

IMAGES OF PEOPLE AT WORK:  
THE VIDEOMAKING OF  
DARCY LANGE

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the work of New Zealand artist Darcy Lange (1946-2005) who, trained as a sculptor at the Royal College of Art (1968-71), subsequently developed a socially engaged video practice, making remarkable studies of people at work that drew from social documentary traditions, structuralist videomaking and conceptual art. My research into his oeuvre draws on intertwined artistic, theoretical, historical and cultural discourses from the period in which he was active, particularly those concerned with realism and representation, reflexivity and video feedback, the document and documentary, the dialogic and participation, art and society, and social activism.

Starting with his last sculptural 'environment' *Irish Road Workers* (1971) and ending with the series *Work Studies in Schools* (1976-77), labour was the sole subject of Lange's oeuvre for much of the 1970s. In his words, his aim was "to convey the image of work as work, as an occupation, as an activity, as creativity and as a time consumer". He engaged in comprehensive studies of people at work in industrial, farming and teaching contexts across Britain, New Zealand and Spain. A commitment to realism guided his works in the early 1970s, evident in his adherence to an observational practice reduced to its bare essentials. Using photography, film and video (at times simultaneously), he portrayed workers performing their tasks, and cast workplaces, schools and mines as complex societal mechanisms engaged in the production and reproduction of class identity.

*Work Studies in Schools* introduced a radical shift in his practice, influenced by current epistemological and philosophical concerns about the politics of representation that recognised representation (and its making of meaning) as contingent and dependent on context. Rather than engage in the examination of the image's process of signification through structuralism and semiotics, Lange grounded his analysis in human experience and opted for the dialogic possibilities of camera lens media. Focusing on pedagogical practices in the classroom, Lange explored the implications of video for teaching and learning, inviting his subjects to speak through their own analysis of their experiences of work and class. In enabling a situation where the social exchange between teacher and pupils could be observed and analysed collectively, Lange turned a closed process of exchange into something more open that could be mutually redefined and transformed.

In so doing, his images of people at work sought to confer agency, in an effort to realise his expressed ‘socialist aspirations’.

Lange’s political awareness grew in a decade of intense politicisation in the United Kingdom. In New Zealand, the 1970s saw the beginning of the so-called ‘Maori Renaissance’. Lange joined the efforts of fellow activists and documentarians there to raise awareness and support for the land claims by the Maori indigenous people and, working in collaboration with Maori activist and photographer John Miller, produced the *Maori Land Project* (1977-1980). It was in the Netherlands where he further developed the ideas and aspirations behind this project, collaborating with René Coelho, founder of Montevideo in Amsterdam, and Leonard Henny, professor at the Sociological Institute’s Centre for International Development Education in Utrecht. Theoretical debates about cultural difference of the period framed this project, driven also by Lange’s desire to further extend social agency with his videomaking. An activist impulse also lay behind his political multimedia musical performances *People of the World* (1983-84) and *Aire del Mar* (1988-94).

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Lange’s turn to video was not to engage in conceptual activities or as a deconstructive exercise. I argue that he was drawn to video (film and photography) for its experiential and dialogical nature and capabilities, as “a way to get closer to people” and leave the isolation of a studio practice. He was driven by a desire to seek out a social purpose to artistic activity while avoiding the dogmatic political advocacy of his community art contemporaries.

## **CONTENTS**

ABSTRACT .....	3
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	6
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	9
INTRODUCTION .....	11
CHAPTER 1 From Sculpture to Film and Photography .....	31
CHAPTER 2 Ethnographic, Structuralist and ‘Real time’ Filmmaking .....	75
CHAPTER 3 Images of People at Work .....	128
CHAPTER 4 Education, Participation and the Making of the Subject .....	171
CHAPTER 5 Social Activism .....	214
CONCLUSION .....	264
LIST OF INTERVIEWS .....	276
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	277
APPENDIX 1 Darcy Lange Exhibitions and Catalogues .....	289
APPENDIX 2 Research Outcomes: Exhibitions, Symposiums and Workshops.....	290

