Placing Art

a Colloquium on Public Art in Rural, Coastal and Small Urban Environments

Editor
Professor Liam Kelly
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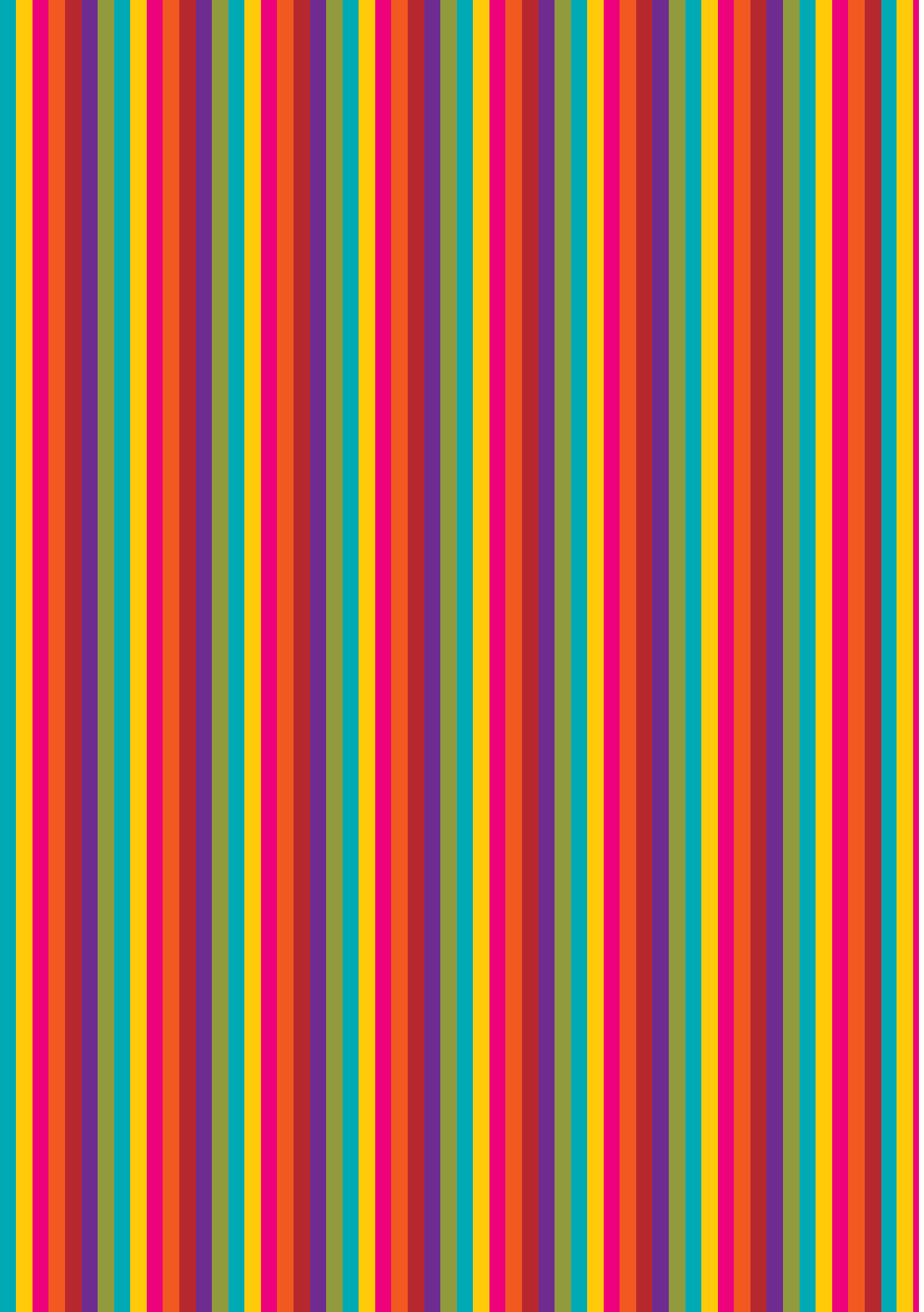
Sligo County Council and Sligo Borough Council



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Foreword

Liam Kelly, Ireland

In 1997 Sligo County Council and Sligo Corporation initiated their innovative public art programme, *Placing Art*. The aim of this pilot scheme was to develop a considered longer-term public art policy for the area. Six projects were commissioned and completed by 2000. Working through this inaugural programme has allowed for consideration and evaluation of strategic approaches for commissioning and administering public artworks. An important strategic objective of this initiative has been community involvement, access and challenge: artists working into and with the community.

As an advisor to the project, I could sense a dynamic worth exploring which led to the holding of an international colloquium in December 2000 on *Public Art in Rural, Coastal and Small Urban Environments*. The colloquium would provide a platform for the presentation and critical engagement of the *Placing Art* programme and its commissioned works, but also allow for consideration of other experiences, case studies and approaches to public art by invited curators, artists, critics, as well as policy makers.

There were at least two important impulses behind the choice of speakers – issues related to discourses about 'centres and peripheries' and their relevance to County Sligo and, importantly, Sligo itself.

The presentations of the key speakers are presented in this publication of the proceedings of the colloquium.

They include: Luke Gibbons (Ireland); Rebecca Solnit (USA); Ortrud Westheider (Germany); Yuji Akimoto (Japan); Maaretta Jaukurri (Finland) and Antony Gormley (England).

Sligo is a medium-sized port town, the largest in the North West of Ireland; a border town, it was traditionally the gateway to Ulster. The region is steeped in Celtic mythology and is forever linked with the poet W.B. Yeats and his brother, the artist Jack B. Yeats. Related to this historical and cultural background and in a region of natural beauty such as Sligo and environs, is the potential problem **that the pull of the romantic may offset the social/political problems** experienced elsewhere in an evolving and more prosperous new Ireland.

In his context-setting paper for the colloquium, Luke Gibbons takes us on a land survey of Sligo and its environs. By way of Edmund Burke (critical topography) and other writers, he takes us back into 'rough ground' and the dark side of landscape – the understanding, he would claim, an acknowledgement of which is a necessary condition for a more open, less fixed and layered sense of place.

"What is required is a re-working of the

notion of locality which does not shy away from the transformation of modernity." (Gibbons)

Recent decades have witnessed huge re-alignments of place and identities. Never has the need for map-making been more urgent, or the need for it to be under more scrutiny.

"Cartography as the articulating sign system for the immense shifts taking place all around us between places, spaces and the subjectivities which designate them as the location (or dislocation) of identity, requires an ever vigilant critical re-examination" (Irit Rogoff, 1997).

As **Luke Gibbons** points out, many Irish artists have deployed 'mapping' (un-mapping /re-mapping) as a counter-cartography and critical strategy to interrogate social, political and personal issues.

For Gibbons, the map may open up new ways of seeing, but its diagrammatic disposition is restrictive in rinsing up the cultural investments in landscape – 'the occlusion of time'. They do, however, "...prepare us for the apprenticeship of the eye that is public art, whose purpose is not so much to give us back what we already know, but also to make strange, to open up alternative perspectives on our lives".

This capacity of public art to 're-frame' experience, he examines, in considering Ronnie Hughes' installation on Streedagh Strand, County Sligo, one of *Placing Art's* projects. 'Keepsakes' reaches out over time – its echo and call sounding out from the local memories of Armada shipwrecks off the Sligo coast.

"... to talk of locality in terms of loss – as is the case of Ronnie Hughes' 'Keepsakes' – or to acknowledge a negative or even tragic element in one's attachment to place, is not to diminish it; it may actually enhance it in a world sedated by the creature comforts of commodity culture."

Rebecca Solnit's rolling, rollicking prose demonstrates as much as anything else her passion for San Francisco – a city of festivals, sub-cultures, street life and streetwise politicised citizens. In her paper, she considers art about public issues and art that participates in public life – "acts of art as much as works of art".

She indicts the new technology culture of sameness. Money, she claims, has eradicated a lot of the existing cultural community – its displacement creating a loss of urban memory (West Coast amnesia). In contrast to California as the world capital of amnesia, she views Ireland as the world capital of memory (don't we know!). This erasure of memory/history in the American West is compounded by the mobility of its inhabitants – "when no past anchors your dreams and acts".

As a result, according to Solnit, artists have become the new custodians of memory and serve as historians in the United States.

"Of course, artists have long been making commemorative statues and history paintings, have been serving official versions of history; but in recent years, artists have been actively participating in re-writing American history on the local and national scales as part of a revisionist history, complicating the records of race, class, gender, geography. They have become the memory and conscience of the community."

The artists Solnit discusses in her paper take the side of the dispossessed, the marginalised – those asked to move on. Projects reviewed highlight the treatment of Mexican Americans (Border Arts Workshop) and Native Americans (Richard Misrach), as well as the provocative re-claiming documentary photography of Ira Nowinski.

"I want to create an Island of dreams for children." This could be J.B. Yeats speaking. It was, however, the wish of Tetsuhiko Fukutake, the founding president of the Benesse Corporation which established its contemporary art museum and its cultural village on the beautiful island of **Naoshima**, in the Seto inland sea in Japan in 1992. Benesse is a made-up word meaning 'well-being' and testifies to the spiritual thinking of the company.

Along with other art critics, I visited the island and cultural village in 1998. It made a lasting impression on me. There is a wonderful feeling of things being in their place on Naoshima. I felt it appropriate to invite the curator Yuji Akimoto to Sligo.

As Akimoto points out in his paper, the Japanese architect Tadao Ando designed the museum and guest accommodation annex, which initiates and encourages dialogue with the natural setting. The commissioning process for open air projects extends this discourse further. Works are sought from artists who are given time to visit, consider, respond to and select particular sites.

One of the most compelling strategies for linking art, the environment and the local community deployed by the commissioning team at Naoshima Island, is the operation of the *Art House Project* in the village Honmura, in which an artist works with an architect. In the first of these collaborative projects, a 200-year-old house was remod-elled structurally in the spirit of tradition to accommodate integral contemporary artworks. The aim of the project, as Akimoto states, is to take and refurnish an ordinary, traditional house and create conditions inside the house that are extremely non-ordinary.

In the first house project, *Kadoya*, Tatsuo Miyajima installed his 'Sea of Time' (1998) – a serene floating world of

'counting' digital numbers. It is about continuity and change; life and time; tradition and new technology. With the emphasis on process, the artist involved the local community so that the meditation on the nature of the work (the total work, art/building) is in the acts of participation – in the 'becoming' of the artworks.

Maaretta Jaukurri, who took a year off to work as project curator for Artscape Nordland, takes us into important considerations related to the reception of contemporary public art. This large international sculpture project began in 1992 in an expansive remote area of northern Norway, of some 40,000 square kilometres. The impulse behind it was Michael Heizer's statement, echoing Martin Heidegger's thinking, that "a work of art is not put in a place, it is the place". It was also related to issues of centre/periphery being debated in the late 1980's.

Three other curators were involved – Bojana Pejic (Belgrade), Angelica Stepken (Berlin) and Per Hordevaakk (Oslo) – and the core of the international artists invited were from Norway and other Nordic countries, to ensure sensitivity to 'local culture and identity'. The vision was to 'create sculpture into landscape' rather than a cultivated sculpture park. Each artist was invited to select a site, many choosing sites outside existing areas of habitation.

Jaukurri recounts in her paper the lived experience of working at the heart of the project and takes us through the public storm and hostility in the initial phase to reflect on questions of time, democracy, place and trust, and how artworks communicate or not with their intended audience. Taking Mikail Bakhlin's advice that "time constructs narratives by its intersection with social and symbolic space", Maaretta Jaukurri resisted educating her potential audience, in favour of allowing people to make the experience their own, to "encourage people to take a leap into the world of the art works and reflect on their own knowledge, experience and emotion". The participating artists tended to use more universal symbolism to create space for that personal and democratic encounter.

Antony Gormley, like Rebecca Solnit, picks up the issue of mobility in today's society in considering the condition of contemporary sculpture.

"For me the most pertinent characteristic of our time is mobility: people, money, images, ideas, are all mobile in a way that they weren't even twenty years ago. Art itself is encouraged to be mobile and the audience for it is mobile."

He associates this with fragmentation in society and its institutions – a collapse of

faith in institutions and a loss of the spiritual dimension. He links this further with our fascination for science, with its promise of a better life, a false hope as he sees it.

Such a condition or context, he claims, is not good for art but art can provide a foil to it – a necessary sense of continuity and stability. It can inspire, not merely ask questions, in a discourse-prone world. He emphasises in his paper that art must engage with "collective experience". In the twentieth century, art by becoming self-reflective and over concerned with language and idiom, became specialised and remote from collective experience.

The central questions he poses are: how can art convey what it's like to be alive, and how can it take its place in the world? But, for Gormley, "placing the artist is the first question in where you place the art".

By analysing three examples, he explores how art can take its place by "inscribing the transitory experience of life in the permanency of durable material". All three examples, a work by Erwin Wurm, Stonehenge, and the Vera Mukhina Soviet monument, have the human body directly or indirectly as a force. They are about time, place, placing and emotion. "...for me sculpture bears witness to life by being created in it but standing outside it, acting as a witness... Sculpture, therefore, has to deal with mystery, with magic, with death and has to be totemic".

So like Rebecca Solnit, Gormley believes in art being resistant to both passive consumption and to mobility itself, and that the past is perennially pervasive.

Münster in Westphalia is a university and civil service town – a provincial capital of a wider agricultural region. This historic cathedral city was heavily bombed during the Second World War in response to the destruction of Coventry. Today, alongside another German provincial town, Kassel, it is famous for hosting an international exhibition of public art projects every ten years. Their over-riding aim is to 'invite global, art local'. The project started in 1977 with the curatorial team (Klaus Bussmann, Kasper Konig and Florian Matzner), whose initial consideration was to question and react to the nature of autonomous, self-sufficient sculpture and address issues related to art, community and location.

Ortrud Westheider, in her paper, charts the thinking behind and development of the three projects to date, 1977, 1987, 1997, which question how modern art might engage with narrative again.

The inaugural project in 1977, brought minimalist and post-minimalist art to Münster which began, as the later projects

developed, a dialogue with the city and viewer participation.

"With the integration of the viewer, minimal art let go of the hierarchical structure of the classical forms. As a result, the artist no longer appeared as the ingenious creator, but as someone who offered more questions than answers."

The 1987 project intensified the critical dialogue between artists and the historical fabric/memory of the town. The theme was 'Site Specificity' but Kasper Konig sharpened the theme: 'From Park to Parking Lot'.

"The pieces should give the city back all the narration it had lost due to the modernistic reduction in architecture. Art should also concern itself with the most marginalised areas, with 'non-places'..."

For the last project to date i.e. 1997, many artists developed conceptual works. "...they were no longer concerned with the placement of a sculpture – they pursued object avoidance... Distance and irony replaced site specificity and the culture of remembrance."

What had evolved also was a willingness of city-state, university and the private sector to collaborate.

All these speakers, by way of a wide variety of working contexts, urban and rural, explored aspects of memory, place and the space public art re-creates for meaning, feeling and social engagement. All good art is multi-layered, as are the contexts and cultural conditions placing art charts, re-charges and registers.

"...But when working with place, artists can only give if they are receiving as well. The greatest challenges for artists lured by the local are to balance between making the information accessible and making it visually provocative as well; to fulfil themselves as well as their collaborators; to innovate not just for innovation's sake, not just for style's sake, nor to enhance their reputation or ego, but to bring a new degree of coherence and beauty to the lure of the local."

LUCY R. LIPPARD

Space, Place and Public Art: Sligo and its surroundings

Luke Gibbons, Ireland

A sunlit June afternoon in Summerhill College, Sligo, the heat like a warp in the glass of the examination hall windows that looked outover the town below as it receded into the countryside. It was the day of the Leaving Cert. Geography examination, with the Ordnance Survey section that required answering detailed questions about a district through a closereading of a map. Such a decoding was difficult at the best of times, like trying to make out the weather forecast by simply looking at the whorls and figures on the weather-chart after the News. Suddenly, students began to stand-up, Jack-in-the Box fashion, to peer out the windows, as the whisper went around: 'It's Benbulben... you can see it for yourself'. There, hovering over the town, was the stretch of countryside that eluded our understanding: it was as if the diagrammatic contours of the map not only made sense for the first time, but a long familiar horizon was also made strange in the process. Everyone in Summerhill, the 'college of knowledge',did well in the Geography exam that year, even if the mode of success ran against the whole spirit of the exercise.

Maps are not the same as local knowledge, nor do they even presuppose it. The abstract delineation, the lack of all but the most superficial resemblance to the look of the land (or the city), the need for a 'key to the code' on the corner of the sheet – all these make for a distancing effect, and break with the continuum of everyday experience.

But it does not follow – as many of the received interpretations of Brian Friel's *Translations* have it – that maps thereby supplant local knowledge, or erode a sense of place. It may be more accurate to say maps *go beyond* what is tried and trusted, extending the boundaries of perception to new ways of seeing and comprehending our environment. In this, they prepare us for the apprenticeship of the eye that is public art, whose purpose is not so much to give us back what we know already, but also to make strange, to open up alternative perspectives on our lives. This is as it should be in an increasingly multi-cultural and diverse Ireland, where the local can no longer be taken for granted, and disparate voices and vantage-points are evident in even the most remote corners of the Irish countryside (the remoteness, indeed, often providing the attraction for those from different cultures and backgrounds.)

