

## Questions /Answers about Art Practice / Scotland 2009

### *1. Which works have you made that you consider to be the most important, and why?*

The question of importance to me is a somewhat contextually relevant question. For example, I might consider “Thousands Watch” (1979) to be an important work for me personally as it was the vehicle which helped launch my success at festivals and with funding agencies in the United States, i.e. The National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Even though “Thousands Watch” still holds up after almost 30 years it is not a work that I screen very often these days.

Clearly, “Body Count,” (1980) a short study for “Smothering Dreams” (1981) was important in that it helped me source extra funding to produce the larger work. “Smothering Dreams” has remained both a very important and influential work that not only generated a great deal of critical attention and won numerous awards but was also broadcast nationally in many countries and is included in more permanent museum collections than I have been able to keep track of. Like any work viewed from an historical and aesthetic distance of over 25 years there are aspects which one would be tempted to modify. My ongoing intense and comprehensive study of the historical, sociological, and moral dimensions underlying the Viet Nam war, and my understanding of my involvement in combat there, have matured and deepened over the decades. It is for this reason alone that I would set out to make a completely different production today. The work's cathartic value, in terms of releasing a kind of bondage to demons from the past, has been immensely valuable to me over the years.

“Sabda” (1984) was a work that reached further into the experimental and abstract realm and thus appealed to “gatekeepers” and critical theorists at places like Documenta 7

and the Whitney Museum of Art Biennial. “Sabda’s” importance to my practice is that it allowed me to see that I could wander freely and travel rough using my video equipment with no particular agenda or expectation concerning a final result and yet produce a work of a certain beauty, stillness, and complexity.

“Ganapati / A Spirit in the Bush” (1986) is a longer work that early on anticipated and successfully articulated the depths of what I would call humankind’s moral disconnect from and dismissal of the rights and inherent dignity of the animal realm. This is eat heart an ecological work and was recognized as such at early environmental media conferences. This work actually deserves a resurgence considering how poetically charged and moving it proved to be to many, many viewers when it was broadcast on WGBH (Boston) and WNET (New York) as part of the “Contemporary Artists Television Fund” series. The issues that “Ganapati” explored are ones that I intend to return to.

“Obsessive Becoming” (1995) has been very important on many levels (excluding its non-broadcast status in the United States which remains an on-going mystery for me given its critical standing, deeper meaning and accessibility for the attentive viewer in a particularly American social context). This work was broadcast throughout Europe and has received generous critical acclaim and scholarly attention. The major importance that “Obsessive Becoming” has had for me exists in the emotional dimension, to a great extent. During numerous screenings around the world I have been invited to hear viewer’s own stories of rejection, confusion and betrayal in the family and witness their enthusiastic identification with a story that I had always aspired to make open and transparent. It had been my intention from the start to fashion a structure and emotive tonality in the work which would allow a viewer to enter into and invest themselves in the narrative in the most intimate sense. We now live in a world where infotainment, degrading reality shows and the like continue to drag unfortunate souls on to a worldwide, cyber-circus platform in order to expose their rage and confused

vulnerability as a kind of post-capitalist spectacle “*for the enjoyment of dying men*” (in the words of poet Federico Garcia Lorca).

“Obsessive Becoming” also allowed me to accept the contradictions of a rather hermetic art practice while undertaking a daunting task of tremendous technical complexity. I began to understand that in order to live with and develop my own working practices, which have always been thoroughly studio based, I would need to bring on extra help and train them in the processes I was exploring and developing. I also had to come to terms with the deadline and commercially driven motives of certain funding agencies, such as Channel 4 in London which operate on a tighter business cycle.

Quite a few other works unmentioned here have enjoyed tremendous success, but I consider the question asked as having to do with highlights of my career, so I have left them out.

