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

SP: After doing all those sorts of works this strange machine arrived one day which was a video tape recorder, and I mean it was very cumbersome and rather industrial and clinical I always thought almost like something from…I always associated it with hospitals…nevertheless I started fooling around with it and immediately thought this is it, this is the medium that I can actually work with…God knows why I felt that way… later I think I intellectualised it to think that it was partly… because it wasn't held in high regard when it came out, I think there was a very different reaction to it in Britain than there was in America for instance, in America all sorts of artists just did videos they just saw it was an extension of what they were doing, there was a lot of really interesting work, Bruce Nauman people like that… but in England, particularly, I think we still had that strange slightly class ridden snobbish attitude to all sorts of things including this new technology which was 'telly' really, it wasn't film that's for sure… and it's a bit like being a devils advocate just being awkward because I can be a bit awkward!! And people were sneering at it and saying well, that's not like film, it was the qualities that weren't like film which actually really interested me and I don't just mean this instant playback thing, it was a bloody awkward medium to work with, but there was something rather special about it. So getting back to your question, the reason those early works are significant to me is that to me it was a personal breakthrough. I'd found a medium that I could make significant works in.

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? Can you talk about your aesthetic considerations and what your conceptual ideas were?

SP: Its interesting *Easy Piece* and *Monitor*. I've come to regard *Easy Piece* as a much more important piece than *Monitor* personally, and in some ways *Monitor*'s an aberration for me, coming from a painting background, not that I painted any significant paintings, but went to do painting, I never did sculpture I'm not a sculptor. And you could say that Monitor dealt with more spatial aspects and is slightly sculptural…I would never say I'm a sculptor, my major influences were conceptual art and language.

Monitor came out of observation like a lot of good art, if you can call it good. Observing and experimenting, it's a bit like now we talk about research questions and methodology in research. Although one wasn't conscious then part of the methodology of making art, is that experimenting, that is a methodology working with tools and techniques and then observing, and coming to conclusions and then making a piece of work, you don't sit down and make the piece of work just like that it's coming from all sorts of ideas processes thoughts, notions, really the piece is just the coalescence of

that at the end, so all of that testing and methodology is what its about. So if you went back to monitor and asked, what are the research questions? It'd be something to think about!

JH: When you were making work had you been shown any video work of other artists, were there any works that were influential at that early point?

SP: I started making works in video in '73, there wasn't any distribution then, it wasn't until The Video Show of '75 that you saw a lot of work from all over the world. So mainly I was seeing films if you're talking about artists works, I was seeing artists films or filmmakers I don't really recall seeing a videotape by another artist except my peer group in '73, '74, there just wasn't anybody shown. Tony Sinden and David Hall were making work, they were part of the milieu that I was within they were both teachers and so we would go and see their work but I can't recall seeing the works that Vito Acconci was making, you read about them and saw images so imagined and finally I did see them but there was quite a lag between the two. We were pretty starved of seeing the primary source.

JH: But you saw other moving image work, well film work?

SP: Oh absolutely, weekly, sometimes daily, saturated.

JH: How were the works produced? Could you just talk a little bit about the processes of production, the technology whether that was key? You say you came across video technology in '73 and obviously that has influenced the way you have continued as an artist.

SP: From the early days right up until just a few years ago, you couldn't get away from the fact of the technology. The technology's very pervasive, very limited…that might be seen as a negative thing, but I see it as a positive thing. The medium itself is restricted, is limited, therefore it imposes its own discipline, and cuts out a lot of things, a lot of issues and problems which could be extraneous. I mean with a pencil you can do anything, the pencil's high tech, video is low tech.

You cannot love this medium that's why I like it because you can't love it. I remember saying that quite a lot in the 70's and 80's. It didn't get any easier when it became colour and we had these edit suites, I mean three machine edit suites are just monstrous in some sense. Now I've got the desktop, although I still use reel to reels, I use both I'll edit bits on the desktop but its very limited if you do some of the works I do which require a mixing process. Like the video-wall thing, like *Interplay*, like *Chimera* which I made with Elaine (Shemilt), these are all about overlaying images and mixing, and for that, the way I use an edit suite is not like a broadcaster would use it I tend to bring in lots of extra VTR's. I'm running them all. I'm putting them through a mixer, its more like sound where you can do endless takes and layer and layer and layer and you can't do that with this stuff, if you try to do that with final cut pro, you tear your hair out. I still use a reel-to reel edit suite. It's not that I'm going back to analogue it's just that nobody has built in the digital domain. That sort of interface nobody gives you a mixer on the desktop. It's a very active process, if you're mixing sound.

