







DOWN TO EARTH: BOYLE FAMILY IN NEW ZEALAND



Boyle Family, Auckland, April 1990
(left to right) Joan Hills, Mark Boyle, Sebastian Boyle, Georgia Boyle
Photograph: New Zealand Herald

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Foreword

The aesthetics and working processes, inseparable and indistinguishable, of Boyle Family, are just as valid now as they were when the Scottish artists Mark Boyle and Joan Hills made their first cast reliefs in 1964.

Indeed, it is possible not only to regard the work of Boyle Family (which now includes their children Sebastian and Georgia) as the epitome of the new art of the 1960s, but also to see that its elements have now become accepted as part of the canon in art today: art as work, as exploration, as documentation; art that glorifies in the beauty of the banal and the ordinary; art that is predicated on random processes; art that uses and extends technology; art made to a programme; art as performance; art without boundaries, as a continuum; art as popular culture; art which focuses on the Earth, our understanding of it and its preservation.

If this suggests a dry, theoretical art, arcane and exclusive, nothing could be further from the case. Boyle Family reliefs are powerful in visual impact, universal in their fascinating appeal and limitless in the rich scope of interpretation that they offer. It has been pointed out that avant-garde art has rarely been greeted with so much enthusiasm and fascination (by those who risked the encounter) as has that of the Boyles. Ten years after the *Journey to the Surface of the Earth* began, Boyle Family represented Britain at the 39th Venice Biennale, then again in Sao Paolo in 1987. The public reception of Boyle Family's major exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London, shows how enduring their unique art proves itself to be.

When, in 1968 or 1969, a dart thrown at a map landed on Gisborne, neither Mark nor Joan nor any of their friends or associates (the blindfolded dart-throwers), could possibly have imagined that more than two decades later the artists would still be on that journey, let alone that they would arrive unheralded in New Zealand to create *Gisborne Triptych*. The Boyles were certainly not aware when they came earlier this year, nor until after they had completed the sculptures, of the significance of Gisborne in New Zealand's history and, therefore, its peculiar appropriateness to their aims. These themes are featured in Andrew Bogle's informative text and Mark Boyle's own journal for this catalogue.

Andrew Bogle, Senior Curator of International Art, included a Boyle Family work in *Chance and Change*, an exhibition he organised here in 1985. Since learning about the Gisborne work, Bogle has singlemindedly, like the Boyles, pursued the consummation of this very special piece in their *World Series*.

Down to Earth celebrates the making of *Gisborne Triptych* for this gallery and through the generosity of Boyle Family introduces their work more fully to a New Zealand audience. We are grateful to the Boyles, their dealer in Zurich, Turske & Turske, and a private collector for lending to the exhibition which this catalogue documents.

The British Council, through the enthusiastic encouragement of its New Zealand representative, Colin Ramsay, provided financial support for the project and we are happy that *Gisborne Triptych* was made while he was still in post here. The presentation of the exhibition has also been assisted by the provision of iGuzzini lights by ECC Lighting Ltd, for which generosity our thanks are due. The Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand also provided financial support.

Christopher Johnstone
Director

Boyle Family: Probing the Underworld

*ANTENNAE OF THIS MULTICELLULAR ORGANISM HUMANITY
PROBE THE ENVIRONMENT NOT SO MUCH ARTISTS AS FEELERS
NOT SO MUCH TRANSMITTERS AS RECEIVERS COMMUNICATION
IRRELEVANT THOUGH INEVITABLE THE SENSUAL LABORATORY
THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE
RANDOM SAMPLES WE TAKE OF OUR ENVIRONMENT ARE DEVICES
TO EXPAND OUR ABILITY TO ABSORB BECOMING INCREASINGLY
UNNECESSARY UNTIL IF WE'VE THE CAPACITY WE BECOME ONLY
SENTIENT BEINGS TOTALLY PERMANENTLY OPEN TO EVERYTHING
WITHOUT THE FILTERING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SHOCK BARRIERS OR
THE DISTORTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE OR DRUGS DISCOVERING JUST
HOW MUCH REALITY HUMAN KIND CAN BEAR*

Mark Boyle: Telegram to Mike Jeffries, August 1967

1

For those who are unfamiliar with the Boyles' pictures the revelation that what they are looking at is not a massive slice of reality lifted bodily out of the ground, but a thin painted fibreglass shell, comes as a shock of disbelief. Seeing is believing. The illusion is so seamless and convincing that the mind cannot suspend what it views to be the truth. A tap with the knuckles on the surface of the shell produces a hollow knock and the bubble of disbelief bursts.

Still, the verisimilitude of all the Boyles' surfaces and textures is so complete that it is difficult to comprehend how the illusion is achieved. The Boyles consciously promote this air of mystery by refusing to be specific about their methods, emphasising that the techniques required for each piece are different and governed by the peculiarities of the site.

What is known is that each 'earthprobe', as the Boyles call it, usually incorporates a certain amount of loose surface material from the randomly chosen site such as twigs, leaves, dust, pebbles and litter which is fixed with resin and lifted from its immovable base (rock, pavement, clay, etc) to be later reunited with the fibreglass cast of that base once it has been rendered. The result is a seamless dovetailing of actuality and illusion so that it is impossible to say where reality ends and representation begins.

The fabrication techniques, synthetic resins and exotic reinforcing materials that the Boyles employ are similar to those used in the moulding of modern boat hulls; but the effects they achieve are decidedly low-tech and betray no hint of how they have been made. A glimpse behind the scene, however, reveals a wooden armature to which the shell is securely fibreglassed. The reverse side of the shell, where the colours have been applied (so that from the front they are seen through

the translucent resin) is completely obscured with a backing coat of matt black paint.

The first earthprobes were made in 1964 under Mark Boyle's name, since they were his creations. When he and his partner Joan Hills (they first met in 1956 in Glasgow, before moving to London) collaborated, they used the names The Institute of Contemporary Archaeology and The Sensual Laboratory, which were umbrellas for a range of theatrical events and multimedia presentations that included the first light shows. The latter were projected as a visual accompaniment to the live performances of the experimental music group Soft Machine, who toured the USA with the Boyles and Jimi Hendrix in 1968. A theatrical event the Boyles staged in London in 1964, called *Street*, resulted in people they had invited to a performance at premises marked 'Theatre' looking out through a shop window onto a street once they were seated and the curtain was drawn.

It wasn't until their children, Sebastian and Georgia, were old enough to make a significant contribution to the collective making of the earthprobes that the name Boyle Family was coined. Mark Boyle: 'They came to all the sites. The *Tidal Series* at Camber Sands, the *Rock and Sand Series*, the *Lorry Park Series*, the *Paved Yard Series* and so on. And they contributed their utmost... There's been no sudden impact on our work because they've been making their way in our practice for more than 15 years and they've had a gradual but increasing effect on the concepts and techniques... Everyone in our family knows their way around the resins, can break down, crush and prepare colours, can lay a pretty good polyester and fibreglass lamination over quite a large area and so on... Joan and I didn't want them to commit themselves to our practice until they had a chance to discover some alternatives. But they've tried other things and they always just kept coming back to work on the latest piece. So to call ourselves Boyle Family is just to accept an existing reality.'¹

Between August 1968 and July 1969, when Sebastian and Georgia were still youngsters, Mark and Joan invited a number of people to initiate a global project involving earthprobes in completely arbitrarily selected places. Each mailed invitation contained a small dart which the invitee was instructed to shoot from a gun at a wall-sized map of the world. Participants were blindfolded and darts that missed were fired again until 1000 random pinpricks were obtained. Many of the darts landed in the sea, resulting in sites that are technically not viable. Some landed in countries at war and others landed near military installations, where access is forbidden, which ruled them out as well. The Boyles' mission, however, is to visit as many of the *World Series* sites as possible and execute earthprobes at each of them, by repeating the dart-throwing process with progressively larger-scale maps of the general area until a precise location, approximately a stone's throw in diameter, is determined. They will then travel there and upon arriving at that place

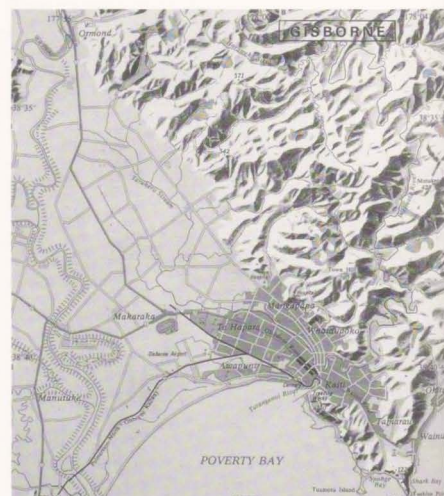
throw a right-angle into the air. Where it lands will form a corner of the final square or rectangle of ground they will represent.

To date the Boyles' odyssey has taken them to places as diverse as Toyama, Japan; Mount Ziel, Central Australian Desert; the Vesteralen Islands off the coast of Norway; Nyord in Denmark; the Hague, Netherlands; Sardinia; and Bergheim, Germany. Six darts struck the continent of Australia, two of them in Queensland, three in Northern Territory, and one in South Australia. A single dart landed in New Zealand, a bullseye on Gisborne which is the first significant town in the world to see the morning sun, lying as it does close to the international date line. The map the Boyles used was in Mercator's projection, with the North and South Poles featured in insets. Apart from the South Polar region where one dart struck, Gisborne is the southernmost of all the sites in relation to Greenwich, London where the Boyles live, extraordinarily close to zero meridian. The Boyles came to New Zealand in March/April 1990 as part of a programme of Foreign Artist Projects at the Auckland City Art Gallery. *Gisborne Triptych* is the resulting work and was directly acquired for the permanent collection.

2

Gisborne is the principal population centre on the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand and is situated near the confluence of the Waitemata and Taruhera rivers where they become the Turanganui, the indigenous name for Gisborne. The town, which took its name from the colonial secretary of the settlement when it was laid out in 1870, is situated at 178° 02' longitude and 38° 41' latitude. The population of Gisborne is approximately 36,000. The port of Gisborne serves the extremely fertile Poverty Bay Flats, a flood plain of alluvial soil (the richest in the country) which is up to 10 metres deep in places and highly suitable for all types of pastoral, agricultural and horticultural production. Viticulture (Gisborne was the site of New Zealand's first commercial vineyard), sheep and cattle farming, fruit growing, market gardening and maize and barley cultivation are the main sources of production in the area. The area's average annual temperature is 13.9°C as against 12.8°C for the whole of the North Island and it receives about 2300 hours of sunshine a year, which makes it one of the sunniest places in New Zealand. It is well watered both by its rivers and a copious rainfall of 1170 millimetres average a year. The town of Gisborne prospered and expanded rapidly early in the century on the strength of its exports of frozen meat, wool, hides and tallow. To cope with this export growth and the larger ships necessitated a breakwater which was constructed beyond the harbour entrance. On part of this reclamation a freezing works was established and later a tankfarm for petroleum storage. So on account of its prosperity the ironically named Poverty Bay was significantly altered, especially in the region of Boat Harbour, which is the port of Gisborne.

