REWIND | Artists' Video in the 70s & 80s
Interview with Chris Meigh-Andrews

Interview by Dr Jackie Hatfield, 22nd May 2006

JH: Which of your works you consider to be the most important to you and why?

CMA: In the period of the 70s and 80s there are some tapes I suppose, that were important to me at any rate, and that were shown around a little bit. The first of them-one of my earliest tapes, was called 'The Viewer's Receptive Capacity' (1978), which was made in collaboration with a woman called Gabrielle Bown, who I've lost touch with. We made about three or four tapes together and they were all produced in a television studio- as all my earliest works were.

Parallel to that collaborative work, I was also making my own stuff. 'Horizontal & Vertical' (1978) was one of four landscape pieces that I made. Then jumping a bit, there's a tape called 'The Room with a View', which was made in 1982. Then 'An Imaginary Landscape' made in 1986 and 'The Stream', which was made between 1985 and 1988. There were lots of different versions of 'The Stream' including several two screen versions, but there was also a single screen version that was completed in 1988.

It was at that point that I stopped making single screen tapes because I felt there were limitations on the way I was interested in going. I felt that I needed to move outside of the screen in some sense. I wanted to explore the relationship between the screen and the space and to do that I started working with installations. But prior to that point I did make quite a few videotapes. It was between 1977 and 1978 that I started to seriously work with video tape. I had dabbled before that, but those works don't count and anyway they are all lost.

At that time I was living in Montreal. In 1972 I was working in a high school as an AV technician- a kind of dog's body. They had an IVC One-Inch Recorder to play back programmes to the kids and I had access to a Portapak at the Instructional Materials Centre that I used to work at during the summer period when the school was closed. There was a also small TV studio and I got a little experience working with that equipment during the period before I left. In 1974 I got a new job as a photographer in an AV department of a college and they had separate departments for video, audio and photography. I was the photographer but there was also a video guy - an American draft dodger called Peter Graham. He ran a little video department and they had portable video for the students to use. It was at that time that I did my first video editing, in the winter of 1974. I edited something with a stopwatch using the pause control and hitting the record button manually.

The college had a fine art department and a cinema department and they had connections with a Montreal gallery called Vehicle Art. I did a documentary piece about a conceptual artist who taught at the college and it was shown in the gallery. So those were my earliest projects, but they don't count because they weren't really 'art' per se. It wasn't until I came to England in the summer of 1975, although I didn't come to London until 1976.

JH: So where were you then?

CMA: When I came to England I went to live with my parents for six months. They were in Leigh-on-Sea in Southend, and I went to Southend School of Art for six months. They had a clapped out video recorder, but nobody knew where the camera was. I dug the recorder out of the basement and dusted it off and tried to make it work, but I couldn't.

I missed the (Serpentine) summer show because I wasn't aware anything like that was happening. It wasn't until the 'Arena ' Video Art broadcast on BBC 2 in 1976 that I realised there was stuff going on. Then when I went to film school at LCP, I came into contact with people who were interested in video art.

But in terms of my work with videotape, the first tape I really count is something called 'Continuum' (1977) which was a double screen piece that I made a single screen version of and that I still have and still occasionally show

JH: So when you say 'tapes' what do you mean by tapes? Do you mean single screen or do you mean that's it's purely for a screen based work rather than an installation?

CMA: Good question. I did some double screen things, as I have already said 'Continuum' was double screen and I did another piece called 'The Docklands Tapes', (with Chris Hartwill) which was also double screen. But they were both student projects done while I was at the LCP, early in the second year so about1976/77. My work was, by and large, single screen because it was very difficult to show double screen things anywhere so if I had a double screen I would make it into a single screen thing. There were no installations, I made one installation in 1980, which was a three-channel work ('Field Study', 1980) and then I made another one in 1982 ('Light, Time Memory, Anticipation, Illusion…'), which used closed-circuit video plus a slide projector when I was at Goldsmiths. Everything else was single screen tape and that was because of distribution problems, and because of screening issues.

JH: Did you find that early on when you first started making work that issues of distribution were a problem?

CMA: Yes, it was a problem right from the start. First of all screening was a problem. For example 'The Viewers Receptive Capacity' was a half hour piece. That was selected for the New Contemporaries in 1979. I went along to the exhibition at the ICA in London and there it was running on a television screen on a plinth in the middle of the upstairs gallery space- in the Nash Room. The work was surrounded by all sorts of other stuff- there was a sculpture over there and there was a photograph over here and of course people were just walking past my videotape. I made a big fuss and demanded that the videotape works (there were one or two other video pieces by other artists) were given a special screening. The organisers agreed to set up a screening in

the cinema downstairs, and they just made it like a cinema presentation. It was around that time that I realised that there was a problem with the work that I was making, because they didn't really function in a gallery, but equally they didn't work in a cinema either.

So I was troubled by this, and it was a problem that plagued me across the 80s, from when I started making tapes at the end of the 70s right across the 80s, and it eventually led me to abandon making single screen tapes. But distribution was, by and large, an LVA issue. I was quite involved with LVA for a while right at the beginning (1979-80) and then at the end of the 80s. So, in the middle period I didn't have anything to do with the organisation but at the two ends of the 1980's I did.

But to answer your question, it was an issue right from the start. It was a question of: How do we show this stuff and what do we do with it?

JH: So in the early works that you've just listed, which you are calling tapes?

CMA: They are all tapes, yes.

JH: What were some of the aesthetic considerations and what were you interested in? What were you searching for at that point do you think?

CMA: I realise that it's quite complicated when reflecting on it. I was at film school and we were introduced to a lot of film theory and none of it seemed particularly pertinent to video. That was the thing I used to get frustrated about because I can be quite aggressive and angry and I used to get up and shout, 'This isn't relevant to my practice' and 'I can't really relate to this. This is all about film and about narrative; I'm not interested in those things!'

At the LCP film school, there were a number of artists there including Tony Sinden, and later on Ken McMullen and Peter Donebauer, and all of those people were important to me. Tony Sinden ran experimental film screening classes on some evenings. They were sort of an optional extra. You would go at the end of the day and it was around that time, once I started seeing work by artists, that I realised that this work was much more relevant to me. The artists' films were more relevant to me than the stuff I was getting in the classes that were about film theory and all of that. But I was also being shown lots of things. I was seeing quite radical documentaries like 'The Nightcleaners' by the Berwick Street Film Collective, and some of the early Frederick Wiseman and Nick Broomfield films. There was quite radical filmmaking mixed in with conventional Hollywood type narratives, mixed in with interesting British Cinema such as Powel/Pressburger and early Lindsay Anderson free cinema- a real jumble of things. Then because it was at the time when the structural materialist filmmakers were also theoretician/film makers like Peter Gidal and Malcolm Le Grice. Their work was influential as were the ideas that they were developing around cinema, the rejection of narrativity and an interest in the material concerns of film, I was quite conscious of trying to apply some of those ideas to video. I felt I was the only person at the LCP doing that. I have to say that there's something about my personality that I deliberately set myself up in opposition to things. So I found a way to be an outsider, to continue to be an outsider because I was at a film school that really wanted to turn out film directors and camera operators. We were having classes on how to direct and how to

light. I had to do light and camera exercises and so on but meanwhile I really wanted to work with video and increasingly I wanted to be an artist rather than a filmmaker or a television producer or whatever else they thought we might become. I was always trying to somehow bring my video practice in and make that the centre of what I was doing in film school. I have to say that people like Ken McMullan picked up on that and helped with it. He supported what I was doing- he was interested in it and took me along to the Slade so I met up with people like Stuart Brisley. I ended up being Ken's cameraman on a couple of his films because I had the technical skills initially to do that and so I found myself in demand as a sort of lighting cameraman on radical film productions. But I wanted to make videos and I believed that video had its own language and I wanted to discover what that was. I hadn't yet seen many of the really important early video works, but through Tony Sinden I was introduced to David Hall and I went along to something in 1977 at Maidstone. I showed a piece of work in Maidstone and David was there and he told me about London Video Arts. I also made some connections with Stuart Marshall who lived next door to David in Brixton. I remember going over to David's house and talking to Marceline Mori who was living with David at the time and I remember meeting Stuart. Even though I was a student I began to try to mix with the practicing artists who were interested in looking at what video could do. I was very conscious that there were issues that were relevant to video, that were distinct from film but that drew on some of the same concerns, especially the materialist practice.

JH: Did you go to the Co-op as well?

CMA: Yes, I used to go to the London film maker's Co-op and some of the filmmakers from the Co-op were important to me- particularly Chris Welsby because of my interest in landscape and because I was trying to make videos that were similar to what Welsby was doing with cinema.

JH: Why were you interested in video and not film? Since you were in between and you didn't have any particular allegiance to either in a way from the very beginning, why choose video?

CMA: I loved it for aesthetic reasons. I loved the low resolution and the texture of the image. I loved the quality of it. I loved the fact that it was instant and instantly re-viewable. I didn't like film because I didn't like to wait- I was very impatient. Also because, as a teenager I had been fascinated with tape recorders and with sound recording. I used to play with tape recorders all the time, and for me video was the perfect fusion of the tape recorder and the film camera. I just fell in love with it as a medium and I loved all of the things that many people saw as drawbacks. For example, in the early days you couldn't edit video very easily. For years editing was terribly clumsy, so I was content to experiment with duration. I was happy with the black-and-white grainy low-resolution image and I used it. I explored it, -played with it. So it was this thing about the tape but also about the 'liveness' of it. It's like what we are doing now. We can look at the picture and know it's the going to be the same thing and I love that. I love the fact that I can see it on a television screen at the moment of recording and that if I wanted to change the exposure or mess around with the colour, if I turn the dial on a chroma control it cranks up the colour, or I could adjust the contrast and I was able to see it happening live and in 'real time'.

Also I liked fact that the sound-picture relationship was simultaneous. With film you had to have a separate machine, it was synchronised and it was a mess to worry about all that synchronising and all of the editing afterwards with the film here and the tape there and moving it round. Video was all one thing. I loved that.

JH: What about the issue of the frame since you are talking about the technology? At the time obviously the structural materialist was a movement I suppose. The artists that were playing with those ideas were showing us the frames, showing us the differences between the still and the moving. What is it about video, in the sense that you can't see the frame? Is that something that you are interested in as well?

CMA: Yes, all the stuff about it being a signal. I remember feeling that I was stuck somewhere between Peter Donebauer on the one hand and David Hall on the other because I thought David was too rigid in his definitions of what video could be and Peter seemed to me to be too spiritual. I wanted something that was in between and so I really believed in the signal as the essence of video, (Although this is what Peter believes too. I've done interviews with him for my book and I know we were absolutely in agreement about that.) I saw video as a signal, not as a set of frames. I saw it as a continuous flow of signal like a sound recording. The Vasulkas, who I didn't know until much later, understood this relationship between sound and picture or the sound signal and the picture signal: that they were part of the same technology. But the frame was not relevant to me in the sense that I saw video was a continuous signal laid down on tape.

JH: Did you know the Vasulkas' work at that time or was it much later on that you come across their work?

