Chris Meigh-Andrews
Video Tapes•Installations•CD Roms
1978-1997

Artist's Statement

My artistic practice has for some time been centred on the use of electronic images, principally on video tape and in video installation. My subject matter has always been strongly tied into issues of perception, consciousness, and the complex inter-relationships of sense-awareness and physical being.

My work uses images (and sounds) which explore and evoke the two poles of our existence- the physical (nature) and the mental (mind). These images and sounds are often of natural phenomena- elemental forces such as water and wind expressed by reference to their flowing movement. For me the constant flux of matter is a fundamental link between the visible world (or more specifically its representation) and its underlying structures.

As an artist who works with communication technology, but who also has a fascination (and sense of wonder) for the natural order, I am inevitably drawn to exploring the connections across and between these fields. For many "nature" and "technology" are often seen as contradictory, in some cases perhaps even conflicting areas of concern. My own view is that it is through an exploration of the relationship and interdependence of these fields that insight can be made into the nature of thought and its relationship to matter.

Chris Meigh-Andrews, July 1996

Chris Meigh-Andrews: A Profile.

Few video artists have worked so determinedly within the conceptual problematic as Chris Meigh-Andrews. However, his commitment to the intelligence of art as a way of thinking has, in a career spanning sixteen years, been more than theoreticist. Early works share the neo-modernist aesthetic of his contemporaries, unpacking the dominance of television to unearth a mode of practice entirely appropriate to video. The works of the 1980s are language-based and semiotic in inspiration, but marked, especially in **Time travelling/A True Story** (1982), by an attention to the making of the image which lifts it out of the run of Screen - derived work of the period. **Interlude (Homage to Bugs Bunny)** (1983) loops a detail of an impossible chase from a Chuck Jones cartoon, while the soundtrack churns a detail of music into existential vertigo.

Mid -80s single channel works return to earlier autobiographical studies, but with a meticulous sense of the capacity of the video image to generate unreality as fast as it builds recognition. In **The Stream** (1985-87), elementary, even elemental aspects of an English landscape are slowed, mirrored and colourised to produce a statement on the transmutation of nature that balances between the philosophical and the alchemical. Other tapes explore the transformation of the personal in this most intimate of media, notably in **An Imaginary Landscape** (1986) in which a recognisable domesticity is re configured out of illegible but carefully equilibrated pixels, digitised into blocks of colour. As the image clarifies, the scale of abstraction rises, as the symmetry of the frame about its vertical axis intrudes further into consciousness: is this landscape imaginary because it is symmetrical? Like mud sedimenting out of river water, the raw footage emerges as the imaging of the imaginary, of self image and imagination. In **Other Spaces** (1986), images of interior and exterior meet, compound and confound one another, marked in each instance as the trace of someone constantly passing out of vision, a figure (the artist?) running across the screen.

This interplay of natural and artificial, of perception and image-making, underlies Meigh-Andrews' major work in installation since the beginning of the 1990's, notably in three sculptures, **Eau d'Artifice** (1990), **Streamline** (1992) and **Perpetual Motion** (1994), each of which draw natural and artificial into complex interplays. The first reconstructs a rococo fountain, the second a stream from Monet's Givenchy garden, from monitors, playing on the flows of water and current, while the third uses the standard electricity supply to power in turn a fan, a wind turbine, a computer and its images of the wind - a kite in the ceiling, blown grass on the floor. In all three, the complexities of drawing the natural world into the gallery provide the founding metaphor for the work. More recently, these researches have been enhanced by an adventure in interactive media, notably in CD-ROMs drawing on a library of self-portraits amassed over the years. Throughout a distinguished career, Meigh-Andrews' meticulous craft and intelligence mask a slow-burning, passionate commitment to the interface of technology and intimacy.

Sean Cubitt, Directory of British Film & Video Artists,
Arts Council of England, London, 1996.

Interview with Chris Meigh-Andrews
for Virus, Milan, Italy
Questions by Cinzia Cremona

1. Why have you chosen video as your artistic language?
I chose video a long time ago (1978) because of its immediacy, the fact it was instant. I also loved the way the image looked - the low resolution, the quality of the colours (and the B&W!!) and most importantly the TV display - "the box", that is both a piece of furniture and a frame, and a medium with a specific history and social significance. With video there is also a simultaneous use of sound and picture - in TV and video they are inseparable, and mutually supportive.

2. What is the source of your creativity?
I think the thing that inspires my creativity (or at least my desire to be creative) is a fascination with the interrelationships between things around me - images, identity, thoughts, language(s), organic life, the natural world, technology. I get excited when I suddenly see a connection or an interdependence. I like the parallels which exist between thoughts and communication systems, and living, thinking beings.

3. What is your relationship with high technology: CD ROM, Virtual reality, computers?
My relationship is one of constant surprise. An equal mixture of frustration and excitement. High tech equipment seems to be more than a tool. Its an attitude to the world "out there". Its a contemporary language system in itself. It forces you to "speak" in a certain way which can be restrictive and reductive, but it can also be liberating because it is a language that many people want to participate in. Of course, every language has its constraints and as an artist I must find ways to exploit those constraints and turn them to my advantage. I think thats one of the major roles of a contemporary artist.

4. Is there any special reason why you have never realised a single channel video?
I have made numerous single channel video pieces. I began to concentrate on video in 1978, and continued to make single channel works until 1988. I still make diary pieces, but I prefer to work with sculptural ideas at the moment. I like to make works which operate between the flat screen (the monitor and the projected image) and the physical space within the gallery. I am interested in setting up a tension between illusory space (within the frame of the screen) and real, physical, architectural space.

5. *What are the most important things in your life?*

To me, the most important things are relationships. To the people I love, the things I care about, relationships between thoughts and actions. I think it is important that we keep growing, developing, thinking, questioning, trying to understand. Those are the things that keep us feeling alive and connected. I think a clear and positive sense of self is crucial too.

6. *Water appears in many of your installations. Can you tell me something more about it?*

Water is a fundamental thing. Essential for life. Water also seems to me to be an important and very potent symbol. Its fluidity, its clarity, its power. I am attracted to the elemental properties of water - particularly "flow". The flow of water parallels the flow of thought, of life, of time, of electrical signals audio - video and voltage. As I mentioned earlier, I am fascinated by parallels - and there are so many connections between flowing water and aspects of communication - especially electronic communication. I have been particularly influenced by the writings of the physicist David Bohm about the relationship between the nature of thought and the flowing movement of matter in general. In more recent work I have tried to introduce other flowing elements - wind in **Perpetual Motion**, for example and time in a new installation piece **Fire & Ice**.

7. *How was the idea for Perpetual Motion born?*

There is never one idea for a piece. Its more a set of relationships. In the case of **Perpetual Motion**, I had been doing research into wind turbines as an alternative power source for an outdoor video installation. It occurred to me that using a turbine indoors and driving it via a fan powered from the mains electricity was an interesting contradiction - it seemed symbolic of the way in which alternative energy is used - at least in this country! I also liked the idea of the wind in the gallery (being created by the fan) as a physical (and tactile) experience. This in turn connects to my interest in the tension between the image on the screen (in this case the image of a kite flying in the sky) and the objects (the "sculpture") in the gallery. In this piece there are several sorts of "flow". Flowing images from the computer, flowing wind from the fan, flowing electricity from the turbine to the video monitor and most importantly, the flow of thought as the gallery visitor makes connections between the elements within the piece.

8. *Tell me something more about A Sense of Myself. Why a work about identity?*

A Sense of Myself is a CD ROM. It is a collection of self - portraits made using different lens-based media techniques. The idea was that it would trace the development of my use of different (but related) imaging technologies and parallel (that word again) my developing identity as an artist. It begins with early colour transparencies, taken before I was consciously trying to make "art", and progresses through more self-conscious attempts at image-making including colour Xerox and photo-booth images in the 1970s, to video pieces and installations culminating with some computer-manipulated images made especially for the CD ROM. The theme all the way through is self-image. We live in a time where everything is documented - from birth to death, and even our most private moments seem to be available as an image. I am interested in this mediated experience of life, and am curious about the sense of self that such a dependency on images provides.

9. *Did you realise your project for a permanent outdoor installation in a forest?*

Not yet. I have been working with another video artist, Catherine Elwes, on this. We have had Arts Council research funding to make a feasibility study, which we completed in collaboration with an electrical and structural engineer, and we have a site for the work, but so far we have not been able to raise enough money to build the piece!!

10. *What is the general situation of video art in the UK?*

Changing rapidly. The old divisions between film, video, installation, photography, sound, etc. are all disappearing - mainly because of the computer in its many manifestations. I don't think the support structure is moving fast enough - perhaps it can't. Galleries still want objects to show or to hang on their walls, publishers thinking about marketing CD ROM titles or VHS tapes are still very unadventurous, and funding bodies still seem to think that media artists should be low - budget broadcasters. There are too few critics interested in the area, which means that artists are still having to write about each others work. On the positive side I think there is a wide audience for new media work generally - a genuine enthusiasm for art that uses technology and a willingness to engage with it.

11. *You play different roles within the art world. Teach, write reviews and are an artist yourself. Does this create problems for you?*

For me, teaching would be impossible without my practice. The constant challenge of making and showing work is an important part of the experience I bring to my teaching. I am involved in training practising artists and in order to do this effectively I think its crucial to be engaged in contemporary art practice. I also value the exchange of experiences between myself and my students. Similarly in looking at the work of other artists critically I can better observe and be objective about my own work.

12. *What are your future projects?*

I am presently thinking about some new installations. A large multi-computer piece whose principle image will be comprised of a flock of birds - an image of many individuals acting as one. In connection with this I am researching into the use of computer animation "flocking" techniques. As a counter-point to this, I am also planing a series of small scale table-top pieces.

Contents

THE VIEWER'S RECEPTIVE CAPACITY (1978)
25 mins. B&W.

