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# **National College of Art & Design**

*Faculty of Fine Art, Department of Painting*

The Effect of AIDS on Contemporary Art Practice

by

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## Introduction

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This is a discussion which maps lines between queer identity, activist art and the AIDS epidemic. Firstly, the relationship between 'queer' and AIDS is considered. Then, AIDS activist art is looked at in terms of art history. Finally the effect of the AIDS epidemic on contemporary art practices is assessed.

I became interested in this topic because I was personally convinced that AIDS has had a significant effect on art practices, not just in cultural centres like New York and London but throughout the world. The effect on my own life was a direct one but I felt that the social effect and subsequently the effect on contemporary art practice was one which affected each student in this college and indeed virtually every contemporary artist with a modicum of social or cultural awareness.

As little has been written dealing directly with this subject, I chose to interview a number of people and travelled to New York, California and London in order to do so. The six interviewed all identify as queer/gay: five are practising artists and one is an art historian and activist. Artist, activist and theorist Nayland Blake lives in New York. He has also lived in San Francisco, where in 1995 he curated 'In a Different Light', the most extensive exhibition of gay/queer or related art to date. Don Bachardy lives in Los Angeles and is internationally renowned for his portraiture and homoerotic drawings. He describes himself as a formalist. Simon Watney lives in London. He comes from an art historical background: he is known as a critic, a writer and perhaps best known as one of Britain's leading AIDS activists. I interviewed three Irish artists. The first of whom was Patrick Hall, a well known expressionist painter, who has used AIDS as a starting point





for his current work which deals with issues of mortality in an oblique manner. Louise Walsh's work has dealt with social issues from a feminist perspective, and has recently begun to encompass mortality as a theme. And Michael Wilson, artist, activist and theorist, whose 1995 show 'Queerly Heteroclit' combined conceptualist approaches of the seventies with AIDS activist approaches of the eighties in a dialectic of 'art about art about AIDS'. Quotations throughout the text are derived from these six interviews unless otherwise noted.

If the aim of this thesis is to examine the effect of the AIDS epidemic on contemporary art practice, why do I see it as necessary to look at the relation of queer identity to AIDS? Why is chapter one relevant? Gay men and women have been at the forefront of attempts to produce health education, medical aid, funds and publicity for prevention and treatment of HIV and AIDS. It is queer which links AIDS to postmodernist or contemporary culture. Queer made AIDS important in terms of culture. In the second chapter I look at the importance of activist art and its place in contemporary art practice, taking into account the debate between activism and formalism. This is in order to show a correlation between AIDS activist art and a wider trend in art practices. In the third chapter, I explore other specific influences of AIDS on art practice. I hope again to show that AIDS has had a very definite effect in the shaping of current trends in art.





## Chapter I. 'Queer Identity'

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What is queer identity<sup>1</sup> and what is its value? The word 'queer' has long been in use as an adjective meaning spurious, odd, insane, eccentric; but this adjective has within the last two decades taken on a new meaning, a meaning which refers to, or is related to homosexuality but is in fact considerably more complex. If we are to look at queer we must look at it in relation to what it is not, which is firstly not normative, not heterosexual, not dominant, thus immediately defining it as opposite or 'other', but also we must look at it in opposition to other related terms such as homosexual and gay. These terms are also defining a marginal group or an 'other' but queer is more inclusive, more all embracing. The traditional term 'homosexuality' is a pathological term from the end of the nineteenth century and one which was dominant in describing this marginal group until Stonewall (1969)<sup>2</sup>. Post Stonewall, 'gay' became the term used for the new movement and activism. Similar to the pathological term, 'homosexual', gay related specifically and only to men and women attracted to members of the same sex, but with a much more positive frame. Gay, although less inclusive than queer, remains the dominant vernacular term, particularly among heterosexuals,

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<sup>1</sup> Queer: /kwie(r)/ adj., n., & v. -adj. 1 strange; odd; eccentric. 2 shady; suspect; of questionable character. 3 a slightly ill; giddy; faint. b Brit. sl. drunk. 4 derog. sl. (esp. of a man) homosexual. -n. derog. sl. a homosexual. -v.tr. sl. spoil; put out of order. Δin Queer Street sl. in a difficulty, in debt or trouble or disrepute. queer a person's pitch spoil a person's chances, esp. secretly or maliciously. \*\* queerish adj. queerly adv. queerness n. [perh. f. G quer oblique (as THWART)]

Identity: /ai'dentiti/ n. (pl. -ies) 1 a the quality of condition of being a specified person or thing. b individuality, personality (felt he had lost his identity). 2 identification or the result of it ( a case of mistaken identity; identity card). 3 the state of being the same in substances, nature, qualities, etc.; absolute sameness (no identity of interests between them). 4 Algebra a the equality of two expressions for all values of the quantities expressed by letters. b an equation expressing this, e.g.  $(x+1)^2 = x^2 + 2x + 1$ . 5 Math. a (in full identity element) and element in a set, left unchanged by any operation to it. b a transformation that leaves an object unchanged. ° identity crisis a phase in which an individual feels a need to establish an identity in relation to society. identity parade = identification parade. [LL identitas f. L idem same]

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<sup>2</sup> Stonewall is the name given to the gay riot which took place in New York's Greenwich Village on June 25th 1969. The riot was sparked off by a police raid of a homosexual and transvestite bar called 'The Stonewall' and lasted for three days. This was a turning point in gay politics and the riot is commemorated each year by the gay pride march.







and nowadays is a quite comfortable term, whereas in the nineties, 'queer' tends to suggest a political awareness or activism, which is no longer suggested by 'gay'. The appropriation of the word 'queer' did not signal an end to a 'gay' movement or gay identity, but rather indicated a sort of split within that movement or identity. Queer is post-gay, but this does not mean that gay does not exist alongside queer, or perhaps as one of the many identities which come under the more inclusive or pluralist umbrella that is queer. Queer includes all forms of 'sexual deviancy', all forms of 'other' sexuality. When related to cultural studies, and used in phrases like 'queer readings', 'queer positions', and 'queer pleasures, the word queer is meant to suggest a range of non-heterosexual, non-straight responses to culture that can be experienced by anyone, regardless of their 'real life' sexual identity. Nayland Blake says:

"people who had an investment in building the economic and social community at least in America in the mid-sixties to the mid to late seventies - I would call that the gay generation, and then the people who grew up with most of those institutions already in place, I would call that the queer generation."

So queer is the new generation, those whose upbringing and 'outcoming' was informed by gay liberation. But at what point did queer establish itself as separate to gay? Blake continues to say:

"I think that that split is beginning to occur in the very late seventies and early eighties and got basically repressed because of the AIDS crisis which forced people to really pull together. But what we've seen happening in the nineties is that split has reasserted itself".

But the development of queer is generally associated with the AIDS epidemic. Can we extricate the one from the other? Simon Watney claims:

"queer in turn is inseparable from the epidemic, to be honest, absolutely inseparable".





So, is queer inseparable from the AIDS epidemic? Is it something that grew out of the AIDS epidemic, or in fact a separate happening linked to the epidemic?

Blake says, in reference to the AIDS epidemic:

“One of the things that we saw happened was that activist energy that was initially developed around AIDS issues was then adopted by generally younger people. The rise of something like Queer Nation for example is really people taking the tactics of organisations like Act-Up and expanding to engage with a larger realm of issues.”

Queer Nation in America, like Outrage in Britain, aimed as their goal to establish a notion of a queer politics whereas Act-Up is concerned primarily with AIDS awareness and politics: so queer groups of the nineties took their start from AIDS activist groups established in the eighties. Thus we can say that although queer may appear to be a separate issue or movement and one that would have occurred with or without the advent of AIDS, its actual evolution is none-the-less inextricably associated with the AIDS epidemic and activism of the mid-eighties.

The earlier ‘gay’ movement began in many ways like ‘queer’ as a radical movement concerned with civil rights, but by the early to mid-eighties gay had come to mean something else. In larger urban areas a recognisable gay culture has developed and assimilated itself comfortably into the surrounding urban environment. Michael Wilson says:

“Gay in the nineteen seventies signalled a whole range of different things but within that diversity there was an over-riding revolutionary impulse, I mean basically there was an aligned attempt, at least, with Marxism or with feminism....by the early eighties, mid-eighties....you have the emergence of a very well-heeled gay bourgeoisie in America who are capable of generating a very specific kind of urban culture and who have very little relationship, if any, with notions of social critique or revolution, but are in fact basically the model consumer of the late twentieth century.”





It was these circumstances, combined with the repoliticising of homosexual/gay issues as a result of the straight backlash against the gay community caused by the ignorance and fear surrounding the AIDS epidemic, which prompted the division between leaders of the gay community in the U.S. specifically, or the polarisation of these two groups: those who wished to follow normative strategies and promote heterosexual aping, gay marriage etc., and those who wanted to disrupt the norm, to destabilise traditional notions such as those of the family. So queer may be said to disrupt identity politics. Blake says:

“one of the important things that queer people bring to the contemporary situation is the understanding of identity itself as a construct and because they see it as that they can be more fluid in their relationship to it.”

The preoccupation with identity among the sexually marginalised cannot be explained as an effect of a peculiar personal obsession with sex. It can be seen, more accurately, as a powerful resistance to the organising principle of sexual attitudes. Giving oneself a named identity is a political move. To identify oneself as queer is to instantly marginalise oneself, but it is important to marginalise or to identify as other in order to disrupt the norm. It has been sexual radicals who have most insistently politicised the question of sexual identity. But the agenda has largely been shaped by the importance assigned by our culture to ‘correct’ sexual behaviour. It may be suggested that sexual identity is shaped at the juncture of two major concerns: our subjectivity, who and what we are, and society, health economics and politics. Self identification is necessary in order to contextualise oneself and to mature as an individual. For queers, self identification can be valuable in terms of shifting your perspective.

It could be argued that this preoccupation with sexual identity grows out of, and simultaneously contributes to, a growing sense of crisis about sexuality. At its





centre is a crisis in the relations between the sexes: relations which have been profoundly unsettled by rapid social change and by the impact of feminism. This in turn feeds into a crisis over the meaning of sexuality in our culture, about identity and pleasure, and about the freedom to choose. A growing willingness to recognise the huge diversity of sexual beliefs and behaviours has only sharpened the debate about how to cope with these in social policy and personal practice.

But how does this relate to art and artists? Do artists not resist self-labelling and are in fact normally labelled by others? Michael Wilson says:

“Obviously anybody who works as an artist always tends to resist or wants to resist any particular label that might be mobilised, video artist, performance artist, because it’s seen as establishing a set of parameters or restrictions on their practice.”

Yet some artists do choose to mobilise these identity labels strategically. They use these labels to counter their marginalisation through the promotion of queer culture and queer art. Gay art could be defined as essentially an art where ‘the male gaze’<sup>3</sup> replaces the female object with a male object, thus producing an art for which homoeroticism is a central factor. This is an art dealing primarily with issues of sexuality and these issues were the frontline issues for the gay community in the seventies: namely sexuality and visibility. Queer art could be defined as much more hardline political ‘in your face’ art. Male to male sexual desire is no longer central and is replaced by a number of sexual identities and more potent issues such as AIDS and discrimination. Traditional views of gay male sensibility propose a standard idea of male gaze and male object. Politically and ideologically this is regressive. Blake says:

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<sup>3</sup> as defined by BERGER, John, *Ways of Seeing*, London, BBC/Penguin, 1972.





"I think that certainly many gay and queer artists struggle with the notion that there is some monolithic idea or essential idea of what gay art is or queer art is, and that whatever it is that they are doing is not that and to me, I think that's exactly the sort of wrong headed, backwards reasoning in terms of trying to come to an understanding of what we might call gay or queer art."

At this point in time a greater number of possibilities exist for what a gay/queer reading could be, such as a blurring of gender, the idea of the pathetic or decadent, a formal preference for the fragment over the masterpiece, working against the grain of accepted readings and so on. Queer art reflects a sort of second generation of gay work, at the same time it is part of the second generation of conceptual work within the art world that is no longer geared towards an abstract idea of thought but more geared towards the construction of community and community thought. Queer art is dealing with a whole cluster of issues around the way that this society constructs homosexuality as a position.

Michael Wilson says:

"Queer perhaps marks a greater degree of proximity with certain other developments in contemporary culture, say postmodernism..."

Postmodernism is characterised by pastiche, self-referentiality, fragmentation, hybridisation of styles, linguistic multiplicity; and queer with its self-awareness and awareness of gay/homosexual history and its inclusiveness is in line with this.





## Chapter 2: 'Activist Art'

AIDS is not the first epidemic to have affected the production of cultural objects and the construction of cultural history. Yet none have done so as rapidly or as politically as AIDS (fig. 2.1 & 2.2). One explanation has been the onset of the age of communication. Yet millions of



fig. 2.1

people in the third world die of cholera or malaria each year but no one has ever marched down New York's Fifth Avenue for the rights of cholera victims or



fig. 2.2

attended an exhibition of postmodern Malarial art: the third world does not have the resources to mobilise the international media. Why do other first world diseases such as cancer or leukemia not provoke the same

reaction? Cancer is uncontroversial as it is non-infectious, and it is not associated with any particular group, race or minority. AIDS is preventable, prevention measures are routinely ignored and people living with AIDS are discriminated against in law. P.W.A.s<sup>1</sup> are marginalised.

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<sup>1</sup>People With AIDS.





“Crucial to the ideology of radical AIDS activism are the twin concepts of social marginalisation and inferiorisation developed by theorists in the arts and social sciences and expanded by politically active artists influenced by critical theory.” (Miller, 1992, p5)

In the mid to late eighties in America, in response to the AIDS epidemic, a number of art activist collectives were formed, among them Gran Fury, Testing the Limits, and Powers of Desire. These groups recognised the fact that the most effective way of bringing their

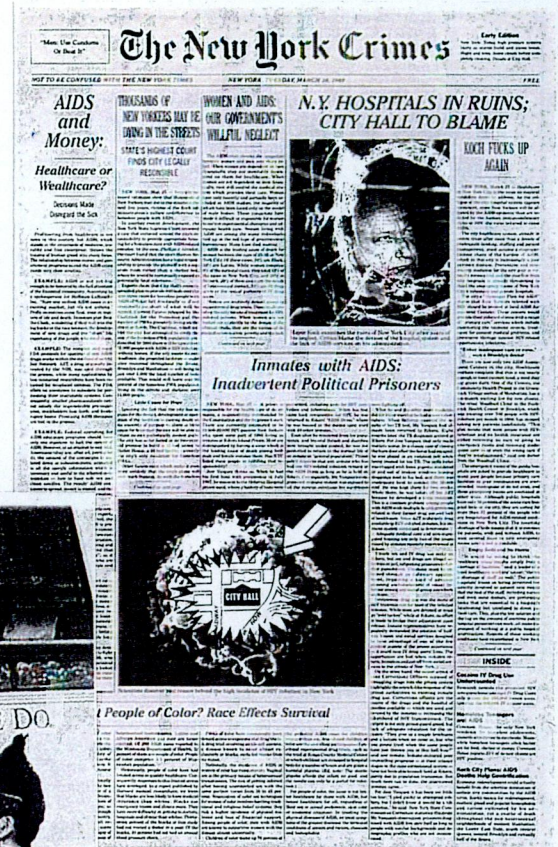


fig. 2.3

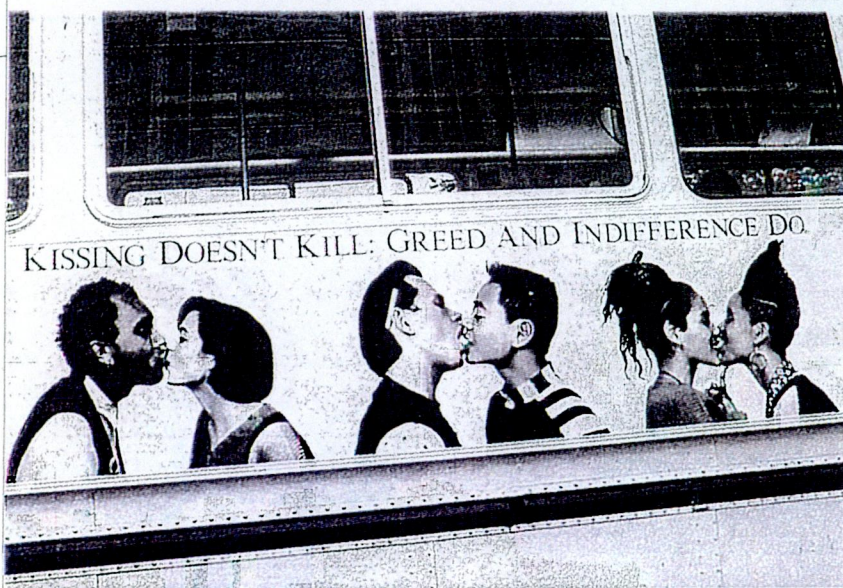


fig. 2.4

art and their message to the attention of the public was through controversy. The best

known of these groups, Gran Fury, uses images which mimic those from media and advertising. They have produced a mock-up of the New York Times calling it the New York Crimes, featuring AIDS stories on the entire front page (fig. 2.3), also a Bennetton-like ad, on the sides of buses featuring gay, lesbian and straight couples with the slogan ‘Kissing doesn’t Kill, Greed and Indifference do’ (fig. 2.4). They have placed red hand prints all around New York city symbolising blood on the hands of the government: the government which has failed to act (fig. 2.5).







These groups did not have a manifesto of artistic philosophy, their ideology had to do with action, not art. Douglas Crimp says:

“Aids activist art does not seek primarily to interrupt our notion of art itself but instead to intervene in a wider area of representation: the mass media, medical discourse, social policy, community organising, sexual identity,...” (Crimp 1993, p23)

This leads us to a number of questions. Has AIDS activist art interrupted our notion of art itself, or has it remained entirely outside a hegemonic conceptualist art culture? Will AIDS activist art have any value from a future art historical point of view? Perhaps it is precisely this ‘not

seeking to interrupt our notion of art’ which makes activist art unattractive to so many artists. Most of the AIDS activist art produced is new art made by unknowns. What is the validity of this art? Should art be produced from a political viewpoint? Some say not. Don Bachardy says:

“I don’t think one should approach work as an artist by saying I want to do a political painting. I think one should say I want to do a painting and then afterwards you look at the painting and realise it is political, ....I don’t like the idea of approaching art first from a political point of view.....I’m a formalist, that’s really what I care most about.”

All artists are a part of the social environment in which they live and all art is political, but should this be a starting point for their art, or just a factor, a



fig. 2.5





symptom, a by-product? When we look back at art history and work from previous generations and previous centuries, sloganeering or activist art is not something which jumps out or appears to be prevalent. We can look at events in periods of time, such as wars, times of great political activity: indeed we can look at World War 2, for example. There was a lot of political art produced at that time but little of this art has endured. But then as we continue to search we come across artists such as Diego Rivera<sup>2</sup> or José Orozco<sup>3</sup> and see that in the Hispanic communities mural painting and other forms of activist art have a strong tradition perhaps owing to the fact that these have often been troubled communities (fig. 2.6). And then as we continue to look we come across paintings such as Grünewald's



fig. 2.6

Crucifixion<sup>4</sup> which

<sup>2</sup>Rivera, Diego, 1886-1957, was the most renowned and one of the most important figures in the Mexican mural movement. He won international acclaim for his vast public mural paintings, in which he created a new iconography based on socialist ideas and exalted the indigenous and popular heritage in Mexican culture. He also executed large quantities of easel paintings and graphic work.

<sup>3</sup>Orozco, José, 1883-1949, was one of the most important Mexican mural painters and his expressionist style has been particularly influential among younger generations of international mural artists. He also produced political cartoons and caricatures. He was obsessed with the ironies of that human comedy the events of the revolution had spread before him, and himself handicapped, he personally identified with the victim; the radical realism of his work dramatises only the details of atrocity and triumph while avoiding grandiose, abstract commentaries on human destiny.

<sup>4</sup>Grünewald, Matthias, 1480-1528, a contemporary of Dürer and the most expressive of the 16th Century German artists, completed the Crucifixion from The Isenheim Altarpiece in 1515; originally situated at the church of Antonite Monastery, Isenheim (Alsace), it is now at Colmar Museum.







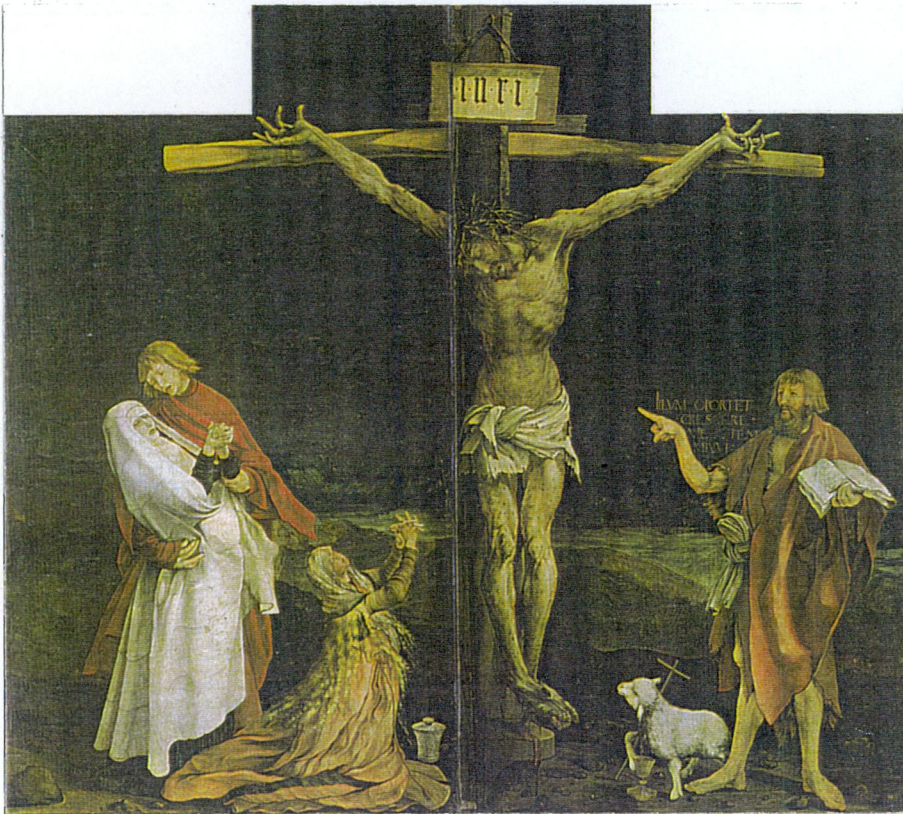


fig. 2.7

features a Christ who is showing all of the symptoms of suffering from bubonic plague, so all of the horrors of that illness are presented within the cadre of the standard crucifixion composition (fig. 2.7); and as we continue to look at standard crucifixions, annunciations and piètas it becomes evident that

perhaps art is long in use by the church and nobility to proselytise. This kind of work has a strong message or slogan; is it so far from the sloganeering work seen today? Has it not been more influential than any of the activist art produced about AIDS? So art for art's sake is really an invention of the twentieth century, seen alongside or central to the philosophies of the various art movements starting from the Impressionists, who scandalised by choosing to paint just for fun, through to conceptualism.

