Memories of Art Unseen

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As with certain fine wines that were improved by travel, sent on long sea voyages that ended where they began, there is an often unacknowledged feeling that works of art gain some further flavour from touring, beyond the ratification given by an airing in prestigious international venues, the names of which cling to the work like stickers to a suitcase.

From what basis does that feeling launch itself into the consciousness of art-lovers? There is first the opinion that travel is good for people too, since travel, romance and the love of art accompany one another, making of minds dulled by routine sharp aesthetic and erotic receptors.[1] Thus the most developed cultured cosmopolitan types must spend their time hopping between the world's great art centres and the further flung biennials where familiar venues and works are made to rub up against each other and, in the resulting friction, alter one another. In this transaction—as in travel for the sake of it—time and space are knotted tightly together. The unfurling of space in travel possesses the powers usually ascribed to the passage of time, engendering

forgetfulness and returning the voyager to an unattached state: 'Time, we say, is Lethe; but change of air is a similar draught, and, if it works less thoroughly, does so more quickly.'[2] In a still modernist compact, vagabond meaning, cultivated in the paradox-spinning common to contemporary art, finds a warm welcome in the mind of the wandering aesthete. It is the greeting of two exiles, travelled far from domestic bonds of affection and restriction.

Indeed, as described by Ernst Bloch in his epic meditation on *The Principle of Hope*, travel, with its continual parade of novelty, transforms time and space together. It brings about a subjective spatialisation of time and a temporalisation of space in which time becomes filled with detail in the way that space is usually filled, and space becomes the medium of change that time usually is. Such a transformation, says Bloch, is like the month of May which makes everything anew, and for the bourgeois private world, it is the only one available.[3]

These broad considerations apply equally to art shown in regional centres and that seen in the major art capitals and the foremost international exhibitions. The distances travelled (at least by the audience) may average less, but may feel as significant; the works of art displayed may be no more at home.

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[1] On this subject, see the beautiful passages in Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice/ Stephen Plaice/ Paul Knight, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1995, pp. 370f.
[2] Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain* [1924], trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1960, p. 4. In classical mythology, Lethe is the river of forgetting.
[3] Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, trans. Neville Plaice/ Stephen Plaice/ Paul Knight, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass. 1995, vol. 1, p. 371.

Wherever art is shown, we should ask: what is the life of those works for the great majority who only encounter them second-hand? How many more people, for instance, have heard about, read about and seen in reproduction fragments of Gerhard Richter's *Atlas* than have perused it face-to-face on one of its international outings? The same may be said for some of the artists dealt with by Locus+—for instance, of the whistling kettles, decaying blooms, whitening chocolate walls and dissolving estuary columns of Anya Gallacio.[4] In addition, some works make a virtue of their invisibility to the general public. Pat Naldi and Wendy Kirkup's surveillance project only ever had an after-life on video screens and in the pages of art publications, its birth being witnessed by a security officer or two. Stefan Gec's *Buoy* has become a roving nautical instrument, its irradiated shell living for all but passing seafarers solely in the mind. While these works make a theme of their own invisibility, most are not like that. Rather, they display themselves in particular places for particular audiences, striving to change themselves, the venues and their viewers and then to move on.[5] Nevertheless, in both cases—visible or largely invisible—works of art have their greatest reception second-hand.

To return to the question, then: what life does the art work have for those who do not directly experience it, what memories do they carry with them of art unseen? In trying to find an answer, we will highlight the entanglement of the passage of time and the experience of space, and will take a few brief journeys, some of which may have the appearance of detours.

[4] On Gallacio's work, see Locus+/ Tramway, *Chasing Rainbows*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1999.

