

# THE STATIC PERFORMANCE

In selecting and putting these works together I have tried to address the preoccupation of artists with the human body and psyche, frequently looking inwards at the most available subject, striving to understand more and more about the nature of what it is to be a human being.

My interest here is in considering precisely what the images and my writing about them might reveal about one individual, made over a period of fifty years. For this reason, I would encourage the spectator to view the exhibition as a whole rather than as a collection of individual artworks.

It has been my policy, for as long as I can remember, always to show new work therefore, obviously, never showing a work more than once. This makes sense given that I have been drawn more and more to make works that if not site specific nevertheless take the site very specifically into account. Whilst this exhibition quite demonstrably does not follow that maxim much of the work has never been shown before. I have indicated where this is the case (npe - not previously exhibited). Importantly for me is my consideration of the domestic nature of the gallery and my perception of this exhibition as a new work in itself, considered in its entirety.

I find that my practice includes more and more writing and this is demonstrated here. As such I perceive the texts within the exhibition to be an integral part of the work that is the exhibition.

With the exception of performance works, where it would be impracticable or inappropriate to show the original work in its entirety, I have elected to present the documentation in the form in which it was recorded wherever possible.

The work shown here falls naturally into a number of sections.

## 1. Student works

<i>Self portrait</i>	pencil	c1962
<i>Self portrait</i>	pencil	c1962
<i>Self portrait</i>	pencil	c1962
<i>Self portrait</i> (all npe)	red biro	c1962

Dating back almost 50 years when, as a teenager, I was simply trying to produce a likeness as a means of improving both drawing and painting skills (neither of which I have continued to pursue). Whilst I was not attempting to probe into any issues of identity, the issues are nevertheless transparently there in the form of an adolescent's view of himself.

<i>Mannered self portrait</i> (npe)	pencil	c1965
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I produced a second grouping of drawings when I was a student which appear to have been made using my shaving mirror and although mannered they nevertheless attempt at some kind of visual truth.

## 2. Early works

<i>Self portrait</i>	pencil	1969
<i>Self portrait</i> (both npe)	pencil	1969

Although I studied theatre design at art school I always maintained my fine art practice and took an active interest in current developments in art. After art school I joined the BBC and pursued a number of fine art activities both traditional, including print making and experimental, writing my first multi media performance pieces in the late 1960s. The drawings dated 1969 clearly relate to a very graphic approach to art that comes from both my printmaking and design work.

## 3. Intermediate Works

In these, as with the early works I had no conscious wish to explore myself at all. They were produced at a time when I had destroyed all my remaining paintings and abandoned traditional methods of making artworks in favour of conceptual work, initially often landart based. Although I am reminded that it is said that everything that an artist produces is a self portrait, I have limited the works from this period to those which include photographs of me.

<i>CHV event 16m X 4m</i>	B & W photograph	1975
<i>CHV event 16m X 4m</i>	colour photograph	1975

The pretentiously titled *Chimerical Hexagonal Void* was a site specific installation for the Old Police Station under the Town Hall in Ipswich then a gallery and now the 'One Stop'. This work included a large quantity of polythene which needed to be cut into squares. At the time I was teaching at Northgate High School with a particularly interesting group of sixth formers who I had involved in a number of my works. Spontaneously I decided to explore the entire sheet of polythene in the wind on the school playing field and the sixth formers kindly documented the experience for me. Whilst I did not perceive this to be a performance work I nevertheless exhibited the photographs alongside the installation.

*Rainbow Balloons for Ay O*  
(npe)

35mm slide

1976

Small tissue paper model hot air balloons were popular in the late 1970s and I had ambitions to release one of each colour of the rainbow into the sky, photographically recording them until out of site. Coincidentally, experiencing the first minutes of 2011 outside my house I gradually became aware of the sky filled with many miniature hot air balloons. My work required both a totally still day and a sufficient number of people to prepare and launch the balloons in quick succession. Although the weather was near perfect and those involved completely committed to the event, it proved too difficult to achieve the hoped for image of the entire rainbow in the air at the same time. However, the event in itself was important to me as part of a series of works which had involved a number of people. Whilst many of the works that I produced around that time would not be considered by many people to be art, they were nevertheless events which people were able to engage in and hopefully enjoy. The image here is the only extant document of *Rainbow Balloons* and although not conceived as a performance, the documentation has the same validity as documentation of works that were conceived as performances.

