

Master of Fine Art Submission
Errol Fielder
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First Paper

Issues and Concerns in My Practice

When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

1 Corinthians: Ch.13, verses 11 and 12.

Like everyone else, I am plagued by the tyranny of conscious thought. Most of my thoughts are about, or held in place by, fear and desire. Fear of what? Desire of what? I am not certain of the answers to these questions. However, I will know something about my state of mind by observing it "through a glass, darkly"; confronting it "face to face"; comprehending it "now I know in part" and being identified by it "I know even as also I am known". Because of these things I have belief in the play factor of discourse and dialogue. My mind is erratic and filled with a complication of disordered psychic fragments that are eager to surface and reveal their own disposition. Justice might best be served to my unconscious, with its tricks of irrationality, by using the format of the interview. An essay proceeds in a logical way, an interview contains the complexity of the unexpected, there is an element of surprise for the interviewer and interviewee alike. These surprises provoke changes in mood, language usage, texture, content and syntax.

There is a strong parallel between the form of the interview and the form my work takes. I am dealing directly with the irrational nature of the mind. What follows is a compilation of transcriptions from three interviews conducted in my studio at the University of Tasmania School of Art, Hobart in October, 1994.

The questions are asked by: Jim McKee, Julie Taylor, Peter Hill and Edward Colless. I provide the answers.

Q: What happens between the small drawing book and the large wall works?

A: The book containing the small drawings is a source. There are similar energies at work in the production of both types. The wall work is a public way of putting together the material that comes from a search which involves the small drawings. The small works are less of a search, they are more contained, more intimate, more cathartic. They are a documentation of a journey back into my mind told in story board format and not the whole story, just episodes.

Q: The nature of its making is different, the nature of its content is different.

A: Yes. The concerns are still looking at my neurosis, certain anxieties that remain pivotal to the manner in which I express things. I investigate the phantasies contained in my mind by the exploration of object-images of my past. I return to the present with an almost complete object-image in my mind's eye after having visited that space in my head where fantasies float in flux. The drawings in the small book remain fixed. The wall works are more compulsive and speculative, more assertive, the context is changeable, therefore the meaning is changeable which is not unlike the workings of the mind itself.

Q: So things are recontextualised?

A: Yes. The trip back from the fantasy is extended onto a larger scale. Colour is added. The wall work has another task, and that is to orchestrate these images from my stream of consciousness.

Q: There is another task at work. It invites the method you employ when dealing with the smaller images, from vague recollections of childhood memory. You draw these images by trying to piece these thoughts together, having teased them out of your memory. And there is another kind of activity at work when you start collaging it all together on a larger scale.

A: That is true. My usual procedure is: I arrive at my studio, I set to work, I eliminate mentally all the clichés and superfluous material, anything that is irrelevant, loud and brash, in order to dig deeper to find things that are evocative of feelings that are usually less than welcome. These may be the simplest objects: say, a car, a toaster. The journey begins, the loading of images, the investment of feelings, their personal history and these small works are usually completed at one sitting. While with the wall works there is much more play, more deliberation, more musing over possibilities.

Q: They operate as two different languages, and the translation, that is if there is a translation, and the space, that is the movement between these

two forms interest me. I am not suggesting that you close the gap between these forms.

A: It is becoming clearer to me that the gap is closing as these works progress. They are becoming reciprocal now that I know how the small drawings feed the large and their mutual dependency. It is almost Darwinian.

Q: And the text that exists on the works usually has a story attached. They suggest a narrative.

A: That is true. It is anecdotal, a running commentary with the work.

Q: Some of the connections, the words themselves seem really obscure.

A: They are to me as well. They are mostly proper nouns, names of things I cannot render - like "chloroform", or "Africa" or "New Zealand" - without resorting to symbolism, that sort of symbolism that is visually abusive. I do not mean to be disingenuous, a viewer will bring to the work what they will as Richard Wolheim suggests, "The spectator will always understand more than the artist intended, and the artist will always have intended more than the single spectator understands". There is the paradox. It seems as though language, images and objects exist everywhere and appear, initially, to be independent of one another. Where, in actual fact, they are totally dependant on each other. I give the viewer glimpses, visually charged phrases that allow them to make their connections, their syntax. They fill in the gaps. The use of text is not a direct attempt to engage in semiotics. At the same time, I am not sure if you can avoid it. There is always that differential. Experience verses culture.

