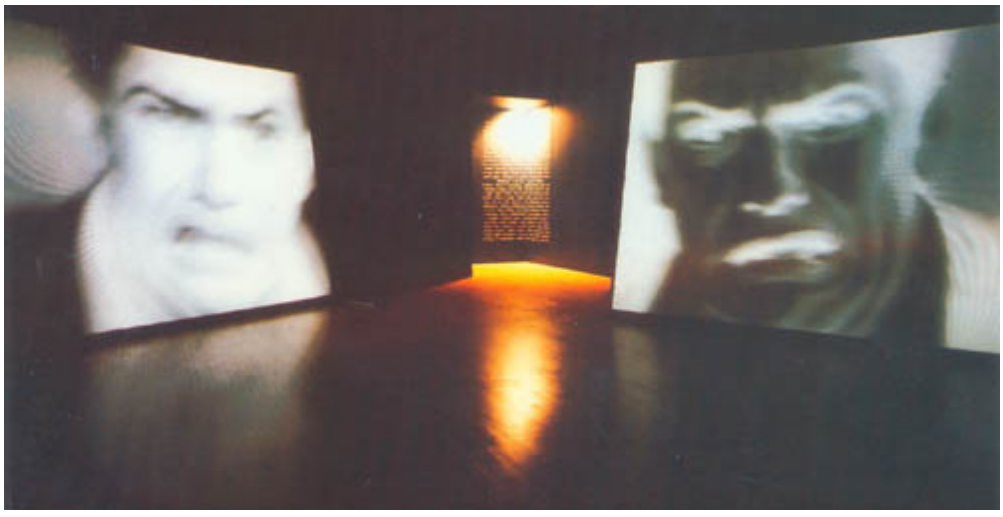
FOR ART



Glasgow A Presentation of the Art Scene in the 90`s • KARI J. BRANDTZÆG

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PREFACE

This essay presents the art scene in Glasgow at the end of this millennium. The young British artists in Glasgow in the 90's are successfully attempting to define new trends in contemporary art in Scotland, Britain and internationally. The names and works of Douglas Gordon, Christine Borland and Julie Roberts might be well known to students and critics of contemporary British art. But few know that these three belong to the same generation of artists, educated at the Glasgow School of Art in the late 80's and early 90's. And they are not alone. The Glasgow art scene in the 90's comprises a wide variety of interesting artists.

This essay is based on research on Scottish and British contemporary art conducted during my six months stay in Scotland and England from February to August 1997. During these months I collected material, interviewed artists, visited exhibitions and discussed the contemporary British art scene with critics and curators in Glasgow, Edinburgh and London. I benefited immeasurably from the amicable interviews and meetings with artists in Glasgow, particularly (alphabetical) Claire Barclay, Christine Borland, Martin Boyce, Roderick Buchanan, Nathan Coley, Louise Hopkins, Victoria Morton, Julie Roberts, Ross Sinclair, Beáta Vesceley, Neil Warmington, David Wilkinson and Richard Wright.

I am also grateful for the help and information I received from Pilar Corrias (Lisson Gallery, London). Charles Esche (former Director of Tramway and now curator at The Modern Institute, Glasgow), Duncan Macmillan (Professor at Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh), Francis McKee (Head of Artistic Programming at Centre for Contemporary Art. Glasgow), Kate Smith (Manager of Collective Gallery, Edinburgh) and Toby Webster (Artist and Curator of Transmission Gallery/ The Modern Institute, Glasgow). I thank them for their willingness to share of their knowledge. My greatest thank goes to Ross Sinclair, Jan Næss and Tore Slaatta, without whose help and support I would never have been able to finish this project. But although I am indebted to so many, I can only blame myself for all possible faults and inaccuracies.

Stirling/Oslo 1997,
Kari J. Brandtzæg

GLASGOW A PRESENTATION OF THE ART SCENE IN THE 90'S

1 Glasgow, art and culture - a mirror of the shifting focus on locus

For an art historian intent on evaluating recent trends in the Glaswegian art scene, it is difficult not to be reminded of the role of Glaswegian art and design at the end of the 19th. century. Then, modernism and internationalism in art came together. Today, one might say that globalisation and post modernist trends define a new context, both for the individual, for society and for art. And again, Scottish art seems to have a voice which is becoming increasingly audible on the international art scene. Being there at a time when Scotland seemed obsessed with the issue of nationalism and devolution from Britain, I unavoidably came to reflect upon the importance of the city, the location of the city within a nation, and the location of the nation within a united kingdom. And further, the importance of this historical, political and social context for the artists living and working in Glasgow.

On September 11, 1997, 700 years after the famous battle of Stirling Bridge, Scotland voted for devolution and a Scottish parliament in Edinburgh. Some months earlier, Stirling City Council had invited 10 young artists to suggest new designs for an imaginative Scottish flag. On the night of the referendum, the flags were hanging from Stirling Bridge where crowds gathered to celebrate the long awaited outcome. The flags were intended to «represent areas of Scottish cultural identity» and to envisage new ideas of Scottish contemporary identity. To the bafflement of some local council members, the traditional national symbol of St. Andrew's Cross was substituted for a variety of icons and signs, signifying the nation in totally arbitrary ways. With considerate effect, the flags thus came to emphasise the ambivalent project of constructing a Scottish national state in the age of globalisation.

Many of the invited artists were Glasgow based, working consciously with the conceptual and contextual aspects of the art process. For instance, Christine Borland's flag showed the circulatory system of a heart. The design was a reworked illustration of a foetal heart from Gray's Anatomy, originally published as a textbook in 1858. In its new context, the illustration reflected upon the «... yet 'unborn' in the status of Scotland as country». Ross Sinclair's flag was a colourful rainbow, designed «...to signify a small nation rising from the ashes of its emasculation». But the words «REAL LIFE» were incorporated in the flag, questioning the idea of authenticity (fig. 1). David Shrigley, on the other hand, wanted his design to fulfil the criteria to be a positive statement, but also to be in keeping with the content of his ordinary artwork, «... encompassing some naive, surreal, ironic or humorous element».[1] And in his design he has exchanged the traditional white cross for a pink hand against a blue background with the inscription «Hello» in its palm (fig. 2). Waving in the wind, the new Scotland introduces itself to the world.

In recent years the international art scene has shifted its focus from traditional centres of contemporary art, like New York and Berlin, to cities and places geographically located in the European periphery. Recent political, social and economic changes have altered the significance and relevance of geo-political borders. In the wake of the fall of communism, problems connected to collective identities again surfaced on the European continent. Simultaneously, though, new communication technology and a globalised media culture appear to indicate that the specific geographic location of the artist and the expression of collective identity has lost its importance as a social and political context for the reception of art. In this text I will present the works of some of the Glasgow based artists who encompass and reflect these seemingly opposite trends. Due to lack of space, I will regretfully have to bypass others,

though they may be equally worth mentioning. The new, conceptual art in Glasgow reactualises issues in Scottish political and intellectual history in a post modern context. For instance, the particular political situation in Scotland at the end of the 90's has an obvious relevance for the artists' reflections on an individual and local identity. As Etian McArthur notes, «... In a globalising mosaic of identities, as the Eurocentric world-view disintegrates, as the old cultural and political hierarchies within Europe itself loosen, local identities have become more important as secure anchors in the disorientating global (dis)order.»[2] Also, the tradition from the Scottish enlightenment is visible in some of the artists' works, where moral distinctions and the capability to separate good from evil are questioned. Similar issues were discussed by prominent philosophers such as David Hume (1711-76) and Adam Smith (1723-1790), both central figures in the intellectual history of Scotland. According to their philosophy, the acquisition of empirical knowledge puts man in a better position from which to draw conclusions and pass verdicts pertaining to moral issues, and, as will be seen from my presentation of the artists, reminiscences of this modernity project are present in their investigations into the complexity of contemporary, urban life, often, however, coexisting with influences from romantic literature by authors like Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson and James Hogg.

Modernism: The second city of the Empire

Thus, in many respects, history seems to repeat itself in various ways in Scotland. In the age of modernism Glasgow became the «second city of the Empire», not just in the field of industry and economics but also culturally. The man who more than anyone put Glasgow on the international map of culture was the architect and designer Charles Rennie Mackintosh (1868- 1933). He grew up in the expanding city at a time when the question of national identity and Scotland's international position was on the agenda.[3]

Mackintosh developed a Scottish style in architecture and design, which gained international recognition. With its decorative elements and regional vernaculars it became part of an international modern style that inspired developments in functionalism and decorative arts in the early 20th century (fig.3).[4]

The nineteenth century was an age of urbanisation, and at the turn of the century, 50 per cent of Scotland's population lived in large cities like Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen. The increase in population was especially high in Glasgow, doubling nine times in the course of the nineteenth century. Glasgow's new wealth came first from cotton and tobacco, but by the end of the century the sources of wealth included the mining of coal and iron-ore, heavy engineering and above all ship-building. Between 1870 and 1913 Clydeside shipbuilders consistently provided a third of the total British tonnage. The city was growing fast as one of the most industrial towns in Europe. Indeed, Glasgow felt itself to be a European city, and started to distinguish itself from London and the British empire. Following W.W.II the economic base which created the wealth disappeared and left a city in decline. Glasgow soon found itself in a deep financial and social crisis, where unemployment was high and the city became notorious for riots and violent gang culture in the 50's and 60's. Since the war, the population has been reduced to half, now counting around 750.000. People are still moving to outer suburbs or even to London, but today pessimism appears to be on the decline. In 1990 Glasgow was the Cultural Capitol of Europe, and the city will figure as UK City of Architecture and Design in 1999.

Cultural life in Scotland seems again to be thriving. Recently, the Scottish author Irvine Welsh has received international attention through the filming of his well known novel Trainspotting. Since then, Scottish film and literature has gathered new momentum with directors and actors like Ken Loach, Peter Mullan, Ewan McGregor and Robert Carlyle, and with authors like James Kelman, Duncan McLean and James Meek. Now, art also seems to follow. At the end of the 20th century, a new generation of artists, particularly from Glasgow, is gaining international recognition. These artists are showing a capability to unite the local with the global, a trend which was crucial also for the development of the international art nouveau movement at the turn of the century. The shared experience of living and working in the northern periphery of Europe is of particular significance. And also in relation to the British centre of London, Scotland remains the periphery of Britain. But this experience has become a potential for action, a potential for drawing new lines and ways of redefining the concepts of centre and periphery. In the post modern age of globalisation, the position of Glasgow becomes that of the global village. And the importance of Glasgow as a place to work with, and experience art, is redefined.

From figurative painting to new conceptual art

Many of the young Glaswegian artists were educated at the Environmental Art Department at GSA, and they were immediately perceived as being in opposition to the established figurative painters of Glasgow. These figurative painters; Steven Campbell (b. 1953), Ken Currie (b. 1960), Peter Howson (1958) and Adrian Wisniewski (b. 1958) had become well known during the 1980's, influenced by a new international realist movement in painting, spearheaded by the German artists; Baselitz, Penck and Immendorf.[5] The teaching and guidance of the Scottish painter Aleksander Moffat (b. 1943) at Glasgow School of Art was of central importance for the figurative painters.

