



the  
**transit zone**

*projects and writings 1988 - 2003 by*  
**Jeremy Welsh**



*Markings, tracks and traces. A com-  
pendium or collection. Things which are  
constantly falling away, moving beyond  
out of reach, at a certain depth, regis-  
tered in layers. The relative motion of  
the*

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*these layers in the lateral plane. Their  
overlapping and their convergences.  
Transparencies and shadows. The rela-  
tive motion of these layers in the verti-  
cal plane, the dimension of depth.*



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Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen vil fokusere på forskning og kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid, og har etablert et program for å stimulere og utforske praksis i og på tvers av områdene billedkunst, design og kunsthåndverk. Gjennom en serie publikasjoner vil KHIB bidra til debatt og utvikling innen samtidskunst og kunstutdanning.

Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen's intention is to focus upon artistic research and development. A programme has been established to encourage and investigate research practice across the fields of Fine Art, Design and Applied Art. Through a series of publications, KHIB contributes to debate around and development within contemporary visual arts and art education.

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## **Devices will drain us, make us vague and compliant.\***

Since the mid seventies I have worked with a variety of cultural practices, from rock music to web-based digital art, that are dependent upon electronic technologies for their production, performance, dissemination, storage and retrieval. As an artist, educationalist and observer of contemporary culture, I am keenly aware of an ambivalent, indeed a contradictory relationship with technology, with devices. Don DeLillo, one of the most insightful voices in contemporary English language fiction, has often encapsulated the state of affairs in our relationship with technology and media \*\*. As artists dependent upon and attempting to work critically within the technological zone of digital media we must be alert and prepared to avoid the hazards of vagueness and compliance. The history of electronic, and later, digital art, has been one of an embrace of technology tied to a critical deconstruction of technology's discursive logic. Digital art is often predicated on the misuse of technology, driven by a need to discover the dark and forgotten corners of a world that appears to be bathed in the harsh light of technological rationality. For the contemporary artist, there is not an either/or choice to be made between art and consumer culture, between the hand-made and the technically reproduced; it is always a question of both/and.

An investigation of *The Image* is central to all aspects of my work from the 1970's to the present time, even when that image is ostensibly absent, simply referred to as a linguistic construct. In digital media culture, *The Image* becomes all-encompassing, not simply an isolated occurrence or statement, quarantined from the world by frame and glass, but a constantly modulating field within which the contemporary world defines itself and is always being redefined.

The projects and texts contained within this publication map the terrain of a working process that began in the mid-seveties against a backdrop of post-conceptualism and the emergence of punk and continues today both as artistic practise, proto-theory and pedagogical problematic. It is the document of a work in progress, a report on the

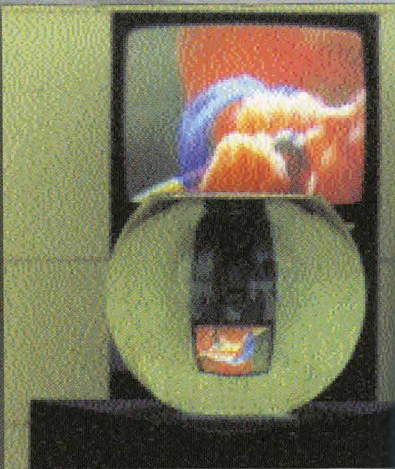
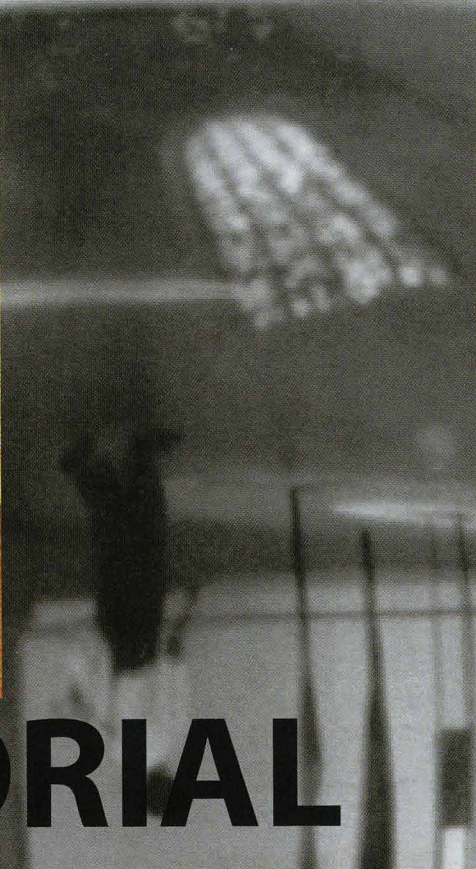
process so far, a collection of elements that should be understood in relation to one another, and as parts of a whole. The works that are documented cover the period from 1988 to 2003 - a period within which the impact of digital technologies upon the practise of art has been profound. Texts that are reproduced in *The Transit Zone* range from essays and discussions on the status of media art to narratives based upon observations of and speculations on contemporary cultural phenomena. Some of the texts are extremely fragmented, approaching the condition of concrete poetry, manipulating language as if it were a plastic substance. The use of cut and paste techniques, so central to the media of the digital age, is a thread that runs throughout my work, predating any engagement with computers. From early experiments with tape recorders, super 8mm film and slide projection in the seventies, to digitally controlled multi media installations in recent years, the ability to combine a variety of media in space and time has been a central strategy for my work as an artist. Collaboration with other artists from different fields has also contributed to a broadening of the frame of reference in which the creative process is elaborated. A dialogue with the languages and traditions of other artistic practices places the work in a larger context and allows the viewers to participate in an active reading of the work, drawing upon their own experiences, memories and preferences. This publication might be a travel diary, it may be the journal of a media archeologist, it could be a postcard from somewhere, it might be a floating archive, it seems to be a residue, the precipitate of a reaction, a process. A document, the remains.

