Inspiration to Order

Neil Boynton/Emma Rose

Gerry Davies

Rebecca Fortnum

Michael Ginsborg

Beth Harland

Paula Kane

Mary Maclean

Amanda Newall

Vong Phaophanit

Kirk Woolford

University Art Gallery
College of the Arts
California State University, Stanislaus

Front Cover Image: Michael Ginsborg, *Documentation of the making of Among Other Things No.2 - Timeline*, 2005, acrylic, paper, and inkjet prints on canvas, 157.5cm x 121.5cm.
Back Cover Image: Boynton and Rose, *Location*, 2006

Contents

Director's Foreword

This exhibition, *Inspiration to Order*, gives our university
an incredible opportunity to experience the work
of some of the United Kingdom's leading artists.
The exhibition was curated by Rebecca Fortnum,
Research Fellow in Art of The Lancaster Institute for
the Contemporary Arts, Lancaster University, UK. As
director of the University Art Gallery I am very pleased
to welcome these colleagues to the University Art
Gallery.

Many associates have been instrumental in presenting
this exhibition. I would like to thank Nigel Whiteley
for his excellent essay, Gordon Senior for his help
in initiating and coordinating the exhibition, Tammy
White and University Communications, California
State University, Stanislaus for the wonderful catalog
design and Claremont Print and Copy for their expertise
in printing this catalog. Lastly, I would like to thank
Rebecca Fortnum for her insightful curation and
dedication to the exhibition.

A great amount of thanks is extended to the
Instructionally Related Activates Program of California
State University, Stanislaus as well as anonymous donors
for the funding of the exhibition and catalogue. Their
support is greatly appreciated.

Dean De Cocker
Director, University Art Gallery
College of the Arts
California State University, Stanislaus

Vision and Care

"Anything in life or art, any mark you make has meaning, and the only question is, what kind of meaning?"
- *Philip Guston*

The exhibitions we have presented at the University Art Gallery over the past few years have been largely Californian based. An idea developed gradually over a period of a few months that we should expand our vision, to reflect in our program what was going on artistically elsewhere in the world. It was very natural for me to turn to Europe, where I come from, to look for an International perspective.

Two years ago I had a conversation with Eleanor Wood in which she pointed out the difficulties of such a venture, and said that it would be important to find someone with vision and care to realize this ambition. I had worked with Rebecca Fortnum during the 1990's at Norwich School of Art and Design in England, and knew her to be an accomplished teacher, artist, and writer, but also someone with ability, experience, and commitment in creating exhibitions.

Rebecca and I discussed the idea, and we decided that she would curate an exhibition from the UK. Rebecca had recently been appointed Research Fellow for the Visual Intelligence Research Project, an initiative of the art section of the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts within Lancaster University in Northern England. She explained that she had organized a seminar with a group of prominent artists which addressed issues of decision making within individual artists' practice, and also concerned approaches to making work. Rebecca envisaged an exhibition as well as a scholarly text as the outcome of her project.

Because of Rebecca's vision and care we have this outstanding International exhibition *Inspiration to Order* presented in the University Art Gallery at California State University, Stanislaus in Turlock.

Many thanks are due to Rebecca Fortnum for this outstanding exhibition and catalog, to all concerned with the Research Project at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Lancaster University, to each of the artists in the exhibition who have loaned their artworks, and to Dean DeCocker for his hard work, and diligent support of the exhibition.

Gordon Senior
Chair, Department of Art
California State University, Stanislaus

What is visual intelligence and how do artists use it?

When artists make art an evolution occurs. As Martin Kemp has said,

> "….works of art are physical products made by executants who face real challenges and do not come ready made from the heads of their makers." [Martin Kemp, *The Art Book*, volume 10, issue 2 (March 2003): 37]

The Visual Intelligences Research Project at The Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts seeks to investigate these 'real challenges', that is the way visual artists think and make and, most importantly, the relationship between their thinking and making. The term I am proposing for the interconnection of thinking and making is 'visual intelligence' and, whilst the phrase has its difficulties, for many it proves an interesting proposition. The term seeks to address the fact that Kemp highlights; most visual artists make a number of decisions whilst making their work that aren't purely conceptual or only to do with material and technique but lie in the relationships between these aspects of making. At this moment in time the articulation of visual intelligence could be helpful for both intellectual and pragmatic reasons, providing new ways to map artists' processes and methodologies. It is hoped that the phrase may present a genuine life raft, enabling the decision-making processes of contemporary visual practices to be recognised and enter certain academic debates where they have been largely absent. Firstly though, it should be stated that the problems presented by both words in this pairing cannot be underestimated, continually presenting a threat to capsize its usefulness.

The difficulties of the visual

The 'visual' in contemporary debate is much contested and I will briefly outline some of the difficulties associated with its primacy within academic study and its dissolution within contemporary art practice. In her essay 'Art history visual culture' (2004), Deborah Cherry outlines the factions within the 'traditional' discipline of art history and its more recent 'rival', visual studies, examining their varying attitudes to the visual. The visual within current modes of enquiry is anything but neutral

and, through theories of the 'gaze', we are familiar with the notion of looking's relationship to power. Cherry draws attention to,

> "A swathe of recent interpretations [who have] argued that the project of Western modernity was achieved by the privileging of sight and the enmeshing of visuality, knowledge and power" [Deborah Cherry, 'Art history visual culture', *Art History*, September 2004, Vol 27 No 4:486]

Visual studies has not only broadened the scope of subject under examination from art to culture at large, but also uncovered the unacknowledged agendas of aesthetics. According to Cherry visual studies' use as a wide-ranging tool of investigation and analysis is earned at the expense of art history's ability to contextualise and scrutinise in detail. However both disciplines' relationship with the visual remains fundamental; for Cherry visual culture, like art history, "accepts without question" what Tom Crow describes as,

> "….the most cherished assumption of high modernism …the view that art is to be defined by its essentially visual nature, by its working exclusively through the optical faculties." [Cherry, 'Art history visual culture', *Art History*, September 2004, Vol 27 No 4:483]

It appears that the visual has an established critical domain but one that finds itself increasingly estranged from contemporary developments. Contemporary visual art invigorates itself via other academic fields such as psychoanalysis, philosophy and political theory, which enable it to join current debates.

This challenge for new ways of understanding and relating to art is re-iterated by art itself as it has evolved during the twentieth century. Cherry quotes Charles Harrison characterizing conceptual art as a "withdrawal of visuality" and notes the emergence of art practices that are "antagonistic or averse to the visual" and calls for a different type of critical response. With reference to this dilemma, the art historian Francis Halsall advocates a notion of 'sensism'. He describes this as,

> "The manifold sensory experience…, which is then synthesized into a conceptual unity of understanding". [Halsall, 'One Sense is Never

When discussing the inadequacy of art history's privileging of the visual in relation to contemporary art he takes as his example the challenge of Robert Smithson. He outlines the way the work *Spiral Jetty* operates across media, time and space.

> "…[if] *Spiral Jetty* is but one link in a chain of signifiers which are not only visual but textual, aural, oral and even olfactory, then how should we as art historians approach it? …It would seem that the art historian's trusty apparatus of formal analysis and visual iconography ….. will not work in the face of a work that will, by its very complex nature, resist such an easy simplification". [Halsall, 'One Sense is Never Enough', *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 2004, Vol 3 No 2:105]

Nevertheless it is worth remembering that Halsall has this insight when he leaves his books to visit *Spiral Jetty* to see it 'with his own eyes' as it were, gaining a physical experience of it. Although he advocates eschewing the "over-prioritization of sight" or what Cherry calls the "occularcentrism of visual studies" his investigation continues to enact art history's investment in empiricism. Whilst it is vital to acknowledge this 'embodied' perception, it must not be forgotten that it happily includes the agency of sight. Indeed, although Smithson's work may well be 'complex' this is surely to do with the way it explores its subject(s) in relation to its form(s), rather than its particular material manifestation. Such complexity may be equally found in works throughout history and requires skilful and meticulous attention to unravel. In answer to such a need Norman Bryson suggests the possibility of a "reformulation of where the work stands in time" which he locates in the writings of Mieke Bal. Bal also advocates an experiential account of a work, one that does not attempt a finite summation, but rather seeks to describe a performative encounter between a work and its audience, contingent on context. She describes it thus,

> "Perception, however, is a psychosomatic process, strongly dependent, for example, on the position of the perceiving body in relation to the perceived object... Perception, in fact,

depends on so many factors that it is pointless to strive for objectivity". (Mieke Bal, *Looking In; The Art of Viewing* (Amsterdam, G&B Arts International, 2001): 42)

Indeed the idea that seeing can in some way be hived off from the rest of experience or that the visual can be isolated from other elements no longer holds any sway, as the disenchantment with formalism attests.

It might also be important to note here the impossibility of separating seeing from thinking. Thinking **is** part of looking: we choose what it is we look at and understand that what we see is often not what is. A study such as Rudolph Arnheim's *Visual Thinking*, examines how we think through our senses, that is perceptually. The information our senses afford us is shaped and determined individually at the point of reception, occurring continually in everyday life. He says,

> "…the cognitive operations called thinking are not the privilege of mental processes above and beyond perception but the essential ingredients of perception itself." [Rudolph Arnheim, *Visual Thinking*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, University of California Press, 1969):13]

Compelling writing by art historians such as Michael Baxandall, Svetlana Alpers and Michael Podro have in common a sense that their analyses are founded in a primary experience of looking; the intuitions or reactions experienced whilst contemplating a work of art are acknowledged and then related to a scholarly exploration of the artist's works and processes.

The problem that lies at the heart of the debate may be this; a complete articulation of what happens when we experience a work of art is impossible. Visual art's academic disciplines so called 'priviliging' of the visual may be viewed as an over compensation for its inability to find adequate means of translating the visual. As Podro concludes his book *Depiction*,

> "Critical description never properly or adequately corresponds to the interest and force of a painting, both because our interest is irreducibly bound to our perceiving, and because what we describe takes on its force for us only in the context of innumerable other recognitions in which it is embedded and which

lie beyond the scope of describing." (Michael Podro, *Depiction*, (New Haven & London, Yale University Press,1998):147)

Rather than avoid the idea of the visual then, it would make sense to acknowledge its importance in our perception of art and its basis in the material, sensory world. In the term 'visual intelligence' then, the visual refers to the perceived physical nature of medium and process. Accepting our inability to verbally define the visual is important and perhaps releases us to engage with the more ephemeral kinds of statements about art that often issue from a studio practice. The purpose of allowing artists' voices to enter the fray is to muddy any notion of 'purity' in the visual realm, rather than act as an ultimate authority or simplistic closure to debate. They may produce subjective statements rooted in time and place, yet if artists are willing to share their experiences, we stand to gain an understanding of the transactions between thinking and making that are otherwise unavailable to us. To the debate around visual studies and art history then perhaps one might also want to add the multivalent 'studio practice' to the methods of enquiry. Often disparaged as the least disciplined of all the disciplines, an inconsistent hotch-potch of ideas and theories drawn from the academic debates it exists in ephemeral forms; verbal critiques, artists talks and statements and, occasionally, catalogue essays and exhibition reviews. The words that emerge from practices often include the voicing of something experiential and provisional and with a sense of personal imperative; much is at stake. The transient nature of such material is crucial, they are of the moment, used in the service of the visual work, work that is to be experienced rather than 'read'.

