



SUPERMASSIVEBLACKHOLE

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## SMBHMAG | SUPERMASSIVEBLACKHOLE ONLINE PHOTOGRAPHY MAGAZINE

Established in 2009, SuperMassiveBlackHole is dedicated to contemporary photography and the photographic imagery resulting from the time-based processes found in many interdisciplinary art practices today. It is freely available to download as a PDF.

*Time, Space, Light & Gravity are what drive SuperMassiveBlackHole*

Edited and published by Barry W Hughes

## GRAVITATE

Cover image: Patrick Hough

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## THEME

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### Studio

The artist's studio is a place that is rarely seen by those who eventually see the final artwork. It can be a place of mystery to the layperson, sometimes perceived in a romantic manner as though nothing has changed since the painters of past centuries. It is undoubtedly a private space, the physical manifestation of an artist's mind where they are free to experiment, build and destroy in peace and comfortable isolation from the outside world. Without such a space many artists simply find themselves too distracted or hampered by external pressures that can drain their creativity or worse still, cause utter stagnation.

From a sculptor's studio, which can be a noisy place full of hands-on craft and seemingly cluttered with throw-away objects to a photographer's studio, which can appear clinical with expensive technology and streamlined equipment, there is little difference to the artist; all require a specific working environment that allows them the space, time and freedom to do what they do with complete control. In many situations this space itself can be the difference between creating something of long lasting value or something of short-lived frivolity.

There are those who intentionally include the studio, and the working process within their private space, as part of the work they produce. Many contemporary artists and practitioners view this underlying commentary on the machinations of the medium as an integral part of the final artwork. Indeed it is not uncommon for many artists to produce work about the process of producing work. And while it may sound absurd to those who walk into a gallery or exhibition and read such things, it has always been the case that artists will communicate with one another, and the public, in such ways. It has always been so, and even today with the compressed digital studio being little more than a laptop computer, artists still communicate in such ways.

Along with these examples presented in this issue, there is also attention paid to those who work in the studio, either as an artist, performer, visitor or assistant. Showing both the creative and laborious aspects of the behind-the-scenes production narrative, the studio is never completely isolated from the external world. Others must enter for various reasons, and so it must also be a place of compromise and discussion during the working process. From the painter's garret of the 20<sup>TH</sup> century to the cold-lit photographer's studio of the 21<sup>ST</sup> century, it is just as important to consider the working environment of each artist while understanding their oeuvre. After all, the place in which time is spent with an artwork during its creation, is vital to how the artist will judge each amendment and progression towards the final outcome ●

# BRIAN CREGAN



## Creating The Mapestry

During Workhouse Assembly, Callan, 2013



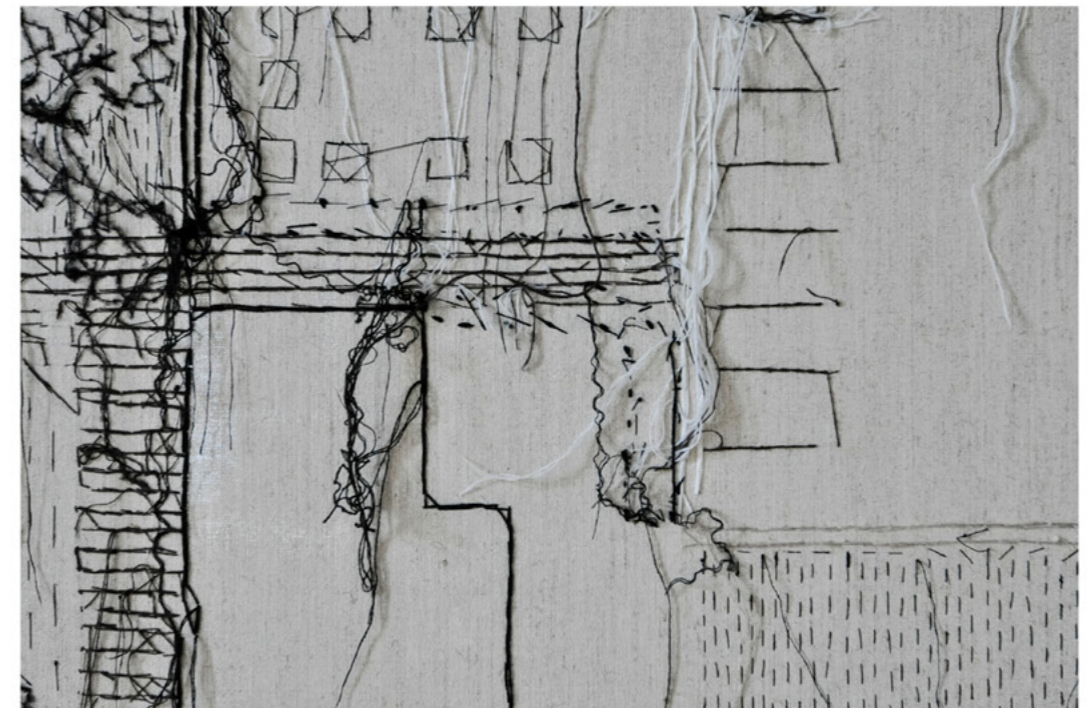
An embroidered drawing, which was nick-named the *Mapestry* by its creators, was the medium chosen to represent the investigations and proposals made by the LiD Architecture workshop as part of the Workhouse Assembly 2013. The workshop examined in detail the patterns of life and appropriation of the Workhouse Enclosure, including the horticultural activities of the Camphill Community, the self-seeded shrubs and trees that have formed habitats for wildlife, the County Council social and sheltered housing built in the 1990s, more recent uses as artists studios, joinery workshops, exhibition hall, and circus/ fairground. From these observations, a number of proposals were developed for subtle interventions and incisions designed to increase potentials for the overlaying and enhancement of the current appropriations, as well as the possibilities for connections and cohesions more widely with the town of Callan itself.

