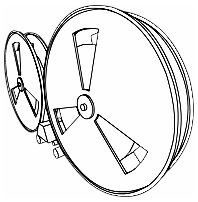

REWIND | Artists' Video in the 70s & 80s
Interview with Judith Goddard

Interview by Maggie Warwick, 1st March 2007

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

JG: I don't put them in any hierarchy. I don't think of an individual work being particularly more important but I do think of some of them as being landmarks in terms of my practice. Certain works, for example *Time Spent*, which was the first video that I made, I would still show. It was important because it was about how you use time, how I represented time and how it related to my practice at the time. It came out of a conversation with Peter Cardier who was my head of department at the Royal College. He asked me what I did with my time and so I made a piece of work about it. *Electron* I would think of as another important work. It was also TV circled. As an installation it was really important for me because I'd got to work on a big scale. It was a project that was run by TSWA3D, so I was working with James Lingwood and Television South West. That was a big scale that project. It was installing 7 televisions in steel boxes on Dartmoor and making a work to go on those screens. It was a really ambitious project. It was also an installation and it was a site-specific installation so that was important. It was moving out from the single screen work, which *Time Spent* was the first of. Then I'd say *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, which was a collage work, predated by *Luminous Portrait,* which was a commission for BBC. With the *The Garden of Earthly Delights* I had 7 layers of moving image, which is now nothing, but back in 1991 it was groundbreaking technologically. Also, for me, it was using an interest that I'd had in collage, but actually being able to make it move. There was something quite child-like about it. At the same time, using my interest in the medieval, I was actually really making that happen in time in with the visual narrative. I was making the world picture quite different to the other works. That was an important work for me. After that I went the other way. I reacted perhaps, and made *Descry,* which was very simple and important for moving away from the dense visual collage and into a much simpler way of working. It was more spatial and using the viewer in the work as part of the work. Because the light from the monitors filled the whole room, it was an experiential work. It's a real installation in that way. *Reservoir* followed that a few years later. The viewer completed that work even more so, because it was interactive. Without the viewer the work doesn't exist. More recently the works that I've been making have been single screen again. That's been really interesting because I feel that some of the things I'm doing in the more recent single screen works are actually going back to the ways of working with *Time Spent*. So, in pieces like *Mirror* or *Monument Value Lost* some of the strategies of editing are actually kind of echoed. Perhaps some of the most important works are yet to come. They are projects I'm still working on.

MW: Are there any works that are important to you but that haven't necessarily been shown or appreciated by a wider public?

JG: I don't think so. There is one work that I haven't actually shown. I haven't even mentioned it because it hasn't been shown, but I don't think that's a problem really. I think work will get shown if it hasn't been shown. In general, it has been shown.

MW: So you mentioned an interest in the medieval. Could you say a bit more about that?

JG: I'd been using 16 mm for a few years before I started using video. I started using video in 1981 and I was looking for models for using images in time. I wasn't making cinema. I wasn't making film and I was looking at painting, even though I'd originally thought I was going to art school to paint. I looked particularly at medieval painting because they were using images to tell a narrative. I could see that this was a possible model for me to use to tell stories in time without using a dramatic narrative, which was the convention of cinema. I was taught by structuralist filmmakers, but I wasn't actually making structuralist films, although my work was perhaps informed by it. So, I started looking at medieval work. I was thinking of medieval work as a model for me.

MW: That has continued throughout your practice with *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and *Luminous Portrait.*

JG: Yes, it is definitely there with *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and *Luminous Portrait.* It is there with earlier works as well but perhaps less obviously so. But those two are collaged works and are the most obvious in using the medieval.

MW: Are there any other people or artists that have inspired or influenced your work?

JG: There are many, too many in fact. More recently, I would say that I was obviously, and probably always have been, influenced by film. For example, *Last Year in Marienbad* like many art students. It was another film that doesn't use much dramatic narrative. Painting has been a big influence on me in the use of pictorial space. But, I've also been very influenced by cinematic space and the use of screen space. I think about the difference between screen space and pictorial space. I question what those differences are. I think at different times in the work one has been of more interest to me than another. In the more recent work of the *American Landscapes*, I was very interested in the idea of screen space. In that work and some of the work that I've been doing using text, I've again been interested in cinema and in titling. It's known as the battle between the surface of the screen and perspective. In some of the works like the collage work, it's not what I'm working with. In working with the collage work, it's a different space. It's more of a medieval worldview and making a world that's flatter in some ways. It's not so much about perspective. It's about a conflating of time. Even in the ones where I'm actually working across time, there is something about bringing all those connections together. That's a very different way of working. There is a complexity. I'm talking about a 20-year period of work. Across that period of time the work has gone in and out of lots of different phases. I suppose I am interested in different things. In the end they are all about the same thing, but there are different ways of saying these same things.