As we look back through the annals of time we must also consider how selective this history has been, Louise Walsh says:

“‘History’ is very relative and I think just because work isn’t deemed by certain people to be of value doesn’t mean it’s valueless. I think we’ve got lots of different agendas when people start collecting work as ‘important work of our time’. You’ve got corporate issues, you’ve got political issues and I actually think history is so selective that when you’re talking historically you have to realise ‘whose history are you speaking about’,







‘who’s making the history’, ‘who’s recording the history?’ That’s something that’s going on a lot at the moment around people looking at artists who have been forgotten because they weren’t deemed important, especially women artists, or people of working class origins. Their work wasn’t seen as real, because the people who were collecting it and buying it and documenting it were male middle class establishment, patriarchal. So that whole notion of history is problematic in the first degree as to who remembers what by what names.”

So perhaps we cannot entirely trust history nor history in the making. It is difficult to predict what will be remembered, what will be considered as important in future times. Often recent history is written and then rewritten as different analyses are made, and this is reflected in contemporary museology where curators choose to illuminate certain works and not others in order to illustrate an exhibition’s theme or thesis: and social issues in historical works are generally ignored. Nayland Blake says:

“Museums as institutions, one of the things they teach you is about class. I mean in a certain sense museums are all about continually decontextualising and denaturing objects of power, whether they are objects that wealthy Italians purchased for their homes or whether they are objects that villagers in Mali built to protect their village. But at this point in contemporary museology both of those objects are brought into the supposedly neutral but actually very class coded space and made into curiosities.....The National Museum of Women in Art in Washington DC is treated with contempt by many women who claim that they don’t want to be ghettoised within it or that its context doesn’t speak for them.”

How important is the museum context to the contemporary artist and is this changing?

Many gay artists have produced AIDS art or AIDS activist art, but little has been produced by important or established artists. In some cases artists such as





Robert Mapplethorpe<sup>5</sup> were seen to tame down their work as a result of AIDS hysteria. Known artists who have produced work which could be classed as AIDS art include Keith Haring<sup>6</sup> and Gilbert and George<sup>7</sup> who have been directly touched by the AIDS crisis and who identify entirely with the AIDS subculture (fig. 2.8 & 2.9). Keith Haring was an



fig. 2.8

already established artist who upon discovering his own hiv+ status began to produce art dealing with this subject matter, sloganeering art. Other now famous artists are David Wojnarowicz<sup>8</sup> and Andres Serrano<sup>9</sup>, both of whom came into the

<sup>5</sup>Mapplethorpe was a sympathetic participant of the group which identified themselves with sadomasochism in the post sexual revolution 1970s. He felt it was worthy, legitimate, previously unexplored, and an almost obligatory subject for him to treat. He approached it not as voyeur but as an advocate, wanting to instil through his photographs dignity and beauty to a subject that was outside the accepted norms of behaviour. In his later work it is flowers and phalluses that abound. Mapplethorpe continued to use male bodies, genitals and torsos as part of his vocabulary, but in the 1980s' climate of homophobia, AIDS hysteria and reactionary sexual politics he chose to tame down his act, concentrating on aesthetic nude studies, flowers and society portraits.

<sup>6</sup>Keith Haring (1958-1990) first achieved notoriety in the early 1980s when he appropriated the slate-like panels used for advertising posters in the New York City subway for rapidly executed chalk drawings. By 1984 he had brought his underground art up to street level and into the world's most prestigious museums and galleries. With the spread of drug abuse and AIDS in urban areas Haring's work became increasingly agitated, sounding an earnest note of alarm while retaining its intrinsic childlike aura. He died of AIDS-related causes in 1990.

<sup>7</sup>Gilbert and George, British sculptors, have worked together since the late 1960s, when their strategy was to make themselves into sculpture, so sacrificing their separate identities to art and turning the notion of creativity on its head. In the 1980s, although continuing to feature themselves, they gradually shifted the emphasis of their subject matter from their own experiences towards inner city realities and structures which inform life such as religion, class, sex, identity and politics. In 1989 they produced an exhibition entitled 'Art for AIDS'. Their work in the nineties continues to aim for an 'Art for Life's Sake' and 'Art for All', underlining their belief that art can still positively break down barriers between people and open up society to new ways of thinking about the world.

<sup>8</sup>David Wojnarowicz, born 1954 in New York, supported himself by hustling until his health collapsed. He then worked in bars and clubs in Manhattan's East Village and joined a postpunk band. In 1980 he met photographer Peter Hujar who became his mentor. In addition to Wojnarowicz's visual work, he attained national prominence as a writer, a passionate and angry advocate for AIDS awareness, and for his unyielding stance against censorship. He died of AIDS in 1992.

<sup>9</sup>Andres Serrano was born in New York City in 1950. His name became a household word on May 18th, 1989, when Sen. Alfonse D'Amato tore up a picture of the artist's *Piss Christ* on the floor of the U.S. Senate. The act launched the so-called Culture Wars, a national debate over free expression and federal funding of the arts.







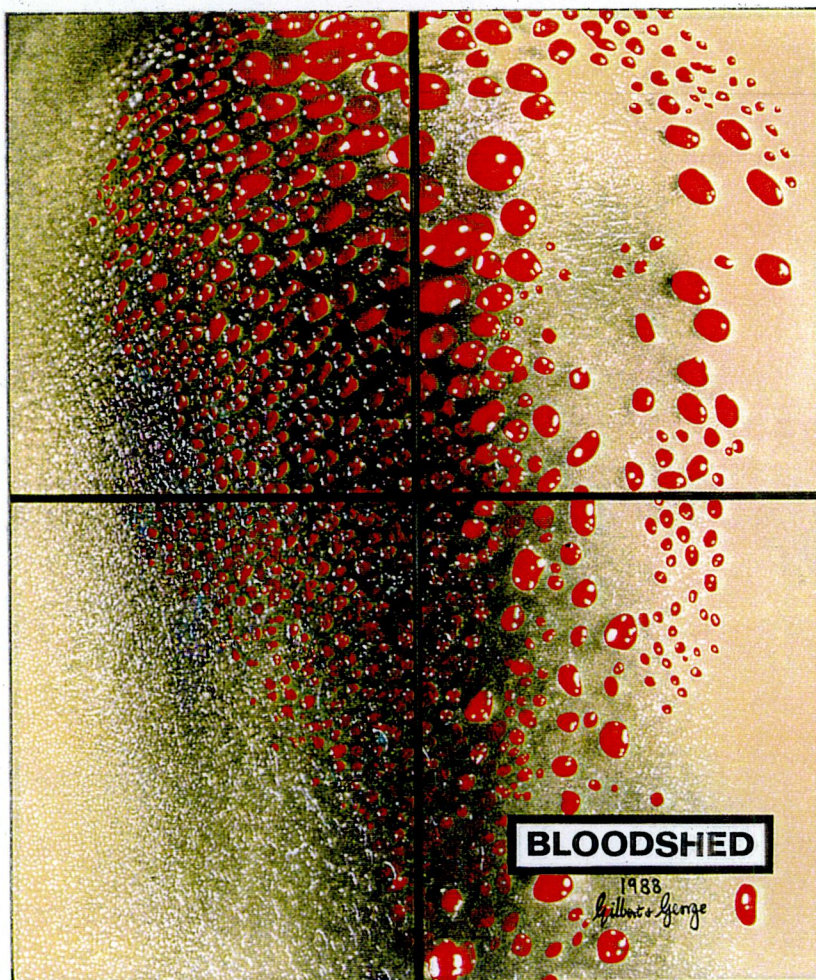


fig. 2.9

light of the public eye as a result of controversy with the NEA<sup>10</sup> (fig. 2.10 & 2.11). Many gay artists have avoided this area of AIDS art for fear of producing non-enduring work. Is it this or is it just that they are influenced by the hegemony of the late modernist or the minimal and conceptual tradition? Are we not foolish to try and judge what may or may not in fact endure? Blake says:

"I think that the objects that endure are the objects that continue to draw a strong response after their initial context has passed away. Many Botticelli paintings are filled with disputations about Christian theology, that don't make much sense to us, issues that don't necessarily seem engaging to us, but those paintings continue to draw a strong response. And it's not because they were just more general paintings, it's because of the power of their specificity.....if the idea is to say once the AIDS crisis is over then all this art that proports to be related to AIDS is no longer going to make any sense, that may be true, but some of that art is going to be useful thought material for other things, and that art will continue."

So what is different about AIDS activist art from other historical forms of proselytising or propaganda art? One major difference is it is informed by modernism and the conceptualist tradition. In many cases it uses the mediascape and can thus appeal to a larger and often more informed group. Also at this time

<sup>10</sup>In 1990 the National Endowment for the Arts in America was attacked by Senator Jesse Helms for funding the controversial photographs by Andres Serrano to the tune of \$15,000. The NEA subsequently withdrew funding for Serrano and other 'controversial' artists.







we see AIDS Activist Art as perhaps part of a wave of issue-based art or community-based art. We are in what could be called the second phase of conceptualist art which is one where work is not based merely on an abstract idea but more and more it is



fig. 2.10

an art that is based on some kind of community involvement, response, or

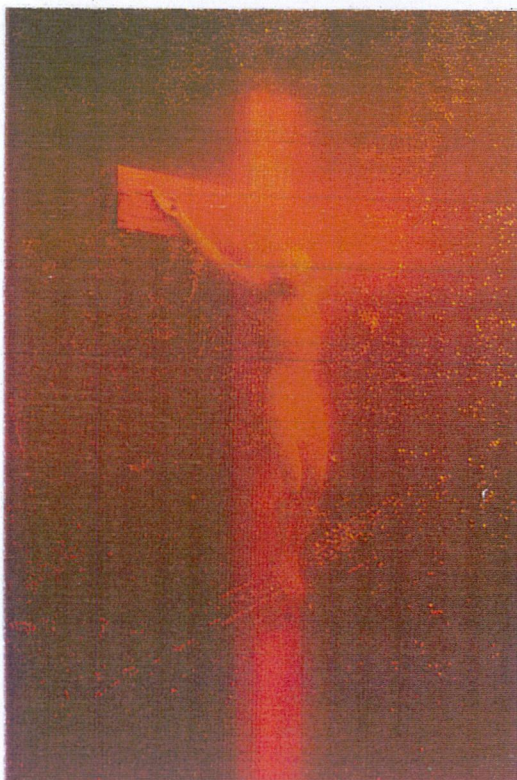


fig. 2.11

commentary. Aligned with this but also in opposition to conceptualist tradition we see in the late eighties and early nineties the reintroduction of the image or narrative into art. AIDS activist art fits into this category of narrative art: an art where the narrative is dominant and where there is an indifference to form and strategy. This narrative art poses a threat to the more philosophically based 'minimal and conceptual' art, the active statement versus the philosophical statement, issue-based art versus art for art's sake, activism versus

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## Chapter 3 'Contemporary Art Practice'

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One of the first areas of art practice to be significantly affected by the AIDS epidemic was the area of gay art. Gay art hitherto had dealt with issues of sexuality and otherness but as a direct result of the AIDS epidemic, the concept of what was gay art greatly broadened. Nayland Blake says:

"I think one of the things that definitely happened in the mid-eighties is that the epidemic opened people's minds to an understanding that gay art....could be engaged with something other than that sort of mechanism of desire, that representation of gay male desire...., because of people's reaction to mortality suddenly the subject matter, the possible field of what could be understood as a gay concern, expanded enormously in the culture. And I think people, myself included, took advantage of that expanded field to begin to point out to people all of this other range of things. It was like 'if you're going to listen to us about AIDS, then you should listen to us about this, and this, and this, and this'. I think in that sense it definitely changed, in western art the possibilities for what gay male subjectivity could be about."

Was this the start of a cultural renaissance, a renaissance in art generated by AIDS?<sup>1</sup> AIDS has entered into the psyche of the public, the result of which must resound through the art world. Michael Wilson says "...AIDS has so deeply marked the fabric of our social experience in the late twentieth century it inevitably marks things like art practice." Likewise Don Bachardy says:

"I do think that AIDS has come into the forefront of our view of life and that we can't get around it. We have to deal with it in some way or other and since we do live in a period in which most forms of art do seem to be political, politically inspired, conceptual, intellectualised, something like AIDS which is a very real concern of so many people must influence whatever art is turned out."

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<sup>1</sup>When Simon Watney posed this question to members of Gran Fury in 1991 the response of one member was one of horror: "...frequently we're invited to speak at artist spaces precisely to discuss that and I find myself having to reject that idea. Not because I think that it may or may not be untrue...but because I'm much more concerned about the lives that are slipping through my fingers." Where as another member was not upset by the position of AIDS as a "leading avant-garde thing" because it does provide an audience for what they have to say and thus should be exploited. He goes on to say: "as an artist, if it opens up the art world to ideas rather than just forms and aesthetics, that's fine with me. But it doesn't have anything to do with Gran Fury." (Watney, 1991, p65)





The effect of AIDS culturally is obviously greater in North America than it is in Europe, but as American society is a world leader, particularly in the area of contemporary art, the effect of the AIDS epidemic on that society must affect us all.

One area where we see the effect of AIDS is in Abject art. "Despair about the persistent AIDS crisis, invasive disease and death, systemic poverty and crime, the destroyed welfare state, indeed the broken social

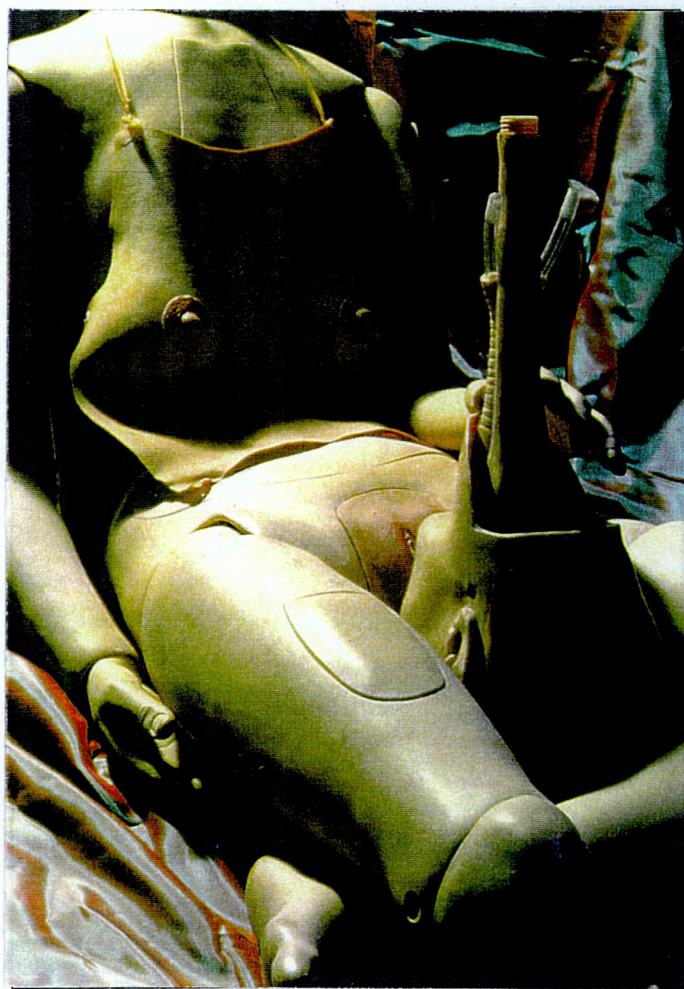


fig. 3.1

contract" are all cited by Hal Foster in 'Return of the Real' as reasons for the "fascination with trauma, this envy of abjection, today" (Foster 1996, p166).

Abject art rejects illusionism, indeed any sublimation of the object - gaze, in an attempt to evoke the real as such. Foster says,

"If some high modernists sought to transcend the referential figure and some early post-modernists to delight in the sheer image, some later postmodernists want to possess the real thing." (Foster 1996, p165)

The abject is attractive to artists who wish to disturb orderings of subject and society alike. One significant event which influenced a move into the area of abject art for some artists including Cindy Sherman<sup>2</sup> (fig. 3.1) was the now

<sup>2</sup>Sherman, Cindy, born New Jersey, 1954, appears as one of the most important artists working today. Her work is considered to embody the impact of postmodernist thinking in the art world. Despite Sherman's unwillingness to enter into theoretical or political debate, her 'Sex Pictures' were seen by most as a direct response to the censorship debate. The 'Sex Pictures' produced by Sherman in 1992 were photographs of genitally correct dummies who engage in very incorrect activities and show unabashedly their proclivity for the perverse. Dismembered but still coitally coupled; frozen in masturbatory gestures; practiced at S/M play, but in each instance so utterly without emotional dimension, they menace the viewer as they hammer at conventional codes of decency.







fig. 3.2

recently work about mortality in 'The Morgue' series, 1992 (fig. 3.3). In this country we could look at work such as Billy Quinn's 'Castration Piece' (fig.3.4). Quinn is one



fig. 3.3

infamous NEA controversy, following a number of incidents including the withdrawal of funding for a Robert Mapplethorpe exhibition<sup>3</sup>. Mapplethorpe was an acknowledged homosexual who had died of AIDS. Also involved in this controversy, Andres Serrano has produced abject work referring directly to AIDS in his 'Semen and Blood' series, 1990 (fig. 3.2), and more

<sup>3</sup>In 1990 Dennis Barrie of the Cincinnati Contemporary Art Centre was prosecuted in connection with a show of Mapplethorpe's work deemed pornographic.







of the few Irish artists whose work deals in a very direct manner with the epidemic. His 1995 show 'Traditional Family Values' centred on the relationship of issues of child abuse and AIDS.

Brandon Taylor in 'The Art of Today' while discussing narrative art in the early nineties and the reintroduction of the image in art states:

"A further consequence of the AIDS crisis in America - it has not devastated the European art community in anything like the same degree - was a desire, for the most part unstated, to put the prescriptions of left wing and Conceptualist theory, identified as male, academic, white, and heterosexual, to one side. The experiences and images of the body, as opposed to the materials and devices of representation, became, in such circumstances, perhaps the dominant general concern among younger artists at the time." (Taylor 1995, p146)

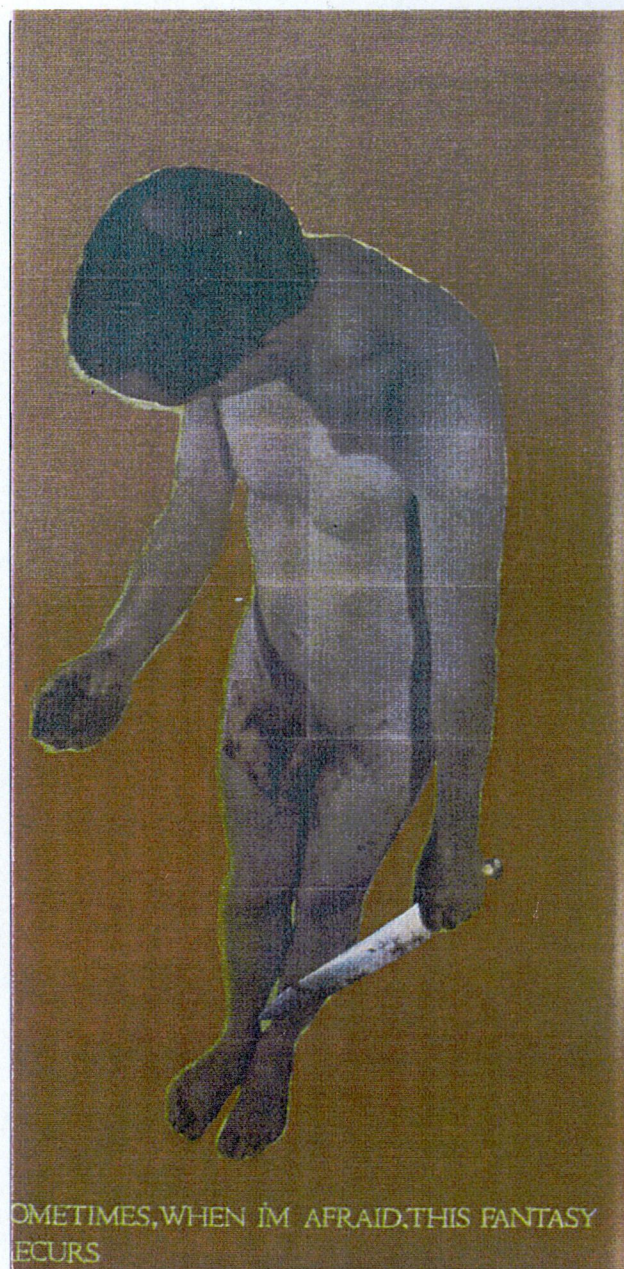


fig. 3.4

The body has become more central to art in the nineties than it was perhaps in the conceptually dominated seventies, but is this significantly different to what went before, the body in art in the sixties? According to Kristeva they are rather different. In the art of the 1960s there was a kind of enthusiasm and perhaps a utopian sense of being able to achieve a kind of completeness, a power, a totality. Where the body is used in the 1990s there is a distance, a greater formal sophistication, a play with absence, the sign of something impossible. There is an







awareness of suffering - not necessarily a belief in its value - which leads to a kind of appeasement, of serenity. But this is very different to the juvenile view of the sixties, of pleasure at all costs. A feeling of impossibility has blown through. Kristeva believes that it is the threat of grave illness nowadays which focuses attention on the body. (Penwarden, 1995,p26)<sup>4</sup>

Issues around death and mortality have become prevalent issues in contemporary art practice. Nayland Blake agrees that one of the things that is happening is that the AIDS epidemic reintroduced death as a primary topic in contemporary art in a serious way. He states that "you had a whole generation of artists who were just beginning, who were young artists but still had to think about death which is a very rare circumstance". He believes that what has happened is that this notion of mortality has become an almost invisible ground to, or starting assumption of an enormous amount of work.