Time and Space

First, we should consider, briefly and at the highest level of generality, the interrelation of time and space in culture and memory. In making memories, our minds make spatial forms out of temporal sequences, preserving time only by fixing it in space. The ancient tricks of memory enhancement involved the mental construction of an architecture and the placement in its niches or between its columns of striking, mind-prompting images.[6] Modern mnemonists have evolved similar techniques that have, for instance, involved imagining a walk down some city street, placing 'objects' in doorways or against walls; to remember a sequence of words or numbers, even years later, it is enough to walk once again down that same street.[7] Such aids aside, our regular experience of memory feels more spatial than temporal, a layering of veils distant and near, which has its own spatial organisation independent of temporal contiguity. As Proust, that most assiduous student of memory, describes it

> Have we not often seen, in a single night, in a single minute of a night, remote periods, relegated to those enormous distances at which we can no longer distinguish anything of the sentiments which we felt in them, come rushing upon us with almost the speed of light as though they were giant aeroplanes, instead of the pale stars which we had supposed them to be, blinding us with

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[5] See, for instance, the accounts given of Lloyd Gibson's work *Crash Subjectivity* on its various displays in Newcastle, Carlisle and Dublin, in Jon Bewley and Simon Herbert, eds., *The Perplexities of Waiting: Crash Subjectivity, 1993-95, Lloyd Gibson*, Locus+, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1995.
[6] See Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Pimlico, London 1996, passim.
[7] See, for instance, the remarkable account of synaesthetic memory in A.R. Luria, *The Mind of a Mnemonist: A Little Book about a Vast Memory*, Harvard University Press, Harvard 1986.

> their brilliance and bringing back to our vision all that they had once contained for us, giving us the emotion, the shock, the brilliance of their immediate proximity, only, once we are awake, to resume their position on the far side of the gulf which they had miraculously traversed…?[8]

In more material terms, when memories are made, pathways of protein are laid down in the brain—a network of learning—and that activity, and the amounts of protein involved, can be measured.[9] Without sufficient intake of protein, the mind lies undeveloped as surely as the body. So in extreme circumstances even the most personal and internal matters—those of memory and thus of individual identity—are subject to economic forces, and the power struggles attendant upon them.

The numerous forms of artificial memory, too, transform time into space—the library, the filing cabinet and the archive as much as the hard disk and other digital storage media (though with the latter a logically organised visual interface conceals another principle of spatial ordering beneath, one less amenable to human perception). As has often been brought out in historical and theoretical writing, these collective apparatus of memory are bound up with political power, the archive originally residing in the hands of state authorities who both controlled access to records and sanctioned their interpretation.[10]

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[8] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Montcrieff and Terence Kilmartin, Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex 1983, vol. 3, p. 950.
[9] See Steven Rose, *The Making of Memory: From Molecules to Mind*, Bantam Books, Toronto 1993, passim.
[10] On the latter point, see Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever. A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1997, p. 2.

Against this work of memory, individual and collective, that spatialises time, there are forces that push in the opposite direction, continually throwing fixed structures into chaos. These are the sovereign powers of commerce on which so much that is valued and thought of as settled is sacrificed. As Marx and Engels put it in a famous passage, of economic and technological forces that are now more familiar but also more powerful and ubiquitous:

> Constant revolutionising of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air…[11]

The authors believed that in and of itself this process would ensure that people would confront the actual conditions of their lives, not foreseeing that new mythologies would spring up to replace the old, and that some—perhaps, above all, the appeal to art's eternal spirit—would acquire a particular durability.

Economic forces exploit differences marked spatially, sometimes to make those differences more pronounced; sometimes, in the process of exploiting them, to efface them. Against the spatially congealed forms of collective memory are pitched the forces of entrepreneurial flux that would tear them down. Consider the difference

between those cities that are the centres of economic turmoil and runaway growth (urban centres in China and Southeast Asia that until the recent crash ruthlessly remade their structures every few years) and those places which for political reasons have for a time become economic backwaters (Havana or Famagusta, for example) becalmed in dusty, if dignified and historic, stasis. Equally, those forces bear on individuals, forcing or luring them from familiar environs, thrusting them in their millions into migrations, regional (from the north to the south of England, say) and across national boundaries (from the countryside of Ireland to the city of Newcastle, or from the Philippines to Saudi), with all the compensatory forms of memory, community, culture and national politics that such movements regularly induce.[12]

An Odd Commodity

What role do works of art play within this opposition—for the moment too crudely drawn—of the spatial impetus of memory, and the disruptive temporal flux of trade, technology and migration? The circulation of art works is a curious matter, as art works are themselves curious commodities. Often, of course, that circulation takes place to achieve a sale, but our concern here is more the temporary display of a work to the general public in a particular locale. Such works are not, like most commodities, consumed but are instead preserved (although there are exceptions

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[11] Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto: A Modern Edition*, Verso, London 1998, pp. 38-9.

