



10
DIALOGUES

RICHARD DEMARCO
SCOTLAND &
THE EUROPEAN
AVANT GARDE



PREFACE

Bill Scott PRSA

10 Dialogues: Richard Demarco, Scotland and the European Avant Garde celebrates the achievements of our remarkable Honorary Academician, Richard Demarco, and the work of ten outstanding artists with whom he has been closely associated. It is a story of a vision that connected artists across cultural and political divides, and which continues vigorously to this day. It seems particularly fitting that, in parallel, the Academy is also showing *Richard Demarco: A Life in Pictures*: prints drawings and watercolours that showcase the work of Richard Demarco the artist. From his early years at Edinburgh College of Art to the present, his landscapes and cityscapes have reflected Scotland and his wider world in Europe and America. And Richard Demarco will also deliver the prestigious 2010 Sir William Gillies Memorial Lecture, *10 Dialogues, on the Road to Meikle Seggie*.

The Royal Scottish Academy prides itself on its independence, which gives it special status within the cultural community, but we are always ready to build on existing partnerships and happy to forge new collaborations for the benefit of visual art in Scotland. This salute to Richard Demarco's achievement could not have happened without active support from the National Galleries of Scotland; indeed this project has signalled a new stage in a working relationship that is grounded in our shared history. For *10 Dialogues*, we have also received significant financial assistance from Creative Scotland, the Henry Moore Foundation and from cultural ministries and agencies of Germany, Poland and Romania. Research towards the exhibition was supported by the University of Dundee through Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, and thanks must also go to the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which funded the Demarco Digital Archive project, out of which, in many ways, the exhibition has grown. The Academy also extends its thanks to the many other sponsors and collaborators that have made the exhibition possible: reaching out and joining together across Europe is testament to how we can make great things happen. In this we have been greatly assisted by Cathie MacDonald of Constantine Art Services who coordinated the complex transport that this exhibition required.

Finally, on behalf of the Council and Members of the Royal Scottish Academy, I would wish to thank Euan McArthur and Arthur Watson RSA for curating the exhibition. Their knowledge and dedication has been invaluable in seeing the project come to fruition.

FOREWORD

Euan McArthur and Arthur Watson

Richard Demarco is an artist, gallery director, educator, promoter of theatre and cultural commentator. Reaching the age of 80, for anyone else, would quite reasonably signal a time for reflection on the past, but for Richard Demarco the past is the reservoir from which he draws the energy he needs to pursue the completion of his life's work. The essence of Demarco's interactions with artists (and their audiences) has always been one-to-one, face-to-face, discursive and conversational. Fed by his appetite for travel, he has never ceased to visit studios and exhibitions to discover new work and engage with its makers. This exhibition roots itself in ten of these dialogues, current and remembered, both for their own sake and for their creative potential for the future.

The idea of a dialogue between Richard Demarco and the Royal Scottish Academy may at first seem a strange one: Demarco, Scotland's iconoclastic advocate of the avant garde, the Academy, a cornerstone of the Scottish establishment since 1826. But Demarco is first and foremost an artist, and the Academy is in essence a collective of artists. In the early days of the Richard Demarco Gallery many of his artists were Academicians or were later to be elected, and many have continued to have a close relationship with him; while the Academy has bestowed honorary membership on many European avant-gardeists: Braque and Chagall, Mestrovic, Tapiés, Kiefer, and also Richard Demarco.

The Demarco Gallery was founded in 1966, and rapidly developed an international perspective and a commitment to new developments in sculpture, installation, film and video, site-specific work, performance and theatre. This was strengthened by close collaborations with Joseph Beuys and other Dusseldorf artists, and with the avant gardes of Poland, Romania and (then) Yugoslavia. *10 Dialogues* reflects that commitment in the predominant place it gives to sculptural and (more broadly) object-based work, and the documentation of performance. The exhibition concerns one central aspect of Demarco's work, the presentation of major European artists in Scotland and his promotion of Scottish artists in mainland Europe. It focuses on artists with whom he had sustained or seminal contact, in most cases exhibiting them first as young artists. The exhibition includes a recent sculptural installation by Magdalena Abakanowicz (shown for the first time in the UK), new works commissioned from Ainslie Yule, David Mach and Alastair MacLennan, works from the studio of Gunther Uecker, sculptures by Rory McEwen from Richard Demarco and the McEwen family collections; works by Tadeusz Kantor, Paul Neagu and Joseph Beuys from major European collections, plus documentation of the first performance of *Rhythm 10* by Marina Abramovic, recently discovered in the Demarco archive.

The initial idea for this exhibition has become a magnificent reality for three reasons: first, because the Royal Scottish Academy galleries (part of the Scottish National Galleries complex) comprise the finest exhibition space in Scotland; second, because the splendour of the space is more than matched by the quality and ambition of the work on exhibition; and third, because of the skill and commitment of Colin Greenslade, Alisa Lindsay and the staff of the Royal Scottish Academy. Finally, we are deeply grateful to Richard Demarco for his enthusiastic support for the concept of this exhibition, and for his trust and patience at every stage in its preparation. We hope that it does some justice to this significant aspect of his life's work.

10 DIALOGUES

RICHARD DEMARCO SCOTLAND & THE EUROPEAN AVANT GARDE

David Mach
Paul Neagu
Rory McEwen
Joseph Beuys
Gunther Uecker
Alastair MacLennan
Marina Abramovic
Ainslie Yule
Tadeusz Kantor
Magdalena Abakanowicz

INTRODUCTION

Euan McArthur & Arthur Watson

This exhibition marks the year of Richard Demarco's 80th birthday, and those of his contemporaries Magdalena Abakanowicz and Gunther Uecker. It is also the 40th anniversary of *Strategy: Get Arts*, the exhibition of artists from Dusseldorf that more than any other in the post-war period challenged the Scottish art-world and public with new currents in contemporary art. And it is the approximate 20th anniversary of the serial collapse of the communist regimes of eastern Europe and the beginning of the end of the political division that Demarco laboured to overcome in the cultural sphere through artistic connection and exchange. The physical challenges, bureaucratic obstacles and lack of information that he faced during the period from the late 1960s to the 1980s, especially in relation to eastern Europe, is daily becoming more remote, but in many ways the connections now sustained so easily in the digital world of the present rest on such histories of hard work, of face-to-face encounter and actual as opposed to virtual travel. That was and still is Demarco's primary reality, however much he may (or may not) have adapted to the digital age.

The theme of the exhibition, then, is connection. If Demarco has a watchword it is 'dialogue'. The aphorism "Art begins in the meeting of friends," with its implications both social and of constant new beginnings, has often been associated with him. At the same time, as an artist himself, he is perfectly well aware of the artist's need to be closeted in their own space, in the silence of the studio. It may surprise some that a man who has so fully inhabited the often-febrile world of contemporary art is a man of deep religious conviction, but the sense of moral seriousness that has always marked his response to art and artists is rooted in this. Art for him does not begin or end with an object. The long-term personal associations evident from the record of his exhibitions are an indicator that life and art are not separate, for him any more than for Joseph Beuys or the other major artists with whom he worked.

The ten dialogues of the exhibition title are points in an extending network of creative connections and encounters, between people and with artworks. Each artist is the centre of their own network, some first connected to others in this exhibition through Demarco, the uniting figure at the centre. His contacts with Magdalena Abakanowicz (b. 1930), Gunther Uecker (b. 1930), Alastair MacLennan (b. 1943), David Mach (b. 1956) and Ainslie Yule (b. 1941) have been sustained for up to five decades. With Marina Abramovic (b. 1946) and Rory McEwen (1932-1982) his most productive connections were concentrated within particular, even crucial, periods in these artists' lives. The remaining three associations, with Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990) and Paul Neagu (1938-2004), each a close friend, were terminated only by the artists' deaths, although his dialogue with their work and legacy of ideas has never stopped.

These relations point to a fundamental fact about Demarco's approach to his life's work, that at least since 1968 he has not sought to function as an exhibition curator as the term is commonly understood. It has neither been a matter of presenting a programme of exhibitions in which contemporaneity or variety is conceived as sufficient *raison d'être* in itself, nor of engaging lightly and moving on. On the contrary, running through his exhibitions, journeys, conferences and other events from 1968 onwards has been an unwavering purpose, to change the terms of public discourse about art, society and politics in both post-war and post-Cold War Europe. The foundations of this ambitious project lie in his ethical and political commitments, but also in the relationships that he forged and sustained with individual artists, which clarified his commitment to ideas above aesthetics, to cultural pluralism, and the need to overcome the political and other forms of division that have disfigured Europe in his lifetime. For that reason, the idea of an endless unfolding dialogue stands at the heart of this exhibition.

