REWIND | Artists' Video in the 70s & 80s
Interview with Clive Gillman

Interview by Professor Stephen Partridge, Emile Shemilt and Adam Lockhart, 28th November 2006

SP: Which of the works you've facilitated or produced do you consider to be the most important and why?

CG: I found this quite a difficult question to answer. I had this notion that I was kind of in the middle of something that happened at a certain era around artists' video in the UK. I think I made some works that seemed to have some measure of success in that they were fairly widely shown. I am still not entirely sure I've really got a handle on what those works meant in the wider sphere of things, or if they meant anything at all. I think they were very specific to their time and I think in that context they are kind of interesting but I am not entirely sure that they have any real significant longer lasting resonance. One of the pieces that I made that was shown quite widely was a piece called *Warning, Attack & Recovery (W.A.R.).* That was originally made as an adjunct to a performance piece. When I made it, it was part of a process that I'd been through, through studying at college and learning and getting quite excited by the potential of the medium. It was an expression of that excitement and it was a celebration of the kind of textural qualities of the medium, which at that stage were really important for me. I suppose the point that we are at now is looking back on that those particular qualities. The exploration of those qualities was, I guess, part of a particular tangent that has gone onto other things. Thematically, that particular work was interesting because it came at a time when there was a heightened sense of the political impact of video. Video was wrapped up in a whole set of single-issue concerns and specifically with that piece, issues about the anti-nuclear movement and the threat of nuclear, which was an ever-present notion at that point in time. I guess for me, that piece was an interesting piece because it was quite successful in terms of being shown. I think an interesting piece in that it represented a whole set of concerns that were active for me. Then works that followed that kind of built on that.

SP: When was that piece made?

CG: It was made in 1983.

SP: You said it was originally adjunct to a performance, so it wasn't always performed?

CG: No, it was only ever performed twice. It was actually a piece that I made for my degree show when I was at college. It was presented in the context of a performance whereby the video played and there were certain sequences in the video where elements were

performed alongside it. Interestingly enough there is one point in the video where there is actually no video signal at all for about 2 or 3 minutes and all that you get on the screens is flickering noise. The piece is 20 odd minutes long, and then it hits this one section where it just drops out and nothing happens. I don't think this was ever actually documented anywhere but when I performed it live, during that particular moment when nothing else is happening on the screens, I am actually sitting in the middle of this big space just dropping water on to a hot iron. It makes these sizzling noises and gradually fills the room with steam. Once I'd made that piece of work it kind of took on a life of its own. It entered into the LVA distribution system and got picked up and started to be shown quite a lot, still with this gap in the middle where nothing actually happened. So the piece itself, would be played out in lots of different circumstances, always with this section with basically everything just dropped out in the middle of it.

SP: It's a bit like John Cage's *4' 33".*

CG: Perhaps, but not quite as profound.

SP: It's quite specialised, but the idea of 'nothing' on the tape, in those days was random noise. The TV set or monitor would show random noise, so when you say nothing, that is actually an expression in itself, but it's random. Of course, now what you get is something entirely different, but you will never get 'nothing', because with all monitors and cameras there's always something. In this digital it's a blue screen for instance, or often black.

CG: I think with the technology, what would happen was that certain TV monitors would show or would attempt to suppress the fact that it was receiving no signal. They were intelligent enough to suppress noise, so depending on what monitor you actually showed it on, you'd actually get a different effect. It may even be the case that when it was dubbed, it might have been dubbed onto a tape that actually had a control track signal. It wouldn't have generated black, but whether or not that actually creates a different effect on the screen, I don't know.

SP: Are there other works that may not have received a lot of attention, but that you still have fond memories of?

CG: I think it was probably less the works and more the ideas that lead to the making of the works. What I remember about that time was that I was relatively unsuccessful in getting support to make works. I never really got any grants or anything. I used to try and buy time on edit suites to make artwork. So, I'd do a job or get somebody to commission me to do a piece of work like making a video promo or something, and then I would make the artwork on the back of that in the studio. As a result, I'd often cram a lot of ideas into a very short space of time to make a piece of work. I think later on in the 1980's I got really interested in this whole idea of using the edit suite as a kind of a studio, as a sort of paint-box tool. I got very involved in just seeing it as a kind of a processing laboratory where you could loop things around, plug things into other things and discover things like linear keying tools. I got very interested in the whole idea of the edit suite as a creative space in its own right. Off the back of that I got into this whole idea that the notion of creating a videotape at the end of it was a bit secondary. What was really interesting was that

process. It was almost like a performance in the edit suite. What I then started to do was to try and make these videotapes that I kind of subtitled, *NLV*, which was Non-Linear Video with the notion that actually you could watch them backwards or you could watch them at half-speed or you could watch them at double speed. It didn't matter that they were actually textural objects that were in essence the output of a process. Actually, the process was the interesting thing. I was always really disappointed with the fact that what came out of it was a single, linear tape. I guess that was a precursor to a notion of generative systems and interactivity, which actually were still a little bit further down the line. That is what I got more involved in the 1990's, but during that period in the 80's, I was very much into exploring the analogue device. I was interested in the analogue technological device as a kind of studio facility that could be generative in its own right.

SP: You've been talking about these works and the facilities you were trying to win access to. Let's locate this, because the majority of the people we are talking to were based in the South East and you weren't?

CG: I studied in Sheffield and I carried on an association with Sheffield after I left but I did return to London. I was from London originally and a lot of the production activity that I ended up doing was though LVA. I got involved fairly early on, probably around the mid 80's. I was running workshops at LVA and actually teaching other people how to use the edit suite. I'd come out of a situation where the course that I did in Sheffield was one of the first courses to equip with relatively advanced video editing facilities. So, I had the opportunity to be a little bit ahead of some other people in terms of the technology. I used to go around quite a lot of different facilities and do that stuff. I used to run workshops on similar kinds of things at the Lighthouse in Brighton as well. I had quite a strong association also with a facility in Leicester of all places because somebody I worked with quite a lot, was based in Leicester. They ran a video facility that was part of a community arts workshop, and again it was fairly well resourced so I would spend large amounts of time up there working with him on some of those projects. Interestingly, between us, we got involved in purchasing some equipment and exploring what that equipment did but the great bit of equipment was the Fairlight CVI, which was the computer video instrument that was produced in Australia by Fairlight. I don't think many of them were in existence. I think my understanding is that the person who designed it jumped off a cliff or something. They had their moment but actually nothing really grew from them because I suppose, very high-level professional systems came in and took over. I guess it was only when you started to get the software systems on the computer, which would do some of those same tasks, that some of that activity started to resurface again. But, the Fairlight was a very distinct and fairly unique instrument.

SP: Yes, it had too much of its own imprint in the work. I spent hours playing with it but never released any work from it. It was fun trying to work it, but somehow, somebody else's authorship seemed to be imprinted on it all the time.