MW: Lets go back to when you first started using video. You talked about cinema being an influence. Why did you choose video? Why was video an important medium for you as opposed to film?

JG: Originally I started using video because I had this idea that it would be democratic. You could make videos and put them on a shelf like a book. I liked the idea of there being many, many copies. I think that was a part of my generation. We were not making art objects. There was this whole era when there was a belief that if you were making an art object, it was all part of the commodification of art. So, I was making objects that couldn't be, or didn't have, a commercial value. Of course that is a problem when you need to make a living. So one of the reasons for using the video was definitely a rather idealistic democratic idea. Another reason was that I liked the immediacy of it. That was even though, when I'd been a student, I had worked with black-and-white 16 mm film where you could shoot in the morning on black-and-white neg, then develop it before lunch, hang it up to dry over lunch and then print it on an optical printer in the afternoon. You could have a film by kind of 5 o'clock in the evening. That was fantastic, but it was black-and-white, and I do like working in colour. I always have done. If you worked in colour you had to send it off to a lab so it couldn't possibly be done in a day or at least not on my budget. So, I loved the immediacy of video. I was also attracted to that electronic image. I was attracted to the emanating light from the television monitor, from the CRT screen and I wanted to work with that aesthetic and that's what I continue to do. I was attracted to the intimacy of the monitor. I had a love-hate relationship with the monitor on the one hand because it was a box and they are quite ugly boxes. But, it was the screen and the light coming out of the screen that I was interested in. The spectacle of the cinema screen was of less interest to me at the time. I rather liked the intimacy of the screen of the monitor.

MW: Can you remember what kind of technology you were using in the early days, for example with *Time Spent*? Was it U-matic?

JG: It was very heavy and it was orange with a black lens. If you wanted to take the camera anywhere you had to have this ridiculously heavy lead belt of batteries. It was a bit like going deep sea diving with Jacques Cousteau. It was like going to the bottom of the sea in one of those aquanaut suits. It did feel like you were limited to working within the studio, so all my work was pretty much made either in the studio or somewhere where you could easily plug in the electricity supply. You could plug into to the socket on the wall, but because the cameras were incredibly heavy, you needed a big tripod. You needed lights because they were light sensitive. It did really affect the way you worked because at the same time as I was making video, I was also working with a Super 8 camera. All the video was done in an interior with lights pretty much. I also travelled a lot. I would take a Super 8 camera with me everywhere and still have an extraordinary archive of Super 8 that I couldn't bare to edit because it was so fragile. I was worried about scratching it every time it went through the projector. I'm still planning to do things with some of that. Occasionally the Super 8 did appear in the work. In *Lyrical Doubt* there are several quite long sequences of Super 8. There are two in particular that I shot in Berlin, in either 1982 or 1983. They were shot in East Berlin and West Berlin, which at the time were still separated. You had to go through Checkpoint Charley to go and see East Berlin as a tourist on a day visa. I shot a flower seller in West Berlin, who was selling Strilitzias and

Kangaroo Paw and very exotic things flown in from everywhere. Then I shot a flower seller in East Berlin who is selling stubby Daffodils and some great Hyacinths. In that tape you see me sitting in an armchair. I am looking at these sections of the world. I did occasionally use the Super 8 but it was very much in an observational way, looking at the world. I used to use video much more in a constructed way where I would construct scenarios or scenes or certain shots. That was quite a different way of working and I did seem to separate them by medium.

MW: Can you talk about the technological processes and how you edited the early works?

JG: With editing, I was using clunky low-band U-matic that got slightly better as it went on. It wasn't frame accurate and sound seemed to sometimes drift. You made it as good as you could, but it always seemed to have a flaw in it. The other thing was drop-out. We were all plagued by drop-out and drop-out seemed to be caused by anything from dust to sneezing. Drop-out was a big problem. You were forever trying to edit drop-out. There was an acceptable limit of drop-out, which was something to do with so many glitches per second or minute or whatever it was. If you had more than that it was technologically flawed and people would criticise the work for having too much drop-out.