At the very outset, therefore, it is possible to grasp one of the key civic functions of *Placing Art* in public space – it's capacity to 're-frame' experience, to introduce multiple and often disorienting perspectives into the comforting, everyday routines of a community. But the 'shock of the new' does not always come from the

outside, and discomfiture need not always result in a loss of attachment, or a sundering of local ties. It may also emerge from the discovery – or recovery – of hidden or latent narratives *within* a locality; memories and stories that have, in Yeats's phrase, been 'beaten into the clay' through force of habit – or, as is more likely the case, through the force of forgetting, and official amnesia. It is striking that some of the most innovative and engaging experiments in Irish art in the last two decades – whether in the work of Kathy Prendergast, Philip Napier, Chris Wilson, and Tim Robinson, or the Knoxpark public art project by Martina Coyle, Hilary Gilligan and Pauline O'Connell in the Sligo *Placing Art* programme – have to do with mapping, surveying, and place-names, and what may be seen as both the challenges and the limits of the cartographic imagination. As might be expected from the controversy over Friel's *Translations*, one of the perceived limits of the map, with its address to the eye and the charting of *space*, is the occlusion of *time*, and the difficulty in capturing the memories and histories sedimented in the landscape. How can a map assume narrative form, or do justice to the stories and associations secreted within place-names and popular memory? It is to these layers of local knowledge that much of public art is addressed, the task of *Placing Art*, in effect, being one of imaginative geography, bringing art out of the cultural sanctuary of the gallery and 'back to the rough ground,' as the philosopher Wittgenstein described it, of inchoate, everyday experience.

Shoring up the Ruins of Memory (Keepsakes)

It is in this light that we should view Ronnie Hughes's remarkable art project, *Keepsakes*, conceived as part of the Placing Art pilot scheme devised by Sligo County Council. By means of installation, performance and site-specfic rituals, this work sought to commemorate and, in a way, make imaginative reparation for one of the many atrocities that have scarred Irish history. In September 1588, three ships of the Spanish Armada were wrecked in violent storms off Streedagh beach in County Sligo, and as the hapless survivors struggled ashore, they were slaughtered by both English forces and local inhabitants, as much for their valuables as for political reasons. From one of the remnants of the shipwreck, a stone cannonball washed up on the beach, Hughes cast three hundred and twenty spheres made of hard, transparent resin in which local people from Streedagh and its vicinity were invited to place objects, sometimes of great personal and sentimental value: family

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heirlooms, mementoes, old photographs, relics, and an actual button from the uniform of one of the sailors on the doomed ships. Sealed within these time capsules, the spheres were stacked in the manner of cannonballs on the beach by the local community who then bore witness as their memories and treasured objects were gradually swept to sea on the tide, cast adrift to the fate that had befallen the sailors four centuries earlier.

In this art of memory, it is perhaps possible to see two contrasting visions of the encounter between native and foreigner, the familiar and the strange. In the original incident, there is a gruesome, real-life enactment of the colonial stereotype of the savage Irish, though the fact they were accompanied by their civilizing masters in the slaughter raises questions itself about where barbarism ends, and civility begins. On the other hand, there is the gesture of extending one's local horizons across the seemingly endless expanses of the ocean, as all that one holds dearest is given, as it were, to the world at large, in an act of imaginative sympathy.

It is tempting to see in the former the worst kinds of localism and xenophobia that have come to be associated with fears of the outsider and the unknown; by contrast, the outward looking stance of the latter corresponds to what may be seen as the best kind of cosmopolitanism, thatF which is rooted in the affiliations of one's own time and place. It is, perhaps, significant that the spheres launched on the sea are *globes,* so that, in a profound sense, Hughes's *Keepsakes* re-works the global itself in terms of those attributes of home, memory, and place that are often considered to be the first casualties of the modern world system that began in the Elizabethan era. The scene enacted on the beach may thus be seen, quite literally, as a celebration of globalization in which the past mingles with both the present and the future, and local attachments enhance rather than diminish one's embrace of the unknown.

Memory in *Keepsakes* is not only the medium linking the disparate events that are centuries apart, but is also the source of the deep attachments embedded in the objects, the basis of the gifts given by the local community to strangers on other distant shores. Participants in the ritual were asked, as Gavin Murphy writes in his notes on *Keepsakes,* 'to contribute a piece born from a consideration of their ownlives, memories and values in relation to the imagined lives of those lost on Streedagh beach'[1]. But in another nuance playing on the visual form of the objects, memory is not confined solely to the backward look, for the transparent spheres also evoke the appearance

1 Gavin Murphy, Keepsakes: A Spanish Armada Commemoration Project from Placing Art: A Pilot Public Art Programme (Sligo County Council, 2000), pp. 39

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Keepsakes, Ronnie Hughes, 2000
Cast resin spheres and donated memorabilia
A commemorative project on Streedagh Strand,
County Sligo

of crystal balls. This version of local memory giving us a glimpse of the future as well as the past, or perhaps a clairvoyant past that opens up new vistas on the future.

The experience of the local evoked in Ronnie Hughes's *Keepsakes* bears little resemblance to conventional romantic conceptions of place, which revolve around organic ideals of harmony and fusion with one's surroundings. It seeks rather to connect, as Paul Gilroy suggests, roots in one's native place with routes in the guise of travel and an encounter with 'the other' – other cultures, other times and other places. One of the central problems with 'the lure of the local', as re-formulated under the influence of the Romantic movement in the nineteenth century, was its consolatory role as a comfort zone, a refuge from the seismic upheavals of the capitalist world system: empire, industrialization, mechanization, urbanization, secularization. As with related concepts of community, place and locality began to function as 'out-takes' from modernity, as narrative or nostalgic asides from the march of progress in its dominant – and often predatory – Western forms. It is for this reason, as Doreen Massey argues, that:

> place and the spatially local [have come to be] rejected by many progressive people as almost necessarily reactionary. They are interpreted as an evasion; as a retreat from the (actually unavoidable) dynamic and change of real life, which is what we must seize if we are to change things for the better. On this reading, place and locality are foci for a form of romanticized escapism from the real business of the world.[2]

The task facing modern culture is how to rescue a sense of the local, and the recognition of a need for attachment and belonging, for a contemporary conception of place, free from 'reactionary nationalisms... competitive localisms [or] introverted obsessions with heritage': 'We need, therefore, to think through what might be an adequately progressive sense of place, one which would fit in with the local-global times and the feeling and relations they give rise to.'

It may not be entirely consistent on Massey's part to call for a 'progressive sense of place' which simply 'fits in' with advanced Western society, for surely one of the distinguishing features of a modernist aesthetic is that it is *at odds* with its surroundings, and strikes a discordant note, contesting any romantic harmony or fusion between identity and place. What is required is a re-working of the notion of locality which does not shy away from the transformations of modernity, and which even acknowledges its more violent, disruptive aspects, while still adopting a critical or suspecting stance –

2 Doreen Massey, A Global Sense of Place, in Space, Place and Gender (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 151

"... to talk of locality in terms of loss – as is the case of Ronnie Hughes' 'Keepsakes'– or to acknowledge a negative or even tragic element in one's attachment to place, is not to diminish it; it may actually enhance it in a world sedated by the creature comforts of commodity culture."

if only from the point of view of those on the receiving end of these often uninvited upheavals. Public art – by virtue of its very experimentation, and its lack of immediate impact or instant effect – may be seen as one of the primary means of recasting the self-images of a community, putting in place the outlines or 'frames' through which a community makes sense of its shifting positions in a rapidly changing world.

Sligo and the History of Place

It is striking, therefore, that in terms of Irish literature – and perhaps even on a wider world stage – Sligo and its environs has come to embody the ultimate dream of romantic escapism, as conjured up in Yeats's 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree,' – inspired, it is worth recalling, not by any 'call of the wild' in Irish culture but by a reading of Thoreau's vision of a retreat to the woods in American romanticism, with its cult of the wildernesss and love of remote places. Not least of the ironies of this celebration of the wilderness and primitive nature is that its intellectual hold on the American imagination is itself due in part to the extraordinary influence of a pioneering Irish treatise on aesthetics, Edmund Burke's, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757) – as is clear from the title of the recent major exhibition at the Tate Gallery of the artistic discovery of the great American outdoors, *American Sublime*[3]. However, if we attend closely to the arguments of Burke's youthful *Enquiry*, it would seem that instead of laying the basis for romantic escapism, and a comforting recourse to nature, there is instead an emphasis on the unsettling and dark sides of the landscape – terrors that have as much to do with history and human destructiveness as with the threats presented by nature itself.

Given Yeats's idealization of Sligo and its surroundings[4], there is an additional irony in the fact that one of the earliest manifestations of Burke's anxieties about the terror barely concealed under the surface tranquility of the Irish landscape also surfaces in relation to the Sligo countryside. This is contained in a response to a letter written to him by his friend, Charles O'Hara, landlord and Patriot M.P. for Sligo, at the height of the Whiteboy disturbances in Munster in 1762. O'Hara had written to Burke of an absorbing visit to the island of Inismurray off the coast of Sligo, in terms that would have elicited the approval of later romantic nationalists:

> The race of inhabitants now there are by their tradition of many hundred years standing... They are an unmixd people, Their Irish purer than our people speak and many of their stories I am told, have all the natural beauty so well *counterfeited* in Fingal [i.e. James McPherson's fabricated

3 See Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States, 1820–1880 (London: Tate Publishing, 2002)

4 This refers mainly to Yeats's early poetry: the reflections on nature and landscape in his later work have much more in common with the dark forebodings of Burke's sublime

> translations of Ossian] They have ruins very singular and of great antiquity. But the innocent simplicity of their lives is extraordinary. Extremely hospitable to any stranger that goes among them; and miraculously chaste; whatever disputes may arise, are settled among themselves; they are never known to carry a complaint into the great world.

O'Hara is convinced that the image of such a community would greatly appeal to Burke, and, virtually anticipating Yeats's hankering for Innisfree in London, writes: 'When I go to London, I shall try to get this island. I think you'd pay me a visit there; tho' you wont here' (referring to his country residence on the Sligo mainland). At this point, however, fulfilling his mission as a Protestant, 'improving' landlord, he strikes an ominous note in relation to this idyllic, pastoral community:

> I told them they must be modernized... I have a desire to make them industrious, and to preserve them. You'd hardly expect this from a man you usd to accuse last winter as being as bad as any Cromwellian.[5]

In keeping with the tragic paradoxes of an emergent, romantic sense of place in Ireland or America, the indigenous community – whether Irish or native American – must be uprooted and 'moderniz'd' in order to be preserved in the aesthetic imagination. As if in a gut reaction to O'Hara's mention of Cromwell, Burke, in his reply, scarcely suppresses his fears as to the likely outcome of this version of progress, notwithstanding his friend's benevolent designs. Relating O'Hara's plans for improvement with the provocative agrarian enclosures that sparked off the Whiteboy unrest in Munster, he writes:

> You charm me with this account of your Little New World, which you have described so near home. Of what size is this island, or is it described in the Map? I wish you may get it with all my heart; for I know that you will be no Cortez, Pizarro, Cromwell or Boyle to the Natives. Happy and wise are these poor Natives in avoiding your great World; that they are yet unacquainted with the unfeeling Tyranny of a mungril Irish Landlord, or with the horrors of a Munster Circuit [i.e. that persecuted the Whiteboys]. I have avoided this subject whenever I wrote to you; and I shall now say no more of it; because it is impossible to preserve ones Temper on the view of so detestable a scene. God save me from the power, (I shall take care to keep myself from the society) of such monsters of inhumanity.

After noting that only hangmen are fit company for the gentlemen of Munster who are tyrannising the Catholic population, Burke breaks abruptly from this disturbing train of thought to enquire: 'Can you get drawings of any of the ruins on Inis Moray?'[6]

5 Charles O'Hara to Edmund Burke, 10 August, 1762, Correspondence, i, ed. Thomas W. Copeland (Cambridge University Press), pp. 144–6

6 Edmund Burke to Charles O'Hara, ante 23 August, 1762, ibid., pp. 147–8

It is almost as if Burke unmasks the horrors of improvement, Irish style, through the contemplation of ruins. The very presence of these fragments of the past on the landscape acts as a rejoinder to those official, sectarian accounts of the Cromwellian period which provided little more than apologias for confiscation. Expressing his contempt for 'those miserable performances which go about under the name of Histories of Ireland', Burke adds elsewhere, in a telling passage:

> But there is an interior History of Ireland – the genuine voice of its records and monuments – which speaks a different language from those histories of Temple and Clarendon. These restore nature to its just Rights, and policy to its proper order (TPL, vi, 45). [7]

For Burke, ruins represent a kind of inner speech within a culture, disjointed and fractured expressions of what is suppressed in official memory, and in this may be seen the lineaments of an early alternative sense of place to its more therapeutic, romantic counterparts. This rival conception of place sees it as site of multiple and often contested narratives of gain and loss, many of which have yet to find material expression, or achieve their moment of articulation. Such an engagement with locality is, I would suggest, the task of public art, which aims not to re-instate but to question the appeal of romantic evasion and nostalgia.

Place is reclaimed from its sentimental moorings, whether in the form of uncritical parochialism, comforting 'small is beautiful' philosophies, or the more superficial glosses of the heritage or cultural tourist industries. It is true that a sense of place that engages with the submerged, 'interior histories' of a locality runs the risk of unsettling the more sedate, acceptable self-images of a community, but is no less loyal to that community for doing so.

As if taking a cue from Burke's early exercise in this form of critical topography, Sydney Owenson (later Lady Morgan) in her *Patriotic Sketches of Ireland* (1807) also looked to the scenery and character of Sligo in the aftermath of the Act of Union to undermine the delusion that small is beautiful, and that the unity of the parish or the locality is an antidote to bitter political and economic divisions in society at large. In one of the earliest descriptive sketches of the Sligo countryside in a recognizable romantic idiom, she gives a premonition of the Celtic twilight that would not be out of place in Yeats's imaginary Sligo:

> The fairy land of Hazelwood, the bold attitude of Benbu[l]bin, the beetling brow of Knockna-[r]e, the oceans' gleaming line comingling with the horizon, and the town of Sligo spreading irregularly along the base of a lofty hill, crowned with meadows, and successively

7 Edmund Burke, Tracts Relative to the Laws against Popery in Ireland [c.1765], Works, vi (London: Bohn, 1902), p.45

> betrayed by an expanding view; till the softening influence of twlight mellowed every outline into air, and dissolved every object into one mild and indistinct line.[8]

But political violence is not far from the surface for, she points out, as if also anticipating the shoreline rituals of Ronnie Hughes's *Keepsakes*, 'the literal meaning of the word *Sligo* is the "town of shells"', and it owes it origins, she continues, to the fate of the inhabitants of the nearby town of Ballisodare, who 'having been driven by the vicissitudes of civil dissention from their native place, fled to the shore, and of the shells and pebbles flung by the violence of the tide against the coast, erected a number of huts, which formed the infancy of Sligo.'(18) This provides the pretext for a series of reflections on the rise and fall of human fortunes (influenced perhaps by the French writer Volney's meditations on ruins), which proved not exactly flattering to the then current inhabitants of Ballisodare:

> Sligo is now a large opulent and commercial town, while its parent city is one of the most ruinous and wretched villages in the province... The routine of all human, as of all natural events, knows no variability in its cause or its effects; and the rise, climatric, decline, and fall of every empire, are but the counterpart of that which preceded it. (19)

The contemplation of the mouldering ruins of Sligo Abbey initially provide an occasion for reverie but then this summons up remembrances of the more baneful and 'noxious' effects of political and religious bigotry, the 'cold contracting dogmas of intolerance' that brought the Abbey to ruin (31-2) Instead of inducing repose and tranquility, the surface calm of the landscape in remote regions often belies the turbulence underneath.

Quoting the Swiss romantic writer Zimmerman, she observes 'that in the unvaried stillnesss and stagnation of small remote places, lie buried acrimony and rancour of the passions, rarely found in great cities'. Challenging the romantic myth that the countryside is the cure for the ills of city life, she argues that it is the very intimacy of small neighbourhoods which adds extra rancour to more abstract political and sectarian conflicts:

> That destructive spirit of intolerance in religion, and of faction in politics, which has so long and fatally diffused its noxious influence over the whole kingdom and which we hope is now happily fading away in its leading cities, may still be found flourishing in all its pristine vigour, in the hearts of those little towns and villages, where both are still nurtured by the local intimacy and opinionative distance. (49)

8 Sydney Owenson, Patriotic Sketches of Ireland, Written in Connaught [1807] (Baltimore: George Dobbin & Murphy, 1809), p.18. (Subsequent references in parenthesis in the text)

Though the romantic periphery – from Lady Morgan's own novel *The Wild Irish Girl* (1806) to John Ford's classic film *The Quiet Man* (1952) – is often portrayed as a source of tranquility and regeneration for ennervated metropolitan sensibilities, in fact, such exotic regions have known very little peace since the heyday of Western expansionism and colonization. To the outsider and the tourist, they may afford rustic retreats, but, as Dorren Massey once more points out, following Owenson's line of argument, this does not accord with the experience of those living in remote regions, for whom

> "the security of the boundaries of the place one called home must have dissolved long ago, and the coherence of one's local culture must long ago have been under threat... In those parts of the world, it is centuries now since time and distance provided much protective insulation from the outside."[9]

It is undeniable that the possession of positive self-images is crucial to fostering pride in one's locality, and the empowerment and agency that goes with it. Hence the role of County Councils, Chambers of Commerce and, indeed, local newspapers in building up what can be seen as celebratory rituals of identity – 'locality', as Walter Benjamin might put it, 'with its make-up on'. But to talk of locality in terms of loss – as in the case of Ronnie Hughes's *Keepsakes* – or to acknowledge a negative or even a tragic element in one's attachment to place, is not to diminish it: it may actually enhance it in a world sedated by the creature comforts of commodity culture. There is a tendency to construe loyalty to one's community – or any minority or beleaguered group – in terms of telling the good news, of presenting an affirmative, buoyant image to an outside, often hostile world. This may be reassuring to local authorities and tourist interests, but the difficulty is that it may end up converting people into tourists in their own localities. By contrast, the role of the arts – and culture in its critical or reflective sense – is often to question such 'pleasing illusions' (in Edmund Burke's phrase), to lift the veil which communities often use to hide the truth from themselves as well as others.

