. Co-ordinator, wrote a response to Alec's installation, for the Gallery's archive. This researcher decided to include the full text because it provided a clear and personal narration to the installation:

> "Opening day of this exhibition foretold the aesthetic experience to come. A small crate stood under a single overhead spotlight in the center of the gallery and a tool cart waited expectantly to the side. Anticipation was "building" (pun intended!)
>
> "In the days that followed, a delivery arrived from McDiarmid Lumber that included a kit for a small shed, some sheets of particleboard, a batt of insulation, shingles, nails etc.
>
> "Construction began immediately but not in the usual sense of the word. The frame of the shed was raised but stretched forward for an expanded structure. Walls were covered in but only partially with cut out forms of particleboard reminiscent of giant pieces of a child's jigsaw puzzle. The board sheeting on the roof veered at strange angles and light shone through the cut out of a person in a spread-eagle pose (think 'Roadrunner' cartoon). Small dioramas appeared in the gallery's two windows onto the corridor. Bits and pieces of building materials, some in diminutive proportions, were scattered around and through the maquettes whose themes suggested travel in a fragmented fashion... open skies. Portions of roads, a doll-size suitcase clutched in the hand of a diminutive figure that bore surprising resemblance to the artist.
>
> "Advance information that preceded Shepley's arrival indicated that he, as a "life-long and devoted assistant of internationally-renowned artist, Shelley Cape", would

"reconstruct a diorama from her studio at home in England". It would be a "station or landing place on her journey along and around Latitude 53 or thereabouts".

"Each day the work progressed and the scene shifted as if one were viewing the space within a giant kaleidoscope. A table appeared in the pseudo shed and a miniature diorama blossomed. Resting on a lush green carpet, an upward thrusting framework of this balsa wood glowed in the overhead light... a construction nestled in another, a 'birthing' as it were.

"Each of us has stopped to watch workmen at a construction site. Our curiosity is piqued by the noise, the anthill-like movement and the sheer massiveness of the production. We are fascinated by the machinery, the bustle, and the coming together of someone's vision coupled with time, effort and expense. His images reminded one of fragments of memory, snatches of past events, or segments of dreams caught in a prairie whirlwind.

"Many viewers asked 'When will it be finished?' and 'Is it done?'... They were puzzled and confused. Previous exhibitions had been installed, were followed by an opening reception and a 3 – 4 week viewing run, and then been dismantled. Shepley's work seemed to evolve each day with no end in sight. Suspicion grew that the project would terminate without resolution of the vision, with no final end product.

"The cogs of my mind began to rotate and new thoughts fell into unused spaces. Did the creative process require an ending? Could an exhibition be staged featuring only the 'process'? Would the viewer be satisfied with just that or demand that more be done?

"Late in the second week, the 'neon man' arrived. By mid afternoon the gallery space was aglow with dripping strands of red neon, hanging from the beams of the shed and angled strips attached to the corners and sides. A miniature house, entirely of neon, perched jauntily in the interior.

"Additional small-scale dioramas sprang up around and through the structure. I began to realise that all of the materials used by the artist were industrially manufactured. All related to the construction of buildings, all were man-made and indicative of an

advanced civilisation. However, the artist appeared to be intent upon imposing a randomness to the overall installation. Shingles cascaded from the roof boards into the interior space at the rear of the shed, wall sheathing was cut into curves and off angles and were attached to the uprights in a haphazard fashion. The viewer saw a chaos that was not threatening but nevertheless disturbing. Could this be an intent to restore the 'natural' to the environment? I speculated that he was searching beyond the mechanical and seeking the spiritual connection that had been removed.

"For centuries, the Buddhist monks have practised the art of sand painting of *mandalas*. They invest considerable time and effort in these intricate creations knowing that they will be destroyed. Such is life, so they say. Could it be that Shepley is staging a version of a mandala for us and is thus allowing us to view an individual's search for completeness?

"Following the public viewing reception and artist's talk on March 18th, the installation began its descending spiral. As if the world had suddenly tilted, the entire installation appeared to have been sheared in half horizontally, and the top half of the shed came to rest to the left of the base. Shingles, pink insulation, and particleboard mushroomed out across the floor as the neon continued its steady glow. Gradually the smaller elements disappeared as the artist slowly dismantled the piece. Finally, the shed vanished into a waiting truck and the only remaining feature was the small red neon house. The warm light seemed to circle the space, probing the corners in search of the former construction.

"In the window a 4" circle of fine sand appeared and perched atop was a small ceramic building of European design. Suggestive of castles in the sand, we are reminded of the passage of time, the erosive power of the elements and the selectiveness of memory" (Johnson, D. 1999).

This researcher observed that this project was the culmination to date of Alec's 'speculative' approach to making and displaying the processual nature of his art. The

interplay between the architecture of the gallery and that of the installation, together with the changes in scale between the models, the shed and the 'life-size' scale of reality served to both implicate the viewer within the work, and to 'point the viewer in different directions' (Shepley, A. in Jakubic, N. 1998). The hierarchy between painting and the rest of the practice that Alec described in his earlier work gave way to a more democratic and often more chaotic approach, but one which he considered more honest and open.

The multi-media and multi-dimensional approach in 'I Shot B-By', served to demonstrate Alec's move away from a confining and exclusive 'studio-bound' practice to a more liberating practice, one with a more installational and provisional nature.

8.11. Conclusion.

This chapter reveals the transition from a studio-based practice that by and large consisted of painting and drawing, to a more installational-type practice. Alec found the studio-based painting practice confining and limiting and the case study shows how he wanted to engage in a more speculative approach to making art. Problems and limits were explored via new installational-type work and through making art into more of 'an event' by involving a time-based approach (e.g. 'Testing... Testing... Testing... Watch the Birdie' 1996 (Sheffield Hallam University), and the 'Dis-Assemblages' project (University of Salford, 1996).

Alec explored the rectilinear format of his paintings and drawings, speculating upon the creative process in real space and using an extended range of materials. Once liberated from the rectangle, Alec explored the possibilities of using the space in which the work was installed as the 'boundary' or frame to the work. The case study reveals how the boundaries of the installational work became blurred and how the relationship with the audience was altered as a result. The study shows how Alec attempted to implicate both himself and the viewer within the work. He tried to 'get inside' painting.

The study reveals Alec's reflective conversation with 'the situation': the problems and limits within the studio based practice. The problems were explored through a more installational approach to creative practice. The 'situational frame' surrounding the studio-based practice was changed to allow in new ways of making art (Schön, D. 1984). The practitioner had a reflective conversation with the situation and the problem became reframed within a reshaped situation.

Alec explored the possibilities of giving the work a temporary nature and he explored the possibilities of making temporary art in non-gallery spaces. The study shows how provisionality and the speculative aspects of creative practice came to the fore in Alec's installational-type practice. The project 'Latitude 53', initiated in 1995, demonstrated the focus upon 'limitlessness' within the new working process. The architectural context of the work was freely associated with the materials and the relation to place.

Problems were found with the studio-based painting practice. The problems were reflected on and incorporated within the new situation. The new situation consisted of an installational approach to making art that reflected Alec's thoughts about the problem found. Through reframing the problems found with the studio-based painting practice, the practice is now less static, more fluid and more dynamic. The contents of this case study, together with the conclusions, are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies, in chapter ten.

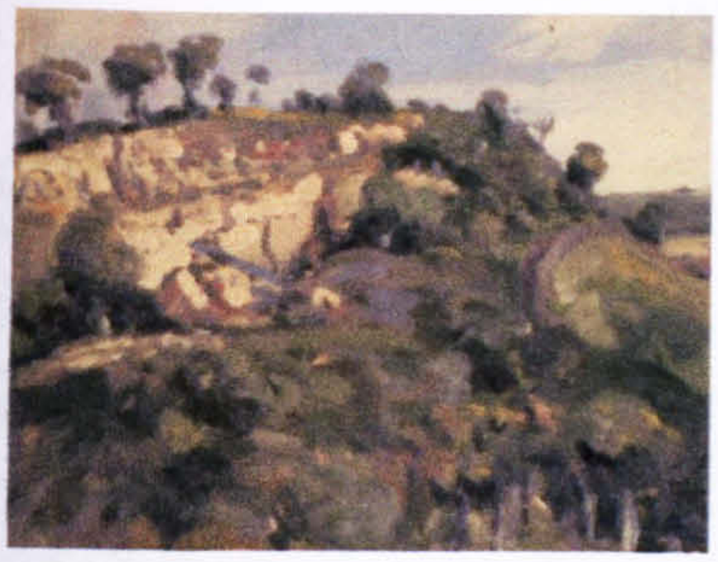


Fig. 8.1. 'Quarry, Shire Hill' 1989 Alec Shepley
(oil on canvas, c. 12" x 14")



Fig. 8.2. 'Quarry, St. Austell' 1989 Alec Shepley
(oil on canvas, c. 12" x 16")



Fig. 8.3. 'Beacon I' 1989 Alec Shepley
(oil on linen, c. 42" x 42")



Fig. 8.4. 'Nude Study' 1989 Alec Shepley
(oil on canvas, c. 24" x 18")



Fig. 8.5. 'Monsieur Shepley Finding an Arresting Composition in the Grounds of Knole House' 1993-94
Alec Shepley (oil on canvas, c. 18" x 24")

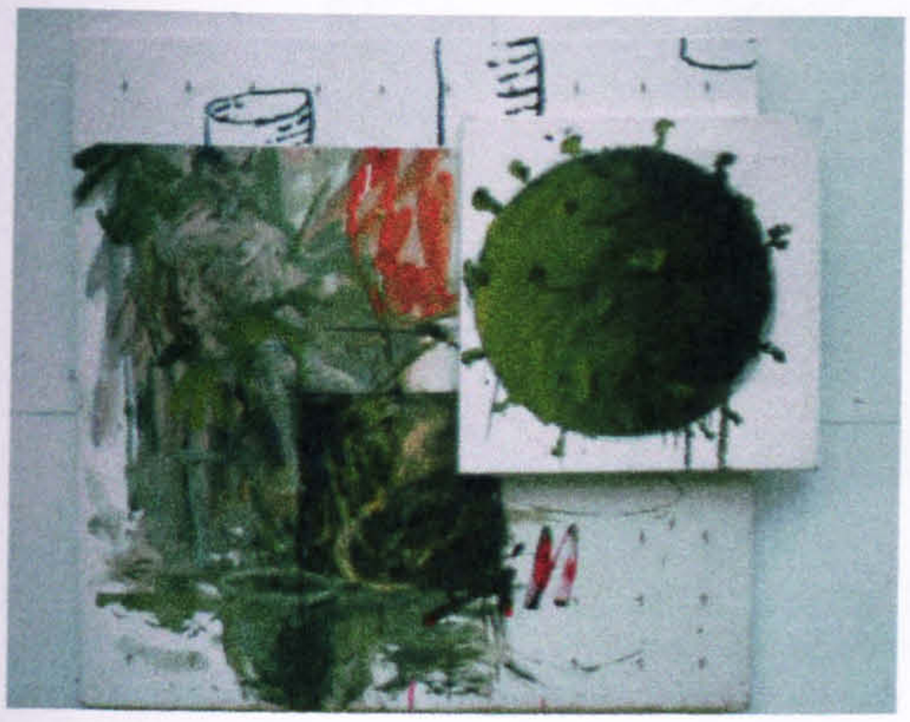


Fig. 8.6. 'Bill' 1993 Alec Shepley
(oil on canvas, metal hooks
c. 4' x 4')



Fig. 8.7. 'Untitled Painting' 1993 Alec Shepley
(oil on canvas, c. 4' x 5')

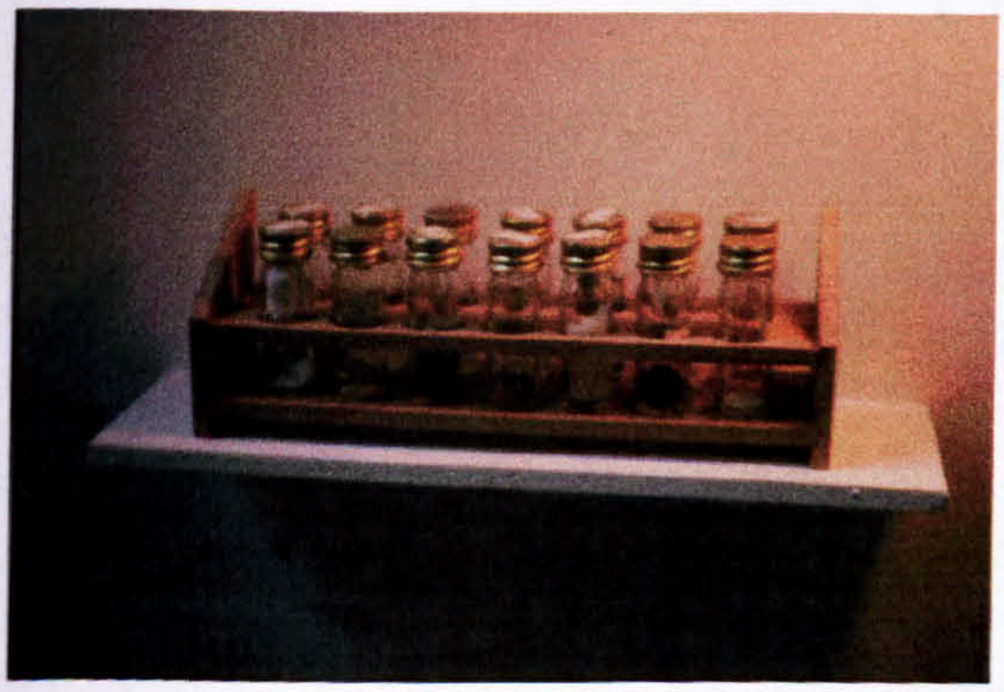


Fig. 8.8. 'Untitled' Substances from Studio 1991-94 Alec Shepley (various substances, glass phials, rack, c. 4" x 16")



Fig. 8.9. 'Untitled' Performance Drawing Surrounding Architecture on Polythene Sheet, Manchester City Arts Festival, Albert Square 1989
(polythene, wooden frame, c. 7' x 7')



Fig. 8.10. 'Untitled' Studio Activity, Mossley, Lancashire 1996 Alec Shepley
(various materials, dimensions vary)

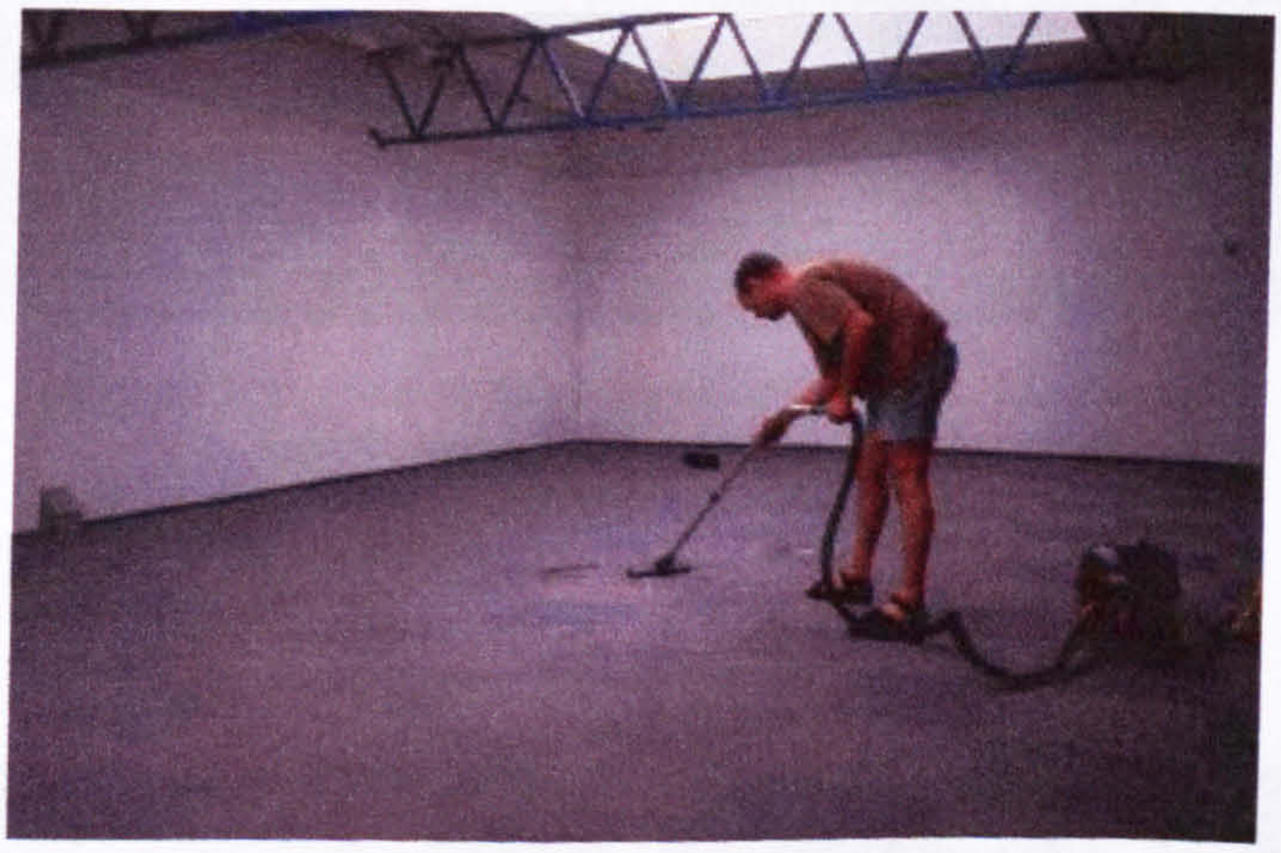


Fig. 8.11. 'Untitled' Studio Activity, Salford 1996 Alec Shepley
(various materials, dimensions vary)

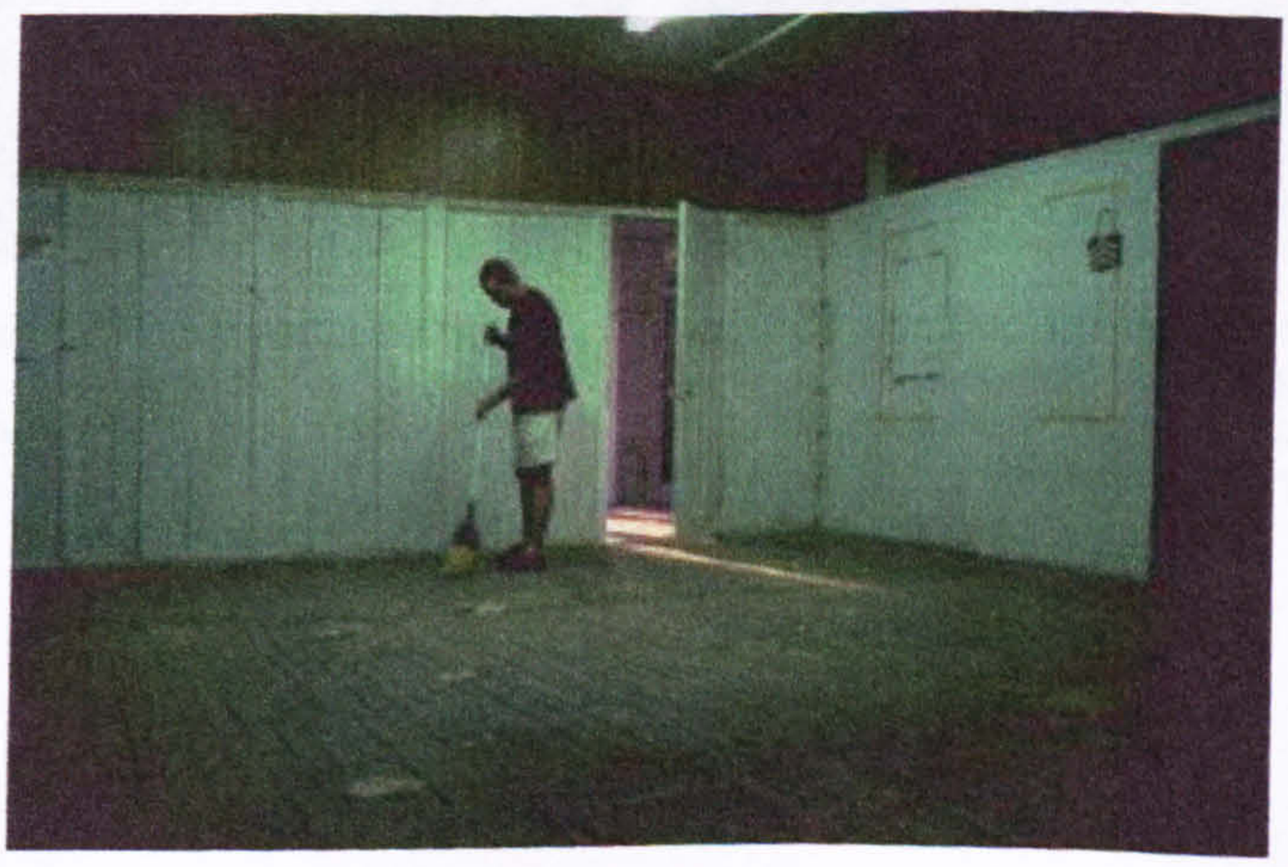


Fig. 8.12. 'Untitled' Studio Activity, Winnipeg, Canada 1998 Alec Shepley
(various materials, dimensions vary)

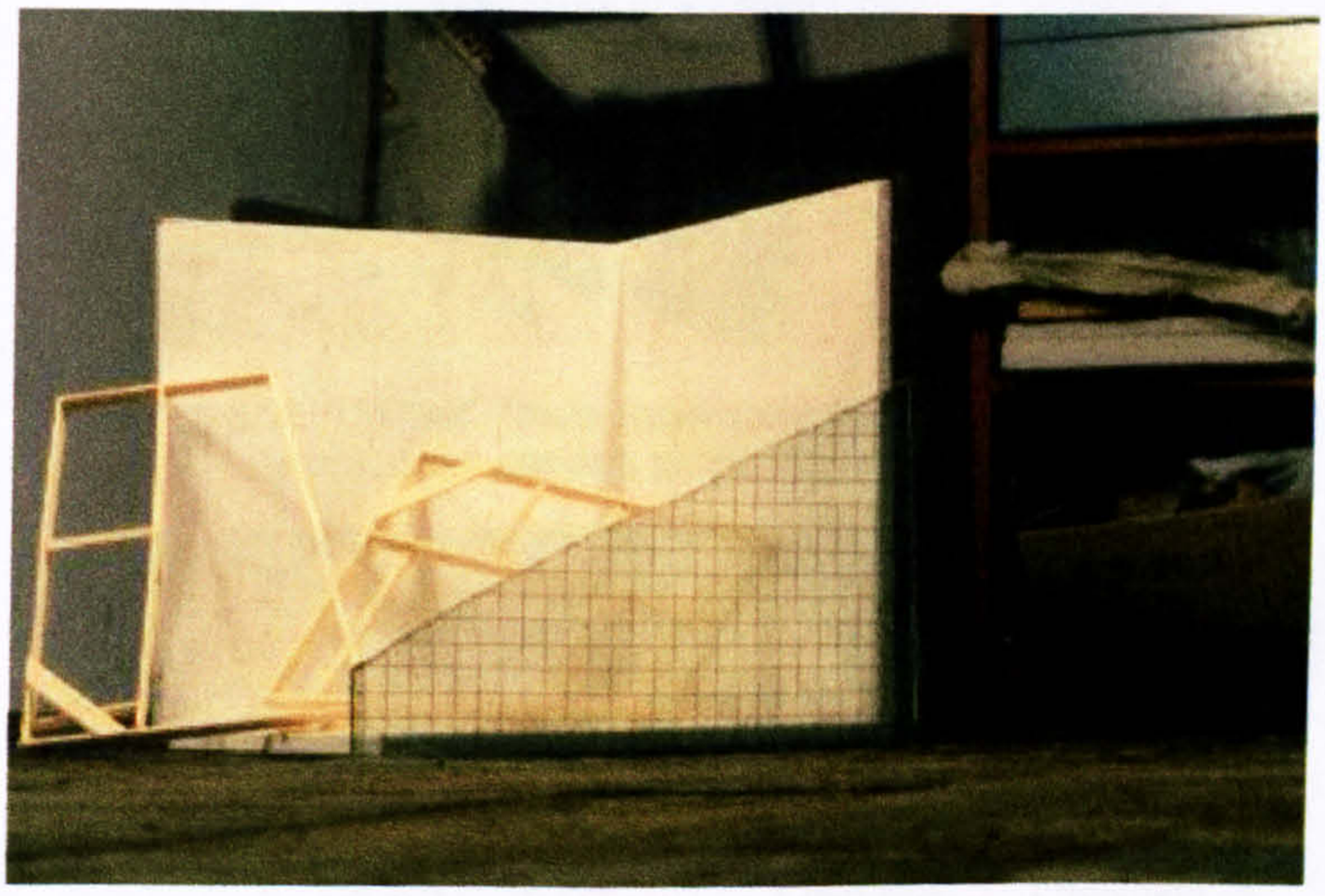


Fig. 8.13. 'Untitled' Studio Disaster Model 1995 Alec Shepley
(mdf, glass, balsa, c. 12' x 12' x 12')