Particularly, Moffat's influence on Ken Currie and Peter Howson was decisive. In the same way as him, they sought an expression that could move people, an art that had something to say, an art that was didactic.[6] In that way they wanted to bring life and art closer together. They often found their motives in the history of Scottish labour. Particularly in Ken Currie's and Peter Howson's work, the depiction of heroic man in the face of historical, social and urban oppression is a continuing theme. Their pictures often contain direct references to Glasgow's urban history and the contemporary social crisis, as in Currie's important work, Glasgow Triptych (1986). The triptych is a dark and pessimistic figuration of Glasgow past, present and imagined future. In Wisniewski's and Campbell's work, the reference to the social and the historical past is substituted for a more surrealistic mixture of fact and fiction, dreams and memories. Through their motives and colours they express a more romantic, dreaming attitude in their art. The characters in the pictures are dreamlike wide-eyed figures who don't seem to belong to our world. This dreamlike sense of reality reminds of the English pre-Raphaelites' paintings, conveying a sense of estrangement and alienation.

With the figurative painters, Glasgow slowly established an art scene and a small market of local galleries and museums that supported and acknowledged the painters. They were also officially supported by Glasgow city's cultural institutions and were frequently commissioned for public art projects and used in the promotion of the city. Hence, it became more difficult for the generation of conceptual artists to establish themselves with the acceptance and support of the cultural and political establishment. They were seen by many as challenging the hegemony of the figurative painters and were often

disregarded for their post modernist attitude.

In spite of this, there are similarities and thematic connections between the two generations of artists. Both generations are committed to forms of art that connect to society and believe in the role of art as a social and political «facilitator» for the viewer. Their differences lies first of all in the use of materials and in the presentation of the work of art. The new generation wants the viewer to be confronted with more ambiguity and openness, reflecting the complexity of the political, religious, cultural and economical situation they see themselves as part of.

The conceptual artists found themselves outside of the established galleries and museums in Glasgow. An important platform, however, emerged with the Transmission Gallery. It was started in 1983 by a group of artists (John Rogan, Lesley Reaside, Alistair Mcghee, Alistair Strachan, Richard Wright), who wanted to improve the situation for young local artists. With small budgets but a strong will they created an active arena for the students graduated from GSA. In the beginning the Gallery exhibited the figurative painters, but increasingly the next generation of artists took over the new Transmission Gallery in King Street.

Environmental Art

The new impetus was originated through students at the Environmental Art Department. The department was started in 1986 as an alternative to the traditional categories of Painting, Photography, Printmaking and Sculpture. The somewhat difficult label 'Environmental Art' was designed to emphasise the much-cited contextual basis for the production of art. As a part of the courses public art projects were started, where the art students were prompted to create art outside the studios and galleries. They had to find their own sites, gain permission from local authorities or private proprietors, make their proposals, develop the work and set it up. As the Head of Department, David Harding, pointed out, the projects required a high degree of initiative, which would build confidence in the artists to take initiative themselves when the became part of the professional art world.[7]

The theory of 'Environmental Art' gave the artists a new freedom, demanding a different type of creativity and approximation to aesthetic, intellectual and practical problems. The department encouraged a close relationship between artist and society, and moved the process of art production out of the studio and into the public space. The artist was forced to look at society in a more active way, and the context was seen as fifty percent of the work of art. Thus, the students were trained in the role as «investigators», penetrating the surface of society and commenting their discoveries.

Windfall 91

In the summer of 1991, the artists attached to the Environmental Art Department joined forces and made the show «Windfall». Transmission Gallery was another important force in organising the exhibition which was housed in two buildings belonging to the old Seamen's Mission on the Clyde riverside. The organisers, with David McMillan at the head, got the idea for the Windfall show from the two former Windfall exhibitions in London's Hyde Park in 1988 and in Bremen in 1989. But Damien Hirst's «Freeze» exhibition in London 1988, which placed the young Goldsmith artists on the map for the first time, also provided important inspiration.

The exhibition was a collaboration between 26 artists from Scotland and five other European countries. The aspiration to be «European» has long been an important feature of the artistic strategy in Glasgow. The concept of the exhibition was flexible and encouraged the artists to be their own curators. The catalogue announced that the artists were «... brought together by a strong perception of the environment to which they respond and of which they charge».[8] The artists selected their exhibit spaces and developed their art projects with the view to retain the unity of the given site.

Claire Barclay placed her work in the side corridor and Julie Roberts made two paintings of the building construction. Nathan Coley placed big pale canvases against the huge windows and Martin Boyce's board paintings situated upright on the floor, with the title Potential For Greatness (fig. 4) referred, among other things, to the potential for contemporary artists in Glasgow. As it turned out Martin Boyce had no need to be «a little worried about my future», as was written ironically on the last of the three panel boards, because in retrospect, Boyce's title seems perfectly sound; The show wasa success, and became a trigger for recognition of the new conceptual art made in Glasgow. International curators and art dealers came to Glasgow to see the show, and they soon found themselves paying attention to the artists emerging from the Glasgow School of Art.

In spite of the young artists' new international reputation the local art market still met the new art scenes with some reservation. However, something was changing with the emergence of Transmission Gallery, and the new interest paid to the artists by Centre for Contemporary art (CCA) and Tramway Gallery. The exhibition «Trust» at Tramway, 1995 in Glasgow was organised as an attempt to form a new relationship between conceptual artists, institutions and audiences in Glasgow. The director at Tramway, Charles Esche, curated the show together with the artists Christine Borland, Roderick Buchanan, Jacqueline Donachie, Douglas Gordon and the curator Katrina Brown. Their aim was to introduce the audience to a new type of art, representing something else than the figurative paintings normally on view for the public. Internationally renowned artists were invited , such as Marina Abramovic, Maria Eichhom, Felix Gonzalez-Torres, Kornar and Melamid, Tony Oursler, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Rosemarie Trockel, Lawrence Weiner, Andrea Zittel and David Wilkinson, all of whom in various ways had influenced the Glasgow based artists in their own work.

The exhibition's title «Trust» was meant to be a metaphor for the process of making an exhibition; as a description of the relationship between the curators, the selected artists and the viewer. The expressed idea was to lower the «artificially high level of cynicism with which a Scottish audience approaches contemporary art».[9] But the exhibition's good intentions didn't seem to be recognised by the Scottish press who reacted negatively to the lack of «traditional» painting, photography and also the «provocative» title of the exhibition. The show was criticised for not being accessible to ordinary

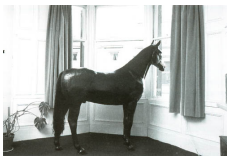
people. In response to the bad reviews the curators organised an open forum. About 150 people attended, creating a heated debate and making the exhibition a cause celebre, after all. At the end of the exhibition the curators even organised a weekend off discussions and social events, where 100 people attended. The artists had finally succeeded in their attempt to introduce a new form of art which demanded of the viewers that they spend time, as well as intellectual and emotional energy in confrontation with the exhibited pieces.

Home Shows

The white gallery space is no longer the perfect or only site for the showing and viewing of art. Using private flats for art exhibitions has become a new and popular strategy. As in the case of the Soviet artists of the 60's and 70's, this has become an alternative to the official art spaces in the 90's. Whereas the unofficial Soviet art had to go undercover, contemporary artists see this strategy as a practical and inexpensive way to expand the public art scene in Glasgow and elsewhere. It also reflects the pressure from the 71% increase of British artists during the last ten years. There are currently more than 100.000 practising artists in Britain. Of these, the largest proportion are in the 25-34 age band. It is also in this age group we find the initiators in Glasgow. They cannot accept the general view of artists as passive and apolitical. Instead of waiting for society to give them «a chance», they are arranging exhibitions themselves, where it would have taken them months or years to get the permission and possibility to exhibit in an official art gallery.

In recent years, Glasgow has seen a number of projects using the lived-in spaces of homes, like «The Living Room» project curated by Gianni Piacentini in 1990, which involved more than twenty artists. More recently «Wish You Were here, too» was held in a private apartment on Hill Street. The exhibition lasted from February 1 to February 14 1997 and received 500 visitors during the first week! The show presented as many as 40 artists, mostly from Glasgow. But again, international artists from Slovene, Italy, Hungary, Finland, New York and London were invited to participate. In order to house the exhibition, the artists Beáta Vesceley and David Wilkinson, and the curator Charles

Esche, had opened their own home. In a fascinating way, the exhibited works of art were integratedin the apartment, linking the reflexive experience of art with the experience of everyday, private life. By moving around in the private home, the exhibited pieces had to be discovered, and this sometimes proved to be difficult. The boundaries between art as an object and the art context were deliberately blurred. At the same time, the viewers' role as guest/intruder and viewer/peeper was brought into focus. In the window sill by the toilet, a seemingly accidentally placed walkman contained Nathan Coley's conversation piece Sanctuary, about «the death of the Utopia». For the patient viewer a connection could be established to Tanya Leighton's collection of coins submerged in the bathtub. A wishing well for the household? Christine Borland's piece Threshold Accident was installed outside the entrance door, glittering on the floor. In the corridor David Wilkinson had painted the wall and on the floor Ross Sinclair's video Studio Real Life TV was situated (fig.5). Julie Roberts' wall painting Bartlehiem Pale Blue was connected to the pale blue grid pattern above the fireplace in the kitchen, and Douglas Gordon's «insertion» of a question mark and an exclamation mark up on the kitchen wall seemed to point to the displacement of the sign and the context of signification. Above Charles Esche's bed, Ross Sinclair's installation of «pseudo»-fanzine T-shirts covered the wall, as in a teenager's bedroom. On the sitting



room mantelpiece was Douglas Gordon's photo of a hitch-hiker holding a sign saying «Psycho», referring to his well known film installation 24 Hour Psycho (1993), which he worked on while actually living in the same apartment.[10] In front of the main window, Beáta Vesceley's full scale model horse, displaced and displayed, invited us to take its view out on the street (fig.6).

Douglas Gordon won the Turner Prize in 1996. This year Christine Borland was a nominee. There is no doubt that the new generation of Glasgow artists has reached a new level of recognition both at home and abroad. Their artistic and intellectual program is more widely appreciated, but the artists still find themselves in the intersection between acceptation and scepticism. Some of the artists have reached international fame, particularly Douglas Gordon, Christine Borland and Julie Roberts. And many of the other artists are exhibiting internationally. But the collective enterprise of keeping up the vital art scene in Glasgow is still important to them, both for their individual careers and as a significant social and political context to work from or within.

2 The artists and their art

In this part of the essay I will present some of the Glasgow artists and their works. The presentation is organised in four sections, showing thematic interrelations and conceptual similarities between the artists. Although this emphasises similarities in some of the artists' projects and differences between others, it is important to stress the interrelatedness of the different projects, as well as the polysemic nature of their art. In the first section, the works of Ross Sinclair, Roderick Buchanan and Douglas Gordon will be grouped together as being particularly connected to questions of identity in the post modern age. In the second section I will discuss the works of Christine Borland and Julie Roberts in relation to institutional power and knowledge, especially related to medical history. In Louise Hopkins' and Claire Barclay's projects, the use of mass-produced material and the transformation of «low culture» material to «high culture» objects emerges as a common theme. This also forms an interesting aspect in Richard Wright's, Nathan Coley's and Martin Boyce's investigations of the complex relations of art, design and architecture in an urban society.