Storms from Paradise

That such a reflexive or critical sense of place still engages our deepest, primordial attachments is poignantly evoked in a painting by Sean McSweeney on the cover of the Sligo-based Dermot Healy's autobiographical meditation on such themes, *The Bend for Home*.

Here we see an apparently idyllic green Irish landscape, complete with farmhouse surrounded by trees and the glow of a kitchen

9 Doreen Massey, 'A Place called Home?', Space, Place and Gender, pp. 165-6.

window, its light capturing the warmth and security sought by those in search of home. But the painting is about the search rather than the fulfilment, for the chalk-white road that leads to the house, with its dramatic curves, sweeps by the front door at the last moment, propelling the viewer out of the frame into the darkness. To borrow the imagery of the German critic Walter Benjamin, it is as if a storm from paradise has blown even the landscape itself off-course, and with it any dream of returning to the 'Lake Isle of Innisfree', or its equivalents. Approaching the house, swathes of green are caught up in the wind, and an imposing tree bends over the rooftop, the gashes of red on its branches resembling blood-stains left behind by a setting sun. Healy's own narrative picks up on this theme of loss, even within sight of paradise. The epigraph to the book quotes two lines from Percy French's celebrated ballad, 'Come back, Paddy Reilly to Ballyjamesduff':

> Just turn to the left at the bridge of Finea, And stop when halfway to Cootehill

– but, like the character Maria who forgets her lines in Joyce's short story *Clay*, symptomatically drops the previous two lines:

> The garden of Eden has vanished they say But I know the lie of it still.

'Lie' is the appropriate word, for it designates not only the gentle slope of the land, but the illusion of it all. As Healy explains himself, the harsh geographical reality is that if you turn left at the bridge of Finea (Healy's home village), there is no chance of finding your way to Cootehill, let alone to Eden:

> It can't be done. No matter how you try you can't turn left at the bridge of Finea, unless you go up Bullasheer Lane which leads eventually to the banks of floating reeds on Kinale. Some make a case for the old Carrick road which passes the weeping walls of Carrick Church that stands in a quarry, but the Carrick road is to the right. It's all cod... And that's how I found out writers not only make up things, but get things wrong as well. Language, to be memorable, dispenses with accuracy.[10]

But then, he adds, as if an afterthought, one day his mother did manage to take the turn to the left on the road that doesn't exist, and found her way to Cootehill, simply by following the words of the song. Home becomes a hall of mirrors, a pause for reflection that is amusingly evoked in another scene in the book which describes the disorientation of the family dining room in the Healy household. This was dominated by a huge mirror which was nearly the width of an entire wall:

> That mirror has given my family and me a second identity. We ate looking at ourselves in it. We were never fully ourselves, but always

10Dermot Healy, The Bend for Home (London: The Harvill Press, 1996),p.10.

Through public art, it is possible to sift our responses to locality and home through new filters of vision,re-claiming a sense of place for a rapidly changing and often disorienting globalised environment.

The Bend for Home,
Sean McSweeney, 1996
Oil on card

> possessed by others... The family, when they conversed, never had to look directly at each other. We all spoke through the mirror... This mirror and use of it threw visitors off balance. They looked at you directly, but you looked at them through the mirror. Even if the person was standing right in front of you, you looked over their shoulder. That warped perspective stayed with me for years. (*The Bend for Home*, 74-5)

If home entails the loss of the garden of Eden in Healy's world, it also brings with it a reflectiveness and an openness towards visitors that may make it all the more welcoming in a contemporary, multi-cultural world. These mirrors can be seen as emblems of public art, the equivalent of new, often disorienting, maps of meaning even for those who think they know their homeplace off by heart. Through public art, it is possible to sift our responses to locality and home through new filters of vision,re-claiming a sense of place for a rapidly changing and often disorienting globalised environment. It is true that the map is never the territory; but as we found out, looking through the windows of the new wing dormitory that improvised as an examination hall in Summerhill College, that very stylisation itself indicated that it is at one remove from reality, all the better to throw new light on the most familiar landscapes of our lives.

The Art of Memory and the Art of Forgetting

Rebecca Solnit, USA

The author qoutes extensively from her published works throughout this text:

In the United States, we forget our history a lot, and this is partly because it's a history of erasures. Landscapes, species, languages, and cultures have been erased. Since these are uncomfortable histories, physical traces and social memory of their occurrence has often been erased too. As Rachel Carson pointed out in her 1962 book about the impact of pesticides, *Silent Spring*, catastrophes of erasure are compli-cated specifically because we don't notice absence. Absence is something that only an informed mind can notice, a mind that can make comparisons, that sees a lack of nests and birdsong where someone else might just see a tree. Ann Hamilton addressed this in her 1991 installation *View* at the Hirschorn Gallery on the Mall in Washington, D.C. She and her collaborator Kathryn Clark covered the windows of this round museum with wax in which they stamped the names of endangered species. The installation substituted information for experience, shut out the world and replaced it with a description of the world. It was an evocation of what extinction means: extinction means what we don't see, extinction means the world gets smaller and simpler.

Here, I should say that rather than talk about public art as such, I want to talk about art, about public issues and art that participates in public life: a Henry Moore in a plaza can be about private experience just as a photographic essay can be both a public exhortation and a record of public history. My own early interest in public art evolved into an interest in art that makes individuals members of the public, makes them citizens and participants in public life, particularly art in which people become the producers rather than the consumers of the meaning of their lives. Maya Lin's epochal Vietnam Memorial is more significant for how it allows people to interact – walking a sort of stations of the fallen, reading, seeing their reflection in the polished granite, laying wreaths and taking traces – than for its brilliant formal design. Thus, my interest in public art became an interest in community–developed projects, public festivals, demonstrations, uprisings, street theater, and guerrilla art. With a book on walking it has also become an interest in the activities that give a place resonance: the strolls, parades, neighbors, conversations, landmarks which make mute walls and streets speak of their events and inhabitants. Thus I will speak of works of art but also of acts of art and sensibilities, of what kind of imaginative life can be lived in public. For, public art, public life, and public space depend on people who desire to live in public, who can find the

time to do so – and the new technology economy can be inimical to both these, with its acceleration of everyday life and its disembodiment and emphasis on private space and virtual space. And part of what happens in public is shared experience that becomes shared memory or commemorates shared memory, as statues, parades, and place names do.

My own home and the eventual subject of my talk, San Francisco, has been ravaged by a tidal wave of money tied to high technology, money that has eradicated not only a lot of the existing cultural community but much of the time and space in which people engage in memory and invention. Though the boom is supposed to be about the unarguable goodness of wealth, it has created widespread crises of scarcity, scarcity of time, housing, tranquility and the continuity that keeps memory alive.

Memory and invention are not lucrative activities, at least compared to software development and web design, and this new wealth is displacing longtime residents, ethnic groups, under-classes, students, artists and historians. The hordes of technology workers over-running us like Vikings don't even know what's missing, though the resistance to that destruction has itself taken the form of public performance, guerilla art, street posters, and pranks, as well as ballot measures, marches, and even building occupations. In studying this destruction, I came to realize how much artists serve as historians in the United States. Of course, artists have long been making commemorative statues and history paintings have been serving official versions of history; but in recent years artists have been actively participating in rewriting American history on the local and national scales as part of a wave of revisionist history complicating the records on race, class, gender, geography. They have become the memory and conscience of the community. For artists, being radical may simply mean being committed to untold stories, unseen lives and systems, whatever and wherever they may be.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles, for example, has been the New York Department of Sanitation's artist-in-residence for more than a quarter of a century, and one of the things she has done is make visible the systems and workers who keep that city viable. That is, she has made garbage and garbage collectors her subjects. The garbage truck "The Social Mirror" reflects back the image of the public so that, says Ukeles, they can see who creates the garbage. She helped design the new Waste Transfer Station as an educational center, so people could see their garbage on its way to Fresh

I have often called California the world capital of amnesia (which is why I'm wildly curious to see how the technology boom has played out in Ireland, which may well be the world capital of memory).

Kills Land Fill. About a decade ago, incidentally, Fresh Kills became the largest manmade object on earth, bigger than the great wall of China and visible from space, but few New Yorkers know about it.

But this problem of invisibility is a particularly western problem: the American West was more recently settled, often by people who came to shed their identities as failures, criminals, members of unpopular ethnic groups, or as dutiful children and citizens. And a lot of us have moved around so that we are ourselves erased people: we have left behind our grandparent's graves, their language, the scenes of our childhoods, that entire accumulation of association with place and past that roots one. The West is well known as a wide-open place, and this openness is about the wild possibilities when no past anchors your dreams and your acts. Out of this wildness comes Hollywood and Silicon Valley, in all their glory and scariness. I have often called California the world capital of amnesia (which is why I'm wildly curious to see how the technology boom has played out in Ireland, which may well be the world capital of memory). The definitive myth of the West is that we went from virgin wilderness to shopping mall in a single bound, and that history is a mildly interesting proposition that happened elsewhere, not a nightmare from which we wish to awaken. This means that our own history is largely unknown and untended.

In a rush of xenophobia five years ago, Mexican-Americans and Latin Americans were demonized as invaders by a white population that could not remember that California and the southwest – a million square miles all told – were stolen from Mexico in a dirty war in 1848, a war that to my knowledge has not a single Californian monument to it while Civil War monuments checkerboard the Nation, even thousands of miles from where the battles were fought. This image (slide) shows one of the end results of a Border Arts Workshop project in San Diego on the Mexican border; they gave their grant money directly to illegal immigrants as marked $10 and $20 bills, then followed the flow of that money through the community to demonstrate the valuable role those immigrants played in the local economy. It was called the Art Rebate because these illegals cannot collect their tax rebates.

Many Indian homelands have been reinvented as national parks widely imagined as that same virgin wilderness – for what is virgin wilderness but a place where nothing happened, where memory is not required, where history has yet to be kick-started? Yosemite National Park, the

definitive wilderness of this kind, is the world's first national park. Artists, particularly photographers and the Scottish-American nature writer John Muir, succeeded in describing it as a place apart from human strife and human history, and this was a valuable agenda in getting the place respected and preserved. But preserved as what? Though the indigenous population did not even leave the small valley at the heart of the park, two contradictory stories about the place were promulgated: that they never existed in this place outside human history and that they had died out a long time ago so that history was sad but tidily concluded and we were back in that damned virginity.

I wrote about this in my 1994 book, *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West*: "Southern Sierra Miwok activist and Yosemite Park employee Jay Johnson told me the following story a few years ago: I think it was 1980, Julia and four of us on business for our tribe [seeking federal recognition in Washington] went to the Smithsonian Museum and found the California museum exhibits, then Yosemite... It had a little statement on the side and it left off with 'It's very sad today. There's no more Yosemite Indians.' Period. I said, 'Let's go down, talk to the people at the desk about this statement.' So we went down there and this lady, she was at the desk, and I said, 'Ma'am, about that diorama about Yosemite,' and she says 'Oh, isn't that nice.' And I said, 'It's nice, but there's an error in the statement,' and she says, 'Oh no, there can't be. Every little word goes through channels and committees and whatnot,' and I says, 'It's OK, but,' I says, 'It tells me that there are no more Yosemite Indians today.' She says, 'Well that's true, it's very sad but whatever's out there is true.' So I say, 'Well I hate to disturb you, but I'm a Yosemite Indian, and we're here on business for our tribe.' And she caught her breath and said, 'Ohhh...'" The Southern Sierra Miwok have after many years of struggle, got a few acres in the park upon which to build their own cultural center and to represent their history, religion, and presence on their own terms. It should create a very different picture of Yosemite, a picture that includes memory, that makes the virgin wilderness into an ancient homeland.

These are images by Richard Misrach of one of the many pieces of military land that has escaped public scrutiny: this happens to be Bravo 20 Bombing Range in Nevada, about 150 miles northeast of Yosemite as the crow flies. The US Navy has been practising bombing here for half a century, though the land was never legally taken out of public hands. The mountain at

Ira Nowinski
from his photoessay **'No Vacancy'**, 1970s
One of hundreds of elderly men displaced by urban renewal gazes upon the rubble of what was once an entire neighbourhood of residential hotels fo retired laborers, who fought a pitched but losing battl eto save their homes.

the center is a peak sacred to the Paiute tribe; it has been bombed so often it is now fifty feet shorter than it used to be. This is about as literal as erasure gets. Richard engaged in one of my favorite kinds of public art, the impossible public art proposal, when he drew up plans to make Bravo 20 the nation's first national park commem-morating environmental disaster, a park in the American west about history! Like many other such proposals, it may not lead to altering the actual public landscape, but it has created a conversation in that other important public space, the public imagination. This documentary function of photography has enormous significance for public life.

In my book, *Hollow City: The Seige of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, I wrote: Thanks to the photographer Ira Nowinski we know what disappeared in San Francisco in the 1970s. The neighborhood known as SoMa or South of Market had a brief tenure in the 1860s as a gracious district for the moderately wealthy, but it has been a working-class, immigrant and industrial district ever since. By the postwar era, its numerous residential hotels housed a predominantly male and elderly population, particularly in the area known as Yerba Buena, just across Market Street from downtown's prime business and shopping district. Though "blight" was cited as grounds for razing the area, it was clear that expansion of commercial and civic functions was the real motive. The population was overwhelmingly white, male, retired and union. Many were maritime workers, and most hailed from the heyday of unions, strikes and organizing, from San Francisco's General Strike of 1934 and other moments when labor had seized power. Some had been communists. They prized the security, affordability, community and access the area's forty-eight residential hotels provided, and they were not going to be herded out of their homes like sheep. As Calvin Welch, an affordable housing activist in the city since 1970, recalls,

> A very sharp battle was fought, much more sharp than the Western Addition. People were killed, buildings were burnt. Political organizations were suppressed. They were so opposed to any compromise – they probably cut the best deal that was ever cut with urban renewal in the city.

South of Market was gutted to make way for Yerba Buena Center. The convention center, named after assassinated Mayor George Moscone, opened in December of 1981. For several years the space in front of Moscone Center remained a vacant lot. When the Democratic Presidential Convention was held there in 1984, the gravelly dirt became a "free speech zone" where local punk bands

such as MDC (Multi-Death Corporations) played and thousands met to protest the blockades, "die-ins," and Hall of Shame tours of downtown's many corporate headquarters, tours that were another form of restoring knowledge of the city to its citizens.

Now that vacant lot is a complex featuring a theater, a Martin Luther King commemorative fountain of big concrete slabs, and the Center for the Arts for showcasing local art; the place has a strangely dislocated, airport-like ambience, though its central lawn provides a pleasant lunch spot for office workers and an occasional site for performances, concerts and outdoor sculpture shows. The place has a perpetual identity crisis about whether it belongs to the high-minded nonprofit sector or to the tourism-and-entertainment industry that the area as a whole clearly caters to. Across from the Center of the Arts is the most recent addition to Yerba Buena Center: the glittering silver-and-glass Sony Metreon, billed as "an interactive entertain-ment experience." It harbors a multiplex movie theater for Hollywood movies, a few knick-knack stores, including a Discovery Channel boutique, a Starbucks coffeeshop, a Sony PlayStation for electronic games, and the world's first Microsoft Store. A more obsequious monument to global capitalism would be hard to find. It's a complicated argument whether democracy and community culture are better served by a collection of residential hotels occupied by old, white radicals, a vacant lot occupied by mostly white political punks, or by a private-public complex for sometimes-multicultural arts and entertainment.

Probably the best melding of these histories ever was Ira Nowinski's 1995 Center for the Arts show of his early 1970s photographs of the TOOR activists, their homes, and their demonstrations. In beautiful black and white images, Nowinski suggested a minimal lifestyle that was more than acceptable for many who came out of both the working class and the Great Depression. His still lifes of folded linens and pillows atop sagging striped mattresses, hotel lobby signs, and then the closed and wrecked hotels radiated a potent melancholy. To see these still lifes and sympathetic portraits in Yerba Buena Center for the Arts was to see a place get its ghosts back: standing in front of the images, one could imagine that one stood where a wall had been or an old man had laid down to dream, an erased architecture that still exercised authority over the shiny new spaces. These photographs testify to something else too: the many roles artists can play in cities and conflicts.