Fig. 8.14. 'Untitled' Document of the Burnt Remains of a Drawing 1995 Alec Shepley
(ashes, paint, c. 24" x 24")



Fig. 8.15. 'Untitled' Document of the Gap in Studio Floor 1995 Alec Shepley
(wooden floor boards, polystyrene balls, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.16. 'Untitled' Studio Assemblage 1995 Alec Shepley
(wood, paint, canvas, glass, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.17. 'Untitled' Studio Assemblage 1995 Alec Shepley
(wood, paint, canvas, glass, dimensions vary)

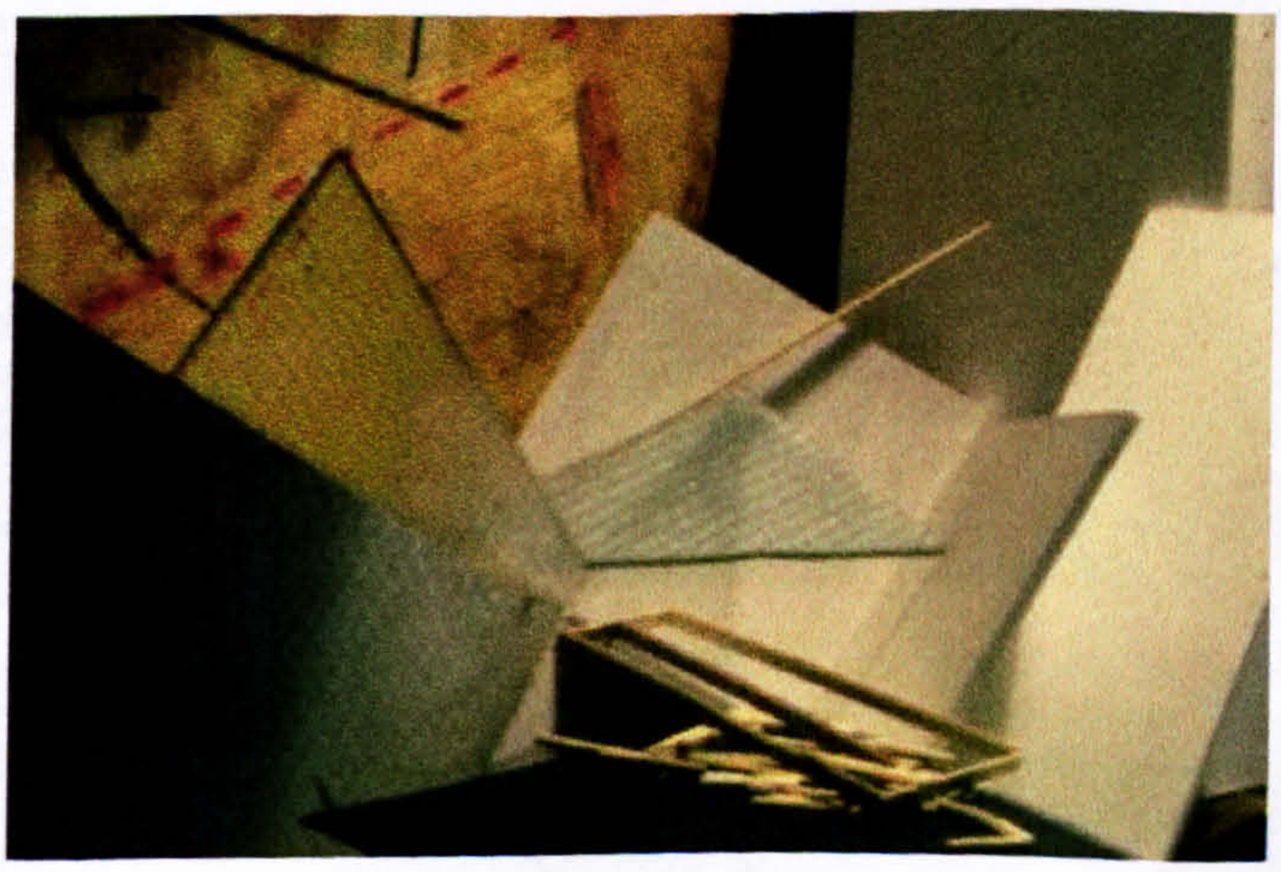


Fig. 8.18. 'Untitled' Studio Assemblages 1995 (detail) Alec Shepley
(wood, paint, canvas, glass, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.19. 'Untitled' Model Test-Spaces
1996 Alec Shepley
(balsa, polythene, mdf, paint, c. 12" x 12" x 12")



Fig. 8.20. 'Untitled' Model Test-Spaces
1996 Alec Shepley
(balsa, polythene, mdf, paint, c. 12" x 12" x 12")



Fig. 8.21. 'Untitled' Model Test-Spaces'
1996 Alec Shepley
(balsa, polythene, mdf, paint, c. 12" x 12" x 12")

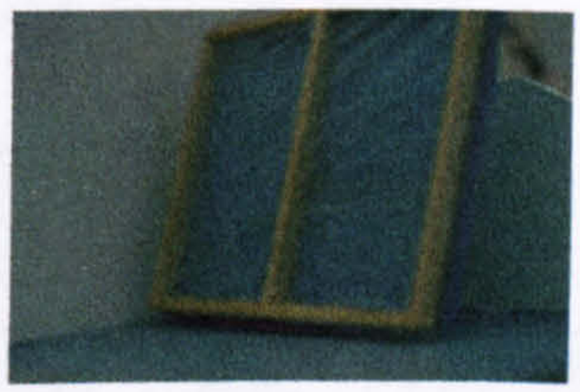


Fig. 8.22. 'Untitled' Model Test-Spaces'
1996 Alec Shepley
(balsa, polythene, mdf, paint, c. 12" x 12" x 12")

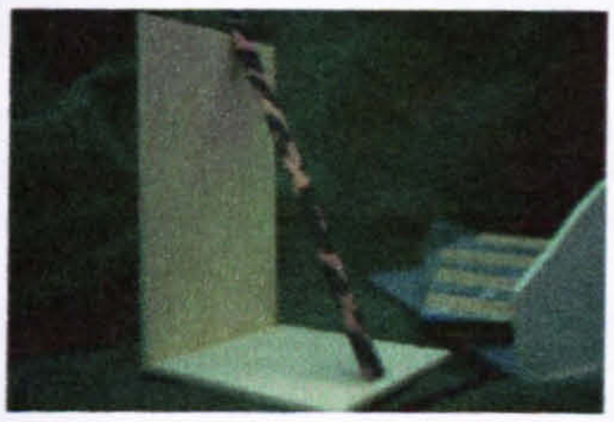


Fig. 8.23. 'Untitled' Model Test-Spaces'
1996 Alec Shepley
(balsa, polythene, mdf, paint, c. 12" x 12" x 12")



Fig. 8.24. 'Untitled' Model Test-Spaces'
1996 Alec Shepley
(balsa, polythene, mdf, paint, c. 12" x 12" x 12")



Fig. 8.25. 'Untitled' in 'International Sculpture Symposium' Salford University 1996 Alec Shepley
(various materials, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.26. 'Untitled' in 'International Sculpture Symposium' 1996 Alec Shepley



Fig. 8.27. 'Untitled' in 'International Sculpture Symposium' Salford University 1996 Alec Shepley
(various materials, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.28. 'Vignettes' Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Manchester 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.29. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)

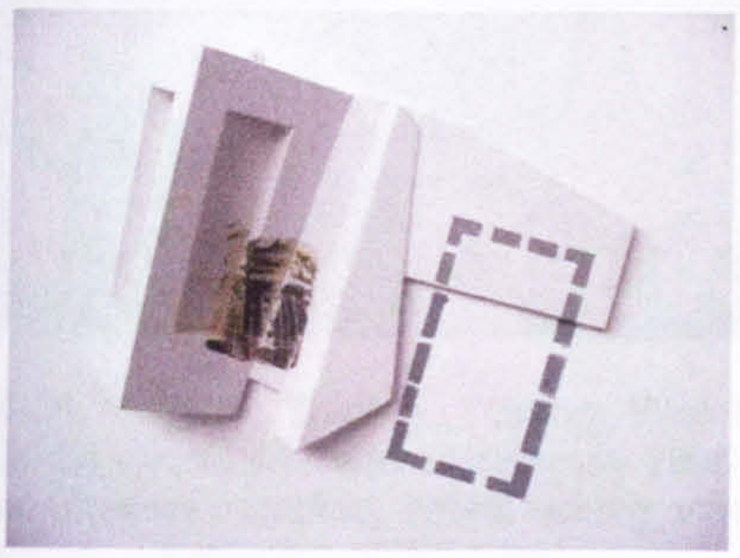


Fig. 8.30. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.31. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)

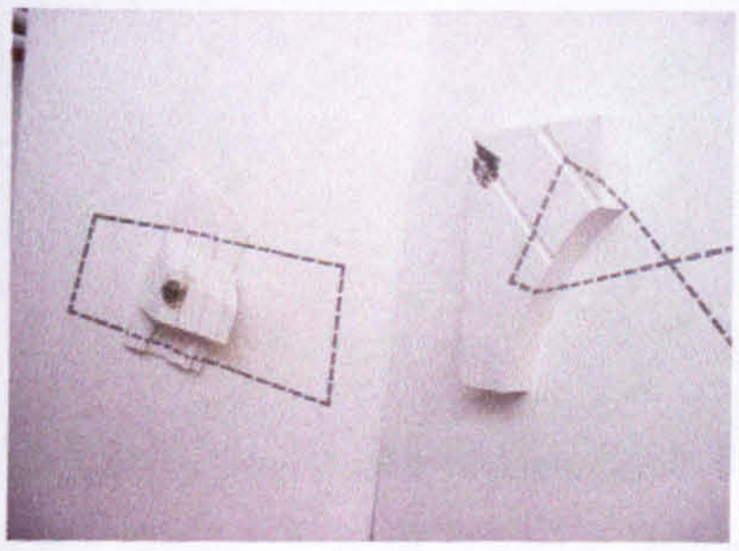


Fig. 8.32. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)

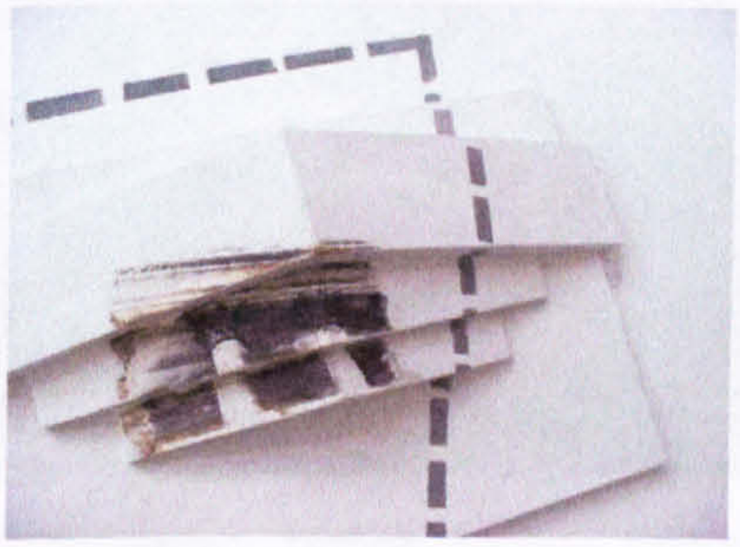


Fig. 8.33. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)

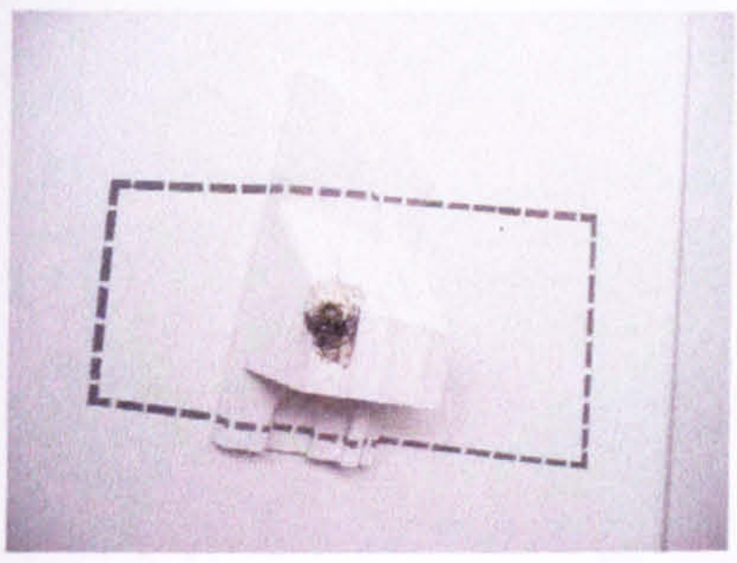


Fig. 8.34. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)

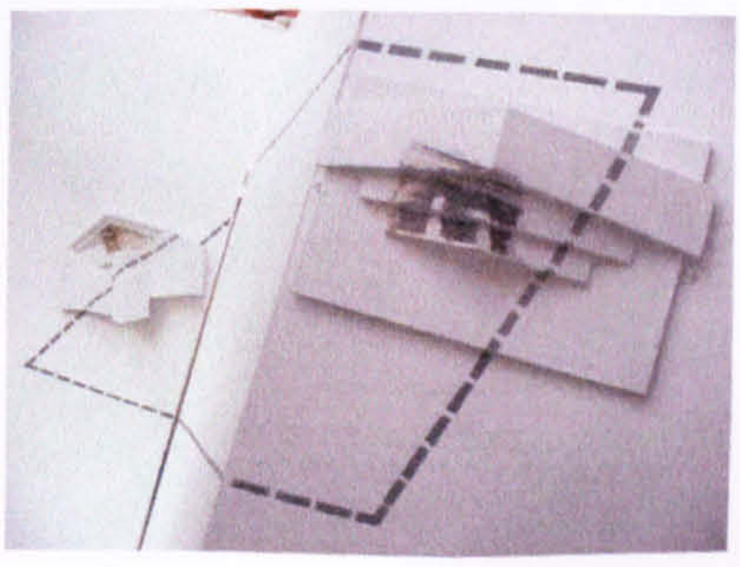


Fig. 8.35. 'Vignettes' RIBA 1995, Alec Shepley, Richard Greaves & Diane Goodwin (MDF, liquid light, dimensions vary)

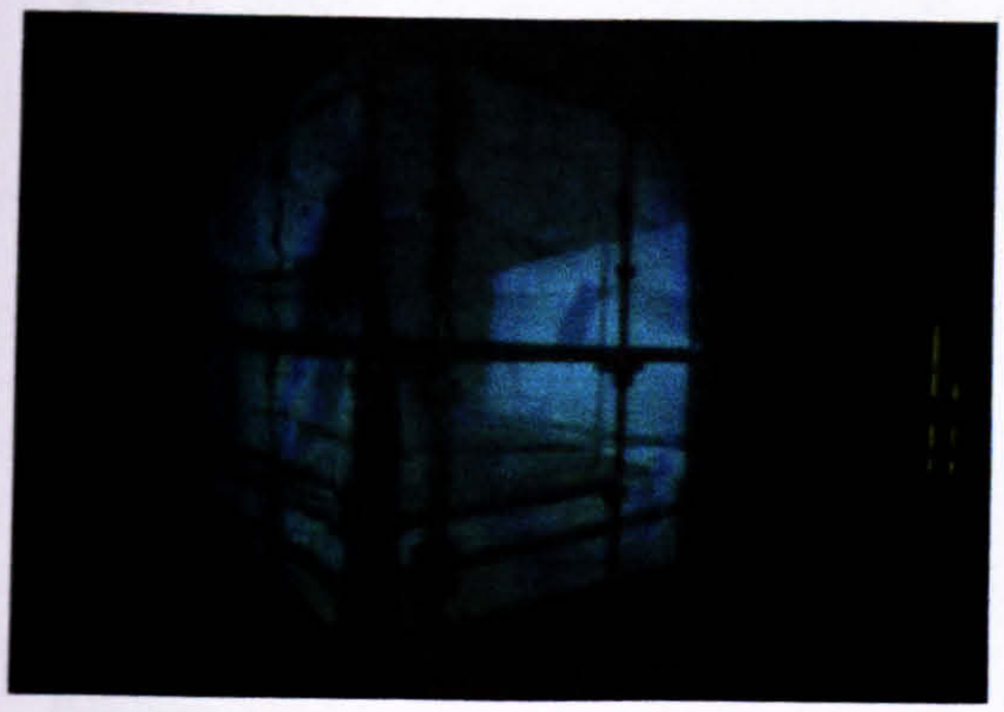


Fig. 8.36. 'Testing.. Testing.. Testing.. Watch the Birdie' Sheffield Hallam University 1996
Alec Shepley (scaffold, debris netting, video projector, c. 20' cube)



Fig. 8.37. 'Testing.. Testing.. Testing.. Watch the Birdie' Sheffield Hallam University 1996
Alec Shepley (scaffold, debris netting, video projector, c. 20' cube)



Fig. 8.38. 'Testing.. Testing.. Testing.. Watch the Birdie' Sheffield Hallam University 1996
Alec Shepley (scaffold, debris netting, video projector, c. 20' cube)

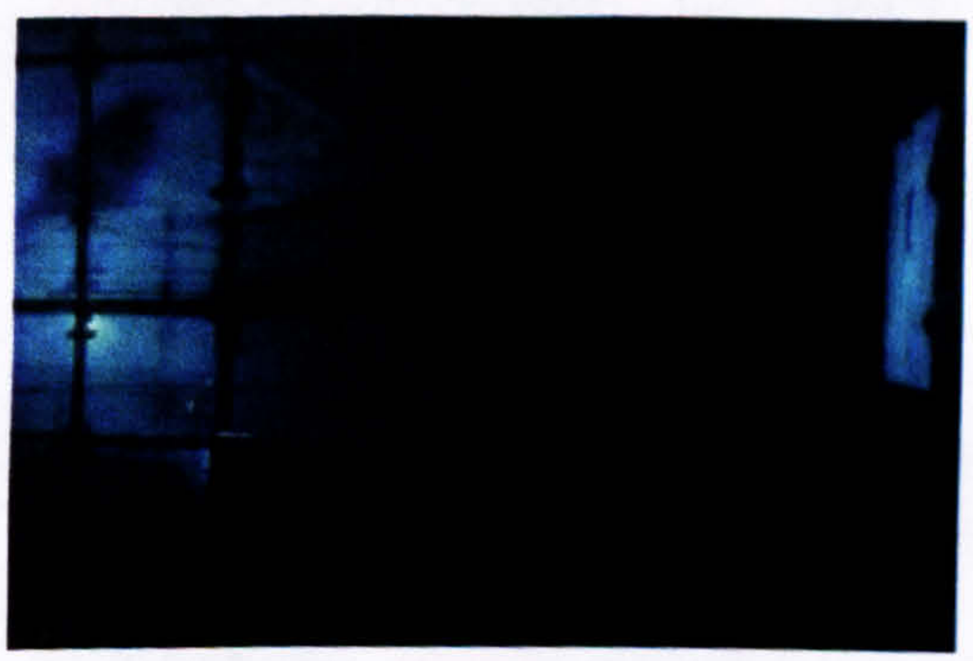


Fig. 8.39. 'Testing.. Testing.. Testing.. Watch the Birdie' Sheffield Hallam University 1996
Alec Shepley (scaffold, debris netting, video projector, c. 20' cube)

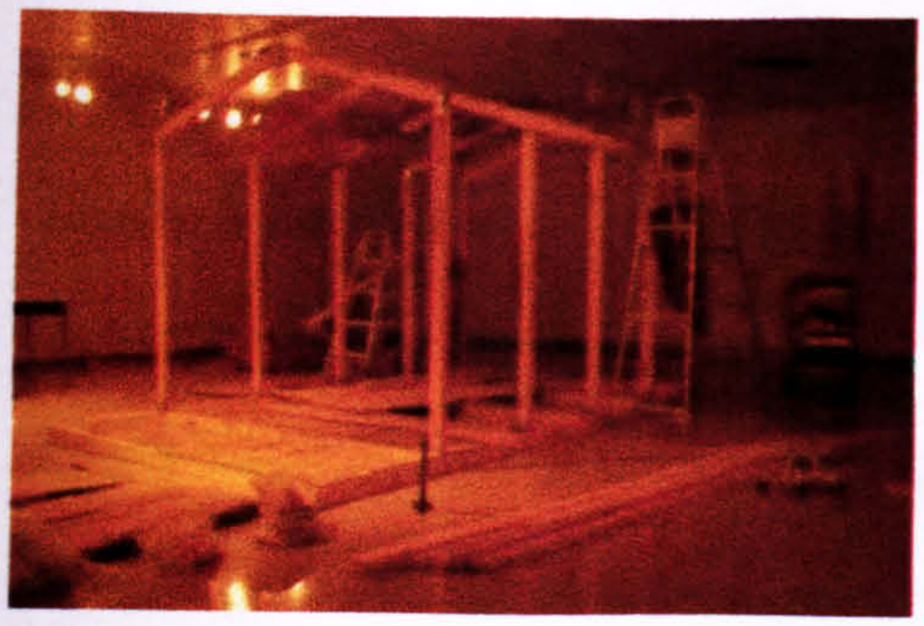


Fig. 8.40. 'I Shot B-By' Gallery 1.1.1. University of Manitoba, Canada 1999 Alec Shepley (various construction and model-making materials, neon glass, dimensions vary)

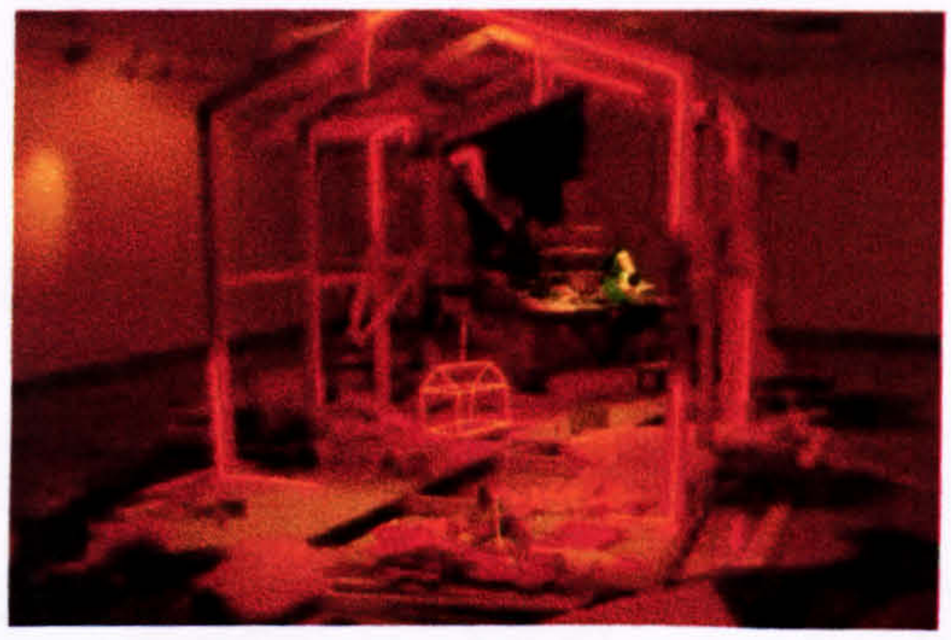


Fig. 8.41. 'I Shot B-By' Gallery 1.1.1. University of Manitoba, Canada 1999 Alec Shepley (various construction and model-making materials, neon glass, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.42. 'I Shot B-By' Gallery 1.1.1. University of Manitoba, Canada 1999 Alec Shepley (various construction and model-making materials, neon glass, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.43. 'I Shot B-By' Gallery 1.1.1. University of Manitoba, Canada 1999 Alec Shepley (various construction and model-making materials, neon glass, dimensions vary)