So the technology, technological issues weave in and out and they change, but they're always quite dominant I think in video – I mean does video exist any more? Some people say not.

JH: Technology being a considered part of your process, which was clear from the *Monitor* piece, technology being embedded in the whole piece. Can you talk a little bit about that piece and the technological process that you went through as an artist?

SP: *Monitor* came about rather like a research question, what is this feedback? Can you do anything with it, or is it just a freaky little graphicy thing like on Doctor Who or Top of the Pops, and it's just one phenomenon of that medium. It's with audio is the howl you get between the mic and the speaker but the howl you get between a mic and a speaker is quite an unpleasant experience. Whereas the visual feedback is rather a sensuous experience, and I think it sparks off things like the hall of mirrors, I was interested in the mirror aspect of it, the physicality of it, and the fact that it was instantaneous in time and space. I realised that it doesn't have to be instantaneous it could be a recording. So *Monitor's* a trick, its faking feedback, there is actually no feedback in monitor; it's all a replay of a videotape within a videotape. Although it looks like feedback it isn't feedback.

JH: You talked about the sensual aspect of the image in *Monitor* that seems to have been translated in *Easy Piece* in the sound…

SP: *Easy Piece* it's like a one liner, it isn't even that, it's a one worder. I mean it's a one word joke.

JH: I would contest that because the way I've seen it was installed, on a monitor therefore it's more than one word it's many words you stand and watch it over a period of time so it's a piece that evolves over a period of time as well.

SP: That's the irony part of it, is it a one word joke or isn't it? The fact is I think the sensuous thing you're talking about is the woman's voice…it's a six minute cycle, but she's saying it different each time.

One part of me, the joke part of it was well this is not going to be easy to watch. Remember at the time we were watching lots of structural film, structural videos and everybody was going, 'how long is this piece?' I showed it at the time as a tape piece although intended it to be an installation but I never got round to it until many years later. The joke being there if it's on for twenty four hours it might not be that easy to watch. When we finally showed it as an installation actually that's the reaction I never got, nobody ever said this is hard to watch, they actually all seemed to… if you watch people watching it they sort of smile. But you don't know how people are going to react to works to you I mean you assume certain things, and it's very pleasing when people surprise you with reaction, whether it's negative or positive it doesn't really matter. Especially when they come up with a reaction which you couldn't predict I think that's great actually. So *Easy Piece*, you asked me 'what's an important work' so now on reflection I'd say *Easy Piece* is more important than *Monitor* for me, especially because I keep on going back to it, I've remade it a number of times with the original sound which is getting an amazing patina, but keep re doing the visual bit, and have continued to change it and modify it, I like to call it my fake because it's *Easy Piece*

1973 until whatever date it is today, sometimes I just bill it as that from 1973 to 2004 because I keep returning to it.

JH: Can you talk about when and why you started making work using video, I don't know if you want to talk a little more about that?

SP: *Red Leather Yellow Leather*, that was the first video piece I ever made I don't know whether it was '72 or '73, it was very shortly after the first machines came into Maidstone (College of Art) whenever that was, it was a month later… it might have been on the turn of the year… they were sort of performative pieces, and of course language. *Red Leather Yellow Leather* is a language conundrum thing. That was the first works and they were black and white, reel to reel, half inch, EIAJ, Shibaden VTR's which you had to treat with a great deal of loving care and respect to get any real quality I mean the contrast ratio was appalling, that's the other thing about *Monitor*, and *Easy Piece* is keeping the elements simple so you could actually get an image which had some dynamic in it, I mean these cameras and the medium itself were poor to say the least, not much further on from Logie Baird, so I thought that was really important and seeing other people use that format at that time. In my opinion trying to capture images which the medium just couldn't handle, it had no resonance, it was really low… you've got to recognize, you can't do an oil painting with charcoal can you? I think that's a good analogy there, so they were very limited even to the point, certainly at Maidstone at that time, we didn't have any portable equipment, it was all studio based.