Michael Wilson says:

"In terms of the impact on art practice, it's so complex. First of all death, young men and women dying, and at a scale, and in American society, and American society being such a world leader in terms of contemporary art, experiencing a shock comparable to Vietnam in terms of the weight of mortality in its youth. And I think that put death essentially on our agenda again when it had been so sanitised in many respects. The other thing is the body, the whole cult of the body beautiful, the way that is both reinforced and compromised, it splits, by the prospect of the sick body, the diseased body being so much more present within the distributed society, the distributed community."

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<sup>4</sup>PENWARDEN, Charles, "Of Word and Flesh: An Interview with Julia Kristeva", from Rites of Passage, London, Tate Gallery, 1995.





If AIDS has permeated  
the collective psyche  
then issues of death  
and mortality gain  
greatly in significance.

David Deitcher says:

“Death casts a  
long shadow  
these days over

life, and therefore over art. In museums and galleries, in concert halls and theatres, in performance spaces and movie houses, even while reading quietly at home, there are so many cultural occasions that bring mortality to mind. Artists need not deal directly or even obliquely in their work with death, sickness or loss for the spectator to end up thinking about these things. They need only die young, or have rumours circulate about the state of their health, for the uneasiness, the silence and solemnity to set in.”

(Deitcher 1996, p41)



fig. 3.5

This is to suggest that a culture of public mourning plays an increased part in our society. One aspect of art produced about AIDS is a consolatory aspect, a denotation of rites of passage in work dedicated to those who are ill, dying, or dead. The AIDS Quilt is one such piece. Lesser known recent works produced by individual artists include Nan Goldin's diaristic photographs (fig. 3.5), Roni Horn's 'Gold Mats Paired (for Ross & Felix)' (fig. 3.6), Jim Hodges 'Already Here, Already There' after the work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres and Zoe Leonard's 'Sewn Fruit (for David W.)'. A lot of these artworks would not come to the attention of any large audience outside of the elitist artworld but this theme does cross over into the realm of popular culture, for example in Madonna's hit song 'Rain' about the death of Keith Haring and the compilation album 'Red, Hot and Blue', dedicated to AIDS awareness.





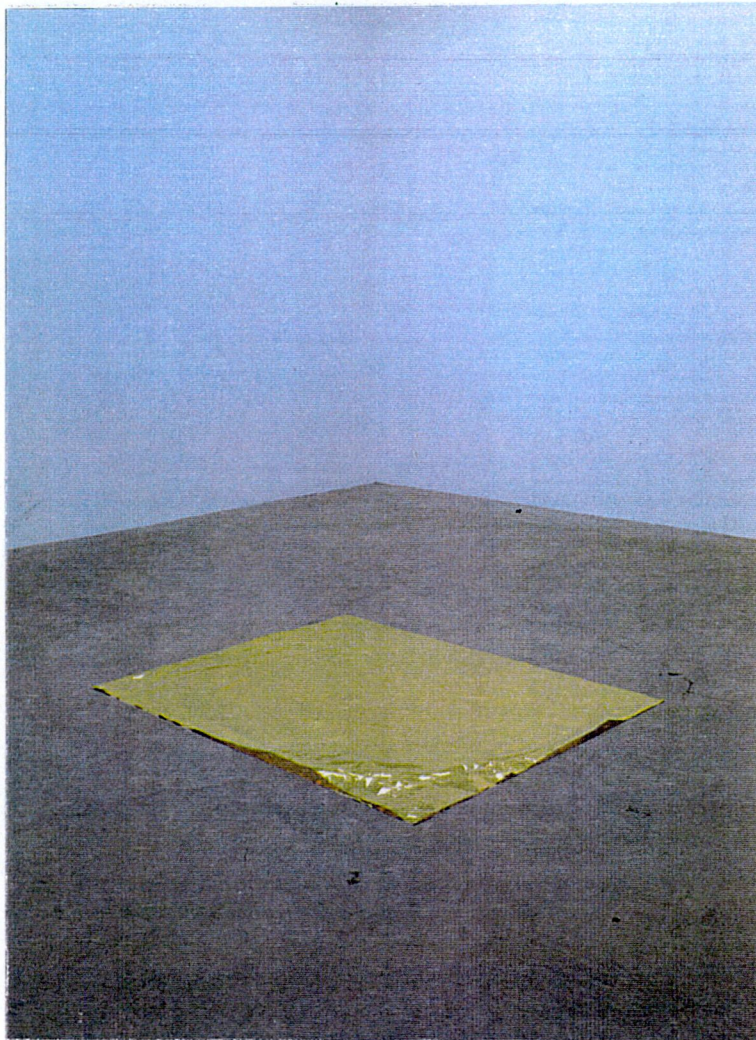


fig. 3.6

embrace death and (some of) those who grapple with it.”(Deitcher 1996,p42)

And the reason for this predisposition he puts down to AIDS. Deitcher goes on to say,

“In today’s market culture, death is prized, like genius. In fact, the two can be closely related, the operable rule being: the sooner the better. As artists die young, they are positioned strategically within a narrative trajectory that can lead to the construction of mythic, and highly marketable genius. The appeal of the short-lived genius is deeply rooted in Western culture. For behind the pop spectacle of today’s flaming youth there stand the more picaresque denizens of Bohemia’s past; and, beyond them, historically remote

<sup>5</sup>Expressionistic renderings of the words ‘Adieu’ or ‘Il conversion di San Paolo Malfi’, served as the most prominent element in these otherwise abstract works. Turning grief into his motif, Schnabel made it impossible for the viewer to determine whether the untimely death of his friend in a motorcycle mishap in Rome was the tragic inspiration or the clincher the artist needed to lend a note of gravity to these sunny decorations.







Romantics along the lines of Lord Byron and Géricault. This mythology now haunts the burgeoning cottage industry in posthumous exhibitions, such as those devoted to the works of Mark Morrisroe, who died of AIDS-related complications in 1989. For many reasons these exhibitions have not only been occasions for viewing or reviewing the legacy of a gifted artist who was deprived of the chance to develop more fully. They have also been fraught with doubts about the institutionalised hunger for brilliant youth, about promotion and profiting from the dead.” (Deitcher 1996, p43)

Aesthetic responses to AIDS can be looked at in two ways. Firstly there are changes at the level of content of individual works of art, traditional artworks ‘about AIDS’, and secondly, changes in



fig. 3.7

the way art functions in society, cultural participation in activist politics, the use of graphics, video etcetera. It could be said that the former leads to the latter, but they could also be looked at as entirely separate issues. AIDS activists have debated the relationship between art and AIDS from the onset of the epidemic.

“AIDS activists...argued that, in the midst of this highly political health crisis, the only art that could possibly matter was political art of the kind that was being created collectively in the crucible of ACT UP. Gallery art that addressed, death and loss, art that relied upon the more private resources of the individual reflection, art that memorialised, that lamented, that described pain rather than promising empowerment, all these were considerably ill-affordable luxuries.” (Deitcher 1996, p43)

What they feared was the tendency of traditional art forms or Gallery art to





universalise, and to universalise death was also to naturalise it, and this naturalisation could rob deaths that really are political of their political meaning.

AIDS has had an obvious and immediate effect on 'Gay Art', and it can be seen to affect art movements in terms of traditional or gallery art, such as Abject art, Narrative art and the reintroduction of death as a major theme. It contributes to the increasing culture of associations and nostalgia, nostalgia for the just barely past and the still present, it contributes to themes of fragility and our increasing self-consciousness. AIDS has incited cultural participation in activist art movements, which use media style appropriation and guerilla tactics to show their message and their art to as large a forum as possible, outside the museum. Thus surely AIDS has contributed significantly to the end of Modernism and to postmodernism.





## Conclusion

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Queer identity has been mobilised as a tool in the struggle to fight against or come to terms with the AIDS epidemic and was instrumental in making AIDS important in terms of contemporary culture. It is by the proximity of queer with certain other developments in our culture that we can see AIDS as the postmodern illness, the disease of our time. AIDS activist art has contributed to an interruption of the conceptualist tradition, in line with a reintroduction of image and narrative into art, and a second phase of conceptualism taking on board a level of community or issue consciousness. The reintroduction of death as a major theme in art has had a pervasive effect in many different areas of art practice seen through the representation of the body, and use of concepts of fragility and nostalgia.

AIDS has had a definite effect on western society, particularly on certain areas of that society, but how significant has this effect been? We can see more clearly how the American situation has been affected but the effect on the European art community is by comparison unquantifiable. I wanted my findings to be dramatic, to say that the effect of AIDS can be read into virtually any piece of contemporary art. Search as I did for those who might prove me right, that argument proved too extreme. Although the effect of AIDS on contemporary art practice is significant in the work of certain individuals, in certain aspects of culture, in certain geographical locations, it cannot be said to have had the blanket effect I was hoping to find. Particularly in chapter three I argued as strongly for the case as I could but I am left unconvinced, the reason being that much of the relevant work, if taken out of social context, does not carry the same reading. Unless a piece of work has an obvious and prescribed meaning it





will be read differently by differing individuals in various locations. Thus a piece of work such as Rachel Whiteread's 'House' (fig. 4.1) with its inherent themes of nostalgia and fragility would be read as having to do with AIDS, were it produced in San Francisco. But if it was sited in Derry the same themes would be read as pertaining to the conflict in the North. Nayland Blake would not agree; he says in relation to this and other recent work from young British artists;

"it's all work that is involved in its agonistic relationship to the past, to the weight of the past and to mortality. There's all these different images for that, whether pressed and fading flowers, or the shell of something that used to be there, that we now just have the casting of, or the actual dead things. Much of that work wouldn't be possible without the range of work that was initially informed by AIDS, that came before it."

But this seems like a reading that is particular to America.

According to Louise Walsh people bring their own experiences of illness and frailty and death to things, so if their experience has been of AIDS and that is what is in their culture, then that is what they are going to bring to



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'Rachel Whiteread's 'House' is one of the most extraordinary public sculptures to have been created by any English artist working this century, according to Andrew Graham-Dixon. It was made by filling a house with liquid concrete and then stripping the mould, that is the house itself, away from it. It is both a relic and a prompt to the imagination (Who lived here? What did they do? What did they feel?) as well as a sculpture that is charged with a deep sense of loss. 'House' is about the past and it is also about the unrecoverability of the past, about the fact that what has gone cannot be revived. Death finally is its theme. (GRAHAM-DIXON, Andrew, "This is the house that Rachel built", The Independent, Tuesday 2 November 1993)





something that evokes feelings of sadness, vulnerability, frailty, death. But for those who have not had any experience of the epidemic they are likely to bring another reading to a piece of work such as Whiteread's 'House', where the artist has not prescribed a specific meaning.

In Ireland few people have had any experience of this epidemic as the figures are quite small. Of the recorded 1600 cases of HIV approximately 800 are amongst IV drug users and only about 350 cases are amongst homosexuals/bisexuals. This is partly because gay men traditionally emigrate, homosexuality having been outlawed until 1993. Thus those amongst the Irish population who would have made the educated, queer, media-savvy activists appear to have already moved to Britain or to the States, where Irish expatriate queer groups have a louder voice than those at home. As of yet AIDS has touched few lives here outside of the aforementioned groups. There is no AIDS policy in Ireland. The government has taken no particular action. But as members of the EU and traditionally living in the shadows of Britain and America, we have adopted many of the hard won changes in representation and language to do with AIDS.

Where art is concerned there has been little direct effect of the epidemic in Ireland over the last ten years. The problem of the closet has hindered this area, but since 1993 there have been a couple of small shows to coincide with Gay Pride, and a larger group show, 'Pride in Diversity', in June/July 1996.

April 1995 saw Michael Wilson open a show of his work entitled 'Queerly Heteroclite', heteroclite meaning abnormal or irregularly inclined. This overt work attempted to open discussions on the representation of AIDS, gayness, queerness:





"It is not my intention to deal with the incredible experience that is living with HIV+ status, but rather to find a point of engagement in which to tap into the whole discourse that surrounds and sometimes threatens to engulf the topic." (Wilson, 1995)<sup>2</sup>

Patrick Hall believes that in this country AIDS has made people think of death, "It has dressed death in very dramatic robes, if not melodramatic robes". It has certainly affected his own recent work, dark and personal imagery of

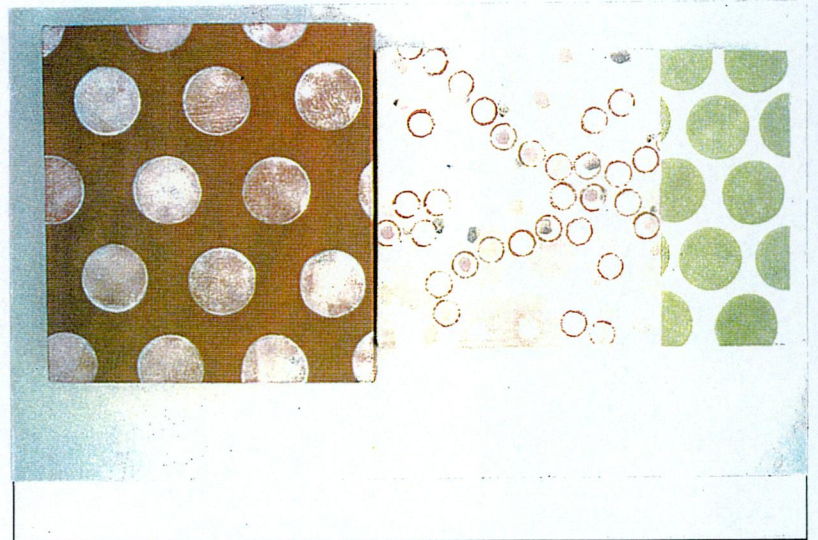


fig. 4.2

mountains and skulls, but again this work is open to a number of interpretations. In the 1996 show 'Pride in Diversity', there were a number of works pertaining to the themes surrounding the AIDS crisis, works perhaps influenced by themes in American or British art, including Gerry Scott's 'Hazard I' and my own 'Skin Series' (fig. 4.2 & 4.3), which in the context of a Gay Pride show could be read as

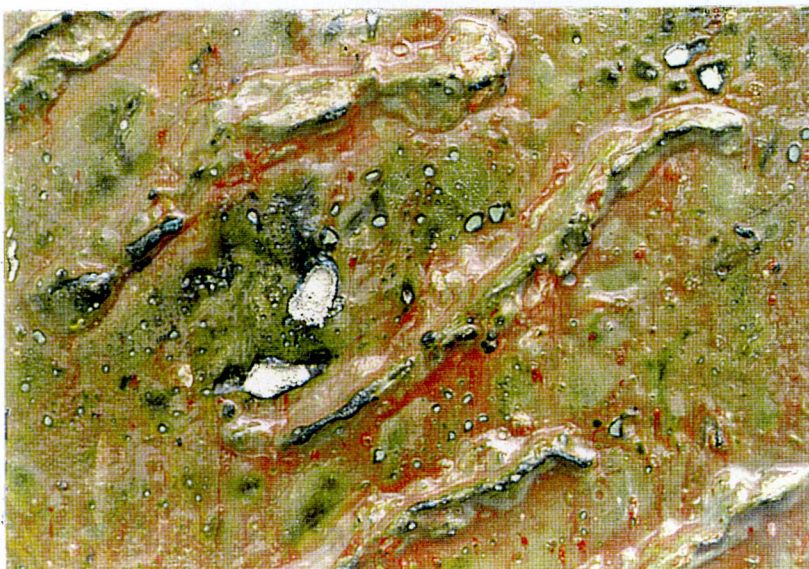


fig. 4.3

having to do with AIDS specifically. But the queer forum in Ireland is too small to have any major influence on trends in the Irish artworld. And any of these works shown in a different context allow for innumerable different readings or interpretations.

<sup>2</sup>WILSON, Michael, quoted in "Queer Perspectives", by Gerry Scott, Gay Community News, April, 1995.







But can we say that regardless of context or interpretations the subliminal effect of the AIDS epidemic, and the work produced directly surrounding it on an international level, have permeated through to other art practices in this country? To assume a blanket effect of the epidemic on art practice would be to assume a world art culture. Although we are perhaps nearer to such a thing now than ever before, and obviously different cultures and artists from those cultures are in dialogue with one another, the autonomy of different cultures cannot be overlooked. To ignore this would be to generalise to an unrealistic level. The truth is a relative truth, a contextual truth.





## Appendix I

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### **Interview with Don Bachardy -September 13th 1996, Santa Monica, Los Angeles.**

*How do you relate to the titles homosexual, gay or queer artist? I first saw your work in advocate men so I immediately had the impression that you were a queer artist.*

Well, yes, I've always been a queer artist (laughs). I remember once somebody, this was probably twenty, twenty-five years ago, told me that my drawings were 'homosexual', that they exuded homosexuality and this was told to me as a criticism, as though my drawing was exposing me, making me vulnerable because they made it clear that they were done by somebody homosexual. Well, you could maybe get away with that twenty-five years ago, using homosexual as a put down, I don't think you can any more and it hurt my feelings because, yes, I did feel my drawings were very much the work of a homosexual sensibility and I felt vulnerable at the time. And then I started thinking about it and I got really quite angry. Why shouldn't they be homosexual? And if I am homosexual, certainly I'd want that to show in my work. I want that to be clear. It's such a basic part of who I am and such a basic element of my sensibility that not to make it clear in my work would be really telling a lie about myself.

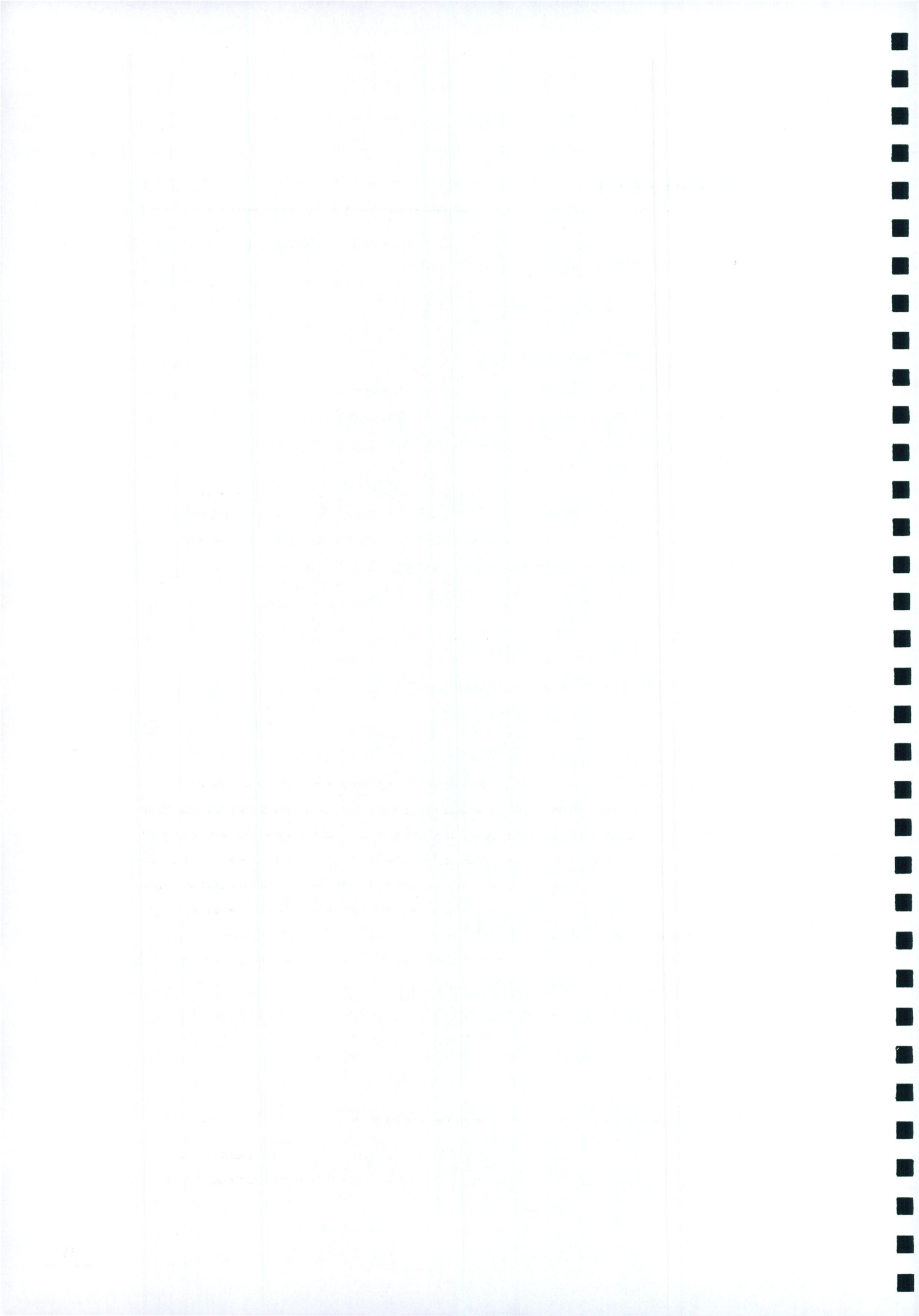
*And yet you don't see this as being political?*

Oh, of course it is political, helplessly political (laughs), because I couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't change the way I draw. I couldn't change my sensibility. And I thought about it and I didn't want to. Why should I be interested in anything other than what I'm interested in. That's who I am as a person and as an artist. And so I thought instead of trying to cover up my homosexuality, I ought to flaunt it, ought to encourage it, to feed it to make it blatant if necessary, but then that's getting political and as I told you I don't really think that art should be political. Or it shouldn't be conceived as political art. It should only be politically interesting or useful after the fact. I don't think one should approach work as an artist by saying I want to do a political painting. I think one should say 'I want to do a painting' and then afterwards you look at the painting and realise it is political, well, that's fine. But I don't like the idea of approaching art first from a political point of view.