Fig. 8.44. 'I Shot B-By' Gallery 1.1.1. University of Manitoba, Canada 1999 Alec Shepley (various construction and model-making materials, neon glass, dimensions vary)

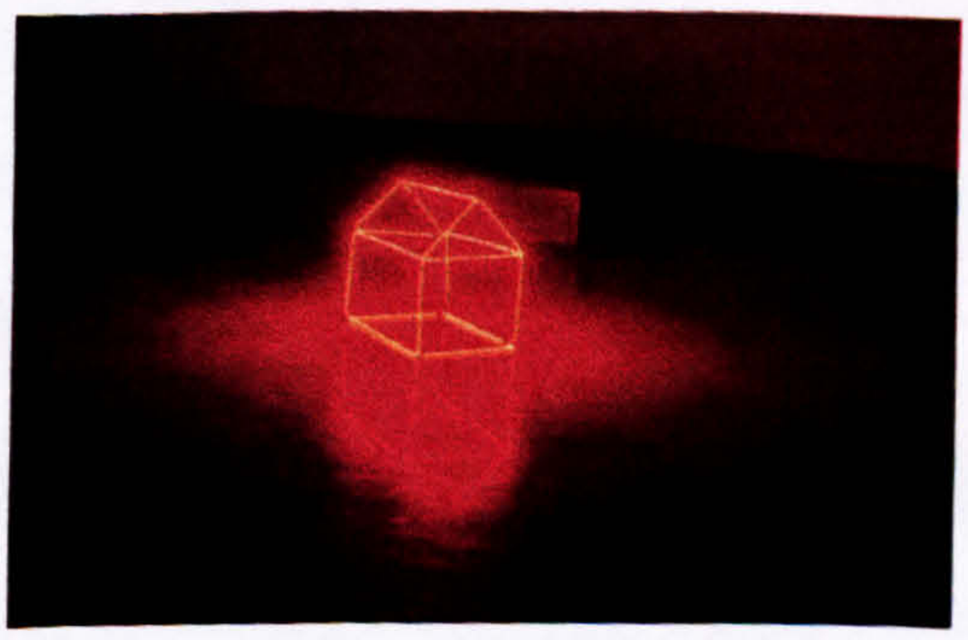


Fig. 8.45. 'I Shot B-By' Gallery 1.1.1. University of Manitoba, Canada 1999 Alec Shepley (various construction and model-making materials, neon glass, dimensions vary)

CHAPTER NINE: Case Study Seven: Alison Jones

9.1. Background.

Alison Jones (born 1965) trained in Fine Art (Painting), at Camberwell School of Art, London (1986-89). She gained her MA (Fine Art) from Chelsea School of Art, London (1993-94). Alison is a full-time artist and works as a part-time project co-ordinator for the 'North-West Disability Arts Forum' (NWDAF). In addition Alison takes on freelance work as a workshop leader and as an artist on such programmes as the 'Artist Education Programme' at the Tate Gallery, Liverpool. Alison has a studio at the Bluecoat Chambers, Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool. She works in a sole practice as an artist but also works on collaborative projects when appropriate.

9.2. Introduction.

This case study is an example of an artist who changed her practice from one which was largely concerned with making paintings within a studio-based practice to one which was more installational. The chapter describes and discusses how Alison reached out beyond the conventions and limitations of a painting practice. An examination of the extended range of media, materials and processes that have accompanied the change in practice is followed by a discussion of Alison's involvement in working with others.

Insights are provided of examples of specific artworks and projects. These are described and discussed in relation to the main themes of the case study in the final sections of the chapter. Illustrations are referred to in the case study where appropriate and these can be found at the end of the chapter.

Alison's quotations are taken from interviews with this researcher during the period 1997–2000, (e.g. Jones, A. 1997), unless otherwise stated. Other people's commentary is referred to and quoted where appropriate.

9.3. Reaching out: beyond the limits.

In an interview with this researcher, Alison described how she found 'pure painting' to be very limiting (Jones, A. 1999). She referred to the way she had felt somehow restrained by the feeling of being bound by strict rules of so-called 'purist painting'. She described an event whilst on the MA Course at Chelsea School of Art, which, in part, contributed to the change from painting to a more installational-type art practice. The event she referred to was a critical discussion with one of her tutors.

She said the tutor had been very critical of what he termed 'non-purist painters', for example, those in his view whose creative interests took them beyond the perceived boundaries of what painting consisted of. He referred Alison to purist painters whom he preferred, such as the colour-field painters Barnett Newman (1905 - 1970), Mark Rothko (1903 - 1970), and Kenneth Noland (b. 1924). She referred to having had

arguments with him about this during several tutorials, and how this process exacerbated her feeling of being confined by another layer of rules – another person's rules. The arguments seemed to have clarified Alison's move in a direction away from 'pure painting' and she decided that: "paint was too two-dimensional for me" (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison said for her, she came to the 'end' of painting as she knew it. In addition to being confined by perceived rules of painting, Alison also described the way painting had played itself out in terms of creating an illusion of real objects in real space. She referred to mimetic painting and said:

> "We know we can do that now so what's the point. Maybe painting wasn't enough really. I think to be in the real space with the real thing is a lot more interesting than trying to paint it on a two-dimensional surface. It's very skilful but there's more to it than that" (Jones, A. 1999).

She said (Jones, A. 1998) she "wanted to make real objects" to explore the idea that her paintings could be seen as objects rather than solely images. She said:

> "I started making boxes and putting things into them, as an extension of the stretchers, which would come out from the wall space but remain on the wall" (Jones, A. 1998)

Stretchers are the wooden frames on which the canvas is stretched and Alison began to make these thicker, to project the surface of the canvases out from the wall and into the display space (see Figs. 9.6., 9.7. & 9.10.). She said:

> "I used to make stretchers that were 6 inches thick that came out from the wall, like boxes. The progression was to make flat things on the wall, come out into the real space. It was almost like they punctured the space around them. Punctured reality" (Jones, A. 1999).

In a slide talk, Alison described how she began to focus upon the juxtaposition of 'real' and the 'illusory' via the combination of actual substances and representations of the actual substances. She referred to how she liked the "physical aspect of collage and dealing with real objects", placing and arranging, juxtaposing real things rather than just limiting herself to pushing paint around. For example, see Fig. 9.9., where one-hundred and eighty ceramic plant pots were arranged according to a grid structure and juxtaposed with photographic images of the same pots. She said she found these aspects of 'placement and arrangement' quite meditative (Jones, A. 1999). This researcher noted that this process seemed to have been a liberating experience for Alison.

However, in spite of Alison's attraction to the meditative aspects of using collage and found objects in her work, she described the loneliness and confinement of studio painting and that this was a limitation that needed to be addressed (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison referred to another, more serious and more profound, limitation to her practice. She described how she was gradually losing her sight through an hereditary genetic condition called 'cone-rod dystrophy'. At first, when Alison was young, she said she was under the impression that it was short-sightedness. However, later on in life, after an increase in visual impairment and a visit to a specialist, she discovered when she was twenty years old, that the condition would get gradually worse and result in the loss of sight.

She said the condition would eventually result in the permanent loss of her vision, but she described how this limitation had influenced her significantly in finding a new approach to making art. She described how depressing this was but decided to carry on with her career choice in visual art and how this has led her, in part to experiment with more installational aspects of visual and tactile art (Jones, A. 1998).

She referred to how she became concerned about the need for an approach to creative practice where she would still be able to produce things and how she began to use her visual impairment to her advantage in painting 'blurred effects'.

She described some particular problems, for example, in making stretchers. She said:

> "Making stretchers, especially the precisely measured ones I used, became more and more difficult because I couldn't see them properly. So, there were the practical reasons too. I didn't want to be waiting around for people to do things for me" (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison spoke of the way she had wanted to break free from the conventional notions of painting that had been handed down through art history. She said:

> "I think it has something to do with the history of painting and things I've read about it. Traditionally two-dimensional painting is on the wall and you don't usually put it on the floor. Maybe it's made on the floor but it doesn't get shown like that" (Jones, A. 1999).

She said reaching out beyond 'just painting' had something to do with breaking out of these conventions but that it also was something to do with the perceived territorial nature of painting and sculpture (Jones, A. 1999). She referred to one of her earliest installative projects which comprised a room where the walls had been painted with fifty lbs. of honey (see Figs. 9.20. – 9.22.). She described the way she was 'breaking away' from the feeling of being confined by the painting's edges, but how she still judged the work in terms of painting language. She said:

> "Why can't I just be a fine artist? Painting the walls with honey was not a conventional way of doing a painting but it still is painting, rather like the big colour field paintings, but getting rid of the middle man and painting it straight onto the walls." (Jones, A. 1999).

This researcher observed that the architecture of the space (the walls and floor etc.) became the stretcher and the canvas. This project is discussed in section 9.8.

Referring to the 'Salt Piece' (1997), installed at Norwich Castle Museum (see Fig. 9.29.), Alison said she saw her installational work as an extension of her painting, she said:

> "In a way I suppose it is like painting, because it's still playing with shapes and space and form but it's just in a more tactile way, because when someone said that the salt piece I made looked like a Bridget Riley made out of salt, and yeah, I suppose when you're looking down at this floor piece it is like looking at a big painting but it's made out of alternative materials. I'm trying to bring some kind of order to material, which can be chaotic. I suppose it is formal, this salt can go all over the place but I'm putting it in an order - the coarse sea salt and fine table salt" (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison referred to the importance of maintaining the connection with painting and the visual language of painting, even though she was apparently moving away from it. She said:

> "I think a lot of it is to do with painting, it's where I began... it's like tactile painting. It's not flat painting, it's sculptural painting" (Jones, A. 1999).

She said that this desire to 'stay in touch' could have something to do with a sense of stubbornness or her not wanting to let go completely of identifying with the field of

painting. She said that maintaining an identity and a sense of where she 'belonged' were important.

However, Alison's reassessment of the media, materials and processes within her practice led her to consider the art object as 'more than just a picture' of something. She wanted her work to reach out in some way beyond the single perspective of itself, so as to defeat the apparent separateness that she felt painting to have (Jones, A. 1999).

The 'separateness' of the activity that Alison described was something that she had felt quite early on in her artistic career. This researcher observed that the conventions of painting, or rather the limits that these conventions had placed to Alison's progress, had provided an opposing pressure for her to withstand. The problems she encountered were incorporated into the practice. The next section contains a flashback to Alison's earlier work and describes the paintings that preceded her involvement with a more installational approach to creative practice.

9.4. Earlier work.

In an interview with this researcher, Alison described her earlier training in painting and the way she often used to mix other materials into the paint and enjoy working in a very textural and physical way (see Figs. 9.1. – 9.4.). She described having fun in the earlier work and described how, in the 1980's it mainly consisted of paintings, drawings and prints that were made with a tactile approach to the use and manipulation of paint.

Alison referred to her sense of joy in making paintings that were so "tactile and lumpy", that they made her want to touch them (Jones, A. 1999). She said:

> "I'd always liked 'thick' painting and collage, because of its tactile quality. It makes you want to touch it" (Jones, A. 1999).

This researcher noted that the earlier work showed a preoccupation with the tactile surface and that this tactile nature was contrasted in her paintings by the introduction of the grid. For an early example of Alison's use of the grid to provide a structure to the work, and to separate the image into equal sections, see Fig. 9.5. The painting was divided up into equal squares by the introduction of a grid structure. This researcher noted that this was a precursor to the paintings being divided up further into separate sections and the beginnings of the image and object becoming 'liberated' from one another (for examples see Fig. 9.6. – 9.7. & 9.10. – 9.12.).

According to Ryan, D. (1994), the introduction of this grid structure emphasised the 'freeing-up effect'. He referred to Alison's earlier work as having "formal elegance". He said certain works, (for examples Figs. 9.10. - 9.19.) existed:

> "as a dialogue with certain formal devices of painting, even though the main constituents of the work may be photographic or environmental. We find here, grids and mainly symmetrical structures that hold either actual or photographic renditions of nature's surface appearance/skin, whether this is a blown-up image of fruit or other substances.

> "That the contrivance of the 'display' is highly formalised encourages a freeing-up of focus without any search for 'expressive vent'" (Ryan, D. 1994 pp. 20-21).

In a slide talk (Jones, A. 1999), Alison described the 'multiples' she made to go on the wall, referring to them as 'using painting language but without the paint'. The images were made using a juxtaposition of photography or photocopy, with the real substance.

For example, the image would still follow a rectilinear structure (similar to the painting in Fig. 9.5.) but would now be in the form of a set of rectangles or squares (see Figs. 9.6. – 9.13.). Instead of trying to emulate straw using paint, Alison referred to how she would cut out the middleman and use either real straw, or photographs of real straw. Alison described how the stretchers had grown and caused the image to push out from the wall into the space of display. She described how she was trying to make the connection in her work, between the 'real' and the 'simulated' (Jones, A. 1999).

However, this researcher observed that Alison had become frustrated with the way her work was being 'held' upon the wall. She said:

> "I came to the point where I thought there's only so much that you can do with it. Painting took so long, you had to be in your studio so long to get anything" (Jones, A. 1999).

She went on to describe how, on her BA course, she became bored with just painting:

> "In my second year painting I think I just got bored with it. I was still painting, I still was playing around with it but I used the time for experimenting. But I think I just got bored with painting and I wanted to make something more sculptural. To actually make objects" (Jones, A. 1998).

She referred to her desire to assemble things that had tactile surfaces and juxtapose these objects alongside photographs of the same tactile objects (see Figs. 9.9. & 9.10.).

The problems found with the earlier paintings were incorporated into a newly situated practice, which gradually became more installational. The distinction between object and image became blurred and this provided the jumping off point to more installational type work. This process of change involved Alison exploring an extended use of media, materials and processes which are considered in the next section.

9.5. Extended media and processes.

Alison described to this researcher the way that, during her Foundation Course at City College, Liverpool and during the earlier part of her BA at Camberwell School of Art, she had always mixed other substances with and actually into the paint (see Figs. 9.1. – 9.5.).

Alison went on to describe how she has come to include other materials and real objects within her repertoire:

> "I didn't just use paint; I used to mix things into it. It was very tactile and lumpy, I remember mixing flour into it and sawdust. I used to look at artists like Frank Auerbach. I loved all that thick, 'gungy' stuff and it sort of progressed, developed into using more tactile, sculptural materials and paint. Paint was too 2-dimensional for me. On my BA I did pure painting but very, very thick and I also started mixing things in then - clay, bits of pottery and all sorts of crap into it and PVA. I suppose it became more like a relief, probably. Yeah, sort of raised up. I think it's always been there but waiting to come out" (Jones, A. 1999).

She also said that she liked the physical aspect of collage and dealing with real objects, placing and arranging, juxtaposing real things rather than just limiting herself to pushing paint around (see Figs. 9.16 – 9.19.). She said she found this aspect quite meditative.

She went on to describe how, in the third year, she started to bring in photographic images and juxtapose them with real substances, in conjunction with the grid structure in her work. She said:

> "I suppose I was starting to 'comment' on painting, on how, when we paint, we create an illusion on that 2-dimensional surface and I was presenting a 2-dimensional photograph and the real object next to it" (Jones, A. 1999).

She continued:

> "I think there was always a need to do something more sculptural and tactile" (Jones, A. 1999).

In an interview Alison said that from around 1989-90 she began exploring the idea of transformations and 'life-cycles' in her artworks. She said the ideas connected with the idea of the life cycle, such as repetition and reproduction, seemed to crystallise at this point and she gained a lot of encouragement from 'outside' the painting area at Camberwell from a sculpture tutor called Tony Carter.

For example, Alison began experimenting with using alternatively shaped stretchers to the rectangle, for example she made a 'modular' piece based on honeycombs, that had separate hexagonal stretchers and which all fitted together according to how the artist wanted to arrange them. The piece could have taken varying formats depending on the number of component hexagonal stretchers, (see Figs. 9.14. & 9.15.).

In addition to experimenting with different formats of stretcher, Alison referred to how she began to work in multiples, using the wall space to arrange associated images and objects which would create a visual dialogue with one another (see Figs. 9.16. – 9.19.).

She described how she continued to make multiples but soon realised that just using paint was going to be too restricting and too time-consuming, and she would have to extend the choice of media (Jones, A. 1999).

The final move from just dealing with paintings on the wall came when Alison had to produce her final MA show at Chelsea College of Art. Alison described how she decided to use the actual walls of her display space as her canvas and use real honey as paint. She said she got the idea for the piece when looking at the amber glow from a honey pot on the breakfast table. Originally, she had wanted to recreate this glow in an artwork that used real honey in polythene bags, but eventually she decided upon painting the room with honey. The honey dripped down and formed pools on the floor. The room totally enclosed the viewer in a 'honey environment' (see Figs. 9.20. – 9.22.). This project was called 'Hum' 1994 and is described in detail in section 9.8.

Alison described the way she had begun to explore the possibilities of representing 'two realities'. Alison said she liked the interplay between real object and the mimetic image of an object and the way it bounced between two 'realities' - real space and illusory space. Alison described the juxtaposition of real objects alongside photographic representations of themselves and how she was playing with real and illusory space. Some of the real objects and their photographic counterparts were similar in scale and from a distance the viewer confused the two. She described how this appealed to her and the visual 'game-playing' she was involved in (Jones, A. 1999).

In furthering this visual game-playing Alison extended the range of materials with which to make art objects. She referred to making juxtapositions between real materials and 'substitute materials'.

She said she used:

> "Food stuffs most recently or rather organic food stuffs with a more synthetic version of that, like the table salt and the sea salt" (Jones, A. 1999).

She said that she used marzipan, honey, clay and sawdust in the paint, photographs and photocopies, nectarines and plant pots (see Figs. 9.9., 9.10., 9.16., 9.20. & 9.28.). She referred to using things like real honey and foodstuffs and mimetic counterparts, to heighten the difference between the real and the synthetic:

> "it's almost like still life but real, because I use organic foodstuffs and then more synthetic representations as photographs. It was also to do with trying to represent the body - the organic matter represented the body. And the plant pots as vessels represented the body. They were metaphors" (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison said she was interested in trying to represent 'transformations'. She said:

> "I was reading a book on alchemy and how to turn base metals into gold", because she was interested in representations of 'transformations' (Jones, A. 1999).

There were three examples of this. Firstly, the 'straw piece' (see Fig 9.11. – 9.13.), included corn at a particular stage in its life cycle. Secondly, the 'nectarine piece' ('Soft Centre' 1993), depicted nectarines in varying states of decay, (see Figs. 9.16. & 9.17.). Thirdly, the 'marzipan piece' ('Something Rendered' 1997), invited the viewer to

'mark' the surface of a block of marzipan placed in the middle of the gallery space (see Fig. 9.28.). Alison described how the extended media introduced to the work the opportunity to use the sense of smell. The aromas that would be given off by all these pieces would also change over time as each aroma either faded or became more and more pungent (Jones, A. 1999). 'Something Rendered' (1997), is described in more detail in section 9.10.

Alison described how she was trying to make a piece that made apparent the link between her paintings, the space and the use of foodstuffs (Jones, A. 1999). An example of a project in which Alison's extended media made the link between her painting, and the sensations of smell, time and place, was 'White Lines' 1995. This was an installation which comprised a 'carpet of desiccated coconut' within a large Victorian building at Albert Dock, Liverpool and was part of the exhibition 'Go-on' 1995.

The floor piece was a large rectangle (c. 12' x 12'), of desiccated coconut sprinkled onto the stone floor of the building (see Fig. 9.23.). The coconut had connotations of and associations with the site of the Albert Dock. The Albert Dock had trading links with the West Indies for many years and commodities such as coconut would have passed thorough the docks in great quantities. Swords, H. (1995) provided insights into the installation when she reviewed the exhibition 'Go-on'. The reviewer wrote:

"Alison Jones's large coconut floor-rectangle combines minimal form with expansive sensual affect, and explores a site-specific trajectory. The piece is flanked by four iron pillars that are structural girders for the site

and are used here to demarcate spatial limits for the work. The ninety-eight pounds of desiccated coconut, literally blooms and glows. Creamy-scent evokes sultry, distant sea breezes and high summer sun lotions, it pervades far beyond the sculpture's physical limits into fantasy, but then the white net shape elegantly draws the viewer back to the centre space of the exhibition site. Here is a powerful seductive interplay of attraction to the immediacy of the virgin object (it should not be touched), followed by release to a less determinate, drifting sensuality. The piece is entitled 'White Lines', attesting to the layers of coconut which clot along the ridges of the cobbled floor surface insinuating a barely visible grid which is found to exist just beneath the feathery, snow-like, or powdered surface. 'White Lines' alludes to a flight of psyche on cocaine, but the materiality of Alison Jones' work remains important. Coconut is amongst the wares that arrive in bulk cargo at the Albert Dock, a 'fixed' reality which this lacy carpet belies; the exotic nature of the substance – its 'otherness', creates a white space to contemplate the loss of creamy milk and hoary shell from which it originated. Like a crisp, white page, this sculpture suggests points of entry for many narratives" (Swords, H. 1995).

It is worth noting that the Victorian building in which the piece was situated, and the Albert Dock in general, were built upon the economy provided by the trade in 'bulk cargo' to which Sword, H. (1995), referred. This researcher observed that the work

evoked connections with the 'many narratives' conjured up by the many stories, history and legacies of this site.

Through her move into a more installational approach to making artworks, Alison has explored extended media and processes. She also explored placing her artworks in different locations, for example 'White Lines' 1995 & the 'Salt Piece' 1997 (see Figs. 9.23. & 9.29.); this led to encounters with different audiences. Site and audience are considered in the next section.

9.6. Site and audience.

In a slide talk (Jones, A. 1999), Alison described how she extended the site of display to include spaces which were alternative to those on the gallery circuit. She said she felt more 'at home' in gallery spaces but that she had exhibited in alternative spaces such as Norwich Castle Museum and the Albert Dock, Liverpool. These shows, Alison claimed, attracted an additional audience to the gallery-going audience. Alison said she enjoyed posing the question, to the different audiences in the different locations, of whether or not what they were looking at was art, or not. The use of the space was an important feature since the space or site, provided the frame or context for the work (Jones, A. 1999).

She said she did not see the point in exhibiting work in places where people did not expect it, or want to see it. She did not want to be seen to be 'forcing art' upon people in

this way (Jones, A. 1999). However, she said the strong associations between certain materials and the place of exhibition demanded on occasions, that the work be sited in a specific location. For example, the 'coconut piece' ('White Lines' 1995), was exhibited at the Albert Docks, because coconut was a commodity that was imported at the port and she said she wanted to make an installation about that relationship between a specific place and a substance in transit.

Alison said the public perceptions of her work and responses to her work in the press have been a mixture of negative and positive, but seldom indifferent. She described her difficulty in gauging the reaction to the work. Referring to the perceived audience and their anticipated interpretation of her work, she said:

> "I don't think that they will always get your exact meaning but if they've got some interest in art or knowledge of art, they'll know the way it works; you place your work in a gallery and leave it up to them to work it out. I think they play the game to work out the code and transfer that to other pieces of art" (Jones, A. 1999).