In Lucy Lippard's *The Lure of the Local*, she writes,

> historical preservation may have been better served by a lack of money than by a myopic philanthropy. Jonathan Daniels says that 'poverty is a wonderful preservative of the past. It may let restoration wait as it ought not to wait, but it will keep old things as they are.

In much of the San Francisco work I am going to show, artists have taken the side of poverty – that is, they have not only been relatively poor themselves, but they have taken the side of poverty against wealth when poverty means the vulnerable, the elderly, the marginal communities, the continuities and memories erased by wealth, when wealth means a kind of bulldozing amnesia. Because really, looked at this way, poverty is monetary poverty but a wealth of meaning and connection; monetary wealth is also an impoverishment of meaning, connection and memory. What is being lost in San Francisco and many other cities is a rich, complex texture of urban life, made up of eccentrics, individualists, activists, idealists; what is replacing it has a mechanical, almost cloned feel of homogenous workers in homogenous workplaces spending their homogenously high salaries on homogenous recreation and products. It is a tremendous loss. The information economy is erasing a lot of information – local information, sense of place, community memory, and various kinds of history – as fast as it is generating others.

My city is undergoing a crisis like that of many American cities besieged by this kind of wealth, though ours is the most extreme case because our city is on a small peninsula without room to absorb growth comfortably, because a third of the technology economy is here, and because we were already a very expensive place to live. Elsewhere, I wrote, "For at the heart of this war is the question of what a city can be and should be. At its best, a city is the place where everyone belongs and anything can happen, where the resources of culture and ideas are heaped up and made available for the generations to raid. Noah loaded his ark two by two; cities load the specialized subspecies of humanity twenty or a thousand at a time so they can form a theater troupe or a new kind of music. Only cities have the critical mass for a surrealist movement or a Velvet Revolution, and San Francisco has been good at evolving movements and subcultures.

In all the arts, San Francisco has generated contributions wildly out of proportion to its size, and since the 1950s, those arts have often been distinguished by a refusal to sort out spirituality and politics, to make art that is not high or pure in the

Visual art is a material medium, but at its best, it makes the material a vessel to be filled with stories, ideas, desires, subversions and provocations.

Susan Schwartenberg
Condiment City, 2000
View of the Yerba Buena complex of cultural and commercial facilities that replaced the residential hotels depicted in the previous image. The couple are standing in front of the hot-dog condiments at the chain-theatre complex, Sony Metreon.

New York mode. San Francisco has given the world new social and cultural configurations, versions of what is possible when you forget what gender, poetry, photography, film or dance is supposed to be. Odd cultural things from light shows and LSD as a tool for expanding consciousness, to mountain bikes and body manipulations originated in the region, but so have significant ideas since at least Henry George. And it has been, like New Orleans, a great city of street life and street festivals, from Chinese New Year to Halloween in the Castro. This street life makes the whole city into home, draws people out into a fleeting sense of community and celebration that is one of the best things about urban life (and in San Francisco the festival shades imperceptibly into the uprising, just as the activist community shades imperceptibly into artists, for this is also the nation's greatest city of rabble-rousers).

It has often been called the most European of American cities, and this is praise of the pedestrian scale and public life of the city. Such life required a certain amount of leisure, an interest in strangers and civic life, a desire to mix that is, in some ways, contrary to the busy and sequestered life of the Internet economy (whose workers may mix but whose rhetoric constantly celebrates the virtues of shopping, talking, and learning without leaving home)."

And again, from Hollow City, "The city is both the place where order, control and hierarchy are administrated and, traditionally, the place where they are subverted. This subversion is made possible by the free space of the city, in which people and ideas can circulate, and bohemia is most significant as the freest part of the free city, a place where the poor, the radical and the creative overlap, where disorder seeps into the center of things. Cities once had a kind of porousness – like an old apartment impossible to seal against mice, cities were impossible to seal against artists, activists, dissidents and the poor. The remodelling of Paris between 1855 and 1870 by Baron von Haussmann under the command of Napoleon III is well-known for what it did to people's feelings, the poor and the old faubourgs. As Shelley Rice puts it in Parisian Views, "One of his first priorities had been to cut through and destroy the unhealthy, unsightly, and economically underprivileged areas that had been growing wildly and, in their horrific overpopulation, overtaking the heart of the town. By so doing, the prefect hoped to roust the poor (who posed, he felt, a threat to both the city's health and the stability of its government) to the outlying banlieus."

Every city changes, and walking through a slowly changing city is like walking through an organic landscape during various seasons...

Haussmannization encompassed urban renewal, but it did more; it sought to reinvent the relation of every citizen to the city. In modernizing the city, Haussmann and his emperor did some unarguably good things: they provided pure water and sewage systems. They did, with the building of boulevards, some debatable things: the boulevards increased circulation for citizens, commerce and, occasionally, soldiers, making the city more accessible for all purposes. And they erased the sites of peoples' memory and association: Baudelaire in Le Cygne and the brothers Goncourt in their famous journal entry bemoaned this architectural lobotomy. "My Paris, the Paris in which I was born, the Paris of the manners of 1830 to 1848, is vanishing, both materially and morally," the latter wrote. "I feel like a man merely passing through Paris, a traveller. I am foreign to that which is to come, to that which is, and a stranger to these new boulevards that go straight on, without meandering...." In Le Cygne, a poem about walking through one of Haussmann's construction sites near the Louvre, Baudelaire complained The old Paris is gone (the form a city takes More quickly shifts, alas, than does the mortal heart)...

The changes taking American cities by storm are only like Haussmannization of Paris in that they are displacing the poor for that they seldom bring the infrastructural improvements and amenities Haussmann did, and they are the fruit of private enterprise rather than central planning. Rather than an emperor nationalizing a city, we have corporations globalizing them. But the displacement, both literally and psychologically, is important and so are the ways artists have resisted it and represented it in recent years. From Hollow City again: "'I started to feel like a stranger in my own neighborhood, I started to feel like I didn't have that much holding me there,' says the graphic artist Eric Drooker, who was a dedicated anti-gentrification artist in the Lower East Side during the late 1980s. His street posters dealt with, in his words, "real estate, landlord terrorism, police brutality."

Allen Ginsberg, who also lived in the Lower East Side, was a fan who collected Drooker's posters off the street, and the two did a book together. Drooker has also done New Yorker covers and graphics for numerous progressive causes. Two years ago, after a lifetime on the east side of Manhattan, he moved to Haight Street in San Francisco. One afternoon, I went to visit and from his drawing board in the small room that is also his bedroom, he told me, "People ask me out here, 'Eric, don't you ever feel homesick for New York?' And I go, 'Yes, sometimes I do, but I've been feeling homesick for years.' In New York I was feeling homesick the last five


WALNUT CREEK
FEB California
RU VESTD
APTOS / LAKE TAHOE
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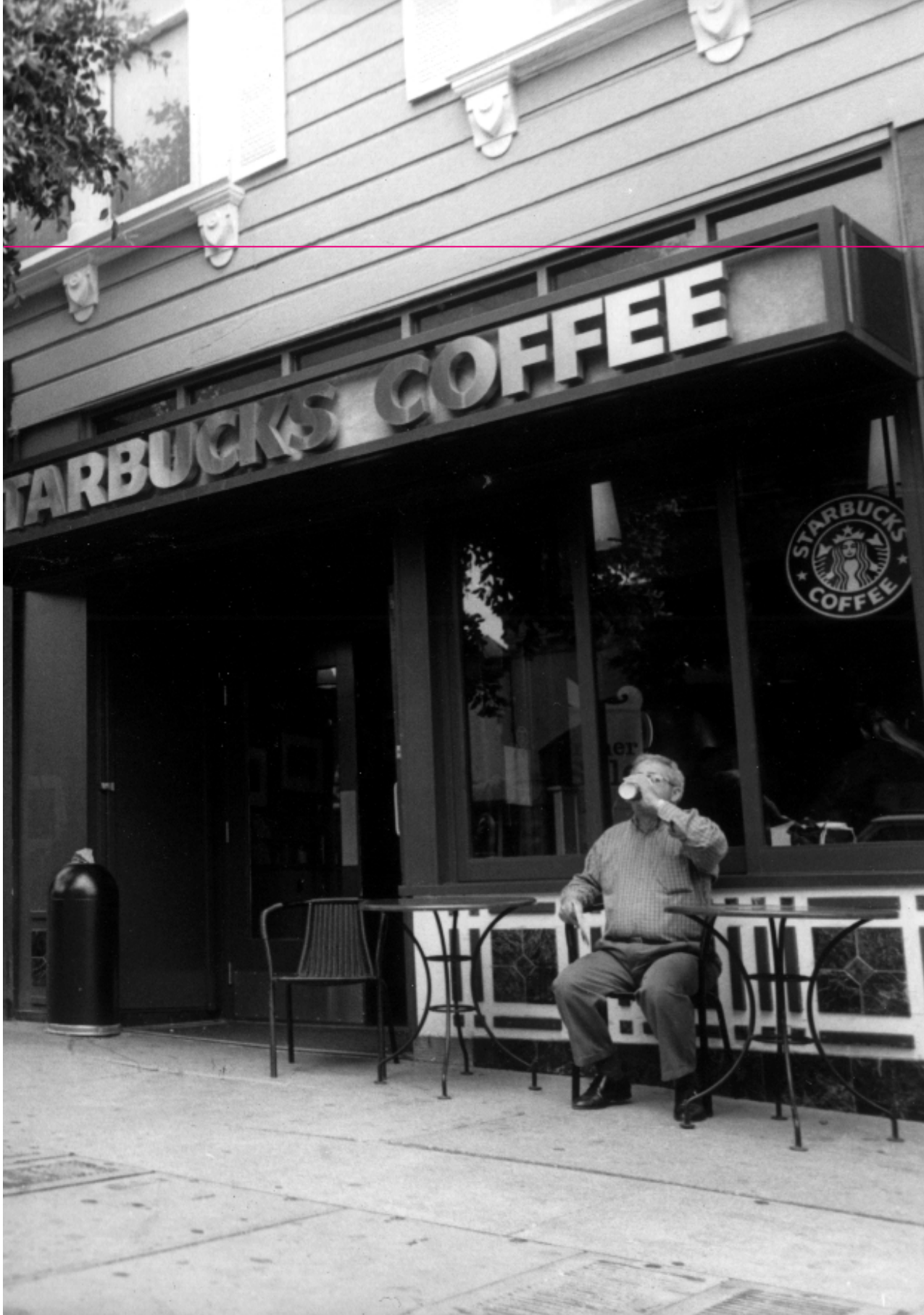
TARBUCKS COFFEE
STARBUCKS
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or ten years. I felt like I had the carpet pulled out from under me, things changed so much. It was pretty dramatic after staying in one place my whole life. You stay in one place and watch everything change around you. You definitely don't notice it unless you've been in the same place for five, ten years, if not twenty or thirty years, and then you really get perspective. I love New York but I felt four decades was a long stretch. I know exactly what people are talking about [with gentrification here] but I don't really see it because I just got here. New York is so painful to me when I go back and see that things from my childhood are no longer there. It's unrecognizable. Here, though, it's the same destruction that's going on, I don't perceive it because I have nothing to compare it to. It looks good to me.

It doesn't look so good to those who have been here longer. There must be a rate at which one forgets, and as long as a city changes at that rate or a slower one, change registers but it doesn't disorient, for there are sufficient points of orientation and triggers of recollection. For those who spend years in a place, their own autobiography becomes embedded in it so that the place becomes a text they can read to remember themselves, to muse, as well as a collection of landmarks of minor and major historical events. Every city changes, and walking through a slowly changing city is like walking through an organic landscape during various seasons; leaves and even trees fall, birds migrate, but the forest stands: familiarity anchors the changes. The decades during which San Francisco's Mission District went from being Irish to Mexican and Latin American was organic time, but the current eviction of that and the artistic population of the neighborhood is taking place so rapidly it's traumatic, visible and much resisted as these two billboards (slide) show. If change accelerates, a disjuncture between memory and actuality arises, and one moves through a city of phantoms, of the disappeared, a city that is lonely and disorienting, one becomes, like Drooker, an exile at home.

The urban forest can be clearcut and defoliated. To have your city dismantled too rapidly around you is to have the relationship between mind and place thrown into disarray, to have it stripped of meaning, silenced, and this is part of what disturbed the Parisian writers and strollers during Haussmann's redevelopment.

Visual art is a material medium, but at its best, it makes the material a vessel to be filled with stories, ideas, desires, subversions and provocations. It invests matter with life, and history does something similar to cities: it makes buildings, streets, squares and

Previous spread
Kate Joyce
from **'San Francisco in Chains'**, 2000, photoessay on diverse enterprises taken over by Starbucks café chain. This one depicts the site of the Batman Gallery, which was from 1961-66 an important showplace.

Cities were born free but are everywhere in chains, and these chains erase the particulars by which we know a city and the non-commodity goods we get from the places we frequent.

parks come to life and voice. In a place with a rich culture and cultural memory, an interchange is forever taking place between mind and material.

When culture and memory are evicted from a city, its places, its locations and its products become mute commodities that can be purchased but not dreamed. I think globalization, homogenization and the eviction of artists all have this effect, of turning the material world from a vessel for the spirit into mere retail goods and real estate. The objects still have value but no longer have meaning.

I have lived in one place long enough to watch it go from a neighborhood with no trees and lots of parking to the reverse as it evolved from a poor, predominantly African-American neighborhood full of people who saluted each other by name on the street to one that was for a long time a stable mixed community and that has, in the past few years, suddenly gentrified and clogged with SUV's parked on the sidewalks where children used to jump rope and women walk to church. You have to stand still to witness the movement of populations, economics, cities. I have been arguing with a friend about whether the Mission District club called Amnesia used to be the Club Chameleon, but I can readily remember the ancient pharmacy on Haight Street that went out of business a year or so ago. In its windows were huge prescription books from early in the twentieth century, and the careful copperplate handwriting, the drugs prescribed and the ethnicity of the names listed spoke of an entirely different civilization than do the current swarms of adolescents and plethora of platform-shoe stores. The pharmacy window thus became a window into a Haight district few alive remembered.

Many of the non-chain businesses in the city – upholstery shops, hardware stores – display photographs of the business or the neighborhood long ago. This is one of the incalculable benefits of these non-chains: they sell commodities but they give out history, memory, a sense of place, local flavor, community knowledge. Across the street from my destroyed Italian foodstore, a donut shop became a burrito shop in the 1980s that went from being a great place to a sad one, and then it suddenly became a Starbucks, and to step inside Starbucks is to step from the particular to the generic, from memorable location to the limbo of the chain which makes Philadelphia, Seattle and Albuquerque indistinguishable. Cities were born free but are everywhere in chains, and these chains erase the particulars by which we know a city and the non-commodity goods we get from the places we frequent.

They chain our minds to mere commodities. Like the mass- manufactured goods that introduced one kind of alienation in the industrial revolution, corporate chains introduce another in this global capital era, an alienation from geography, from place. Chains such as the Starbucks coffee bars are scariest of all, because they impersonate the sensibility of non-chains, while McDonald's is at least honest about its mass-production values.

There are sixty Starbucks in San Francisco now, and to step into any one of them is to enter limbo, albeit limbo with good graphic design. This version of limbo is all over the world: there is a Starbucks in China's Forbidden City and another across from the tea house that is Shanghai's most famous location; now Imperial China is indistinguishable from bohemian San Francisco: they are both suburbs of the corporation. The Glasgow bookshop where Robert Burns bought his reading material is now a Starbucks too. I spoke at the beginning of this talk about the creative and political processes that make people participants in their society, make them producers of meaning rather than consumers.

By the same terms, I am interested in the processes of craft, creativity, community and memory that make objects resonate with meaning, with how even these objects can be brought to life – become vessels of spirit is the phrase that occurs to me. But Starbucks kills the object, makes it numbingly repetitive, eternally predictable, forever insincere.

Memory is being removed from San Francisco with the rubble of old buildings, the demise of non-chain businesses, the out-migration of economically uncompetitive people and the arrival of newcomers who live in a city as though it were limbo, ready to leave it as quickly as they came, interchangeable cogs in a global machine, generic workers. Memory is being evicted. I think we move forward as rowers do, facing the receding shore of the past, and memory provides the landmarks ashore that let us navigate a coherent path. The commemoration of the past becomes a path into the future just as parades and processions are commemorations of past events that let participants lay claim to present power or the creation of a future.

From Art and Revolution's pageant at the conclusion of last year's May Day Parade to Dolores Park, I know that Emma Goldman once lived in a house facing its green slopes, and that she and Alexander Berkman briefly published Blast there.

It took a parade which is a commemoration of worker's history and a celebration of the presence of radicals now to give me

that small nugget of local history, and at the February 2000 youth rally opposing a draconian prison measure for minors, I realized that the youths were rapping in front of Emma's house, so that two histories of resistance suddenly aligned and moved me to tears. Walking down Harrison Street, south of Market, the other night, I passed doorways with homeless people sleeping in them, as brightly illuminated as though they were in window displays, and then an expensive, dimly lit restaurant and then, across the street, a highrise building whose tile-mosaic entryway floor I saw for the first time: it said Mendelsohn, and I realized that this was Mendelsohn House named after one of the elderly residential hotel tenants who had fought Yerba Buena's redevelopment so valiantly. The sequence – homeless/upscale/commemoration at the entry of a residence that saved some vulnerable citizens from homelessness – made a narrative, and thanks to Ira Nowinski's photographs, I could read it. Eric Drooker was a repository of stories even after the subjects of some of his stories, human and architectural, had been displaced, but now he is like a book that has checked itself out of the library of New York stories; his memory is no longer facing his community. To lose the people who know a city, to lose a lot of them quickly, is like burning its library.