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FIG. 1 <i>Unnamed Monster</i> (1966) .....	P.34
FIG. 2 <i>Scarlet Chrome</i> (1966) .....	P.345
FIG. 3 <i>Formality I</i> (1967) .....	P.34
FIG. 4 <i>Formality II</i> (1967) .....	P.34
FIG. 5 <i>Extended Formality I</i> (1967) .....	P.34
FIG. 6 <i>Formality III</i> (1967) .....	P.34
FIG. 7 <i>Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)</i> (1969) .....	P.37
FIG. 8 <i>Untitled (Composition and Realism with Chair and Still Life)</i> (1969) .....	P.37
FIG. 9 Contact sheets of photographs of model with coat as part of <i>Untitled</i> ( <i>Composition and Realism with Coat</i> ), (c. 1969) .....	P.38
FIG. 10 <i>Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)</i> .....	P.39
FIG. 11 <i>Environment of Mokau and Reminiscence</i> (1969) .....	P.41
FIG. 12 <i>Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie</i> (1970) .....	P.42
FIG. 13 <i>Commentary—Equality</i> (1971) .....	P.43
FIG. 14 George Segal, <i>The Restaurant Window</i> (1967) .....	P.45
FIG. 15 George Segal, <i>The Execution</i> (1967) .....	P.45
FIG. 16 <i>Irish Road Workers</i> (1971), Royal College of Art .....	P.47
FIG. 17 Study photographs documenting road workers .....	P.47
FIG. 18 Ian Breakwell, <i>One</i> (1971) .....	P.49
FIG. 19 Robert Whitman, <i>Shower</i> (1964) .....	P.50
FIG. 20 Edward Kienholz, <i>The Beanery</i> (1965) .....	P.51
FIG. 21 Edward Kienholz, <i>The State Hospital</i> (1966) .....	P.51
FIG. 22 <i>Social Consideration, Communication, Observation</i> ( <i>Hardware Store in South Kensington</i> ) (1971) .....	P.58
FIG. 23 <i>Social Consideration, Communication, Observation (Cow Milking)</i> (1971) .....	P.61
FIG. 24 <i>Social Consideration, Communication, Observation</i> ( <i>A Woman Putting out her Washing</i> ) (1971) .....	P.63
FIG. 25 Darcy Lange, ‘Marcel Duchamp’, unpublished Master thesis .....	P.63
FIG. 26 Michael Snow, <i>Wavelength</i> (1967) .....	P.77
FIG. 27 Andy Warhol, <i>Eat</i> (1963) .....	P.80
FIG. 28 <i>Studies of Family Groups (Basil Cox)</i> (1972) .....	P.82
FIG. 28 <i>Studies of Family Groups (Mr and Mrs Mates’ Family)</i> (1972) .....	P.84
FIG. 30 Andy Warhol, <i>Screen Test (Lucinda Childs)</i> (1964) .....	P.86
FIG. 31 BBC television series <i>The Family</i> (1974) .....	P.87
FIG. 32 BBC television series <i>The Family</i> (1974) .....	P.88
FIG. 33 <i>Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces (E. Brennan General</i> <i>Woodcarving Furniture Workshop)</i> (1972) .....	P.93
FIG. 34 <i>Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces (Wild, Mellor and</i> <i>Bromley)</i> (1972) .....	P.93
FIG. 35 <i>Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces</i> ( <i>Breakers Metal Works</i> ) (1972) .....	P.94
FIG. 36 <i>Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces</i> ( <i>Burns and Lux</i> ) (1972) .....	P.94
FIG. 37 Lumière’s <i>La sortie des usines Lumière (Workers Leaving the Factory, 1895)</i> .....	P.98
FIG. 38 Muybridge’s <i>Woman Emptying a bucket on Seated Companion</i> (1887) .....	P.99
FIG. 39 <i>Craigdarroch, Scotland</i> (1973).....	P.100
FIG. 40 <i>Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast</i> (1974) .....	P.100
FIG. 41 <i>A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities,</i> <i>Nottingham, UK</i> (1973) at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in 1985.....	P.101
FIG. 42a-c Installation diagrams for <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working</i> <i>Life</i> (1974). Barbara Reise Archive at Tate Britain Archive .....	P.104-05

