



## REWIND | Artists' Video in the 70's & 80's Interview with David Critchley

Interview by Dr Jackie Hatfield, Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004

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

DC: I would say that *'Pieces I never Did'* is the single most important piece of work I've made. It was the last big piece of video art I made, it took over a year to make and it's got sixteen different pieces of work within a piece of work almost, along with many themes and strands that work across those individual pieces of work. So it remains a single entity comprised of many parts, many elements, both in terms of the performance aspect of each piece that I never did of course. The video element is not just simply a means of presenting performance work it's a means of taking them further into expressing what I was talking about by using video as the structuring medium to work around. So it was the first piece I made with colour, I actually started to shoot it on Sony Rovers, black and white reel to reel, and at that time I was very fortunate enough to be involved in the three year MA Course at the RCA which no longer exists and they got hold of Umatic equipment, and I actually stopped and started again in order to make use of the Umatic gear from 1978 onwards so it was important in that sense technically it was at that time quite an early British Video art piece made in colour on Umatic. It was also intended that the piece was shown on three monitors, not as a single screen piece which is all that remains of it, the single screen piece contains all the elements of the three screen piece in terms of the spoken parts the references to the written down ideas I never made but which have obviously been made in some way.



JH: Are there works that are important to you and the development of your practice but that are not necessarily more widely acknowledged as important by external viewers or within written texts for example?

DC: There are, and again if I look at my video art output over that period of time let's say the early 70's to the late 70's or very early 80's at the latest, looking back at it there's a sort of logic to it where I work with initially quite limited contained ideas in one off pieces lasting a few minutes, basically looking at working through a process, I need to be more specific.

JH: What I was getting at with that question was that whether there were works that didn't receive attention but that really were of central importance to your development as an artist and your practice at that time.

DC: *Triologue*, *Static Acceleration* were quite important that got shown and that were shown and were represented, there was another one *Zero Reaches Zero*, which was my first single monitor tape, and there was another piece at the *Video Show, Yet Another Triangle*, which really was my first finished video piece in the sense it was shown in the gallery it worked in that context and continues to be able to be shown or worked on, but it was an installation dependent on the medium for its working out.

JH: It was a performance centred piece?

DC: The making of the piece was a performance, and the showing of the piece puts the viewer in a similar predicament if you like to the performers making the piece, so there's a self-referential element if you like in that, or you give a viewer the same problem as you gave the performers. So those pieces were out there, but then there was a little piece called *3D* in which I showed my ear, my eyes and my mouth, but as you were looking at my ear I was describing my mouth, and then you look at my eye and I'm describing my ear and you look at the mouth, so again you're disjointed in terms of what you're looking at, what you see and what you're looking at, and just a little piece like that it's almost like a sketchbook piece, you know it may have been shown a couple of times, but actually to me it was working through this same line if you like of just picking something up and saying how can I take that apart and find some way of looking at it again from another angle.

There are two pieces called, *Memory 1* and *Memory 1 and 2*, that work across four screens that quarter the screen and also go back in four depths, which was a very mechanical piece of work that helped me work out what was possible to do with the medium mechanically, but in and of itself it wasn't a fantastically interesting piece, some people quite liked it and found it amusing, which I also thought was important, I think an element of humour or creating space for other things to happen is quite important as well.

I would hope that in making work whilst you've got a broad concept of where you want to end up, you don't know the end before you start, otherwise its kind of pointless doing it in the first place, and I think a similar thing applies in terms of presenting the work, its not something you can legislate for you can't just say to people, there's going to be a surprise or this isn't going to work out the way you think it is because you've already diffused it. You have to let it develop and move and meander and turn into something that perhaps you yourself don't have full control over either as an artist, so that there's space for a viewer to work on the piece themselves and bring their thoughts to it its important that that's there definitely.

JH: How were the pieces produced? What was the start point? Was there a general process in mind with each piece?