MW: Where did you edit? Was it at LVA?

JG: Yes, I did work at London Video Arts. I did edit there and I was also on the council of management. I only edited a couple of tapes there. Later I did some editing in Dundee at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design. Then there was *The Garden of Earthly Delights,* which was a post-production house and a sponsorship deal.

MW: That was through the BBC wasn't it?

JG: No. I did two works through the BBC. The second, *Lives*, was done in their Edit Suites in Glasgow. But, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* was done through sponsorship. It was a post-production house having a wonderful hire editor called Jamie Russell. The industry had just crashed. It was the beginning of the recession in 1991 and they had a little down time. He did it for me as down time. The advertising industry had just crashed so we did it over five days, 15 hours a day,

MW: That was very fortuitous.

JG: It was very good for me, yes. Now of course things have really changed. You can edit anywhere.

MW: Yes, it has changed quite dramatically. Has that had an impact on your work?

JG: It is interesting. There was a strange period when I was mainly working on video installations. During that time, with editing, I was working with an editor in edit suites, but something rather strange happened in terms of the technology. It went from being available to somehow being of better production quality, you had to go up a notch, which meant that you had to work with editors. So one had to develop a relationship with another

person. Then suddenly, it was possible to do your own editing because the equipment was cheaper and better quality. It was broadcast quality again or as good as. It was very interesting for me when I started to edit my own work again. I did remember that I actually really enjoyed it. I don't think I edit in a conventional way, whatever that is, I think about moving the images around even if I'm not necessarily working with collage. But, there is something about the way that I move the images around that is stitching them in and out of the timeline. It's a creative process that I do and enjoy. There is something about moving it around. It's like moving paint around on something like a canvas. There is something quite tangible for me, people talk about it as not being physical, but I actually do experience it as quite physical. I think of it in quite a tangible way.

MW: Did you find that difficult to convey that to another person when you had other people editing?

JG: In general, I'm quite clear about what I want in an edit. I think that's the main thing. When you are working with another person, if you know what you want then that's easier to convey. I've been lucky in having editors that I've always been able to communicate with.

MW: In *The Garden of Earthly Delights* and *Luminous Portrait*, you were obviously using quite high-end editing techniques for that time. Can you remember what the editing techniques were? What was the process by which it was done?

JG: It was interesting because with *The Garden of Earthly Delights* I actually documented the making of it. I did look at it again recently and I showed a little bit of it in a talk I gave, but actually it's not that interesting. At the time it was fascinating. It was fascinating to me because, for the first time, it was a truly digital edit and everything was being composited in the computer. Now of course people can see that every day on their Final Cut Pro or iMovie or whatever they are using. At the time it was fascinating, but now it's just an everyday occurrence.

MW: Let's talk about funding. You mentioned that the BBC commissions.

JG: *Luminous Portrait* was a commission for Late Show on the BBC. They commissioned artists to do one-minute pieces. It was the Late Show that commissioned that.

MW: Before that, how did you fund your work?

JG: All the very early single-screen work was made on a shoe-string. I suppose the first properly funded work was *Television Circle/Electron*, which was this TSWA3D Project. It was a nationwide project and it was competitive entry. You had to send something in. In fact, it came about because I saw James Lingwood at an opening and he said to me, "Have you put an application in for the TSW Project?" I'd already shown a work with him or one of my works down in Plymouth, which was the first gallery he ever worked at. I think it was the first show I did after I left the Royal College. He asked me if I'd put anything in for the project and I said, "No, the one I wanted to do was Dartmoor but there aren't any plugs on Dartmoor". He said, "Oh we'll do something anyway". I then thought about getting electricity into Dartmoor and what I would do if I was going to do something on Dartmoor,

responding to the site so that it was site-specific. I did my circle of TV monitors and it was in reference to the stone circles of the site. So, it was a monument. Then I made a tape to go on it. It was a really big budget because although the budget for making the tape wasn't that massive, the sponsorship was extraordinary because everything from the electricity people putting in a spur, to the forestry commission putting down the 16 millimetre armoured cable, which was my solution to the electricity problem, to Toshiba providing the TVs, it would have cost a fortune if that had all been paid for from one big budget.

MW: Did you ever get public funding from the Arts Council or any other funding body?