She enjoyed (Jones, A. 1998) the audience's confusion when she witnessed their first encounter with the 'Straw Piece' 1993 (see Figs. 9.11. – 9.13.). She said she enjoyed playing games with "juxtapositions of the real object with the photograph of the real object" she liked to "play games" with the juxtapositions. She said that on seeing the straw piece as they entered the gallery space where it was exhibited the audience at first thought the whole artwork was made from straw that had been dyed with black and grey

ink, placed next to 'un-dyed' straw. The audience were surprised that they had been confused by what turned out to be photocopies of a photograph of straw.

Asked if she expected the viewer to look at her installational work differently to her previous work in painting, Alison said:

> "I think that the work has become part of reality; in a way it is not that 2-dimensional thing that you put up on the wall, it's almost come off the wall into the real space. So in a way people could argue 'is it art?' either because they think anyone could do that or because they see a recognisable substance, but... because I am using a substance that is recognisable you would have thought that people could relate to it more because they recognise it more easily, but then they would ask why is the honey on the wall? That's what throws them. I think it's to do with contradiction" (Jones, A. 1999).

This researcher noted that space, time and smell became more widely employed by Alison, as strategies for engaging with audience. 'Contradiction' was a key component to understanding the relationship between the materials and surfaces present in her work.

Alison described the way she played with real space and illusory space by juxtaposing or abutting real objects up against their mimetic counterparts. For example in 'Soft Centre' 1993, (see Figs. 9.16. & 9.17.), images of nectarines and real nectarines are

displayed together, visually and deliberately making a connection in the mind's eye of the audience between the real and the illusory.

This researcher observed that by releasing the image from a single form of representation, and using the space more imaginatively, the work reveals the problems being focussed upon by the artist and the connections to be made by the audience. Alison described the sense that the removal of a conventional frame made her work somehow limitless but that she:

> "would rather be framed by the architecture of the space or the gallery"
>
> (Jones, A. 1999).

In this way the frame of 'the work' was 'beyond' the viewer and therefore included or at least implicated the viewer within the work.

The gradual decay of 'Soft Centre' (1993), and the changes in the form of the marzipan block as people in the gallery were invited to make marks in its surface were, according to Alison, an attempt to create another sense of reality, through an alternative to the visual sensation (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison described the way the smell of the coconut piece when it was first installed at the Albert Dock, Liverpool, as quite pungent, but as time went on the smell faded into the background. Whereas the gradual decay of the peaches gave an increasing sense of smell and heightened the experience of decay and prolonged the visual fascination of 'seeing decay'.

In 1995 Alison became involved in an exhibition entitled 'Permission to Speak', at Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery. This was a group exhibition comprising ten contemporary British artists (which included Alison) whose work was seen as having a particular, and often interactive, relationship with the audience. The audience were invited to make responses via comment books and through workshops which discussed the exhibition. The comments were used in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition and lent the exhibition its title. For this exhibition Alison constructed an artwork titled 'Tilt' and this is described in section 9.9.

According to the 'Walsall Chronicle', when it reported on 'Rebel Angels' (see section 9.10), a more interactive approach to making artwork had an effect on audience participation. Involving the audience directly had an effect on the gallery attendance figures. The Walsall Chronicle (1997) said:

> "The 'Rebel Angels' exhibition, featuring a marzipan tower, is expected to have received more than 1150 visitors in its first week. A massive 500 people turned up on Saturday when the show opened. Staff usually see about 120 people coming through their doors on the average Saturday".

The next section considers Alison's work with others.

9.7. Working with others.

In an interview with this researcher Alison described the installative work as:

> "more physical, it involves more repetitive action but it's very rewarding and fulfilling" (Jones, A. 1999).

The extended range of media and the particular use of site in some of Alison's work meant that a wider group of contacts have been drawn into the practice. For example, photography has been an important feature of Alison's practice. This has often comprised specialist colour photography and required photographic images to be glued onto a range of surfaces such as canvas. This has meant working with professional photographers and printers.

This researcher noted that the fact that Alison's sight is impaired had not prevented the practice from operating and growing. However she has had cause to work with others where otherwise she might not.

Alison's involvement with a more installational approach to art practice has led to her working and collaborating on projects with fellow artist Laird Galbraith (born 1959), who was also at the Bluecoat Chambers, Bluecoat Arts Centre, Liverpool. They collaborated together on several projects including 'White Lines' Albert Dock, Liverpool 1995 and the 'Salt Piece' Norwich Castle Museum 1997 (see Figs. 9.23. & 9.29.). In an interview with this researcher, Alison described the very clearly defined role that Laird played in the collaborative projects. Laird's role was to manage the

technical aspects of the installations. He would ensure that 'things worked' and were safe. She referred to being very clear about the work being her own. She wanted the ideas about the nature of her artworks and the aesthetics of her pieces to be her own. She did not want unsolicited input from others as it would effect the authenticity and integrity of the work (Jones, A. 2000).

Referring to an installational approach to making artworks Alison described a sense of collaboration with the audience. This, Alison said, was because they were not merely required to look at dumb objects but because their preconceptions about art were 'challenged' (Jones, A. 1998).

She related the action of preparing and making a public piece like the Norwich Castle Museum 'salt piece', to the 'action paintings' of Jackson Pollock. She described the higher amount of risk because of the situation and the problems that can arise from working in a place where she does not normally work and how this makes it all more exciting. She said:

> "Maybe it is like a performance in a roundabout way. The things that happen in the process which you can't account for make it work in the end" (Jones, A. 1999).

This researcher observed that working with an extended range of media, materials, processes and locations has meant working with a range of people Alison might not have come across otherwise. Working with alternative spaces has meant liaising with

property managers. Using materials such as salt and coconut in bulk meant finding sources and sponsors to provide the quantities that she required for the projects.

In addition, certain projects such as the building of the Victorian room in Worcester City Museum and Art gallery for 'Tilt' 1997, (see section 9.9.), required collaboration with people who had appropriate specialist construction and installational skills.

The following sections contain examples of installational-type projects. Details of the form and content of selected projects are considered and discussed in relation to the changes in the art practice.

9.8. Project One: 'Hum' 1994 (Chelsea College of Art) and 'Hum' 1995 (in 'Bayer Earth Art Award Exhibition', Mall Galleries, London).

'Hum' (1994), was Alison's installation project for the MA show. It comprised a large, sun-lit room on the top of the college building, which had been painted with Mexican honey (see Figs. 9.20. – 9.22.). The same project was re-installed in the 'Bayer Earth Art Award Exhibition', Mall Galleries, London. Alison won joint 1st prize of £2500, for her installation, from the German chemical company 'Bayer' who were the sponsors of the annual exhibition.

The second installation comprised a small room painted with enough honey to entirely cover the walls, drip down the walls and gather in pools at the bottom. Ryan, D. (1994),

responded to the original honey piece in the catalogue essay and discussed the relationship and crossover between materials, the place and the effects on the viewer.

Ryan, D. wrote:

> "Two things immediately strike me about Alison Jones's work and they are not unrelated; firstly, there is a direct use of specific materials which function as some sort of metaphoric juncture for the 'inner' and 'outer'. Secondly, a feeling of excess or surplus is explored that results in a crossing-over from one sensation to another" (Ryan, D. 1994).

He referred to the 'dialectical' quality of the installation and described the 'fluid' relationship between place, material and the viewer:

> "the relationship of subject/object is seen as a processual and dynamic one" (Ryan, D. 1994).

He conceded that the same could be said about any work of art but pointed out that, in Alison's work, these relationships between the viewer and the situation being experienced were emphasised or 'structured' within the installation. Ryan, D. (1994) referred to a differentiation to be made in Alison's installational projects; he said they were more 'situations' than 'works' "that emphasise this dialectical play between all three components (body, consciousness, work)".

Ryan, D. (1994) referred to the 'durational effect' of the honey installation and the links with painting as follows:

> "The actual structuring of the piece was extremely simple and transparent yet effective, what amounts to no more than an exposure to a given 'duration' of carefully chosen material. A six-inch band was left free of honey at the bottom of each wall at the initial execution of the installation. This had the effect of both allowing the coloured field to hover (again, bringing to mind overt links with painting), and explicitly displaying the process, the behaviour of the material, as the honey itself slowly dripped down".

This researcher noted that the 'dynamic situation' created by the slow but inexorable movement of the honey from the walls to the floor was evidence of the temporal nature of this installational project.

In addition to the visual sensation there was also the sensation of smell provided by the honey installation projects. One attendant at the Mall galleries describing the honey in 'Hum' after a few days, said: "It stinks the whole place out. It's dripping off the walls now and forming puddles, and the room is buzzing with flies. I'm going to keep as far away as possible" (from: 'London Evening Standard', 16th October, 1995).

In an interview with this researcher Alison described some of the imperatives behind her work, such as to allow for a meditative approach and to make apparent to the viewer more physical and time-based aspects associated with the subject. It seemed to this

researcher that the honey projects were a larger incarnation of the earlier piece 'Soft Centre' 1993, and included the viewer *within* the process as opposed to merely depicting it. Instead of distancing the viewer from the subject Alison attempted to include the viewer within the situation and to re-emphasise the "connections and interpretations that can occur within the subject/object field" (Ryan, D. 1994 p.28).

This researcher noted that the tutor who had been critical of her 'non-purist approach' loved 'Hum', presumably because the work was similar to the large expanses of colour found in large-scale, colour-field painting.

9.9. Project Two: 'Permission to Speak' 1996, Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery.

'Permission to Speak' (1996), was an invitational exhibition to promote works of art which explored surface and texture. Alison included two pieces for the show at Worcester City Museum and Art Gallery.

'White Whiteness' (1995) comprised a wall assemblage, which consisted of 4 panels each 60" x 18" (see Figs. 9.6. – 9.8.). Alison said two panels were box-like, since they were 6" deep stretchers with white velvet fabric stretched on them. The two other panels were 'flatter' at 2" deep, and were framed photographs of white fabric. The photographs showed the weft and the warp of the fabric in close-up detail and were meant to imitate the 'real' texture of the velvet in the other two panels. She said the real fabric panels

pushed out into the space and the illusory images, which gave the impression of real fabric, remained a part of pictorial space (Jones, A. 2000).

In the exhibition catalogue, Alison said:

> "Experiencing the work in the show involves a collaboration of the senses; our sense of vision is exchanged for the sense of touch and vice versa. The combination of surface textures within the work can only be experienced fully through our fingertips. One experiences the dynamics between a visual reality on the one hand whilst confronting a tangible reality on the other. Our temptation to touch transforms the familiar into the unfamiliar – exploring the unknown within the known. Together visual sensations collide with tactile sensations upon the surface of the work" (Jones, A. 1996).

'Tilt' (1996), was created by Alison to accompany the exhibition. The installation comprised a construction of a 'life-size room' within the gallery space. The installation recreated the interior of a domestic-type room but with a difference – the room was tilted on its side (see Figs. 9.24. – 9.27.). This piece was entirely constructed by the gallery technician who used Alison's plans, diagrams and instructions to build it. Alison said to this researcher that 'Tilt' was built in response to the chaos and mess that she saw during the gallery's recent refurbishment (Jones, A. 2000).

According to the press release:

> " 'Tilt' is a room within a room, built in the corner of a museum space, a room reminding us of many others but unlike any we have seen before. From the outside it is a white box, which would be completely sealed – doorless and windowless – except that a corner has been sliced away to provide a way in" (Dean, D. 1996).

In an interview with this researcher, Alison described the way the piece was similar to previous projects that focussed upon the viewers' 'other senses', for example smell and touch, and how she was focussing upon the viewers' senses of balance and of touch. Various textures, for example the flock wallpaper on the walls, were used to suggest that the piece had a tactile element. She referred to the way the room within a gallery space, tilted on its side, created a sense of play between the real and the illusory. Alison described the way the viewers would find themselves situated within a distorted space and so their sense of balance might be affected (Jones, A. 1999).

According to the press release:

> "Glimpses of sumptuous red and gold flock wallpaper, with its associations of faded glory, old wealth, auction rooms and mock-Victorian pub interiors, tempt the onlooker to step inside. Once there however, nothing is as it seems or as it 'should be': our expectations are literally turned upside down. We are standing not on a floor but on a

> wall, with wall and not ceiling above us. Reality has been tilted" (Dean, D. 1996).

Dean, D. (1996) described the installation as "a response to the gallery itself, which has recently had its old, grey, hessian-covered interior transformed into bright white, following redecoration". This researcher noted the transformation of the gallery was embodied in 'Tilt', with its white, box-like exterior and pseudo-Victorian interior. Alison described the piece's strange familiarity in the press release that accompanied the exhibition. She said:

> "I wanted to make the supporting structure of the walls, ceiling and floor the focus of attention. By removing the contents our attention is focused upon the bare fabric and parameters within the room – its edges and corners etc. By turning the room on to its side our view of the room is altered further.... Our senses are disturbed; the familiar becomes strange. It was important for the piece that there was a combining of the senses; visual and tactile sensation merging to help us re-interpret the world around us" (Jones, A. 1996).

One of the main themes of the exhibition was the audience's response and their participation in composing the exhibition commentary and exhibition labels. The audience were invited to write comments about the work and attend a series of tape-recorded discussion sessions. The commentary from the sessions and the written responses provided an opportunity to publicly share the opinions about the art on

display. The exhibition toured two other venues after Worcester (Derby Museum and Art Gallery and Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery) and the audience commentary expanded as the exhibition travelled to each venue. Dean, D. (1995) said:

> "A variety of viewpoints is therefore presented. These may be very different from the artists' original ideas and intentions and not everyone will agree with them but they illustrate that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers: everyone is invited to make up their own mind. This may take time, or might change on different occasions, according to the viewers' mood".

This researcher noted that there was a 'democratic' relationship and dialogue being encouraged between the viewer, the art works and the artists. The fluid relationship and the dynamic situation were evident from some of the viewers' comments. The viewers' comments were anonymous and, since the work in the exhibition was to a theme, the comments were not fixed to a particular artwork within the exhibition. For example one comment said:

> "that one's interesting. You see so much in it as you're looking at it – you see something different all the time. ..."

Another said:

> "The pieces of work grow on you. I'd like to see more of them. The more you look at them, the more you see what the artists are trying to get at."

This researcher noted that the interaction between the space, material and audience implied a fluid and dynamic relationship with the 'situation'. The variety of viewpoints brought to the work, and the free associations with the space made by the various interpreters, together with a seeming lack of limits, enabled other people to become actively involved in the life of the work.

9.10. Project Three: 'Something Rendered' (Marzipan Piece), 1997 ('Rebel Angels' Exhibition, Walsall Museum and Art Gallery).

'Something Rendered' (1997), comprised a 24" x 24" block of marzipan placed on a plinth (see Fig. 9.28.) and situated in the centre of the gallery space and was part of a group show entitled 'Rebel Angels' at Walsall Museum and Art Gallery 1997.

In an interview with this researcher Alison described how she wanted to incorporate the element of time in 'Something Rendered'. She referred to the way the viewer was invited to explore the touch and feel of the marzipan and enjoy its malleability. The initial softness of the marzipan allowed the fingerprints of the viewer to become a part of the piece and in this way it was 'interactive'. However, she described how the gradual hardening of the marzipan "froze all the marks made by touching it" (Jones, A. 1999).

Alison was quoted (in Wolstenholme, J. 1997), as saying the idea behind the marzipan piece was to explore the way smells can evoke emotions and memories.

According to Brewster, M. (1997 pp. 28-29), the piece of marzipan emanated a "cloying, sweet smell reminiscent of sebum" and she described how the viewer was "invited to explore the fossilised crevices in its surface which other fingers have created".

This researcher noted that the invitation to touch and smell the marzipan, and explore one another's imprints, added to the intimate nature of this piece. When considered in the context of the whole show this feeling of intimacy is well situated. The illustration (Fig. 9.28.) shows how the viewers have felt, poked and prodded the block of marzipan.

According to Brewster, M. (1997) the artist Kim Merrington curated the Walsall exhibition 'Rebel Angels'. The exhibition title 'Rebel Angels' referred to Jacob Epstein's (1880-1959) sculptures such as 'Tomb of Oscar Wilde' (1911) which depicted the poet as 'a winged demon angel' (Compton, S. 1987 p. 426-427). The exhibition took as its point of departure the original public censure in the press and the critical condemnation of his artworks depicting the human body. The exhibition brought together seven artists who each explored the human body in their work. Brewster, M. (1997), described how the show 'Rebel Angels' contained little of any immediate shock value, but rather it teased out ideas about "gender, disease and desire for intimacy and acceptance".

However, according to Wolstenholme, J. (1997), one councillor (Cllr. Melvin Pitt), in Walsall branded Alison's marzipan piece 'Something Rendered', as a:

> "ridiculous waste of public funds... The council is facing its worst financial crisis in living memory. If, as I understand it, people are being invited to prod the marzipan, then I don't see why I shouldn't poke fun at it" (Pitt, M. in Wolstenholme, J. 1997).

Alison described how the galleries have budgets allocated in advance and money could not therefore be taken away from other departments in the council. Alison said she had experienced this kind of hostility to her work on several occasions before. She referred to some of the negative reactions to 'Hum' 1995, but concluded that negative criticism was to be accepted as part of the job. She said "I find it all quite funny" (Jones, A. in Wolstenholme, J. 1997).

According to Merrington, M. (1997) the work that Alison produces is just as likely to evoke a reaction of repulsion as pleasure. She provided insights into Alison's work in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition. She said:

> "Alison Jones draws upon the power of the senses such as touch and smell as well as the visual to evoke emotions and memories. She is fascinated by the way in which a smell, for example, can transport the mind through association, whilst the body remains in real space and time. The sculptural form, which she presents here, consists of a huge mound of marzipan, pungent and malleable to the touch. The overpowering sweetness evokes a response of both pleasure and repulsion; the smooth texture of the marzipan is tactile and inviting.... Human contact will be

> preserved by the material properties of the marzipan. The physical human presence is at once apparent and elusive" (Merrington, K. 1997).

Merrington, K. (1997), referred to the ways in which the human body has been represented and interpreted in art and how representations embodied the culture's prevailing identity and values. This researcher wondered whether 'Something Rendered' revealed our culture's prevailing identity and values via its transient marks, denoting the presence of the viewer via their absence.

9.11. Conclusion.

This chapter reveals the transition from a studio-based practice that consisted of painting and drawing, to a more installational-type practice. Alison found the studio-based painting practice confining and limiting and the case study shows how Alison wanted to explore more than just the visual sense through her work. Problems and limits were explored via new installational-type work and through making art into more of 'an event' which involved a time-based aspect (e.g. 'Hum' 1994 and 'Something Rendered' 1997).

Alison reached out to explore the rectilinear format of her paintings and drawings in real space using real materials. Once liberated from the rectangle, Alison explored the possibilities of using the space in which the work was installed as the 'boundary' or frame to the work. The case study reveals how the boundaries of the installational work became blurred and how the relationship with the audience was altered as a result.

Alison's reflective conversation with 'the situation' the problems and limits within the studio based practice, was key to the changes within practice. The study reveals how the problems were explored through a more installational approach to creative practice. Alison drew together these 'problems' in a new practice and explored them in new art forms. Alison explored the opportunities for the new art forms to move on from just appealing to the visual sense and to investigate other senses such as smell and touch. The 'situational frame' surrounding the studio-based practice was changed so as to allow in new ways of making art (Schön, D. 1984). The practitioner felt limited by the flatness of her earlier pictures and she wanted the artworks to push out from the flat, 2-dimensional surface (Jones, A. 1998). She explored the problem found in wanting to juxtapose depictions of the real and real objects via a more installational approach. The problem found became reframed within a reshaped situation (Schön, D. 1984).

The case study reveals how Alison explored the possibilities of making the work 'temporary' or giving it a 'provisionality'. In addition Alison explored the possibilities of making temporary art in non-gallery spaces. This became an important feature of the installational-type practice, together with the introduction of carefully selected materials and media, which had a close relationship with the concepts and issues within each project. The context of the work, the materials and the relation to place were explored through a more installational-type approach.

Through problem finding and reframing the problems within the new situated approach to making art, the practice is now less static, more fluid and more dynamic. The contents of this case study, together with the conclusions, are considered and discussed in relation to the other case studies, in chapter ten.



Fig. 9.1. 'Untitled' Portraits 1986 Alison Jones
(paint and mixed media on board,
c. 4' x 4')

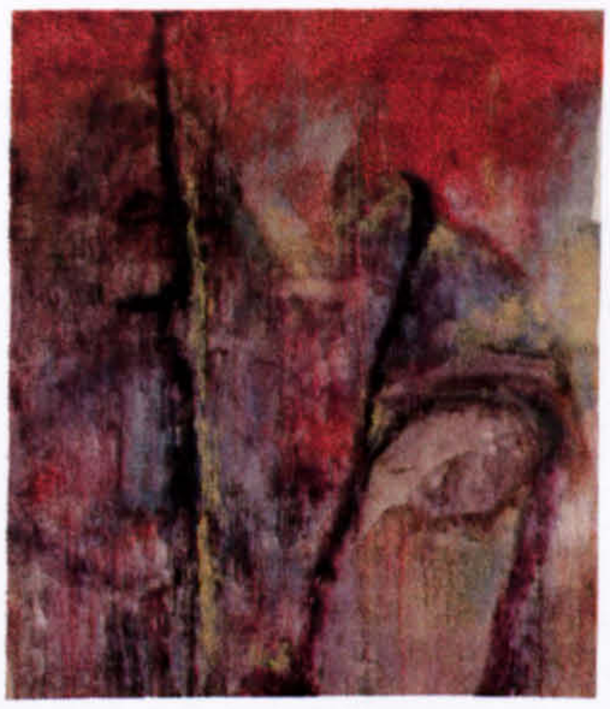


Fig. 9.2. 'Untitled' 1987 Alison Jones
(paint and mixed media on paper,
c. 8' x 6')

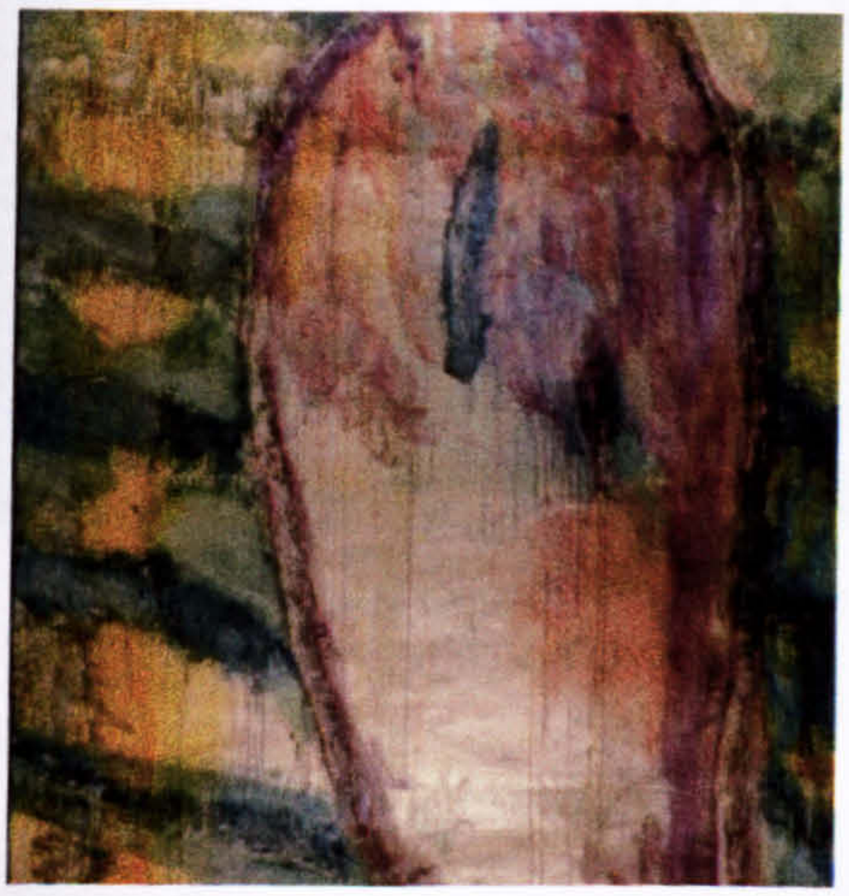


Fig. 9.3. 'Untitled' 1987 Alison Jones
(oil on paper and mixed media, c. 12' x 6')