In making this video tape we were very aware of working in reaction to broadcast television. In conventional T.V. drama the studio is used to construct a self-contained illusory reality. We were concerned with the idea that this particular type of programme format manipulates audience expectations to the extent that it creates compliant acceptance of content. We wanted to make a piece which continually deconstructed its own illusion of reality. Our approach was to devise a structure which combined scripted material (the talking head), semi-scripted improvisation (the viewer in the tape), and spontaneous input (from the production crew). This resulted in a series of opposing elements within the programme, the actual recording session being as much a documentation as a dramatisation.

Chris Meigh-Andrews and Gabrielle Bown, Statement for **New Contemporaries**, Jan. 1979.
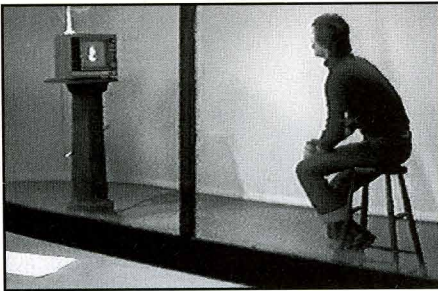
Screenings of this tape include:

New Contemporaries, **ICA**, London.

Expanded Media Show, Sheffield.

Rusden State College, Victoria, Australia (purchase)

New Acquisitions, **Art Metropole**, Toronto.

Brock University, **Sheridan College**, Ontario, Canada.

THE ROOM WITH A VIEW (1981-82)
## Colour, PAL, 12 mins.

"...an evocative work, with consistently crisp colours, non-shaky zooms, and poignant, associative imagery redolent of both personal identity and photgraphy itself."

Reel Reviews, **TIME OUT**, July 1983.

It is often dificult to distinguish between the memory of an event and the memory of a **photograph** of that event. Photographs of the past sometimes become the event, replacing other possible understandings and interpretations of the past. Photographs are so easily accepted as a "true" representation of things-especially people as they were.

Seeing without the influence of photographs is now almost impossible. **THE ROOM WITH A VIEW** is a view through the camera at a set of family snap-shots, but it is a view that tries to get past a reading of them as fact, to a view of them as object - as an aspect of human subjectivity.

From: Video tapes by Chris Andrews, 1978-82, **ICA Cinematheque**, Jan. 1982.
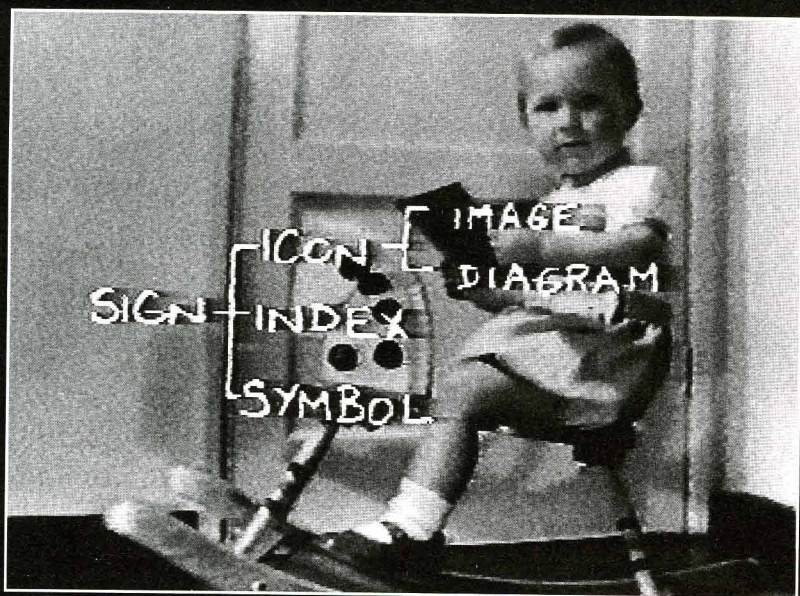
Screenings of this tape include:

New British Video, **Museum of Long Beach**, California, USA.

The Basement, Newcastle upon-Tyne.

ICA Cinematheque.

Art Metropole, Toronto.

Air Gallery, London Video/Performance.

The Photographer's Gallery, London.

Grand Dieu! Epargnons cela a notre pays, **Cairn**, Paris.

TIME TRAVELLING/A TRUE STORY (1982)
## Colour, PAL, 7.5 mins.

"I wanted the moments of my life to follow one another in an orderly fashion like those of a life remembered. You may as well try to catch time by the tail."

Jean-Paul Sartre, **NAUSEA**

Time Travelling/A True Story is about personal relationships to time. Its narrative structure makes references to the influences of the present on memories of the past. The tape tells its story by reshuffling the elements of its own structure. The core idea for the work was to make a narrative from (mostly) unrelated elements and from this construction to make a point about the activity of memory. The elements which make up this story are:

1. 8 mm film sequences which I shot as a teenager growing up in suburban Montreal.

2. A reading from Jean Paul Sartre's **NAUSEA** (altered by the addition of autobiographical references.)

3. Contemporary video sequences shot in London, mixed with captions and rescanned.

4. A second voice-over, which relates back to the texts and images from the first sectiion. In this tape I wanted to evoke the constantly shifting relationship we all experience with the elements of our past.

From: Statement for British/Canadian Video Exchange, **A Space**, Toronto. May-June 1984.
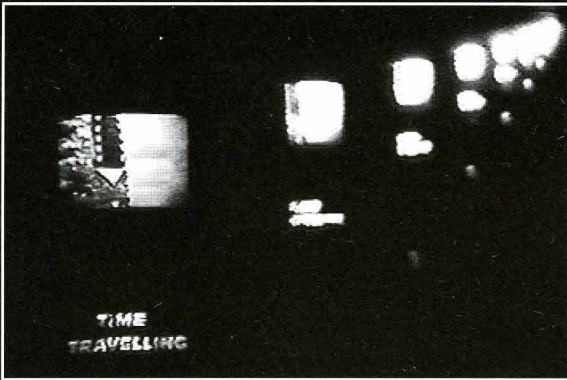
Screenings of this work Include:

The British/Canadian Video Exchange, **A Space**, Toronto.

The Ottawa International Festival of Video Art (Touring 8 Canadian Cities)

Summary Video, UK., **ICA**, London.

Gallery Trekanten, Copenhagen.

The Expanded Media Show, Sheffield.

Acts of Remembrance, **Harris Museum**, Preston.

INTERLUDE *(HOMAGE TO BUGS BUNNY)* (1983)
Colour, PAL, 5 Mins.

"In its broadest sense, video contains all of the visual media, it is comparable to print in its scope. I am working in a very particular area within video - this area cannot ignore the experience of television, but it also cannot allow T.V. to define it." C.M-A, August 1981.

From Photography to Video, Statement for Kammer & Camera, **Mostly Photographic Gallery,** Southend Essex.

Interlude *(Homage to Bugs Bunny)* was intended to be a comment on watching TV, the endless repeats and a reference to the concept of "flow" (seperate programmes being part of a continuous stream of entertainment). I also enjoyed the rythmic momentum it built up, being at the time (1983) entirely under the spell of "minimal" music.

Fom: Some Notes on Single Screen Video Work: 1978-88, **Lancashire Polytechnic.**
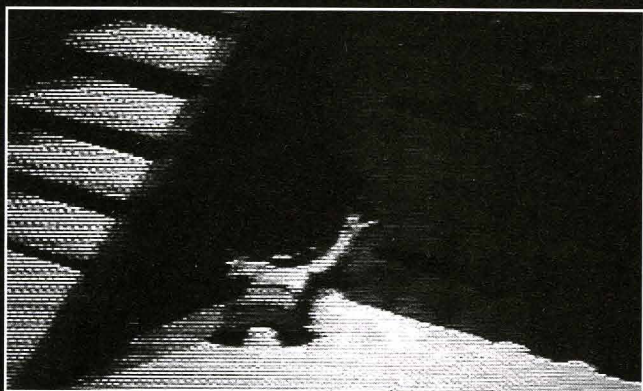
Screenings of this work include:

Ljublana Video Festival, Yugoslavia.

New British Video, Strasbourg, France.

Falling Annual Living Room Festival, Odder, Denmark.

Heaven & Earth, **London Film-makers Co-op**.

ON BEING (1985) Single screen video tape, Colour, PAL, 2.5 mins.

Funded by Greater London Arts.

"...Chris Meigh-Andrews weaves a gentle tapestry of memories and connections with places, objects and the image of a woman with whom he was bonded. His sense of identity is fluid, shifting. He displays the kind of negative capability normally associated with the flexible ego boundaries of women."

From: The Politics of the Personal in British Video Art, **London Video Access Catalogue**, Autumn, 1991.

Central to my working method is the idea that certain material aspects of video can be analogous to the human mind and its perception of the world. This does not mean that the work is about the medium, but that it uses the process of video to explore aspects of human experience. I am interested in using video to express states of being and to evolve a language for exploring interactions between the mind and its environment.

From: Approaches and Attitudes, a proposal for new work made to **Greater London Arts**, Oct. 1985.
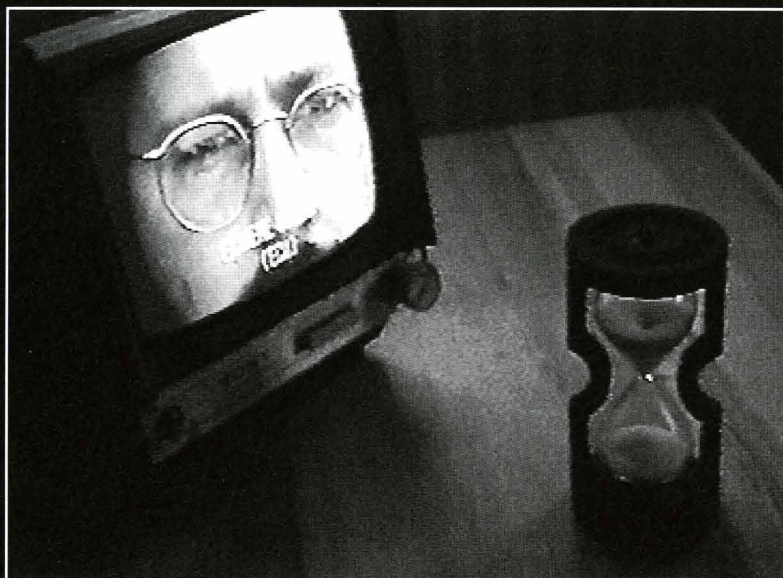
Screenings of this tape include:

Genlock, (London Video Arts touring show) **Screenworks** Portsmouth.