FIG. 43 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life</i> (1974), at The Kitchen in New York, 1976 .....	P.106
FIG. 44 <i>Clem Coxhead, Study of cow Milking in Opunake, NZ</i> (1974) .....	P.112
FIG. 45 <i>Vern Hume, Aerial Top Dressing, Okato, NZ</i> (1974) .....	P.112
FIG. 46 <i>Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village</i> (1975) .....	P.114
FIG. 47 Jean Rouch, <i>Jaguar</i> (1967) .....	P.115
FIG. 48 Jean Rouch in <i>Chronique d'un été</i> (1961) .....	P.115
FIG. 49 Jean Rouch in <i>Chronique d'un été</i> (1961) .....	P.116
FIG. 50 Chantal Akerman, <i>Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles</i> (1975) .....	P.124
FIG. 51 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 4<sup>th</sup> Study: Spinning—Theresa Hird)</i> (1974) .....	P.130
FIG. 52 <i>Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village, Maestrazgo, Spain (Ploughing with Bulls)</i> (1975) .....	P.132
FIG. 53 <i>Craigdarroch, Scotland</i> (1973) .....	P.133
FIG. 54 <i>Competition Axemen at Agricultural and Pastoral Show, Stratford, NZ</i> (1974) .....	P.134
FIG. 55 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Study: 'Order Assembly'—Michael Normington)</i> (1974) .....	P.136
FIG. 56 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 4<sup>th</sup> Study: 'Order Assembly'—Kevin Bulner)</i> (1974) .....	P.136
FIG. 57 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 2<sup>nd</sup> Study: 'Study of a Packer'—Burford Manders)</i> (1974) .....	P.136
FIG. 58 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 1<sup>st</sup> Study: 'Study of a Packer'—John Wood)</i> (1974) .....	P.136
FIG. 59 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Third Situation: Hepworth and Grandage Ltd., 1<sup>st</sup> Study: 'The Verson Press'—Roy Penny)</i> (1974) .....	P.137
FIG. 60 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 2<sup>nd</sup> Study: Traditional Combing—Alah Dad)</i> (1974) .....	P.139
FIG. 61 <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 1<sup>st</sup> Study: French Combing—Mrs O'Connor)</i> (1974) .....	P.139
FIG. 62 <i>Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces (E. Brennan General Woodcarving Furniture Workshop)</i> (1972) .....	P.140
FIG. 63 Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly, <i>Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry</i> (1973–75). Installation at Tate Modern, 2016 .....	P.145
FIG. 64 <i>A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham, UK</i> (1973) .....	P.149
FIG. 65 <i>A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham, UK</i> (1973). Installation at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in 1985.....	P.149
FIG. 67 Allan Sekula, <i>Portraits of Salespeople</i> (1973) .....	P.159
FIG. 68 Photographs from the series <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life</i> (1974), at Bradford Industrial Museum in 1976 .....	P.160
FIG. 69 Darcy Lange standing in front of the installation of <i>A Documentation of Bradford Working Life</i> (1974), at Oppenheim Studio Köln in October 1975 .....	P.161
FIG. 70 <i>Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Brandon, Mathematics, Ladywood Comprehensive School)</i> (1976) .....	P.1734
FIG. 71 <i>Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Rigby, Biology Class, King Edward's Grammar School)</i> (1976).....	P.173
FIG. 72 <i>Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Trott, English Class, King Edward's Grammar School)</i> (1976) .....	P.173
FIG. 73 <i>Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Infants Assembly, Leabank Junior School)</i> (1976) .....	P.173
FIG. 74 <i>Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Theater Performance, King Edward's Grammar School)</i> (1976) .....	P.173
FIG.75 <i>Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Christmas Party, Ladywood Comprehensive School)</i> (1976) .....	P.173

