Caline Aoun

A report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the School of Arts and Digital Industries, University of East London,
for the degree of Doctor of Fine Art

May 2012

Contents

Introduction

I was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983 in the midst of the Lebanese civil war. Due to my country's difficult circumstances, my family decided to move to Saudi Arabia when I was a few weeks old in order for my sisters and I to be raised in a stable environment all the while maintaining proximity to our homeland. My father worked in a company that organised fairs, and early on, I was exposed to the production of graphic banners, poster imagery, and vinyl sign making. I returned to Lebanon at the age of 13 to achieve my high school education all the while maintaining my fascination with the world of graphic imageries. My fascination eventually materialized with my move to London at the age of 18 where I decided to attend St-Martin's School of Art. This expatriate move sublimated my cultural detachment from my homeland, which had already been preset from childhood.

Since we could not vacation in our homeland due to the war, my family and I spent most of my childhood traveling to foreign countries. I was thus imbued with many different cultures during my formative years , none of which happened to be my home culture. The sense of detachment and 'not-belonging' to a source culture, as well as not having the time to fully adapt to a place, has been influential in the way I would eventually perceive the world. To my perception today, most things in our world look unoriginal, with 'original' denoting an object's stem source that has gone through various conventions only to be presented to me through many layers of mediation. The sense of nothingness and blankness, partly affected by states of suspension whilst travelling as well as the complexity of information I was presented with, is always something I think about when I produce work today.

The technical evolution of the production and dissemination of images is central to my research. My intellectual point of departure is French philosopher Bernard Stiegler's (1994) statement that "man is nothing other than a technical living being" and that the becoming of man and technics are the same thing.

My research interest is twofold focusing in first part on the evolution from analog to digital technologies in relation to our perception of images and how we acquire knowledge from them, and in second part on the role that imaging technologies play in the production of ideology.

As a response to the evolution from the analog to the digital and the overload of information and media-based production, I exploit, in my current art practice, the material realities of the image – inherent in its digital or mechanical production or in its physical or virtual distribution – as a way to generate aesthetic production and meaning. I assert and define images as objects that are part of an active system with their meaning impossible to be defined as inseparable from their material realities.

Relevant to the research is the recent emergence of young artists namely – Walead Beshty, Marcus Amm, Eileen Quinlan, Marisa Olson, Anthony Pearson, and Wade Guyton among many, who are driven by a sense of urgency, nostalgia and/or celebration of images' means of production, circulation and interpretation in today's world. The research focuses on Walead Beshty and Wade Guyton's practices after comparing the art practices of Sol Lewitt with Agnes Martin, and discussing the art practice of Roni Horn. These three artists are known to deal with the concerns of materiality and immateriality in different ways; they call our attention to life's moments of comfort and 'full nothingness' all the while exploring the contradiction of 'being no more', yet becoming 'a lot more' than what they really are. This sense of the "real" versus the "elusive" is what I try to explore and define when I create work.

Autobiographical context

My work in my third year at Central Saint Martins focused on my interest in painting and the documentation of art. I was particularly interested in the fact that we seem to accumulate a wider global awareness of *documented* artworks rather than of originals because of the installation shots that are massively published in books, magazines, and on the Internet. This pushed me to research how art is typically shown and recorded, and how the context of presentation can affect our experience of art.

My work was not meant to serve as a critique nor homage to any means of documentation, but rather an objective observation of the different styles of documentation. I was eager to delve into the different tools used by the said documentation in order to understand what complexities and contexts may be consequentially brought up by a given artwork.

During the third year, I produced paintings that represented photographic documentations of artworks that surrounded my art making. The process of painting was a way to add yet another layer of mediation to the excessively mediated images. In other words, it presented a way to reduce or alter information, to emphasise a graphic replacement of real experience of art and to raise awareness of the vastness of the system that surrounds art.

This is so Contemporary II, (After Thomas Scheibitz), 173 x 130 cm, Oil on canvas, 2005

After graduation, I continued my work along that same line of thinking. In an exhibition I had in that year, I made work using one of John Baldessari's parables (1971) as a starting point.

'The Best Way to do Art:
A young artist in school used to worship the paintings of Cézanne. He looked at and studied all the books he could find on Cézanne and copied all of the reproductions of Cézanne's work he found in books. He visited a museum and for the first time saw a real Cézanne painting. He hated it. It was nothing like the Cézannes he had studied in the books. From that time on, he made all of his paintings the sizes of paintings reproduced in books and he painted them all in black and white. He also printed captions and explanations on the paintings as in books. Often he just used words. And one day he realized that very few people went to art galleries and museums but many people looked at books and magazines as he did and they got them through the mail as he did.

Moral: It's difficult to put a painting in a mailbox.'

My work in my postgraduate degree at the Royal Academy Schools (2006-2009) continued to reflect on issues of presentation and the production of images. I examined the ways in which we perceive our surroundings and culture, ways that are mediated by technology and flattened by commercialism. I also examined the different values, effects and fates that are consequentially possessed by these images .

Ice/Night, Installation shot, Oil on wood, 2007

At this point, the investigation of material and medium specificity seemed to be important. I was interested in the response I had to the specific conditions related to the use of images. The process of painting started to become meaningless in my practice.

At the start of the third year of my postgraduate degree, I decided to stop painting altogether. I felt it was the wrong medium for me to be working with as if it was slowing down the development of my ideas and processes. At this point, the work had to be placed within a discourse of painting, and justifying the work within that framework was therefore no longer interesting for me. At that point, my work started to revolve around the processes of saturation and dissipation – the points at which information recedes into blankness.

Almost There, Digital image. Shown as a desktop image on a compute screen. Part of 'Testcard Project', 2009

(see Appendice 1)

Lighter Later, Digital image. Shown as a desktop image on a compute screen. Part of 'Testcard Project', 2009 (see Appendice 1)

My practice started to reflect on the worlds and visuality of images questioning their presentation and production in everyday mass culture. Through my work, I examined the ways in which we perceive our surroundings, typically flattened and mediated by technology. I examined the different values, effects and fates these images have on us. As such, I was interested in the influence that image production and reproduction technologies, as well as shifts and changes in image consumption, have on our society.

Whilst the different means of image production are basically mechanical, digital and/or industrial, I experimented in the studio with different means of processes in order to tap into the state beyond what is purely straightforward visual information normally presented by images themselves. The basic idea is to explore potential new meanings for images through these images' means of production. At this point, it was important to investigate material and medium specificity . I was thus interested in

understanding the response that I personally had to the specific conditions related to the use and production of images.
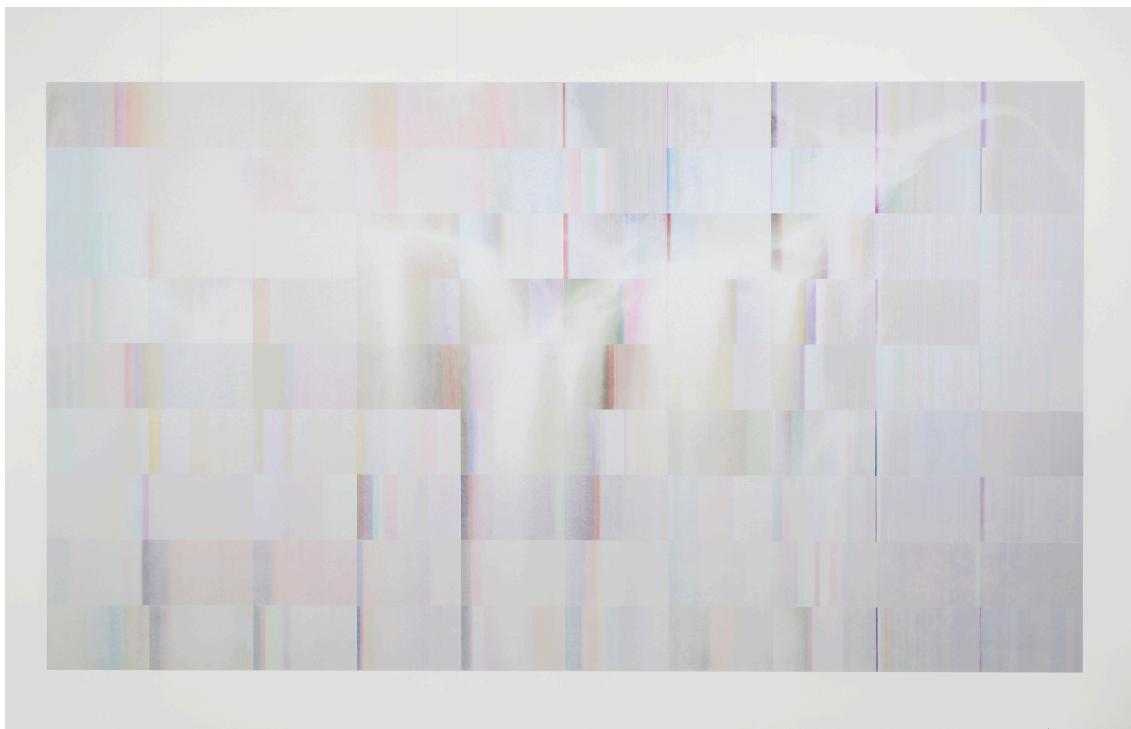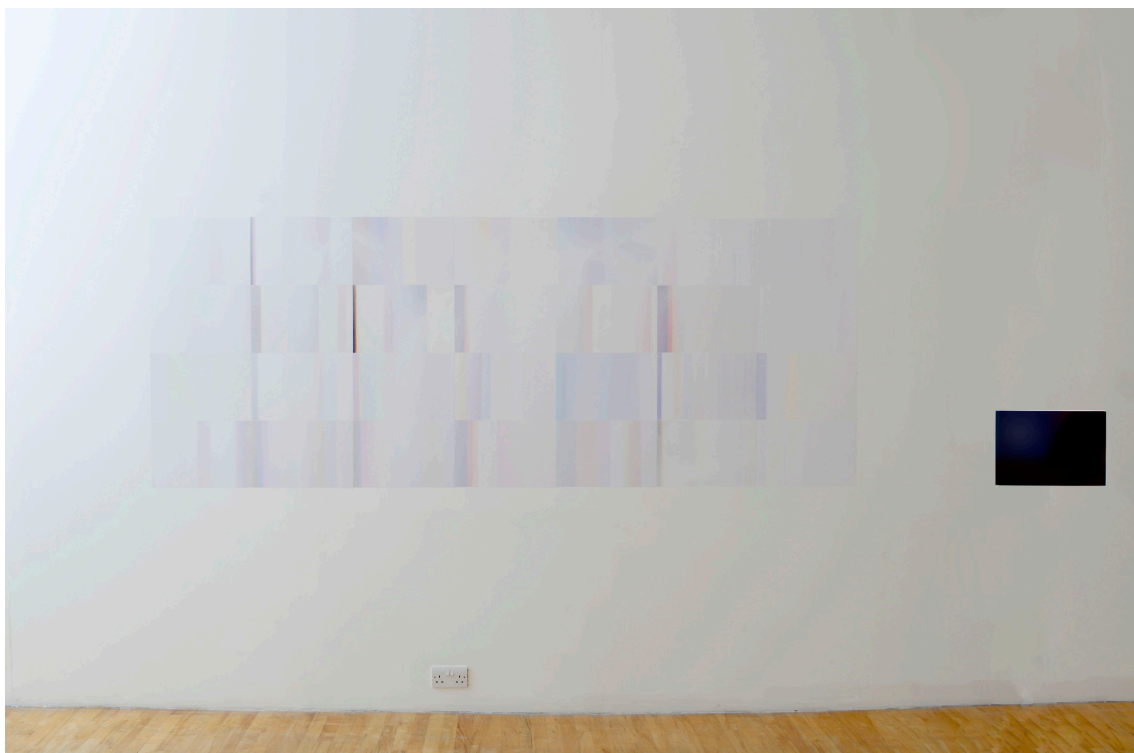

Glow to Scatter, Unique inkjet prints on vinyl, dimensions variable, 2009


Glow to Scatter, Detail, 2009

Starting from that point, my work mostly revolved around the processes of saturation and dissipation – the points at which information recedes into blankness. By providing the viewer with eventful readings of our ordinary, exhausted and saturated responses to recurrent daily images, I attempted to reduce visual representational information to 'nothingness'. I thus manipulated the materials used to communicate images and dismantled pre-established modes of recognition by creating mechanical interventions that played with the viewers' senses and their ways of seeing images. Resultantly, I manipulated the mechanics of image creation and representation by disrupting the printers' own processes – force-feeding paper manually into a printer at different angles, blocking plotters' suction, and so on. These disruptions or purposeful malfunctions become signs of waste, tiredness and show the failure of representation to represent. Through transformation and spontaneous disruptions, I utilized the excess energy of a system in order to reveal its inconsistency, often employing the systems themselves through the use of grids and repetitive formats. These processes resulted in works bearing the traces of their own making, containing their very own transcripts in re-presented images.