CMA: I had been aware of it in a vague sort of way because I had been introduced to these early video works when I was in Montreal, by my draft-dodger friend. He'd shown me some stuff so I'd seen for example 'Transition 1' by Peter Campus probably only about 6 months after it was made. I must have seen it in late 1974, early 1975. It's dated 1974 so I must have seen it hot off the press. I'd seen some early Vasulka stuff in the same context but I'd forgotten that I'd seen it until I saw the Arena broadcast when they showed 'Transition 1'. I thought, 'I've seen this. I know this work' and of course with that there was some new work. I hadn't seen Peter Donebauer's work until then, I hadn't seen David Hall's work, I hadn't seen 'This is a Television Receiver'- the one with Richard Baker. I saw it for the first time in '76, but it was as if I was reminded of something I'd seen earlier that I'd forgotten.

I guess in that period, I hadn't really committed myself to video. I knew it was there, I was very intrigued by it but I was still using photography. I was doing things with Xeroxes and I was making films. I worked with all of those media in that period. Then basically I aligned myself to the idea of being committed to video around 1978. So in the period between 1974 and 1978, I was playing with everything- all of those other things. I guess what emerged out through that was this fascination with video and the belief that that was the thing I wanted to do,

JH: Can you talk a little bit about post 1989 and the shift from tapes? What happened at that point because it was a very specific shift wasn't it?

CMA: Yes absolutely. It happened partly as a result of the experience I'd had across the 80s with showing work. What happened would be that work would go out, LVA would distribute it, and every so often I'd get a little note back from Jeremy Welsh or from Dave Critchley saying, 'Your tape was shown in Spain' or 'Your tape was shown in Sao Paolo' or something, and I'd think 'Oh that's nice' and it would go down on my CV and I'd think, 'Wow', but it didn't mean anything to me because I wasn't there to see it screened. I had no sense of what the response was like. I had no sense of how it felt to see that work in another context. It just didn't exist for me. So that was one problem I had. The other problem was this business of duration. I was making things that you had to sit down and watch but they weren't television and they weren't cinema. I think the other thing that was happening (and it happened as a result of finally making my last tape, 'The Stream'). It was a double screen piece with two monitors where there was a back and forth between the two screens. I couldn't show it like that in any context, so I made this combined split screen version of it and realised that I was really interested in something that was happening 'off' screen. I realised that there were interesting things happening as a result of the minute you put a monitor on a plinth in a space. There was a relationship between the monitor as object and the space it was in. Whether you walked around it, whether you sat in front of it and watched it, there was an off-screen dimension and I thought this is important to me. It's important to say that I was at Goldsmiths after LCP between 1981 and 1983 on the MA course. I was the only video artist in the room. I was the only video artist in the village, literally. I used to have disagreements with Jon Thompson, the guy who ran the course. Not Jon Thomson the digital artist- the older Jon Thompson, who disliked my work and was really very blatant about it. Fortunately Nick De Ville was there and he was a softer option. But they made me very aware- the course made me very aware, of conceptualism, because at that time it was, I think quite neo-conceptualist and it was beginning to emerge as a very important course. I think it was the second or third intake.

JH: What year was that then?

CMA: 1981 to 1983. The year before, I think there'd been a couple of art stars come through, but basically the big names didn't come through that course until the year after me. My year was rather a non-event in terms of artists who went on to become famous but there was a very rigorous conceptual base to the work. They were really, really getting us to look at all the issues behind what we were doing and they were introducing us to very interesting artists and very interesting ideas and challenging everything that we said or did. It made me really think hard about what I was doing and what I was trying to achieve. It made me address the whole business of 'off-screen' and so I suppose by 'The Stream' (which I finished the last version of in 1987/88) I realised that I wanted to do things that meant I really did need to address what was happening in the space. So I started to make installations and the first piece I made was called 'An Imaginary Fountain'. It was made for Canada House. There was a Canada House show that was curated by Denise Hawrysio and it was supposed to be ex-pat Canadians. (I wasn't an ex-pat but I got included as one.) I made a nine-monitor piece. I remember I was teaching at Maidstone at the time and so I managed to get nine monitors from Maidstone and lug them there. (I threw them into the car I think). I built a structure and I had nine monitors. It was three-sided and it was basically about the fact that this was only a fountain because everybody made the conceptual relationship between it and

the space between the images. The gaps between the thing made the meaning and so that was where I went. The following year, in 1990 I was commissioned by the Harris museum to make a big piece and so I made a 35-screen version of it, which was called 'Eau d'Artifice'.

JH: That's the image with security guard in it?

CMA: The image with the security guard in it is a restage of the installation at the South Bank in London. 'Eau d'Artifice' was originally done for the Harris in 1990 on 35 of those Sony Pro-feels , as they were called, on 19′ Pro-Feel monitors. They were stacked and then when I re-did it at the South Bank, at the Royal Festival Hall, I used the larger Pro-Feels, the 29′. They were monsters. They weighed a ton and so the whole installation was much bigger though it was still composed of 35 screens. It was really about making a structure where the structure is relative or in relation to the screens. What is on the screen is only part of the meaning. The structure and the space between the screens are crucial to the work in some way. I wanted the spectator to be aware of the fact that they were participating in the process of meaning. That was really important to me.

JH: What about sound? What were the key issues with the sound? Can you talk about that process?

CMA: I think for me the sound followed the picture. The fact that you had a microphone on the camera meant that you recorded the sound and there it was so I didn't really get very deeply involved with the sound with the installation works. With the tape works a lot of the meaning in the early tape works is about what happens on the soundtrack. So there is a lot of things being said on the soundtrack in the tapes. In the TV studio tapes, the ones made with Gabrielle Bown, it's about the dialogue between the two of us and she stood in for the person in the institution and I stood as the 'outsider'. We did a lot of things where she was on the screen and I was in the space and we were arguing or we were having what I thought was a dialogue and then suddenly realised it wasn't. So there were a lot of things about language, about television as an institution, about the thing as a process. That was only one way, giving the illusion that there was some kind of an exchange. So it was stuff going on like that in the early tapes. In the later tapes I started to use the sound track. When I was at the Goldsmiths the two externals were Rita Donna and Bill Pye. Bill Pye was a sculptor, and he said to me: (partly because I think I'd used music by Philip Glass in something) 'You really should make your own soundtracks'- so I followed his advice.

So by the mid 80s, the soundtracks on my tapes are much more constructed. They are much more collaged. There are layers of sound. I even had a go with making 'music' so there were levels at which I was trying to do something that approximated music. Since I'd fallen in love with the minimalist composers, particularly Steve Reich, I was very struck by trying to use repetitive sound, layers of sound, phasing, those kinds of things. I did a bit of that.

JH: And what about the editing process? Can you talk a little bit about how that technological shift affected that part of it?

CMA: Editing is very important to me because right at the beginning I'd use a stopwatch and hit the record button. Then after that, around 1974, from that period when I started making tapes again through to when I got my hands on U-matic editing, it was real-time stuff. But then once U-matic editing came along, I completely fell in love with the idea of being able to perform my edits electronically and to mess around with the contrast, brightness and colour and all those things. So editing for me was not just about cutting, it was about mixing. Peter Donebauer built something called The Videokalos Image Processor, which I made a tape with before he did. He built the prototype and then designed and built the production version and there was one at the LCP. So I started using it and in 1978 I made a series of tapes using the Videokalos where I was mixing images. The only way to mix them at that point was to re-scan. The Videokalos would only genlock one source, so I was mixing three or four tape sources by recording stuff on portapaks, playing it on TV screens and pointing video cameras at them, feeding those into the Videokalos and mixing them live. I was messing around with the colour, the contrast and brightness to play with the levels so I could distinguish between the different channels and so that the viewer could distinguish between them when they watched it, to make them aware that there was a movement through a series of tapes or a series of sources- a series of channels. All of that was happening, so for me editing was about the electronic mixing and manipulation of the video signal very early on, 1978/79, around that period.

Once I left film school, even before I did the MA, which was 1981, (I left film school in 1979), I was already actively involved with LVA. I formed a partnership with two LVA members - Alex Meigh and Pete Livingston, and we set up a production company. 3/4 Inch Video it was called at first. We bought, through my contacts, a second-hand U-matic edit suite from a guy who was a technician at LCP and set it up in one of the other rooms at LVA in an office just off Wardour Street, on the corner of Tisbury Court. There's an Anne Summers shop there now- but it wasn't Anne Summers when we moved in. Above it were offices owned by The Other Cinema. In the front office was LVA and 3/4 Inch Video had a room upstairs- and we set up our editing equipment there. It was to be our studio. Pete never did anything with it but Alex and I used it to make videos and so we had an edit suite. The idea was that we would hire it out to other artists. Other artists including Tina Keane and Stuart Marshall used the edit suite. But that was my edit suite if you like.

JH: Did LVA not have facilities?

CMA: No

JH: So did they just do distribution at that point?

CMA: They just did distribution at that point yes. When I first joined LVA it was literally the tape collection and playback. There were no edit suites. There weren't even any cameras at first. In fact, when I first joined LVA, they were originally at Newport Street near where the photographers' gallery is now. Then they moved to Tisbury Court, which is where we set up 3/4 Inch Video. The only access to video editing outside of the art schools was the Fantasy Factory. Sue (Hall) and Hoppy (John Hopkins), bless them, seemed so rigid, and so difficult to work with. They were watching the time, and would say, 'Sorry you are 10 minutes overtime, out!' You had to do everything by the rules that they set, and I got the impression that some people didn't like working there.

We used to hear that. Alex worked for them- She was editing manager for them for a while and then I was interviewed for the job when she left. I ran out of the interview virtually screaming because they showed me this flow chart that was like a map unfolding. How to answer the telephone was one I remember, and it was 'If this, then this, then that'. It was this incredible chart and I just thought, 'No, I can't work like this'.

So we thought we could set up this alternative edit suite, with the idea would be that it would be ours as well and I made work on it. When they came to interview me for Goldsmiths that's where they came to see me. When David Curtis came to interview people as to whether they were going to be included on Video Artists on Tour in 1980, that's where he came to see me. Tisbury Court- my edit suite there.

JH: Did you get funding? How did that work?

CMA: No, I went to the bank

JH: So you got it with your own money?

CMA: That's right. Peter Livingston had some money. He was in a terrible accident and he had received some kind of compensation- so he had some dosh. Alex had some money; she was from a fairly wealthy family. I went to the bank manager in Leigh-on-Sea and I said, 'Lend me £2000, I want to start up a video company. 'Video, What's that? Yes, OK, we'll lend it to you' So they lent me 2 grand, because I'd just graduated from LCP with a degree in filmmaking. So we put in 2 grand each, and with 6 the grand we bought the edit suite, all the bits, two monitors and sound amplifiers, speakers. We built a structure for it and everything. We had 6 grand and we set up a little company with it.

JH: Did it work out?

CMA: No. What happened was that Alex and I fell in love. Pete Livingston was very excluded. We wanted to turn it into a production company- we wanted to do other stuff and were quite energetic. Gradually we drifted apart and Pete froze the assets of the business because we needed three people to sign the cheques. He froze the assets. Alex's father found this flashy lawyer and we won the case. We bought Pete out and Alex and I changed it (the name of the company) to '3/4 Inch Productions' and moved from Tisbury Court to Brixton. I was living in Peter Donebauer's basement on the Brixton Road and after I left the LCP I had kept in touch with Peter and we became friends, so I was renting the basement of his house (it was a big council house) at 291 Brixton Road. It's still there, a big beautiful house. I lived there at the time so we took the whole edit suite and we set it up in the basement and we ran it from there for a bit. Then we decided that it didn't work commercially to have it there, so we rented a very nice studio in Lavington Street (which is now very trendy) in SE1. It was in Lavington Street just near where the Tate Modern is now. We ran it from there for a bit but it was too hot. It had all this glass along the top and I used to put up seamless paper to keep it cool. It was a big, beautiful space and we had the edit suite there but it didn't work out. Then we just moved around. We moved it to Kensington. Alex's mother was a psychotherapist-quite a famous one. (She was a very interesting woman.) She owned a penthouse flat right near the Royal College of Art on the Queen's Gate Terrace. We lived there, at the top, when Alex and I first started living together. We took the edit

suite there and that was when I first joined the MA. Peter Donebauer was setting up Diverse Productions around that time and when they were interviewing potential film and video editors they came and used our edit suites to do their interviews.