DC: Its probably quite important when talking about my video work to just go back to my film work and also to the purely performance work and you know to go back even further to sculpture and photographic work and sound work and then painting and drawing and right back to basics, to try and fix that with the video work, I mean the films I made were often about duration it could have been about framing. I made a piece called *Move Towards the Verticality of the Horizon* it was a film four minutes long basically I was standing with the horizon of the sea like that and I slowly fell over holding myself up with a pole and the camera followed that movement, so you ended up with the horizon vertical in the frame, and me vertical in the frame. That was made in '75, '76, on Southend Beach, shot by Alison Winkle I think, and funded by me so that those kind of playful but visual experiments and time duration experiments, framing experiments, a lot of that I did photographically or on film, and performance pieces like the *Butlers Wharf*, *24 minute retrospective* was a sound piece layering sound minute

by minute on 24 tape recorders, with one minute loops running and again that element of layering and additive altering of how something might work out was done in sound as well as in vision – which of course video suddenly made possible to do both those things, whereas certainly up until '75 I saw film as a silent medium and sound as a spatial medium separate from image.

JH: Video was a plastic medium?

DC: It made all those things possible to bring them together in different ways but they've grown for me out of a visual, aural, performance area that bit by bit working through video once I'd got that physical mechanical technical hang of the thing I could bring lots of things into it.

JH: Another process question, if you could talk about when you first started to make work using video, when and why?

DC: The very first video piece I made was in 1973, I just called it *Changing*, it almost never existed other than as a performance again, but I changed through all the clothes I owned, I just brought them all into the studio, set up the camera set the camera running, clothes on the rail, me here, empty space there, and one by one randomly bit by bit changed through this rail of clothes and then took them off again, a shoe a shirt, whatever, dumping them in a pile, so that at the end of the piece, about an hour it probably took you had an empty rail here and a big pile of clothes there, and I took everything off and that was the end of that...

It was available (video) through my college course at the time at Newcastle, Stuart Marshall was my lecturer at the time, he was opening up possibilities in those directions.

It was probably a couple of years really on from that before I made *Yet Another Triangle* for the Serpentine Show, which was very much for a start getting your hands on three portapak at the same time which was another minor miracle in 1975, there were all different formats. In fact we had to re-make that piece, I made with Stuart Marshall, Keith Frake and myself in Newcastle but for the Serpentine because of the players that they had we had to re-shoot it with Tony Sinden and David Hall at Maidstone using Sony portapaks so that the tapes could actually be screened at the Serpentine.

JH: So the documentation of *Yet Another Triangle* which is in the Video Show Catalogue that says it's got you Keith Frake and Stuart (Marshall) but actually what was shown there was the piece with Tony?

DC: I think I'm right in saying that what was actually shown there was one remade with David and Tony but the publicity had already gone to the printers by then.

(Before *Yet Another Triangle*) I didn't make a video piece as such, I was shooting film, Super 8 and 16mm, and I was doing sound pure sound recording mixed in with performance and quite a lot of photography.

JH: How long did the works take to make?

DC: Things vary enormously *Pieces I never did* took a year to make, but it's made of separate elements, some which took a minute, some which took forty minutes, creating some of those pieces actually took some weeks.

JH: So in terms of the process for your pieces, that leads to the question about technological processes and methodologies was that, did you edit the works together, was it layered with an edit or was it done with a camera?

DC: It was done in camera. *Static Acceleration* was probably the first piece I made that has an actual edit in it, because I didn't have an edit deck before then, and it was open reel editing anyway, it was really cutting things together, tagging one thing to another, and the process I was using was not really an editing process it always a camera process.

JH: Was the camera part of the performance in a sense?

DC: In *Yet Another Triangle*, its very definitely part of the performance the camera limits how the performers can move, by its angle of view and by their relationship to other performers it might limit the stage if you like for performers. The camera created the space in which I would work.

*Instruction Limitation*. Its a really boring piece of work, but again it helped me go through all the things you could do with a Sony edit deck and a camera technically so that the camera is pointing at me talking with a screen here and I'm giving myself instructions, pull the slow motion button, click twist, but just literally working through one by one all the bits of stuff you could do that was '77ish.

JH: If you can talk about your artistic processes and how these have changed over the years – over the period that you've been making work from 1970 until now.