Jeremy Welsh.  
Bergen, August 2003.

\* Don DeLillo in "Libra", 1988.

\*\* See also the title to Andrea Kroksnes' essay, page 4.





# IMMEMORIAL

Video installation, 1989 / 2001

3 video tapes or dvd discs, 3 monitors  
on black plinths with mirrored sur-  
faces, round glass bowl filled with  
water standing on a triangular black  
plinth, six channels of sound.

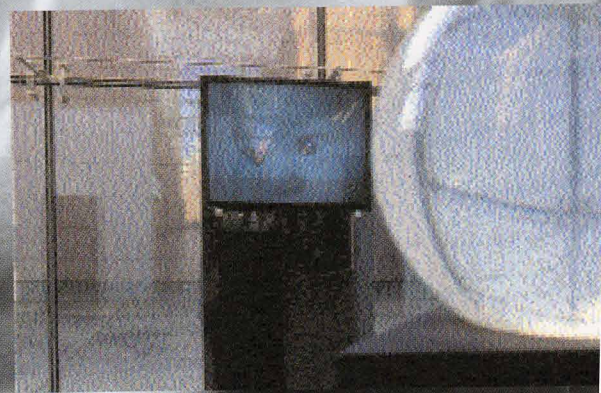
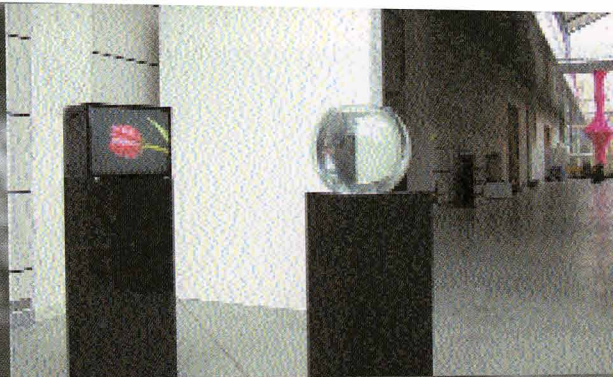
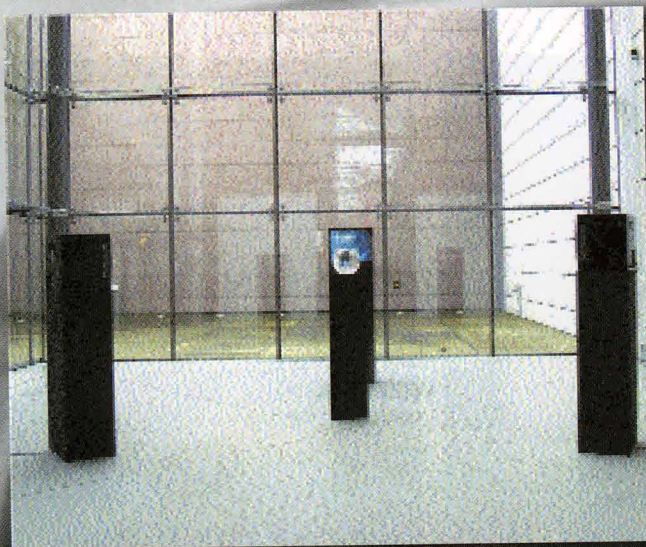
Commissioned for Video Positive 89,  
Liverpool

Images on this page from Eropean  
Media Art Festival, Osnabrück, 1990.

