



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

Interview by Dr Jackie Hatfield, Thursday 27th October 2005

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

DL: There really is this problem of history and dating. You are doing something to bring it back. It's to get stuck in that and I hate it. I've actually shown enough now, I don't like showing even. Just sometimes, if you've got something, like I showed a bit of *Ich Tank* the other day, but that's nineties so it doesn't really cover your remit does it? I think you are always doing the latest process. You arrive with the latest HD, which is, "I just want to get it and but it's not 12 bit". That thing, the data rate is under 25MB/sec, I don't know what it is but if you want full HD, we are talking 170 MB/sec and that's what process is about, what is raw at the moment. I'm interested in raw files, simply because what you can do with it is extraordinary. You add all the metadata later. In terms of what it is going to be, because you've just got original data and got no interpretation of it, it means that any improvement in the future on how data is interpreted, you've got the original stuff, so it's just like so many photons etc. That's process. Whereas I always thought making film, that someone would one day be able to reconstitute that image by going into how the light actually struck it. I always thought you could actually reconstitute the space from a negative somehow. That was an intuition almost in a psychic sense maybe, but who knows because it's extraordinary. I studied Palaeolithic Archaeology at Cambridge, for my Archaeology and Anthropology, and we all thought "Oh well it's all finished" and then suddenly it's all to do with DNA and carbon dating was the thing in the early sixties. Now it's important but people like Leakey were saying "A million years ago..." and my tutor said, "That's rubbish, it's not that old" etc. Now it's dating back to 4 million years etc. So historically, you don't know what's going to happen. But, in terms of the content there was a show at the RCA for free, somebody was doing *A Page of Madness*, which is by this well-known Japanese guy (Teinosuke Kinugasa) but his first film in the twenties. It was meant to be some hyperbolic crit, which did the rounds on secret cinema. So I went along and it was okay but it doesn't come near *Un Chien Andalou* or *L'Âge d'or* in terms of what I think is significant. What was the word you used?



JH: Important to you.

DL: Important. They are all important for different reasons as much as from the fact that they are a failure, because then you had to live with it. So it's much more existential my approach to it. Okay, sometimes some of them, *Granny's Is*, which won lots of prizes, back in whenever it was 15 or 16 years ago. It was on TV "x" amount times and blah-blah-blah. I

nearly got it right in that but it was in those days when digital editing was £6000 a day. My budget was 20, 000 quid. It was a joke really, so I ended up with one and a half nights and then eventually we had no money so I had to do three nights in component video. You can see the whole thing falling apart but if it had been finished it wouldn't. I would have been happy with it maybe because there is a possibility of finishing it. There was actually a possibility of making it so compact. It's like last week, I had to do a reference for somebody and I did it in English although it was for a French grant from a German stipendium giver. I tried to translate it into German first of all. They called me in and said "Look we can't translate this" and in fact it was so succinct, because it took me a day to write it, that instead of four sentences it become one sentence. There are elements of that in the making of film. If you can get it as succinct as that then it has much more resonance and "truth" about it. But, if you are still struggling to see what you are trying to say then you are just going, "Oh God! What's he babbling on about!?" I remember for instance, a friend of mine who didn't know me when I made *Mare's Tail* but later when the Film Co-op had the printer, he said, "Oh God, there was bits of the movie that were great, but sometimes the camera is just pointing at something and it's just going on and on and nothing's happening, David". I said, "Yes but, it was just that I didn't want to throw that bit away". But which process? We can talk about the technical process or the existential process. There's a programme, which is a few years old now, called *Processing*, which is a very good way to learn to programme. Unfortunately I haven't learnt to programme but next year I'll be retired so I'll start to learn to process because we've got to learn to code now, if you can't code you are really nobody, which is hence why I like this raw thing. Well "raw" would have many versions. You could even take it in a Lévi Straussian sense of the raw and the cooked. It's only the cook that makes it. It's only the cook that redefines culture in a sense. Without the cooking there's no culture. But, the culture can be added in, which is why I like this metaphor of this "raw" because you can put it in later. Originally you could say that cinema, apart from my point of view, it came out of a therapeutic situation where you are trying to, not exactly justify your existence on the planet, but you are trying either to show those parts of you or find out about bits of you that you don't know. You go "Oh My God, is that what it's like? It's like a mirror?" so, there is that level of process in *Mare's Tail*. I just had to do an introduction to my seminar for this semester. I've got a web-page saying more or less what I'm doing but I just suddenly thought I can't go through that. I don't even remember what I said I just started off by saying "I'll probably forget what I'm trying to tell you in the middle of trying to tell you it and that's how it's going to be, if you don't mind. I'm sorry if you get confused but I'm afraid I won't make it any clearer." Somehow I can stick with that because you bumble from thing to thing. Sometimes something just happens. It's a question of timing. It's quite interesting from the point of view of just reading about the X and Y Chromosomes. We've been very celibate really, the human race, because half the Y chromosomes have lost 16 markers in men, which means that the sperm doesn't have to fight too hard. It's got a bit lazy. Whereas in monkeys, in certain chimpanzees, they haven't because the female screws everybody in sight and the alpha-male gets most of the hits. But, because the sperm is fighting inside, the theory is that the less promiscuous you are the less work it has to do so therefore it doesn't have to copy quite as effectively. That's a process.

JH: Can you talk more specifically about *Ich Tank* and about how that came about? I look at that work, and to me it's so precise in the viewing of it, for a viewer, for a spectator.

DL: It took a long time. I started that in Berlin in 1983 because the wall was there and I thought, "Okay we are enclosed" It seemed a good metaphor in the end. Then I had to live with it because I'd shot some of it and I had to do something and it went on. In fact, *Ich Tank* as it is now, that version, was finished in 1997. So we are looking at 14 years between when I started it and when I finished it, or when it got to the form it has. Although, it doesn't have that form because a lot of stuff no one has even seen. I showed some because I did a performance. There is a piece where I'm actually painting with the fish. It's about an hour of taking each fish putting it in the ink, making the mark, which is gyotaku. There's one outside, a huge one, which is a Japanese version of fishermen when they've fished and they want to prove what they've got. They do these fish prints. I thought I'd do it with the gold fish that was there. So, I am standing there like a weird fish butcher at the back. It was live, and the whole scene goes on for an hour or something. That didn't even get into that tape and the funny thing about that tape was that I'd made little bits of it at different times: when I went to France, when I shot a bit here or a bit here. I worked on it so in the end, the way it got that form, I was asked to do the inauguration of the ZKM video, the media-tech show place, which was huge. It had a massive, huge JVC projector that looked like it was shot on 35mm. It was extraordinary. It's all Digi-beta. But, the point about it is that the day before, at six in the evening, I didn't have a single frame of that movie. I was working with Patrick Zanolli, the French guy who I did a lot of work with and at 3 we went into the edit suite. Nothing was working. It took three hours to make everything work. I had 30 tapes and I had a list of maybe this, this, this and we put it together. By six that morning we'd sort of put it together and made a couple of extra pieces. He went to bed. I then went up and saw Paul Lamb, who I was working with and we got the mix done. It was quite a long time ago so it was still on DAT tape. We had to synch it, and put it on the Digi-beta. We made the Digi-beta copy into an analogue-beta and by 9 o'clock it was all ready. I went and woke up Patrick. We got it in his car to drive to Karlsruhe, which was 300 miles away. The opening was at 7. We found that we'd been locked into the car park. We had to build a little thing to knock down the fence. We built some concrete with some planks we'd found. We got out of the car park, drove, and got there at 6 with the tape. On a much earlier tape: eETC. That tape was the first time I ever got any serious money. It was from Channel 4 in 1982 from Alan Fountain and I didn't deliver it until 1986.