Plymouth Arts Centre.

Third Eye Centre Glasgow.

Usher Gallery, Lincoln.

Intrim Arts, London.

Acts of Remembrance, **Harris Museum**, Preston.

Heaven & Earth, **London Film Maker's Co-op**.

THE STREAM 1985-1987,
Colour, PAL, Stereo, 15 mins.

Completed with a grant from Greater London Arts.

"A hypnotic visualisation of a Steve Reich piece from an artist whose work continues to grow in maturity and assurance."

Jeremy Welsh, **Bracknell Video Festival Catalogue**, 1987.

"...more than a slowly evolving and engagingly simple essay on the power and beauty of nature as subtle questions arise...**The Stream** seems to operate, almost subliminally, on the borderline between the 'landscape' genre and softcore didacticism. Eschewing the upfront, confrontational strategy of many tapemakers, Meigh-Andrews manages to be all the more effective in offering questions to the viewer by integrating text into a larger framework of quietly striking images."

Nik Houghton, **Independent Media**, March 1988.

Screenings of this tape include:

British Video Art & Experimental Film, **Mucsarnok**, Budapest, Hungary.

Museum of Modern Art, Medelin, Columbia.

The Art of Understatement-Recent British Video, Madrid, Spain.

Included in Electric Eyes, British Video Art 1985-88, compiled by **Film & Video Umbrella**.

Tate Gallery, London and touring UK.

Sao Paulo, Brazil. Vienna, Austria.

AN IMAGINARY LANDSCAPE (1986)
## Colour, PAL, 6.5 mins.

"...a fluid, well composed and evocative piece..." **Independent Media**, Jan. 1987,

"...in **An Imaginary Landscape** a recognisable domesticity is re configured out of illegible but carefully equilibrated pixels, digitised into blocks of colour. As the image clarifies, the scale of abstraction rises, as the symmetry of the frame about its vertical axis intrudes further into consciousness: is this landscape imaginary because it is symmetrical?

Directory of 100 Film & Video Artists, **Arts Council of England**, 1995.

My concern with **An Imaginary Landscape** was to represent a state of mind. The tape is not about the room or the figure in it, but is an attempt to construct an experience which is unique to video. This is the meaning of the title - the "landscape" depicted on the screen does not exist in reality, but it is an imaginative possibility.

from: Some Notes on Single Screen Video Work, **Lancashire Polytechnic**, Jan. 1988.
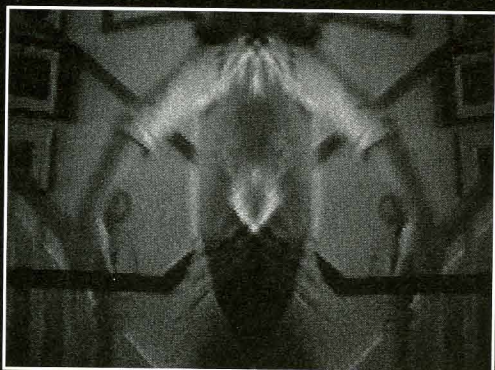
Screenings of this tape include:

Light Years, **London Film-makers' Co-op**. & **The Fridge**, Brixton.

Breaking Boundaries, New British Video, **ICA**, London.

Dialogues, **Haworth Art Gallery**, Yorkshire.

4XVideo, **Galleri One**, Antwerp.

EAU D'ARTIFICE (1990)
Installation for 4 VTRs and 34 Monitors.
Commissioned by the Harris Museum, Preston,
in association with Samuelsons Communications.
Funded by Arts Council of Great Britain

"The use of screens to make a composite image - and the use of water a subject -
reappears in Chris Meigh-Andrews 1990 work **Eau d'Artifice** - a fountain formed of tiered video
monitors. Water has been used by video artists as a metaphor for the fluidity of the medium itself,
and Meigh-Andrews has, in several works, linked this metaphor to a consideration of flow as a
metaphysical or psychological process"

From: "Video Installation in the UK", **Video Positive** Catalogue, 1991.

"Classical and formal in its inspiration and it's symmetrical economy, **Eau d'Artifice** opens
outwards and inwards simultaneously towards the famous Kenneth Anger film...and beyond that
to a formal, nearly Kantian aesthetic which, however, is maintained in constant interplay with the
intangibility of the images, and their slow fade in and slow fade out. Despite its scale, the piece
breathes fragility and ephemerality. Water is indeed, as on the soundtrack, its central complex
metaphor."

From: **Artscribe International**, April-May, 1991.

"...what Meigh-Andrews is offering us is an aural and visual stimulus, a temporal space in
which to experience our own interiority...like a real fountain it interacts with our senses setting up
a flow of perception, interpretation and projection in which we are the main creative protagonists.
The artifice of the title reminds us that apart from its technological base, the work is a complete
fiction...**Eau d"Artifice** refers constantly to its own means of production - the aggregation of
monitors, the cables that carry the signals, the flatness of the screens that pulls against the
illusion of depth...(it) allows us to play with our perceptual processes and reflect a little on the
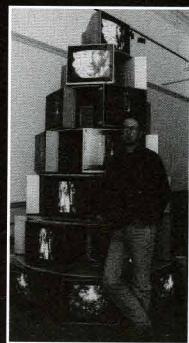daily stream of illusions emanating from the box which we accept as objective reality."

From: **Performance**, Spring 1992.

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Exhibited at:

Visions & Transmissions, **Harris Museum**, Preston. Nov-Dec 1990.

Quick! **Royal Festival Hall**, South Bank Centre, London, April 1993.

STREAMLINE (1991)
Installation for 9 VTRs and 9 Monitors.
Commissioned by the Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool.
In association with English Estates.
Funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

"Fascinating on two levels: perceptually we see nine short films cued in sequence, yet we read it as a continuous "stream"...At a symbolic level it seems to be about relationships, messages given, received, understood, misinterpreted...This beautiful and moving piece...shows just how much video art as sculpture has come of age."

Adrian Henri, **Liverpool Daily Post**, August 21st, 1991.

In **Streamline**...the space between the monitors becomes the site of the imagination as we fill in the gaps to complete the stream. This process is emphasised by the sudden appearance of a hand at one end which launches a small paper boat. The boat travels down the stream appearing and disappearing across the monitors in a game of conceptual "Fort/Da". The delight with which children follow the boats is a testament to **Streamline's** breadth of appeal. The more adult viewer can also notice a narrative content which casts the female hand as the launcher of boats and the male as the recipient of the "messages". These fragile communications make their way down the line with some difficulty but always reach their destination, their meaning undoubtedly compromised by their journey. A poignant and rather magical metaphor for the vicissitudes of human communication."

"European Media Arts Festival - Video Installation in Osnabruck", **Variant**. Winter/Spring 1993.

Exhibited at:

New Art Northwest, Mercury Court, Liverpool. August 1991.

European Media Art Festival, Osnabruck, Germany. September 1992.

CROSS-CURRENTS (1993)
Site-Specific Installation for Camera & Projector
## Commissioned by Camerawork, London.
### Funded by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

(In **Cross-Currents**) "...we see this swimmer swimming beautifully, sensuously up and down in a handsome video installation...It was a work which I felt most easy with, and which I liked very much."

"River Crossings", Kaleidoscope, **BBC Radio 4**, March 26th, 1993.

Cross-Currents is concerned with temporal and spatial transitions, or crossings, where inside and outside meet; where past activity is revived technologically in the present; where illusion meets concrete reality. These multiple crossings are achieved symbolically and electronically through the wires that connect the two spaces. The solitary swimmer underlines this theme by repeatedly crossing the floor of the gallery, and simultaneously cross-referencing with the still images arranged sequentially around the walls.

Proposal for **Cross-Currents**: An Installation for the Cafe Gallery. March 1992.
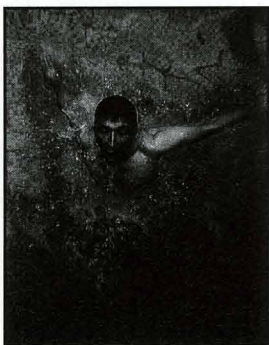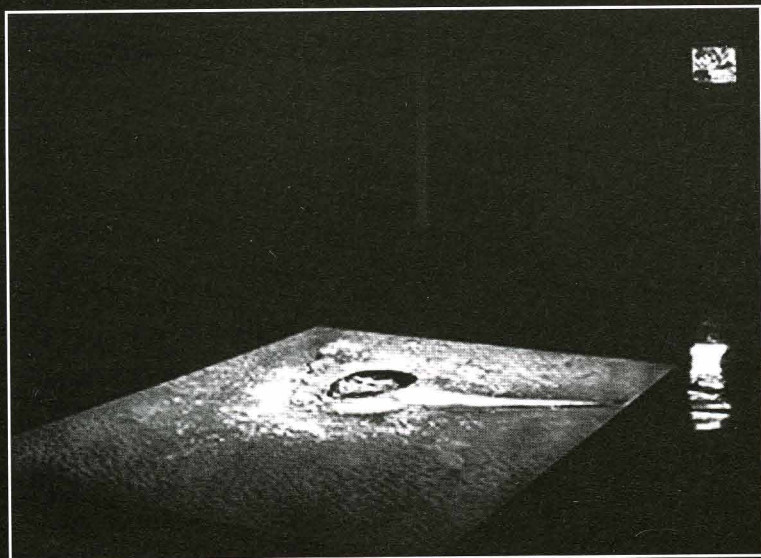
Exhibited at:

River Crossings, **Cafe Gallery**, London, April-May 1993.