To reflect the nature of this unfinished business, the exhibition is both retrospective and forward-looking. It includes sculpture by Rory McEwen, whose glass and perspex sculptures were shown by Demarco in 1969, and Beuys' *Three Pots for the Poorhouse - Action Object*, which was made in Edinburgh in 1974 and is now in the collection of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art. The exhibition includes photographic documentation, by Demarco, of performances and actions, such as Marina Abramovic's premier performance of *Rhythm 10* and a unique sequence of Beuys drawing the blackboards during the action *Three Pots for the Poorhouse*. There are videos (from the Demarco archive, newly digitised) of Beuys,

Abramovic and Neagu, including the latter's *Gradually Going Tornado*, broadcast in 1974 by Grampian Television and long thought to be lost. There is always a new and different public for what to some visitors will be familiar, but there is also the pleasure of renewing old acquaintanceships. Both belong to the essence of dialogue and add to the store of collective memory. Gunther Uecker's impressive *Pictlandgarden* works, first shown by Demarco in 1990, left a powerful memory with those who saw them then. We present several of them again, knowing that they will more than stand up to the scrutiny of those who will be renewing their memories and those seeing them for the first time.

The exhibition does not lead the viewer down a narrow track directly from past to present. Its retrospective aspect is not strictly defined by what Demarco has already shown, because his dialogues always demanded a readiness to respond to new ideas and artworks that his interlocutors either brought to him or that he encountered in their studios or in their exhibitions elsewhere. As Kantor wrote in *The Impossible Theatre*, "The development of art is not a purely formal, linear process, but most of all, within and without, it is a permanent motion and transformation of thoughts and ideas". Kantor's installation, *The Great Emballage of the End of the 20th Century* (from the Cricot 2 production *I Shall Never Return, of 1988*) is exhibited in this spirit, as a work not exhibited before in Scotland but which is also a product of the language of objects ("between eternity and garbage" in his words) that Kantor first brought to Scotland through the agency of Demarco. It also underscores the fact that Kantor is one of the 20th century's major visual artists, not only a genius of theatre, and that Demarco showed his sculptural and object-based work as well as his great Edinburgh theatre productions. The same line of thought links the exhibition's retrospective with its contemporary aspect. The recent work that has not been seen before in Scotland and the new work made specifically for the exhibition represent the continuation of dialogues begun several decades ago. These works include Magdalena Abakanowicz's monumental *The Court of King Arthur*, Alastair MacLennan's installation, NOR KNOW NEMESIS, Ainslie Yule's recent sculptures and drawings and David Mach's two large portrait collages of Demarco.

The exhibition has drawn upon the Demarco Digital Archive for the exhibition prints of Abramovic's *Rhythm 10* and Beuys' *Three Pots for the Poorhouse* action, and to expand its historical content and provide more extensive contextual documentation. The latter material is presented on ten monitors, one for each artist, each with a rolling 'slide show' that is centred on the particular artist but extending into projects and exhibitions in which they were associated with other artists who were (or are) also part of Demarco's world. So, with Abakanowicz, for example, we show images from *Atelier '72*; with Abramovic, *Eight Yugoslav Artists* (1973) and *Aspects '75*; with Uecker, *Strategy: Get Arts*; with Beuys we document Richard Demarco's visits to his Dusseldorf studio, the Free International University at Documenta Six and meetings with other artists; with Kantor, extensive (but still very selective) documentation of *The Water Hen*, *Lovelies and Dowdies* and *The Dead Class*; with Neagu, *New Tendencies in Scottish Contemporary Art* in Sarajevo; with McEwen, Beuys' journey to Rannoch Moor and *New Directions*; with Yule, *Three Scottish Artists* at the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice; with MacLennan, *Demarcation '84* and the 1986 journey to Poland; and with Mach, *Three Scottish Sculptors* at the Venice Biennale in 1990. The archive, of course, still continues to grow and develop, and this exhibition is as much a part of it as it is of the exhibition.

The theme of expanding circles of dialogue and the accommodation of multiple perspectives that runs through the exhibition as a tribute to the spirit in which Demarco has worked, has been carried through into the publication. It has many authors, including Richard Demarco himself, who have written from their own positions unrestricted by a single curatorial thesis. Most of the texts are new, some are reprinted, and some transcribed from interviews; others are artists' texts or by writers commissioned by an artist, and others again have been commissioned by the exhibition organisers. The ambition has been to stay true to Demarco's broad-church outlook. He has always been open and responsive to what comes to him and pluralistic in what he supports. And so, if the publication contains inconsistencies all the better; all the more like life and art. There is, though, a unifying theme, the one stated at the start: connections, and the unfinished business of creative dialogue.

Richard Demarco, Scotland and the European Avant Garde

The importance of Richard Demarco's internationalism in the Scottish context of the 1960s needs brief explanation, for it leads directly to the relationships that underpin this exhibition. Opportunities then to see contemporary art in Scotland were few. Despite the series of great exhibitions shown during the Edinburgh Festival, from Bonnard and Vuillard in 1948 to the Blue Rider in 1960 (and including Gauguin in 1955 and Masterpieces of Czech Art in 1959), the Edinburgh Festival barely touched on contemporary visual art or assisted Scottish artists. It also made painfully clear to Demarco and his circle the dearth of cultural activity throughout the rest of the year. Seeds of change appeared in the late 1950s, with the opening of the New 57 Gallery and in 1959, Jim Haynes' Paperback Bookshop, with its small gallery space where Demarco presented his first exhibitions. In 1963, the Traverse Theatre opened (Demarco being one of the founders) and shortly after this, the Traverse Gallery was established in the theatre's restaurant, with Demarco responsible for the programme. He continued in this role until 1967, by which time he was also running the Richard Demarco Gallery which he had opened in Melville Crescent in August 1966, with the ambition that it match in the visual arts what the Traverse Theatre was doing for drama.

His record of exhibitions at the Traverse shows that Demarco was a conscious internationalist from the beginning, exhibiting artists from North America, Australia and throughout Europe, along with British artists. Two exhibitions stand out from this period as pointers towards the future, the exhibition of Polish artists in 1963 and of Polish film posters in 1966. Within a year of the Demarco Gallery's opening, these early contacts with Polish art were being built on to forge the beginnings of what became a lifelong engagement. In May 1967, he selected the exhibition *15 British Painters* for the gallery of the Union of Warsaw Artists, one of the fifteen being Rory McEwen who exhibited abstract paintings. The British Council, which assisted with funding, did not consider Demarco sufficiently prominent to attend the opening in Poland, and preferred instead the Royal Scottish Academician, Robin Philipson, who was also an exhibitor. The reciprocal exhibition, *16 Polish Painters* (among them Roman Opalka) was presented at Melville Crescent in October that same year. Although his interest in Poland was unusual among his western peers, Demarco up to this point had been essentially a conventional gallery director, but his experiences in 1967 and 1968 changed everything. In 1967, he led a group from Edinburgh to *ROSC 1* in Dublin. The insight he gained from the exhibition of contemporary art, curated by James Johnston Sweeney and Willem Sandberg, was a transforming experience. Crucially, he met one of the artists selected by Sweeney and Sandberg, Gunther Uecker, who invited him to visit his studio in Dusseldorf. This was the 'deep' origin of *Strategy: Get Arts*. Then, in 1968, visiting Documenta 4 on the way to the Venice Biennale, he was mesmerised to see Joseph Beuys (of whom he then knew nothing) installing his work. The combined impact of *ROSC* and the revelation of Beuys at work induced a fundamental shift in his understanding of contemporary art, which the experience of the Venice Biennale only confirmed.

Demarco's sense of purpose was growing when, in 1968, he made his first visit to Poland as a guest of the Ministry of Culture. From Poland he travelled on to Romania as a guest of the Romanian Artists' Union, a visit that was largely unproductive except for a meeting with Ion Bitzan. On Demarco's return in early 1969, Bitzan introduced him to Horea Bernea, Paul Neagu, Ovidiu Maitec and other artists. The connection bore quick fruit, with the exhibition *4 Romanian Artists* (Bitzan, Peter and Ritzi Jacobi and Paul Neagu) being shown at the Demarco Gallery in March, and afterwards at Aberdeen Art Gallery. He followed this by including work by Maitec in the 1970 exhibition, *Small Scale 3-D Art*. It was also in 1970 that he returned to Romania for the third time. Knowing that the Bulandra Theatre Company had already been booked for the 1971 Edinburgh Festival, he proposed to the Romanian authorities that it be matched by a major exhibition, for which *4 Romanian Artists* had essentially paved the way. In this second and more ambitious project, which Radu Varia assisted at a crucial moment, Neagu, Bernea, Bitzan, Maitec and Pavel Ilie were among the many artists who exhibited. In a complementary programme of performing art, the dancers Miriam Raducanu and Gheorghe Caciuleanu and the poet Miran Sorescu appeared at the Demarco Gallery, while Liviu Ciulei's Bulandra Theatre production of *Leonce and Lena* was presented at the Lyceum Theatre.