Moving on to installation works, I have to mention “the Well of Patience” and “Eingang” which enjoyed quite a bit of success and exposure both in The US and in the UK. I started out with the first version of “The Well of Patience” as an invited residential artist at The Capp Street Project in San Francisco (1988-89). This was the first time that I was able to create what I consider to be a powerful sculptural media work that had sprung from pure inspiration. When I was living in Paris in 1985 on a Guggenheim Fellowship, I had been able to behold the entire installation and detail of the work in a somewhat visionary moment. Capp Street under the careful direction and generous philanthropic guidance of it’s founder Ann Hatch allowed me to bring this large ambitious work to fulfillment during my six month residency there. The work played large and successfully in the community as a site-specific work in a decidedly non-gallery setting. People could come and go freely on average eight hours each day at the location in an unused chapel in the Mission District. In 1990 with generous support from the “Glasgow 1990 European City of

Culture” commission I was able to enlarge and reengineer the piece and bring it up to a more refined and elegant level. The installation proved to be very popular again with a healthy visiting demographic that was a welcome by-product of it’s location at the Pearce Institute in Govan, Glasgow.

“Eingang” is an installation that remains my own personal favorite of works produced in any medium to date. The first commission was arranged through “The Art at the Edge” series at The High Museum in Atlanta, USA, where it was installed in February through May of 1990. A second European version was commissioned by Lewis Biggs for “The New North Exhibition” (1990-91) at The Tate Gallery Liverpool and toured for a year to various venues around the UK including the Tramway in Glasgow. Both of these works had a relatively dynamic career promoting influence, but their importance to me as an artist is what remains the key issue. I was able to conceive and execute large-scale installations unlike anything seen at that time which allowed for a secular environment that created room for awe, reflection and a quiet engagement with time and beauty. “Eingang” has had a large life in the United States, having been seen in six venues over a twenty-year period. I still own it and hope to see it installed here in Santa Fe where I live now. This would be a grand circuitous fulfillment, as the almost 400 year old trees that form the main structural element began their life in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains above Santa Fe some time in the early 1600’s.

Imagine that . . .

## ***2. Can you talk about the technological processes and methodologies you were interested in and employed?***

The technology has always remained very much a pronounced means to an end for me. There has been little satisfaction to be had in their own right from either the processes or the tools employed and developed to execute a given work. In some important way they are too remote from the whole body. The

sole exception to this has been the tactile aesthetic relationship I have had with a good ergonomic video camera from time to time; before they become obsolete or by passed by on account of resolution or stability issues. When I travelled through Europe and India for about 4 months in 1983 I owned a light-weight broadcast quality record only camera called the Sony BVP-110 that became an extension of my eye and hand allowing me to scoop and scroll up imagery by moving along with the camera suspended in my hand without aid of the viewfinder. This is allowing the camera to become more like a brush or pen. I still use this method, but the thrill is gone with the advent of gadget burdened digital camcorders. The artifacts of tube cameras were magical, quirky and serendipitous all at once and included broadcast defects such as smearing and ghosting. These were tremendously important in the texturing and formation of earlier works.

Any technology that allowed me to take the moving image and fashion a fragment or a dimension reflective and resonant with an important poetic inner life was always worth the pain. Software is completely impossible to love. Its virtual penumbra excludes the possibility of aura and is precisely the inverse of alchemy. I find it is confounding to the soul and body but have had to allow it to become an unwelcome bedfellow out of necessity. I still have wood carving tools and whetstones that were bought and used almost four decades ago and I know they will work without adapters, upgrades or electricity. That day or eventuality is available in any moment.

I have covered the technology issues very thoroughly in my essay "The Digital Divide" so rather than revisit the same territory I will include a copy of that paper.

### ***3. How has video evolved as a medium for your artistic production?***

To me video is like a seed that fell from the tree of commercial television (*all television is commercial no matter the contrary*)

*claims*) a branch of which grew into an artistic medium that no one really understood or knew how to talk about or contextualize at first. There was an inherently energized frontier quality surrounding video and an unpolished bravado in evidence in artistic video practice from the mid 60's for about three decades. Now that video art has been identified with glamour and a limited edition ownership pseudo value in the art marketplace it will continue to be desiccated and degraded by notions of commercial value and commodity. This is not to say that there is no possibility for inspiring and beautiful work, but the touted democratization potential of youtube, camcorders in every home and the pervasive market based stretch of the internet are in the hands of those same folks who sell unending war like lemonade and plan for the poor to pay for bank failures and the jittery greed spasms of capitalism.