PERPETUAL MOTION (1994)
Installation for Wind Turbine, LCD Projector, Monitor & Computers.

Produced whilst Resident Artist in Electronic Imaging.
Oxford Brookes University in collaboration with Southern Arts.
Additional Funding from North West Arts.

"**Perpetual Motion** uses space in an intelligent way - using the dimensions of the gallery to create a sculptural installation which poses a series of relationships between the viewer, the physical presence of the objects and the technologies at work in the piece. There is a flow of the viewer's imagination as s/he makes associative leaps between the wind machine driving the turbine and the image of the kite on the monitor. Meigh-Andrews has left creative gaps in his work, so that the audience is left to create a simple technical narrative - how it all works - and to create a narrative of meaning within the work itself...the effect is both medative and engaging...This is a circuit of energy, imagination and visual representation through which the artist comments on the representation of landscape, the desire of both art and science to represent and imitate the natural world, to force from its disorder, structure, to take its structures and create a more perfect replica. If there is an implied synergy / dependency / inspiration between nature and the machine- there is also an implied critique of that relationship."

From: "**Digital Meditation**: Imagine Technology as Art"
Lowena Faull, **Back/Slash** Catalogue, Sept-Nov. 1996.

A major theme in my installation work is flow. The flow of information, of thought, and of matter, and the constant flux of time which binds them. Crucial to this is the notion of the interdependence of these concepts, and the possibility of a consciousness which can move freely across them. I am concerned with making work that explores and celebrates this constant flux by drawing attention to the process of thought, and its free-ranging movement as it shifts focus.

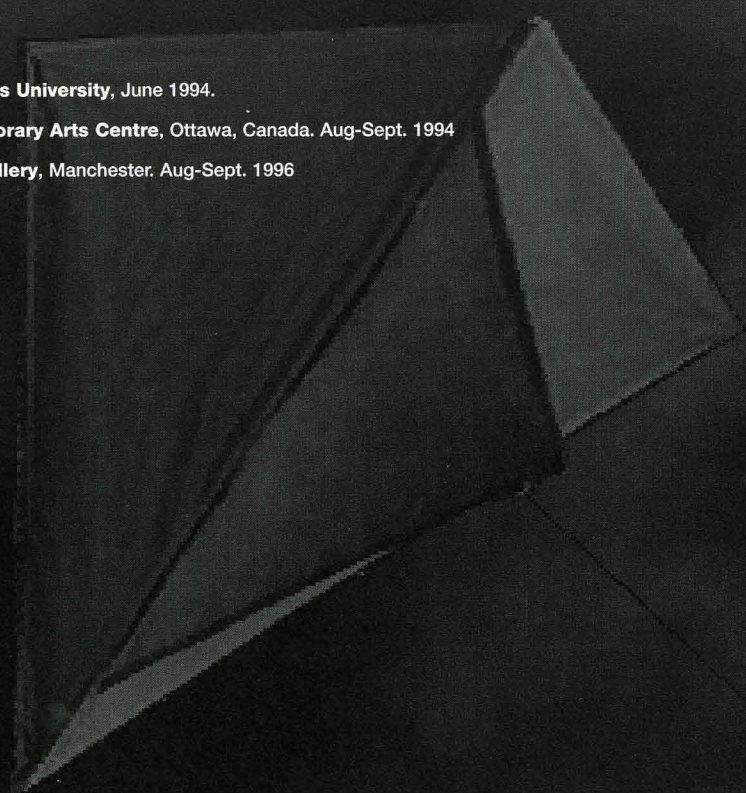From: **Proposal for Perpetual Motion**, April 1994.
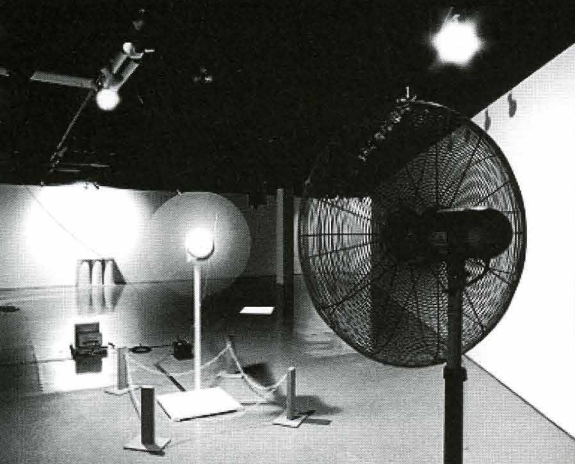
Exhibited at:

Oxford Brookes University, June 1994.

Saw Contemporary Arts Centre, Ottawa, Canada. Aug-Sept. 1994

Castlefield Gallery, Manchester. Aug-Sept. 1996

PERPETUAL MOTION
Background notes

Perpetual Motion was made in 1994 whilst I was Resident Artist in Electronic Imaging at Oxford Brookes University. With this work I wanted to further develop the use of electronic images of flow to parallel human thought processes. Seeking a natural force to mirror with artificial means within the gallery context, I decided on the flow of air. Invisible in itself, it could be rendered visible via images. In the case of **Perpetual Motion**, a ceiling - mounted monitor displaying a flying kite and an LCD projector imaging an area of moving grass - a representation of the sky and the earth. As a sculptor (as I now see myself) "tactility" has become crucial - I strive to convey an actual physical "participatory" experience. Walking around the circular pyramid in **Eau d'Artifice** and crossing the bridge or following the boats in **Streamline**, for example. In **Perpetual Motion** the wind in the gallery created a physical experience which contrasted with the virtual space on the screens of sky and earth - it is clear that the "wind" in the gallery could not move the kite or the grass. I wanted the fan in the space to relate conceptually to the images and therefore intended the use of the wind turbine to be seen as a poetic device, tho' it also literally drives the monitor that provides the image. The irony of the electric fan, so conspicuously plugged into the wall socket which in turn powers the video monitor, is intended to play against the title of the work. **Perpetual Motion** is of course a theoretical impossibility - the belief of a bygone era when science was in its infancy. Contemporary attitudes to the world's natural resources may be more sophisticated, but are they any less naive? Instead of the optimism in the potential for inexhaustible sources of free energy, we have an attitude which perpetuates our unwillingness to address the issues seriously. "In our hands", the slogan of the Rio conference, can be understood to convey the message that we are in control. But are we? Is this what our current technology causes us to believe?

The 70's view of the computer as a tool for de-centralisation is still powerful. It gave us a new model of the world-chaos mathematics, and the intellectual revolution of the1980's when the belief in a linear predictability gave way to "chaotic unpredictability". In trying to understand complex ecological systems: fluids, human society, the weather, economics - we have developed a new understanding of world which has been termed "intrinsic unpredictability". But if this new model has reinforced the belief that the natural world and electronics is beyond centralised control, the burgeoning web of communication systems that we spread across the globe still seek to define the world in terms of ownership. The optimistic advertisements of Microsoft and IBM play down the fact that this new technology is producing a vast underclass. There are growing numbers whose access to this technology is restricted to passive consumerism. There are even larger numbers in other parts of the world who will be totally left behind by this new technological revolution.

But I don't intend to end on a pessimistic note. Our technology is evolving rapidly, and it is increasingly a technology that mirrors nature in its complexity and interrelatedness. "The world of the made and the world of the born" (to use Stuart Brand's terms) are moving ever closer. This ever closer relationship must lead in turn to a new understanding of our place in the order of things, providing a model that will hopefully enable us to reunite in a harmonious balance with our environment. I believe it is the task of artists to encourage, reflect and celebrate the emergence of this crucial relationship.

This text was originally part of a presentation made by the artist at **"Art, Culture, Nature"** Salisbury State University, Maryland, USA, in April 1995.

FIRE, ICE & STEAM (1995)
A site-specific video installation

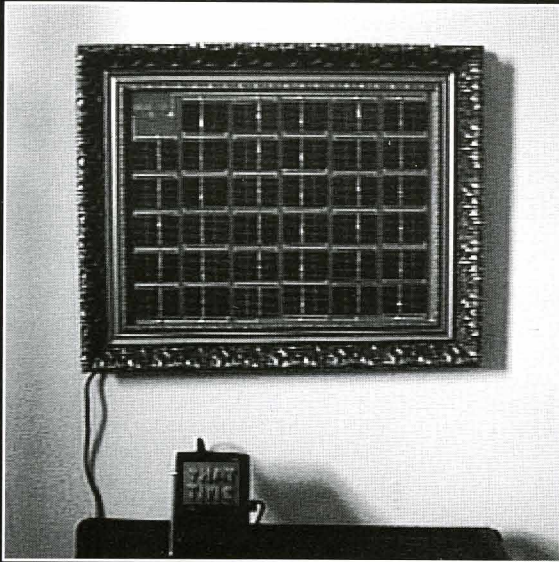Produced whilst Video Artist in Residence at Cleveland Arts.
Funded by Northern Arts and the Foundation for Sports and Arts.

In my work generally I am interested in creating pieces which present a series of inter-related contradictions, the primary contradiction being that the work is neither sculpture nor video. In **Fire, Ice & Steam** the installation partly occupies the physical/tactile world that we inhabit (the light/heat, the oil, the smoke) and partly occupies the conceptual world inside the head (the texts, the illusionistic representations of ice and flames, and the memories these images conjure up.) My objective is to produce an experience which makes a direct reference to the collision between the domains of the physical and the conceptual.

Designed for two adjoining spaces within the gallery, **Fire, Ice & Steam** was made in response to my initial experience of Middlesbrough - specifically the industrial processing plants that form a dramatic backdrop to the town and its immediate eviron. I became particularly interested in portraying a general sense of the industrial processes these massive plants represent. Whatever their specific function there is a common operation of transformation - the changing of material from one form to another. I wanted to represent this process using basic elements and so chose ice, oil and steam to make reference to numerous kinds of transformation over time: Ice melts, oil is consumed and steam dissipates. The other crucial element in all of these processes is time, and in **Fire, Ice & Steam** the element of time is represented in a variety of ways.