*So this is formalism v. activism? You believe that formalism is far more important than the message? By formalism I mean formal concerns like composition, light, colour etc.*

Yes, yes then I'm a formalist, that's really what I care most about, yes.

*And do you feel that formalist work is more valid than activist work, than work that is produced with a political agenda?*





No, I don't feel it's more valid, it's just what I'm interested in personally, so it's more valid for me. I can't really speak for anybody else. I do know that the work by other artists that interests me, it interests me first on a formalist basis and then if it happens to be political I'll swallow that too (laughs).

*You tend to use the term homosexual. Do you differentiate between homosexual, gay or queer?*

Actually I like queer. That's my favourite word to describe myself. 'Gay' I've never really liked much, it sounds frivolous. I like being frivolous sometimes but not all the time. 'Fag', I like 'fag'. I use fag a lot.

*These seem like very 'in your face terms'.*

Yes, well, I think it's a luxury that minorities can deal in, they can use the words of their oppressors and make hay with them.

*Do you value activist art in art historical terms? We could look at AIDS art for example, art that has come out to highlight the AIDS crisis or war art, the kind of art that was made in WWII.*

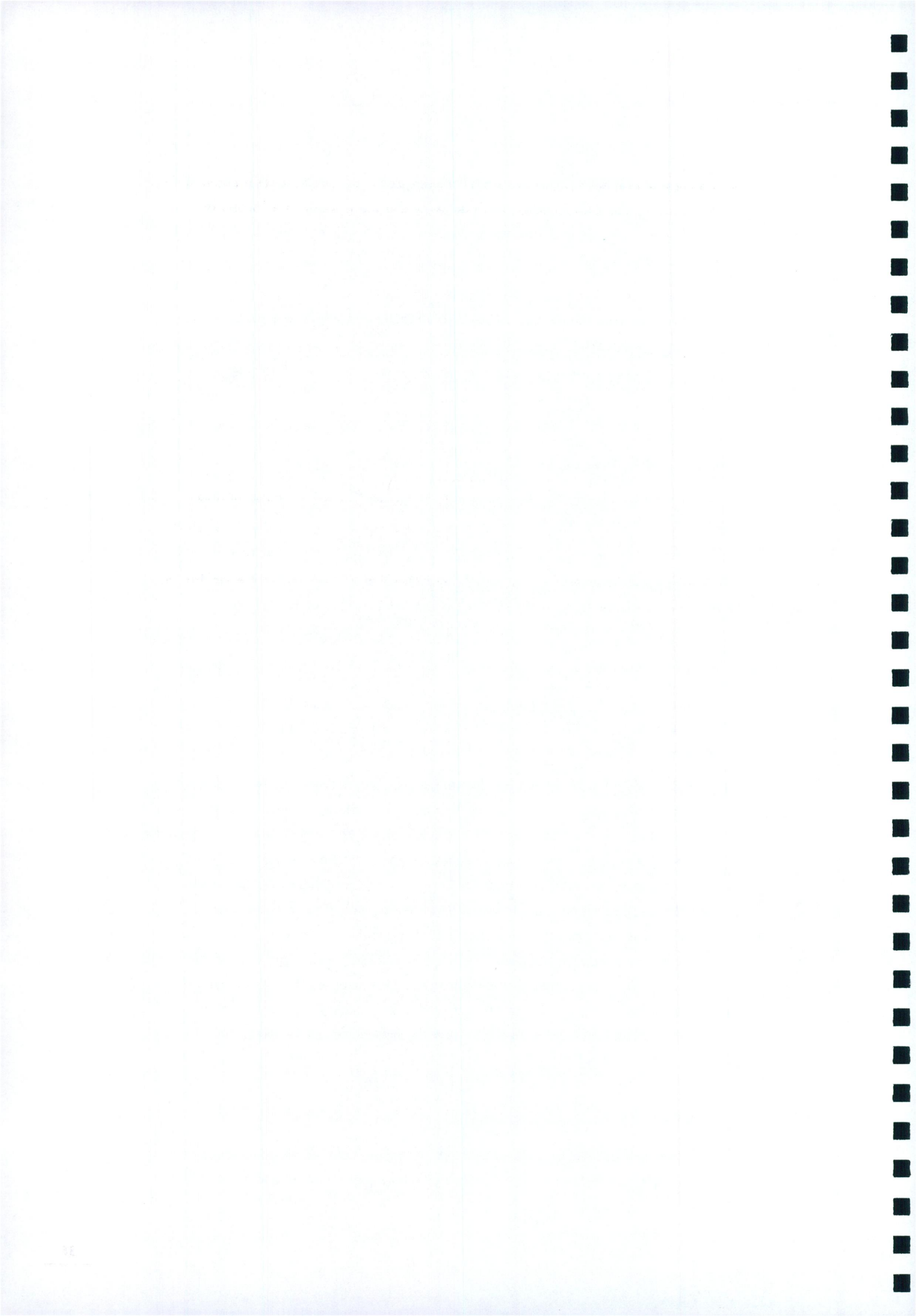
Well again it's kind of making a point that is political rather than graphic and it's just not where my interest as an artist lies.

*What do you think is the effect of AIDS culturally, socially on you, on the community you live in and on your work, if any?*

Well, I've done lots of drawings and paintings of people who are suffering from AIDS. Actually quite often, relatively speaking, I've been asked to do a commission of somebody who is actually dying. A young man wanted a picture for his parents because he knew he would be dead within the year. Another young man who had posed for me a year or two before, he was a very pretty, sweet young man, he had AIDS and looked terrible. He had spots all over his face and would put on make-up to cover them up. He knew he looked terrible. And he asked me to do a sitting with him as a kind of before and after. And in this case the after was not an improvement. Usually before and after means one looked terrible to begin with and then one was transformed into a beauty. This was in reverse and it was very sad. And I always have to paint what I see, and if he asked for a sitting for that reason I thought I ought not to try to soften the experience for him, and yes, he was quite shaken when he looked at the pictures I did.

*Do you feel that AIDS has really had an affect on modern art practice?*

Yes, I think it's had an affect on all kinds of things. I mean it's such a very real event of our times. I think it has affected all kinds of art and people whether they know it or not. Yes, It has





to have entered into our psychology, because it's so present. It's something that I think most of us think about continually in one way or other. It's changed our whole attitude to our experience particularly for queers.

*You said earlier that you felt that the political art and the conceptual art that seems so dominant at the moment is another phase like for example cubism was a phase. Do you feel that AIDS has influenced this in some way and if so why should it have come now and not at some earlier point when, lets say, cancer was the discussed disease or tuberculosis was prevalent?*

I do think that AIDS has come into the forefront of our view of life and that we can't get around it. We have to deal with it in some way or other and since we do live in a period in which most forms of art do seem to be political, politically-inspired, conceptual, intellectualised - something like AIDS which is a very real concern of so many people must influence whatever art is turned out. And also if a work of art is completely un-AIDS-oriented then it becomes an anomaly for its time because everybody says 'I don't see any mention of AIDS, I don't see any allusion to AIDS. He was living right in the heart of that period, how could he not refer to it in some way' and so it becomes AIDS conscious by default, because it doesn't make its political statement about AIDS, maybe it becomes anti-AIDS.





## Appendix 2

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### Interview with Nayland Blake -September 16th, Brooklyn, New York

*How do you relate to the terms homosexual, gay or queer artist, and how do you differentiate between them?*

Well, I think of them in of themselves as historical terms. I mean that in a broad and simplistic way they denominate different generations: the pre-stonewall generation, the post-stonewall gay liberation generation and the generation that has come after that, which I would refer to as the queer generation.

*At what point does gay turn to queer?*

One of the big delineating points is among people who had an investment in building the economic and social community, at least in America, in the mid-sixties to the mid to late seventies, I would call that the gay generation: and then the people who grew up with most of those institutions already in place, I would call that the queer generation. So in other words people who in a sense are not as invested in, or are not as identified with, a particular set of community institutions. I think that's one of the reasons why you see a lot of tension between younger and middle-aged people in the community. Because in a sense it's almost like waves of immigration here in the U.S. The generation that in a sense wants to identify and codify its own experience as a distinct group, that would be the gay position; and then the queer generation who in a sense have internalised so much of that definition that for them it's not an issue in need of expression. The queer generation may speak from a position that is very informed by gay liberation but they don't necessarily identify themselves automatically with particular gay institutions. I think that this split is beginning to occur in the very late seventies and early eighties and got basically repressed because of the AIDS crisis which forced people to really pull together. But what we've seen happening in the nineties is that that split has reasserted itself and that we find that people have very different attitudes, very different political attitudes, very different social attitudes, notions of inclusiveness. The evidence that I've seen with people who self identify as queer is that they are not as inclined to separatism. For example, they don't necessarily see the value in building institutions that might be purely, say, lesbian institutions or purely gay male institutions and their relationships to things like, say, the leather community or to transgender issues are much more engaged and playful than they are necessarily codified into the rigid structures that are the hallmark of the previous generation.

1. The first part of the report discusses the general situation of the country and the progress of the work in the various departments. It also mentions the results of the various expeditions and the state of the different branches of the service.

2. The second part of the report contains a detailed account of the various expeditions and the results of the same. It also mentions the state of the different branches of the service and the progress of the work in the various departments.

3. The third part of the report contains a detailed account of the various expeditions and the results of the same. It also mentions the state of the different branches of the service and the progress of the work in the various departments.

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9. The ninth part of the report contains a detailed account of the various expeditions and the results of the same. It also mentions the state of the different branches of the service and the progress of the work in the various departments.

10. The tenth part of the report contains a detailed account of the various expeditions and the results of the same. It also mentions the state of the different branches of the service and the progress of the work in the various departments.



*I would have thought that part of what defined the queer generation or the changeover would have been AIDS; that in the mid-eighties the fact that people became activists and much more 'in your face' resulting from the epidemic created the changeover from gay to queer.*

One of the things that we saw happened was that activist energy that was initially developed around AIDS issues was then adopted by generally younger people. The rise of something like Queer Nation for example is really people taking the tactics of organisations like ACT UP and expanding to engage with a larger realm of issues. But for the most part the people who were engaged in that expansion were younger and they didn't necessarily identify with organisations in the States like National Gay and Lesbian Task Force or Gay Liberation Front: basically activist or political organisations that had been in place already for ten years. In a sense what you're seeing as a cause I'm expressing as more of a symptom of a division that was there earlier but didn't really express itself until, in a certain sense, the first phase of the epidemic had passed. At that point people, in a weird way, were able to look around and assess; they weren't in full crisis mode.

*What do you think is the importance these identities and what do you think is the value of identity politics?*

I think that perhaps, to phrase it in another way, one of the important things that queer people bring to the contemporary situation is the understanding of identity itself as a construct and because they see it as that they can be more fluid in their relationship to it. For example many isolated or marginalised communities in modernism and post-modernism have constructed cultures out of say the fragmentation of a master-like colonialist narrative. But in some cases communities, particularly communities of colour have opposed that notion, that oppressive colonialist culture with a kind of essentialised notion of their own indigenous culture, and I'm not necessarily convinced that this essence, the sort of indigenous essence, is any less a construct than the monolithic imperialist essence. I think that's an understanding that is informed because of the queer experience, because of knowing that in a way there is no geographic essential, there is no real cultural essential that binds all queer people. They have similar cultural experiences but that is a different thing from having an irreducible essence. So in that sense I think that the process of self-identification can be an extremely valuable one in terms of shifting your perspective. For me for example, I could understand my relationship to women much better when I began to look at myself as a gay man. What was I thinking about the way that I related to women if I identified in that way? To see myself as a gay man, to engage in that notion of self-identification, was what allowed me to become politicised. So in that sense I think it can be really valuable. For artists, I think that certainly many gay and queer artists struggle with the notion that there is some monolithic idea or essential idea of what gay art is or queer art is, and that whatever it is that they are doing is not that and to me, I think that's exactly the sort of wrong headed, backwards reasoning in terms of trying to come to an understanding of what we might call gay or queer art. Instead of saying it's about X,Y,Z and then

1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 3, 1862. It is a very important document, as it contains the President's views on the state of the Union and the progress of the war.

2. The second part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the War Department, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the military operations of the Army during the year 1861, and a statement of the condition of the Army at the beginning and end of the year.

3. The third part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Navy Department, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the naval operations of the Navy during the year 1861, and a statement of the condition of the Navy at the beginning and end of the year.

4. The fourth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and a statement of the condition of the Department at the beginning and end of the year.

5. The fifth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and a statement of the condition of the Department at the beginning and end of the year.

6. The sixth part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the Army, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and a statement of the condition of the Department at the beginning and end of the year.

7. The seventh part of the document is a report from the Secretary of the Department of the Navy, dated January 10, 1862. It contains a detailed account of the operations of the Department during the year 1861, and a statement of the condition of the Department at the beginning and end of the year.



you go out and find the artists that fit in that mold, instead you say let's look at what all of the artists who self-identify in this way are doing. And then what does it mean to think of what they are doing as being queer? What does it mean to look at abstract art as queer? What can that do to enrich our understanding of what abstraction might be, what does that do to enrich our understanding of what queerness might be?

*Can I ask you about formalism v. activism? Do you think it is a dichotomy? Do you value activist art in art historical terms for example?*

Well, I think of myself actually as a radical formalist. In other words I think that it's important for artists to understand how things function within particular contexts and how contexts function within society as a whole. You need to examine the instrument that you are going to use to see if it really will be able to affect the sphere that you really want to affect. If you want to, say, apply pressure to the CDC to have them approve a drug faster it makes more sense to go poster the outside of the CDC or to go stand outside of the CDC and yell at them than it does to paint a picture of an agonised person in a scant interior screaming and then have that hanging in a gallery somewhere. The ability of that gallery space to affect the actions of the CDC is quite reduced in relationship to going to them directly. On the other hand to take those posters that were outside the CDC and to hang those in a gallery to me seems equally pointless, because all you're doing at that point is adding a particular suspension of engagement and a particular time of contemplation to something that didn't need them to begin with. So, I think you have to be aware of what particular contexts do. The museum is a space that is valuable for conducting a certain kind of critique but not all critiques equally and the same is true of the street.

*But if we think specifically in art historical terms, how can the art on the street and the posters outside survive historically if they are not brought into the museum?*

Well, I think that one then goes back to the question of why do we want them to survive? And this is something that I talk about constantly with people because, for example, people float ideas at various times like founding a gay museum, a museum of gay art in America. And one has to ask why?

*Well don't you think for education purposes? Isn't that what museums are there for?*

But suppose you founded something that was like a gay curatorial project that published guides to other museums. Wouldn't that be just as effective an amount of education with much less capital investment.





*But a museum would be something very different.*

It would be very different, indeed, and that goes back to, okay if we could accomplish this educational goal by doing this thing, but you still want to have the museum then you have to go back and say what is it about the museum that you want to have.

*But I think it's a different educational goal, it's a different education, you learn something different from going to the gay museum than from going to other museums with your gay viewpoint.*

Would you though? Museums as institutions, one of the things they teach you is about class. I mean in a certain sense museums are all about continually decontextualising and denaturing objects of power, whether they are objects that wealthy Italians purchased for their homes or whether they are objects that villagers in Mali built to protect their village. But at this point in contemporary museology both of those objects are brought into the supposedly neutral but actually very class coded space and made into curiosities. So, do we really need to have a building stuffed full of gay curiosities. What exactly would that do? That to me is going back to notions of queer culture. If you value a particular context then stand up for that context against the mainstream's desire to homogenise that. I believe this is happening in a lot of communities right now, particularly in the States because finally a lot of communities, say in San Francisco the Latino and Chicano communities, the Asian communities, are finally getting access to enough money to be able to build their own museums. And what you are starting to see is a generation of artists who come up with those institutions in place and are saying so what, we don't care about this. The National Museum of Women in Art in Washington DC is treated with contempt by many women who claim that they don't want to be ghettoised within it or that its context doesn't speak for them. I think that when you adopt cultural institutions, you have to look at the full range of what it is that you are adopting. And this again goes back to this generational split. We talk about, yes, on the one hand it is valuable to have a gay owned and operated business, but on the other hand what if you feel that all corporations are evil, that essentially capitalism works to finally eliminate difference or subsume all difference under the sameness of consumerism. If that's the case then where do you take your stand on an institution like that. I think that's exactly the sort of thing we are grappling with culturally. And for artists I think that it's very important to question those contexts and not to automatically accept the hallmarks of success that are presented to artists in this culture.

*When I was speaking to Don Bachardy, we were talking about, well I suppose about post-modernism really, and he was saying how having a political agenda and the conceptual art that we are seeing at the moment, is just another movement, another phase, in a sense like it will pass, like it will be over soon, like cubism in the twenties for example. Do you think that's true and if so what will happen next, have you any idea?*

I think that within the market ideological nexus that we understand as the artworld today, of course it will pass, that's a machine that is built to move ideas from one place to another, and





then move other ideas through, so of course it's going to pass. I think that there is a deeper issue which is that there is no art that is not political, that what we do when we make culture is to engage in a kind of politics. To say 'this is only a painting' is a political statement and I think that once we have that knowledge we can't wish it away. Once you understand that the sneakers that you own are affordable because they are made in a country where people basically get paid nothing to make them, even if you continue to buy those sneakers, you can't do so in the same state of blissful ignorance that you were before. And so I think it's not possible in that sense for us to go back to a time when we didn't have knowledge of the political dimension of cultural activity.

*Do you really believe that this knowledge is so much greater now than for example during WWII, when there was a lot of 'War Art' produced at the time, and you don't really see that art now, occasionally you come across it but it's not considered to be very important, but surely that was a time when people were very politically aware, and then it subsided between...*

Well another way that you could look at this is that people's definition of what was political was less complex than it is now. It was easier to say 'well this is political art, this isn't political art, this is protest art, this isn't protest art'. Also I think that certainly for us to look at particular, say, allegorical drawings or to look at a Rollinson print we are far removed, perhaps, from the subject that is being satirised in that print, and we may work to understand what it is that is being addressed, but it will never be as deft to us as it is within its own time. I can look at a political cartoon today and forty years from now to look at that cartoon I may require a great deal of context to understand what it is. Any cultural object that is produced today is going to have a certain degree of the same problem. I think that the objects that endure are the objects that continue to draw a strong response after their initial context has passed away. Many Botticelli paintings are filled with disputations about Christian theology, that don't make much sense to us, issues that don't necessarily seem engaging to us, but those paintings continue to draw a strong response. And it's not because they were just more general paintings, it's because of the power of their specificity. So, I don't think that in our present time it's going to be any different. There will be objects that seem incredibly to the point and powerful to us now, and which will seem sort of ludicrous in the future, but that's the way of history. I think what you try to do as an artist is to engage most powerfully with what you're doing in the hope that it will evoke a strong enough response in other people.

*But you don't really feel that now differs so much from then because you think that the political statements that are being made now are also equally in need of a context as the political statements made during WWII?*

Yes, I think all cultural activity is like that. You could make the same case with any number of colourfield painters. If you want to talk about formalism you could go to any number of Greenbergian, for example there's a small David Smith exhibition up in Washington at the

1. The first part of the report discusses the general situation of the country and the progress of the work in the various departments. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

2. The second part of the report deals with the internal affairs of the country, including the state of the army, the police, and the judiciary. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

3. The third part of the report discusses the external affairs of the country, including the relations with the neighboring countries and the international community. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

4. The fourth part of the report deals with the social and economic conditions of the country, including the state of the education system, the health services, and the economy. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

5. The fifth part of the report discusses the progress of the work in the various departments, including the state of the army, the police, and the judiciary. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

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8. The eighth part of the report deals with the progress of the work in the various departments, including the state of the army, the police, and the judiciary. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

9. The ninth part of the report discusses the external affairs of the country, including the relations with the neighboring countries and the international community. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.