Q: Where do you see these works fitting into the history of art? Do you see them as a surrealist enterprise or not?

A: There are some connections with surrealism. The images may appear, at first glance, to be dream like subjects. However, these images are not based upon dreams. Dreams always remain dreams, once you try to take them out of your head they are no longer dreams. They remain an unconscious wish, an involuntary escape path that our minds invoke to displace pain and fear. Whereas my images are based on idiosyncratic links with experience, a nexus of diffuse proposals and ideas that I believe are steeped in reality. I believe that there is a deliberate abandonment of the pleasure principal. That is achieved, in part, by my absorption in the use of medium, by the confrontation between myself and the formalities of art that I am dealing with at the time. As well there is an awareness of an open ended emotional state, an affective speculation space where the need for invention prods me

along labyrinthine paths back to the conscious present. There is not the dream-like fuzziness where nothing is concluded or resolved while in that state. There is no hypnagogic condition represented, no attempt to describe the ineffable. There is an affective logic that is possible to follow, an order in the superstructure as well as the fabric of the work. In fact there are closer links between my work and the psychology of the joke than there are links with the dream.

Q: You are not really setting up a narrative?

A: It is possible.

Q: What about the arrangement of the work? The order that exists? How do you go about the formal composition?

A: The elements just seem to look right at the time, and if they do not I keep moving them around until they do. The composition of each panel usually consist of a central element around which everything else rotates as if held there by the gravity contained within the mass of the central object. However, there is a lot of juggling going on, not unlike the memory process. The order suggests itself as the complexities are unravelled given time and attention to detail.

Q: You collage associations as you go, nothing is predetermined. Like the figure in the suit emanating from a toaster?

A: Many of the elements are reintroduced from works completed a while ago. I rely on my memory to reactivate them. There is still the element of chance that is part of the process. These aleatoric combinations are a strong component in the final composition.

Q: This relates to the arbitrariness of memory does not it?

A: Yes. But memory does let you down when choosing objects, it is flawed. It all comes back to the gulf that exists between recognition and recollection. Recognition is automatic to a normal healthy mind, while recollection is a deliberate act. Specifically, there is an interaction with tolerances and gaps of uncertainty. There are, I suspect, grey areas between recognition and recollection which are stimulated by, or are a stimulus to emotions that are induced from a common source.

Q: The more traumatic or difficult the issue is and their recovery more arduous - it seems the deeper it goes into the unconscious and the less likely you are to recall it. This suggests to me that there are certain issues that will never be revealed. Is that true?

A: That is true. You know that some objects are more weighed down with trauma than others, while others are weighed down with fictions,

fabrications and fables. But many of these areas are unknowable, locked in the unconscious. However, I do know that, at odd times, some objects do impact more than at other times and this seems to occur at times of one's greatest vulnerability, or so you believe at the time of one's childhood. It is not until much later that it is realised that these profundities are social constructions. The value systems of a child differ from those of an adult, that is unless you are subject to an arrested development. By recreating these objects of trauma as an adult I actually engage the trauma source and examine it under controlled conditions by giving it shape and substance knowing full well that I do not discover the proximate cause of the catharsis. This does not mean that you distance yourself from the emotional investment: that remains at large. This is acknowledged by the spectator as they respond to the work. Besides, the artist and the spectator should not be contrasted as different classes of people. We are the same.

Q: If you take away the person of the artist and look at it as an anthropological artefact, then you read it differently, deciphered clues that make the work read as a cultural not just personal.

A: I guess I am exploring, visually and discursively, the public implications of my personal anxieties in a form that they are made publicly consumable. The intimate nature of my small drawings, when projected onto the wall works seems to complete this cycle.

Q: The voice over, the changing images, as well as the static images seem to be somewhat hypnotic in their impact. An all over excessiveness, even a claustrophobic feeling.

A: The intention is to overload the viewer with a wealth of diverse information, to surround and entrap them in the work, not unlike a knee-high maze where the escape path is fraught with confusion for the participant. They remain alienated even though the outside world is clearly visible and the temptation to step over the dividing hedges is great.