CG: There was something I quite liked about that. Some of the pieces of work that I did in the 1990's were very much celebrating the aesthetic of the cheap computer. I got quite interested in that and I think some of that comes from the Fairlight because it had a lot of the aesthetic of the Commodore Amiga or the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, before those things

really became tools for production of visual media, before they became art tools. It was a curious device and I suppose oddly enough, there are one or two works that have been made over the years that are in effect the first exploration of a Fairlight CVI preset. Those works still stand up, even though they are simply an exposition of a preset effect on this technology.

SP: What was the name of the facility house in Leicester?

CG: It was called the Fosse Neighbourhood Centre. It was with St, St-John Walker, the person I worked with a lot. He used to work for a community arts group that was based in that centre. Leicester, interestingly enough, had a really strong policy of developing neighbourhood centres with community arts facilities built into them. So, they had quite a lot of different, well-resourced sound studios and things like that, spread out across the city. I don't know whether or not they generated many things that reached a national level though.

SP: Can expand on some of the context and ideas that influenced you?

CG: I suppose I've always had this sense that my particular engagement with video art practice was coloured by a sense that in order to make works you needed to have access to the facilities. A lot of the time, especially during that period, a lot of the facilities were created through support that was directly or indirectly from Metropolitan authorities, and often with a fairly strong political resonance actually informing what those resource centres were about. So, there was this sense that one was exploring a set of processes to do with being creative around these tools, but it was actually done within this context of a whole set of fairly live and powerful issues that were being played out within that same domain. I think that was obviously reflected in the festivals like Bracknell. The National Video Festival would be showing a lot of work that was essentially single issue, politically generated video work alongside work by artists from around the globe. Often there was quite a lot of crossover. There were obviously a lot of artists for whom that was a very special attraction, who wanted to make works that did cross over between those genres, like Tina Keane and Sandra Lahire. They were making works that were fairly overt political statements at the same time as making works that were referencing contemporary art practice. I think that was a really powerful thing at that time. There was almost a sense that it was actually quite hard to make. The motivation to make a work that existed outside of that wasn't really there. I was quite excited by the idea that there was a political motivation that you needed to find within your work. I was excited by the idea that it needed to have some kind of edge that was informed by a political consciousness. For me, that seemed quite exciting at the time. The idea of making works that existed within a gallery context that had those ideas within them was very much a part of that. Then the sense that you were also engaging with a medium that up to that point was seen as very inaccessible, and was seen as being somehow politically part of the establishment, suddenly the very act of making a video was a political act. There was the idea that you could document things that television wouldn't document. You could edit and show things and share things that actually would never be seen on television. That started to become a big part of the whole consciousness around working with that technology. Places like

Fantasy Factory, The Moonshine, West London Video and all those different resources were part of that and crossing over between those approaches.

SP: Yes, there is a strong tradition in Britain and to some extent in America, although eventually they became completely different worlds in America. There was always this sort of resonance or oscillation in England, in particular. It was not so true in Europe.

CG: I think my experience was very, very localised at that time. I didn't really have a strong sense of what was going on elsewhere. I might have seen the odd work by artists when it was brought over to the UK, but it was very much informed by a fairly 'on the ground', 'in London' perspective of the GLC and the small-scale independent movements that were growing in response to a fairly long period of conservative government. The sense that, by having access to these kinds of technologies, you could play out a lot of different ideas in a lot of different spaces. Some of that was politicised but actually a lot of it was just suggesting that, "Wouldn't it be great to take a whole bunch of tellies into a night-club and hook them up to a camera and actually create a fabulous light experience that had never been seen before". It was very much a celebration of the potential of the medium and the fact that it was an open door that you could explore.

SP: Yes, there was always the notion of open doors. There was also a sense of elitism embedded in the system because the technology was expensive. There was a sort of vetting procedure of the means of production and who had access to it.

CG: I remember editing at LVA and being incredibly nervous that somebody would come in and find out that I was actually editing a pop video for a band. I remember thinking that I would be crucified. I'd be ordered to report before a committee, I would be lined up and there would be half a dozen very stern people who would kind of tell me off for not conforming to the principles of the organisation. But, it was fine. That was in the fairly early days.

SP: You've mentioned St John Walker, but who else do you think resonated with you?

CG: What I remember about that time, was that when I came out of Sheffield, there was a whole bunch of people that kind of came out in the years that just followed, who were incredible video virtuoso people. They were so skilled and so obsessive about the editing process. They would be so creative with the process of editing. It was people like Sven Harding, Colin Scott and obviously Lei Cox who went on to Dundee. They were working to eek out every last quality of the surface of the screen, but actually to create things going on within that, that were unlike anything I had seen before. It was almost like these people were DJs with video, long before that really became something talked about more recently. They would go into an edit suite and they would just obsessively play with material in order to create these montages. You could endlessly repeat things. You could freeze things. You could start effects on the colour of the picture, then repeat things and then layer them back on top of each other. There were very video-specific things to do with keying and so on. It was all about playing with those textures because that palette had suddenly become available to people. Those people for me were really exciting. I was really, really looking forward to seeing what they would do next. Colin Scott made *The Stakka Tapes*, which was this mad thing that I've still never seen the like of since. It was an hour of spinning

and morphing 3D shapes. It was a totally 1980's thing but a really big trippy videotape that was sold through Virgin.

SP: The real asset to that was the compositing, which was terribly difficult to do because it was pre-digital. That's another reason why it seems so obsessive because it was very demanding to be able to do it well.

CG: Yes, there was almost a sense in which it mirrored what I suppose is a fairly discredited moment in musical history, where people were playing with analogue synthesisers, patching them, recycling them, looping them and just exploring what would happen if you plugged A into B into C and pressed the start button. Then what came at the end was something that was unlike anything that you might have experienced before. That was interesting whether or not it produced things of lasting resonance. I'm still not sure. I guess part of the task was to pick through some of that and find out those things that did have some of that resonance. I was just having an argument with somebody the other day about whether or not the particular aesthetic of mid-1980's video will actually have resurgence, the idea of very brittle live keying effects and things like that. Whether or not that particular aesthetic will be rediscovered and reused, I fully expect that it will, but I think the jury's out on that.

SP: You are describing yourself as a bit peripheral. Do you view yourself that way? You talk about it as though there was a mainstream going on and you were outside of that.