*Dissipation, Portal,* Installation view , 2009 (see appendice 2)
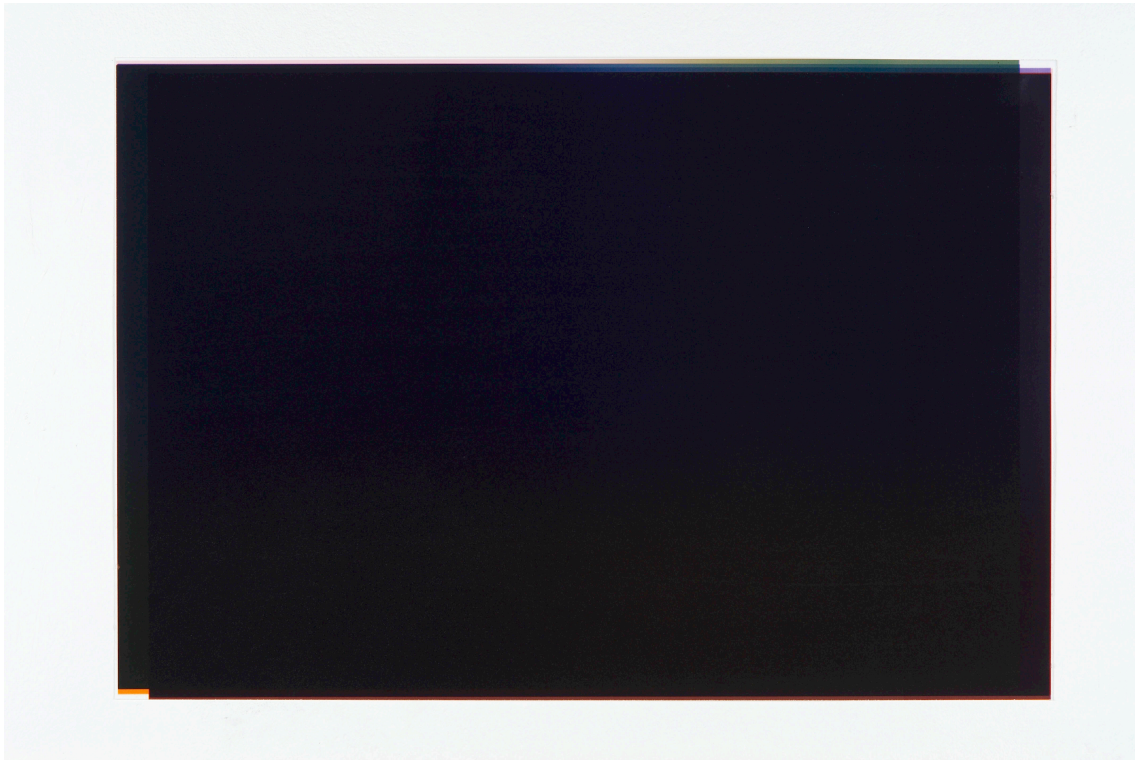
Portal, Unique inkjet print on Sommerset paper, 2009

'Glow to Scatter' and 'Dissipation' were printed on vinyl using empty ink cartridges and domestic printers, and presented in a grid proportional to the wall. The image struggles to appear through the process of its own making. Fragmentary components indicate larger production processes doomed by their further dissipation.

'Portal' was created from feeding a single piece of paper into a domestic printer over and over again until it became saturated with ink. The coloured ink builds up on the surface of the paper to form a thick layer of velvety material. The result looks like a hole in the wall, a void, vacuum. The image thus becomes consumed by its own 'material': the ink, and flatness becomes a form through the gradual accumulation of layers, revealing the potential of space, as a surface, in which edges are paramount.

Royal Academy degree show, Installation shot, 2009
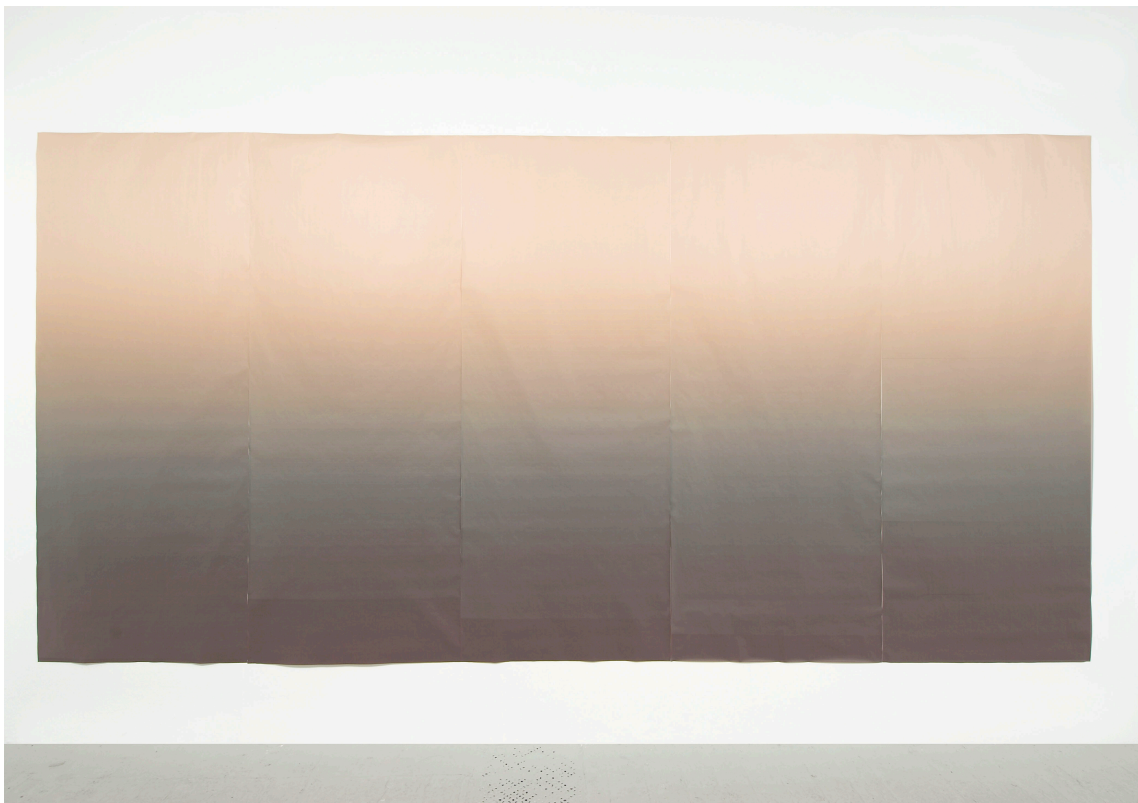
At A Glance, Suite of unique inkjet prints on pink FT newsprint paper, dimensions variable, 2009

Critical reflection on theory and artists

Not long ago, CDs were a novelty and the World Wide Web did not even exist. Today, technologies are beginning to evolve ever faster. Most forms of mass media today, television, music, and film, are produced and distributed digitally. Now that the transition from analog to digital has fully taken effect, there is a tangible trend moving towards the digitisation of almost every aspect of everyday life. In our offices, in supermarkets and our homes, every form of information traffic is being monitored or controlled digitally. 'Analog' technologies are effectively retreating every day. How much will the digital bubble that we now live in affect the gallery space, the museum and the production of artworks? Digitisation does present practical challenges with the means of dissemination and communication made possible by the technologies. So how should we, as artists, deal with the medium of the digital in our increasingly digital media-imbued world?

First, in order to understand the term 'digital', we need to investigate the term 'analog' that precedes it. I would like to note that the uses of the words 'analog' and 'digital' in this research do not only apply to their technical differences – i.e. in the differences between digital and film cameras – but to the more theoretical ideas of the ways we experience life. On example is the Google Chrome advert "how to be extreme", which seems to be a parody of the contemporary Internet age: the relation between the technical system and the social system is mainly characterized by the current problem of consumption commercialism, and the need for the consumer to constantly adapt and re-adapt his/her attitudes and behaviours to the ever-changing environment.

How to be Extreme, Google Chrome advert still

Neil Postman is quoted in Carol Wilder's publication (1997, p.240) titled *Being Analog,* saying that 'a new technology does not add or subtract something. It changes everything'. The word 'analog' comes from the Greek roots 'ana', which means 'equivalent', and 'logos', which means the structure of reality (Wilder, C, 1997, p.240). This suggests that the analog relates to the way things are in the real world; placed directly in reference to the physical world, and the tactile.

The basis of this research is to establish the effect of digitization on our perception of images today and how we acquire knowledge from them. The premise is that digital photography has fundamentally altered the way we perceive images of the world. The evolution from analog to digital in relation to the image is further discussed in Bernard Stiegler's essay titled 'The Discrete Image' (2002). In his essay, Stiegler explains that with analog photography, there is a sense of truth or fidelity to the actual event or subject photographed. He further posits that the purported fidelity of the analog image is no longer existent in the digital realm. In fact, the digital realm is a space where manipulation of the image is almost unavoidable. Even though analog images could be also be maneuvered, manipulation was rarely the general intention

or idea behind analog photography, whereas in digital photography manipulation is most of the time almost inherent. Stiegler writes (2002, p.150):

'The digital photograph suspends a certain spontaneous belief which the analog photograph bore within itself. When I look at the digital photo, I can never be absolutely sure that what I see truly exists – nor, since it is still a question of a photo, that it does not exist at all.' He further adds, 'manipulation is (…) the essence, that is to say, the rule of the digital photo'. Through the reading of his essay, one could make a utopian point within the discourse of the analog/digital transition of a "digital immaterialism".

Another great mind, Friedrich Kittler, writes in his book titled *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* (1999, pp.1-2) that the transition from analog to digital is 'an end to medium specificity'.

'The general digitisation of channels and information erases the differences among individual media. Sound and image, voice and text are reduced to surface effects, known to consumers as interface (…) Inside the computers themselves everything becomes a number: quantity without image, sound or voice. And once optical fibre networks turn formerly distinct data flows into standardized series of digital numbers, any medium can be translated into another. With numbers, everything goes. Modulation, transformation, synchronisation; delay, storage, transposition; scrambling, scanning, mapping - a total media link on a digital base will erase the very concept of medium. Instead of wiring people and technologies, absolute knowledge will run as an endless loop.'

All possible means of digital communication, whether through the Internet or the mobile phone, erases the spatial and temporal restraints as well as the boundaries of our bodies. This results in a complete disembodiment, where communication places a great importance on our minds, similar to the very nature of the digital mediums themselves. All that said, most of us still yearn for the analog, whether it is in the form of sounds of music, Polaroid pictures or analogical processes in film. Indeed, there often seems to be a sense of resistance or premature nostalgia in our ways of dealing with the world's evolution into the digital. Losing the endearing qualities of the old makes us yearn for the 'real': the feel of a paper book or a music record in our hands, the sounds of the processes of a film camera, or even the sight of our real friend instead of his/her live image transmitted through Skype photons.

Marshall Mc Luhan's *The Medium is the Message* (1967) is worthy of being quoted at this point in the research. Mc Luhan describes how the form of a message (print, visual, musical, etc.) determines the ways in which that message will be perceived. In fact, today's digital technologies (computers, mobile phones, iPads etc) are increasingly becoming the main medium through which we now see, understand and experience or interact with the world. We seem to be heading in a direction where Mc Luhan's visions are coming true. Most of us now mainly communicate, consume culture and make friends through the computer and the Internet in such a way that we could say that we almost become part of these technologies. In *Technics and Time, 1: the Fault of Epimetheus,* Stiegler (1996, pp.4-10) reflects, via the work of Martin Heidegger, on the idea that human temporality is in fact irreducibly technical. For Heidegger, the 'Dasein' is authentically temporal and forms itself through historical heritage. It is a question of always coming back to the past in order to transport itself into the future. As a response to this idea, Stiegler notes that the access to a non-lived past will essentially be technical and inscriptive. In other words, it is only through objects and technics in general that we are given access to the past and the future.

In my ongoing research, I attempt to explore different theories of technical evolution. For Bertrand Gille (Stiegler, B, 1998, p.15), technics have entered a state of permanent innovation and are evolving more quickly than culture.
The investigation and research of technical evolution is indeed very important today as it is a subject that is becoming more and more difficult to grasp, while it is unclear whether we are able to predict or orient the evolution of the technical dynamic.

Important to this research are also some of the frequent attributes cited when discussing images and objects: terms such as 'poor' images, and 'generic' objects that closely related to a material issue. Through the reading of Hito Steyerl's (2009) essay 'In Defence of the Poor Image', Paolo Virno's (2004) *A Grammar of the Multitude* and Alex Alberro's (2003) *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity,* I explored the notion of the 'poor image', its meaning and its implications and influence in aesthetic production. In short, the poor image is the image that is distributed for free, compressed, reproduced, copy-pasted, ripped, remixed, uploaded, downloaded, shared, re-edited, and so on. Its accessibility enables users' participation in the re-

editing, re-creation or re-distribution of its content, whereby users become the co-authors of 'poor' images. The poor image is the accessible image readily available at the expense of its quality. It transforms contemplation into distraction. Born from digital information technology, it is also a threat to the existence and the value of the printed information. In my opinion, the key point of the 'poor image' is the real condition of its existence: its digital dispersion, its material fragmentation and its flexible temporalities.