Fig. 9.4. 'Untitled' 1989 Alison Jones
(oil on canvas and mixed media, c. 4' x 4')



Fig. 9.5. 'Untitled' 1989 Alison Jones
(mixed media, c. 1' x 1')

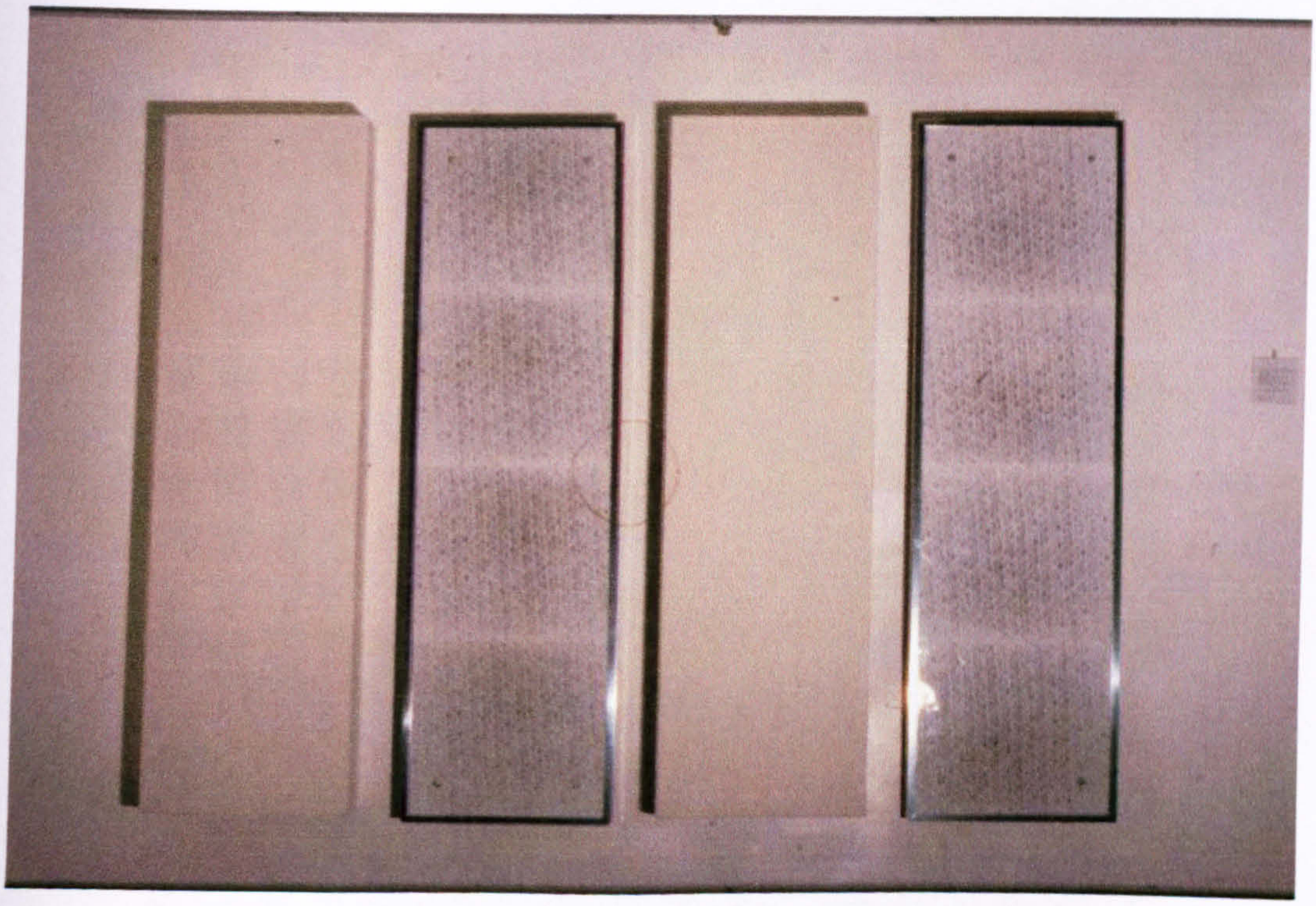


Fig. 9.6. 'White Whiteness' 1990 Alison Jones (white velvet, photocopied white fabric, c. 5' x 6')

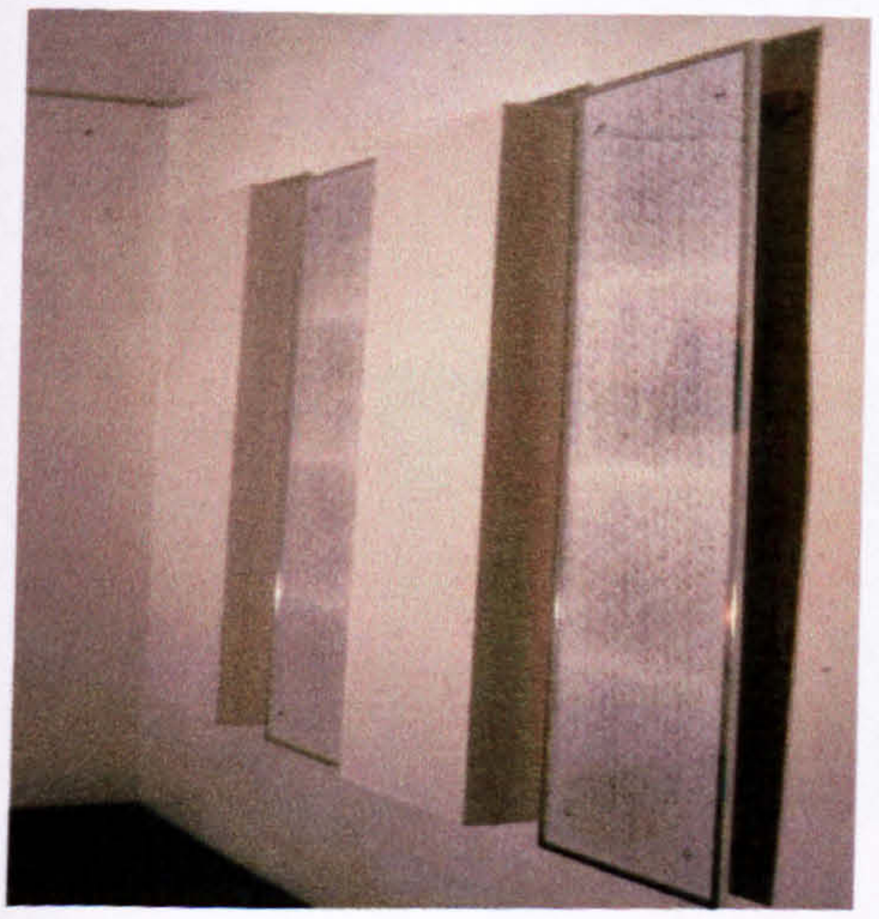


Fig. 9.7. 'White Whiteness' 1990 Alison Jones (white velvet, photocopied white fabric, c. 5' x 6')

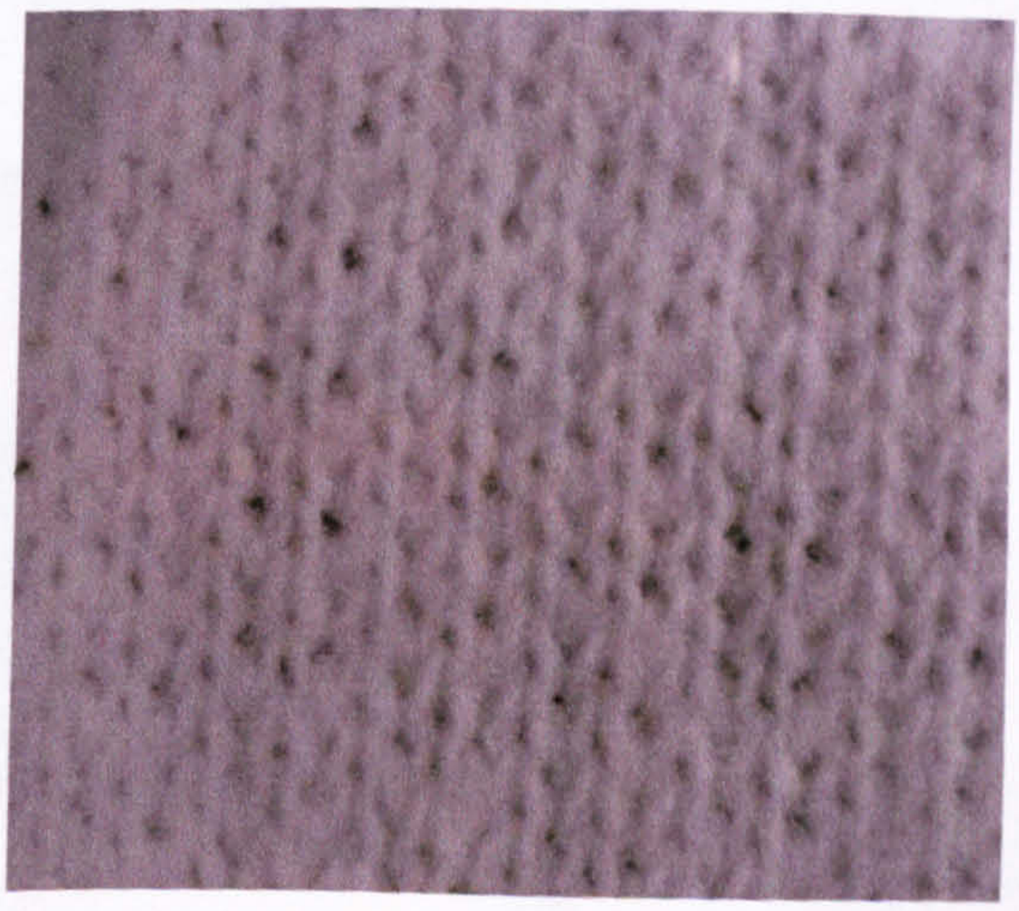


Fig. 9.8. 'White Whiteness' (detail) 1990 Alison Jones (white velvet, photocopied white fabric, c. 5' x 18")

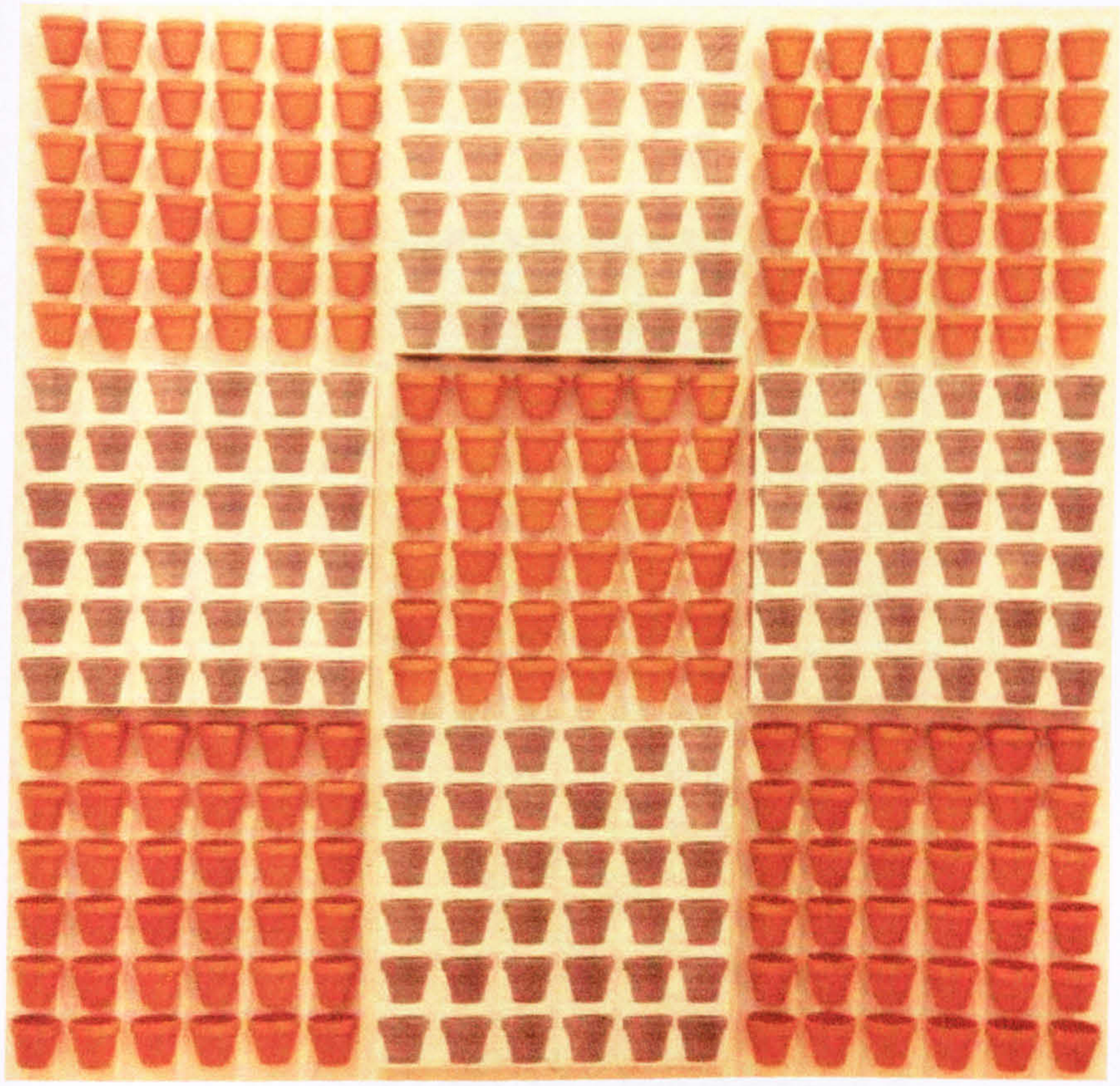


Fig. 9.9. 'Vessel' 1991-92 Alison Jones
(photographs, 180 plant pots, board, c. 9' x 9')

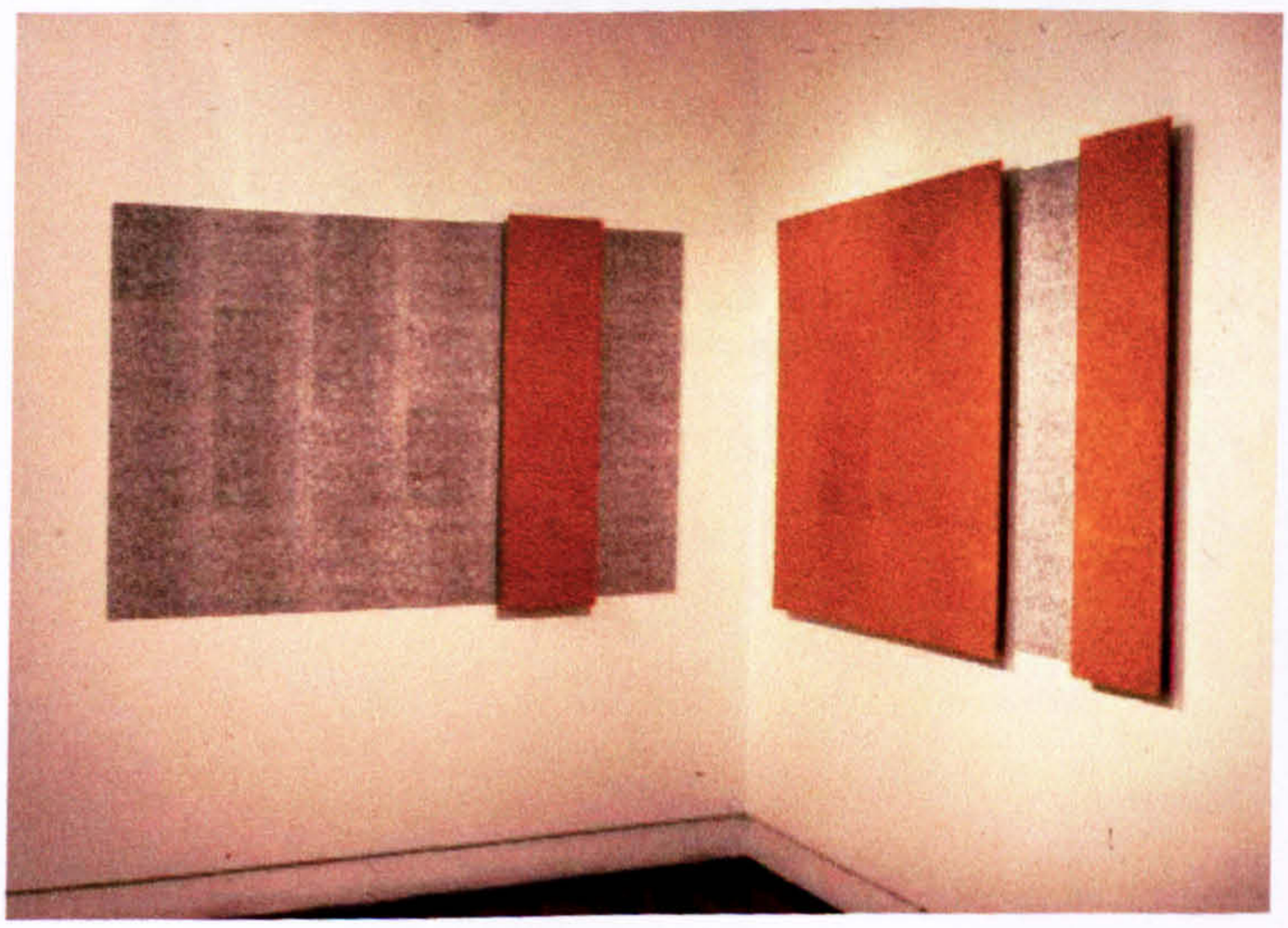


Fig. 9.10. 'Untitled' Floor Tile Piece 1993 Alison Jones
(floor tiles, photocopies, panel, c. 4' x 6' ea.)



Fig. 9.11. 'Untitled' Straw Piece 1990 Alison Jones
(straw, wire, photocopies, panel, c. 8' x 7')

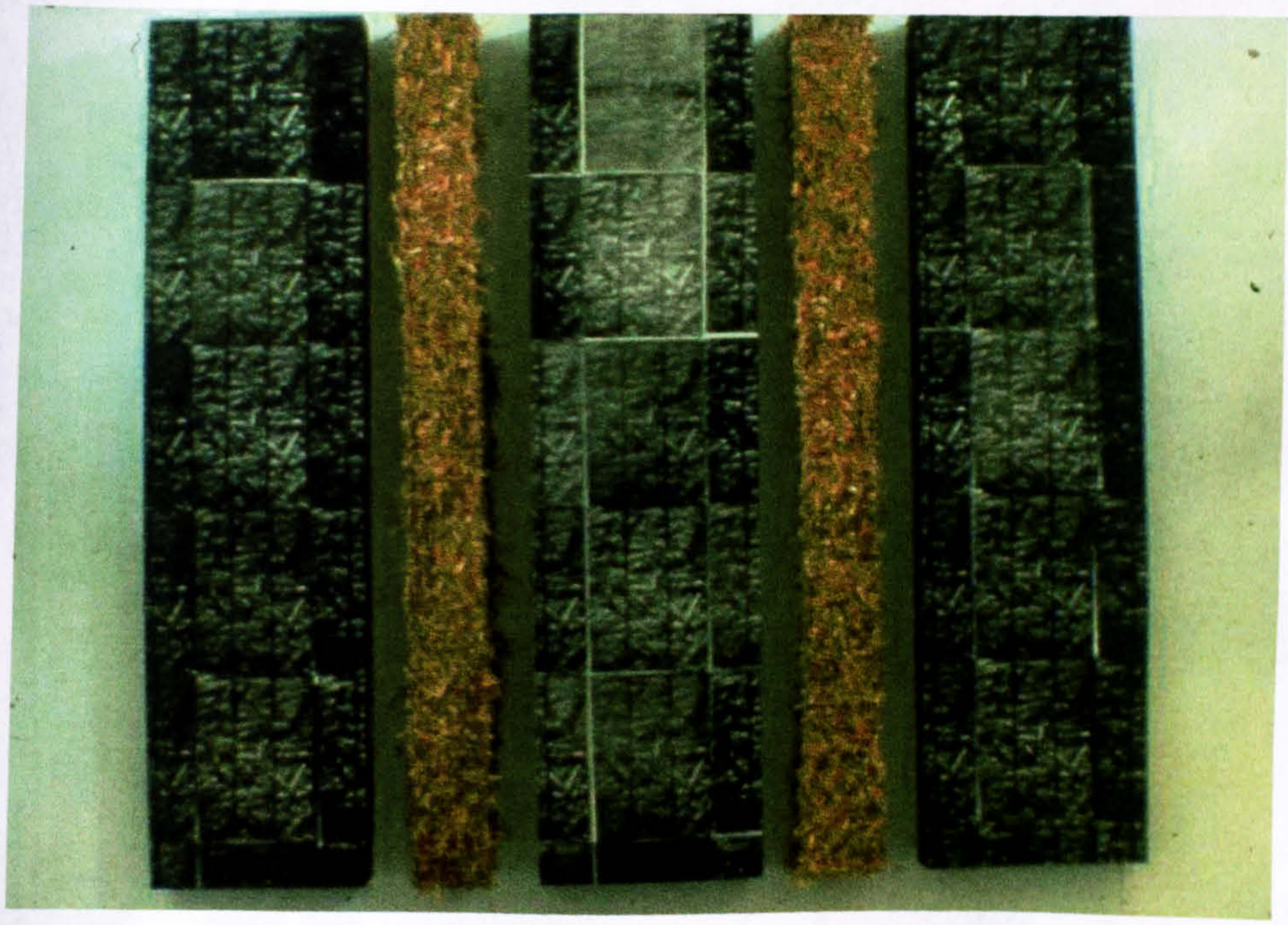


Fig. 9.12. 'Untitled' Straw Piece 1990 Alison Jones
(straw, wire, photocopies, panel, c. 8' x 7')



Fig. 9.13. 'Untitled' Straw Piece 1990 (detail) Alison Jones
(straw, wire, photocopies, panel, c. 8' x 7')

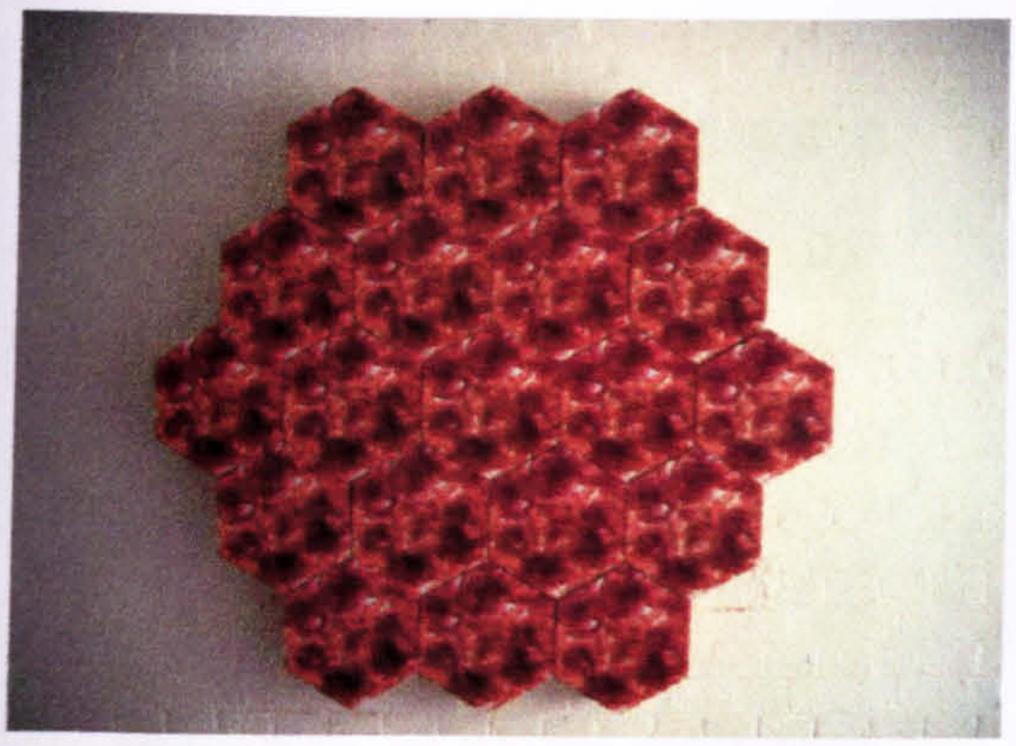


Fig. 9.14. 'Honey Comb Piece' 1994 Alison Jones
(colour photocopies, panel, c. 5' x 5')