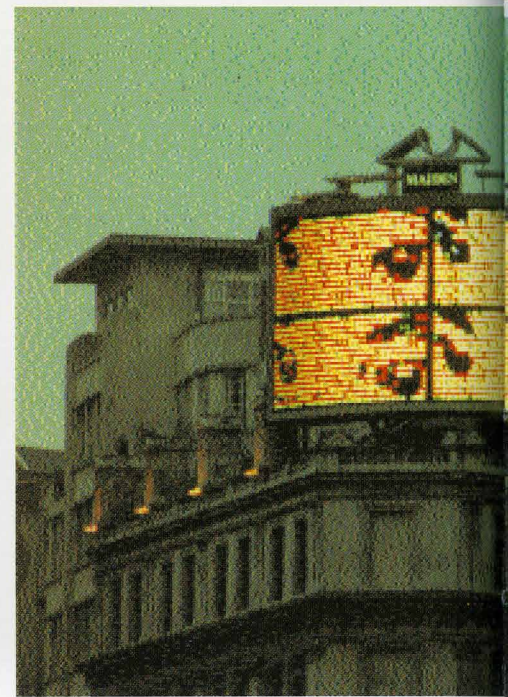
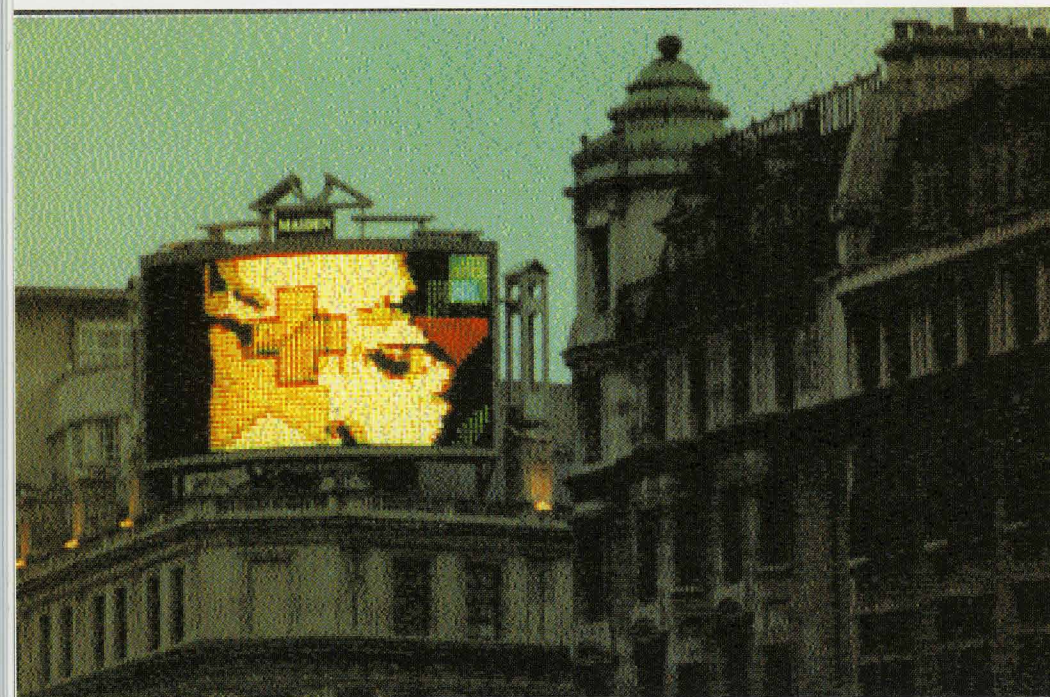
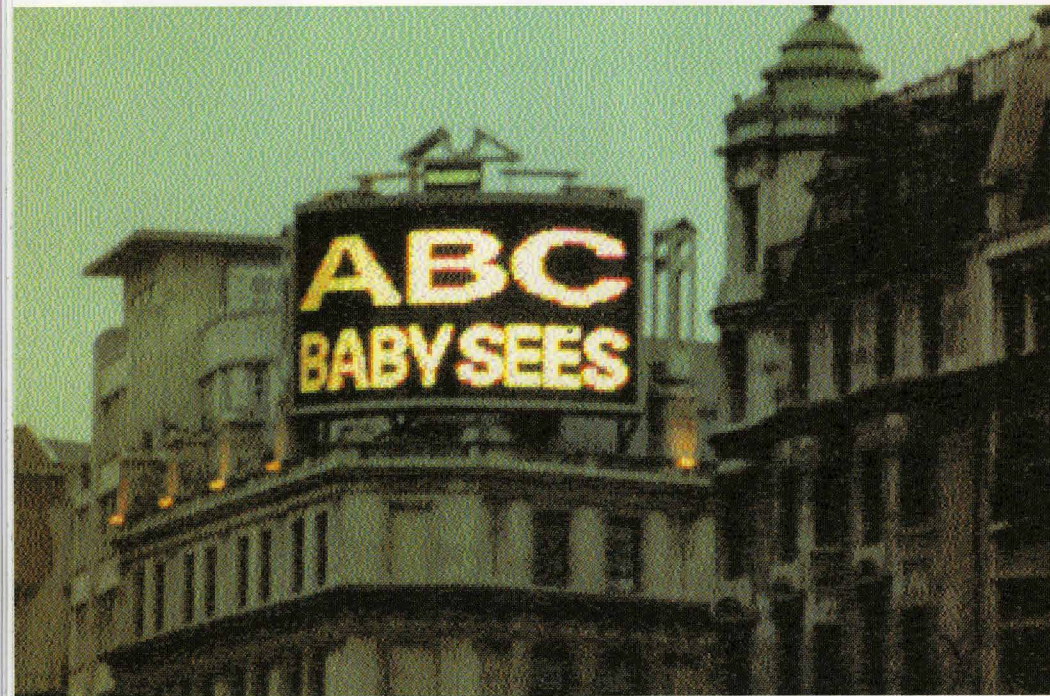
Facing page from Video Topiques  
Musee d'Art Moderne et  
Contemporain, Strasbourg 2002 / 2003