By then we'd renewed the edit suite. We bought a new edit suite. Jane Thorburn's company- AfterImage, were going up to a Sony Series V, so we bought their 2860 edit suite, which had a better controller (RM 440) and their portapak (VO 4800) from them.

Then we bought a house in Brixton. The bank manager by then said, 'Look you've got this business- the two of you are partners, you are not protected by the business laws. It's very, very vulnerable. If you get married I'll give you a mortgage' So we got married, the bank gave us a mortgage and we bought a house in Brixton, a big old Victorian house, and we basically had two of the rooms in that house dedicated to 3/4 Inch Productions. So we had a studio and the edit suite in the house. That's where we ran it. Basically that was my studio because Alex gave up making tapes quite soon. But I used that as my studio from 1981, right through to when we got divorced and moved away in '88. During that time the studio developed. I kept up my friendship with Peter and I bought the prototype Videokalos, which was at the time not working, so Alex and I had electronic lessons from Peter on how to build circuit boards. And we rebuilt the Videokalos prototype under Peter's tutorage with Richard Monkhouse looking over our shoulders and checking the circuits, and then the prototype Videokalos was part of my edit suite until we got divorced when we simply threw it away.

When we moved out of Brixton we sold the house. It was part of the Thatcher boom. We moved into Brixton when it was very cheap and it did very well out of it. 3/4 Inch Productions did fine- it did very well, we weren't rich but we had enough money. We sold the house and we bought a house in the country in Cambridge, just on the borders between Essex and Cambridge- it was a Thatched cottage. There was no room in it for an edit suite and we disbanded the company. We sold off the kit and we threw out the Videokalos (Which of course I now deeply regret!)

JH: Why did you choose to do that? Was it just that you needed a change?

CMA: I wasn't making tapes anymore. I'd moved into the installation mindset and I'd stopped making tapes. I wasn't using the suite-we weren't using the kit. Alex had no interest in video. She had retrained as an art therapist. I was more and more interested in making installations. That really meant that we didn't need a lot of kit. We'd had a break-in in Brixton, and our portapak and camera were stolen. I sold the edit suite and the controller. I sold off a time-base corrector I had. We sold all of that stuff- we just got rid of it all because it was a room full of kit and I was increasingly interested, not in having all of the stuff, but in thinking more flexibly and so on.

JH: But basically you made a living from the business or did you teach as well?

CMA: I made a living from a combination of things. We were running the business as a production company, and I did freelance including quite a lot of stuff for the BBC and we also did corporate, educational stuff, little promos and stuff like that. I did a lot of photography as well so I was doing that and I was also working as a freelance editor for a company called Utopia, which was a music business but they had video kit. I was

teaching part time as well and making my work as an artist. So I was wearing lots of different hats and I saw them as complimentary. I saw them as feeding off each other and I had very clear ideas about the difference between what I called my 'applied work', (the commercial or at least non-fine art work), the fine art work and my teaching. I saw them as feeding off each other in different ways. I was learning about the technology through my corporate practice or my commercial practice. I was keeping up with all of that through there. I was freelance editing so I was doing things for music promos and things like that. It was fairly crude what I was doing but I was doing it, and I learnt how to do three-machine editing and those sorts of things. But I was teaching and I was teaching in a film school.

JH: Where were you teaching?

CMA: Well I was teaching in a variety of places. I was teaching in art schools so I was doing part time in Preston even then. But I was also teaching at the London International Film School, which was really extraordinary because they had very wealthy clients, so for example, I would guess the most famous person that I taught was the son of a very famous film director. They would be these very wealthy people coming through. They would pay very high fees and I would teach them how to edit on the most clapped out stuff. You couldn't imagine what they had at the London International Film School, but nevertheless the video course was something the students had to do. They had to do this kind of introduction to video as part of the course and I was it. For years I used to do that part time as well. So it was a mix of things and I found it increasingly difficult to do all of that and the University in Preston, which was Preston Polytechnic at the time. They offered me a permanent half contract in about 1986, so I took it and dropped a lot of the freelance things and started concentrating on teaching, being an artist, and working in an art department and so on. But I guess for about 4 or 5 years I split my time between lots of different things. Some of which were commercial, including the BBC stuff. It's very hard to separate these things out. The theory and practice are so interwoven, when I started discovering some of the theory I'd already assimilated it because of the practices that had influenced me. I was rediscovering things a bit like realising that Peter Campus's 'Transition 1' was one of the most crucial influences on my practice because of its attitude to video space. I've only realised it in writing my book, which has taken me two or three years. When I was writing about 'Transition 1', I was talking to Campus via e-mail and I realised that I'd understood something profound about video very early on, not because I was smart, but because I got it through one of the leading pioneers who'd understood it 'on his skin'. So when I saw the Vasulkas's work I understood it through my body. Those ideas had come to me through some of the other theoreticians I've been interested like Merleau-Ponty and ideas I'd had about embodied knowledge and all of those things. So my relationship to video and its tactility and so on, were tied into an interest in the embodied brain and ideas that I developed out of my readings of David Bohm and so on. These things will come up in the theory section but you don't really separate that. You don't learn about theory and start applying it to video. This is what I used to shout at my tutors at the LCP about. I said, 'This is no good. It's the wrong way around. I'm not going to illustrate your theories by making films that somehow take these ideas. The filmmaking comes first and the theory evolves out of the practice.' It was one of the things that I used to really get upset about.

JH: How have changing technologies have impacted on your work? You started practicing earlier on in the seventies, and there have been massive changes in the last thirty years.

CMA: It's been profound and it's been a profound influence on me. In fact this is the central thesis of my PhD and of my book. The relationship between the technology and what artists can do with it has been a very important influence on the form of video art as a genre, or an idiom or whatever the hell it is. So yes, when I started making video it was something that would be a continuous recording in black-and-white on reel-to-reel tape and that affected the way I worked in the sense that we used the duration of the spool. It was a half hour segment and I got used to thinking in that way. The fact that the sound and the picture were married meant that you couldn't separate them out and you couldn't mess around with them because they weren't on the same place on the tape. So when you tried to edit, you had this problem of where the sound was in relation to the picture as well. Initially there was that problem but I didn't see it as a problem, I just thought, 'Well that's what it is', no more than I thought 'Oh, what a drag. I don't have five legs- I have two legs'. So video was that and as it changed the changes just simply gave me a new colour on the palette. It gave me a new aspect. It was as if I had a tool kit that initially only had a screw driver and a hammer in it, and then someone gave me a drill and then I found that I could use a saw. What you could do with video gradually improved and increased. So for example when I got my hands on the Videokalos, it made it possible for me to mix pictures, it made it possible for me to change the colour, it made it possible for me to introduce colour. Those things were just incorporated in and affected the way I thought about video and affected what I could do with it. I just incorporated each new possibility as it came along. I knew there were things in the industry that I didn't get my hands on till much later because I would always talk about this idea of accessible technology. I knew quite early on of broadcasting in colour, because when I lived in Canada they were broadcasting from the USA in colour. We had colour television in 1966 or 1967. But when I was a child living in Montreal the NBC broadcast would begin with the peacock. I only saw it in black-and-white, we were still watching Disneyland or whatever it was called and you saw the NBC peacock in tones of monochrome, but I was aware there was a colour picture there. So yes, there was accessible video technology as opposed to what was out there in industry and as the things became accessible, I incorporated them into what I did. They made it possible to do things that hitherto I'd not been able to do.

JH: What things? Are you talking about processing or are you talking about where you could exhibit the work?

CMA: Good point. Initially it was about processing. But I guess it was also about distribution because U-matic and then after U-matic, VHS meant cassettes and meant distributable forms. I don't think the display side of it changed very much. Projection was not a real option until quite late on in my practice. Obviously it affected the installation days, but if we talk about the display, I guess the videocassette meant distribution was possible and it meant there was the possibility of the work going out in a way that at the beginning it wasn't. I guess my first answer was based on the fact that, for me, video was about something that I could manipulate. I got very excited by the fact that I could mess around with the colour, that I could mix images, that I could do things with the signal. I just loved all of that.

JH: So there are two sides to that? There's the exhibition side and the processing side?

CMA: Yes

JH: Have you changed the way that you've worked as the technology has changed?

CMA: It's a good question. The first works that I made, that were shown publicly were things that I had done in a television studio. My collaborator Gabrielle Bown and I were very conscious of thinking about the television studio as a technology and thinking about what we could do with it. So we thought very hard about what it consisted of.'There are these cameras, these multiple cameras that somebody has to mix, and what can a mixer do?' In fact the third tape we made is a systematic working through of all these different things. Each cameraman was given instructions on how and what to vary in particular ways and so there was almost a structural analysis of what the television studio was. So really my practice from the late 70s across into the 80s was very influenced by asking: What is this technology? What does it do? What is specific about it? How does it (the technology) affect the meaning? How does the language affect the idea? What is the language? So I was thinking hard about every bit of technology, not very rigorously probably, but certainly asking: What does it do? What am I doing with it? How does it affect what I'm saying? How is what I'm saying affected by the technology I've got? In other words, to use the analogy of language, if I was speaking to you in French, my ideas would probably come out differently as a result of the language itself. So I was very aware of that with video. I was constantly thinking about it as a signal, as having a certain kind of visual quality, as something that was displayed on that kind of a box, on the assumptions of the audience, on what it was they were going to be seeing because of their conditioning to watching things on television and how different that might be from the cinematic experience. All of those things were important. So, the technology in what it did was deeply imbedded in what it was I was trying to do and what I thought I might have to say. If I had anything to say! When I was much younger I believed I had something to say and only later, I came round to the idea, as John Cage had said, 'I have nothing to say and I'm saying it and that's poetry'. I began to see it like that. I guess by the time I moved into my installation phase, I was really thinking that I didn't have anything in particular to say, but I loved to say it. Perhaps I loved the sound of my own voice. But in my early days I was a bit idealistic about it. I thought that there was a crusade for me and it was about getting video recognised as a medium in its own right, making works that weren't television and weren't entertainment, but they weren't cinema either. I was very particular, and really motivated by those ideas.

JH: With the wider community in the UK, from what I can gather, there was a drive towards the televisual, certainly in the 80s. How did that affect you? What are your feelings about that?