JH: I was going to ask you about *Dialogue for Four Players,* and *Dialogue for Two Players* because you'd talked about the studio based aspect of your process, and picking up on that particular one, because it comes from that you talking about the studio, that if you could talk about that process because I think that embodied quite a lot of what you were interested in up to that point.

SP: It also brings us in the idea commenting on or coming in within the domain of broadcast television, because there's the studio, which we might mean the artists studio, and then there's the studio which in television world is the television studio, and again this idea of stripping things back to concentrate on one thing. Another theme I've looked at is the talking head, the interview and *Dialogue for Four Players*, and later the Channel Four work *Two Players* which was derived from it. To me it was like bringing together some of the things I wanted to say formally about video as a medium with a sort of take on the broadcast television context, conventions, of the talking head. The interview was broadening it out quite a bit because a lot of the early works were very tight. They're formalist works. They're dealing with one or two issues, exhaustively maybe. *Dialogue for Four Players* brings in a whole other raft of issues, questions, and starts to become I suppose artists television, rather than artists video, maybe its a bit of both. It brings in those questions anyway; you certainly want to bring into the mind of the observer, the notion of television as opposed to just the art gallery.

Getting back to *Dialogue for Four Players*, the original one, basically I was dealing with this idea of interview and I had this notion that I didn't want to interview anybody of course I didn't want narrative to be coming in. I think I got something out of my brain from drama, where it was almost like a little drama game, where you sit somebody in a chair and you try and make them talk, so what are they going to talk about? I thought about that. If you sit somebody in a studio and you put lights around them and you

make it like a real TV studio, it's quite intimidating. I suppose it's that notion of interrogation and it's a bit of a game, hence the title *Dialogue for Four Players*. What I did to structure it was I recorded some interviews from Radio 4, not from television, and got an idea of the pace of interview, how long an answer might be, and how long the question might be, and I put that down as a score, a time score and I put a person in a chair, and I'd sit in front of them and they'd sit in front of me. I said to them I want you to speak when I point and I want you to stop speaking when I make this gesture. I did that, as I say I choreographed it around a discussion with four people, from Radio 4, if you had tried to invent it there wouldn't have been a natural rhythm. So my score was for each participant, one two three or four.

JH: In the studio so you recorded it one person after another and also you were behind the camera?

SP: I wasn't shot, all you see is a gesture. That's all you see in each case, the first person who is pointed to they speak against that choreographed against time, of course you have to give them minimal instruction because otherwise they try to manipulate it themselves, you do have to persuade them to get into the chair, and of course they say what are we going to talk about… it doesn't matter… actually people are quite easily suggestible I found, and what was really surprising is that when you go (gesture) they obeyed you. I thought that was rather interesting, because if it was me I wouldn't necessarily obey but that didn't really ever happen except once in the TV version later. So the first person sat there, the second person they had me in front of them, and they also had the monitor of first person and what they're saying so they're reacting to that as well as me and so on, so by the time you get to the fourth person they've got three monitors and me and they're filling in these gaps its much richer with those, they're reacting to all these other things and they're reacting to the other people saying 'I don't' know what I'm going to talk about that's a ridiculous situation' and they might be contradicting them 'its not ridiculous at all.. what's your problem?' so there's a conversation going on, and when you play them all back together its all simultaneous, but its choreographed so they're not all talking at the same time. But you think what's going on because this person's obviously relating to that the first person but doesn't seem to, the first person's very reflexive just about themselves, the second ones got somebody to play against, the fourth one is really trying to play, people get very playful, its very fascinating.

When I did it for Channel 4 it was two people and me and you do see me in shot and you see me giving camera directions. The camera was moving around it was very intimidating in a way.

JH: You used actors for that?

SP: I used an actress and an actor. The thing is about that, the woman in it was very biddable. Anna Ridley produced all that, and she selected the actors and it was really important that I didn't meet them. If I'd met them it would have lessened the mystique.

JH: They knew you were an artist?