If an artwork is said to be more or less like a thing or an object, the research explores the boundaries between the different meanings and suggestions of what an object or a thing is. In W.J.T. Mitchell's (2005) words ' things are no longer passively waiting for a concept, theory, or sovereign subject to arrange them in ordered ranks of "objecthood". The thing rears its head – a rough beast or sci-fi monster, a repressed returnee, an obdurate materiality, a stumbling block, and an object lesson. The thing is like a sci-fi monster, created, awakened, or evolved because of the machinations of a mad scientist, a nuclear accident, or a scientific experiment gone awry. A thing is resistant to the ordered "objecthood" of objects, which are named, categorized and become part of a system of objects. Within this context, my research tries to clarify or understand the meanings of the art object, the "thingness" of art, through its histories of immateriality and materiality. The "generic" objects, the ones that are designed so incredibly well to function with transparent efficiency within the systems of circulation for which they are intended, will be discussed in relation to their employment in contemporary art practices – how can they be reclaimed and transferred into our personal realm?

I then explore the concept of repetition as strategy in its relation to the production of meaning through works of artists who take up the structures that define organisation of images. I also delve into the decision-making processes in their practice regarding the meaning of forms and material processes. This is explored with reference to Deleuze's (1994) *Difference and Repetition,* Hal Foster's (1996) *The Return of the Real,* Soren Kierkegaard's (1983) *Fear and Trembling,* as well as Andy Warhol's piece *Shadows* (1978) currently installed at the Dia Beacon Centre.

'Repetition is a comfort in a world that's chaotic, ever changing and crazy, something which can be relied on, a regular rhythm, I think is a comfort', says Martin Creed (no date, http://www.youyube.com/watch?v=_YI_kJgjMo).

For Kierkegaard (1983, p.149), the repeated experience is always something different. Repetition has both its tragic and comic aspects: doing the same action over again can be a boring and often insane thing. But repetition, says Deleuze, is also a kind of freedom: without its regular framing and punctuating insistence, we would never be able to experience difference and relish in the new at all. He (Deleuze, 1994, p.xix) writes that 'modern life is such that, confronted with the most mechanical, the most stereotypical repetitions, inside and outside ourselves, we endlessly extract from them little differences, variations and modifications'. He explains that we ought to find in these differences a new economy of thought, experience and aesthetic production. Without repetition's existence, we are left with the order of mere representation where one thing is made to mean another. But if we enter a realm of true repetition, the same and the different overlap without sacrificing each other's meaning. A pure repetition is a startling difference.

Perhaps believing in repetition is something comforting and engaging. Claiming it is not really repetition at all is a way of saying that all our daily routines, habits, obsessions and mistakes are not repetitive despite all evidence to the contrary. For artists, repetition in the production of work can be a strategy to claim that our works are not mere representations of an idea but a life giving concept; repetition in itself can indeed generate the production of meaning.

Artists

Sol Lewitt is mainly known as a founder of both Minimal and Conceptual art. Lewitt became famous in the late 60's with his wall drawings and sculptures, which he preferred calling 'structures'. His first series of sculptures, created in the 60's, used the modular form of the square in arrangements of varying visual complexity. His practice involved a wide range of media, which involved drawing, printmaking, photography and painting. The sizes of his works range from gallery-sized installations to monumental outdoor pieces.

Throughout his time as an artist, Lewitt has been very influential and transformed the ideas and practices of drawing and changed the relationship between an idea and the artwork generated by the idea.

In 2008, I came across Sol Lewitt's artworks at the Dia Beacon Foundation just outside New York. It was a show of fourteen complex and intricate wall drawings.

Sol Lewitt, wall drawings installation shot, Dia Beacon foundation, NY, 2006-ongoing

In this series of wall drawings, Lewitt gave modern drawing the scale of painting and the immateriality of pure thought, and combined it with architecture and real space. They were seductive, monumental wall drawings but at the same time they were completely transparent about how they were made. They were articulately political in the sense that they sided the politics of aesthetics within the room in the relation of

the viewer to the art object. They disrupted the power relationship between aesthetics and the individual viewer by choosing not to conceal how different choices were made. As I was walking in the space, I was immediately absorbed by the aesthetic impact of the wall drawings. I wondered how I could possibly sidestep this aesthetic surface in order to take an uninfluenced look at their conceptual content. This proved to be easier than anticipated.

In his paragraphs on Conceptual Art (1969), Lewitt defines conception as 'pre-fact' and perception as 'post-fact'. Indeed, the aesthetic experience of his work at the Dia center was a 'pre-fact', preceding the original idea. When I create my work, I am constantly aware of this thought process. Indeed, I enjoy creating work that superficially harbors an aesthetic surface, all the while inviting enough in its aesthetics for the viewer to seek to scratch that surface and look for deeper ideas and concepts. 'In conceptual art the idea or concept is the most important aspect of the work. When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art.' (1967, *Artforum*, June)

In Six Years: the dematerialization of the art object from 1966 to 1972 (1997), Lucy Lippard presents art through the concept of dematerialization in two ways: 'art as idea and art as action' (Lippard, 1997: 43). Dematerialization in this connection aims to de-emphasise the material aspects of art, and especially of art as object, its prevailing orthodoxies of 'uniqueness, permanence, and decorative attractiveness' into an 'anti-form' or 'process art' (Lippard, 1997: 5).

Lewitt's 'Paragraphs on Conceptual Art' also define the terms in more detail (in Lippard, 1997: 28-9) and his 'Sentences on Conceptual Art' are presented as a series of sayings such as:

'10. Ideas alone can be works of art; they are a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be physical.(...) 14. The words of one artist to another may induce an idea chain, if they share the same concept.(...) 29. The process is mechanical and should not be tampered with. It should run its course.(...) 35. These sentences comment on art, but are not art.' (1997: 75-6)

Lewitt as well as the minimalist artists Donald Judd and Dan Flavin, were also inspired by Duchamp's thoughts about ready-mades, which disdained artistic touch, favoured chance and put ideas first. Unlike Flavin's fluorescent tubes, or Judd's metal boxes, Lewitt's ready-mades were not industrial objects or materials. They were the intellectual staples of plane geometry – grids, arcs, straight lines, squares, circles – whose many applications could be adjusted and rendered with the sweep of a hand holding a bit of graphite, coloured pencil, chalk or crayons (and possibly a straight edge). The wall drawings looked very basic and 'real'.

Agnes Martin, Installation at Dia:Beacon, Beacon, NY. Dia Art Foundation

Agnes Martin was a Canadian-born American abstract painter (1912-2004). Whilst one could easily associate Martin's work with minimalism, Martin clearly identifies herself as an abstract expressionist. Not the Abstract Expressionism of action painting with the gestural brushworks, but the abstract expressionist who uses a dry and clear visual language to express perfect states of emotional being. 'The function

of an artwork is … the renewal of memories of moments of perfection' states Martin (1987, *Artforum 25,* n.10, p.94).

Minimalism originates from the reductive aspects of Modernism and is often interpreted as a reaction against the intensity often found in Abstract Expressionism. Minimalism strips down imagery to its most essential features while striving for expressionless-ness. Martin dismissed the legacy of minimalism as impersonal and dispassionate. Even though Martin strips down her imagery to its most essential features, conceptually, her works show directness and immediacy of expression, which is at the heart of an Abstract Expressionist.

I mention Agnes Martin's practice in relation to Sol Lewitt's practice because even though they produce work through different philosophies of art, they both share and present certain morphological likenesses and formal affinities based on the use of grid or related graphic structures. For example, the elusiveness of Lewitt's wall drawings in graphite and the modularity of his drawings often composed of rectangular surfaces could well compare with Martin's process of working. There are, nonetheless, crucial differences: Lewitt's works are grounded in the intellect, hers in inspiration; his metaphysics are fundamentally materialist, hers idealist. Her work has never been about the empirical world, but rather the emotional and spiritual realm she lives in.

For Martin, those memories of moments of perfection evoke abstract emotions, most notably those of happiness, innocence, and beauty. She believes that sensations experienced when contemplating the natural world – prairies, plains, deserts, the night sky, the ocean – can generate such emotions.

Most of Martin's work has been inspired by the delicate tones of colour found in the vast expanses of natural scenery, or by their counterparts at a microscopic level – a leaf, a blossom, a bird. She states on the subject of nature: 'its really about the feeling of beauty and freedom, that you experience in landscape … my response to nature is really a response to beauty'. (1993, *Art Monthly,* n.169, p.4)

Her abstract configurations of parallel lines or rectilinear grids are perceived more as images rather than simply as form, and more of an optical sensation rather than an illusion. Central to this compelling yet understated effect is the viewer's sensual engagement with the material details, but unlike with Lewitt's work, the spectator, suspended between passivity and total control, is unable to completely master the situation.

While Agnes Martin's work has nothing to do with the physical world, but rather the emotional and spiritual realm, Roni Horn, an American artist who has been working since the 1970s, does the opposite. Horn is an artist who is empirically inspired by her surrounding landscape. She states (1989, *Bomb,* n.xxviii p.35) that 'in Iceland you understand empirically exactly what this place is: its what and how'.

What engages Horn is precisely this relationship of "what and how". Her work seems to always clarify the experience of the relationship between form, material place and identity. In her sculptural practice, she seems to refuse to identify objects as self-contained entities. Her sculptural works are empirical and circumstantial – they are responsive to the space in which they are placed and their identity is the product of a cumulative experience of formal, architectural and temporal relationships.

Throughout her practice, Horn consistently insists on a purity and integrity of materials, which have included solid rubber, lead, wood, copper, aluminum and stainless steel in her sculptures, as well as pure pigments in her drawings.

Horn's diverse practice encompasses sculpture, drawing, photography, language and site-specific installation. Many of her artworks are site-dependent and expand upon the idea of site specificity in association with minimalism. Her practice is clearly rooted in minimal art and conceptual art yet Horn developed her own concerns with identity, memory and place.

I am particularly interested in Horn's method of using sculptural materials to play with the viewer's perception especially in her solid glass castings.

Roni Horn, *Well and Truly*. Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria, 2010

The surfaces of the pieces are fire-polished and slightly bowed like liquid under tension, while the sides maintain the rough texture of the mold. Although the immense weight of the glass is obvious, these objects confuse our perceptions because of their almost immaterial look. Appearing as liquid but existing as solid, they play with our senses and knowledge of the physical laws of states of matter. Horn uses the characteristics of glass to make sculptures that are aesthetically and technically magnificent.

Walead Beshty is an American-British artist, born in London in 1976.

I came across his work for the first time at the Tate Triennial (3 February – 26 April 2009) curated by Nicolas Bourriaud where he has exhibited a few times since. I attended his exhibition "Walead Beshty: Production Stills" in August 2012 at the Thomas Dane Art Gallery in London. Beshty had chosen to reveal an installation of wall-based works and sculptures, both about the nature of the production and consumption of contemporary art. I was particularly interested in his photograms, which relied on the various practices and processes that could occur in the darkroom using light and paper. These experimentations with light-sensitive materials are done without a camera or negatives. Though this process dates to early nineteenth-century experiments with light sensitive materials, Beshty has dismantled the process to further investigate material conventions.
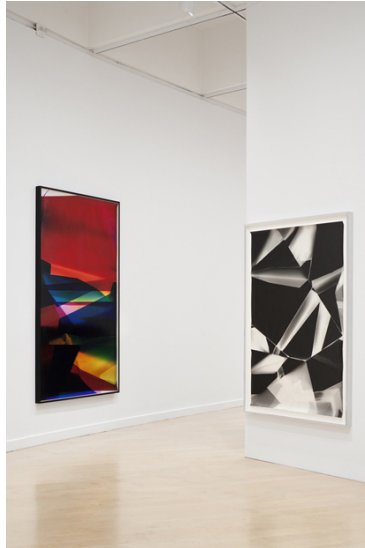
Walead Beshty , Hirshorn Museum

In the 1920s, artists like Man Ray, László Moholy-Nagy, Aleksandr Rodchenko and Christian Schad explored this technique's potential for abstraction and the production of a new visual language in photographic representation to challenge the nature of photographic representation. In relation to these Modernist precedents, Walead Beshty's photograms are oversized and seem to, at the same time, explore more deeply, and to deconstruct the means by which they are made.

He says during a discussion on a panel in Pasadena,

'my procedure might be an "appropriated" model modified from the avant-gardes or Conceptual art, which allowed one to be freed up from certain aesthetic conventions. But my emphasis is on the active application of this logic to the contemporary context as a way of moving past certain conventions, of finding another way through that isn't based on the false options of negation or affirmation.' (2009, *Art in Amerca*, p:136)

Given the abstract "look" worn by these works, I would also like to explore the artists' relationship to abstraction, or more clearly, to the term "abstraction" used to describe their work. Walead Beshty writes in an essay titled Abstraction Photography, " As signifying surfaces, images are abstractions. The logic of the abstraction is the reduction of four dimensions to a two-dimensional surface".

I would not say that his practice shows an attachment to photography per se, nor to abstraction in photography. But photography is the dominant mode through which images are circulated daily. So it seems important to tackle its discourse when talking about his work that is in fact dealing with the circulation of images.

However, it still remains hard to classify Beshty's photograms as abstraction. They are visibly the product directly resulting from the specific conventions and circumstances of their making. With their apparent tears and creases, the photograms' surfaces remind us directly of the material world underlying all of photography's production. In a discussion with curator Christopher Bedford about the photograms, he said: ' I consider those works … to be literal, meaning that they aren't abstractions of a particular subject matter, but are concrete manifestations of a specific set of conditions.' (2009, www.frieze.com/issue/print_article/depth_of_field/)

I would also resist using the term abstraction because the latter is a term that is usually associated with a particular historical movement and it may stop other fundamental questions from being asked about their works.