With the input of textile artist Dee Harte, methods were developed including reworking the threads of the base fabric into the piece to indicate the 'ghosts' of former buildings; couching-down unraveled yarns to represent the varied vegetation; the use of curved quilting needles and reverse stitching from the rear of the piece that allowed this scale of embroidered image to be worked on by up to ten people at a time.

Text by LiD Architects

[briancregan.com](http://briancregan.com)





Before: Production of 'The Mapestry' in the Workhouse Chapel. Clockwise: Recycling wool for The Mapestry in the old Workhouse, Callan, Co. Kilkenny; Detail of stitching; Stitching 'The Mapestry' in the Workhouse Chapel; 'The Mapestry' with initials of collaborators



# TOMMASO FISCALETTI



## The Perception of Mamba

“My work comes out of the need of searching for items in the past and reconnect them with the present. These kinds of responses are often linked to Nature as a ‘salvific element’, capable of creating clarity. Living in Cape Town, South Africa, has been a crucial step in my personal poetry. The interweaving of cultures and intense stories are the central elements of this country. Countless fascinating insights to start from when speaking of Man, along with the constant presence of a prevailing Nature, in a very tangible way.

In Africa, the natural element breaks on the senses, conditions, illuminates.“

[tommasofiscaletti.com](http://tommasofiscaletti.com)









# FRANCK LESBROS



## Olision Valley

These images relate to a video project, *Olision valley*, which was filmed in my studio in 2014. They convey the important part of how I produce an art video project. Everything is about process in my artwork: I can start with an idea and during the working process I pay attention to any accidents and random occurrences in order to make some changes to perspective, and let other results effect my initial idea.

Documenting the process with pictures and back cameras is important to the creation of the video, because everything is at stake at that particular moment of the filming process. The pictures relate that intense moment where everything can happen and take place because of the way I make those stages in the studio. The studio is at that time a place of experimentation; the work in progress exists in those moments where whatever happens, happens.

In *Olision valley* one's eyes come and go, rush into the relief, come up to the surface, detect fields that are neither welcoming nor hostile, but rather peculiar. My latest video shows a series of valley landscapes, where rhythm takes its source in the iteration of plans and a soundtrack specifically composed for the film – like in all his projects, where a musician often collaborates in the creation process. Here, an out-of-tune piano is used to create stretched sounds and a discordant music, which is as captivating as the images. Filmed with models specifically procured for each object, the video becomes a curious piece at the crossroad between movie and sculpture, but also painting through the flatness of most of the film's parts that are shot with frontal framing – among which can be reflected some Kaspar David Friedrich here, or Malevich there, and many others elsewhere. All the more that, as often in my videos, perspectives have been meticulously thought through; a world and a “visual” cinema where the artificial nature of the places and their fake aspect are largely assumed and never hidden, as if to get closer to a reality the artist is fully aware of not being able to catch, even through trickery.









# MEMY MOM



## The Backstage

*Memymom* is a collaboration between two artists, a mother Marilène Coolens (1953) and her daughter Lisa De Boeck (1985). Two self-taught photographers who work and live in Brussels, Belgium.

*The Backstage*, is where we started gathering all of our backstage images taken during the shoots of our series (in this case: *The Patient* - 2012, *The Escape* - 2012, *Lip Reading* - 2011, *Landescape* - 2014, and *Untitled* - 2012). Choosing images for this body of work nearly gives them the feel of a staged backstage. The intensity and sub-layered real and unreal, we keep seeking spontaneity in our work.

[memymom.com](http://memymom.com)







Before: *Lip Reading*, 2011. Clockwise: *Landescape*, 2014; *Untitled*, 2012; *The Patient*, 2012; *The Escape*, 2012



# CLARE BENNETT



## The Tester Shot

I once worked in a photography studio where the team's goal was to photograph inanimate objects and people with the same agenda: to make them look good through the use of professional lighting set-ups and expensive camera equipment. I was frequently asked to step in for light test shots, but to my disappointment these shots usually showed me looking quite bored, with no make-up, under unflattering lights.

My initial response to these awful pictures was to dispose of them as quickly as possible, but realising they were challenging my perception of my own self-image, I started to collect them instead. I can't help wondering whether they're a harsh reality of how I actually look, and if so, should I make an effort to paint myself in a more attractive/positive light? I began to think more about the 'tester' shot before the 'actual' shot and how people can change once they know it is just a test. They don't try so hard to put their best side forward, "Oh are we shooting for real now? I thought we were just testing," is a statement I have often heard.

[clarebennett.com](http://clarebennett.com)









# MARINA GADDONEIX



## After The Image

We sneak onto the set that waits patiently for us do something.

We go under a spotlight and ask permission to perform for a while. There is no question of competing with the seal, which did a fine job, but we also want to participate in the show and accomplish harmonious gestures if possible.

Sitting on a chair facing a machine that stares at us without a word, our body starts to wiggle. We are tempted by buffoonery, tempted to get completely naked, but all of a sudden, we are unsettled by a gaze on the surface of the lens: we see our small reflections and do not like that very much.