DC: For the last 5 years I've worked in collaboration with Suzy Freeman and Liz Leigh a doctor who started a process of work called *Pharmacopoeia* based on medical themes; a wide variety of medical themes, responding to them artistically initially with the aid of a Wellcome Foundation grant. Liz Leigh then asked me to get involved bringing a different angle. The video work we've been talking about up until now really has been what you might call personal artwork or art related artwork. The references are very much art references, the difference being given a proposal or brief. How can you represent that? So its very much working on a theme that's telling a story of some sort, but in order to do that I talked to people just about that fact, pulling together a sort of series of disparate ideas. This I think far more than I would have done twenty years ago, I am happy to ask other people what they think and then include that. I am talking about quite a distinct difference there. The pieces I tend to work on now, certainly *Recoil* and *Cradle to Grave*, in the British Museum; *Cradle to Grave* took two years to draw together, *Recoil* took six months.

JH: Is that different from the earlier work would you say, that time scale of production?

DC: *Pieces I Never Did*, took a year and it was based on notebook ideas that went back several years. So, again I like this sense of connectedness over time, you know over long periods of time.

JH: Did you have any ideological reasons why you wanted to use video in the first place?

DC: I think there was an element of accessibility. I was quite keen about that for the artist and the audience, and for society in general. At that from that period of time from the mid seventies to now. I think there was an idea that it would be a great device for freeing up peoples ability to express themselves and to say things, which I guess to a great extent it has been. Pieces I never did was picked up early on by someone at the BBC who wanted to include it in a programme of artists who used diaries. It was seen as a diaristic piece in the end I didn't agree to get involved in it because I thought that they were changing the meaning of it quite considerably in the way they wanted to present it. I saw video as a complete alternative to television, I didn't have a television at home for many years, but I really was not into television both as a political media construct or as a physical medium, I really went off it at that point in time. A book that I thought was important at the time was a book called Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television by a guy called Gerry Mander. I felt that video was making some point about that the ability to use it oneself.

JH: You really were making a political decision to use video?

DC: Yes I think that's right

JH: (The works) they were meant for the gallery?

DC: Yes, I did see it as part of a social collaborative process involving other artists involving interested people and taking place in galleries or venues, in other words you got out of the house and you went somewhere else and you socialised.

JH: Was there ever a time or a work where it mattered which imaging technology that you used?

DC: I think at that time very unlike now where technically speaking with your laptop or portable camera. You can do it all here now in this room certainly to a higher quality standard than you could do it then at all. Certainly when colour arrived, I switched from black and white and started re-shooting again, and shot it all in colour in Umatic, and a year later by the time I'd shot everything and got all my master material there, I then went to the Fantasy Factory which was about the only one accessible, well done Hoppy and Sue, available and affordable Umatic edit suite. That would be early '79. But to do anything more than just sort of crash edit anything together Umatic you obviously needed a proper edit suite.

*Pieces I Never Did* was conceived as three tapes about 35 minutes long each tape that broadly ran in sync for 35 minutes changing at least every one minute. I showed it at the ACME gallery in an LVA show the same year as Ian Bourne. Helen Chadwick saw that show and actually selected both those pieces; Ian Bourne's (*Lenny's Documentary*) being shown at the Hayward annual in 1979. In the end I didn't show at the Hayward Annual having been asked to by Helen. It was to do with the way they were going to show it at the Hayward, which was very side-showish, not on permanently, not in a fore grounded gallery but off to one side, it was the very early days of showing video in galleries: times change.

JH: Was video central to your work?

DC: You'd have to look at my development as an artist, from going to art school in 1970 to date, the whole thing's a process and it changes and moves with the times so there was definitely a period of time where video was very central to my work, and that period was probably 75 until 80. Before that time I was far more interested in performance, during that time I was also interested in film, and I was making film still into the late 70's actually, and then there was a period after that certainly into the 80's where I stopped completely, where I had a complete change of lifestyle. I started making documentaries with a production company that I started until the early 90's when I went into teaching.

JH: How has the process in the 70's and the current work with the coil piece, would you say that you use the technology very similarly?

DC: The nature of a video image is quite special it's the only way you can get things to look like that so I was using it for that reason. You could have done that probably just about in 1979 with a portapak. You could have done something like it but with the earlier work it was less about the way it looked.

JH: You were talking about monochrome, there was an issue about colour. A lot of people were using black and white and there was a polemical reason why that was the case?

DC: And a technical reason why that was the case, it was all you could get your hands on up until a certain point. Working with black and white did create its own limitations but also that was not a bad thing at that time. Whilst I think the reel to reel black and white video art period from early 70's until late 70's was a purist period because there were those limitations so people focussed on processing images and what effect that had. All those things that were material to the medium really,

JH: Did that change things when colour came out, did the work discernibly change?