[12] Benedict Anderson has written eloquently on this subject. See, for instance, his *The Specture of Comparisons: Nationalism, Southeast Asia and the World*, Verso, London 1998, especially chapter 3. A brief history of Irish immigrants in the North East of England accompanied an exhibition of the work of Shane Cullen in Newcastle. See John Corcoran, 'The Irish on Tyneside and the North East: An Integral Part of a Region's Identity', in Jon Bewley and Simon Herbert, eds., *Shane Cullen: Fragmens sur les Institutions Républicaines IV (Panels 1-48)*, Locus+, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1996.

which we will look at shortly). Both factors—display without sale, and preservation rather than consumption—tend towards spatial fixity as against temporal flux. While achieving a temporary transformation of a particular area, the works place themselves on the side of memory as against dizzying change.

It is a much-honoured convention among artists and those who write in the support of art to pay homage at the twin temples of indeterminacy and hybridity, celebrating the broad cultural phenomena—if not directly the material forces—that allow one to enjoy Lebanese cuisine in London, or Vietnamese in Paris. The homage is attached as much to works that are strapped with conceptual and physical bonds to one place as for those that can be packed in a crate and shipped anywhere. Strangely, at the birth of immobile works—those that reflected on site, on the particularities of a certain place—in an art still illumined by the fading light of modernism, there was a similar celebration of the falling away of fixed categories: for Robert Smithson, faced with the strange shore of the salt lake that would become the scene for *Spiral Jetty*

> My dialectics of site and nonsite whirled into an indeterminate state, where solid and liquid lost themselves in each other. It was as if the mainland oscillated with waves and pulsations, and the lake remained rock still. The shore of the lake became the edge of the sun, a boiling curve, an explosion rising into a fiery prominence. Matter collapsing into the lake mirrored in the

shape of a spiral. No sense wondering about classifications and categories, there were none.[13]

Site specificity, then, was born at a place that could not conventionally be seen as a place. Yet, aside from the fact that the insistent assertion of a claim to indeterminacy or liminality can reinforce the policing of conceptual boundaries and of difference, for all the content of conventional contemporary works (and the overtly hybrid sculpture of Lloyd Gibson can serve as a model here), the form of the work—whether circulating unchanged and intact, or tied to one location—tends to fixity.

Counter-Currents

This basic opposition of commerce and memory is, of course, too simple, for there are countervailing currents running through the broad opposing tides of fixity and mobility. The swift and disorienting movements of people, goods and information (much of it cultural) provoke compensatory attachments to older political, social and cultural forms, which, although they are reinvented for the benighted present, are packaged as a return to past purity, and as a bulwark fixed once and for all against the flow of time. Such reactions are not necessarily fastened upon the conventional forms of identity politics: the preachers recorded on the streets of Nottingham by Virgil Tracy, in their objections to homosexuality, feminism, promiscuity and the sanctities

[13] Robert Smithson, 'The Spiral Jetty' (1972), in Kristine Stiles / Peter Selz, eds., *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1996, p. 532.

of mainstream politics powerlessly protest against a flow of social change that has left them stranded.[14]

Equally, commerce seizes on marketable ancient fixity—condensed in that invidious word ‘heritage’—with the same fiction that the past is brought unchanged into the present, though in fact it must be constantly remade to meet the demands of fleeting and easily distracted buyers.

Thus museums and galleries, once reliable repositories of static memory in which ‘old friends’ could always be found in their familiar places on repeated visits—so that in the mind building and contents grew together, united in assuring the viewer of constancy and profundity—now continually shuffle their displays. (Think, for example, of the Tate Gallery which shows only a small part of its permanent collection at one time in seasonal, sponsored ‘new displays’, and also cycles it between different buildings in London, Liverpool and St. Ives. A work by Ben Nicholson, for example, will take on a markedly different flavour in Cornwall than in the capital, in the former tending to provincial landscape, in the latter to European modernism.) Moveable, and sufficiently sturdy, works of art no longer have homes but in their circulation from place to place (even within the same building) are meant to gain from travel and a change of neighbours, just as tourism brings about a new May for the weary bourgeois. So the buildings alone endure, solitary sites of space and memory—and this is the cause of the muscular and sometimes overbearing

[14] See V. Tracy, *A Good Book*, Locus+, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1994.

charisma of contemporary museum and gallery architecture, often more celebrated than its shifting contents.