The unexpected thing that has happened in this San Francisco crisis is a great cultural flourishing, a flourishing of resistance. I have been joking that a crisis that makes green-haired nose-pierced performance artists passionate about zoning code enforcement is a very special crisis indeed – and I think it broadens and deepens the commitment of said performance artists when they know and care about zoning codes and urban planning. The passionate defense of this city by thousands of activists, tenants, musicians, dancers, artists and writers has made the latent love of citizens for their city very, very tangible. The love they, or rather, we have is akin to that which saves wildernesses and landscapes; it's less common to see it applied to a city, though this city seems more and more like an environment in its complexity and its vulnerability.

Afterword

This was written in the autumn of 2000, about half a year before the dot-com bubble burst and the economy started to slip downhill. The effect was to arrest this assault-by-wealth on San Francisco; evictions plummeted,rents and real estate prices declined slightly (except for office space, which declined dramatically), but prices had risen so high that the city is permanently altered. My city was once a wonderful place for the young to come to invent themselves as poets, as innovators, as activists, as pursuers of alternative practices from Chinese medicine to African dance. Now it is far harder for newcomers to live here, and to do so they often have to take on work that eliminates either the free time in which to pursue their dreams or the idealism with which they came. Something of the spirit of the city survives, however. In Sligo I was struck by how much this talk resonated with the Dubliners present, for they – and Londoners, and Glaswegians, and Chicagoans, and Bostonians – experienced similar impacts from economic boomtimes. I hope that we have now learned that what is sometimes called wealth can spread a profound poverty, a poverty not least of the imagination. As San Francisco poet Diane DiPrima once wrote, "The only war that counts is the war against the imagination."

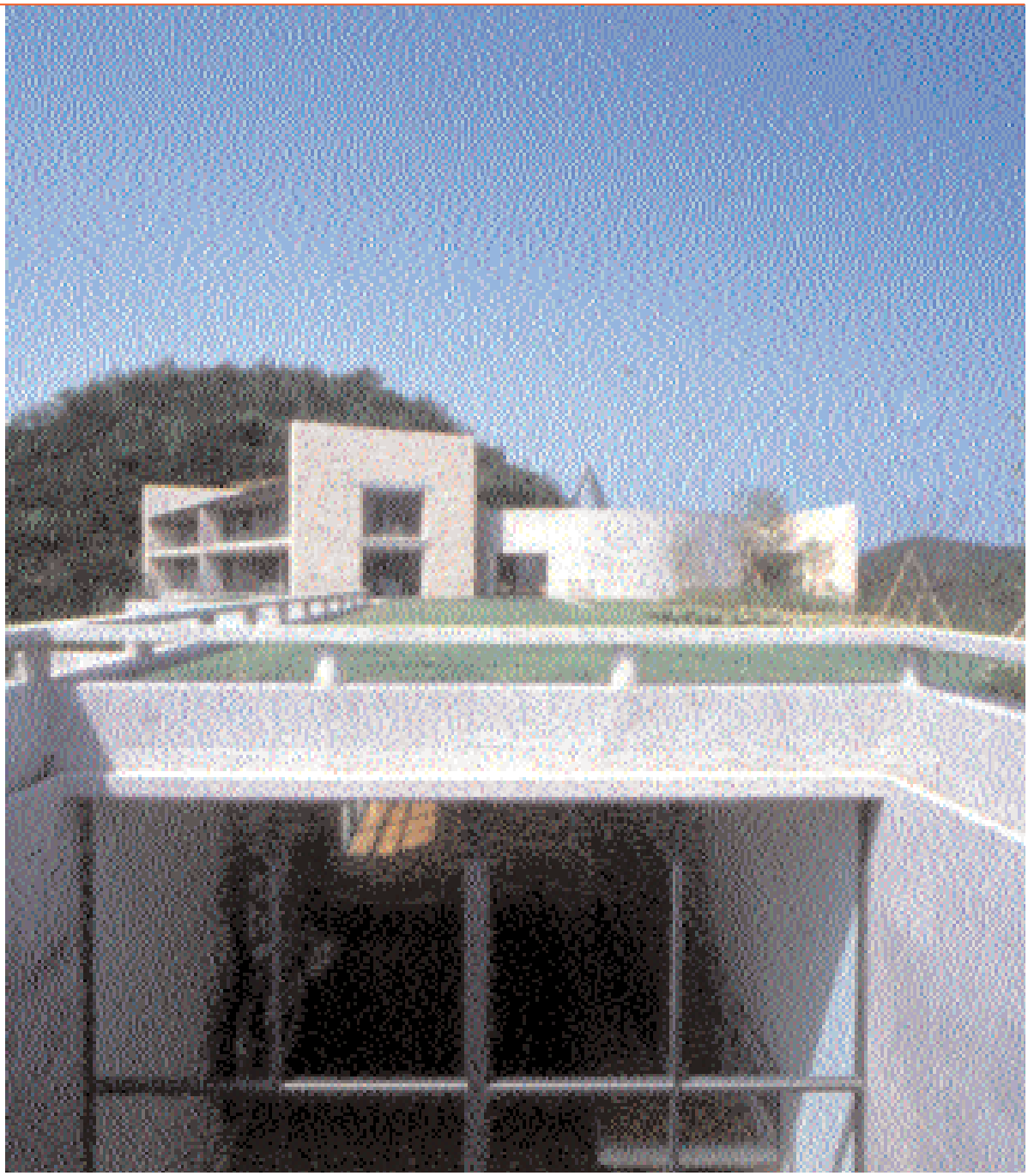
Naoshima: An Island of Art

Yuji Akimoto, Japan

Naoshima is a small island with a population of 3,800 people. The northern side of the island is dominated by the Mitsubishi Materials Corporation refinery, the foundation of the local economy, while the southern side boasts unspoiled natural scenery beautiful enough to become a national park. Naoshima is geographically separated from major urban centres and is politically, economically, and culturally marginal.

Commissioned Works

When the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum opened in July of 1992, it started out with an active programme of exhibitions, symposia, and lectures and began forming a collection based on the themes of 'art and nature' and 'art and history'. Around 1994, the emphasis changed from showing and acquiring works of art made elsewhere to commissioning works of art on the museum property and effectively displaying those works. One reason for this change was the strong character of the museum building. It is not a neutral white cube providing an unobtrusive background for artworks that makes a strong statement independent of their surroundings. Tadao Ando's architecture is known for breaking through the barriers of convention and preconceived ideas, and this is especially true of this building. The space is more than a receptacle for art; it actively responds to the surrounding environment, the light and air, the sea and the forested hills. The main gallery is underground, and the building is surrounded by thick vegetation. At the same time, the walls are pierced by large windows that open the interior up to the outside. The structure is at once closed and open.



Tadao Ando's architecture is known for breaking through the barriers of convention and preconceived ideas...

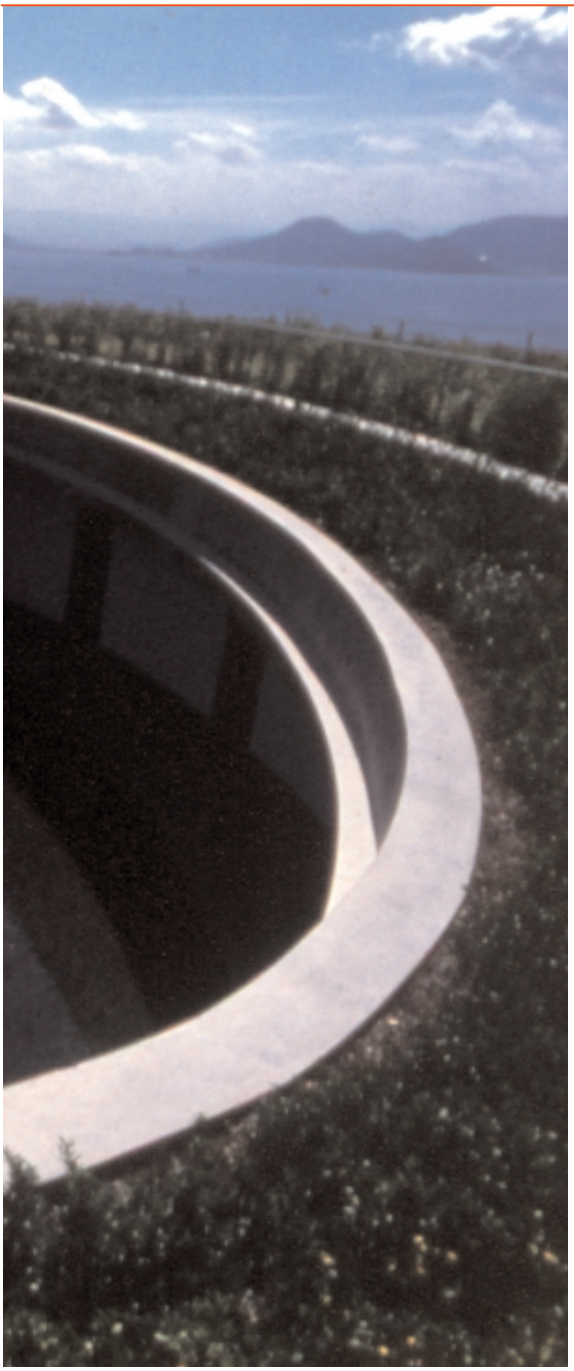
The natural environment and the concrete structures come together to create a scene of great beauty and express spiritual qualities. This is a complex and highly expressive space that makes a fiercely original and symbolic statement. Just before sundown, sunlight from the west fills the galleries, creating an evocative effect that blows away a mediocre painting or sculpture. The building simply overpowers ordinary works of art.

Therefore, the art installed here must have great expressive power and an unusually strong sense of presence. It must be original in style, transcend the conventional boundaries of art, and make an impact on its architectural and natural environment. The relationship between the work and its surroundings cannot be one of stable, prearranged harmony. In this museum, the artist must find ways to make the best use of the special characteristics of the building and the landscape, find the place most suitable to the work, and adapt the work effectively to the site.

In commissioning a work, we invite the artist to inspect and select a site and create a work that will be installed here permanently. Because of the strong character of the museum, which I have mentioned, the artist must take great care in choosing a site, be sensitive to the special features and meanings attached to it, and design the work so that it relates to the site in a way that enhances the viewer's experience of both the work itself and the surrounding environment.

The emphasis on commissioning art at our museum was inspired by the special relationship created here between Tadao Ando's architecture and nature, and this approach has grown and developed as a special feature of the museum. These commissioned works express meanings in response to the architecture and the natural environment, in addition to the independent meanings adhering to the work of art itself, meanings that could only be derived from the particular physical and cultural context of this place.

Bennesse House
The Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum
Architect; Tadao Ando, 1992



The Art House Project in Naoshima

The *Art House Project* in Naoshima was conceived as an extension of the museum's ongoing practice of commissioning works at the museum. The main site for the project is Honmura, an old section of the town of Haoshima that has played a central role in the community throughout its history.

The *Art House Project* differs from other commissioned works in scale and in the way it brings out the special meaning of the site. Each house chosen for the project is changed through the work of a single artist, a process that draws attention to the unique culture of the Honmura area and adds meanings to the house, making it more relevant to the present.

In today's Japan, there is a skewed concentration of population in the large cities. As culture is disseminated from these urban centres, regional cultures and customs are rapidly disintegrating. This same process is occurring in Naoshima, so the purpose of this project is to provide a fresh perspective on these disappearing elements of local culture and customs and use art to revitalize the community.

Benesse House Annex

The most outstanding feature of this part of Naoshima is its traditional houses with their walls of white plaster or clay, charred cedar boards and roofs of old-style black tile. Many of the houses are more than 200 years old, some are as old as 400 years. People still live in them, but they are gradually being vacated and, once abandoned, rapidly deteriorate. The initial motivation for the *Art House Project* was the desire to make good use of these unused houses. Efforts are being made throughout the country to preserve old houses, but the usual approach is to restore them to their original condition as examples of traditional architecture. However, in Naoshima, we did not try to stop the flow of time, to go back to the past, but to bring the wisdom of the past to life in the present and revive these old houses as entities that provide a critical understanding of the present.

When we started the project, we came up with a few core concepts and basic conditions: making the house into a work of art while keeping the basic structure intact; thinking about the nature of Japanese culture during the process; rediscovering the culture and way of life supported by the house from the viewpoint of the present, not as a form of nostalgia, and approaching each project slowly and carefully, at the rate of one house per year, using one artist and a small staff.

The Significance of the commissioning process in the Art House Project

The *Art House Projects* are all commis-sioned works carried out by a single artist. This commissioning process is not just a way of adding to the museum collection. It has a deeper meaning as an important method-ology and strategy of pushing forward the museum's overall project in Naoshima.

The *Art House Project* is an experiment in changing an ordinary, anonymous place into an extraordinary and special place. Using the commissioning approach, it is carried out through a process that is open to the public. The emphasis is on process rather than the completed work. The process itself is seen as the work in an expanded sense, and it becomes a shared experience for the people involved in the project. This approach makes it possible to share interpretations of the art and to talk about it with people in the community, making connections with the place, local customs, and regional characteristics. Discovery and understanding of the place occurs through the accumulated experience of making the work, and through this process, an ordinary place is transformed into an extraordinary place. The continuity of the process is more important than each separate part of it. This project is the result of concern about our own tendency to think

In order to make art relevant to people, it is necessary to bring out all of its seemingly contradictory aspects...

of art in overly abstract terms or as information, forgetting its essential nature as a physical object located in a real place. It is an action decided upon after serious thought about what should be done to rectify this situation.

In order to make art relevant to people, it is necessary to bring out all of its seemingly contradictory aspects: abstraction and representation, universality and connection to particular places, and visible and invisible qualities. In a place like Naoshima where people have had little experience with art, it takes time to understand the meaning of a work. Therefore, rather than presenting temporary, one-off art events, we need to proceed patiently with activities that help answer people's questions about art. What is it? What does it have to do with us? What can it give us? Rather than delivering a one-sided lecture on the meaning of art, we need to help establish two-way communication between the maker of art and the audience. The process of creating the art houses can be used to prepare the foundations for appreciating art in the life of the region.

Kadoya

Kadoya was completed in March 1998. The architect Tadashi Yamamoto supervised the restoration of the house and Tatsuo Miyajima designed the artwork. Measures were taken to involve the local people, such as having them set the speed of Miyajima's digital counters, in order to make this first project more accessible.

The main significance of *Kadoya* was the use of this particular house. It was built in the typical style of this region. Previously, there were many houses of this style and size in the town, but they have mostly disappeared in the last few decades. When the local people saw this typical house restored to its original condition, it reminded them of the houses they used to live in, the kind of life they used to live, the type of community that once existed, and the close relationships maintained in the neighbour-hood. Miyajima did what he could to involve the local people in the making of the work, giving them a sense of participation in the project, helping them feel that it was an addition to the life of the community that was somehow connected to them, rather than seeing the art as something impossible to understand that had invaded the neighbour-hood. The importance of this project lies in making the people of the region think about their community in new ways.

Minamidera

Minamidera, the second project, was completed at the end of March, 1999. A new building was constructed for this project. The external architecture was designed by Tadao Ando and the artwork was created by James Turrell.

An actual temple named *Minamidera* was previously located on the site of the project, but it was torn down more than a hundred years ago. The people in the neighbourhood have continued to refer to the place as *Minamidera*. We decided to construct a new building on the site in place of the temple.

The original idea for the *Art House Project* was to limit the projects to old, traditional houses, and there was no intention of constructing a new building. We had planned to use only old buildings even if the art installed in them was contemporary. Since the original building was gone, we decided that it would be alright to use any records that were left to reinterpret the site, and that such an approach would be appropriate to the *Art House Project* considered in a broad sense.

As the project went forward with the first and second houses, we came to realise that it was a way of exploring the history and development of the region. This is more so when the house has a public character, that is, a temple or shrine that represents a certain historical period or the house of a locally prominent individual.

Minamidera connects the *Art House Project* of the present to the time when the temple disappeared, over a hundred years ago. It gives meaning to a place that has become anonymous. That is why we chose to have a new building constructed. This suddenly changed the meaning of the place, erasing the interval and joining the past and present. I believe it is essential to understand the basic difference between using something new and restoring and giving new life to something old. The most important things to consider are how much of the old to leave, how much of the new to incorporate, and how abstract to make the narrative. Thinking carefully about these issues is what will give reality to the *Art House Project*.

Sites of Reflection

Maaretta Jaukkuri, Finland

A work of art in a public place has traditionally been considered to express the shared historical, political, and cultural memories or aspirations of a given community. This thinking still colours the reception of contemporary artworks, even those devoid of this kind of ideological or historical content. An important aspect of this new public art has been its presence as a place-creating or space-marking element in its function of accentuating and making more visible already existing elements in the environment or in its participation in processes inherent in the milieu. A problematic side of this art is manifest in situations where an artwork is felt to invade or appropriate a common space or a place with a pre-existing significance – perhaps for but a small group of people – or to engulf an existing meaning and transform it into something else...