*Portraits*  
(npe)

B & W photograph

1981/2

The proposal *Portraits* followed a year long conceptual work that required an individual to receive an envelope through the post every day of the year for one year exploring the permutations of the then current second class postage stamps. I used a friend (and ex. neighbour) who happened to be a Consultant Psychiatrist. He had an interest in art and it occurred to me that with my having a passing interest in psychiatry we were, to some extent, mirror images of each other. I devised a work with this in mind and for a period of time we agreed to take self portraits at a designated time once a week. The interest for me was in whether, given that we were very close, there would be any similarity in the images. In the event I abandoned the work unfinished for reasons that are no longer clear to me. This work was not intended to explore the self but that aspect of it cannot be denied in retrospect.

## **4. The Sensitive Heterosexual Male**

In 1986 I began working within the international mailart network. I had started to consider gender issues and generated a mailart project entitled *The Sensitive Heterosexual Male*. It was my observation that at the time there was plenty of literature on Women's Issues, for gay women and gay men and enormous quantities of literature for men who love football, cars and all things macho; this led to my questioning where the heterosexual male fitted in who had no interest in traditional male pursuits.

The international network of artists working through the postal system was in its heyday in the seventies and eighties but has now been largely supplanted by the internet. An important dictum was that it should be totally democratic, privileging communication over artistic quality. - See my Mphil thesis: - Mail art 1955 – 1995: Democratic art as social sculpture  
[www.fortunecity.com/victorian/palace/62/](http://www.fortunecity.com/victorian/palace/62/)

*Playing with fire*

35mm slide

1988

Whilst not strictly fitting into the category of *The Sensitive Heterosexual Male*, this was the first work in which I explored the human condition which in this case focussed on issues of relationships. The title refers to my feelings about probing too deeply into family matters. The large triangular wall piece installation consists of a top line of text: Intonarumori. This refers to Luigi Russolo's noise generating machines. The line below is a row of columns (the 'pillars') from my grandparents Rectory. Below are members of my family including the first two photographs I ever took, of my grandfather and of my grandmother, shortly after my grandfather had bought me my first camera when I was aged nine in 1954. Although the subjects of the photographs are centrally placed and the figures vertical, almost filling the frame, I fell into the obvious trap of photographing my grandfather with the column (as used in the row above) growing out of his head. Below the photographs are cones, funnelling the

noise down to four lead bowls containing the burnt original size photographs. In front of the lead bowls are two votive lamps and finally in the very front is a speaker on its back, attached with two electric cables to the cones and supporting the skull of the family pet.

'45 23 1 90' 3 x 35mm slides 1990

The title of this wall based work, '45 23 1 90', refers to my age, date of birth and the year in which the work was made. The strip of bandage is a material that I have regularly used because it speaks to me of both wounds and healing. The use of three is again a theme of my work, making reference to my highly religious Christian upbringing. Behind two layers of bandage are three identical 'pillow book' images of the birth canal and at the bottom of the strips are three identical images of my wet head, upside down, implying both birth and travel through life.

*Monument to Independence* 2 x 35mm slides 1990

*Monument to Independence* was produced at the same time as '45 23 1 90' and is again a vertical strip but this time a single strip of paper in a maroon colour, such as the highly respected and very masculine artist Barnett Newman produced. The bottom of the strip is left unpainted and contains text, reading: Real Men Don't Have Cuddles. By contrast, the bottom of the strip is clasped by a heavy masculine bulldog clip. Perhaps this was the first work in which I directly engaged both with gender issues and my own identity.

*Concerning Men's Hairstyles* book (edition 100) 1990  
*Concerning Men's Hairstyles* print (unique) 1990  
(not included in this exhibition)

As with *Monument*, this work also deals directly with gender issues and conditioned upbringing. A copy of the bookwork was sent to all participants in the mailart project as was *Dear Boy...*

*Dear Boy...* book (edition 100) 1990

This book addresses the intensely personal subject of masturbation. The content is 14 letters photocopied from the 1891 – 1892 Boys' Own Annual, each of which is a terse response to agonised questions from boys, sometimes as old as 21. Although the subject is never mentioned, there is no doubt what it is and no doubt at all as to what the terrible consequences would be if the practice were to continue. Although the warnings were less hysterical when I was an adolescent, the habit was very much frowned upon largely on religious grounds.

*Untitled (memory purse)* edition unknown (<10) 1991  
*Untitled (memory wallet)* edition unknown (<10) 1991

The image of me in this work is a studio portrait, taken at a time when families were not so familiar with cameras. I have printed the image onto tissue paper which wraps-up a dried rose with a bandage stained with the blood of my finger pricked by the thorn of that rose. The whole preciously contained within a crudely made faux leather purse in one version and in the other, within a transparent wallet.

*Madonna and Child* photocopies 1991

My therapist explained to me that people often find Christmas difficult because of the way in which the baby Jesus is so wanted. Finding this a contrast to my own experience I wondered what it would be like to be a baby Jesus and asked my mailart correspondents to send me images of a Madonna and Child. Typically for mailart, I received a gloriously and unexpected wide range of interpretations of Madonna and Child and on each I substituted my own face for that of the 'Child', photocopied it and returned the original with a selection of photocopies of

the contributions of other artists to each contributing mailartist. I have selected about half to present here.