The difficulty of intelligence

The term 'intelligence' and its use in relation to the workings of artists, is also somewhat problematic. In several books on the subject the celebrated psychologist and educationalist Howard Gardner, explores the notion of multiple intelligences, some of which are exploited in the making of a work of art. He states his position,

> "To my way of thinking, the mind has the potential to deal with several different kinds of content but a person's facility with one content has little predictive power about his or her facility with other kinds.......human beings have evolved to exhibit several intelligences and not draw variously on one flexible intelligence." [Gardner, *Frames of Mind*, *The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, (London, Fontana Press,1993): xv]

His theory has reached wide-ranging acceptance not least because it seems to be exemplified in the world around us (we all know people who seem intelligent in different ways) and in scientific studies (neuropsychology). Gardner outlines seven types of intelligence which 'work together' in different configurations in creative individuals to produce cultural outputs or (to use his term), 'symbolic systems'. In this list he includes 'spatial intelligence' which 'grows out of one's observation of the visual world' and enables those who possess it to both imagine and recognise objects in space. Although he can locate this type of intelligence in scientists (Einstein), artists demonstrate it most clearly and he draws on examples from the life and work of Picasso, Michelangelo and Henry Moore. When spatial intelligence is not accompanied by technical facility (bodily intelligence) it surfaces as discriminatory connoisseurship (Kenneth Clark). However contemporary art practice includes such a range of activities it would be difficult to trace a particular skill such as spatial intelligence on to an art practice in any meaningful way. One interesting aspect of Gardner's argument is that is that he does not see the arts as mimetic. He says,

> "In the last analysis there is a definite logic in the pursuit of the arts, one that sets it apart from the imitation of nature and places it closer to other areas of rigorous investigation." [Gardner, *Frames of Mind, The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, (London, Fontana Press, 1993):200]

What I propose examining then is a notion of intelligence as it relates to a methodology of creativity, a series of decisions that make up Gardener's 'definite logic'.

In the minds of many the idea of intelligence is inextricably linked to some kind of rating system. However intelligence tests and their interpretations are continually under debate. For example in trying to

decide which intelligences a candidate might possess, Gardner notes,

> "At present it must be admitted that the selection (or rejection) of a candidate intelligence is reminiscent more of an artistic judgement than of a scientific assessment." [Gardner, *Frames of Mind, The Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, (London, Fontana Press, 1993):62]

Given the difficulties inherent in absolute (or even consensual) judgements then, in this part of my research it has proved most useful to regard intelligence as a process, the ways the mind works, rather than as an attribute to be bestowed by a critic/psychologist. Indeed by analyzing how, in relation to why, an artist makes one decision rather than another, within the different and individual terms each artist initiates, one may begin to plot visual intelligence at work. As Piaget famously realised, it is the lines of reasoning rather than the isolated answer that yields most information. An examination of visual intelligence can be investigated by both, that is by looking at the decision making process in relation to the artwork produced. Studies such as Arnheim's analysis of the sketches for Picasso's *Guernica* or Gardner's account of 'linguistic intelligence' in the jottings of Stephen Spender examine process carefully in order to see how intentions are played out and problems solved when a work gets made.

It is true that the evidence I am examining here takes verbal rather than visual form and one only needs look at Alpers' and Baxandall's examination of the drawing and cartoons of Tiepolo in relation to his finished frescos to see how interesting individual studies of the visual means of contemporary artists would be. An artist like Tieoplo adopts various sequential strategies that establish processes allowing him to think laterally and tangentially, problem solving on the way to a major work. Michael Podro draws attention to the way Hogarth's reworking of his own imagery and the visualisation of his reading in subsequent years provide us with clues to later works. Podro's interest in process is important here; in order to analyse how a complex and substantial work is made he draws on its relation to earlier works, where echoes appear. In the revisions that take place he is able to detect Hogarth's thought patterns. However, given that this essay is not concerned

with making aesthetic or critical judgements of either the work or the processes, the artists' own articulations seem a good place to start.

Visual intelligence in contemporary artists' processes

In October 2004 some British artists were invited to take part in a seminar where they responded to a list of questions relating to their process. The material below draws on statements by those artists present at the seminar who are now exhibiting in the exhibition, *Inspiration to Order*, the occasion for this publication. Indeed *Inspiration to Order* (the title comes from an essay by Max Ernst) was conceived as an exhibition that would examine the concerns of this essay in more detail.

> *"There are moments in between projects where Bruce Nauman's dictum of 'how to proceed and how to proceed correctly' seems appropriate." (Ian Kiaer)*

In established artistic practices, parameters are developed within which events happen - the 'process'. While it is true that some processes may 'feel' more spontaneous than others, it is rare for something to occur outside the boundaries an artist has put in place.

Procedures and systems emerge from the medium and, rather than constrict, they often give the artist structure and a sense of freedom. There are times however when the limits of the medium will be temporarily exhausted, painter Beth Harland examines this when talking about her interest in digital imagery. She suggests changing media can propel the work's trajectory. She says,

> "Jon Thompson talks about 'learning how to make a space for yourself in which to act' and says 'sometimes painters have to do something else to find this' and this rang true with me –I think new mediums bring with them different ways of looking and thinking and they disturb your habits."

These parameters and procedures for the making of a visual artwork develop through a relation between the material process, and concept or idea. Harland adopts an approach to making that has a conscious ideological framework. She describes its thus,

"One of the things that is very important to me is the notion of Faktura, which is from the Soviet avant-garde. It's an emphasis on the mechanical quality and the materiality of the procedure…. For me the linking of form and content is crucial so that painting as a practice signifies subject just as much as the found or constructed image that I choose to work from….. I want to resist making a representation of something in the world, so that the matter of painting itself is a mode of address and a site of critical thinking which goes beyond the image."

So, artists continually write their own internal rule books prior to making work. Any study of visual intelligence thus needs to begin by a thorough mapping of an individual's acknowledged boundaries. Before work commences many possibilities are hypothesised and decisions are taken. Often the artist consciously submits to a chosen genre or form in order to be placed within an historically prescribed dialogue. Each medium or convention requires different skills at different stages, often used strategically by the artist to facilitate their thinking around a work's evolution.   However Michael Ginsborg's phrase, "I am trying to give myself permission", suggests the necessity (and difficulty) of testing these predetermined limits.

I was reminded of the quote by William Carlos Williams, 'no ideas but in things'." (Michael Ginsborg)

Many of the artists involved in the seminar begin a work with the exploration of an external subject. Often the making processes of visual art allows the artist to simultaneously adopt a range of approaches; critical, metaphorical, mimetic, suggestive amongst others. The art work allows deliberation on this subject matter and the artist may be able to reach conclusions or make allegiances that are apparent to the viewer. Paula Kane takes the investigation of a specific visual subject as her starting point and included in this is a self reflexive process. She says,

"I currently make paintings of imaginary landscapes and explore themes of genre or what a 'proper' landscape painting might be. …. I'm trying to question my preconceptions."

Kane's process is determined around visual problem solving in a number of stages. She says,

"To some extent, I have a good idea of what the painting is going to look like formally but when I actually start to make the painting I then realise what the problems are. So there is decision making at every stage, before when I make drawings on bits of paper and then a second level of decision making when I actually start a painting. And then the other kind of decision making is how you move from one painting to the next, how you move the work forward."

Kane's traditional approach involves sequential stages of development, each offering its own visual problem to be solved on the way to a final resolution. More recently however she has begun to question this hierarchical activity by exhibiting her initial 'supporting work' as a 'studio wall', alongside her 'finished' paintings.

Others artists describe their work's evolution as self-generating. An artwork does not perform itself discretely but relates the individual work to others, usually the artist's body of work and specific project. By either continuing or discontinuing a line of enquiry, it almost always situates itself in relation to what has gone before. Ideas and forms present in one work may be further explored, resolved, refuted or abandoned in others. Often artists will 'discover' something in the work that they wish to explore further. Artists often work in series or 'projects' as this enables them to probe an idea or method over a sustained period. The specificity of the visual material nature of the making can be seen to sustain the artist's intellectual enquiries. In this way rather than the artist conferring meaning 'on to' the artefact she can be viewed as drawing meaning 'out of' its physical nature and mode of making.

What we encountered in the artists' descriptions was a range of intellectual engagements or modes of thinking during the process. On occasion, when difficulties and doubts about suitable subject matter or procedures arise it may feel as if the medium has come to the artist's rescue. The artist may 'suspend' their conscious deliberations, creating a sense for them that the medium has its own volition and that the work 'talks back' to them. Michael Ginsborg reports an experience that may

appear contradictory, yet in fact re-iterates the notion that the physicality of making and looking can, at times, overwhelm the reflective or decisive elements of the process. Ginsborg says,

> "….as soon as I've taken the tools out of my hands as it were, what happens is that I get all the ideas about what I should do next."

and many artists reported spending a far larger proportion of 'studio' time looking at what they have done rather than making. What all the artists seemed to be describing was a need for a shift in focus that is a recognisable element in all intellectual endeavour. A range of types of mental and physical engagement seem necessary in a creative process and it is a matter of intelligence how an artist switches between these modes. For the visual artist engaged with the making of his or her own work, it appears the making itself not only provides the necessary 'break' from the artist's deliberations but that the work [both physical and mental] that gets done during that time will also be of use to the artist when they apply a more analytical frame of mind. Kane has used the word 'play' to describe her process and this is interesting, perhaps denoting activity that does not necessarily require resolution. Some artists will experience their process as a cycle of making, reflection, judgement, decision, occurring over different timescales. Other artists report making decisions and judgements of their work, both the specific instant of it before them and their entire oeuvre, as they make it. However it is expressed, what is important here is the dynamic between the work and the artists, who are continually repositioning themselves in front of their object. It is this dynamic that needs to be further explored if we are to increase our understanding of visual intelligence. The way an artist orchestrates the work's passage to completion, will effect both when decisions are made about the work and the nature of those decisions, and so become crucial to further study. In this way the artist's strategic negotiations between the material, intellectual and logistical demands of the work and the originating intentions for the work can be viewed as a series of judgements and decisions demonstrating their visual intelligence.

"There is a great expression in James Joyce which is 'thought through my eyes',

he suggests you see and think at the same moment….." (Maria Chevska)

Art doesn't emerge from a vacuum and I have noted its relationship to the world and the artist's own body of work. For the majority of professional artists the work they produce is also borne out of a relationship with other works of art. Although strict notions of genre and tradition may have dissolved, all contemporary artists have an awareness, to differing degrees, of their work's relationship with both historical and contemporary practices and debates. For some artists this is a useful dialogue and sets up a conversation from which the work develops but this does not mean that the artist sees their visual medium operating in an identical manner to a theoretical debate.

For some this provides a way of communicating 'through the eyes', that appears to bypass linguistic articulation. This sense of recognition is facilitated by the senses and felt 'in the body'. Michael Ginsborg describes his viewing of a Van der Weyden altarpiece, a painting of a deposition, in similar terms,

> "…something happened to one's own whole self, one's own whole body from looking at it."

This experience of a bodily knowledge may be elusive. Although in some artists this may lead to feelings of failure, it provides a goal to strive for and perhaps suggests that a range of engagements are necessary in the production of a work of art, of which this sense physical recognition may be only one. The attendant difficulties draw attention to the flexible dynamic of making and the complexity of a mapping procedure. As Michael Ginsborg says,

> "Visual intelligence is about how to deal with aspects of the work which are possibly less predictable and less schematic and have less of a laid down notion of how they can be dealt with."