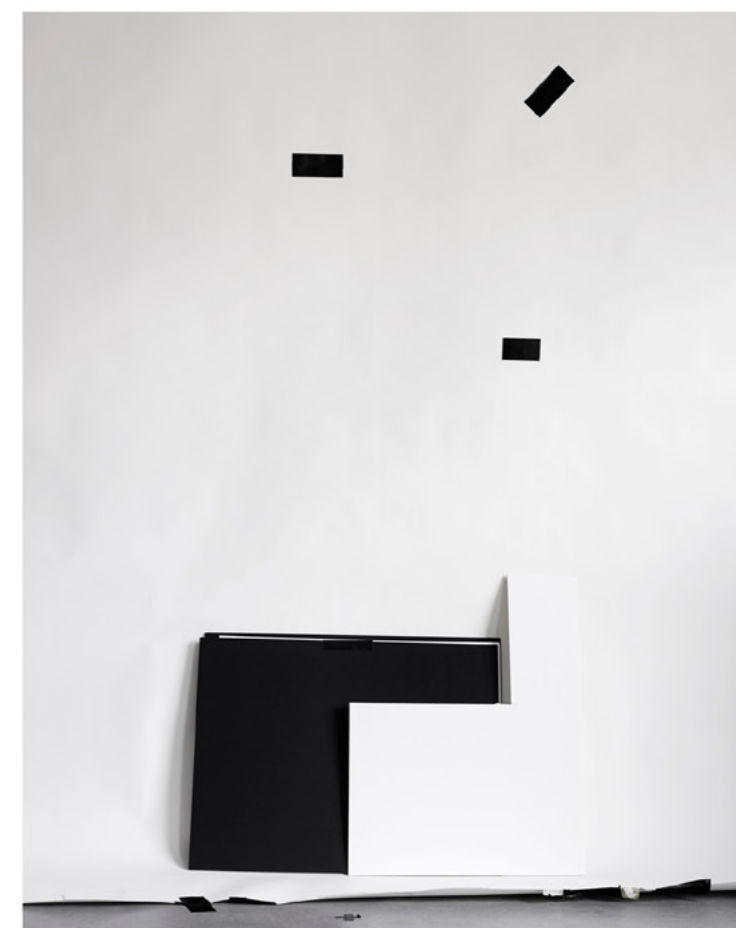
We leave the sets.

Text by Amaury Da Cunha (extract)

[marinagaddoneix.com](http://marinagaddoneix.com)







Before: *Untitled* (Hiroshi Sugimoto, seascape), 2014  
Clockwise: *Untitled* (Alberto Giacometti, *Tête sur tige*), 2014; *Untitled* (Victor Vasarely, composition), 2013; *Untitled* (Lynn Cohen, Classroom), 2014; *Untitled* (Alexander Calder, hanging mobile), 2014