*Madonna and child* tie 1991

Having been given a tie and transfer kit for a present, I decided to transfer what I perceived to be the strongest Madonna and Child image onto it.

*I could have been that man* collage 1991  
(npe)

This work follows on from Madonna and Child with the idea of inserting myself into different situations; in this case it is simply ironic projection!

*Who am I* photocopy 1991  
(npe)

The title of this work could be taken to mean that I don't know who I am but what I was exploring was the problems encountered in attempting to engage with and identify with images of ourselves from several decades earlier.

*At my age I don't know whether I am coming or going.* colour photocopy 1991  
(npe)

This title, as with *Who am I* is open to misinterpretation but for me it refers not to midlife crisis (which I was not aware of experiencing) but to the numerical fact that at the age of 46 I didn't know whether I had more years ahead of me or behind me before I die.

*Memento Mori* colour photocopy 1991  
(npe)

Unlike the other works, made that year, which represent me, this is defined completely by the title.

*Black Wednesday* book (edition 8) 1992  
(npe)

'Black Wednesday refers to the events of 16 September 1992 when the Conservative government was forced to withdraw the Pound Sterling from the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) after they were unable to keep sterling above its agreed lower limit.'  
(Wikipedia)

The major stock market crash prompted me to comment through facial gestures which were made directly on a photocopier

*Don't Act Like a Girl* 35mm slide 1993

Although I do not remember the phrase being directed at me, 'Don't act like a girl' was one often used when I was a child. It clearly insults both boys and girls and I believe still underpins the thinking of most people.

Choosing to study theatrical design at art school, to my surprise, I found myself attempting to get to grips with a needle and thread. Since that time I had almost never sewn except for repair jobs until the need arose to make this banner, symbolically acting like a girl.

*Can You Be Certain ...* 35mm slide 1993

This text piece relies on knowledge of the country of the flag in the work although at the time it was first exhibited, it would be hoped that an awareness of the news of what was happening in Yugoslavia at the time should have made the meaning abundantly clear. As a male who, naturally, abhors the idea of rape, I believe that no man can be certain what he might do in certain extreme situations.

*Medusa Dia – installation* colour photographs 1996

This installation uses a Victorian hooped petticoat which I own but do not remember acquiring. It relates to my study of historical costume and my interest in gender issues. This work was shown in darkness with a slide projector, projecting 'Memento Mori' onto a mirror placed at an angle under the petticoat, reflecting the image onto the wall behind. Importantly for me, the image on the mirror created the possible double interpretation of my adult birth through the petticoat (with a reference to '45 23 1 90') and to the unacceptable male behaviour of looking up the petticoat.

The title came from the director of the Polish gallery in which it was shown. For her the image of the petticoat, especially in the mirror was like what she called a medusa which I discovered is the Polish word for jelly fish and dia is the Polish word for slide.

*Self Portrait (npe)* book (multiple) 1998

This little leporello was made to be sent through the mailart network.

*Needle portrait (npe)* photocopied postcard with needle and thread (multiple) 1998

Postcards were a frequently used medium for mailartists although this one had to be sent in an envelope for Health & Safety reasons to protect the postal workers. I have no idea how many I made.

*Title Withheld* colour photographs 1998

This installation consisted of 13 women's petticoats each with my portrait on the are which would be over the stomach. The work was in total darkness with each petticoat lit with the lowest wattage bulb inside the petticoat. The title indicates my feeling that a title was unnecessary for the work.

*750 to 1 – installation* colour photograph 1999

This work was viewed through a small window in a door. The floor was covered with 750 test tubes on a layer of ashes. My portrait was projected onto the floor which, given the texture of the ashes, created the impression that it was painted. I later made a performance in the installation.

*Self Portrait Xeroxes (npe)* photocopied postcards (multiple) 1999

I made a number of self portrait photocopied postcards for sending through the mailart network. An assumed identity was a strategy often used in the network; mine was 'energyman'.

*Untitled* collaged postcards c2000

More postcards produced for mailart use however, I particularly liked them and so retained a number of them.

*Gently - Installation* colour photograph 2000

This work was realised in response to a given and restricted space. The double image slides were projected onto a light globe at a height of three metres in a gallery in Budapest. The image is a close-up of my mouth screaming.