JG: I have had public funding. I've had funding from the Arts Council 2 or 3 times but I was not so great at applying for it. I was much better at having galleries and people approaching me and saying "Would you like to do this". Then I would put something forward. Quite a few of the works that I've done had been projects where I put something forward and the gallery has gone to the Arts Council and got the funding.

MW: So in effect it's been commissioned work from a gallery?

JG: Most of the work has been commissioned, yes.

MW: What about your teaching post? Has that facilitated any of the works at all?

JG: I have used the editing at the Slade since I started to edit again. Originally, I was using analogue edit. I was using Avid at the Slade and then Avid Express DV. So the Slade has been somewhere that I've had access to. I also edited some works at Duncan of Jordanstone. I did 2 or 3 pieces up there and I would do an edit and then do a bit of teaching. A very long time ago, I made one of the works when I did a video residency in Maidstone back in the 80's.

MW: You have already mentioned exhibition, but where else have you shown?

JG: *Reservoir,* is a large installation, which was a commission. It was first shown with Steve Foster at John Hansard Gallery in Southampton. It was a big project. It involves 2 parts. It has running water and a Wimshurst Machine and projection, and monitors. It also involves the viewer interacting just by coming into the space. Their presence actually operates the Wimshurst Machine, for example. A Whimshurst Machine is a machine that was used to demonstrate electricity. It is Post-Newtonian. Newton's followers actually used to use it to demonstrate electricity and the existence of God because the spark of God is the creative spark. It is two contra-rotating disks with metal petals that generate static electricity, which builds up to such an extent that it has to discharge. There are two metal balls and the spark, which is the discharge jumps from one ball to the other. It's like lightning. It's quite complex.

MW: Did you have the machine made for the piece?

JG: Yes, I had the machine made by a man called John Wall. He had a Wimshurst Machine that was the size of his living room wall in his rather small 1920's semi-house in Kent. He

demonstrated that one for me when I went to visit him in his house and when that one went off it was just extraordinary. It was the same voltage, if that's the right description, as lightning. It made the most extraordinarily loud crack. *Reservoir*, went to Portugal and was in a very big show, which was where I first met people like Dan Graham and Brice Nauman who were also in the show. It was very good company. Gary Hill was there as well. I've shown *Descry* internationally. I went to Berlin and was showing in Kunstburger. *Television Circle/Electron,* even though it was site specific, ended up in a show that Chrissie Isles did in the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford. It was called *Signs of the Times* and it was also shown in Paris in the British Council touring show. I showed *Mirror* in Estonia. That was quite interesting. The invigilators used to knit while they were sitting minding the work. The single screen work has been shown all over the place, but the installations are the ones I remember because usually I go with them.

MW: Was the single screen work distributed through LVA?

JG: Yes, LVA distributed my single screen work from the early 80's onwards.

MW: Could you talk about the working with single screen and installation? How do you see the relationship between single screen and installation, because some of the works exist in both forms?

JG: I've done single screen, multi screen and installation or installed work. The single screen tends to work more with a sequence of images in time so it's a different experience for the viewer. You are seeing the images in a particular sequence. The multi-screen is to do with sometimes separating it out. It's expanding the sequence so you might be seeing the sequence. Sometimes I have used repeat. In *Television Circle/Electron* it actually is a circle of 7 monitors but you are actually seeing a sequence repeated. It's the same image on each monitor. It was edited with that in mind, so there is a flow of images around the screens when you see it in its installed state. But, it does also work as a single sequence and people do, and have, distributed it as such. The installations in general were about breaking the screen. It was going beyond the screen. It was another experience of space. It wasn't the pictorial space of painting. It wasn't the screen space of cinema. It was the physical space of the gallery. It was also to do with the viewer's body within that space. I think the place of the body within the work is always in relation to these three different kinds of spaces. In my very early work I think I was using the depiction of my own body within that screen, the monitor space. In the installations most of them are actually referring to the viewer's body. So, it's their physical relationship to the image or the screen. In installations in general, it is much more to do with the physicality of the space and relationship of the image to the physical space and the viewer's body within that.

MW: Let's talk more about the works themselves. You have a repeating fascination with urban landscape in quite a lot of the work, particularly London.