# GEORG PARTHEN

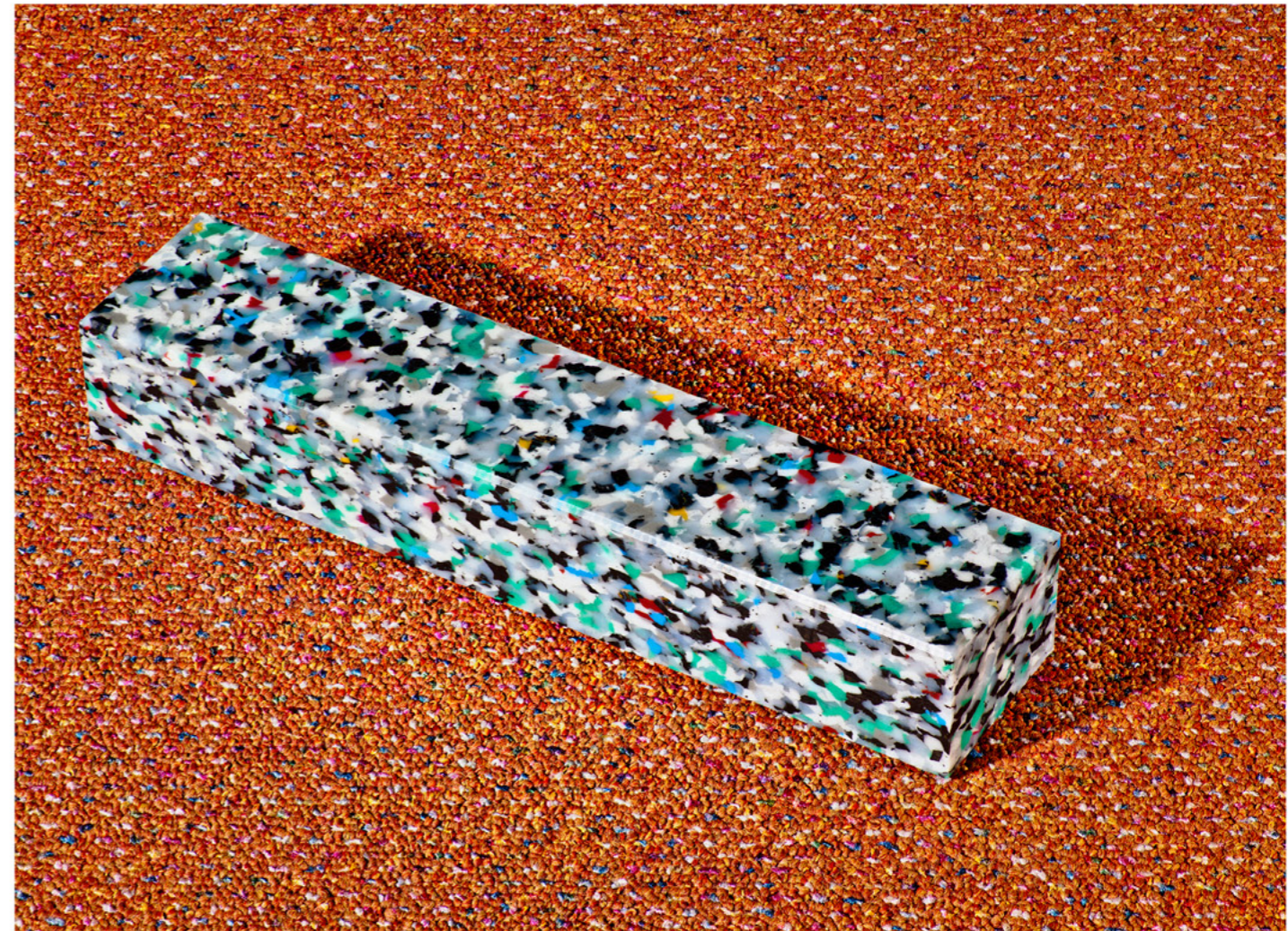
## Studioarbeit

*Studioarbeit* is a record of the studies and experiments which I and others have recently conducted, along with a documentation of the workspaces and situations in which these experiments took place. Recently these experiments have become increasingly obscure. The documents form a system of functional relations and visual references, which allow the work to be approached in multiple ways. The work is presented as framed images on the wall and as a workbook-style folder.

[georgparthen.de](http://georgparthen.de)







Before: *Aufbau* (HAS\_RG), 50 x 60 cm, 2014  
Clockwise: *Stilleben (Geäst)*, 83 x 110 cm - 32.6 x 43.3, Digitaler C-Print, 2012;  
*Materialstudie (Klotz)*, 38 x 52 cm, Pigment Print;  
*Stilleben (Adam)*, Digital C-Print, 2014;  
*Stilleben (Rotkohl)*, 60 x 48 cm, Digital C-Print, gerahmt v29, 2012;  
*Stilleben (Geäst)*, 83 x 110 cm - 32.6 x 43.3 Digital C-Print, 2012



# DANIEL ALEXANDER SMITH



## Ruckenfigur

Often in images, there is a person facing away from you, looking into the image. This is a *ruckenfigur*: the pictorial proxy for a flesh and blood viewer. Usually inserted into a large, sublime scene, it is supposed to provide a locus of access from which you can experientially enter the image.

Of course, in practice, the world does not translate easily into images. This series explores the pictorial and conceptual strategies we deploy in order to enter our own images. Historically, Brunelleschi's perspectival systems, Alberti's window, and the romantic ruckenfigur invited us into images. Today, our technology complicates each of these devices. The camera literalizes linear perspective, the computer monitor embodies Alberti's window, and blue screens actualize the metaphor of the ruckenfigur. Technology brings the mind's eye inside of images more easily now than ever before, but our physical relationship to pictures remains unbridgeable. The image is fixed in time, while our bodies are not, and we still fail to enter our images.

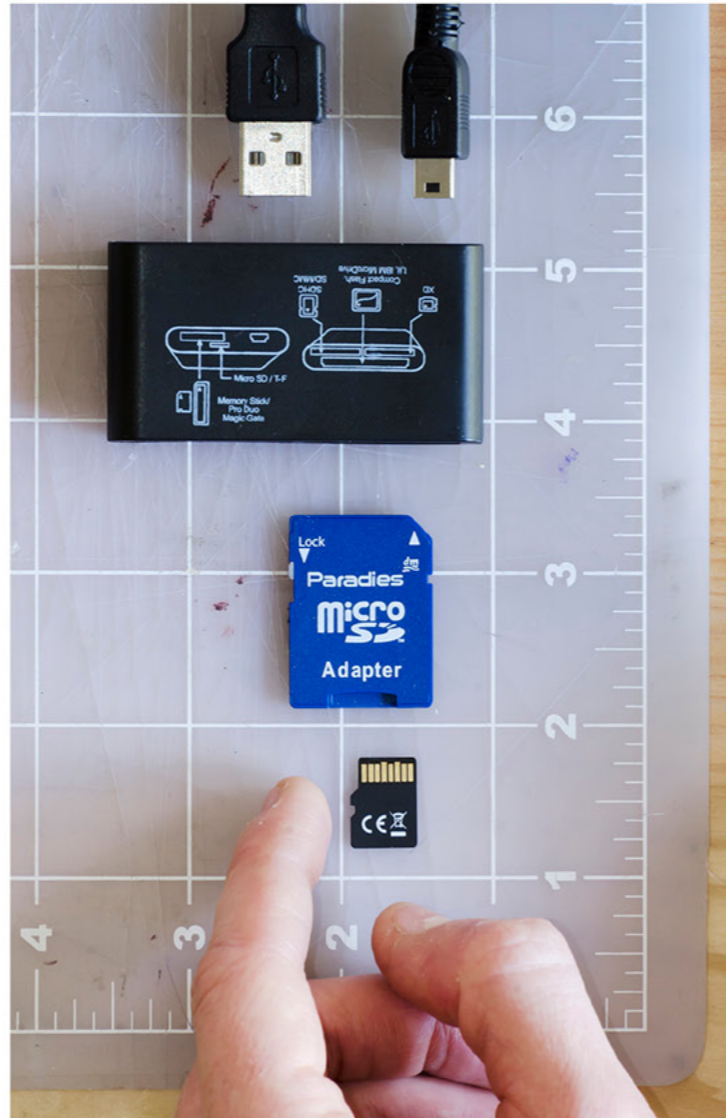
In *Ruckenfigur*, each image serves as a door and a wall. The images are layered with photographed objects that define a recognizable realism, but their digital reconstitution denies the manifestation of this reality in an actual space.