DC: I think generally, I mean my work or video art work in general changed I think at that point *Pieces I Never Did* is essentially a story, its quite long, it covers a lot of different locations and areas. All of that didn't come over well in black and white grainy portapak style. Portapaks were used to do agitprop work and there were a lot of interviews done in that way, which works fine, but certainly in comparison with film which you could have giant beautiful colourful projections in film then. Interestingly I think more so than you do now, because quite a lot of people use video and project video which actually is not as crisp as 16mm film still in terms of what you get projected at the end of the day.

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

DC: The bigger background funding scenario in terms of lets say the funding of London Video Arts, it did both those things, of course it enabled people to work, it enabled their work to be distributed in a way it never had been before, it was modelled on the Filmmakers coop idea an artist run organisation. On a personal level I'd had a couple of small grants from Northern Arts and from the Arts Council to complete film work.  
(20/1/2/64)

JH: There was obviously that transition point where you started to use video. Perhaps was it to do with audience and placing the work within a space which was not as simple with film?

DC: The way of working could be translated but in terms of audience, I think that maybe this goes onto the community side of things. I was at Newcastle Polytechnic for my BA, Stuart Marshall was teaching there, I met Alison Winkle, I moved to London so there was that whole community of artists who met through the ACME housing association which was significant at the time in the East End. Alison was from the Isle of Man, she knew Kevin Atherton, Martin Hearne, Mick Duckworth, Charlie Hooker, John Kippin and Belinda Williams. We all ended up in London at the same time and we got a studio together at 2B Butlers Wharf which was really a space rented by the eight of us, a studio space, we were all performance, film, not so much video, but non object based artists so we used it to show our own work. We started to run it as a performance run gallery really. Initially we were paying the rent out of our own pockets.

The Arts Council came up with a modest grant generally to formalise it. We did have regular meetings, there was a social grouping there. There was a community around there, definitely a cross over between the ACME gallery, the film makers coop, Butlers Wharf as a set of studios, and 2B as a space in which to show. Funding I think was a mixture of self funded at that time, group funded which would enable things like Butlers Wharf. On a personal level I only ever got very small completion grants and later when we started doing LVA. I did get funding again that actually paid me to research in practice the establishment of an artist run video resource. Funding tended more, I think it was policy, to fund organisations or groups and very little funding direct to artists.

JH: How much did funding take part in the continuation or realisation of your practice?

DC: I would have to hold my hands up and admit to being very fortunate to do the three year MA at the Royal College (76-79) after that it became a two year course. (Environmental Media).

To touch on LVA, David Hall, Steve Partridge, Tamara Krikorian, Roger Barnard, met Stuart Marshall, Johnny Turpie, myself and Pete Livingstone. We actually met for the first time at the Serpentine Gallery at the Video Show in 1975 so there was this Newcastle gang and this Maidstone gang and that was where we first had a conversation about the possibility of something like LVA existing, and it was on the basis that here we were all about to finish college courses, we were doing an exhibition foregrounding video art in Britain for the first time. What happens next? How does this develop? So I would personally put that at the point when the idea of a group of people came together to create an organisation for artists to make video generally really started out...people were basically all headed for London.

I think about the earliest work I'd seen were Clive Richardson's video pieces which I think were made at the Royal College also about '72 '73.

What equipment we could find when we were first in London for instance would be places like Oval House, or the Battersea Arts Centre, or Albany perhaps. There was always a community video element to it, now nothing wrong with that at all but I think that the first video piece I made in London was *Zero Reaches Zero* which was made on the Oval House portapak. So I was essentially in a community centre making video

art but I think there was still quite a strong feeling that artists wanted a place that was for artists, both to make and to show and distribute work and that argument did rumble on throughout the whole period of LVA.

JH: I was going to ask you about LVA, there was no exhibition space, so can you talk a bit about the decisions around that?

DC: Discussions were held and Butlers Wharf was quite important because that was somewhere we would meet up. Steve Partridge and Jane Rigby showed at Butlers Wharf, they were very involved with what was happening there, so the discussion of the idea of something like LVA was ongoing and David Hall would quite often come to things at Butlers Wharf as well so bit by bit that discussion continued to the point where a group of people, David Hall, Stuart Marshall, Steve Partridge, myself Johnny Turpie, Marceline Mori, Tamara Krikorian, Roger Barnard, Pete Livingstone, Brian Hoey and Wendy Brown were also around. We formalised it and started to put together a proposal for what it should be.