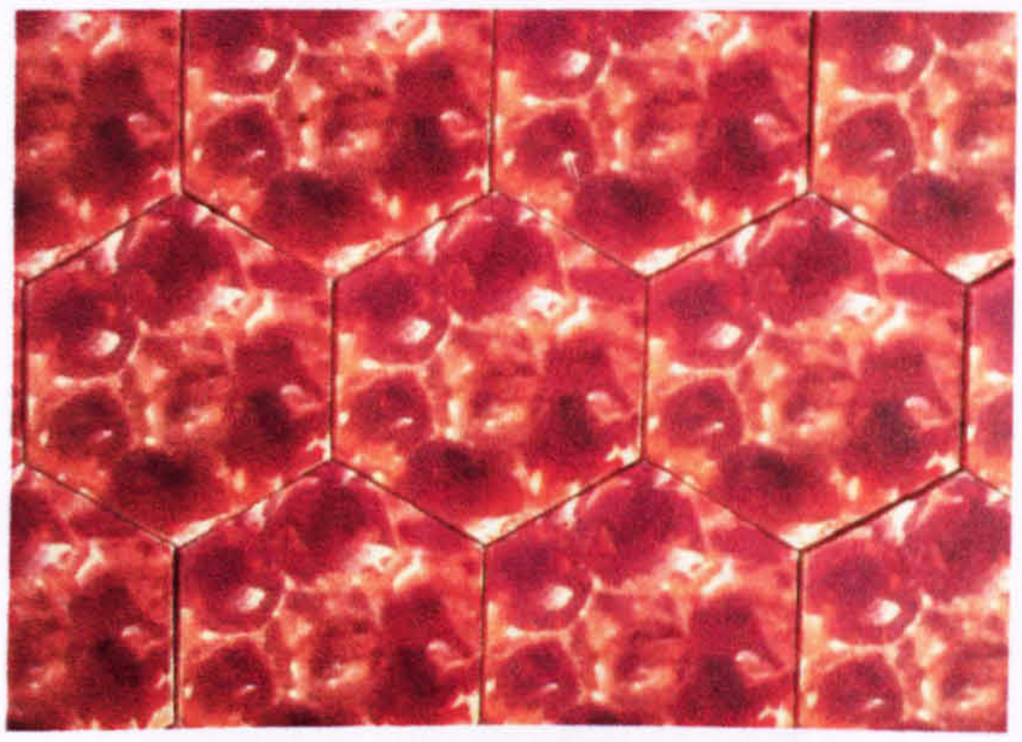


Fig. 9.15. 'Honey Comb Piece' 1994 (detail)
Alison Jones
(colour photocopies, panel, c. 5' x 5')

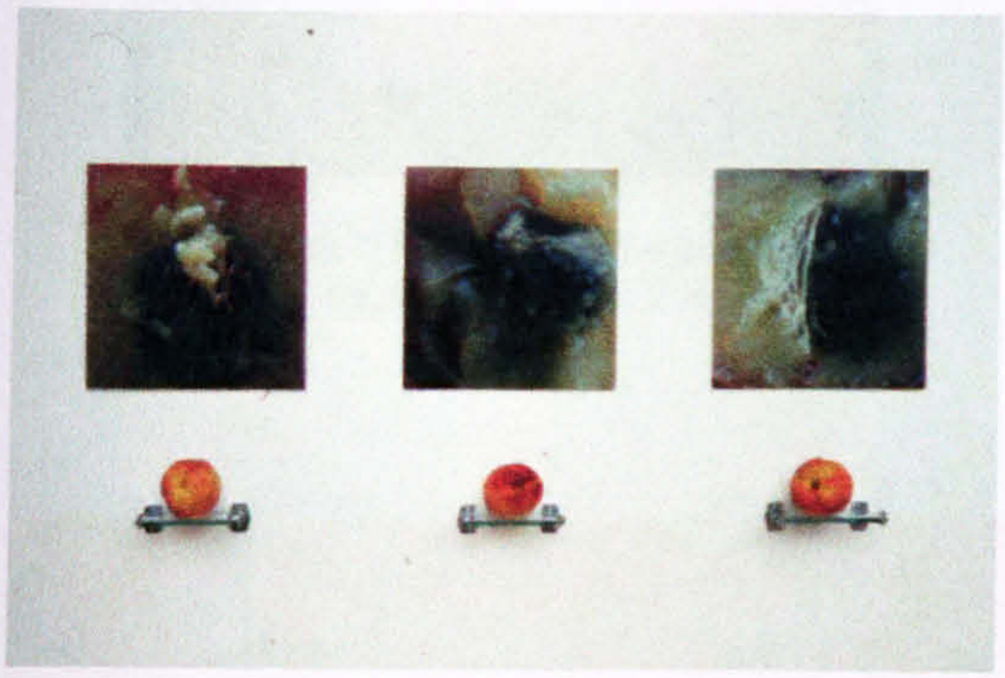


Fig. 9.16. 'Soft Centre' 1993 Alison Jones
(colour photographs, rotting nectarines, glass and metal shelves, c. each photo.1' x 1')



Fig. 9.17. 'Soft Centre' 1993 (detail) Alison Jones
(colour photographs, rotting nectarines, glass and metal shelves, c. 1' x 1')

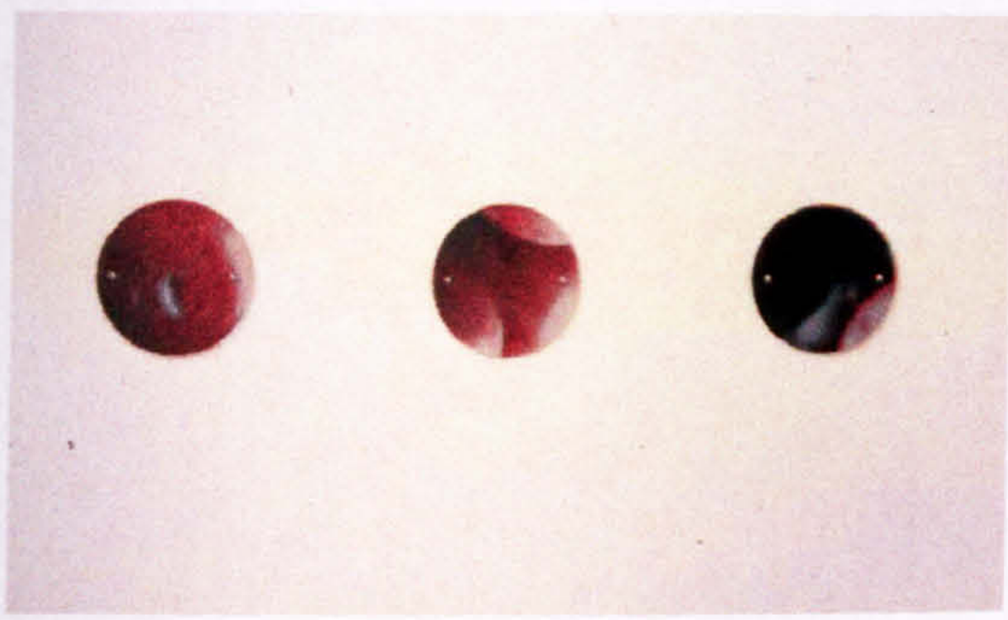


Fig. 9.18. 'Untitled' Plums 1993-94 Alison Jones
(colour photographs on metal panels, c. 12" diameter)

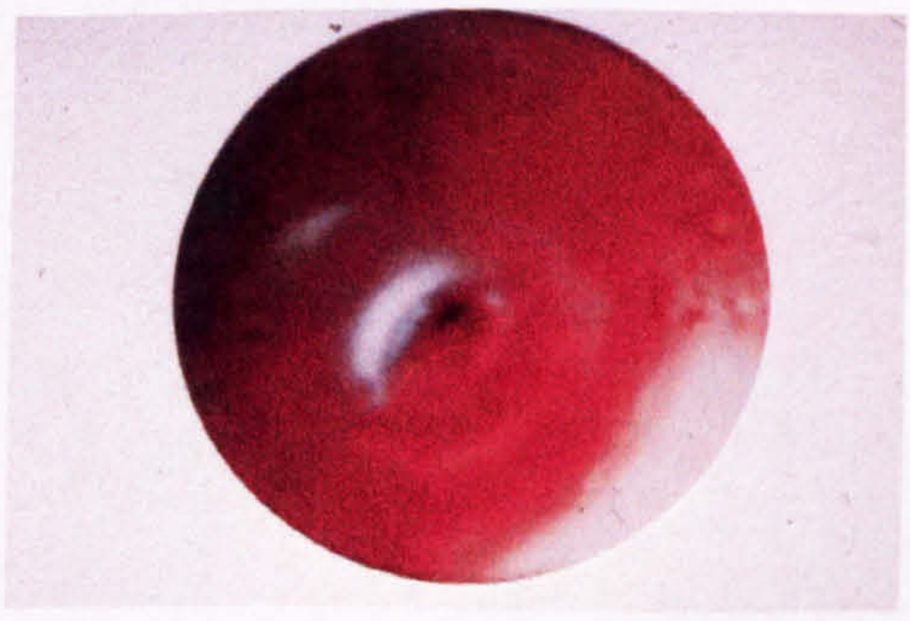


Fig. 9.19. 'Untitled' Plums 1993-94 (detail)
Alison Jones
(colour photographs on metal panels, c. 12" diameter)

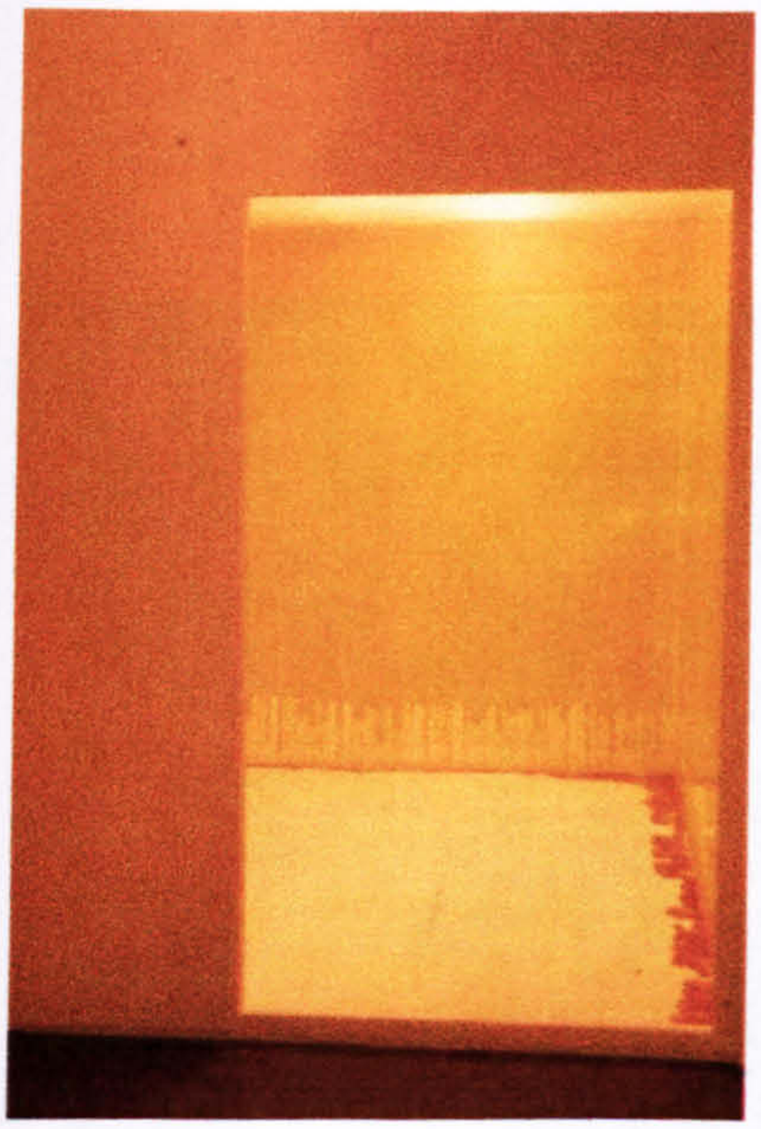


Fig. 9.20. 'Hum' 1994 Alison Jones
(honey, room space, c. 12' square)



Fig. 9.21. 'Hum' 1994 Alison Jones
(honey, room space, c. 12' square)

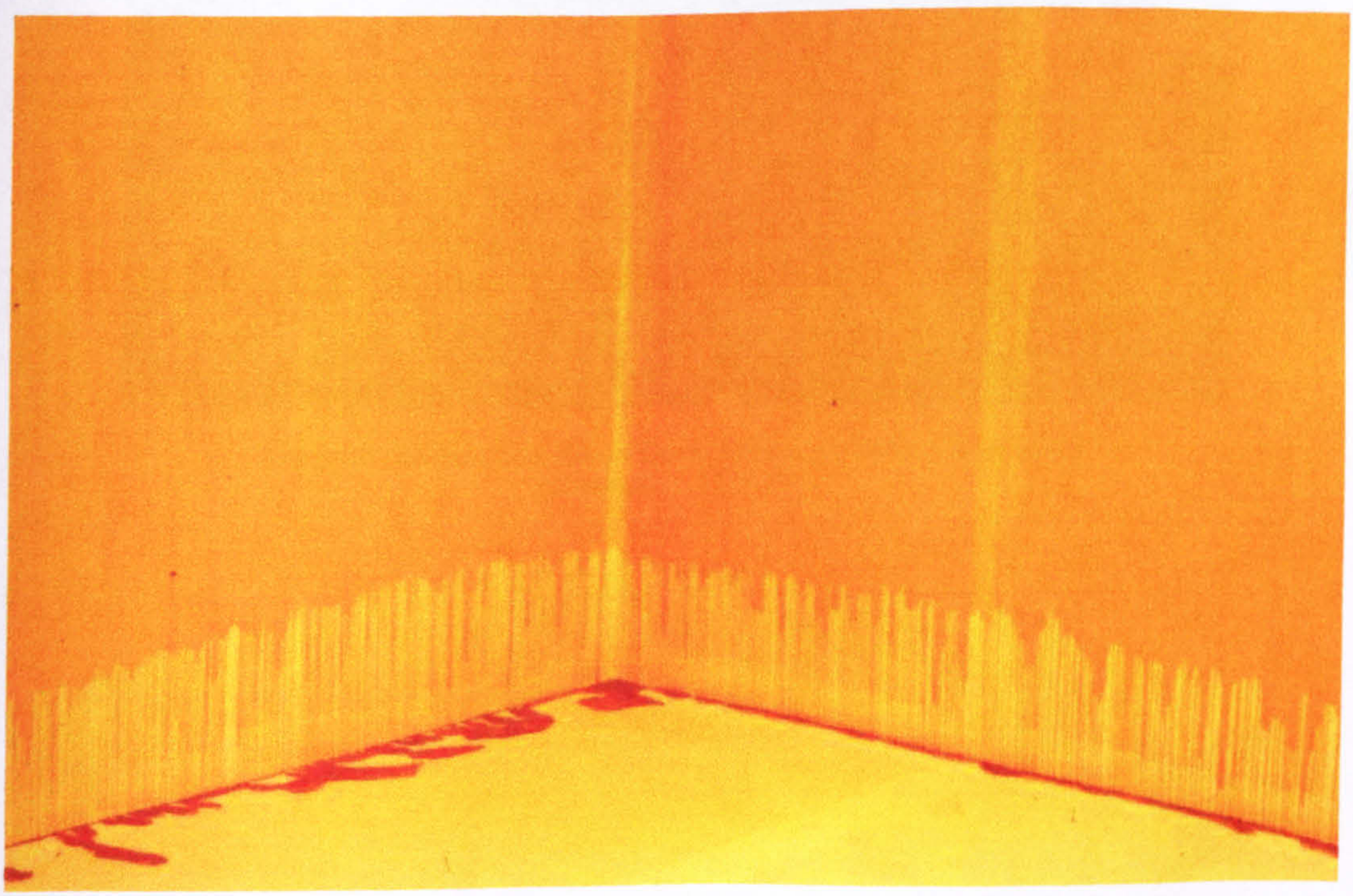


Fig. 9.22. 'Hum' 1994 Alison Jones
(honey, room space, c. 12' square)

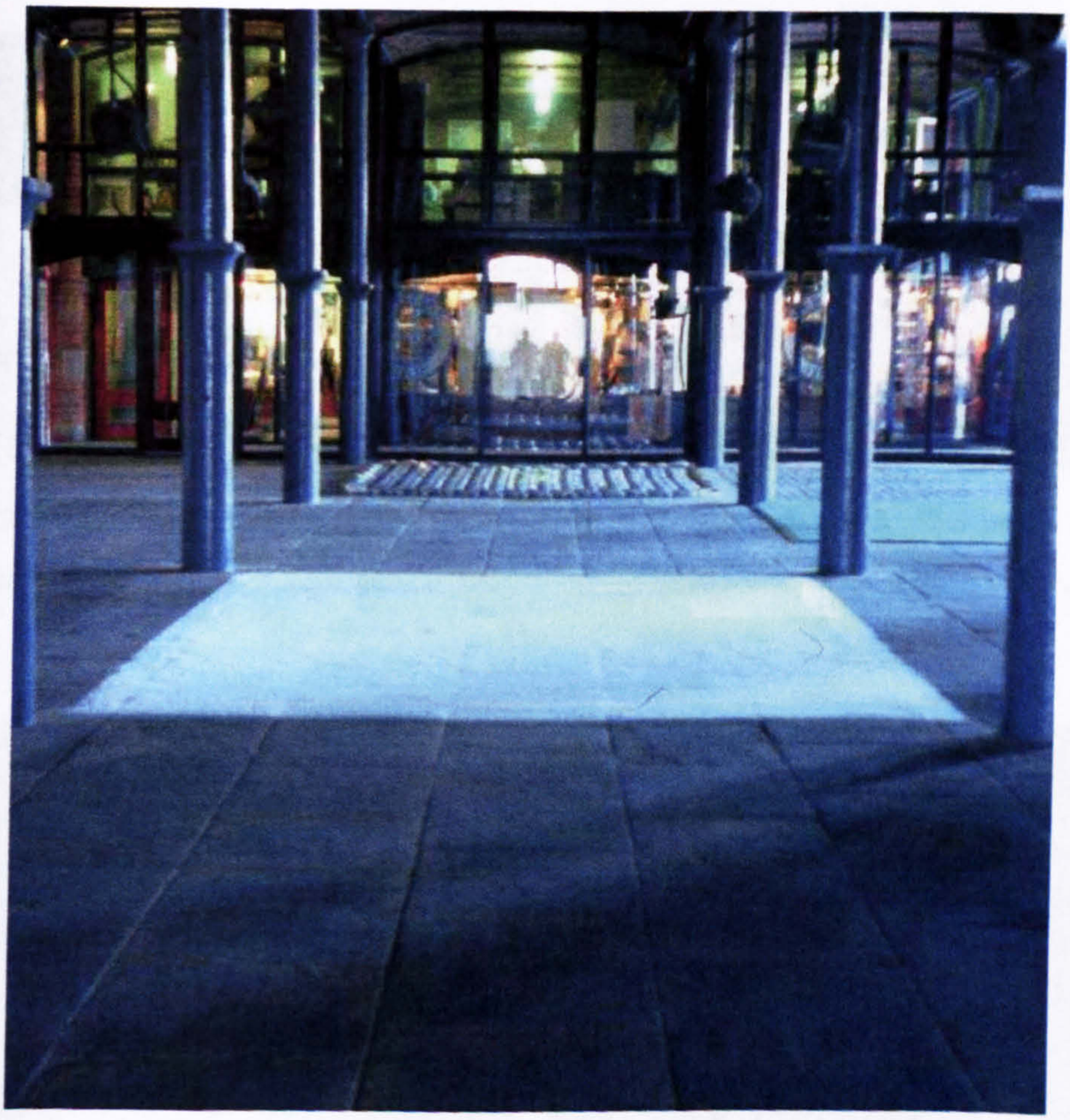


Fig. 9.23. 'White Lines' Albert Dock, Liverpool, 1995 Alison Jones
(coconut, c. 11' x 17')

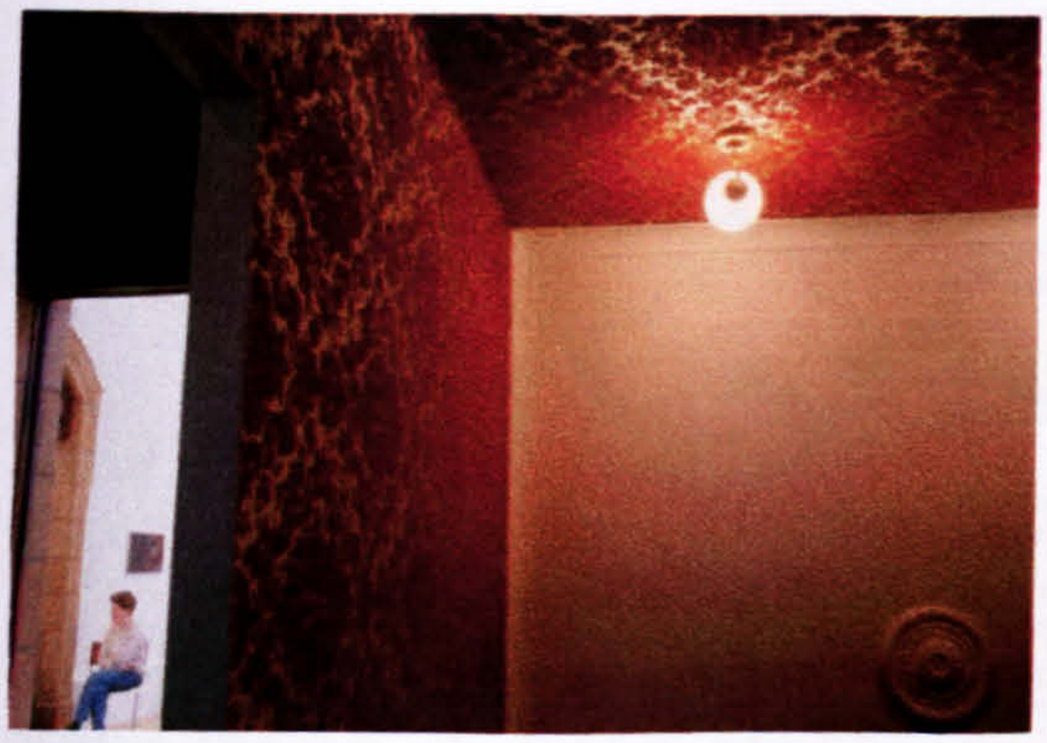


Fig. 9.24. 'Tilt' Worcester Museum and Art Gallery
1996 Alison Jones
(constructed room, flock wallpaper, electric light,
c. 12' x 12')



Fig. 9.25. 'Tilt' Worcester Museum and Art Gallery
1996 Alison Jones
(constructed room, flock wallpaper, electric light,
c. 12' x 12')



Fig. 9.26. 'Tilt' Worcester Museum and Art Gallery
1996 Alison Jones
(constructed room, flock wallpaper, electric light,
c. 12' x 12')



Fig. 9.27. 'Tilt' Worcester Museum and Art Gallery
1996 Alison Jones
(constructed room, flock wallpaper, electric light,
c. 12' x 12')



Fig. 9.28. 'Marzipan Piece' 1997
(marzipan, c. 24" cube)



Fig. 9.29. 'Untitled' Salt Piece Norwich Castle Museum 1997 Alison Jones
(sea salt and table salt stripes, c. 17' x 8')

CHAPTER TEN: Conclusions and further research.