2.1. Collective and individual identity

Questions concerning the construction and maintenance of collective and individual identity are a common theme in the works of Ross Sinclair, Roderick Buchanan and Douglas Gordon. Through investigations of existential questions confronting the individual in various social and political contexts, the artists attempt to reify ideas of cultural community and constructed images of identity. But while Ross Sinclair puts the focus on the clash between inherited, local, national culture and international, popular culture, Roderick Buchanan investigates the private and collective values of artefacts and logos manufactured by the sport industry. Douglas Gordon's ambivalent work is in a more ambiguous way connected to popular culture, especially film, and the way it influences our private memories and identities.

Ross Sinclair (b. 1966) has been central in the formation of the new art scene in Glasgow, working both as a conceptual artist, musician, writer and critic of Glaswegian contemporary art. In many of his installations, his own experiences as a rock'n roll artist are reflected in several ways. The installations

are often staged as performances, where he personally acts or performs within the physical space of the work of art. The viewer is confronted with the experience of being part of a theatre or music hall audience, and the artist's performance alludes to popular fanzine culture and boyhood dreams of pop stardom.

In the installation Studio Real Life (1995) and Portable Real Life, (the Agency 1997), an elevated stage is rigged with various musical equipment, as if waiting for the band to appear for the gig. The background wall is covered with colourful T-shirts painted with subcultural slogans like «We are all prostitutes», «No more heroes», «I was born dead», «The Will to Power». But in place of the band, two video monitors are «performing» on the stage. In one monitor, Sinclair is seen sitting in a sofa with his friends, playing his guitar. Also present is a pregnant woman. In the other monitor, a sequence of shots from different domestic and private arenas show Sinclair in everyday situations, singing familiar songs and popular tunes. We see Sinclair standing naked in the shower singing «Singing in the rain». In the next scene is he sitting on the toilet singing sad songs, like Edwyn Collins «Make me feel again». A red T-shirt with the inscription «Tears are cool» adorns the door. In another scene he is singing and playing his guitar in front of the bedroom mirror. Every time the scene is changed, a close up of his upper back being rubbed by a woman's hand proves that his tattooed inscription Real Life cannot disappear. Sinclair is insisting that he is real and alive, but do we believe him? The serial video performances and simulations of everyday life seem to give an ambiguous answer.

The conflict between what is real identity and what is constructed is also problematised in Sinclair's installation Real Life Rocky Mountain, (fig.7), exhibited at CCA in Glasgow in 1996. The work has become one of his most significant installations, bringing together central themes from his various art projects. The large installation presents an artificial landscape with stuffed samples of highland wildlife and imitations of vegetation. The idyllic scene is disturbed by the presence of a video monitor, two red electric guitars and a guitar amplifier. In the centre of this rude reconstruction of the Scottish Highlands, Sinclair sits on a chair with his bare back to the audience. The tattoo Real Life on his back repeats its ambiguous statement, this time placed in the artificial landscape. Sinclair plays his guitar and sings Scottish popular songs, selected from a history of 300 years spanning from Roberts Burns to Teenage Fanclub. The selection shows the sprinkling of the American influence the recent years. The TV-monitor on the other hand shows a videotape of the artist located in the «real» Scottish Highlands. The video work presented in Real Life Rocky Mountain is called Sound of Young Scotland (1996). Sinclair filmed himself singing old Scottish songs in the Highlands and islands of Scotland. In a way reminiscent of an ethnographic exercise he visits the places where the songs were actually sung and written down by ancient ethnographers. But with the video shots focusing on Sinclair's tattooed back, the mixing of genres and media confuses the impression of authenticity. Like post modern music videos Sinclair's Sound of Young Scotland thrives in its ambiguity. He reveals the nature of an ironic double assertion of authenticity, which pervades all of his work.

In the installation Real Life Rocky Mountain Sinclair wanted to bring the countryside and the mountain to the urban people and make... «the artificial landscape accessible in an absurd and bizarre way. People could come in from Sauchihall street to CCA, go through the bookshop, and in to the Highlands».[11] It was important that the installation gave a clearly artificial impression. As Sinclair explained, the only thing that was real was himself. Thus, instead of constructing an image of the Scottish indigenous

culture, «landscape», «mediascape» and «technoscape» were fused into a reification of the «ideoscape», symbolising Scotland as a part of the global village.[12]

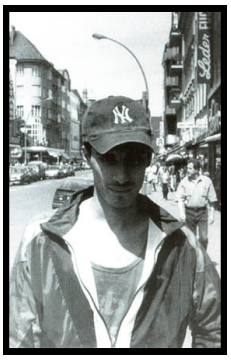
«For me Scotland is much more in my head, than within geographical borders. Think of all the people around the world defining themselves as Scottish because of Scottish heritage, but without having any real idea of what Scotland is. Scotland just lives in their imagination», says Sinclair. In his personal way, he also asks: «Why do I feel passionate about Scottish folk songs, but why do I also feel passionate about songs by Nirvana, and how can it be like that?» The question for Sinclair is how much of yourself is real and how much is constructed? It has become impossible to say, since we are constantly surrounded by media, images and information. This becomes a threat and challenge to contemporary art. In an essay, Sinclair asks...

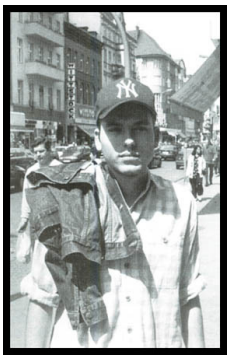
«What if the cultural position artist, defined through centuries of tradition and patronage, has finally been made redundant? [...] In a cultural sphere full to bursting with over stimulated images of dizzying speed and prozac self - satisfaction, the visual arts must seek out new strategies to communicate with the global village idiots - or die. If the artist's voice is to be heard at all in the maelstrom of 21st century culture it will need to find a workable midpoint between vacuous chest beating and the pip-squeak whisper of this nation's cultural apologists.[13]

His installations reflect an energetic, pro-active attitude to life and society, also to be found in his essays. With titles like «Faster than a pool of piss on a hot summer sidewalk»[14] and «Nietzsche, the Beastie Boys and Masturbating as an art form» he continues to provoke and challenge both colleagues and critics with fresh views and statements. In Sinclair's work there is both a will to find new expressions and communicative strategies, and a despair over the loss of radical possibilities in music and art.

Staging plays an important part also in Sinclair's installations We Don't Love You Anymore (1993) and Real Life Moby Dick (1997). In many of his projects we find expressed both a fascination with and criticism of the commercial rock industry and popular culture. He engages himself «with the grey area between real life and the aspirations offered to us over the mediated airwaves of victorious post-pop global culture».[15] Sinclair says that he never could be a painter and go to a studio every day, because for him it is important that artists... «have a real and meaningful social function. When the context of art dissolves into the realm of formalism and the art world exclusively, it has relinquished much of its potential for social function».[16] His art projects are developed through the prism of his own personal experiences in society and expressed through investigations of the blurred borders between an authentic individual identity and a collectively produced mass culture. In this way, the artist uses himself to advance a particular idea or strategy which has a wider constituency in culture/society.

Roderick Buchanan (b. 1965) approaches the issues of collective and individual identity from a different angle. Buchanan is interested in the logos and emblems of popular culture, such as sports and fashion, serving as symbols of fellowship and social belonging. While travelling around the world as an international artist, he was fascinated by the way people of different cultures and classes signalled adherence to a cross-cultural world-wide fellowship of club supporters. In European youths wearing Yankee caps, or Scottish soccer enthusiasts wearing Milan shirts, the products of fanzine culture exposed their transnational character.





Wearing his own Yankee baseball cap, with its well known blue-and-white insignia, Buchanan travelled in Europe to find and document his own transnational tribe. He made a series of photographs of people he found in the European capitals of Berlin, Paris and Amsterdam (fig.8). As Buchanan says: «With Yankee merchandise flooding high streets everywhere, anyone can buy a piece of New York».[17]

For Buchanan every logo or piece of sports' gear tells a story of identification and allegiance. The experience of growing up in Scotland and Glasgow made him particularly aware of the possible oppressive aspect of collective identity. His mother wouldn't allow him to wear his green and white Celtic Football Club scarf for fear of provoking sectarian abuse.[18] As for many a Scottish youngster, football has always been Buchanan's passion. For him as an artist, the game becomes a vehicle, giving him access to places and people he otherwise wouldn't meet. Also, the universal aspect of football culture, which seems to transcend differences of nationhood, social class and culture, was intriguing. Even if you don't know anything about football it is possible to find a message in Buchanan's work. Using football as a metaphor in his investigations of the value of community and difference, he visualises the complexity of reality, dream and exclusion, and the universal nature of football. For Buchanan football is secondary to the idea he wants to explore. It becomes a way to see the world we live in.

In the project Work in Progress (1993-1994) Buchanan photographed any Glaswegian he came across in his neighbourhood who happened to be wearing a Milanese striped football top, either the red and black of AC Milan or blue and black of Inter Milan (fig.9). He invited the boys and men to be photographed in his studio in the back of his van, where they posed before a blue background in the position of their idols with their arms behind their back. The faces of the football fans express both pride and bashfulness while they pose in their team's T-shirt. But Buchanan's obsession with football culture and the merchandise of popular culture sticks deeper than the anthropological investigation. With his works, he problematises the practice of categorising «the other».[19] Approaching the lads with Milan tops, he had two things in mind, do these people look Glaswegian? Would these people look Italian in another context?[20] Buchanan says: «The subject has long interested me coming from a city where the myth is you can recognise Catholics from Protestants [...] I guess Work in progress was an attempt to investigate this question».[21] Photographing these different individuals wearing identical items, the underlying statement of fellowship created by the trade industry is contradicted by their very lack of similarity and familiarity. They are total strangers, but through his systematisation and categorisation they become visible as a group. In Buchanan's project, the garments become a sign of the commodification of allegiance and group identification.

Coast to coast (1997) revolved around Yankees' merchandise, but in contrast to his former projects, these photos show the arbitrariness of logos and clothes worn by youngsters. The nine photos of young boys document the cap culture in Buchanan's own neighbourhood, showing the desire to be American and to be associated with the broader hip hop culture more than simply to be identified with a special club or allegiance. They just put on their head what they happen to have. Some of the boys cover the badge on their sweater identifying the school they belong to, and others wear clothes with logos which emit a variety of contradicting signals. More than merely documenting and analysing group identification, these photos, through the use of background, colours and light, emerge as aesthetic objects.

In addition to photography, Buchanan works with video, developing his pieces as he travels from place to place. Ten in a Million consists of video takes from local football pitches in Manchester, Glasgow, Budapest and Nantes, shot by basing the camera on a centre spot and swivelling it in a complete circle. They all look the same, but any supporter would of course be able to tell the difference. Another video work, Notes on pronunciation (1997), has also been made through visits to various countries and meetings with foreign artists and other inhabitants. In these projects Buchanan invited two groups of separate nationalities to read a list of names of people from both their own, and the other nation. Reading through their list they stutter and strain over names which are unfamiliar, but reading names from their own country they appear safe and confident. The names become metaphors for the arbitrariness of nationhood and how we read «otherness» through the pronunciation of unfamiliar names.