The idea for the Nordland sculpture project was presented in 1988 by Anne Katrine Dolven and was based on the thought that Nordland, as a periphery that is viewed from art centres, could become a new kind of centre, with its regional natural beauty and these artworks in the landscape. A kind of motto for the programme has been Michael Heizer's statement from the early Seventies, which, echoing Martin Heidegger's thinking, states that a work of art is not put in a place, instead it is the place. Accordingly, the artists would create new places by placing their work in specific sites in the landscape or constructed milieux.

The artists invited to contribute to the Artscape Nordland project were consciously selected in a way that would not be limited by artists' generation or stylistic concerns. The idea has been more of a collection than a uniform, a conceptually coherent art project. The international group of artists was selected by a committee of four curators, and was based on the idea of an expanding spiral of geographic backgrounds.[1] The core of the invited artists would be from Norway and other Nordic countries to ensure sensitivity to local culture and identity. The artists in the programme come from eighteen countries. This led to one of the main criticisms of the project and the concern as to whether artists from these

1 The curators at this initial stage were Per Hovdenakk from Oslo, Bolans Pejic from Belgrade/Berlin, Angellka Stopken from Berlin and Maaretta Jaukkuri from Helsinki.

different foreign countries would be able to understand local traditions and culture.

The starting point for each work has been identical. Each artist was invited to a pre-selected municipality to look for a specific site for the forthcoming work. As the project progressed, this work was increasingly done in collaboration with the artists' local hosts, who suggested and presented various possibilities. After this initial visit, the artist rendered a sketch of the work that was considered by a small working group as to the suitability of the suggested site and the economic and technical possibilities of realising the work. A great concern at this stage was also whether the work could tolerate the quite harsh climatic conditions of the region. As, in most projects of this nature, economic concerns were great, and some of the proposed works had to be abandoned due to their production costs. The subsequent course of events was different in each case. Some took many years to complete while others could be realized more rapidly.

The concept of a collection also contained the concept of the site-specific. The artists planned their works for the sites they had selected. The aim was to create a real dialogue between the environment and the presence of the work. However, the dramatic changes in seasons could not always be taken into consideration. Beyond the fact that in some cases snow entirely covers some sculptures in winter, this has not been particularly important, as visits to the sculptures are made primarily during the summer months, in keeping with the main tourist season. The sculptures remain in a state of semi-hibernation during the winter.

Most of the artists preferred sites that one had to choose to visit, and works have been placed in relation to a pre-existing milieu in but a few instances. The landscape of the region is the inherently 'sublime' aspect of the project. The artists were also very conscious of the uniqueness of the possible sites offered for work. The collection of sculptures placed in the county of Nordland, if not being able to present a seamless narrative of sculpture as it has developed since the 1960s as was the original goal, nevertheless shows a complex and varied set of approaches to the art of sculpture and its contexts. There is a more developed understanding of the range of possible responses to sculpture in what is

The great change in art in recent decades has been that the viewer has become a visible partner in the discussion.

called new genre public art with its central idea of audience participation.

All the works have been made specifically for the project and thus, date from the 1990s. As a whole, they may be viewed as reflecting sculpture that has been in the forefront during the past three or four decades. Interestingly, the collection could be defined not only as site-specific but also as time-specific; both in the sense that many of the works actually refer to specific concepts of time, but also in the sense defined by Mikhail Bakhtin, that "time constructs narratives by its intersection with social and symbolic space".[2] Futhermore, the collection reflects our understanding of what was and is interesting to show in a project like this based on the idea of a 1990s collection. It is also clear that the works will survive changes over time differently. Some may remain unnoticed for a period while others will have a more steady visibility. Such fluctuations may be expected.

The Works

In most cases, the fact that the work was to be permanently installed on a site affected the choice of both materials and visual idioms. Initially, the tendency was to use beautiful local stones as well as local craftsmanship in shaping this material. In terms of visual idioms, a predilection toward what could be defined as more general or even universal issues may be detected. Among the large themes reflected in the works, are nature in dialogue with culture; architectural structures related to the visitor's presence (shelters, pavilions, scenic lookout points); the human figure in the landscape; local cultural artefacts integrated into new settings; time-related processes (changes in materials, viewer comments continually filed in archives in the wanderers' studio); representations of cultural institutions (temple, museum, studio), and interventions in the landscape that either make the overlooked apparent or create an ongoing situation for interaction with an existing site. Often the visitor's gaze is guided – through the sculpture – outwards towards the beautiful scenery surrounding the artwork. Framing the landscape is one of the dominant themes of the projects, although realised through different means.

2 Stanley Aronowitz, Dead Artists, Live Theories (New York, 1994), p. 148

Perhaps, it is just the similarity of the landscape, but Caspar David Friedrich's famous painting *Der Wanderer über dem Nebelmeer* (1815) seems to have, in several instances, served as a model for viewing a landscape when the artists chose sites for their works. Perhaps they were reminded of the position of this famous wanderer and the object of his gaze when they viewed the landscape unfolding before them.

Parallel Interpretations

One of the most interesting aspects of the project has turned out to be the ways in which these artworks communicate, or do not communicate, with the respective local populations. When we started working on this project, the general assumption was – as is usual in such projects – that the people living in Nordland might resist the programme and the works at first, but would learn to accept, and in time, even like them. My own thoughts at the time, which in retrospect were over optimistic, was that local people – so used to reading and interpreting signs in nature – would also avail of this ability in their encounters with works of art placed in nature. However, I was to learn that art/culture was another field of signification and that what is natural in one, is not easily transferable to the other.

When following public debate about the project in its initial phases, it soon became obvious that people did not like the idea of receiving 'modern sculptures' in their landscape, and did not feel comfortable when confronted with works of contemporary art. This was true even with well-meaning people who otherwise supported the programme. Opinions were also expressed that the project was violating democratic principles; something was being forced upon them that they really did not feel any need for or interest in. They saw this as arrogance on the part of the people working on the project. It was also clear that they felt that they could not understand these works.

However, the length of time that it took to realise the project seems to have benefited its reception. When one reads the press material from the overall project period – the small local newspapers were following it from the beginning with great interest and often with a populist negative attitude – one notices a development from general prejudices to precise questions. The general level of discussion rose considerably during the decade it took to complete the programme. On the other hand, the local and regional press also functioned as a crucial forum for relevant information about the artists and presentation of the works.

Previous Spread
Three Flames, Hulda Hákon (Iceland), 1997
Varnished stainless steel, granite plates and painted flowers

There were moments of hopelessness when considering the situation in light of the commonly accepted notion that special knowledge is needed for people to be able to understand and appreciate contemporary art.

There were moments of hopelessness when considering the situation in light of the commonly accepted notion that special knowledge is needed for people to be able to understand and appreciate contemporary art. If this had been true, the situation would have been quite hopeless, as these people did not possess specialised knowledge and it would not have been possible to provide them with enough information to allow an understanding of the works within the framework of art traditions.

Our response to this debate was to encourage people to embark upon the chain of associations that the works spontaneously created in their minds – wherever they might lead them. To initiate this dialogue, we started to distribute invitations to people at openings as well as through local channels, urging people to write about their encounters with the sculptures.

The Spectator's Active Role

The great change in art in recent decades has been that the viewer has become a visible partner in the discussion. Research in the reception of art is very much in focus today. The present period could be defined as the 'age of the spectator', as it grants the spectator freedom to interpret what he/she is seeing and experiencing to an unprecedented degree. This freedom is in no sense anarchistic, as we can talk about interpretation only when the spectator is keeping the object of interpretation, the work of art, the event, or the scene of art, in focus at all times. Furthermore, it is still – and must remain – the artist who has the privilege of addressing the spectator and defining the subject.

The taboo in different discourses in art about reception theory seems to be the layman's reception. What does one actually feel and understand when confronted with art when lacking the prior knowledge that enables one to contextualise in the discourse in which it is contained or that accompany and surround it? In this discussion, we have to keep in mind that the idea of 'laymanness' is more a question of scale, or varying degrees of expertise and understanding. No matter how well informed, one still, fortunately, encounters works that do not divulge their meaning on the basis of our information – at least, not immediately.

If we accept the proposition that art is one individual's expression that communicates with another individual, and that its reception cannot be decided or even foreseen according to democratic principles, we logically have to accept a situation in which the audience is granted the right to think and feel whatever they may in front of the artwork. The space for dialogue is reserved for the work and its spectator.

This space demands the onlooker's courage to receive the meaning of the work and in a creative way, incorporate it in his/her own life. The gap between these two, the bridge that seems to be missing, echoes Bertolt Brecht's concept of creativity. According to Brecht, creativity is used in situations where we feel that "something is missing,"[3] and must be resolved. When confronted with a work of contemporary art and lacking any prior knowledge of the discourses surrounding it, the feeling of "choked passages" linked by Giles Deleuze to moments of creation seems very fitting.[4] The escapist reaction to this is often the carnevalization of "modern" or contemporary art as a whole and displaying distrust in its sincerity and aims. Constant references to the 'emperor's new clothes' reflect a rejection of tradition typical of Modernism, with its constant striving to achieve something new and more progressive and its belief in a development towards something better, finer and so on. 'The emperor's new clothes' has been a central metaphor in local debates about the Artscape Nordland project as well, even though it appears as a somewhat outdated simile in this context.

Another approach is letting the experience sink into one's mind and seeing what may come out of it. The exacting nature of this experience requires that trust emerges

3 Quoted in Ernst Bloch, The Utopian Function of Art and Literature (Cambridge, London, 1998) pp. 15-16

4 Gilles Deleuze, Negotiations (New York, 1995), p. 133

If we dare to enter the world of the image, it may result in a great adventure in the meanings of things; we may acquire new symbolic keys and our ability to observe the world may be expanded. To put it in simple, but undeniably utopian terms, the world becomes a more interesting place because we see more things in it. Perhaps, more importantly, we can see things differently from what we did before.

Shark, Cow, Bathtub, Dorothy Cross
(Ireland), 1993
Granite, Bronze and cast iron

in the object in question. This feeling of trust generally arises in a highly instinctive manner, through almost the same kind of intuition as one's famous 'first impression' of a person. This feeling is not yet communication or interpretation, but very much a precondition for it. Lack of trust may be one reason why visual art is experienced as difficult. If we dare to enter the world of the image, it may result in a great adventure in the meanings of things; we may acquire new symbolic keys and our ability to observe the world may be expanded. To put it in simple, but undeniably utopian terms, the world becomes a more interesting place because we see more things in it. Perhaps, more importantly, we can see things differently from what we did before.

Living with Art

Democracy in the reception of art is a possibility that is quite interesting in today's world. Freedom is the right to define oneself and to let other people do the same. The intense discussions concerning identity seem to circulate around the acknowledgement that we all have the right to maintain our own stories, to formulate and conceive our life experiences as a living texture in the narration of who I am, was and will be. This story must be seen as a primary text, mainly interesting to me and to those interested in my life and me. A secondary text, however, holds up a claim of having relevance, even for others, transgressing the boundary of the private sphere. Consequently, any interpretation of a work of art is important for the person doing it, but an interpretation, as a form of further communication that may be interesting to others as well, is a secondary text and a cultural act. The criteria for these are determined through critical judgement, which may also be broadened to encompass new voices.

Allowing and even encouraging people to experience art on the basis of their own life situations and experiences is a possible way to avoid speaking for others. After all, the most crucial issue here is the privilege of 'living with' art, as Gadamer has defined the situation of interpretation. This collection of art and the 'chorus of texts' accompanying the presentation of Artscape Nordland aims to encourage people, both Nordland residents and visitors alike, to do precisely this. Hopefully, we will notice how the meanings we create change along with the world and ourselves.

Token or Totem: Placing Art, Placing the Artist

Antony Gormley, UK

I am very glad to discuss a topic that is very close to the heart of any artist working today, and particularly one that is interested in sculpture, an art form that I feel has always wanted to inscribe the transitory experience of life in the permanency of durable material. Yet this activity has been displaced. Before talking about some projects, I really wanted to discuss the context as I see it, both for art, and therefore, for the artist.

I think that we live pretty well in a culture of envy, where even if we don't feel it or want to be part of it, it is transmitted globally, both through television and through printed media, in which in some senses, we are all invited to live a kind of fantasy life. Our celebrity heroes, visible to us through the pages of OK magazine, the tabloids, and television, have multiple sexual partners, multiple domiciles and clearly, the adoration of multitudes. The rest of us are passive consumers of this mythic drama in our midst. This is the mediated, virtual vision that art can provide a foil for by reinforcing the viewer. The same thing is true for artwork, some get the equivalents of holidays in Phuket, business trips to New York and live a Concorde-fed and transported life, and others never leave the studio and, rather than serving the imaginative needs of the world, simply become the aspirational fantasy works of their makers. Some artists may pretend that they do not care, but how can you make work that is fundamentally a contribution to visual communication and not care?

According to the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions, out of our twenty-four allotted hours of the day, we spend eight-and-a-half hours sleeping, we spend two-and-a-half-hours working, we spend one-and-a quarter hours travelling, we spend an hour eating and we spend three hours watching television. That accounts for sixteen-and-a-quarter hours of the twenty-four. The rest are spent, according to this survey, in cleaning, cooking, washing clothes, care of children, in helping people outside the house and religious activities, in shopping, gardening, hobbies and games, eating and drinking out, visiting friends and in exercise. We spend ten minutes doing nothing and four minutes that might include some artistic consumption (concerts, theatre, sports and spectacles). Some of that may come through television but what it suggests is that the context in which art can work is very different from what it might have been in the Fifteenth century. The way in which art might be consumed and be the subject of daily engagement has been eroded by the mobility of populations, their need not to be

in one place and by the fact that when they are in one place, they are looking at images of other places through the television.

For me, the most pertinent characteristic of our time is mobility: people, money, images, ideas, are all mobile in a way that they weren't even twenty years ago. Art itself is encouraged to be mobile, and the audience for it is mobile. There's no question in my mind that the most potent monument that we are leaving to the future is the network of roads and highways and autobahns and freeways that speak of a restlessness that inscribed itself on the skin of the planet. Within this context of mobility, art has been forced to move, as Virilio has pointed out, from the original place of inscription, the carved image or the painted drawing on the side of the cave, which is completely indistinguishable from its place, through a period when works became transportable as in the Très riches heures of the Duc de Berry, to the later invention of the easel painting, to today's explosion of time-based media.

Most of this mobility, of speed, was supposed to save time, but we ended up really with a huge explosion of choice: in options that we do not exercise and often, I think, this links in with a sense of fragmentation: having so much choice, we're not quite sure any more which is the right one, and we're constantly reminded of this when we see the inscriptions of previous eras on our landscape and in our built environments, where certainly in religious and legal institutions there is a very strong sense of a shared stylistic form and of confidence, purpose, identity, inscribed in materials and often in scale.