CG: The interesting thing for me was that I was peripheral, but I went to a lot of things and I got very interested in looking at a lot of work. I went to a lot of shows at the AIR Gallery. Whenever you went to those things, you always knew 60% of people there. Then there was the 30% of the people who had wandered in off the street accidentally. Then there was the 10% of people who actually seemed to turn up to a lot of these things but didn't necessarily talk to anybody else because they didn't know them. I was always in that 10%, for quite a long period of time until I eventually plucked up the nerve to say, "Actually, I've got work showing in this one". Then I had conversations with people. I went to the AIR Gallery and I went to LVA. It was just the screen stuff on Frith Street in the space upstairs. I went to Bracknell and the Café Gallery and all those sorts of places when they were showing stuff. I would go to all of those. I did a post-graduate. I did a Masters at North East London Polytechnic, which was slightly accidental, because North East London Polytechnic was my local. When I went back to London it was my local college. I just walked in one day and said, "Look I'd really like to use your equipment, can I use it?" and they said, "Well, we can't really do that but we've got this School of Independent Study, and if you register with them, you can come in as a student". So, I registered with them and then found out that I'd registered for a Masters Programme. So, I then went in and did my stuff in the North East London Polytechnic and came out at the end of that with a Masters. The people who were teaching there at the time were people like Tony Sinden, John Smith, Alison Winkle and Steve Hawley. There was a whole bunch of people who were actually really good to be working with at that time. Michael Maziere was technician there in the Film and Video Department followed by Nick Houghton, who studied there and was a technician there as well. There was a whole bunch of people that it was suddenly

really good to be hanging out with, watching what they were doing and connecting with some of that stuff that was going on in the rest of the city.

SP: It's extraordinary the way you say it was because, "I went into my local Polytechnic and found so many very significant names in there" Were you unaware of them at the time?

CG: I'm sure it wasn't as serendipitous as all that. It's really hard to untangle these things because Steve Hawley then got the job up in Sheffield and I did some cover in Sheffield before Steve got that job. There was all this to-ing and fro-ing but I can't be certain who I knew before I went to the North East London Polytechnic. I'm sure I must have come across Tony Sinden and John Smith. I'm absolutely sure. I am sure because we had a really good programme of visiting lecturers when I was in Sheffield. We would also go and visit a lot of other institutions. In fact, I think the first time I met you I was probably coming to Coventry to a show a student show there, Events Week.

SP: Yes. Was there a gap between your Undergraduate at Sheffield and then your Masters?

CG: There was about a year in between I think. I sort of dribbled into the Masters. I think it was probably at least a year. It maybe a little bit more. The other great thing about the Masters was that they'd just bought, or they inherited or something, a Spaceward Microsystems Graphics Computer that nobody knew how to use. Basically, I was just given that to play with for a couple of years. I ended up making some fairly dodgy pieces of work, but exploring some of the potential for those high-end graphic systems.

SP: It was like the poor man's Paintbox, wasn't it?

CG: It was, yes.

SP: What do you mean by 'dodgy' works?

CG: They just weren't very good. They were just made by getting very interested again in how it was possible to overlay fairly complex and sophisticated graphics on to video. Also, by not always offering the flexibility to make the piece that you might have wanted and having to go through that process of trying it all out, testing things and then standing back and seeing how they look. I think it was the kind of thing that characterised all of that time. It came from that whole idea that making a piece of work, for me, was a bit like a performance that nobody came to. So, you would go into the edit suite and you would spend a day performing and then you would come out at the end, not look at what you had done for about a week, then come back, look at it and say, "Actually, I think that's probably OK. I think that probably sort of represented what I was hoping to do when I went into that space". It didn't always happen like that, so consequently you might just tape over it and start again. But, there was this sense, for me anyway, that the production of the video work was about bringing together a loose collection of ideas and sensibilities that were of that moment, with a set of raw materials. I would take them into the suite and blast them through, seeing where it went. It was very much like that studio mentality, a bit like making a painting.

SP: I suppose thinking like that aligns you with people who think of it as having plasticity. A lot of people don't recognise that. Certainly it's the way I work. I would spend hundreds of hours playing with different types of material and tape, compositing layers and stuff like that, and actually never really been too concerned about producing a work, which had a start, beginning or end. That resonates with people like David Larcher, who is probably the acme of this. He rarely commits to an end, which he then releases as a work. Even the works that are his canon, most people are never really clear on which version they've seen. There are so many versions.

CG: Yes, it's funny. I suppose we never really kind of bottomed that one out. It's almost like the idea of versioning those works. It would have been quite interesting to have a version 1, a version 1.1, a version 1.2 or whatever, based the idea that they are evolving objects. You can revisit them and reversion them. It seems to me to be quite a sensible thing especially in the age of computer technology.

SP: One talks about proto-cinema. To my mind, the 80's were a bit proto-digital weren't they?

CG: The whole development of digital technology was obviously totally technologically determined. There was this sense for me, that looking back at all the stuff that I did in the 80's, I was actually waiting for the computer to come along so I could actually do the things that I originally intended to do. Everything up to that point was almost like training for the moment when that technology would come along. So, you had the sensibilities that might be able to be applied creatively to that tool. I dug out a little thing that I wrote for Undercut in 1990, which was all about generative and interactive works and about the feedback loop between the artist and the audience. It was about how the technological tools are coming along, but we mediate that. For me, that was almost a signing off point for the 1980's. Now it's reaching the point when some of the stuff is really going to become possible. Personally, I'd been playing around with that and attempting to use the language that was developing around that technology, but the technology itself hadn't yet been in a position to fulfil the expectations and inspirations that I had.

SP: So you waiting for the computer to catch up? That's a different perspective from what most people have, because most of them think it's the computer that's ahead of the game but in fact, there's a delay. Do you think it was 1990 when the computer in this context caught up?

CG: Yes, I think I bought my first Commodore Amiga probably about 1987, and made works with the Amiga all the way through to 1990/'91. I originally used the Commodore Amiga as an image generation tool and then started to make works that were completely interactive. So the works they actually ran off the computer, rather than using the computer as a tool for generating imagery that would then be used in linear video. I made that switch, personally, around about 1991/'92.

SP: When talking about technological processes and methods, the other strand that seems to crop up is locating it within what we call, 'community agitprop'. When did Liverpool start figuring in the landscape?

CG: The first Video Positive was 1989 and I showed something in '89, went up and then actually moved up there in 1990/'91. I was up and down to start work on Video Positive '91, so my connection with Liverpool started at the beginning of the 90's and ran through that decade. I think Video Positive '89, lead by Eddie Berg but working with Steve Littman, imported a lot of things into Liverpool to make them happen. In 1991, it started to generate a lot more activity locally. We kicked off MITES in 1992, which carried on a trajectory that I've been on. It was to do with linking together the process of trying to make available technical opportunities for artists, which up until that time, for me, had largely been about production activity at the back end of the 80's. I suddenly realised that a lot of the logistical issues were just trying to show work and getting work seen. Those issues were hampered by the lack of exhibition technology. It shifted towards trying to do work that would be supported. I started working at LVA at the back end of the 80's. I'd been teaching courses and then took up the role of Facility and Training Manager. In that job, I ran the facilities and the training courses, and I grew some of that activity around exhibition technology.

SP: How long were you doing that, even without the formal title?

CG: I was employed by LVA for about 2 years only, but they were very chaotic years it has to be said. I think about 2 months after I was appointed, the director resigned. It was just chaos. But I spent a lot of time running courses for LVA. I was working on the design of the courses around editing and video graphics, as we used to call it. So while I was running the courses, I was getting to know quite a lot of people though teaching them and developing an understanding of the potential of those tools.