The desire was to have a space and I think the first official launch of the LVA catalogue as an exhibition as show was at the AIR gallery in about '78. That was the first LVA show as an organised event. At some point after that, '78 '79 we looked at space in Brixton, the Fridge, I think, but it wasn't the right place and then Tony Kirkhope from the Other Cinema rented a room in little Newport Street in Soho, to LVA. That was our first place.

JH: What was the preferred context for your practice?

DC: At that time I wouldn't have said I would have thought about it in those terms, some work along with others was screened at the Tate and it was quite alarming to see one Sony Trinitron against a giant white wall a 19" screen on a table next to a wall. That was the Tate screening video in the gallery at that time. I think it was again at that time a question of 'well that was it'. That particular show must have been about '78. Then there was some installation work downstairs. Stephen Partridge and Roger Barnard had work installed, and that worked better just because installations have a scale to them, but in terms of screening work it really, it was difficult. As the technology changes you change and develop with it.

JH: Coming to the question about television or broadcast, did you ever see that as being somewhere you'd like to place your work?

DC: Speaking personally I was not interested in television and I saw the practice of making video art as an alternative practice to television. Perhaps naively saw gallery shows and evening screenings as an environment and a social event, which was for me a complete alternative to TV. As I said before I didn't have a TV probably from 75-85 and I did not make video artwork to be seen on TV, that was not where I was aiming my work at all.

JH: Did you achieve your ambitions with the dissemination of your work?



DC: I think I did at that time, apart from perhaps the Hayward annual in '79. After that I screened pieces of work in Germany it was screened all over the place at that time. I had a lot of screenings between the late seventies and the early eighties.

JH: The issue of non object art galleries not sure where to place it?

DC: I think it was more British to be honest, I certainly think looking at the States there was a much easier acceptance of video as a medium that could be made to work in the gallery context or other contexts, I think in Germany also the acceptance of art practice as a valid arena for experimentation and polemic social interaction, I was really knocked out because a couple of times when I was in Germany, art was part of everybody's lives, certainly at that time, I don't think it was worldwide, I do think it was a British thing, I think it was linked to the general malaise of our society, peoples expectation of art galleries, it was effected by funding both arts council who had a limited budget to direct in that direction. Which was used to the best of everybody's ability but it was a very limited budget.

Certainly when LVA became an organisation that was up and running in the early eighties, with four or five staff, and premises in Soho Edit Suite Distribution, and access to a gallery on a regular basis, at the AIR gallery, at that point in time that was only possible because of some Channel 4 funding, GLC funding, Gulbenkian Foundation funding. Relatively by Arts Council terms a lot of funding, although in terms of those other funders, the Arts Council amounted to about ten percent of LVA's total funding, and at that point LVA was also able to generate funding through work it did through distribution, hiring of edit suites, sales of work and it had changed completely. It was a working functioning organisation that was generating income and from other spin off work that came from that.

JH: Were there specific facilitators or curators who were important to the exhibition of your work?

DC: In terms of my work I was dependent on that community of people who knew my work, Artists who were involved. I think everybody in this area, was very much involved in the distribution and exhibition of their work as much as the making of it. There were key people at the film makers coop; There was the Arts Council video makers on tour scheme, there were the key colleges around the country, Coventry, Newcastle, Brighton, Wolverhampton and there were the local film coops, Norwich, Birmingham.

JH: What critical feedback or public attention did the work attract?

DC: My work was reviewed in Studio International (David Hall wrote that piece), in Art and Artists, also written by David Hall, there were catalogues through LVA and through exchanges notably The Kitchen and other publications like Independent Media.

I personally shied away from writing, I felt it was not my area, and I felt I didn't want to either overly characterise my work in writing, and I also didn't feel I needed to make a case for it in writing, in that it stood as an artwork in its own right, and if other people wanted to write about it fine, and when every I have written things in other publications like LVA catalogues or brief bits about Butlers Wharf in Readings Magazine I tended to

write as near as I can a factual account of what's happened in a given area and not get into putting an ideology on it, I just feel that's not my thing.