Abstraction in contemporary art in fact lacks any real solidity or real importance, as it always seems to merely be mentioned in relation to formal traits or to something that doesn't include any type of figuration.

Furthermore, the production of his work involves operations of chance especially in the glass boxes series, where Beshty has sent away glass boxes with FedEx, and has shown the resulted broken glass boxes along with their packaging as to show the generative mechanism behind an organization such as FedEx.
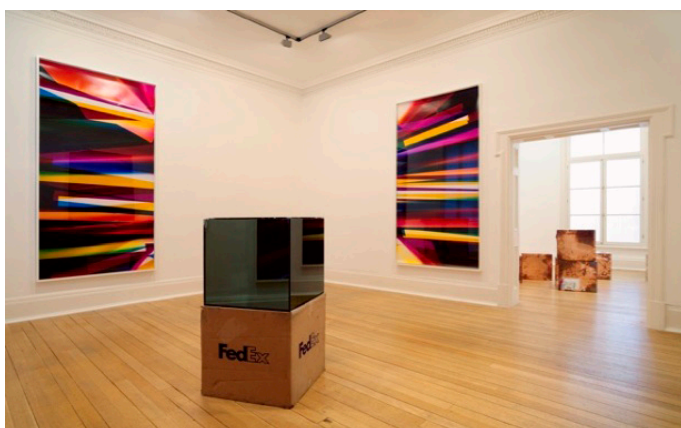
Walead Beshty, Thomas Dane London

In fact, most of his works emphasizes the element of chance in the process of making. He starts by setting pre-determined rules that provide underlying parameters for his process. The resulting work questions the nature of abstraction, as well as the material properties and conditions of photography itself.

While his work mainly deals with the structures that define more or less the meaning and organisation of images, it is not, however, a reflection of these structures.
He says 'I'm not particularly concerned with the denaturalisation or decontextualization of a pre-existing organizational structure in its static form. I'm more concerned with how the material traffic of an image - the contingencies produced by this traffic - whether the work is on photographic paper, or exists in a digital file, or as an object in transit, might generate other possibilities for aesthetic production.' (2009, *Art in America,* p:135)

 The meaning of the work lies outside of the work in the ways that the work traffics with the accepted or rejected conventions. He uses the structure as a false model to develop, but then undermines it and denies it. He also adds: 'negation is, in my understanding, a form of preservation.' (2009, *Art in America,* p:136)

In more recent work, he plays with the digital code of an image in order to create a new face to it when it would be sent to print.


Wade Guyton is an artist based in New York, born in 1972.
In a big part of his practice he uses Epson inkjet printers and flatbed scanners as tools to create works that act like drawings, paintings or even sculptures.
At the beginning, he was using pages torn from books, catalogues, magazines, posters, which he would then feed through an inkjet printer. He used a very simple and pared down vocabulary of shapes and letters drawn or typed in Microsoft Word, then printed on top of these pages or, occasionally, on a blank canvas.

The resulting work looks nothing like Epson printer conventional printouts. These machines are built and designed to produce slick and flawless reproductions that "exceed your vision" where mistakes are not to be tolerated, but he went ahead and

used the machines to create an opposite effect, with his work bearing all traces and registrations of its production, even the trace of a struggle between the printer and the material.
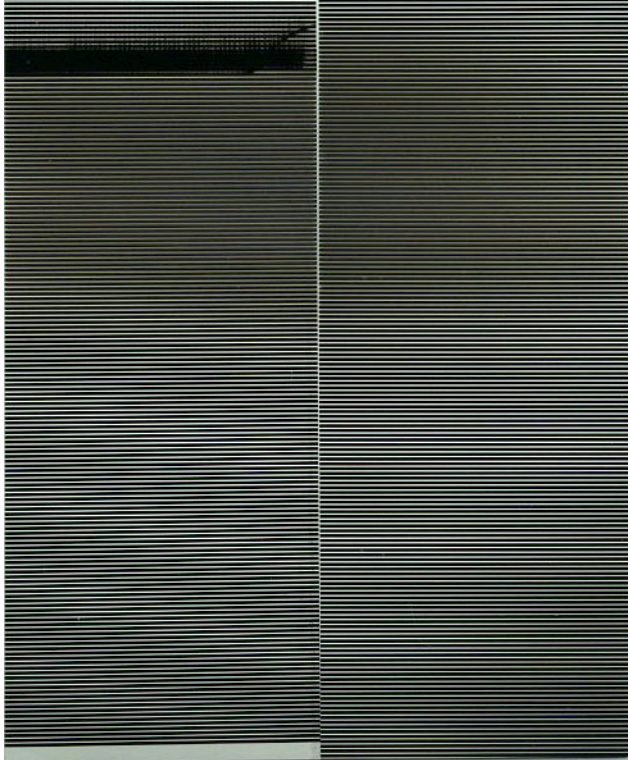
Wade Guyton at Gio Marconi, February 11th, 2009

Seeing the conditions that harbor Guyton's work, there is no question about the fact that his work points to the context of painting or of art-making more generally. However, today's prevalent idea that art is a "comment", an "interrogation" or a "critique" of itself or its housing institution seems to be out of time.

Douglas Crimp's (1995) essay entitled "the End of Painting", discussing mainly Daniel Buren's work, well exemplifies the contextual turn of the 1960's and 70's, where the conditions of artistic production as well as reception became the content of art practice. The transposition of strategies adopted by Daniel Buren and Wade Guyton makes it interesting for us to look at differences between their practices, especially when we acknowledge Buren's historical engagement of a specific discourse, as well as the institutional critique that has been accepted by the very institutions it was originally critiquing. Johanna Burton writes that Wade Guyton's

work "is inevitably attended by the peril of merely mimicking gestures of the past that, in this changed historical situation, are reduced to motif." (2008, Artforum, http://prod-images.exhibit-e.com/www_petzel_com/a73d2373.pdf)

In the context of art making today, Guyton's works could be seen as invested in the techniques or mechanics around which images are being produced. The works become about technology's tendency to complicate, rather than simplify, the material conventions of malfunctions encouraged in the making of the works. This is where I draw parallels to Walead's practice.

Critical Reflection on Creative Practice

I have chosen to discuss the works of Sol Lewitt, Agnes Martin, Roni Horn, Walead Beshty and Wade Guyton because they all have been influential in one way or another on the way I think when I produce my own work.

The work of Sol Lewitt is very influential to me in the way it never hides the raw application and the process with which it has been made, yet still gives way to a conceptual idea behind the work. I greatly like to share Roni Horn's similar approach in empirically making work by at the same time further exploring and developing personal concerns surrounding her practice. Agnes Martin's work has inspired me to not forget the possibility of expressing elements of personal emotions through abstraction. Walead Beshty and Wade Guyton are contemporaries with whom I share many concerns and interests to do with the production of images today. Exploring these artists helps me see and understand the similarities but also the many differences in the way we respond to the same concerns we have. It so helps me position myself further amongst many other artists who are also concerned with the advancement of image production technology today, and who return to the medium of photography or printing as a way to investigate this dying medium in an almost fully digital age.

My recent art practice investigates and challenges our understanding of the production of the image today, which is evolving dramatically with the fast development of digitization and networking technology. It aims to interrupt and re-think the image as object and proposes a broad investigation into its everyday and often overlooked wider uses. The image's current wide range of production, usage and consumption actively brings together several realms of possible source material, through which I find ways to produce artworks. The presentation of an image, as well as its material traffic – inherent in its digital or mechanical production or in its physical or virtual distribution – and the contingencies produced by this traffic, create new possibilities for the construction and understanding of images. I posit that images are objects that are part of an active system, with their meaning being inseparable from their material realities.

My art studio becomes a site of experimentation with the malleability of images as well as the limits of the mechanical processes through which images are produced and circulated daily. My practice looks for spaces of reflection amidst the ever moving, ever increasing sea of images. In light of our present cultural moment of over-proliferation and digital evolution, the 'abstracted' image-less nature of my work could be interpreted as a breakdown of an overall system of image production. As Sean Snyder (2008) writes in an article in Art & Research: 'despite the ever-increasing amount of images we are exposed to, it could be conjectured that we see less. We see less of the image itself, overpowered by the meaning imposed by the discursive context in which it appears. But what if we displace an image from its reception on a screen or printed matter, blow it up and examine it? What if we capture video, slow it down and review it? WHERE DOES THE QUOTE END?

Many of my artworks draw attention to surface effects, where the physicality and surface of the artwork are important to its understanding.

Paul Butler, digital map drawing, Facebook, 2010

A year ago the image above appeared on the BBC news website. It is a map resulting from Facebook intern Paul Butler's attempts to visualize where people live in relation to their Facebook friends. Each line on the map connects cities with pairs of friends. The brighter the line, the more friends communicate between those cities. The map of the world that appears through the rendering of human relations, shows

that the Internet is very much a geographical and therefore physical system and is not confined to the ether. The following five postcards show physical places where much of the Internet traffic actually happens. They are taken from an online article that describes the journey of a single bit, as data travels from sea to wired sea (2009, http://www.wired.com/magazine/ff_internetplaces/).

Halifax, Canada

New York, 60 Hudson Street (right), in downtown Manhattan

Culpeper, Virginia

Kansas City, Missouri

Grover Beach, California

The physicality of the Internet structure triggered the questions: how heavy is information? How much would all the data sent through the Internet on an average day weigh?

An article in *Discover* explains that all types of information: e-mails, documents, video clips, Web pages, everything, are streams of binary digits, 1s and 0s. These digits are mathematical entities, but they are also tangible ones: they are embodied and manipulated as voltages in electronic circuits. The article shows that every bit of data must therefore have some mass, albeit minuscule. The article then concludes that everything that is encoded as 1s and 0s in the Internet, taken together, weighs roughly the same as the smallest possible sand grain, one measuring just two-thousands of an inch across. In parallel, it also concludes that though the data is almost weightless, the storage itself would weigh in at something around 182,500 tons, roughly the weight of a mountain.

The storage of internet data would equal roughly the weight of a mountain

This research provokes my interest in the material realities of information. In parallel it also makes me think of other issues related to the massive proliferation of

information, now easily accessible to most of us. In this digital age, can the physical library survive? Nearly 1bn was spent on e-books last year in the US alone and threatens institutions already at risk of closure. The appearance of the seductive objects such as the iPad and the Kindle is causing publishers everywhere to rethink the notion of what it is to read texts, how work will be disseminated, paid for and understood. All at a time when journals and magazines are faced with the choice of dropping print altogether for online-only content, or facing closure. Magazines and newspapers are being read more and more online. Kodak recently went bankrupt, Fuji is a closing business, Ilford is discontinuing its favorite paper stocks, and Polaroid film is becoming extinct. In short, the survival of printed information is seriously in question.

We are now very familiar with the theoretical understanding of photography in terms of loss. From the early reading of writers such as Walter Benjamin, Siegfried Krakauer, Roland Barthes and Susan Sontag, we understand the photograph as predicated on the idea of the loss of the thing that it was an image of. Photography seemed to always be about the absence of the particular moment being depicted. Also, photographs are very often perceived as pure images, in a sense that for example, a photograph on a billboard or one in a magazine is perceived as the same photograph where in actuality the way in which those images were constructed and their relationship to the viewer are vastly different.

In order to distance myself from the equation between photography and loss, I became interested in employing in my practice the ready-made structures in the real world and the actual material traffic of images. I became interested in the materialist idea of the photographic image where the image is itself, as an object, and doesn't fall into the problem of representing what wasn't there. One critical thought on my artworks is that, at times, the work can be overly opaque as to how it was made and become too difficult to read.
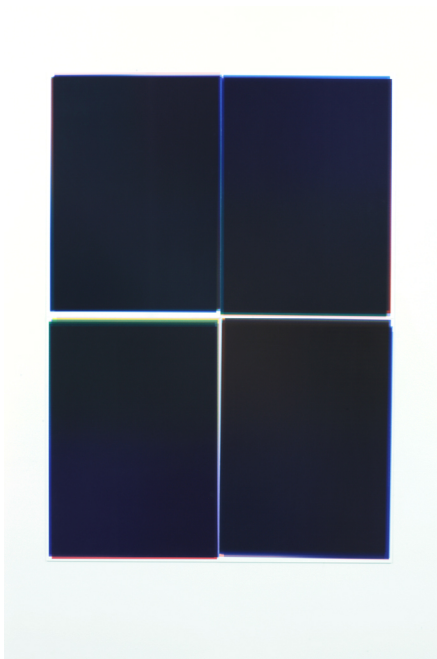
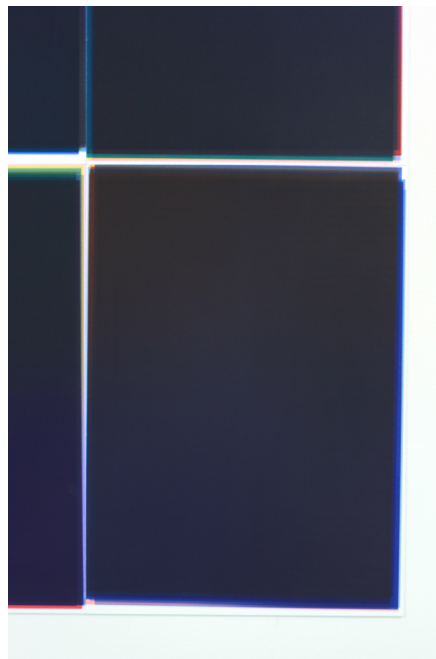*Scape*, Installation shot (see Appendice 2)
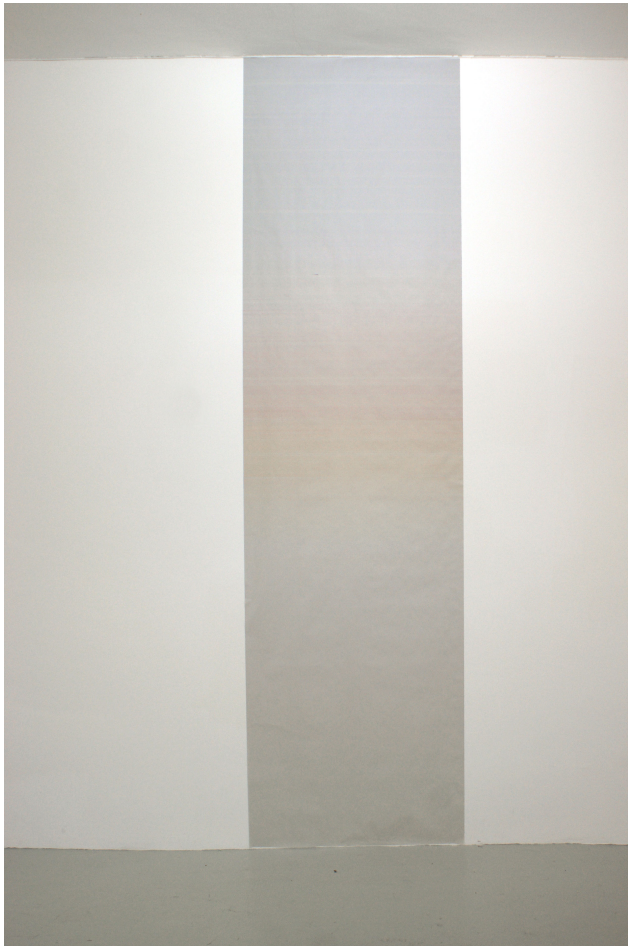