The urban experience and the way we define and organise the post modern world is a source of inspiration in Buchanan's work, constantly investigating people he sees and meets. He systematises and presents the material in a clear and almost repetitive way. His art is a product of social or lived experience; or from real culture as Ross Sinclair has put it.[22]

Douglas Gordon (b. 1966) confronts us with material reflecting the ambiguity of human nature and the relationship between culture and mind. In some of his early works, he is quite personal and private, documenting the constructedness of his own memories. He tries to reconstruct listings of people he can remember to have met and what kind of popular music his mother might have listened to when she was pregnant with him between January and September 1966. His works investigate the way in which the borders between a private identity and collective culture are blurred. The personal memories and cultural experience of a young man from Glasgow might bear resemblance to those of a young man or woman in New York or Oslo. From such a perspective it becomes interesting to ask what our memories actually are made of.

When Gordon won the Turner Prize in 1996, the jury praised «his engagement with profound issues of memory, psychological division and moral ambiguity and for his use of a wide range of media». In his artistic strategies he exploits our collective memories attached to popular culture as they are mediated through film, music, and books and he explores their relevance to personal experiences in everyday life. In one project, he constructed telephone messages with film-noir one-liners, such as «You can't hide your love forever», or «Everything is going to be alright», or «I won't breathe a word to anyone». In a similar project, The Archive Projects (France 1991), letters were sent to people in the art world with texts like «I am aware of who you are and what you do», signed Douglas Gordon, or «I remember more than you know». The threatening undertone in the messages brings our collective memories of crime and passion into focus. In this way, he also problematises the struggle between good and evil. In another piece, Above all else, for the Serpentine Gallery in 1991 (fig.10), Gordon decorated the cupola of the building with black letters saying «We are evil» on a large splash of sky blue.[23] Normally, the classic church cupola is decorated with paintings of God's light and deeds, but Gordon's installation produced a more sinister statement: «Above all else - we are all evil». Using a dialogic method, he does not present the recipient/viewer with any comfortable answers, but raises deeply disturbing questions. According to Sara Arrhenius «...Douglas Gordon does not merely talk about evil in his work - he also talks to it, examines it, challenges it, exorcises it».[24]

Sigmund Freud, with his insistence on the decisive role of early memories, is a natural source of inspiration for Douglas Gordon. The installation Hysterical (1994) includes a fragment of a medical demonstration film from 1908 where two men are struggling to hold a masked woman down.[25] On a second screen the same scene is repeated in slow motion, underlining the analytic aspect. Russell Fergusson has written this about the piece: «...the process of voyeuristic implication in the brutal scene is inescapable». Gordon himself admits that he loves the idea of being an observer: «I think sadism is a primary motive, especially for my relationship with cinema. If it is not dead already, it's dying for sure. So we are afforded the distance, where you can make an analysis of it and enjoy it at the same time.»[26] Also, in other installations, Gordon clearly makes reference to psychological science, particularly the problems of the divided self. Split personality and psychological control of the human body are recurrent themes. In this venture, Gordon actually draws on the scientific and literary heritage of Scotland. In the last century Edinburgh and Glasgow were known as centres of scientific research on the body and the mind. This tradition is mirrored in Scottish literature from the same period, particularly in the novels of James H. Hogg's The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824) and Robert L. Stevenson's Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886). The theme these two books have in common is the dual nature of man and the conflict between good and evil. In 1995 Gordon made a video installation titled Confessions of a Justified Sinner (cover picture). It consists of two large video screens, showing the first screen version of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in two slow motion versions - one positive and one negative. The projections present an enlarged and distorted transformation of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde where it becomes difficult to distinguish between good and evil.

Moral ambiguity has recently become a central theme for Douglas Gordon, evidently so in the video installation Divided Self (1996), where two small video screens show a shaven arm wrestling with an unshaven arm in a battle for supremacy. The theme of the divided self, and the conflict between good and evil was also present in his first, and most well known, film installation 24 Hour Psycho (1993) (fig. 11), shown for the first time at Tramway. Here he screened Alfred Hitchcock's film «Psycho» (1960) in extreme slow motion and without soundtrack. The film scenes where the schizophrenic Norman Bates stabs people to death have long been regarded as classic. Once seen, the film is not easily forgotten; who hasn't seen or heard about the famous «shower scene»? These considerations were obviously important for Gordon when he decided to use the classic film to create a new work of art in 1993. The installation effectively transformed the filmatic experience into something else. The narrative structure of the movie broke down, and instead the audience was forced to study the picture frame by frame. Thus, the screening turned into a kind of slow motion replay of our collective memories of the film. As a common reference in our western culture, the film now becomes a revelation of our constructed self.

Gordon's recycling of cultural products in an art context adds a new dimension to the products, a parallel to what Duchamp did in 1917 with his ready-mades. Applying the «Duchampian strategy» to films and novels, Gordon changes something already given, and the cycled object becomes «a trigger for new associations and experiences».[27] Screening «Psycho» and other film classics and documentaries in slow motion and without sound as art works, Gordon also reveals their analytic and observational nature. They become signs of culture, in fact the essence of mankind, bringing into the open the deep undertows of our common human nature.

2.2 The Frankenstein Legacy: Institutional knowledge and power

The fallacies and frailties of human nature are themes shared by Christine Borland and Julie Roberts. Using different media they are particularly concerned with the influence of medical science on our lives, an interest not entirely coincidental, as Scotland has a long tradition for medical research, dating back to the eighteenth century.[28] In their works, the institutional knowledge and powers are questioned through explorations of moral aspects of medical research and treatment. In their systematic uncovering of the history of medical science, the moral ambiguities in the practice of medical institutions become visible. The relationship to the Scottish enlightenment period is evident in Borland' and Roberts' work, as it is in Gordon's projects. According to Hume's scepticism, there is no certitude to our knowledge of the external world. Many of the artists in Glasgow reject the notion of fixed or imposed meanings. Instead we find a closeness to real life, but with an analytic distance.[29]

Christine Borland's (b.1965) projects are often complex installations involving a wide range of media. Borland shares with Douglas Gordon an interest for the moral ambiguity in the human being, and the problem of how to separate evil from good, and like Gordon, Borland plays with references to 19th century novels, thematising medical and ethical problems of early scientific experiments and research on the mind and the body. Moral questions attached to modern biology and medicine are important ingredients in the novel Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus (1818) by Mary Shelley (1797-1851), which played an important role in Borland's solo exhibition at Lisson Gallery in May 1997. In the novel, Dr. Frankenstein creates a monster of terrible strength and bulk inspiring great fear and loathing in all who gaze upon it. Frankenstein abandons the creature, which thereby becomes evil and takes a terrible revenge.

The title of one of Borland's installations at Lisson Gallery was a quotation from Paradise Lost, by John Milton (1608-1674): «Did I request thee, maker From my clay To mould me man? Did I solicit thee From darkness to promote me?». It consisted of two chairs and two photocopied books. The viewer was invited to sit down and read chapters three to eight, «The Creature's Monologue», from Frankenstein. Here the monster explains to his creator how he feels wronged at being abandoned and he presents a condition which must be fulfilled unless he is to wreak his awful revenge. For Borland, these chapters comprise the real philosophical underpinning of the book.

Borland's installation L'Homme Double (1997) (fig. 12) at Lisson Gallery acted as a direct comment on the installation of Frankenstein. The subject of L'Homme Double was the Nazi doctor, Joseph Mengele, notorious for his inhumane experimental work in Auschwitz. Borland asked six sculptors to model a traditional life-size portrait of Mengele's head in clay. She gave the sculptors two rather poor reproductions of archive photos and a list of contradictory descriptions from people who had met him. The six sculptors interpreted the given information totally differently, as Borland no doubt intended. In an intriguing way the six heads, positioned on plinths, show the difficulties of reconciling Mengele's frequently mentioned «handsome» appearance with his evil deeds.

Seen in relation to one another, the two installations form a poetic discourse on the relationship between mind and body, good and evil. Like Frankenstein, Mengele was a doctor, and like the fictive Frankenstein's monster the real Mengele is a metonym for evil. But in Frankenstein's case, perhaps the

doctor was more evil than the monster from the outset? In this way Borland focuses on responsibility and moral consciousness in relation to medical experiments as well as our struggle for control over life and death. In addition the Mengele piece refers directly to a historical context, and Borland thus raises the issue of our collective consciousness in relation to the second world war and the Holocaust. In this respect, Christine Borland questions the validity of human values in a society which is still unable to make a clear distinction between 'good' and 'evil'. In many of her projects, Borland can be regarded as an archaeologist of scientific knowledge, searching for an understanding of complex historical and political institutions. For her, art is not an isolated activity, but has to be reconnected to life. Often using an almost scientific methodology, she investigates the construction of knowledge and power in society, focusing on how this influences our lives. To carry out her projects, she often has to access social and political organisations in order to bring their hidden institutional knowledge and, ultimately, their power to surface. She thinks it is important «to move into spaces, gaps which other people normally can't see or can't get into».[30] This strategy is evident in her work Holding, Waiting (1994), on police and judicial processes, and the installation From Life (1994), which enters the field of forensic science.

From Life (fig. 13-14) was shown at Tramway in Glasgow. In three portacabins, she documented the reconstruction of a human being from a skeleton, through the use of forensic science. During the last years new medical techniques in forensic science have become an effective aid in solving crime cases by reconstructing and identifying dead and murdered bodies.[31] Borland bought a skeleton through a mail-order firm, and with the help of various specialists in the forensic field she reconstructed the skeleton's physical identity. The reconstruction indicated that the bones belonged to an Asian woman who died at the age of 25, having experienced at least one pregnancy. Her face was remodelled in clay, casted in wax and bronze and elevated on a plinth in the last portacabin.

A leading motif in this project was the dehumanisation of the human body. The fact that Borland bought the skeleton through mail-order for a thousand pounds, intensified the ethical and moral dimension of the work. The police discovered that the bones were obtained under 'suspicious circumstances' and are since said to have put an end to the sale of human skeletons. The installation served as an attempt to re-invest some human dignity in the life and body of a person who had been exploited, perhaps killed, to satisfy the ever present demand for corpses and skeletons in medical research. This theme is also central in the installations 2nd Class Male, 2nd Class Female (1996), The Dead Teach The Living (1997), Phantom Twins (1997) and From Life, Berlin (1997). In the last mentioned work, 21 fragile shadows of human skeleton parts fall on the gallery walls. Light is projected onto transparent shelves, where the contours of skeleton parts are inscribed in dust. The patterns are the remains of dust that the artist has powdered over skeleton parts initially placed on the glass shelves. When the skeleton parts are removed, the illumination of the space «brings them to life» as shadows on the walls. The installation reminds us of the brittle state of the human body and connects to the words of the burial litany: «Ashes to ashes, dust to dust». To Dust we will Return was, in fact, the title of an installation Borland made in Stockholm 1996. Borland has made use of the same technique of display in her work After a True Story: Giant and Fairy Tales (1997) for the Turner Prize Exhibition 1997.

Borland's works demand contemplation and meditation and are characterised by detained passion. Although dealing with strong and passionate issues she uses methods of presentation which «very clearly and cleanly», show her closeness to a scientific methodology. But as she underlines, she wants

to «...keep control over the result as an artwork, otherwise it would be a science display».[32] And she edits the material very heavily, so it is not a straight presentation of facts. The aesthetic impression the viewer gets is of great importance. Through a delicate presentation, Borland lures the viewer to contemplate the darker sides of life and society.