Whilst I felt that I was happy that David Hall had defined an area which was a starting point, it was clear, and you could almost identify work that fitted that bill, however, that in itself was limiting, for me it provided a good starting point a place to work from, but I also felt I needed to move into a less rigidly defined practice, so you know whilst I was aware of what people were writing and saying in different arena's I personally didn't feel I should put myself in one camp.

JH: Would you say that LVA was a place where people could, or artists particularly could lead the debates around the practice they were experimenting with?

DC: Yes very much so, and I think that was an important part of LVA doing regular screenings in any given year at that time we would do thirty screenings I guess, and they were places where people would come and watch work and discuss work and things did move on as a result of those shows. I saw that as the means of communicating, through the work, through the location, through the discussion.

I felt that I worked very much within an artistic environment with both my partner who I lived with at that time; Alison Winkle, with all our friends, with the whole ACME artists wider diaspora, the 2B Butlers Wharf people, the film makers coop people, I felt that there was a very active artistic environment with a lot of discussion, with a lot of people looking at each others work and I was happy as it were to work within that.

JH: Can you describe if possible what other ideas and other artists inspired the work?

DC: I would go back and look at people like Vito Acconci, Chris Burden, William Wegman to some extent, Beuys, Joseph Beuys, and just generally the whole performance art scene the European performance art scene, and the American performance art scene and I would mention Stuart Brisley specifically. I did like that purist art performance area.

Also I liked a lot of the sculptors who were around at that time. People like Richard Serra and I liked Dennis Oppenheims work very much also some of the sound work that was around at that time, Cage, and Alvin Lucier. People who I was introduced to certainly through Stuart Marshall initially, and then a good friend from that time, Fast Forward who went to the states as Paul Wilson, and became Fast Forward overnight and still is Fast Forward and is a very accomplished and widely exhibited musician around the place.

I think also I should mention contemporaries, I think one is most influenced by ones contemporaries certainly Kevin Atherton, Alison Winkle, and others who were around. Steve Partridge, Jane Rigby, very different but interesting work so actually quite often one was making work which was a response to ones contemporaries.

JH: Were you a part of any community or collective organisation of artists? What do you believe were the collective goals?

DC: We've talked about Butlers Wharf quite a lot earlier. A point came in the late 70's where it became essential for London Video Arts to be a formalised legal entity and

actually that gave rise to an argument between essentially two groups of people within that body of people who were the founder members as it were of London Video Arts, and without going into great detail there was a lot of discussion and debate about whether LVA should be a private organisation or a publicly funded and run organisation and that literally came down to a vote in council of management meeting. It went, I don't know how many votes by, but it went to being a publicly funded organisation, not as a private entity. At that point Steve (Partridge), David Hall, Roger Barnard basically said, OK if its going that way, fine, but you can run it if you want it to be that, and at that point I felt I had to make a serious personal commitment otherwise it just wouldn't have worked. By that time LVA had books, it had artists in distribution, it had outstanding commitments and it was renting a space. I actually made a conscious decision to focus my time and energy on running LVA.

JH: Can I ask you a specific question about how you think LVA at that time, since you brought up about the LUX and the merger of the coop and LVA, how do you think LVA compared as an artist led organisation to the coop? Do you think that LVA kept its identity as artist led facilitators of practice relative to the coop, or not?

DC: Do you mean did LVA, or if you like, do you mean what's left of LVA as part of the LUX is still definable or recognisable?

JH: That the coop had a definite identity which had evolved around experimental film, LVA was sort of separate, this is my perception of it. It was sort of separate in that the artists didn't have a space to show the work, but it did have a separate identity, it had a very particular identity, and it was exhibiting gallery based work rather than I'd say cinematic work lets say. There must have been a point at which for whatever reason, and maybe it was to do with the merger of LUX, that the identity that was very strong in the 70's and 80's became diffused and I wonder if you had a feeling about it.

DC: I think it did become diffused and I think there are several reasons for that, the merger apart from the fact that people then at the LUX came from either film or video as a background but also when the LUX came about which was actually the fairly late nineties wasn't it? By that time the technology had changed so much that filmmakers who I know in the past would not dream of putting their work on video were happy to project their work on video projectors, the whole distinctions between the two had become very very blurred to the point now where Malcolm LeGrice shows wonderful lively three screen video projections, which certainly in all the time I knew Malcolm showing at the Film Coop it was film he would be doing.