CMA: I was very much in opposition to the idea of making things for television, if that's what you mean by televisual, because I was doing things for television separately from making art. I remember when Terry Flaxton did his 'Video One, Two and Three' and they came to interview me. In one of their little clips I said, 'Artists should be very careful about showing things on television that they've made for a different context'. I believed that I was working in a different context when I put my video artist hat on. I was doing something different to what I was doing when I went to television centre and did my little animations for kid's TV. They were my 'bread and butter' commercial work

and although some of the experimental ideas I was kind of drawing on from my role as an artist were being brought into that, they were different and they were for a different purpose. This is funny because I was doing things for Kid's TV. I was doing things for 'Heartbeat' and 'Take Heart' so we had an audience of up to 5 million people, with kids watching every week. Some of the little things that I did had been watched by millions of people so I wasn't particularly bothered about the video art work reaching those kinds of numbers. I didn't care about television. I didn't want my video art work broadcast because I was making it for different reasons- it wasn't for that kind of mass audience. It addressed different concerns for me. They were quite personal concerns for a while. I got quite interested in seeking it through an autobiographical layer and so on and what I considered to be a sort of lyricism, a kind of poetry, but it was formal. It was very formal and it had a different reason and a different message from the broadcast work and from the really rather crass educational, commercial stuff I was doing as well. So I wasn't bothered about broadcasting and I didn't think my video art work was for broadcast. I didn't think it was a route into commercial television. I think there were some people who really wanted to be on television.

JH: Did you or do you have any particular ideological reasons why you wanted to use video?

CMA: Yes. I think I did. Video was the sort of poor relation. First of all, once I really saw myself as an artist, I was a serious artist rather than- 'Oh Gosh I'm an Artist!' Once I'd decided I was an artist, I saw this as an ordinary job, like anything else. Being an artist was a role, but video had no currency. If you were a filmmaker, it seemed to me that, well the filmmakers- even the avant-garde filmmakers, had some credibility. Their work was shown. There was a big show at the Hayward. I remember going along to 'Film As Film' at the Hayward and all of that work was celebrated and seen as part of the artistic canon. Even if it was just within the avant-garde it was being shown in a major art venue. Video artists were the poor relation. Nobody respected video artists. The filmmakers thought video artists were idiots. They thought video was an inferior medium. They thought that video artists weren't serious about what they were doing. Then you had the broader sense that being an artist was itself problematic.

JH: During the 80s?

CMA: On the turn between the end of the 70s and into the 80s. I felt very much on the periphery so I began to be quite keen on the idea of campaigning in my own sort of way for video as an art medium and for video to be accepted as a legitimate art medium. That was my ideology. There were other things around identity as well. My awareness of myself as an artist emerged around the time when the feminist tradition, the feminist ideology, the feminist mode of thinking was very influential and it had an impact on me. So when I started to think around issues of identity, I got very interested in the implications of feminism on notions of masculinity. So I started to look at that in my work. My work was about identity and about relationships at a time when I don't think many male artists in video were doing that. I made a couple of tapes that I think people recognised that it was going on. They (the tapes) were influenced by people like Jo Spence and by Laura Mulvey and Mary Kelly. I'd had the good fortune to hear Mary Kelly speak. She came to Goldsmiths and talked to us. I'd seen Carola Klein's film 'Mirror Phase' and I was aware of some of those ideas. Through Wollen and Mulvey, and their films and then the writings of Laura Mulvey and the writings of Peter

Wollen, I'd become aware of the relationship between meaning, content and image. Because I was a quite introspective person- I have kept a diary since age 19 and I still write it. I was very interested in self-portraiture and images of the self. I've got self-portraits that go back from around that age, and I still do them so I've got a body of work of photographs- a lot of photographs. Every so often I do a self-portrait. I started to use self-portraiture in my video at the beginning of the 80s. I had relationships with a number of very strong women and I was always attracted to those kinds of women. I was interested in their ideas and I was interested in how they impacted on my sense of self. I started to read Robert Bly who was an influence on me fairly early on as well so I was interested in the so-called 'Men's movement' and in that re-examination of masculinity and so on. There is a strand of that in my work. So there are issues about identity and self-image, which were there in the work of the early 80s.

I moved away from that though. I started to work with installation and I got interested in installation because I wanted to make the connection between the viewer and his or her participation with the image. I wanted to create a sense of self in relation to the sculptural and the image. I started to try to make works where I wanted the viewer to be aware of their consciousness and the flow of consciousness that was happening: 'I'm here now. I'm watching this to make meaning of it. I'm participating in it.' I wanted to throw that back on the viewer so I started to read ideas and theories to do with human consciousness and how it was operating. What it was. I became very influenced by an American physicist who was based in London called David Bohm. He theorised human consciousness and tied it into ideas in new physics, so I started to read ideas around new physics. He'd been influenced by a mystic, Krishnamurti. Who influenced David Bohm in a way that I had to go back and read Krishnamurti. I never attended any of his dialogues, but my first wife's mother, Joan Meigh, used to go to Krishnamurti gatherings. I have tape recordings of some of his dialogues. I still have them somewhere and I used to listen to them. I became very interested in his ideas and how they fed into Bohm's ideas and how those ideas had given rise to this relationship between flow and consciousness; the flow of matter and the flow of consciousness. So in my videotape 'The Stream', it is about a parallel between the flow of matter and the flow of consciousness and the flow of the video signal. That feeds into installation work like 'An Imaginary Fountain', 'Eau d'Artifice' and so on. So I started to make works which were constructed around the relationship between the person in the room and what s/he was watching and the meaning that s/he was making as a result of engaging with the flow of meaning on the tape and in the installation. So that's ideological I suppose, if you take it in its broadest sense. The politics were to campaign for an acceptance of video as a legitimate art form in the early days.

JH: Can I rewind a little bit to where you talked about the filmmakers and how they saw video and video artists basically as inferior beings because they were using this technology, which was not as pure as film, I still hear that with the current generation as well. I'm interested in that because in reality, certainly in the 70s, many of the artists who started with film used electronic technologies. They used them both. I'm thinking about Tony Sinden and David Hall and Malcolm Le Grice. So where was it coming from? Was it coming from specific people or was it just murmurings in the background?

CMA: First of all, there wasn't much funding for video. LVA struggled. It finally did get funding and it established itself, but it was the poor relation, in the sense that the Co-op was much more established. There was a tradition of artists making films that goes right

back to the beginning of the 20th century. When you read Malcolm Le Grice's book, 'Abstract Film and Beyond', you even go back to the Cubists and the Futurists and the Dada and Surrealists. There was a strand of filmmaking that ran through all of that- even the Russian side with Eisenstein and Vertov and so on. There was a strong tradition from a number of strands of artists who made films, Len Lye etc. Video doesn't have that pedigree. It came along a lot later and it came out from being a medium used for convenience. Performance artists started using it because it was more convenient than film.

JH: But I don't see it as any different, personally. I don't see how it is different in a conceptual sense. If you take a trajectory back, it's moving image. It's cinema.

CMA: But then there were all the drawbacks: you had this low resolution, low sensitivity, bulky awkward thing that you couldn't edit. All of those things were problematic. As the technology improved, it was still quite low resolution. If you projected it, it looked like cotton wool. It was unstable. It didn't last very long. All of those things were legitimate. The technology was at a less developed stage. It was less refined. The resolution meant that when you projected a film it was clean. You could project it. You could duplicate it in a way that meant that your copies didn't look any different. You had the negative and you could make prints from the negative. So there was a lot of that and there was a lot of tradition. Video didn't have that tradition. It was a different technology. There were all the community users that I think a lot of artists looked down on. There were people using video for other purposes. They were using video to document squats or they were using video to document the counter culture. People didn't use film for that.

JH: But they did in the 20s, and they did it in 1910

CMA: But in the 60s and the 70s they didn't.

JH: So you are talking about its perception.

CMA: Yes, I think that video was seen as a cruder tool. It had a different purpose. It was useful for sketching something out but if you were going to do something serious you needed to commit it to film. Film was going to last more. It was going to be easier to distribute. It was going to be a better image. It was a more serious medium in every sense. Then there was this history, which wasn't there for video. The funding structure was non-existent at the beginning. And I think there were just less of us around. There was a hardcore little group of people who saw themselves as making video and then there was this ambiguous relationship to television. I suppose that artists in the 70s and the early 80s saw themselves in opposition to television, in the same way that the avant-garde filmmakers saw themselves in opposition to Hollywood mainstream cinema. But television was still something that one saw as some kind of a monolith. It was owned by big corporations or by the government. It was controlled. Video was an underground, almost private, personal intimate medium and that was its strength as well as its weakness.

JH: Do you think that position was reflected in the United States?

CMA: Yes, but I think they got their funding act together earlier on. What you had happening in New York by the beginning of the 70s was quite strong support for those early video pioneers and you also had these broadcast access workshops. There were a number of those and there was cable.

JH: But if you look at the scene in New York, then there isn't such a demarcation between mediums as there was in the UK. The Co-op in New York distributed video without any questions. They saw it as an imaging medium with the same validity as film for an artist.

CMA: I think that's all largely down to funding. Not all down to it, but largely down to the fact that quite early on large amounts of money were available specifically for video and that's why we have a situation now, where everybody knows who Bill Viola is but nobody knows who David Hall is. There's no reason why that should be the case except that there wasn't a lot of support for what we were doing in the UK in the early days. Then there are the national collections, what video is in the national collections? Gilbert and George- jump to Gillian Wearing. Nobody else is represented in the national collections. They might have stuff in the education department but that doesn't really count. They've got Bill Viola and they've got Gary Hill. The Tate and any of the other national collections do not have and do not represent that body of work from 1975-1990 at all. I don't know what film they've got.

JH: I think it's the same. They have, most probably, Tacita Dean. One imagines they've got some of hers but it's absolutely the same thing with the filmmakers.

CMA: So it isn't like it's 'us against them', but nevertheless since I care about video and that's what I am looking at, what I see is that those people- and I think that's three generations of artists missing. And they are crucial as far as I am concerned and I will continue to campaign in my own way, which I guess is though my book, but certainly in the early days I felt part of a small band of people who believed in video and wanted to do something to get it out there as a legitimate art form. That meant joining LVA. That meant helping with screenings. That meant making work that I thought was different to the filmmaking work that was being done and different from what was being broadcast on television and that was part of my activity. It was the way I tried to define what I was doing. When I was at Goldsmiths and the only artist working on tape, I was arguing for this legitimate art form every week and having to fight my corner because there were all saying, 'What is this stuff? This isn't valid. This isn't a legitimate way of working.'

JH: I just think it's so extraordinary that so many artists that I've interviewed and artists that I know using video all say exactly the same thing.

CMA: Sure. It was a common experience.

JH: I just think that's so extraordinary to multiply the experience by so many people.

CMA: But it gave us something to fight. I always saw myself as an outsider and at some level I get something from setting myself up with something to fight for. (It's probably because I am left-handed!!) I don't know what it is but there's a sense in which one felt one wasn't the same as everybody else and that there was something to prove. Video fitted nicely and neatly into that because I could see that it really was a very important

medium. There was something to do with the fact that it wasn't the same as what people were doing with other mediums. So it's partly medium-specific but it's also because I really loved it. When I ran Time-based media (at the University of Central Lancashire) the decade before and my students would be using video just because it was convenient I would say, 'If you don't love it you've got a problem. You need to care about this and if you don't care about it, in the end it's not going to be good for you. It's like your work is going to suffer if you don't care for it.' I passionately loved it. I loved the way it looked. I loved the way that you were able to manipulate the signal.

JH: Did funding stifle or enable you to realise your ambitions?