Neagu, who moved from Bucharest to Edinburgh in 1969 and then permanently to London, continued to exhibit with Demarco until his death in 2004. During the 1969 Festival he was one of six artists, Rory McEwen being another, who presented solo shows at Melville Crescent, and in subsequent years he exhibited and performed with Demarco in both group and solo shows. Among the most significant of the latter were an exhibition, under the pseudonym 'Paul Honeysuckle', at the Saltire Society in February 1974 and the broadcast by Grampian Television in October that year of *Gradually Going Tornado* (in a prime-time slot as part of the arts series *Images*, the content of which was selected by Demarco). In early 1975 Neagu had a second solo exhibition at the Saltire Society, of his pseudonymous 'Generative Art Group', then another in 1976 at the Demarco Gallery (with Horea Bernea's work in the adjacent space) and, in 1978, *The Art of the Visible*. His next solo show, of sculpture, was *Nine Catalytic Stations*, shown at the Demarco Gallery in Blackfriars Street in March 1988, and later in the year in the garden of Traquair House, in the Scottish Borders and at Artspace Galleries in Aberdeen. Lastly, he exhibited in 1996 and 1997, as part of the *New Beginnings*, *Equation* and *Integration* programmes.

In later years Neagu contributed to *Demarcation '84* (Demarco's Edinburgh Festival programme for 1984, presented at Edinburgh College of Art) and, in February 1988 (becoming a Scot for the occasion) to *New Tendencies in Scottish Contemporary Art*, for the Winter Festival in Sarajevo (in which David Mach and Ainslie Yule were among his co-exhibitors). Neagu's special closeness to Demarco is perhaps best shown by his participation in all nine Edinburgh Arts summer school programmes between 1972 and 1980. Among his contributions were the 1972 performance, *Fish Net*, on Inchcolm Island in the Firth of Forth, and a drawing workshop in Greyfriars' Churchyard; in 1974 his performance of *A Private Tornado* at the Forresthill Poorhouse and impromptu 'actions' captured on camera by Demarco near Ballater and at Roslin Glen; in 1975, exhibitions in Edinburgh Arts-originated shows in Rome and at the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice, and later on the same journey, travelling to the Highlands and the Hebrides, where Demarco documented him on the 'Burma Road' near Mallaig, on Skye and on Harris and Lewis at various locations, including Dun Carlaway and Callanish.

Returning to January 1970, at the invitation of the West German Government, Demarco visited Dusseldorf to investigate the possibility of an exhibition of contemporary German art for the Edinburgh Festival. He already knew Uecker and something of Beuys, but the work that he found there made this visit the decisive experience in the development of his ideas about art and of his own purpose as a gallery director. He abandoned plans for an American exhibition for August that year (in collaboration with the Museum of Modern Art, New York) and substituted one of new art from Dusseldorf, the title of which, *Strategy: Get Arts*, was a palindrome by one of its participants, André Thomkins. The project brought him into personal contact with Beuys and others for the first time, among them Gerhard Richter, Daniel Spoerri and Dieter Rot. Beuys made a preliminary visit to Scotland in May, the first of eight over the next eleven years (though as he pointed out to Demarco, he had been to Scotland once before, "like Elvis Presley" on a 40-minute stopover at Prestwick Airport when returning from Nova Scotia). During this visit, Demarco took Beuys on a journey through Argyll to Glencoe and Rannoch Moor. In August, on his second visit just prior to *Strategy: Get Arts*, Beuys made another journey

to Rannoch Moor that was filmed by Rory McEwen as *Joseph Beuys in Scotland*, and carried out the action on Rannoch Moor that was filmed by Mark Littlewood in *Moorfilm*. The action was linked to *Celtic Kinloch Rannoch: The Scottish Symphony*, which Beuys and Henning Christiansen performed for *Strategy: Get Arts* at Edinburgh College of Art, Beuys also exhibiting *The Pack* and the installation that was later entitled *Arena*.

Three years later, on his next visit, Beuys presented *A Homage to Anacharsis Cloots (The 12-Hour Lecture)* at Melville College as part of the Edinburgh Arts 1973 programme, and in Edinburgh once again in 1974 he was a key speaker (with Buckminster Fuller) at the *Black and White Oil Conference*, which Paul Neagu attended. This was also an Edinburgh Arts event, and the venue was the Forresthill Poorhouse (a favourite Demarco location in those years) where shortly afterwards he performed his *Three Pots for the Poorhouse* action, the subject of a film but also documented in exceptional detail by Demarco's camera. In the later 1970s, one of Beuys' key interlocutors in Scotland was Jimmy Boyle (who also corresponded with Marina Abramovic). The connection emerged from Demarco's involvement with the Special Unit at Barlinnie Prison, Glasgow, where Boyle was serving a life sentence for murder. The regime at the Special Unit was unique in the Scottish prison system, based on liberal principles and placing creativity at the centre of the process of rehabilitation, a philosophy that both Demarco and Beuys wholly endorsed. In January 1976, Beuys represented Boyle, then still in prison, at the opening of Boyle's exhibition, *In Defence of the Innocent*, at the Demarco Gallery, and in September of that year signed a letter of protest, with Demarco and others, against his transfer out of the Special Unit and back into the mainstream prison system. On his next visit to Edinburgh, during the 1980 Festival, again under the banner of Edinburgh Arts, Beuys presented the lecture/event *Alternative Policies and the Work of the Free International University* at the Demarco Gallery, during which he made the *Art=Kapital/Jimmy Boyle Days* blackboards. They finally met in 1981, after Boyle's release from prison.



To assist the Demarco Gallery, in 1980 Beuys agreed to the production of three printed multiples, which were issued in 1980-81. Demarco's long standing collaborator, the graphic designer John Martin, oversaw the project, using his extensive knowledge of print technology to produce three dramatically different but iconic works, each of which highlighted different aspects of Beuys' engagement with Scotland. Among them was *Scottish Symphony*, *Celtic Kinloch Rannoch*, which used photographs of *Eurasian Staff*, the action on Rannoch Moor and of *Celtic Kinloch Rannoch: The Scottish Symphony*. Beuys made his last visit to Scotland in July 1981. By this time, the Forresthill Poorhouse was scheduled for demolition. The main doors, still with tattered posters (one for Beuys himself) were salvaged (the process documented in valedictory mood by Demarco) and taken to Edinburgh College of Art, where, shortly afterwards, Beuys made a minimal intervention by placing a red light underneath the doors, titling the work *New Beginnings are in the Offing*, which was purchased by the Stadtische Museum, Monchengladbach. In the years since Beuys' death in 1986, Demarco has never ceased to represent and explore his legacy in exhibitions and symposia.

Among Beuys' co-exhibitors in *Strategy: Get Arts* was Gunther Uecker, with whom Demarco has stayed in contact until today. Uecker presented two works in *Strategy: Get Arts*. *Sound-Scene*, a collaboration with Friedhelm Dohl, was a 'concert' of electronic sound and an automatically banging door. The other, *Sharp Corridor*, was intended to confront visitors with the challenge of a narrow passage bristling with steak knives. The police, however, insisted the knives be screened behind wire mesh,

whereupon Uecker re-titled the work *Sharp Corridor Blunted by Police*. Even to reach it, the visitor had to pass Klaus Rinke's water jet that bisected the main doorway, and throughout the building would have encountered many other works that conceded little or nothing to conventional expectations. Among the many photographs taken by Demarco, Uecker can be seen smashing a chair on the college staircase for Stefan Wewerka's action-installation. *Strategy: Get Arts* opened the horizons and transformed the ideas of a generation of Scottish artists and students, and, through their example and teaching, has been foundational to the strength of contemporary visual art in Scotland over the last two decades. Twenty years after *Strategy: Get Arts*, it was Uecker whom Demarco invited to make an exhibition for the Demarco Gallery at Blackfriars Street, to mark the anniversary. Uecker and his family travelled across Scotland to discover the landscape and the Celtic and Pictish worlds that Demarco had first spoken of at ROSC in 1967. The result was *Pictlandgarden*, which Uecker has described "as an encounter with [a] fascinating land, painted in the raw".