Scape, Installation shot (see Appendice 2)

Excess/, Installation shot (see Appendice 2)

Portals, unique inkjet prints, 2009

Detail

Sream, unique inkjet print on newsprint paper, 2009

Brighter Beams, Sliding Gazes, Installation shot, 2010, Occupy Space, Limerick (see appendice 3)

Brighter Beams, Cardboard tube, unique inkjet print, dimension variable, 2010

The first series of works, *Excess/Repeat, Portals* and *Stream,* that I produced in the doctoral degree was an extension of previous works where similar processes and presentation were applied. Following works included *Brighter Beams* and *Sliding Gazes, I covered found cardboard tubes with long strips of unique inkjet prints on paper. The long strips of prints were evenly spiraled and glued onto the tubes similarly to the way cardboard tubes are industrially produced. The robust and protective surface of the cardboard tube thus becomes delicate and velvety. The single colour gradients of the prints were also designed in such a way that when spiraled and covering the tubes, they create* a horizontal gradient across the height of the tube giving the illusion of shadows. Shadows are perceived as nothingness but also as very specific printed information. The colour yellow references the prevailing colour in the graphics of postal and packaging companies.

Brighter Beams, detail 2010

Mirror ball, Jesmonite, Aluminum tape, 35 cm diameter 2010
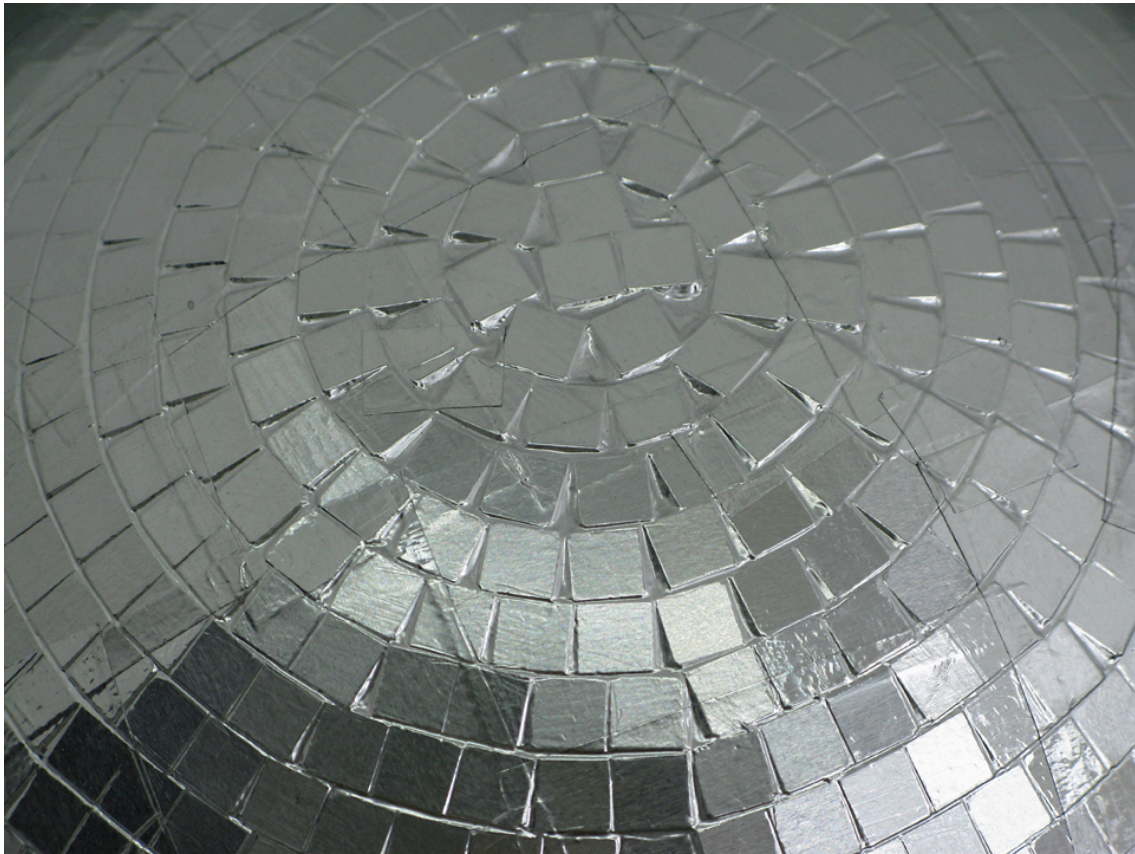
Mirror ball, detail 2010

Making *Brighter Beams* has triggered an enthusiasm in me to make more sculptural objects. I started to look at mass produced objects in the real world in a similar way I looked at mass produced images. The mirror ball, in that sense, has always been a generic object of interest to me. *Mirror Ball* revolves around ideas of nostalgia and the collective memory of an object that has been replaced by another due to the development of technology. The mirror ball is nevertheless still seen in social spaces, but in most cases, its original function is no longer applied since it has now been replaced by electronic means of producing light effects. Mirrorball is therefore present as homage to an object we once loved. *Mirror Ball* is a cast of an actual mirror ball in jesmonite and I then covered the surface with aluminum tape. Its copy to the actual mirror ball operates like a photograph of a loved thing; it also went through a process of material transition. The surface of *Mirror Ball* is not reflective enough and it sits on the floor; it acts like a failed copy.

In the following works, I attempted to move further away from the digital "print" and "printers" and wanted to make more work that examined the excess of physical and media production through objects themselves.
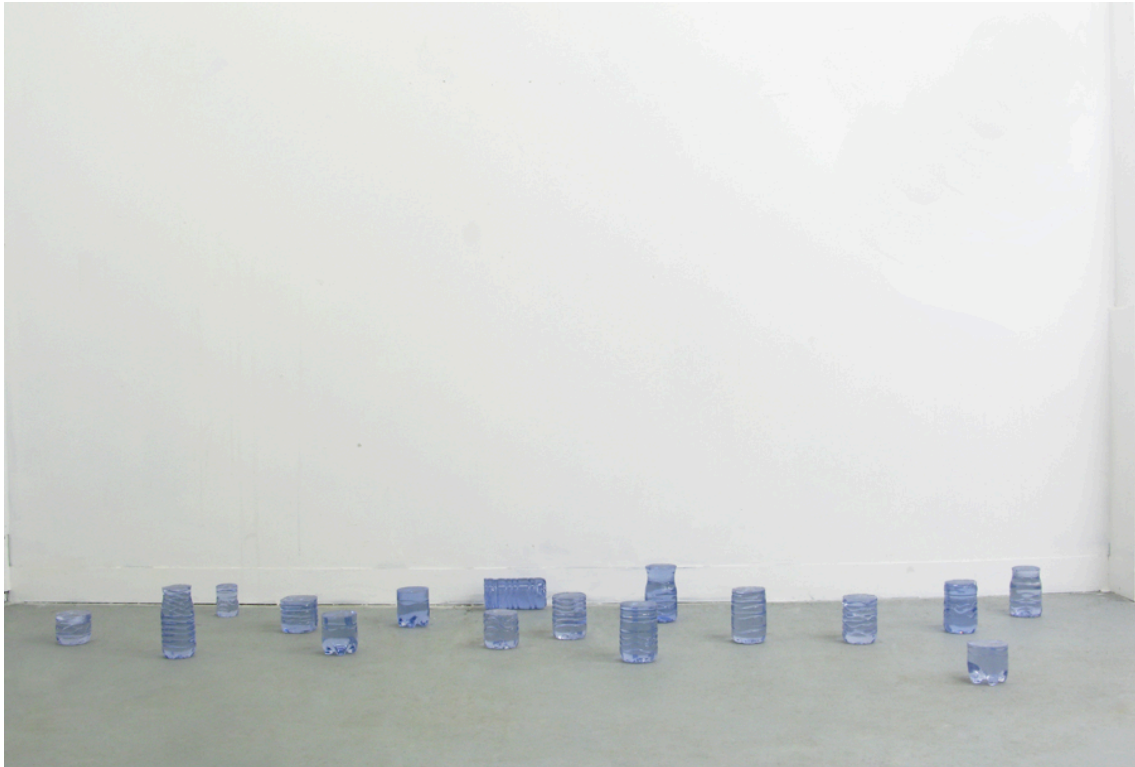
water, resin, pigment, dimension variable 2010
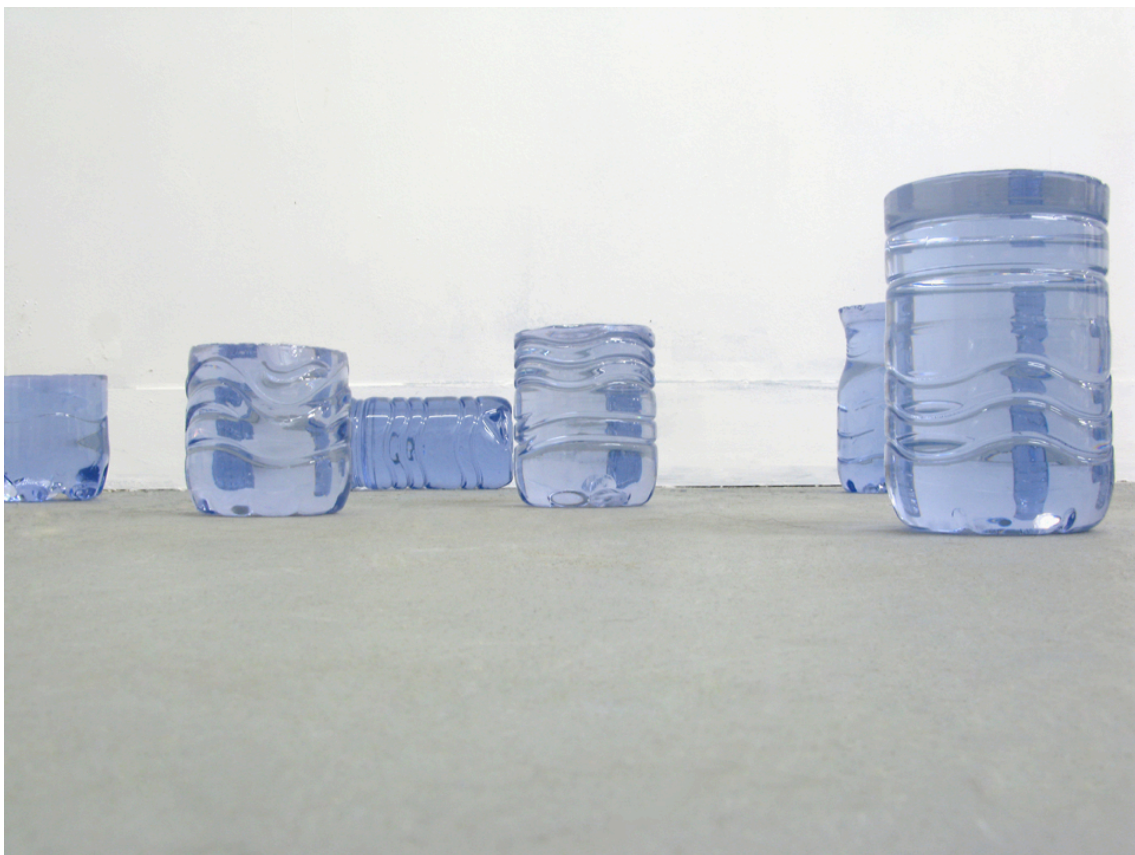
water, detail, 2010