SP: So, apart from making your own work, you were facilitating a lot of other people to make their work?

CG: I've done odd bits. I did some editing for Andy Stones. I did a really big complex edit with him. It was a 4-machine video edit we did for that one, which was quite interesting. During the time that I was at LVA, James Gormley was still around. James would often be the hands-on editor who would work with people. Although, there were various moments when James' patience was tried fully and exhausted and I had to help out. I helped specifically on things like Susan Hillar's *An Entertainment,* which I ended up doing some work on. But, James would often do a lot of that work. We had people like Marty St James and Anne Wilson working on the *Video Portraits* that they did for the National Portrait Gallery. They came through at that time.

SP: It has to be said, those edit suites were incredibly complex rooms. They were edit-'suites' as opposed to a desktop. It's on the desktop now, but before it was a suite. We often had sofas in the room. There were lots of ballistics in terms of handling the machinery and tapes.

CG: Yes, it was actually quite good fun. When I was at LVA, LVA had this big issue that it had a whole bunch of equipment that it had bought a long time previously, and it was all now deeply unfashionable. There was a need to upgrade. When I was there, I went through the process of making an application for new money to upgrade it all and then procured all of this new stuff. So, we actually built the first proper three-machine list management edit-

suite with full 3D effects and everything going onto high-band U-matic SP. There was this kind of lovely moment of moving all that up a stage and suddenly having a lot of artists coming back in a saying, "You've now got facilities that we want to use". I started to do things with them and introduced them to the new facilities that were there. I would hope that I was adding a level of technological sophistication to what it was they wanted to do with that work. But actually, I don't know much of that work now, that might have come about at that time. Marty St James' and Anne Wilson's portraits for the National Portrait Gallery were done at that time. I definitely remember that. They benefited a lot from that higher quality and that sophistication. But I think it's probably fair to say that Dundee had cornered the market at that time. A lot of that production activity was channelled through Duncan of Jordanstone certainly with the kind of artists who were producing named work. We probably had a lot of people passing through LVA who were at different stages in their careers. Also, there was a lot of work that was kind of crossover work between quasi-broadcast works. These were works that might have been commissioned for broadcast but actually would only go out in a graveyard slot. Then they had a life within the network outside of that. There was a lot of that going on. Certainly the mixed economy notion had taken over, big style, at that point. There was a huge prerogative to bring in an income against those facilities, so it was probably less of a service directly for artists, than it had been previously.

SP: You talk about Dundee, but I don't think it was that dissimilar. There are all sorts of mythologies. With funding, you remarked that you were unsuccessful in funding. Yet, of course, you were associated with lots of organisations that you were helping being successful in getting funding.

CG: I think it's probably fair to say, I've always been a lot more successful with the work that I've done around organisations, than I have around my own work. I've never really had money when I was based in England. I don't think I was ever successful in getting money from the Arts Council in England personally. I think I did get some money through third parties, so I've been part of something that might have been an application. I kept applying for things, for grants to produce things but certainly in the 80's I was never successful in actually getting anything to support the work that I wanted to make. But, to be honest, I probably I wasn't going the right way about things. I wasn't saying the right things. I wasn't necessarily playing to the requirements of the committee at that time. All of that was pretty alien to me. The way in which I was working at that time was that it was actually a distraction to think about trying to get money to do what I wanted to do. It was actually possible for me to find resources to make work. Then when I made that work there were places to get that work seen. I did that off my own back. It seemed to be kind of part of what I was doing at that time. I suppose I was living that kind of post-student existence where I wasn't that bothered about earning a living. I was dipping in and out of various things, doing workshop activities, which brought in a bit of an income. Making the work was something that I enjoyed doing and wanted to do but actually never really quite got the system of how to get money to support my own practice.

SP: The practice was happening so you tried an alternative way of doing it presumably? You were technician, a facilitator, an artist, a teacher and a trainer.

CG: Yes, in some ways the whole thing for me was much more akin to being in a band than actually being an artist. Having been somebody that always have been in bands and being part of what I did, the grafting onto that, of the processes that were involved in videos, actually seemed a very natural adjunct. Throughout the 80's a big part of what I did was about making video works that accompanied the process of being in a band. They were shown in nightclubs and were about the performance activity that would be going on at the Fridge in Brixton rather than some of the more conventional art house venues. It was happening in these alternative places. For a lot of it probably, that was the right place for it. I wouldn't pretend that it had the sensibilities or subtleties that the art projects might have had, but I was interested in exploring the possibilities of that world. I was very interested in what was going on in that world. I was really interested in the work that was being made in that space. But, I think I always struggled to cross over from making it work for me, in that particular context, into becoming that term: 'an artist'. To be honest, especially when I was working at LVA, I would come across hundreds of other people that would be doing that same kind of thing. It was a relatively common thing and probably still is, except maybe now, the way people work is slightly different in that they veer between other kinds of technology, web based or interactive, into making artworks.

SP: You could say that the edit suite was very much like the sound studio. It was always slightly behind sound technology. Things are much quicker in technology in sound, and they are cheaper.

CG: Yes, the bandwidth of sound is smaller so therefore you can do things with it before you can do things technologically with video. That's exactly how I viewed it. I really enjoyed using the sound studio as a studio, as a palette to create things. Then I would go off into the video suites and do the same thing in the video suite. Then I would often try and stitch those two things together to make a final product. I really envied people like St John Walker and Colin Scott and Sven Harving because of their consummate skill in that editing process and their ability to take all that stuff and stitch it into a very beautifully choreographed final work. For me, that was never that essential. It was always a bit of disappointment to actually make that final work. I very much so got into the whole idea of that 80's thing, about music being released in lots of different mixes. I liked the idea that you would make a video and you would release it in lots of different mixes. You could possibly even make them so that the mixes could be recreated by the user as well. So, there were lots of ideas that the technology never really kept up with.

SP: When talking about your own funding applications, you talk about playing to the requirements of the 'committee'. What do you mean by that?

CG: Yes, it was a committee, which I only learnt about much more recently in fact. I didn't know who the committee was, but I knew there was a committee because I used to get letters back from David Curtis. They were very nice letters. He even sent me letters saying, "This isn't quite working, maybe we should have a chat to see how we could improve your chances." I can't remember what he said but it was something along those lines. It was supportive.

SP: You're referring to the Arts Council. Greater London Arts was the other committee.

CG: Yes. I worked very closely with them when I was at LVA but I don't think I've ever worked with them as an artist making things. I'd snaffle little pots of money for making community-based projects from very local sources and often off the back of those would make things that would buy me time at the edit suite to make other things. I never got direct support to make the things that ended up getting distributed by LVA. They were always just done haphazardly.

SP: With the exhibition and distribution, did you have a preference, for example in the art gallery or the nightclub?