As I am using the term, intelligence isn't about possessing knowledge, it is about the ways it can be acquired and applied, as demonstrated in the judgements artists make. In relation to an art practice this means that the artist manages the experience of making, learns during the process, as it were. This transaction with the medium centres around a physical

encounter with the work. Mary Maclean describes her sensation on viewing her own finished work,

> "I usually experience a shock on seeing the final image although I have examined contact sheets, proof prints and test strips. The mis-alignments between what I had expected and what is physically present remains and only adjusts itself after a passage of time."

The quest to direct and harness the potential of the material is infinite and, for most artists, is a compelling part of the process. Maclean continues,

> "My understanding of materials is never complete, small or large departures from the expected behaviour nearly always take place."

In most visual practices this engagement with the medium and its potential to surprise fulfils an important role within the artist's thinking. Artists often adopt strategies that not only allow them to be surprised by the results of their processes, but also revise their aims and approaches in the light of their 'discoveries'. To some extent this reinforces myths of heroic, creative struggle with the medium, but it also reflects a very real gap between hypothesis and result. Even if the work's final evolution is unknown, the unforeseen can be used strategically within the process.

> *"I think moving towards something that is unknown is important. Foucault calls it 'working at the edge of an un-thought, slowly building a language in which to think it'." (Beth Harland)*

In his persuasive essay, 'On steering clear of creativity' (2004), T. J. Diffey points out the difficulties of the study of creative processes, where we can never know 'how far we have got in our understanding'. In this it differs from scientific research where one would be able to quantify what one has learnt from 'an experiment'. Diffey explains the lack of an available predictive model for artistic endeavour,

> "To create is to engage in undertakings the outcome of which cannot be known or defined or predicted, though there may be some presentiment of the outcome." [T.J. Diffey, 'On steering clear of creativity', 2004, Journal of Visual Art Practice, 2004, Vol 3 No 2:95]

Although, as I have been attempting to point out, there are identifiable steps and procedures in every artist's process which have evolved through the individual artist's context (ideology, temperament, logistics, choice of media etc), for virtually all artists there will always be some element in the final work that will be unaccounted for. It appears that the artist's own sense of discovery is often crucial to their process, even if to the observer contemporary art practice's scope for surprise has its limitations. As I suggested earlier, it is rare for an artist to step completely outside the parameters they have used to initiate a work. As Michael Ginsborg asks,

> "How unforeseen is an unforeseen event? Where does the boundary of possibility come? The facilitation of unforeseen discoveries is what ran through the whole of the art of the last century, not all artists of course, but unstable techniques, the absurd and the illogical are all about the unforeseen."

For the artist though there remains an anxious sense of the work bringing something previously unknown to the world. Ginsborg describes a feeling of 'helplessness before the object' as he makes and speculates,

> "It seems to me none of my work has a foreseen conclusion to it."

This drive to find something surprising in the work's resolution is echoed in the artist's encounter with their materials and processes as I have described above. Perhaps it need not be interpreted so much as a quest for originality, but as a recognition of something exterior to the self, operating in the world independently of the artist, reaching its audience.

The recognition of this sought for, yet unknown, quality in the work is a crucial moment in the process. This sense of recognition may be instantaneous or take time. Even in its finished state the work's existence balances precariously and the conclusion to a work may be experienced as a resolution, although possibly of a temporary nature. The work may reach a point where it is made public and exhibited and/or documented but then gets taken back by the artist and is re-thought, quite literally recycled. Although these artists are making

real objects that take up space in the world, or perhaps because of it, a reluctance to draw a line under a work seems to dominate. Beth Harland reflected,

> "The idea of a piece existing in a certain place and time which is then destroyed is interesting. Howard Caygill speaking at the Tate recently was talking about a work having a certain poise in between its creation and its destruction."

The fact that contemporary artists seem to enjoy the vulnerable nature of their work, indicates an acceptance of, even a delight in, the material nature of visual art. That the visual artist in particular, for whom the materiality of the work is fundamental, should be so concerned with its ephemeral nature is hardly surprising. Some artists report the importance of making a decision to halt production as part of the process. This also occurs for others as a less conscious strategy in the form of a 'creative block' to be overcome. By working through such obstacles the artist affirms the value of their making to themselves and even creates new understandings of their own endeavour.

In conclusion I would like to suggest that 'visual intelligence' is a useful phrase. It opens up the possibility of discussion of the way art is produced and allows the artist some agency in that discussion. It challenges the assumption that the creative process will not hold up to investigation, that creativity is a bubble that will burst when examined (the example of Hans Namuth sending Jackson Pollock to his grave comes to mind). It also disputes a popular idea that the 'conceptualism' of contemporary art eliminates the evolutionary process of making as exemplified by Hugh Rifkind's response in *The Times* to the fire at the UK's MOMART (art storage) warehouses in 2004,

> "Why can't Brit Art's finest devote half a weekend to knocking them out all over again?" [James Meek, 'Art into ashes', www.guardian. co.uk 23/9/04]

Whilst perhaps the destroyed work could be duplicated it is unlikely that most artists would want to do so, mainly because it would hold no interest for the artist, it would be unlikely to engage their visual intelligence. I believe that for a majority of artists, the term 'visual intelligence' can be used about the debate they have with their work

during the process of making it, and I assert it is a debate worth noting.

Rebecca Fortnum, 2006
Research Fellow in Art,
Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts,
Lancaster University, UK
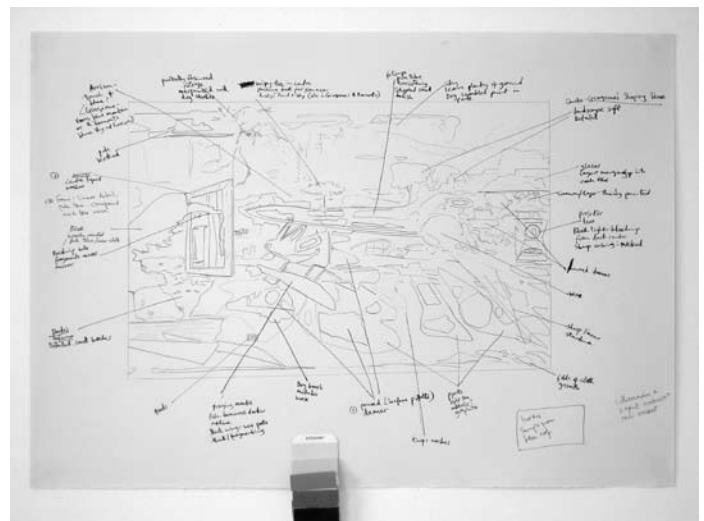
Beth Harland
the mapping of *Zone*, 2006

Inspiration to Order
- Methods to Take Away

The creative process, with its decision-making and feedback elements, is well described by the contemporary figurative painter Alex Katz:

> "Well… you have an idea about what a painting should be, or an idea *of* a painting. And then it correlates with something I see and then I start out empirically and optically. And when I do that I get involved… there's an unconscious procedure and it gets into something I wouldn't have thought of to start with. It moves around a bit and that's the part that's interesting. Because when you go in there you find things; weird things happen and some are all right and some aren't all right. But they wouldn't have happened if you just took the idea and did it, and that's part of it. I think with painting you have the opportunity to go inside yourself and find your unconscious intelligence or your non-verbal intelligence and your non-verbal sensibility and your non-verbal *being* in a sense. And you alternate between consciousness and unconsciousness and it can engage much more of you than if you just merely took an idea and executed it." [1]

It is interesting that Katz uses the terms 'non-verbal intelligence' and 'non-verbal sensibility'. The research project underway in the Art Section of the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts has coined the term 'Visual Intelligence' to describe exactly what it is to which Katz is referring. Whatever the term employed, what is being alluding to is a decision-making process that ensures an artwork has resonance, richness and is *sustainable* in that the impact of the work does not lessen with repeated viewings. We do not think of a *single* 'intelligence', the same form possessed by all artists, but a range of visual *intelligences*, each of which is shaped by a number of variables, not least of which is the type of artwork and the values it engenders.

Of the range of Visual Intelligences that became available in the twentieth century, three broad types became orthodoxies. The first is the 'organic' or 'expressive' process. It is exemplified by Henri Matisse.

In 'Notes of a Painter' (1908), Matisse describes how, in painting an interior, as soon as he makes the first mark on a canvas, in this case a red mark to represent a cupboard, 'A relation is established between this red and the white of a canvas. Let me put a green near the red, and make the floor yellow; and again there will be relationships between the green or yellow and the white of the canvas which will satisfy me.' The relationship between the colours needs to be adjusted so a sense of balance will be sustained: 'A new combination of colours will succeed the first and render the totality of my representation. I am forced to transpose until finally my picture may seem completely changed when, after successive modifications, the red has succeeded the green as the dominant colour.'[2] For those artists working in this way, every mark becomes an aesthetic judgement, however intuitive the decision-making process. As a vital mode, it is a process that remained in good currency into the second half of the century and reached its apotheosis with Abstract Expressionist artists who, although more gutsy and open-ended than would have seemed proper in Matisse's eyes, upheld similar visual values, and would have recognised a similar Visual Intelligence.

The second major method in the twentieth century involved chance as a way of avoiding personal habits, bypassing conventions and good taste, or even a means of revealing a deeper truth. Salvador Dali claimed that the process that produced 'The Exquisite Corpse' - randomly related images akin to the children's game of 'consequences' – '…produced remarkably unexpected poetic associations, which could not have been obtained in any other way, associations which still elude analysis….'[3] Jean Arp made groups of reliefs, sharing similar elements but differently configured, under the title *According to the Laws of Chance*. He claimed that, 'Since the arrangement of planes and their proportions and colours seems to hinge solely on chance, I declare these works were arranged "according to the laws of chance" as in the order of nature, chance being for me simply a part of inexplicable reason, of an inaccessible order.'[4] The legacy of this mode of thought was felt in Abstract Expressionism and European *Art Informel* in the 1950s: artists accepted chance as an element of the creative process, and engaged in dialogue with it. Some artists used chance in conjunction with the organic method.

Both of these methods became increasingly rejected by artists in the 1960s as too arbitrary and idiosyncratic. A post-gestural generation of artists made use of systems, mathematical modelling, seriality, cybernetics, and computer programmes as an antidote to expressive and other overly-personal modes that were felt to put too much emphasis on the individuality of the artist and the specialness of art. The British Systems artist, Jean Spencer, for example, explained that, in her own practice, 'Out of an investigation of informal plastic relationships certain number sequences may emerge which in turn provide more rigorous structuring for the visual counterpart; the evolution of the system depends on this dialogue between abstract numerical form and visual counterpart, and the dialogue itself can eventually be identified as a method...'[5] That method was not only explicit but, for many artists, became more important than the physical realisation that, conventionally, was the work of art.

This was one of the manifestations in the later 1960s that produced a shift in art from the perceptual to the conceptual. The Conceptual artist Sol LeWitt, like many at the time, wanted not only to give priority to the idea or concept, but also downgrade the physical outcome and reject the very idea of a 'work of art' because '…I am not in favour of work and the term sounds pretentious.'[6] As 'the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work,'[7] '[a]nything that calls attention to and interests the viewer… is a deterrent to our understanding of the idea….'[8] The priority of the idea, which is supposed to be 'mentally interesting to the spectator', meant that whatever it is that we see, we should expect it and, indeed, '…want it[,] emotionally dry.'[9] When LeWitt declared that 'The idea becomes a machine that makes the art,'[10] he was committing himself to a value that, in conventional terms of creative processes in visual art, was a rejection and denial of Visual Intelligence and the types of method that were used to produce conventionally (and unconventionally) notions of qualitative art.