JH: So did they have a deadline for you?

DL: No they didn't but you are meant to give something. If you've got money from TV, you are meant to give it next year. In fact the next year I gave a part. I said "Look this is, but it's not finished"

JH: So they didn't accept that. That it was part of the way that you worked then?

DL: Well it wasn't really their problem. They needed something to broadcast then. In fact it wasn't even programmed but I wasn't happy with I'd done. So in the end I sent it to him and I went away and I went home to Mauritius. Then he lost his job or changed his job and ended up with Rod Stoneman. So he gave me another £10 000 which was enough to carry on. He came down here and said "Now, David. I understand it's about the cranes

and language and stuff like that but there are only about 5 people in the world who even want to know about this, and what you know about it, there's only one person in the world and that's you!" And: "Fuck you Rod". We were quite friendly in the end but he got me in the end because it was all on 1 inch film. So, in those days there was no digi-beta and all that stuff. It was before D1 even. But I got to work in an edit suite so it was another one of those situations where you work all day and you get something done by asking other people to do what you can't do yourself. In the end, we did three days and I wanted ABC roll and then to mix it. At the end of the third day I was half way through the second roll, the B roll and Rod says, "Look David if you don't finish today I'll broadcast the A roll."

JH: And did he?

DL: No, in the end he broadcast the mix of the A B, so there are huge holes in it, because I wanted to give myself the freedom to mix it live. It's a bit of a luxury with six C1-inch machines but then some people have had like, what's his name that wonderful French guy who did Ubu, in the late sixties in Paris. They brought all the machines from all the different edit suites in Paris to one place in order to do what he wanted to do. I'm just doing a thing on feedback in my seminar this semester, not that I talk of it as a seminar in the workshops. I put a link. I found this wonderful link where guys are doing a feedback loop through all the machines anyone can bring and then sending it through the web and then bringing it back again. It's the biggest feedback loop. It's the Guinness Book of Records. I liked it. So, one always wants to add as opposed to condense and this question, once again, it is a processing. If you think, if I'd got *Granny's Is* finished, as it should have been, it would have been condensed in a certain way. You could look at it from any side. It would really work. It's like a phenomenon. It's the beginning and the end all in one, which is at the moment. Someone did a little mini-retrospective of my stuff in Montreal a few years back, and she'd looked at *Granny's Is* and she said, "Yes that's a real little jewel isn't it David!" and I always think, "well in a way it was". But in terms of process it's quite interesting because there are two sequences that were done on digital, which in those days as it cost thousands of pounds, £600 an hour. I ended up getting one sequence done one night, and then I got another a night later, and then added another. What happens, is you go through these various stages. Half of it's all falling apart because it's 30 generations of analogue Betacam. At the end, I just see it and I just see the whole materiality of the Betacam with about eight Hi8 images in it. You could actually see the end of the material. But, if I'd had the money to do it all on digital I think it might have.

JH: Can we go back to talking about the shift from film, to the electronic?

DL: I think I started shooting film 1963/1964 after I left Cambridge. They were giving two places at the Royal College of Art in a thing that's finished now. Not a diploma exactly, a sort of post-graduate course. I got one and Simon Hartog got one and that's where we met at the Royal College back in 1964. I'd been off to these islands, which are totally uninhabited except fishermen who go there from Mauritius and I shot my first film there in 1964. I suppose I shot it on a Bolex. There was no television at the time and these guys had come from the BBC to Mauritius to found the Mauritian Broadcasting Company, and they had a Bolex. I said "Oh, well I'm just going to the Royal College of Art to do Film and

TV" and so they gave me this Bolex and I ended up on these islands. No women had ever been there, ever, they were not allowed. The fishermen would go there on six-month contracts and live there. There were two or three isles that they inhabited in temporary shelters. They'd spend six months fishing and then come back with the money and go back to their family. The boat goes once a week. I went there and shot some bits of film and then came back. That's why there are some parts of *Mare's Tail*, where you see all these turtles being pulled.. *Mare's Tail* was 1969 and that was 1970, we abandoned it in 1975.

JH: So *Mare's Tail* you started in 1963?

DL: Yes, with those first shots. Prior to that, when I was in Cambridge, doing archaeology and anthropology, I used to see things I'd want to record. I'd say "Oh God, I wish I'd have a memory of that or I wish I could make that look as good as it looks to me on paper" and so I bought a camera, which was ridiculous because I had not a clue. Then, quite a lot later a friend of mine, somebody I met in 1968 who had just been putting movies together with John Chamberlain, he'd just made *Wide Point* with Taylor Mead and all that Warhol crew. He'd come here to make the *Secret Life of Hernando Cortez* because Alan, who was sort of big collector, one of the first collectors of pop-art in England, his father was trustee of the Tate and that that kind of thing, Ted Powers, he had the Oldenberg typewriter, he had all the seminal stuff. You would go into his place and it was all lying about and because they were the first guys who really went to the States and bought up that stuff in 1964 or around that time. I met him in 1968 and his place up there was full of it. Alan Powers, his father was called Ted Powers. Alan lives in LA now but he financed *Mare's Tail* because he wanted to do a book of photographs. I wrote to him. I was sort of wandering about in the Hebrides at the end of 1968 and I wrote to him and said "Look I'd rather put all the bits of film I've got, make that into a movie rather than do a book of photographs" I had by then, four years of stuff, because that's how one tends to work and some of it I really liked. I was thinking how to structure it. I was thinking about how to put it together to make it worth looking at. So then he gave me that money. We started in January 1969 and then for six months lived with the material. So, a lot of it is shot on the hoof. In fact, that Lithuanian guy, Jonas Mekas, I saw him leave when it was showing. I was sitting behind him at The National Film Theatre. It was showed there in 1971/2 when there was that first independent show.

JH: The Expanded Cinema Show?

DL: Well no, it was the first real independent, underground, experimental-work, film festival in England.

JH: Was it *Film as Film*, or something like that?