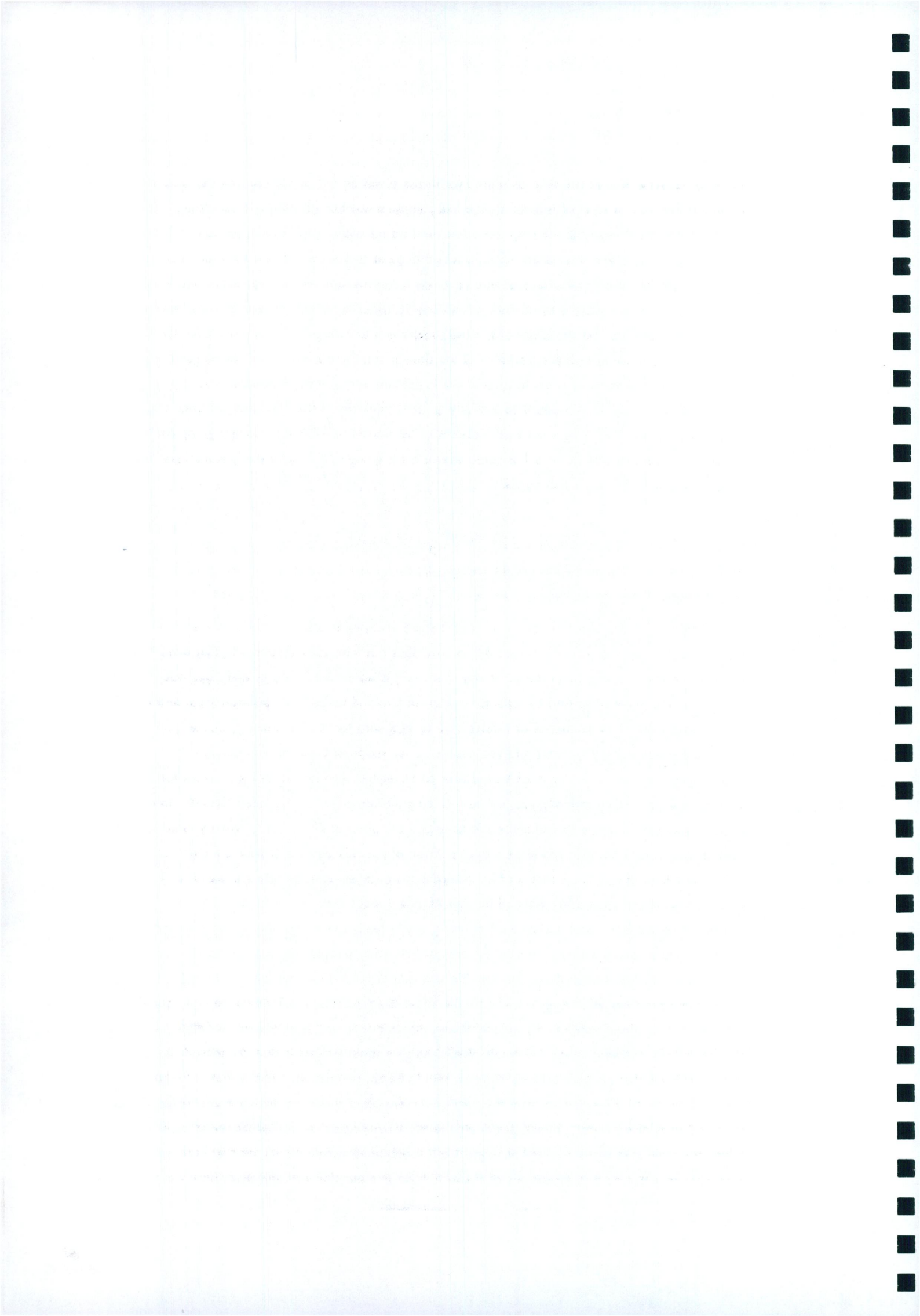
10. The tenth part of the report deals with the social and economic conditions of the country, including the state of the education system, the health services, and the economy. It also mentions the results of the recent elections and the state of the economy.



National Gallery. And at the time of Smith's death there was an enormous controversy because he had these welded steel sculptures and he had painted a number of them and used the paint to try to do something with the shape of them. And his main champion at that point, Clement Greenberg, thought this was heresy, to apply a skin of paint to a sculpture and attempt to create an illusionistic space on the surface of an object was ludicrous, was sort of worthless. Now, to us at this point that debate is as obscure as differing attitudes in an alchemical engraving from the sixteenth century. So, those notions, those specific bits of dialogue that go on within the creation of any individual object are there all the time in cultural objects. They always get shifted around and some of them become more important, some of them become less important over time. That happens to everything. So, I think that if the idea is to say once the AIDS crisis is over then all this art that proports to be related to AIDS is no longer going to make any sense, that may be true, but some of that art is going to be useful thought material for other things, and that art will continue.

*I wonder do you think that formalism is actually stronger than activism in the long run, because work that's equally political, if it's got more of an aesthetic appeal it has a better chance of surviving, of people looking at it in the future?*

I really wouldn't make that distinction. I mean, instead of saying that form is function, you might say that form is tactics. There is no art object that does not have formal concerns, that does not have aesthetic concerns, in the same way that there is no aesthetic object that does not have a political dimension. And to separate out those two and to say I'm a political artist and I don't have to deal with aesthetics or I don't have to deal with form, is to delude yourself, because if you're making a poster and you decide to use six point type and you don't understand how big something must be in order to be legible, then it's not going to work for you, you will have failed formally, you will have failed politically because you failed formally. In the same way to say I'm just a formal artist and to ignore the political dimension of what you do is again a kind of folly because you leave a large portion of yourself outside of your control. You remain in a kind of ignorance that is often disingenuous because many people are 'well I've seen what politics is and I just don't want to be part of it' and that's it at its worst when it's disingenuous and at it's best it's just kind of naive. If you really don't have any understanding of yourself as functioning within a political dimension then other people will place you politically, other people will take care of that for you. To turn that around and to say 'okay I'm making these stripe paintings, what does it mean to talk about them politically' allows me to understand a different thing about politics. If you look at, say, Agnes Martin and you read her writings, they're actually extreme political writings. What she says about politics is that the individuals duty is to itself, that people's primary concern should be contemplation. I mean, that's a political thing to say. And I think that to deny the political dimension of that is to deny the possibility of that kind of thinking within politics. It's doing the same thing as to say 'well what gay art is is taking the male gaze that's directed at women and substituting a male object for that gaze, so that what true gay art is is evocations of the male form in a pleasing way, and that's how we can





tell that the artist is a gay artist'. But if you don't have an interest in doing that and you're a gay person that means that you don't get to make gay art, and why should that be. There's no reason for that at all except some bizarre series of assumptions and decisions that were not made by you, that you passed over to someone else. So, why not have the ability to insist on your own politics, your own definition, even if it's to be a definition of distance, of removal, but insist on the political power of that. What does it mean to struggle for autonomy in society? One of the things it might mean is that one gets to make works as powerful as Agnes Martin makes, that those paintings stand as a kind of admonition against the surface engagement that many artists have with what they do. So, I think that to make that distinction to set up that opposition of formal and political is to give into a set of criteria that we ourselves did not establish and have no real necessary investment in. We are not necessarily on the side of the people who set up that distinction. It's like giving in to High Art and Low Art. It's like saying 'well, I like Low Art period! and it's better than High Art'. Well, yeah, you can engage in that fight, but that's like saying that you like a particular football team and not another one and never getting to talk about what sports might mean in society in general.

*Okay, let's talk a little more about the affect of AIDS. Can you tell me about the affect of AIDS culturally, socially on you and on your work as an artist?*

Well, I think one of the things that definitely happened in the mid-eighties is that the epidemic opened peoples minds to an understanding that gay art, as much as I hate that term, could be engaged with something other than that sort of mechanism of desire, that representation of gay male desire. That suddenly there was, because of peoples reaction to mortality suddenly the subject matter, the possible field of what could be understood as a gay concern, expanded enormously in the culture. And I think people, myself included, took advantage of that expanded field to begin to point out to people all of this other range of things. It was like 'if you're going to listen to us about AIDS, then you should listen to us about this, and this, and this, and this'. I think in that sense it definitely changed in western art the possibilities for what gay male subjectivity could be about. For me, as I said before, it's one of the things that allowed me to realise the political dimension of what it was that I was doing.

*When did you start making art?*

Well, I was an art student starting in '78, really started in high school, but basically studied art in college and went to graduate school. I moved to San Francisco in 1984 and basically I've been working there since then. I think from the start I worked very differently in those situations where I knew the work was going to be going into a gallery situation than I did if the work was intended for a street situation or a public situation. And I think what tended to happen with work, certainly in the gallery situation, not only mine but many peoples, is that the initial wave of work was much more elegiac, was much more about demonstrations of mourning and loss. I think that for me, my work tended to be engaged in some ways with that, but in other ways

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with images of bodily distress, my own fear of and fascination with penetration, medical scrutiny, examination and also desire for comfort, all of which had a personal narrative that was informed by being queer in San Francisco in the mid-eighties where a lot of people who you knew were getting sick and there was an enormous amount of fear and distress. I think, also one of the big distinctions, perhaps, was being in San Francisco which had, because there was a fair amount of gay power structure already in place, in a sense, a more sophisticated reaction or a more sophisticated response to the epidemic than, say, New York did. And one of the things that happened in San Francisco was that at the point that there was the active explosion where active chapters were forming all over the place, the chapters in San Francisco were really at a loss because the tactics that made sense, and again we're back at a formal issue, the tactics that made sense in places like New York or in other parts of the States, were really tactics of visibility. The first thing that had to happen was that gay people had to become visible, so that there could be some understanding of the crisis that was going on. In San Francisco that wasn't necessary because they already were extremely visible. So, when people tried to adopt these techniques of visibility it ended up reading as 'what's the point? We already know that you're here. We already know it's going on. We already have this particular healthcare system in place.' And I think it took a while for those organisations to understand that they had to adjust their tactics to engage with the particulars of that social situation, that were very different, which is why I think you didn't see the same range of street art in San Francisco that you saw in New York. But on the other hand you saw a much speedier adoption of things like homecare, of things like meals on wheels, things like that. So, I think the whole tone of the artistic response in San Francisco was much more nuanced at first.

*Do you think that AIDS has really had an affect on modern practice and on straight art?*

Yes, I basically think that there is not a....

*When I was speaking to Don Bachardy he said that because AIDS is such a big issue at the moment that if somebody is producing work without a political agenda or with a completely different political agenda, in some way AIDS is obviously ignored or not considered that it is non-AIDS conscious work as opposed to AIDS conscious work and so it has to be considered one way or the other, because it is such a big issue. Do you agree with that, I mean for straight artists also?*

Yeah, I would agree with that. For one thing, I mean one of the things that you're seeing in contemporary aesthetic practice is that people are still very wedded to the idea of having an issue, that they need to have an issue with which to work, that their work is somehow an expression of issues. And I think that's true in part, but also one sees among artists who don't necessarily have an identification with a particular ethnicity or religious affiliation or gender affiliation, that you see 'issue envy', you see people feeling, somehow, that their consciousness is not validated because they don't have a particular set of ethnic, or whatever, issues to hang it on. This is a really simplistic understanding of identity, certainly, but I think it's the case right now.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes the need for transparency and accountability in financial reporting.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.



One of the things that's going on is that the AIDS epidemic reintroduced death as a primary topic in contemporary art in a serious way. And you had a whole generation of artists who were just beginning, who were young artists but still had to think about death which is a very rare circumstance when you think about it. I think what's happened is that notion of mortality has become almost invisible ground to, or starting assumption of an enormous amount of work. So much so that in a sense it has become a cliché, it has become a signifier of importance, that somehow, because mortality is involved, this must be an important work, like you couldn't possibly make a trivial work about AIDS, which of course is wrong. You could make a trivial work about anything. But the idea is still circulating around, and I think that it's one of the reasons why you see, for example, the success of so much recent work from Britain. It's all work that is involved in its agonistic relationship to the past, to the weight of the past and to mortality. There's all these different images for that whether pressed and fading flowers or the shell of something that used to be there, that we now just have the casting of or the actual dead things. Much of that work wouldn't be possible without the range of work that was initially informed by AIDS, that came before it. So, I think that certainly by reinscribing notions of mortality at the centre of contemporary practice, AIDS has had a profound affect. I think where it's seeing the point where that affect is so big that it's starting to become invisible and pointless. Once everything is about death, then nothing is really about it. It's like anything, once everything relates to this one thing, there's no way that you can make a distinction about that one thing.

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## Appendix 3

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### Interview with Patrick Hall-31 November 1996, Dublin

*How do you relate to the terms homosexual, gay or queer artist and how would you differentiate between them?*

Homosexual is a clinical term isn't it? You can be homosexual but then if you own your homosexuality maybe you'll become gay. You take on the personal and cultural responsibilities of being homosexual, you own it in other words. I think queer in the contemporary sense has become a political word rather than the older term of abuse, when people up to the sixties or seventies called homosexuals queers, but now it's used by queers as sort of a political banner and that's something I would have identified with some years ago when I was politically active on the gay scene in Dublin, but that time has passed, I'm not politically active on the gay scene.

*And do you relate to one of these terms specifically?*

I wouldn't see myself as a queer artist as I don't see myself as queer, even in the way that queer is used by gay people, referring to themselves, I wouldn't see myself as queer. I would see myself as gay, and since my sexuality is only an ingredient in my make up, in my personality and in the work that I do and in my whole life, I wouldn't see my art as specifically gay art. I think there is a very big gay element in it, just the same as I think there is a very spiritual element in it, or a very metaphysical element in it, because my temperament has those characteristics. I wouldn't label it a gay art any more than I would call it expressionist art or spiritual art, but it may have all of those elements in it some way or another, and I think it does. My sexuality is very important to me but is only one ingredient in my life and is not the most important.

*What do you think is the importance of having an identity label like this, and the value of identity politics?*

I think it could be important, because when I was coming out in the seventies it was very important for me then and it was very important in my coming out to actually be a queer artist then and to actually own the characteristics of being gay. I think that was very important, just the same as the so called promiscuity of the sixties was very important. In fact it was so important that it had to happen simply to overturn the mores and the beliefs of a kind of Victorianism that lingered through this century up to that time, and it was absolutely necessary for gay people to go through that, even if the result or one of the effects of this, it might be argued, was AIDS, and I don't think it was promiscuity, which was actually owning your sexuality. We were throwing off centuries of sterile secrecy. To get back to your question I think it depends on what you do, there are different times in your life when you require this, just the same as there are different times when you will read certain books that you won't read when you're older and vice versa, when you are twenty you might read Dostoevsky but when you are

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders.

2. The second part outlines the procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps from initial entry to final review, ensuring that all data is captured correctly and consistently.

3. The third part addresses the role of the accounting department in overseeing these processes. It highlights the need for regular audits and the implementation of internal controls to prevent errors and fraud.

4. The fourth part discusses the impact of these practices on the company's overall performance. It notes that accurate record-keeping leads to better decision-making and improved financial stability.

5. The fifth part provides a summary of the key points discussed and reiterates the commitment to high standards of accuracy and transparency.



fifty maybe you don't want to read Dostoevsky. We need to emphasise certain aspects of ourselves at different times and taking on that in a hostile heterosexual society, I think it's necessary at some stage in every gay person's experience to assert this gay sexuality. I don't see any way around it, unless you're an extraordinarily fortunate, blessed kind of human being that you don't have to struggle to put together this identity with an integrated sexuality.

*Do you think it's necessary in terms of self preservation or it's necessary in terms of making a statement for society?*

I think it's necessary for you to become human, just in terms of your own happiness and your own fulfillment as a human being because I can't see you being fully human, I can't see anyone being fully human without owning their sexuality. Our sexuality is central. It may not be the most important thing but it is certainly one of the most central, one of the most basic and to disown that or not to allow it to flower in any way, or not to integrate it into all the energies of our lives and the thrust of our lives and our ambitions and everything, would be unthinkable, would be horrific. It has happened and that's what did happen, probably is still happening to a lot of people. To me it's a very sad thing. It's one of the tragedies of human history, the sadness of unfulfilled lives.

*I'd like to ask you about formalism v. activism. Do you value activist art in art historical terms, you could look at art that was produced during WWII, or you could look at AIDS art?*

I couldn't say yes or no to that because it's almost like saying do you value Catholic art or do you value Irish art? It's too general. But in theory there is no reason that art which has an active agenda, an active message, a political thrust and energy, need be bad art, just the same as there is no reason why it should be good art simply because of the political content or because of its nature, or its energy. It doesn't make it good or bad but, I think that like queer art or like catholic art or any other kind of political art, it has to be balanced. If you're a good enough artist I think you can make anything art, you'll actually make good art that happens to have a political message. If you're a bad artist, and that begs so many questions, to say good artist or a bad artist, if you're a bad artist I don't think it's going to, but it could be very effective politically. I would be sympathetic because there are certain areas where it's very hard to define what is good art or bad art and what is art or non-art, and really it's only time that tells. It could have a very cleansing effect, it could be quite cathartic.

*There seems to be a trend at the moment towards issue based art and away from formal concerns, like in Britain there have been criticisms because a lot of the Art Council funding goes to issue based work because of the idea that then the community is getting something back, but then is art losing out? The trends there seem to be followed here to a certain extent. What do you think of this, do you think that people are moving away from formal concerns?*

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the integrity of the financial system and for the ability to detect and prevent fraud.

2. The second part of the document outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps involved in the accounting cycle, from identifying the transaction to posting it to the appropriate ledger account.

3. The third part of the document discusses the role of the auditor in verifying the accuracy of the records. It describes the various techniques used by auditors to test the reliability of the data and to ensure that the financial statements are presented fairly.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the issue of internal controls. It explains how a well-designed system of internal controls can help to minimize the risk of error and to ensure that the organization's assets are protected.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of transparency and accountability in financial reporting. It argues that organizations should be open and honest about their financial performance and should provide clear and concise information to their stakeholders.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the role of the government in regulating the financial system. It describes the various laws and regulations that govern financial reporting and the role of regulatory agencies in enforcing these rules.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of ethical behavior in the financial industry. It argues that financial professionals should always act in the best interests of their clients and should avoid any conflicts of interest.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the role of technology in financial reporting. It describes the various ways in which technology can be used to improve the accuracy and efficiency of financial reporting.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the importance of ongoing education and training for financial professionals. It argues that the financial industry is constantly evolving and that professionals must stay up-to-date on the latest developments.

10. The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of public confidence in the financial system. It argues that the financial system can only function effectively if the public has confidence in its integrity and reliability.



I don't think so, no. Again I think it's a balance. In every generation and every decade, there is always a preponderance leaning, now it's issue based art, and I think that's okay, but I think for an individual artist to go completely with that, it could lead him up a blind alley. I think art is more than an issue, and to reduce art to an issue, it develops a kind of journalistic kind of art, and art is very much in the clutches of a journalistic concept of art at the moment, and I think that weakens art because art is more than an issue, in fact it may not have an issue in it and could be good art. But just at this particular moment in time, which is a very brief moment, issue based art is popular, is the official art that is supported by the official bodies, for a million and one reasons, because that's just the way, the temple of the time or whatever. But at the same time I think that there is another dimension to art which is a more personal one and is a more solitary one, and that's really where your energy comes from, and it's a very ambivalent sort of thing, and it's very ambiguous, those sources of energy, those wells of energy. And it's very hard to categorise them, but to actually bring it up to the surface and say art is issue orientated or issue based is not true in my experience, it's more complex than that.

*Do you think that there will be a return to formalism?*

I think formalism is the other extreme, it's almost like saying art for art's sake, it's the other end of the swing of the pendulum, and I'm not sure if that is not too simple either, because art is never really that formal is it? not really. People try to say that Rothko is an abstract artist, and Rothko always argued that he's not an abstract artist, he's a religious artist, this is where his energy came from and he saw this as the expression of his energy. Everyone has an agenda in art. Is it possible to make an abstract, formalist work of art? Maybe it is? I'm simply asking the question. I can only speak from my experience and for me it is not possible. If I draw a line across a piece of paper, so there's hardly any difference between it being a drawing and a piece of paper, there is still a source, at the time that I drew that line there is still some image based source or something in my mind or in my memory or in my genes or in my, or whatever. There is something that's actually not abstract that's driving it. I find it hard to conceive of an exclusively formalist art.

*What do you think is the influence of AIDS on your work and on contemporary art practice?*

My own partner died of AIDS so that was a very momentous happening in my life. At the time that he died in '89, in the late eighties the work I was producing was very death orientated, and the whole obsession and central imagery in my work was very death orientated, and very consciously so actually. It was only when coming up to when he died that I think it began to take a turn for the better and to turn away from death in a curious kind of way, just as he died and just as the AIDS period came on top of us with a bang. The curious thing about AIDS is, and I know a lot of people with AIDS and who are HIV+, I think it was a very important phenomenon, it came out of the so called promiscuity of the sixties and seventies, gay peopled owned their sexuality and having to go to extremes to do that, and I suppose there were several

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing reliable information to stakeholders.

2. The second part outlines the procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps from initial entry to final review, ensuring that all data is captured correctly and consistently.

3. The third part addresses the challenges associated with data management. It identifies common pitfalls and offers practical solutions to ensure the integrity and security of the information.

4. The fourth part discusses the role of technology in modern accounting. It explores how software solutions can streamline processes and reduce the risk of human error.

5. The fifth part provides a summary of the key points and offers recommendations for future improvements. It encourages a continuous approach to learning and adaptation in the field of accounting.



other things that contributed to it, but I've seen people whose lives have been transformed by AIDS and not necessarily in a bad way, but in a good way. It's part of the growing up process of gay culture, gay culture can never be the same post-AIDS as pre-AIDS. Gay abandon and irresponsibility was fine, but that's only part of life, not all of life. It's like Ireland is a country growing up, we had to introduce divorce, we had to introduce contraception and all these sort of things, whereas before we were protected like children, so we didn't have these laws, but there comes a time when we had to claim that freedom even if it entails risks and it does, and dangers, but that's growing up, when you're sixteen or seventeen you begin to leave the house and your mothers at home by the fire, biting her fingernails (laughs), wondering where you are, but you just have to grow up, she can't keep you, but she'd love to if she could. But the gay thing is very important, it's a huge thing.

*The effect on your work is obviously from a personal viewpoint, from your particular experience. There are quite a number of gay artists in this country but very few who work with AIDS. Do you think that in this country it has effected art at all, take for example theories around the reintroduction of death as a major theme in art, do you think that is true for here or is that really only true for places like San Francisco and New York?*

I think it has made people think of death, it has dressed death again in very dramatic robes, if not melodramatic robes, so it's brought death to the centre of the stage again, and I think that isn't necessarily a bad thing. I would argue that death is a very fruitful area to explore; it's an area we know very little about, and I think there may be a source of rich energy there in terms of painting, in terms of art. And if AIDS has done that for some artist then I think it's good.

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2. The second part outlines the specific procedures for recording transactions. It details the steps from initial entry to final review, ensuring that all data is captured correctly and consistently.

3. The third part addresses the role of the accounting department in overseeing these processes. It highlights the need for regular audits and the implementation of internal controls to prevent errors and fraud.

4. The fourth part discusses the impact of these practices on the company's overall performance. It notes that accurate record-keeping leads to better decision-making and improved financial stability.

5. The fifth part provides a summary of the key points discussed and reiterates the commitment to high standards of accuracy and transparency.