Water has always been a recurrent motif in my practice (waterfalls, water bottles, rain, and water ripples), mainly for its strong metaphorical suggestions as well as its generic and reduced representation. In different works, I explore water's material realities – its fluidity, transparency and the fact that it always takes the shape of its container. *Still Water* is made by casting the bottoms of water bottles in resin. The resin casts show the various waves that are part of the bottles. Scattered on the floor, the piece as a whole is intended to look like a sea.
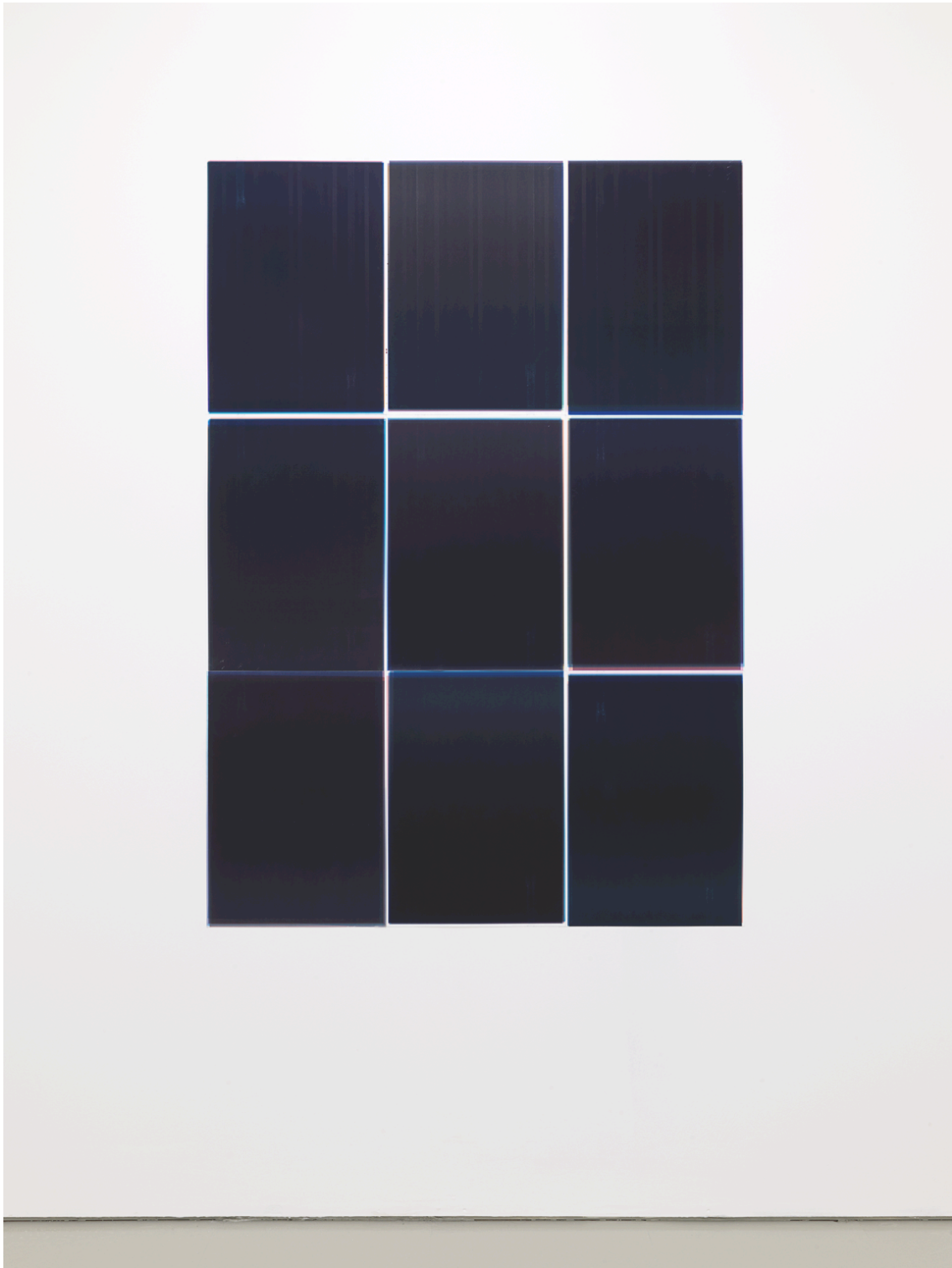
Sliding Gazes, Unique inkjet prints on Sommerset paper, Dimension variable 2010

In *Sliding Gazes*, I continued to investigate my interest in making work that explored the sculptural and architectural potential of paper and image-making. I wanted to expand *Portals* from my pre-doctoral work into a larger grid because I wanted to further explore its architectural potential in the space. Unlike Portals, I carried on with the same process until the surface revealed traces of its making from scratches the

wheels imprints of the printer. The edges of each print are paramount as they indicate the processes undergone. The final printed sheets of paper were then presented in a grid and stuck directly on the wall. Consumed by its 'material', the end piece extends to a potential of space.

Today's *Entertainment,* Unique Inkjet prints on Newsprint paper, metal rods 2011

Today's *Entertainment,* detail, 2011
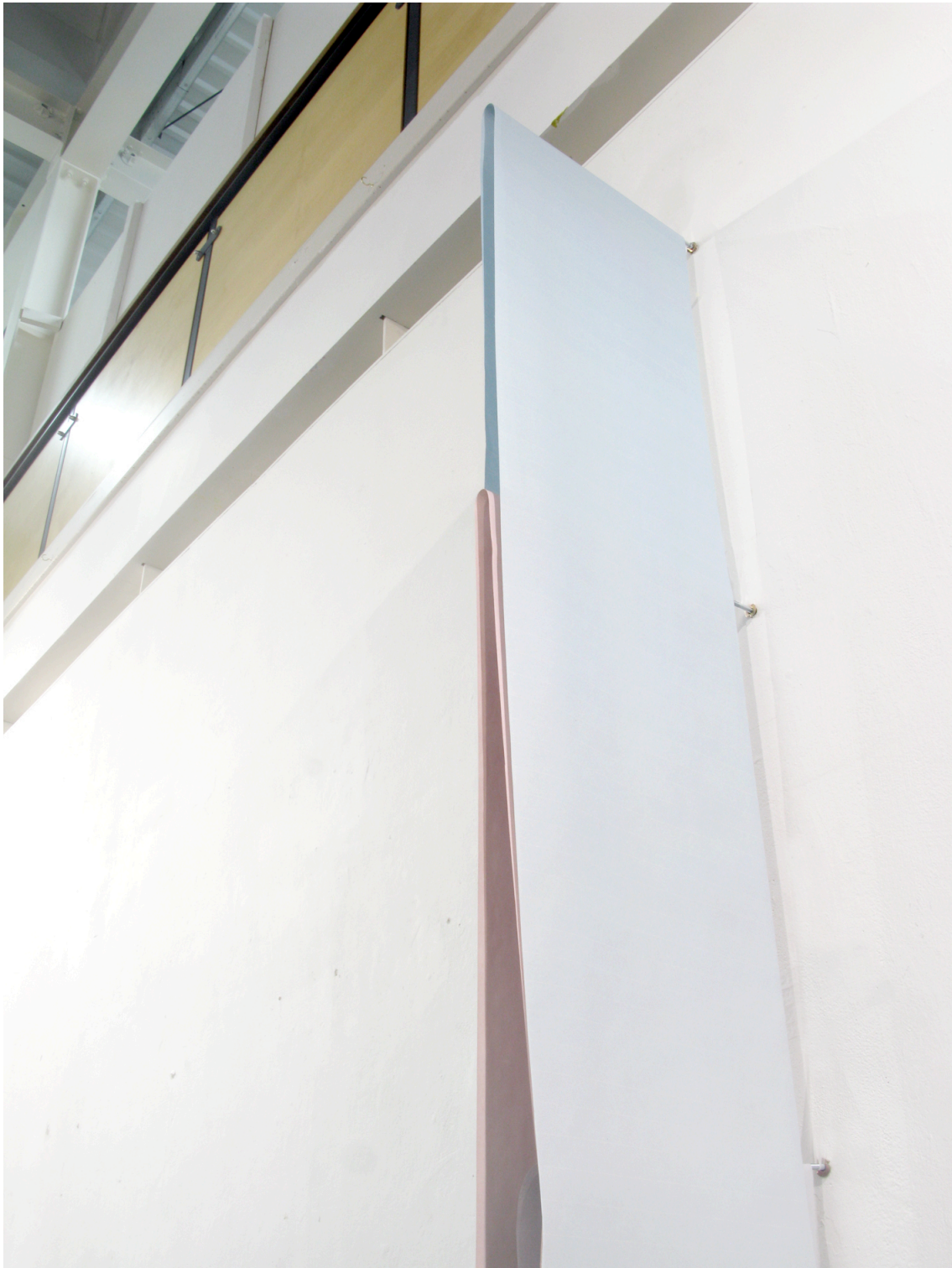
Today's *Entertainment,*detail, 2011

In *Todays' Entertainment,* I used the material of newsprint paper. I have printed on both sides of long sheets of newsprint paper gradients that see the colour of the ink disappear into the colour of the actual newsprint paper, the integral material. The colour of the ink and the paper are materially combined as the ink sinks through the paper. I draped the paper on metal rods in order to make reference to the conveyor

belt of never-ending stories. The thought process of this piece is very similar to *At A Glance,* from my pre-doctoral work, apart from my intention to experiment with its display in a space, and to look at the paper as an object rather than a flat surface.

*Blur 1,* Magazine page, frame and frosted glass, 2011
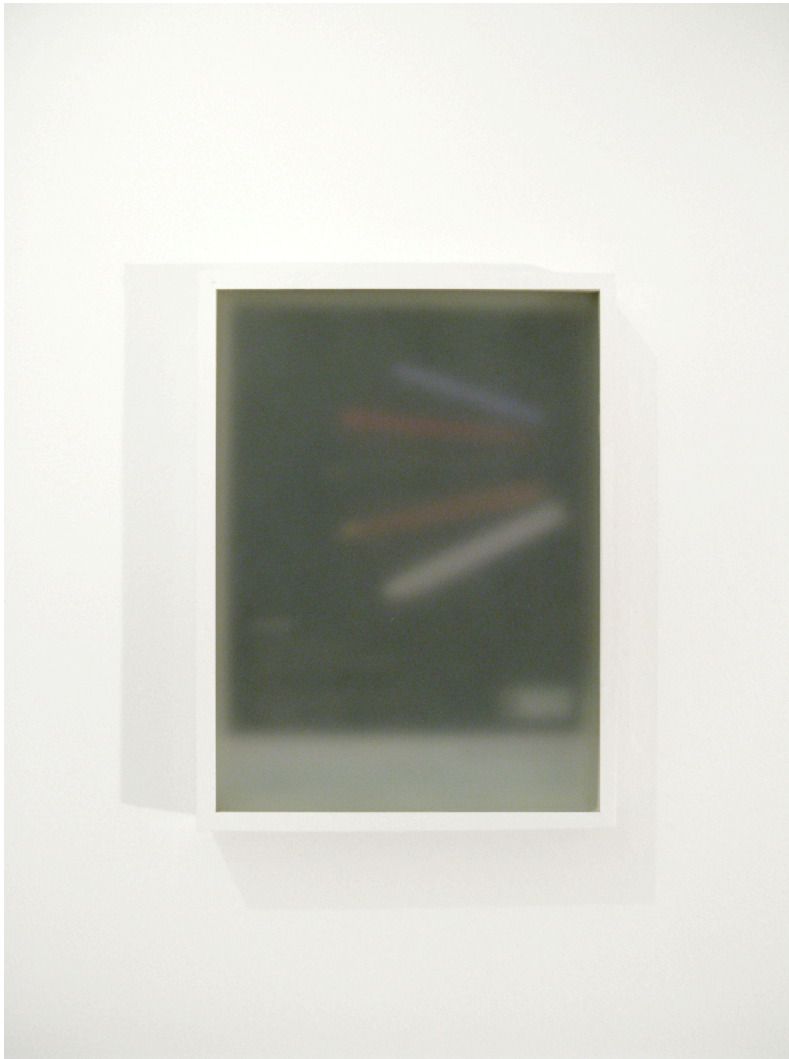
Blur 2, Magazine page, frame and frosted glass, 2011