One could say that Christine Borland, like Mary Shelley in her time, observes and reacts to the moral ambiguity of modern science and the professional ethics of medical and social institutions. In the preface to Frankenstein, Shelley made clear that she was «...by no means indifferent to the manner in which whatever moral tendencies exist in the sentiments or characters it contains shall affect the reader».[33] Vaguely reminiscent of Shelley's Dr. Frankenstein, Borland reconstructs «life» from parts of human remains and illuminates our collective responsibilities in connection with the history of medical institutions and the ethical problems attached to the production of knowledge in modern science.

Julie Roberts (b.1963) also thematises connections between knowledge, science and medical institutions and examines how they influence and govern our lives. In an article, Ross Sinclair compares Roberts with Mary Shelley in her «...secular pragmatic obsession with life and death...»[34], a comparison which also suggests her similarity to Christine Borland. But Roberts is a painter, who prefers to work in her studio. Her pictures are figurative with a tactile realism, usually depicting objects like furniture, garments and medical equipment on a monochrome background. One gets the impression that the objects are floating, as the cool backgrounds set the objects loose. Only their central position stabilises and fixes them to the canvas. Or they seem to be frozen in the instant death of the photographic moment, as weightless objects in outer space. The abandoned objects make us aware of a certain default, the lack of human presence: Sigmund Freud's empty chair, a pope's throne- but no pope, the lovechair of a king - devoid of kings or lovers, a night-gown - but no sleeping body.

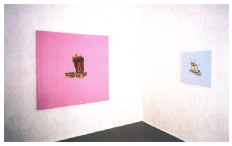
In the early 90' Roberts started to paint objects related to medical technology. Based on detailed studies of clinical equipment, such as operating tables, dentists' chairs, straitjackets, breast implants and dental instruments, she analysed the institutional powers and knowledge rooted in medical science and history. In a critical perspective her pictures almost function as illustrations to Foucault's archaeological investigations of power and knowledge. The objects, disconnected from their institutional and physical context, remind us of the sedimentation of science into material structures as hospitals and asylums. But also in another respect they remind us of physical pain: Medicine is a science that literally cuts and make scars in our bodies.

An intellectual and scientific orientation is visible in Roberts' work. She develops her projects through almost scientific methods. Before she starts to paint, she has done background research, observed, taken photographs and made interviews. The collected material becomes an important context for her work. But on the canvas only an object is seen. Through their importunate absence, the social and political contexts of science and institutions live on in our understanding of the pictures.

In addition, the context of the exhibition is important. Roberts is particularly aware of the dynamic interplay generated between the work and its environment. In her installation for the exhibition <<Rivieria>> (1994) in Llandudno, she painted objects related to dental surgery like a frieze in the changing room at St. David's College. The exactly executed objects gave a frightening impression, painted

in great detail over the pegs where children normally hang their clothes, thus confronting the neutral and cold objects with the vulnerability of the naked boys. In a subtle and concrete way, Roberts suggests the objects' natural relation to the body and at the same time forces us to recall our fear of being subjected to medical operations.

In her paintings, Julie Roberts often meditates over the conflict between science and nature, between the hard, objectified reality of modern medicine and the fragility of the human body and soul. Through this conflict, Roberts' pictures suggest a relation to Walter Benjamin's theory of melancholy. For Benjamin, melancholy arises when the connection between this world and the divine world of salvation is lost beyond recovery, and the classical understanding of the relationship between soul and body is destroyed. In Roberts' paintings, the human body has been expropriated by science. The emphasised and elevated objects become modern icons representing the omnipotence of science.



In recent years, Roberts has developed a technique where she paints directly on the gallery walls. Again, this emphasises the particular connection between work and context. At Roberts latest exhibition The Room of the Parrots (1997)(fig.15) shown at Almut Gerber Gallery in Cologne, she painted the gallery walls in tapestry patterns from the turn of the century. The patterns, displaying exotic birds and flowers give an impression of royalty and intimacy. Against this background Roberts displayed two paintings; King's Throne and Love Chair. In Love Chair, a beautiful Art Nouveau chair is depicted, which under closer scrutiny reveals itself to be a chair where the king's mistresses could be placed, as in a gynaecological chair, while he penetrated them. In showing this object to the gallery audience, Roberts problematises power and authority in a pompous but at the same time physical and trivial way. The installation reminds us of Jean Baudrillard's phrase: «the systems behind the objects». The Room of the Parrots visualises male dominance in the materialised structures of royal power and thus also lends itself to a feminist criticism.

The feminist perspective is also visible in other works. For instance, in the Straitjacket series (1995) consisting of paintings of female straitjackets and restraining coats from the 19th century, where Roberts investigated how psychiatric treatment varied according to sex. Her concern with the relationship between sex and power, is however best seen in her paintings of gynaecological objects. An old gynaecological coach, floating weightlessly in an undefined, monochrome void, becomes a dense reference to the intimidating and humiliating position in which women usually find themselves when in the hands of a male examiner. The picture functions effectively as a criticism of the gynaecological profession and the institutionalised context of birth and motherhood, power and gender. And again, the absence of the body is an important sign.

«When I first started to make the gynaecological coach, somebody said: Why don't you put a figure on? But, I suppose it would be so unnecessary to have a body there. Because when we see the couch we know a woman should lay there. And we could pretty much imagine that a male will examine her»[35]

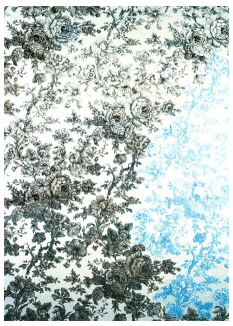
Instead, the absence of the body becomes meaningful, and conjures up the social and institutional context of the objects for the viewers. In some of her recent paintings, Roberts has moved from painting isolated objects to depicting more complex narratives or plots. Objects, particularly furniture,

still play an important role, but now as part of a situation, where also a body is present. However, the physically present body is at the same time objectified, seeming more like a corpse than a living body. Both in Crime of Passion (1996) (fig. 16) and Teenage Suicide (1996) we observe a female figure lying as if dead or unconscious, indicating that something violent has just happened. We don't know what, but there seem to be traces of power abuse. As the titles indicate, the pictures are categorised as dramatic causes of death, and the viewer is invited to take the position of investigator of a crime. In Crime of Passion, the body of a young girl lies crumpled on the carpet beside a table. The table is laid for three persons and around the table, three chairs seem to have been left in a hurry. A harmonic family scene has been interrupted, something violent happened and the girl is left on the floor: We are forced to reconstruct the scene. What happened around the table a second ago?

Formally, the paintings are constructed in the same style as her previous paintings, with figurative objects centred on monochrome backgrounds. The scenes of crime become idealised situations, floating in the monochrome void, leaving it to the viewer to fill in the institutional context and causal explanations of death. Thus, in these pictures, Roberts is close to Douglas Gordon's applications of film noir clichés problematising our collective consciousness, and she likewise plays with our collective repertoires of psychodrama and archetypical plots.

2.3 Reconstructing the manufactured

Louise Hopkins and Claire Barclay investigate the conflict between machine made and hand made. Through their transformations of manufactured materials they connect new meanings to objects, their functions and to the materials themselves. On a basic level, their art works display the conflict between nature and culture, art and design, and at the same time thematise contemporary issues of social and political importance.



There is something decadent, dark and mystic in Louise Hopkins' (b.1965) flower paintings which is difficult to pinpoint in her seemingly innocent patterns of roses. In a series of paintings of pale blue and dark brown flower patterns, she reverses furnishing fabric, stretching it like a canvas on the frame. The reverse side of the fabric is then covered with several layers of translucent gesso. Closely following the patterns on the reversed fabric, which still are visible in a negative, pale version, she now adds paint, making the patterns reappear in a transformed way. Her selection of colours is reduced to white and dark brown, creating two separate fields of flower patterns on the surface. The dark brown flowers are painted with tiny brushes, giving them a distinct organic impression of sinews and muscles. Traces of pale blue, which is originally in the fabric but now only faintly visible through the white cover of paint, show up in the dark brown field and it looks as if the dark brown flowers expands and absorbs the pale blue flowers (fig. 17).

Her paintings thus share with Julie Robert's pictures a fascination for malice. But where we in Julie Robert's pictures observe a scene after the peak of drama, the pictured flowers of Louise Hopkins leave us with the feeling that a drama is on its way. It has been said that her flower images oscillate between opposites like «... silence and noise; tranquillity and laughter, purity and contagion [...] flatness and deep space, the living and the dead».[36]

In Hopkins paintings there appears to be a tension between the decorative surface and the conceptual connotations of the project. Looking at her paintings it seems obvious to think of Baudelaire's poems in Les Fleur du mal (1857), where he explores the aesthetics of evil. As in Baudelaire's writing, expressions of despair and anxiety are embedded within a framework of harmony and beauty. We all entertain an image of roses as decorative symbols of love and care. But Hopkins demonstrates that conventional symbols of goodness are constructed. Their innocent, beautiful surface hides a darker side. She chooses the back of furnishing fabric because:

«...it contains an already-painted image made by the fabric designer. I was interested in this material because it gave me so many references even before I started using it - to still life painting, illusionistic space, British garden [...] repainting of someone else's flower is a painting out but also in of that image.»[37]

Using the back of the fabric also reminds her of rejecting paintings, when you turn a painting to the wall. The intentional turning inside out becomes a rejection of the original material, displacing and transforming its symbolic value.

Hopkins thematises the cultural history of roses and the decorative use of flower patterns in crafted materials. Roses are deeply embedded in the history of the British Empire. They were imported from the colonies and used in the gardens of the aristocracy, but soon became a popular model for decorative arts and crafts, and were taken up in the manufacturing industry for mass production. Roses are also strongly associated with British popular tradition and Victorian values. As a result of the arts and crafts movement and the mobilisation of the lower classes into the market economy, aristocratic symbols such as gardening and roses became popular ingredients of middle class culture and life. In 1912 the hybrid rose «Musks», conceived as a rose for «the little man», was introduced. The beauty of roses was now to be accessible to all, both as manufactured patterns on furnishing fabric and in British gardening.[38] Roses still hold a strong connotation to middleclass Britain and to conservative flowery furnishing fabrics and clothes, such as those found in Laura Ashley's boutiques.

It is interesting to see Louise Hopkins' flower works in relation to the art and craft movement at the end of the 19th century, which also wanted to fuse everyday life with high art. In Hopkins' combining of hand painting with the manufactured floral patterns, she transforms the commercially produced materials to hand painted, hand made paintings. Through her technique, she demonstrates the mechanic nature of painting, copying and reproducing in a slow and repetitive method. In that way her work repeats the struggle between craftsmanship and industrialisation underlying the history of modernist painting. One of the first intentions of the avant-garde strategy of modernist painting was to give their craft «... a reprieve by internalising some of the features and processes of the technology threatening it, and by mechanising their own body at work»[39]

Hopkins' painting project presents a challenge to the notion of what constitutes a painting today. Her works are simultaneously in opposition to and in line with modernist minimalist paintings, with links to both Ad Reinhardt and especially, Agnes Martin, deconstructing the rigid boundaries of minimalism. Hopkins is in search of a fluid and metaphysical surface which can open up the square of painting to reveal another structure, something translucently ordered, but at the same time poetically irregular,

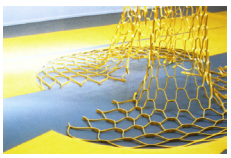
like nature itself. And Hopkins' flower pictures suggest a twist to the rigid formalism of minimalism. Her furnishing fabrics undermine the scientific uniformity of the modernist grid, thus emphasising the forces of disruption that lie beneath the surface of a material order.

