

Works at The University of Surrey

ALPHABET PIECE:

For a piece commissioned to go outside the Linguistics Department at the University of Surrey, I started with the bedrock of language; the alphabet. As people say the eyes are the window into the soul, I have always had a love of words as, to me, they are the window into knowledge, comprehension and understanding.

In this way I first abstracted each letter of the alphabet using narrow lines in black ink on white paper in a meditative, repetitive way reminiscent of Japanese drawing. Those drawings were then fired onto architectural glass blocks which have a ripple effect. This ripple effect was important to me as it represents the distortion between the words uttered and their received meaning.

As I believe that words are the “scaffolding” of communication so it fell easily to have scaffolding carry the alphabet glass blocks. However the word scaffolding is also used in an educational or instructional context and describes a teaching method that enables a student to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal through a gradual shedding of outside assistance which seemed appropriate for a University site.

The icon T., meaning text, is created by the top horizontal line of letters, the central vertical line and the letter Z having a black background and white lines which is the inverse of the other letters.

URBAN LANDSCAPE:

I have been photographing motherboards for a long time now as not only do I think they are beautiful but they also make me think of aerial views of cities at night. Both share a street like grid format and represent the extremes of man's invention, one being micro and the other macro in scale. I put the images on panels that are about the height and width of a standing human, and each panel is suspended and held together by wires as wires play an important part in contemporary human connections.

THE EVENT HORIZON:

Mostly the term “the event horizon”, is used in reference to the perimeter of a black hole from which, if passed, there is no return; the point at which the gravitational pull becomes so great as to make escape impossible, even for light. At the time of making this piece I had been reading about the fact that space is now littered with our debris and that we are nearing the point of being unable to rectify this situation. Consequently I manipulated my photographs of scrap metal, had them laminated with a UV protective film onto formica and set into five 12 foot girders, one placed above the other. These girders are used in “lost work”. Lost work is a term used in the building industry when a temporary structure to support some element of the building process is erected which is removed once that process has been completed.

The Event Horizon is part of a series which I've called Mnemonesia in which all the works relate to memory. I coined the word “Mnemonnesia” which is comprised of Mnemon, who was an aide to Achilles and who was slain by him for forgetting to remind him never to kill a child of Apollo, and -nesia which is a combining form denoting a certain type of memory, i.e. 'amnesia' - no memory. I put the two together to say these pieces are about 'remembering to remember'.

TEST TUBE PIECE:

This work is part of a series called "Bob's World" in which I appropriated the writings of someone I know called Bob who is schizophrenic. These works explore language. Isolated and repeated words are presented, attempting to deconstruct language and reference Derrida's subversive way of reading texts, concentrating on what is referred to as the textuality - or how the text is read as opposed to what it means.

In this case I haven't manipulated the photographs of his writings but used the photographic prints and placed them in test tubes. Handwriting is in evidence less and less with computer technologies and here I have treated it like a specimen to be investigated, placing the photographs in test tubes, in anticipation of the day when it will be a thing of curiosity and research.

The test tubes are displayed in a large grid of repeated lines. Repetition has always been important to my work as it is like the heartbeat; our driving life force. It is found throughout nature and here it mirrors the repetition in the words as written by Bob who, it would seem, tries to put some order into chaos by writing his "lines".

FOUR PIECE SUITE:

This piece was commissioned by the University of Surrey to go outside their diabetic research premises. Sugar is a well known contributor to type 2 diabetes and I had just listened to an episode of The Food Programme in which the interviewer visited a family in their flat. They no longer used their kitchen as they stored the children's bikes in it. When asked what they did for food one child replied that they just go down to the chippy and get chips and a bottle of pop; sugar and fat. I thought about contemporary life; shopping malls, fast food and sweets and this piece was born. Each panel is approximately the height and width of a human, painted in the almost fluorescent colours found in shopping malls, into which a clear perspex panel has been inserted which is filled with sweets.