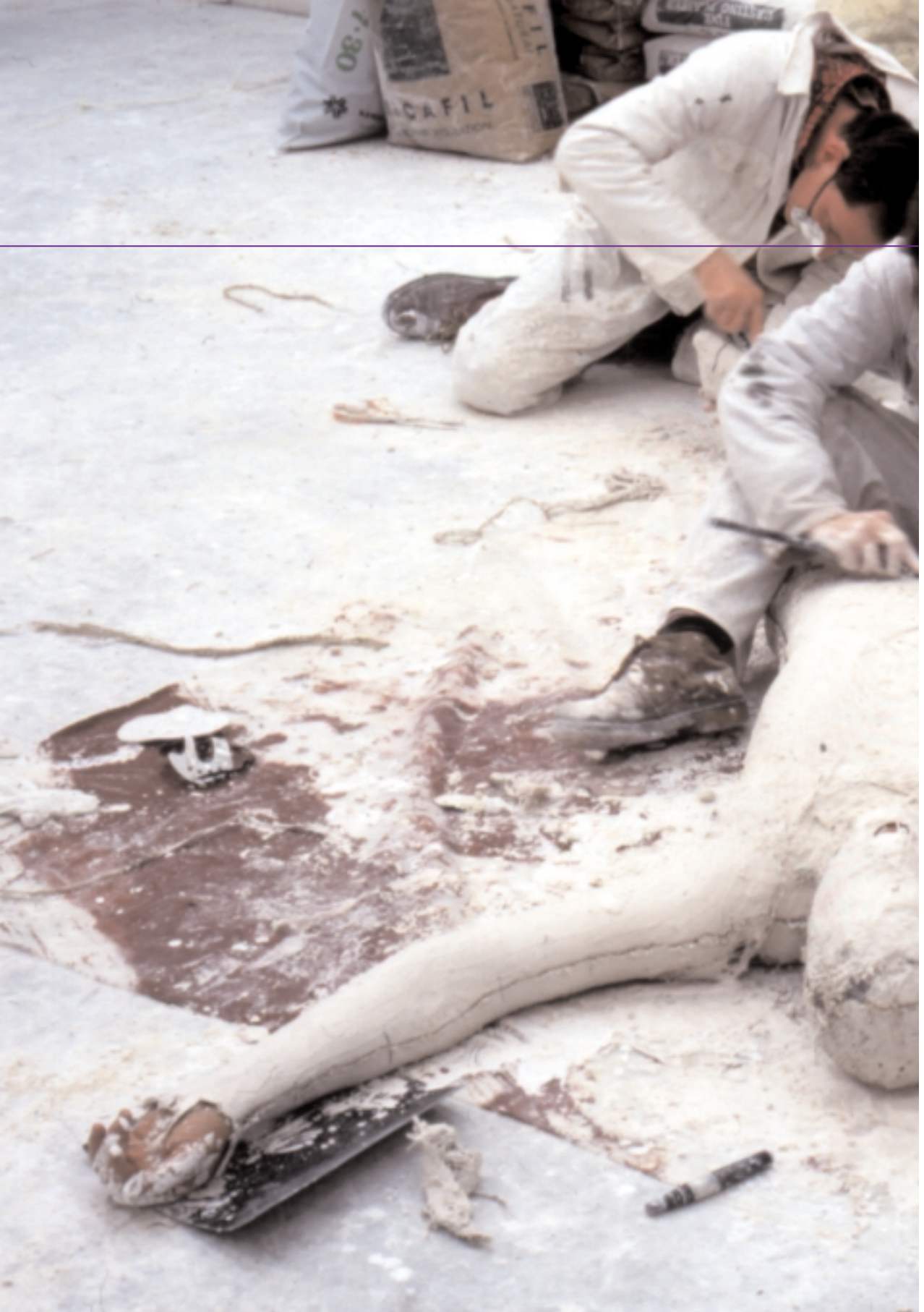
What else is out there in terms of the context for art? I think there's a general feeling of a collapse of faith in the very institutions that created the built environment, and we are left with the twin poles of vernacular needs and provision: the home and the shop, the bank and the office. Perhaps in Ireland, it feels different to elsewhere, but certainly the power of both the political and the sacred in religion and in politics has been undermined by all sorts of collapses of the patriarchal society, of the infallibility or real value of belief systems, whether they be papal or any other legal or economic institution. We do not believe what we are told. There is a rise in the interest in and fascination with the

There's no question in my mind that the most potent monument that we are leaving to the future is the network of roads and highways and autobahns and freeways that speak of a restlessness that inscribed itself on the skin of the planet.

potential of science but science can only answer questions about how things work, not why they're there, so there is a loss of a spiritual dimension. I think, for many years, many of us assumed that scientific exploration and technological invention, modernisation generally, were all part of a more or less continuous progress which was underwritten by a Darwinian understanding of survival of the fittest and the continued existence of market forces which would lead somehow towards a better world. It's clear that this is a false hope, and if this is indeed progress, why is so much disease related to the increasing consumption and pollution, and why are species becoming extinct, why is the world threatened by ozone depletion and global warming, and why are we living in a time of more warfare than any other time in human history?

So basically, the context is not good for art: what does art, and particularly sculpture, do about this sense of loss, sense of fragmentation, sense of alienation, sense of discontinuity in which everybody is looking at everybody else for some kind of relief. In the words of Francesco Clemente, "the world is divided into refugees and tourists and I would rather be a tourist."

What I'm really asking is, what is the artist today? Is he a free agent, a maverick who somehow tests the envelope of the built world with work that excavates his own emotional underbelly as an example of a common condition and, therefore, of society as a whole? Do we make ironic advertising movies in the manner of Pipilotti Rist, do we deconstruct the moving image in the manner of Douglas Gordon, or do we try to move towards an examination of the condition of the artist and the relationship of the artist to his own existence, as in Charles Ray, Chris Burden, Marc Quinn, Paul McCarthy, as opposed to the condition of art which was? Or is it possible that there is another role, perhaps more like an architect, that can make life better by making work that inspires as well as questions?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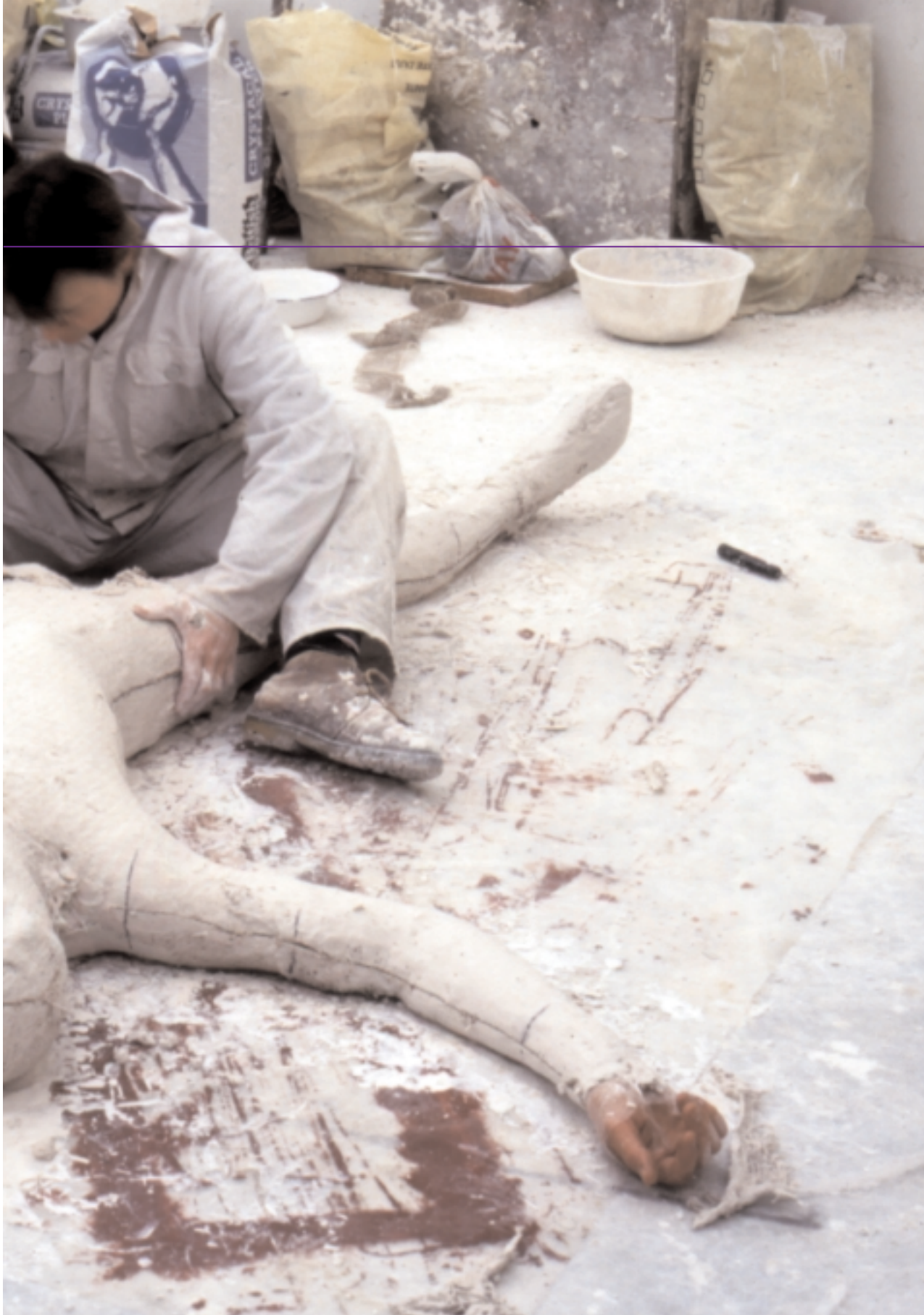


Placing the artist is the first question in where you place the art.

This is one of Erwin Wurm's one-minute sculptures, and I'm just wondering whether this isn't a rather wonderful, telling monument for today's predicament for the artist. A kind of party game? A provisional position, it's an improvised situation, it's exercised in the vernacular. Here is a man wearing ordinary clothes, who has found himself temporarily elevated and stuck against the wall. I like the fact that he's wearing corduroys and an open-necked shirt, it suggests that he's a casual worker. I would like to analyse this image because, I think in a curious way, it responds very precisely to exactly the problems that art and, particularly, sculpture has today.

In many ways, it's a classical piece of art: it's a moment taken out of time, it's the body re-positioned in space and conscious of itself, it has an absolutely direct connection with daily life, and it has a high degree of uncertainty, both in its status and in its engineering. It also avoids pomposity by replacing the plinth with an old household broom and, in a curious way, puts the viewer, by a kind of humorous empathy, in the position of a spaceman re-placed within his own world in looking back at it from a precarious position of isolation. What interests me about this Wurm is that it deals with the materials and context of everyday life, but also with a living subject, and I think this is the great leap forward for so much of the latter half of the Twentieth century. Art was so concerned with its own stories, with the evolution of pictorial and formal languages, that it forgot altogether the existential question which is, as far as I'm concerned, the central issue of art: how can we convey what it feels like to be alive?

So what about that other role for the artist as provider of imaginative furniture? In broad terms, I think that there are only two polarities for sculpture – talking about sculpture for a moment – either a body or architecture, either an object or a structure, either a mass or an enclosed space. One tends to abstraction and the other to emotion. They can enclose and encompass each other, the architectural becomes embodied when internalised and the sculptural becomes architectural when externalised.

Let's look at a complete opposite to this contemporary Erwin Wurm one-minute sculpture. Stonehenge, built to last for thousands of years, a human inscription using geological materials in geological time, a place not an object, exposed to the elements, with evidently some kind of collective function, evidently sacred and evidently in some way accommodating both

Previous Spread
Lost Subject 1, Antony Gormley, 1994
Lead, fibreglass and air

the human body and an understanding of the planetary bodies and making a place that relates the two.

Is there any way in which something like this can be anything but a nostalgic, romantic object of our own projections, mystical, magical and mythical?

I just wanted to look at one other public monument that very much defines a place, again it's the human body stilled but it's very different from Erwin Wurm's. This is the famous Vera Mukhina Soviet monument of 1937. It's strange that its positive imagery now strikes us as comic if not endearing, but nevertheless, I find its 'built-ness', the communication of a powerful message, even its use of art as propaganda, very positive.

To what extent are these three images 'sculpture' in the strictest sense? William Tucker's formalist definition is "sculpture is the artform that is subject to gravity and revealed by light", but I would add to that, that it is also the desire to embed human expression in matter, a way of conveying feeling. Is it possible in a time of vast mobility, loss of faith in institutions and in religion, the availability and proliferation of imagery globally, for this archaic and fundamental definition of sculpture as the inscription of human experience in matter, to have any place? Within the Virilio imperative about this ever-increasing *dèplacement*, is it possible? The question I want to ask is, what can art and the artist usefully do in this exposed and difficult place-time, and remain true to himself, and acknowledge these conditions without escaping into solipsism or romanticism?

The fact that I'm even asking these questions would seem to suggest that I feel that art has a function. This itself would be contested by many: an artist does and that is enough for most artists, the artist is seen as a kind of thermometer or gauge that can be addressed when necessary, but this reinforces a kind of isolationism and a dependency on the specialised conditions of the museum, the private collection and the art gallery eco-niche, the necessary conditionality of the presentation and conservation of art. And, I think the fact is that art has got to break out, we have got to allow art to do what Stonehenge did: to make a place.

The problem is that having liberated itself from the twin duties of illustration and representation and the duty of trying to find a way of illustrating the collective historical or sacred stories that gave body to image and collective myth, art became a specialised area which increasingly mediated and meditated upon its own nature, so there's a paradoxical trajectory in

which, in seeking its own liberation, art became increasingly dependent on the specialised environments, contexts and languages which withdrew it from the zone of collective experience. There is a real paradox here, that in the process of liberating itself, art lost its place within the established fabric. So the plinth, the niche, the fresco, the ceiling, those sites in which traditionally art was to be found in the Classic and Gothic models, no longer are attractive, seem less inviting, less possible and can only be occupied with irony or with compromise. Do we bemoan this state or do we celebrate it? Should artists be crying for a new integrationist position within the built environment, or should we be delighted by all the legislative and fiscal changes that have resulted in a potential for a Per Cent for Art policy to become universal. Should we recognise that it is actually not a matter of art asking to be given a place within the 'known' fabric but to follow its true calling and to make places?

The fact is, that I don't believe that contemporary architecture needs art. I think if we follow the modernist dictum, the articulation of space and light creates human spaces that increase our wellbeing, they certainly don't need decoration, and in fact, the bodies that grow and move within them are their own ornament, they are the enhanced life of a building. Certainly, in this age of Gehry and Vignolli and others, buildings have become increasingly sculptural. So, my reaction to all of this is to try to find what is sculpture's primal function, and for me, sculpture bears witness to life being created in it but standing outside it, acting as witness, and in some senses, this is always going to be atavistic, always going to be about the past, but also about the past as a zone of unknowing out of which the present has come. Sculpture, therefore, has to deal with mystery, with magic, with death, and has to be totemic.

My feeling is that art, and particularly sculpture, in its essence is resistant to both passive consumption and to mobility itself. It attaches itself to different centres in our cerebral and affective centres and, most importantly, is providing a still point of reference and, therefore, an invitation for reflection in a time of extreme mobility.

Sculpture Projects in Münster 1977, 1987, 1997 – A long term study

Ortrud Westheider, FDR

The subject of this colloquium is *Placing Art*. Placing art was also the question that initiated the art projects in the Münster urban area in 1977.

The speaker presented a series of slides:

On the left we see Michael Asher's trailer, which could be seen at nineteen different locations within the city during the first exhibition in 1977. Here it was parked between the university's history and art history departments. These university buildings are located at the cathedral square in the direct vicinity of the Westfälische Landesmuseum.

On the right slide, we can see Claes Oldenburg's *Giant Pool Balls*. In 1977, these three cement balls with a diameter of 3.5 metres, were placed on the shore of a lake called Aasee, the downtown green belt recreation area. Asher and Oldenburg both make art in the public sphere a topic for discussion. From the beginning, one of them emphasises the mobility and changing locations of the artwork, while the other makes the city the playing field across which the balls roll. The correct position decides victory or defeat, with the artist and curator in the role of player.

Placing art as a parking permit in the recesses of the urban environment? Placing Art as a game with the risk of failure? Both positions make commentaries on the then fashionable furnishing of public spaces with fountains and free-standing sculptures – still figurative in the 1950's, in the 1960's increasingly abstract – however, invariably inconspicuous, exchangeable and decorative.

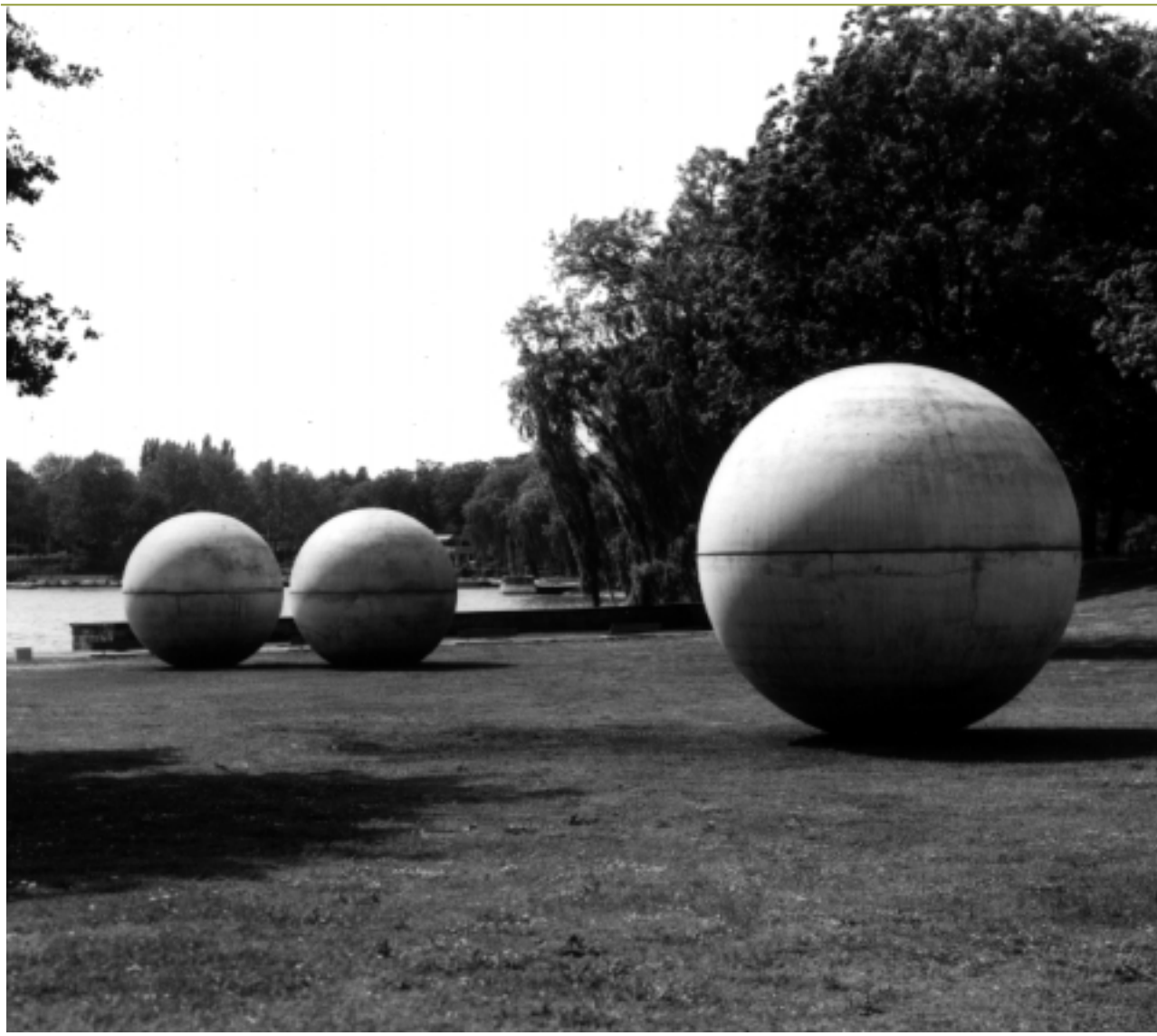
The autonomous sculpture, completed in the sculptor's studio and positioned outside by the patron, had entered a period of crisis. Even though the term 'drop sculpture' first arose in the 1980's, the coincidental arrange-ment which it expressed had already become marked.