Hopkins tries to use « ... a potential which is already there, but hasn't been used».[40] She is not interested in creating her own images, preferring to use something that already exists, taken from the real world. This strategy is also visible in her works on song sheets and maps, which are covered with white paint. The original backgrounds become translucently visible. The overpainted titles and notes in the song sheets appear as a fragile, vibrating surface, with tiny black spots still visible as remnants of a forgotten tune or as new notes in an another song. The song titles express nostalgia, like «You're Nobody 'Til Somebody Loves You», reflecting the sadness in the picture. The overpainted world maps appear in the same way, as transformed descriptions of geopolitical representations of countries, cities and landscapes. With pale blue paint she covers the land and the graphic markers of borders, countries and cities, emphasising the traces of civilisation and culture on the world. In a political context, she erases the existing representations of allegiances and confrontations, and geopolitical identities. The pale borders are only visible at close range, while from a distance the picture becomes an image of a united whole, perhaps suggesting the potential of a world without war and violent nationalism. On the other hand, perhaps envisioning a forthcoming annihilating catastrophe with apocalyptic proportions.

Claire Barclay (b. 1968) is a sculpturer who makes objects from a wide range of materials, like feather, leather, rubber and aluminium. Her works are always titled No Title, giving them an ambiguous anonymity at the outset, allowing the viewer to interpret and associate without an authorial label. Many of her objects are seemingly originals, designed and manufactured for distinct purposes. Others are replicas made in alternative, almost contradicting materials. Bringing them into an exhibition, they look like manufactured objects, brought in as «ready-mades». But they are actually designed and manufactured by the artist herself. Her objects thus become ambiguous in terms of history and function.

In one of her sculptures exhibited at Transmission Gallery in 1994, three flat, white objects were lying on the floor. They looked like soft, small sized foam rubber mattresses (150x75x5), but the material was really enamelled, cast aluminium. The way the objects were laid down beside each other in a row conjured up associations to hospitals beds, orphanages, emergency housing for the homeless and the poor, or in a different context; camps for refugees and prisoners of war. The clinical, white surfaces of the objects had been soiled with mould, at once repulsive and aesthetically seductive. There were traces of use, which in the context of charity or detainment became traces of human misery and pain. In this sense Barclays' work has something in common with Julie Roberts' painted medical objects, which are decontextualised and turned into symbols of institutional power and knowledge. Also, the mattresses parallel Robert's use of medical objects and equipment, displaying their ambivalence as philanthropic objects of help and healing.

This is further problematised in three white pillows (fig. 18), also laid out in a row on a low plate on the floor. Like ordinary pillows, the artist had sewed and stitched them in cotton fabric, but in the middle of each pillow, she had inserted machine made aluminium rims. Thus, the immediate connotation of soft pleasure was contrasted by the brutality of the hard metal. The pillows had obviously become unsuitable for their original function, and a sexual or sadistic function might appear to be more relevant.



Through the ambiguous aspects in the objects, both in the use of material and in their possible functions, the meaning of Barclay's work oscillates between the polarities of intimacy and privacy, and the institutional context of physical treatment and care. Like Hopkins, Barclay is interested in the tension between man made and manufactured. Her latest solo show at CCA in July 1997 was titled «Out of the Woods». In the exhibited objects, she explored the ambivalence of, and borders between, nature and culture. The exhibition was dominated by a monumental and bright yellow rubber sculpture, hanging from the ceiling like a huge net, spreading out on the floor (fig. 19). Looking somewhat like a manufactured catching net, the installation made the viewer circle the exhibition room like a hunted animal. In a more innocent sense, the object looked like an enlarged Christmas decoration, like the paper chains children love to make. In an intriguing way the manufactured material was combined with the man made. The pattern which had been cut and clipped in the rubber was crafted by the artist. However, the regular and systematic way in which it was done contradicted the hand made impression.

The other works exhibited also illuminated the dichotomy between nature and culture. A tree was hanging from the ceiling, wrapped in a pink rubber sheet, floating just above the floor. Together the objects formed an artificial landscape where nature and the culturing of our own presence effectively contrasted each other. In the show, Claire Barclay also included a photo of herself on a hilltop, next to a wolf. What in a first viewing might appear to be an everyday situation, or an ordinary photo of a woman taking her dog for a walk, turned out to represent a more complex relationship between man and nature. According to Jeremy Millar, Barclay here seemed to have made a conscious attempt to lose herself in nature «.. in order then to engage with it more fully». He sees her art in relation to George Bataille's reflections on the complexity of nature, where «... in the depths of the woods, as in a bedroom where two lovers are undressing, laughter and poetry are set free».[41]

Barclay's sculptures reflect the rich diversity of contemporary life and art. In her work she benefits from her predecessors in the field, such as Beuys' «social sculpture» and other artists who have pushed the sculpture out into the «expanded field». The forms of her objects often relate to the body and to human behaviour. For Barclay it is impossible not to think about urbane life, and through her sculptures she comments on the increasingly out of balance relationship between nature and culture.

2.4 Art, design and public spaces

Exploration of the borders between design and art and the relevance of materials and contexts, are central themes also for the three conceptual artists commented upon in this section. They all problematise the public space in the urban landscape where the relationship between art, design and architecture is questioned. Where many of the previously discussed artists draw on a Scottish intellectual, scientific and literary heritage, the following three seem to be more directly concerned with Glasgow's position as a centre for design and architecture, thus indirectly linking up to a local tradition reaching back to Charles Rennie Mackintosh and the city's expansive period in the last century. The contrast between the intentional and the accidental is a point of departure for many of Nathan Coley's (b. 1967) works. He wants his audience to realise that what we often perceive as designed objects are actually more or less arbitrary and fragile, ideological constructions of a limited value, while what we usually take as being random appearances and objects, more often than we think are results of intentionally, shared culture and aesthetic norms or traditions.

In the slide installation Lecture (1996), shown at «Sawn Off» in Stockholm, Coley staged the gallery space as a lecture hall, with a slide projector positioned between rows of chairs showing motives from building sites.[42] The slide show was accompanied by a voice-over, sounding convincingly like a credible expert, a designer or an architect, lecturing the audience on the designs, and their underlying intentions. However, as one sat down to look and listen, one soon realised that the message was constantly being contradicted and blurred by the images. Instead of delivering the expected pictures of well designed buildings and objects, the slides presented «aesthetic» details of unfinished building sites and houses under repair, as if they were worthy of high esteem.

Interestingly, though, the pictures also seem to remind of the post modern truism that «ugly is beautiful», thus partially subverting the original irony expressed by the «double bind» gap between the audience and the visual aspect of the show. The ripped backsides of the city are still what very many people must accept as an everyday environment, and the definitions of high vs. low culture are questioned. Thus, it is the meaning of designs as cultural objects and signs which Coley seems to be investigating. Being designed (although maybe not according to conventional rules), the (un-)designed objects are also (or even more) readable signs of culture.

Similar themes are visualised in other recent projects. In making the slide installation Pigeon Lofts (1997) (fig. 20), Coley started by photographing many of the pigeon lofts found near working class suburbs in the wastelands outside Glasgow. The lofts are built by ordinary people with little consideration for design and architecture, and without formal permission by the local council. As Coley documented the lofts, he observed how the seemingly accidental design of each was repeated with remarkable similarity in all of them, following some set of systematic rules and stylistic conventions. But for the artist, these conventions were hard to understand, as they also often proved to be for the owners. For instance, when Coley asked why they built the houses in green and black rather than blue or red, they said things like «That is the colours it has to be», indicating some commonsensical necessity beyond questioning.[43] To Coley, the lofts represented a kind of unofficial architecture, based on the conventions of bird lovers and amateur breeders, reflecting reminiscences of a specialised knowledge of pigeon breeding and sport. Between the lines, so to speak, the photos also reflected the pigeons' ancient role as deliverers of messages. Read as cultural signs, the lofts testify both to an archaic and contemporary cultural practice, interestingly documented by the photos.

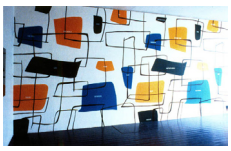
In the installation, a careful selection of lofts was presented in a slide show. Again, the projector was staged as if the gallery was a lecturing hall, between rows of design chairs. Coley wrote the accompanying text, but wanted a woman to read it, so in the presentation a female voice-over systematically described and analysed in detail the aesthetic significance of the various structures appearing on the screen, creating an effective «... disparity between the academic seriousness of the commentary and the (seeming) slightness and haphazardness of the structures actually shown in the slides».[44] According to Coley, the female voice- over was intended to create an oppositional element to the masculine identity connected to the lofts and disrupt the idea that design and architecture is a typically male pursuit. By inserting the woman's voice, the conventions of authorship and sex are questioned.

In the project Villa Savoye (1997) (fig. 21) Coley follows the same procedure but now starts out with an elaborate theory of design. The point of departure is Le Courbusier's (1887-1965) famous Villa Savoye in Poissy (1929-31), which is an icon of modernism in the history of architecture. In 1921, Le

Courbusier published the manifest «Une maison est une machine à habiter», describing the theoretical intentions in his later house designs. For the installation Coley edited together comments and critics on Villa Savoye. A female voice-over reads the comments alongside the slide show. But instead of witnessing a documentation of Courbusier's work, the viewers are confronted with pictures from a typical, British suburban brick house. The images thus contradict the voice-over in an ironic way. When the voice authoritatively lectures «The villa is largely a cube», the viewer is visually confronted with a «cosy» house with angles and projections. And while the voice-over comments on the importance of white walls, space and light, the slides present interior pictures with patterned wall paper, flowery furniture, cape-like curtains, trinkets, etc.

At the end of the slide show, the voice-over's concluding comment on the functional design of Villa Savoye becomes utterly ironic and ambiguous with the statement: «A house as a machine from the beginning». In contrast to Courbusier's grand visions, the designs found in ordinary peoples homes seem to oppose elitist definitions of taste and style. Thus, Coley seems to be questioning the relevance of design theory and architectural style and fashion to our everyday lives, based on a dialectic reading of professional discourses on modern architecture and design.

Martin Boyce (b. 1967) is interested in the relationship between design and everyday life and the particular role that design has in public consumption and popular culture. In the formative period of functionalism in the 50's, Boyce finds an endless source of inspiration to rearticulate the cultural meanings of everyday design in contemporary society. In the post war period, widespread optimistic expectations for the future, expressed in everyday use of commercial and industrial design, stood in stark contrast to the devastating prospect of nuclear war between the super powers. Thus, in Boyce's work, a tension between collective fear, individual life expectations and trivial pursuits is often detectable. In his works he uses a wide range of media, such as wall paintings, photography and sculpture, often integrated as room installations.



