



# Switchspace

Flat 1/2

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>Envelope-to: mail@sparwasserhq.de  
>Date: Mon, 22 Sep 2003 16:00:40 -0800  
>Subject: Re: "old habits die hard"  
>From: Sorcha Dallas <sorcha.dallas@ntlworld.com>  
>To: Sparwasser HQ <mail@sparwasserhq.de>  
>  
>hello  
>we have selected our video by the artist Craig Mulholland  
>Will Federal Express it tomorrow, should be with you before 8pm on  
wednesday  
>hope this is ok  
>Best Wishes  
>Sorcha Dallas for Switchspace  
>

# Switchspace

>Switchspace is an artists run moving gallery, committed to  
>supporting new and established artists at all stages of the creative  
>process. We have curated a selection of exhibitions at varying  
>locations and we feel this transient approach offers a challenge to  
>individual artists as well as offering an alternative to the  
>traditional gallery system.

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>Switchspace was set up over four years ago by myself, Sorcha Dallas,  
>and my colleague Marianne Greated. We were recent GSA graduates  
>who, like the many artists around us, were faced with the daunting  
>prospect of acquiring a studio, making and showing work in an  
>already saturated artistic environment. We were both well aware of  
>the artist-run collectives who were trying to deal with these  
>problems and the positive effect they had, not only on their  
>immediate surroundings, but on the wider artistic community. We  
>began by utilising the front room of my west end tenement, after  
>fifteen months we had shown work by fourteen artists ranging from  
>solo and collaborative exhibitions in drawing & painting, video,  
>installation and performance. Predominantly Glasgow-based artists  
>were shown, but there was also work from New York and London.

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>The term 'Switchspace' was chosen as it really summed up our  
>intention to utilise and transform alternative/unusual spaces into  
>environments in which work could be viewed. Being a self-funded,  
>private space, this first incarnation of Switchspace had its  
>limitations, especially in terms of access and advertising. We both  
>felt we had achieved as much as we could at that space and in order  
>for us to move on and progress we had to live up to our name and  
>switch the space. We were also spurred on by good publicity, most  
>notably a feature article on us in the December issue of Artists  
>Newsletter.

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>The idea for the second incarnation of Switchspace was born of the  
>need to expand our operations while remaining true to the spirit of  
>the original concept. To this end we decided to set up as a charity  
>and have been fortunate to secure the sponsorship of Impact Arts(Fab  
>Flats) who have been providing us with a variety of properties  
>throughout Glasgow in which to exhibit. We have already shown 6  
>artists over a 12 month period within these properties, with  
>financial support from Glasgow City Council, and hope to continue  
>this program in 2003. Our recent program has included new work by  
>Ian Balch, Neil Bickerton, Margaret Barron, Craig Mulholland,  
>Douglas Morland with forthcoming exhibitions by Sally Osborn & Alex  
>Frost, Clara Ursitti, Lorna McIntyre, Beagles and Ramsay and Sam  
>Ainsley. For this programme we have been successful in securing

>really positive support and press. We believe this is a new and  
>interesting idea with the work and venue constantly changing. We  
>also are committed to offering an educational program in conjunction  
>with the exhibition program. Both myself and Marianne work as  
>freelance artists working in schools, youth groups, museums and  
>prisons with children, adults and special needs persons. We have  
>combined our experience and understanding to develop an interesting  
>and informative series of workshops and events, including free  
>workshops for local schools as well as gallery tours and artists  
>talks, all proving invaluable in involving and informing the local  
>and wider artistic communities.

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>Switchspace also converted, for a period of 11 months, the basement  
>space at Offshore Café, Gibson Street, where we showed emerging  
>artists on a monthly basis. This also proved to be a really  
>successful project and we ran in conjunction with this a weekly art  
>education programme for local children based on each exhibition.

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>We have also curated a video/new media exhibition at The Arches in  
>April 2002, in conjunction with RAW and the Glasgow Art Fair. This  
>was a real success, with attendance figures being on average 100  
>people per day for the duration of the show and offered us an  
>opportunity to curate a different sort of exhibition in an unusual  
>environment.

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>We have also renovated and recently launched the new Glasgow arts  
>venue, The Chateau, with a large exhibition in December 2002. For  
>this we worked with a range of cutting edge artists, based in  
>Glasgow, Edinburgh and London, to create a series of interventions  
>throughout the building. Contributing artists were Neil Bickerton &  
>Lorna Macintyre, Karla Black, Paul Embleton, Lotte Gertz, Kim  
>Coleman & Susea Green, Alex Frost, Emily Richardson and Hayley  
>Tompkins. The opening was a massive success with over 350 attending  
>the event.

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>At present we have just completed exhibiting at this year's Art  
>Fair in Glasgow where we were within the Contemporary Pavilion as  
>part of EXTENSION, alongside The Collective, CCA, The Fruitmarket,  
>Lapland, Glasgow Sculpture Studios and Tramway. For this event we  
>showed work by Laurence Figgis and Henry Coombes, recent GSA  
>graduates. We are also continuing our programme of exhibitions  
>within residential properties due to securing major funding by The  
>Scottish Arts Council as well as continued support from Glasgow City  
>Council and Fab Flats. In 2003 we also hope to develop links with  
>similar organisations situated within the Scotland and the UK.

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# “Smile in the crowd”

## Craig Mulholland

Smile in the Crowd is intended to operate within the genre of the 80s pop video, which provides a narrative model and armature. The action is set to the cover version of a song by New Wave British group The Durutti Column, here its melancholic and slightly paranoid lyrics are read out by remote text-to-speech software.

The narrative also draws heavily on a scene from King Vidor’s silent film *The Crowd* 1928, a portrait of the struggle for subjectivity in an industrialised, mass-consumer culture. Using a combination of D.W. Griffith’s realism and Sergei Eisenstein’s montage aesthetic, Vidor introduces the protagonist, John Sims and the viewer to the nightmare of an industrialised New York, with mass crowd scenes, melodramatic tracking shots of skyscrapers and a plethora of workers sitting at identical desks.

Smile in the Crowd satirically examines this concept in a post-industrial light, focusing on the internal and external focalisation of the viewer. Here the image of the anonymous worker is that of the prostitutes telephone-booth advert, commonly found in large British cities. These are painted, animated and cut with live action footage of crowds, traffic and internet porn, mimicking the circular narratives and absurd dialogues of the low-fi pop video. The narratively unmotivated disavowal of internal focalisation echoes the voyeur/protagonist’s process of disintegration and highlights the melancholia, of living by increasingly remote means.