- Hommage, Lesson One* book (edition 10) 2000  
(npe)  
I had previously used the image of Tallulah Bankhead in an installation (not represented here). In this work I wanted to produce a secret intimacy which only occurs when the book is closed and thus not possible to experience. I become intimate with the unreachable Tallulah, unreachable not only because of her extraordinary beauty and fame but also because she is long dead.
- Energystamps* booklet (multiple) 2000  
(npe)  
In the early days of mailart, all aspects of the postal service were explored and at times exploited. This work was made for networking purposes.
- Two Energyman Stamps* photocopy (multiple) 2000  
*Two Energyman Stamps* inkjet print (multiple) 2000  
(both npe)  
Both works made for my use in the mailart network.
- Arcana – installation* colour photographs 2000  
Having placed my image in a test tube, I became aware of its potential as an installation as with '45 23 1 90' placing the repeated image on the skirting board. *Arcana* attempts to merge with the architecture, in its scale playing itself down whilst simultaneously risking egotism in its repetition. The subject matter continues an interest in the use of self portraiture to refer to the fragility of human beings and the uncertainty of the future.
- Constrained Energy* photocopy 2000  
(npe)  
The image that I used for *Arcana* was pressed into service as an image to send through the mailart network.
- Fragmenting – Installation* colour photographs 2002  
In this installation, devised for the Kharkov City Gallery in Ukraine I enlarged the image of my mouth several times and overlaid them in a chaotic manner, suggesting that all was not calm. Closer inspection revealed that dressmakers' pins had been randomly inserted into the mouth, each with a carmine thread of cotton. This work clearly relates to my 1998 postcard.
- Silly, Sad, Plain, Crazy, Furious* inkjet prints 2004  
(npe)  
A series of postage stamp sheets, made for mailart networking on a random variety of coloured papers. These relate to a video I made in the same year, see *Gurning* elsewhere. It also spawned my Christmas card three years later.
- The Unbearableness of Being* colour photographs 2004  
*The Unbearableness of Being* devised for Centre Noirot, Arras, France, was based around a video installation self-portrait of my mouth prior to going to the dentist for major work. The problems of keeping my mouth open for videoing were clearly audible as was the single sonorous gong of a clock. The video degrades as it is copied over and over again to extend the short footage to three hours. In front of the projected image were nine small sheets of glass, each with a pile of flour with a regular indentation in the top that contained a slide-size black and white image of my open mouth.

## **5. Performances and performative works.**

For the purposes of this exhibition I have taken the performances as a separate body of work although they occurred alongside other works to which they often related.

1993 was the date of the first of many working trips that I made to Poland and to other central and east European countries and it was at this International Artists Meeting that I first set out to make a performance work *per se* rather than a performance emerging from a larger work or simply writing performance scripts.

*Shelter* (interactive sculpture-photo-performance) Skoki, Poland. 1993

*Shelter* existed as a work which took a number of forms, acting both as a sculpture – again with a number of forms – and as a site for a photo-performance.

*Rebirth* (video – performance) Skoki, Poland. 1993

This performance was made for video for two reasons, firstly it was important to me that the images were viewed in close-up rather than the spectator allowing his/her eye to wander around the room and secondly I wanted to create an intensity that I thought might be too difficult for spectators to view in a live performance. The work addresses the way in which it can be said that we are all authors of our own misfortune to some degree and our way out of it is frequently in our own hands. This theme is one that has underpinned the majority of my performance work.

*Ambition* Smart Street, Ipswich 1994

This eight hour performance had one very simple aim, namely to reach the ceiling of this very high Victorian school room, using only string or rope that was provided by the spectators, both in advance and during the performance. One further limitation that I imposed on myself was that the structure must allow me to relax at the ceiling height, hence no rope ladder or simply a rope to climb. I intended the work to be seen as a metaphor for ambition in work and life in general.

I found my self in a verbal dialogue with the spectators and agreeing to allow them to help me however, given the nature of the string and rope, after two hours I found that the structure stretched when I stood on it, meaning that I was still not off the floor. After five hours I was a few inches off the floor but it was then pointed out to me that the old cast iron heating pipes that I had attached string to had bowed and come four inches away from the walls: it was clearly time to abandon the performance and cut the strings post haste.

*Pathway* (video – performance) Skoki, Poland 1994

The title of this performance was intended to refer to the pathway of life and relates strongly to *Rebirth*. As I moved through the pathway of tables and chairs, I attached the chairs to my body with a long length of string that I had placed on the tables until, at the end of the 'pathway' I collapsed under the weight of my attachments.

*An Attempt at Survival in Alien Circumstances too*  
Smart Street, Ipswich 1995

The title of this performance refers to a 1977 work made in Kassel, Germany by Stuart Brisley, an English artist who had performed in Northern Ireland, engaging the spectators in debate about their political situation. As with *Ambition* this was an eight hour performance. I had asked people to donate newspapers to me. I sat cross legged on the floor with a semi-

circle of newspapers around me and two bowls, one containing paste and the other water. I systematically went through the newspapers, tearing out articles and photographs which I then pasted onto the walls using the flour and water as a glue. Given my previous performance in this space, spectators expected to be able to talk with me about it but in the event I found that although I muttered, often with despair at what I found in the press, I did not communicate with the spectators.