10.1. Introduction.

This chapter contains a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the research. The chapter starts with a brief recapitulation of the aims of the study and a brief description of the research methods. An overview of the case studies and the findings then follows. This researcher's thoughts about future research are provided at the end of the chapter.

10.2. The aims of the study.

The first set of interviews conducted during the investigation showed the artists in the case studies to be immersed in a process of intuitive and analytical questioning of their practices. The practitioners were found to be questioning the physical and conceptual limits of their art practices via the artworks being produced, the materials and processes, their own roles as creative practitioners, and their relationship with others namely other artists and the viewer.

The aims of the study were revised to focus on the practitioners' problem finding within the practices, their probing of limits and questioning of conventions. It was hoped to identify the features of reflection and problem finding in installational art practices, to examine the processes of problem reframing and provisionality within the art practices, and to provide insights into installation art and the perceived boundaries of art.

10.3. The research method.

A combined approach of literature study and case studies was adopted. Case studies were seen as the appropriate research method in this investigation for the following reasons:

1. They were seen as the best way to find out what people do, to meet the data, to observe processes and witness events.
2. They provide opportunities to become immersed in the investigation and arrive at unexpected answers.
3. They take the reader into settings that are rich in detail (Marshall, C. and Rossman, G. B. 1999).

As described in chapter two, the case studies do not form a representative sample. They have been chosen because each of the artists in the case studies was engaged in problem finding in their studio-based painting practice. Each of the artists in the case studies described a process of self-reflexivity. Through self-reflection and problem finding within the practice, each of the artists in the case studies became immersed in a process of transition from a studio-based painting practice to an installation art practice.

The case studies were analysed against a background provided by the ideas and results of other artists obtained from the literature. The placing of the case studies against this literature enables some general conclusions to be drawn even though generalised statements cannot be made on the basis of a set of case studies on their own.

10.4. Summary of the case studies.

This section contains an overview of the case studies, a discussion of the 'absence of stoppage', comments on problem finding and the role of back-talk in the change of practice and a summary of the features of transition.

In case study one, Steve (Dutton, S. 1997) found the finished painting did not reflect the complexities of the process of painting. He reached out beyond the conventions of the studio-based painting practice and began to make commentaries on his situation in visual installational artworks. Firstly he began to make experiments exploring the conventions of his painting practice such as 'painting without paint' (see Fig. 3.9.). He extended the range of media to include photography and later he moved into making scenarios or models depicting his situation (see Fig. 3.13. – 3.18.). His artworks became more interrelated with the space of display and the distinction between the artwork and the display setting became deliberately blurred. For example, in 'Vesuvius' (1998) Steve placed large colour photographs of the gallery space in which the viewer found themselves, at Rotherham Arts Centre (see Figs. 3.30. - 3.34.). In the installation 'Vesuvius' the boundary between 'art' and 'not art' was explored through the use of multi-media displays and through the use of text. The case study shows that Steve explored making temporary installations in which the different gallery and non-gallery display settings formed part of the artwork. The art object itself was dispersed through the use of an installational approach to art practice. Once the problems found with the conventions and limits of the studio-based practice had been formed within an

appreciative system, Steve maintained a provisional stance in relation to his artworks' permanence and to their possible boundaries. The question of who actually made the art was explored through the collaborative projects with Percy Peacock and Steve Swindells. Steve Dutton explored the possibilities of making artworks that were unbounded by a conventional frame but held provisionally in a kind of matrixical frame that was the display setting. The viewer was temporarily implicated within the artwork's 'matrix'. By blurring the distinctions between artwork and place, the viewer became engaged in 'looking for' the art.

In case study two, Dave felt confined by his studio-based painting practice and limited by the rectilinear formats of his paintings (Mackintosh, D. 1997). He reached out beyond the conventions of his paintings and blurred the boundaries both of his paintings and his practice. For example, he made new artworks that involved the viewer in an interactive way, not just in terms of the viewing experience, but also in the actual manufacture and display of the artwork. For example, the 'Great Masters Art Quiz' 1995, (see Figs. 4.5. & 4.6.) and the jigsaw piece – 'Dave's Evening on Wheels Jigsaw' 1997 (see Fig. 4.16.) involved the viewer in the making of the artwork. Dave relinquished some control over the making of the artwork and its ultimate display setting. The case study shows that Dave explored making temporary artworks in different gallery and non-gallery settings. Provisionality added to the possibilities of chance and the possible risk of failure. The inclusion of 'managed risk' heightened the excitement of making art and added to his sense of fulfilment. Dave's problem finding and problem resituating resulted in his artworks becoming an 'event', in which the

viewer was engaged directly. Problem finding and problem-resituating led Dave to work with the 'like-minded people' he sought. He become more directly involved in the art network of Manchester and his collaborative project with Graham Parker, 'Bono and Sting' led him to set up an art gallery entitled 'From Space' in Salford.

In case study three, Geoff explored the possibilities of making temporary two and three-dimensional works that were based on his paintings and drawings of landscape. The case study shows that Geoff explored 'pictorial space' in a broader range of media and in three-dimensional space. He said he wanted to explore "the spaces between the paintings" (Molyneux, G. 2000). Referring to the ideas behind the installational-type works and the paintings, he said, "the content goes throughout, the same kind of questions are there... it is more one thing in a number of ways" (Molyneux, G. 1997). Geoff seemed to hold a conversation between his paintings and more installational type artwork: the process of working in three-dimensions helped to inform his paintings and visa versa. He made site-relevant works that used a particular setting as a 'contextual backdrop' to his work (Molyneux, G. 1997). For examples see the installation made in Herzliya, Israel (1998) (Figs. 5.21. – 5.24.) and the Lewis's Department Store Installation 'Are You Being Served?' 1999 (Figs. 5.25. – 5.30.). The case study shows that Geoff explored making temporary artworks and he explored making the artworks' relation to the different gallery and non-gallery display settings ambiguous. He used a broader range of materials that were often found on site which had a particular resonance with the site and the ideas behind his work. For example, he used metal fencing and camouflage material to make a connection between the physical and

conceptual boundaries in landscape. Geoff made use of opportunities to network with other people but collaborative work did not become a significant feature of his installational practice.

In case study four, Duncan felt limited by conversations about the interiority of painting. He wanted to explore the exteriority of painting – its context and what went on outside its boundaries (Mountford, D. 1997). He felt limited by the language conventions of painting. The study shows how he broadened his approach to explore the relationship between the art objects and the space in which they were displayed, for example ''Lost and Found' (1996) (see Figs. 6.10. – 6.12.). The case study shows that Duncan explored making temporary artworks in different gallery and non-gallery display settings. Duncan (Mountford, D. 1997), explored a wider range of media and extended his visual language to include the language of display through temporary installational projects. He searched for ways in which the viewer could be totally immersed in the artwork where the frame acted as a temporary 'zone' (Mountford, D. 1999). For example, he constructed installational works that the viewer could 'walk into', such as 'Museum One' (1999) (see Figs. 6.30. – 6.34.). 'Museum One' was a temporary architectural construction that consisted of a built environment that the viewer walked through. Collaborative work formed a significant feature of Duncan's installational-type work, particularly his collaboration with Janet Farahar. Duncan considered the possibilities of an artform that could be made by more than one person. The conversations which the two artists had about art formed a dialogue that they tried to reflect in their more interactive project work. For example, in the project 'Traces' (1996), Duncan attempted

to show a dialogue in the artwork about the relationship between the display setting and the interaction of the people who used the building. Duncan explored the possibilities of using materials that emphasised the temporal nature of this process.

In case study five, Martell felt 'tethered' by the static nature of her studio-based painting practice (Linsdell, M. 1997). Martell explored the context of her work and the comparative value of objects. For example, she made 'interventions' into museum collections and juxtaposed her own work with relics from the past, such as 'Out With It!' 1995 (see Figs. 7.10. – 7.14.). The case study shows that Martell explored the relationship between her temporary artworks and the different gallery and non-gallery display settings. She broadened her range of media and processes and explored time-based and interactive media. For example, she explored non-visual elements of landscape such as radiation ('Drill Core Test Bores with Geiger Counter' (1994), see Fig. 7.8. & 7.9.), and the effects of time and technology ('Site Specific Decay' (1994), see Fig. 7.7.). Martell tried-out time-based media such as video and interactive digital artworks, for example 'Mark-ing Up Languages' (1996). Collaborative projects did not feature prominently in her installational type practice. However, working with others became a significant feature of Martell's installational-type practice. For example, Martell completed installational projects in Manchester working with the all-female artists' group 'Brass Art' such as 'Our Night at the Palace' (1998) and 'Observing the Observer' (1999) (see Fig. 7.23. – 7.30.).

In case study six, Alec extended his practice beyond the conventions and limits he found with his studio-based painting practice. He explored a more speculative, installational approach to creative art practice. He extended the range of media, made work about his studio space and used video and photography to document these 'events'. For example, he made dioramas and temporary constructions in the studio (see Figs. 8.13. – 8.24.) to explore whether he could make artworks which were more 'open-ended' (Shepley, A. 1998). He experimented with ways of crossing over the frame to show 'process' as the main feature of his artwork - where the viewer could be more directly involved in the work. For example, he produced 'Watch the Birdie' (1996) (see Fig. 8.36. – 8.39.) which was a video projection that implicated the viewer within the artwork. Alec explored ways of blurring the boundaries of art and 'not art'. He wanted to 'get inside painting' (Shepley, A. 1999). The case study shows that Alec explored making temporary artworks in different gallery and non-gallery display settings. The problems found with the limits and conventions of the studio-based practice were formed into an appreciative system and Alec made installational artworks that were provisional and which used the display setting. Although he worked with others on projects such as 'Vignettes' (1995) (see Figs. 8.28. – 8.35.) collaborative work did not feature significantly in his installational art practice. Alec took opportunities to work with others, but in this case study it was confined to networking with other artists. Interestingly, he was more interested in working with invented, imaginary people such as Shelley Cape, whom he could use as an extra member of his team.

In case study seven, Alison felt confined by 'purist painting' (Jones, A. 1999). She reached out from her studio-based painting practice to work in an extended range of media. She explored making use of the space within gallery and non-gallery settings. For example, 'Hum' (1994) (see Figs. 9.20. – 9.22.) was an installation in which honey was used as paint and the gallery walls acted as the canvas. The rectilinear format of the walls and the fluidity of the honey acted as metaphors for painting but in 'real space'. She explored non-visual artworks via an extended visual language and media. For example, 'The Marzipan Piece' 1997 (see Fig. 9.28.) involved the viewer in directly manipulating and changing the form of the artwork: the coconut piece 'White Lines' 1995 (see Fig. 9.23.) and 'Soft Centre' 1993 (see Figs. 9.16. & 9.17.) involved the sense of smell. Alison (Jones, A. 1999) explored the idea of reproductive cycles and a broadened visual dialogue through making 'multiples' (see Figs. 9.14. & 9.15.). Alison made temporary artworks which related to the display setting and often alluded to the time-based or cyclical element of her work. The case study shows that Alison explored making temporary artworks in which the different gallery and non-gallery settings temporarily became part of the artwork. The rectilinear format of Alison's work remained a significant feature of her installational-type work. Working with others became more significant in Alison's installational practice as she extended the range of media and processes. She worked closely with fellow artist Laird Galbraith but collaborations did not feature significantly in the case study.

Fig. 10.1. Overview of case studies.

Feature of installational practice / Case Study	Case Study 1 Steve	Case Study 2 Dave	Case Study 3 Geoff	Case Study 4 Duncan	Case Study 5 Martell	Case Study 6 Alec – the researcher	Case Study 7 Alison
Focus on relationship between art object, viewer and display space	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Artwork/display space interdependency	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Reliance on site or site specific	yes/no*	no	yes/no*	yes	yes	no	no
Artwork interactive with audience	no	yes	no	yes	yes	no	yes
Use of time-based media i.e. video	yes	yes	no	yes	yes	yes	no
Performance-based aspect	no	yes	no	no	no	yes	no
Use of 'other senses' i.e. sound, touch	yes	yes	no	no	no	no	yes
Working with others	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Collaboration	yes	yes	no	yes	no	no	no

* yes/no indicates practice occasionally relies upon a particular space

Fig. 10.2. Summary of features of transition.

Case Study	Features of Transition
Case Study 1 (Steve)	1. Responding to limits of studio-based painting practice. 2. Exploring 'complexities' of painting process 'outside painting' 3. Scrutinising relationship between artworks, viewer and display setting, implicating the viewer in the work. 4. Extending range of media and processes. 5. More democratic practice – working in collaborations with other artists.
Case Study 2 (Dave)	1. Responding to feelings of confinement by studio-based painting practice and conversations about the interiority of painting. 2. Interacting with audience and exploring other venues for experiencing art, implicating the viewer in the work/ directly involving the viewer in making the artwork. 3. Extending range of media and processes. 4. Exploring alternative venues. 5. Working in collaborations with like-minded people. 6. Exploring 'Random Fictions' - making art an 'event'.
Case Study 3 (Geoff)	1. Responding to the limits of the studio-based painting practice. 2. Realising painting ideas in 3-D, exploring different types of display setting. 3. Exploring artwork's relation to site relevance. 4. Extending range of media and processes. 5. Exploring alternative venues. 6. Exploring temporary artworks. 7. Working with others.
Case Study 4 (Duncan)	1. Responding to limits of studio-based painting practice. 2. Working with others and exploring a more democratic practice in collaborative practice, implicating the viewer in the artwork/directly involving the viewer in making the artwork. 3. Extending range of media and processes. 4. Exploring alternative venues. 5. Exploring 'museum languages' and visual codes.
Case Study 5 (Martell)	1. Responding to limits of studio-based painting practice. 2. Exploring relationship between artworks, museum exhibits, non-art objects, the viewer and display spaces. 3. Extending range of media and processes. 4. Exploring alternative venues. 5. Working with others and exploring interactive art through collaborative projects.
Case Study 6 (Alec – the researcher)	1. Responding to limits of studio-based painting practice. 2. Exploring time-based/durational aspect of art practice and artwork. 3. Exploring relationship between artwork, the viewer and the display setting, implicating the viewer in the artwork. 4. Extending range of media and processes. 5. Working with others.
Case Study 7 (Alison)	1. Responding to limits of studio-based painting practice. 2. Exploring artworks' non-visual elements e.g. touch and smell. 3. Exploring relationship between artwork, the viewer and the display setting – directly involving the viewer in making the artwork. 4. Extending range of media and processes. 5. Exploring alternative venues. 6. Working with others.

Fig. 10.3. Case study projects.

Case Study	Project
Case Study One – Steve	1. 'What you are seeing will not be here forever' 1995 Merseyway Shopping Precinct, Stockport 2. 'Quarterlight' 1996 Cultural Industries Quarter, Sheffield 3. 'Depot' 1997 'Old Bus Depot', Cultural Industries Quarter, Sheffield 4. 'S1 Specs' 1998 Sheffield City Centre
Case Study Two – Dave	1. 'Bundesliga (One World Cup and Two World Wars)' 1996 Video Performance, Germany 2. 'Dave's Evening on Wheels', 1997 House of Good Things, Manchester 3. 'Private View' 1997, Velvet Bar, Manchester 4. 'Die Kunst v Das Golem' 1998 Theatre in the Mill, Bradford
Case Study Three – Geoff	1. '800 Boxes' 1989 Upper Campfield Market, & '1000 Boxes' 1989, Rodney Centre, Liverpool Manchester 2. '60 Railway Sleepers' 1991 Oxford Road, Manchester & Edge Hill, Liverpool 3. 'Rydal Hall Drawings' 1992 Rydal Hall, Cheshire 4. 'A Conversation Between Two Chairs' 1998 Flux Space, Flux Magazine 5. 'Are You being Served?' 1999 Lewis's Stores, Manchester & Liverpool
Case Study Four – Duncan	1. 'Lost and Found' 1996 The Glass Box, Salford University 2. 'Traces' 1996 South Trafford College, Manchester 3. '24th August 1994' 1996 Skillion Warehouse, Liverpool 4. 'Obsessive Compulsive Disorder' 1998 Liverpool Museum of Life 5. 'Museum One' 1999 Nottingham Trent University
Case Study Five – Martell	1. 'Visions' 1991 Archaeology in Britain Conference, University of Birmingham 2. 'Mark-ing Up Language' Cyberia, Manchester 1996 3. 'Human Transcript' 1997 RIBA, Manchester 4. 'The Waiting Game' in 'Our Night at the Palace' 1998 Palace Hotel, Manchester 5. 'Observing the Observer' 1999 Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester
Case Study Six – Alec	1. 'Intervention' 1995 Merseyway Shopping Precinct, Stockport 2. 'Vignettes' 1995 RIBA, Manchester 3. 'Latitude 53' 1995 Internet 4. 'Neon Painting' 1998 Artspace Building Foyer, Winnipeg Fringe Festival, Canada 5. 'Albert Street Warehouse Project' 1998 Winnipeg, Canada
Case Study Seven – Alison	1. 'White Lines' 1995 Albert Dock, Liverpool 2. 'Salt Piece' 1997 Norwich Castle Museum

10.5. The absence of stoppage.

Langrish, J. (1993) claimed that instead of looking for physics-type causation, 'biological' events could sometimes be explained with reference to the absence of things stopping that event. This "absence of stoppage" (Langrish. J. 1993 p. 6) was a feature of the transition from studio-based practices to practices that were more collaborative and installational. The use of both gallery and non-gallery display settings, an increased focus on meeting wider audience, and an extended range of media were features of the installation art practices in the case studies. The absence of stoppage, preventing the artists in the case studies working with extended media, other artists and non-artists, gallery and non-gallery people, and displaying their work both in non-gallery settings, was a feature of the transitions in the practices. In other words, there was nothing preventing the artists in the case studies using the available non-gallery settings and collaborating with other people.

The relationship between the artwork and its setting was explored in both in gallery and in non-gallery spaces. The artists in case studies reached an audience by taking the work out of the gallery to the audience, for example, into shop windows. The table in Fig. 10.3. summarises the projects in non-gallery settings undertaken by the artists in the case studies.

10.6. Problem finding.

The pattern of problem finding and problem reframing revealed in the case studies is discussed here in a wider context, more particularly within the context of Donald Schön's ideas about the 'reflective practitioner' and how professionals think in action. The relationship between problem finding and the visual aspects of the artwork produced by the artists in the case studies is discussed.

A pattern of problem finding emerged through qualitative analysis of the data from the interviews, the case study artists' slide lectures witnessed by this researcher and through other people's commentaries.

The artists in the case studies examined the nature of the perceived model of studio-based practice and 'problematised' their overall production of artworks as a result of finding problems. Problem finding had an effect on the work being produced and changed the strategies for making and displaying artworks. The case studies show that reflection upon practice consisted of not only 'looking within' the practice and the artworks, but also 'beyond' the practice and the artworks. This 'reaching out' beyond the conventions of practice included reaching out to use different media, meet new audiences and make connections with other artists and other disciplines.

Probing and questioning by each practitioner led to a 'conversation' with their situation. The review of the situation and the work being produced gave rise to critical reflection

and reframing of the situation to judge the competing ideas. The inclusivity/exclusivity judgements and resulting fragmentation and complexity in new practices was enjoyed by each practitioner and generated strategies for creative thinking about the art object, extended media and different modes of engagement with audience and other artists. Each of the artists in the case studies found problems with their studio-based situation and formed an appreciative system of the 'problem situation' and the new situation of installation art (Schön, D. 1983).

Each practitioner expressed thoughts and ideas about the concept of engagement and the time element of engagement. In addition, "the traditional aesthetic habits of detached spectatorship" were considered by each respondent, (Kaprow in Gablik, S. 1989, pp. 20-24).

It is significant that, once the problem had been identified, the artists reframed their practices in terms of an 'unframed situation'. They appeared to feed off their interest in that problem and to give it life as the new subject for artistic inquiry.

In the shared pattern each practitioner saw the 'new emergent problem' in relation to their familiar repertoire and tried to treat it as a "generative metaphor for the new phenomenon" (Schön 1983, p. 269). Steve saw the initial problem as a problem of a painter's space in terms of a window, Dave saw the problem in terms of the rectangle, Geoff saw it in terms of site and context, Duncan and Martell saw it in terms of objects, value and context, Alec saw it in terms of process, and Alison also saw it in terms of

feeling confined by the static nature of the single rectangle. Each of the artists in the case studies reflected upon a problem, formulated it into a new hypothesis and tested it in the new situation. The exploration of the problems found in the new situation of installation art delayed closure of the problems and gave rise to new approaches to making and displaying art (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976).

There was a problem identified in the feeling of being bound by the perceived conventions, materials and linear process of production in the studio-based practices. This initial framing of the problem and generative metaphor prompted action and a different approach to practice. The result was a new kind of practice, one that was more focussed on process, provisionality, the relation between the viewer, the artwork and the display setting.

Isolation (Wolff, J. 1981, p. 10-11), or a sense of being trapped by a particular convention of art language (Nietzsche, F. in Sarup, M. 1988, p. 50), was revealed as a problem that the artists in the case studies reflected upon in their practices. Whether confined by language conventions, physical isolation, or the limits of media, materials and processes within their own individual practices, the artists in the case studies showed a very real sense of wanting to become 'unbound' and move beyond their own boundaries into a new situation.

The case studies show that the increased complexity in installation art practices was a significant feature and was enjoyed by the artists in the case studies. Increased

complexity increased the opportunities for 'survival strategies' and accidental happenings. 'Chances' were increased. The accidental find and the ensuing testing through choice and selection was a contributing factor in the competition of ideas - ideas which compete to be chosen - and then selected (Langrish, J. 1993, pp. 3-5):

> "At any stage in biological evolution, the number of possible future states is enormous. Those varieties that do survive and lead to further varieties do so partly by luck and coincidence and because of environmental changes which are also not predictable.... Without variety there is no competition. Without competition there is no evolution. Without evolution there is no biology." (Langrish, J. 1998, pp. 1-3).

Creative practitioners from many disciplines have a vested interest in evolutionary change - it is the dynamic that keeps their work 'alive'. The focus on provisionality and process in installation art keeps the work alive. It delays the artwork's 'end' or 'closure' (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976).

10.7. The 'appreciative system' and 'back-talk' in the change in practices.

This section relates the initial framing of the problem or 'the appreciative system' (Schön, D. 1983) to the role of back-talk.

According to Schön, D. (1983), little is known about the ways individuals develop the feel for media, language, and repertoire that shapes self-reflexivity. Schön, D. (1983)

claimed finding and initially framing a problem (together with the recognition of the connections with other apparently unconnected phenomena) and relating to the new situation with the conventional repertoire forms the basis of an 'appreciative system'. He went on to suggest that an appreciative system is an essential condition for reflection in action. Without an appreciative system, the conventional repertoire cannot be seen in the light of the 'back-talk' from the conversation with it and it is likely that instead of artistic inquiry and reflection in action there would be "a series of disconnected episodes".

All the artists in the case studies reflected upon the conventional repertoire of their studio-based practices. The reflective conversation with the situation gave rise to renewed artistic activities. The artists in the case studies engaged in similar types of reflective conversation but each was governed by a different appreciative system (Schön, D. 1983). The back-talk enabled a reframing of the situation and new artworks to reflect that new situation.

The artists in the case studies had to 'hold themselves open' to the back-talk from their situation in order to make sense of their transaction with the situation (Schön, D. 1983 p. 164).

All the artists in the case studies reflected on the limits of their studio-based practices. In the light of the back-talk from their situations the artists in the case studies 'unframed' their practices to explore the possibilities of them being less limiting and less insular.