FIG. 76 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Roger Perks, 'Orwell's Animal Farm', Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976) .....	P.174
FIG. 77 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Roger Perks Interview, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976).....	P.174
FIG. 78 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Perks Students' Responses, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976) .....	P.174
FIG 79 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Wright, History Class, Cheney Upper School, Fourth Form (14-15 years old) (1977) .....	P.174
FIG 80 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Wright viewing tapes, Cheney Upper School) (1977) .....	P.174
FIG 81 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Wright Students' Responses, Cheney Upper School) (1977) .....	P.174
FIG. 82 Contact sheets from Film Studies in Comprehensive and Grammar Schools, UK (1976–1977), Mr. Trott (King Edward's) and Miss Kanta (Ladywood) in their homes and classrooms .....	P.175
FIG. 83 Diagram for the Oxfordshire schools project .....	P.177
FIG. 84 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Peter Garwood, History, Banbury School, Fifth Year O Level) (1977) .....	P.180
FIG. 85a-b Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Paul Nagel, Roman Roads, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976) .....	P.180
FIG. 86 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Tony Morgan, Art Class, Banbury School) (1977) .....	P.183
FIG. 87 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mrs Shalgowski, Art Class, St. Mary's Girls School) (1977) .....	P.183
FIG. 88 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Spencer, Art Class, Cheney Upper School) (1977) .....	P.183
FIG. 89 Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Charles Mussett, Art Class, Radley College) (1977) .....	P.183
FIG. 90 Dan Graham performing Performer/Audience/Mirror (1975) at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam in 1977 .....	P.189
FIG. 91 Group Medvedkin, <i>À bientôt j'espère</i> (1967–68) .....	P.199
FIG. 92 Leon Narbey and Geoff Steven, <i>Te Matakite o Aotearoa/ The Maori Land March</i> (1975) .....	P.215
FIG. 93 <i>Maori Land Project</i> , at Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, 1980 .....	P.227
FIG. 94 Stills from Darcy Lange's <i>Bastion Point</i> (1980) .....	P.239
FIG. 95 Colin Clark speaking at the Fourth Russell Tribunal and (right image) holding a copy of the Treaty of Waitangi .....	P.241
FIG. 96 Colin Clark at Fourth Russell Tribunal held in Rotterdam in 1980 .....	P.241
FIG. 97 <i>People of the World</i> in RASA Cultural Centre in Utrecht, 1983 .....	P.252
FIG. 98 <i>People of the World</i> , at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in 1985 .....	P.258
FIG. 99 Drawing by Darcy Lange of <i>People of the World</i> , c. 1983 .....	P.259
FIG. 100 <i>Aire del Mar</i> (1988) at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 1988 .....	P.260
FIG. 101 Darcy Lange playing flamenco guitar, c. 2000s. ....	P.263

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## INTRODUCTION

For much of the 1970s, labour was the central subject of video artist Darcy Lange's oeuvre. In his words, he aimed 'to convey the image of work as work, as an occupation, as an activity, as creativity and as a time consumer'.<sup>1</sup> His camera recorded workers performing their tasks, and cast their working environments as complex mechanisms engaged in the production and reproduction of class. His uncompromising, compelling observational documentations of workers were an acknowledgement of the invisibility of work, with a humble aim of contributing to the correction of this blind spot. Lange described his studies as a 'kind of uncomplimentary social realism', adding, 'they searched the monotony of the work, they questioned the workload and the suffering due to the work'.<sup>2</sup>

At a time when structuralism and semiotics were widely claimed to be the critical tools with which to engage with the complexity of representation, Lange's realist and aesthetically uninflected approach to the process of making visual records of people at work might have seemed outmoded. Yet he expressed a 'responsibility to keep questioning the nature and power of realism'.<sup>3</sup> The first strand of this thesis sets out to explore: first, how did Lange understand realism and the role it played in Lange's documentations of people at work? Was his understanding of realism essentially positivist? Did his understanding of image-production evolve and not least in light of his growing awareness of the politics of representation? Second, why for Lange was realism an ethical and political matter? This leads to the issue of the efficacy of his video art, a theme to which I will return later in this introduction.