Gisborne is famous in New Zealand for two major events, Captain Cook's



Gisborne Map
(scale 1:125,000)
relief shading by D.W. Lawrence
Courtesy New Zealand Map Service



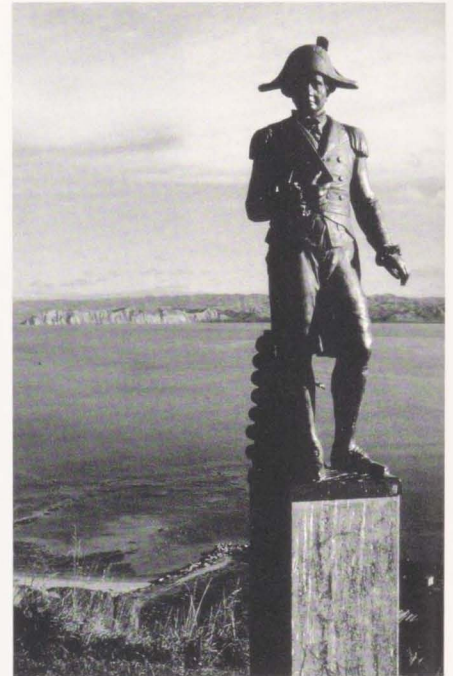
Detail of World Map used by Boyles with dart hits circled
Photograph: Boyle Family

arrival in the country and Cyclone Bola. The name Poverty Bay was bestowed by Cook who made his first landfall there after arriving from Tahiti on 8 October, 1769. He initially decided to call it Endeavour Bay, after his ship, but changed the name in his disappointment at being unable to obtain fresh water and food there 'because it offered us no one thing we wanted'.² The precise place Cook landed, Kaiti Beach, a little east of the mouth of the Turanganui river, is now under the land reclaimed by the Gisborne Harbour Board. Today the spot is marked by a memorial, and a statue of Captain Cook overlooks the site from Kaiti Hill nearby.

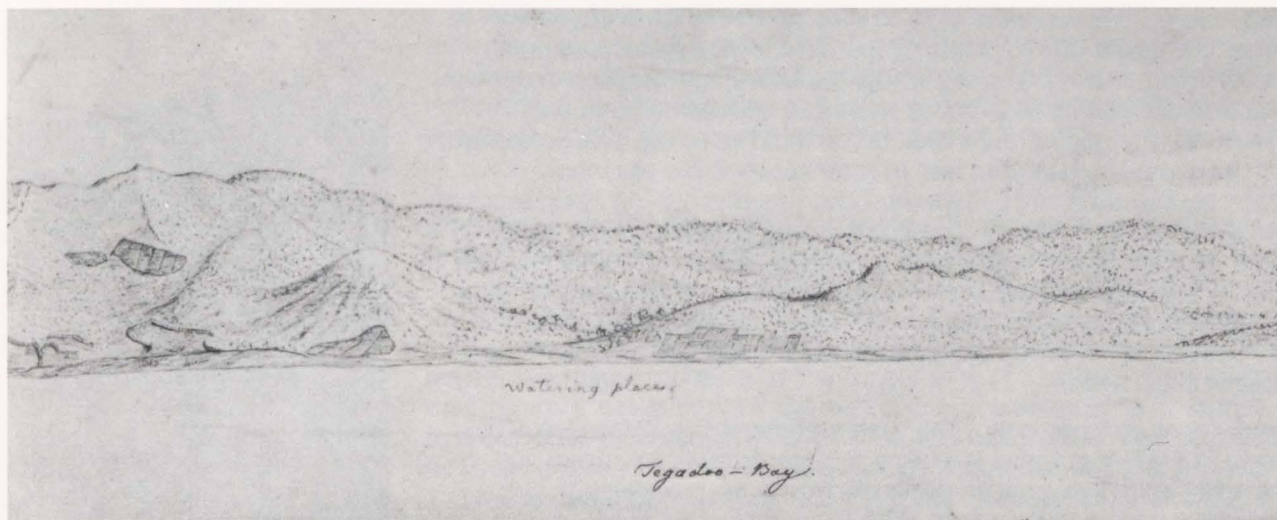
It is a remarkable coincidence that the place where Captain Cook happened upon New Zealand is in the same vicinity as the point at which a random dart stuck on the Boyles' giant map of the world – a coincidence the Boyles rejoiced in, upon recently learning of its historical significance.

In his book *Mark Boyle's Journey to the Surface of the Earth* (1978), J.L. Locher draws a parallel between the Boyles' objective spirit of enquiry and the empirical methodology of the professional artists who accompanied the exploratory voyages to the South Pacific. These artists, Locher says, 'found that the new scientific requirement conflicted with the traditional criteria of the art world of that time. This conflict was finally won by the demands of science. The artists relinquished the principles of neo-classicism and concentrated on empirical observation. This led to... the "typical landscape", the objective being to depict each place as a typical entity with its own climate, surface configuration, vegetation, fauna and human type. The empirical picture they gave of the South Pacific, which was widely disseminated and exerted enormous influence, contributed appreciably to the genesis of a new representation of landscape.'³

Perhaps it is academic to say that the Boyles are the inheritors of that legacy, but there are curious parallels between the Boyles' *Journey to the Surface of the Earth* (and the fragmentary picture that their earthprobes present of this world) and the exploratory voyages to the South Pacific that Cook and his scientists and artists made (and the fragmentary picture they presented of those countries they visited from the geographically disparate viewpoints of isolated anchorages and brief landings). Seen in the context of the history of New Zealand landscape art, the Boyles and Captain Cook's artists occupy a unique place. Most New Zealand landscape artists have depicted a local landscape they came to know intimately and for which they developed a deep emotional attachment. Painters as diverse as Albin Martin, Alfred Sharpe, John Gully, William Sutton, Rita Angus, Doris Lusk and Colin McCahon have tended to depict either scenes that embodied spectacular or sublime views, or places that they came to know extremely well, often because they lived there. Albin Martin's views of South Auckland and Colin McCahon's views of French Bay are examples of the latter. What the Boyles and the artists who accompanied the early exploratory voyages shared was a lack of familiarity with and emotional attachment



Captain Cook memorial
Kaiti Hill, Gisborne, May 1989
Photograph: Roger Blackley



Herman Spöring
Tegadoo Bay sketched from
the *Endeavour*, 20 October 1769
pencil
Collection: British Library, London

to the geography – the latter from necessity and the former by design. Both cultivated a stance of objective detachment from their subjects.

Empirical observation was manifested in not only the detailed maps that Cook made of the coastline of New Zealand, but also in the copious sketches he and his artists Sydney Parkinson and Herman Spöring made of the landscape, the Maori, their pa, habitations, canoes, implements, clothing and ornaments, as well as botanical specimens, birds and fish. In a place where everything was new and unfamiliar to their enquiring minds, all things demanded the same detailed observation and recording as is evident from the extensive notes in their journals and the sketches they made.

For example, when Cook and his party went ashore at Kaiti Beach, Dr Monkhouse noted the dimensions of the huts ('there was one tolerable house about eight yards by six [7.4 x 5.5 metres]'); their method of construction ('the end wall... was placed about two feet [0.6 metres] within the roof and side wall'); the materials used ('thatched with a kind of rush and course [*sic*] grass').⁴ They also recorded the placement of objects nearby, such as some old fishing nets, and a burnt and blackened tree stump on which was placed a piece of white pumice carved in the shape of a human figure, and so on.

In a similar spirit of 'scientific' enquiry Mark Boyle, in 1970, prescribed for each *World Series* piece a programme of investigations and recording that included taking an earth core showing the composition to a depth of 1.8 metres; making a film involving a 360° pan from the centre of the site; collecting seeds on the site; in the surface presentation preserving all traces of animal life, and so on.

Some of the tasks have proved to be impractical. It is not easy, for

example, to make an earth core to that depth in a concrete pavement. What the Boyles do with most of the *World Series* pieces is remove insects from the selected site. These are later photographed under an electron-microscope to produce enormous enlargements of the creatures, the photographs then becoming part of the final presentation of the piece. The quantum leap in scale between the electron-microphotographs and the earthprobes subverts our ingrained sense of dimension so that hairs on the leg of an ant can look like the trunks of pine trees, larger perhaps than any isolated feature of the earthprobe. In this way, by examining in such minute detail isolated features of each site, the Boyles reveal worlds within worlds, extending the process of throwing darts at progressively larger-scale maps and expanding scale almost exponentially.