Q: The image of the wardrobe seems to have central significance to you. You have drawn it as an observer looks at it from the outside, yet I have heard you previously describe the origins of this drawing in a different way. As though you were locked inside. I notice that the doors are locked, there are no handles, the keys are removed. The wardrobe is an image of exclusion surrounded by debris. It seems to operate around the other way to the way you have just described.

A: I am consciously inviting a rescue. Will you let me out, do you suspect there is someone or something inside? Do you empathise?

Q: I get the impression that these objects are floating in space, that there are layered, sequential arrangements.

A: Yes, a mind made of paper and canvas in three dimensions.

Q: What about documenting at different stages?

A: These elements could be used again and again, depending on the venue and the needs of the time. The whole thing could be reconstructed, reconstituted and reworked. The character of the work would change as it is meant to. Documentation would make it static.

Q: I recognise things in this work that come from works you finished a year ago. No doubt you will be adding new elements to the work?

A: In a way I am treating the wall work as a working externalised memory bank with additions, layers and losses. Some elements are more fused into the fabric of the work while others are ephemeral and peripheral. John Berger makes mention of the fact that we take photographs of things so that we may forget them. I suspect that the same principal can be applied to these drawings. Each time I view them they appear changed. I recover the images from my head and re-present them with pathos, having lost them, having renounced them. Some times I reinvent some images in the small drawing book, with variations, a differing perspective, a change of emphasis to the central theme, added fictions and elaborations.

Q: You could also end up with all sorts of images that you can not recall where they come from.

A: Many of the images have a spurious source. There seems to be a big difference between memory and the place you visit inside your head where invention takes place. It is impossible to tell the different origins just by looking at the drawings themselves. And I have no idea how these fictitious images get inside my head. It seems that the more drawing I do the more my concerns are with visiting that place of invention and imagination. Freud said something to the effect that memory of trauma may, in some cases, originate in our imagination and have no basis in truth or reality.

Q: It is interesting to speculate on the mood of these images, whether they are humour-based or fear-based. There is, overriding the work an oppressive feeling, as though things are seen through an equivocal distancing. For example, the hat is not a delightful looking hat, the toaster looks unfriendly, the black tie looks unclean, grimy, the figures look scratchy, the suit droll.

A: Nothing is in pristine condition, they have all suffered wear and tear, dust has settled on them, their use-by date has passed. I guess I remember things near the end of their lives not when they were shining new.

Q: They are very ordinary objects. The halos or coronas around some of the objects gives them special meaning.

A: At the time of drawing they had specific energy attached to them for me. It may be in direct proportion to the amount of pain they gave me.

Q: Or it suggests vagueness or uncertainty. There is a further suggestion that the objects are constant, more constant than the figure. Why do you use objects?

A: Objects are social things, loaded with both cultural and personal implications, that is the meaning of the objects and their context goes way beyond their function. There is a great irony attached as well. Presumably objects could have a basic goodness attached to them. The law, morality and desire make scrupulous judgements of objects to decide which objects will survive and be allowed to exist. This selection process is self-sufficient and backed by force. This suggests an anti-aesthetic where higher principals disperse an idiolect and map out the concern paths of the spirit in the material world. There was a time in our history when our needs created objects. Now, it seems, objects create needs as Marx pointed out. So objects are loaded with culture as well as idiosyncratic concerns influenced by our own neurosis.

Q: Projections?

A: Yes. The Freudian as well as the Bergsonian views, parallel universes that are totally interdependent forming one dichotomy. Dichotomy is the power house of all consciousness, as Marx may have said.

Q: Objects of desire? All thoughts have equivalence. They are just there. You can observe them as thoughts. But you attach yourself to some and they engender desire.

A: Desire is the undercurrent to everything.

Q: You believe that is always there and as the thoughts float by desire chooses one?

A: Yes. The way we perceive things is through a lens of desire. This not always easily seen in itself. It is an undercurrent of desire that is synonymous with need and demand as any Freudian will testify. All objects are metonyms for something else. It is possible that the, "something else" may also be a metonym for "some other, *ad infinitum*. Just as desire desires desire. Language is everywhere isn't it? But besides the metonym

and the symbolic and all that that encompasses, there is the real, as well as the imagined. All conditions of the mind that exist to deal with matter and the order of matter are bound within our personal conventions of desire, function and meaning. It is this complexity that I gravitate towards and attempt to replicate in my work. I can not engage with the seamless. There must be the personal experiences and judgements, I must be able to speculate on contradictions and irony, heterodoxies and dichotomy. The prospect of the seamless is the most terrifying prospect of all.