In Münster in the 1950's, the gift of an outdoor sculpture by Henry Moore was turned down. In the 1970's, the discussion centering around this missed opportunity lead the city of Münster to acquire a kinetic sculpture by George Rickey. The protests which erupted as a result prompted Klaus Bußmann, at that time curator of modern art at the Landesmuseum, to plan an overview exhibition dealing with the development of 20th century abstract sculpture to fill in the information gap. Initially, Bußmann planned a pure museum exhibition, from Rodin, Brancusi, Boccioni and Giacometti to George Rickey. However, Kaspar Konig, who was at that time living in New York and originally came from near Münster joined for a part of the project.

This curatorial team is also responsible for the exhibition projects following in 1987 and 1997. Today Klaus Bußmann is the Director of the Westfälisches Landes-museum. Unfortunately, due to illness, he is unable to address you personally today. Kasper Konig has recently become Director of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne. Previously, he was President of the Städel School and Director of the Portikus in Frankfurt. In 1997, Bußmann and Konig were supported by Florian Matzner, who is currently Professor at the Akademie für Bildende Künste (Academy for Visual Arts) in Munich.

In 1977, the curators made a decision which in the following years proved to be important internationally: autonomous sculpture would be displayed within the museum. By contrast, all works which were created temporarily for a certain location outside the museum were called projects. The administrative district and the city of Münster, as well as the Landschaftsverband Westfalen-Lippe as the owner of the Museum, funded the production costs of sculptures in public areas. However, these organisations were not obligated to fund a permanent placement after the end of the exhibition. This arrangement also held true for the subsequent projects. Nevertheless, the Landesmuseum and the city of Münster today possess a large collection of sculptures

With the integration of the viewer, Minimal Art let go of the hierarchical structure of the classical art forms. As a result, even the artist no longer appeared as the ingenious creator, but as someone who offered more questions than answers.



Giant Pool Balls, Claes Oldenburg, 1977
Concrete, 3.5m diameter

within the city: three works were acquired after the first sculpture project, after the second around twenty and after the latest, ten.

In addition to Asher and Oldenburg, seven additional artists were invited in 1977, including Carl Andre, Donald Judd and Richard Serra. With this selection Kasper Konig brought Minimal Art and Post Minimalism to Münster, both of which had already been introduced in the Netherlands and the neighbouring Rhineland with important exhibitions.

Münster is a civil service and university city surrounded by agriculturally-based Westphalia. In the industrial Rhine-Ruhr region, a gallery owner such as Konrad Fischer had already been able to establish the new tendencies in American art within collectors' circles. In contrast, these new tendencies appeared in Münster in 1977 as if out of thin air and took the city completely by surprise! There were situations when the protests increased so much that the police had to cordon off the works, e.g. of Oldenburg and Judd.

On the left slide, we see the project by Donald Judd and, on the right slide, Carl Andre's 1997 *Steel Line*. Both artists chose a location near the Aasee. Judd had two circles poured of concrete. The inner one closes horizontally above and is optically linked to the surface of the lake. In contrast, the outer falls diagonally and follows the slope of the shore wall. Andre created a path of 97 slabs. When walking on it, one either moves towards Münster the silhouette of the city or away from it.

The strong presence of American Minimal Art at the first sculpture project had to do with the new concept of sculpture that it represented. No longer was the abstract form in the foreground; instead it was the viewers of the piece themselves. Their movements in space, the varying perspectives that formed the work in the time spent viewing it were inherent elements to the piece itself. With the integration of the viewer, Minimal Art let go of the hierarchical structure of the classical art forms. As a result, even the artist no longer appeared as the ingenious creator, but as someone who offered more questions than answers. In this respect, the first sculpture project brought a democratisation to the understanding and reception of sculpture to the Münster area.

A project such as that by Richard Serra, however, already points to artistic

Art should also concern itself with the most marginalised areas, with 'non-places'... Once again the principle was 'Invite global, act local'.

strategies, which were to become characteristic of the sculpture project that followed ten years later. Serra chose a situation for urban planning which has yet to be resolved. Since the Baroque era, between the palace and the city centre, there is a large undeveloped site which is used today as a parking lot. The palace is the seat of the university administration. Across from it is the lecture building. They are divided by a multi-lane street so that the students must use a pedestrian underpass on their way from one building to the next, which comes out at the place where Serra placed his doubled Double-T structure of iron. The structure acts as a barrier, emphasising the division of the city not addressed by urban planning and calls it to consciousness.

The theme of the 1987 sculpture project was 'Site Specificity'. In the previous ten years, this debate was led from Münster. The dispute with the city – its topography, its history and its urban planning context – had become a sort of seal of quality. In the introduction to the catalogue it said, "the well-intended invention" 'Kunst am Bau' "should be buried once and for all for the sake of the artists". The work of the artists on site promised a new authenticity in the pieces. Given no guidelines, the artists invited were able to select the type and location for their artistic interventions themselves. Kasper Konig sharpened the theme: "From Park to Parking Lot" was his motto.

The pieces should give the city back all the narration which it had lost due to the modernistic reduction in architecture. Art should also concern itself with the most marginalised areas, with 'non-places', as one would perhaps say today. Once again the principle was 'Invite global, act local'. Around sixty artists unfamiliar with Münster came to this provincial capital to have it out on site with civil services, churchgoers, business people and road users.

On the left slide, we see the *Black Form* by Sol Le Witt and on the right slide, the *Cherries* by Thomas Schütte. Le Witt's *Black Form* made the connection to the Minimal Art of the first sculpture project. He placed the black masonry block in front of the Baroque era palace built by Johann Conrad Schlaun, which had been severely damaged in the Second World War. At first, it appeared as though the formal contrast was important to the artist, especially as he placed a corresponding piece, the *White Pyramid*, on the rear side of the palace. However, the surprise was Sol Le Witt's inscription which read "Dedicated to the missing Jews". With this dedication, the black block became not only a memorial to the students who were murdered, but also for all those Jewish students who have been absent from the university of Münster since that time.

After the end of the exhibition, the city of Münster started a cross-party initiative to acquire and permanently preserve the piece. However, this plan fell apart due to the veto of the President of the University at that time. Today, the *Black Form* can be found in Hamburg. It was reconstructed on the site of a former synagogue in front of the Altona Town Hall.

Narrative structures are characteristic of the 1987 project. This can be said of the

Cherries, Thoma Schütte, 1987
Sandstone, aluminium and paint
6m


FRISC

formally abstract piece by Sol Le Witt as well as the figurative piece by Thomas Schütte. Schütte followed Konig's motto by placing a pedestal of his *Cherries* on a small city centre parking lot. The *Cherries'* shining surface was a calculated response to the parked cars. The cherry pillar was acquired by the city. Some time later it was decided to relocate the parking lot so that the *Cherries* could shine unimpaired. Schütte, however, was completely misunderstood by this cleansing of the parking lot since his piece was not about beautification.

With four gates, Daniel Buren marked the urban nucleus of Münster around the spiritual centre, the "monasterium", which gave the city its name. In earlier times, the four places selected by Buren were the crossing points between the cathedral district and the merchant city.

Lothar Baumgarten also dealt with the city's religious history. Even today, his piece stands as a visible intervention in one of the symbols of the city – the Lamberti church tower with its three cages. During the Reformation, the city was briefly in the possession of the Anabaptists, a radical branch of Protestantism, who were persecuted as heretics by the Catholic Church. After the ruling bishop regained his power, he paraded the three leaders in iron cages. Their bodies were later displayed in the cages high above the town as a warning. Baumgarten had three light bulbs installed in the cages which are tumed on at dusk, thereby allowing memories of the leaders to flicker through the night.

Significantly, this piece was acquired for Münster by the city's businesses, who traditionally had a strained relationship with the Church leaders.

Nearby in a pedestrian precinct, Katharina Fritsch had a life-size Madonna of Lourdes placed. Without the pedestal, one meets her eye-to-eye. However, this monument of identification was transformed by its garish colours to give the viewer a more distant relationship. The wide reactions to this piece varied from damaging the figure to placing flowers at her feet – a piece which called forth mixed feelings. Katharina Fritsch had a life-size

The 1997 sculpture project was seen by many as a festival. It showed itself as an aesthetic exception. Many artists made this development the subject of discussion by utilizing elements of an amusement park.

devotional statue made, thereby making a statement concerning the relationship between church and market place. Its placement in the pedestrian precinct, a site of consumerism, enhanced this reading. Fritsch's piece represents a particular example of site specificity even when it concerns a mass produced ready-made statue.

Katharina Fritsch's work finds an echo in a project realised ten years later by Ayse Erkmen. However, Erkmen worked with the originals. She had sculptures from the Seventeenth Century, which partly had been evacuated from the facades of the churches before the destruction in World War II, and placed by helicopter on the roof of the facing Landesmuseum. Her contribution thereby concerns the 'placelessness' of art, its déplacement, its 'museumisation'. Site specificity as an achievement of the 1987 projects is critically called into question.

Like Erkmen, many artists set the tone of the 1997 sculpture project with conceptual pieces; they were no longer concerned with the placement of a sculpture – they pursued object avoidance. Thus, Maria Eichhorn's work consisted of registering an empty lot as a piece in the real estate register. In this slide we see the artist together with Klaus Bußmann and the notaries. Art, as an economical and politically conditional transaction, is put up for discussion.

Another artistic strategy consisted of reuniting aesthetics and function and to make offers for their use: 'Art as a Service' was the motto of this strategy. We see, in this slide, the bar that Tobias Rehberger had installed on the roof of the lecture building at the palace. This shot shows the location during the day and emphasises the sculptural aspects of the piece. However, during the exhibition, the piece at night was regularly transformed into a chill-out zone for numerous students and art tourists.

On the right slide, we see the *Pier* by Jorge Pardo, which belongs today to the Landesmuseum's collection. Pardo frames the view of the landscape, at the same time adding a functioning pier for the water sports recreation area.

The 1987 sculpture project, with its careful handling of the city and public art, set a precedent. The city also developed an affinity to the works of the artists on site. In 1997, many of the seventy individual projects were realised with the help of the city administration and the support of local craftsmen. For the politicians, the sculpture project was already a fixed component in discussions concerning the appeal of the city and its attractiveness to tourists. The 1997 sculpture project was seen by many as a festival. It showed itself as an aesthetic exception. Many artists made this development the subject of discussion by utilising elements of an amusement park. Walter Grasskamp spoke of "serious jokes". For him, the air conceals flying sculptures and a fictitious subway stop for Münster is an irony. The end of urban euphoria had come.

Martin Kippenberger's transportable ventilation shaft of sheet steel, decorated with ventilators and subway sound effects, was a part of the global project *Metro-Net. Subway Around the World*. In addition to Münster, it was installed at three other locations around the world in the summer of 1997; in the Fulda-Aue in Kassel on the occasion of the *Documenta X* on the Greek island of Syros and in Dawson City, Canada. The fake subway ventilation and entrances belong to the series of pieces entitled *Unsinnige Bauten (Absurd Constructions)*. The underground, however, symbolised the idea of Hades, the door to the underworld as well as a communicative 'Network of Brotherliness' – a bond within the artistic community. Kippenberger consciously chose a location near the bust of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff, a Westphalian author of the Romantic movement. Thus, over and above the irony, there are aspects in the late works of Martin Kippenberger which reach far beyond Dadaistic slapstick.

The *Mobile Homes* from the van Lieshout studio also pointed to globalisation and mobility. Here a private room is planted in public. The artist distanced himself from the expectations which the public placed on him.

At the end of this long-term study of sculpture projects in Münster, distance and irony have replaced site specificity and the culture of remembrance. Art has made the nature of exhibitions and the art industry the subject of discussion in a highly sophisticated way. In view of the 2007 projects, it will be exciting to see how things develop.

Yuji Akimoto is the Chief Curator of the Naoshima Contemporary Art Museum and the Benesse Corporation's Art House project in Naoshima, Japan. He studied painting at the Department of Fine Arts and Music at the National University in Tokyo and graduated in 1982. Until 1991 he was an artist and free-lance writer on art. Among the exhibitions he has curated were: *To Distant Japan from La Biennale Di Venezia*, 1995; *Contemporary Art in Seascape, Open Air 94*; *Kid's Land Art*, 1993 and *Twist*, Issey Miyake, 1992. He has commissioned and curated the work of SUDA, Yoshihiro, 2002; Walter de Maria, 2000; James Turrell, 1999; Tatsuo Miyajima, 1998; Cai Guo-Qiang, 1998, Richard Long 1997, David Tremlett, 1997 and Jannis Kounellis in 1996.

Luke Gibbons is Professor of English, Film, Theatre and Television, at the University of Notre Dame, USA. He formerly taught at Dublin City University and, as visiting Professor at New York University. He has written extensively on Irish literature, the visual arts and popular culture, and is the author of *Transformations in Irish Culture* (1996), co-author of *Cinema and Ireland* (1988), and was a contributing editor for *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing* (1991). His forthcoming book, *Edmund Burke and Ireland: Aesthetics, Politics and the Colonial Sublime* will be published by Cambridge University Press.

Antony Gormley has over the last 20 years revitalised the human image in sculpture through a radical investigation into the body as a place of memory and transformation, using his own body as subject, tool and material. Recently the sculpture has made a paradigm shift from a preoccupation with mass, volume and skin, to a concern with the body as an energy field; an exploding random matrix of elements extending into light and space.

He made large-scale installations in Cuxhaven in Germany, at the Royal Academy in London and has participated in group shows such as the Venice Biennale and Documenta 8. He has had solo exhibitions at the Whitechapel Gallery, the Serpentine Gallery and White Cube. He has created some of the most ambitious and recognisable works of the past two decades including *Field*, *The Angel of the North*, and most recently, *Quantum Cloud* on the Thames in Greenwich. He was awarded the Turner Prize in 1994 and the South Bank Prize for Visual Art in 1999.

Marretta Jaukkuri, is Chief Curator at the Kiasma Museum of Contemporary Art in Helsinki. As a curator, she has worked on the following free-lance projects: Co-curator of *Living and Working in Vienna*, 2000; Curator of the *Artscape Nordland* Sculpture Programme in Norway from 1992–1999; Co-curator of the European section of the *Roteiros, roteiros, roteiros...* exhibition at the Sao Paolo Biennale in 1998; Curator of the Nordic Pavillion at the Venice Biennale in 1988.

Liam Kelly is Professor of Irish Visual Culture at the School of Art and Design, University of Ulster, Belfast. He is a writer and broadcaster on contemporary Irish art. He has also curated both solo and thematic exhibitions in Ireland, USA, France, Slovenia and Hong Kong. He took part in *L'imaginaire Irlandais*, as curator of *Language Mapping and Power*, exhibited in Paris in 1996. From 1986–1992 he was Director of the Orpheus Gallery, Belfast and from 1996–1999 Director of the Orchard Gallery, Derry. His publications include *Thinking Long,Contempary Art in the North of Ireland*, 1996 and *The City as Art: Interrogating the Polis*, 1994. He is currently a Vice-president the International Association of Art Critics, Paris (AICA). In 1997 he organised their international annual congress, *Art and Centres of Conflict–Outer and Inner Realities* in Belfast and Derry.

Rebecca Solnit is an essayist, critic and activist based in San Francisco. Her work focuses on issues of environment, landscape and place. Her books include *Secret Exhibition, Six California Artists of the Cold War Era*; *Savage Dreams: A Journey into the Landscape Wars of the American West*; *A Book of Migrations, Some Passages in Ireland*; *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*; *Hollow City: Gentrification and the Eviction of Culture*, in collaboration with the photographer Susan Schwartzenberg; an essay collection titled, *As Eve Said to the Serpent: On Landscape, Gender and Art*.

Ortrud Westheider is the Curator at the Bucerius Kunst Forum in Hamburg since 2002. From 1999–2001 she was Curator for Contemporary Art at the Westfälisches Landesmuseum in Münster and from 1998–1999 she was Curator at the Kunsthalle Bremen. Among the exhibitions she has curated for the Hamburger Kunsthalle, is the work of Max Beckmann (also exhibited at Kunstforum Wien) and Hanne Darboven. She has contributed to publications about the history of collections and exhibitions, nineteenth century art, the Classical Modern period, the art of the 1960's and contemporary art.