'Kindly think seriously about the inanity of dimension,' Jean Dubuffet wrote in 1957. 'It is a mad prejudice, a vulgar trap, which makes you marvel at your snow-capped peaks, high cliffs, your gardens of rare species, or your elegant islands. Burn scale! Look at what lies at your feet! A crack in the ground, sparkling gravel, a tuft of grass, some crushed debris, offer equally worthy subjects for your applause and admiration. Better! For what is more important is not reaching objects of reputed beauty after long days of travel, but learning that, without having to move an inch, no matter where you are, all that first seemed most sterile and mute is swarming with facts which can entrance you even more... The world is made in layers, it is a layered cake. Probe its depths, without going any further than where you stand, you will see!'⁵

The above words are not theirs, but the sensibility they express is one that is at the core of the Boyles' inimitable odyssey. The *World Series* is predicated on the notion that the Earth is an infinitely rich and fascinating place, regardless of where one is, if one can only get to see past the screens of conditioned values instilled in us by our upbringing and education. To do this it is better to begin by looking in any one place thoroughly, since it is not the place that is important, but the process of looking. It follows from this premise that any one site will do as well as any other. As Mark Boyle has said, 'To study everything we may isolate anything'⁶ and 'I am not trying to prove any thesis and when one is concerned with everything, nothing (or for that matter anything) is a fair sample. I have tried to cut out of my work any hint of originality, style, superimposed design, wit, elegance or significance. If any of these are to be discovered in the show then the credit belongs to the onlookers.'⁷

The random aspect of the Boyles' work is vital to ensure the objectivity they aspire to. Chance is blind. And because it is blind it pays no heed to the romantic and archetypal views that people form of different countries. In fact the Boyles earthprobes have a way of debunking prevalent myths about places. In Switzerland, close to the Lichtenstein border, they were shocked to discover their site turned out to be in the middle of a half-built autobahn. Mark Boyle: 'To the British, Switzerland is



Pastoral erosion
South Gisborne area
May 1989
Photograph: Roger Blackley

a land of cow bells and sunshine and mountains and yodelling and summer pastures and blonde smiling milkmaids and Edelweiss and icecream and extremes of natural magnificence. And out of all this we had made a random selection and there we were, four bedraggled Londoners, in the rain, looking at this vast area of mud.⁸

3

When the Auckland City Art Gallery invited the Boyles to come to New Zealand to execute the Gisborne piece I wondered what kind of patch of ground their dart would lead them to. I knew that it had landed on Gisborne, but the hole made by a dart on a map of the world can cover an enormous area. (For this reason the Boyles repeat the process with larger-scale maps.) I considered the topography of the area, and thought how ironical it would prove if the dart struck one of the slips or slumps that scar the highly erosion-prone hill country behind the town, ravaged by Cyclone Bola in March 1988. Would it be a denuded patch of argillite and mudstone that forms some of the most unstable land in the world; or a layer of alluvium sediment and debris washed into the rivers and deposited on orchards and farms on the Poverty Bay Flats? Might it be a fence broken under a mass of tangled branches and silt? Some hill country farms lost 30% of their grazing area during New Zealand's worst natural disaster, and the majority of farms lost between 5 and 10%. The chances therefore would not be excessively remote for the dart to strike one of these devastated slopes. What kind of statement would that make about the land New Zealanders cherish as (and the rest of the world believes it to be) one of the most unspoiled in the world? For the truth is, over little more than a hundred years, the forest cover on the unstable slopes around Gisborne was mindlessly cleared and felled for pastoral purposes despite warnings by nature and by experts. In 1989 the American environmentalist Michael Pilarski said of the East Coast, '...it ranks among the worst erosion in the world.'⁹ Recently (two years since Cyclone Bola) a report issued by the Ministry of Agriculture said, 'There is still no visible strategy in place of effectively diminishing the region's susceptibility to a repeat of the Bola disaster.'¹⁰

The Boyles arrived in Gisborne to execute the predestined *World Series* piece in March 1990. In the event their dart did not land on one of the eroded hillsides; it landed much closer to the centre of town, not far from where Captain Cook made his first landing. Because they had come so far the Boyles threw three darts at the local map of the area instead of the customary one; they felt the great distance they had travelled justified the extra effort. The result was *Gisborne Triptych (World Series) 1990*, which is exhibited here for the first time.

Gisborne Triptych is not about pasture and sheep tracks, or vineyards, or fields of sweetcorn or potatoes, or kiwifruit orchards, let alone about a leafy forest floor or bracken-covered slope, or tangle of gnarled pohutukawa roots and sand. It is far more urban than that. Nature in fact is almost completely obliterated. The skeletal remains of a small

dead bird (perhaps a sparrow), a brittle pohutukawa leaf, a dried puddle of mud, a charred log of wood, and myriad small pebbles embedded in a concrete matrix are the only traces of nature among the three large panels. The predominant elements are concrete, steel railway lines, a manhole cover, asphalt and pieces of corrugated roofing iron.

Any symbolism the viewer finds in the Boyles' pieces 'belongs to the onlooker,' to borrow Mark Boyle's phrase, and is entirely coincidental. Nevertheless, it is thought-provoking that of all the places in New Zealand on which the Boyles' darts could have randomly fallen, serendipity chose sites with disused railway lines and a jumble of building rubble and a charred log of wood. It is also a challenge to the romantic image New Zealanders have of their landscape.

Not that the Boyles are making any overt environmental statement. Their pieces inevitably have environmental implications since they mirror the environment – albeit small, isolated fragments. But these environmental connotations are really a by-product of the earthprobe itself, and its indomitable presence as a facsimile of a piece of reality comprising the culmination of nature's complex processes, man's prodigious industry, and myriad historical facts and accidents interacting intensively within a small patch of ground.

The result is a combination of the ordinary and the unexpected, the fascinating and the banal, the organic and the inorganic, richly layered like Dubuffet's metaphorical cake. Reality after all is surely infinitely more rich than the most spectacular creations of the imagination, even the most ubiquitous patch of stained asphalt or cracked concrete. It demands that we open our eyes to what in everyday circumstances is so obvious and commonplace that to all intents and purposes it lies outside our line of sight. In 1966 Mark Boyle wrote, 'the most complete change an individual can effect on his environment, short of destroying it, is to change his attitude to it.'¹¹ It is not an exaggeration to say that Poverty Bay, once one of the most fertile and productive regions in New Zealand, has been effectively destroyed. In the words of New Zealand's most eminent geographer, Professor John Morton, 'Today the East Coast is a province of anxiety. Soil-eroded and flood-aggravated, it is once more Poverty Bay.'¹²

4

The word 'earthprobe' that the Boyles use to describe their surface presentations is an interesting one. To probe is to investigate penetratingly; to examine closely. A probe is an instrument for exploring a wound, and an unmanned exploratory spacecraft transmitting information about its environment. It was in the early 1970s that the American and Soviet space programmes launched their first planetary probes to explore the surface of the Moon and Mars. Mark Boyle's *Journey to the Surface of the Earth* project, a kind of Jules Verne epic which may never be completed because of its impossible scope and logistical complexity, takes on a special meaning when considered in the



Aerial photograph of the city of Gisborne in 1969

light of these scientific explorations into the frontiers of space. The planetary probes such as the six Soviet 'Luna' probes and the American 'Viking' Mars probes were designed to land on the planet's surface and take soil samples, measure magnetic and gravitational fields and solar wind particles, test for signs of life, and so on. The Boyles' project is a kind of complementary exploration of the planet Earth. Where the astronomers look up, the Boyles look down. There is a large element of chance to even the most sophisticated planetary probes. When the surface of Mars is the ballpark it doesn't really make a great deal of difference where the probe lands.

Luna 16 landed in Mare Fecunditatis on 20 September, 1970 and returned with 100 grams of moonsoil. The way the Soviet scientists pored over those humble grains of dust is echoed in the Boyles' obsessive attention to arbitrary patches of ground, in far-flung corners of the world, selected with the same kind of randomness as a planetary probe fired from Earth.

The Boyles' art occupies a position well outside the mainstream and has no direct historical precedents. Indeed, it resists convenient pigeon-holing, spanning as it does a wide range of artistic styles, techniques, movements and genres that include landscape, still-life, *trompe-l'oeil*, hyper-realism, *arte-povera*, earth art, process art, aleatory art, *objet-trouvé*, assemblage, the 'ready-made', performance art, happenings and more. Perhaps the earliest antecedent of the Boyles' earthprobes is Albrecht Dürer's *The Great Clump of Turf*, 1503. This famous watercolour is unique amid the art of its time in its faithful recording of countless minute details of a humble clod of weeds in such a way that it holds all the interest of a full-blown landscape. An exquisitely rendered microcosm of the landscape, it is complete in itself, a self-contained world, teeming with incident and information in the same way that the Boyles' probes are infinitely rich and complex. *The Great Clump of Turf* is a finished, integral scene, mirroring the greater world in miniature. As such it embodies a sensibility that is also apparent in the Boyles' microcosmic landscapes.

The Cubists were amongst the first artists to incorporate actual everyday objects and materials in their pictures, such as pieces of newsprint, oilcloth and rope. These elements were integrated into their painted still-life compositions in a way that presages the Boyles' interpenetration of actual and represented elements in their earthprobes. But whereas the Cubists' choice of materials was indisputably subjective, the Boyles' surface elements (twigs, pebbles, cigarette butts, a discarded glove) are completely objectively selected and remain inextricably related to their 'original context'. In this latter respect they are more closely related to the 'snare-pictures' of Daniel Spoerri who 'traps' objects within a designated field of play (for example, the remains of a meal on a table) and exhibits them in a vertical plane as a picture of reality. Spoerri's snare-pictures constitute a kind of 'ready-made' but unlike Marcel



Albrecht Dürer
The Great Clump of Turf 1503
watercolour and gouache
Collection: Albertina, Vienna



Daniel Spoerri
Marcel Duchamp's Dinner 1964
 cutlery, dishes and napkins mounted on wood
 Collection: Arman, New York



Yves Klein
Planetary Relief 'Moon No. 2' 1961
 gesso-cement, pigment on wood
 Galleria Apollinaire, Milan

Duchamp's ready-mades such as *Bottle rack* 1914 (a common object elevated to the status of art by an act of conferral), Spoerri's snare-pictures, like the Boyles' earthprobes, preserve the object's supporting base and immediate physical context. In this sense the Boyles' and Spoerri's pictures are still-lives, representations of existing tableaux, the dynamics of which stem from their interaction with the real world, not just the artist's imagination. The creative act in both Spoerri's and the Boyles' works is essentially conceptual, for in effect a slice of reality is, in both cases, divorced from its physical continuum and frozen at that moment of time like a three-dimensional snapshot, and 're-presented' like a picture, vertically, on a wall. In such a context the familiar and the prosaic take on a peculiar aspect. People often remark on the striking compositional qualities of the Boyles' works, as though the artists had some hand in it. François Morellet was right when he said 'works of art are like picnic areas or Spanish Inns, where one consumes what one takes there oneself.'¹³

In the 1960s New Realism was an important movement in Europe. Raymond Hains and Mimmo Rotella made *décollages* of posters torn from billboards. These constituted a kind of ready-made; an urban, landscape picture in the same sense as a pavement in Westminster is a ready-made urban picture awaiting the attention of the Boyles to elevate it into a field of aesthetic interest. In 1961 Yves Klein produced a series of 'Planetary Reliefs' which bear a curious thematic resemblance to the Boyles' earthprobes. Klein's earthprobes are relief maps of large areas of the Earth's surface, modelled in gesso-cement so that whole continents, mountain ranges and oceans form a kind of abstract bas-relief, in spite of the fact that they are grounded in reality. Klein coated these reliefs with the pure pigment with which his name is now so closely identified, for reasons which are not relevant here. Suffice to say Klein's 'Planetary Reliefs' are, superficially, like macroscopic versions of the Boyles' microcosms of the Earth's surface.