Q: What about satisfaction, repletion, contentment and those things? Do they figure in the picture or are they just illusions?

A: They are all just illusions. We are continually conditioning ourselves into changing our states of perception from the real, the imagined and the symbolic and back again. And this is linked with the tripartite notions of need, demand and desire. Desire is never satisfying or satisfied. So we content our selves by distractions and sublimations.

Q: Or substituting, or replacing?

A: That is exactly what these objects and their descriptions do for me.

Q: This is something that is unattainable isn't it?

A: But what happens is that one abandons the deferral process in favour of the process of representation due to a lack in our lives of the object/subject of our desires by focusing our attention and becoming involved with the materials of art itself, as well as one's own methodology. That is the way you momentarily abandon deferral, I believe.

Q: But is it real and tangible through representing it?

A: What is real? The desire? The act of drawing? Drawing converts, that is, the process of drawing converts passivity into activity through the use of media and representation. A representation that produces objects, things of significance, that insinuate themselves in place of the absent objects. A representation no less, and just as real, and it is this activity of making real from what is imagined that is actually the journey away from the centre of ones neurosis.

Q: What you describe as process, which is different from what you end up with, I am wondering if you are not describing the order?

A: I am giving it a context and therefore a meaning.

Q: But by your placement you placate it, you domesticate it in your mind, it is no longer wild.

A: That is true. I shackle it at the moment of birth.

Q: But it is still inadequate, isn't it?

A: You never escape that. You just keep of deferring.

Q: Is this the process of treading water or swimming against the steam, the stream of consciousness?

A: What you are looking at are stills or story boards from a "road" movie that is, rightly or wrongly, the memory of my life so far.

Q: How would you describe the overall nature of your work?

A: The arena that I work in is, I believe, speculative, full of contradictions, strange couplings, like the libidinal lying down with the hum-drum.

Q: There was a time, in your work, when the landscape loomed large as subject matter. Where has that gone?

A: That is true. They were anthropomorphic landscapes.

Q: What you have now might best be described as domestic landscapes which also includes the figure.

A: Yes. Domestic items, amongst other items, form the loci. What used to be the isolated River Red Gum now translates as a wardrobe or a gesturing finger as metonym for Apollonian power. These elements come from a memory that is burdened with cultural constraints, but a culture that is tolerant enough to absorb any assault I bring to it. So it is a two way street. For example, when I was drawing this wardrobe I actually went blind for an hour or so due, I guess, to the anxiety I held in connection with this object itself now converted into another object, an image on paper. Much like the ritual of atonement, whereby the Jews, in biblical times, would lay their hands on the scapegoat, after having symbolically recited their sins over the animal. It was then put out into the wilderness, presumably to wander and eventually perish. It was believed that the sins died with the goat. The difference with my ritual is I keep the bones and the hide of the animal. I suppose what I should be doing with my drawings, once completed, is to burn them and to assuage myself of any sins. However, what I am dealing with here is not the self but things outside the self, "the other". Concerns outside intimacy, things of complexity that can be dismantled, rearranged, managed, rolled up and stored as well as put on public display. My memory is not the subject of this narrative, my memory is the locus of specified events; the subject, ultimately, is my own death and the loss of self and how it effects me in the present. So drawing a tree or a wardrobe is still less painful than guilt, fear and the spectre of death, but the catharsis achieved by drawing these fearful objects results in giving me a nice warm glow momentarily.

Q: Along the lines of the personal and the public sides of your art, how much of your work is confessional and how much do you enjoy the process of confessing?

A: Very much, I must confess. It is a large part of my source material and my actions in making art are both cathartic as well as punitive. I am aware of an irony here, By confessing I could be subjecting myself to the control of rules set by a stronger moral code than my own, or, in my own awareness and involvement, participating in a self-protective union of the weak. I speculate that the emotions attached to a state of moral well being and a state of guilt have the same libidinous origins, it is just that the channels to the latter state have easier access due to more regular usage. At times I am duplicitous as I disguise my guilt and show another face, another movement, another layer. At other times I take some pains to invoke guilt just so I can bounce off it.