CMA: No, it was a sort of catalyst because at first I set up my own company and so I had to borrow the money to do it. I had to pay the loan back but I suppose I earned money by doing things that I thought were connected to what I was doing as an artist. So at first I didn't get any funding and then when the work that I made as a result of that non-funding started to get shown, it was an incentive in itself. Then along came 'Video Artists on Tour' (Arts Council of Great Britain) and so I was indirectly paid. I was also indirectly paid by the fact that I was teaching in art school. I saw what I was doing as being legitimised by that. At first I had a technical skill that some people didn't have. I knew how to use video quite well. People used to think that I was some kind of technical wiz, which I never was, but they thought I was. I'd get these jobs where I could teach people how to do stuff because they thought I understood the technology. I suppose that at a certain level I did. But the funding did start to trickle in. I remember the first money I got was Video Artists on Tour where you got paid to go and show your work. It used to be quite reasonable because they would pay you a fee plus your travel. That was OK because you would get so much a mile and so I'd go to Newcastle from London and get £300. I'd loose a whole day and I'd come back at four in the morning the next day having slept in the car and all the rest of it, but I earned some money that way that I ploughed back into my work. I got some money from GLA, Greater London Arts around 1983/84. I think it was £600, but it enabled me to finish a couple of tapes and it was an incentive in itself. I sold a few works in the mid 80s. In fact, the very first piece I ever sold was in 1979 because I made one of the TV serial pieces that were shown at Sheffield Media. There was an Australian guy who represented some college back in Australia and they were interested in what you could do with a TV studio, so they bought two TV studio tapes that we'd made for £100 each. That seemed like a lot of money at the time. I was stunned. I sold a few tapes and then I sold something a few years later through LVA, but real funding didn't come until the installation days. I didn't really get any serious funding until about 1990 so all through the 80s it was self-funded, teaching or tiny bits of Video Artists on Tour and things. It never prevented me from working. In fact, I think it spurred me on.

JH: So where was the money from during the 90s? Did you get that from galleries?

CMA: It was a combination. I did some residencies and I had some commissioned work. That piece at the Harris was commissioned and the following year, 'Streamline' was commissioned by the Bluecoat Gallery. I had about 4 or 5 residences where I got a fee plus expenses plus a commission. Basically I think I've had money every year since 1990 - so I've had quite a lot of funding. At first I got none, like I said all through the eighties. I remember when I was chair of LVA in about 1987, I was having tea in Soho with David Curtis and plucked up the courage to say, 'David why have I never had any

funding?' and he said 'Oh you've simply haven't won the lottery yet' and basically I didn't worry about it because it did start to happen. I just had to keep going on my own. I believed in what I was doing at some level, which wasn't always easy. I remember crying about it once. I was in Brixton. We had the studio for 3/4 Inch Productions. Terry Flaxton had told me that Alan Fountain was looking for some work to show on Channel 4. I sent him a tape and I was in the bath on my own. Alex was out. The phone rang. I had the phone by the bath and it was Alan Fountain and he went on waxing lyrical about 'An Imaginary Landscape', the piece I'd sent him. He said: 'Oh yes it's a very beautiful piece and very elegant but we are not really interested in broadcasting- we've lost out budget.' I put the phone down and I burst into tears. I thought, 'What does it take? I've been doing this stuff for 10 years. I've done everything I can. There's just no way they are ever going to show this work. They are not interested!' I did break down about it and I was really upset- I thought, 'What is it? Why is it that they won't show my work or take it seriously?' but everybody hits those things. I know plenty of artists, much better artists than me. People who never even got teaching jobs, their whole career. But my small contribution was eventually acknowledged at some level, so I don't care.

JH: But the teaching funded you. It supported your practice. That was obviously important. When you shifted from doing commercial work towards the academic; that must have been a key moment?

CMA: Yes it was. It was great because before then I'd done this sort of hotchpotch of teaching at the film school. I did part time at LCP. I worked part-time as a technician at LCP after I left as a student. I did some teaching at Southend School of Art- I was teaching foundation photography.

JH: And you did the BBC stuff too?

CMA: I was freelance for the BBC between 1981 and 1987. I did every season because what happened with those was that they were on a commission basis. They would set a theme for the programme and they would send me the themes. It was: 'OK we've got 12 themes….which ones do you want to do?' I think I did one on the first series. I sent a film to them when I was a technician at LCP because it was all film, and they sent it back to me in an envelope. I didn't even open the envelope, At the end of the day I came back from work, opened the envelope and inside was the film as I thought, but there was also a piece of paper in with it saying, 'We really love this. We'd like to commission you to make a film for us'- I hadn't seen the message until later on. So I made the one film for them and then the following season I made three. I made one for every theme.

JH: What were the themes?

CMA: They were animations. Tony Hart would do something like 'wind' or 'numbers' or 'letters' or 'upside down'. The whole programme was based around some kind of theme like that. Tony Hart would do drawings and the funny little caretaker would come in and do something stupid and they'd feature some theme. So I would know what the themes were in advance and I would make animations to the theme. I did these things with words. I would come up with phrases. I'd go down and see the producer and we'd have a meeting and I'd say, 'OK these themes interest me and here are some ideas.'

And I would come up with little sayings that would tie into the themes. They were always things like the wind one, which was 'blowing in the wind'. So I would do an animation where I would take each word and treat it differently. We'd end up with a sentence that was all animated but in different styles. I did everything and so I'd use every animation technique from animating objects under the camera directly to scratching on the film, to sticking my face under the camera. I did that before Peter Gabriel's sledgehammer animation by Aardman- I was on BBC television underneath the camera in my sunglasses. I would do all the artwork at home in my studio in Brixton and than I'd just go to the TV centre, into the basement where the animation cameras were, and I'd work with two cameramen and we'd basically do an animation. It would take us all day to do one. We'd do one a day. Over the Summer I would shoot the entire season's animations for the programme. It got to the point where I was doing animations plus the theme at the beginning of the programme so I'd use one of my little word things right at the beginning to say what the theme was. Then I'd have another animation somewhere in the programme. They were all very short. I think the longest one was a minute or 50 seconds or something like that. I didn't earn a lot of money but I'd get the fee for that plus a guaranteed repeat fee. They also showed those programmes abroad so I'd sometimes get a cheque in the post. One time I got a cheque for over a £1000 after I moved out of Brixton. It just turned up one day. I'd get paid for these things. I must have earned £20,000-£30,000 over about 10 years. So that was bread and butter but they weren't what I did as an artist. They were what I did to pay for a new piece of kit. I bought a camera and I bought a time-base corrector. They were mostly second-hand. I rarely bought anything new. I bought the camera new but everything else we bought second hand. The essential question was about the teaching and about how the practice was related to the teaching I suppose.

JH: There must have been a reason for the shift from doing commercial work towards committing to academia? Presumably that must have been because the relationship between the practice and your academic context must have changed?

CMA: Well I found teaching in an art school really rather enjoyable and I was lucky because I got the job at the point when they had students making films and videos but they had no department. They had painting, sculpture and printmaking and students were kind of dabbling in film. I went to the head of department and suggested that we make it a separate discipline and the head of department said 'OK, you've got the job'. So I created Time-based Media and I interviewed students specifically to do it. So we had a little department and I ran it. I was 33, I'd finished my MA. I'd run a business for a while. I knew what I was doing. I was committed to video but it was also film, sound, performance. I took on a part-time lecturer called Hannah O'Shea, who was a performance artist. We worked together, but I ran it. I had a little department, so I was completely autonomous. Nobody told me what to do. Nobody told me what to teach and I had a lot of success with it because the students got a lot of firsts. I had to fight because the other departments didn't always like that. We had to fight for funding and all the rest of it but I went up there and ran my own little show, and that was great, that's what I loved doing.

JH: And you are still working at Preston? That's a place that you've been committed to?

CMA: Yes, I'm still working there, but I'm in a very different role now. I left Time-based Media when I was made a Reader and in fact it fell apart as a department when I left. They

don't have Time-based Media area at all now. I ran Time-based Media for 15 years and I also helped to set up an MA in Time-based Media and was MA tutor for a couple of years doing that. So I had an undergraduate and a post-graduate in Time-based Media for a while.

JH: And you did a PhD?

CMA: Yes.

JH: What made you do that, as an artist?

CMA: I suppose I already could see that I needed to continue to develop my ideas- I needed the discipline that I thought that researching a PhD would give me. I think that one is rather more haphazard in terms of acquiring ideas and keeping up with ideas and thinking deeply about things as an artist. It'd be just as they come along and I thought that I could be more rigorous in my approach to things if I had some kind of a structure. I also saw that there was an opportunity. It was fast becoming apparent to me that I would need the qualification of a PhD to continue my academic career because I was gradually moving away from being the kind of artist who worked with the equipment. I wasn't teaching people how to press buttons anymore, I was doing tutorials with MA students and I was being asked to do things with students who were maybe interested in doing PhDs. So, I thought I needed to do it myself and I did it early enough-there's still nobody in fine art with a PhD in my university. I managed to argue for the fee funding, so I got my fees paid and so on. I started in 1996- so it was a little earlier at my institution, but I thought it would give me the rigour to continue developing the ideas side of my work. I thought what I was engaged with was already systematic enough so why don't I see if I can get a further qualification and continue to make the work I want to make. It was a way of continuing my practice, improving my chances as an academic and I guess it worked, because I was made a Reader even before I finished the PhD. Now I'm running a research unit, which I set up as a result of getting the PhD and I'm arguing for practice-led doctorates. There was nobody doing that. There was nobody interested in that area. I found a little niche for myself I suppose. Sometimes I see things with enough vision to do something with it. It's not as if I am the first in the Universe, but rather the first on my block. It's like being the only video artist on the MA at Goldsmiths. Now it's commonplace but it wasn't then. It was useful and it's been helpful, it helped me to maybe be a bit more rigorous about what I was doing.

JH: What was your preferred context for the dissemination of your work? You'd said that you shifted from tapes and screening in this sort of amorphous place, which wasn't very controllable for you, can you talk about that?

CMA: It's worth starting off from the point that I touched on earlier on the New Contemporaries because before the New Contemporaries, I went to Maidstone and presented a tape. We were presenting things. We were there- the artist was there, we'd stick the thing on a monitor, we'd contextualise it, we'd show it and we'd talk about it. That seemed to be almost the ideal in a sense. But once the work started to go off on it's own and I wasn't there to give any sense of what it was really about and to present it in some way that helped people to read it, I felt there was a problem. I felt I wasn't in control enough of how the work was understood. I also thought that there was a level of sculpture that was implied by what I was doing anyway. It seemed to me that

at least partly, I was a sculptor and I needed to bring that sculptor out of the closet. So my preferred context moved away from the screening/seminar situation to the art gallery situation and in the art gallery situation I didn't think having a monitor and a load of chairs was at all useful. First of all, I think it didn't work. People didn't want to watch things like that and if they did they got restless - uncomfortable and all the rest of it. They lost interest very quickly. It wasn't immersive the way that the cinematic projection was. I'd seen enough expanded cinema works because of my interest in experimental film. I did care about experimental film. I didn't reject film. I rejected it in terms of my own personal practice but I continued to look at it and I was very interested in what they were doing, Malcolm (Le Grice) et al and the things they did at the Co-op, David Dye, and Chris Welsby- particularly Welsby, I was very struck by what Welsby did when hestarted to play with the gallery space and the projector and the projection space. I saw Annabel Nicholson's work. I saw them and I knew they were partly performance, but I thought there was another possibility there. I'd seen some of the things that had been done and I'd seen pictures of things that had been done in the States where they were using very crude projectors and so on, so I began to be interested in the art gallery context and saw that as the context I was moving towards. I wanted to be accepted as an artists and I thought that video on a monitor was partly sculpture- because of its tactility and because it of the fact that it was seen on a box and that the box had a physical presence in the space. That was all part of the experience. I felt that all of those things were relevant, and so the art gallery became my preferred context. Then I arrived very neatly with my struggle to be recognised an artist, a real artist, and to be written about. Of course, nobody wrote about video art, except the artists so David Hall wrote about himself and his little group and I felt like I wasn't really part of that little group, although I knew them all and I'd been rubbing shoulders with them and I was there at the inaugural screening and all the rest of it. But I was at Goldsmiths and Goldsmiths had a different aesthetic. I wanted to be seen the same way that John Hilliard was seen or Gilbert and George. I wanted to be seen in that context, I didn't want to be seen in a special: 'You are a video artist'. I wanted to be seen as an artist who used video but was shown at the Tate or the ICA or wherever else it was legitimate to be shown. That was the context and that was the venue.