Rather than mediating a sublime experience, these images present the inaccessible sublime. There is a failure in the transfiguration of flesh into the body as imaged. These photographs defy consistent translation between pictorial and physical experience—instead, they examine the means for this translation.

[danielalexandersmith.com](http://danielalexandersmith.com)







Before: Wanderlust  
Clockwise: Genius; Impotence; Adapter; Plug



## KATHARINA GÜNTHER

## Interview: Perry Ogden on Documenting Reece Mews

Katharina Günther is a professional fine art researcher and independent art historian, based in London, UK. Since graduating from the University of Cologne, she has been focussing on the work of Francis Bacon and has been researching and publishing for The Estate of Francis Bacon, most notably on the Francis Bacon Studio Archive at The Hugh Lane Gallery in Dublin, Ireland. She is currently working on a PhD thesis on Francis Bacon which explores the artist's relationship to photography.



In 1998, British photographer Perry Ogden, acclaimed for his work in fashion and advertisement as well as for his intimate portraits of his adopted country Ireland, experienced what he regards as the 'high point of his career'.<sup>1</sup> Ogden spent three days on his own in Francis Bacon's studio at 7 Reece Mews, London to document its contents before their relocation to Dublin. Bacon had lived and worked there from 1961 until his death in 1992 and amidst the knee-deep heaps of paint-splattered and battered books, magazines and newspapers, torn leaves and crumpled fragments of pages, original photographic prints and postcards, he created some of the most haunting paintings of the last century. Referring to the artist's own perception of his working environment, the photographs were taken in the early morning- the time when Bacon preferred to paint. Shortly after Ogden's visit, the studio was dismantled to be meticulously reconstructed at Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane.

Many photographers from Henri-Cartier Bresson to Jorge Lewinski took pictures of the infamously chaotic space but Bacon was keen to keep any documentation on a general level. As a result, images showing an unspecific, confusing abundance of working material unwittingly supported Bacon's public myth of the accidental genesis of his paintings. Ogden's photographs, in contrast, allow the intimate study of single images, their peculiar subjects and material state, posthumously revealing fascinating details of Bacon's working methods in their original context. They precede the current digital archiving of the over 7500 items found in Reece Mews, which proves to be an invaluable source for Bacon scholarship. Today, there is barely a publication or exhibition on Bacon without Ogden's photographs and several shows and a publication were dedicated to the series itself.





Katharina Günther: *Visitors of the studio during the artist's lifetime recall a strong feeling of unease, as if they were entering forbidden, highly private territory.* <sup>2</sup> *How would you describe the atmosphere of the room? How did you feel coming so close to Bacon's pictorial sources of inspiration?*

Perry Ogden: I found the space invigorating. I could feel the creative energy and could see how it had worked for Bacon - the light, the quiet, the simplicity. For me it was very exciting to finally be in the studio. I had heard and read so much about it and, of course, seen photographs as well as the famous Melvyn Bragg interview.

KG: *What remit did you set yourself for documenting Reece Mews and what was the biggest challenge? How did you try to inject your own artistic point of view?*

PO: I didn't set myself any remit beyond wanting to capture the space in the same light that Bacon would have painted - primarily morning light. The only natural light in the studio came from a west facing skylight which Bacon had had installed in the early Sixties soon after he moved in. The two windows facing onto Reece Mews were blocked off. With Bacon painting in the morning the light from the skylight would have been soft yet sharp and focused - not dissimilar to the classic north light much loved by painters for many centuries. I had no desire to do anything clever - to impose anything on the studio - I just wanted to capture what I saw in front of me.

## *I didn't photograph all the items, only the surface*

KG: *You once compared shooting 'Pony Kids' with recording Reece Mews.* <sup>3</sup> *Could you elaborate on that?*

PO: Did I? Not sure I can remember that, I'll have to think about it! It was probably the sense of capturing the purity of the subject and keeping it simple.

KG: *Over 7500 items were unearthed from the atelier. How did you approach the overwhelming quantity of material and possible motifs? Did single items stand out for you and why?*

PO: I didn't photograph all the items, only the surface. I didn't want to touch - or undo - anything. My approach was forensic; later a team went in to do an archaeological dig and worked there way down to the floor! On the surface there were many fascinating items including Peter Beard and John Deakin photographs; books - or pages torn from books - on Seurat, Velasquez, van Gogh, Rodin and others; a book with photographs of cricket; another on bullfighting. I could go on and on... but one of the most fascinating was a series of black and white contact sheets of two men - naked, except for swimming caps and trunks - wrestling with each other on the floor of a bare room. The contact sheets were marked - presumably by Bacon - with red and green pens. I tried to find out who had taken the pictures but never could.







# Bacon was the first artist I had been consciously exposed to - through John Russell's monograph - when I was still in school

KG: Judging from your experience in the studio, what impression did you get of Bacon's artistic sensitivity and his working methods, and how did that feed into your pictures of the space?

PO: I felt he was an enormously sensitive man, but this probably comes as much from my reading of David Sylvester's series of interviews with Bacon - originally published as 'The Brutality of Fact' - which I had read many years before and which also gave me a strong sense of his working methods. It's hard to say how my impressions fed into my pictures because when you are working in this situation the sub-conscious takes over. You are reacting to what's in front of you and bringing to your reading - and rendering - of the space everything that you know. In my case this was quite a lot because Bacon was the first artist I had been consciously exposed to - through John Russell's monograph - when I was still in school.

KG: After Bacon's death, the machinery of the studio- the accumulation, manipulation and appropriation from photographic material- came to a permanent hold. How did you address the absence of the artist and the fact that the studio was now a static relic instead of a productive creative space?