DL: No it was before that. It was 1971/2. He'd written a thing saying "there are some films like David Larcher's *Mare's Tail* where you can feel the filmmaker nailing down the celluloid to the rails as he's steaming off into the unknown" and it was a bit like, "You'd have see how it actually came to be." How it came to look like it does, is relatively mysterious. But, once again it's something that falls apart towards the time of a deadline. That's why for instance

much later in something like *VideoOvoid Text*, I actually incorporate, because that's only half an hour. It's the shortest thing I've done and when you've reached that level of sophistication with the medium, then you can play with the notion of the deadline, because whatever you put in, it's going to be OK. That's more or less how I started to work with video. I'd make it sequential. That's why *Mare's Tail* for instance was called *Mare's Tail*, because there's this very old plant which from the same time as the dinosaurs. It's like a bamboo, but it just grows in parts and it's called *Mare's Tail*. Mare means that sort of plant. It's also some type of cloud. From my point of view it has several meanings, but it was the fact that you have bits and it's modular. I could have stuck it together in another way. But, the point with film was that it wasn't as immediate. You would actually have to shoot it. Then you'd have to process it. Then you'd have to hang it out to dry. Then you'd have to like run it through a projector. Then you have to decide what you're going to do with it. A friend of mine, Gary Woods, who was part of the London Film Co-op group or some spin off from Malcolm and Co, he would make a piece on his 100 ft, and then of course he'd project it. And he was so pleased with it, he'd project it again and then he'd say, "Hey come and see this!" and a month later the thing was in bits, which was great actually because it's much more artistic in a sense, because there is the actual pleasure in the medium itself and it does something. So, rather than make a copy and then save the master, you destroy the thing as you show it. We did a show of photographs just the other day, I hadn't shown a photograph in years. I had access to this Lambda printer so I did these very big prints, which were 4K off inferno processed from an original VHS, which was blown up. It was pretty nice. I was just trying to make the point it's digital, it doesn't matter. I said to the gallery "Look, basically what I'd like to do is paste it to the wall with wallpaper paste. Have it there and then at the end of the show, come along with wallpaper stripper and strip it off, because I can get a Lambda print that size for 30 quid. I am only going to show two, that's £60". They were horrified. They said "No, no, no you can't do that! No not in my gallery!" and "You have to have it framed" and so in the end I sent it off to this guy to have it framed. It cost me £250 each. Then one of the guys put glue on it and so they refused to show one of the photos, because it had a tiny bit of glue. I didn't even notice so he put another print up instead, of the one I wanted to show, because that one had glue on it and then nothing. Then in fact, I got drunk the night of the show and one person was going to buy something. They saw me drunk in the pub. "I'm not buying anything that guy made". It was quite funny actually in the long run. In the end I didn't know what to do with the things. They've cost me 500 quid. In the end I gave them to Sarah who was in them and so she got the prints. But, the point was, the guy who'd done the framing, who'd ruined them, I said, "Well look, you ruined one of the prints" and "So, I'll pay you half and that will cover your expenses, but you've ruined one of my prints and I've got two things I don't know what to do with as a result of this stupid show." and the guy said "No, no, no you've got to pay me the whole lot because basically doesn't matter if I put glue on it because you were going to paste them on the wall and use paint scrapers to get rid of them so... obviously they aren't worth anything. So, "No, you've got to pay me the whole 500 quid" which eventually, I did. I've been at the Academy of Media Arts in Cologne for 9 years. It is a very odd event that, that happened and I got this job. Eventually after huge fights, I got Discreet Logic stuff in. We got Flame and Inferno through the back door, by recuperating a piece of stuff. So, now for instance I haven't made anything since 1997. I've applied for, but haven't had any money since 1993 and I'm dammed if I'm going to sit here financing myself, because I don't need it. I am fed up

with showing stuff and there are ten people in the room. I just can't be bothered, really. I don't want to do it. Funnily enough, I was just talking to a couple of the guys, who make films and videos, well videos really, whatever the difference is, where I am and one of them said, "it's bit odd showing. It's all announced, you get all keyed up and then there are 10 people sitting in this room and you've got to tell them that all this stuff." Gosh! It's no solution to watching it. The biggest audience I ever had was for *Mare's Tail* in Cologne in 1971 after that show. Vernon Akiss saw the films and said "I want to show it in Germany". He paid our flight over to Hamburg and then the Hein's said "Oh we'll show it in Cologne" We ended up going to Cologne and there was a big cinema like the Odeon in Leicester Square and it was full. Two people left because they thought it was a documentary about Mauritius. So that was that. You get 50 people or something. When *Granny's Is* showed on TV I've had a few funny reactions. I met someone for instance who said, "You are the guy who made that film about his grandmother or something aren't you?" and then he said "I hope you won't mind me or saying this but it's a bit left of field. You must find it quite difficult to make a living" I said, "Well, yes, but I manage, just about" and so there's the discussion of what you do with something you've done, especially now. It's much worse now.

JH: We were talking about video and when you first got hold of technology.

DL: What happened after I made *Monkey's Birthday* was basically, the guy who gave me the money for *Mare's Tail*. It had a certain sort of slight success. For instance, when I had this big audience in Cologne in 1971, we walked down the Rhine with the person I lived with at the time, from Cologne. Actually, we went via boat to Cologne, missed the boat and walked for three days along the Rhine. Eventually we managed to hitch to Manheim. They actually showed that movie, an hour of it on Belgium TV in 1971, in England? Forget it. But I got there, and we were so poor that in fact we got into the foyer of this Manheim Film Festival. It was the big time when Jean-Marie Straub was showing, *Othon*. People were throwing stuff at the screen. It was 1969 time so he got the prize in 1969. We went out in 1971 he'd shown the movie and Marie Straub is quite rigid. *Othon* is basically a French play of Corneille spoken on that place in Rome where all the Romans used to hang out. I forget what it's called. They were walking on and off, speaking in Latin. It was hard core structure. Well, do you call it structural? I don't know but that was all happening. We arrived and this guy had got me a showing of it. I got there and Elisabeth collapsed in the lobby in tears. We hadn't eaten for 2 days. That's twice when we lived together. She is the person in *eETC*. Then the guy found me told me that there were German squatters who had a place and we found someone to put us up. The guy from the BFI came up to me when he heard I was speaking proper Queen's English, like all those Englishmen, "Oh yes and who are you?" I said, "Oh I am David Larcher, I am showing *Mare's Tail*" He said, "Oh yes that's the film that they put on at Arts Lab when they've got nothing to show" That was the BFI reaction to it. It was like that with *Granny's Is*, that's why my next movie is me completely drunk slagging everybody else, here in 1991. OK I got the money from the BFI to do *Granny's Is* because there was Colin McCabe, who did the work on a Joyce piece. He did a really good book on Joyce. I remember doing an interview with him to get the money, "Oh yes I want this one". I don't know why because it was just two pages, but anyway we got to this place. When I'd done *Granny's Is*, I was trying to get some money to make four stills of it. In those days you had to make it off a D1 and it was a 100 quid for

the four so then I could have pictures because otherwise you had to shoot off the screen, which was awfully crap. This were digital prints off the master D1, £100 each and the BFI said, "Oh no, we can't afford that." So then I called again and there was this girl there. I said, "Yes I am the person who made that movie. It's being shown and we need some stills to do the publicity." And she said, "Oh yes, I vaguely know about the film and yes maybe I'll have a look at it and I will call you back tomorrow". So she had a look at it and called me back the next day and said "Well I've looked into your film there isn't a single image in it that will make a still", in *Granny's Is*. She made the judgement. I couldn't have the 100 quid and so they went around promoting the film with me in my sort of black leathers. It was quite a nice still actually, because it was Anna Thew. It was outrageous. I've got a few BFI orientated stories like that, so I'm always slagging them off.

JH: Do you think that's been a problem for artists, this lack of funding?

DL: I think, since they killed the BFI Experimenta, and the Arts Council, when they gave 10 people a year 20 grand, well I haven't had any money since 1993, that's 12 years my last budget.

JH: And you got that from the BFI?