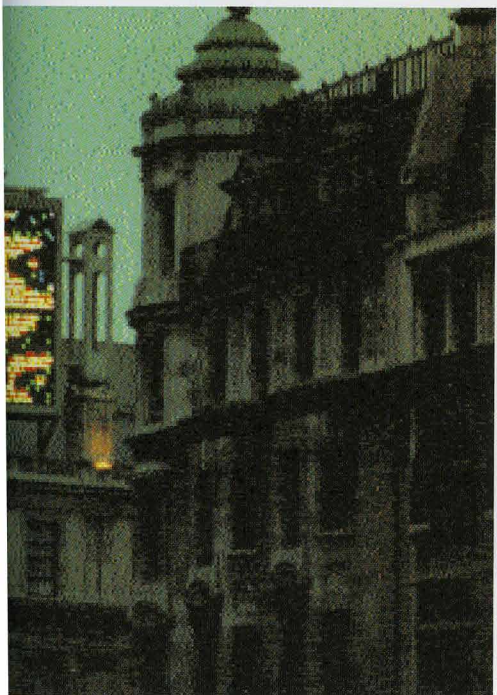
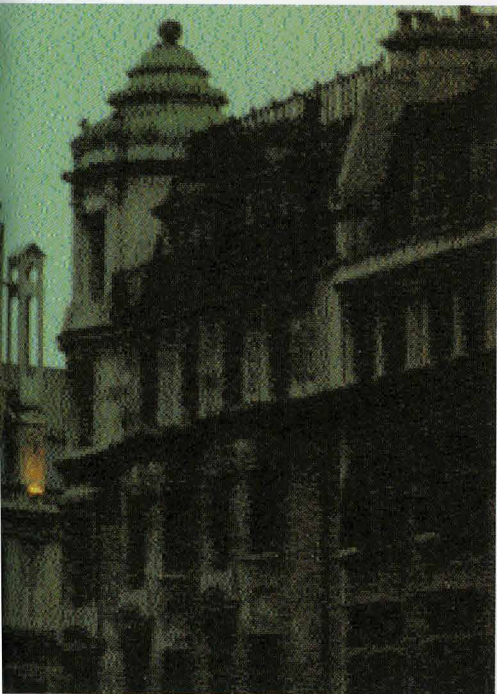














Previous pages:

ABC Baby Sees, 1989 - 20 second computer animation for Spectacolor Pixel Board, Piccadilly Circus, London.  
Commissioned by Artangel for Artists On Spectacolor.

Facing page:

Ghost Architecture I & II, 2001.

Digital photographic prints on backlit foil. Each 240 x 90 cm.





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