JG: I think it is very much London. London has a mythical status for me and has had ever since I was a child. It started from when I was sent one Easter in the school holidays age 10 from Bristol to London on the train on my own. That was something that just wouldn't happen now. I arrived in Paddington and just thought that Paddington was amazing. I'd

been to London before but never on my own, and it was just so exciting. I was met by someone who worked for my grandmother and then taken across the city to Liverpool Street. Because we had a couple of hours before getting the train out to the country, he took me around the city. He took me to Billingsgate Fish Market, which was still by the Thames. He took me across the old London Bridge and I remember standing on the old London Bridge where they were pile-driving for the new London Bridge. Now the old London Bridge is in the middle of the desert in America. He took me to Smith Mills Market and he also took me to the Monument, which cost a penny. I remember going to the top of the Monument and looking out over London and just thinking it was the best place. Then I remember getting on the train at Liverpool Street with my oyster shells that the fishmongers had given me and I remember the stink. I fell in love with London then. It opened my horizons. There was this place that was big and exciting and had a sense of history. I felt like I belonged. I think I've always been an outsider but I think in London, you can be an outsider and belong. I think that's one of the extraordinary things about London. You can be culturally, historically displaced but still have a sense of belonging and it's that inclusiveness. It's a great city. I was brought up with *Songs of Innocence* by William Blake. That experience and Blake had always been part of my childhood landscape. Later, I read *The Wasteland*. I could probably still recite *The Burial of the Dead* by T.S. Eliot because I learnt it when I was 15 or 16. So, T.S. Eliot's London became part of my kind of imagined landscape before I ever lived here. It's still an important site for me to make work and I still do make work using it. I've been doing these series of miniature or photographs of St Paul's at night taken with my mobile phone and blowing them up to a meter wide. I have the times of the tides at London Bridge on my computer. I do feel that as much as anywhere, this is the only place that I've ever felt kind of like home.

MW: Much as you love it, a lot of the work also has a great sense of menace or foreboding or an underlined feeling of eruption about to happen. Can you talk a bit about that as well?

JG: I think you are right. I suppose it's the cliché of the dark underbelly that is fascinating. Long before Peter Akroyd wrote Hawksmoor, I had been fascinated by the Hawksmoore churches. When I was at the Royal College I had a book, which had inside an amazing photograph, probably taken in the 1920's of St Anne's Lime House with the Vicarage on the right. It was of the opening towards the main entrance of the church. In the photograph there was a figure walking in front of the church. He was like a ghost because of course it was a fairly long exposure. So this person was fleeting. It's in a book of architecture from the 1920's. I had that book out all the time that I was at the Royal College. I didn't want to give it back because I was obsessed with this photograph. That photograph somehow summed up some of my interest in something that you can't quite put your finger on. It's that under side of London or the under side of the city. I later discovered that in fact underneath that vicarage there is a passageway to the church. In London there are lots of connections. It's like there is this sense of death. Most of the streets of the city you are walking along there are people probably buried underneath. Things have happened. I have this extraordinary sense of what's happened and where. It's this tangibility of the past, of the history and it is menacing.

MW: I think it's what gives the work its tension and its depth. There is a layering of history.

JG: I don't see the gaps. I see the connections. So when I walk through the city of London, I get a sense of the street plan. There are all these tower blocks but I can still trace the medieval street plan and that fascinates me. The fact that electricity is pulsating under your feet is also part of the same thing. The London Underground is another network. It has all been rather overdone by followers of Ackroyd, but it's always fascinated me. *Lud Heat* by Iain Sinclair is rather a good, earlier, book.

MW: Electricity is obviously a recurring motif in your work.

JG: Electricity was the medium that I was working with. As an artist one's always looking at the subject, the object and the medium that you are working with and hopefully that combination of things. With electricity I was fascinated with, as in *Electron*, with the connection to the Greek and striking two pieces of amber together and making a spark of electricity. I wanted to think about the stuff that electricity came from. I went and photographed the collection of amber in the Natural History Museum. A wonderful man called Dr Wally let me photograph his collection of amber which included the photographs that you see in *Electron* of the lizard, which is one of the largest animals that they have in a piece of amber. There is also the fly and various other bits and pieces. It was a beautiful collection and just used his fibre-optic light from his microscope to light each piece and take a photograph. The power station in that tape is connecting everybody that uses electricity. I'm going from one end, the miniature, with the ancient tiny piece of amber with a trapped fly in it, to the other extreme, which is the power station. What that represents and how our lives are ruled by it and where we get oil from etc. I'm really overblowing it because it's there by implication.