## Appendix 4

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### Interview with Louise Walsh- 21st October 1996, Dublin

*How do you relate to the titles or terms, or differentiate between, queer artist, gay artist, homosexual artist, lesbian artist?*

I don't relate to them all, I would relate to lesbian and queer personally; homosexual isn't a word I would ever attribute to myself unless I was talking to someone who didn't speak English very well (laughs), so that isn't really an issue for me; gay, if I was talking to someone who maybe didn't understand queer and lesbian so much, I might say gay so as not to freak them out. Some people fall over backwards with the word lesbian, if they are not very offay with the notions of contemporary culture or society. Usually gay and homosexual wouldn't be words that I would use while speaking about myself. I would think of gay as gay male and homosexual as textbook. I wouldn't use the word vagina when talking to anyone (laughs), it's the same thing, a textbook term.

*Do you not relate to that textbook term on some level?*

Only in a textbook way and I don't really relate in a textbook way, that's not how I live my life by a textbook term. If I'm talking to somebody or if I'm identifying myself when I'm comfortable or in a general day to day way, I either use queer or lesbian or dyke, actually; gay to somebody way out there, but I wouldn't use it for myself. I would use it in a broad way, so that somebody could place me within a world that is about their preconceptions, not mine. So when I'd use queer I'd use it when I'm addressing me as regards the rest of the world. I would be talking about me and people who are queer; and in queer I mean people who are bisexual, people who are transgendered, people who are gay male, lesbian, and all the other shades of not straight. I think straight is a very tiny little word that encompasses a tiny group of people who identify themselves as normal, and fundamentalist or something, do you know what I mean? And queer is all of those other things when you're saying that you're not straight.

*And do you relate to the term queer artist or lesbian artist?*

At times, at times. I relate to the word artist. I often relate to the word woman artist in the same way as if a person who was black needed to define themselves further as an artist they would say black artist, or sometimes they would say woman artist or sometimes they would say queer artist, and black would be in there as well. It's a section of your identity that sometimes overlaps onto other sections, like mother, daughter, but I wouldn't wholly describe myself in that way. I would sometimes because I think it's relevant sometimes, it's part of who I am, I'm Irish, I'm a woman, I'm lesbian, I'm queer, I'm my mothers daughter, I come from Crosshaven in Co. Cork, I used to live in Belfast, and sometimes I would use those as they are appropriate to describe a certain place that I'm coming from.





*Giving yourself a named identity like this is a political move in a sense. What do you think is the value of identity politics? Do you think it's really useful?*

I think identity politics is really interesting. It's a problem sometimes because if you're identifying yourself you're constantly marginalising yourself, but it's actually often quite important to do so by saying I'm coming from this place, I'm talking as a woman, I am talking as whatever. It is important, but in some places it places you outside of the centre, which I don't think is useful. I am an artist and the art that I make is as valid as the next artist's work, whether or not I'm queer, whether or not I'm a woman. When I start identifying myself is when the other artist starts to look at their work with the weight of history attached to it and therefore marginalises me. So, I would often say that it's important to me to talk as a woman artist because that's constructing my art as other than the art that has been made for hundreds of years and I'm positing myself in a place where I'm challenging that history, that weight of male history in visual art practice. In the same way it's important to me to be queer because everyone assumes the world to be straight. But actually sometimes it's not an issue at all for me personally. That's where I think for me, identity politics is important, because you're claiming your place, as somebody who was originally marginalised and is now in there. What I don't like is when people only read you as gay, woman, lesbian, black, because that marginalises you from their position and power; they're saying 'I'm a real artist and this is a person with an issue and they're only able to work in this issue, in this area, so their art isn't as transgressive as mine, it isn't as broad, isn't as important, because they're just speaking from this angle.' That's when I get worried because they're trying to ghettoise me, and I'm maybe playing into it myself.

*I want to ask you about formalism v. activism. In 'Gay and Lesbian Visions of Ireland' you are described as artist/activist, do you value activist art in art historical terms? Like if you look at war art from WWII, or AIDS art and activist groups like Gran Fury....*

I think it's very important. 'History' is very relative and I think just because work isn't deemed by certain people to be of value doesn't mean it's valueless. I think we've got lots of different agendas when people start collecting work as 'important work of our time'. You've got corporate issues, you've got political issues and I actually think history is so selective that when you're talking historically you have to realise 'whose history are you speaking about?', 'who's making the history', 'who's recording the history?', that's something that's going on a lot at the moment around people looking at artists who have been forgotten because they weren't deemed important, especially women artists, or people of working class origins, their work wasn't seen as real, because the people who were collecting it and buying it and documenting it were male middle-class establishment, patriarchal. So that whole notion of history is problematic in the first degree as to who remembers what by what names. So to go back to your question I think what artists are doing around AIDS and around other kinds of activism, around poverty and around certain live issues that are current or were current ten years ago or whatever, are of the utmost importance, because that's what people need to address at the time,





that's what's going on in their lives, that's what moves, them motivates them, drives them and I think, of course it's got value. I would question the notion of 'historical' because that's talking about market and value and value systems, and I don't give a shit about that kind of thing really. I'm more interested in art that moves me and that is important to me.

*You don't think that aesthetic concerns are of particular importance?*

Well, aesthetics are a different scenario.

*But the aesthetics concerns would tend to be attached more to the formalist viewpoint. It may be considered in activist art that these concerns are not so important because what's important is the message. What do you think?*

I think it depends on what you think art is, you're back down to definitions. What is art? Some people would say that's not art that's politics, that's propaganda and so be it. If it's propaganda it's propaganda. If somebody is calling it art, it has to be criticised as art. And so is it art?

*We're back to Marcel du Champ.*

Is it art, who's calling it art, are Gran Fury calling it art or are they calling it propaganda and activism? I think it's very creative activism and very creative propaganda, and it can be viewed as art if somebody's putting it in an art context and criticising it and critiquing it in an art context. You can also say Jackson Pollock's art, is it formalist, is it working in formal terms? Or Rothko or any other movement or art practice.

*But can you look at Jackson Pollock's work in anything other than formal terms? That seems obviously formalist work?*

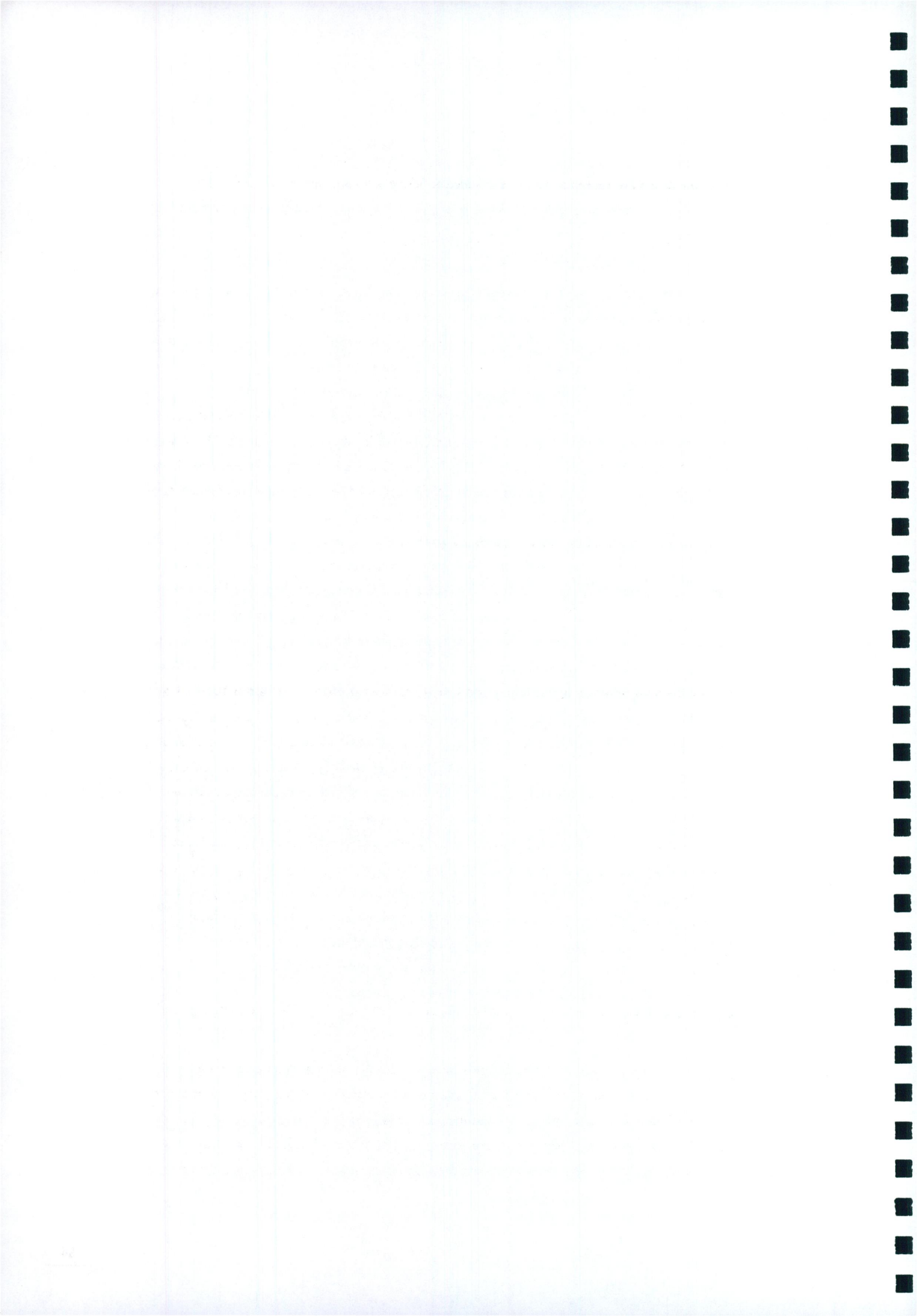
I think for the people who saw it first, it didn't have any formal terms, as they saw it. I think what their view of formalism was, Jackson Pollock's work wasn't actually taking on. It's semantic. The Gorilla Girls for instance, who are critiquing the art market and the art world, very well and very classically, and using their language and using the advertising language, and using the business of making books from art very creatively, and it's definitely impinging on the art world and using formal language, the way they use reclining nudes with gorilla girls faces and the way they use billboards outside of art galleries to show sexism and racism inherent in the collecting that's going on in the gallery; I think that's very artistic, because it's using art concepts and the concept of the media and the image of the artwork. But it is 'what do you think art is' that it comes down to, and if somebody calls it a work of art it has to be critised in terms of what art does. But with postmodernism all of those elements are breaking down, and it's a very hard question to answer in a traditional way, because of the way that people are using media and billboards and advertising in art anyway.





*One of the artists I've spoken to said that this idea of having a political agenda, the conceptual, issue based or intellectualised art which is prevalent or dominant at the moment was like the current phase or movement, almost like cubism was the prevalent movement of the twenties. Do you think this is true, and if so what might happen next?*

Again, I think there are so many different things happening. I get a sense that what's happening is that people are tired of formulas, and there are very cynical cryptic pieces of art being made, and I'm just thinking of something like the British Art Show or the whole Damian Hirst and all that 'brilliant' crowd who had those exhibitions in the States of British art. I don't know a lot about American art apart from the magazines. But a lot of the work, I think, is quite cynical. I'm not saying that is a bad or good thing, but a lot of the work is quite self-referential and cynical. I don't even see much work being issue based at all. I think it's very un-issue based. There are smart one-liners; the work isn't very layered, generally. Good, quick funny idea, get it up there and there's a twist in it. And the twist can be conceptual, but I just keep thinking of them as one liners, like Hirst. There are artists that I really like that don't get in there, people that I'm interested in, who would be more issue-based, and more humane in their context and content. Georgina Starr is one. People like Mark Wallinger I find interesting, because at least they're critiquing some kind of culture in a clear way, whereas I don't fancy someone like Hirst myself, I think it's boring and has fulfilled its purpose as one-liners do. I can't really say that I see a coherent phase going on. I don't think that you can return to formalism given the concepts that are flying around in terms of computer, multi-media, the way we have access to so many ideas, so many theories, so many philosophies, and I think that's what postmodernism is about. It's about responding to the world as the huge barrage of information, media and communication that the late twentieth century, the nineties is; all the concepts, hundreds and millions of them, and all the materials, hundreds and millions of them and all the ways of seeing and thinking and being in the world, and all the cultures and all the layers of one culture in particular, that are there and that we are all aware of, and that we wouldn't have been aware of fifty years ago because we didn't have the methodology or the media to show us that, and I just think that's what contemporary art practice is reflecting, compared to when we only had stone, clay, wood and paint, and that was what we fashioned our view of the world from, that was why we did it that way, we had only the body, and the world and our village, and stories from the bible to illustrate. If you look up through the industrial revolution and movements in art, that's what has happened, that's what art represents, it's a reflection of our culture, and our culture now is huge and diverse and diversifying all the time, and that's what contemporary art is doing, so, that's why it's everything.





*What do you think is the effect of AIDS, culturally and socially on your work, if any?*

There is a piece of work that I want to make that is connected to AIDS but I haven't made it yet. In my life it's there all the time because of my experiences around people whom I know who have died or who are HIV+, so, as an experience I have women friends and men friends who are HIV+, and one, a woman, who died. It's there for me, it's in my consciousness. I haven't addressed it directly in my work, but I will.

*Do you think AIDS has had an effect in general on contemporary practice or on straight art?*

I think that to my mind, in the kind of work that I read about and the kind of work that I'm interested in, it comes up. I don't know if I could say that it has affected generally contemporary practice, because there are a lot of people out there that don't deal directly with things like that, but I'm sure are informed by illness and cancer, twentieth century diseases of which AIDS is one.

*You wouldn't differentiate AIDS from cancer and other diseases?*

I would in my life, absolutely and totally, but I think if you look at peoples work that might deal with fragility, that might deal with another related theme, you can't just put a label on pieces of work and say AIDS, I think that's a mistake.

*You don't think that more work has been inspired by the AIDS epidemic than by cancer, for example?*

I think politically, yes. I think in certain situations, and places like New York and San Francisco, and certain urban centres where there is a large awareness around poverty and queerness, that there is a lot of work which has come out of it. I think in other places, no, they haven't been touched by AIDS. I do think that when reading a piece of work you can't just say 'ah, AIDS' when reading a piece of work about something, unless somebody says 'yes, AIDS' back to you and is quite categoric, so it's very hard to say how AIDS impinges on work, it's very hard to quantify that because you're not dealing with a direct language, you're dealing with something that gives you feelings and I might read something as being about AIDS when it's about a cell. It has a broader reading than AIDS, and I find that too hard to quantify, unless somebody is actually talking about the work or there is information around the work.

*Do you not think that people would tend to see this cell and read it as AIDS because that's the social context that we're in?*

Yes, but other people wouldn't, my mother wouldn't. I think you have to be careful with what you say about dominant and general society, and making generalisations, because I might ascribe that kind of issue onto a piece of work but my mother wouldn't. She might think of it as a baby or as a kind of foetus, or all her friends are getting old, she might talk about it as aging. So when you're ascribing certain influences onto certain things I think it's very hard to make art fit your box for you, and I think that's a problem.





*There was an article in Aug Frieze entitled "Death and the Marketplace" and this is probably more true of America, about how AIDS reintroduced death as a major theme into art in the mid-eighties. We could subsequently imply that a lot of work produced recently such as Rachel Whiteread's 'House', dealing with decay, the shell, is work that is informed by this reintroduction of death as a major theme. Do you think that this is true?*

You know, I think it's true for some people and rubbish for others. That's the problem when you start to try and legislate for meanings in art. What you have to realise is that people bring their own experiences of illness and frailty and death to things, and if people's experience has been of AIDS and their friends being ill, and that's what's in their culture, then that's what they're going to bring to something that makes them feel sad and vulnerable and frail and near death. Whereas somebody else is going to have something about racism and poverty and somebody being destroyed by the forces of a corrupt power, if they are black and heterosexual. My middle-class parents, who have an awareness of certain kinds of art historical practice, are going to think of death in terms of aging, sudden illness, accident, and they are going to see Whiteread's house as nostalgic, home. If you accept that art belongs to everyone then you have to realise that everyone's response to it is actually different. Rachel Whiteread makes the work, and our readings of it and art historians, and theoreticians readings of it are all different. She hasn't prescribed a meaning and that's what I think is interesting. We are free to come to it with our associations. To answer your question I think they have affected our readings of the house and our experiences of death for this culture and this time, but it's ours, it's not necessarily hers and it's not necessarily some woman or man's down the road either.

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that proper record-keeping is essential for the transparency and accountability of the organization. This section also outlines the various methods used to collect and analyze data, ensuring that the information is reliable and up-to-date.

2. The second part of the document focuses on the financial aspects of the organization. It provides a detailed overview of the budget, including the projected income and expenses for the upcoming year. This section also discusses the various financial risks and how they are being managed to ensure the organization's financial stability.

3. The third part of the document addresses the operational aspects of the organization. It describes the various processes and procedures that are in place to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of services. This section also discusses the various challenges that the organization is facing and how they are being addressed.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the human resources aspect of the organization. It provides an overview of the current staff levels and the various roles and responsibilities of the different departments. This section also discusses the various training and development programs that are in place to ensure that the staff is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the legal and regulatory aspects of the organization. It provides an overview of the various laws and regulations that the organization is subject to and how they are being complied with. This section also discusses the various legal risks and how they are being managed to ensure the organization's legal compliance.

6. The sixth part of the document discusses the environmental and social aspects of the organization. It provides an overview of the various environmental and social issues that the organization is facing and how they are being addressed. This section also discusses the various initiatives that are in place to promote sustainability and social responsibility.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the future of the organization. It provides an overview of the various strategic initiatives that are in place to ensure the organization's long-term success. This section also discusses the various challenges that the organization is facing and how they are being addressed.

8. The eighth part of the document discusses the conclusion of the document. It summarizes the key findings of the document and provides a final overview of the organization's current state and future prospects.



## Appendix 5

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### Interview with Simon Watney- 17th October 1996, Camden Town, London.

*How do you relate to the terms homosexual, gay, queer or rather how would you differentiate between them?*

I think it's very important that one does, I think this is a very, very interesting question. I think all three stand for different sorts of identity and all three stand for cultural formations as well. Homosexual is a designated identity, obviously closely connected to shame. Homosexual culture and politics aspired at maximum to notions of tolerance: I'm thinking of E.M. Forster or in cultural expressions people like Benjamin Britton in this country and others. It's an apologetic identity. It's obviously a pathologised identity to begin with, it's profoundly individualistic because it sees a range of individual homosexuals or perverts, it can't conceive of collectivity or shared interest and that I think is in a nutshell homo. Gay emerges in the late sixties, early seventies, in anglophone culture, as a resistance to all those different aspects of homosexual. It's collectivist as well as individual. It spoke for a culture which maybe seems banal to us today in some ways, all that positive imaging stuff and so on and so forth, but none-the-less an assertive culture, a culture which thought not merely of series of individual homosexuals but of a special movement, a real constituency based on a recognition of the way that homosexuals, if you will, were targeted by the law, and by the state in other ways too, and imagined and feared and dreaded and so and so forth. And gay culture had and has many, many different variants in its own history. It's only twenty five years old, it's a young movement. And queer in turn I think is inseparable from the epidemic, to be honest, absolutely inseparable, for a generation born, let's say, 1970's the medium term, five years before, five years after, on the whole at the time of gay liberation, who grew up under the shadow of the epidemic as children and as adolescents, who also looked at the older generation, as younger generations will always quite properly look at older generations, with a need to differentiate the new from the old. Utopian, in some ways to my generation, I'm filled with admiration for what queer tried to do, its possibilities were different to ours. The relationships between lesbians and gay men were so different by 1980, so different to my generation. I have to say I always think the women dumped on us, badly. Different forms of feminism permitted queer, different forms of race politics, as well the whole relations of black and white kids in this town now is incomparably different. I grew up in South London, I never met a single black person in my entire childhood, growing up in Streatham, ever once, in my school, anywhere, so my sociology is utterly different, and queer expresses something of that. In cultural terms I'm less sure quite what queer has taken us to. It's about a body of theory, from screen and from psychoanalysis and from other sources. It's about sexuality rather than gender, interestingly, but then I think always in gay theory and in gay culture also there was a tension between a culture and the politics about sexuality running into a more traditional sexual politics on gender.







*So you think that queer is inseparable from the epidemic, when I spoke to Nayland Blake he suggested that they were in fact quite separate, they just coincided but that really the difference was the generation difference, the fact that the queer generation were the people who grew up with these gay institutions already in place?*

Yes, that's important certainly, that's part of having been of that generation of 1970, to be able to take for granted a whole range of, I mean if you look at the back pages of Gay Times and just run through the social groups in Britain, from gay stamp collecting groups to rambling to whatever, everybody's there in one way or another. When I was a teenager there was nothing. We were illegal, simple as that. I'm a pre-Woffington person. And so the psychology of growing up in that way is quite different from the psychology of growing up on the back of publications like Gay News and all the other things that happened in the seventies here. Also queer is quintessentially American. In this country it is entirely an imported term, and there are tensions there, real tensions. Britain is very much not America, thank God. I think gay came out of an anglophone politics at a time when in this country the left was, as it still is in lots ways, profoundly homophobic and misogynistic. And gay came from a civil rights politics and from a more libertarian politics which was still actually looking back to the new deal, to Roosevelt, to all of that, and that doesn't really exist in America anymore except in a few beleaguered pockets, I suppose. But our political history is so different to theirs. Now I think probably there's much more opportunity for genuine oppositional politics in Britain or in Ireland than there is in America; and queer therefore has to carry this whole load of being involved in foreign policy issues and all domestic policy issues as well as homosexuality. I think that's one of the mortifications, in a way, of American queer and gay politics; that because there isn't analogy to the left and centre left parties of Europe, that the lesbian and gay and feminist groups in America have to take on board all of this other extraneous baggage. I was one of the three founders of Outrage and our goal there specifically at the same time as Queer Nation in 1990 was to establish a notion of a queer politics, something that was completely autonomous, which wasn't just saying 'we say no to the gulf war' say, maybe we did say no to the gulf war, but what has that got to do with sexual politics. In England, at any rate in my experience, always queer politics as you'd say no, but gay politics in the seventies was homogenised by the far left. Since I never came from the far left and was always deeply hostile to the far left myself, I was glad to see the opportunity for a lesbian and gay movement which wasn't caught up with other social struggles. I think American gay politics and now queer politics are heroic and brave and wonderful, but they pertain to a different political structure, to a completely different cultural organisation, and I think the way that queer gets used here is much more playful and creative in some ways, if you look at the queer studies here, than America. I was a Labour Party baby (laughs), that made you profoundly unpopular in the seventies in the main stream of lesbian and gay politics here. I wasn't in favour of shooting people on the whole, I always found it rather abominable (laughs), you know, public school revolutionaries are rather tiresome, I find.