For me flow is the crucial element in all my installation work, and in **Fire, Ice & Steam** the flow is a movement between numerous elements - sculptural, spatial, conceptual, temporal and most crucially, the flow of thought which brings these elements together - meaning unfolding through time.

From a presentation made by the artist at **Middlesbrough Art Gallery**, June, 1995.

Exhibited at:

Taped, **Middlesbrough Art Gallery**, Cleveland, June-July 1995.
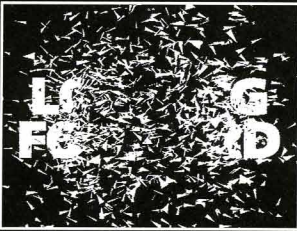
VORTEX (1995)
Video Sculpture/Installation

Produced Whilst Video Artist in Residence at Prema Arts Centre.
Funded by the Arts Council of England and Southwest Arts
Additional support from Television & Imaging Workshop,
Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee.

"The question to ask of art now is not what it means, but how it means. What is it made of? What is the matter - the material force at play in its persistence, in the way it is or the way it can be perceived? Like others of Chris Meigh-Andrews' installations, **Vortex** is made of electricity, the flow of those primordial forces, that even now, we scarcely comprehend, but whose movement approximates to the motions of both water and thought. The flux of electrons and magnetism, the fall of light and the drag of gravity, are the subject and the medium in an art where the two are indistinguishable."

From an essay written to accompany the exhibition by **Sean Cubitt**.

"... on closer scrutiny the subtlety of the piece reveals itself. Symmetries are underpinned. Sound plays backwards and forwards, water ebbs as well as flows, silence is equated with stillness. Text operates as a bridge of visual material, not literary descriptor, linking ideas and process in a parallel relationship to that of the image and the represented."

John Forster, **Live Art Magazine,** April-June 1996.

I make video installations which operate between the image on the screen and the space in the gallery. The "frame" is not simply the space within the TV screen, but the marked-off time and place of the installation itself, and in the mind of the viewer at the point of perception. The sculptural device of the spiral ramp has an important link between function and meaning. Viewers are engaged physically and perceptually in the work. The walkway is also functioning as an "image", just as the image (the vortex of water) is being presented as an object. In **Vortex** the tension between the illusion of the disappearing water and the emotional power of its physical presence is echoed by the physical journey of the viewer along the walkway.
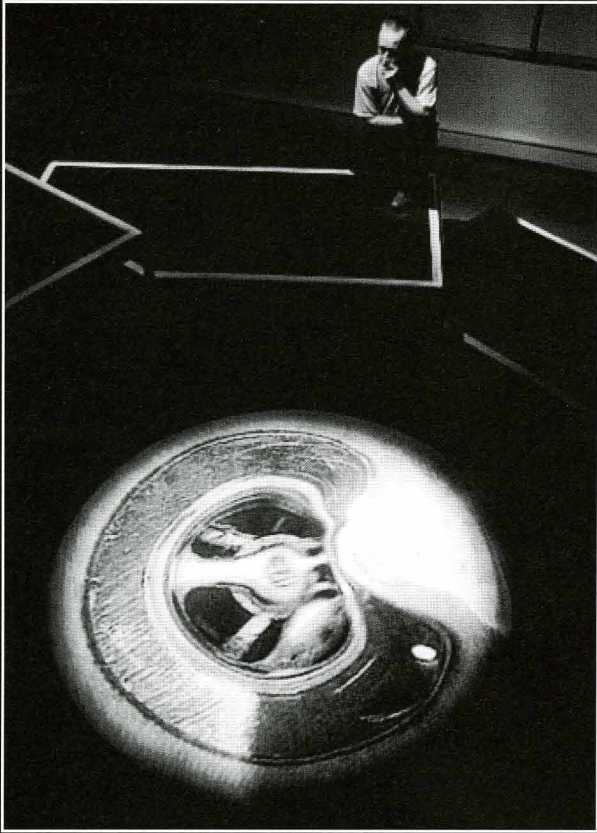
Exhibited at:

Prema Arts Centre, Uley, Gloucester, Oct-Nov 1995.

VORTEX
A video installation by Chris Meigh-Andrews

The wonder of the electronic media is that, though they have such an impact on life, they only ever seem to have a partial existence, flickering in and out of being in a way quite unlike the solid and trustworthy, traditional media of art - sculpture, painting, even photography. Every electronic image blinks into the world and blinks out, its only moment of visibility the very moment of its decay. Photography, and maybe even film, can be picked up and looked at, but the electronic image, like music has to be experienced as a temporal, a temporary, a contemporary tintinnabulation at the edges of a vast silence, an endless nonentity.

The siren images that surround us, that sing us their inescapable songs, are the lure. The electronic artist, like Odysseus, has himself strapped to the mast, the ears uncorked, to hear the unutterable tedium of a song that works every time. The point is not so much that the epic voyager heard the song, but that he was voluntarily immobilised in the kind of passionate paralysis that has underlined much of the most significant art of the last five decades. The whirlpool of images or the rocks of the everyday, the devil of meaninglessness and the deep blue sea of infinitely proliferating messages: the Odyssey still inspires the electronic artist caught between the vapidity and the brilliance of the TV screen.

The question to ask of art now is not what it means, but how it means. What is it made of? What is the matter- the material force at play in its persistence, in the way it is or the way it can be perceived? Like others of Chris Meigh-Andrews' installations, its predecessors **Eau d' Artifice**, an electronic fountain, and **Streamline**, a video homage to Monet, **Vortex** is made of electricity, the flow of those primordial forces, that even now, we scarcely comprehend, but whose movement approximates to the motions of both water and thought.

The flux of electrons and magnetism, the fall of light and the drag of gravity, are the subject and the medium in an art where the two are indistinguishable. In the end, it is made up of the same things as **Blind Date** and **The Bill**, except that it wears the repetition they disavow like a red badge of courage, guarantee and death-knell of its glory. The harmonies and counterpoints of fluids and languages are more restless and braver than television continuity.

Some people say, with reason, that TV is just radio with pictures, a speech-driven form. But words, when they have no voice to give them some kind of (illusory?) authenticity, the words you have to read, you read with your own voice. Yet that silent inner voice, so intimate and familiar, speaks like a ventriloquist's mannequin when the words are scripted for it: such is the strange communication of reading quietly to yourself the words of another. The written word, read, floats between its material and the illusion of authorship, the writer's or the reader's. It is an anti-gravity machine that allows the letters to surface from the dark labyrinth of the closed book. Words like the animation of light on waves, the splashing and gurgles as they pour across each other. The sound of the vortex fills the space. TV sound, and most soundtracks in computer games and CD-ROMs, comes from within and behind the screen, an illusory space that locks us into the fixed and foetal curl that typifies an absorbed viewing session. but the sound of **Vortex** occupies the building. It is a sculptural sound, freed of prematurely traditional anchorage in the image to explore the acoustic world with a solidity as appropriate to our times as Early English Perpendicular to theirs.

A Walkman, a car stereo and a police siren are all ways of marking territory: **Vortex's** sound is a way of exploring it. And yet, it is recorded sound, a sound that never sounded before as it does now and yet which carries like a scar the trace of an umbilical link to a vanished plunge of water into the silent dark.

What happens at the nub of a whirlpool? What happens at the point at which you are too close to an image or a sound to see or hear it clearly? To fall into the image is to destroy both it and yourself, to come to the lonely instant in which all the illusions falter, and the truth cannot be born. Contemporary art has taken on the work of exploring the real world which philosophy abandoned a hundred years ago. Now there are only scientists and artists who believe in the materials with which they work. At the beginning of the age of the artist-engineer, we must face the immense questions concerning the making of meaning, the meaning of meaning, and the possibility, always present, of the great cloud of unmeaning, madness or possession, that lurks in the chamber of images.

Sean Cubitt,
Wallasey, 19/10/95

A Sense of Myself:
Lens-Based Self-Portraits: 1974-94

CD ROM.

Produced whilst Resident Artist in Electronic Imaging at Oxford Brookes University.

The images, sequences and sounds in this work span a period of over 20 years, covering my career as an artist. They begin at a time before I considered what I was doing might have anything to do with "art"; the young man looking back into the camera in Pierrefonds, Quebec, 1974 was probably more interested in finishing off the roll of film than recording his image for posterity. In retrospect, perhaps more than anything else, these pictures chart my changing attitude to making images.

In all but a few obvious cases, the work is not primarily "about" portraiture, nor is it about the passage of time, and yet both of these subjects seem important to me now, and are gathering significance. The linking theme for me is that the same individual was on both sides of the camera. Identity is not fixed, and it is most certainly tied up with self-image. Our relationship with, and our understanding of the world around us is facilitated with self-reference - "me and not me", we must crucially make a distinction- as Jean Francois Chevrier says in "The Truth of the Other" (Introductory essay to *Staging the Self,* a self-portrait exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, London) "We can no longer escape the obvious truth that every identification pre-supposes the mediation of an image and there is no identity that does not pass through this process of alienation."

A Sense of Myself traces an evolving interest in the relationship between methods of imaging and meaning-making, and a quest for a medium most suited to my particular sensibility. It charts an increasing use of technology - hopefully not just for its own sake, but as a way of reflecting the experience of living with a constant feedback of mediated images.

From: Statement to accompany CD ROM, **Oxford Brookes University**. July 1994.

A Sense of Myself:
Lens-Based Self-Portraits: 1974-94.
a CD-ROM by Chris Meigh-Andrews

Artists have only recently begun to exploit the computer as a medium of expression and exploration. The work of Chris Meigh-Andrews is certainly in the forefront of such developments. He exploits his theme of self-imaging as *a form of information,* utilising a visuality that is neither photograph nor video.