JH: Text is another form of dissemination, so with regard to the writing, obviously doing the PhD propelled you to have to write, but did you write before that?

CMA: I did write a little bit before that. When I was at LCP, we were under Ken McMullen's wing. He used to do these funny things where he'd write, what he called, 'a film justification'. So when he was applying to the Arts Council he'd write something that really wasn't a script, it was something that explained at some level what the work was trying to do and how it engaged and so I started to articulate my ideas around my own practice that way. Cate Elwes was a strong influence on me. I became aware of the way she worked and how she thought about it. I think she is a good writer but there was something that I didn't feel she was grasping in her articulation. There was something, on a level at which I thought I was interested in- something that wasn't being articulated in the way she wrote. Also, she was arguing for a different practice to the one I was interested in, so I started to write. I reviewed a few things for Art Monthly. I reviewed Bill Viola's show at the Whitechapel. Tony Oursler's show at the Bluecoat Gallery and a show that Katherine Meynell was in at Kettle's Yard. So I wrote a few things for Art Monthly and then yes, as a result of that, I realised that it was possible to

write. I didn't feel I was a good writer, but I felt I had bash and because nobody was writing about video artists. There was Sean Cubitt writing about video art but otherwise it was Stuart Marshall, and very important writer-artists like David Hall, and that was it, really.

JH: And Tamara Krikorian to begin with.

CMA: Yes, there was Tamara, but before my time.

JH: She had a lot of energy at the beginning and probably as much as Stuart Marshall, funnily enough.

CMA: Yes, you are right. There was also Mick Hartney. I think he wrote very well. In fact I am sorry that he didn't continue because I think, looking at some of the things he wrote earlier on, that they are amongst the best of the writing in terms of the way it was accessible and thoughtful.

JH: I think that Stuart Marshall's philosophical and analytical writing was key and it is so unfortunate that of course he didn't live to carry on. Whether he would have carried on anyway is another story because he moved into commercial work. What he did do was key and certainly Video Art, the Imaginary and the Parole Video were key texts. But also for the filmmakers, it was because of Malcolm (Le Grice) and Peter (Gidal) that there was a philosophical key, which the video field didn't gain.

CMA: And Peter Wollen and Laura Mulvey were writing. Peter Wollen had written 'Signs and the Meaning of the Cinema'. Then there were people like Victor Burgin- they took up the politics of the image. I know that was more photography, but I think there were quite a few.

JH: Do you think that the experimental film field was somehow covered by the film theoreticians and the media theoreticians, whereas video wasn't covered by the art world and neither was it covered by the media theoreticians?

CMA: Video somehow fell in between those two things. The art world rather than filmmaking, wasn't interested in video particularly unless it was performance artists like Gilbert and George, but even those tapes were seen as peripheral to what they were doing. In a sense they were a bit of a spin off. So yes, I think that video art was a sort of poor relation in terms of funding, as well as being seen as an inferior medium technically, and it was not written about very much; certainly in the UK. So there were a number of reasons why it was marginalised. I got interested in writing not because I thought I was any good at it but because I thought, 'Well I may as well. I'll have a go' and it was basically at first because there were one or two things that I thought, 'Well I am interested in writing about this so I will'. Then I started to try to write about my own work as well. My book, 'A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function', is an extension or development from my PhD thesis, which was about the influence of imaging technology on the development of video art as a practice. It isn't to say that video art is technologically driven or technologically determined, but to say that there is a relationship between what artists could get their hands on and what they did as a result, what kind of work they made as a result of what they get their hands on. It starts with television, like Paik and Vostell fiddling with television sets. It moves

through to the recording of performances with a single camera locked off and it develops through to colour imaging, editing, image processing, advances in display technology, and how all of those things affect the kind of work that's made, and the kind of way that people (the audience) are able to engage with the work.

JH: What was your preferred context for the dissemination of your work?

CMA: I was interested in a mix, I was happy for it to be sent out into the world although I didn't get anything personally back from it, I was glad that that was happening. And I liked it best when it was part of a context. I didn't like the idea that they were themed and that often happened, that the work would be shown in a theme and then misunderstood like 'Interlude' which ended up being seen as a 'scratch' tape- which it never was. In fact it predates scratch, which is really interesting. Jez Welsh, showed it once or twice in that context.

Where there's some kind of possibility of understanding that there's a body of work, not just of my own, but of other like-minded practitioners and there's a relationship established in some way, there's a context for it. I think that my preferred thing, the absolute preferred and it's never happened yet, is the retrospective context. I don't mean that in a some kind of grandiose way, but I think the best way to understand any artist's work, is to see his or her work in relation to the flow, because there is a developmental thing and so that is how I'd like my works to be understood in relationship to each other. - Maybe one day.

JH: Yes, it would be good to see it all. I think you're absolutely right. Whenever I know an artist's body of work, it is like you understand the artist. You understand the subject. You understand what they've done throughout their process.

CMA: That's right, and then there is when you see it in a relation to their contemporaries. When you see 'Room with a View' and you know that Hollis Frampton's 'Nostalgia', Jo Spence's photography, are two primary influences. If you take on top of that the Men's Movement and my interest in feminism and their impact on the fine art context, then the work makes more sense.

JH: Was it necessary to compromise because of lack of exhibition opportunity?

CMA: I think one is always compromising at a certain level. I don't know how to answer that really because it seems to me that whatever opportunities there were, I was always happy when the work was shown. I don't remember thinking that, except when I got really upset that things weren't progressing. There was a flat period and think that that period, when I made the transition to installation, was also pushed along by the fact that it seemed to me that the tapes weren't being shown very much. But, I don't think that there was a compromise. I made the things I wanted to make and if they were shown: fantastic. If they weren't: tough shit.

JH: Because you were making installation works during the 90s onwards, were you conceptualising the works as a sculptural entity, which were then exhibited? And, was it going to be straightforward because you automatically got the funding or was it that you had to conceptualise the works relative to what technology was available? How did that actually work?

CMA: There was always an influence on what was available, but usually I studied that from a position of what was hypothetically available. I don't think I ever made an installation where I went to a gallery and said, 'What have you got in your cupboard?' and then decided to make an installation based around that. I would literally kind of plan them. Once I began making installations seriously, they were always done that way. I would come up with an idea conceptually and then try to find the way to do it. So no, I don't think I compromised. I would say I made the work I wanted to make or I found the way to make the work I wanted to make.

JH: There is an issue about editioned works. One of the reasons why the artists using video and film weren't, and haven't been included or collected by the major galleries and which then filters down of course to the commercial galleries, is because the works weren't editioned. The artists weren't like painters. They weren't saying, 'Well this is an object'.

CMA: Yes, I never thought of that myself. It's very interesting. You are right because we talked before about wanting to be recognised as an artist, but I never had any interest in making works. I think it's beginning to surface now as an issue perhaps, but I never thought about selling the work. I never thought about making it more sellable, I never thought about the commercial side of it and made the work because I wanted to make it and I found ways to show it. There have been installations that have been shown more than once, restaged in a different context, but most of the works that were installations were one-offs, they were commissions for a specific space or situation or gallery. They happened. They were taken down and put away and all I have is the documentation and I was quite happy about that.

JH: The other issue is that when talking to museums or state funded art galleries, even retrospectively with artists working during that period, if they were considering collecting those works they would need a blue print for each art work that was made, even if you didn't have the technology, so the question of emulations then crops up. So how do you recreate a Chris Meigh-Andrews artwork, Fountain or Streamline. Where are the drawings? Where are the blueprints? Where do we put the monitors?

CMA: There are drawings. There are diagrams. There are all those things. The part about it, which is more difficult, would be the tape sources, because in 'Eau d'Artifice', there are four tapes. In 'Streamline' there are nine and that was the largest number of source tapes for any work I ever made. There are six in 'Mind's Eye'. It's as if there are two bits. It's as if you've got the orchestra and the score. You could assemble all the kit. That's like you are assembling the orchestra. Then you'd have to have the score, which is probably the tape source material. I never thought about it like that. I'd do a sketch because I needed to plan it out or I needed to show a gallery what it might look like and I did start doing computer-generated sketches. I remember going to a meeting, because 'Streamline', (which is the one with the monitors and the bridge) - that was sponsored, it was in a corporate space and I went with an animation of the thing I did on a 'Spaceward Supernova', believe it or not. It was an animation of the flowing images going across these monitors. I brought this little video Walkman in with the computer animation of it actually running, and the guy was stunned. It was a computer simulation of what the thing would look and it looked exactly like that when I made it. But normally I would go and I'd have a sketch or a description something written out: 'It

will look like this, there will be 16 things here and there will be a cable here'. It was like that. I would often do just a block diagram so I wasn't particularly concerned about editions, I never even thought about it and now, if you go and visit these wealthy Americans in up State New York, they've got Bill Viola installations in their houses, and I realise that there are editions of Tony Oursler and all the rest of it. But, I think my model was more like a composer with a score, so I probably shot myself in the foot quite early on!

JH: I think there are a lot of artists, during that period, that were not interested in the issue of editions. There was a political, social and ideological reason for that.

CMA: One chose to work in an ephemeral medium like video precisely because it was a political decision not to make objects and fill the world with yet more clutter. There is a legacy from that I suppose that continues to this day. So, the idea of selling the artifice, (although it might be attractive to sell something for lots of dosh) isn't enough of an interest for me to really try very hard to do it. I made the piece as it existed. I've got video documentation of it. It's been written about. It's been photographed and that's enough for me. I move on because I am no longer interested in things I made 15 or 16 years ago.

JH: Were there any specific facilitators or curators who were important to the exhibition of your work, either through process or the gallery or exhibition?

CMA: There was Anna Douglas who curated 'Eau d'Artifice', who really set me on that road because I think, up until then, I made pieces and then speculatively tried to get them shown. She asked me specifically to make a piece for an exhibition that had Marty St James, Anne Wilson, Andrew Stones and myself in. It was a specific commission so hats off to Anna, because that was a serious commission, and as a result of that, other work got commissioned. 'Streamline was commissioned by Eddie Berg and the very nice guy who is the director of the Bluecoat Gallery, Brian Biggs. Those people were early enough on in terms of my installation career. They were important to me for support.

JH: Were there any other people who were helpful to you?

CMA: There was the curator of photography at the V&A, Martin Barnes, who commissioned 'A Photographic Truth'. Chrissie Isles was helpful because she was the external assessor on my PhD, and I suppose for her interest quite early on which resulted in an exhibition of British installations by film and video artists at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford. I think that was a key exhibition for British Video Art although it didn't just show British Video Art. Not in terms of my practice, but the people like David Hall and the people who worked around David to start LVA. He was important because of the Serpentine exhibition and what grew out of that, which I know he didn't single-handedly curate, but the curatorial strand of David Hall's practice and the way that he championed and argued for a particular kind of practice, that I think lead to something, developing an interest in galleries to show video installation and videotape work.