SP: They knew I was an artist, they knew it was for television, they knew it was involving, not a script, and we did choose people from the theatre. They were more theatre

actors than they were TV actors, because we didn't want them to be too comfortable in the studio. Actors do tricks, and they have to be good, so we didn't want them to rely on those tricks too much, so when I met the woman and I just explained I want you to speak when I, you know. She just went 'oh you know that's quite interesting' and she was quite happy to go ahead. When I had the guy, the actor, he really was not comfortable he did not want to do it, he wanted to know a lot more, I don't know whether that says anything. It may just have been him, the sex and gender thing, could be, might not, he didn't put up much of a fight, but he was very edgy. It shows in his on screen persona all the time, people don't like him. I'm sure, I know he's a really nice guy, but he's edgy and he's defensive and he's aggressive, and he was uncomfortable with the whole situation and it really shows. We shot them in the same day; we shot her in the morning and him in the afternoon, what I did learn later, was she bumped into him in the foyer. She was leaving and he was coming in so that does explain a little bit about, he asked her you know what's it like and she said 'hell' and then went. So that was unfortunate because it sort of set him up, but maybe that was fortunate as well because it gave me two very different personas.

JH: Sorry to interrupt you, but I want to ask you a question about context just here whist we're talking about that shift between the works because there's a discernable shift as far as I can see in terms of where you placed the works televisually, had that changed the way that you worked as an artist that your output was going to be in a televisual context rather than as an installation or in a gallery space.

SP: It changed as a target, rather than making gallery art, it's a different context and that I didn't think there would be much point in making a work for television which didn't have some regard, some comment upon television, otherwise why not make a videotape and broadcast it,

JH: But you'd made *Dialogue for Four Players* before which was almost playing with that anyway?

SP: But if you look at that it there's four artists in shot, and it's set up in a gallery, you could only set it up in a gallery, it didn't deal with notions of acting. *Dialogue for Two Players*, the TV work, dealt with a number of extra issues, and it was very much television, one of the problems Channel 4 had was they couldn't call me Director, because I didn't have a ticket, so it was 'created by', and I could have an Editor, actually next year I did get a Director's ticket but I mean that's funny in itself.

JH: But didn't you want to be called artist?

SP: I didn't really mind if they had called me 'Director' I would have found it equally amusing as 'created by'. I mean 'artist' if you think about going on television what would you say, 'work by an artist' sounds awkward.

JH: But you are an artist.

SP: Yes I know but to a viewer at home. I didn't want a viewer watching it to think 'this is art', I wanted them to think 'this is television'. So from that point of view that was a shift, but it wasn't a new shift, it was if I ever make a work for television that's what I'd like to do. I don't mean I'd like to make that piece, I'd like to make a work that's not flagged up

as 'oh now for something completely different'. You know it's a piece of television. You get people writing in and Channel 4 keep a log, mostly considered it – I think they twigged it was slightly different, most people thought it was a bit of drama, a curious drama.

JH: Can you talk about your artistic processes and how they have changed over the years.

SP: What do you mean by artistic processes?

JH: It could mean, as you were talking about research before you could mean, your artistic methodologies, where you start from.

SP: I probably start with writing, I suppose most artists start with sketching but I actually start with writing. Sometimes I start with sketching, probably with installation, I'm usually writing something, I don't mean a script, I mean I'm writing ideas, writing questions, writing context, I'm writing what am I trying to do, what am I dealing with here like the current piece I'm working on. I'm writing about, what lies behind it, why am I doing it, why am I shooting a sixteen year old and capturing her voice five years before? What's that? This sort of sense of time moving on, and sound, often I'm just writing about sound, I have to say. Although I've worked with David Cunningham a lot, I worked with him because he seemed to be inside my head, we seem to share the same things often.

JH: Can you talk about changing technologies and how these have impacted on your work and artistic objectives.