CG: To be honest, it always seemed to happen slightly out there. I remember going to LVA when I left Sheffield with a whole bunch of tapes because basically that's what it was suggested I should do. So, I turned up at LVA and gave these tapes over and said, "Here are some tapes that I would quite like to put into distribution". I never really knew what that meant. I never really knew want might happen to them. I think it was probably largely because Jez Welsh picked them up and included some of my works in packages that then got toured quite quickly. I came out of Sheffield in 1983, and in 1984 the piece that I made, *Warning Attack and Recovery*, went into the British-Canadian Video Exchange, which at the time was a relatively big show of work. Suddenly, I felt "Oh this is quite nice". I was quite exposed in all of this stuff, but I didn't go and see much of it at the time. I couldn't go and see anything in Canada, which is where it was shown. But, the work would then get picked up and it would surface in Montbeliard and Video Brazil. I'd just get these little reports back saying, "This work had been shown in these circumstances". I never went to any of the international stuff. I never really participated in that, but it was really nice and really cool to think that the work was out there doing the rounds. I always had a very strong sense that actually what I wanted to explore was an idea of the installation of the environment of video, within a controlled context. It was the idea of video as a performance, not necessarily performance with video, but more in the showing of it as almost a theatrically controlled environment, in which you would then show a video event. That always really appealed to me. Consequently, I did a few of those. Some of those were half-installations, half presentations shown in fairly marginal spaces. I did a video installation with St John Walker in the Leicester Museum. I did a piece for a little gallery that I founded in Walthamstow called The Changing Room Gallery. That was all about aircraft flying over London. There were all installed pieces. That was what I really liked. I thought that was consummate video, being able to take those trappings of video, the furniture, the time-base, the sound, the vision into a space and make that a singular experience.

SP: You are talking about them almost like a performance. It sounds slightly positioned not as we understand contemporary installations now.

CG: Yes. I have a rant that I think I've exhausted pretty much over the last 10 years. The one thing that, for me, video art lost out on was the fact that it was always a time-based medium. It is an obvious thing to say, but it is a time-based medium. A lot of video works that you see now, the time base is actually largely irrelevant to it. It is a piece that exists over time but actually the time dynamic has been completely flattened within it. In effect,

the idea of the work, that is varying over time, even if it's in a musical structure or if it's in a narrative structure, has actually pretty much gone. It's very rare to see works now that actually use that, partly because audiences just don't know how to engage with it and partly because the mechanism for engaging with the time-based work is not there. When we show a video installation work we show it in a gallery. People's experience of visiting a gallery is that they go in and they invest 90 seconds with a piece of work. Then they move on to the next work. If you've made a work that's 15 – 20 minutes long and actually has a very significant time dynamic, we don't actually have an effective mechanism for presenting that to an audience, because when we show it, we just show it as an image on a wall. We don't tell people where they might be within that sequence. So, if there is a 50 minute piece and you walk in and it's up to 5 minutes 20 seconds, there's no way of knowing that. Effectively, most audiences when they experience that get quite disenfranchised with that whole experience. They feel that don't know where they are with the work. Gradually, to be successful, artists iron out that time dynamic. So, if you do walk in at 5 minutes 20 of a 50 minutes work, it is not that different from 10 minutes 20, and you can effectively plug into that time sequence. I always thought that we really lost something with video when we failed to find the right mechanism to engage with an audience in a way that actually reflected the time dynamic that was possible within video. I don't know if that will ever come back or if it's possible.

SP: You say that we lost it. I don't think it was about loss. It was more about a different intent by different generation. To my mind, what's called 'video installation' actually hasn't really got anything to do with video in the context of the period that we are dealing with. Actually, what we're talking about is a sculpture. It's art in a convention. It's come back to the convention. The time is not important at all. It's there but it's not really. It's denied. That's why it's all short cycles.

CG: Yes. There's also notion of the edit. The edit is actually a really profound interruption in a lot of contemporary video art works. It's seen as being quite a challenge to an audience to put an edit into a piece of video work. The edit is a really interesting thing. It needs to be explored in the context of the gallery environment but it hasn't. Maybe there were people that were teasing away at that 10 or 15 years ago, but actually it's just not there now. It just isn't seen as being relevant.

SP: Were there any curators who were important to the exhibition of your works?

CG: The person that made a difference for me was Jez Welsh. In his role at LVA at the time, he was very active in picking up on the work that I'd made. He championed it, built it into packages and put it out. Almost single handily, he gave me a bit of a profile in terms of work that was seen at that time. If other people showed work that I'd made at that time I would guess it was probably pretty much on his recommendation. I would have made work that would have shown in festivals that I might have submitted directly, but a lot of the stuff that came out of LVA, especially the touring packages and international packages, that was pretty much all driven by him. Outside of that, I'm not entirely sure I could actually identify anyone. There was the odd occasion with things like Bracknell, where work might get packaged up. It was part of the festival, which happened occasionally. People like Steve Bode, at the back of the 80's, were packaging up works for things like the Bracknell

Video Festival and possibly even elsewhere in London. There were odd things, like some of the screenings that happened at the London Filmmakers Co-op, and stuff that happened as part of the London Film Festival, but again most of that was looped through LVA and Jez at some point. I also got asked to take part in something called Channel 5, which was a small festival of installation activity that took place in a series of TV rental showrooms across London. Again, that was something that Jez put together. A lot of that seemed to be through LVA. Outside of LVA, I don't think I would have had much opportunity of exposure that wasn't just completely self-generated. I organised something called the East London Film Festival that took place in The Tom Allen Centre in Stratford. I started that off and was interested in getting people along to show their work. Then I got involved in starting a gallery in Walthamstow at the time as well. That was called The Changing Room Gallery. I would show work as part of that, but it was nothing like the exposure that happened through LVA. For me, during that time, it was either Jez or it was stuff that I was doing myself.

SP: Does The Changing Room Gallery still exist?

CG: I think it is still going but there are a few galleries called Changing Rooms. We actually took over an old changing room in the middle of the park, which was basically derelict and turned it into a gallery. I think probably a few other people have done a similar kind of thing and made them workable. It was in Walthamstow interestingly enough with Helen Sloan who was somebody who curated work, and does a lot of work in new media now as well, all around the country.

SP: You hinted before that you didn't have much involvement in Europe, did you never go to European festivals?

CG: I would have gone to the Worldwide Video Festival at the beginning of the 90's, but certainly during the 80's, they just seemed like entirely alien, other worldly places to me. Plus there wasn't the funding infrastructure around. I loved the fact that they happened and I loved going through the catalogues. I poured over all that stuff but I never actually thought they would be something that I would actively participate in. It just felt like they were happening in another universe.

SP: What critical feedback did your work attract? And, was there any particular contextual critical writing that you would agree or disagree with?