Q: I wonder, do you take that idea full circle? You talk about your own childhood, your mother leaving you at a young age and the rich and varied life you have lived, do you wonder about the impact that this has had on your own children and now grand children?

A: More guilt. Taking responsibility for what happened to yourself at the hands of your own parents as well as taking responsibility for your words and actions with your children - where does it end? I do not know if one can negate the process of genetic and ancestral behaviour implanting, the sins of the father visited upon the son and the like; I guess all I can do is add it to my repertoire as source material.

Q: You put yourself forward as the victim here don't you?

A: You're right I do. But not, I hope, with too much of a bleeding heart. I mean, I hope to discover where I am coming from by making myself the centre of this discursive piece.

Q: But you do not balance things up. Yourself as victim not victimiser where your children are concerned? Perhaps there is another series of work to be produced with that in mind.

A: I can but try.

Q: The sadist as well as the masochist?

A: I will endeavour to fill both roles.

Second Paper

My Work in its Context

I will not deny the quandary I find myself in when attempting to speculate on the nature of objects and their description. If I had a camera that could create images out of memory I would use it instead of drawing. Drawing can be clumsy and laboured or clinically correct and dispassionate or some how removed from the issues and concerns that are central to my way of making art. However, I will proceed as though the technology for this kind of photography does not exist.

It is possibly the description of objects, that is, objects as physical matter, that confounds me most of all. My current practice is to describe objects by drawing and painting them in a variety of ways. Through drawing I hope to demonstrate my concerns with the general workings of memory and recall together with the specifics of some objects and events that have become permanently fixed in my mind, and regularly stimulate recollections of repressed experience (or what I perceive to be specifically repressed experiences). I believe that these specifics have been developed by the conflict and fusion of mental impressions, and chains of remembered and repressed experiences that are formed by association and are all contained within a highly structured and well maintained belief system that has become my own. These associations may be formed by attachment to a place or thing that is easily accessible and easily grasped in memory, that is, a locus. The locus has of the greatest significance in the process of image recovery because it acts as a coordinate, a reference point, that is divested of meaning in itself, but, when linked with other propositions, acts as a catalyst, that stimulates mental energies and images in the imagination. These travel upwards past layers of the preconscious and consciousness and into the present in a synoptic form. These images are those that have survived the compression of subsequent strata, and in having done so have lost their original shape and are reconstituted much like a fossil but composed of other psychological materials. My original perceptions are no longer there; but the images remain and their function is now an active not a passive one, and it informs and directs my life. All decision making is contingent upon its ability to inform and consequently it acts as a causative factor in the conscious will, or as Freud puts it, "fulfilment of a wish".

Drawing deals with the psychic mechanisms of the locus, the arbitrariness in choosing elements and their arrangements, in a

cohesive way that always remains affective. I acknowledge this affective property as being Oedipal and orbiting around a central core of anxieties which is probably made up of recumbent adolescent neuroses and other obscurities and inventions. It is sanguine quest to invest in the use of metonyms that will somehow satisfactorily substitute for my mothers physical absence from my life from my age four to pubescence. Or, could it be that I have just Oedipalized myself now that I know the model and some of its causes and effects? These images may be self deceiving. I suspect that all of the aforementioned applies and contributes as individual moments and yet be part of the rhythm of the whole. Once absorbed any experience may reduce the flow of entry of further experiences into the conscious mind with some congestion or, at least, influence its entry, demonstrating how the past may prey upon the present, and how an emotional dependency is established by engaging in this process time and time again.

The objects and events described become coated with the most personal associations and reveries that usually relate to invented and real trauma of my early life. These traumatic occurrences I have described in the first person, and the way they are used in the schema, the object - image would have far more general associations for a complete stranger. My personal loadings might not all be understood by the viewer, but that might be said of all art. My being understood is not my first consideration as an artist.

For the most part it has been my intention to influence the viewer by prompting them to be self conscious in their response to the content of the work as well as its form. By also revealing, as much as possible, how the work is made, a viewer would become more stimulated and amenable to the context and meaning of the work. Hopefully the viewer takes on a similar role to the artist and engages with the work via their own multifarious value systems in order that they may struggle to make sense of it and cancel meaning and reform it.

This schema allows me to struggle with and be jostled by the concept of the work, its form, the general sense of it, the particularity of objects and events chosen, their coded description, and all that lies within my personal psychological boundaries. This is my navigation through a cascade of ideas and experiences.