MW: Let's talk about the earlier works. In particular you mentioned *Time Spent,* which is one of the first video works that you ever made. You made it you were still at the Royal College. It embodies concerns that have been ongoing throughout a lot of your other work in relation to its editing and use of space and time.

JG: I think it's really interesting that the trigger for that piece was the conversation with Peter Cardier, where he asked me "What do you do with your time?". I think I was and still am somebody that spends a lot of time daydreaming. As an artist, that is both a curse and a blessing. On one hand I think that sort of indeterminate space of reverie or half-consciousness can be very creative, but it can also be death by daydreaming, where you don't ever quite do anything. I think I was perhaps less consciously aware of the latter when I made that tape. When I made that tape I was trying to focus on, "what do I do?". One of things that I do quite literally is spend a lot of time just looking. In that tape one of the first shots you get is a focus pull on a tablecloth. It's obviously an optical thing that the human eye won't see. It's actually created in the camera. Somehow it represents that pulling in and out of focus or pulling in and out of consciousness. That tape is very much about that state of going in between those different states of mind. I think the physicality of the body is reflecting that: the fragmentation which everyone always talks about, the glimpses of the other people that were in that space and the difference between using real time and stills. In that tape there is a sequence of stills of another person and they are not

seen in real time. So there is that interest that's in quite a lot of the work: the difference between the still and the moving.

MW: In some of the subsequent early works to *Time Spent*, you used yourself or fragments of yourself in the work. Was that a conscious decision to do that rather than use someone else?

JG: In the early works, it was that combination of knowing what you wanted to represent. There was a curious relationship that I had, that was perhaps using the monitor as a mirror. So it could be seen as narcissistic. Perhaps it is slightly, but it's also to do with a self-portraiture and trying to work out where I was in relation to my work, quite literally. It's one of those really crucial things that we have to do as artists. That's a lot of what that early work's about. I think what was more conscious was when I decided not to use myself in the work. I felt that I was exposing myself because I was using myself actually quite unconsciously. So, in 1984, I decided to stop using myself in my work. Then I realised that I was going to have to represent what I'd been representing by use of my own body or fragments of what I was going to have to represent in some other way. Then I then thought of the work as being coded and so some of those things that I was representing through my own physicality were then shifted into other modes of representation.

MW: What was the work that shifted that in 1984?

JG: It was *Lyrical Doubt.* All the work has got an autobiographical element because it in one way or other, it charts something that matters to me at that time. I think *Lyrical Doubt* was perhaps more related to kind of what was going on in my life rather than some of the other works. It more closely related personally, which made it rather painful. It made me think, "I've got to find a different way of working. I don't want to work like this anymore." I think the work can be quite difficult to make even when it doesn't have that ostensibly personal material that obviously is not going to be so personal, that other people can't relate to it.

MW: Can we talk more about the exhibition of your work and particularly in the 80's. Where was it shown mostly?

JG: In the 80's not that many galleries were keen to show video. I think they thought in those days, that even putting a plug in the wall was difficult. That was partly because the technology was unreliable. It sounds unbelievable now I think but even videotapes weren't reliable initially. I don't think the video recorders necessarily looped so it meant that an invigilator had to press a button when a tape came to the end to start it again. They weren't keen on having somebody to do that all day in a gallery. Then there were problems with video projectors. There were also problems with monitors. I remember reading something that another artist had written about how could show your work in one gallery and it would be slightly blue, in another gallery it would be red, while another gallery it would be black and-white. That wasn't just on a monitor. It was even a projector. But, the projectors in the 80's were three-tube. They were enormous, very unreliable and expensive. So there was reluctance for galleries to show video work, but the alternative was showing in festivals. Quite earlier on I decided that I didn't really want to go down the festival route, partly because the festivals generally showed film and video and video