In my own practice I feel my hands telling me that they want some attention and a bounty of real things to touch. I sense my eyes and brain saying they want to be drinking at the spring not attempting to recreate the spring in some sort of high definition simulacrum. I started with video in 1978 when art video was maturely portable and relatively stable and for better or worse have always been riding the wave of what was technologically feasible in a pure studio environment. To make works available for broadcast I developed an ongoing collaborative technical exchange with the fringes of the broadcast industry in the US and the UK. This was valuable in regard to putting work out into the homes of real people, but these possibilities have been displaced or have all but disappeared in many countries. Video as an art form is far too commercially valueless and replete with genuine ideas and questions to be used as a container to sell soap or X-Boxes for corporate government.

I feel a great resistance to the idea of putting more time and energy into a medium that will always be pushed forward by marketing. This translates into the desire to explore within the parameters of what I possess physically at the moment in terms of

systems and equipment and the aspiration to stay with the skills and technical virtuosity that might be living comfortably under the roof of my own diminishing technological learning curve. I don't want another manual, upgrade or Version 9.X of anything.

#### ***4. What ideas have influenced you work? What and whom?***

I have been profoundly interested and influenced by poetry, great cinema, music, philosophy, art, metaphysics, history and the study of traditional culture. (Our own included) I am a terminal reader since getting a library card in my hands and the smell of books in my nose at age 5. Through constant and passionate reading my curiosity and interest in this beautiful madhouse are always expanding and unfolding. I suspect that real world life events, like my sadly bizarre upbringing, the four years (from 17 to 21) spent in the Marine Corps and near death in Viet Nam as well as a certain immersion in Eastern and Latin American cultures while living abroad have had at least as much impact and influence on my artistic practice.

When I was allowed to spend weekends at home in Washington DC after being away at foster home or military school I could feast on the culture freely available in that great city in the 1950's. As young boys my brother Tom and I spent endless hours in all the museums downtown and would see at least two or three movies on a given weekend. These were the days of triple feature on a Saturday for 75 cents. Being exposed to all this marvelous array of art, science and history had an immeasurable influence on both our vocations. During the summers we would often be on the Mall or in the Smithsonian Museum buildings for ten hours a day. My stepfather was an illegal bookie, so he wanted us out of the apartment and on the streets. This suited us perfectly.

In cinema including documentary, these encouragements and influences would include Chris Marker, Andrei Tarkovsky, Werner Herzog, Maya Deren, Jean Cocteau, Stanley Kubrick, Akira Kurosawa, Marcel Ophuls, Agnes Varda , Jean Luc Godard, Louis

Malle, Kon Ichikawa and far too many others to mention. What moves me is the poetic depth of a film whether it is calm or discordant the essential thing is the lyrical and imaginative *rasa* or aesthetic flavor at the core of the work. Cinema has a singularly powerful ability to create a substantial psychological emotional environment that remains complete within its own expanding gestalt.

In poetry and literature Homer, Montaigne, the Mahabharata, Bhakti poetry, Native American and many other cultural myths and origin epics, Rumi, Walt Whitman, Kurt Vonnegut, Pema Chodron, Susan Griffin, Thich Nhat Hanh, Chogyum Trungpa, Dogen, Basho, Ikkyu, Li Po, Czeslaw Milosz, John Berger, Gary Snyder, Denise Levertov, Jane Hirshfield, Anna Akhmatova, Albert Camus, Robert Desnos, Federico Garcia Lorca, Cesar Vallejo, William Faulkner, Allen Ginsberg and so many others.

Although I was strongly attracted to existentialist thought and writing as a teenager, (*in high school I formed an existentialist club with two other members - we did absolutely nothing...*) over the years the ideas that have continued to influence and inspire, include the notion of *Ahimsa* (Sanskrit) for the practice of non-violence as in the life and work of Gandhi and Martin Luther King, *Shoji* (Japanese) as in the philosophy of Ehei Dogen and his extensive writing on the concept of *no-birth no-death*, the concept of deep ecology by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess and others as well as the essential love and respect for humanity found in the writings of Albert Camus and many other humanists. These ideas exist beyond erudition and discourse but can be understood and experienced more like roadmaps for the strange journey we find ourselves on.