The psychological weight of each object and event may, in some way be proportionate to the scale and the intensity that is invested in its description. I have become aware that my recollections have been distorted by other creatures that inhabit my mind. What I believe to be a clear and honest description of simple objects and events, together with changes in points of view and the absorption of subsequent experiences and appropriations, have all allowed a fermentation process to take place which brings about change. Ideas pass from the conscious to the unconscious and back again. The result is that the image in my mind's eye is transformed, albeit, to a more potent version and, I suspect, it differs in appearance from the original.

I see the act of drawing the objects and events of my past as an assault by imaging, that is an attempt to make clear that my fear and anxiety can be displaced physically so that I am no longer afraid or anxious. The drawings appear to have a kind of nostrum effect. However, the very act of doing so proves the fear. As Gaston Bachelard in *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, points out, "We have only to speak of an object to think that we are being objective. But, because we chose it in the first place, the object reveals more about us than we do about it."

I further consider that the act of drawing objects and events is perhaps for me a last resort. It is not the object described but the act of drawing that is linked to the process of parapraxis. By drawing the object in the conventional way, in two dimensions (sometimes with the allusions of three) as a physical act, using physical materials, using all the visual rhetoric at my disposal, as well as the weight of my cultural experience so far, I will some how assuage the object's potency, defuse it, detach myself from it and in fact forget it. However the process does not operate that way and all associations remain intact. I am not certain that the Bergsonian model, suggesting consciousness exists outside mind and is entirely linked to physical matter, is a totally satisfactory explanation. Neither does the Freudian model totally explain the phenomena adequately. It assumes, according to Charles Rycroft, that,

all experiences, or at least all significant experiences are recorded, but that some cease to be available to consciousness as a result of repression, this mechanism being activated by the need to diminish anxiety. Rycroft continues, although this theory explains those instances of forgetting that can be demonstrated to be related to the neurotic

conflict , other factors presumably contribute to the fact that amnesia for infancy and very early childhood is universal and is not decreased by even the deepest analysis.

So a response is revealed but the source may never be revealed. On the other side of the coin, forgetting , can be automatic as Rycroft explains,

there is a tendency to assume that all forgetting is due to repression, though the idea that in perfect mental health we would remember every experience throughout our lives, however trivial, seems improbable on *a priori* grounds. If, as biological theory maintains, the function of remembering is to make available past experience while making present decisions, forgetting is a pathological if it occurs in respect of facts which are relevant to the present.

If our memories were infallible so would our perceptions also be, as suggested by Jorge Luis Borges in his short story "Funes the Memorious". With an infallible memory every detail of every object seen would be immediately burnt onto our brain via the optic nerve. Thankfully our memory is fallible and we are saved from the tormented fate that Ireneo Funes endured. We regularly fix our gaze on something; we never allow the total registration of everything within our field of vision. This attention takes place against a background of inattention. It is against this cycloramic background of inattention that action takes place. It supports and contextualises the roles and actions that are performed before it. It is the bland that reveals the significant. A Cartesian space located contiguously with a space that is home to desire.

John Berger has difficulty with this notion in his article "Photography and Memory" contained in *New Society Magazine*,

memory implies a certain act of redemption. What is remembered has been saved from nothingness. What is forgotten has been abandoned. If all events are seen instantaneously, outside time, by a supernatural eye, the distinction between remembering and forgetting is transformed into an act of judgement, into the rendering of justice, whereby recognition is close to being remembered and condemnation is close to being forgotten.

Unlike photography the acts of drawing and painting may well be designated by some, in these times of rapid artistic, social and political change, as being at best anachronistic and at worst inadequate. It would seem that more serious considerations are given to art forms that are dealing specifically with psycho-linguistics and conceptual formalities. This suggests to me that, to a large degree, a shadow has fallen over many traditional methods. What is now seen in

high profile is a genre of theoretical writings that prescriptively networks an abundant variety of art forms. They seem often aimed at, or stand before a background of artistic, social and political correctness which may have the effect of regaining the flagging attentions of an already too easily distracted art world.

With this in mind I am determined, no matter how naive or problematic my art form is, to pursue my direct personalised image methods as a contrapuntal act in a world of deregulation and heterotopias.