*Wedge* Skoki, Poland

1995

Continuing the *Rebirth* theme, here I pinioned myself to a sand pit by driving wooden wedges between my toes and fingers (the final ones using my mouth to place them. Having completed the task, it had been agreed that my gofer would take the spectators away, leaving me in the pouring rain. In the event, he elected not to do as agreed and I found my self in a stand-off with the crowd. I noticed some German women whispering and later found out that they had been planning a rota for an all night vigil. However, two of my Polish friends decided to release me instead.

*In Absentia* Richmond House, Ipswich

1996

This was paradoxically a performance *in absentia*. I had made a series of works around the theme of what happens behind closed curtains. This work took place in an industrial lift in an abandoned warehouse. My performance was entirely private but resulted in chalk drawings on the floor and walls as well as various stains. I had also left an open notebook about the work on the floor. Visitors viewed the work through a tiny window into the lift.

*Energyfield* Skoki, Poland

1996

There are perennial problems with documenting performance work but these are compounded when the work takes place at night in the dark. There is no satisfactory visual documentation of this work although the photograph of the back of the Summer Palace at Skoki serves to prompt the imagination. There is a big rectangular lawn in front of this elevation and it reminded me of a swimming pool with the balcony serving as the edge and a potential diving board. Having changed into swimming trunks, I swam two lengths of the 'pool' before getting out of the 'water', drying off and entering the building through the French windows. Later, at home, I discovered that I had picked up a tic from the lawn – antibiotics were taken *post haste*.

*Wo Bist du?* Kunst Akademie, Stuttgart, Germany

1996

This work has no visual documentation either but in this case because I did not want any distraction from the intimacy of the performance. I was struck by the German word for mother (*mutter*) and the English meaning to mutter. The spectators placed themselves either side of a grand dog leg staircase and Having tied all the men to the baluster rails, I approached each woman with a basket and asked her, "Mutter?" all but one replied 'nein', apparently most reading it as my asking if they were my mother. To all those who said no, I remained silent and took an egg from my basket and dropped it on the stairs in front of them. To the one who replied 'Ja', I angrily replied 'Nein.'" I left from the top of the stairs, leaving them to untie themselves.

*I Mediate* Smart Street, Ipswich

1996

Whilst dancing to a band, I looked up and noticed two intersecting steel joists and thought of building a pile of newspapers up to it from the floor and sandwich my prone body between the newspapers and beam. I discussed this with my students and found them to be very pessimistic about the likelihood of my surviving such a performance. Finding another location where there was a platform half way between the floor and ceiling I decided to build the tower of newspapers on the platform beneath an attic trap into which I positioned a monochrome television which showed white noise. My naked body, lying over the newspapers in pitch darkness under the television gave rise to the title. As the pile of newspapers grew nearer the trap it became clear that they were unstable and that I would have to adapt the two hour

'lunchtime' performance. One of my students provided the solution in the form of an abseiling line attached to a joist in the roof. Given this I was unable to lie over the newspapers and had to support myself with my arms, consequently I decided to wear a suit instead of being naked. In the event, having been positioned I found that I was unable to support myself by my arms and consequently passed-out, falling onto the newspapers.

*And on the Eighth Day...* Vysoke Uceni, Brno, Czech Republic. 1997

This performance was devised for a large winter garden. The general atmosphere of the old building and the tiled floor and soak-away in the winter garden reminded me of an asylum. The performance was viewed through a narrow aperture in the shutters that divided the space from the drawing room. I symbolically anointed the space and naked, bandaged body in water.

*Traces* Galeria Arsenal, Bialystok, Poland 1997

*Slady (Traces)* took place in one of the three rooms of my installation. In this one I had covered the floor with sand. Here I worked initially with the room in pitch darkness and then blindfolded myself at which point the lights were turned on. Having disabled my left arm with bandages I used water from a bowl, mixed with sand to write on the walls. The disabling refers back to a theme in my performance work from four years previously.

*Pan Pies (photo-performance)* Poland 1997

The title is Polish for man dog and quite simply refers to the appearance of my image with a dog on my shoulders.

*Other Echoes* The Orangery, Holywells Park, Ipswich 1998

*Other Echoes* takes its inspiration both from the beautiful orangery and from T. S. Eliot's *Burnt Norton*. The work explored time and implied issues of genetics. The orangery faced a clock tower and I used dandelions, bunched into twelves. Spectators viewed the work from outside but were constantly frustrated by my obscuring their vision with Windolene or terrorising them by spraying the inside of the glass with a hose.