JH: Did the work attract any critical feedback or attention from any critical writers, whether they were artists or not?

CMA: The first time that I had anything seriously written was by Nick Houghton, who wrote about 'The Stream' for Independent Video. That was a big deal for me because it was the first time that one of my tapes had been written about in more than a line. I'd had mentions, the odd line here and there but that was the first time when anyone had written seriously about a piece of work. Then there is Sean Cubitt. Sean Cubitt wrote quite a lot about 'Streamline' and he continued to write about Streamline. He misunderstood something fundamental about the soundtrack and it's funny because even though I've said to him, 'Sean, the reason why it (the soundtrack) doesn't reverse is because I want the backwards video to be seen as another stream, not the same one, so the sound going backwards would turn it into a video loop and it isn't a video loop.' He hasn't understood that but never mind. Sean is important. So, Nick Houghton- because he wrote first and Sean because he's written consistently. Cate Elwes, because Cate has written about a number of my works and I think the reason that that started to happen was because once she knew me she understood the work. She didn't understand the work before because she was coming from another context. It's really along the lines of when we were talking about understanding someone's work because you can see the trajectory of it. Without the trajectory, if it's recontextualised by presenting it into a group show then it can be misunderstood very easily. The other person is Jez Welsh because Jez also understood what I was doing. I think 'The Room with a View' is an unacknowledged influence on Immemorial. I'm sure he would never admit it but he wrote about 'The Stream' and he wrote about 'An Imaginary Landscape'. He included those works in some important compilations like 'Genlock' and 'Electric Eyes'. His way of writing and campaigning for a certain attitude to videotape is important as well. So I would say Cate, Jez, Sean, Nick are the key people in terms of writing and articulating and arguing for video polemically.

JH: Do you think that there were any of your works that lead any philosophical debates that were in the air or at any point during your career?

CMA: Not directly. I'd have to say that my tape work was misunderstood. I don't mean in some terrible, criminal way. I think it was not understood. I think some of the things I did were more important than they were seen to be at the time. Probably every artist feels that. I think some of them are undervalued. Maybe my ego is talking here, hoping that eventually, retrospectively, what I did will be appreciated and seen as consistent but I think it's going to take some time. I think some people who saw my installation work should re-visit the tape work and perhaps they'll see the link. I think Sean did that. I think that was interesting about Sean. I think he saw a compilation of tape work when he wrote the biography for me in that Arts Council book, 'A Directory of British Film & Video Artists' (edited by David Curtis). I think he saw what was going on in the tape work for the first time and I think that lead him to make the connection. With the exception of 'The Room with a View', because I don't think male artists were making autobiographical videotapes that were making reference to the video as an image making process in the way that I did in 1982.

JH: Steve Littman did to a certain extent. You were similar in that sense.

CMA: Well I think Steve and I both have been undervalued. I always felt Steve was a bit undervalued in terms of his contribution.

JH: I'm not sure were either of you necessarily been undervalued but it's always relative to the context. I think there was a very strong first generation in the 70s. It was very strong in a very particular kind of work. Then during the 80s there was a shift with Cate Elwes and others.

CMA: Cate and I were pretty well around the same date because she was in that 1979 New Contemporaries show as well with a performance piece. So, we were both starting to grab hold of the idea of video. But, I'd been working with video since I first dabbled with it in 1974. So I'm almost as early as some of the first generation but I cross over in the sense that I was a student in that first period and I was taught by people like Tony Sinden and Ken McMullen and Peter Donebauer. I have a funny transition thing that I'm almost their age because I went to art school a bit late. I already had sort of fairly clear idea of what I was trying to do and was influenced by some of the same things that they were influenced by, but then also partly influenced by what they were doing as well. So I agree with that point. Maybe 'Eau d'Artifice' was influential, with hindsight, because there was quite a large structure to it and being about the monitors forming the structure- but I wouldn't make any big claims.

JH: Was there any particular contextual, critical writing that you would agree with or disagree with?

CMA: No one thing because I felt that there were things I wanted to take from a number of different angles. There were things that David Hall wrote that I disagreed with fundamentally, but there were aspects of it that I thought were important. I thought that him arguing for video as an autonomous medium was spot on and so that was important to me. The stand was important and the writing was important. Stuart Marshall's writing I felt was useful in that it was pulling in from some of the film theory positions and applying them to videotape- that was important to me as well. Some of the feminist writing, particular Laura Mulvey, her position was influential because of the business of the viewpoint of the camera and the perspective of the maker in relation to the assumptions about audience and so on. They were influential and important to me. Marshal Mcluhan was important, but strangely enough not directly. I didn't read Mcluhan but I was so influenced by artists who had read Mcluhan like that generation of American artists who'd been very, very influenced by Mcluhan, which would include people like Frank Gillette, Beryl Korot and the Radical Software group and so on. Their writing and the way they absorbed Mcluhan's ideas was very important to me. The writing of Rosalind Krauss, particularly 'Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism', that was very influential. It had an impact on me. Peter Donebauer wrote a bit about video as a live medium and about his relationship to technology. He influenced me more as a teacher than as a writer. I didn't find his writing terribly convincing but it did point me at writing, because I then went and had a look at what Stephen Beck had written. I was particularly interested in artists who made their own technology and artists who'd been so influenced by the medium that they wanted to get their hands onto the signal as a part of their meaning-making process. Fundamentally important was Merleau-Ponty, particularly 'Eye and Mind', the idea of the artists as a body, the artist thinking through making and the sensibility. The mind is not just a head- the mind is not a brain. The mind is an embodied thing and so the business of working through a material is very important. The thinking and writing of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and that area is very important to me. 'Camera Lucida' by Roland Barthes is also very important. Susan Sontag's 'On Photography' was very influential on me around the time of the Jo

Spence thing. Then we have to move on into practitioner /theoreticians Malcolm Le Grice and his sense of the history of experimental filmmaking and particularly his ideas about what constitutes the abstract, because for me the idea that abstraction could be created through lens-based media comes from Malcolm. I understood it before, because I was attracted to those things, but I didn't understand why they could be seen as abstract until I read and absorbed Malcolm's filmmaking through something like 'Berlin Horse'. I read his book and understood his sense of history, and was then turned on to some of the filmmakers he wrote about. I was less influenced by Gidal directly because I found his writing virtually impenetrable. I disliked his practice although I recognised that he was making an extreme point and I admired the courage of that because I also was interested in the idea of marking out your territory by going to the edges, finding out where the edges of the territory were. For him the idea of any kind of narrative, even the narrative of image, was the edge that he was looking for. The writing of Stan Brakhage, particularly around 'The Art of Vision', was fundamentally important to me. I think those are the key ones. There's a bit of cybernetics in there but that is filtered through because I think that Lawrence Weiner and McLuhan, both had such a profound influence on that first generation of American video artists and I inherited that through their practice. So 'Vertical Roll' by Joan Jonas and some of the New York practitioners. Beryl Korot- they are important to me because of what they did. So you get their theory then. When I started to read what some of the people had written, it clicked back with the work I had already seen.

JH: What ideas or other artists influenced your work and who or what inspired your work?

CMA: Michael Snow, particularly 'La Région Centrale', and 'Wavelength', they were fundamentally important. Peter Campus, 'Transition 1', was crucial.

JH: You saw those works in Canada?

CMA: I saw 'Transition 1' in Canada and then again in England. I saw 'Wavelength' and 'La Région Centrale' in England. Malcolm Le Grice's, 'Berlin Horse' was a particular revelation. David Hall's '7 TV Pieces', particularly the monitor filling up with water: a kind of watershed pun. 'Vertical Roll,' I thought 'wow', when I saw that. I was stunned. I just sat there stunned. Hollis Frampton's Nostalgia, the photography of John Hilliard, the photography of Jo Spence, there are some sculptors, David Dye, Anthony McCall's 'Line Describing a Cone'. Welsby's 'Seven Days' was really important. There are other filmmakers, Len Lye, particularly the drawing on films. The other strand of influences is back in Canada, it's the National Film Board and particularly 'Norman McLaren'. The photography of Edward Weston, I went to a screening of a film about Edward Weston where they read some of his Day Books. That's what inspired me to start writing my own diary and the revelation that you could be an artist and not paint and not sculpt- that came from Edward Weston. I'd already been taking photographs, but my brother was the artist in the family. He was the painter and the sculptor. I was the other one who did stuff with the camera. It didn't count: it wasn't 'art'. Some feminist artists were important, as was the 'Nightcleaners' film. The Berwick Street Collective was important. Then there are the documentaries of Frederick Wiseman, particularly 'High School' and another one was Nick Broomfield, 'Juvenile Liaison', which for me was about the fact that the documentary is not the truth, the fact that documentary is a fictional reconstruction. Those sorts of things were all really important to me. There are the animations of the American guy who started out as a painter, Robert Breer. I love

'A Man and His Dog Out For Air'. I think it's a great piece of work. So there is a whole range of things. I loved animation and I loved filmmaking but I wanted to work with video because it was this electronic thing. So I took from film and tried to apply it to building, collage-ing like the first video artists. I think Paik was a collage artist. I think Vostell and Paik started out from collage. Animation is collage. There's collage in the Fluxus movement. There's also Maya Deren. I always say to my students, Maya Deren and her husband, Alexander Himmid, made the film 'Meshes of the Afternoon 'together. It's not Maya Deren's film- it's a joint film. I hear feminists say Maya Deren's 'Meshes of the Afternoon', but if you look at 'Meshes' it's different from her other films and Brakhage is very good on this, he knew them both (Deren and Himmid) he said, 'That film is a collaborative film'. When you see it, they are both in it. The thing is, it's an important film. 'Meshes of the Afternoon' was influential on me as a work of art with a moving image. I don't work in that way. I don't work with that kind of psychological thing, but the structure- I love the structure.

JH: Did you collaborate with any other artists?

CMA: Yes, Gabrielle Bown with three or four videotapes at the beginning of my serious attempt to be an artist. Since then, no, but I do use collaborative input on projects like the installations. I've often worked with editors to make the things. The image source for installations are from work with editors or technical advisors on different aspects, two outdoor pieces I've done, 'For William Henry Fox Tolbot' and 'Interwoven Motion,' Richard Monkhouse was the solar energy consultant on one and John Calderbank on the other, so I do have collaborative input on projects.

JH: And on the early work was a Alex Meigh a collaborator or not?

CMA: No, we never collaborated.

JH: Did she make her own tapes then?

CMA: Yes, she made her own tapes. We never collaborated at all on any of our artwork. We made completely separate things. We did on some commercial things together and we've shown together. We went to Paris together and showed work as 3/4 Inch Productions, but it was Alex's stuff and Chris's stuff.

JH: As part of a community or collective organisation, what do you believe were the collective goals?