DL: No the last one was from the Arts Council, which I made *Ich Tank* with. I got it in 1993 and I eventually delivered with Juliet McCallan.

JH: Didn't you get money from Channel 4 as well?

DL: That was in 1981/82, which is 24 years ago now. And that was *eETC*. It was all on film and then transferred to U-matic and then scrambled. That's when I met Steve, because that's when I joined LVA. I was with the Co-op. I came back from travels in 1973 but that's another long story. Another one of those, for instance *Monkey's Birthday* was with Alan. It was really complicated because he produced *Mare's Tail* in 1969, then he said, "Oh well, I'll do another one" The budget was only £2000, even in those days it was little. It ended up costing three and a half. The way we used to work was that he would give me £20. Then we did *Monkey's Birthday* with him, but I knew that I'd shot all this stuff between '69 and '73 travelling around in my trucks all over the Hebrides, Scotland, Wales, and all over. I had all this material and I knew I had a film anyway, so I said "No we will extend the journey and go east". So, he agreed and I bought myself a truck. Well, I had mine already. Anthony and this other guy took Nastassja Kinski with us, when she was 13. She is in that. There were all kinds of weird events like that. Then we came back here in 1973. The very first Co-op meetings I went to were in Better Books in Charing Cross, in 1968 or '69. 1968 I think actually with all those funny people like Bob Cobbing. They hadn't got printers and stuff then. Malcolm hadn't got the stuff yet and he was in with the Dutch guys Co-op there, which disbanded. Eventually they moved from Drury Lane to that other place where I met Richard, where *Mare's Tail* used to show quite a lot, Robert Street. Then they moved to the Dairy, which was this old dairy on Prince of Wales Crescent. By the time I got back, they were set up with two printers and a processing machine. So I arrived and parked my trucks right outside, in the Crescent and squatted in it, basically. We had a few fights with Malcolm and Peter who thought I'd said, "Well if you are there, no one else

wants to go" which was a bit unfair. So that's when I did all that processing work on the film. They say in French "travail sur le support" which means work on the support. That means you are actually working with the material on which the data is put. Nowadays it's all code art. I'm going next Friday to the *Read Me Run Me* in Dortmund, which is a code festival, live code. I've just put up a thing for people. In fact, I'm waiting for an email about it. They call it a "temporary software art factory" which is really cool. They have two days of talks. Aleksej Shulgin who's Russian, he makes great videos too. England, France, hardware medium conference, *SPAM: the Economy of Desire* is the talk at three, then the *MapOMatix* by Yves Degoyon. It's a bit like a live code intervention with PD Max. Nowadays, there are all these new programmes, which we mentioned earlier, *Processing*, which is an MIT spin off. I've really got to learn it, but I don't know it yet. So of course, if I could learn C, I wouldn't even do movies. I'd be back into the raw. That is the raw basically. When I first got video, this grant, which I was telling you about was finished. I never finished *Monkey's Birthday*, so I ended up at the Co-op for a year on the printer with the truck outside. The baby was born in the truck, and we pulled it into the yard. The midwife knocked on the front of the door of the big building with all these different artists' studios. Annabel Nicholson I think let her in because we got along OK. It was quite nice because she lived there and we let in the midwife and then the midwife went right through all the whole thing, came out of the back door, up the steps, into my truck, and didn't even realise she wasn't in the building. The baby was born quite quickly and I had a fire going and water and everything. It was quite hardcore hippy stuff. In the meantime Alan, who was financing this, had met this guy. I could tell you so much about him because he financed Steve and all kinds of people. He met this American guy, the Stones, not the Stones *Stones*, but a couple who had made movies in the States and they conned him really. He bought the Gate Cinema and he refurnished the Gate Cinema. This was in 1974. He refurnished the whole Gate Cinema to show movies. But they wanted to be big time so guess what they went and bought? And he spent a fortune on it. There's that famous German, everybody loves him, he made *Querelle*: Fassbinder. So, they got him to buy this ghastly movie called *Wildwechsel*, which they still love in Germany. They are showing it all the time. Gary and I looked at it, and thought, "Oh my God, it's like Coronation Street". Maybe the Germans didn't have Coronations Street so Fassbinder did it a good job. But, he did do *Querelle* just before he died. So when I went in 1980, I got a DAD and I hung out there for a year. In the meantime Alan had spent all this money. I knew what was going on and he said "Look, David". I was getting 20 quid a week plus all my lab bills paid, from him. So that's how he financed it. In the end it was meant to be £10 000 for the whole budget. By then we'd taken four trucks to Turkey and I'd gone on into Iran alone. I abandoned the trucks. It was just at the time when there was the first petrol crisis, so I lost one truck completely with all my stuff in it, with all my photographs and everything. Anyway, that's another whole story. So, he said, "Look you've got to finish". We had this huge factory in Chalk Farm. It was a very funny story. The Prince of Wales Crescent, where the Co-op was, was quite hardcore. Hoppy was on the corner at the end with Sue and they were like the original video pioneers, which became Fantasy Factory and all that. Occasionally he'd walk in. I've know him since 1966 when I first bumped into him when he had a flat in Bayswater and he had Ornette Coleman staying with him. We are talking that far back. He ended up taking photographs. I'd done a book of nudes with someone because they just had the Royal Albert Hall Poetry Reading. They just did the re-mix of it 40 years later, because the last one was in 1965.

JH: With Alan Ginsberg or somebody like that?

DL: Yes, and I did a book with Peter Whitehead called *Holy Communion*. He made a movie and we used my pictures to do the book, which I don't even have a copy of. I didn't know him. I went to his place and he was showing me these pictures of this sort of cross. I'm going, "That's very interesting", and it turned out to be the same girl that I'd been photographing, but with her bending down so it was her bum and the cross of the bum but very highly blown up and grainy. That was how I met Hoppy. I think that was 1966 because I ended up with a guy called Conrad Rooks who made *Chappaqua*, with Robert Frank doing the shooting. I ended up in the States with them and I ended up going to bed with the leading lady somewhere in Wyoming. The director was so furious he cancelled the whole trip, he sent everybody back. Robert Frank went home. That got me into trouble and I ended up living in New York completely broke in a cellar someone had given me. I then ended up in the Chelsea Hotel for a while and then abandoned it and left. That's another story. It is really gossip stuff. But I ended up with *Monkey's Birthday*. I was just making this film. What I wanted to do was to put it all together. By then I had six hours of AB roll of it. Later when I did *eETC*, I got the money from Alan Fountain's, from Channel 4 when it started. It was the same technique of having several layers. It was a sort of mixing process, which nowadays you do using Max msp or whatever, or all the bespoke software they have for video. But it's still the mix, it's on the mix ultimately as opposed to, say, in the construction. OK you do the construction first, that's what I was meaning about this piece. But with *Ich Tank*, when, for instance, it was all put together in a night, from 6 at night when we got everything running: you didn't even have a preview in the action. When you do a cut, you can't see what is happening. Eventually we got it working manually, it was pretty crazy.

JH: It's compositing though, with *Ich Tank* isn't it?