*Conduct Becoming* Stary Rynek, Poznan, Poland 1998

I had observed the sad sight of alcoholic men chatting animatedly on benches in the morning but ending-up slumped and passed-out on them by the evening, seemingly becoming one with the benches. In this performance I used bandage and plaster to make myself one with the bench.

*749 to zero* Suffolk College, Ipswich 1999

This performance took place in my installation *750 to 1*. An important aspect of this work for me was the projection onto my body. The spectators entered the small space via a lift. I used a microphone to amplify the sound of my choking on the dust as I crunched test tubes in my mouth and from time to time I took the microphone to the speaker, creating deafening feedback for the captured spectators. Finally I left via the lift.

*Esmerelda* Studio Theatre Istvan Paal, Szajol, Hungary. 2000

The venue for this was a domestic garden but with a lake behind and a 't' shaped jetty. On the way to the venue I had been told how the Australian Mining company Esmeralda had polluted the local river Tisa to such an extent that it had entirely killed it off. My performance was a ritual for the river, using my usual vocabulary.

*Walking and Moaning* Ipswich Town Centre 2001

During the anti Iraq war demonstrations made in the hope of preventing the war, I was moved to make a performance through the centre of the town, coordinating with the weekly demonstrations outside the town hall. Dressed in a white boiler suit, with a red cross on the back, I carried and swung an incense burner. I had a lamp on my head and red tape over my mouth. The title is taken from the fact that I found myself moaning as I walked.

*Fragmented* City Art Gallery, Kharkov, Ukraine 2002

I had agreed to make a performance at this venue in advance of seeing it and discovered that it was particularly difficult as it was a small space, dominated by a staircase and surrounded by floor piece artworks. I therefore elected to make my performance on the staircase. Wearing a red boiler suit I used the structure with my often used vocabulary of restricting myself with bandages.

*Waiting* St. Clements, Ipswich. 2003

I was asked some six months prior to this performance and prior to my having given it any thought, how long it would last and what it would be called. I enquired how long the venue was available for and discovering the answer to be five hours, made that the duration and decided on the title *Waiting*. The complex ritual included 12 sheets of glass and covering my head with flour and water.

*Metamorphosis* Students' Cultural Centre, Belgrade 2004

As in the Ukraine I had agreed to make a performance in Belgrade and found that the venue was in effect a student bar, complete with a small number of vociferous drunken students. The space was not one in which I felt inspired but I had thought for some time of taking further the action that I had made ten years earlier of tying chairs to myself. In this case however, I did not set-up a pathway but engaged the spectators sitting at their tables by tying them and their tables and chairs to each other and ultimately me and tying chairs to myself until I was unable to move.

*Sonority* Centre Noroit, Arras, France 2004

This performance was made in my video-installation *The Unbearableness of Being* and as with *749 to zero* the projection on my body was important. I pressed my face into mounds of flour each containing a small image of my mouth which I gave to spectators. I then removed the small sheets of glass which were placed under the mounds, wrapped them into a black sheet, blindfolded myself and left the space having first smashed the bag of glass onto the wall.

*Re-Searching Journey* (video-performance) c2004

Using a small video camera I attempted to explore every part of my body from extreme close-up so that it was not usually possible to tell which part of the body was on camera. The sound picked-up as it travelled through my hair contrasts with my vocal reactions to the painful positions I found myself in at times.

*Untitled 'Gurning'* (video-performance) 2004  
(npe)

Whilst some of the faces would be called gurning, the proposal for this work was to explore all the different faces that I could pull, demonstrating the enormous range of expressions that the face can produce, exploring different emotions. The work relates to the postage stamp work; *Silly, Sad, Plain, Crazy, Furious* of the same year.  
(not included in this exhibition)

*Ready/not ready*

Butley studios, Suffolk.

2004

This two hour performance took place in a grain silo about four metres square. I was blindfolded and had no props. Viewing was through a narrow aperture at about one metre from the floor. I had no way of measuring the passing of time or any sense of where I was in the space until I hit a wall. I found myself shouting at times and stamping my foot in an exaggerated manner of a military guard.

*Like gossamer*

Argyle Street, Ipswich

2006

This work relates to *Medussa Dia* and my interest in gender issues, expressed through my putting on 12 layers of polythene, resulting in the appearance of a wedding dress. Between putting on the layers I struggled with holding sheets of glass sandwiched with 12 eggs and a layer of rose petals at arms length above my head until I was no longer able to support them and they crashed to the ground.

*Going off*

Carlisle

2007

Employing my frequently used vocabulary of bandages, bowls, and water with religious ritual, I mixed plaster and poured it over my body dressed with a sheet. I repeated this ritual 12 times, becoming more physically impeded and psychologically exhausted with each layer.