CG: In terms of written stuff, I ended up having quite a good relationship with the late Nick Houghton. He operated in that part of the world at the same time that I was there. Nick wrote a lot for Independent Media and then became editor of Independent Media magazine. Independent Media was my bible during that time because I think it reflected the cross-over between the kind of political agitation, the alternative TV stuff and all the way through to the stuff that was being done by artists. I always enjoyed Nick's particular insight. He was a very sparky, jazzy writer but not without a critical edge. His focus for his writing was to hook into something that was not necessarily about an academic analysis of the work. It was actually about "how can I write interesting things about this stuff". Consequently, most of the things I made during that time would end up getting reviewed in

Independent Media. So, I had this quite flattering, but critical process where I felt like if I made a piece of work, I could actually get it reviewed quite quickly in the publication that I personally thought was probably most significant in the world that I was inhabiting at that time. Outside of that larger and I guess more analytical and possibly academic writing, there was probably not very much. I don't know how much there actually was at that time anyway because most of it seemed to be live magazine criticism, which was reviews and promotional stuff around things like City Limits and Timeout and even things like The Face. I think Steve Bode wrote a couple of pieces about things that I'd been involved in for The Face. So, it was cropping up in style magazines as much as it was in critical academic publications. There would be the occasional essay, again probably by Jez Welsh where I would often get name-checked as part of a certain generation of artists working with video, but it was very rarely done as a critical analysis of work that I'd made. It was more "Here is a whole bunch of people that are doing stuff" and "let's see what they do next". To be honest, I don't know if I ever read much that was really proper critical text in that time. I suppose there was a lot written about the aspirations of the medium, and not much written about the clear-sighted critical positioning of where it was at, at that time. There were a lot of people writing about hopefully what was going on rather than analytically about what was going on.

SP: Did you have any involvement in the franchise agreement in the workshops for Channel 4?

CG: Yes. For me, it was a really interesting thing. The influence of Channel 4 and television around that time was underplayed from my perspective, because there was this incredible sense of optimism about television as a platform that followed on from the creation of Channel 4 in 1982. There was a sense that suddenly this platform was available. Rather than having an audience of 30 people in a drafty room in Kentish Town, suddenly you could make stuff that would have a massive audience. Even if it was 25,000 it would be massive. It would be real budgets and it would be a real production process. That was really, really exciting. The history of this has never been really written as far as I am aware, but there was a programme that went out on Sundays, called Channel 5. I think it started at about 11 o'clock in the morning and it went on till 7, 8 or 9 o'clock at night. They used to broadcast from a shed that's now the site of Canary Wharf. It was the original Canary Wharf shed. I think it probably only lasted for a year or two, but they probably commissioned more new content for television in that one programme slot than anybody has ever done before or since. I think there was a sense that there were all these possibilities. You could make a 5 second piece and actually have it broadcast or you could make a mad, hour-long performance that would go on the background of this TV programme. It would somehow break through on to television, and it happened outside of a really analytical critical context. There was an absolute buzz about the fact that this medium was just exploding and opening up and the franchise agreement with the hands-off beneficence of Alan Fountain and Rod Stoneman saying, "We think it's really great that we have these workshops and we'll give you £25,000 a year, but actually we don't really want to necessarily have you out creating any content that we are going to have to show. We just think it's good that you are doing this stuff". That notion, in me anyway, instilled a sense of possibility about the fact that I was being given this space to explore, to play and try and make sense of confusing, often contradictory influences that were coming in and being centred round this particular media platform.

SP: So did LVA get money through that route?

CG: Yes, LVA was a Franchise Workshop. I think £25,000 a year was the figure. As far as I know that continued right up to the point when the Franchise Agreement was of overturned. But, people like Sean Cubit and the Independent Producers Association and the Independent Film and Television Association, all created a sense that there were all these interesting people getting involved in shaping a broadcast channel in the development of Channel 4. They were people who were coming from a perspective of not being television people. They were actually people who were interested in a media form and the creative potential of that media form. That just seemed incredibly exciting. All of that stuff that went out on Channel 4 and was probably really terrible and probably got totally slagged off, for me, was incredibly exciting. Suddenly people were really pushing the boundaries. I had been interested in working with people who were pushing the boundaries in the way that you could make something that you would put on a monitor then take that monitor into a night club or into a TV show room, or you put it in the window of a building that overlooked a busy street. That was all great, and then suddenly other people were also doing this on television. It just felt really good that all the stuff was firing off.

SP: It got slagged off by newspaper groups and the owners of television, who had a vested interest in television. It's interesting that a lot of that stuff was recycled and Janet Street Porter's programme was seen as something groovy. That was deemed ok, because it was the TV people who were recycling the ideas. Who were the people behind the Channel 5 programme?

CG: I can't remember who the producers were but was all of those presenters like Magenta Devine and people like that, who were around in the 80's. Even Janet Street-Porter was probably involved. It was just live chaos on TV, but it was opening up a slot, letting it run and just throwing the stuff out. It was totally amateurish but it was great.

SP: It was non-discriminatory. That was the thing. It was cheap and that's why it happened. At that time Channel 4 didn't care much about, or didn't have an idea of, running on Sundays. It was like, "You could have it", to Alan Fountain and Rod Stoneman. "Do what you like". So they thought, "Yeah, we can fill 8 hours."

CG: Yes, there was stuff like the 11th Hour slots and there was a series that was done by Andy Littman, who used to write for City Limits, about video art. So you would get this stuff being shown and being talked about. It was made in Britain, by people who you would encounter dipping in and out of television, and then back into the gallery. That was great. There was something quite nice about the fact that that connection opened up across those boundaries for a while.

SP: It's interesting because Channel 4 was set up very much so as Jeremy Isaac's patrician, and letting everything that was possible happen. Then there was the infamous apparition of Michael Grade, who walked into the building, referred to the 11th Hour or Ghost in the Machine, and said "I want that off my Channel". It was all gone almost over night.

CG: Yes. It had felt quite an exciting moment. I don't know if it really was an exciting moment because I was at an age where I was ready to be excited by those things, or whether or not there was genuinely this shifting of paradigms around the notion of broadcast media and creative practice.

SP: I think there was. I think if one did a little research on that programme, I think you would see a lot of analogies now with what we've got in multi-channels. They were doing it on one channel, but it seemed multi-channelled.

CG: There was all that stuff with text moving across the screen and little inserts. It was seen as being just the weirdest thing possible then, to actually have text running across the bottom of the screen when somebody was talking at you. It's the absolute norm now for broadcast.

SP: Did you feel that you were involved in any contemporaneous philosophical or conceptual debates?