The 'expanded field' of art from the 1960s had other effects on creative processes. Pop art (from the second half of the 1950s) not only re-engaged with figuration and external referents, but also made use of pre-existing imagery that the artist selected and modified, almost as a form of 'ready-made aided'. Artists like Roy Lichtenstein and Andy Warhol began thinking in

terms of the manipulation of sign systems, rather than the creation of formal configurations, *de novo*. Richard Hamilton analysed key aspects of contemporary, Americanised culture, and examined visual codes and conventions before creating a work that explored visual languages. Hamilton explained that he looked upon his paintings not so much as a way of 'finding art forms but [as] an extension of values'[11] – art as a form of visual investigation.

Art as an attack on ruling elites/patriarchy, and as an expression of political, social and cultural identity was developed by a wide range of artists in the 1970s. 'At its most provocative and constructive', the critic Lucy Lippard contended, 'feminism questions all the precepts of art as we know it…. The goal of feminism is to change the character of art.'[12] Sentiments expressed by the 'Black' artists of the time were similar: 'Art is important only to the extent that it helps in the liberation of our people,' declared the artist Elizabeth Cartlett.[13] Inevitably, this reframed the way the artist went about making art. The self-referential, fundamentally aesthetic methods of earlier generations, were replaced by a more socially-embedded way of thinking and creating. Aesthetics were relativised and politicised; form was a means to an end of expression and communication, not an end in itself.

Radical groups of artists had overthrown orthodoxies about art. In the later 1970s and 1980s, Post-Modern theory established a new paradigm in which metanarratives of value – including the creative processes that upheld them – were challenged or subverted. Peter Halley, an artist whose work was strongly shaped by Post-Modern ideas, thought this was nothing short of a fundamental shift, '…the result of a tidal wave of intellectual change that has washed over the art world in the [1980s]. An art practice that had been dominant since the Second World War has been completely swept away and replaced by another.'[14] The creative processes available to the Post-Modern artist ranged widely from appropriation of another artist's work, justified by its challenge to myths of originality and authenticity (for example, Sherrie Levine); through a concern with visual re-presentations and 'signs in circulation' (Cindy Sherman); to 'disaffirmative' (Terry Atkinson) and 'bad art' (David Salle) that consciously sought to subvert and destroy previously cherished notions of excellence and quality. All were effective and

legitimised methods that deconstructed and exposed assumptions about the relationship between method, form, content and value. All were forms of theorised practice. Against this new socio-cultural paradigm, conventional creative methods that upheld notions of integrity, authenticity, authority, expressivity, individuality and selfhood were rejected as naïve, anachronistic beliefs and self-sustaining myths.

So, if the rules of the game were exposed as a form of insider-dealing, what is left for the artist now in the era that might be *after* Post-Modernism? Methods can now range from the dour rigour of a highly theorised practice to the happy subjectivism of 'anything goes'. The thinking artist seeking some version of Visual Intelligence cannot uncritically buy-in to a method as though it is value-free – we have to accept that methods are soaked in values, and are historically-located. The artist now has to take real responsibility for her or his creative method as part of the total scope of their practice. It becomes explicit and scrutinised. This is the position in which the exhibitors in *Inspiration to Order* find themselves.

Some of the artists can claim continuity with some of the dominant methods and processes of the twentieth century. Artists of the last century may have predominantly used paint as the vehicle, but many artists now utilise new digital technologies. Vong Phaophanit describes two distinct phases to his creative process. In the first, whilst suspending preconceived ideas about his subject matter, he uses a 'delicate and precarious' nurturing process to gather together images which are 'simultaneously strange and familiar.' In the second, a sort of montage is created through the editing process, not to follow a narrative, but to create a 'liberation of the image' as a form of visual poetry. When Claire Oboussier's independently poetic voiceover is juxtaposed with the images, a further dimension is achieved that produces new and unexpected effects and meanings inter-relating the formal and the associative/conceptual.

Similarly, Neil Boynton and Emma Rose respond to the visual and aural characteristics of a particular environment and seek parallels and resonances that are expressive of sensations – visual phenomena and sounds – with the aim of upholding the value of 'selecting and elaborating formal qualities.' Boynton

& Rose make use of digital technology's editing and manipulating potential 'to enhance speed, rhythm and colour of the image flow.' Collaboration becomes part of the process to be negotiated, but reaches a level in which individual input would be almost impossible to track. Mary Maclean's work also starts with a particular place, but moves in a completely different direction. The places and spaces she visits are routine and even banal - common spaces - and she wants the viewer to feel a sense of recognition and shared memory. Her process, like Boynton and Rose's, also involves careful selection and emphasis, but the aim is not formal quality because, for her, the 'procedure of observing through photography… seems to parallel the act of remembering, dependent in turn on selection and oblivion.' In the end, the viewer is returned, 'via an unexpected route, [to] a space which is known and understood.'

A third version of the importance of the particularity of place is provided by Gerry Davies, achieved both from visiting what might be the extreme conditions of an environment such as a cave, and through a re-visiting of the work of an artist who had found a visual language to convey the experience of that very same environment. Directness and indirectness are then melded through a process that he describes as 'semi-mechanical,' although the system never replaces judgement. However, because Davies is content to 'let outcomes take care of themselves' he allows a certain amount of – if not chance, then, perhaps – open-endedness. This is an approach shared, to some extent, by Michael Ginsborg who relies on chance at different stages of his process. Ginsborg allows collected material – 'some found, some made by me, some printed, some painted, some kept in files…' - to be linked by a system of 'anti-organisation' so that they form a new and unexpected configuration, a momentary ordering that becomes literally fixed and permanent. Yet 'truth' and any deeper meaning, or even subversion, are neither sought, nor found, because his process and use of materials aims at a deferral of ultimate meaning, while maintaining a range of possibilities and potentialities.

Deferral is used in a different way by Kirk Woolford who seeks, in a work such as *Will.0.w1sp*, to avoid resolution and its associated assumptions of clarity and order. The technological methods may be sophisticated, but the technology needed to be secondary to the poetic

and rhythmic effect, and so the choice of computer generated imagery was carefully calculated in order to avoid the baggage of 'digital art' with its often standard aesthetic of hard geometry and fully saturated colours. Woolford wanted the technology to enhance, not define what he wanted to achieve in terms of the borderline of what viewers can recognise as human movement. Woolford's approach reminds us that materials, methods and even technologies can bring with them their own assumptions and values.

Rebecca Fortnum's processes cross-refer 'high' culture and popular culture, alluding to memories that are from either personal 'authentic' emotions – for example 'dreams… diaries [and] emotionally evocative writings' - or 'inauthentic' mass media sentiments, such as the 'histrionics' of pop songs with their lyrics that chart the relationships with which we are all encouraged to identify. Fortnum makes use of parallels, allusion, simile and metaphor in her employment of materials and methods so that idea and visual treatment are in fruitful dialogue, creating a layering of surfaces and meanings, and corresponding 'the pleasure of painting' with the pleasures of life. Cross-referencing also goes on in the paintings of Beth Harland, who goes about creating a work 'strategically, sometimes mechanistically [and] with an interest in the meaning engendered by the material and its behaviour.' Harland describes the making process as like a …"conversation" between the painting's surface and the digital screen.' Conventional methods of painting are set up in dialogue with digital manipulations so that disparate sources are juxtaposed and merged into one another to enable 'multiple positions, fluid structure [and] slippage.' This creates 'flux' and an illusive sense of meaning. The dialectic between method and image produces 'a site for critical thinking.'

Methods that engage in visual representations feature in both Paula Kane's and Amanda Newall's work. In making paintings of imaginary landscapes, Kane interrogates genre, stereotypes, and our preconceptions of 'received' languages and conventions. A range of representations from reproductions of artworks, through the artist's own drawings and photographs to mass media imagery is collected. Images, which might be traditional or contemporary, naïve or cultured, and known or unfamiliar, are worked together but resolution is avoided. Within their aim of questioning genre

and visual languages, the decision making process in the creation of a particular work is, Kane remarks, intuitive, but 'always reached through understanding the wider context of how you want your painting to be read.' Amanda Newall is concerned with the visual representations of symbols in different cultures and engages with 'ambivalent anthropomorphic imagery and transgressive political (mis)representations.' On a recent visit to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Newall noted the incongruity and apparent clashes of tradition and modernity in the culture at large, epitomised by 'colourful panties entitled 'Miss Tanzania' with an image of a white woman.' The work she produced, which included objects, performance and their documentation, was an intervention in a socio-cultural system, not, in her words, in a colonial-like attempt to 'answer questions or solve problems [but] to display ambiguities, provoke inquiries, and instantiate interpretive leeways.'

The range of creative methods available to the artist at the beginning of the twenty-first century is vast, and artists are at liberty to pick, choose, mix and even contradict methods within a piece of work. However, it remains the case that an artist's creativity and methods work best when they are at the service of a clear aim, however unspoken and unarticulated that aim. Arguably, the more an artist is aware of these two aspects of that dynamic, reciprocal relationship that defines Visual Intelligence, the more likely is the art to be powerful, compelling and resonant.

Nigel Whiteley, 2006
Professor of Visual Arts
Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts,
Lancaster University, UK

[1]Alex Katz (1997) interviewed in David Sylvester, Interviews with American Artists (London: Pimlico, 2002): 238. [2]Henri Matisse, 'Notes of a Painter' (1908) in Charles Harrison & Paul Wood (eds.), Art in Theory 1900-2000: an Anthology of Changing Ideas (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003): 72. [3]Salvador Dali, 'The object as revealed in Surrealist experiment' (1931) in Herschel B. Chipp (ed.), Theories of Modern Art (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968): 418. [4]Jean Arp (1974) quoted in Marina Scharf, Liberation through Art: Dada and Surrealism (Milton Keynes: The Open University Press, 1976): 29. [5]Jean Spencer, Systems exhibition catalogue (London: The Arts Council, 1972): 48. [6]Sol LeWitt, 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' (1967) in Harrison and Woods, op. cit.: 849. [7]Ibid.: 846. [8]Ibid.: 849. [9]Ibid.: 847. [10]Ibid.: 846. [11]Quoted in Richard Hamilton exhibition catalogue (New York: The Guggenheim Museum, 1973): 24. [12]Lucy Lippard, 'Sweeping Exchanges: The Contribution of Feminism to the Art of the 1970s' (1980) in Lucy Lippard, The Pink Glass Swan: Selected Feminist Essays on Art (New York: The New Press, 1995):172. [13]Elizabeth Cartlett, quoted in Sharon F. Patton, African-American Art (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 204. [14]Peter Halley, 'Nature and Culture' (1983) in Harrison and Woods, op. cit.: 1043.