In one of his best known wall drawings Return to Forever (1995)(fig. 22), we recognise a familiar design from the 50's, often used in clothing and wall paper. The design is somewhat enlarged, based on large black strokes forming a loose, open grid or network of roughly rectangular shapes. Colour blocks are inserted behind and in front of the black strokes, creating a sense of dynamic movement on the wall. The colours: turquoise, orange and dark bluish green, were all new synthetic colours in textiles and print in the 50's. On each colour block, dreamlike fragments of sentences are printed, saying things like; «There», «The Future», «The End», «Nowhere», «Now», «Beyond now», «The World», «The Modern World», etc.. The black strokes suggest an interconnectedness between the coloured shapes, as do the repeated colours, connoting maps and charts where categories and meanings are ordered in systematic, scientific ways. At the same time, the loose, ambiguous grid contradicts any ordering, suggesting a more anarchic, chaotic and dissolved state. The text fragments refer to various kinds of gloomy destinations in time and space, suggesting a deeper, ideological meaning of design as a cultural form. The references to the 50's and the utopian expectations of modern life are contrasted with our present knowledge about risk society, the spread of nuclear weapons and the constant threat of nuclear waste and pollution. In this way, the art work connects the prospects of individual lives with the collective fate of the world.

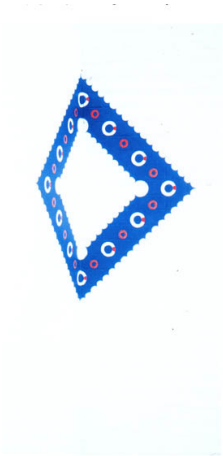
The same tension is visible in his photo I've seen better nights than this one(1995). The photo shows a young man (the artist) standing in a backyard bowing his head backwards, watching towards the dark sky. The posture of the man is relaxed but attentive, as if he is listening to something ahead or looking out for something. The title of the photo brings us to the conclusion that the innocent
posture is connected to fear and anxiety. Like someone living in a city under bombardment during a war, the person gazes up and listens for approaching bombers. The contemporary settingbrings other questions to the surface: This might be the right way too look for bombers (still relevant in the 50's), a war, the person gazes up and listens for approaching bombers. The contemporary setting brings other questions to the surface: This might be the right way too look for bombers (still relevant in the 50's), but where is the threat to our existence coming from now? If this is the posture for detecting our childhood fears, what postures should we now assume? And what fears will our children look out for in the future? The photo also reminds us of the loneliness and privacy in which we often have to cope with our real and imagined fears.

In the work Souvenir Placards (Standard Edition) (1993), Boyce plays with our common memory of political history. Seven demonstration placards are placed in a room as if being stored there, or randomly thrown or carried into the room. Some of the placards are spread on the floor with their slogans showing, others are stood up against the wall, upside down and back to front. The readable placards each carry a redundant protest slogan specific to an era or certain time in recent history, like; «Pay no poll tax», «Make love not war», «Free South Africa» and «Coal not Dole». The white, clean placards are apparently left, as if their bearers have run away. Again, Boyce's work upon history becomes a potential for reflection upon the present. What are our slogans now? Are strikes and protest marches still a viable and effective form of political action?

Martin Boyce recently spent four months at Cal Arts in Los Angeles, drawn there by the reputation of Michael Asher. During that time Boyce became more aware of the possibilities in using furniture design in his projects. Again, the objects connect to the design culture of the 50's, both in regard to style and material. In his recent work SKTBL (1996) a plywood object with curved ends is placed on two metal legs. Two contradicting functions are visible in the object, as it has the shape of a SKaTeBoard, while being displayed more as a TaBLe. The legs show Boyce's affinity with Charles Eames'famous chair designs, which were developed in the early 50's.[45] With the combination of forms and designs, Boyce comments upon the connection between the role of the commercial, everyday designs of the 50's and the commercial design for youth culture and leisure time consumption. With regard to Boyce's other works, the aesthetic dimension of the objects seems to point towards ideological aspects of design. Our obsession with design, with its cleanliness, innocence and trendiness, shields us from brute reality and our fear of contemporary life.

Richard Wright's (b. 1960) work serves well as an illustration of the shift from figurative painting in Glasgow to conceptual art in the 90's. In the 80's, Wright belonged to the figurative painters in Glasgow. But increasingly he felt that he couldn't express himself through traditional work with canvas and oil. After some years outside the art community, he was influenced by the conceptual thinking at GSA in the 90's. In his new projects he moved away from conventional painting and developed an art strategy focusing upon the connections between art, design and architecture. He continued to use paint, but started to decorate gallery walls and exhibition buildings with graphic symbols and forms, often draw-

ing on the style and design of the popular visual environment, like logos and tags in bright colours. In that way he escaped the standard expectations of painting and could immerse himself in the action that painting in-situ demands.[46] Wright believes that each situation and each show he participates in calls for a different approach. Before he develops a design he has to take the building, its architectural structure and the physical context of the exhibition into consideration. With his designs he enters into a dialogue with the physical context and structure of the room.



Wright often employs simple geometric forms and «... deploys them so as to make the viewer aware of his physical and perceptual role in apprehending the work».[47] The emblematic forms link to abstract modernist paintings, but maybe even more to graphic designs like tattoos, corporate logos and club emblems. Painting the forms directly on the wall, he heightens our awareness of the artificial surface and architectural structures in the room, as well as changing our conception of the physical context. For the exhibition «Sugar Hiccup» at Tramway in 1996 he decorated particularly selected spots on the walls with graphic symbols (fig. 23). The symbols were elaborate signs with ambivalent references to iconographic elements usually found in logo designs and futuristic templates.

One of his designs at Tramway was placed low on the wall, almost touching the floor. On a black oval shape with a toothed rim, hinting at mechanical tools and constructivist ornaments, three white, wing shaped feather patterns were orderly inserted. From a distance, the sign looked like an enlarged and displaced club emblem. The position of the sign added a new perspective to the exhibition hall, ordering the other exhibition objects in a new way. The mechanical shape might connect to the former use of Tramway as a garage, but the meaning of the wing shaped forms was harder to fix. The viewer became trapped in intertextual labyrinths, where the condensed sign set the imagination off in several, and opposite, directions. Wright's paintings fall somewhere between action painting and site specific installations. His work Bloody for the exhibition «About Vision» (1997), at Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh, was painted as a symmetrical spray of red ribbons flowing out from a central, oval ring. The ribbon expanded from the front side of the wall through the passage onto the back side. In order to see the whole work, the viewer had to follow the ribbons into the next room. In this way, his painting was integrated with the physical architecture, adding meaning to the wall as something both separating and continuing the art space. The organic, red pattern created a rhythm contrasting the static forms of the room. The title and the organic shapes engendered a metaphorical connotation to the blood binding us all together.

It takes a lot of craftsmanship to make the flat emblematic and painted forms look mechanically produced. But at close range, the living surface of the wall and smaller decorative elements become visible. Thus, as many of the other Glaswegian artists, Wright plays with the opposition between the crafted and the mechanically produced. His work Mad Marksmen (1997) for the exhibition «Correspondences» at National Gallery of Modern Art in Edinburgh, a striped band, brightly coloured in black and red, was painted around the room. Again, the painted form continued into the corridor. On the opposite wall in the corridor, an enlarged goblet was painted in the same red and black colours. At the end of the corridor, the striped pattern was repeated in a square form.

The temporary nature of wall-painting is an integral part of Richard Wright's art. The works cannot exist permanently, outside the context of the exhibition. As temporary, transient works, they only exist

as long as the show runs, then they are painted over. In a way reminiscent of performance art, Wright's works remain only as a visual memory for the viewers, or in photographic or textual form in documentation and reviews. Art objects can usually be bought, collected and saved, but Wright's work does not enter the art market as a commodity. Wright's own comment to this is that there is « (...) too much art anyway in the world»[48]

Wright is dedicated to the process of painting but avoids anything painterly or personal. In the recent years he has worked particularly with designs where the human skull is stereotyped and repeated in a linear series of white on black. Again, the emblematic style connects to our stylised images of tattoo patterns or pirate flags (fig. 24). In the exhibition rooms, the paintings stand out as unconventional art forms with persistent, ambivalent meanings. In contrast to Christine Borland's work on the cultural meaning of physical death, Wright's designs seem to have more to do with popular forms of culture and the commercial, social or political uses of icons and symbols. The serial reproduction of the skulls removes the connections to any physical or personal identity. Thus, the paintings in a way signify the symbolic death implicit in the act of inscription and textual reproduction of the icon. In the age of simulacra, this obsession with death has become the essence of our cultural production and reproduction of signs which, according to Baudrillard, have left their referents once and for all.

3 Conclusions

This essay has attempted to give an insight into the Glaswegian art scene in the 90's and to point out some of the factors which have been important for its shaping and international reputation. In my presentation I have strieved to see the connections both between the artists, and to a broader social and political context. The work and practice of many of the contemporary Glaswegian artists reflects the shifting importance of the city in a post modern context, understood as a place to work and to communicate from. The artists are engaging in the construction of an international discourse on art and society with a distinctive voice, sometimes drawing on an intellectual tradition and a consciousness of representing simultaneously a geo-political periphery and an international centre. Glasgow is often depicted as being part of a European periphery. But in another sense, Glasgow is an urban centre located somewhere between Europe and the American continent. This gives the city a more international position, disconnecting it from a secondary position within Britain. The important thing for the Glaswegian artists is not any longer to become part of the British art scene in London, but to address and correspond to an international and European art scene.

In the 90's, both Glasgow and London have been celebrated nationally and internationally for their contributions to the development of Young British Art (YBA). Although there are many similarities between the two art scenes (and all the artists, both from London and Glasgow are defined as «British» by international art critics), there are interesting differences. Many of the young artists in London have been educated at the Goldsmith College of Art, as for instance Damien Hirst and Gillian Wearing, both recent winners of the Turner Prize. In Glasgow, the Glasgow School of Art has played a similar role, educating leading artists of their generation. While many characterise the London scene as «hype and decadent», with a strong focus on the artist personalities and their public performance, the Glaswegian artists are less obsessed with commercial trends, less self-exposing. They tend to see their art practice and art strategies as more intellectual and related to complex public issues embedded in historical and political contexts.

The art scene in Glasgow is in a greater sense disconnected from the commercial aspects of art production. The lack of a local art market still makes it important for many of the artists to be regularly exhibited and represented by London galleries. However, it is not as in previous times, when artists from Scotland had to move to London if they wanted an international career. Today, most of the Glaswegian artists continue to live in Glasgow, which in no way hinders them from pursuing international careers. Most of them have lived abroad for longer periods and regularly exhibit abroad. In spite of their international career they continue to stimulate the collective enterprise of upholding the local art scene, and there is now an influx of young artists from all over the world to Glasgow and the Glasgow School of Art.