*Do you think that these identities are completely necessary, what do you feel is the intrinsic value of identity politics?*

Well we all come into the world and we have identities from our mother's milk, from where we've grown up, from our families, and always inflected through class and ethnicity and national histories and our different relations to those which can change over time. When it comes to sexualities that have been produced in relation to homosexual desire then that's something really rather new. If I say homosexual identity it's almost a tautology. In America for example, in my experience, from my generation and younger generations, it's very common for people to say 'I'm a homosexual'. Very, very unusual in London to hear anybody under sixty call themselves a homosexual, almost unthinkable, unless they're deeply self-hating and peculiar in some way, which again suggests something actually about the differences between gay identity in Britain and gay identity in America. Gay identity here never had the kind of naive American essentialism about it. It didn't suggest that we were all the same in any way, least of all in what we want to do in bed, or anything else. It was insisting however that we are all vulnerable to being beaten up at bus stops, or to being harassed under differential age of consent legislations or bonkers cops making arrests for crimes without victims and all that sort of thing: a shared sense of political and social interest between large numbers of men from very different backgrounds if not from different generations. I think gay identity did become more or less indispensable for people who had the luck, in a sense, to have access to it. You can only achieve social and political goals through collective action as well as through individual action, and in that sense gay identity doesn't say anything very much about you or me or anybody else in terms of whether we are nice or nasty, or anything else about us. But it does suggest that we are going to share a certain key core set of assumptions, whether or not we go clubbing, whether or not we like house music, whether or not we find Old Compton Street repulsive or heaven or change our minds every few days about it or whatever. I take it so deeply for granted as one does tend to take one's identity for granted, but it's never something that I found causes personal anxiety, as it were, on the levels of theoretical debates about essentialism and anti-essentialism. I always thought that the people who argued that gay identity was a form of confession, parodying and, I believe, mis-reading a certain aspect of Foucault, were very naive and usually heterosexual as well, in the early days of that critique. I don't think gay identity, even coming out, is remotely like confession, on the contrary I think it's the exact opposite. If you're going into confession you accept, obviously, the authority of the priest and the church. In coming out you are absolutely refusing the authority of certain intellectual and other forms of knowledge formations and asserting another set of identities. Historically forged, limited, they are not going to last forever, identities will always be contingent by their very nature. But I think after twenty five years we've now got to a situation where gay is pretty embrative, fairly inclusive, very much an umbrella, and underneath it all sorts of other orchidacious identities can emerge and flourish and disappear and emerge and flourish in the same way that the mollies or the marjorams emerged and flourished and disappeared. It may come back for all you know, thirty years time I'll be meeting people who come up and say 'hello, I'm a marjoram' for all I know, bad, bad







(laughs). Well I suspect queer's a bit like that, it's the next phase moving on, gays or says, twenty five, thirty years on, that's all. There are bound to be resistances, hopefully, if people are alive and living in the present. And I don't think that necessarily has to mean violent civil war. I did very much dislike the Canadian anti-gay, 'kill gay men', queer rhetoric. I thought that was repulsive, but I still think some aspects of the queer anti-gay rhetoric is fairly unpleasant. I think the anti-gay rhetoric here at the moment is disgusting actually.... I don't have much time for anti-gay, because it's purely negative, it says nothing exceptional, a certain kind of journalistic ambition.

*Let's talk about formalism v. activism. Do you relate to activist art in art historical terms? We could look at art that was produced in the second world war for example....*

If you look at the Artists International Association, for example, formed in relation to the Spanish Civil War, you can see artists whose main practice may have been figurative or non-figurative, caught up in the aesthetic debates of the late thirties, who also turned to art for fund raising purposes as well as propagandising purposes. By and large I don't really think we have moved very far from that. There are very few artists I know whose practice is exclusively activist or, at the other end of the scale, formalist. Indeed, I can't think of anybody whose work is entirely and exclusively, in that sense of the word, activist. Activism is a word which I think in British English, is a very unfashionable word at the moment. To me, it simply means acknowledgement of a politics which is outside parliament, extra-parliamentary, about everyday life which by definition parliamentary politics and party politics are unlikely to reach, and demands on the part of various marginalised, dispossessed peoples, necessary voices, often angry, but not necessarily. Activism is dispatching from demonstrations on the streets through to people working silently towards a goal.

*Can I ask you about the effect of AIDS, culturally, socially on contemporary art practices, and on straight art practices?*

I think the key issue here is where and when and what kind of epidemic. In America there have been more than 500,000 cases of AIDS. In Britain there have been 9,000 deaths. So that's the difference, it's not commensurate. In the American art community everybody has been affected directly, almost everybody anyway, and in Britain, fortunately, happily, very very few. Cross the channel to Paris and you'll find a situation far more like New York, and that spins out. You can't give people that experience; mind you that's exactly what some of these artists attempt to do, to try and produce materials which will help other people understand the position in which people in these groups find themselves, whether in relation to actual loss and death or the experience of periodic illness or the experiences of hatred and violence and the other epiphenomena of the epidemic. In Britain I think AIDS is a theme which runs through many aspects of contemporary art but doesn't often have a tag around it. It's not been tested. Whereas in America it's more likely to be explicit, partly because of the scale of the epidemic, but also because of the scale of

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The second part of the document focuses on the implementation of the proposed changes. It details the steps involved in the process, from the initial planning stage to the final execution. The document also addresses the potential challenges that may arise during the implementation phase and provides strategies to overcome them.

The third part of the document discusses the results of the implementation. It presents the data collected and analyzes the outcomes of the changes. The document highlights the areas where the changes have been successful and identifies the areas that need further attention.

The fourth part of the document provides a conclusion and a summary of the findings. It reiterates the importance of maintaining accurate records and the need for continuous improvement. The document also provides recommendations for future actions and a timeline for the next steps.



the failure of the American response to the epidemic, the enormity of the failure of the response of the government and other agencies, compared to Britain at any rate, and the same goes for France, the failure of the government there is unimaginably worse than the failure here. Thatcherism actually responded paradoxically very well. In relation to injecting drug users at any rate, we had the best system of needle exchanges in the world by 1986, which is why we have less than five percent of cases from injecting drug use. There is no parallel, it's an extraordinary story. But what they didn't do was to respond to the needs of African women in Britain and gay men. That you couldn't have predicted, but that does pan out in a way across the arts field as every other social field. What we have got, I think, in Britain is, as elsewhere in Europe, a general cultural climate in which questions of loss are very high on the agenda. Loss in relation to the Second World War, in relation to notions of, you name it really, notions of the past, questions of the past, and the present and the future, exile, diaspora, all sorts of things. Whereas in America AIDS art tends to be much more site specific, issue specific, because of the enormity of the disaster, and because of the scale of the political failure and of the political process in America to do with the epidemic. So I don't think it isn't surprising but it does have an epidemiological explanation in a way. Not that the epidemiology predicts exactly how people are going to react, of course, but it does frame the social reality in which we live. That also means that the pressure in America on artists to be more traditionally political and prescriptively political is going to be stronger than here. Also there is a stronger tradition in America after all, in many ways, of political art. I tend to be sceptical, like so many other people, of the category of political art if only because it often restricts our understanding to relatively obvious notions of what is or is not political. And I think good political art very often in fact expands our understanding of politics and of identity and of other things in ways that we can't necessarily know in advance. Which is why the work of someone like Bill Jacobson, about the epidemic is, to me, very political. Whereas it wouldn't have been seen as political in other circumstance. I think one of the things that is significant is that many artists involved in AIDS work are also involved in other areas of practice, women or men, for that matter, seem to be producing angry assertive mobilising art as well as art that is reflective and memorialising and concerned with unconscious responses and stresses and so on. It is very difficult to generalise about these things, dangerous.

*When I was talking to Nayland Blake we talked about the reintroduction of death as a major theme, sadness etc. I believe you've read the David Dietcher article in Aug Frieze entitled 'Death and the Marketplace.' What Nayland Blake said was that he felt a lot of work being produced by young British art stars now, for example, is informed by this and in a sense couldn't have been produced if it wasn't for AIDS.*

I don't agree with that for the simple reason that I don't think that there is a world art culture. Obviously different cultures are in dialogue with one other and artists are, but unless we respect the relative autonomy of English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, French, Belgian art, we are generalising at too high of an altitude of abstraction. It's certainly true that the work of Rachel Whiteread with







its poetic thematic of loss, what happens when a house is turned inside out, its image of exclusion that gay men are likely to know, which black people are likely to know, which the Irish in London are likely to know and so on and so forth, it speaks immediately concrete formal metaphors of loss, a loss of working class housing in the blitz, but even more so because of labour council rehousing projects in the fifties and sixties. Frankly, my family got through the blitz, but they didn't make it through the sixties (laughs), 'out to Essex you will go.....' and Rachel Whiteread comes from a similar social background. But those questions of the family, of loneliness inside houses, white thsepulcas, endless slipstreams of connotative associations in her work can take on board AIDS as well, quite clearly. We don't know who's got AIDS. You walk down the street, all the houses look the same; somebody in there's ill, in one of those houses. It's polysemic, it's open to projective readings. It's work which makes us very acutely aware of ourselves projecting into the work of art, onto the field of the work of art. I don't think that's necessarily better or worse than more obviously or narrowly prescriptive traditional political forms of art. But I think it would be wrong to say that work only comes about because of the epidemic or because of cultural responses to the epidemic. I think that would be very reductive and simply historically wrong, as simple as that. Equally Damian Hirst in a melodramatic way, one can read questions of loss there. Given, I think they are both heterosexual, I don't really know. Hirst brings into a public arena questions of death, mortality, of inside outside, like Whiteread in a way but I think less interestingly so, to me at any rate. If I can think even of a single English artist, who has dealt with AIDS as the major subject matter of his or her art, no names spring to mind at all. We've had nothing like work on the level of Felix Gonzales-Torres. Felix's work was entirely about clinical trials, about loss, about a politics which wasn't political, which is why so many people didn't like him in this country, I think. He did 'Poster of White Bed' as a site specific piece of work in New York back in the late eighties, a double bed just leaving the impress of two people who'd been there, maybe they died, maybe they just got up to use the bathroom, you don't know. When that showed in Glasgow, all sorts of virtuous people were screaming 'why doesn't it say use a rubber every time, why doesn't it say this, why doesn't it say that'. That was very interesting to me, that people were aggressive to that image of a bed, because actually it was very beautiful in grimy old Glasgow. I mean this beautiful, beautiful white bed floating over the estates and down the Liverpool road and so on and so forth. I thought it was a wonderful piece about the epidemic, and bringing the epidemic into an open environment. We talked about it, because beds are where we're born and where we fuck and where we die, if we're lucky, and it's the central object, sculptural plinth, for thinking about the sight of death, but death absented, present and absent at the same time very much like most of Felix's work. And I have to say that I think that such work will survive and have more purchase and explain more about what it was like to live in relation to the epidemic in the eighties and nineties than perhaps the immediate sloganising, which is only to say that the immediate sloganising is contingent, it has a very different kind of goal, a goal which is a short-term local goal, not a broad goal and that's fine. Different works of art have different targets, different reach, different durability built into them, it's part of the process, which is why, I think, talking of AIDS and art it's best to try and step back from trying to decide in advance too confidently whether or not something is relevant to the epidemic, or derived from the epidemic, or good or bad.







I think most of us are going to be suspicious now of statements in any medium which are prefaced 'as a woman', 'as a gay man' in some ways; in other ways we have to trust those statements as well, because of the absolutely irresistible, irreducible facticity there - 'I am not a woman, I am not a heterosexual, I don't have AIDS'. Unless we proceed from respect for those lived social subjectivities and at the same time understand that they aren't necessarily guarantors of universal truth, then we are on the right lines.

*Can I ask you about Douglas Crimp's reaction to Nicholas Nicholson's exhibition in the States? What do you think of that now, do you think that kind of reaction is likely to still happen today?*

I think the reaction at the time was more understandable than it might be now, though I'm sure many people would still agree with that ACT UP line. When there was a show at the Museum of Modern Art of Nicholson's photographs of people mainly in hospitals and mainly dying, they were accused of being voyeuristic and fatalistic and so on and so forth, and the flyer that was given out, silently, people didn't interrupt, it was done with some discretion in the room, people were given flyers which said give us photographs of lively, beautiful, sexy people with AIDS, etc. And at that point in the epidemic it was indeed important to point out that most people with AIDS were living mostly lives which were very productive and healthy, and only a small percentage of their time involved any relation to hospitals. And the overwhelming set of images of the epidemic had been in public images of death and dying and there did seem to be a need to make a balance, to put it at it's most generous. But also looking back I think one can see that there was a kind of denial going on there. So many people were dying inexplicably and sometimes in very terrible circumstances, but I think work that dealt with death was just too scary frankly, people do tend to die with AIDS. The whole of that anti-HIV movement, all the cranks, conspiracy theorists, who cluster in on this epidemic have done a great deal of harm and somehow we have to accommodate ourselves to the fact that in the absence of effective treatment drugs, at the moment the long term situation is uncertain, less uncertain now in '96 than it was in '95, but somehow we have to deal with death, we have to survive death, we have to, like our friends with AIDS want to have the sun shine on their faces, want to be alive because life is all we've got. So, yes, let's have a broad, broad spectrum of understandings of the epidemic but there is no simple truthful way of representing AIDS. Everything we've learned from theory in the last twenty years tell us that complex social phenomena can't be adequately described and explained in single images or in a photographic regeneration or however. And to try and imagine that you can represent AIDS without having people dying is somehow to rather spectacularly miss the point of the actual realities of this epidemic and how it's experienced most of all by people with AIDS....





*When I spoke to Don Bachardy he talked about, I suppose the way that we look at art in a social context, and what was true for him, living in L.A., nowadays was that you look for the AIDS in the art, as it were, and if it wasn't present then the art could be seen as non-AIDS art. Do you think this could be true in Britain, do you think it's true in America?*

It may be true in Los Angeles, I know the West Coast very little, I'm almost entirely East Coast and Mid-Western in my affiliations with America. I don't think in Britain there is any sense whatever to making the distinction, why AIDS and non-AIDS, why not any other social issue you care to name, there are many, many bigger issues here in Britain than AIDS that you might equally bifocate art, you might say housing art and non-housing art, employment art and non-employment art, it doesn't run at all in Britain or anywhere in Europe that I'm aware of, only in those centres of population where AIDS has been the leading cause of death for many years for younger people, under forty, as it is in many American cities, could that be a perception. But I think that in turn puts probably an intolerable weight on artists, a responsibility which I don't think is up to me or anyone else to say how they should respond to. If you're nursing your lover at home, if you're living with AIDS, if you're a buddy, if you're spending all your time fund-raising, who's to tell you how you should or should not respond in your work as an artist, it seems to me most improper and unhelpful to try and tell artists they should or shouldn't do anything, frankly. Unless your work comes from within yourself it's not going to be any good anyway, good art always has to proceed from within, or else it's just something else. In this curious paradox that Richard Goldstein pointed out in the Village Voice fifteen years ago, for those in risk groups, we're walking around in the blitz, bombs are going off day and night, where other people are just walking down the street in the sunshine, you can live in the same street and it's a different universe at the same time to everybody else. And artists are likely to respond to that kind of situation of ambivalence because so much art is always about ambivalence.

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2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and techniques used to collect and analyze data. It includes a detailed description of the experimental procedures and the statistical analysis performed.

3. The third part of the document presents the results of the study. It includes a series of tables and graphs that illustrate the findings of the research. The data shows a clear trend of increasing activity over time.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the implications of the findings. It suggests that the results have significant implications for the field of study and may lead to further research in this area.

5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.



## Appendix 6

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### Interview with Michael Wilson- 14th October, Dublin

*How do you relate to the terms homosexual, gay or queer artist and how do you differentiate between them?*

I would see the three terms would mark out a historical trajectory, late nineteenth century, homosexual, a clinical model, pathology, then in the course of the twentieth century there are a number of attempts to rework the term homosexual both to make it in itself a positive term or to replace it by other terms, this culminates in the adoption of the term gay which signals the whole liberal reformist tendency of the last couple of decades. However gay at the beginning would have been a term that operated very much in the way in which the term queer began to operate in the eighties under the influence of AIDS activism. So they mark, the terms homosexual, gay, queer, different moments in the elaboration of various strategies. The difference between gay and queer I think is very shifting or unstable because basically the gay strategies which were set in the early seventies in New York or Paris are very much the same as the queer strategies of the late eighties. I suppose the big difference between gay and queer would be the degree to which queer has been able to go mainstream so quickly, I mean, queer cinema in the early nineties broke very quickly and gained wide circulation at least on the arthouse circuit and even on the mainstream circuit to a certain extent, some of the movies did. So that would be a big difference. Gay was a lot harder to gain circulation within those mainstream channels. Queer perhaps marks a greater degree of proximity with certain other developments in contemporary culture, say postmodernism and other developments. I don't think that either the homosexual lobbyists of the early twentieth century or the gay activists of the seventies had that degree of identity with the larger condition of the culture. Queer fits in with so many other things that are going on. Ironically queer is eminently assimilable to the mainstream culture, while at the same time it's supposed to be a strategy of non-assimilation, of resistance and so forth. But basically a historical trajectory, the three terms, that's the first thing I can say about them. I think that they would be used strategically, in some instances it makes sense to use the term gay, in others homosexual, in others queer, they are strategic things, given that if we go with the queer idea that there is no essence involved, it doesn't matter what term you use except as it fits into a context.

*But you don't personally relate to the term homosexual?*

Say the famous medical handbook in the States, The Diagnostics Book, that in their disassemblies was it managed to persuade it to exclude the category of homosexual. It's inclusion of the category of homosexual as a pathology is something that I think that one has to relate to, despite the fact that it happens in a different territory, a different legal territory, a different state and also in a different historical period. I still think you cannot mobilise the terms queer and gay



1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that this is crucial for the company's financial health and for providing transparency to stakeholders. The text mentions that the records should be kept up-to-date and should be accessible to all relevant parties.

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3. The third part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining a high level of quality control. It states that all products and services should be of the highest quality and should meet the company's standards. The text mentions that the quality control team should be responsible for ensuring that all products and services are of the highest quality and that they meet the company's standards. The text also mentions that the quality control team should be responsible for identifying any defects or issues and for taking the necessary steps to resolve them.

4. The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining a high level of security. It states that all data and information should be kept secure and should be protected from unauthorized access. The text mentions that the security team should be responsible for ensuring that all data and information are kept secure and that they are protected from unauthorized access. The text also mentions that the security team should be responsible for identifying any security risks and for taking the necessary steps to mitigate them.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction. It states that the company's goal is to provide the highest level of customer satisfaction and that this should be the focus of all of the company's efforts. The text mentions that the customer service team should be responsible for ensuring that all customers are satisfied with the products and services they receive. The text also mentions that the customer service team should be responsible for identifying any areas for improvement and for taking the necessary steps to improve the customer experience.



in the contemporary without relating them to say the pathologisation of the homosexual historically.

*But do you relate to the terms 'queer artist', 'gay artist', as an artist?*

You mobilise them strategically and I think if the question is can they be mobilised strategically, yes. I'm perfectly happy to use these terms but I don't see them as the be all and end all. I think maybe it's very important to have things like gay artist and queer artist in the public domain as terms, as conceptions that might have some kind of general currency at a particular moment in time as a way of signalling the existence of difference. Obviously anybody who works as an artist always tends to resist or wants to resist any particular label that might be mobilised - video artist, performance artist - because it's seen as establishing a set of perimeters or restrictions on their practice. In practice, in the practical realities of getting a show or getting a space booked or whatever, one has to operate within a vocabulary of available terms in order to gain access. But yes I would relate to them, I would understand their use, and I would accord with their use strategically. I don't see them as finalised or resolved terms.

*You mentioned queer in conjunction with AIDS activism in the mid-eighties. Do you think that's when the change came about from gay to queer, that's when queer began, as a result of AIDS?*

Do you think something like Guy Hocquenghem, the French theorist in the early seventies, what he was doing in the manner of gay are all of those strategies that were adopted again in the mid-eighties by AIDS activists in New York and tried them out again in terms of queer.

*So you think that essentially there's no difference?*

There is a difference in precisely in as much that the name change was necessary, because gay by the mid-eighties had become something else. Gay in the nineteen seventies signalled a whole range of different things but within that diversity there was an over-riding revolutionary impulse, I mean basically there was an aligned attempt, at least, with Marxism or with feminism. It was a radical revolutionary form of social critique. By the early eighties, mid-eighties, you will have partly in response to AIDS but partly as a natural consequence of a certain degree of inroad being made by the gay movement, you have the emergence of a very well-healed gay bourgeoisie in America who are capable of generating a very specific kind of urban culture and who have very little relationship, if any, with notions of social critique or revolution, but are in fact basically the model consumer of the late twentieth century. So, under those circumstances and then with the moral backlash in terms of AIDS being identified as a punishment from God etc., there is this polarisation among gay community leaders at least in the States whereby there are those who endorse a normalisation, let's fit in, gay marriage, gay couples, monogamy, let's fit in with the dominant heterosexual culture in that way and then those who say no, let's go and make an all out attack destabilising the normality of the family, making the family look like a weird thing. But

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5. The fifth part of the document concludes the study. It summarizes the main findings and provides a final statement on the importance of the research.



also I think queer represents an attempt to form a greater alliance with certain strands of feminism, those elements of feminism which had moved beyond the idea of woman as an essential category and had engaged in the whole cultural politics of representation and so forth throughout the seventies, they became a point of departure for queer as well. Queer is not really something new so much as a strange and abmixture of a number of different elements, but one of those element would have to be some of the earlier gay strategies of late sixties and early seventies.