Inspiration to Order
2006, Installation
University Art Gallery
College of the Arts
California State University, Stanislaus

IMAGES AND STATEMENTS

Gerry Davies

Over time my drawing practice has changed; topics, scales, and materials have differed, yet two aspects have remained constant: drawing as an act of poetic inscription and the use of notebooks. So, although occasionally drawings lead on to other forms -3D objects or prints- their origins and intentions lay in manipulating materials and images to suggest narratives. And, although collage and photography have a generative role, it is the notebook, as both a vehicle for collecting and preserving ideas and images and simultaneously a site for rumination, that has stayed constant. For me notebook drawing is a discursive and reflexive activity, it confirms decisions within states of visual and conceptual flux and reflux. Unlike more 'finished' works notebooks narrate a private dialogue that arises from relationships between personal compulsions and artistic intentions, or document the fertilisation of found or candidly observed images by pre-existing ideas. The process is, however, far from automatic and instinctive. It's highly self conscious, I'm aware of myself asking questions through notebook drawing – how can I balance chance against calculation, should this fugitive image (column of smoke) be fixed through a system (gridded up)? Or how to synthesise newspaper images of the Iraqi diaspora with a sense of our culture slipping through my fingers? Finished drawings will describe a single, selected answer, but rarely betray the extent of the iterative process.

Cave is an example of a recent finished drawing; this alongside the accompanying notebooks goes some way to illustrate the acts of reckoning and weighing up different and competing forces. The first note for this work was made underground in a cave that J.M.W Turner once drew in. His drawing *Inside Yordas Cave,* 1816 is wild and jagged, lacking his customary measured precision, another, a few pages on in his notebook, is more extreme, like a section from a seismograph. I followed in his footsteps and found that drawing in the dark levelled up other senses to bear greater influence on perceptions and responses. The notebooks attempt to record what it felt like to be in that environment including the numbing coldness and sounds of cascades and smells of earth. However, in re-drawing the images in the studio all potential links between my observations of dramatic images of nature with notions of the sublime were progressively erased through development and final application of a semi mechanical drawing system. Rather than Romanticism's magical flowing of transcendent artistic vision, the work is achieved through relentless application of single vertical pen marks across a matrix of projected and pre-drawn lines. Once set in train the process of drawing advanced horizontally from left to right across the surface, moving up, from the bottom of the work, line by line. Each mark required a decision about relative tone and density and selection of the appropriate pen, nib size and ink quality.

This drawing satisfies my appreciation of the cave: the accumulated result of many minute actions over time; and some of the desires I have that only drawing can satisfy: to engage in visual thinking, to become immersed in the process, materials and decisions and to let outcomes take care of themselves.

Gerry Davies
Cave, 2005
pen and ink on Waterford paper, 50.8cm x 50.8cm

Rebecca Fortnum

When I began my recently completed paintings (*False Sentiment*, April 2006) in 2002 I didn't know that they would take their present form. I had been using words in my paintings since 1997. To begin with I used diary entries, emotionally evocative writings that I inscribed into an impastoed surface in columns within large paintings. I had long related to the thick paint as a skin-like surface, so to use a kind of handwriting, recording the body's movements seemed to reinforce the sense of the personal or the felt. Yet authenticity was undercut; reading one became aware the works' had no single author because of the differences in each text's vocabulary and tone, which I had carefully edited from their source. With these paintings I decided to remove this sense of authentic experience still further. I continued to use the lyrics of pop songs, evoking common, yet personal sentiment. I exchanged the inscribed cursive for a stencilled surface using vinyl lettering. Thick paint was applied over the letters and when removed I noticed that the words appeared to optically hover, white on white. I liked this sensation as it reminded me of listening to music, when it feels as if the words hang in the room's atmosphere. Recently I washed some of the lyrics paintings with intense colour and the clarity of the stencil means that they are still legible which wouldn't have happened with the thinner inscription. I chose a font that felt like a formal handwriting. I love the histrionics of pop songs and the lyrics were chosen for their comments on relationships.

I paired the lyrics with canvases depicting the silhouettes of my partner and I. Having worked on wall sized paintings, I saw the scale of these smaller works as mirrors, to look into and see ourselves blankly reflected. Drawing with a sharp surface into sized and pigmented canvas the oil paint seeps into the line. I see this process as a tattoo, inscribing into the weave of the canvas, like an indelible shadow, permanent yet evasive (like our own sense of self). I drew directly from our shadows, projecting a light so they would fall on the canvas surface. Most drastically I have paired the coloured lyric canvases with large 'portrait' paintings of my children. I used a full range of brushes and colours, which I haven't done for many years. The pleasure I have in looking at my children's faces coincides with this primary pleasure in image making - long abandoned in my painting practice. I painted on a smooth ground (five layers of primer) colour washed to work with the lyric canvas colour. I wanted the images to be painted lightly so that the ground seeped through the face and didn't overwhelm the lyric canvas. I used a projector and photographs to work from, but I wanted a painterly image, showing brush marks that speak of this pleasure in painting.

Rececca Fortnum
What am I supposed to do..., 2006
oil on canvas, 122cm x 90cm

Michael Ginsborg

Among other things

The paintings are made using paper. I work with the primed canvas tacked to the wall. This provides the solid support needed to glue the paper down. When the painting is nearly finished the canvas is removed from the wall and stretched onto a conventional stretcher.

The pieces of paper I use are selected from a collection of images, some found, some made by me, some printed, some painted, some kept in files, some in drawers and boxes, some dating back over twenty years, and some made recently. I either use these images directly, or make inkjet prints from them, and place them on the canvas, often giving them coloured borders or frames. Then I join them up with curved bands of transparent paper, painted with acrylic.

This describes the process as a physical sequence of events but, to just as great an extent, it is a sequence of encounters with meaning.

Both in the storage of, and the selections I make from, my collection of images, I fail to use, or choose not to use, any principle, or system of classification (for example, by colour, date, or type of thing depicted). The purpose of this "anti-organisation" might be, to quote Eva Hesse, that,

> " If I can name the content, then... it's the total absurdity of life...Absurdity is the key word. It has to do with contradictions and oppositions."

Maybe it is "contradictions and oppositions" that keep things moving. Images that were lost initially, either by others or by me, are lost all over again even when I decide to keep them. But they are lost in a new way because now they await their rediscovery. Then, printed on acid free paper, glued to canvas with conservation standard acrylic adhesive, and protected with acrylic varnish containing ultra violet light filters and stabilisers, then, and only then are they finally released from the darkness. But paradoxically at this point, though displayed, though given a place, all the potentialities they contained, all their pictorial possibilities, moving and changing, become static.

What is going on here? In relation to my paintings, I have found one of the things that Michael Craig-Martin said about his work in his 1997 Townsend Lecture to be particularly useful and encouraging:

> "The paintings are neither hierarchical nor didactic, neither narrative nor allegorical, but all these possibilities are implied. As in life, things both connect and don't connect."

Michael Ginsborg
Among Other Things No.2, 2005
acrylic, paper, and inkjet on canvas, 157.5cm x 121.5cm

Beth Harland

In the recent series of paintings entitled *Zone*, the making process is structured as a 'conversation' between the painting's surface and the digital screen, the image developing through alternate modes of painting and digital reworking. Photographs of prosaic objects, ordered on a table top, are repeatedly manipulated until spatial order becomes disjointed and traditional genres of still life and landscape seem to merge.

Central issues in the working process include the impact of visual technologies on aspects of *space* and *duration* in painting (the digital offering painting an expanded topography) and concepts of rhizomatic space, fragmentation, re-inscription and appropriation. Fragmentary quotations from other paintings and various image sources are woven into a complex surface. Chance and mechanical projection procedures combine to produce a *double space* in which oppositions of figure/ground begin to disperse, enabling multiple positions, fluid structure, slippage. This spatial, and temporal investigation is also linked with filmic encounters such as Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, and references various writings including Deleuze and Proust.

The process of copying/translation from digital print-out to painting, is a form of mapping, bridging the retinal and the tactile. Due to the fragmentation of the original image I'm perpetually losing my place and finding it again, and this experience transfers to the viewer, caught in the movement between clarity and indistinction – in flux. The work tends to operate in the domain of *haptic visuality* or close range vision; the boundaries are blurred and flawed, images partially absorbed and fleetingly described. The haptic is a form of looking that tends to move rather than focus, and one that alludes to senses other than the visual; an embodied form of seeing. The physicality of the surfaces in the paintings is important, all are made in oil paint but numerous different approaches to marking the surface and different consistencies/mediums are adopted to evoke sensory experience. The play of difference and fragment, yet coherence, becomes a delicate balance.

The fragility of boundaries, definition of inside and outside, is referenced through camouflage and formal decisions such as the use of the coloured border. Like the framer's device 'passe partout', it interfaces the interior and exterior of the work and is linked to Derrida's notion of *parergon* - without it the depiction is exposed, too present.

I approach making *strategically*, sometimes mechanistically but always with an interest in the meaning engendered by the material and its behaviour, viewing the matter of painting as itself a mode of address; a site for critical thinking.

Beth Harland
Zone 15, 2006
oil on canvas, 152cm x 114cm

Paula Kane

I make paintings of imaginary landscapes. Within the traditional framework of landscape painting I choose to explore and quote from this known genre and its many varied, received languages. I use this vast lexicon of often forgotten information to both salvage and sabotage the material.

I act as an urban, cultural tourist, cherry picking and filtering a wide range of information gathered from the 'real' world of nature and from landscape images that are both high and low art sources. From within this genre I can toy with a variety of languages of depiction.

I create awkward spaces and problems within the image as a means of initiating strategies for retrieving the image without allowing it to move too far into any fixed category of interpretation. I therefore attempt to play off one pictorial language against another.

I wish for the paintings to be picturesque yet sublime, familiar yet unknowable, fecund yet empty and naive but complex. The paintings are finished when they hover among several camps, never settling in any fixed territory.

In order to make a painting I need to gather much visual source material, including reproductions of paintings and drawings (both famous and obscure), photographs taken by me on walks and holidays, I also make drawings from a variety of sources. These starting points then get processed, distorted and rearranged in further drawings and painted sketches.

I then make a number of rough drawings in which I attempt to construct a composition for a larger more complex image. This will comprise of a largely imaginary space populated by a number of incongruous inhabitants gathered from sources covering different centuries, continents and ideologies. This explorative research material comprises the *Studio Wall*; this is the raw, less processed material which offers a path into a working methodology.

One main difference between the *Studio Wall* and the paintings is that the paintings have rules and the research work has not. The large paintings are an attempt at negotiating my understanding of painting as a language and the *Studio Wall* refers more to my experience of landscape itself.

The necessary shift from research work to 'finished' painting is ongoing, as that which appears to be a successful composition as a sketch doesn't always translate easily into painting. The paintings are a continuous series of decisions with no fixed outcome.

The large paintings offer more possibilities of alluding to fictions and narratives that I tease out through distorting scale, space, colour or by adding contradictory elements; an Italianate tree against a Germanic snow-capped mountain.

I attempt to suggest a veneer of what a 'proper' landscape might be and then find a means of perverting that order. Needless to say such a project has failure built into it and that is often humorously apparent. The only logic necessary is that which exists within the surface of the painting, when everything is in the right place, all the correct elements seem as they should be: at that point the cracks in the facade often hold the most meaning.

Paula Kane
Gulf, 2004
oil on canvas, 91cm diameter

Mary Maclean

In a recent series of photographic works titled *Almost Nothing* I set out to examine the experience of place. I developed my interest in a certain kind of institutional space. These were spaces that I visited in the normal course of events, a public foyer, a doctor's waiting room, a library. Full of small events of anticipation, waiting, apprehension, the impression of a space which is influenced by its visitors is given weight by the shifting traces of a history visible in the fabric of the structure – a slightly stained carpet, a scratched wall. I intend these photographic works to be linked to the functions of memory and to relate to an act of recognition, so returning to the viewer, via an unexpected route, a space that is known and understood. As part of the development of the ideas and the activity of making the work I have responded to parallel considerations on the question of memory in the writings of Borges, Pessoa, Calvino and Sebald. These have offered important points of orientation for reflection on my practice.