*Lachrymose*

Performance Art Platform, Tel Aviv, Israel

2007

*Lachrymose*, performed (much to my surprise) in a night club atmosphere, used ritual water pouring from bowl to bowl as a symbolic cleansing in a country deeply torn. The ash line I drew down my head and torso contrasted with the ecstatic expressions on my face video-projected onto the back wall behind my action. A build-up of images was created as I worked my way around the circle of bowls: 1. the screen; 2. my live action; 3. the shadow of my live action on the screen; 4. the screen image on my body and 5. the laptop screen image.

*You and me*

Nachlaot Neighbourhood, Jerusalem, Israel

2007

(not represented in this exhibition)

This simple street performance created a number of problems and became contentious in ways that I was not expecting. The message, in a country horrifically divided, was one of togetherness, indicated by my creating an image of a passer-by in the mirror alongside my own. I realised the delicacy of the situation but had not been aware that for extreme Orthodox Jews, looking in a mirror is absolutely not encouraged, interestingly relating to my work *Concerning Men's Hairstyles* made 17 years earlier. A further problem was explained to me by the police that I was dangerously blinding car drivers by reflecting the sun into their eyes. There was no documentation given the sensitivity of the work.

*Attachment*

Art Radonica, Lazareti, Dubrovnik, Croatia

2007

*Attachment* was performed in a courtyard overlooking the sea. The work began with me bandaging a large stone to my thigh muscle and continued with stones being bandaged to different muscles of my body until walking was extremely difficult. It became necessary for me to enlist the help of spectators in my activity. The piece finished with me perilously descending the steep ladder to the stone beach and returning all the stones to the sea from whence they came.

*Poultice*

Landguard Fort, Felixstowe

2010

*Poultice* confronts the very English taboo of men not talking about their health. A PowerPoint projection traces my wounds and health problems, beginning with 'the first wound - the unwanted child' and ending with 'catarrh'. Each wound was bandaged with a bread poultice. Some things should not be spoken about; the shamefulness of some images,

especially mental health issues. The importance of not looking weak and maintaining a 'stiff upper lip': all conventions utterly contravened in this work.

## **6. Towards an Understanding of my Existence**

*Towards an Understanding of my Existence.*

(Microsoft Word document)

2001 – ongoing

Annotated autobiography, currently 122,517 words and;

A4 ring binders: -

2 x yellow - photographs

3 x black – (one in progress) - documents

2 x orange - postcards

Various assorted and numerous objects.

In 2001 I began writing my autobiography. This was not intended to be for publication, not least because my ambition is to annotate everything that I own to the text, making it something other than simply a book. As a boy I collected everything that came my way including postcards sent to me and to my family and sent by me when they had been returned to me for my collection. I also took photographs from the age of nine and as a teenager set up my own darkroom. Consequently I have a large quantity of images which have jolted my memory and informed the text as I methodically annotate each image to the text. My research for the text has extended backwards into family history which is now complete as far as I expect to be able to go but the writing of my own lifetime has become a lifetime's work. (not included in this exhibition)

This work has so far generated five other text based works: -

(none included in this exhibition)

*Family Tree* (Microsoft Publisher document)

Researched back to c1575.

*Towards a House* (Microsoft Word document)

in progress

Documenting all the houses I have lived in as an adult (and mostly restored).

This includes documents, photographs and text.

*Towards a Holiday* (Microsoft Word document)

in progress

Listing all the holidays that I have taken as an adult.

Documentation includes holiday diaries and references photographs and postcards.

*Towards Music* (Microsoft Word document)

in progress

Records the 78 rpm records that I acquired or bought and my early memories of exposure to music. Includes all records.

*Towards Artwork* (Microsoft Word document)

on going

Currently 101,769 words, constantly updated.

Includes 6 x ring binders of documents.

Records all my creative work, annotating all works, all drawings and notes, all documentation and all promotional material.

An inevitable consequence of these pursuits has been that they have generated new artworks which naturally have to be annotated back into the text in an endless tautological manner:

*Towards an Understanding* book 2001  
(npe)

Twelve individual texts taken from my autobiography, presented in a box which for me is redolent of children's school workboxes. Each text, in a carefully chosen type face and type colour has been designed to fit an A4 page of paper chosen to relate to the text.

*Towards an Understanding* (installation) colour photographs & part of work 2001

The texts from the book of the same name were copied onto acetate sheets and placed in front of mirrors with the text facing the mirror. The mirror reflected the text the wrong way around so that both images were mirrored, thereby obscuring the content from most people. Between each image was a half destroyed black and white photocopied self portrait fixed to a sheet of slate.