*Do you think this identity, labelling is really important? What do you think is the value of identity politics?*

I would see queer as an attempt to disrupt identity politics, in a certain sense. Identity politics is a complex thing. Basically identity is 'I belong to a certain group', so what it means is identifying a pre-existing constituency and identifying a relationship with that, as in 'I fit in here'. Within modernity any political form of resistance has necessitated the constitution of a group or collectivity, the party, the working classes, the unions. You have to identify a group, a collectivity and mobilise around that. So, in that sense identity is the springboard for political mobilisation, the 'I belong'. The problem is that certain forms of 'I belong to this group', and certain forms of group constitution loose their sense of historical particularity and take on an aspect of universality. People have always been in this group, this group has always existed, it will always exist, we will always be this way. There is an essence. And the problem with essences in identity is the fact that they disallow the possibility of change in very important ways but also that often the constitution of marginal groups serves to reinforce or shore up a dominant main stream conception as in the meaning of being straight takes on greater coherency as some marginal other group outside lends greater definition to it. Man is impossible without woman, straight is impossible without gay. So, I think the problem with identity politics is the degree to which they become hardened and when we loose that reflexivity that selfconsciousness of this is for now, this is strategic. But again, and Spivac talks about this, she talks about taking the risk of essentialism using a strategic use of the idea on 'we are absolutely the same, we are all alike and we are different from you, and we are oppressed on that basis', that strategically very often that can be a very important thing. The problem with all this is that as one moves towards a notion of strategy and relativism and stuff like that, one very rapidly begins to loose the ground on which to build a concrete and coherent agenda, so it's tricky. My main problem would be that identity as a question of saying 'I belong to a group or constituency' can often compromise your ability to actually redefine or modify that constituency, because what happens is as you go 'I belong to the group' someone within or on the edges of that group, or even outside it takes on the power to speak for, to make representations on behalf of the group. As an example recently in GCN there was a front page headline which said - Gays are Outraged at such and such a development. And the source for the headline is that one spokesperson for the community had said this, 'We are outraged'. Now that 'we' was not based on any consultative process. That's a notional 'I am one of these people, I'm part of this group, I think this, therefore the rest of the







group think this, and I have a chance to speak for the group, I'm going to say what's on their mind', and make that identification. So those are the kinds of problems. One compromises the ability to modify the group and two privileges certain elements within the group. The bottom line is that the key social markers, gender, class and race, are overshadowed sometimes by other forms of social identification. And I think that's problematic because even within something like the gay community you'll see the degree to which class privileges are active within the differentiation of a hierarchy within the community. The difference between rent and trade, the difference between rent and your standard customer in a gay bar, that's a class difference above and beyond anything else. That's a class difference which reflects a degree to which we are deeply implicated in the larger society, but even as I do that I say we.

*What do you think of the formalism v. activism debate? Do you value activist art in art historical terms for example? I think it's interesting to look at war art from WWII, art which was made in a very specific social context and so much of it hasn't lived on, and I wonder will AIDS art live on?*

I think there's a collision of so many different questions here. One is what is the relationship between AIDS art and the AIDS crisis, what is the relationship between AIDS art and the historical conjunction in which the art world found itself in the eighties. Basically what has happened is the whole notion of fine arts, visual arts, that high cultural sector of the gallery and so forth, despite the fact that it has a bigger public than ever in the western world, is also in a profound crisis and has been for some time. A crisis which begins in the mid-nineteenth century with the redefinition of the basis of art practices, but which is actually given a further inflection by the collapse of abstraction, modernist abstraction, modernist formalism, by the collapse of that sometime in the sixties, that generates a vacuum into which many different things have tried to rush but nothing has gained preeminence. So against that backdrop the notion of activism as a way of forging a link between relatively privileged cultural practices like the art of exhibition or whatever, and contemporary social realities. That's an agenda that is formulated at many different levels and there are many career bureaucrats and people who identify with particular constituencies, they are all involved in shaping that agenda of trying to forge some kind of link between a privileged cultural practice, maybe it's only notionally privileged, not necessarily privileged in terms of economics but it's notional privilege is somehow having greater kudos or greater social status, or whatever. Making art is more privileged than making pop music; pop music may be more lucrative. So against that backdrop the emergence of activist art in the late sixties represents one strategy to solve a certain impasse, and I don't think it works, in the sense that it doesn't address the basic problems of how this category of art comes about, what function do these notional hierarchies and cultures serve, and so forth. In terms of the historical survival of AIDS art, will it survive or not, I don't know, I think it's a funny question to ask because it's kind of the nineteenth century view of what is good art, that which abides over long historical periods. I don't think it's important. What I do think is that if we were to imagine what the late twentieth century might look like from a future vantage point, I think that one of the most alarming things about it will be that there was a medical health crisis on a







global level and that the responses to that were so bizarrely inflected by culture, that the very simple fact of a virus and a syndrome, that all responses to those were so profoundly mediated by culture. It's just something like half the population of Uganda is estimated to be HIV+. The global figures are just so paralytically huge, and yet you have people bogged down in an inability to deal with the idea that a condom or a needle exchange might be very simple straightforward strategies for just allaying the further spread of this. Basically the problem is that pathology was equated with identity. Basically to be sick was to partake in some essence, you were some form of other, racial, sexual, whatever. I think it's bizarre. I mean I think from a future historical vantage point, looking back at the late eighties, rather than the question of whether or not AIDS art will survive, I think just the whole cultural reflex in respect to AIDS will just look so bizarre. Hopefully it will look bizarre. Hopefully it will become so alien to the future that it will look bizarre, because I think it is incredibly bizarre that responses almost a millennium old have been evoked. If you look at the responses to syphilis in early modern Europe, or if you look at the responses to prostitution in the nineteenth century, you see exactly the same kinds of rhetorical and mythological models at work serving to disrupt the appropriate response to what is a medical crisis. I mean even AIDS understood as an STD, and all the ramifications that this has. Will the art survive? I don't think it's an important question.

*When I was talking to Don Bachardy he seemed to think that the way that so much art nowadays does have a political agenda, is conceptual, intellectualised, whatever, and this is often times considered to be more important than the formal aspects. He seems to think that this is the current movement, this is the phase now, like cubism was a movement in the twenties. Do you think this is true and if so could the next movement be a formalist one, or can you make any projection as to what might come next?*

I don't think that socially motivated, or socially activated art practice is dominant. I think that there have been a couple of short term barrages of coverage for some of these practices, but I really think they fall far short of, I mean formalism is hegemonic still. If you look at it in terms of the exchange values commanded by art works on the international market, it is the enduring art object evaluated in terms of the authorial signature and its formal qualities; that is what is valuable, that is what has survived and is continuing to survive. So I don't think that in any sense activist art constitutes a movement at this point. I think it constitutes a point of reference. I think it's a very important point of reference for the legitimization of state investment and state sponsorship of the arts. Identifying art practice with particular marginal social constituencies is a way of legitimising state expenditure for what has historically and correctly been perceived as a class privilege, art. So, in terms of the opposition between activism and formalism, I think that's historically specific to do with the collapse of formalist modernism, or the attempted collapse of a formalist modernism by what's called postmodernism, by things like conceptualism and so forth. But the other thing I think which is most problematic is that the majority of contemporary practices which do have some kind of socially activist agenda fail to take account of the institutional critique launched by conceptualism and feminism in the seventies: an institutional critique which can actually be found in Duchamp, in the found works, the urinal and



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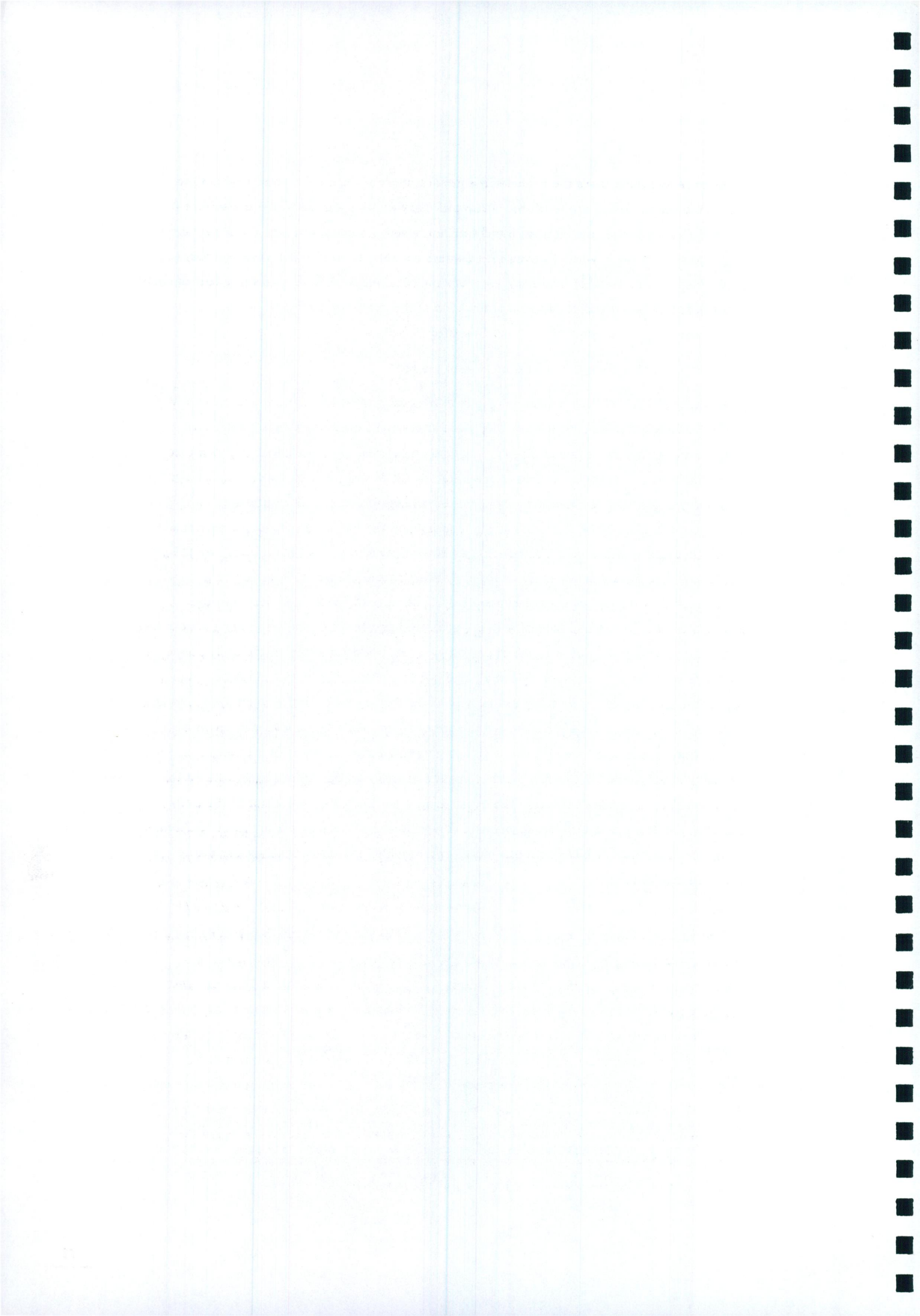
so forth. And I think that's the problem, the politics of art are not the contents within the frame, the politics of art are much more complex than what's going on within the picture frame, it's to do with whether the pictures framed or not, where it's hung, what are the expectations of those coming to see it, who's allowed see it, where are they allowed see it, what are they told they're seeing, why are they bothering, what are the relationships between this moment of social practice and other moments of social practice, all of those kind of things.

*What do you think is the effect of AIDS on modern practice?*

One response I would have is Gran Fury, one of the real activist coalitions in and around ACT UP in New York in the eighties, when they were interviewed by Simon Watney doing an programme for the late show in '89 or '91, basically he was asking 'what about this idea that there has been a renaissance in culture generated by AIDS' and some of the respondents got very angry in terms of 'we're talking about making an urgent and critical response to an immediate crisis, using any resources at our disposal and the discussion of cultural revival and renaissance and whatever is antipathetic, if not down right wrong. So I think that's one thing to bear in mind, to get a relative sense of scale, art practice and the fact of millions dying unnecessarily, ultimately unnecessarily, people dying because of a refusal to deal with the problem: an absolute refusal to deal with the problem because it's perceived as being a sickness in terms of identity and not in terms of pathology of the body, pathology of the body politic. It's seen as a sickness of contemporary society and not as a physical sickness. In terms of the impact on art practice, it's so complex. First of all death, young men and women dying, and at a scale, and in American society, and American society being such a world leader in terms of contemporary art, experiencing a shock comparable to Vietnam in terms of the weight of mortality in it's youth. And I think that put death essentially on our agenda again when it had been so sanitised in many respects. The other thing is the body, the whole cult of the body beautiful, the way that is both reinforced and compromised, it splits, by the prospect of the sick body, the diseased body being so much more present within the distributed society, the distributed community.

*One of the artists I spoke to felt that AIDS was such a part of our social consciousness and context, akin to a war were we living through one, that if you went to an exhibition and expected to find reference to AIDS there, and there was no reference, the work in a way could be deemed non-AIDS conscious art.*

That smacks of the North American situation. First of all interpretation is so much more complex than a simple reading in, and also the idea of something being in the work is also questionable. Cultural artifacts take on significance according to their position in relation to other cultural artifacts and in relation to cultural practice: classic example, Barbara Krugers work 'we don't need another hero' in London or in New York it means one thing but slapped up on a billboard in the middle of Derry, in the middle of the conflict, it means something very





different and it's read differently. So the question of interpretation I'd leave to one side because it's too complex. But in terms of the idea of one deciding to put a content into the work, I think what's happened is that because AIDS has so deeply marked the fabric of our social experience in the late twentieth century it inevitably marks things like art practice. So, as well as the selfconscious importation of it as content, and you can see that in the work of a number of artists, you also have it there as just something that has, AIDS has been the occasion for the incredible exaggeration of a number of conventions of representation that have been there for centuries and are activated at particular moments and given greater currency at particular moments; but just to such a huge and overwhelming degree in the age of AIDS that inevitably art practices are marked by them. The whole question of categories of sexual identity, queer, gay etc., they are precisely up in the air because of the way in which AIDS became a symptom of identity. The equation was something like, gay=AIDS, AIDS=death, so that fits in with the old idea of homosexuality=pathology, identity is illness. Under those circumstances any social practice would be deeply marked. So, I think it's a complex question, as regards work which selfconsciously attempts to import the question of AIDS into the work, I do think there are problems there in terms of, I suppose my own response would have been the show *Queerly Heteroclit*, where the idea was not to make art about AIDS but to combine the conceptualist's approaches of the seventies with the AIDS activist's approaches of the eighties and play those two things off each other in a dialectic of art about art about AIDS; while trying to not place the AIDS at a second or third remove but trying to retain a consciousness of the fact that this was a lived reality in terms of not so much whether you have the virus or not, but it's a lived reality in terms it completely marks the way in which you perceive your body and the products of your body. So, it was a question of questioning the way in which art about AIDS or art aligned with any social issue had become a way of saving art from the possibility of its disappearance under the impact of the critique of the institutions and so forth, mobilised by conceptualism. After Duchamp puts the urinal in and calls it a fountain you really do have a problem in terms of if you are seriously and reflectively going to consider what you're going to do as an art practice if anything can be art, and it depends not on the thing in itself but on its position relative to other social frames. What is the point? And I think that the value of conceptualism was that it was willing in certain areas to seriously take that on, and I think the problem with art about AIDS is that very often it foregoes that question. Very often it doesn't and I would like to align my own practice with those who take on board both the fact that we live in a world where the governmental and international health responses to AIDS are profoundly and systematically negligent and willfully allowing people to die, and have very limited means to respond to that. I think it's really one of the most difficult questions which is what I was trying to deal with in the *Queerly Heteroclit* show. And I think the show is successful precisely in as much as it's marked by that difficulty, in the fact that it's not resolved that it is a heteroclit that it is a collision on many different levels and scales of many different questions. And even with that you have the question of that as the complexity of agendas and considerations in the work increase the alienation of the viewer multiplies also. In the end it becomes almost an alchemical process which is exclusive to the non-initiated, that's another risk, another question.



1. The first part of the report deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the general situation of the country and the progress of the work during the year, and the second section deals with the specific results of the work.

2. The second part of the report deals with the specific results of the work. It is divided into three main sections: the first section deals with the results of the work in the field of agriculture, the second section deals with the results of the work in the field of industry, and the third section deals with the results of the work in the field of commerce.

3. The third part of the report deals with the conclusions and recommendations. It is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the conclusions and the second section deals with the recommendations.



The bottom line is because AIDS was equated as a disorder of identity, AIDS was a question of identity. Identity politics was put on the agenda, because the AIDS crisis became a crisis of representation. That's why art practices became such a key focus for certain activities: because they are one of the areas in which practices of representation could be interrogated. And I think very often you do have a direct move or correlation between an exploration in an artwork and a revised strategy in, say, public health information campaign. And I think that's an important consideration, that there has been this interlinking between ideas elaborated in and around gallery and other art spaces and the actual practices of disseminating information to a large community. I think the one key thing here is the hegemony of America, particularly New York, San Francisco, L.A., Chicago, the hegemony of those centres for us in Europe and in Australia. I think that's kind of interesting because you have a repetition of certain earlier aspects of 20th century art, the one where New York has become the centre and everywhere else is the margin, the periphery, the regions and you have that again with responses to AIDS. It may be also this is much more quickly challenged as well. I mentioned Mathew Jones earlier, an Australian artist whose work in relation to the silence=death project, that's a very clever and very well thought out response to the degree that the whole ACT UP agenda had become an orthodoxy which was just exported. Obviously that would collapse the minute he stops to think about somewhere like South Africa where AIDS is not a gay issue: AIDS is a colonial issue or neocolonial issue or race issue or whatever.





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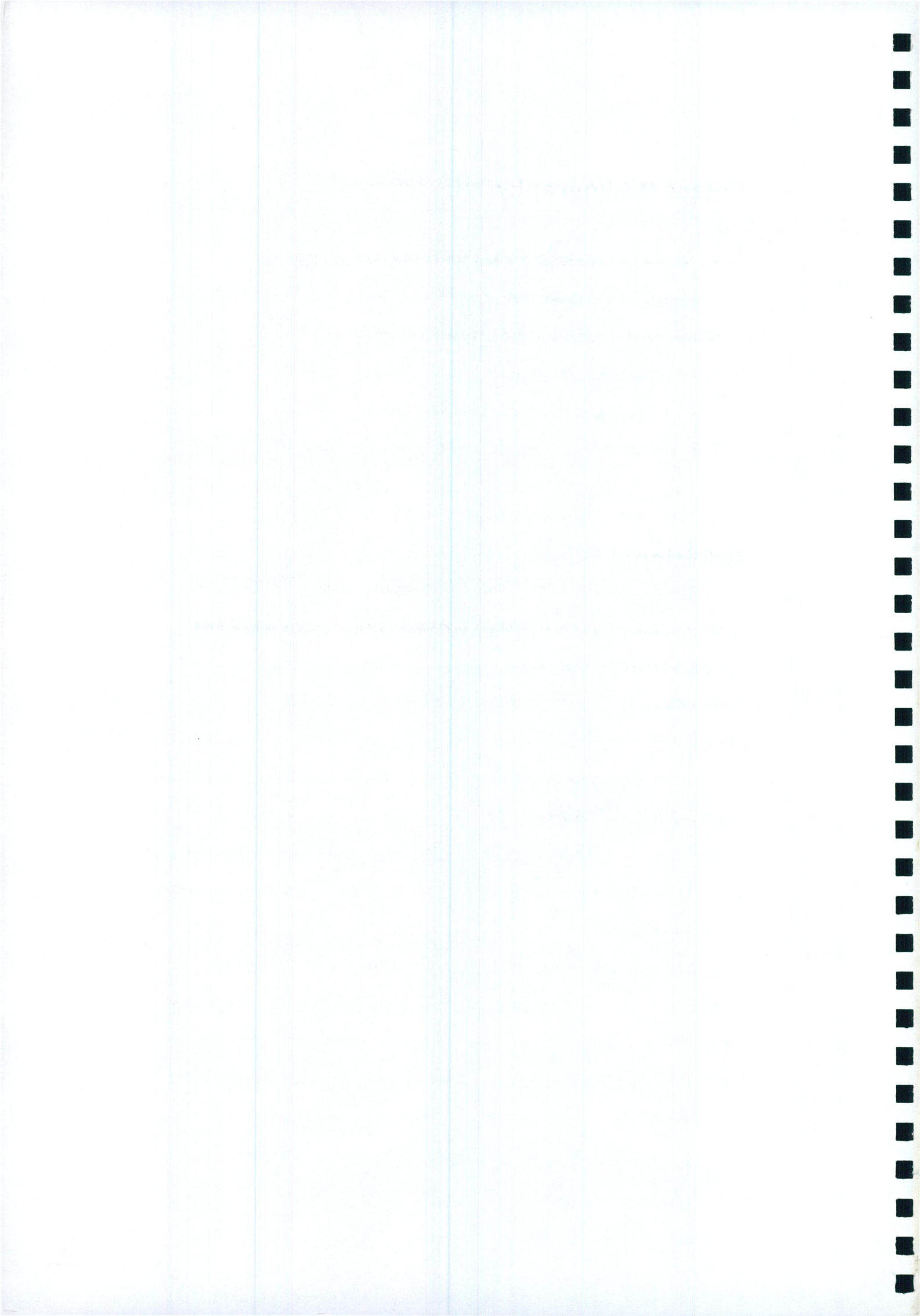
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