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

DC: Again I would see it in coming together of a mixture of funding bodies, a mixture of people to work with, friends, or people who one might associate with through an event such as staging an exhibition for which work maybe essentially made. I'm thinking in terms of Steve Littman, Marty St James, Anne Wilson and others. Through the late seventies it was supported by friends, particularly 2BButlers Wharf people, people at the Royal College, people at the film coop, people at LVA...we definitely worked of each other and supported each other in the work '79 '80 '81 '82, I was teaching also and producing work more within the LVA sphere

- JH: Did you facilitate other artists works?
- DC: I think that's more of what I did at that time I think that from 79 onwards I actually made less of that type of work myself. Even if it was literally providing things for people at LVA or we set up a bursary scheme with a small amount of input from the Arts Council £300 plus access to LVA's edit suite, which people were then able to produce a piece of work. It was far more formalised then.
- JH: When producing or exhibiting your works did you feel that you were responding to a larger movement? How would you define this?
- DC: Yes is the straight forward answer, I would say if you were to talk to somebody who was outside of ones bubble and try to describe it, then it's good to have a global touchstone. So if you say this is video art and then you can point at Bill Viola or Takahiko Imura or whoever and they can say fine, or Nam June Paik, and its an understandable ouvre. Once you're within that bubble of course things are very very different, and you know from one artist to another they differ enormously and just because you're using video doesn't mean to say that your works the same as another using video. So I'm happy to sort of define it in some way like that but I'd also be keen to differentiate once one's examining the work in detail.
- JH: Really what was the international context really in response to the work, it really relates to that question too, because you travelled and saw other artists work you must have felt in a sense that you were part of something international.
- DC: Oh sure, and I think festivals were a place for that interaction, again bringing in David Larcher here as a great example of someone who works across media, and who other people might define at different points in time as being a film maker or a video maker or a computer artist. But actually my view of him is that he appears to be happy working with whatever he can get his hands on. I think he's a very good example of someone whose work is led by his thought process, his focus is artistic in the broadest sense of the word, and the medium he uses is the medium he's using at that time.
- JH: When you say content, and this is digressing a little bit but you've used it on and off, what do you mean exactly by that?
- DC: I use it in this context is in relation to work I'm making now where *Cradle to Grave* in the British Museum is a piece of work made around a specific brief to represent the maintenance of health and well being in the UK today, that's a sentence, you know, represent the maintenance of health and well being in Britain today in the context of a gallery showing how other people in other cultures at other times maintained their health and well being. So I think that's incredibly narrow and well defined actually on one level, brief, and if you like you can say well that's what that piece of work is about, that's what it was set up to be about and that's what I mean by its content really.
- JH: But wouldn't you say your seventies work had content, *Pieces I Never Did* has content, is it the balance? I'm not sure the difference.

DC: I think its defined in a different way that's all, maybe I'm wrong, but it seems to me its defined in a different way.

JH: Did you work with technicians?

DC: Up until a certain point in time I felt I was quite technically competent, I could handle the medium and the equipment I was using and on the whole I found myself actually showing other people how to do things or helping them to do whatever, I think as time's gone by things change, I get older, equipment changes I feel less like that now, I'm still happy to do the things I do know about. *Cradle To Grave* was put together by an architect and a team of engineers, that is outside my remit, but we defined what the scale and shape and the size of thing was going to be, again one works in an appropriate way for what you're doing.

JH: To be more specific then so the seventies work basically you made that yourself, *All the Pieces I Never Did* was edited by yourself at the Fantasy Factory, and the more recent work *Cradle To Grave* that you collaborated on and *Recoil*, you made that yourself?

DC: I made that myself, from beginning to end but again that was using a technology that I'm familiar with.

As a result of discussions, particularly I remember this discussion in David Hall's house, where we had to come up with a mission statement for London Video Arts. Even the name, we finally all agreed well ok it's not the best name in the world but it describes what we are, so London Video Arts it was. I believe the subtitle is the organisation for the distribution, production and exhibition of artists work in video and you know again a very nice neat way of saying what it's all about. That then becomes this is what we are about, and that was in '78 or something that was put together, so then it took another five years for that to be a reality it was a clear description of what we were trying to do.



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