In a recent gallery exhibition at the University of Central Lancashire, the artist presented images of himself made over a period of 20 years. His brief introduction to the show emphasised that the work was as much a reflection of his "changing attitude to making images" as it was a series of video and photographic self-portraits. Nevertheless "the linking theme...is that the same individual was on both sides of the camera". Such stagings of the self - or, to be more accurate, its images have a long pedigree, of course, and not only in the history of painting. Meigh-Andrews adds credence to a tradition of photographic self-portrayal in his allusion to Steichen's *Self-Portrait with Palette Brush* (1903) in his own *Man with Mouse (After Steichen)* 1994. Since the 1970's, artists with a similar conceptual orientation to Meigh-Andrews - Cindy Sherman and Jo Spence, for example - have experimented with varieties of self-presentation.

The tenor of **A Sense of Myself** derives from the 70's, a time when artists became less hidebound by traditional media and set about establishing a more fluid relationship between intuitive and critical awareness. Art-practice was based on a linguistic model: meanings were context-driven, installed (often literally) in a particular space and time. Inherent in such practice was the notion of the re-phrasable statement - a statement which, of its nature, was adjustable to, perhaps transformed by, a new context. For many artists, such procedures had an obsessively political bias, strangely at odds with their non-essentialist theoretical framework. Looking at Chris Meigh-Andrews' work overall, one senses that his concerns tend to be built around himself, though in a quizzical, ironic manner. Some of his most successful pieces (for example **On Being**, 1985) have an eerily lyrical feel, the pressure of personal exposure, which is remote from the robotic stridencies of some of his contemporaries.

Whether he is dealing with explicit self-portrayal or not, this artist returns again and again to the sphere of individual experience - its painful ephemerality, its immediacy, its elusivness. The chimerical nature of the self is agreed upon by many philosophers. Such apparently different thinkers as Hume and Sartre agree on its transitive character. Hume writes "When I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other". Contemporary discourse focuses on the way in which the self is alienated; that to define self is to erase it. When we hear ourselves on tape or see ourselves in a photograph, we seem like someone else - a face-maker, a wearer of fashionable clothes and fashionable expressions. To all of these and many other puzzles, Meigh-Andrews addresses himself, not least the idea of self-images as something we *hide behind*.

Through the new medium of the computer, of CD-ROM, the artist has enormously enriched his theme. He is able to review, re-order and in some cases transform his work. The public exhibition of self, based on the gallery, becomes the domain of a private, active 'reader', who can interact with the material - looping sequences, resizing - 'clicking and dragging' as he browses through or interrogates these animated 'pages'. Some of the work is simply re-presented; other projects (*The Stockwell Sequence,* 1977) are subject to addition; yet others (*Mirrors*, 1993) to radical distortion. The new medium allows 'painterly' freedom and placticity. In the artists own words it "pulls the work together like a hub". But it also extends it, re-shapes it. In *Venice Frames* (1994) the history of self-hood is gathered into one portrayal - all those selves, all those times, defined anew. The complexity and the perilousnes of identity confront us in equal measure.

It is tempting to ask whether such self-presentation has a limit, at least of a psycho-logical kind. Can an endlessly-improvised identity turn into a sort of fate? Is the illusion of a true self nevertheless *indispensable*? Meigh-Andrews' briliant new work seems to volunteer a demonstration of the process by which we can, in a sense that is dificult to define, become an illusion to ourselves. In doing so, he makes our selfhood questionable - which is to say *interesting* - again.

Ian Harrow, June 1994.

DOMESTIC LANDSCAPES (1994)
CD ROM

Produced whilst "Resident Artist in Electronic Imaging" at Oxford Brookes University.

The video sequences for **Domestic Landscapes** were shot on Video 8, literally made "at home" using domestic equipment. The subject matter is highly personal - perhaps even private and certainly intimate. The voyeuristic aspects of the experience of watching is an important underlying theme of the work.

The "landscapes" that the work presents are everyday places; views from windows, parks, gardens, travelling along the motorway, brief glimpses into personal interiors. They are places that form the background and the setting of everyday experience. I have deliberately made references to still photography, both in terms of how the images are composed and in the subject matter itself. It is a chronicle of personal details, the minutiae of personal experience. The sequences can be viewed as a series of "moving stills", or in some cases, the moments leading up to the fixing of a particular or "decisive" moment.

The soundtrack has an important role in **Domestic Landscapes**. It is often a clue to the off-camera or out of frame situation. Traffic sounds moving across the space, or the sound of the distant railway for example, tie even the most rural image to the proximity of its domestic setting. For me, the work hovers somewhere between visual diary and documentary.

In making the work non-linear, I have relinquished editorial control of these sequences, their running order is now no longer fixed. They are open to experiment and under the control of the viewer, but they are also now autonomous - free to exist as individual moments, both a part of a larger "narrative", but also independent events with their own resonances and associations.

From: Statement to accompany CD ROM, **Oxford Brookes University**. July 1994.

"In **Domestic Landscapes** the artist presents fragments of landscapes, domestic settings and those semi-natural spaces which link the locations that he has at different times called "home". People appear and disappear, relationships are hinted at but never defined. The work speaks of an elusive masculinity which is forever shifting, evolving an image of itself in the places and through the people who become significant for a time. Since this work exists as an interactive CD - ROM, the sense of mobility, of multiple permutations and connections is pervasive. At no point can one create monuments, nor devise grand narratives, theories or ideologies, there are no closures. The identity which is proposed looks no further than its own humanity to establish a working definition of what it might mean to be a man".

Catherine Elwes, "The Pursuit of the Personal in British Video Art',
Diverse Practices. A Critical Reader on British Video Art,
ed. Julia Knight, John Libby Media, Luton.1996.

MIND'S EYE (1997)

Installation for 3 projectors, 2 monitors & 4 video players.

"The mind's eye begins to see clearly, when the outer eyes grow dim."

Plato, **Symposium**

For me, **Mind's Eye** is about the relationship between looking and understanding. In this installation I am interested in particular notions of light - the interrelated 'light' of the eye and of the mind.

Physically, within the space of the installation, images of 'seeing' and 'understanding' are presented by imaging machines in various forms, and explicitly these machines are themselves productions of the human mind. Sited at the heart of the piece is a projected image of the brain, produced via a camera device which is itself an 'electronic eye' for looking into that organ which is the seat of human understanding. The two cameras on either side of the screen are 'eyes' too, but without the reason behind them that endows our eyes with their power. Making sense of the images formed by these electronic eyes is the task of the viewer.

The darkened space of the gallery is illuminated by various projected and back-lit images, which are in turn imaged by cameras or reflected back into the eye and mind of the viewer. The two projected eyes of **Mind's Eye** are blind - the images which are keyed into each iris do not signify 'looking' but reflection - the reflection of the active viewer. For us sight is about participation, as both looking and seeing require active thought. It is also important to see that the view our technology gives us of ourselves is anything but objective. To quote American physicist Arthur Zajonc, in **Catching the Light**" *(1993) "We need to soften the notion of ourselves as equipped with fixed vidiconlike eyes and static computerlike brains to produce the equivalent of consciousness."*

The installation **Mind's Eye** grew out of my interest in developing a way of presenting images to represent flowing thought. I was inspired by an article in **New Scientist** ("*Have the Mind Mappers Lost Their Way*", May 4th, 1996) which reported on a controversy about the interpretation of results of fMRI (functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging) and PET (Positron Emission Tomography) experiments designed to map areas of the human brain. I was particularly interested to discover that these brain scan techniques relied on the detection of variations in the flow of oxygenated blood within the brain, and on the assumption that this was related to neural activity.

An idea then developed from the notion that if I could have a series of brain scans produced whilst looking at a pre-determined visual stimulus, it would be possible to re-present the resultant brain scans and visual stimuli in synchronisation within the context of a gallery installation. It seemed to me that regardless of the problems of any scientific interpretation of these images, they were nevertheless images of flowing activity associated with the process of human thought. Within the context of fine art, these images are a representation of the interior of the brain - they show the record of flowing activity inside the head. I was particularly interested in the fact that the technology in question was also a product of the human mind, and so had come about as a direct result of the self-reflexive properties of human consciousness. In this installation I am presenting the technology as an example of the subjective human mind looking at itself - literally a "mind's eye ".

The principle image in the installation is a representation of the human brain. In this particular case, it is an fMRI image of the artist's brain, but it is important to an understanding of the intentions of the work that the individual viewer recognises its' similarity to his/her own brain, and that the activity presented on the screen matches an identical process taking place within their own brain when looking at the stimulus on the video monitor.

The fMRI scans are images of the human mind looking at itself. The technology to present the images and the mind looking at the screen are both the product of human consciousness - the power of the brain to be aware of itself and to make sense of the body it is part of. But the brain activity mapped by the scan is not a record of consciousness - it is simply a representation of two aspects of visual perception - colour and motion. The human brain divides visual perception into a number of constituent parts, colour, form, motion, etc. and then miraculously recombines them fully synchronised.

In my installation the "mind's eye" is not the machine that produces images of the brain, but the self-reflexive mind of the viewer who reflects on his/her own perception at the point of looking at the work. My work is at a significant level "participatory". Not only is the work something to be physically experienced by moving around the space, but the active mind connects the elements of the installation to what s/he brings to the work. In **Mind's Eye** I am attempting to make explicit that which was implicit in earlier installations such as **Eau d'artifice**, (1990) **Streamline**, (1991) and **Vortex** (1995). As with these earlier works, **Mind's Eye** is about "flow" - the flow of images, the flow of blood through the brain to the visual cortex (for that is what the fMRI process is in effect measuring) the flow of information, etc. Most importantly however, it is an attempt to make tangible the flow of perception and cognition, to make a link between the act of looking at a work of art and making sense of it, an interactive relationship between the body and the mind, between looking, thinking and emotional and physical experience.
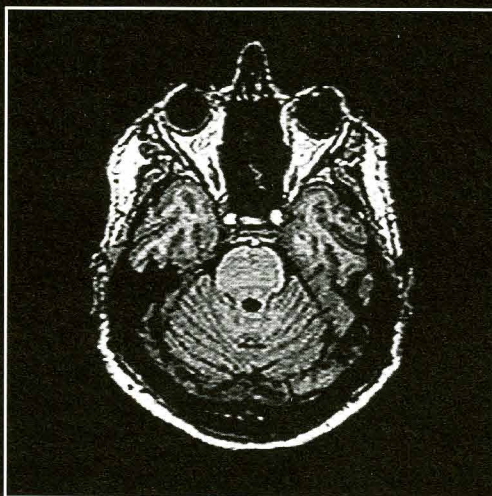
Chris Meigh-Andrews. June, 1997.