SP: Its key isn't it? Privileged to be living through a time where it had what I see as highly significant technological. One day there wasn't video, the next there was. One day, with computers it's still the same, one day there were computers which I thought were just appalling, the idea of computer art was just a nonsense, I now realise I was wrong even that early stuff that was going, which I just thought was… there were all these people talking about.. there was lots of writing, and you ended up with just this square, Lots of stuff coming out of the Slade like that, I now realise that what they were doing was incredibly significant, and it was just that computers themselves were so limited but what they were actually trying to do behind all that actually: nobodies progressed. They did it. They've only progressed with what's on the screen and delivery, but in fact I think they'd got it all worked out, then, interactivity all those notions. There's so much crap talked about it, people would do well to read what was going on in the '60's and '70's by the people who were really thinking about it but couldn't really produce. Artefacts in that sense…they were producing for research they were producing all sorts of notions and new ideas but they couldn't produce the work as we would see it the artistic, the outcomes. I get back to this idea of being lucky, or privileged, there was video, early seventies, and computers probably mid '80's. I don't think that happens very often does it? Two completely huge technologies and tools for artists, never mind any body else. To be able to play around with that sort of stuff and think about it, make work, grow, you know in here. It's just absolutely fantastic.

JH: But you were able to have access to those technologies quite early on?

SP: The way I'm describing it is that I'm this lucky boy and it just drops into my lap. Obviously I was much more active than that trying to position myself where I could get the best facilities that were possible, with the limited budgets that we had, both with video and also with computers. And in fact, also obviously academically introducing them to the next generations and setting up facilities within art schools that was very important to enable other people, to get there, it's important to have peers it's important to pass it on, I do believe in that, so yes it's a very active process. Not a receiver of it I'm just shaping it often. Computers were a slow start for me, I remember when I taught at Coventry, I had a colleague there, and he had computers and he was really interested in them, and I thought they were desperately dull still. The first computer that really interested me, there were two, there was the BBC one and then there was the Spectrum and one day I just went out and bought a Spectrum, and then I signed on at Adult Education classes in London LEA and learnt BASIC, which was a computer language at the time. It was great being back at school, learning that was just, I didn't carry it on too far, I got what I needed from it, I realised it just gave me an understanding of what computers were about how they worked, and I just needed that sort of understanding this idea of code, and also realising just actually how limited they were, which of course echoes back to video they are rather limited, another limiting technology.

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

SP: I liked the fact that video could be perceived as telly, so that certainly some of the early shows, mainly artist organised, you would get people coming into the gallery that wouldn't normally come to the gallery, because it was telly. Telly's familiar, telly belongs to everybody, from that point of view, it's slightly indirect, but that was pleasing. You knew you were reaching an audience which maybe other types of the avant-garde were not going to reach. There was a small research project associated with the installation show at the Tate when Stuart, myself and Tamara had a piece. Which of course, the education department, did some research on how long people watched a piece of work, how long they watched a painting and how long they watched the installations. Of course they watched the installation for far longer than the painting you had to. They asked quite a few questions, they asked people what they felt, people were very interested, they were very open, you sensed that people thought this was good, good that people were using telly as a medium, they did see it as telly, they obviously didn't see it as a telly programme but in a medium sense, and they felt able to comment on it. They were much more able to comment on these installation works which were actually rather, pretty difficult works, than they could talk about painting which was interesting. There was a lack of confidence in a painting because they were being told all the time, 'you can't understand painting' and here there was an opportunity. I may be remembering that a bit rosy tinted, but I certainly remember that people would come to the gallery. I think it was to do with the fact that it was television from their point of view so it was inclusive.

        It's interesting those shows; I recall we stuck monitors in the windows to bring people in. Remember these people had not been in the gallery, so why come in the first place, I mean you couldn't do that with a film, stick it in the window. I think there was a cause and effect there.

JH: I want to talk about funding. First question is did funding stifle or enable you to realise your ambitions?

SP: Well both really, because obviously if you've got some money, it helps you make some work, but, there is a price to pay, you know the expression 'who pays the piper plays the tune'. I think in the early days of the Arts Council, as it was then the Arts Council of Great Britain, was handing out money to artists. For a short period it was a very unencumbered, no strings attached type funding, but that didn't last for long. The funders become prescriptive, they start coming up with themes, where these themes come from they never justify, but they never struck me as being artist led, or from the bottom up, they seemed to me to come from the top down, there seemed to be a notion of curatorial imperative.

        When I made the pieces for Channel 4 or BBC2 at least you were, you knew you were with a fickle broadcaster, you knew the only reason you were in the door talking to them and they were thinking about doing it is because you'd persuaded them. You're not going to get ten years of this it was probably a one off, but once you'd gone past that state they were terribly non prescriptive because they'd taken you on as an artist to do something different. So there was a strange freedom working which might be perceived as something not seen as free but very prescriptive. That was ironic and relatively it was lots of money because they worked at a high level. it was only relative because everything cost a lot the way they did things.