***5. How long have you lived in Scotland and what works have you made whilst here?***



I lived between Scotland and France for over 20 years. My wife Electra and I still have a home in France. My daughter Adele is Scottish by birth, having been born at home in Tarbert Argyll. I lived on the Isle of Lewis, Tarbert in Argyll, in Glasgow and finally in Portobello Edinburgh during those years. The country feels very familiar to me and has a very special place in my heart.

I completed Ganapati (1986), A Mosaic for the Kali Yuga (1986) Sombra a Sombra (1988), Obsessive Becoming (1995) One With Everything (1999) and the installations Eingang (1989), Angels/ Anvils for the National Review of Live Art in collaboration with Sean Kilcoyne (1989), The Well of Patience (1990), Sleepers (1992) and Jizo Garden (1993) during my years in Scotland. I also collaborated with the performance group Clanjamfrie for an elaborate one off performance / installation Satellite in 1996 in Glasgow. The later years involved a new body of work that included many digital paintings that were exhibited at the Tate Liverpool, The Open Eye Gallery Liverpool and Street Level Photoworks in Glasgow.

## ***6. How were these works funded/facilitated/access to technologies to produce?***

My career has always suffered from what an arts Claire Henry writing for the Glasgow Herald once called my *peripatetic* life style. During the last 25 years I have moved over fourteen times, excluding extended stays in Japan India and elsewhere. It has been a rather hectic and scattered life, and I have often envied artists who have stayed put and thus produced more consistently. I have also given over a great deal of time to personal retreat and solitude since my first long journey to India in 1978.

Despite all this movement I managed to receive generous support from The National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts, The Guggenheim Foundation, Art Matters, The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, The Rockefeller

Foundation, The Scottish Arts Council including the Highlands and Islands, Art Matters, The Arts Council of Great Britain and others. The Scottish Arts Council has been enormously gracious, patient and supportive during my time in Scotland and I am deeply appreciative.

The NEA in America was attacked and ripped apart by right wing fundamentalism in regard to direct funding to artists after 1995 and this should never be allowed to happen in countries that care about arts culture and independence.

***7. Where were these works shown or distributed?***

I have include a recent CV where all this information is laid out clearly for each work.

***8. What individuals helped facilitate the works or what institutions have been particularly supportive to you?***

Barbara London at MOMA New York in the early years, Carol Brandenburg at WNET, Cara Mertes at WGBH and PBS, Brian O'Doherty at the NEA who is also the artist Patrick Ireland, Jerry O'Grady at Media Studies Buffalo, Willard Van Dyke who was my first film teacher and got me started down the right road, Sherry Miller at the Experimental Television Center in New York, Jon Hilton in Ithaca who taught me how to edit video and collaborated on numerous projects, Phillip Mallory-Jones, a fine artist and early supporter at the Ithaca Video Project, Gene Youngblood who has become a close friend in later years, Patty Zimmerman a great writer and friend, Nathan and Joan Lyons at the Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, New York, Eric Barnouw at Columbia and the Library of Congress who was an inspiration and a protector when the semiotic fire got too weird, David Curtis at the Arts Council of Great Britain who is without a doubt a gentleman's gentleman, Sean Kilcoyne who has take a deep interest and participated in many of my high flown follies, Lewis Biggs at The Tate Liverpool, Linda Dubler at The High Museum, Atlanta, Ann Hatch at The Capp Street Project, San Francisco,

Tessa Jackson during her directorship of visual arts projects for Glasgow 1990, Robert Livingston and Amanda Catto at the Scottish Arts Council and all the folks at the Travelling Gallery, Andrew Patrizio and David Williams at The Edinburgh College of Art, Lindsay Blair, my gracious Highland muse and Street Level Photoworks in Glasgow particularly Malcolm Dickson who has the patience of a Buddha . . .

***9. When producing or showing work you made did you feel that you were part of a larger movement or scene and if so how would you define it. What was the international context and response to the works you made?***

Starting in the late seventies I became part of a larger community of artists who were then defined as video artists. The camaraderie and shared focus was real but the limitations of the description were always off putting to some extent. I am reminded of the *video artist* as portrayed in *The Big Lebowski*: a bizarre undernourished, black clad, effete, chain smoking Englishman with a pencil thin mustache looking like a skinny line of bat guano on his upper lip and an effete shriek for a voice. There are some like that I suppose but the Cohen brother nailed it.

