



The Archive, the Studio, the Interviews, the Tapes and Writing

Ian Massey

Biography

Ian Massey is an artist and writer. He is Principal Lecturer, Subject Leader for Communication Arts and Design. Trained in Fine Art and Graphic Design he has exhibited paintings at galleries across the UK, and worked as a freelance illustrator for a range of clients, including the BBC, British Council, Vegetarian Society and Yorkshire Bank. Ian has worked in higher education for over 20 years. Since 2001 he has written for the Association of Illustrators: firstly for *The AOI Journal*, to which he contributed a series of reviews and interviews with renowned illustrators; he also guest-edited the journal on several occasions. Ian now writes for the successor to the journal, *Varoom*, for which he also sits on the Editorial Board. Ian's other written outputs include: John McLean, exhibition catalogue essay, *Flowers East*, London, 2001; 'A Dialogue with Joanna Quinn' (book chapter) in *Drawing: The Process*, Intellect Books, 2005; 'Technicolour Travelogue', article on Patrick Proctor's use of aquatint, *Printmaking Today*; Vol 15, No 3, Autumn 2006;

and 'Against the Neutrality of Form: the work of Morten Løbner Espersen' in *Ceramics Arts and Perception*, issue 75, March 2009.

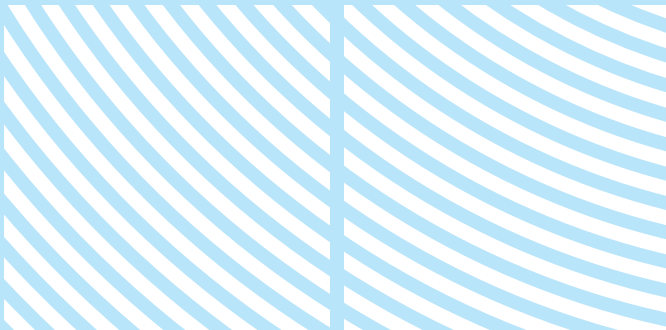
Ian's most recent publications include: *Patrick Proctor: Art and Life*, monograph biography, Unicorn Press, 2010; and *John Blackburn: Paintings*, exhibition catalogue essay, Lemon Street Gallery, Truro, 2010. In his review for *The Spectator*, the art critic John McEwen described *Patrick Proctor: Art and Life* as, "This handsome, copiously illustrated, well-researched and sensitive appraisal of the art and artist", and reviewing for *Country Life*, the writer Simon Blow described, "this superbly written and illustrated biography". The book has also been reviewed or written about in *Chroma* (online), *Nowness* (online), *The Art Newspaper*, *The London Evening Standard*, *The London Magazine*, *The RA Magazine*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, and *Out* (USA). Ian has been interviewed about the artist for BBC Radio Manchester, and given a public lecture on Proctor at Manchester City Library. Ian is

currently working on the text for a monograph on the oil paintings of Keith Vaughan for publication in 2012.

Current Research

Ian's written research tends to focus on a combination of biography and creative process; 'I am interested in the personal factors which determine the nature of an artist's work: social, political and cultural. I am fascinated by the ways in which creative process, technique and the development of a signature style is informed and influenced by such factors.' Although trained as an artist and designer/illustrator, with much experience of working professionally in those fields his research over the past decade has taken written form. In 2001 he embarked on a series of interviews with practising illustrators for *The AOI Journal*; his subjects were Jill Calder, Chloë Cheese, Chris Corr, Sara Fanelli, David Hughes, Aude Van Ryn, and Ian Whadcock. Most of these interviews took place in the illustrator's working environment. The methodology used was simply to record a





conversation, based on a series of questions/themes prepared in advance. In Ian's interview articles he was keen to get across each subject's ideas and experience in their own words, along with insights on their creative practice, whilst also writing a critique of the work and its development. These interviews were subsequently used as secondary research by other academics and students, and cited in other publications; degree students have utilised them as part of their dissertation research.

The experience of conducting these interviews was a useful grounding when it came to Ian's major research on the artist Patrick Procktor, which was largely informed by a series of over fifty research interviews, with interviewees including Celia Birtwell, Kaffe Fassett, David Hockney and Lord Snowdon. The same technique of recorded conversation was used, from which verbatim transcripts were formed, and excerpts included within his text. Through The Redfern Gallery, London, which

represents Procktor's Estate, Ian had open access to archival material and to major holdings of work by the artist. Ian also visited archives in London; The British Library, Tate, Whitechapel Gallery and galleries in Italy and Germany, where he gained access to correspondence and material which threw additional light on Procktor, and the artistic and social milieus in which he operated. Ian also looked at the artist's work in public and private collections in the UK, Italy and Germany. The book was launched at The Redfern Gallery during an exhibition of Procktor's work (April 2010); it combines biography with a critique of the development of the artist's work.

Ian's writing on the artist John Blackburn (for the catalogue of an exhibition in 2010 at Lemon Street Gallery, Truro) again drew on interview material undertaken in the painter's studio, with direct access to the artist, his work and his archive. For this project also, Ian focussed in part on the biographical factors underpinning the artist's development and ideas. Ian has

also written 'in the Shadow of the Mount', an essay on Blackburn's paintings for an exhibition at Artis Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, 2011.

In Ian's current work on Keith Vaughan the focus on biography and process remains, although the research methods will be partly informed by existing material, as a well-researched biography already exists. Ian has access to three key archives of Vaughan material that includes his journals, notebooks, drawings and photographs. As with Procktor, Vaughan's sexuality is a key to his work, and Ian's writing is in part from a gay perspective, one that examines the codification of desire in a period during which homosexuality was illegal. Although some work has been done on this aspect of Vaughan, there is still more to be written in describing how his work was a crucial expression of his sexuality.