DL: Well it is, that's what I'm saying. So, therefore I could do that because each of the pieces had been really carefully worked on before. So, by the time I come to put it together it was like I'd got 30 different movies that I was going to put together in a certain way. I know that I'm there and eventually a deadline comes, so it was like, "you've got to do it today!" and that's what happens nearly every time. That's what always happens. You get this deadline, which says, "Right now you've got to make up". It's quite quantic, the whole question of Q bits and quantic stuff. You've always got the superimposition of layers and as soon as you observe it then you get the final product, which is what's going to happen very soon. They are doing it right now. They've already got, I think, a four-bit Quantum computer set up. But metaphorically it's a similar system, where I've got all these possibilities and eventually someone says, "Right I need it tomorrow" and you go "OK" bam-bam-bam-bam-bam. Or, you chuck it if you got photographs. How are you going to fit it into the book? So sometimes it works and sometimes it just doesn't. Then you are screwed. That's the problem. So you are risking it.

JH: In that case then, would it create more possibilities for you as an artist had you've had constant deadlines?

- DL: I don't really think of myself as an artist but that's another story.
- JH: As a person?
- DL: If I had a constant deadline? Well I do stuff and that's mortality. Then you get into angst.
- JH: But if someone kept saying to you every week "We want something now"?
- DL: That doesn't work seemingly. Every week you want something "now". That's what I get told all the time. You have to have time to live. There's a very nice Nietzsche quote where he says something like, "a piece of work shouldn't appear to have taken more than 40% of the maker's conscious effort" There's a haiku act as well. It's that story: a Chinese Emperor goes to see the maker and the maker says, "Yeah, yeah sure I'll make it for you but I need three years" and he goes to see him a year later and nothing's happened. He goes to see two years later nothing happens and the guy makes it like two minutes before he comes from the third year and that guy says "Hey". There is no other solution. There's no solution to it that's just how it is, as Beckett would say. I just did a nice video, but I don't dare show it because it'll get me into trouble.
- JH: Can you talk about *Granny's Is*?
- DL: My mother's a weird mixture of English, Irish, Scottish and Norwegian. During the War she worked at the War Office, so we lived opposite, and the reason I am here in the garden, is that Granny came to look after us while she went to work in 1942 so she moved in to look after us, to this flat in 1942. Then we went to Mauritius in 1946. Then they split up, so I came back and was posted off after the Vichy France, to an English pre-prep school, prep-school, public school and Cambridge. I did the whole English thing. I came back here when I was about 8, more or less speaking Creole and French with my original English, but rusty. I went to boarding school and I was quite a spoilt little brat. I was evacuated at the age of two when the V2 hit the other side of the square. It nearly killed us all. My father was fighting the Japanese in bloody Burma and my mum was working at the War Office. She eventually became the equivalent of *Miss Moneybags*, so when I came back the Head of MI5 used to come and pick me up from school. I was nine. At the school, that's what I was going to say about this gossip business, my mother said to me that one day the headmaster said, "Mrs Larcher I have to talk to you" and then he said, "Could you come down to see us?" He said, "Well, I had a long talk with your son and he eventually agreed to allow me to remain headmaster" It was very funny because I was telling my eleven year old, who's just gone to Holland Park, and has nearly been excluded already and hit his mum with a broomstick last week, so she called the police. I got back here and I said "Listen, Ok, we all have this problem who's boss", which is part of the theology of *Granny's Is*, is this relationship with the grandmother, which has been going on all that time. This thing has always been there, that's why the movie starts with The Witches Ball. It was meant to frighten witches away if they come in because when they look in, they see this horrible picture of themselves. That's the granny version. There are a lot of different versions but that's why *Granny's Is* starts with it; and it ends with it too. One of the reasons I liked very much when Nicole Gingras showed some of the movie, well everything more or less, except *Monkey's Birthday*, she said, "*Granny's Is* is a little jewel isn't it?" The

point we live in, we are in Stanhope Garden and Lord Stanhope who was the earlier version before they built Stanhope Gardens 150 years ago, but the Stanhope 200 years before, is the guy who invented the Stanhope, which is this little ring in a sort of pen or in a quill, and you've got a tiny little painted miniature with a little magnifying glass on top of it. People collect them and they are called Stanhopes. There's a sort of miniature inside so you can look into it. I always think of *Granny's Is* as a Stanhope.

JH: Is that why you've got that magnifying thing on the window?

DL: Well that's not really why but I have a general interest in...

JH: ...seeing?

DL: Maybe, yes. The interesting thing about *Granny's Is*, is that I had all the stuff that she left when she died. I couldn't have made it before and my mother saw it. She just arrived from Mauritius and it was showing on Channel 4 that night. So I said, "Oh look it's funny my movie is showing". She didn't know anything about it and they don't really think of me and then she saw it, and she rang all her friends, "Oh my son's movie..." Of course she got a terrible shock. She thought it was going to be a Queen Mum's kind of hagiography. Apparently she got a rather a shock. When her friends called, "Are you all right Pam?" She called it "that gruesome movie". It's true in a way. I couldn't have done it when she was alive because, shooting, I would just leave things. It was a discovery process for me as it was for her and she keeps repeating to me, "You've had that camera long enough". She still thinks it's the same camera that I had from 30 years ago. I love the bit when she says, "But it's looking at me here and I'm seeing here", which was also a discovery for me with video. Ok now, you can pipe the image anywhere, it doesn't matter, and bung it on. But, in those days, if you're shooting on film, you can't just have it. It doesn't exist this immediacy, and so that's why there are bits in it, which are like that, are really perfect, from that point of view. In relation to this question of the Stanhopes, and the miniaturisation, because it doesn't quite do it because of the flaws, but it could have done it in the same way each of the times. Whereas, for instance, something like *VideOvoid Text*, for instance, it's kind of there. I had the time, although I am talking about the deadline, I had the time to actually deadline it, so that I timed my deadline just to coincide. That was the point. I had the freedom to do so because it had no budget, whereas *VideOvoid Trailer*, I got 20 grand from the Arts Council in 1990. Well, they gave it to all the people didn't they? They gave it, every year, to five or ten people. I can't remember that year, who got it. I've got all the lists. I'm going to publish it one day, in my book. The story of the movie, *Granny's Is*, is a complete book. How it got made against all the odds. Whereas, with something like the *VideOvoid* pieces, which were made because *Granny's Is* won a prize in 1990 in Montpellier. I'd got this money. I had £4000 for post-production that was in my budget. *Granny's Is*, is BFI. I budgeted 4000 for post-production. But the point was, I'd made *Granny's Is* before, and I got 20 from the Arts Council four years later to make *VideOvoid*. *VideOvoid* was meant to be four tapes mixed into one. And in Montpellier, I'd done a little book about it. So, I got this grant out of which I had 4000 for post-production. £4000 for post-production means you could have three nights, one and a half at £1500 a night. If you are lucky, that's a night editing. That's downtime in BetaCam not even in Digi. We are talking 15 years ago. Meanwhile over there, they'd got money from