PO: Well, the studio felt very alive - particularly to anyone who had a sense of Bacon's work - because here it all was: the sources of inspiration, brushes, rejected canvases, bits of corduroy he had used to get a certain texture of paint, the palette on the walls. Time had stopped but the studio was the forum for an ongoing dialogue.

perryogden.com

francis-bacon.com

1 Andrew Pulver, 'Photographer Perry Ogden's best shot', *The Guardian*, published online on 22 July 2009. Seen 12.12.2014, 15.40.

2 Hugh M. Davies, 'Interviewing Bacon, 1973', in: *Francis Bacon New Studies. Centenary Essays*, Martin Harrison (ed.) Steidl: Göttingen 2009, pp.88-123, p.91; Brian Clarke, 'Detritus', seen online on the website of the Estate of Francis Bacon. Seen 10.11.2014, 15.30.

3 SHOWstudio: Café Conversation - Simone Rocha and Perry Ogden, Autumn 2011, YouTube. Seen 05.12.2014, 21.00.



All images:

*Francis Bacon studio, 7 Reece Mews, London, 1998*  
Collection Dublin City Gallery The Hugh Lane

Photographs: Perry Ogden  
©The Estate of Francis Bacon. All rights reserved DACS 2014



## PATRICK HOUGH

## An Archaeology of Cinema



Initially beginning as a series of photographs, *An Archaeology of Cinema* is an installation composed of two silent projections, showing historical film props rotating at the same speed in different directions. Across both projections the scale of the objects oscillate between an original size and an over life size, highlighting the duality of its role as an archival object and a cinematic image. Removed from their original context and presented on a green screen studio backdrop, the endless rotation of these objects, strips away the illusionary qualities of the cinematic aesthetic. Instead of concealing their fictitious nature their ersatz quality is embraced and exposed in a direct questioning of the ontology of the film prop.

Unlike the artifacts they represent, these props are marginalised and undervalued, inhabiting the dusty shelves of a voluminous prop houses. Yet despite this they are complex objects imbued with a multiplicity of times, narratives and histories, rendering them more implicit as objects than as simple cinematic devices.