After an initial visit of visual note taking using a 35mm camera I make a further visit to the place with a medium format camera and tripod. I am conscious of the dissimilarity between the formality of the camera's positioning that is poised and limits the intake of information and the processes of natural perception. The procedure of observing through photography, of making an insertion into a space, seems to parallel the act of remembering, dependent in turn on selection and oblivion.

The finished photographic works are large scale. I work directly onto aluminium, allowing the grey reflection of the metal to form an integral part of the work. The emulsion is coated onto the aluminium in successive layers. Brushing on the silver gelatin emulsion gives a dense tactility to the surface, suggesting a sensuousness that coincides strangely with the coldness of the metal. The gelatin surface holds a register of slight flaws, emphasising the uniqueness of the work. I am interested in the resulting minimal fluctuation that introduces uncertainty to the image. The tonal register is also altered: a more ghostly image is achieved whose qualities cannot be exclusively associated with the photographic.

An important aspect of my process is the way in which the viewer can be implied within the space of the work, introducing a fluidity of border between subject and the object viewed. The dull reflectivity of the surface of the aluminium takes in ambient light and gives back a hint of the presence of the viewer.

At a certain stage the work is caught in its own structure: it cannot incorporate new twists and turns. After the slowness of days of preparation, aiming to steer the final image, unhindered to a desired and planned outcome, there is a surprising shock at the freshness and waywardness of its eventual appearance. No amount of planning seems to legislate for the nuanced pitch of its final presence.

Mary Maclean
If...Then...Else, 2006
silver gelatin photograph, 96cm x 109cm

Amanda Newall

(Mis)Tanzania

(Mis)Tanzania came about during a trip to Tanzania in April, 2006. In Dar es Salaam, I perceived a lot of geopolitical and ethnic transfigurations and paradoxes. A street vendor selling colourful panties entitled 'Miss Tanzania' with an image of a white woman; Maasai warriors on advertisement billboards with cell phones on the savanna; and, of course, the safari tourists' intense interest in African animals as opposed to people.

These observations aligned with my approach to making art, which gravitates toward ambivalent anthropomorphic imagery and transgressive political (mis)representations. Ambivalence is a mood I try to sustain, since it opens up experiential, conceptual and practical interpretations and suspends the creative process in a state of becoming. I prefer to display ambiguities, provoke inquiries, and instantiate interpretive leeways.

In *(Mis)Tanzania* images in situ inspired a textual playfulness, reframed personal and geographical modes of transition and captured the flux of changes in a visual statement. On the urban streets I noticed transcultural changes in people's dressing styles. Modernisations of women's traditional kanga – a cotton fabric customarily printed with national symbols and slogans – now ironically can display cell phones and light bulbs; the fabric wrap is increasingly superseeded by Western tailored garments with zips and buttons. I located kangas in a market place and thus commissioned a tailor to cut it into a skirt and blouse with semi-Western motifs.

The dress features what ethnographer Mary Louise Pratt calls a «contact zone» of endemic mammals and extraterritorial tourism. The zebra on the blouse is a safari emblem while the giraffe is a national symbol of Tanzania. I appliquéd the word 'KIWI' onto the blouse, a polysemic label signifying the international colloquialism for my ethnic belonging, and, of course, the endemic bird of New Zealand. In Kiswahili the word 'kiwi' means dazzling, visually emphasised by the bright white letters and the radiating light bulb on the skirt. The gloves were handstiched from a stolen hotel napkin, onto which I glued false fingernails. Typically I would also have constructed the costume, but lacking a sewing machine I commissioned a tailor. I found the wig in a shop decorated with the slogan 'Darling you look fine'; this as well as the other sites of purchase were documented.

The image shows me guarding a gate to an abandoned colonial property on Upanga Street, alluding to the Maasai watchmen ('askari') that are employed by wealthy city residents today. (During the photo session, Maasai men approached me looking on with interest, from the make-up application to the final documentation, while women passed by giggling seeming to encourage the female empowerment presented in the transcultural staging.) The scene negotiates the appropriation of the Maasai as mythical male warriors, contra myself as a female mediator in a cultural interface at once splitting and fusing two colonized cultures. It is like capturing an ethnocentric tourist on an imagined frontier, a heterotopia in medias res, overexposed in a frozen postcolonial 'kiwi cha macho' (blinding of the eyes).

Amanda Newall
(Mis)Tanzania, 2006
images and media variable

Vong Phaophanit

All that's solid melts into air (Karl Marx)

The desire of the film is to show rather than to say. The process of shooting the material, whilst conscious, is without intention – it is both conscious and unconscious. My guiding principal is the rejection of cliché. I do not work with preconceived ideas of how I might use the material I am collecting. When filming I am acutely aware of the 'act' of filming – I try to find a place, a balance, where I am not imposing myself or the camera. I try to act with discretion but also without becoming a voyeur or a spy – I am always very conscious of the way I am 'taking' the images, to give them the greatest possible space from which to make their meaning. This is a delicate and precarious process. The scenes that I film are chosen simply because they 'touch' me in some way: a melancholic atmosphere, a particular light or sound, an unexpected scene, a trace… The images are simultaneously strange and familiar. Each shot is treated like a tableau, a fragment. For this particular project I have shot over 10 hours of material in this way during two visits to the town Luang Prabang in Laos. I am left with a mass of fragmented scenes, images and sounds.

It is at this point that a new creative process begins. There is no narrative structure – the film evolves as a 'tissage' of images, places, sounds. Despite the apparently arbitrary nature of this process it is fascinating to see the language and new meaning that is generated through it – it often seems is if there is a certain synchronicity at work. As with the 'act' of shooting, the process of editing involves giving the maximum space for the images to 'speak' in their own terms.

This is the way I work; I show things and allow them to speak, I avoid any preconceived narrative but rather work towards a kind of liberation of the image/material so that it can create new meaning.

The text for the film (in the form of a voiceover) that Claire Oboussier is producing is generated alongside the images, simultaneously but independently, and without any direct or intentional relation to them. Claire's way of writing is close to my own process of making images described above – we share a similar 'ethos' in our working processes. Her writing is the antithesis of descriptive or illustrative writing. Poetic, fragmented, oneiric – the words will play the role of 'acoustic images' within the body of the film.

When, at the end of the editorial process, we 'place' the text in the film (as voice) it is treated in exactly the same way as the images. We try to give image and word as much liberty as possible to generate their own discursive dimension. We experiment to see how different fragments of text and image behave when placed alongside each other – it is a wonderful process – to see meaning 'in production' before one's eyes.

Vong Phaophanit
Still from the film: All that's solid melts into air (Karl Marx), 2006
with text by Claire Oboussier

# Neil Boynton and Emma Rose

Rush

The Forêt des Landes in southwest France is an area of tall conifers growing on a sandy heath. When viewed from a fast moving car the tree trunks appear to move, sometimes they swirl and rotate in vertical bands producing a flickering, stroboscopic effect that disorients the eye and brain, not unlike the effect produced by British artist Bridget Riley in her black and white paintings. This optical effect was the central idea behind the production of the video. Many of the trees have few branches in their lower regions and this characteristic was intrinsic to the production of the effect—at dawn, for instance, the black trunks of the trees visible through the mist created a monochrome image comprising vertical stripes against a grey-white background. All the video of the forest was shot from a moving car, with the camera fixed to a tripod in the passenger seat: with this setup we sought to capture the effect in a variety of ways. During the editing process, some of the tendencies of the original footage were emphasized through digital processing, such as using short, repeating loops of film to enhance speed, rhythm and colour of the image flow. This is seen in conjunction with doubling and mirror effects across two screens, aiming to make less likely any naturalist interpretation, heightening the sense of reverie.

The audio serves primarily as a film-like soundtrack, drawing out moods and associations of the visual imagery. Recording the local sounds of waves crashing on the beach and the noise of cicadas in the forest was one way of underpinning the video's visual world. To the source sounds, additional recorded material was added, including the whooshing of blades from a wind farm, and the breath of a woman panting: these sounds all share similar sonic qualities, and the whole of the soundtrack is formed on the basis of this deliberately limited range of possibilities.

In reflecting on the process of collaboration, we recognised that working together made us articulate our ideas for the work earlier in the creative process. At times this meant that more ideas were tried, conversely, we were aware that time was needed for the gestation of ideas—a too hasty exposition might lead to the rejection of an idea. In our collaboration the individual input would be almost impossible to track and probably quite meaningless because we were both involved in decision-making in all areas of the work.

The journey conveys a fiction disrupted by the memories and the associations it provokes. By selecting and elaborating formal qualities, the film suggests a particular kind of visual experience of an artist or someone who is preoccupied by the structure or language of vision, not just things seen. *Rush*'s journey fuses reverie with abstraction, and culminates in the suggestion of a kind of hyperaesthetic fatigue. The viewer is finally uncertain whether it is hallucination, daydream or metaphor. It concludes ambiguously with what may be a destination or just a temporary cessation of movement.
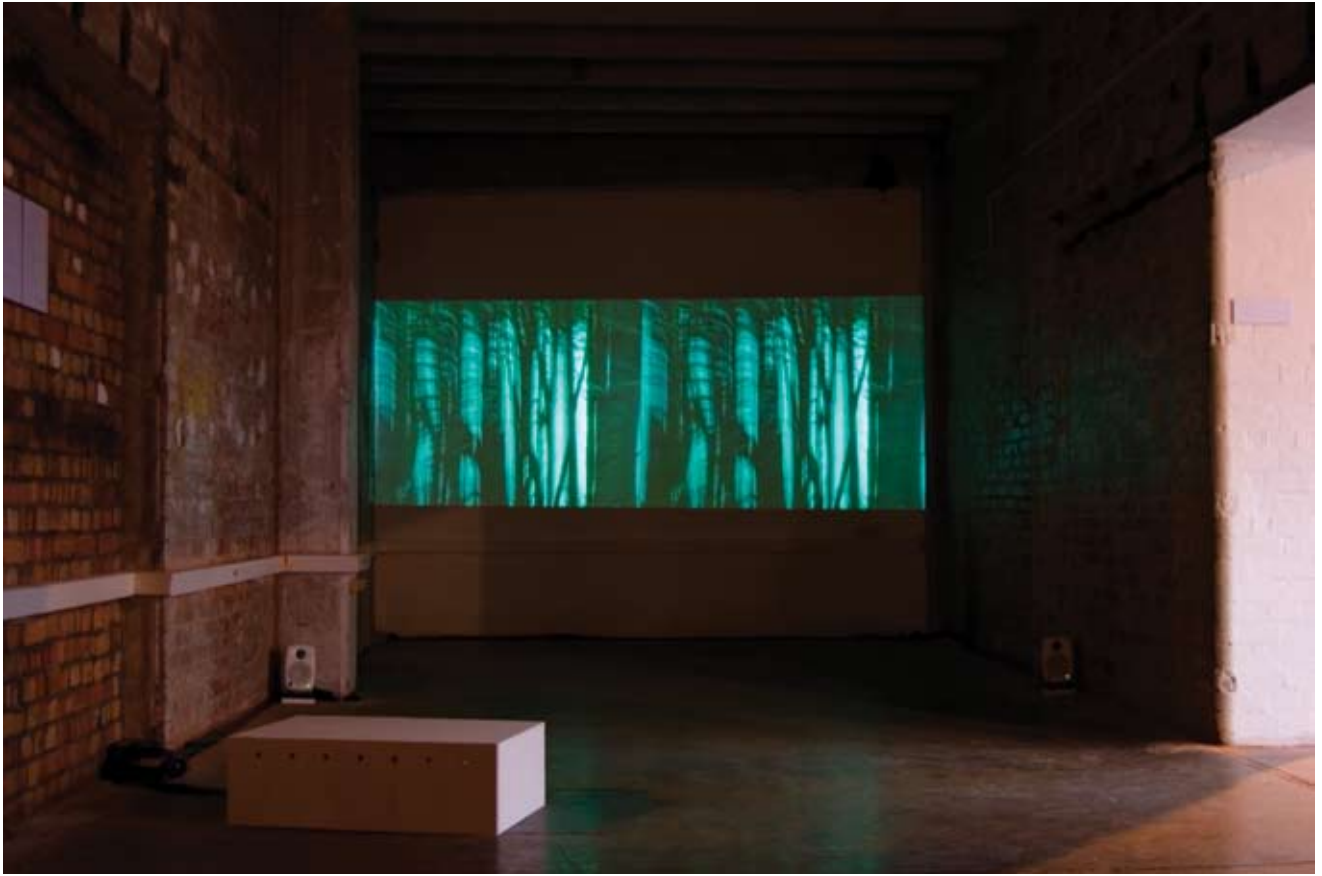
Boynton & Rose
Rush, 2006
installation image, The Bargehouse, Oxo Tower, London

