

per annum at a full loaded cost of £2,200 per agent is set to save £24,200 to £44,000 a year" by using its "Telebusiness Psychometric Inventory (TPI)" and one-to-one interviews.

Psychometric testing was developed in the US in the thirties as a way of helping companies

call centre operators who were successful in sales and customer services were examined.

Previous surveys of the call centre business have often found that many operators are poorly paid, required to work in stressful conditions under constant supervision. Petrina Alexandre,

test takes approximately 30 minutes to complete and the inventory comes in a booklet that applicants complete before an interview.

James Morrow

MY BIG BREAK

Malcolm Le Grice was once a painter. He tells Martin Seal why he made the switch to cinema, and why he'll never sell out by going mainstream

Film meant a change of direction

MALCOLM Le Grice may live his life with a beginning, a middle and an end, but when it comes to his work he considers it "only one way of organising time experience". An experimental film maker of international reputation, he has for the past 13 years been Head of Harrow School in Design and Media at Westminster University.

He is soon to take up the position of Director of Research at Central St Martins. It's something of a homecoming for him since he worked there back in the late sixties, when he established the highly influential film making department.

The sub-culture of the sixties helped develop his work. After leaving London University's Slade school to teach Le Grice became disenchanted with art. "Once I started making film, the painting dropped away. I was moved by seeing something dynamic on the screen."

But although some titles of his early films catch the mood of the era — Yes No Maybe Maybe Not, Spot the Microdot, Your Lips — he wasn't totally enamoured of hippie philosophy. "The drug culture of the time gave avant-garde film making a notoriety, which meant there were certain kinds of screening you could do relatively easily. I didn't go along with all of the romantic things in the counter culture but I was totally involved in the forms, innovations and changes of attitude," he says.

In the early seventies he met and worked with Roxy Music's Brian Eno on the psychedelic short Berlin Horse. "I did a show at the Whitechapel gallery around 1971. Brian came to it, and liked the repetitive loop-based structure that was in a num-

ber of my films." The result was his dream-like images coming alive to Eno's music.

He and like-minded artists had a mission to create a climate where the experimental could have a voice in cinema. "When I started, it was very much a minority activity and had no base at all," Le Grice says. The films of Derek Jarman and Peter Greenaway are part of this legacy.

Along with his work at St Martins, Le Grice was one of the founders of the London Co-operative workshop and has been on committees of the British Film Institute and the Arts Council. "It wasn't just a question of making my own film work in an isolated situation, I thought that it was necessary for there to be a much better base for

I'm basically quite bourgeois. I have a good well-ordered family existence, the upside of which is I can concentrate on my work

experimental film production, screening and distribution."

So where did his zeal come from; was it pure disenchantment with narrative? "My work isn't totally outside narrative, but I'm against its social function. It becomes something which people live their lives through and it takes people's energy away from treating their own lives seriously."

Despite his sterling efforts, his work might have remained on the fringes indefinitely if it hadn't been for the creation of Channel Four, which was born with the remit to show under-represented

material. Le Grice's work easily fitted the label "alternative" and the channel bought and commissioned three of his films, made him the subject of one documentary and featured him in another.

He has a mixed reaction to what a wider audience meant for his type of work. "We do have a big slot, but it does muddy the waters between what's experimental and what isn't. There was a very confusing time for the direction of experimental film in the eighties, almost like there might have been a yuppie bridge with the mainstream. Fortunately many film makers didn't choose that."

His determination not to compromise is evident. "I've never had too much trouble deciding whether I should put my work into the world, rather than fit my work to what the world thinks film is." And Le Grice did not take an opportunity to go into the mainstream when it arose.

Twentieth Century Fox took him on in the early seventies as an expert on computer film images. Despite collaborating with Sam Wanamaker, the experience did nothing for him: "I liked Sam, but I didn't care for

what I saw, for the way in which films were thought of as a product."

His roles as both artist and administrator have not so far posed much of a problem. "I'm basically quite bourgeois, I have a good, well-ordered family existence, the upside of which is I can concentrate and make my work."

His advice for up-and-coming film makers is unequivocal: "It's very easy to lose your way in compromise. Focus on what you do artistically."

Picture: Sean Smith