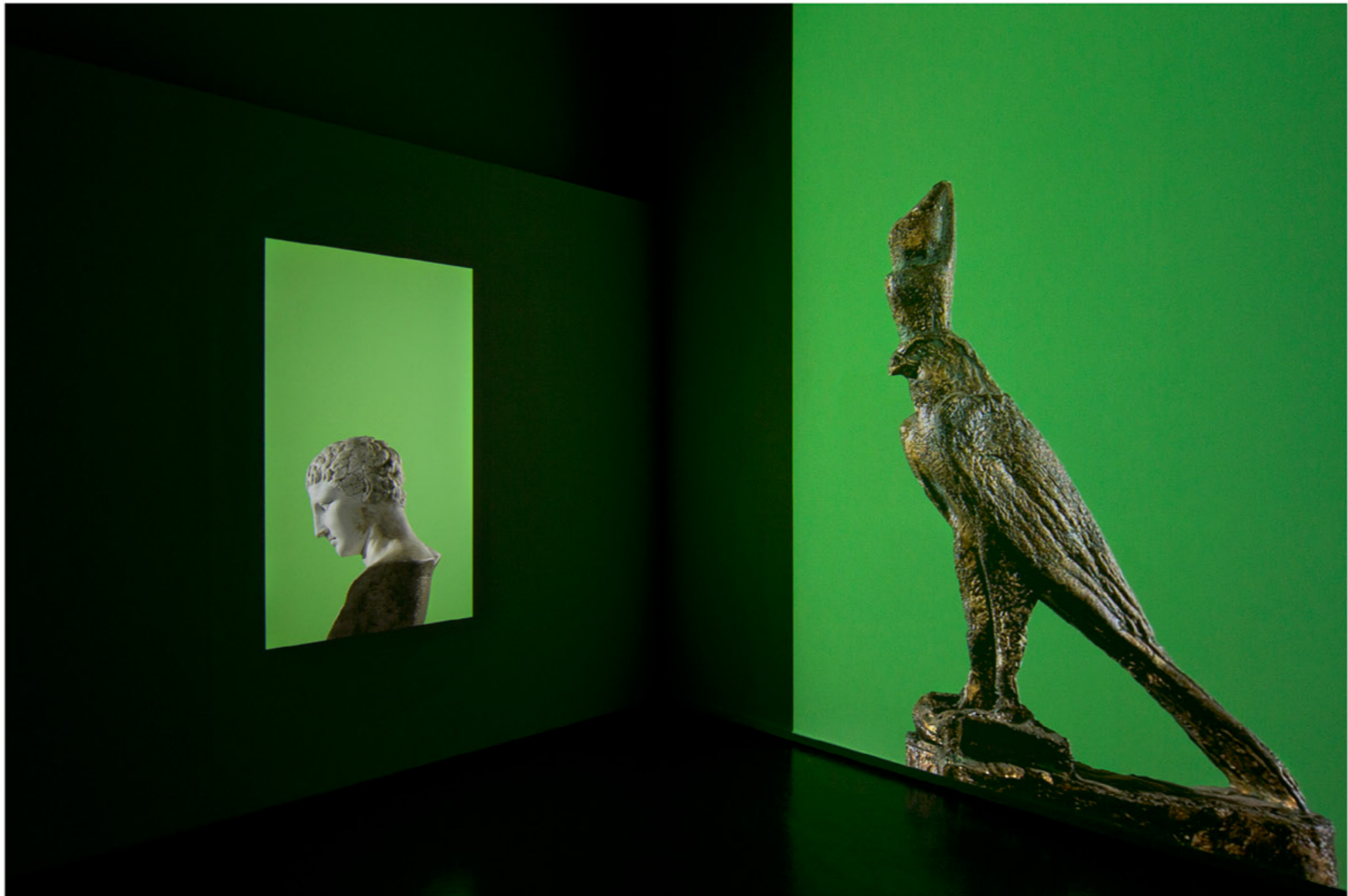
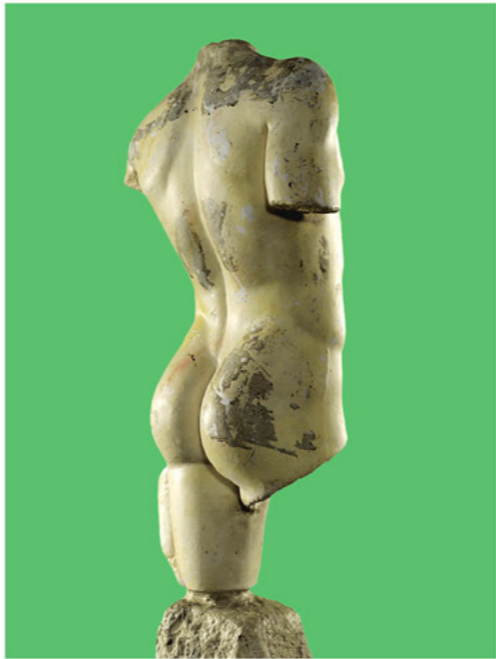
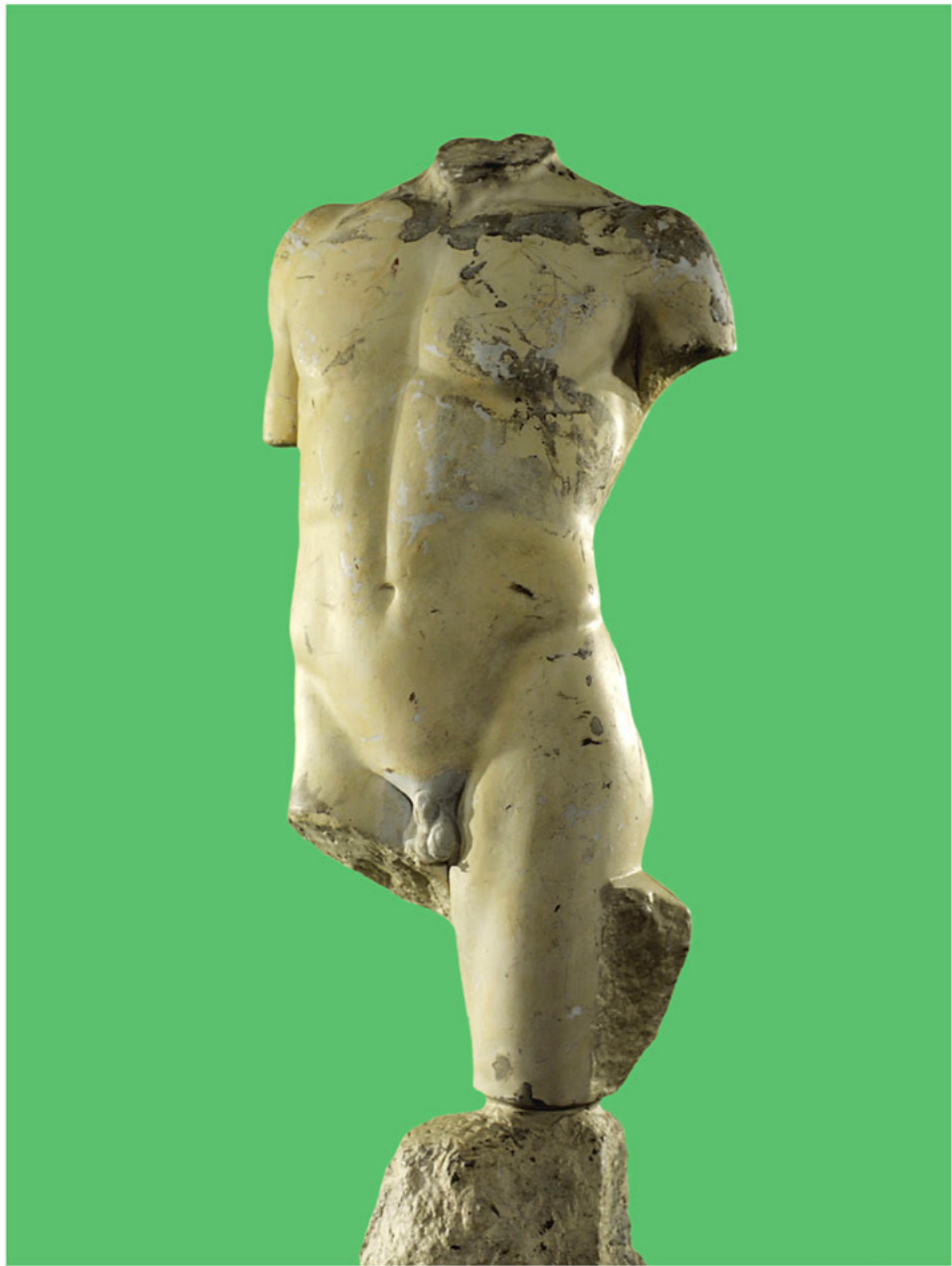
If the significance of these cinema objects is considered with reference to museological ones, we can move beyond the established hierarchy of facts and fictions, of real and imitation, we can start to recognise the prop as an object of history in its own right. For if our visual history forms part of our visual culture, which itself is a continual mirror of our cultural shifts, then these objects can reveal much about the politics of representation within our systems of signification.