somewhere, and they put together a complete D1 suite with two D1 machine and all the stuff, so I wrote to them and said, "Look, I'm the guy who made *Granny's Is*, and I've got £4000. Normally, I would get three nights Beta Cam editing, analogue but could I come and would you give me two weeks?" They agreed and I went there and they liked so much what we did in that first two weeks, that they gave me two more weeks and then another month and then another month. So I had three months. So that meant serious time to work with Patrick. I couldn't handle a bloody D1 edit suite. It was like chalk and cheese. He was the compositor editor. What happened is that I would go there. It was like an old chateau sort of Victorian sort of spooky kind of mansion in France. It's called, *Le Centre International de Création Vidéo*. Downstairs, they had this digital edit suite with an analogue edit suite. Then it changed a lot but I could go there and after the two weeks they liked what I'd done, which was minimal but was completely different from anything else that they'd done there, so they gave me a couple of more. Then I'd go and I'd work again and by the time I'd had three months, once again, we came to the point where I had to give the Arts Council something. I first went there in 1992 and they gave me 10 days in the analogue edit suite. At the end of the day, they said, "Yeah, we like it". Then I was working with Patrick and someone else had cancelled for that weekend. Patrick was on. He goes away. He doesn't work weekends, so they said to him "Could David handle the machines on his own at the weekend?" and he said, "They are going to ask you if you can handle it, just say yes." I was asked, "Could you handle the machines?" "Yes, yes of course, yes". So then Patrick sort of ran me through, of course I was there, but I couldn't understand anything or how it was working. It was quite intense. But I started to work on my own, and that's how I started to work on my own in Hi-End as opposed to Umatic video.

JH: So you were working in the same way that you had with film?

DL: More or less, it was the same kind of stuff. Well, by then, I'd made Video. I'd made you know *eETC* and *Granny's Is*, so I more or less knew what it could do. By the time you understood what it could do, you no longer want to print film. I really went off the whole cinema thing long before it was just totally limiting.

JH: Do you mean cinema as film?

DL: Yes, cinema as film. Whether you are using 35mm or whatever, it's just too much work. What you would spend a month doing on film, now you can do just by pressing a button. You've already moved on in terms of language, "transformations" etc, it's a completely different language already because it's all machine code now. All that stuff is invisible. Then you can start flying stuff about which is quite magical the first time you do it. Ok, then you get bored with that. Now of course, it's very interesting for instance someone like Kaspa did this piece at the thing in New York about three years ago, and he pointed out that all that's done is made resolution to the point that people, now, don't care about resolution anymore. In fact what you see is stuff on the web, which is like zero resolution. So I'm looking at the cinema experience but in fact the more technology you get, the less resolution you get, unless you go and see IMAX. I went to see *Cyber World* on the IMAX. It's all 3D re-rendered. We went a second time. I went with a friend and it was awful. But the first time, you have your Polaroid glasses and everything and then you realise, coming

out it, you realise it's going to be actually in your eyes. You are going to be lying there with head up displays. You don't need to go to a huge place, which is a bit boring, sitting in a room, especially if they are doing remixes of the Pet Shop Boys going around with heads. No, it's quite nice. It's very high tech, you've got to give them that. It's out of date, it was 1997 or something, this particular Cyber World piece but when you see what can happen it makes sitting down, in front of structural movies...

JH: Seem quite primitive?

DL: Yes.

JH: I think, not just about structural works, it's to do with the filming, 16mm, it just highlights the viewing experience of that flat screen, and that demarcation between the audience.

DL Then we are talking in central region, Michael Snow, post-*Wavelength*, *Back and Forth*.

JH: Yes, he plays with that.

DL: Yes, he's great.

JH: But a lot of the others don't, that's the thing. When they say "structural movies", I always think of Peter's movies.

DL: God yes, we used to joke about *Clouds*, at the Co-op. But the discourse is pretty articulate, no wonder he writes books on Beckett. It's very interesting, actually. When we did this talk, the evening before he'd done a show, everybody thought I'd invited him. We are talking about Cologne in 1998 or something, and one of the best video people got furious and walked out. Then I got, "You invited that guy?" It was his new piece in '98, whatever it was, where you might have something minimal, it might move there. Ok, in a sense, it has to exist, that's why I quite like it. Somebody's got to do it. Somebody has got to take it to the Nth degree. There is a whole article that I just was reading about the function of nothing, which is quite close to my subject in terms of *VideOvoid*. It was excellent. *Kritikos* it's called, it's a kind of critique. There it is, *Kritikos: an international and interdisciplinary journal of post-modern cultural sound, text and image*. I got to it by chance, but there's some quite nice stuff in it. Funnily enough, I'd just linked to an interesting article on code. Paula Murphy is who I'm thinking of. There are still purists, film purists. I got a letter the other day from a girl who is doing something about film. I can't remember what it was. She sent me this hand-written letter. I was very impressed. She would if she is doing film. It said, "I am doing this thing, and really would like to invite people who are working with film still." I picked up the phone and I said, "Thanks very much for asking me but I haven't touched film since 1985. I hate the stuff." She said, "Oh, really? Oh! OK" But the film I have done, there are some great bits. But, you pick up the can and the film is actually completely destroyed, the base of the can and there are like these huge holes in the can. The film is still maturing - the movies I'm making from the sixties.

JH: Like a bottle of wine? We'd like to taste it!

DL: Exactly. One day, I tried to get a grant to explain that that's what I wanted to make, but I want to put it all on 4K video – the 16mm, disintegrating history. I didn't get it. You know why I like the Arts Council system? Because you kept your rights. The bloody BFI, they take your rights. I was really lucky that I renegotiated. So I've got all my rights, apart from *Granny's Is*, which I then negotiated a second edit because it ended up getting transferred from video to film. It got shown as a 40-minute film, which went around. It was in Berlin. But then I still wasn't done, so I think it was Ben Gibson who got me another whatever it was, however much it cost to do another three day edit mix. Ben Gibson connected with Rod Stoneman, who I'd been working with and who'd got Alan Fountain's job in 1986 and said, "Look, if you are showing the movie on Channel 4 you can pay another 10 grand for the extra edit time." so I got these three extra nights of editing at Component Video and I think I got an extra fifteen hundred myself. So the movie ended up being an hour and eighteen minutes rather than 40 minutes. So there was a whole question about whose rights were what. In the end they kept the rights to the short version, which is on film, then they gave those rights to London Video Arts, which I didn't want. They then gave those rights so Eddie Charlevoir put out the movie. They put out the movie out of this Euro funded system in Holland. It was being bought by people in Paris. I know because people said, "Oh, we bought your movie the other day and it was shown in Paris, the Louvre etc"

"Oh really?" So Eddie Charlevoir took their money. Then they give that part of it to LVA. Then LVA give the other 50% to the BFI. So this meant that these subsidised places by the State, supposed to be set up for the artist, all three take their cut and I've never seen one penny in 15 years. Not only that, when you got the money from BFI which was 20 grand, Channel 4 who gave the money to the BFI anyway, have the right to show the movie. So they put it on twice. That's three hours of full time TV. There are no rights for the artists in England, so I got no money for it, and they got 3 hours of television, whether it was 11 o'clock at night or 12 o'clock it doesn't matter, state funded for £20 000. That's £7000 an hour back in 1989. If I hadn't won prizes I wouldn't still be fucking alive. Luckily, it won three grand in one place, five grand in another and then luckily VidiAir bought it, and I still have the rights and I got £4000 from that. It's outrageous. So now you know what I mean about the BFI earlier, when I finally made the movie and asked for a £100 to make stills, and told there isn't an image in it that would make a still. Having 20 years earlier, in whenever it was, 1972, 18 years earlier, been told that *Mare's Tail* was the film the BFI people said "Oh it's the film they put on at the Arts Lab when they've got nothing the show. Luckily the guys in Belgium put it on and they found me a squat where we could stay. That's like "Hey you want to make experimental movies?" Forget it. But Juliet was very good with *Ich Tank*. She managed to swing a few. *Ich Tank* started in 1983, and I finally gave them the result in 1997 but then they only gave me the money for it in 1993. So it took me four years to do it, but then I'd spent six months or something like that working at CICV on various incarnations of it. Then just the last month did a shoot, put it together in 10 days, and it was gone. In fact I gave it to Channel 4 and it disappeared without a trace. It's only been shown twice in England. Once at the LUX when it was for that festival they did. It was quite fun. Then you showed it.