Kirk Woolford

Will.0.w1sp

Will.0.w1sp is slightly different from most works of visual art in that it was conceived of as an interactive piece. The original idea came from a desire to create a work that could not be viewed directly. Ideally, the piece would continually avoid the viewer's gaze. Eventually, I decided the apparatus required to track a viewer's gaze was so cumbersome that it would overwhelm the piece. Aesthetically, I did not want viewers to think of it as a 'digital' piece, so I removed as much technology from the piece as possible. I used position-sensing techniques that were hidden from the viewers. I also decided to avoid traditional CGI aesthetics of hard geometry, and even harder, fully saturated colours. For many years now, I have experimented with organic ways of using digital imagery. Before building *Will.0.w1sp*, I spent several years exploring particle systems. I wanted to have the will.0 dancer constructed of particles flowing through motion capture data. This idea was too abstract to describe to funders and colleagues, so I spent several months in late 2002 writing software and experimenting with relationships between particle flow and motion. When I finally got my 'Particle Man' working several companies understood what I was doing and offered me a great deal of software created for the film and video game industries. I was quite interested by this but eventually realised I could not create anything outside of their aesthetic using their tools. I went back to the software I had written almost 2 years earlier. During this time, I learned of research done in psychology relating to 'mirror neurons' and specifically became interested in notions of 'biological movement' or the ability of human beings to recognise human movement. I spent a great deal of time balancing the particle flows to keep the imagery on the border of what was and was not recognizable as a human being.
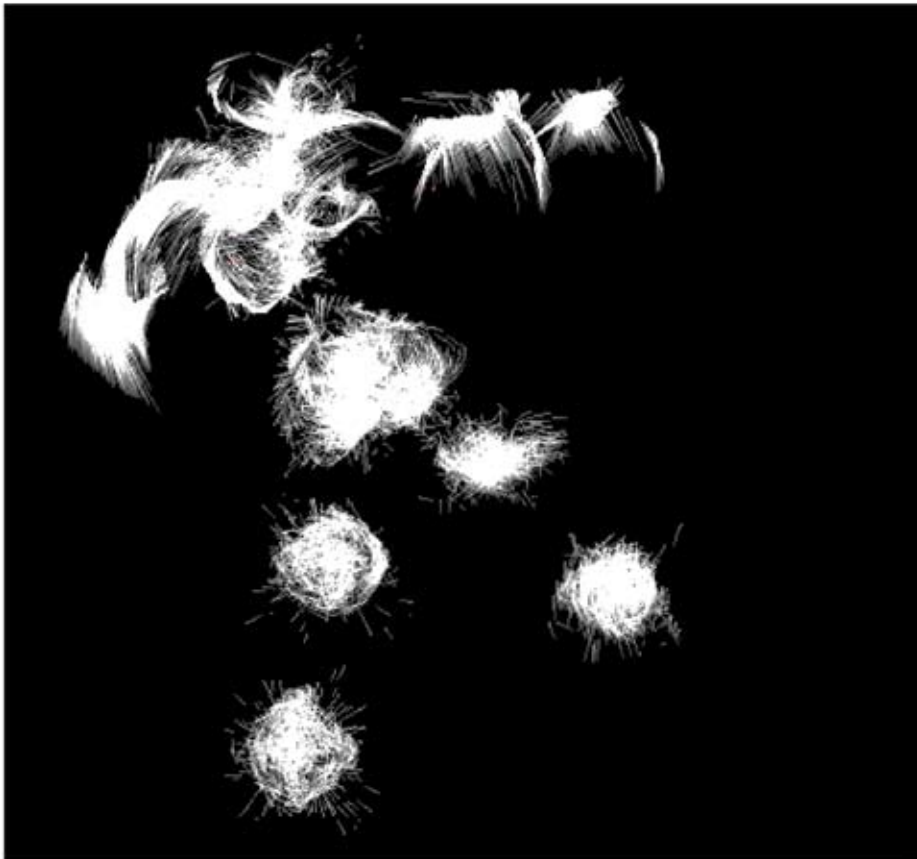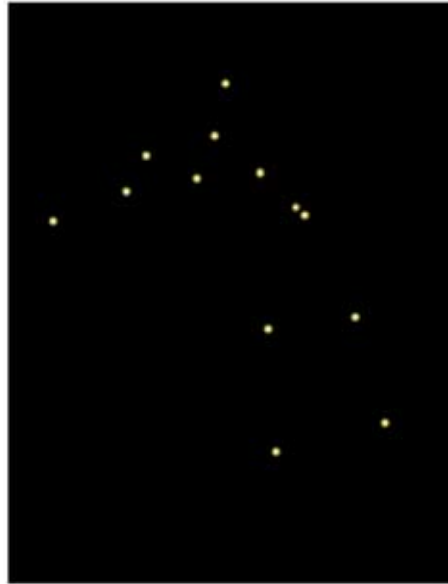
Kirk Woolford
Will.0.w1sp

Inspiration to Order
2006, Installation
University Art Gallery
College of the Arts
California State University, Stanislaus

South Ga...

Inspiration ... Order

BIOGRAPHIES

Neil Boynton (born 1966) trained as a composer and clarinetist at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts, Lancaster University. He has received awards from various funders including the British Academy, the Leverhulme Trust, and the Arts and Humanities Research Board. As a musicologist, he has published on the work of Viennese composer Anton Webern, including notably an edition of Webern's 1934–38 lectures *Über musikalische Formen* (Schott, 2002). His recent work as composer and director in collaboration with Emma Rose shows a particular interest in spatialization, digital audio and installation. Their works have been shown in national and international festivals and galleries, including transmediale05, Berlin, 700.is, Iceland, Seoul Net Festival, and the *mac*, Birmingham, AdHoc Gallery, Newcastle, the Royal Scottish Academy, Edinburgh, and Oxo Tower, London. Boynton has also worked with the Leeds-based contemporary performance group imitating the dog, composing the soundtrack for their latest work *Hotel Methuselah*, which toured the UK in spring 2006.

Gerry Davies was born in the Cynon Valley, South Wales, U.K in 1957. He graduated from Wolverhampton Polytechnic in 1981 with a degree in Fine Art specialising in sculpture before entering the painting school of the Royal College of Art, London where he spent three years making drawings. He was Artist in Residence at Durham Cathedral UK 1998-99 and a Fulbright scholar at Purdue University USA 1999-2000. He has had a number of solo shows of his drawings and been represented in numerous group and national survey exhibitions. He is currently working on a new sequence of drawings and sculptural objects – *Flood Story*- that imagine communities fleeing a deluge upon rafts. He is also working on an Arts and Humanities Research Council project to research and exhibit contemporary British artists notebooks. He lives and works in North Yorkshire.

Rebecca Fortnum (born 1963) read English at Corpus Christi College, Oxford before gaining an MFA from Newcastle University and taking up a fellowship at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, USA. She has been a Visiting Fellow in Painting at Plymouth University and at Winchester School of Art; a visiting artist at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago; a Senior Lecturer at Norwich School of Art and Wimbledon School of Art and an Associate Lecturer at Bath Spa University and Central St Martins School of Art. She is currently a Senior Lecturer at Camberwell College of Art, University of the Arts, London and Research Fellow at the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts at Lancaster University. She has received several awards including the Pollock-Krasner Foundation; the British Council; the Arts Council of England; the British School in Rome and the Art and Humanities Research Council. She has exhibited widely, including solo shows at the Collective Gallery, Edinburgh; Spacex Gallery, Exeter; The Winchester Gallery; Kapil Jariwala Gallery, London; Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham; The Drawing Gallery, London; and Gallery 33, Berlin. She has exhibited in group shows in New York, Maine, Budapest,

Salzburg, Marseilles and Gdansk as well as numerous UK exhibitions. Recent group shows include *Fluent; painting and words* (2002) and *Unframed; the politics and practices of women's contemporary painting* (2004). She was instrumental in founding the artist-run spaces Cubitt Gallery and Gasworks Gallery in London and has worked as curator and an art writer, contributing to various magazines and books. Her book, *Contemporary British Women Artists, in their own words*, has just been published.

Michael Ginsborg studied at Ealing, the Central, and Chelsea Schools of Art, graduating in 1969. He has worked extensively in UK art schools and he played a key part at Wimbledon School of Art in starting the MA in Drawing, and the Centre for Drawing, both being the first initiatives of their kind in the UK. In 2003 he stopped working in education in order to devote more time to making work in the studio. He has exhibited widely in the UK and his solo exhibitions include the Lisson Gallery (1969); Serpentine Gallery (1973); Acme Gallery (1980); Benjamin Rhodes Gallery (1986, '89, 1992, '93, and '95), and The Drawing Gallery in 2006. Group exhibitions include The British Art Show (1980); Three Painters, Camden Arts Centre (1986); John Moores Exhibition 18 (1994); British Abstract Art Part 1: Painting, and Part 3: Works on paper, Flowers East (1994 and 1996); International Biennale of Contemporary Art, Florence, Italy (1997); The Jerwood Drawing Prize Exhibition (2001). Large scale commissioned works include St Charles Hospital, London; The Long Term Credit Bank of Japan; Linklaters Alliance; and Glaxo Wellcome Medicines Research Centre, Stevenage. His work is included in many public, private and corporate collections, including The Government Art Collection; The British Council; The Department of the Environment; The Arts Council Collection; The National Museum of Wales; The Whitworth Gallery; The Graves Art Gallery; St Thomas' Hospital; St Bartholomew's Hospital; The National Gallery of Art, Budapest.