In the *Blur* series, I continued to look at the image as an object. I framed advertisement pages from magazines with glass that has been frosted with frosting spray. The magazine page is then obscured and the final object reveals anything but the actual advertising information of the page. The blurry shapes that appear through the glass become seemingly animate in relation to the other framed pages. The order of the framed magazine pages is deliberate in order to suggest a narrative between them.
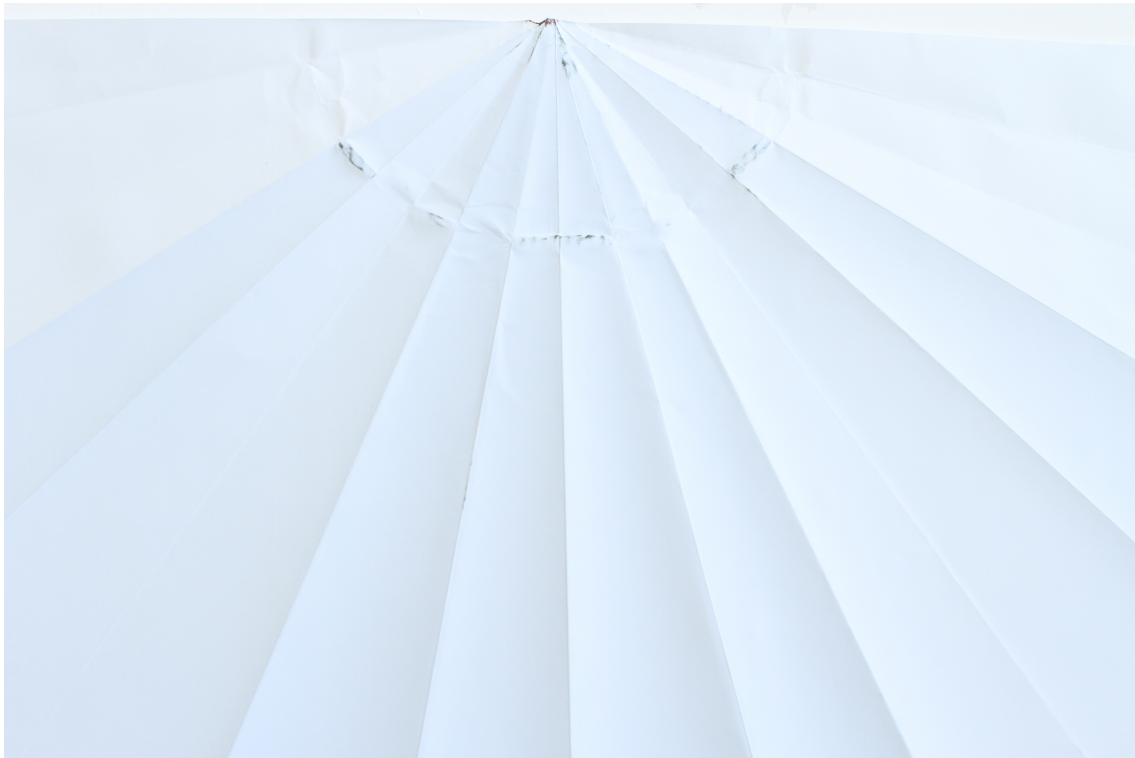
Blue Paperplanes, Installation shot, 2012
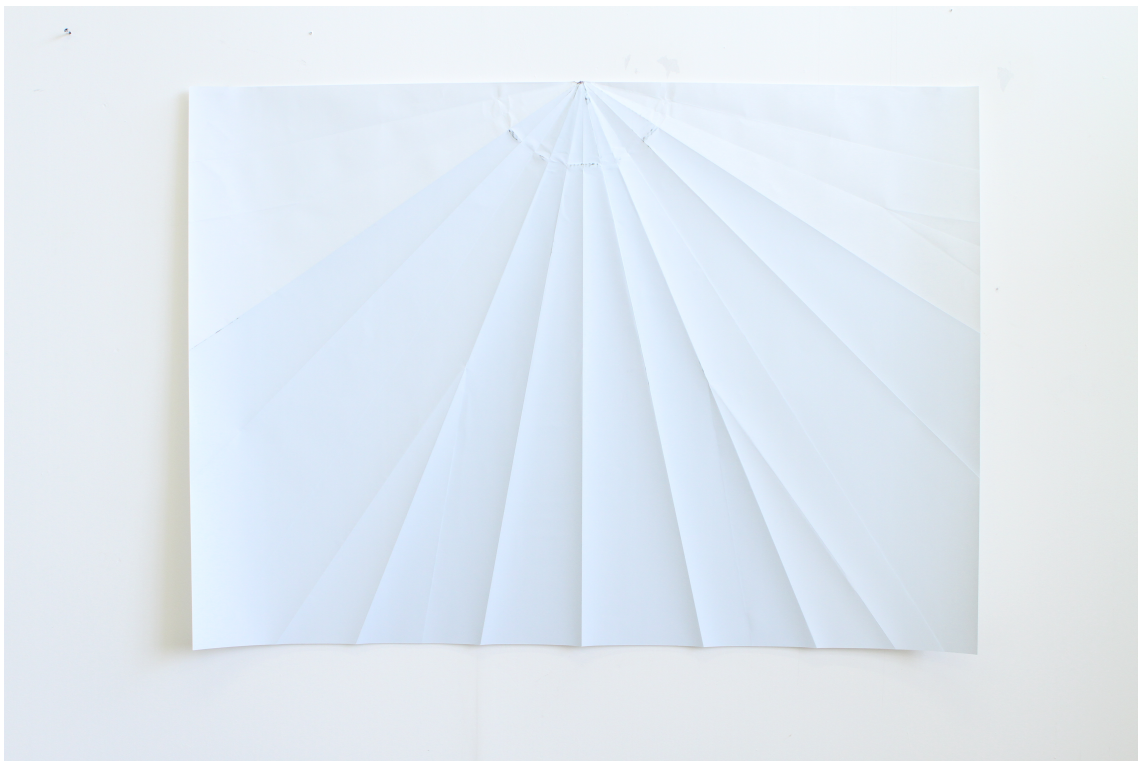
Blue Paperplane, unique inkjet print on folded paper, 2012

Blue Paperplane, detail, 2012

Blue Paperplane followed my habit of turning unwanted scraps of paper into paper planes before disposing of them. *Blue Paperplane* series are objects of 'non-images' prints, where spectral fields of colour are superimposed onto one another. They were made by force-feeding folded paper through an industrial printer, resulting in delicate colour gradient prints and ink marks on the folds from their contact with the head of the printer during the printing process. The sizes of the *Blue Paperplanes* are similar to the average poster size.

New work involves sandblasting large sheets of glass. The sandblasted horizontal, vertical, and circular gradients on glass sheets will be leaned against the wall holding up inkjet prints on paper. The work explores the relationship between image and glass through sculptural potential. Other works in progress involve casting paper pulp into silicone rubber molds of floor surfaces, such as ceramic tiles and rubber tiles. Another work involves the printing of an image that was posted on the Internet by a person who was complaining about his printer. The person had scanned an imperfectly printed image of a magenta monochrome. I have sent the digital copy of the imperfect monochrome to a printing service point, and asked to print the image

one hundred times without managing the ink in the Litho printer. These works are in progress and will be edited in or out in my end of year doctoral show.

Conclusion

In my practice, I engagingly focus on the world's shift from analog to digital image production and the influence that the excess of images and media-based production has on our relationship with images today. Drawing links between the interest in the material constructions of a photographic image and the contemporary realities of our culture of over proliferation – though such comparisons may be abstract – the research helped develop new ideas and new meaning from the changing material underworld of the production of all images.

I wish to engage in theoretical research and to pursue my art practice in an environment geared toward doctoral study mainly because as an artist, I often find myself posing and responding to similar questions to those theorized in purely academic circles. I was hoping that by re-entering an academic context and engaging with a doctoral programme, I would complete the programme with better ability to contribute to a larger body of theoretical work, which is seen to be setting the terms for the discussions happening in the art world today. The programme helped me define the cumulative vocabulary that surrounds the context of my practice, and consequently has honed the development and production of my work.

Bibiliography

Alberro, A. (2003) *Conceptual Art and Politics of Publicity*, Cambridge, MIT Press

Baldessari, J. (1971) *Ingres and Other Parables,* Konrad Fischer, Dusseldorf, Oct 8-22

Calvino, I. (1983) *Mr Palomar*. Trans. William Weaver, London, Vintage Books

Crimp, D, (1995) *On the Museum's Ruins,* Cambridge, MIT Press

Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition.* Trans. Paul Platton, London Athlone Press

Foster, H. (1996) *The Return of the Real, Art and Theory at the End of the Century,* Cambridge MIT Press

Horn, R. (1989) Interview with Mimi Thompson, 'Roni Horn', *Bomb,* n.xxviii, Summer

Kierkegaard, S. (1983) *Fear and Trembling, Repetiton.* Edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton, Princeton University Press

Kittler, F. (1999) *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter.* Trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Miachael Wutz, Stanford California:Stanford University Press

Martin, A. (1973) lecture 'On the Perfection Underlying Life', *Archives of the Institute of Contemporary Art,* University of Pennnsylvania, Philadelphia. Quoted in Thomas McEvilley, 'Gre Geese Descending: The Art of Agnes Martin', *Artforum 25,* n.10 (Summer 1987)

Martin, A. (1993) Interview by Irving Sandler, *Art Monthly,* n.169

Mitchell, W.J.T. (2005) *What Do Pictures Want? The Lives and Loves of Images,* Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press

Steyerl, H. (2009) 'In Defence of the Poor Image', *E-flux*, Journal n.10, http://www.e-flux.com/journal/in-defence-of-the-poor-image/

Snyder, S. (2008) 'Optics. Compression. Propaganda' *Art &Research, A Journal of Ideas Contexts and Methods,* Volume 2 no.1, Summer, ISSN 1752-6388

Stiegler, B. (1994) *Technics and Time,1: The Fault of Epimetheus*. 1st ed. Trans. Richard Beardsworth & George Collins, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press

Stiegler, B. (2002) 'The Discrete Image' in Derrida J. and Stiegler B. *Echographies of television*.Trans. Bajorek, J. Cambridge UK: Polity

Virno, P. (2004) *A Grammar of the Multitude*, Cambridge MIT Press

Wilder, C. (1997) 'Being Analog' in Berger, A.A. *The Postmodern Presence: Readings on Postmodernism in American Culture and Society*. New York: AltaMira Press

Professional Practice

a)

Solo Exhibitions

October 2009 | 'Scape' | Sartorial, London
Installation of three works on paper, all were unique inkjet prints on different types of paper (vinyl, Somerset photo Satin, and newsprint paper), an experience of space, and object and a picture.

May 2006 | 'New Paintings | Store Gallery, London
An installation of paintings of documentations of art, page frames and crops of text were painted, different in scale.

Joint Exhibitions:

October 2011 | 'Matter' | APT gallery, London
A series of posters made by folding a paper into a paper plane and feeding it into the printer whilst folded.

June 2011 | 'Friendship of the Peoples' | Simon Oldfield, London
Poster made by folding a paper into a paper plane and feeding it into the printer whilst folded.

February 2011 | 'Liquid Space' | Nettie Horn, London
A series of framed magazine pages with frosted glass. Installation of unique inkjet prints on paper on wall. Installation of long sheets of unique prints on newsprint paper, and metal rod.

November 2010 | 'Bloomberg New Contemporaries' | ICA, London
September 2010 | 'Bloomberg New Contemporaries' | A Foundation, Liverpool
Installation of unique inkjet prints on paper on wall.

March 2010 | 'paperplane' | Occupy Space, LCGA, Limerick

Installation of unique inkjet prints on paper on wall and on cardboard postal tubes.

February 2010 | 'paperplane' | The Joinery, Dublin

Installation of unique inkjet prints on paper on wall and on cardboard postal tubes.

July 2009 | 'Returning to Form' | Store Gallery, London

Installation of three works on paper, all were unique inkjet prints on different types of paper (vinyl, Somerset photo Satin, and pink newsprint paper), an experience of space, and object and a picture.

May 2009 | 'The little shop on Hoxton street' | Limoncello, London

A unique inkjet print on a found cardboard tube.

March 2009 | 'Testcard' | www.projeckt.org.uk. , London

A digital image from a scanned printed image using an empty cartridge.

February 2008 | 'Premiums 2008' | Royal Academy, London

A juxtaposition of two paintings of found generic images, one of a constellation of stars, and an image of cupcakes with icing.

February 2007 | Sign Artist at Lee Maelzer's solo show | Museum 52, London

A map of all of London's contemporary art galleries existing at the time with constellation of coloured squares varying in size according to their distance to Museum 52 gallery.

December 2005 | 'Future Map 05' | Arts Gallery, London

A painting of a crop of an art-magazine page, part of a documentation of Arturo Herrera's work and part of a still of a video.

June 2005 | 'Degree Show 2005' | Central Saint Martins, London

An installation of paintings of documentations of art, page frames and crops of text were painted, different in scale.

Collections:

Work part of the 'University Art Collection'

Teaching:

27th of April 2007, Artist talk and tutorials for BA students at Central Saint Martins school of Art & Design, London

b)

The last exhibition I took part in during the doctoral programme was called 'Matter' and was curated by Claire Undy and Sarah Williams. The exhibition brought together a group of works that reflect a return to post-minimalist practice. The works displayed abstract qualities, and had a strong material presence. The abstract presence of the works was also very literal, in the sense that most works in the exhibition made reference to the real world through materiality, their relation to the landscape, or to the exhibition space. The works were almost accidentally abstract, rather than abstracted or adhering to a more traditional notion of abstraction, questioning what it means to be a contemporary abstract artist and how this contextualizes itself in 2011. Bringing together painting, sculpture, drawing, photography and film, the works in the exhibition showed a prevailing sense of playful experimentation in their material investigation.