JH: We showed it in 2004. It was last year.

DL: I made the premier for ZKM because they liked my *VideOvoid Text Trailer*, with all this stuff. They booked me to premier the opening of their huge video tech cinema, which was extraordinary. I was eventually carried out.

JH: What drunk or shocked?

DL: No I was elated or something, which was Ok. That was the premier because I made it the night before. It was made a night in October 1997. The story of how it actually got made was that 4 days before that, my lady left with someone else over here, and I was there working on it. So I flipped out. The whole story is great one. The 24 hours is a movie in itself. I took a plane. I abandoned it. I said, "No I'm not doing the show." They would have been left with nothing. ZKM, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie in Karlsruhe. They actually paid. They are massive. They make England look like... mind you, you guys got the jackpot from another point of view, but over there, they are busy on it, all of them. At ZKM, they've bought the copies. They paid £1500 for a print or for a Beta, but not anymore, finito. I went to this awful thing in Cambridge called *Film Parliament* or something, where I said people like the head of the Film Council, that awful guy who did *Bugsy Malone*, Alan Parker, should be shot. I said, "Give us a break, you know". Because of what they've done, there is zero funding. Ok, now you've got Film London. I am old it doesn't matter. Give the young ones a chance, because if I really wanted to do something, I'd go and do it myself. But from next year I won't be able to. I'll have finished the job. I'll be 65.

JH: So you'll actually retire?

DL: Yes, in a year and a half, a year and five months.

JH: So will you have to retire from teaching?

DL: Well, I think that's enough. I didn't like teaching, and I don't do it, as I explained. I don't fucking teach! But I won't even get a pension, because I've only done it for 10 years. I've just worked it out. I'll get 400 Euros a month, so I'm thinking, "Right then, maybe I'll have to start work again." But because I haven't done anything since I got there. Well, I finished *Ich Tank* in 1997, or I put an end to it, which I gave to Juliet. The Arts Council had a copy because it was their budget. I delivered a copy to Channel 4 and never even had an acceptance of the tape, nothing. They screened *Granny's Is*, but that's BFI funded. I think they did it three times actually. I don't even know. Then *VideOvoid Trailer*, they screened at least twice, for which, I got nothing. So that's another whole bunch of stuff they got for nothing basically, by giving the Arts Council 20 grand. Then I made *VideOvoid Text*, because Pierre, who ran CITV, said, "Look David you were never meant to make 4 of these tapes". There was meant to be *Pre-text*, *Con-text*, *Sub-text*, *Core-text* and *Ex-text*. They were meant to joint together and they were meant to play. That was the original concept. In the end I made *Trailer*. Then I made *Text*. So then, I tried to make *Sub-text* and he said, "Look, you can come and work here". So I did that from 1993 until about 1996, two years. I used to go over there, stay a month and they'd give me access to the edit suite, sometimes with Patrick, sometimes without. So that's how I got to make that and that's how I made most of *Ich Tank*.

JH: What do you think is the preferred place for your work? Is it in the gallery or is it in a cinema, theatre type space? Or do you not really mind about the space?

DL: I've never shown in a gallery but I could easily. I had a show in Berlin in the Einstein Gallery in 1983, there's a catalogue and everything, where I showed everything from the time, which was quite good. It filled up four rooms with these huge silk screens, which I'd done there. We're talking 1983. I had a DAAD, which is a visiting artists scholarship type thing to Berlin, which most people will have. The guy before me made *Serene Velocity*, Ernie Gehr. Then just before that was the Hungarian, Gábor Bódy. I came next, but a lot of people who'd originally, because they bought a copy of *Mare's Tail* at Arsenal, which was the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek, all these people, cinema people, The Gregors, they were the Mafiosi of international experimental cinema since the sixties and they have a very big collection. They even bought *Granny's Is*, the film version, which now has disappeared. Then, when Colour Film Services went down six months ago, I called them up and they didn't know anything about it. I had a print made, which was only £300. I called up the BFI and I said, "Look, if you don't go and get this thing..." and they didn't even know *Granny's Is* existed. The master of the film transfer was with Colour Film and I had this copy made, which they bought. I think they paid a grand and I got 500, so it cost them £1500 and now it doesn't exist any more. So, where should it be seen? I think it should be seen from a bed on a TV. I love the scale thing, especially Imax and Polaroid glasses. That's the whole interesting thing about raw and what video does. Now that's it all in the digital realm, anything can be converted into anything. You are no longer stuck with a piece of film, which is what is so boring about film. OK big time, you put up three projectors and time it. I remember when *Mare's Tail* did its premier at the Edinburgh Festival in 1969 and I remember the guy who worked with Jim Haynes, who ended up at Montevideo in Amsterdam. He had 12 double-headed Siemens, pixing, trying to sync it all. It was a nightmare, and even in the end it's great. It's like that Swiss artist who used to sync hundreds of sawn installation and hundreds of Super 8, but like 50 of them. Well, in fact he wasn't clever enough to sync them, but he had them all running at the same time, whereas this guy was a very excellent video technician, one of the first guys. He was doing that in 1969 and by 1971 he was totally into video. He's little, fat, tubby guy with a beard. He is kind of famous and gay. He is kind of famous for his collection of gay porno. I think that because in fact *VideOvoid Text and Trailer* are actually made about TV really, they look great on a monitor and ok, sometimes when they are projected but in fact with the monitor, you've actually got the feeling of these electrons hitting. If the monitor's set up, someone said to me once "We've never seen such a nice black, in *Trailer*" A lot of the black there, you can really feel it black, because it's done when the little drop outs hit the screen and therefore you get a flash of light. Then I've got the image going out into the audio so you've got that kh-kh-kh-kh of the soundtrack as well. You really get the feeling that that you know cathode ray tube is going to explode or it's telling you something. But funnily enough I made a DVD of it for some friends, a guy who I had at school as a fellow. It was a really good video. He'd just spent two years on Flame at the Le Frêne Noir in the North of France. Then he was working, but he works mainly on Max audio. He's very good. Anyway, he took the DVD and I got a mail from him about two months ago and it said, "Hey David, we just dropped some acid and we don't know what's going to happen. Hey are you all right over there?" and "Oh God, let me out of this." The next morning I got this great mail saying, "Somehow in the middle of the night your DVD turned on and it was

just perfect! We watched it from beginning to end.” Then the girlfriend got another mail an hour later saying, “Great we finally saw the piece as it’s meant to be seen. You never gave us User’s Manual before”. It was quite funny. That’s how it should be seen.

JH: Unconsciously?