On the other hand the random method of selection the Boyles employ to pinpoint their subjects aligns them with certain aleatory artists such as Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, François Morellet, Herman de Vries, Kenneth Martin and George Brecht, all of whom have employed such devices as tables of random numbers, tossing coins, throwing darts, tossing dice and related ludic aids to bypass subjective control and enter into a dialogue with the unexpected and the unforeseen. By such objective procedures the artist opens his or herself to possibilities that consciousness and conditioning preclude from consideration. Duchamp used a variety of methods to invoke chance including, significantly, the firing of matchsticks dipped in paint from a toy cannon to randomly compose the nine points or 'Shots' in *The Large Glass* 1915-23, a procedure not unlike the Boyles' dart-throwing exercise.

In other respects the Boyles are more closely related to earth artists such as Michael Heizer, Robert Smithson, James Turrell, Richard Long and

Alan Sonfist, for whom the great outdoors and the natural terrain are their raw materials and their studio. Then again, the extreme realism of the Boyles' work links them with the hyper-realists. At least one commentator has remarked that the Boyles' earthprobes are a kind of landscape counterpart to Duane Hanson's polychromed fibreglass sculptures of everyday people. Certainly the fabrication techniques that Hanson uses and the way that he dresses his figures in actual clothing bears comparison with the Boyles' integration of actual objects and illusionism in their pieces. Above all the Boyles' *Journey to the Surface of the Earth* is an epic conceptual work of which each *World Series* piece is but a fragment. Their mission, which has so far led to the execution of some forty *World Series* pieces and many other earthprobes, may never be completed. The family's destiny is now inextricably tied up with the project in such a way that their whole life is in a sense one enormous performance or theatrical event played out on stages scattered about the globe. In the process pieces of the world get shuttled back and forth across oceans and continents so that a chunk of the Australian desert finds its way to London, for example, and a piece of quarry from Japan gets transported to Düsseldorf, and so on, like a pack of cards being shuffled.

Andrew Bogle
Senior Curator of International Art

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1. Boyle 1986, p.12.
2. Begg, p.12.
3. Locher, p.18.
4. Begg, p.12.
5. Dubuffet, p.611.
6. Boyle 1987, p.49.
7. Boyle 1987, p.49.
8. Boyle 1987, p.23.
9. Morton
10. Morton
11. Boyle, 1987, p.49.
12. Morton
13. Naylor, p.641.

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Boyle family outside the Gisborne studio, March, 1990.
Photograph: Sebastian Boyle

Boyle Family in New Zealand

1

I floated to the surface through a troubled jet-lagged sleep. Joan was breathing gently beside me and a fly was beating his sad brains against the window. Somewhere nearby I could hear the aggressive moaning of an angry vacuum cleaner. I couldn't move for fear of waking Joan though I knew it was very probable that she was lying still for fear of waking me. I lay and listened to her peaceful presence. It was our first morning in New Zealand.

My mind went back to London and I thought about the yellow ochre brick houses and the grand ivory-coloured squares and the spring we had just left behind in Greenwich Park, a thousand shades of green. And I thought about our beautiful Hillside House in Crooms Hill, and the many houses in London we'd lived and loved in; and made pictures around; and sent exhibitions from; and welcomed our friends to and fought over and were evicted from and wept about. And it was our eviction from one of these houses in 1967 that led directly to our arrival in New Zealand.

For artists, of course, a house is a collection of walls and in your mind each of these walls bears the imprint of the pictures that hung on it, so your memory of each house is like a carousel of slides you can switch on and watch all the pictures you made there pass before you. It's anguish for anybody who gets kicked out of their house, and with their memories and associations it's also anguish for artists. But we didn't just get kicked out of houses, we were thrown off the demolition sites and bomb sites and junk heaps that we used as studios. We were desperately poor at that time, Joan making £3 a week plus tips as a chef. I was making £1 a week plus tips as a head waiter. Of course £1 bought more in those days, but not that much more. By the standards of the time we were very poor and apart from the clothes we wore to work we just had rags.

We worked on these old bomb sites where houses had been blasted away during the war. The surface of London was pockmarked with such sites and in the early sixties, when they started to rebuild, the first move was usually to knock down everything that still stood around them. To us it seemed like a kind of alternative London where people could be free; and in these places, in our rags and with no place else to work, like refugees we picked through the rubbish and made pictures and sculptures. Sometimes the police came. Once they accused us of stealing the tiny fragments of rusty metal and glass we had incorporated in a picture. I pointed out that they were to put down the value of the 'stolen property' on the charge sheet and that no magistrate would look kindly on someone being charged with stealing something of no value from an unknown person whose house had been blown away twenty years before. They decided with great magnanimity not to press charges. We thought of these sites as genuinely public parks and

sunbathed there and took picnics there in summer and worked there all the year round. I'll never forget one Whitsun holiday spent with our little family under an almond tree in full bloom surrounded by acres of smashed red brick sprinkled with pink almond blossom.

Then one day there was a letter in the *Kensington Post* complaining that the sites were rat-infested eyesores attracting unsavoury types to the area. I (of course) replied, as one of these unsavoury types, suggesting that these areas should be preserved for their outstanding natural beauty. Needless to say they failed to publish my lovely letter and we were thrown off the site.

More and more during the months that followed our beautiful parks/demolition sites were fenced off and we were driven away with nothing to mark our family's passing except an occasional mist of tears and a few pictures and sculptures that we get a chance to see from time to time, rusting away beautifully in their museums. But right then, just as that golden era was coming to an end and they were closing down, or even worse, rebuilding, the last sites in our area, there was one final magic moment. It was a sweet grey day with a hint of rain in the air and Joan and I were staring at a frame lying on all this junk at a bomb site, one of those rectangular grey plastic fillets that used to hold the screen of a TV in place. It seemed to us that the arrangement of earth now inside the frame was absolutely perfect. We thought it was maybe the fact of framing that made it seem so right, so we tried moving the frame to see if it worked elsewhere. No matter where we placed it, it looked wrong, precious or contrived. Eventually it occurred to us that the reason the original site seemed perfect could be that it was natural, because it had just happened like that. So we threw the frame away across the site and wandered over curiously to see what we would find. Again, it was perfect. We spent the rest of that day taking turns and alternately placing the frame deliberately and throwing it away; and every time we placed it, it looked wrong and every time we threw it, it looked just right. I still cannot really say why that should have been so, but over the next few weeks and months and years we tried many different kinds of frames, different shapes, different sizes, and the random principle always worked. Eventually we found a way of fixing the images we found inside. Then we invented a series of techniques that should enable us to make a 'picture' of what we found inside the frame, not just on the junk site but in theory anywhere.

After some stumbling beginnings in the Shepherds Bush area, we drew a plot a mile square on the map of London with our flat as the centre. We then threw 100 darts into this area on the map and began a project to make a 'picture' on each of these 100 sites. We were working on this project when we got thrown out of our flat. Usually we were chucked out because the owner or the agents thought we were turning their property into a junkyard or feared the walls wouldn't support the weight of the works or something. This time they were pulling the house down to make a roundabout. You can still see the place. When you go down

Holland Park Avenue, just before you get to Shepherds Bush there's a major roundabout. In the middle of the roundabout there's a tree that used to brush against our studio windows.

The immediate consequence was that we had to abandon the London series. We had chosen the square mile round our house because of practical limitations on distance at that time and we felt we could hardly start a new London series whenever we moved. Moreover, we already felt the random principle was slightly vitiated by the fact that we had chosen to live in London and as we chose to continue to stay in Britain a series based on Britain would have the same problem. So between 1968 and 1969 we had 1000 blindfolded people fire darts at an unknown target which turned out to be a huge map of the world. We called it our *World Series* and it has taken us to sites all over the globe, from the Vesteralen Islands in the Arctic Ocean to the Central Australian Desert and from an opencast coal mine in the Ruhr in Germany to the burnt-out site of a forest fire in Kyushu, the southern island of Japan.

2

Can you imagine how it feels to be invited by the Auckland City Art Gallery to come to New Zealand to make a picture in a place where a dart fell twenty years before? Can you imagine flying across the world to this place? Our children were slender waifs at the time of the throwing of the darts, marshalling the people in the queue to throw, making sure the blindfolds were properly adjusted and indicating the general direction of the target. Now, as adults, they had come out to New Zealand a couple of days early, rented a truck in Auckland, bought the materials and equipment we couldn't bring out from London, driven over to Gisborne, organised a unit in a motel, met us at Gisborne airport, taken us on a rapid tour of the city and then to see our new studio. We arrived at this amazing building not far out of town they had already got hold of that day. I couldn't believe it. It was huge. They had swept the vast concrete floor clean, so we started to move our equipment and materials in. We then made further random selections from a map of Gisborne and went down to view the sites.

For many years we made the *World Series* pieces on an 1800 mm x 1800 mm format, but increasingly we've been varying that, loosening up on my rather rigid, dogmatic approach. This time we decided on a triptych and after we had inspected our three sites, with great enthusiasm we laid our plans to start work the next morning. Then we had supper, went to the motel and after the turmoil and excitement of the previous few days, Joan and I talked late into the night.

As I lay there besides her in the morning, looking through into the sitting room where the sun was spilling in round the edges of the curtains, I suddenly remembered that this was the morning we were due to start work. I jumped out of bed and threw open the curtains. A huge wave was creaming in across the ocean. Three surfers seemed to be clinging to the perpendicular green and white face of this fast-moving wall of

water. Soon it shrugged them off and hurled itself onto the beach which seemed to be somewhere below us. It was the most spectacular view. Hearing our shouts of joy, Georgia and Sebastian came in, laughing, because they had set up the previous day's programme so that we wouldn't see this sight till the morning and they'd chosen the marvellous motel to produce the effect for us.

We had breakfast and went off to start. Unfortunately all my plans to learn surfing came to nothing. We had to work so hard on the triptych there was very little time for anything else. Sebastian and I went a few times to play tennis at the Gisborne Tennis Club where everyone was extremely kind to us; but we were working morning till sunset, flat out most of the time. We came to appreciate the gentleness and friendliness of these kind folk in Gisborne. That joke everyone tells you when they hear you're going to New Zealand—about the airline pilot approaching Auckland announcing over the intercom that passengers wishing to adjust to New Zealand time should put their watches back approximately fifteen years—has got it so perfectly wrong. Of course it probably seems different to people who live there all the time, but to the casual visitor, with the full weight of a few weeks' experience of the country to support his opinion, it seems that New Zealand has got the balance just about right.