At video festivals, symposiums and other gatherings in those halcyon days I met many artists, curators, critical writers and gallery directors who were not only good friends but smart and energetic. Living in Ithaca in upstate New York and being involved with The Ithaca Video Project, being on the board of directors at the Media Alliance of New York and The Robert Flaherty Seminars, all contributed to a healthy sense of community that has always been important to me. Now living in Santa Fe, New Mexico I have re-established old friendships with the generation that preceded my own involvement in the medium, including Woody and Steina Vasulka, Gene Youngblood and others. All of this exchange has been and continues to be a great boon in many ways.

The international response has been genuine and generous. My work has been broadcast and collected in over thirty countries since 1979. Personally I feel like more of a citizen of the larger world that precludes nationality.

***10. Has there been a high point for video art in your opinion? What factors have contributed to its lack of recognition in galleries or in collections, if indeed you think that to be the case?***

If there was a high point for artists video I might identify the early 1990's as a time when much convergence and experimentation were blossoming wildly across the globe, when much was reaching fruition. I would guess that this opinion may be a generational illusion. I think if I were young now I would consider the high point to be this very moment.

I do find that many important young and established curators and theorists are often too short-sighted and perhaps a bit lazy in their efforts to interpret and present earlier work. They have not taken the time to investigate the history of video art that exists outside of the canonical texts and exhibition histories of the larger institutional structures. Clearly if one were to rely exclusively on the major texts, many very interesting artists and endeavors would be overlooked.

I cannot discount the marketing and re-branding strategies of contemporary museum and gallery culture and the lust for novelty, shock and instant fame. Having been involved in higher arts education for about ten years I noticed that many young aspiring artists are often discouraged by the demands of virtuous effort and occasionally know little of history or a wider culture.

In a recent essay entitled *Twelve Theses on the Economy of the Dead* (Left Curve # 31) John Berger posed this question:

How do the living lie with the dead? Until the dehumanization of society by capitalism, all the living awaited the experience of the

dead. It was their ultimate future. By themselves the living were incomplete. Thus living and dead were inter-dependent. Always. Only a uniquely modern form of egotism has broken this inter-dependence. With disastrous results for the living, who now think of the dead as eliminated.

Surely part of the answer concerning the question of recognition is to be found in our uncomfortable relationship to what has gone before.

***11. I think your work is distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix. Anyone else? Have you had any experience of LVA?***

My work is currently distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix, New York, The Video Data Bank at The Art Institute of Chicago, Art Metropole, Montreal, Films Media Group, New Jersey, and LUX in London

My experience with pre LUX LVA was limited but useful.

***12. What about your experiences of Channel 4/ACGB/SAC?***

My involvement with Channel 4 goes back to 1982 at INPUT the International public television conference in Toronto. After I screened *Smothering Dreams* there, a producer for Channel 4 approached me and we eventually negotiated a broadcast deal. After they bought screening rights they put the program aside in a kind of limbo because of the Falklands conflict and the intense jingoism that ensued in the UK. Channel-4 then trotted it out for *The Ghost in the Machine* series of video art screenings while I was living in the Outer Hebrides. Viewing it out there was a very surreal experience to say the least. After that I landed a modest commission through John Wyver that helped produce *Sombra a Sombra* (1988). David Curtis got behind and championed my early proposal for *Obsessive Becoming* (1995) and then had to wait very patiently during the five years of production. When it was finally broadcast Channel 4 screened the work at 1AM, the witching hour

of the video art ghetto. After that I was commissioned to make *One With Everything* (1999) again through the support and encouragement of David Curtis at ACGB. I was strictly instructed by Channel-4 to make the deadline or else forcing me to adopt a very traditional and *tres cher* production style that was alien to me in every way. Personally the work was a financial disaster that 10 years later I am almost recovered from. It was never broadcast in the end, either because it was totally lacking in tits and ass value or they were afraid of offending the Buddhist community. No one ever let me know. One thing we should note is that when PBS and the likes of Channel-4 reach out with a nervous embrace to art video, they have often done so with a certain cultural embarrassment as if they were inviting a naked trapeze artist on mescaline into the parson's living room for tea. Even the names like *Alive From Off Center*, *Ghost in the Machine*, *TV Fetish* etc. are indicative of the slant. Marginalization has always been the order of the day.