Because of the wealth of material already created over centuries, in similar media with similar objectives to my own practice, I find it easier to remain faithful to the scepticism I harbour about what is valid within me. That is, I find myself somehow having a deference to a hierarchy as well as an acquiescence to anarchy.

I fear that through my subject matter I confront things emotional, erotic and Oedipal in a graphic format that may indicate a narrowing of my self view, like little epiphanies, small excitations, small episodes in a seamless life. I would much rather that these confrontations were exorcisms, visionary visitations and endorphin charged flashes.

However, no matter what my subject matter is, my greatest concern is that the things I portray are done so with an intensity, maturity and veracity that hopefully reveals my psycho-centric endeavours and, as well, some of the more interesting episodes of my life.

As I have suggested before, by drawing the objects of my past, it is an attempt to reverse the processes of sublimation and revisit the sources of my fears. However, in doing so I have discovered that my memory is - not so regrettably - unreliable, because the context and chronology is different. In fact these induced recollections that I believed contained contextualized objects strung out along a passage of time, not only are entirely loaded with the emotional and cerebral considerations of the present, but they allow for a constant deferral of meaning that is inherent in the art form itself. In this way memory serves as a place of aggregation. There is an increasing juxtaposing of events, experiences and impressions. This all leads to the indefatigable consciousness of the present. I regain the ability to act on my aesthetic and rational judgements having lost part of what was real. This

supports a dialogue between world of the spirit and the material world. I can see the benefit in believing that, in this way, the material world holds the key to unlock the mind, that the real consciousness lies outside the body in an anterior space, in objects and the preconscious. The mind remains passive, activated only by the senses ability and need to interact with material objects: objects that once held a place in my reality or once appeared in my imagination or are now part of my repertoire of symbols. In this way the subject matter becomes a battle ground for the identity attached to objects on one hand and their interpellation on the other. My problem may then become one of misrecognition not just misrepresentation.

Adding to this, there are the formal compositional problems. These problems exist in the arrangement of the objects and the events described. They are produced apparently without a syntax that is easy to recognise. The images appear to be not dependent on nor subordinate to one another in their arrangement; there is no logical or chronological sequence to the images. Each space in which the images sit differs psychologically from one another. The main emphasis of the composition being a psychological rather than a poetic revelation,; of an affective nature rather than a rational one, or as Lautremont puts it, "as beautiful as the chance meeting on a dissecting table of a sewing machine and an umbrella."

Decisions concerning the composition of object images follow the rules of parataxis. That is, an arrangement of images and propositions that allow the interconnections between images to be supplied by the mind of the viewer. The images themselves seem to have an equivalent status, they may appear as habitual. The images have no preordained function, they arrive at their place "out of the blue". These images extracted from my imagination deal with memory, recall, recognition and their opposites, forgetting, repression and incomprehension. I am not just correcting personal prejudices connected to objects. By repeating images and text I hope to evoke moods and sensations by creating an illusion of the passage of time, by images occurring and recurring within the work. The art work does not realise its true status by my simply reconstructing images from my past. But its status is improved by my engagement with the physical sensations and outward displays of temperament changes that memory produces at the time of making the art work. I am providing

myself with access to a more extensive range of propositions that may well undermine existing personal stereotypes and reveal more to me about what is fiction and illusion in my own mind.

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Documentation

It is almost impossible to predict in what shape our lives will be in two years time. Attitudes and circumstances change rapidly and not always voluntarily. It is the magnitude of these changes that effects me most of all. Overcoming inertia is a change of some magnitude in itself. What seemed to me two years ago to be my most urgent concern was a preoccupation with the problems that are associated with fear and alienation. That is, a fear created out of repression and alienation. Feelings that I had invented and nurtured for myself. I wanted to look behind the veils of memory in my mind with the hope of disclosing what resides there, the causes of these fears and to relieve some of the bewilderment, its effects and influences. How had my phobias manifested themselves in my life so far? Believing that I already knew some of the answers to this question, I needed a strategy to interpret the products of my introspective search and convert them into an art form that would best satisfy these urgent concerns. It would start with the capriciousness of my childhood and end with the pragmatic, even heroic, pursuits of nostalgia and sentimentality that thrive in an adult.