Mind's Eye
An essay by A. L. Rees

Projected in the darkened gallery is a striking central image of a scanned human brain, flanked by a flow of colours and words on two video monitors, and by two larger diagonal screens which carry projected images of the human eye. Among the flux or bundle of sensations-light, contrast, scale, colour - which the viewer first confronts, these projected images of eyes and brain command attention and focus. But the work is sculptural as well as pictorial, inviting us to move around it, from screen to screen, and to make connections. The duration of the piece includes the time which the viewer takes to participate in it. Installed as a continuous performance, it 'opens' whenever a new visitor decides to enter the public forum of the viewing space.

The process of viewing here retraces the stages of making, since the brain scan image records the artist's own neural response to the visual stimuli of those shapes and colours we see for ourselves on the monitor. Our own physical reactions to the changing colours and the image movement are mirrored in the synchronised responses of the brain scan, which charts the flow of blood in the visual cortex. But this leap of recognition between the viewer and artist is not all. To see a colour is one process, to measure colour data is another. Here, the brain's visible reaction to colour and movement (on one of the monitors) is encoded by another set of signals (in video projection) whose parallel colours and sequencing are electronically sourced by camera and computer. By relaying colour words and other images onto the iris of the two large-scale projected eyes, **Mind's Eye** suggests that we see nothing directly or without mediation, invoking the metaphor implied in its title.

Such earlier videos as **The Stream** (1987) suggest an internalist model of perception, in which the eye is never innocent, as Ruskin thought, of the words or categories which shape what we see. This new installation shifts its vantage-point to match an expansion into multiscreen projection of images and words. By separating out the levels of text and picture into adjacent spaces, the spectator is free to reconstitute and question their relationship. Just as neuro-psychology confirms that the visual cortex is specialised for different attributes of vision, so **Mind's Eye** allows for that distinct and irreducible element in visual perception which, in other situations, means that the stick always looks bent under water even when we know it is not.

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At the same time, this more externalist or specific account of seeing is also aware that a map of the neural response path can yield no more information about how our sensations feel to us than a sleeper's EEG can show the contents of the dream which it charts. "The brain activity mapped by the scan is not a record of consciousness," says Meigh-Andrews, "it is simply a representation of two aspects of visual perception; colour and motion." These gaps between source and trace, and between image and name, are explored in the work itself, for example through the viewer's creative response to colour fields and their descriptive names shown on the monitors.

Mind's Eye fuses artistic and scientific research, an impulse in modern art since impressionism and cubism. Intellectually, the work draws on current speculation about mind, brain and human psychology. These theories share with contemporary art a concern for identity and consciousness, while the scientific application of 'pure' abstract colours and shapes to stimulate neural response inevitably recalls the purist or "universal language' of form and motion explored by the film avant-garde from Richter, Fischinger and Eggeling to Sharits and Brakhage. Since modern art, physics, neurology and optics all emerged between the synaesthetic 1880's and the constructivist 1920's, it is apt that the computerised colour-program display used here to generate stimuli for the brain-scan is named after Mondrian.

This fully contemporary work also posits some further historic echoes, its very shape recalling the camera obscura (an early vision machine, and a potent model of mind for the 17th century), while allusions to the ritual art of the cave may also embrace Plato's influential allegory of illusion. Cues to this archaic level of the work include its darkness, the spacing and configuration of its screens and an authoritative central image in the layered and open skull. Evoking primary and bodily sensations ("The head is sovereign", said Giacometti), this image puns on the skull as an ancient emblem of death or momento mori even as it scans, and so digitally remembers, a living interiority. Tracking blood-flow to locate neural consciousness is a startling flash-forward of Empedokles' ancient intuition that we think with our blood.

Allusions to 'the enlightenment' in art, science and philosophy are also part of the mental map of **Mind's Eye**. Both 'the new philosophy' of cognition in Descartes or Locke, and the refashioned post-Cartesian 'new physics' of today, echo in its structure.

The work affirms a broadly holistic philosophy of 'flow' between observer and observed, in which levels of perception and meaning interchange through the consciousness of the spectator. But it is tough-minded in its apparent naturalism. Its different elements- variations of screen and scale, of looking and reading- converge only through the active, cognitive participation of the viewer. This response enters the work as a new- unforclosed and unpredictable- part of its meaning. A literal 'self-portrait' of the artist, suitably enough caught in the act of colour perception, leads the viewer to encounter his or her own sense of vision.

Refreshingly among the newest installation art, the work neither seeks to absorb its viewers in lavish spectacle (as does Bill Viola) nor to split and fracture them in the abjection of psycho-fantasy (as with Douglas Gordon). It is perhaps more closely related to the play between science and art in Mona Hatoum and Judith Goddard, or to the interactive sculpture of Jim Campbell. The artist himself refers, among others, to Michael Snow (for acknowledging narrative and metaphor) and to Chris Welsby (who recognised "the interaction of the cinematic apparatus as an active process in relation to a view of natural phenomena").

Mind's Eye adds a new dimension to Chris Meigh-Andrews' 'post-minimal' video and installation-sculpture, although many of its themes expand on earlier concerns- words set against image, the mixture of pre-recorded and live video and an abiding concern for 'parallel flow' or continuum from the work of art to the spectator. His work relies on personal, often lyrical, ideas which have a decidedly social interface (as with visual perception). This work, I think, is his first to exploit 'hidden' aspects of vision in the sphere of scientific knowledge, in contrast to the more familiar and given world of landscape and dailyness, or to such works as **The Stream** in which flowing water also refers analogically to the movement of human awareness.

In rendering the invisible visible, **Mind's Eye** brings medical science and participatory art together in a public and accessible context. It engages with its audience as an independent work, but - as with such scholars of vision as E.H. Gombrich, Michael Podro and Michael Baxandall- it is inspired by observation and experiment as well as by theory. Scientists, says Baxandall in his book **Shadows and Enlightenment** (1995), apply the test of 'ecological validity' to the psycho-physical stimuli in programs such as Mondrian, to check the relevance of the test stimulus against "the complexity of real experience". **Mind's Eye** yields nothing to that complexity while, as processed-based art, it makes a new and lucid contribution to the ecology of vision.

London, June 1997.

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Mind's Eye
Some notes on the scientific background

Functional Brain Mapping

In the last few years, neuroscientists have been adapting the noninvasive technique of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to create functional images of the human brain in health and disease. The images obtained in the high magnetic field of MRI scanners are sensitive to local changes in blood flow, which is an index of neuronal - or electrical - brain activity. Using statistical image analysis methods, cortical areas associated with a particular brain task can be identified. The results are best visualized by superposition onto high resolution structural images of the brain.

Magnetic resonance imaging methods allow normal volunteers and patients to be studied without the use of a contrast agent, with no radiation dose and with the high spatial resolution of MRI. A single subject can be rescanned as often as desired. This is in contrast to the more established technique of positron emission tomography (PET) which uses a radioactively labelled tracer to image brain function.

In a typical functional MRI (fMRI) experiment, a subject lies on the bed of an MRI scanner while viewing a screen illuminated by a video projector, or listening to auditory input via headphones or performing some other form of cognitive task, whilst a sequence of images is obtained. The subject's head is kept still using foam pads, or another method of head immobilization. Ideally, multi-slice scans are obtained to image the entire brain during an experimental run. Usually many hundreds of scans need to be acquired, to increase the sensitivity of fMRI to small changes in brain blood flow. Some processing of the image data is then performed. This includes realigning the images to correct for movement of the subject during the imaging period, and performing some smoothing and filtering of the images to increase the detectability of the signal. The images obtained when the subject performs a task are then compared with those obtained when the subject is at rest or performing a control task. The brain areas which differ between the images in the two conditions are associated with the task the subject was performing in the scanner.

Studying the Visual System

At the Wellcome Department of Cognitive Neurology in London, Professor Semir Zeki and his colleagues have been using functional mapping to demonstrate functional specialization in the human visual cortex. In a series of recent experiments aimed at learning more about the position and variability of the colour centre in the human brain, fMRI scanning was performed on normal volunteers and patients at the Functional Imaging Laboratory, London. While in the MRI scanner, subjects were asked to view stimuli projected onto a screen using a liquid crystal display system. By presenting a series of achromatic (grey scale) and chromatic (colour) stimuli, the areas of the cortex involved with colour vision were identified (named as visual area 4, or V4). In the same manner, comparing scans of the subjects viewing a stimulus in motion versus the same stationary stimulus identifies the areas in the brain which are involved with motion (named V5).Comparing the scans of subjects viewing any of the stimuli versus a blank screen highlights the primary visual areas of the brain (the striate cortex, named V1, and the contiguous visual area, V2) which cover a large area at the centre of the back of the brain. Lesions in the V4 area (in the occipito-temporal cortex either side of areas V1/V2) are known to result in the syndrome of cerebral achromomatopsia; the critical feature of this syndrome is an imperception of colours, or a severe disturbance in colour perception. Subjects with lesion in V5 (located more laterally and superiorly to V4) show cerebral motion blindness.