Channel 4 early on was seen as the great white hope for artists television by many, myself included, but the funds were meagre at best and the opportunities few and far between. As the years went by and polite art reviews and jazzy breathless art hype commentary became standard fare, what followed was the advent of BIG BROTHERISM the death of ideas and the triumph of hucksterism. Art video on Channel-4 died a sad death between the relentless wheels of the tasteful and the tasteless I'm afraid.

My gratitude for the support of the SAC is unbounded. Much of what was accomplished in the 90's would exist as ideas and notes and drawings without their support. The opportunity to serve on the Visual Arts Panel for a few years was a marvelous and curious experience all at once. I always wondered how money was allocated to artists and I found the experience rigorous, honorable and stimulating. Good laughs as well.

***13. Your installation works have been shown in various venues and contexts (ie. Pearce Institute, Travelling Gallery, Video***

*Positive, NRLA, and in galleries). Can you talk a bit about each of these experiences for you as an artist?*

The Pearce institute was a joy for the most part during the installation of the second version of the Well of Patience. I had brought a number of members of the crew assembled in San Francisco the previous year and they had a larger budget, great in-kind support from a local aluminum fabricator. Cycling over from the west end on the first morning of the installation, I was shadowed by two young boys on bikes who kept asking me: *fut ya doeeen bigmaan* for about 2 blocks before I could figure out what they were asking. The surely thought I was dead stupid, but that brilliant patois was completely new to me. I also have an audio recording somewhere of the fall of the 343 crystal wine glasses onto the floor when the array was being hoisted for the first time. Miraculously only a dozen or so broke. I had to leave for a six month artists exchange in Japan before the installation was completed and no one bothered to inform me that one of the 12 projectors became defective and the decision was made not to revolve the work instead of finding a solution for the broken equipment. This was sad for me personally as Barry Valentino who designed and constructed the revolving turntable at the Exploratorium in San Francisco had died over Lockerbie within weeks of finishing our collaboration in 1988.

I thought the Traveling Gallery was one of the finest efforts developed by the SAC and was invited for two road trips with them with *Jizo Garden* and as part of a group show entitled *Scratching the Surface*. When we outfitted the gallery bus for *Jizo Garden*, the vehicle was down at the house in Tarbert Argyll for about a week while all of the complex structure was built. A lot of local rumors went around. I believe we had to surface mount 14 different monitors for the installation. To me the outreach that was provided all over Scotland has been a great benefit to the communities it visited.

Video Positive in Liverpool brainchild of the unstoppable Eddie Berg was an all out jamboree for those of us doing media art in the early nineties. I installed a truncated version of the *Well of Patience* for the first event and got to meet many UK based media artists at that time. I think we drove the security staff at the Tate Liverpool around the bend, but it definitely loosened them up. Eddie Berg who has been a mover and shaker for years in the media art community did a great job pulling all this together and then going on to form Fact UK.

Sean Kilcoyne and I collaborated on *Angels/Anvils* for the National review of Live Art and our collaboration evolved into something so complex and ambitious that it became a touring work in progress finally reaching fruition for two nights at the Bluecoat Gallery in Liverpool. The last night was beautiful. We received a standing ovation from a maxed out crowd and a lovely review from poet Adrian Henri in the local paper. I think we had at last gotten it right. The first venue was at the Third Eye and I remember the entire building being an all out mad house during the put up. Critic Naseem Khan has characterized the NRLA as "*one of the chanciest and most extraordinary events in the experimental arts*" The 1989 event surely lived up to that description. Derek Jarman was there that year and created a work to challenge Clause 28, an ordinance designed to prohibit local authorities from "the promotion of homosexuality" It was a heady rich mix and Nikki Millican has to be congratulated for her guidance, perseverance and creativity in moving it all forward.