always seemed like the poor relation. Video was shown on a monitor and couldn't really compete with the spectacle of the screen of film or the photographic quality. It was such a different medium. So I had always thought of myself as an artist and not a filmmaker or someone trying to be in the film world. I wanted my work to be seen in galleries and so I think one reason for moving into installation or installed work was because I wanted the work to be seen in the gallery context, with an art viewing audience rather than a festival audience, or even a cinema audience. Quite early on I started to make work that could be seen more than once, or that sometimes needed to be seen more than once for you to get the full sense of the work. One of the earliest shows in London was probably Yvonna Blasnack, when she was at the AIR gallery. She put on a show that was called *Window Box,* where she commissioned people to do things for the AIR gallery when it was in Rosebery Avenue. That's when I first met the Duvet Brothers. I'm still good friends with Peter Boyd McLean. But, London was quite reluctant, which was a shame considering it was my home and favourite city. They didn't embrace video as a medium in the way that Liverpool did, for example. That had quite a lot to do with Video Positive and Merseyside Movieola, as it was then, and FACT now. I did three commissions for Liverpool, so it was actually quite important for my career at one point. I did a piece for Tate Liverpool, which was a Video Wall commission, called *Silver Lining*. It was basically using their set-up of approximately 12 monitors, 3 by 4. I had shot along the Thames, from pretty much where the Dome is now. It was a sunrise and it was a still shot. The Video Wall was of 7 minutes of the sunrise over the Thames looking North on the four central monitors, while the outer, surrounding monitors made up a frame. This outer frame was made up of very close-up macro shots of a baroque frame. They moved. They dissolved in and out of one another. That was shown at Video Positive. As I was saying Liverpool was quite good to me for a period of a few years because I was commissioned to do *The Garden of Earthly Delights.* Following that, there was a co-commission between Charles Asher at Kettle's Yard and Eddie Berg for another Video Positive. That commission was for *Descry*. So, *Descry* was shown, first at Kettles Yard and then later at Blue Coat Gallery in Liverpool. Much later, *Reservoir*, which was originally commissioned for Southampton and went to Portugal, was also shown at Tate Liverpool. So, for a period of quite a few years I was showing much more in Liverpool than in London. There was a time when I think it was much easier to show gallery-based video work in Liverpool.

MW: Going back to the earlier single screen works, they were shown by LVA mostly at festivals?

JG: Yes, the 80's work, they distributed. Some of the work would be shown individually in screenings. A lot of that was probably in festivals. I used to get royalties. Very small amounts of money would trickle through and a list of where the works had been shown. Occasionally the old festival would send a certificate saying that I'd won a prize in the Hong Kong Festival or something like that.

MW: Did you get invited to some of the festivals?

JG: The only one that I remember particularly being invited to was one in Japan, which I couldn't go to because I was actually in the middle of installing. I was contracted to install the work on Dartmoor. I've still never been to Japan.

MW: Are there any other people that you think have been important in terms of the exhibition of your work or being important in promoting it in anyway?

JG: I've probably mentioned most of the people that have shown the work and been important like Chrissie Isles, Charles Asher, Eddie Berg, James Lindwood. Mainly in my early career, they were very helpful. A couple of people have written about the work. I still think the essay that Michael O'Pray wrote for the catalogue for the *Reservoir*, which was an overview of the work to that date, is still one my favourite essays about my work. Al Rees was always a good supporter in his way, and Sean Cubitt also wrote a very good piece for me once which I didn't actually get to use but would like to see it used at some point.

MW: Was that about a specific piece?

JG: It was about *Reservoir*. In the end it wasn't used in the catalogue, but it was a very interesting piece of writing. When I look back to the piece that Michel O'Pray wrote, I think he understood my work better than I did.

MW: That's often the case I think. In terms of writing have you written anything yourself about your own work or anyone else's work that you'd like to mention?

JG: I haven't written about anyone else's work. I've occasionally given talks about other people's work. I have written a few things about my own work. Usually I leave it to pretty much the descriptive. I have written a bit recently about the American works and about my relationship to television and to seeing film on television and the influence that that's had on the work. I describe seeing *Monument Valley* as the second-hand sublime. How can you experience something like *Monument Valley* when you are first confronted with it? I had this memory of it from watching John Ford films on a black-and-white television on a rainy Saturday afternoon. So, how do I experience that landscape when I see it? I am also immediately putting my camera between myself and the landscape again, which is something that I've chosen to do pretty much since I became an artist. I put the camera between myself and the world to see the world through the lens. So I have written about that relationship.

MW: Is that just for yourself?

JG: Yes, to go out with the work. Until usually a while after I've made a work, I don't think I have enough distance to write particularly well about it. Then, often one had to write about the work to get the money in the first place, whether it was a commission or whatever. Usually somebody, "What's your idea?" and you have to put it down on a piece of paper. Actually most of the creative work happens in that initial conceptualising and visualising of a piece of work. That's probably the hardest part. Executing it, or making it, is relatively straight forward if you know what you are doing. If you know what you really want and if you've had that vision and you know what you are doing, then the making is usually relatively, simple. Going back to doing my own editing, there is the moving and the shifting around of things in the editing but in terms of the original vision, and carrying it out, that's always been the difficult part: the conception.