Why the continual shuffling of displays? In part, because of the demands of the market that forces time upon objects with its incessant urge to novelty. In part, because of a change in the character of many works themselves, in response to and in anticipation of such treatment: they must make their points quickly and with immediate impact, and draw upon the techniques of advertising and the mass media to do so.[15] For much art made today, it is hardly necessary to see it. Many works operate rather like crossword clues, being collages of ready-made images and ideas, so that a reproduction and a description can impart the general idea. Since the general idea is the core of the work, sensuous and especially unreproducible impressions and inflections add little.

Sometimes you see bands from Eastern Europe, playing on ferries, perhaps, to semi-captive audiences—ferociously efficient combos, working their way with equal despatch through a wide range of Western popular music. Then some oddity in the singer's intonation (like that of a child reading a complex passage) draws you up short, with the realisation that the words sung are mere sounds for the singer and the band, reconstructed from recordings without comprehension. The making of these songs is a little like reverse engineering—the taking apart of a mechanism you want to replicate, starting not with a blank sheet of paper and some desire or inspiration but with the completed device.

How can we know that many of the art works we see—first- or second-hand—hedged about with institutions that foster, protect and restrict them, are not similar? Lacking the betrayal of uncomprehending intonation, expecting in any case a certain irregularity as a regular feature of the art work, can we tell? Sometimes—though this can only be a superficial impression—works become too well-worn by travel, reproduction and brief exposure (as paintings hung in public galleries pale slowly under the built-in flash-guns of compact cameras). Yet, fresh or faded, reverse-engineering is as much a matter for the viewer as for the creator. Writing in support of art often leans heavily upon stories about the artist and the creation of the work, seeking to convince the reader of the work's integrity (or sometimes of a principled rejection of integrity) but that insistence upon the genesis of the work has nothing to say about its reception. If works seen and read about second-hand are reverse-engineered in the imagination, perhaps that process is not so different being in front of the original work itself.

Site-Specificity

As with the broad operation of collective memory, the effect of art works upon flux and memory has contradictory aspects. On one hand, it can act—and sometimes does so consciously—as compensation for the action of commerce that has wiped out the redoubts of culture and attachment with its endless waves, smoothing the shore in ensuring an uninterrupted path for itself. Such art is in the business of recovering

[15] The striking example here is so-called 'young British art', though the phenomenon certainly extends

histories, restoring identities and rebuilding old narratives fit for the present, though (depending on how it is looked at) the resistant particles of excavated history may also appear as yet another wave of commerce. Regional arts organisations, lacking the pretension to universality of the cosmopolitan centres, often exploit the particularities of their specific locale, so that Liverpool which once profited greatly from slavery, now profits slightly from its memory. On the other hand, works of art may serve to more effectively inter the past, freezing it in forms concrete and immovable, funerary monuments that brand a site with their identity (thus Antony Gormley's rusty erection, *Angel of the North*, that comes to bury the old industry of the Northeast in the act of praising it—subverted in Paul St. George's 'minumental' version, small enough to be pocketed).

Given this, what does a particular spatial contextualisation of a work entail? Here the kind of work generally mounted by Locus+, that has so often concentrated on site-specific work and performance (the latter a non-repeatable conjunction of action, site and audience) is symptomatic. What is the meaning of the *locus solus*, the unique place or the solitary place or both, in which the art work dwells? And how does it change for different kinds of work? This is also a way of asking: what type of marginality are we dealing with in the curation and the display of work in a regional arts organisation that has no fixed space in which to show art? Can such an organisation be the neutral facilitator of artists' projects, free from mainstream concerns, as the organisers themselves claim?[16] There is an assumption in their

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beyond these shores. See my book *High Art Lite: British Art in the 1990s*, Verso, London 1999.
[16] Jon Bewley and Simon Herbert, 'Introduction', in Samantha Wilkinson, ed., *Locus+, 1993-1996*, Locus+, Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1996, p. 5.

statements that, left to themselves, artists will drift towards radical form and content, and that the demands of the mainstream institutions hold artists back from their natural instincts to subversion.