***14. What magazines have reviewed your work? What writers or publications have critically tackled your work? Are there any specific writers on video that you admire?***

Magazines and Newspapers include Art in America, Variant, Videography (now defunct) The New York Times, Boston Globe, Atlanta Constitution, After Image, Glasgow Herald, Performance, San Francisco Examiner, Village Voice, Esquire, Time Out and many others. I list selected publications below.



Writers include Michael Renov, Sean Cubitt, Malcolm Dixon, Louise Milne, Marita Sturken, Gene Youngblood, Patty Zimmerman, Chris Meigh-Andrews, Christine Ross and Eric Barnouw among others.

### **Selected PUBLICATIONS**

Hatfield, Jackie, ed. *Experimental Film and Video*, ‘ “Ardent for Some Desperate Glory: Revisiting Smothering Dreams” by Daniel Reeves,’ (London: John Libby/ Indiana University Press, 2006).

Meigh-Andrews, Chris. *A History of Video Art, The Development of Form and Function*, (Oxford and New York: Berg Press, 2006), pp. 189 – 198.

Renov, Michael. *The Subject of Documentary*, “Documentary, Disavowals and the Digital,” (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), pp. 130 – 144.

Rieser, Martin and Zapp, Andrea, eds. *Cinema/Art/Narrative*, (London: British Film Institute, 2002).

Zimmerman, Patricia R., *States of Emergency: Documentaries, Wars, Democracies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

Holboom, Mike and Sandlos, Karyn, eds., *Landscape with Memory*, (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2001).

Ross, Christine. *Images de Surface: Video Art Reconsidered*, (Montreal: Artext, 1996).

Barnouw, Erik. *A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

Sturken, Marita. “What is Grace in All This Madness: The Videotapes of Dan Reeves,” *Afterimage*, Vol. 13, No. 1 and 2, 1985.

### ***15. Tell us about the current work ‘End-to-End’? Ideas that influenced continuity and development to your practice.***

*End to End* might possibly be the most difficult work I have undertaken in my career to date. Now into its fifth year in production.

It is essentially a three-screen installation dealing with the pervasive occurrence of human folly in our times. The initial inspiration for the concept was the Bosch painting entitled the *Haywain* and some of the pictorial aspects of Stanley Spencer's *Resurrection* paintings of the 1930's. For many of the scenes I have used three adjacent HDV cameras running simultaneously to record the slow movement of actors in various allegorical and metaphorical tableaux. In essence using three cameras at once provides for a real time triptych space for recording the performance. This is wonderful, but creates enormous technical complexity in post-production.

I have enjoyed the élan vital and dramaturgical expertise of the performance artist Sean Kilcoyne throughout the production period. Sean who has worked carefully with professional actors and gifted extras to train them in the art of slow moving. We devised a numerical system much like a speedometer to delineate a certain speed for each scene.

The matrix scenes were recorded in an old converted wine barn on our property in France and were tremendously complex in that every group movement performed by as many as 14 actors had to work consistently. For the resurrection scene, which lasted in real time for over twenty minutes, I remember we had to complete over fifteen takes to get it right. There have been four extended recording periods with actors including a five-day session here in New Mexico this year. (*August 2008*) A great percentage of the material has been recorded with chroma-key technology against green screen allowing for compositing and intricate layering.

I have also filmed supplementary materials in a dog food factory, the site of the John F. Kennedy assassination in Dallas Texas, two cross country 2,000 mile road trips using Super-8 film in black and white, Disney World and a host of other locations in the UK, France, the US and Canada. Materials have also been gathered from archives and television broadcast. I am now collaborating

with the Santa Fe based composer Sydney Davis who has created music for the installation of great power, beauty and intensity.

In the beginning I was interested in the sculptural potential of the installation, but as the images and scenes have been developed it is the three-screen projection of the work that continues to capture my attention.

The biggest problem I have had is not being able to assemble a small group of technical artists to help with the endless hours of computer work that the project requires. I did this for *Obsessive Becoming* and it proved to be a great asset. I plan to bring on at least one or two in the closing year to lift the burden.

I do believe that the work will be resonant for our time and of a quality that will have a powerful emotive register. The daily examples of human folly are so pervasive and almost overwhelming in these times that the work continues to be shaped and informed as each day passes.