MW: The sound in your work is always very important and how you go back conceiving that in relation to the image. There is also, quite often, a kind of wry humour that comes through in your work. In your more recent works it has surfaced again. Perhaps you could talk about those things?

JG: The sound has always been really important for me because it goes back to the use of the medium. I have chosen to work with a medium that gives me the opportunity to work with a moving image in time and sound. So, I embraced it. Sound has always been something that I probably use quite emotively. When I think of the very early works, I used quite a lot of synch sound as well so I might use synch sound and music. It's another way of making another space within the work. The sound is making a space that sometimes separate because it's implying another kind of mood or emotive space perhaps. With the use of the synch sound I am locating the viewer within the space of the image. I played quite a lot with that dislocation of the two and still do. I've worked collaboratively with a musician called Kev Fraser. I worked with him for a period of about 6 or 7 years. That was a great relationship for me because I used to be able to say to him what I wanted and he really understood it very well. Then he would come up with something, which would often be more than what I wanted. It was expanding the work in a way.

MW: Which are the works that you worked on with Kev?

JG: He worked on *Electron*. That's a very haunting soundtrack. He was great. When I described how I wanted that electrical sound that you described. He knew where to get it or how to make it. So that very haunting electronic comes from him. It sounded extraordinary when it was first on Dartmoor because you'd hear the soundtrack way before you actually came across this circle of television monitors. He was very fond of *The Shining* and Penderecki features in *The Garden of Earthly Delights* in influence by Kubrick's *The Shining*. I think it was interesting for me when I stopped working with him and started making my own soundtracks again. *Descry* was the first one that I recorded and constructed without a collaborator. It was interesting because there is simplicity when I make artwork. It's a complex relationship with sound in terms of how I want it to work, but I think it's perhaps a simple relationship in terms of construction. I do really enjoy working with someone and I'm trying work with a young singer at the moment.

MW: What about the humour that comes through? It's rather ironic and wry and it's been there from the beginning really, from your very early work.

JG: Humour is something that is important to me in life. It's the old thing of needing a sense of humour in order to maintain a sense of proportion. Sometimes I think in the work, the tension between the beauty and the king of underlying horror is relieved through humour. That sounds like a big claim, but I think that's what I'm doing sometimes with the humour. With *Celestial Light and Monstrous Races,* the image of the monstrous race, was inspired by a book called *Monstrous Races in Medieval Art and Literature*. There I am taking a face and rearranging it into something monstrous. I'm rearranging it into something that we can't register and at the same time I am having that monstrous image smile at the camera. So, you see something that's monstrous but the tension is relieved, but it 's not

really relieved because then it happens again. Another example is much more recently in *Monument Valley*, which uses the refrain from *My Darling Clementine,* which are very dark lyrics. Actually I am just using the refrain, but it's used in a way that could be read as quite vicious and yet at the same time it's humorous.

MW: Can you talk about your current work and perhaps the future?

JG: In terms of my current practice, I am probably working in a slightly wider range of media, not just with video. I never saw myself as a video artist anyway because I've never liked the idea of defining oneself by one's medium. So, I was always an artist who happened to work predominantly with video. I've been working with video. I've been working with print, digital print. I've worked in namely large-scale, digital print. I've also recently been doing some etching and have a series of etchings planned. Some of those are to do with one of the larger scale projects. The way that I'm trying to work is for the more ambitious or larger scale projects that might take a year or two to get the money together. I have to work out the logistics of how they can happen and whether they are an installation or whether they are a large-scale single screen work. But, when I am working on these larger scale things I am conscious that I want to keep the rest of the practice going or have something immediate or more immediate. So, I am working with these prints and etchings and small-scale video works. Things that I might shoot more observationally when I'm out and about might then suddenly come together. I've been working on a series of triptychs. I call them triptychs, but they are seen sequentially. They could be divided. They could be split screen, but at the moment I am showing them sequentially. *Mirror* is an example of that, which is a tape I made a few years ago now. That was shot in Rome and Naples. I have another one that was shot in Mexico and I am working on another one that uses images that were shot partly in Amsterdam. They are tied together with Ovid's *The Art of Love*, so they have a relationship to text as well as image. That's something of an ongoing project that I can work on when I am making plans to make larger scale works.

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