CMA: With LVA the collective goal was clearly to put video on the map, to campaign for it, to be recognised as a legitimate medium for artists to work with, to create production, distribution and network or some kind of systematic distribution and to eventually to make some kind of production centre. I was involved with it in two stages: the first was right after I left LCP, from 1980 to about 1982/'83, when I was on the Steering Committee. When I first went there I remember I'd written to them several times and Alex Meigh got me in because she said at several meetings in a row, there's somebody here who seems to be interested we should invite him to come along. I came along and it was David Hall, Stuart Marshall, David Critchley, Tamara Krikorian, Alex Meigh, and Peter Livingston. I went to a few meetings and then a few new people came in, Terry Flaxton, Penny Deadman, and one or two others. Alex and Pete and I

set up 3/4 Inch Productions. Terry and Penny and Alex and I used to get together after every LVA meeting and talk video. We used to go to a pizza place and talk. Terry and I selected works and we did some screenings at the AIR Gallery. So I was involved at that sort of level and then I got disengaged with it because of Goldsmiths and because of 3/4 Inch Productions. Then I got re-involved with it after Jez Welsh. There was the time when Dave Critchley was running it and then Jez Welsh, and it moved several times. I got re-involved when it was on Frith Street. I rejoined the Council of Management and eventually became Chair, to my horror. I didn't think I was up to the task but I took it on. Cate Elwes left the Council of Management just as I became Chair. I was Chair for two years during the time when it was very tough. The staff were employed then. When I was involved in the early period, it was all voluntary and there was just the Council of Management. When I came back, there was staff working there. There was a distribution manager, Marion Urch. There were technicians, Pete Harvey and another guy who then became the curator at the Third Eye in Liverpool. This is 1987 to 89. So, there were technical people on the staff and there was a distribution manager. We went through a crisis with funding and GLA were threatening to withdraw their funding. We had to have a consultancy team in to decide on a restructuring programme, which I oversaw. It was a nightmare.

JH: Were there people or communities who you felt facilitated your art works or who were particularly supportive to you as an artist?

CMA: Well I think that I will have to say the Arts Council after a bit. I think the Arts Council's 'Video Artists on Tour' was a good scheme and I think it helped me along. It gave me some confidence. Then obviously, once I started getting funding, North West Arts gave me funding because I was living in Preston for quite a while. I got three or four sets of funding from them so I would also flag them up. So the Arts Council have been good. I found people like Gary Thomas sympathetic, open-minded, and interested. My disappointment with LVA was that I always hoped it would be more of an artistic community. I don't think it ever really was. It was certainly artists who got together but mainly for the purposes of distribution and production. There was never a really dialogue about work and I always hoped that that might happen. It never did.

JH: Other people say the opposite. I've asked that question very specifically. Because of the lack of writing, it's important to try and somehow it. People always say that there was dialogue. They say that the artists were always talking about the work. They were in pubs; they were at the ACME etc.

CMA: Certainly Terry, Penny, Alex and I would get together afterwards and talk about work but I didn't feel that I was able to talk about work with Jez or even with Dave Critchley. Even though one felt sympathetic and you could be chatty about the general process of being an artist, but the nitty-gritty of thinking about video and making video art and the context of video art, I never found personally there was much dialogue.

JH: Do you think it was because you were in a different generation from the founding members of LVA? I think that's an interesting point. When I talked to David Critchley for example one of the things he specifically said was that there was all this dialogue, there was all this philosophical dialogue, talking place in 2B Butler's Warf, and in the pub.

CMA: Yes, maybe there was dialogue in those slightly earlier days.

JH: Were you one of those people?

CMA: No. I was never connected with that, ever. I missed that entirely. It seemed to be going on in a different little world. We certainly had a sub-group, and certainly Alex and I and Terry particularly, were really talking to each other about ideas and work and all of these things. It was harder to do it in the wider context. The Goldsmiths context didn't work terribly well but we did form an artists group, called The Artists Research Group – ARGO. We formed a group from the two graduating years so we continued a dialogue but it was fine art practice, not specifically video. I didn't personally create it, but I was part of a post-graduate group. That went on for a few years. We used to visit each other's studios- that was the deal. Everybody would go to one studio and we'd talk about their work. All we would do was carry on the seminar arrangement that Goldsmiths had basically got going for us. That was mid 1980s and that went on certainly while I was making 'The Stream' for example. I remember that dialogue happening for a while. In fact, we had a group show in Howarth Gallery in Yorkshire about 1986/'87. But other than that, it's been quite hard to find that kind of thing, which is one reason why the MA was so important because without it, I think it would have been very hard to have a dialogue.

JH: I think it's an interesting point and I think people talk about the film co-op in this way. There was this place where people went, and in one sense it was true, but I think if you skip a generation you'd find the same arguments.

CMA: I think art school was where it happened. I think a lot of people found like-minded individuals within that art school context. Possibly, in Dave Critchley's generation, there were a number of Northern artists, coming out of Newcastle, for example, which included Critchley and Stuart Marshall, Alex Meigh was there as well. I think they extended something that they may have started while they were at art school. They might have continued it for a while and perhaps that worked in some kind of sub-group setting in the London context. But I was never part of any of it. So I had to create my own dialogues I suppose. It happened enough through one thing or another. Once I started teaching I found there were practitioners teaching at the same institution or there were advanced students there who might kind of engage with me on some deeper level. That's the other part of why teaching is important, especially once I started teaching MA students and running the MA. I had to up the anti a bit. My whole level had to be up to it. I always felt that my practice as an artist was crucial to my teaching and when they started introducing this idea of research as practice I said, 'But of course we are doing that'. I couldn't imagine teaching unless I had a practice. I wouldn't have anything to teach. It's not about facts or information. It's about experience and if the experience isn't up-to-date, if I am talking about the experience of being an artist 10 years ago, then it's not going to be relevant to a contemporary scene or to the contemporary situation for students. So in that sense, the practice and the teaching were my context.

JH: Did you facilitate other artists' works?

CMA: Yes, indirectly. First of all I guess as a teacher that was really important. I suppose I did in those days when I was connected to LVA, in the first phase, when we were

curating some exhibitions. We were selecting work and showing it. I've done one or two other things. When I had a studio at Bow Arts Trust two years in a row I curated the 'Visions in the Nunnery show'. The second year, we had open submissions and we advertised and selected work. So here and there I've done things and now of course through 'Analogue', but that's very much a historical survey. So it's not as if I'm helping new artists or anything. But I would say I have through my teaching practice and through the odd curatorial foray, but I don't really see myself as a curator.

JH: When you were producing and exhibiting the works, did you feel you were responding to a wider international or a larger movement and if so how would you define it?

CMA: I guess there are several layers to that. One felt one was making work in relation and in reaction and response to other works that were being made by contemporaries. Although I don't think there was much of a dialogue with other artists on a really detailed level, there was at another level: you were seeing what they were doing, you were engaging with it and responding to it. In fact, one really feels especially because of the kind of writing that was being done, that you were mainly working for your contemporaries and working in relation to contemporaries you knew. So you were very conscious of what Kate Meynell had just done or what Steve Littman might have made or shown recently at the ACME, or whoever it was, so it seemed to me that there was a sense in which we were each other's context. Then there was the LVA strategy of getting that UK work out into international venues and that did have some impact. They were bringing work in that we were seeing because outside of the college situation, and once I was teaching and showing work myself, the only way I saw other artists work was at LVA shows or the things that started to happen in other galleries in that context. So yes, there was an international situation and one was aware that one was creating a UK response, both to each other's work and to what was coming in from outside, especially the American context. I was less aware of what was going on in France for example. But with Germany, Holland and mainly the USA and to a little extent Canada, I was a little bit aware through my personal networking. I think there was a sense that we were part of something and that we were making very, very small links, but they were important.

JH: What are your most current works or works in progress?

CMA: The last finished thing was an installation in Malta in a group showcalled 'Digital Discourse'. (I had made a transition from analogue video though into installation and then through into the digital, which happened for me around the residency that I did in 1995 at Oxford Brooks University. I was the Artist in Residence in Electronic Imaging and it was then that I first started using computers instead of videotape.)

This new work in Malta, in December / January 2006- there's a strand of my work which has been using renewable energy but using it as a kind of metaphor. It's not just about using it for ecological purposes, but using it to find a way to tag or identify the fact that there's a signal moving- there are things moving from one place to another. There's a flow of some sort or another. So this installation used a solar power derived from artificial light. The work was called 'Resurrection' and it was a tree that had been revived digitally. It was a dead tree but it had artificial leaves that were projected to create living leaves in a blowing tree. It was made by driving a projector that was being

powered by solar energy- there was a thing about light and image and movement and so on. That's the most recently completed piece.

JH: Did it run from a hard drive?

CMA: No it ran from a DVD. The DVD player was solar powered. It had grown out of an earlier piece called 'Interwoven Motion' I did with NESTA (National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts) funding in 2004 and was part of the 'Item Project' that I did with FACT (the Foundation for Arts and Creative Technology, Liverpool). It was an outdoor piece in Grizedale that was solar and wind powered. It was clamped onto a tree and it was the view from the tree, looking down to the base. 'Resurrection' (the Malta installation) was inspired by that, but I took the tree and brought it indoors.

I'm interested in doing another outdoor piece, so the next piece I'm planning will also be solar powered, but it will be on the internet. It's based on the work I've been doing- I guess over the last decade. There's often a historical reference both to imaging technology and the culture and where they intersect. I did a piece that was an homage to Fox Talbot and the piece I did in Grizedale was connected to John Ruskin. The new piece I'm planning is connected to the work of Alfred Stieglitz, particularly his Equivalent series and so it will be called 'All Ways Are Up,' which was what Stieglitz wrote on the back of one of his pictures, his cloud photographs. It's a sort of a solar-powered webcam, which will be using neural net technology to identify whenever it finds an image which is very close to an original Steiglitz image. So basically it will just keep looking and looking and whenever it finds an equivalent it will put it up on the web, identifying the date and time says 'Equivalent Number 4'. So it's just going to be looking to identify these in the sky and find them. So that's what I'm working on but it's in the very early stages. It's in collaboration with a scientist who works with neural-net computer technology.

JH: Did you get funding for that?

CMA: Not yet, no. This is just at the applying stage. I've got the idea. I've sketched out how it should be, but we are going to apply for some kind of funding for an MA student to do some of the research on the neural imaging side of it. The scientist will supervise it, I'll co-supervise and then I'll make the piece.

I've got pictures of all these things and they are on the website. The outdoor piece, the image that it produced was on a screen at the base of the tree and I realised that it'd be much more interesting if I could have made that image accessible on the internet. So, really the new piece is making that image live in some way and making it available anywhere. It's partly about spreading it in a different way.

JH: Do you think there is a connection between the work you are making now and the early video work, or when you first started to make expanded work or installation-based work?

CMA: There's always been this theme of the relationship between technology and nature. It's about nature /culture and about really trying to establish that they are one and the same thing. They are inextricably bound up with each other rather than opposites.

JH: You talked about autobiographical work and that some of the work that you made is autobiographical. Have you made any of that work since that period or would you say that is compartmentalised within a particular period of time?

CMA: I think it's the sort of thing that emerges from time to time- so for example I did a piece in 2000 called 'Fenetre Digitale', which was me. It was my body. I was physically in a space and I recreated it somewhere else. It was a projection of images of myself. Every so often I will appear in things myself. The theme in this piece was about taking a bit of my studio and transporting it somewhere else digitally, and doing some kinds of actions and so on. So, no, it (the autobiographical theme) won't ever disappear but I think it emerges and re-emerges. I think we only have certain number of themes and I think they do emerge and re-emerge across a body of work. So I think anybody looking (when I'm dead) at the work, would see the strands and they would see that they do connect and inter-connect. The historical work, I suppose is me looking at the history of the medium that I'm committed to. So in a way, even that's got an autobiographical element in it. You can't really avoid it.