According to Schön, D. (1983), there are differences in the *constants* various practitioners bring to their reflection:

- "the media, languages, and repertoires that practitioners use to describe reality and conduct experiments
- the appreciative systems they bring to problem setting, to the evaluation of inquiry, and to reflective conversation
- the overarching theories by which they make sense of phenomena
- the role frames within which they set their tasks... " (Schön, D. 1983 p. 270).

He suggested that these things, whilst being named 'constants' are not absolutely unchanging, indeed they change in response to reflection, but at a slower rate than the overarching theories of particular phenomena or frames for particular problematic situations.

Schön went on to describe how the relative stability of these constants enables the practitioner to more quickly recognise and engage with what can often be a dynamic and unstable situation and with what is turbulent within the practice. He said:

> "Differences in the constants brought to the inquiry affect the scope and direction of reflection in action.... Because of the differences in feel for media, language, and repertoire, the art of one practice tends to be opaque to the practitioners of another" (Schön, D. 1983 p. 271).

He asserted this could obscure some of the similarities. Schön claimed that constancy of the appreciative system is essential to the inquirer engaged in on-the-spot experiments (such as those examples in the case studies). He wrote:

> "It is what makes possible the initial framing of the problematic situation, and it is also what permits the inquirer to re-appreciate the situation in the light of its back-talk" (Schön, D. 1991 p. 272).

This point is important not only in terms of the appreciative system but also in terms of exercising the artistic and conceptual judgements that are fundamental to artistic practice.

An important difference is the idiosyncratic nature of the particular artistic judgements that individual practitioners make about their own work; the special theories derived from the practice; and their relation to the overarching theory. According to de Oliveira (1994), installation art is a relatively new art phenomenon, although its lineage can be traced to the earlier part of this century, and the overarching theory, whilst remaining constant, is prone to changes as it emerges.

This complicates any relationship between 'individual special theories' and the overarching theory. However, each artist found a useful connection with installation-type art. Perhaps this 'empathy' was precisely because the conventions of installation art were perceived as provisional and each of the artists in the case studies had a reflective conversation with the limits and conventions of their practice and looked for ways to provisionally reframe this situation. Installation art supplied a language from which each

of the artists in the case studies reconstructed a new situation, without imposing an overarching theory that was restrictive.

Schön, D. (1983) described how practitioners' roles are embedded in an institutional context but each interprets his/her role differently. Whilst institutional contexts can seemingly remain constant, at the same time they allow for difference. According to Schön, D. (1991 p.274):

> "Differences in role frame help to determine what knowledge is seen as useful in practice and what kinds of reflection are undertaken in action."

10.8. Conclusions.

This section contains a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the case studies and the literature.

10.8.1. Changes in practice.

Problem finding with the studio-based practices led the artists in the case studies to form an appreciative system. Problems found by the artists in the case studies were reframed and explored in the new situation, as claimed by Schön, D. (1983). The case studies support this claim but shed new light on the reframed situation. The artists in the case studies delayed closure of the reframed situation and maintained its provisionality (Getzels and Csikszentmihalyi, 1976).

All the case studies show that the practitioners found the conventions of studio-based, painting practice, to be limiting. There was a feeling of being confined by these limits: the practitioners described themselves almost as prisoners of their own conventions. Each of the seven practitioners claimed that merely 'painting' was somehow limiting. In addition, each artist found the duality of the viewer/painting relationship to be limiting. The multi-dimensionality of installation art changed the artwork's relation to the viewer and introduced alternative perspectives to the viewing of the artwork. All the artists in the case studies challenged the central and dominant role of painting in their painting practices and the perceived linear process of production. The product-driven nature of the studio-based painting practice was seen as limiting, and each respondent 'opened up' what constituted their practice through a more installational approach to creative art practice and a more provisional approach to the idea of the 'completed artwork'. The case studies show that practitioners wanted to engage with a more process-based art practice, a broader audience, a wider discursive field and a provisional approach to the boundaries of the artwork. Each case study reveals a desire on the part of the artists to open up the relationship between the art object, the viewer and the display space via a more speculative approach to practice, the viewer, display setting and the artwork. Problems found were reframed in the new situation but in the newly framed situation the artists maintained a provisionality that was lacking in the old situation of the studio-based practice. The main feature of reframing the new situation was the provisionality of the newly reframed situation.

This researcher noted that none of the artists in the case studies completely abandoned painting. The 'end of painting' was delayed. The artists in the case studies preferred to explore the problems found in painting by an installational approach to art practice.

Each case study shows how the artists explored problems through new work. In all cases, this led to a change in approach to their practices. It led to the introduction of new media, materials and processes and changed the nature of the practices.

Each of the case studies reveals how the artists engaged in a reflective conversation with their situation. The research found that the artists' reflection and problem finding was a precursor to 'reaching out' beyond the perceived conventions of the studio-based practice. The reflective processes, in which the artists involved themselves, had the effect of 'fragmenting' the practice and 'opening it out' to a wider range of media.

In all the case studies there is evidence of an opening out in terms of media and interaction with other interested parties. There is evidence in the majority of the installational artworks of direct connections being made by the artists between the art object and its display setting. For example, in some case studies the work makes direct reference to its surroundings through the use of photography (see case study one). 'Site relevance' was seen as important in case study two and in case study four Duncan went to great lengths to make the connection via actual construction and the materials he used.

Most case studies show there was a strong desire to move out and become involved with working with others. However, not all worked collaboratively. For example in case studies one, two, four and five, Steve, Dave, Duncan and Martell all spoke of collaborations with other artists on specific projects. Although collaboration was approached in different ways organisationally, each artist had certain specific tasks to perform and ideas to bring to the project. In case studies three, six and seven, Geoff, Alec and Alison were content to work with others but did not appear to collaborate with other artists on projects.

All the artists in the case studies made considerations about the artwork's relationship with the viewer. Some case studies showed that interaction with the audience was an important feature of reaching out from the perceived limits of studio-based practice. For example, Dave in case study two made work that relied upon the audience to actually make the art or to put together the component parts that he provided. In case study four the project 'Traces' showed how a passive audience was used to make the books of palm prints. In case study five Martell worked with Taylor Nuttall to make an interactive web page where the viewer could manipulate and change the work of art and send it back to the web master to have their version displayed in its new form. In case study seven Alison's 'Marzipan Piece' involved the viewer making impressions of their hands and fingers in the block of marzipan to form a sculpture of those particular moments in time.

One case study (case study seven), showed how the range of media could be extended to include the viewer's sense of smell. The use of materials with a particular sense of smell enhanced the contextual understanding of the artwork, for example, 'White Lines' (see Fig. 9.23.). There is no evidence to support the claim that the deterioration of Alison's eyesight had forced her decision to explore other senses such as touch and smell via her artworks, but this researcher felt that it had informed her choice to do so. Some of the case studies showed how the widened range of media was not restricted to the visual and, for example, in case study one Steve explored the use of sound.

In case study six Alec invented imaginary people, for example, Shelley Cape who was an anagram of his own name and an imaginary artist. He used the invented persona not only to talk to but also to make artworks in their name. All the case studies showed that self-reflexivity was an important feature of the reflective process but only one took this to the point of inventing other imaginary personas with whom to converse.

The changes in artistic approach in each of the case studies to make 'multi-media, multi-dimensional and multi-form artworks' (Stangos, N. 1994), changed the relationship between the artwork and the market (Onorato, R. J. 1997 p. 13 – 29). The idea of artwork as a single commodified object was challenged by the introduction of process-based artworks, temporary installations and installations that relied on the display setting.

All the artists in the case studies explored the relationship between the artwork and its display setting and blurred their perceived distinction between artwork and its background. Some made site-specific artworks, some made site-relevant artworks, but all the artists in the case studies considered the setting as integral to the artwork. Blurring the distinction between the display setting and the artwork was also explored as a way of implicating the viewer in the artwork. All the case studies show that the artists' presence during the installation of the artworks was a necessary feature of the practices as described by Wood, P. (1993 pp. 197 – 200).

One case study showed that the relationship between the artwork and the value of the artwork had been explored via the installational practice. For example, in case study two in Dave's jigsaw piece ('Dave's Evening on Wheels Jigsaw' 1997) the artwork was divided into smaller units, each with a lower price than would have been the case if the artwork were sold as a single unique object. One or several people could own the artwork and its commodity value as a single object was changed.

This researcher felt here was enough evidence to support the view that each artist in the case studies was engaging in a more holistic approach to art practice (Hunter, I. A. 1992 p. 237 – 238). For example, each artist in the case studies reached out beyond the confines of the studio-based painting practice to explore the more curatorial aspects of art practice such as researching the display setting, the relationship between the artwork and the viewer, and the context of the artwork. Each of the artists in the case studies reflected upon the consequences of their artworks beyond the studio setting. The art

object and the object of art were scrutinised via the reflective conversation with their individual and unique situations. The reflective conversations led to problem findings and the problems that were found were resituated within the new approach to art practice. The case studies show how the artists' thoughts and critical conversations about media, materials and processes, the role of the viewer, interactivity, working with others and levels of interactivity were intensely considered in the new approach to art practice.

The artists in the case studies found problems with the material and conceptual boundaries of their studio-based practices. The artists found problems with the hierarchy of their conventions and the perceived linearity of the processes they were involved with in their studio-based practices. The problems found were limiting their creative aspirations. The artists in the case studies explored the problems found via installation art practice. They 'unpacked' the problems found through a new approach to creative practice.

Problem finding leads to problem solving via new artwork. This is one way art renews itself. It is also one of the ways critical rigour is exercised in a variety of situations via an increased range of visual media and processes.

The artists in the case studies found problems with their studio-based painting practices which they found to be limiting and insular. Each of the artists in the case studies reflected on the problems found and formed an appreciative system. One of the features

of problem finding was delayed closure where the problems found were explored in a variety of ways. The problems found were explored using an extended range of media, materials and processes, working with others and through non-gallery settings. The artists in the case studies reached out beyond the limits of their studio-based practices and explored the material and conceptual boundaries of the artworks, together with the relationship between the artwork, its display setting and the viewer. The installational approach to making artworks adopted by the artists in the case studies was characterised by delayed closure. The artwork was made provisional, the frame was rendered permeable and the viewer was implicated in the artwork.

10.8.2. The studio without walls.

The installation art practices of the artists in the case studies were characterised by the 'absence of stoppage' and 'unframing' processes. The material and conceptual limits surrounding the artwork, the studio situation and display setting, were no longer perceived as a 'stoppage' to activity (Langrish, J. 1993 p. 6). Once the perceived limits and conventions of the studio-based practices had been formed into an appreciative system the problems were unpacked.

The features of the installation art practices of the artists in the case studies included the abolition of the perceived limits and conventions of their studio-based practices and the re-formulation of a more 'democratic' and truthful approach to the display of artworks. Venturing beyond the studio-based practices to work with others, to use extended media,

materials and processes, and to work in alternative display settings, diminished the feelings of confinement and insularity. The artists' release from conventions meant that nothing now prevented them from making changes in their practice.

Perceived hierarchies of the studio-based practice, explored through processes of self-reflection, problem finding and back-talk, were characterised by an 'unframing' process. Buren, D. (1970 p. 104) claimed the location - where a work of art is seen is its frame – is its boundary. Buren, D. (1987 pp. 201 – 207) also claimed the definitive place of the work must be the work itself and suggested the studio as initially the definitive place.

Art that remains in the studio, Buren, D. (1970) claimed, is a non-entity but once the artwork leaves the studio it is subject to a range of manipulations, for example, by museum and gallery curators. The case studies shed light on the ways the artists attempted to make more 'truthful artworks'. The artists in the case studies spoke of trying to achieve a more 'democratic' approach both to making the artwork and to the viewer. Each of the artists in the case studies exerted some form of 'display control' in a sense, transporting the studio to the display setting or revealing what went on in the studio in a more open and truthful way using the display setting. They tried to reveal more of the process of the artwork and involve the viewer in that experience by blurring the boundaries around the artwork and bringing the sense of the studio to the display setting.

10.8.3. The use of non-gallery spaces.

As discussed in section 10.8.1. and as illustrated in Figures 10.2. and 10.3. there is evidence to support the claim that the artists in the case studies circumvented curatorial influences on their work by curating their own shows and projects. They used non-gallery display settings and showed their artworks publicly but maintained a sense of the artwork's 'closest reality'.

Often the artists in the case studies tried to create a sense of site-specificity within a project. Site-specificity necessitated the use of certain non-gallery sites. For example, in 1996 Duncan installed '24th August 1994' in the Skillion Warehouse in Liverpool. The disused loft space complemented the abandoned office furniture and paraphernalia of this installation. Another example was Geoff's use of the Lewis's shop windows in Tracey and Mart.

There was no evidence of the artists in the case studies wishing to opt out of showing their work in art galleries but often the nature of the installational type work being undertaken relied upon the use of a space. Given the long waiting lists for gallery exhibition spaces the artists took advantage of the absence of stoppage from using alternative display settings. In addition, given the freedom to use these kinds of spaces the artists in the case studies enjoyed a different level of autonomy to that enjoyed in art gallery settings. They took the opportunity to take, perhaps, a more holistic view of their

work and the relationship between the display setting, the elements of an installation and of the viewer.

10.8.4. The provisionality of the frame, installation art, and its relation to site and audience.

The case studies revealed artists speculating on the relationship between artwork, site and audience through ephemeral artworks and projects. The idea that the frame exists in both a material and conceptual form has been a significant factor in the emergence of an installational art practice and perhaps the most significant is the different ways the artists approached or reflected upon the frame. According to Derrida, J. (1987), the notion of 'Parergon' and the fragile construct that constitutes the frame suggested that the frame is a temporary device, whether physical, material, conceptual or institutional. According to Norris, C. (1988) the frame is impermeable and separates artwork from its display setting. The frame or boundary between artwork and display setting was blurred in the artistic repertoire of each of the artists in the case studies. The distinction between recognisable and unrecognisable artistic activity was explored. According to Onorato, R. J. (1997 p. 13):

> "The aesthetic power of installation art does not reside in the singular, commodified object but in an ability to become, rather than merely represent, the continuum of real experience by responding to specific situations".

By exploiting the provisional nature of the frame the artists in the case studies engaged in artworks that were responsive to their ideas about site and audience. The main features of artworks in the case studies include a close relationship to the display setting. They were often multi-media, multi-dimensional, temporary and used the display setting to blur the boundary around the artwork. The multi-media, multi-dimensional and ephemeral nature of the installation artworks in the case studies and the installations' reliance on being assembled challenged the notion of the artwork as a single, commodified object.

10.8.5. The 'fluctuating frame'.

According to Norris, C. (1988) the frame is an impermeable boundary, it is a marker of limits. According to Derrida, J. (1987) the frame is temporary and therefore fragile. The case studies support both these seemingly contradictory claims about the frame. The case studies shed light on the topic of the frame in installation art.

The artists in the case studies adopted an approach to making artworks which was speculative. This speculative approach was characterised by material fluidity, conceptual responsiveness to specific situations and blurring the boundary between the first, material, physical frame around an individual artwork and the second frame of the display setting, as suggested by Welchman, J. C. (1995). The artists in the case studies spoke of breaking free from the material frame, the rectangle and the linear processes they associated with their studio-based practices and of the preferred matrixical and

provisional nature of installation art. There was evidence in the case studies of the artists' thinking about a provisional matrix governing installation artworks. The installation artworks in the case studies were, for example, multi-dimensional, multi-media, ephemeral or time-based and did not hold the viewer in a single and fixed relationship to the artwork, so the viewer was often free to roam around the space of the artwork. The artworks were dependent on the display setting but not in a fixed, one-for-one relationship (Norris, C. 1988). The frame that distinguished between the material parts of the installation and the surrounding display space fluctuated between individual parts of the installation and the display setting. For example, the material limits of, for instance, the scaffolding in Alec's project 'Watch the Birdie' (1996, Figs. 8.36. – 8.39.) or Alison's coconut piece 'White Lines' (1995, Fig. 9.23.) or Steve's 'Vesuvius' (1998, Figs. 3.30. – 3.34.) or Duncan's 'Traces' (1996 Figs. 6.22. – 6.24.) were apparent to the viewer, but at once dissolved by the realisation of the presence or integral nature of the second frame of the display setting. Upon the realisation that a space contains artworks the material frame becomes apparent once more. The frame or limit to the artwork fluctuated between the material of the installation and the display setting. The fluctuation of the frame is important in drawing the viewer into the artwork.

According to Buren, D. (1970 pp. 100 – 104) the location of the artwork is its frame, it is an ephemeral frame not restricted by any one single perspective of physical reality. The frame is at once part of the artwork and its surroundings and provisional according to circumstance and the viewer. The literature study and the case studies revealed a possible third interpretation of the frame. The main features of the third frame are its

fixity *and* its provisionality. The viewer is implicated in the artwork by the blurring of the boundary which separates the artwork from the display setting (Wood, P. et al 1993 p. 202), and the 'frame' is determined by the speculative viewing from different perspectives.

Because of this third frame's provisionality this researcher first thought of it as a 'fluctuating frame'; 'meta-frame' or 'para-frame'. Subsequently it was decided to use 'fluctuating frame' as the name. The third frame fluctuates, speculatively between the first and second frames.

Of course, broad generalisations cannot validly be made from seven case studies but three kinds of claims can be made:

- Where all the case studies show certain similarities, for example, the ephemeral nature of the artwork or the artwork's relation to display setting, the provisionality of the frame and the implication of the viewer in the artwork, it is at least credible to suggest that these similarities might be of a more general nature,
- Where the case studies support views expressed in the literature, for example, the provisional nature of the frame, this is valuable.
- Where the case studies throw light on the topic of the frame in installation art, for example, the frame's provisionality, this is valuable.
- Certain ideas that stem from the case studies, for example, the artists' collaborations may be listed as suitable for further research.

10.9. Future research.

This section contains a discussion of specific areas that could develop from the thesis. The discussion includes the development of areas for this researcher, other researchers interested in the practitioner as researcher model, and other researchers in related fields.

The evidence-based research in this thesis provides insights into the transition in seven case studies, from studio-based art practices to installational art practices. The transition as shown in the case studies, from studio-based art practices to installational art practices revealed an important shift in the focus of the aims of the artistic activity. Gablik, S. (1989) clarified many of the issues surrounding the shifts in the artistic community. She referred to artists' shift from being engaged in seemingly market-led artistic activity that was autonomous and separate from society to artistic activity in which artists engaged in work with meaning, not separated from society. Gablik, S. (1989) claimed that an art practice which is not cut off from society but is embedded in society and interacts with people from that society is the way art could become 'useful' once again. She wrote:

> "art which is *not* autonomous - not cut off or 'uncoupled' from life-world contexts - actually presents structural characteristics which are resistant to capitalist imperatives" (Gablik, S. 1989, pp. 20 - 24).

Most of the artists in the case studies spoke of wanting to make multi-media, multi-dimensional artworks that related to the display setting and interacted with the viewer.

The paintings that the artists in the case studies had made in their studio-based practices were perceived as limiting in this respect. The paintings were perceived as cut off or 'uncoupled' from the viewer. They held the viewer in a fixed but distant relationship and they did not 'speak' enough of process. The artists in the case studies wanted to make artworks that reached out and implicated the viewer in the artwork.

The artists in the case studies reached out from what they perceived as insular studio-based practices and worked with fellow artists but there was no evidence to support the claim that they wanted to become more embedded in society. There was evidence to show that the installational artworks produced were often displayed in non-gallery settings and that the artists in the case studies spoke of wanting their artworks to be experienced by new audiences in 'life-world' settings (Gablik, S. 1989). However only one artist (Dave) interacted with the audience to make art. It is clear that the artists in the case studies said they wanted to reach out to an audience but this researcher felt that more research could be done into the desired social dimension of installation artworks and art practices. It is anticipated that this would provide a rich area for future research to be undertaken not only in the field of art, but also in the field of social science, since this would reveal more of the social aspects of artists' creative and reflective thinking. It is also anticipated that curators would undertake similar case study research of artists since the changes in practice revealed in the thesis have obvious implications for the curatorial aspects of art practice. The interaction between the artist, the artwork, the display setting and the viewer would provide an area for future research by colleagues in the curatorial field. Such research by colleagues from other fields would provide very

useful corroborative comparisons and locate art practice within a wider contextual setting.

In addition, this researcher proposed to undertake future research, adopting a similar approach of research by case study, in an investigation focussing specifically on the viewer of installation art. One way reflecting on the relationship with the viewer has changed the nature of this researcher's practice is discussed further at the end of this chapter.

This thesis provides a clear methodology for an investigation into the creative practices of seven artists. Another way of taking this research forward would be to make a similar 'practitioner as researcher' investigation but of seven different artists and see how the results compare to this study. Another useful contribution, and one which would provide a corroborative comparison to this thesis, would be to conduct an investigation of seven different artists from a different region. For example, would a similar investigation of seven artists from Edinburgh or London reveal similar findings? Such a study might reveal similar and/or different features of change in creative art practice. It is anticipated that the practitioner as researcher method employed in this investigation makes a significant contribution to research in the field of fine art and provides a model for other art practitioners (not just in fine art) who are entering the field of research and wishing to conduct a similar investigation.

This thesis reveals further specific areas for future research into art practice by scholars from related fields. For example, it was clear from the evidence in the case studies that there were features that distinguish 'working with others' from 'collaborations'. However, the case studies did not provide enough specific detail, for example, about how collaborations are conceptualised in the minds of the individuals concerned or how and why collaborations are initially formed or how they function.

This researcher felt more research needs to be undertaken to provide more detail about how collaborations operate. The qualitative research methodology in this investigation was largely derived from social science methodologies and this researcher felt that future research into the nature of artists' collaborations would be very usefully undertaken by, or in collaboration with, colleagues from the social sciences. Taking the 'practitioner as researcher' method further by the researcher joining an artists' collaborative practice and researching by reflection-in-action as proposed by Schön, D. (1983) would reveal insights 'from the inside' so to speak. Reflection-in-action on selected projects would provide a useful context to study the roles of each collaborating artist together with the relationship between the artists, the artworks and the viewer. It would also be possible to collate the reflective comments of the selected artists about the perceived gap between art and life (Gablik. S. 1989). It should be possible to discover how artists differentiate between collaborative practices and merely working together. This will contribute to the understanding of installation art practices and interdisciplinary practices generally.

According to the available prospectuses there were fewer Higher Education courses in installation art at the point of commencing this research than at the point of completion and it is anticipated that the findings in this thesis will prove useful to colleagues associated with those courses. Being an art lecturer himself this researcher was mindful of the implications of installation art practice to art education. The researcher considered the implications in such areas as resources - the multi-media & multi-dimensional aspects of installation art and the relationship with display setting has implications for a department's resources. In addition, the multi-media aspect of installation art not only has a resource requirement but also a different approach to the teaching and learning process – different to easel painting for example. However, there was not enough time or space to include the educational considerations in the thesis but it is hoped that such issues will provide a rich area for future research by art educators.

For the benefit of other art practitioners considering the practitioner as researcher model, it is worth noting the significance of this research investigation within the context of the researcher's own creative practice. This researcher's creative art practice changed to accommodate the research investigation within the daily routine of working life. For example, because of the nature of the research – literature research, interviews, writing, etc., the number of major art projects that could be undertaken by this researcher had to be limited to, on average one per year. The management of projects was obviously something that had to be handled effectively and the separation of the creative practice from the research investigation was something that had to be continuously monitored.

However, doing the research whilst continuing to make art had some positive and beneficial effects. For example, the role of an 'alternative other' such as Shelley Cape, and the 'conversational' aspects this relationship brought, became a significant feature of the practice. Reaching out to converse with other artists and engage in unstructured and conversational interviews enriched the context of the practice – and obviously increased the researcher's network of artists! Most significant however was the effect of this research on wanting to include the relationship with the viewer more and more in the production of the artwork. At the time of writing up the thesis this researcher began a digital artwork in which audience interviews not only informed the context of the artwork but also provided the material for it.

Finally, this researcher proposed to undertake another research project of the same seven artists in this thesis in ten years' time. This study will reveal further corroborative insights into art practice and the relationship between the artist, the artwork, the display setting and the viewer.

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