New Zealand has managed to retain so much that is good: the freedom from crime, clean air, the kindness and the mutual trust. Can you imagine anywhere else in the world, two young people going up to a man coming out of a barn and saying, 'We've only just arrived in Gisborne, how could we go about getting a barn like this for a studio for a few weeks?' And the bloke saying, 'Have this one, we're not using it,' and refusing any rent or anything; and in all the time you're there no one coming to check up on you, or even being curious about what you are up to? When this is combined with being thoroughly up-to-date in so many areas—in the arts, in an advanced nuclear policy and sophisticated foreign policy, for example—suddenly it begins to look progressive to be hanging on to the best of the past. Of course, we were looking at it all through rose-coloured spectacles. Gisborne reminded Joan and I of the Scottish seaside towns of our youth, only with brilliant weather. The beach café where we had our lunch most days, with its home-made biscuits and cakes and scones, the road outside covered in sand, the young people with sand up to their knees, I could have stayed for ever.

Suddenly the work was finished and we were packing up. A last visit to the studio for photos and a tidy-up, a last lunch of crabsticks in batter and salad at the beach café, a last trip to the sites of the three pieces and a quick last drive round the sweet town before we set off for Auckland.

Everyone in Britain thinks of New Zealand as a pastoral community. They imagine small green fields dotted with cheerful sheep. And, of course, it's

all there! But no one seems to realise that the country goes from being pretty well tropical in the north, to something similar to Cape Wrath on the north coast of Scotland in the south. That the land has been tortured and twisted by volcanic activity. You feel it is explosive earth. Anything could happen. You pass huge geysers, boiling mud, hot springs, old lava flows. Huge tracts of mountain have been blown away in the twentieth century. Put that beside the quiet pastoral image.

We arrived in Auckland on a Sunday night. It's a glittering city by the sea. Next morning we found our way to the Auckland City Art Gallery, carefully examined an excellent exhibition of New Zealand landscape art and made contact with Andrew Bogle who had tracked us down and harried us until we agreed to send an exhibition. He introduced us to Christopher Johnstone, the director, and the gallery staff. Then we put the final finishing touches to the pieces and after a lovely evening, having dinner with Christopher, Andrew, Rosie and Louise, we caught the morning plane and slept all the way to Tokyo.

Mark Boyle
Greenwich, July 1990

List of Works

1. *Study of the Beach at Camber Sands* 1984
painted fibreglass
1830 x 1830 mm
2. *Study of a Red Sandstone Cliff* 1985-86
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3190 mm
3. *Westminster Study with Curved Kerb,
Parking Line, Metal Plate and Cobbles etc* 1987
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
Private Collection, London
4. *Study from the Broken Path Series
With Two Paths* 1986
painted fibreglass
3050 x 1830 mm
5. *Study of a Potato Field* 1987-88
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
6. *White Cliff Study from the Dover Series* 1987
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
7. *Study for the Westminster Series with Kerb
and Pavement Light* 1988
painted fibreglass
1220 x 1220 mm
8. *Street Study Outside a School with Kerb,
Drain and Yellow Lettering* 1988
painted fibreglass
1825 x 1825 mm
9. *Study of a Weighbridge with Cobbles
and Draincover* 1987
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
Gallery Turske & Turske, Zurich

10. *Study from the Fire Series with Four
Hearth Stones* 1989
painted fibreglass
2440 x 1680 mm
Gallery Turske & Turske, Zurich
11. *Tiled Path Study with Broken Masonry* 1989
painted fibreglass
1220 x 1220 mm
12. *Study for the Fire Series with Burnt Ladder,
Slates and Rusty Can* 1989-90
painted fibreglass
1070 x 1525 mm
13. *Gisborne Triptych (World Series)* 1990
painted fibreglass
1770 x 1270 mm (x3)
Auckland City Art Gallery collection

All measurements height before width.
Unless otherwise noted, all works are from the artists' collection.

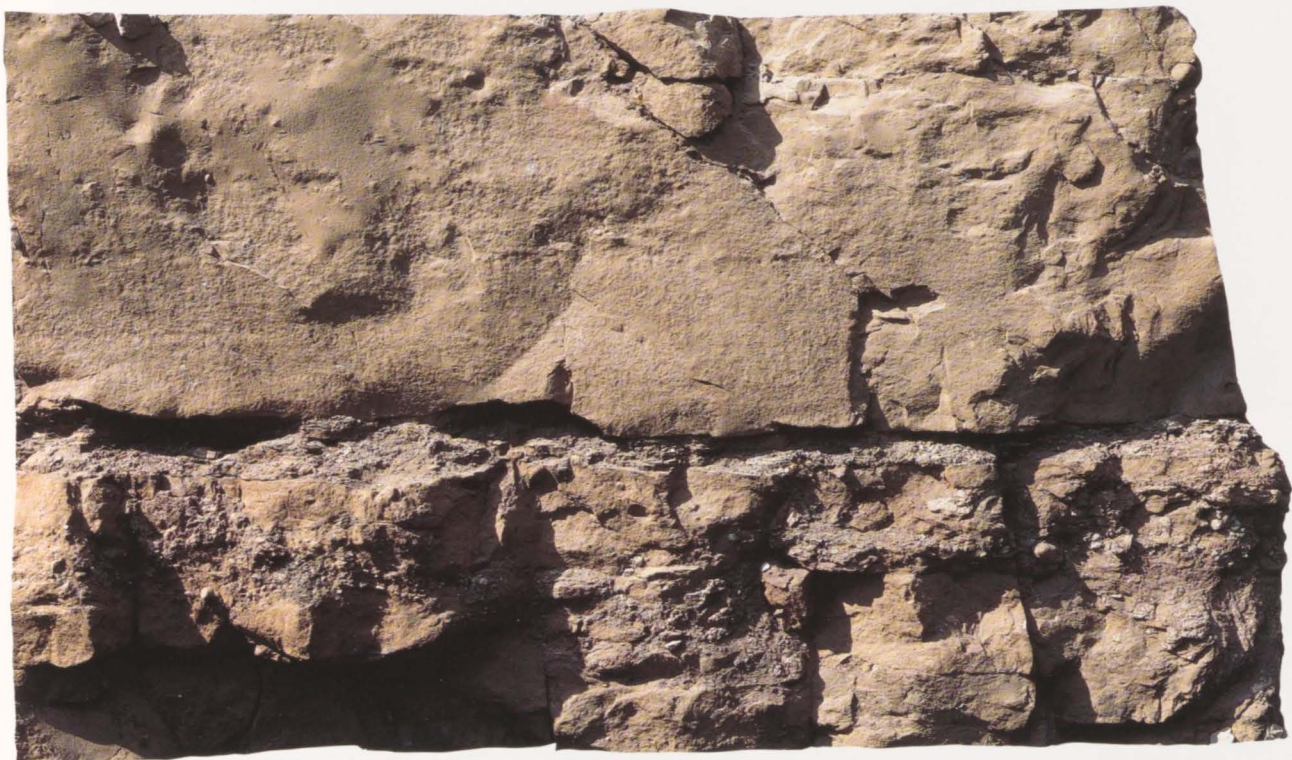
List of Works

1. *Study of the Beach at Camber Sands* 1984
painted fibreglass
1830 x 1830 mm
Photo: James Ryan

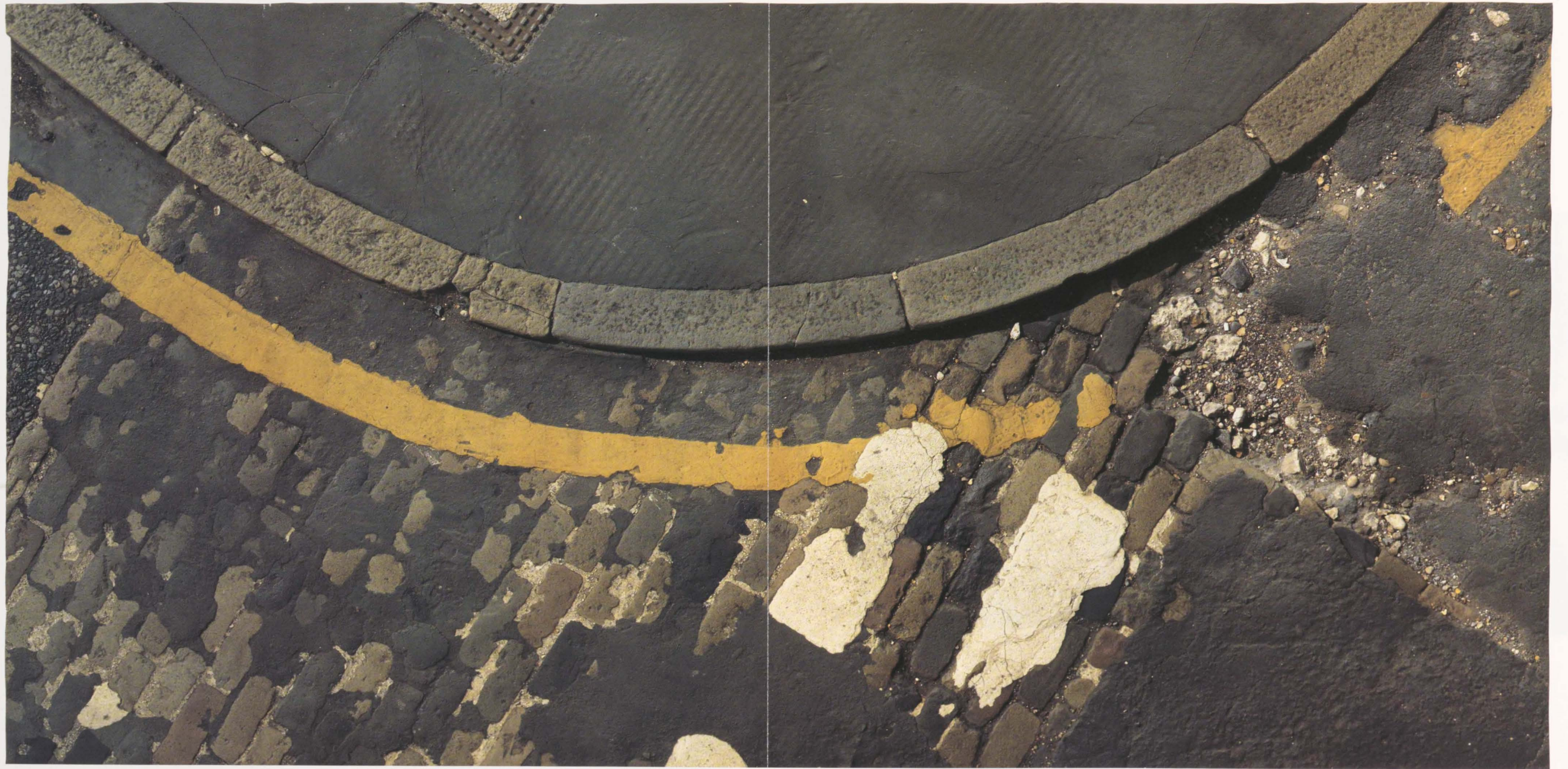




2. *Study of a Red Sandstone Cliff* 1985-86
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3190 mm
Photo: Chris Edwick