Strategy: Get Arts not being enough for one Festival, Demarco presented another exhibition simultaneously at Melville Crescent. Though overshadowed by *Strategy: Get Arts*, *New Directions* is an exhibition of importance in its own right. It was Demarco's first exposition of new British and European (in this case, Romanian) art, confidently integrated in one exhibition. There were four Scots (Michael Docherty, Patricia Douthwaite, Rory McEwen and Alistair Park) one English artist (David Tremlett) and three Romanians (Horea Bernea, Pavel Ilie and Paul Neagu). It makes clear the central place that the idea of dialogue had assumed in Demarco's thinking about exhibitions, dialogue literally between the artists and figuratively between their works, and by extension with visitors (who in this case included Beuys). The ideal of a free and equal exchange of ideas across cultural differences and political divides was given practical expression in this exhibition.

Demarco's Polish connection was resumed in April 1971 with Jozef Szjana's exhibition at Melville Crescent. Szjana returned the following year with his production of *Replique* and the installation *Auschwitz*, for the ambitious *Atelier '72*, Demarco's Festival programme of contemporary Polish visual art, literature, film and theatre, which was realised with the close collaboration of Ryszard Stanislawsky, director of the Museum Sztuki in Lodz and presented in several venues across Edinburgh. Among the impressive list of participants were Tadeusz Kantor (showing art works and his production of S. I. Witkiewicz's *The Water Hen*) and Magdalena Abakanowicz, whose work for *Atelier '72* included *Red Rope*. The work consisted of two heavy hawsers, one of which emerged through the windows of the Demarco Gallery, the other being anchored above the back doorway of St. Mary's Cathedral in Palmerston Place. As each point was visible from the other, the connection between both, and the unity of the rope, was thus implied. Like *Four Romanian Artists* two years previously, *Red Rope* was taken by Aberdeen Art Gallery for a further showing. As a late addition to the Edinburgh Arts programme in 1974, Abakanowicz contributed a lecture about the sculptural nature of her work (Norbert Lynton, Roland Penrose and Peter Selz being among her fellow speakers) but

Ion Bitzan, Richard Demarco, Paul Neagu, Peter Jacobi, Ritzi Jacobi, at the Richard Demarco Gallery, *Four Romanian Artists*, 1969.

Joseph Beuys and Richard Demarco in Beuys's studio, Dusseldorf, 1980. Photographer unknown.

Gunther Uecker (left) and Richard Demarco (right) in Gerhard Richter's studio, Dusseldorf, 1970.

she did not exhibit in Demarco's next major exhibition of Polish art, *Awangarda Polska*, produced in collaboration with the Museum Sztuki in 1979, which presented the work of Henryk Stazewski and Witkiewicz at the Fruitmarket Gallery, and a large group exhibition at the Demarco Gallery (and later at Third Eye Centre, Glasgow). Abakanowicz's next exhibition with Demarco came in *The Polish Exhibition*, in Blackfriars Street in 1986, with which Demarco marked the 20th anniversary of the opening of the original Melville Crescent gallery. Alongside her, the exhibition presented works by Kantor, Edward Dwurnik, Wladislaw Hasior, Zdzislaw Jurkiewicz and Josef Robakowski amongst others, while Joanna Przybyla was shown at Traquair House.



In March 1989, Abakanowicz exhibited, with Dwurnik, Jerzy Beres, Isabella Gustowska, Jerzy Nowosielski and Leon Tarasewicz, in the next major presentation of Polish art at the Demarco Gallery, *Art at the Edge: Contemporary Art from Poland*, selected by David Elliott of MOMA, Oxford, and Marius Hermansdorfer of the National Museum, Wrocław. Also in 1986, in the spirit of Edinburgh Arts, Demarco led a group of Scottish artists to Poland. Among many visits to artists' studios was one to Dwurnik's, and at the Foksal Gallery the group saw paintings by Tarasewicz and met Abakanowicz. Her final exhibition with Demarco before the present one came in 1991 with the solo *Sculptures by Magdalena Abakanowicz*, which was also a collaboration with MOMA, Oxford.

Demarco's 1972 presentation (as part of *Atelier '72*, for the official Edinburgh Festival) of Kantor's Cricot 2 theatre company's production of *The Water Hen* did more than any other to bring Kantor's vision of a different kind of theatre to international attention. In the gnarled and irregularly shaped Forresthill Poorhouse, Demarco found the perfect place for Kantor, one that facilitated his characteristic breakdown of the ideal space of performance and the dissolution of conventional boundaries between the roles of director, player and audience. One of Kantor's performers was his friend Wieslaw Borowski, the director of the Foksal Gallery in Warsaw, with whom Demarco has formed a lifelong bond. The old poorhouse demanded to be used again, and the following year Kantor directed his company in Witkiewicz's *Lovelies and Dowdies*, this time as part of the Edinburgh Arts programme. Demarco exhaustively documented both productions, while *Lovelies and Dowdies* was also filmed by Ken McMullen, leaving an unparalleled wealth of images that preserve both the detail and something of the spirit and atmosphere of those extraordinary events. Not only did Demarco introduce Kantor to Beuys in Edinburgh in 1973 (their only known encounter) but also thanks to his photography we see Beuys at *Lovelies and Dowdies*, not passively watching but involved in the action beside Zofia Kalinska as she emerges from the 'hencoop' as the princess Abenceraga.



In 1979, as part of *Awangarda Polska*, Demarco exhibited paintings and sculptural works by Kantor at Gladstone's Court, along with sculptures in wood by Jerzy Beres. When Kantor returned to Edinburgh in 1976 with *The Dead Class*, the production was presented by Demarco in Edinburgh College of Art for the Festival Fringe. After its Edinburgh run, the production transferred to Cardiff and London. *The Dead Class* was Kantor's last theatre production with Demarco, but as an artist he was included by Demarco in his 20th anniversary exhibition of 1986, in *Death, Life and Regeneration* in 1989 (with work by Helen Chadwick, Beuys, Neagu and MacLennan) and, after Kantor's death, in *Pentagonale Plus* during the Edinburgh Festival of 1991. This exhibition, which arose from an Italian cultural initiative, consisted of mainly small works from artists representing Austria, Britain, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia. Among them were several who had long-standing connections to Demarco: Abramovic, Todosijevic and Marko Krstanovic from Yugoslavia, Bernea, Bitzan and Neagu from Romania, Dwurnik and Kantor from Poland, and Mach, MacLennan and Yule from Scotland.

Although Yugoslavia was by far the most accessible of European communist countries to western travellers, Demarco's first visit came after his contacts with Poland and Romania. In December 1972, with an exhibition of new Yugoslavian art in mind for the following year's Edinburgh Festival, he visited collections and artists' studios, among them Rexhep Ferri's and Iskra Grabul's, in Sarajevo, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade, where the group of young artists associated with the Student Cultural Centre made a particular impression. Among his first list of possible exhibitors were Marina Abramovic, Radomir Damnjan, Zoran Popovic and Gergelj Urkom, all described by Demarco then as "conceptual artists". The final exhibition, *Eight Yugoslav Artists* (1973) was presented as part of his (as always) ambitious Festival programme, which included two other group exhibitions (with equally matter-of-fact titles), *Seven French Artists* and *The Austrian Exhibition*. The final eight Yugoslavs were Abramovic, Damnjan, Popovic and Urkom, plus Nusa and Sreco Dragan, Nesa Paripovic and Rasa Todosijevic. The exhibition was in two parts, artworks and films at the Demarco gallery, and performances in the gymnasium at Melville College. There they were presented under the banner of that year's Edinburgh Arts programme, then reaching its climax with Beuys, Kantor, Zbigniew Makarewicz, Hugh Macdiarmid and the Orkney filmmaker Margaret Tait among the many artists and speakers. It was at Melville College that Abramovic first performed *Rhythm 10*, simultaneously with performances by Todosijevic and Urkom in the same space, to an audience that included Beuys.



The connection with Yugoslavia developed further in late 1974, when Demarco next visited artists' studios and collections in Zagreb and Belgrade, meeting Abramovic again, with the curator Marijan Susovski. The visit was a preliminary to his next large exhibition of Yugoslavian art in Edinburgh, *Aspects '75*, in September of that year, but before that, in July, he visited Yugoslavia again, with the Edinburgh Arts group on a detour from Italy to the hilltop town of Motovun in Istria, to meet with Yugoslavian artists, among them Abramovic and Braco Dimitrijevic. In *Aspects '75*, shown at the Fruitmarket Gallery (then run by the Scottish Arts Council) Demarco presented work by 49 artists. Some he had shown in 1973, including Abramovic, Paripovic and the Dragans, but many were new to Edinburgh, including Ida Biard, Dimitrijevic, Ferri, Slobodan Tadic and Goran Trbulak. Abramovic's contribution (other than photographs of an earlier performance, *Rhythm 02*) was the 90-minute performance *Warm/Cold*, a 17-minute video of which survives in the Demarco archive. In the performance, she placed her arm

on a sheet of glass on a block of ice with a powerful electric heater suspended immediately above, and sat motionless except for one moment of violence, when she smashed the glass and screamed. This was Abramovic's last performance with Demarco, although she contributed a work on paper for *Pentagonale Plus* in 1991.

Demarco's connection with German and central and eastern European artists was not confined to the exhibitions noted above. (His extensive work with theatre companies is not discussed here but was also continuous through to the present time.) Although Uecker and Beuys were the mainstays of his German connections, he exhibited many individual German artists in the years after 1970, among them Gerhard Lang, Ulla Matussek, Jurgen Partenheimer, Hans-Dieter Pietsch and Angela Weyersberg; and group exhibitions, such as multiples by Rene Block gallery artists (including Beuys) shown at Edinburgh City Art Centre in 1982. Between 1967 and 2008, he presented twelve specifically Polish exhibitions in Edinburgh (solo, group and documentary) other than those mentioned previously, that ranged across tapestry, 'primitive' painting, and all forms of contemporary art. Among them, for example, were Franciszka Themerson in 1968, *4 Foksal Gallery Artists* in 1985; *The Foksal Gallery PSP* in 1979, *Andrzej Wajda Drawings* in 1992; *Barbara Koslowska and Zbigniew Makarewicz* in 1993 and *Razem: New Polish Art and Design* in 2008. Originating through the Demarco connection, the Foksal Gallery exhibited Tam MacPhail in 1973 and David Mach in 1985; and in 2008 Demarco presented an exhibition drawn from his documentation of *Atelier '72*, in Lodz. Of other Yugoslavian artists, he exhibited Branko Miljus in 1973 and Miroslav Sutej in a show of Cavallino artists in 1974, Jagoda Buic's tapestries in 1975, and then (separately) Igor Stepanic and Neue Slovenische Kunst in 1987. In addition, he took Scottish artists to exhibit in *Otok 2* for the Dubrovnik Festival in 1998 and exhibited *Witnesses of Existence* in Edinburgh, Kingston-on-Thames, Sarajevo and Berlin in 1993-94. Other Romanian exhibitions not noted above were Pavel Ilie's solo show in 1973; Stoica, Bernea and Radu Dragomirescu in *Three Romanian Artists* in 1978; *Art in the Open* in 1990; and Romanian and Scottish artists shown together in *Beyond Frontiers* in 2007. He also led two other group journeys to Romania, in 1990 and 1991. And beyond all of these, he has exhibited artists from Belarus, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania.

Through the years following the founding of his gallery in 1966, Demarco worked with younger Scottish artists, showing their work in the UK, taking their work abroad, travelling with them on Edinburgh Arts and other journeys, and increasingly often presenting their work in the company of their continental peers. This was the aspect of his strategy that complemented his work to bring contemporary European art and artists to Scotland. One of the first with whom he had a close and productive association was Rory McEwen, whom Demarco had included in the group of British artists whose paintings he sent to Warsaw in 1967. This was followed in 1969 by a solo exhibition at Melville Crescent during the Edinburgh Festival. McEwen was one of six artists given simultaneous solo shows at Melville Crescent (one of the others being Neagu, whom Demarco had first shown a few months earlier). His exhibition included a large steel sculpture, *Arizona Asleep*, seven glass and perspex works, and a large installation, *The Tweed Road*, which comprised five tweed-covered curved segments arranged beneath a suspended cubic ceiling of the same material. McEwen had begun to work with sheet glass and polarising perspex in 1965. It was not unusual for sculptors in the 1960s to explore colour, but as an applied skin more often than an integral attribute of materials. Though better known then and now for his botanical paintings, McEwen's lucent sculptures struck an original balance between minimalist values of geometrical form and the dynamic counterpoint given by colour, transparency and pictorial allusion. The exhibition also contained a single screenprint, from a multiple on which he had collaborated with his friend Jim Dine. Entitled *Rory McEwen - Jim Dine: Songs-Poems-Prints*, it was published by the Museum of Modern Art, New York and Atlantic Records, and comprised a screenprint by each artist with an LP of their songs and poetry. McEwen's screenprint is shown again in *10 Dialogues*.

Magdalena Abakanowicz in her studio, Warsaw, 1972.

Frank Dunlop and Tadeusz Kantor, Edinburgh, 1972.

Yugoslavian artists, including Marina Abramovic (centre), the Student Cultural Centre, Belgrade, 1975.



1970 was another intense year for McEwen. In January, he exhibited a group of small glass and perspex sculptures with Demarco. In August he accompanied Beuys, Demarco, Lesley Benyon, Henry Gough-Cooper and Mark Littlewood on a three-car journey to Rannoch Moor, shooting the film *Joseph Beuys in Scotland*. (In 2007, Alexander and Susan Maris were to retrace the journey to make their film, *13/08*, in response to McEwen's.) In August he and Neagu both exhibited in Demarco's other Festival exhibition, *New Directions*, and in October he presented a new work in *Wool Re-defined*, in which his co-exhibitors were Stephen Buckley, Michael Docherty and Alistair Mackintosh. After this remarkable year, McEwen's connection with Demarco faded, although he exhibited in the gallery's tenth anniversary exhibition in 1976. McEwen's botanical paintings have obscured what he achieved in his glass and perspex sculptures, but they demand to be seen again and written in to the history of his work.

Demarco first exhibited sculptural works by Ainslie Yule, then teaching at Gray's School of Art in Aberdeen, in December 1972, in a two-man show at Melville Crescent with the painter John Busby. Following this, in October 1974, Yule was one of three Scottish artists (the others being Iain Patterson and Jack Knox) whose work Demarco took to the Galleria del Cavallino in Venice, where Neagu was to exhibit the following summer. Demarco next included Yule in a selective survey of new sculpture, *Scottish Sculpture '75*, shown at the Fruitmarket Gallery in April 1975. The other artists were Fred Bushe, Michael Docherty, Jake Harvey, Jake Kempell, John Kirkwood, James McGlade, Tam McPhail, Bill Scott, Glen Onwin and Alistair Park. In 1982, Yule had a solo exhibition and in 1988 a two-man exhibition with Brian McCann, both at the Demarco Gallery; then in 1993, to coincide with the Venice Biennale, Demarco presented his large multi-part, mirrored sculpture, *Three Score Years and Ten*, at the Villa Foscari-Rossi in Stra.



Yule was a participant in several of Demarco's ambitious group exhibitions and projects with Scottish artists that he organised in eastern Europe. Among the former were *Demarcation '84*, in which he exhibited with 19 other artists including Neagu, MacLennan and Mach, and in the same year *Seven Scottish Artists* at the Robinson Galleries in Houston, Texas (in which Mach also exhibited); *Pentagonale Plus* of 1991 which again included MacLennan and Mach, but also work by Abramovic and Kantor amongst others; and *Columcille*, an exhibition of six

Irish and six Scottish artists in 1997. Among the eastern European projects, Yule travelled with Demarco and other artists to Sarajevo in 1988 and to Budapest in 1991, on both occasions to make and exhibit work *in situ*. These and other projects were extensions of the Edinburgh Arts summer school journeys of the 1970s, which had always involved artists making and exhibiting works, whether for galleries or as outdoor improvisations and performances. The Sarajevo project, *New Tendencies in Scottish Contemporary Art*, included work by 45 artists, seven of whom were present in Sarajevo, including Yule and Neagu. The 1991 project, which involved a journey to both Romania and Hungary, culminated in the exhibition *12 British Artists*, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Budapest, which provided facilities for the twelve travelling artists to make site-specific works. Finally, it was through Yule, as head of sculpture at the University of Kingston upon Thames, that in 1993, Demarco was invited to join the university, ultimately holding a personal chair as Emeritus Professor of European Cultural Studies.



A few years younger than Yule, Alastair MacLennan was one of the generation of Scottish artists whose early awareness of contemporary art was tremendously enriched by the exhibitions and the internationalist perspective of the Demarco Gallery, long before he came to be associated with it himself. At least as important to him was the encouragement and the sense of opening possibilities that Demarco gave to aspiring artists, by treating them with the same seriousness as he did their established elders. MacLennan's first performance for Demarco came in March 1980, with the 24-hour *TO WALK A STONE*, the final event at the Demarco Gallery in Montieth House, as a farewell 'blessing' on the space. He next worked under Demarco's aegis in *Demarcation '84*, in which Neagu, Mach and Yule exhibited. *BIRTH DEATH DAY* was a 48-hour continuous performance and installation. In 1986 MacLennan travelled to Poland with Demarco and a group of Scottish artists, during which he performed *HEADLESS*, in the arched cellar space of the Krzysztofory Gallery in Krakow (among the group were Anne Seagrave and Tina Keane, who also performed in the space). MacLennan's next involvement with Demarco came in the exhibition *Death, Life and Regeneration*, held in September 1989 at the National Theatre in London, in which the other artists were Helen Chadwick, Beuys, Kantor and Neagu. His last work for Demarco before the present exhibition was in *Pentagonale Plus* in 1991, the large group exhibition in which works by Mach, Neagu, Kantor and Abramovic were also shown. Their personal connection, however, has been continuous, and Demarco made many visits to Belfast where MacLennan has lived since the 1970s.

Demarco's active connection with David Mach began when he was invited by Phillip King to lecture to postgraduate students at the Royal College of Art, a contact he renewed when he visited the students' graduating exhibition in 1982. Mach's first installation for Demarco, *Thinking of England*, which used bottles part filled with liquid, was exhibited at the London Art Fair in 1983. In the following year, Mach exhibited another installation using the same materials in *Demarcation '84* at Edinburgh College of Art (the image was of a leaping horse), and later that same year Demarco included his work and Yule's in *7 Scottish Artists*, for the exhibition in Houston. Through Demarco, Mach's work came to the attention of the Foksal Gallery, which gave him a solo show in October 1985. He next showed with Demarco in the 1988 Sarajevo exhibition, in which Neagu and Yule were also included, although Mach was not one of the artists who travelled to the city. The project concluded with the exhibition *New Tendencies in Scottish Contemporary*



Art, in which he exhibited a work from the previous year, *Hard to Swallow*. Mach was also one of the Scottish artists shown in *Pentagonale Plus* in 1991, but two other projects involved a much closer dialogue with Demarco. First, in 1990, came *Three Scottish Sculptors* at the Venice Biennale (also known as *Scotland at the Venice Biennale*) in which his co-exhibitors were Arthur Watson and Kate Whiteford. This was the first time that Scotland had been specifically represented, Scottish artists having previously exhibited in the British pavilion. The project was organised by Barbara Grigor for the Scottish Sculpture Trust, and the selectors were Richard Calvacoressi, Julian Spalding and Richard Demarco.

Two years later, during the Edinburgh Festival, Mach made a portrait of Demarco entitled *Local Hero*, one of his *Matchheads* series. *Local Hero* is an apposite work with which to end. As both a piece of theatre or artist's action – Mach himself set fire to and extinguished the head before an audience outside the Demarco Gallery in Blackfriars Street – and a sculpture, it unites the two main sides of Demarco's creative engagement in one work. And, with its indelible tartan patterning, it claims Demarco for Scotland, the place where, as he has said himself and as his record shows, he has always failed to live.

Rory McEwen (seated left) with Salamata and Nazakat Ali Khan and musicians, at the Richard Demarco Gallery, August 1969. The sculpture is McEwen's *Arizona Asleep* (1969).

Ainslie Yule with *Rack*, Aberdeen, 1977.

Alastair MacLennan, *HEADLESS*, performance at the Krzysztofory Gallery, Krakow, 1986.

David Mach and Richard Demarco with *Local Hero*, Edinburgh, 1992.

AINSLIE YULE

Margaret Garlake

Sculptors may be crudely divided between those whose work is fabricated to their design and those who make their own. Ainslie Yule is indubitably a hands-on, workshop man; no doubt his many years as Head of Sculpture at Kingston University encouraged a pragmatic approach to the physical problems of sculpture. Retirement to rural Norfolk brought the gift of uninterrupted time as well as a new studio and workshop, which have been fundamental in formulating his new work. The workshop is profoundly important (Yule built it himself and is, consequently, a certified builder); tools are prominent and serious. Works are constructed, visually tested, deconstructed and put back together differently, emphasising that the process of making is always to the fore. Commentators on his work have emphasised this point: 'the process, the ingredients are necessarily more important than the finished object which is itself transitional'.

This was especially evident in work exhibited in the late '70s at the Fruitmarket Gallery. Floor pieces of wood, acrylic and plaster looked ephemeral, almost throw-away, but Douglas Hall emphasised their evident relationship to 'the tradition of the Russians, of Schwitters and Giacometti, and to a lesser extent of Picasso'. In earlier years Yule also worked with glass and mirrors, emphasising shiny, impervious surfaces that culminated in the complex, theatrical installation *Three-Score-Years-and-Ten* (1990). This large piece was funded by Glasgow City of Culture for the 'Art Machine Exhibition', later shown in Copenhagen. Richard Demarco, acting with his usual perceptive generosity, then independently provided a venue at the Villa Foscari Rossi to exhibit the piece during the 1993 Venice Biennale.

This aesthetic of surface, reflection and repetition gave way to its antithesis in the form of wall-mounted, rough textured, light absorbent works made of cellulose fibre. Deeply internalised, these sculptures referred obliquely to the Scottish coastal landscape of Yule's childhood in North Berwick. Drawing on his knowledge of that coast, Yule has long been fascinated by wave forms, which still structure much of his work. Waves are highly theorised, scientifically and optically; at the same time, they belong to a familiar seascape. Two new works, *Wave 1* and *Wave 2* reveal a tenuous link back to the cellulose fibre sculpture. Contracted from lengths of MDF cut with great precision on a band-saw into gradated, somewhat irregular profiles with an overall wave profile, they recall the sea-battered rock formations of many northern coastlines. It was not Yule's intention to produce a portrait of an area, nor has he done so and it may be that other observers will read them simply as three-dimensional extensions of his wave form drawings and paintings, to which they are undoubtedly related. Their surfaces share the delicacy of these predominantly blue paintings on board, having been rubbed with pumice to leave a surface with the colour and textural gradations of stone, achieved through an almost metamorphic process of coming into being. *Long Shore 1* and *Long Shore 2* also set up a highly evocative vision of shoreline, beach, horizon and sky, the result of deeply instilled memories of the natural world. Their metallic gold, bronze and silver hues offset against black are those of the shale bings of West Lothian, where Yule's parents lived for a period, just as they are the colours of sunset. Uniting these apparently disparate works is Yule's sense of belonging to a specific landscape that is lodged deep in his memory and mind's eye and, no doubt, in the way that he walks and moves: a phenomenological sense of place which enables him to be, as he puts it, simultaneously 'there and not there'.

Yule's three-dimensional work grows from a large body of drawings; often begun as sets of ideas and variations, they emerge from a level below conscious thought and are a progress towards it. Some evolve into measured working drawings, moving also towards the precision of tools in the workshop, while others become paintings rather than sculpture. Recently he has turned again to glass and mirrors, combining them with wood, matt and reflective surfaces and a breath-taking range and richness of colour in an exploration of inclusion and exclusion and interior and exterior dichotomies. These themes emerged from many hours spent in the Musée National du Moyen Âge in Paris and the Victoria & Albert Museum, scrutinising mediaeval reliquaries, especially those constructed in the form of miniature houses with pitched roofs and pointed gables. Especially significant to him were the intricately enamelled, twelfth-century Becket Casket and the reliquary shrines to St. Thomas Becket, all made in Limoges. Heavily and richly decorated, these small repositories of the sacred are both in-your-face and mysterious since their most liturgically precious aspect - the relics that

they contain - are hidden in secure internal compartments. Today we look at them through glass cases which exclude us, rendering us passive, silent observers. As fragile objects, the reliquaries are preserved within a further fragile medium which sometimes replicates them through reflection. Reflection, frailty, repetition are characteristics of Yule's current work, allied with considerations of space, landscape, silence and the processes of making.

Clear, glittering glass is his favoured medium, with the template of the pointed gable running through much of the work. Typically, slats of pointed or rectangular glass are marked with colour, set in slots in a wooden base, then covered with a Perspex box that replicates the museum showcase. *Black Wave* consists of rectangular slats of glass on which Yule painted various wave shapes with a suspension of iron filings in acrylic. Set on a dark base, it is sombre and appears physically powerful, assuming the green hue of water when viewed along its length. To move then to *Colour Piece*, to which *Black Wave* is linked both in the sequence of production and as its visual opposite, is to shift from an exterior world of implicit natural violence to an interior one of encrusted caskets, display and excess. The strength of distinctions between the works, as much as their beguiling visual detail makes it essential to see them separately, without the distraction of another jewel-like work in the corner of one's eye, to allow the drama of each one to become apparent.

Colour Piece is wonderfully exuberant in hue, with paint almost too heavy for the thin glass that supports it. Despite the physical presence of the pigment, this is a more purely sculptural work than the semi-pictorial *Long Shore 1* and 2. Intense colour also characterises *Tidal 1: Blue Piece* where smeared pigment gives way to precise, if enigmatic linear structures that gradually reveal their forms. Precision, inescapable when working with glass, is inherent in Yule's process and imagery. At its most refined his imagery is no more than colour on a simple shape, as is the case with *Marble Dust Piece* where the glass slats are tinted with differing densities and tones of marble dust in acrylic gel. Two further works are explorations of blue lines drawn on glass slats, their complexity mounting towards the centre of the work so that, viewed from one end, there is an almost solid blue form at the centre. For *Labyrinth 1* Yule adopted the forms of a ziggurat and a wave, but whereas both are progressive, moving towards a greater density, the wave is organic and external, embodying light and movement, while the ziggurat is densely static and internal. *Double Labyrinth* derives from a Roman maze preserved on a wall in Lucca which in turn resembles the mediaeval maze set in the floor of Chartres Cathedral.

From formal metaphors for houses it is a natural progression to the house-like form of the reliquary itself. *Mirror House* is a brilliantly reflective container that appears - impossibly - to have no interior and no access. Its glittering presence records a starting point parallel to *Black Wave*, in that it was the prototype for all the house-like works, which comment on and explore variants on its physical nature and its less explicit characteristics. *Long House* is one of several wood-based pieces with applied colour on glass which plays on perceptions of interior and exterior, fullness and emptiness, accessibility and exclusion. The deceptively straight-forward *Black Enclosure* contains a detailed internal structure like a columned passage in a renaissance palace; visible only through tiny apertures, it is designed to lure and finally exclude the inquisitive viewer. Carefully concealed blue glass gives a distinctive interior light and, though it looks empty, the structure contains a further enclosed space, a place of deep secrecy. A similar work, *Enclosed Object*, is set inside a glass box, one side of which is smeared with blue pigment; it relates to a wall panel painted with box-like shapes and wave forms.

A word should be added about the supporting structures of these works. Yule's physically delicate but intellectually robust works sit on heavy-duty metal frames that act as cradles, made to his design. Perhaps rather more solid than is essential, they reinforce the fragility of the works and more important, the extent to which understanding and perception are transient, easily lost, requiring a correspondingly solid effort on the part of the observer to identify and retain the significance of the works. Impact is not enough: as with the reliquaries in their original usage, there is an enduring content, physical and metaphysical, that needs to be grasped and to be held, like all precious things, in memory.



From top: Ainslie Yule sculptures, Richard Demarco Gallery, 1972. Work by Fred Stiven on wall.

Gabriella Cardazzo with sculpture by Ainslie Yule, *Three Scottish Artists: John Knox, Iain Paterson, Ainslie Yule*, Galleria del Cavallino, Venice, 1974.

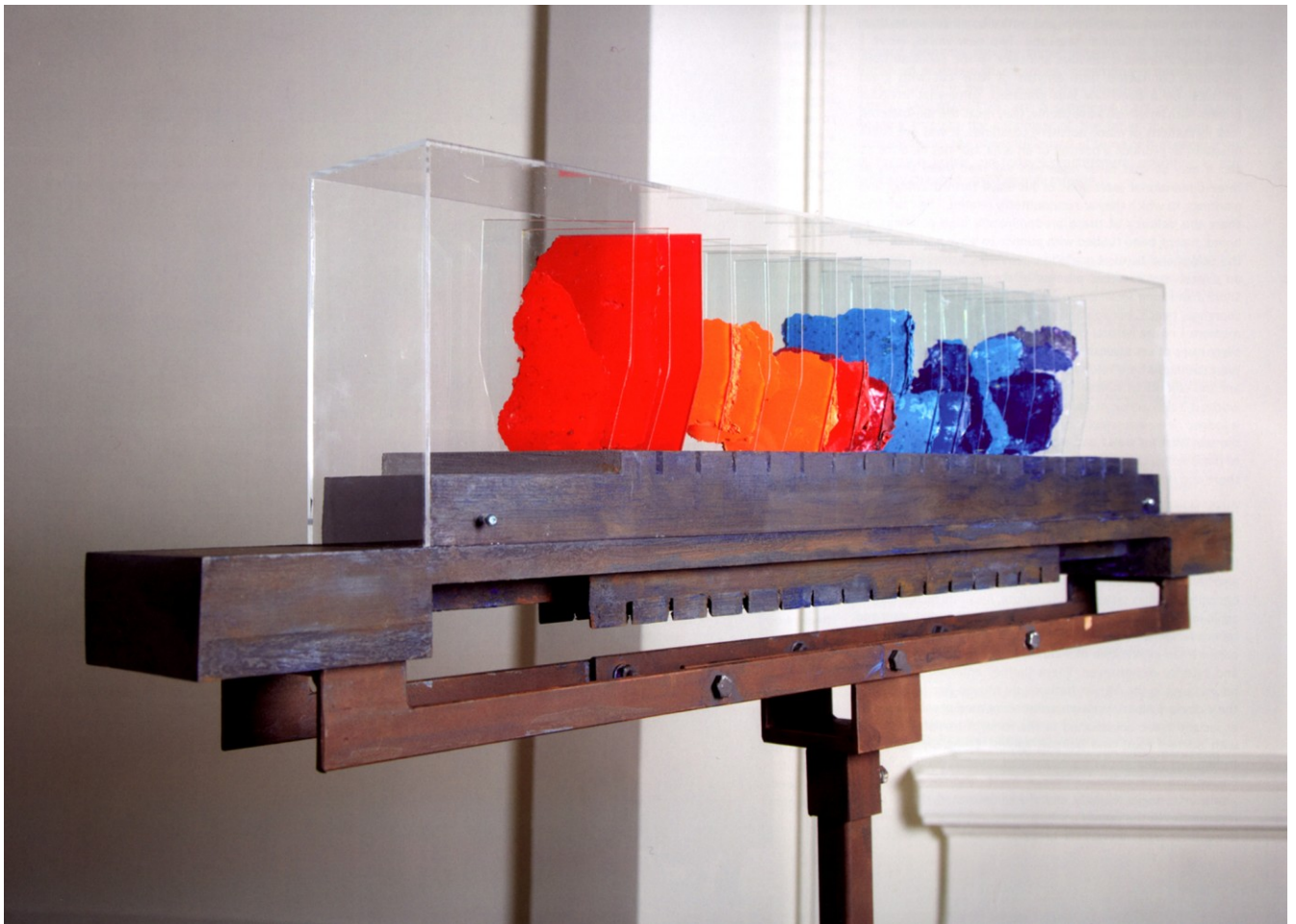
Ainslie Yule, *Three Score Years and Ten*, installed at Villa Foscari-Rossi, Stra, Italy (1993; bottom image), and at the McLellan Galleries, Glasgow (1990). Photographer: Ainslie Yule.

ENDNOTES

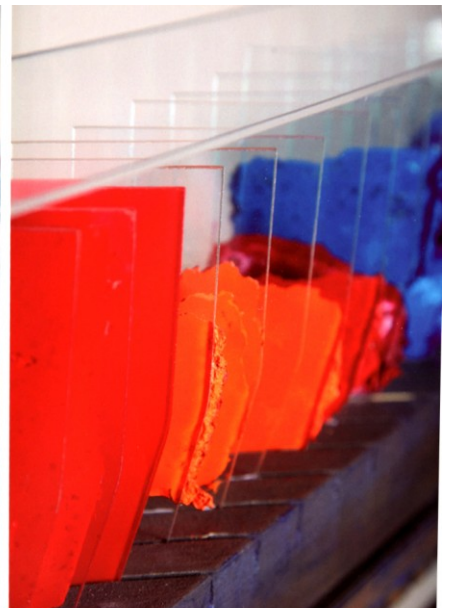
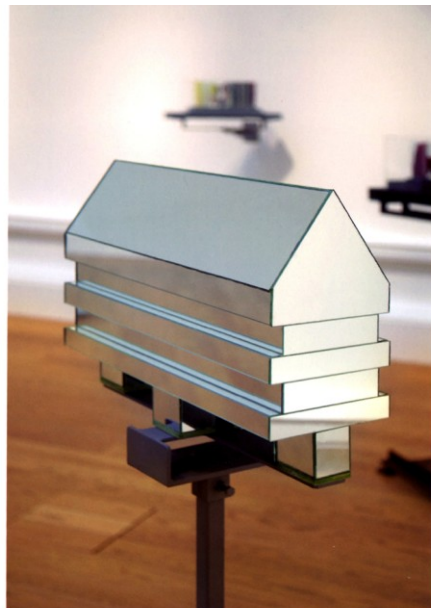
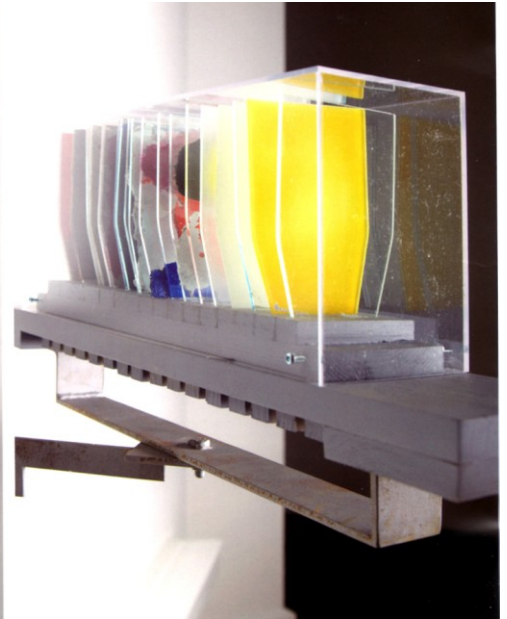
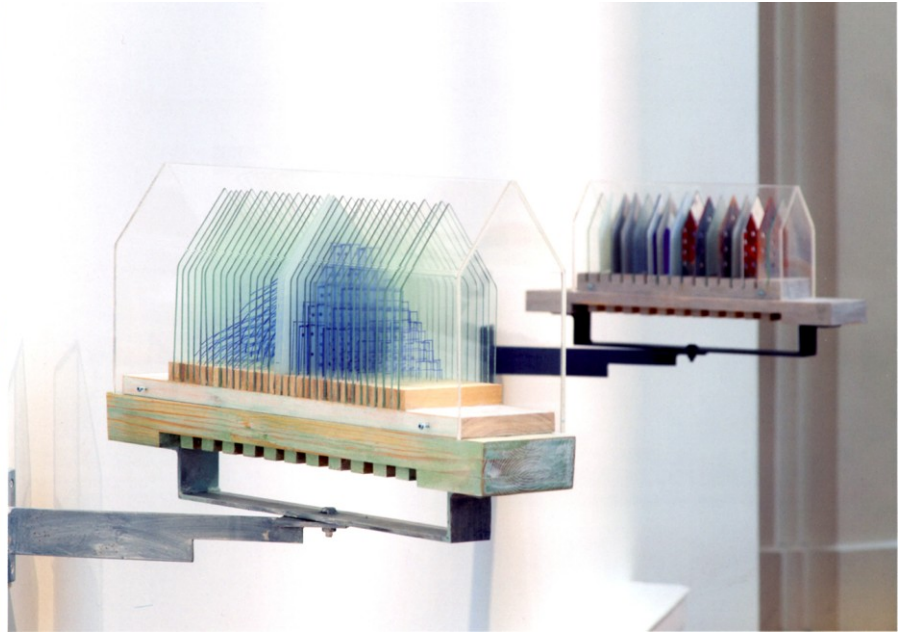
¹ Suzanne Marston, *Ainslie Yule - Takamiya*, exh. cat., Takamiya & Kingston University, 1997, p. 9.

² Douglas Hall, 'Ainslie Yule: sculptures and drawings' in exh. cat., *Ainslie Yule: Sculptures and Drawings*, Scottish Arts Council, 1978.

³ See Mark Gisbourne, *Ainslie Yule, Art Machine: Three-Score-Years-and-Ten*, Villa Foscari Rosso, Venice Biennale, 1993.







This page, top row from left:
 Ainslie Yule, *Wave and Ziggurat* (detail, and foreground)
 Middle row:
 Ainslie Yule, *Small Longhouse*; *Small Colour Piece*
 Bottom row:
 Ainslie Yule, *Mirror House*; *Colour Piece* (detail)
 Previous pages: Ainslie Yule
Colour Piece (detail bottom left);
Longshore 1 (foreground detail bottom right)
 All works 2009-2010. Royal Scottish Academy 2010

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EXHIBITION

Exhibition organised by Euan McArthur and Arthur Watson at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee, with Colin Greenslade at the Royal Scottish Academy.

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The Artists: Magdalena Abakanowicz: Magda Grabowska, Tomasz Piatkowski; David Mach; Alastair MacLennan: Slavka Sverakova; Alexander and Susan Maris; Gunther Uecker: Christine Uecker, Jacob Uecker; Ainslie Yule: Mary Yule; Cricoteka, for Tadeusz Kantor: Tomasz Tomaszewski, Marta Brys, Bogdan Renczynski, Dorota Krakowska, Natalia Zarzecka, Jaroslaw Suchan, Anda McBride; the Paul Neagu Estate: Ilonda Costides, Andrew Ignarski.

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Transport and installation: Cathie MacDonald, Constantine Art Services, Brandt Transport (Poland), Wullie Carnie (Arthur Mackay Ltd.), Steve Higgins (Mike Bissett Plastics), Calum MacDonald (Giclee UK), Thomas McGuire (GMT Relocations), Shane and John (Finix Lighting), Jamie Sutherland (Leith Framing), Paul, Phil and Calum (b:spoke Ltd.), Michael Bowdidge, Renny Nisbett, Duncan Robertson, Patryk Bit, Simon Burns Cox, Derek Sutherland, Martin McKenna, Olga Rek, Paul Ditch, John Biddulph.

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LENDERS

The Demarco European Art Foundation Archive: Photographic documentation of performances by Marina Abramovic (*Rhythm 10*), Rasa Todosijevic and Gergelj Urkom (*Upholstering a Chair*) (1973). Photographic documentation of *Three Pots for the Poorhouse*, action by Joseph Beuys (1974).

The Richard Demarco Collection: Joseph Beuys: *The Scottish Symphony: Celtic Kinloch Rannoch* (multiple; 1980); *New Beginnings are in the Offing* (multiple, 1981); *Lady Rosebery, Joseph Beuys, Buckminster Fuller, Edinburgh* (multiple, 1980); documentations: *Joseph Beuys: 3 pots action* (1974) and *Appeal by Joseph Beuys* (n.d.). Rory McEwen: *Tall Talk* (n.d.); two untitled glass sculptures (c. 1970)

The Demarco Archive at the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art: Marina Abramovic: *Warm/Cold* (DVD of 1975 video). Joseph Beuys: *Three Pots for the Poorhouse* action (DVD of 1974 video). Paul Neagu: *Gradually Going Tornado* (DVD of 1974 video).

The Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art: Joseph Beuys: *Sled* (1970), *Three Pots for the Poorhouse – Action Object* (1974). David Mach: *Dying for It* (1989).

City of Edinburgh Collection: David Mach: *Local Hero* (1992).

The Royal Scottish Academy of Art and Architecture: Alexander and Susan Maris: *13/08 (After Rory McEwen)* (2007).

Christabel Holland: Rory McEwen: two untitled glass sculptures (n.d.) and 1966.

Ośrodek Dokumentacji Sztuki Tadeusza Kantora Cricoteka/Centre for the Documentation of the Art of Tadeusz Kantor Cricoteka: Tadeusz Kantor: *The Great Emballage of the End of the 20th Century* (1988); Film of final four minutes of *I Shall Never Return*, Cricot 2 production directed by Tadeusz Kantor (1988).

Paul Neagu Estate: Paul Neagu: *Nine Catalytic Stations* (n.d.).

University of Dundee: Rory McEwen: *Untitled* (screenprint, 1969).

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