        Most of my support structure has come through higher education; it's not come through funders.

JH: The next question anyway, is 'how did you fund your work financially'. Could you talk about your trajectory after leaving art school to then working within the academic institution?

SP: I was fortunate that Coventry was ambitious and wanted to set up a new little unit, and they asked me to do it, so, it seems terribly primitive now, but it was brand spanking new ½ inch black and white portapaks, which of course were replaced with Umatic. It was one of the best in terms of what was available to an artist in an art school, and then of course I came up here (Dundee DJCAD) and that was on an entirely other level of investment and also ambition. I think, I upped the game, and at Coventry I was always a support area for fine art which was comfortable but I realise looking back it was never really tested. It wasn't until I got up here and then I became not a one man band, there was more than one of us, Colin McLeod, and we got our own students, Post Grad that really upped the game. That was a huge challenge, you're talking about a totally different order of what you're doing pedagogically, that developed, we developed undergrad, and it's become a significant player. So that's been a very important part of my life. I'm amused when people say 'my work' my own work, because I see differences in the character of the tasks and the things that you're doing, but I'm glad I find it difficult to disentangle artistic practice from the pedagogy.

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

SP: It depended on the piece. The video works are made to be seen in a certain context, sometimes a gallery gets it right sometimes they don't. You make the work and its very nature dictates the context, because it's part of that context.

JH: But you've made single screen works which you wouldn't have much control over.

SP: I haven't gone to many festivals recently, but I used to go to lots, there's a certain trade show part of it. I mean *Monitor* and *Easy Piece* look great on the monitors that they were made for. But in the process of dissemination and often you're disseminating to peers, and it's a bit foolish to be precious.

JH: Did you achieve your ambitions in relation to dissemination?

SP: No, not just me, but British Video has suffered from neglect; promotion on every level. Partly it's the artists fault, and partly, there have been opportunities, there have been lots of public resources, and they have just not performed at a high level.
It's not about being a start it's about getting the work out there, I'm pretty comfortable that there's been plenty of work produced in this country which is as good as anywhere else, but it is certainly does not have a level of profile that it deserves, because it just hasn't been promoted well internationally.

JH: You said that the work is not, not promoted in the UK but lets say why then. Is there not a gallery of British artists work in the Tate, they have Gillian Wearing and more recent artists, but why there is no gallery with historical work in there. They have Bruce Nauman or Vito Acconci, one wonders why there is no British work in there.

SP: They don't rate it. I mean I think they have insufficient knowledge, but clearly they don't rate it, there's lots of other things they don't have there, mainly because they don't rate it. Sometimes because they cant afford it. National museums, it's a very different agenda, the reason they've got Bruce Nauman, is because apart from the fact that the work is good, so they've got it right, but maybe they've got it right because somebody told them, it's received wisdom that its rated, because Bruce Nauman is also in Berlin, Bruce Nauman is also in Rome. From a curatorial point of view it is very easy to rate him because all your peers rate him.

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

SP: There's never been a curator in this country that has been important or interested in British Video work significantly in my opinion. My work or anybody else's, in terms of facilitators, Anna Ridley has been really important on that and has facilitated my work and many other artists, Ian Breakwell particularly. She's been there the whole time, even before I started making work, and she was facilitating film before that, very very important. Yes, John Wyver for a time, before he decided video was dead, sorry John! Probably right! But it's been pretty thin on the ground from my perspective. Lots of artists have been involved, nearly everyone. LVA itself was an artist run organisation, 2B Butlers Wharf was informal, very proud that it was unfounded, unregulated un-prescribed.

What we've suffered from of course, the other thing about why British Video art has been a bit invisible is lack of writing critical debate. It's not that there haven't been people writing but there have been so few of them, some of them have been very good, but it seems in that sort of world that you do need a lot of voices. You need a lot of voices because I think the nature of critical debate requires a debate. A debate is not just a monologue it isn't a conversation between two people it needs to be a lot of voices testing which are interacting and testing what's been happening.