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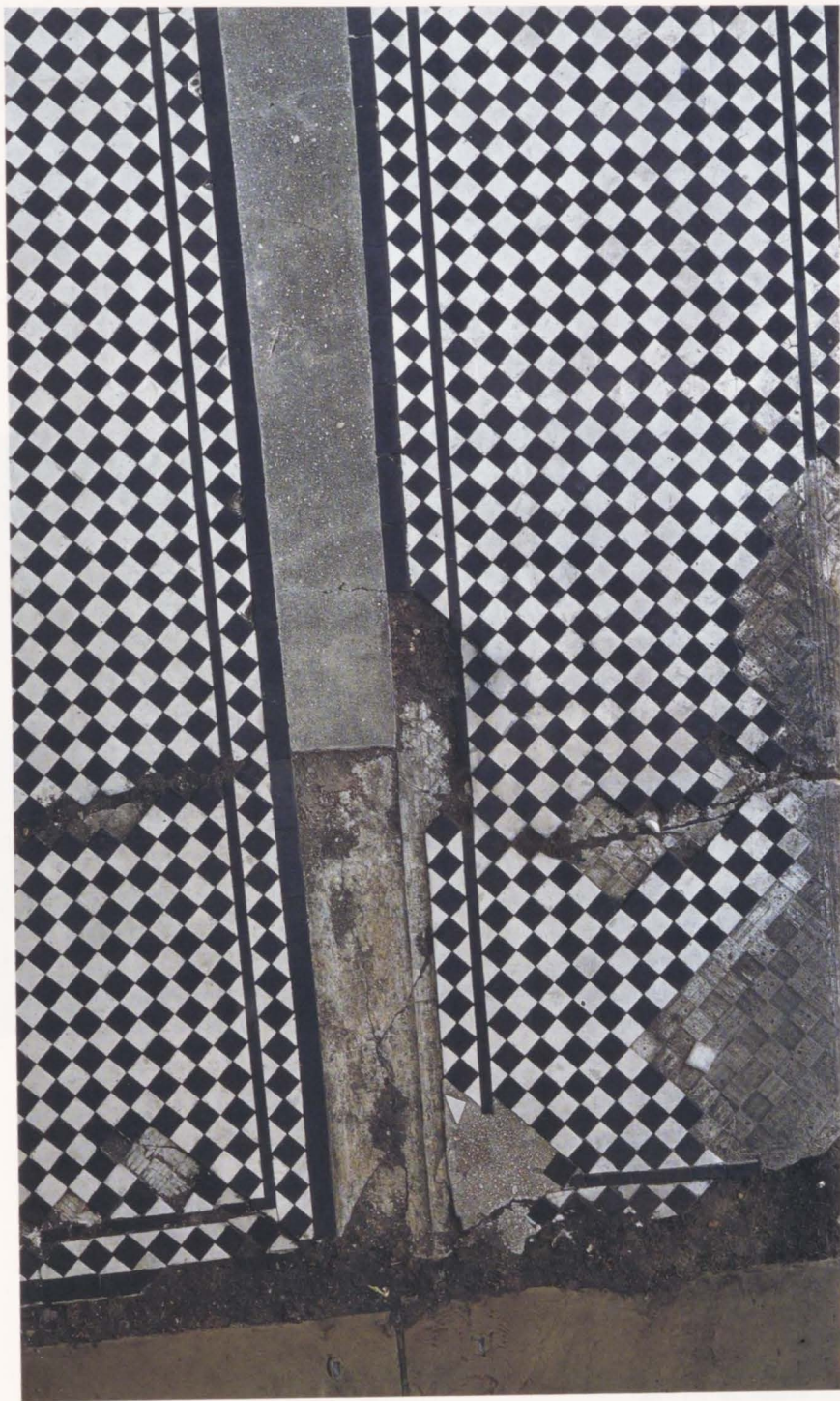


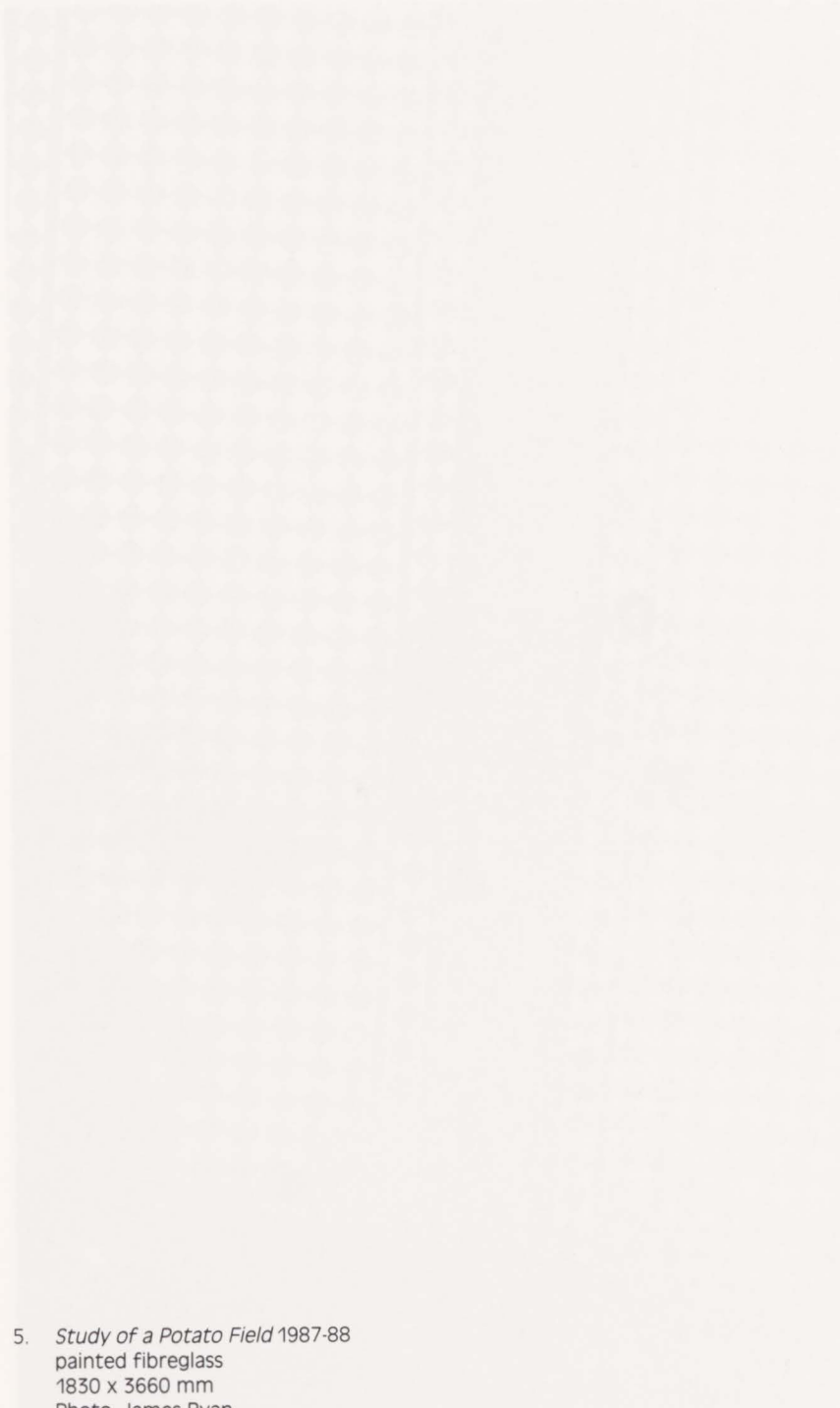


3. *Westminster Study with Curved Kerb,
Parking Line, Metal Plate and Cobbles etc* 1987
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
Private Collection, London
Photo: James Ryan

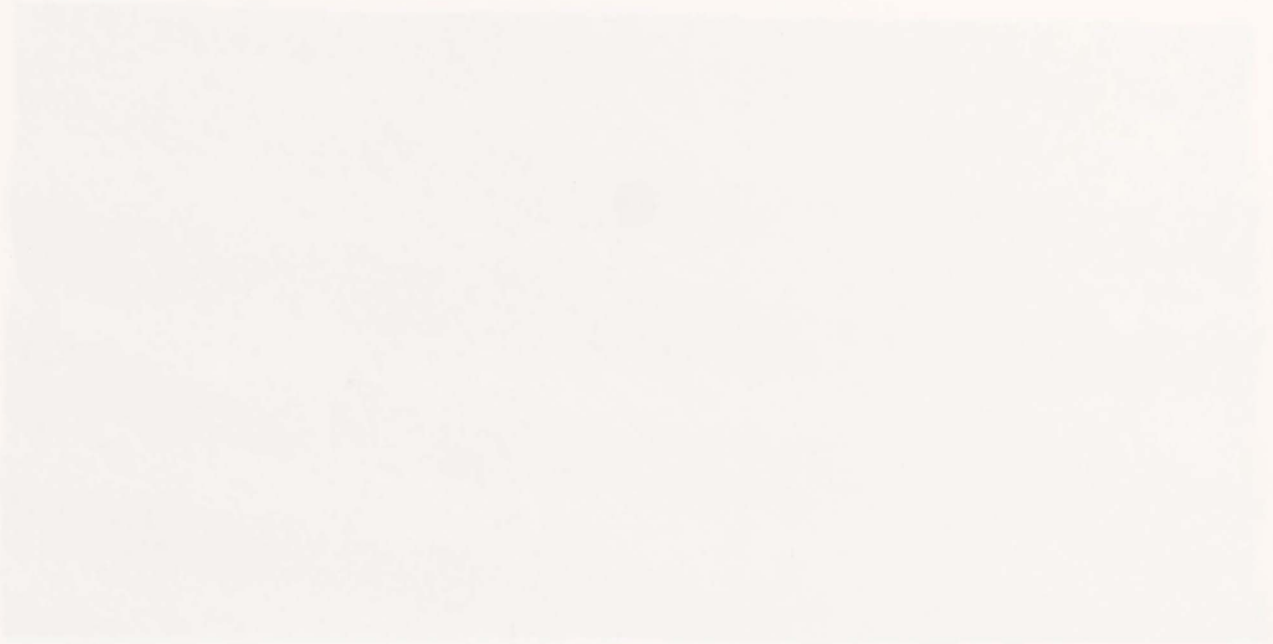
4. *Study from the Broken Path Series*
With Two Paths 1986
painted fibreglass
3050 x 1830 mm
Photo: John Cooper