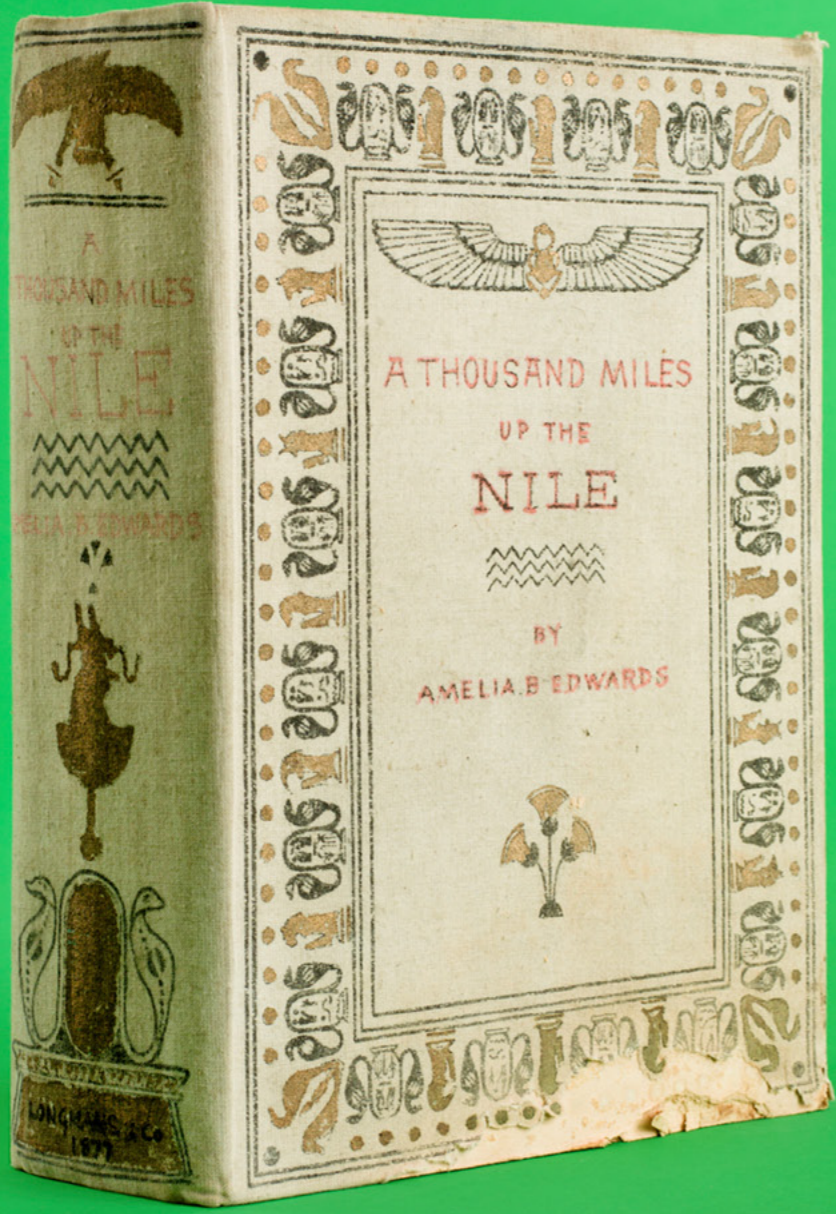




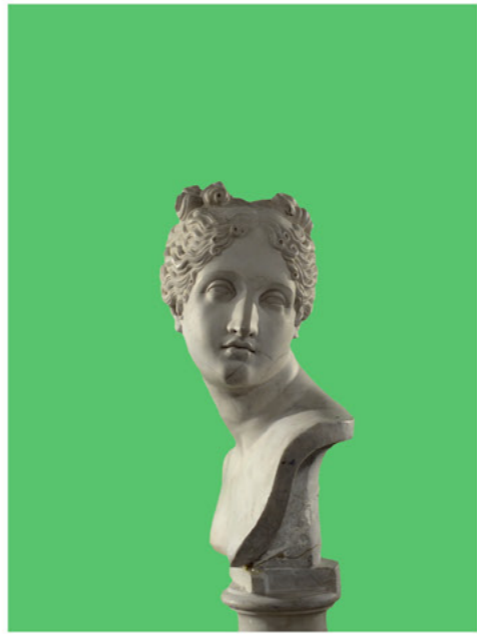
















## BIOGRAPHY

Patrick Hough was born in 1989 in Galway, Ireland. He received his BA in Fine Art Media from the National College of Art and Design, Dublin in 2011 and his MA in Fine Art Photography from the Royal College of Art, London in 2013.

Recent solo exhibitions include: Once More, With Feeling! MOT International project space, London, UK (2014); Those Who Dissolve Into the Future, narrative gallery, London, UK (2014). Recent group exhibitions include Wild Things, The Green Parrot, Barcelona, ESP (2014); Chronovisor: Archive, South Kisok, London, UK (2014); ...all silent but for the buzzing..., Royal College of Art, London, UK (2014); Bloody English, OHWOW gallery Los Angeles, USA (2014); When the Sleeper Wakes, Aperto Gallery, St Petersburg, RU (2013); Unearth, Roscommon Arts Centre, Roscommon, IRL (2013); 21st century Art and Design, Christies, London, UK (2013); Waving Flags, Work Gallery, London, (2013).

He is currently presenting a new commission as part of a LUX Artist Moving Image screening program, touring the UK to various venues including; Arnolfini Centre for Contemporary Art, Bristol, Open School East, London and Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh.

[patrickhough.com](http://patrickhough.com)





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