We should start with the particular spatial context in which Locus+ operates. It is certainly not confined to Newcastle or the Northeast of England, for the organisation makes a virtue of mobility. Nevertheless, if there is a continuity, it is found in the connection of regional cities—not capitals—of the north (and the West), in the exchange of works between, say, Derry, Hull, Belfast, Vancouver and Winnipeg. The attempt to establish, then, a network of artistic centres, that take a distance from the cosmopolitan global cities upon which the main attention of the art world is fixed, and between which works and people can be circulated.

The power of the global culture cities is immense: they have the advantages of a sufficient concentration of wealth, resources and people to create cultural fission, links with other such centres, and the allure that consequently hangs about their very names—London, Paris, New York, Tokyo, Los Angeles. It is a concentration not only of the producers of art but also of its consumers—of people whose work involves some cultural component and who are very likely to go to galleries, buy art books or even limited edition prints and other serial productions, peruse art and style magazines. In Britain a third of all those engaged in cultural work are based in Greater London.[17]

[17] Rosemary Betterton, 'The New British Art', in Ferens Art Gallery, *History: The Mag Collection: Image-Based Art in Britain in the Late Twentieth Century*, Kingston upon Hull City Museums, Art Galleries and Archives, 1997, p. 129; her source is *Cultural Trends*, 1995.

Against this strong gravitational pull, it makes sense for regional arts organisations to establish their own network, a circuit of culture that holds itself aloof from the capitals, and also to support work that makes a virtue of its placement. The installation work of Anya Gallacio, for example, tends to be temporary, non-replicable, unmoveable, unsaleable and site-specific. Such work sets up a number of barriers to circulation, both spatial and temporal. Although the work itself is temporary, its force is on the side of fixity, stasis and memory, its passing a pointed comment on the virtues of enduring. It asserts as a matter of principle that it is not a consumer object, to be bought, owned, moved about and sold. Sometimes, Gallacio's creations cannot be moved without the destruction of their meaning: this was the case with *Two Sisters*, planted in the estuary at Hull in 1998. In Robert Irwin's typology of works that are put in a particular place, such a work falls into the category that is most under the sway of locality, being 'site determined'.[18] Furthermore, it cannot be permitted without supervision to pass through time, lest it eventually slip its leash and bound into undetermined meaning or commodification. Better that, having made its intervention, it is destroyed or is allowed to decay of its own accord. The appeal of such work for the regional arts organisation is obvious: to experience the work fully the viewer has no choice but to come to them; the work is never going to travel to you.

[18] The other categories were 'site dominant', the other end of the scale in which a pre-existing piece is merely placed on a site, and the intermediate categories of 'site adjusted' and 'site specific'. Robert Irwin, 'Being and Circumstance—Notes Towards a Confidential Art' (1985), in Stiles / Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*, pp. 573-4.

Such site-determined works, like performance works, are designed to be resistant, not just to the flux of market time, but also to the characteristics of the art and its engagement with viewers that flows from that abbreviated, hurried time. Their obdurate and often obscure being stands opposed to the exchange in swiftly recognisable symbols that passes for contemporary art in the salesrooms. Yet what the works purchase in profundity and quality of attention, they pay for with limited access, being available to a tiny, often elite, audience. This exclusivity raises once again the issue of memory and privilege, for if works of art gain through travel, or through the alteration of a particular site, and if it is of advantage to see these works first-hand, then (since travel is expensive) experience, memory and privilege are bound together in a finely graded hierarchy, dependent upon institutional power and wealth, and also often upon private means. The question has to be asked insistently: who is this art for? There is another price to be paid for integrity which the work of art purchases with its own swift death—in performance, enacted at the very moment the work is brought to life.

These works, though, do not entirely disappear with their own disappearance, but have a long after-life in artificial memory: in archives and CVs, in photographs, compact discs, catalogues, postcards, posters, in monographs and other art books like this one. That after-life is often conceived as a part of artistic and curatorial work from the start. Many artist-led and otherwise marginal organisations insist on the importance of documentation, visual and verbal, on the production of catalogues, brochures and websites, on the presence at the birth of the work of cameras and camcorders.