I argue in this thesis that Lange's deliberate turn to the social documentary form, whilst not theoretically articulated nor politically programmatic, contributed nonetheless to other attempts at rethinking the possibilities of the social document that emerged in the 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Lange's stance was not militant as some collective forms of social documentary had been — namely the Worker Photographic movement of the interwar years,<sup>5</sup> or the worker films of the collective Group Medvedkin and French filmmaker Chris Marker made in 1968–69<sup>6</sup> — nor did he participate in the critical redefinition of documentary practice led by his contemporaries

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<sup>1</sup> This quote appears in the artist's unpublished notes, a version of which was published in the exhibition brochure *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner* (Bradford: Bradford Galleries and Museums, Industrial Museum, 1976), [n.p.]. The exhibition dates were 16 May–13 June 1976.

<sup>2</sup> Darcy Lange, *Video Art* (Auckland: The Department of Film, Television and Media Studies, Auckland University, 2001), p. 44.

<sup>3</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> See Jorge Ribalta, *Not Yet: On the Reinvention of Documentary and the Critique of Modernism*, ed. by Jorge Ribalta (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> See Jorge Ribalta (ed.) *The Worker Photography Movement (1926–1939)* (Madrid: TF Editores, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> See Trevor Stark, 'Cinema in the Hands of the People: Chris Marker, the Medvedkin Group, and the Potential of Militant Film', *October* 139 (winter 2012), 117–150.

— namely Allan Sekula, Martha Rosler and Fred Lonidier in the USA, Jeff Wall in Canada, and Victor Burgin, Jo Spence and Terry Dennett in Britain, whose seminal writings on photographic history and theory propounded the re-emergence of the social documentary as a political critique of Modernism.<sup>7</sup> How then did Lange formulate this critique through his own practice, as Benjamin H.D. Buchloh has claimed, ‘quite independently with uncommon programmatic clarity’?<sup>8</sup> And, as such, what is the legacy of his work to this revival of social documentary practices?

Whilst no doubt the legacies of film and photography documentary traditions informed Lange’s practice and contributed to the re-emergence of the documentary in the 1970s, as I shall examine in this thesis, his work developed in the aftermath of Conceptual art. The second strand in this thesis examines Lange’s relationship with Conceptual art, an intellectual and aesthetic connection which raises a few questions: first, in what ways did Conceptual art influence Lange’s artistic development in his early transition from sculpture to adopting camera lens media and what kind of inheritances from Conceptual art influenced his image production in documenting people at work? Lange expressed a deep sense of responsibility, wanting to reach audiences beyond the confines of the art world and for art to be accessible. Was this desire reconciled with the complex challenges issued to the matter of representation by Conceptual art? Might his work be compromised if it is to be framed under Conceptual art?

Lange held hopes for video as did other socially engaged video practitioners at the time of ‘shedding the utopian moment’, as Martha Rosler reminded us in the early 1990s, before the medium turned to ‘what we have come to know as *video art*’.<sup>9</sup> To her, this process of cultural assimilation suppressed the utopian impulse of some of its early *users*, like Lange, who saw in portable video the possibility of continuing the legacy of the revolutionary avant-garde project, merging art with social life and turning audience into producers. Video was a technological medium for communication and thus perceived as a democratic tool for social transformation.

Rather than engage in the examination of the image’s process of signification, Lange grounded his analysis in human experience and opted for the dialogic possibilities of video. In his *Work*

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<sup>7</sup> Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, ‘Darcy Lange: Paco Campana’, in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 49–64 (p. 55). Buchloh refers to seminal essays such as Allan Sekula’s ‘Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)’ (1978) and Martha Rosler’s ‘in, around and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)’ (1981) which lead these debates in the USA. Lange’s *Work Studies* predated the theoretical writings and discursive articulations of their canonical texts appearing at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s.