CG: I got slightly inadvertently wrapped into the whole scratch thing, which I suppose was less a debate and more of like wrapping up a bunch of things into a particular kind of cultural product. I think I was probably quite happy to be wrapped up in that because I quite admired that work. But, I am not entirely sure that I really stacked up against some of those people who were doing that kind of stuff, like the Duvet Bothers, The Gorilla Tapes and George Barber's stuff. It had that virtuoso, editing element at the heart of it. Somebody like George is somebody who really does stuff with the edit suite and can really play with that space. I liked that. I suppose how I got wrapped up in that was because I was quite involved in that thing about the edit suite being the space in which you play out ideals around the creative process. I suppose, to be honest, it wasn't debated as much as it was just promoted. It was very packageable. I think there was a point at which video art, in the UK anyway, suddenly discovered that it had the potential for a level of wider audience appeal than it might have actually encountered previously. So that work was packaged up and released as such. Because of the intensity of the production process that was being used at that time, people were making works that were 1 minute and 2 minutes and 3 minutes, whereas until that time, to quote Steve Hawley, "the only defining characteristic about most video art, is that it is 25% too long." Then suddenly it was tight and it was funny and it was punchy and it was bright. Suddenly it became a big thing. But, I am not entirely sure that there was much real critical analysis of it, even though some of that work was really powerful and it stood the test of time. The Duvets Brothers' *Blue Monday,* which still resurfaces every now and again and the fabulous Gorilla Tapes' Ronald Regan stuff was absolutely groundbreaking stuff.

SP: It went sub-cultural didn't it but sort of semi-mainstream subculture. The art world was not interested in it at all. I think it's one of the answers on why British video became invisible in an international context. For most people in Europe and America, they ask, "Did you guys have any video art in the UK?" But there was all this activity going on, only it was on Channel 4 and it was in the clubs. It wasn't in the gallery.

CG: Yes, it's quite interesting that. Having gone through that cycle of studying and then postgraduate and making all that work, I didn't actually hear the name Bruce Nauman until the early 90's. Suddenly, I was being told that Bruce Nauman was the defining voice, influencing a whole generation of people who've been engaged with video. For me, that simply wasn't the case. There was all this other stuff that was actually much closer at hand. Perhaps some of the American stuff, that had been influential, was not necessarily stuff that was coming out of that sculptural perspective. It was people who were wrestling with how to make something televisual, and how to make something that has a time dynamic. Some of the early Gary Hill works, and I suppose even the Bill Viola works, were wrestling with that whole idea of how to generate something that does work over time, and that actually plays to the specificities of the video medium. The work by Max Almy, Joan Jonas, all those pieces, went down that route. They were really important. For me, sometimes I don't recognise my own history. I think I've had this history in this medium, but then when I read about it critically, I discover that actually the history that is being defined as the one that I should be recognising and inheriting, is actually something that just seems entirely alien.

SP: Yes. That is the problem with history. It's who is writing it and it's being re-written all the time. For me it was very much that there were parallel things going on and sometimes overlapping. I was one of those people that started on a Fine Art role. I dipped my toe in the things that you are talking about, but I kept it separate. I knew who Nauman was in 1972, so it didn't surprise me when he cropped up again. But certainly, British video disappeared for almost 10 years and then re-emerged. You could say 're-emerged', but actually it didn't. I call it 'the white cube striking back'.

CG: Yes. There are people like Gillian Wearing, who still wrestle with the time dynamic. I think she is really interesting because of that. She is still trying to explore those things. I suppose the flip side of the effect of Channel 4 was that it provided opportunities for those artists that had come up through that slightly ambiguous hybrid route, to suddenly say, "Actually, I can make a living at this. I can actually do a job now." Every now and again, if I'm watching Channel 4, I'll watch the credit roll and say "Oh God, I remember that person. They showed a piece in The Café Gallery in 1987" or "I remember seeing it in Bracknell." You just see this name go past and they will be credited now as producers. There are a few of them around. There are the people who do broadcast stuff who came out of that whole independent movement. There are people like John Doe, The Duvet Brothers, and then people who have just completely vanished like Mark Wilcox, who made what I think, are some of the best video works I've ever seen, *Man of the Crowd* and *Boxing for Boys.* They are absolutely fabulous pieces, but he just vanished completely. I don't know if he has ended up working in broadcast, because obviously he had some of the skills that might have been in demand in that area. There were big opportunities there to explore that. There are an awful lot of people that you now see on those credits who were previously doing that. They crop up in funny places as well.

ES: What are the personal themes in your works and why did you feel video was an appropriate medium?

CG: The themes that ended up being used in the work were nodding in the direction of quasi-issue based political consciousness. *War, Attack and Recovery* was all about the notion of apocalypse. It was a weird thing because when I made that piece I was also engaged with doing this massive photo essay, where I was going around Britain photographing all of the secret places. I was photographing bunkers and communications installations. I was really interested in the topographic photographic movement of just photographing these places that have certain resonances. Visually they are very dull, so there was a balance there between these incredibly powerful places that were very dull to look at. I was photographing them, but by making a video work that was very bright, in your face and colourful about those same issues allowed me to try to balance those different aesthetics. What then came out of that was that I started to hang on to some of those things through the works. So, the next piece I made was a piece called *Electrical Development* which is a piece I actually still quite like. It was all about privatisation although I would challenge anybody to perhaps find that within it, but it was playing with the imagery of being surrounded by machinery and being surrounded by a fluidity of technology, which you were just amazed by. It was going all around you but actually when it came to it, you had no ownership over it. You were just a small part of that and it just ends. It's a piece that just ends with me reading a newspaper with news about the British Telecom share offer. Then the newspaper just catches fire and I just drop it on the floor. That's the end of the piece. Again, it was holding on to those things. I then made a piece called *Solid State Remains.* That was a video work that was based around the fact that I was quite intrigued by those same technological devices, especially military technology. I was trying to reconcile a fascination with the technology of video, which ultimately, is actually part of the same thing. It is the technology of combat and the technology of the military establishment. I was trying to reconcile that and understand what was the fascination. Why do I like this stuff? Do I like this stuff? Maybe I don't like this stuff. Am I in denial or actually should I just turn up and say, "Yes, I quite like the fact that these things exist but actually I'd rather they didn't"? It was probably not articulated terribly well within the work, but that was the idea behind the work. Gradually that spun out into some ideas that were just about an evocation of some of the principles of science and the notion of universal truths. I made a piece called *NLV7*. It's very Prince like. It's all about geometry and there are all these little clues to geometry. There are things that spin around inside it There is an old tramp, who I recorded singing underneath some arches. There is a series of texts that play out the idea of what a circle is and the perfection of a circle. There are little subtexts that actually float through it and there are little bits of imagery. It's just all about the perfection of geometry. It's part of that same trajectory in the idea of ideas and the rationalisation of a world that actually generates technology. It's about how we then reflect that back through the technology. That's something that I've carried on doing with the other media that I've worked with, more recently in terms of interactive media and computer technologies. It's the same idea. I am intrigued by the space that opens up within technology to be creative and then how you use that voice within the technology in such a way that it's reflexive on that technology. It kind of says something about the technology, but it also says something about you as the creator working within that technology. It's a subject that I haven't really explored fully because I like to work it through the works. I've never really written about that or anything, but for me, it is something that's really intriguing and I think surfaced through those works.

SP: As an addendum it would be quite good to talk about your progression in the 90's. You went to Liverpool, were involved with Video Positive, you set up MITES and became Associate Director of FACT.