My practice has been to create images from my past by drawing objects, figures and other subject matter in two distinctly different scales. The smaller scale drawings are all contained in small octavo size hard bound books. Regular weekly entries were made into these books over the two year period. These drawings had an intimate and accessible feeling about them. The subject matter is intuitive and wide ranging. It deals with objects, elements and experiences of a highly personal nature from my memory that just seemed to cascade out of my mind. Very few of the drawings were modelled from life. They mostly appeared to me as mental impressions in my minds eye, and seen firstly in rough draft and finally as the details were added the drawing progressed and the image became more recognisable. These drawings appeared to have an iconic function. They became the main reference source for the larger scale wall works, as well as maintaining their own diaristic properties.

Using mainly dry materials as media on heavy paper, cardboard and canvas and attached to the studio wall using heavy pins, the large wall drawing stood about three metres high and would grow in length as images were completed and new material was added. For logistic as well as aesthetic reasons the completed section of the drawing was rolled up as new lengths of paper and canvas were attached using strong contact adhesives.

Some of the images produced on the large scroll drawing would often feed into the smaller drawing books.

The scroll became a working memory, a repository of my visual fantasies and a stream of conscious record. It was my intention to keep adding to the scroll and rolling it up until some twenty to twenty five metres were completed. When it came time to exhibit the scroll in the gallery space I planned to reveal a little of it, say three metres or so, at any one time. Each day a new section would be unrolled and the section already seen would be rerolled. In this way the drawing would make its way around the gallery walls throughout the duration of the exhibition by unrolling the leading part and rolling up the trailing part. A viewer would have to return to the work each day of the exhibition to see the drawing in its entirety.

An alternative plan was to unroll the complete scroll in a circle, about nine metres in diameter, inside the gallery, with the image surface facing outwards. In this format a viewer could walk around the drawing but not see the whole work at once because of its curvature.

Both these methods of presentation were abandoned. During the course of making the work the rolled up section of the scroll became very bulky and difficult to manage. Somehow it got out of alignment and this had to be remedied. There was no other alternative other than to unroll it and straighten it up. This I did. The drawing at this stage was about seventeen metres in length. However, when the whole drawing was layed out I was surprised to see how bland and unresolved it looked. I realised at once a new approach would have to be found.

The individual images did not relate well to one another. They seemed two dimensional, over simplified, not complex enough. It lacked entertainment value and there was no artifice and little drama. There was no allowance made for the interplay of elements, ideas, or their reworking. By rolling up these images I had reduced the possibility of reworking them and thereby reduced the potential to re-order the colour, tone and composition. I had not allowed the intellectual process to take the visceral outpourings and shape them into something more cohesive and organised - to abstract the projections from my mind.

It is said that James Joyce took only a few months to write from stream of conscious his book *Ulysses*, however it took Joyce another ten years work on his manuscript to bring it to the final publishing stage. In my case, though personally disappointing having to unroll the drawing, it did allow me to recognise that changes were needed.

I dismantled the scroll by cutting by it up into sections that were of a manageable size. I began collaging and reworking each section as separate entities. When the work was finished on each section it was rolled up individually. I added real cathexis objects such as: my late fathers dress suit, my mothers mix - master, a typewriter which was a gift from my estranged mother to me when I was in prep

school, a radio - cassette player that once belonged to my step - daughter etc. I was creating a montage of allegorical things from my life. I believe I was using these things to replay my life in order to deal with the feelings that they provoked, feelings that I would normally eschew.

Further to this I had photographic slides made of the small drawings. The slide images are projected onto the wall drawings and show a panorama of fantasies strung together, fading in and out over the top of one another and superimposed onto the large drawing of a wardrobe. The wardrobe is a key object in my childhood memory. Each slide is part of a guided tour of some of the sentiments I have experienced. They show the progress of an almost geological evolution, the strata of sentiment both evolutionary and catastrophic. A tableau is created which includes self deceit, paths that venture in other directions other than into and out of my memory. These paths run parallel to invention. I attempt to lay my heart bare but at the same time present negative signs and wrong information, the result of these efforts is, in part, a masquerade.

The physicality of the paper spilling out from the wall; unfurling itself; the sheer weight of it hanging down; the real shadows it produces; the pins that puncture and punctuate the surface. The work has many of the properties of theatre scenery. It is a cyclorama that is background to the actions and portrayals of the viewer.