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5. *Study of a Potato Field* 1987-88
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
Photo: James Ryan

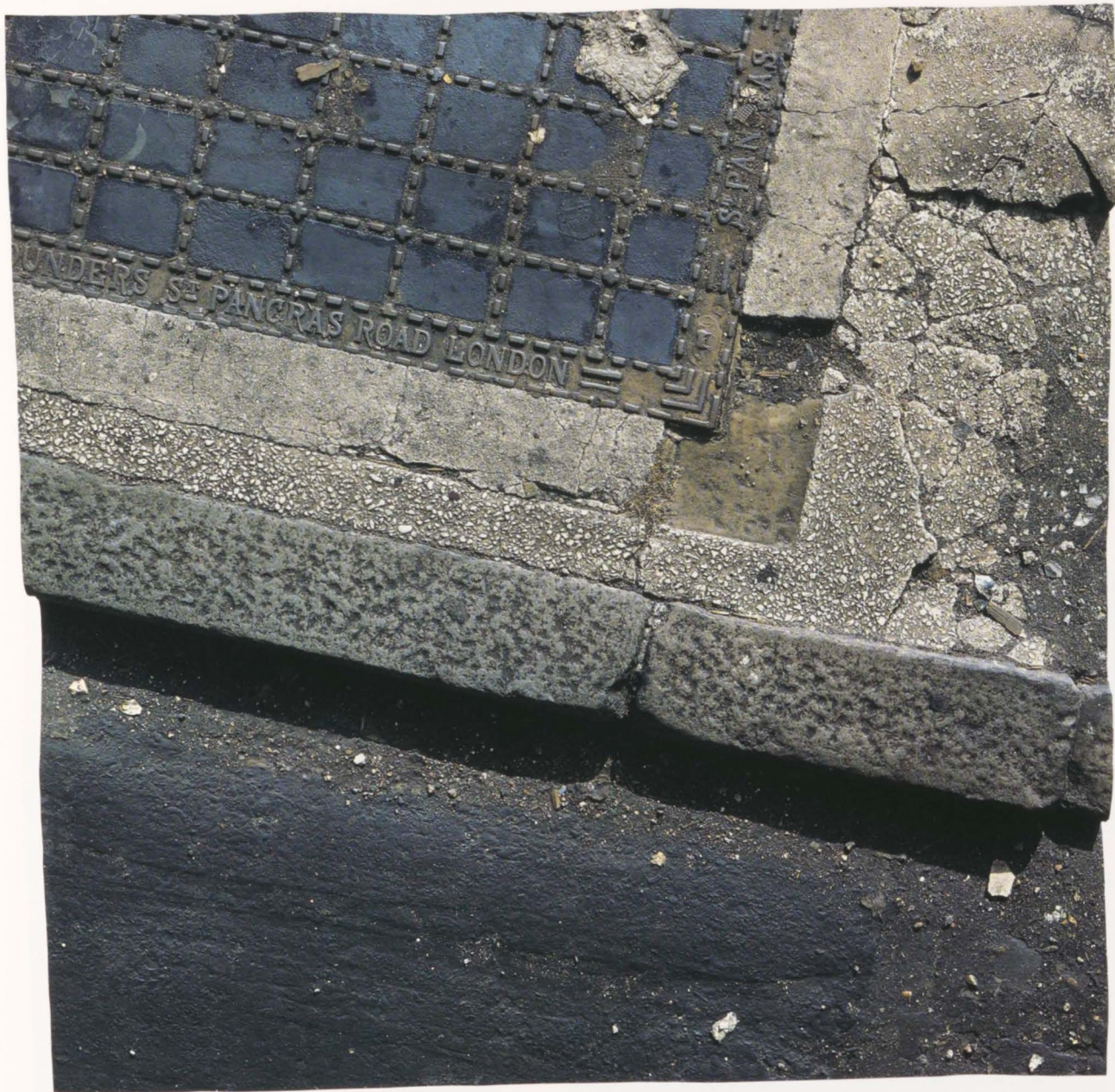


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6. *White Cliff Study from the Dover Series* 1987
painted fibreglass
1830 x 3660 mm
Photo: James Ryan

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(page 53)

13. *Gisborne Triptych (World Series)* 1990
painted fibreglass
1770 x 1270 mm (x3)
Auckland City Art Gallery collection
Photo: John McIver

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Panel 1 *Gisborne Triptych*



Panel 2 *Gisborne Triptych*



Panel 3 *Gisborne Triptych*

Chronology

Bold type indicates artists' solo shows by Mark Boyle, Joan Hills and Boyle Family

1963

Traverse Gallery, Edinburgh Festival

Citizen's Gallery, Glasgow

Woodstock Gallery, London

In Memory of Big ED, Edinburgh Festival (event in collaboration with Ken Dewey, Charles Lewson and Charles Marowitz)

1964

Traverse Festival Exhibition of International Contemporary Art (Richard Demarco) Edinburgh

Suddenly last supper, South Kensington, London (event)

Exit Music, Strand Electric Theatre, London (with Ken Dewey, Charles Marowitz)

The Street, London (event)

First random earth pieces; street theatre; first social studies; presentation of physical and chemical reactions

1965

O what a lovely Whore, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (event)

Any Play or No Play, Theatre Royal, Stratford East, London

Random street studies, Shepherds Bush (London) Series, behaviour events

1966

The Bristol Arts Centre

Indica Gallery, London

Bluecoats Arts Forum, Liverpool

Dig, Shepherds Bush, London (event)

Son et Lumière for Insects, Reptiles, and Water, Cochrane Theatre, London

Son et Lumière for Bodily Fluids and Functions, Cochrane Theatre, London

Founded the *Sensual Laboratory*

Elemental studies, body works, and first tidal pieces and cracked mud studies

1967

V Biennale de Paris – Prize for Painting

Premio Lissone, Milan – Prize for Painting

Ventures, Arts Council of Great Britain Touring Exhibition

Perceptual studies etc; began random study of London

Produced light shows for UFO Club, London

Studies towards an experiment into the Structure of Dreams, Arts Lab, London

Beginning of collaboration with Soft Machine

Lullaby for Catatonics, Edinburgh Festival (collaboration with Soft Machine and Graziella Martinez), also performed at Toulon Festival, Paris Biennale and in Holland

1968

Zagreb International Exhibition – Prize for Painting

Toured USA as *Sensual Laboratory* producing Light-Environments for Jimi Hendrix and Soft Machine

Bodily Fluids and Functions, Roundhouse, London

Began random Study of the World and systematic study of Social Processes

Tidal Series and first snow studies

Arts Lab. London – collaboration with George Brecht, Cornelius Cardew and John Tilbury

1969

Journey to the Surface of the Earth, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

Body Work, event at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

Taste and Smell events at ICA, London

Tidal Series, 1st to 7th November Camber Beach

Snow Series, Camber Beach

1970

Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Netherlands

Institute of Contemporary Arts, London

Bela Centre, Copenhagen

1971

Sonja Henie and Niels Onstad Museum, Hovikodden, Oslo

Requiem for an Unknown Citizen, Rotterdam (event)

Paul Maenz Gallery, Cologne

Akademi der Kunste, Berlin

Began the *Rock Series*

1972

Sonja Henie and Niels Onstad Museum, Hovikodden, Oslo

The British Thing, Sonja Henie and Niels Onstad Museum, Hovikodden, Oslo

Thaw Series and snow pieces in the Arctic Region of Norway

1973

Kelvin Hall, Glasgow
Gallery Muller, Stuttgart
McRobert Centre, Stirling, Scotland
Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
Skin Series

1974

Paul Maenz Gallery, Cologne
Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Cologne
Group Show, Paul Maenz Gallery, Cologne
Art as Thought Process, Arts Council of Great Britain Collection,
Serpentine Gallery, London

1975

Serpentine Gallery, London
British Art Mid '70s, Frankfurt and Leverkusen
From Britain '70s, Helsinki
Project 3 – Body and Soul, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool

1976

Arte Inglese Oggi 1960-76, Palazzo Reale, Milan
Recent British Art, British Council Touring Exhibition to Greece,
Yugoslavia, Austria, Iran, Poland, Scandinavia and Portugal

1977

Felicity Samuel Gallery, London
Photographs–Works, Felicity Samuel Gallery, London
Real Life, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
English Contemporary Art, City Art Gallery, Bregenz, Austria

1978

British Pavilion, XXXIX Venice Biennale
Kunstmuseum, Lucerne
Henie-Onstad Museum, Oslo, Norway
Kulturhuset, Stockholm
Cliff Studies in Sardinia for Venice Biennale
Painters in Parallel, Edinburgh College of Art
Arts Council of Great Britain Collection Acquisitions, Hayward Gallery,
London

1979

Louisiana Kunstmuseum, Humlebaek, Denmark
Museum Am Ostwall, Dortmund
Studies of Cliffs and Desert Terrain, Central Australian Desert

1980

Adelaide Festival, Adelaide, Australia

Charles Cowles Gallery, New York

Richard Hines Gallery, Seattle, Washington

British Art 1940–80: The Arts Council of Great Britain Collection, Hayward Gallery, London

From Object to Object, Arts Council of Great Britain Touring Exhibition

1981

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington

Newport Harbor Art Museum, Newport, California

Approaches to Landscape, Tate Gallery, London

Toyama Museum, Toyama, Japan (Inaugural Exhibition)

1982

Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, Mass.