'Friendship of the Peoples' is an exhibition I took part in where twenty artists invited twenty other artists to build a community of forty artists, all showing uniform sized works on paper. Text-based or image-led, the unifying factor is that all artists had to create a work that is rooted in the idea of a poster. This dynamic exhibition included photography, painting, print, collage and drawing. The exhibition was about exploring our willingness to conform and belong to a community, whilst at the same time expressing a desire to strike out and assert our identity. Crucially, there was no shared intent or theme, other than the artists uniting around the ethos of a poster, a powerful tool of mass communication. I immediately agreed to take part in the exhibition because I wanted to challenge myself to experiment and dismantle the material structure of the production of a poster, and to be able to present a new piece of work that would remain in the category of posters.

'Liquid Space' was an exhibition I took part in, which was inspired by the new technologies surrounding the creation of images and their systems of representation and communication. The exhibition aimed to reflect on the influence and development of digital media through the mediums of video, painting and printing. This exhibition was a difficult one for me to be happy about, I agreed to take part in it too quickly and with limited time before its opening. I didn't feel that all the works in the show were interacting in an interesting way.

'paperplane' responded to negotiations between European editors and an Internet search regarding a lucrative and legislated agreement on the digitization of the world's books. Fears that world's 'last library' might be controlled as a commercial enterprise have sparked debate about the future of literature in light of the proliferation of virtual record as well as the simultaneous decline of readership. Digitisation allows for more practical and accessible circulation of texts and for new life to be breathed into forgotten publications. Consequently, however, the book in its physical form becomes a rarefied object function.

TESTCARD

17 February - 17 March 2009
Launch date: 17 February 2009 6pm

ARTISTS: Francesca Anfossi, Caline Aoun, Simon and Tom Bloor, Cut Up, Karen Tang, Bedwyr Williams, Simon Woolham

Seven invited artists have produced new artworks based around the colour and greyscale configurations of traditional television test card images. These will be broadcast live throughout February and March 2009 on a new web based platform developed by PROJECKT as part of a wider exploration of curatorial outcome. The broadcast, viewable through downloadable software, sends the artists' work to computer desktops where it is automatically updated, continually projecting different works throughout the broadcast period. Exactly one month after the start of the transmission the application will automatically uninstall itself and the broadcast will terminate.

The famous Test Card 'F' designed by George Hersee and featuring his daughter Carole made its last appearance in the UK on BBC1 in 1997, while the last use of a publicly broadcast test card was during a BBC power failure on 20th June 2000. Since the turn of the millennium, and against the fixed resolution of conventional TV screens, the advent HDTV has led to the redundancy of the test card as a functional entity, as the assurances that it offered of unbroken lines, even contrast, and colour removed from neon glare, have become surplus to this current technology.

Alternative mechanisms for making images visible, and, more importantly, making them relevant within an online medium, has become necessary as the wealth of content available through actual and virtual channels becomes increasingly generative and consumptive. TESTCARD utilises a new downloadable system that places access alongside experimentation, and returns to the concept of the 'broadcast' as an opportunity to engage an audience within the deployment of artworks through technology. The test card recalls a time when 'testing' was an allowable and appreciated phase of development. Produced by PROJECKT this practice of 'testing' and experimentation with technological platforms provides one of many potential methods for actively engaging artists and artworks. For PROJECKT the test card, as a signatory of service check, will be recurrent with a series of further durational broadcasts being transmitted throughout 2009.

TESTCARD has been curated by Charles Danby and George Unsworth in conjunction with artist Rob Smith. The second broadcast from PROJECKT will be TIMEBOMB (01 May – 31 July 2009). This will be downloadable from the PROJECKT site from 1st May 2009.

PROJECKT

TESTCARD
TIMEBOMB
FIELD BROADCAST
REMIX

HOME
ABOUT PROJECKT

Caline Aoun, Almost There/HP 57 2009

TESTCARD
17/02/09 - 17/03/09

press release

Francesca Anfossi, Caline Aoun , Simon and Tom Bloor, Cut Up, Karen Tang, Bedwyr Williams, Simon Woolham

For its first broadcast PROJECKT invited seven artists to produce new artworks based around the colour and greyscale configurations of traditional television test card images. These were broadcast live throughout February and March 2009 via a new web based application developed by PROJECKT as part of wider research relating to curatorial practice within media technology. The broadcast, viewable through downloadable software, sent the artists' work to computer desktops where it was automatically updated, with different works being continually projected throughout the broadcast period. Exactly one month after the start of the transmission the application automatically uninstalled itself and the broadcast terminated.

This project is curated by Charles Danby and George Unsworth and produced in collaboration with artist Rob Smith.

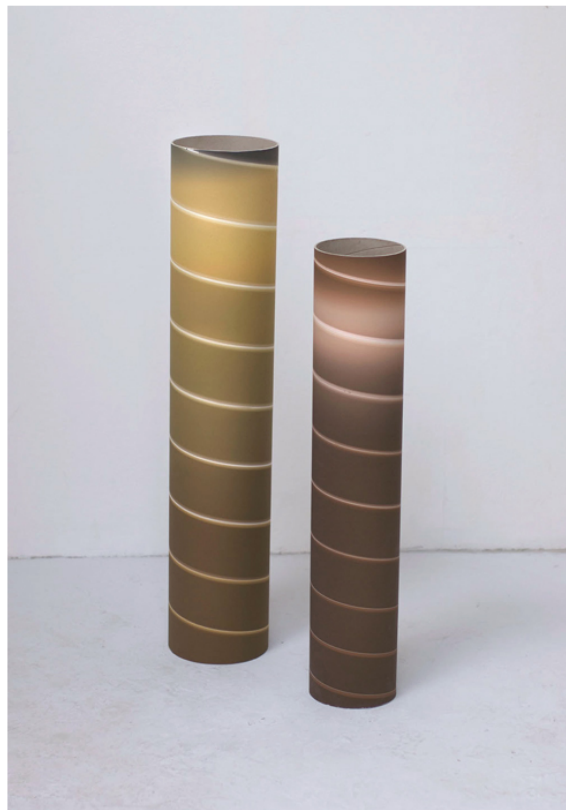**Appendice 2**

Caline Aoun - Scape
(Solo exhibition)
Jan 24 - Feb 23, 2008Oct 2 - 23, 2009

In an era when image production is accelerating Caline Aoun's work revolves around the processes of saturation and dissipation - the points at which information appears to recede into nothingness.

By providing the viewer with eventful readings of our ordinary, exhausted and saturated responses to recurrent daily images Aoun reduces visual representational information to 'nothingness'. Aoun manipulates the materials used to communicate images, dismantling pre-established modes of recognition – she creates mechanical interventions that play with the viewer's senses and their ways of seeing.

Recent works address the mechanics around which images are being created and represented, their image appearing through the disruption of the printer's own processes - manual decisions to force-feed paper into a printer at different angles, blocking the plotter's suction etc. These disruptions or purposeful malfunctions become signs of waste, tiredness and the failure of representation to represent.

Through transformation and spontaneous disruptions Aoun utilizes the excess energy of a system in order to reveal its inconsistency, often employing the systems themselves through the use of grids and repetitive formats. Such processes result in Aoun's works bearing the traces of their own making, containing their own transcripts in the images re-presented.

When Sunlight Bounces Off, Inkjet print on found cardboard tube 105.4 x 21 cm; 90.5 x 17 cm

64

Appendice 3 (1of 4)

Caline Aoun / Niall De Buitléar / Guestroom / Vera Klute

"It has (...) been the millennium of the book, in that it has seen the object we call the book take on the form now familiar to us. Perhaps it is a sign of our millennium's end that we frequently wonder what will happen to literature and books in the so-called post-industrial era of technology" (Italo Calvino, Six Memos for the Next Millennium, 1985).

paperplane responds to recent negotiations between European editors and an internet search engine regarding a lucrative and legislated agreement on the digitization of the world's books. Fears that the world's 'last library' might be controlled as a commercial enterprise have sparked debate about the future of literature in light of the proliferation of virtual records as well as the simultaneous decline of readership. Digitization allows for more practical and accessible circulation of texts and for new life to be breathed into forgotten publications. Consequently, however, the book in its physical form becomes a rarefied object of obsolete function.

Occupy Space, Thomas Street, Limerick City

18 February - 21 March 2010

Image: detail from *Fleet* (2010) by Niall De Buitléar

Appendice 3 (2 of 4)

About the artists:

Caline Aoun's work revolves around the processes of saturation and dissipation - the points at which information appears to recede into nothingness. She studied at Central Saint Martins and the Royal Academy in London where she lives and works. Recent exhibitions include a solo exhibition at Sartorial Gallery and group exhibitions at Store Gallery and Limoncello (all 2009).

Niall De Buitlear is the current recipient of the Red Stables Irish Residential Studio award and was recently awarded the Wexford Arts Centre's Emerging Artist Award. He will present two works related to series of found objects, including the on-

going Found Bookmark Archive. Recent exhibitions include solos at G126 (2008) and the LAB (2008), and group shows at Green On Red Gallery (2009), Lewis Glucksman Gallery (2008) and the CAC, Vilnius (2007).

Guestroom are Ruth Höflich and Maria Benjamin. Since 2003, they have exhibited extensively in the UK, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg and the United States . Commissioned by the Grizedale Arts for AFoundation, Guestroom will present a series of eight video portraits titled 'The Librarians' concerned with personal libraries and collections. The Librarians are Tom McCarthy, Michael Leslie, Lorenza Boisi, Shaun Pubis, Pablo Bronstein, Rebecca Bligh, Isabel Waidner and Adam Sutherland.

Vera Klute was born in Germany but lives and works in Dublin . She graduated from the Institute of Art Design and Technology in 2006, and has exhibited widely both in Ireland and internationally since. In 2009 she had a solo exhibition at the Wexford Arts Centre and participated in shows in Dublin, Paris and Rotterdam .
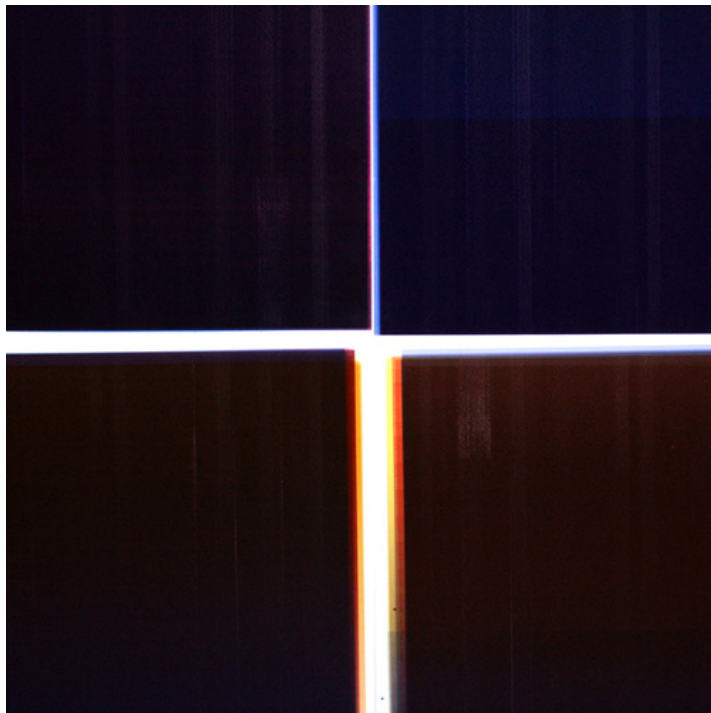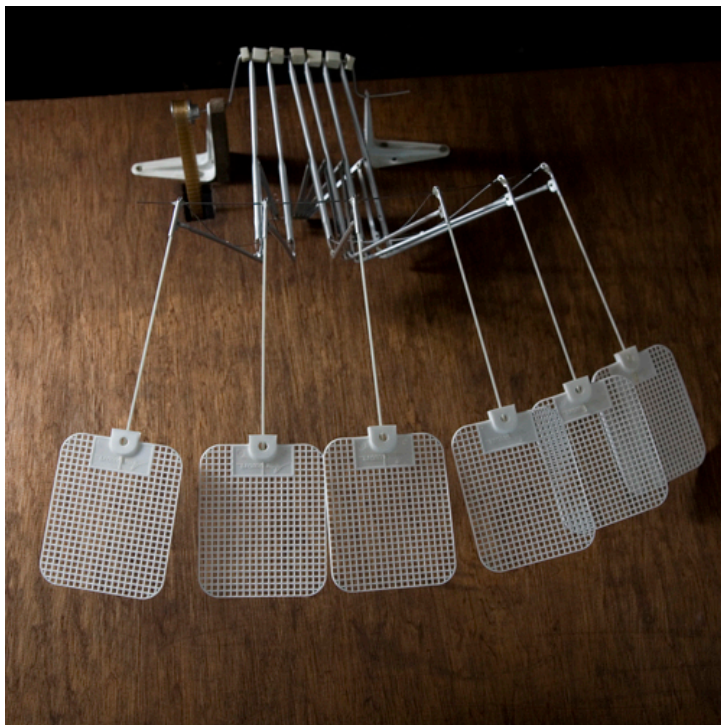

Caline Aoun: detail from Sliding Gazes (2010) suite of unique inkjet prints on Somerset paper, 138.9x97.8cm

Appendice 3 (3 of 4)

Caline Aoun: installation image of Sliding Gazes (2010) and Brighter Beams (2010)

Vera Klute: detail of Swatter (2009), fly swatters, umbrella spokes, wood, motor, 70x70x70cm, photograph courtesy of Miranda Driscoll

Guestroom: installation image of The Librarians (2008) 8 video portraits, 107 mins duration