*One Man Two Dogs Twenty two Years* book 2001  
(npe)

The image from the photo-performance *Pan Pies* of 1997 is paired with the one from 22 years earlier which prompted me to make the 1997 work.

*Listening* (installation) colour photographs and part of installation 2002

I had retained a number of 78s records and produced proformas to record the origins and conditions of the records and my memories of them. The proformas were exhibited on clip boards below the records and slip cases where they still existed.

*Music.a. (Records.)* book 2003  
(npe)

This book is a collection of all the proformas from the installation *Listening*.

*Of my Grandparents* (installation) photograph 2003

The two display cabinets in this installation are filled with objects that I own that belonged to my grandparents. Both contain objects from each of my grandparents although in one cabinet they have been organised in a random manner and the other in a very structured way, neither is intended to relate to a description of either of them. Texts, documenting the objects including my memories of them were placed on the wall behind the cabinets.

*Portrait of my Mother's First Husband* book 2004  
(npe)

This single fold is a reproduction of the blank space in my mother's photograph album which I first saw after her death. She did not know that my sister and I knew that she had been married before she married our father and given its chronological place in the album, I assume that the photograph which was removed was of her first husband.

*Cycle* book 2004  
(npe)

Text taken from one of the *Towards an Understanding* book, this one refers to the problem of communication between my father and me with regard to which side of the road to ride my bicycle.

*Theft* book 2004  
(npe)

Text taken from one of the *Towards an Understanding* book, referring to my discovery that the toy bandsmen bought for me by our French paying guest were paid for with money stolen from my mother's purse, resulting in him being sent back to France.

*I don't understand* book 2005  
(npe)

Colleagues had commented on my frequent usage of the phrase that is the title of this work. For an installation in the 'Mind' charity shop I wrote all the 'I don't understands' about shopping. This 'book' is a collection of all the different not-understandings.

*Cinderella* (Installation) photo 2005

A video installation incorporating one or two objects that had belonged to my late mother. The video consists of photographs of a woman, who although it is not explained anywhere in the work is my mother, from a baby to the last photograph that I have of her. The title refers to the fact that she was obliged to give up a glamorous career in the event of my appearance.

*Three lesser mysteries* (installation) 2006

Three snippets from my annotated autobiography.

*I missed you* triptych 2009

Three A4 framed children's artwork made by my three daughters. The title refers to the pain of being forcibly separated from my young children.  
(not included in this exhibition)

*Inconvenience dilemma* book 2010  
(npe)

Small and personal thoughts such as these are not usually shared, particularly amongst males and I wanted to produce these in an intimate manner.

*Retirement* book 2011  
(npe)

Enforced retirement due to age is something can seem like a blank void but on making the book I realised that my mindset had failed to recognise that a blank sheet is also an opportunity for new possibilities.

*Preoccupation Matters* book 2011  
(npe)

This roughly produced hand written book on cheap unbleached paper contains a crude text that confronts the problems to which there seem to be solutions, it just being a function of increasing age in some people.

*Three Small Problems* book 2011  
(npe)

In this lavatorial white production, draining off the bottom of the pages is the vexing story of the specifically masculine experience of the relationship of foot-wear to urine.

*Aunty Care* book 2011  
(npe)

The story of my aunt illustrates the complexities of family relationships. It was only when watching a friend look at the book that I realised with delight that the title could be read not just as the name of my aunt but also refer to my parents caring for her at the end of her life.

## REFERENCES

In researching for this work/installation, I consulted a number of books and journals and Jones, Amelia. Self/Image, Routledge, Oxon. 2006 was particularly meaningful to me: I found the following quotations especially relevant.

“...the drive in Euro-American culture to deploy technologies of visual representation to render/and or confirm the self...” p.xvii

“...all of them [self-portraits] enact the self (and most often of the artist her or himself) in the context of the visual and performing arts (including film, video, and digital media). All of them, then, participate in what I call “self imaging” – the rendering of the self in and through technologies of representation.” p.xvii

“...mid-1990s...brilliantly simple strategy of swiping her face across a digital scanner ...a paeon to and a critique of the conventional (“this is exactly who this person is”) self-portraits.” P.29 (about Susan Siltan)

“...representation conditions our experience of ourselves but can never fully contain or explain the depths of embodied human experience...” p.41

“...we can never “know” the subject at all...”p. 43

“It has been argued that any self display or masquerade is by definition feminizing, most famously by Lacan...” p.77

“...the photographic trace...” p.69

“... Accepting our powerlessness to determine who we are in the last instance, we would be paradoxically empowered to see (and feel) the other for the first time in her or his embodied richness. So much, I am arguing, these artists are opening the door for us to see (and feel) – perhaps, for some of us, for the first time.” p.159