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco

Aspects of British Art, British Council Tour of Japan

Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum

Tochigi Prefectural Museum of Fine Arts, Utsunomiya

The National Museum of Art, Osaka

Fukuoka Art Museum

Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art

Commenced Japanese pieces for *World Series*

1983

Nishimura Gallery, Tokyo

1985

Exhibition Dialogue, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon

Boyle Family Archives, Sonja Henie and Niels Onstad Museum,

Hovikodden, Oslo

A Notional Gallery, London

1986

Between Object & Image, British Contemporary Sculpture, Palacio de Velazquez, Madrid and tour, Barcelona and Bilbao

Forty Years of Modern Art, 1945–1985, Tate Gallery, London

Studies of the Nude, Marlborough Fine Art, London

Cornerhouse Art Centre, Manchester

Hayward Gallery, London

Broken Path Series

1987

British Art in the 20th Century, Royal Academy London and Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart

Southampton City Art Gallery

Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum

Museum of Modern Art, Oxford

Museum Sztuki, Lodz and the BWR Gallery, Sopot, Gdansk, Poland

XIX Bienal de Sao Paulo, Brazil

Gardner Centre, Brighton

Warwick Arts Centre, Coventry

Turske & Turske Gallery, Zurich

Turske & Whitney Gallery, Los Angeles

1988

Galerie Lelong, Paris

Paco Imperial, Rio de Janeiro

Experience of Landscape, Arts Council of Great Britain touring exhibition

Modern British Sculpture, Tate Gallery, Liverpool

British Contemporary Sculpture, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Le Havre and tour

Richard Gray Gallery, Chicago

1989

Turske & Turske Gallery, Zurich

Terra Firma, Columbia University Gallery, New York

1990

Friedman-Guinness Gallery, Frankfurt

Nishimura Gallery, Tokyo

Glasgow's Great Britain Art Exhibition, McLennan Galleries, Glasgow

Team Spirit, Neuberger Museum, New York and tour

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Public Collections

Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum, Scotland
Arts Council of Great Britain
Auckland City Art Gallery, New Zealand
Australian National Gallery, Canberra
Basle Art Museum, Switzerland
Bochum Museum, West Germany
The British Council, London
The Carnegie Institute, Pittsburg, U.S.A
Gemeentemuseum, The Hague, Holland
Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum
Glasgow District Council
Henie-Onstad Museum, Norway
Hiroshima Museum of Contemporary Art, Japan
Huntsville Museum, Alabama, U.S.A.
Iwaki Museum, Japan
Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefold, West Germany
Kunstmuseum, Lucerne, Switzerland
Munster Museum, West Germany
Museum Moderna Kunst, Vienna, Austria
Museum of South Australia
National Film Archive, London
The National Museum of Wales, Cardiff
Newport Harbour Art Museum, U.S.A.
Reklinghausen Museum, West Germany
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, U.S.A
The Scottish Arts Council
Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh
Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, U.S.A.
Stuttgart Staatsgalerie, West Germany
The Tate Gallery, London
Tochigi Museum, Japan
The Tokyo Metropolitan Museum, Japan
Toledo Museum, Ohio, U.S.A.
Ulster Museum, Belfast
Walker Art Gallery, Minneapolis, U.S.A.
Walker Gallery, Liverpool
Washington State University Museum, U.S.A.
Wiesbaden Museum, West Germany
Wuppertal Museum, Wuppertal, West Germany

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Books and catalogues

Journey to the Surface of the Earth. An Exhibition to launch an Earthprobe by Mark Boyle, The Sensual Laboratory & The Institute of Contemporary Archaeology, Institute of Contemporary Arts, London 1969.

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Mark Boyle's Journey by J. L. Locher, Edition Hansjorg Mayer, Stuttgart and London 1978.

Mark Boyle, British Pavilion, Venice Biennale 1978, British Council, London 1978.

Mark Boyle at Opdage Virkeligheden, Louisiana Revy, Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek 1979.

Mark Boyle und Joan Hills' Reise um die Welt (Mark Boyle and Joan Hills' Journey to the Surface of the Earth), Kunstmuseum, Lucerne 1978.

Mark Boyle und Joan Hills' Reise um die Welt (Mark Boyle and Joan Hills' Journey to the Surface of the Earth), Museum Am Ostwall, Dortmund 1979.

Mark Boyle and Joan Hills' Journey to the Surface of the Earth 3 The Swiss Site, Kunstmuseum, Lucerne 1980.

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Beyond Image, Boyle Family, Arts Council of Great Britain 1986 (exhibition catalogue, Hayward Gallery, London).

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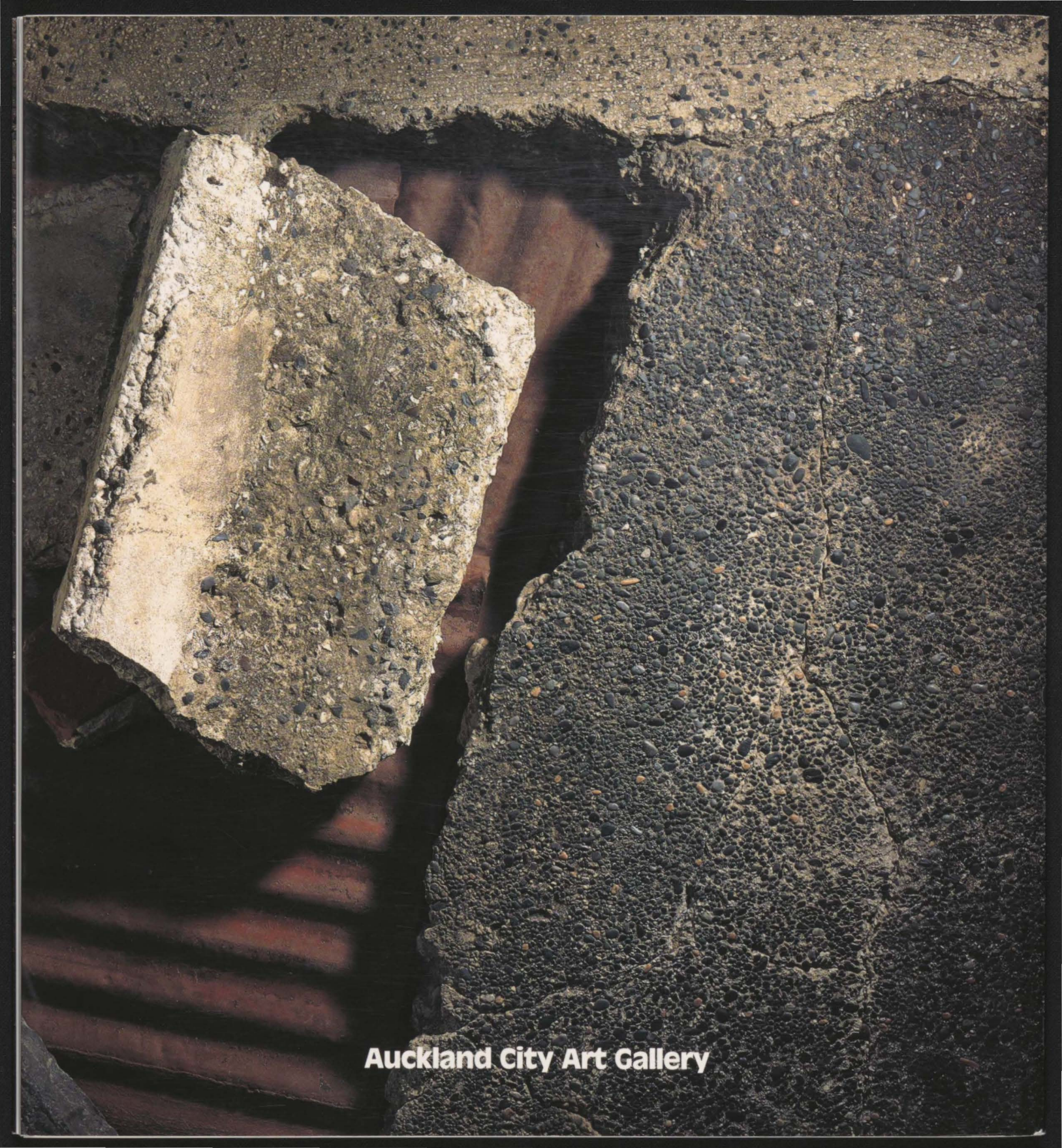
Mark Boyle was born in Glasgow in 1934. His partner, Joan Hills, was born in Edinburgh in 1936. They met in 1956 and together founded The Institute of Contemporary Archaeology and The Sensual Laboratory whose avant-garde activities have included light environments, theatrical events, body works, perceptual studies and the now famous 'earthprobes' which are the focus of this exhibition. These surface presentations of random patches of ground, executed in painted fibreglass, offer up mundane reality as a field of intense aesthetic interest, in a way that challenges the traditional distinctions between art and reality.

Their children, Sebastian and Georgia, were born in London in 1962 and 1964 respectively. Since 1968, when Mark and Joan embarked on a global project of random earthprobes, Sebastian and Georgia have accompanied their parents to *World Series* sites in many different countries. They have grown up with the project and are now fully-fledged members of a consanguineous co-operative that calls itself Boyle Family.

Boyle Family represented Britain at the Venice Biennale in 1978 and the Sao Paulo Bienal in 1987. A major survey of their work at London's Hayward Gallery in 1986 attracted 176,000 people. They live and work in Greenwich, London.

Andrew Bogle is Curator of International Art at the Auckland City Art Gallery. Born in Wellington in 1951, he studied fine arts at Auckland University from 1971 to 1977. Amongst the exhibitions he has organised are *Graphic Works by Edward Ruscha* 1978; *The Grid, Lattice and Network* 1983; *Chance and Change* 1985; *The Print: Methods and Masterpieces* 1986; *Immendorff in Auckland* 1988; and *Advance Australian Painting* 1988. His particular interest is contemporary art. Andrew Bogle is currently preparing a major international exhibition on art relating to environmental issues.

Front cover, inside front flap and back cover show details of *Gisborne Triptych (World Series)* 1990; left, centre and right panels respectively (see pages 54, 55, 56).



Auckland City Art Gallery