The Present Study for "Mind's Eye"

For this project, the motion and colour paradigms were combined in a single scanning protocol. The experimental procedure began with the acquisition of an anatomically detailed structural MRI image of the artist's brain, lasting 7 minutes. A different imaging sequence was used to acquired the functional images. Each functional image was acquired in 5 seconds, and 5 images were acquired during the repeated presentation of each type of stimulus. To avoid the confounding effects of time and habituation, the order of presentation of the stimuli was randomized. Each stimulus was presented 12 times during the scanning session which lasted a total of 30 minutes. The chromatic stimulus used was a Mondrian pattern which comprised of 8 differently coloured elements, assembled in such a way as to provide an abstract scene with no recognizable objects. In the achromatic stimulus (the baseline condition) the elements of the same Mondrian pattern had different grey levels. The rest stimulus consisted of a blank screen. The stationary stimulus used was a random array of 600 black squares displayed on a white background. For the motion stimulus this array was moved coherently across the screen at 5 degrees per second in a random sequence of 8 directions (up, down, left, right and the 4 diagonal directions), changing direction every 3 seconds. The images obtained were analyzed using a statistical analysis package to create 4 sets of results, or contrasts. These represent, as coloured areas superimposed onto high resolution anatomical images, the contrasts between colour and grey scale stimuli, motion and stationary stimuli, and between the two baseline conditions and rest. The results demonstrate the primary visual V1/V2 areas and the bilateral V4 and V5 areas in this subject.

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Selected Exhibitions

Mind's Eye **Hot Bath Gallery**, Bath, July-Aug 1997.
Back/Slash, **Castlefield Gallery**, Manchester, Sept.-Nov. 1996.
Vortex. **Prema Arts Centre**, Gloucester, Oct.-Nov. 1995.
Taped, **Middlesbrough Art Gallery**, Cleveland, June-July 1995.
ArCade, Digital Creativity, **University of Brighton**, April 1995 (Touring UK: 95-96)
Perpetual Motion, **Saw Gallery**, Ottawa, Canada. Aug-Sept. 1994.
River Crossings, **Camerawork**, London. April -May, 1993.
Quick!, **Royal Festival Hall**, Southbank, London. April 1993.
European Media Art Festival, Osnabruck, Germany. Sept. 1992.
4xVideo, **Galleri One**, Antwerp, Belgium. Feb. 1991.
New Art Northwest, **Mercury Court**, Liverpool. Aug. 1991.
Visions & Transmissions, **Harris Museum**, Preston. Nov.-Dec. 1990.
External Affairs, **Canada House**, London. Sept. 1989.
The Art of Understatement: **Recent British Video**, Madrid, Spain: 1988.
Electric Eyes: British Artists Video 1985-88: **Tate Gallery**, London; **ICA**; London Aberdeen;
Scarborough; Birmingham; Leicester; Sao Paulo; Vienna: 1988-89.
Museum of Modern Art, Medellin, Columbia: 1988.
Genlock, **Screenworks**, Portsmouth; **Plymouth Arts Centre**; Third Eye Centre,
Glasgow; **Usher Gallery**, Lincoln; **Intrim Arts**, London: 1988-89.
British Video Art & Experimental Film, **Mucsarnok**, Budapest, Hungary: 1987.
Breaking Boundaries, Channel 6, **ICA**, London: 1986.
Light Years, **London Film-makers Co-op**: 1986.
New British Video, Strasbourg, France: 1986.
Summary Video UK, **ICA**, London: 1984.
The Ottawa International Festival of Video Art, (Touring Canada: 1984-85)
The British/Canadian Video Exchange, **A Space**, Toronto, Canada: 1984.
Video/Performance, **The Photographers Gallery**, London: 1984.
Ljublana Festival, Yugoslavia: 1983.
Gallery Trenkanten, Copenhagen, 1983.
New British Video, **Museum of Long Beach**, California, USA: 1983.
Cairn, Paris, France: 1982.
The Basement, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: 1982.
Video Screenings: Chris Andrews, **ICA Cinematheque**, 1982.
Atelier Ste. Anne, Brussels, Belgium: 1981.
New Acquisitions, **Art Metropole**, Toronto, Canada: 1981.
National Video Festival, Bracknell, Berkshire: 1980, 1981, 1982 & 1987.
The New Contemporaries, **ICA**, London: 1979.
New British Image, **Side Gallery**, Newcastle: 1977. (Touring UK:1979)

Publications

Unseen Images, **Art Monthly** No. 173, Jan 1994.
Dummies, Dolls & Poison Candy, **Art Monthly** No. 171, Nov. 1993.
Abstract, Still Life, Portrait, **Art Monthly** No. 136, May 1992.
Video Positive 1991. **Art Monthly**, No. 147, June 1991.
Video Sculpture & Installation, Visions & Transmissions, **Harris Museum**, Preston Nov. 1990.
Special Effects in Photography, **Dorling Kindersley**, London 1977.

Bibliography

Digital Mediation. Imagine Technology as Art, **Back/Slash** Catalogue, Sept, 1996.
Chris Meigh-Andrews, Vortex-A Video Installation, **Live Art Magazine**, April. 1996.
Diverse Practices-A Critical Reader on British Video **John Lilly Media**, 1996.
A Directory of British Film & Video Artists, **Arts Council of England**, 1996.
Interview with Chris Meigh-Andrews, **Virus**, Milan, April, 1995.
Lost in Cyberspace, **Artists Newsletter**, June 1994.
Videography: Video Media as Art and Culture, **MacMillan**, London, 1993.
Camerawork on Board, **Stage, Screen & Radio**, May 1993.
River Crossings, **Hybrid**, June-July, 1993.
River Crossings, **Creative Camera**, Feb-Mar. 1993.
European Media Art Festival, **Variant**, Nov. 1992.
Osnabruck Media Art Festival, **Frankfurter Rundschau**, 17/9/92.
Eau d'Artifice, Chris Meigh-Andrews, **Performance**, Spring 1992.
Video Art Flows into Mercury, **Liverpool Daily Post**, 21/8/91.
Visions & Transmissions, **Screen**, Vol. 32, No. 2, Summer 1991.
The Politics of the Personal in British Video Art, **LVA** Catalogue, Oct. 1991.
Video Installations in the UK, **Video Positive** Catalogue, April. 1991.
Visions & Transmissions, **Artscribe International**, April 1991.
High Tech Exhibition Features Video Art, **Lancashire Evening Post**, 29/11/90.
The Stream, **Independent Media**, March 1988.
Reel Art, **Time Out**, No. 674, July 22nd-28th, 1983.
Video Art, **Stills** Vol.1 No. 4 Winter 1982.
Moves & Blurs, **The Listener**, Feb. 1978.
British Image 4, **Arts Council of Great Britain**, 1977.

Broadcasts

Vortex at Prema Arts Centre, **BBC Radio Gloucester**, 31/10/95.
Oxford Brookes University's First Artist in Residence, **BBC Radio Oxford**, 25/2/94.
(feature) and 27/2/94 (interview)
River Crossings, Kaleidoscope, **BBC Radio 4**, 26/3/93 (interview)
European Media Art Festival, **NDR 3** (Germany) 10/3/93 (interview & feature)
Video 3, The Eleventh Hour, **Channel 4** & **WGBH**, Boston USA, 1985 & 1987.

Awards

Arts Council of England & **South West Arts**, 1997
North West Arts, 1994 & 1996.
Regional Video Commission, **Arts Council of England**, 1995.
Visiting Artist Award, **Ontario Ministry of Culture & Arts**, Canada, 1994.
Research Award, **Arts Council of Great Britain**, 1993.
Regional Video Commission, **Arts Council of Great Britain**, 1991.
Greater London Arts, 1984 & 1986.

Commisions

Vortex, video installation for **Prema Arts Centre**, Gloucester ,1995.
Fire, Ice & Steam, Site-specific installation, **Middlesbrough Gallery**, Cleveland,1995.
Cross-currents, Site-specific installation for **Camerawork**, London, 1993.
Streamline, 9 monitor/9vtr installation for **Bluecoat Gallery**, Liverpool, 1991.
Eau d'Artifice, 34 Monitor/ 4 vtr installation for **Harris Museum**, Preston, 1990.

Residences

Video Artist in Residence, **Prema Arts Centre**, Uley,Glos. Aug-Oct. 1995.
Video Artist in Residence at **Cleveland Arts**, April-May 1995.
"Art, Nature ,Culture" **Salisbury State University**, Maryland, USA. April 1995.
Artist in Residence, **Saw Gallery**, Ottawa,Canada. Aug.-Sept. 1994.
Resident Artist in Digital Imaging, School of Visual Arts, Music & Publishing,
Oxford Brookes University. Jan.-July 1994.
Guest Artist ,Summer Arts Lab, School of Television & Electronic Imaging,
Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art, Dundee, Aug. 1993.
Guest Artist, **Falling Annual Living Room Festspiel**, Odder, Denmark. Sept. 1984.

CHRIS MEIGH-ANDREWS
Complete videography

1977:	Continuum (2 screen videotape, made with G. Bown)
1978:	The Docklands Project (2 screen)
	The Viewer's Receptive Capacity (with G. Bown)
1979:	3:4 (with G. Bown)
	Horizontal & Vertical
	Scanning
	Clock-Wise & Counter-Clockwise
	On the Pier
1980:	The Distracted Driver
	Field Study (installation)
1981:	The Chance Meeting
1982:	The Room with a View
	Time Travelling/A True Story
1983:	Interlude (Homage to Bugs Bunny)
	Light, Time, Memory (installation)
1984:	5 Minutes
	Still Life with Monitor
	Inspiration (site-specific installation)
1985:	On Being
1986:	Other Spaces
	An Imaginary Landscape
1987:	The Stream
1988:	An Imaginary Fountain (installation)
1990:	Eau d'Artifice (installation) *
1991:	Streamline (installation) *
1992:	Heaven & Earth (site-specific installation)
	Domestic Landscapes
1993:	Cross-Currents (site-specific installation) *
	Zoetrope (installation)
1994:	Perpetual Motion (installation)
	Domestic Landscapes (CD -ROM)
	A Sense of Myself (CD-ROM)
1995:	For John Cage (installation)
	Fire, Ice & Steam (site-specific installation) *
	Vortex (installation) *
1997:	Mind's Eye (installation)

N.B. * Denotes commission

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