What you did do was debate it a lot, that's what Butler's wharf was all about. Your critical feedback came from your peers and because all of that is unrecorded, it's all non-written up, it's not available, and it's ephemeral. It was important and it was there, and it informed the work. It's not like it was a vacuum or a desert which we've now got. So somehow, there was a lot of very very heated stuff, but in a sense that now we understand it in academia. If it's not text it's not written down, it's lost, it's lost to anybody new but it's not lost to the experience, to the people that were there at the time and based their ideas and their opinions and were challenged by that debate.

We're talking about LVA, my involvement with LVA seemed like a long duration. By '79 I'd probably left the organisation. It was only about four years later, people have talked about a split, I don't really see it as a split, it was just a difference point of view of how the organisation should develop, there was David Hall, Roger Barnard and myself. Particularly Roger and I who had worked in the office for a couple of years, really felt that the way we were going which was not going to work you needed to professionalise it. I think the problem with the word 'professionalise' this was perceived by people who weren't agreeing with us. It was taking away the artistic collective spirit, ironically very quickly it wasn't an artist collective spirit it was funded by the Arts Council and it was in a sense semi-professionalised and I think that's a key word semi-professionalise. Key thing for me was that I felt that it needed a curatorial approach and that curatorial approach had to be professional and not an artist. And that has been painted now it seems to me and maybe at the time, as us wanting it to be a private gallery and that was not the intention at all it would be a publicly funded organisation therefore it would not be private. Also it was very clear to Roger and I working in the office when people visited. They wanted context, they wanted to know the obvious question, show us a good piece of work. It was impossible to show a good piece of work honestly if you were doing it by the rules, because it was a collective. You're not supposed to make any value judgements promote one thing over another only a curator could do that, and a different type of approach. It was a fundamental misunderstanding of what we were talking about, it was quite clear that we were in a minority so we just left and it carried on without us.

JH: But why did you want a curator?

SP: Curator's probably too strong a word. We wanted recognition that selection was an issue because it felt it was being dodged, that people did need insight into the collection into the catalogue and the archival works that we had, people expected that. You don't go into a bookshop and when you ask for help they say 'can't help you'. We just felt it was a complete misunderstanding of why that was important and how we would go about that.

JH: Did you facilitate other artist's works?

SP: I just wanted to add something about DJCAD and the TV workshop because that facilitated lots of artists. We made about 450 pieces of work over a period, while it was running and to a pretty high standard, certainly technically and hopefully aesthetically, so I just wanted to mention that.

        Both with LVA, Coventry and Dundee, particularly through the TV workshop at Dundee facilitated hundreds. I hardly dare think, there's another huge archive sitting there at Dundee, of work both student and artists, it's hard to think of them as students. A lot of them were artists, have become artists, or were artists at the time including yourself. It's all part of the culture if you like, I've been glad to do it to be part of that.

JH: Did you work with technicians or other artists on the technical process?

SP: I worked with lots of different technicians; technicians within broadcast, technicians within facility houses and technicians within higher education. In fact, Maidstone didn't have a technician, did you know that? Not whilst I was there, there was just the staff. The first technician I ever came across in video or in media, was a guy called Hugh McVeigh at the Royal College of Art and he built my video switcher for the Tate *8x8x8.* So it was a video switcher which was basically using sound tape, slide technology. If you put pulses on the tape it will change the slide projectors, I was using that, I was using slide quite a bit while I was doing video. I did a piece at the ICA, Malcolm probably won't remember it, it was the first time I met Malcolm Le Grice, and my piece was called *Maybe Maybe Not* and he'd done a piece called, slightly similar, *Yes No Maybe Not.* It was the first time I'd met him as well, it was a coincidence. I just had this notion that the technology of these pulses, could you use that and hybridise it to control a video switcher. Now I couldn't do it, I didn't have the technical knowledge at least I had the idea. I went to Hugh at the ICA, I was a student there and he built it which was great, but we've lost it! I can show you a picture of it!

        Steve Littman, different things, shooting, we did a lot of stuff for the National Review of Live Art, he more than me, we used to go on shoots and stuff, which he always enjoyed far more than me and on the video wall (National Video Wall Project Video Positive) because he was facilitating it.