The results serve as aids to memory for those who were present, but what purpose do these often opaque documents fulfil for those who were not? Perhaps they act as fixed and insistent tokens of the works' resistance to reproducibility, the documents' very impoverishment being an assertion of the unique and authentic qualities of the work.

The documents are framed and reframed, as mental memories fade and time recedes, as temporal works are made thoroughly spatial. The mapping of a book like this, its disposition of reproductions and their relation to bodies of text (commissioned by Locus+), allow the retrospective making sense of a diverse body of work once scattered over time and space, and here brought together in a single, reproducible, moveable and saleable condensation. Again, such an object contains opposed forces, for its life seems at odds with the unique work, fixed in a solitary place and bounded strictly by time. The book, though a commodity, is rarely consumed by its owner but circulates unmolested, is resistant to flux, its time-capsule of thought fixed upon its pages.

Yet this fixing may itself be contradictory. In it, the work is reduced to a photograph and a concept, framed by a more or less pragmatic or poetic evocation of the work and its context, the summoning up of some political, social, aesthetic or intellectual context. The photograph is a ghostly rendition of the work, a skin peeled from its surface, in itself innocent of time, process or meaning. Then there is the bald concept which, as we have seen, can come to circulate in place of the work. Again Locus+

documentation can serve as a symptomatic example, though here there could be many thousands of others. Here is a short description of works from a Locus+ catalogue:

> A performance at the Plug In Gallery, Winnipeg, Canada, incorporating the use of twenty-nine saris borrowed from the local community. Accompanying soundtrack; artist's voice-over covering the history of the sari, the histories of the specific garments used in the performance and personal anecdotes. Performed 9th November 1992.[19]

Combined with the photograph, such a description is a good instrumental tool, allowing the reverse engineering of a similar work, or the commissioning of another work from the same artist by interested parties; or, with the aid of some conceptual context, it is sufficient for art critics and art historians to pronounce upon the work, or give them tools to pass comment on similar work. Essays like this one reframe works as museums and galleries do, by using more or less arbitrary juxtapositions of literary sources, political and social generalisations, in which the works sit, fragments of particularity bent to and embedded in the setting of the general.

Perhaps, then, considered instrumentally and materially, these artificial memory devices retain not the husk but the core of the art work that cannot—except at the price of true invisibility and true extinction—resist all that follows from reproduction, from the dissemination of a host of flattened duplicates. Some site-specific works appear to make this fate a theme, as in John Newling's display in a church of the

templates from which communion wafers are stamped out in a small-scale industrial process—the absent host being a literal sign of the absence of spirit. In the small-scale industry that is the production of art, an analysis of what is being produced and what consumed, and of the spatial and temporal determinants of those processes, could lead to a minor clearing of the mythological fog that surrounds these cultural commodities. For the time being, though, we are usually faced in books such as this with a parade of mechanical ghosts and their chorus of intellectual accompaniment.

Raymond Roussel, writing at the inception of mechanised warfare, and in the twilight out of which Dada and then Surrealism were to pitch their distinctive and radical voices, already warned of an art that was the product of death, a shell of its living self, either subject to the mechanical techniques of reproduction that could convincingly fake the most profound human creations, or (in imagined and bizarre technologies, magical in their utter rationality) that would conjure from the corpses of artists and poets meaningless snatches of their performances in life, much like a snatch of sound recording or video played over and over:

> [the subject] would at once reproduce, with strict exactitude, every slightest action performed by him during certain outstanding minutes of his life; then, without any break, he would indefinitely repeat the same unvarying series of deeds and gestures which he had chosen once and for all. The illusion of life

[19] Wilkinson, ed., *Locus+, 1993-1996*, p. 34. The work described is Stuart Biswas' *To Kill Two Birds with One Stone*.

> was absolute: mobility of expression, the continual working of the lungs, speech, various action, walking—nothing was missing.[20]

Travel, taken in its broadest sense (the reframing that comes about through a change of context, intellectual or actual), the only whiff of Spring still open to the bourgeois mind (and we are all bourgeois now, so we are continually assured) enlivens work and viewers alike. It may, however, also serve to conceal what exactly it is that has been lost in the continual flux—of the change that comes to us even when we remain where we are—of economic time.

[20] Raymond Roussel, *Locus Solus* [1914], trans. Rupert Copeland Cunningham, John Calder, London 1983 , p. 118.