Beth Harland studied Fine Art at the Ruskin School of Art in Oxford and the Royal College of Art, London, and is currently undertaking PhD research at University of Southampton. She has received a number of research awards including the Arts and Humanities Research Council, Arts Council of England, and a fellowship at the British School at Rome. She has exhibited extensively nationally including: John Moores Exhibition, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; Whitechapel Gallery, London; Dean Clough, Halifax; Arnolfini, Bristol; Gasworks, London; Aspex Gallery, Portsmouth; Five Years, London; Liverpool Biennale; Norwich Gallery; APT, London, and internationally including: British School at Rome; Villa Crispi, Naples; Kolo Gallery, Gdansk; UFF Gallery and Studio Gallery, Budapest; 5020 Galerie, Salzburg. Her work has been published in a number of catalogues and books including *Unframed ; the politics and practices of women's contemporary painting* and *Reading Matter*, documenting a collaboration between four artists and four writers. Other recent collaborations include artist group *Machine Room;*

a blueprint for painting. She has curated and co-curated a number of exhibitions including *Closer Still*, a Southern Arts Touring exhibition Winchester Gallery and Artsway, and several exhibitions for Gasworks as a gallery committee member. Other professional activities include membership of the Abbey Council, British School at Rome. She has taught widely in Fine Art at undergraduate and postgraduate levels and is currently Director of Graduate School, Senior Lecturer at Winchester School of Art, University of Southampton.

Paula Kane was born in Glasgow in 1970. She completed her undergraduate studies at Kent Institute of Art and Design and her MA at Goldsmith's College, University of London leaving in 1996. Her solo exhibitions include Emily Tsingou Gallery, London, UK (2004 & 2006) Musee des Beaux Arts de Mons, Belgium (2003) Appelboom, Corez, France 2003, Galleri Wallner, Malmö, Sweden (2000) and Galerie Zurcher, Paris, France (1999). Group shows include APT Gallery, London; Bloomberg Space, London; Oliver Kamm 5BE Gallery, New York; Emily Tsingou Gallery London; Pepinieres Artists 2002, Graz; Arnolfini, Bristol; The Jerwood Gallery, London; John Moores Exhibition 20 21 & 23, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool; The Tannery, London; Whitechapel Art Gallery, London; Vamiali's, Athens, Greece; Andrew Mummery, London; European Parliament, Strasbourg. Paula has been awarded a number of artist's fellowships including a Henry Moore Fellowship at The Byam Shaw School of Art, London, a Pepinieres Award, Belgium, and the Abbey Award for Painting at the British School at Rome. Paula teaches at Camberwell College of Arts, and The Byam Shaw School of Art, both colleges of University of the Arts, London. She has also lectured at The Royal College of Art, Goldsmiths College and The Royal Academy. Catalogues Paula Kane include; *Freefall*, Arts Council, England; *The Valley*, Bloomberg Space, London, UK; *Paula Kane*, La Lettre Volee, Belgium; *The John Moores 23*, (also 21 and 20), Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK. She lives and works in London where she is represented by the Emily Tsingou Gallery.

Mary Maclean (born 1962) gained a first class honours degree at Glasgow School of Art and went on to postgraduate study at the Rijksacademy Amsterdam. She then completed an MA at the Royal College of Art, London and was awarded the Visiting Fellowship in Painting at Winchester School of Art. She has held a number of visiting lecturing posts including at Glasgow School of Art, Nottingham Trent University and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Painting, Oxford. She is currently Associate Lecturer in Fine Art at the University of Reading. She has received several awards including the John Minton Award for travel, the Pollock-Krasner Foundation award and the Abbey Award in Painting at the British School at Rome. She has received Research Awards for individual projects from the Arts Council of England, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and from the Faculty of Design at Kingston University and the School of Art and Design at Coventry University. Solo shows include

Somewhere…fast, Belfast Exposed, Belfast, the *Jerwood Artists Platform*, Jerwood Space, London, *Foiled*, Collins gallery Glasgow, *Still Moves* at East 73rd gallery London and *Almost Nothing* at Neutral Space Brighton. She has taken part in several group shows including *Frenzy* at the Metropole gallery Folkestone, *Residual Property* at Portfolio, Edinburgh, *Behind Closed Doors*, seven Worcester terrace, Bath and *I'm Wary*, a collaboration with Sallyl Morfill at Five Years gallery London. She was co curator with Beth Harland of *No particular place to go* at Apt gallery London.

Amanda Newall (born 1973, New Zealand) obtained her Masters in Fine Arts, Intermedia (2002-2004) Elam School of Fine Arts University of Auckland, New Zealand. Postgraduate Diploma in Fine Arts, Intermedia (2000-2001) Elam School of Fine Arts, University of Auckland, NZ. Studied for a BFA in Sculpture (1993-1997) Canterbury University, Christchurch NZ. Currently employed as a Visual Arts Lecturer 3D/Installation, Curatorship and Professional Practice at Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts (LICA), UK. Her previous positions include Sculpture Lecturer at Manukau Institute of Technology, NZ, 2003-2005; Lecturer in interdisciplinary performance/installation art at Unitec, School of Screen and Performing Arts, NZ, 2003-2005; Lecturer in Sculpture at the Fine Arts Department, Northland Polytechnic, NZ, 2004. She has received several awards including the Arts Council of New Zealand (Creative New Zealand), selected finalist Waikato Art Award, Auckland City Council Funding, Manukau Institute of Technology funding, Two Christchurch Community Trust Awards, selected finalist Rupert Bunny Award (Australia). She has exhibited solo shows at The New Zealand Film Archive, Auckland, NZ (2005), SOFA Gallery, Christchurch, NZ (2005), Edinburgh University, Scotland (2004), Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, NZ, *Story Board* eleven windows on Customs/Commerce street, Downtown Auckland, NZ, High street Project Gallery, Christchurch, NZ, George Fraser Gallery, Auckland, NZ, Blue Oyster Art Gallery, Dunedin, NZ. Her group exhibitions include *Mostly Harmless,* Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, New Plymouth, NZ (2006); FRED 06 *Romantic Seduction and Power,* Cumbria UK; *Tok Tok*, Nuffield Theatre, UK (2006); *Open Hotel,* Boquitas Pintadas, Buenos Aires, Argentina (2004); *Extracted,* Malt House Theatre, Melbourne, Australia; *Ampersand,* High Street Project for Art and Industry, Christchurch, NZ; Room 104 Auckland, NZ; The Moving Image Centre, Auckland, NZ; The Physics Room, Christchurch Arts Festival, NZ; COCA Gallery, Christchurch, NZ; *Oblique,* Community Hall, Otira township, NZ; Christchurch Metropolitan Art Gallery, NZ; Linden Gallery, Melbourne, Australia. She founded the Christchurch Metropolitan Art Gallery in 1997. She has worked as curator and director for High Street Project Christchurch, NZ; *Extracted,* The Malt House Theatre, Melbourne, Australia; *Canvass,* Manchester Street Christchurch, NZ (2000).

Vong Phaophanit was born in 1961 in Laos (now People's Democratic Republic of Lao). He was educated in France and

studied painting at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Aix-en-Provence. In 1996 he took up a DAAD scholarship in Berlin and in 2001 he was Senior Resident at The Centre for Drawing, Wimbledon School of Art, London. He was shortlisted for the Turner Prize at the Tate Gallery in 1993. His one person exhibitions include, Stephen Friedman Gallery, London (1999 & 1996) *Atopia*, Royal Festival Hall, London and DAAD, Berlin (1997 & 8), *Phaophanit and Piper*, Touring Exhibition: Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham; Site Gallery, Sheffield; Cambridge Darkroom, Cambridge; and The Minories, Colchester (1995), *Neon Rice Field*, Tate Gallery, London (1993), *Ash and Silk Wall*, Greenwich Thames Barrier Park Project, London (1993), *tok tem dean kep kin bo dai (what falls to the ground but can't be eaten)*, IKON Gallery, Birmingham and Chisenhale Gallery, London (1991 & 1992). Group shows include Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Asia Society, New York; Galerie für zeitgenssische Kunst, Leipsig; Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane; Konsthallen Gotenburg; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; Johannesburg Biennale; British Council, Sydney; De Appel, Amsterdam; The Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; Reina Sofia, Madrid; Venice Biennale and Serpentine Gallery, London. He has received sculpture commissions from Greenwich Council and Scottish National Park as well as collaborative commissions with Claire Oboussier for *Outhouse*, Liverpool, *Pipedream*, City and Islington College, London and *Lifelines*, Southend City Council. He has been a Purchaser for the Arts Council Collection, on the Advisory Panel for ACE and the London Arts Board as well as a Trustee for Spike Island, Bristol. He is currently working on a commission for *The Quite in the Land*, Luang Prabang, PDR Lao, curated by Frances Morin

Claire Oboussier is an artist and writer based in London. Her doctoral thesis was on visual significations in the work of Roland Barthes and Hélene Cixous (University of Bristol, 1994). She has published essays on the work of both these authors as well as on poetic synaesthesia. She has written about Vong Phaophanit's work for the past twenty years and collaborated with him on numerous projects. Recently they produced a book entitled *Atopia* on a year spent in Berlin for the DAAD scholarship. Alongside her studio based practice she is also currently working on three commissioned sculptural works and two films in collaboration with Phaophanit. Her most recent work, which includes film and sculptures, can be in the touring show 'The Animators'.

Emma Rose (b. 1962) is a Senior Lecturer in Art: The Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts at Lancaster University. She studied as a postgraduate at Chelsea College of Art and after graduating became a Lecturer at Leeds University with many Visiting Lectureships at Universities, Colleges and Art Schools in the UK. She has exhibited painting, drawing and printmaking and more recently experimental video with her collaborator Neil Boynton. Recent solo exhibitions have been at the Surface Gallery, Nottingham, Hotbath Gallery, Bath, *mac* Birmingham, AdHoc Gallery, North Tyneside, Angel Row Gallery, Nottingham. She has shown work made with Neil Boynton in many group exhibitions including 700IS Egilsstadir, international experimental video festival, Iceland, 'BASICS' – transmediale.05, international media art festival, Berlin, The Big Screen, Exchange Square,

Manchester organised by The Cornerhouse in association with the BBC, *Beyond the senses*, The Bargehouse, Oxo Tower, London, Royal Scottish Academy Gallery, Edinburgh, Scotland. Her solo work has been shown widely including Jill George Gallery, London, The Hatton Gallery, Newcastle, Paton Gallery, London, Angela Flowers Gallery, London, Concourse Gallery, Barbican Centre, London, The Rathaus, Dortmund, Germany, The Mall Gallery, London amongst many others. She has curated shows on several occasions including *Slow Burn: Meaning and Vision in Contemporary British Abstract Painting* shown at the Mead Gallery, Warwick University, Scott Gallery, Lancaster University and Leeds Metropolitan University Art Gallery. She has received several prizes and awards such as The Lloyds Bank Printmaking Prize in association with The Royal Academy, London and an Arts and Humanities Research Board Leave Award.

Kirk Woolford (b. 1967) studied both Computer Science and Humanities at Clarkson University and received an MS/MFA in Photography and Design from Chicago 's Institute of Design in 1992. He was a research fellow at the Kunsthochschule für Medien (Academy of Media Arts) in Cologne from 1992-95, an advisor to the Dance Unlimited Master's program in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and is currently a Lecturer in Lancaster University's Institute for the Contemporary Arts. He ran his own production company to finance his arts practice through commercial work from 1997-2005, co-founded Mesh Performance Partnerships with Susan Kozel in 1999, and has collaborated on performances with Charleroi Danse, Diller+Scofidio, and igloo. Kirk has won numerous grants and awards from Ars Electronica, ISEA, Arts Council of England, Amsterdam Arts Council, South-East Dance Agency, Ministry of School and Science North Rhine-Westphalia, and others. Most recently, he has shown work at Ars Electronica and ARCO'06.

Paula Kane
Studio Wall, 2006

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS