



Liminal
The Otter Gallery

Artists

Steve McDade

Shirley Chubb

Christopher McHugh

Rachel Johnston

Victoria Brown

Elizabeth Colley

Liminal

The exhibition takes as its point of reference the notion of 'liminal space' (from the Latin word *limen*, meaning "a threshold")

The idea of threshold indicates an 'in between-ness' relating to, or being an intermediate state, phase or a transitional condition.

Whilst the term was first coined in relation to anthropology (Arnold van Gennep) the idea of a transitional or changing state applies equally to visual art practice. Within art there is a constant oscillation between a material presence and the interpretative encounter. There is a kind of suspension or hovering, a disorientation, where multiple 'readings' and association can operate. The ambiguity that 'liminality' proposes also carries with it the possibility of change and of moving across borders. 'The liminal' suggests that art occupies a position at, or on both sides of a boundary or threshold of the legible and represents a sense of 'coming into being'.

*It is a negotiation between the forms of art and those of non-art which makes it possible to form combinations of elements capable of speaking twice over: on the basis of their legibility and on the basis of their illegibility.*¹

The exhibition 'Liminal' by the Department of Fine Art at UoC presents the latest in a series of research-led investigations focused on visual aspects of actual and virtual space.

This exhibition follows on from 'Entrance to a Lane' 2011 and 'The Margins of the Lane' 2012 and continues the development of art work focusing on the complexity of peripheral spaces. There is still a resonating presence of landscape within the exhibition which can be seen in the use of architectural elements situated in relation to land and in the use of interior and exterior spaces.

¹ Ranciere, J. (2010) *Aesthetics and its Discontents*. Cambridge. Polity Press, p46.

Liminal

The Otter Gallery, University of Chichester
5th October – 17th November, 2013

Artists

Steve McDade, Shirley Chubb, Christopher McHugh, Rachel Johnston,
Victoria Brown, Elizabeth Colley

The work of these artists reflects their individual approaches and interpretation of liminal space. The range of responses includes drawing, film, painting, photography, textiles, and sculptural objects.

Liminality

A symposium on the theme of liminality, 8th November 2013.

Panel including Prof. Maurice Owen (Southampton Solent University), Prof. Charlie Hooker (University of Brighton), Dr Catherine Baker (Norwich University of the Arts) and artist Matthew Burrows, with exhibiting artists.

(Further details from Clarie Hilton, Department of Fine Art
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Steve McDade

The current set of work presents a continuation of visual responses to landscape.

The theme of liminality allowed a further exploration of ideas focused on the ambiguities and tensions between landscape and the built environment.

Whilst previous work dealt with entrances, edges and margins, this work opens up various concerns around space, time and representation. The work(s) use material qualities to configure the threshold between surface and shadow, light and dark and the ambiguity of the actual, the contingent and the immaterial.

The works are constructed in a deliberately 'provisional' way, emphasising the flux between material construction and 'mental image' or concept. The works are incomplete.

This 'in-between-ness' is a property of all art in that the address is always to the viewer with the invitation across the threshold into the work.

The layering of membranes of transparent sheets of polyester and paper, of drawn marks, projected shadows and light filled images, creates a double response; that of the familiar (depiction) and the fugitive (the image as metaphor). This two-sided-ness reflects the process for the completion of the work the space or threshold of the material work and the critical 'work' (idea + reception) of the work. (see Ranciere quote elsewhere)

There is a specific reference in two of the drawings to the site of the Graylingwell (Linden Homes) development.

The former hospital is being transformed into an estate of private dwellings.

This shift from 'institutional' into a 'private' space is a kind of metamorphosis between different sorts of 'residential' spaces. The former 'inmates' isolated on the margins of the town in a world between worlds are now being replaced by a more self-selecting group of inhabitants. The drawings make reference to this shift through reference to 'shuttered' windows and doorways and to fences that 'edge off' and define that which is between the public and the private.



Exiled Oil on Canvas 2011

Gap — Polyester, wood and PVA/resin

This assemblage relates to a previous painting ('Exiled' 2011 from 'Entrance to a Lane'.) The missing fence panel presents a gap or void; a threshold and a two way proposition, of escape or invasion.



Graylingwell Windows - Graphite & PVA/resin on polyester & paper 2013

The triple membranes produce shadows and light drawings of the institutional buildings of Graylingwell.



Linden / Limen

Acrylic, PVA/resin, polyester & wood 2013

The use of industrial materials reflects the building work taking place. The depiction of the fence is a stark signifier of the divide between public and private.

Shirley Chubb

One, Two, Three, Four

In talking about creative thinking Irene Barberis-Page describes how artists explore 'intersecting porosities of the visible, invisible and conceptual'.²

This idea of different realities merging to reflect multiple layers of experience underpins my work which here responds to the former Graylingwell psychiatric hospital. A location laden with past experiences the site is gradually transforming in to a new living environment as it undergoes redevelopment.

The work presents bisected views of particular locations on the working site and investigates the edges between what we see and what we know of a place. The transitions within and between images consider how our spatial awareness and anticipation of change merge as a liminal experience that hovers between different perspectives.

² Farthing, S., Chorpening, K. and Wiggins, C. (ed.) (2012). *The Good Drawing*. London: Chelsea Colleges of Art & Design.



Video Projection: Duration 13.20

Christopher McHugh

Between Paintings

*Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow*³

Between... cup and lip ... two stools ... the frying pan and the fire ... the devil
and the deep blue sea ... the forceps and the stone ... nothingness and eternity

Take two elements, maybe a pair of binary oppositions; focus on where they meet... and notice how a line appears, a shadow falls, where this meets that, inside meets outside, day meets night, success meets failure... This shadow line is the gap where definition is in doubt and words fail... a space of potential, on the edge of perception, where only a sensation of separation can be found...

And to *make* something that conveys this no-thing - a something that embodies an absence...? The answer: something real, that asserts material presence to render space... in other words, paintings... paintings perhaps that have to test the boundary of what painting can be...

... and in the event this means making paintings that are more frame than fill... with real objects from the world - wood, the architecture of rooms, floors, doors... objects with a history ... wear and tear ... an index of insults visible ... reinstated or transformed ... taking off and putting on ... surfaces added and removed ...

...and in the viewing ... in ... and out ...

³ T.S. Eliot *The Hollow Men*.



Between Paintings

- 1 ... *the motion and the act*
- 2 ... *if it wasn't for the 'ouses ...*
- 3 ... *you, me and the gatepost*
- 4 ... *a rock and a hard place*
- 5 ... *'fore and aft'*

Wood, hand-made paper, acrylic, PVA, watercolour, gouache, primer, eggshell, varnish, French polish, adhesive.



Rachel Johnston

Undine

The made objects and photographs that make up this piece, continue to address the themes of place, journey-making and narrative that are central to my practice. The woven shoes are made to be worn in particular places, representing bodily experience of the world and the way that a moment of sensory immediacy can act as a trigger to memories of other places and times. The photographs allude to these moments by beginning to suggest, but not define, a narrative.

There are three pairs of shoes: one worn pair, one unworn and one that is barely there - a ghostly presence. In wearing only one of the pairs almost to the point of destruction, I was considering the ideal of 'perfection' in relation to personal identity and the space between what is desired and the realities of life.

Graylingwell Hospital was founded on the site of an ancient spring and the motif of water is used throughout this piece. The shoes were worn on a number of journeys that all, except for the final one that finished at the Graylingwell site, ended in water. The stepping into water suggests ritual cleansing and symbolises a state of liminality, an uncertain space and a point of transition at which the old self is left behind and a new identity assumed.



Mixed media.

Victoria Brown

1440: Ordinance disorder

Latitude: 50° 50' 32.532"

Longitude: -0° 46' 28.3296"

Using the construct proposed by Deleuze and Guattari in '1440: The Smooth and the Striated.'⁴ This work for 'Liminal' uses hand rolled felt (the smooth nomadic cloth- space constantly being translated) to contain the grid lines of an OS map or Longitude and Latitude, the lines by which we locate ourselves.⁵ The crocheted silk embedded in the felt - the striated fabric represents the settlements and the institution (of Graylingwell and the neighbouring barracks). Records of the Graylingwell site show ancient earth works, which form part of the 'Chichester Dykes' and are evidence of a proto- urban tribal settlement. The crocheted is employed to evoke this and Calvino's *Ersilia*,⁶ the traces that settlement leaves. The crocheted mat/p also alludes to the domestic but there is disorder in the structure, it is no longer a familiar doily it is a metaphor for the mind, indeed Lacan uses textile as a metaphor for the subjects' experience in analysis.

The exhibited work is about the layers of settlements and movement; the physical and the psychological. The order of making, the mould and the cast, the ludicrous notion of pouring molten pewter into felt moulds formed around glass, all play a part in the construction of the fabric of the work. It is about the layers of history that we dig up and display and the placement of objects suggesting complex narratives.

⁴ Gilles, D. and Félix G. (1988) *A Thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Athlone Press, pg 479.

⁵ 1440 is the date when Longitude and Latitude were employed to navigate the abstract 'smooth' space of sea, an allegory for the mind and the liminal boundaries of sanity. The map becomes the stand in for the old Graylingwell Institute in the recovery of the patient.

⁶ Calvino, I. (1979). *Invisible Cities*. Published London: Pan Books.



Wool felt, silk, resin, cast pewter and aluminum.

Elizabeth Colley

Seep

The work presents two aspects of a "space between". Both aspects refer to spaces existing in relation to buildings. Architecture itself represents the relationship of dwellings to the site of landscape. In Rosalind Krauss's famous use of a Klein diagram, the axis, landscape - not landscape presents a space which conjoins culture with nature. Buildings are a sort of landscape plus... this 'plus' represents an overlaying, a one thing on top of another, and a point of meeting or a threshold where uncontrollable natural forces rise through into the 'rational' space of social communities. The underground, the hidden, crosses the threshold (the space between) seeping from the unseen into the visible. It is a leakage between one world and another analogous with the drives and desires of the unconscious seeping into the everyday.



Seep

Oil and glaze on Canvas

The Painting is simply a pool seeping from the edge of a wall - an overflow. The resulting effect is to produce, through a process of "seeing - in", a semblance of a landscape - an island (of the dead, perhaps an echo of Arnold Bocklin) and to privilege a stain as an image of mysterious allure.



At The Edge

Mixed Media

The sheds are buildings at the edge of land (gardens) Marginal and in between. They are themselves liminal spaces, neither proper dwellings nor substantial architecture. They are a sort of 'becoming space' with associations of magical (alchemical) experimentation and hobbies but also to the abandoned, such as shantytowns signifiers of impermanence. The sheds ooze their stains onto the paved surface of the land.