Many of the Glaswegian artists show a continuing interest in human science and medicine, connecting to the long traditions of medical science and empirical philosophy in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Through the discursive connections between art and a political and social context, their works are inscribed into public, contemporary reflections on urban, post modern life in an age of increasing internationalisation and cultural chaos. Glaswegian art of the 90's is about situations and spending time. As Douglas Gordon has pointed out, it is «... the stream - political as well as psychological - of ideas, circulating around the art piece, which is important».[49] For the conceptuall/contextual artists in Glasgow it is important to create a social and psychological space around their works. This is seen as

having particular significance for the reception and interpretations made by the viewer. Consequently, the new Glaswegian art can be regarded as a series of recontextualised and transformed enlightenment projects, confronting the spectator with personal and collective cultural repertoires and reflective knowledge. The art becomes a point of departure for reflections on our changing environments and late modern or post modern condition.

Appendix

Art spaces in Glasgow and Edinburgh

Transmission Gallery is still the most important gallery for young art in Glasgow, although the gallery has changed in many ways since 1983, not just in view of the art which is on display in the gallery, but also in its organisational structure. It now has a new, large gallery space in King Street and is supported by The Scottish Art Council and Glasgow City Council. Most of the money is spent on advertising and on informational material concerning the exhibitions. The organisational structure is based on an unpaid committee of six artists who each work at Transmission for two and a half years. With every new committee new sets of ideas and new approaches to art are brought in. This spurs the gallery's activity and increases its ability to change in response to dominant vanguard tendencies. The social factor is also of importance in the shaping of an active cultural atmosphere in the city. The gallery arranges cross-cultural events and discussions meant to shape the understanding of the artists and exhibitions on display in the Gallery.

The membership system, which now counts over 300 artists in Glasgow, has led to a large community of artists becoming involved, helping out with shows and sometimes exhibiting. Transmission keeps a slide library of all members' work, and acts as a forum for the exchanging of information, as well as serving as a part-time equipment resource. Curators from abroad who come to Glasgow can ask for an appointment with a member of the committee, who will give a slidetalk on Transmission's previous exhibitions, or a talk on a selection of the young artists in Glasgow. The promotional services are seen as being extremely important in the struggle to make Glasgow a vital spot on the international map of art.

Transmission has international ambitions, and establishing contact with artists and organisations in other cities and other countries has been important in overcoming Glasgow's isolation from the contemporary art world. Links with other artistrun spaces have led to exchange projects in Barcelona, Belfast, Toronto, Bergen, London and Chicago.[50] One of the gallery's strategies is to involve local artists with well known artists around the world. An example of this is the exhibition in June 1997 with the Glasgow based artist Jonnie Wilkes and Russel Crotty from Los Angeles.

King Street has lately emerged as an important street with many exhibition spaces in addition to Transmission. The Gallery 18 King Street is also an artist-run gallery supported by the Scottish Arts Council, and in the near vicinity you can find Street Level Gallery, which specialises in photography. Glasgow Print Studio is another space which does not just show prints, but also serves as a valuable showroom for different forms of contemporary art.

A more established institution for contemporary art in Glasgow is CCA (Centre for Contemporary Art). The centre is a an equivalent to ICA in London, with rooms for performances, films and a bar/restaurant which serves as a meeting place for the artists. Earlier it was a venue for international, well known artists, but under the former visual art director, Andrew Nairne, art by young Scottish artists was profiled as well. Nicola White was the visual art director until quite recently, and her program included a conscious strategy to promote young Scottish art. This was especially visible in the three group exhibitions she arranged of young Glasgow based artists in 1994. CCA's publication New Art in Scotland, which introduced the artists involved, has been important for their further careers, and many of the

Glasgow based artists, including Julie Roberts, Ross Sinclair, David Shrigley and Claire Barclay, have been invited to have solo shows at CCA. The new Head of Artistic Programming, Francis McKee, is becoming an important figure in the art community of Glasgow. He came to Glasgow from Northern Irland in 1985 to take a PhD. in medical history. But his interest in contemporary art led him in other directions.

Notes

1 Artists' statement, Artists' Flag for Scotland (Stirling, 1997)

2 Euan McArthur: «High Flown Rhetoric Bringing the Flag back to Earth» in Artists' Flag for Scotland (Stirling, 1997)

3 For a discussion of the connection between art and the national projects in the European periphery at the turn of the century, see my thesis Abramtsevo-kretsen og Elena Polenova, en studie av forestillingen om det nasjonale i russisk kunst 1880 - 1900, University of Oslo 1995. For the Scottish case, see Christopher Harvie: Scotland & Nationalism - Scottish Society and Politics 1707-1994 (1. ed. London 1977, reprinted New York 1995),p. 20-21

4 Alan Crawford: Charles Rennie Mackintosh, (Thames and Hudson, London 1995), p. 16-17

5 See more about this issue in «Heroes and Dreamers - Scottish figurative art in the 80's», by John Griffith in Art & Design, vol. 3 (1987), p. 65-76

6 Keith Hartley: Scottish art since 1900 (1989), p. 42

7 Catalogue: Girls High- Artists celebrate ten years of environmental art in Glasgow (1996), p. 32

8 Cassiro Berdetti, Gianni Piacentini Catalogue: Windfall (Glasgow, 199 1), p. 45

9 Charles Esche: «The experience of Trust», Kunst & Museumjournaal (no. 5, 1995),p. 46-50

10 Kari J. Brandtzæg in conversation with Beáta Vesceley, Glasgow, February 1997

11 Interview with Kari J. Brandtzæg, April 1997

12 «Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy», Appandurai (1990) in Featherstone, M (1990) Global Culture, London: Sage

13 Ross Sinclair: «Nietzsche, the Beastie Boys and Masturbating as an art form» in New Art in Scotland (1994). 24-25

14 Published in the Catalogue: Claire Barclay, Henry Bond & Liam Gillick, Roderick Buchanan, Ross Sinclair (Bremen 1993), p. 35-47

15 Katrina M. Brown: «From the Inside Out», Ross Sinclair, ed. by Nicola White (1997) p. 36- 37

16 Ibid. Sinclair (1997) «Bad smells but no sign of the corpse», p. 87

17 Exert from a fax interview with David Perreau, June 95, quoted in Yankees - Roderick Buchanan, Little Cockroach Press 4, February 1997

18 Susanna Beaumont: The List 26 Sep - 9 Oct 1997, p. 83

19 Zygmunt Bauman: Modernity and Ambivalence (1991)

20 David Perreau: «Work in progress» Documents Sur l'Art issue 10, winter 1996

21 Op.cit.

22 Ross Sinclair: «Global village idiots» - Ross Sinclair on Roddy Buchanan Frieze, p. 23. For a closer presentation of Buchanan see Charles Esche: «Roderick Buchanan - Collision Discourse», Coil Magazine (issue 5, 1997)

23 We are Evil had been culled from a popular chant sung by the supporters of Millwall Football Club. See: «The sociable Art of Douglas Gordon»., by Ross Sinclair, Catalogue Tramway (1993)

24 Arrhemus, Sara: «The headless angel» in the catalogue Sawn - Off (Stockholm, 1996), p. 39

25 Russell Ferguson: «Divided Self», Parkett-Verlag, Zurich(1997) p. 59-60. In the winter of 1885-86, Freud was a student of Jean-Martin Charcot at the Saltpêtriere clinic in Paris. Here he became impressed of Charcot's latest investigations upon hysteria, «some of which were carried out under my own eyes» Quoted after Sigrnund Freud, An Autobiographical Study, James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1963), p.22

26 ibid. Ferguson (1997), p. 60

27 Simon Sheikh: «Kunst er blot et påskudd for en sarntale - et interview med billedkunstneren Douglas Gordon» Ojeblikket (V 1997), p. 17

28 In questions concerning the role of medical science, Gordon, Borland and Roberts have found an important conversation partner in the former Ph.D. student on medical history, Francis McKee, now acting as art critic and curator at CCA, Glasgow.

29 For a further study on the Scottish Enlightenment and New Conceptualism in Scotland see; Melissa Feldman: «Matters of Fact», Third Text 37, (Winter 1996-97), p. 75-85

30 Interview with Kari J. Brandtzæg, May 1997

31 Forensic Science, as an official practical and academic discipline, is less than a hundred years old but its principles have been in application for much longer. Catalogue: Christine Borland, Tramway, Glasgow/Kunstwerke; Berlin (1994), p. 36. Last year British police used a medical sculpture to solve a mystery and to identify the body of murder victim Harjit Singh. The Scotsman (26.5.97),p. 6

32 Interview with Kari J. Brancitzxg, May 1997

33 Mary Shelley: Frankenstein, (This edition 1994 by Wordsworth Editions Limited).

34 Ross Sinclair: «Julie Roberts - Life, the Universe and Science», Art press (février 1995), p. 30-34

35 Interview with Kari J. Braneltzxg, March 1997

36 Tony Godfrey: White Music, The Floral as Viral - The recent work of Louise Hopkins (1996), p. 7

37 New Art in Scotland, ed. Nicola White (1994), p. 69

38 James Roberts: «The Name of The Rose», Frieze (1997) issue 35, p. 64-70

39 Yve-Alain Bois: Painting as Model (1990), s. 233 Quoted Thierry de Duve: «The Ready- made and the Tube of Paint», Artforum (May 1986), p. 115-116

40 Interview with Kari J. Brandtzæg, March 1997

41 Jeremy Millar: Guilty, CCA 1997

42 Catalogue: Sawn - Off, (Stockholm 1996), p. 20-26

43 Interview with Kari J. Brandtæg, June 1997

44 Keith Hartley: «Cultural Rebirth» in Correspondences Scotland/Berlin (1997), p. 30

45 The similarity is especially evident in the design «Wire Chair» from 1951, see Sembach, Leuthäuser and Gössel, Møbeldesign i det 20. århundrede, Taschen (1989), p. 166

46 Susan Daniels in the catalogue: Pure Fantasy; Inventive Painting of the 90s (1997), see Richard Wright.

47 Melissa Feldman on Richard Wright: «At First Site», Art Monthly (10.97), p. 29

48 Interview with Kari J. Brandtzæg, July 1997.

49 Cited from «Kunst er blot et påskudd for en samtale - et interview med billedkunstneren Douglas Gordon» by Simon Sheikh, in Øjeblikket (7/1997), p.16. Translated by the author.

50 Catalogue: Life/Live (Paris 1996), vol. 2, p. 124

51 According to conversations with artists, curators. See also Artists Newsletter (April 1997) p. 16-17 on the conflict.

52 Michael Kelly: «Getting to the art of the matter», The Scotsman, (21 July 1997) p. 17

Owners

Douglas Gordon: Confessions of a Justified sinner, Cartier Foundation, Paris
Douglas Gordon: Above All Else, Weltkunst Foundation, London
Douglas Gordon: 24 hour Psycho, 1) Bernard Storkman Inc. London, 2) Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg
Christie Borland: L'Homme Double, Museum für Gegenwartzkunst, Zürich
Christine Borland: From Life, Glasgow, Collection of Instituto de Arte Contemporanea, Lisbon Julie Roberts: Crime of Passion, Sean Kelley Gallery, New York - Collection of Marvin and Elayne Mordes, Baltimore, Maryland, USA

Illustrations

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Ross Sinclair
Artists' flag for Scotland
(1997)

Fig. 2
David Shrigley
Artist's flag for Scotland
(1997)

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Glasgow School of Art
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Martin Boyce
Potential for greatness
(1991)

Fig. 4
Martin Boyce
Potential for greatness
(1991)

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David Wilkinson
Wallpainting
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Photo: Andrew Whittuck, London

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