CG: For me, the 80's were a time when a lot of ideas were developed, which never really saw fruition until the 1990's. Especially so, with the advent of the technology that I really wanted to explore, and the technology that would allow me to try out the things that I wanted to try out. In terms of an intellectual pursuit what it is to make a work that is interactive and what it is to make a work that is genuinely non-linear or generative. So, that went off on its tangent. I made my first computer-based interactive work in 1992 for the Bluecoat Gallery. It was a commission and it was a piece called *The Picture That Ate My Soul*. It was actually a game built into a game's console. It was a game that was set inside the gallery. You had to explore the gallery space within the computer screen and break out into these virtual spaces. Eventually you would find your way into computer heaven, which was the end point of the game. When you got there, there were all these other computers. If you clicked on them they would recite lines from 1960's soul songs to you. It was a proper game. It had a time limit and everything. When you started playing you had 4 minutes to get round and if you didn't it would reset itself back to the beginning. For me, that was a total shift into a new world and one that I was really excited by. At the same time there was a whole process of relocating to Liverpool to work with Eddie Berg on the development of Moviola and Video Positive. I got very excited by Video Positive as a platform and as a space at that time, that was taking over from what had previously been a quite a clubby and fairly kind of low profile event in Bracknell. I really enjoyed Bracknell video festivals and I was part of that club, but it was quite clubby. Whereas, the way things were developing in Liverpool was that this was a big public festival. So I got really excited by the potential of that and the possibilities of that. I ended up getting sucked into what was happening there on the back of working with Video Positive. I went up and worked on Video Positive 1991 and did the technical management for the festival as well as making a piece for the festival. I made a piece called *Losing,* which was the last piece I made on video. It was a 4 channel video installation all about masculinity and loss that was set around the context of football. I made that piece for the Open Eye Gallery and then started to work on the development of setting up a resource base for artists working with technology. That grew into MITES, which was launched in 1992. The ideas developing around that, and my own ideas about my own work, were all beginning to take shape around the cusp of 1989/'90. That became quite a fruitful period and led to a whole bunch of things, which eventually developed into FACT and the FACT Centre. It led me to continue to explore the idea of what it is to make works that are interactive or generative and operate within that space, which were installations but also public domain, performed works as well. So I made a whole bunch of works that progressed from that but also drew on things that I'd done with video during the 80's.

SP: When was the last Video Positive?

CG: It went on until 2000. 2000 was the last one. We opened the FACT Centre in 2003. There was a Video Positive slated for 2002, when the FACT Centre was supposed to open, but it was delayed and then didn't happen. Video Positive then turned or is still turning into

something else, which probably will happen in 2008. It is now going to be called The Festival of New Cinema, but it will be something totally different.

SP: FACT is quite interesting because it was a concept which was new for Britain. Similar things are happening around the world but FACT has its uniqueness. So, when you were scoping that out, what were your models?

CG: When we did the building, the line that we kept repeating to ourselves in order to try and keep it on track, was how can we create the art gallery of the 21st Century? It's a clichéd line but we were genuinely asking what the requirements of showing the art of the 21st Century would be, and how we could begin to explore that through a building based project. That led to lots of ideas for creating spaces that were appropriate to the presentation of works that would predominantly be projected or would be coming out of darkness. It also led to the creation of spaces which would allow for longer term relationships with works that were time-based, but weren't necessarily cinemas. So that led us to ask whether there was a continuum between the idea of a space that was completely capable of being remodelled, and changed all the way through to the very fixed space of a cinema, but still having spaces in between that would provide different kinds of opportunities for audiences to experience that work, and hopefully experience work that was yet to come. We were really focused on that idea that we had to be thinking about trying to re-write some of the paradigms of the presentation of art works, because the platforms that artists might be using were due to change. But also, with half a mind to the argument that video art effectively lost its time dynamic at some point in the early 1990's. There was a need to look at what the appropriate mechanism might be, that would support work that did have an effective time dynamic but wasn't cinema or television.

SP: Looking back now, how successful do you think it was?

CG: I don't know. It's probably doing the best that it can. It's probably doing the job that it can do given the circumstances in which it's operating. What is interesting is that in Liverpool, before FACT opened, there was this huge thing that people kept asking, "What is it? What is it going to be? What is this place gonna be?" You would try and explain it and never quite get there, but now, there is this acceptance that it's just FACT. You go there and stuff happens and it's actually quite interesting. The true test will come in a few years time when somebody else opens a project and somebody says, "Oh yes, I can see now. That's actually taken this from FACT and that's now doing this stuff." Somebody told me a project is going to be opening in Derby. From what I understand, it has borrowed a whole load of artefacts from the construction of FACT. Similarly, the project that Eddie Berg is now doing on the South Bank in London, the Mediatech, is borrowing whole chunks of what FACT was about. It's early days. I like to think that in perhaps 10 or 15 years time, there will be that sense that actually it did set the seed for a few other things to grow in a particular way. I think we will probably have to wait and see on that one. One of the things that I liked about FACT, and it kind of links backs to the early video stuff, is this sense that art happens within a context. The context that I am actually interested in is almost a wilfully parochial one. I quite like the idea that art happens within a community and it is of that community. It might have international ambitions but actually what's interesting, and international about it, is the fact that it comes out of this community. It comes out of a

community of interest and a community of disinterest as well. For me, Dundee is an interesting place to be doing that, not least because of the stuff that you (SP) have done and the kind of legacy with the University, but also because of the size of the place. DCA is a big project within a relatively small city. Therefore its ability to play effectively with other partners in the city is good. Also other things in the city, the other University, and some of the external perceptions of what the city is about, creates a really interesting platform for some of those things to succeed. I hope that there is a way to go on this one before it starts to fulfil some of those objectives. I'm quite interested to see whether or not it's possible to get there.

AL: What are your current works in progress?

CG: I made a piece of work, which was a small piece of work for the show at the Tramway as part of the National Review of Live Art. I enjoyed very much making it. There is some work that I want to make at the moment but actually finding the opportunity to do that at the moment is not great. Some of the things that I've picked up here are ideas of pieces that are durational, and that are genuinely interactive and generative. I am interested in stuff to do with noise systems and the idea of seedling noise and influencing noise, to create things that are unique and distinct. It's a whole bunch of things about fluid dynamics and chaos and the creation of things that actually could only be created through very particular circumstances that people contribute to. You take these pieces of work into different locations and they create different outputs, but they are totally a product of the circumstances. In effect you are creating a template of a game between an audience and an object. The game produces the artefact and then has a life of its own. That's something I am trying to get sorted at the moment through some learning that I am trying to do with whole other set of new technologies.

SP: It has echoes of John Cage and the first piece you talked about.

CG: Yes, I'd like to think that when I look back at some point in the future, there might actually be a thread that I can unpick and see that it did make sense. I am sure there is because it feels quite consistent in the way I've done things. That's been despite failing at quite a lot in things that I've tried to do, but I actually quite like the fact that I feel like there has been a consistency. There has been a sense that A has led to B, that's led to C and that's led to D. There is a quite a lot of freedom within that because it's never been too successful so I've never been too repressed by that success.