DL: Well no I would go for the real thing, acid! Cinema becomes an exteriorisation or becomes a way of working through stuff. So, actually when we were saying earlier, “therapy”, I use it as therapy really. If you are really miserable like when I made *Granny’s Is*. I was alone, my lady had fucked off somewhere to some sunny place with some other man or some 20 other men. You are sitting there and you are alone. You’ve just got the stuff and you are trying to understand how a Beta-cam Camera works. You’ve rented it, and it’s £300 for the day and you don’t even know how to turn it on. You don’t even know how to synch two signals. It’s kind of like you have to do it whatever you do. Then, night after night start with the very first Sony Hi-8, which was great because it did single frame, it was the first video that did single frame, and you just left it running as you did your stuff. The interesting thing about *Granny’s Is*, is that it’s got the whole history of photography built because in fact it’s not a monitor, it’s a 10/8 camera in the picture. In the 10/8 camera is the whole photographic history that my grandmother left behind when she died, which is in that cupboard, which goes back to about 1830, 1840. Original tiny little figures and then eventually my grandfather, who was well off, I have his account books from 1905 to 1915, 10 full years, every day, every single shilling that was spent. It’s the whole book and it’s got his wife’s allowance, how much granny’s truso cost in whenever it was, it must have been 1918 or something, when she was married. Her daughter was born, so it must have been 1915.

JH: Is that in the work?

DL: It’s in *Granny’s Is* but it’s hidden. You can see the book and you see all these things: how his brother got a motor. In fact it’s really compressed but I think it should have been more compressed because I can unpack it any day. The point about it is in terms of this Stanhope thing, where she is buried in Mauritius. She ended up getting buried for some weird reason, which is totally odd. They didn’t cremate her. They buried her and they dug out this thing in rock because it was cheap. It was the only bit of the bloody cemetery that they could get cheap but they had to get a machine to dig it out. As soon as it’s right, and it can be on let’s say a compact flash chip, there’s going to be a little magnifying glass in. She hated crosses and religious stuff. When she was really ill and about to die, she’d been pushed along in this wheelchair in some clinic and she saw this cross and she lifted up her thing and hooked it off the wall. When my mother’s carpenter guys were making her coffin, they put a cross on, “No, no, no! Don’t put a cross on it”. So if I survive long enough and it becomes possible to put a really tiny little thing inside the cross with an image running off some compact structure, it’s all no moving parts and the screen would be light, which is what I’m saying, that’s how it’s going to be in the not too distant future. You are going to be lying here, with your little head up display and instead of dreaming your own dreams, it’s going to come through your gigabyte connection to the universe. It’s quite extraordinary and that’s the “Singularity is Near” business of Kurt Weil. It’s pretty true, I think. It’s really different now, whether it’s going to be you and me, little white

people or billions of Chinese or whatever. It's amazing what's going to happen. So all this is rather redundant. It's just a very nice little jewel. It's a new little jewel we got today for the first time. It's good. We're not a virgin anymore. What I mean by, "how do you want to show the stuff?" Basically I want to show it lying down, with it in my eyes or wherever going through the body and presumably in a state of ecstasy after a rock of crack as big as the Ritz. Where can you go from there. Well, then you achieve what it is, which is the point of it all, death and that which we don't know. That's the one point that you inevitably have. That's the whole point, whether it's the death drive in a Freudian sense or whatever way you want to do it, the repetition compulsion, which is related anyway. It's like you know the man from Hull who wrote, "They fucked you up your mum and dad" As he is dying, he's always been worried, and his last words are "Ah now here it finally is. Now I'm going to know". Sure, you should have as much fun as you like but ultimately that's like,
"There is a silence in our family brother
There is a tradition in our family brother
To discover the limits and die
Each death of silence
Slowly ruining deaths war"

Then he goes on. It's Icarus talking to Orpheus. It's very nice. The guy who wrote it is this guy who was a very big friend of mine, who lived with me at this early days. He is a poet but none of the stuff has ever been published. He's got Parkinson's. I ran off with this girl to Paris whenever it was, 1964 or something when I was 22 or whatever and I bumped into this Swedish model who'd just come back from Dali's place. As soon as I left she bumped into him and a month later he was at my place. He knew Brion Gysin and Burroughs and all this crew and brought in all that sort of like weird American Beat. I wouldn't call Burroughs Beat or even Gysin. They were much more cynical than the Beats really, much more. He was cinetic. He also made movies, cut ups and all this stuff. It was in the head once again and, of course, drug induced.

JH: Drugs just enhanced the senses more than they are already.

DL: I don't think so. I think they put you in a completely different space because you suddenly realise relativity. Years back, about my third heavy trip or something, I'm looking at this clock and I'm getting frightened. I'm going "Shit" and I call Simon Hartog and I say, "Simon can you come over I need you right now". He comes over and he sits down, I say, "Is that clock going round?"
"Relatively"

"Aaaaaaaah!!!!" and that's when time starts to change. Well this is the whole question about these dimensions and spring theory. Now, normally in spring theory this is 11 But the interesting thing is I've just been reading this woman's theory that instead of them being curled up, they are actually much larger so they are beyond. It's not they are micro dimensions which function but in fact it might function on a scale. It's like, for instance, the plank length, which is tight but everything is based on this theoretical plank length, which is, I don't know, to the power of 43, I can't remember. That's what was interesting making *VideOvoid* because as soon as you start realising then you start to think, "What the fuck is an electron?" and all this kind of stuff, and then you suddenly find out it's nothing. Well, it's just a series of fields. Then everything is relative in relation to it. A field isn't necessarily a field and a data. So, then we get back raw and the raw is basically nothing except how

many photons hit that bloody sensor. It's quite nice, you can feel like a theoretical physicist dealing with photographs but now it's for real. Well, it is in a sense much more interestingly theoretical than when a piece of light hits silver halide. So there's the whole question about structuralism and there's a level that it takes place. So, you have Peter, who actually know defaces content, really. He reduces it to the actual. Well, to the actual what? I've actually never understood the level at which he looks at a film. I've heard him talk many times of it. But, I over determine everything. The guy who was bitching about the fact that I treat video like the Americans bombing Vietnam, in a way he is right, but because I'm interested in the pure pleasure of the effect. So, when the pleasure of the effect takes you beyond the established norms, what do you do? Especially when it gets to become illegal it becomes political, which is what was interesting about Drury Lane and the Arts Lab. With, Jim Haynes, it was really hard-core down there. You'd see people screwing. It was okay. It was what has become much more common now and which is what the Rubec thing is all about. They call it here something else here, I've forgotten. It's much less common in England I think. It doesn't get so much publicity. It's like the love-in's thing. It's like the old arts. That's where I first happened to meet the Drury Lane person, Jim Haynes, when he had the Arts Lab. It was where you saw early Malcolm LeGrice movies and stuff like that. We are talking 1967, I think. It was great. The Arts Lab was really happening. Tonight for instance, I'm thinking of going to a thing called *The Lying Down Show*. I've just mailed it to someone. I went to another one about three months ago somewhere where the whole building was squatted and there were various film shows happening, and performances going on at different levels. Finally everybody is saying, "Right we've had enough of this bloody Coronation Street narrative cinema bullshit" Something like that is what's happening.



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