<sup>8</sup> Buchloh, (pp. 49–50).

<sup>9</sup> Martha Rosler, ‘Video: Shedding the Utopian Moment’, in Dough Hall and Sally Jo Fisher (eds.) *Illuminating Video* (New York: Aperture/The Bay Area Video Coalition, 1991), pp.31–50 (p.31)

*Studies in Schools* (1977) he focused on pedagogical practices in the classroom and explored the implications of video for teaching and learning, inviting his subjects to speak through their own analysis of their experiences of work and class. In enabling a situation where the social exchange between teacher and pupils could be observed and analysed collectively, Lange turned a closed process of exchange into something more open that could be mutually redefined and transformed. In so doing, he sought to confer agency, in an effort to realise his expressed 'socialist aspirations', and transform this project into 'something very close to social activism'.<sup>10</sup>

The third strand of this thesis sets up to analyse *Work Studies in Schools* and the shift that this work marked from *representational* to *relational* parameters in his practice as an artist. The issue of participation and the dialogical nature of Lange's video practice, in my view, raises issues to do with the methodological analysis of this work as in what way this work is to be best understood, that is, whether it should be framed within the discourses of video and participatory forms of documentary or the discourses of participatory art. Whilst Lange's project surfaced at a time when concepts of feedback, communications theories and utopian aspirations were being heralded by video practitioners, it appears to belong to the realm of relational and participatory practices which have been the subject of so much attention from scholars such as Claire Bishop today. As such, can we claim Lange's *Work Studies in Schools* as a precursor of these practices? How does framing *Work Studies in Schools* within the parameters of Bishop's definition of participatory practice and recognising its fundamental relational nature shed new light on this work?

To his disappointment, Lange never found an outside 'function' for his videos, which were shown largely in the context of art galleries. In 1977, he joined the efforts of fellow activists and documentarians to raise awareness and mobilize support for land claims by the Maori people in New Zealand. The 1970s saw the rising of the so-called 'Maori Renaissance', a movement that actively sought indigenous self-governance and self-determination. Working in collaboration with Maori activist and photographer John Miller, he developed the *Maori Land Project* (1977–1980). The last and fourth strand of research sets out to examine Lange's shift towards the field of activism and documentary, a move which raises a number of questions: namely, what propelled him to adopt a more emphatically political stance and engage in political action? Were Lange's political aspirations not met in participatory video projects like *Work Studies in Schools*? How did the collaboration, on which collective actions, like the Maori land claim protests, depend, impact on Lange's sense of autonomy as an artist?

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<sup>10</sup> Lange, 'Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', *Avalanche* (Summer 1975), 12–13 (pp. 12–13).

## **Darcy Lange's placement within the history of video art**

Darcy Lange's place in the history of video art has not been well established, for reasons I shall argue in this introduction. This absence elicited my initial interest in rehabilitating this little known artist, framing his work within the history of early video and the avant-garde artistic scene in London in the 1970s, when Lange was most active. Much of the literature on the historical accounts of avant-garde film and video art in Britain in the 1970s by participants (video artists) and historians makes scant reference to Lange's work.<sup>11</sup> The reasons for his absence might have been manifold.

Firstly, Lange's work escaped easy categorization and the dominant Modernist trends heralded at the time. British curator and critic Rosetta Brooks wrote in a review of Lange's 1973 exhibition featuring *Craigdarroch* (1973) at the Jack Wendler Gallery in London: 'His videotapes are contrary to the sorts of concerns which have recently been housed by this medium.'<sup>12</sup> Brooks described the video activity of the time as divided in two strands: the structuralists like Dan Graham and Jan Dibbets who explored the medium in ways 'which included 'the tricks, and sometimes the clichés, of self-reference'', and 'at its best, the approach operates cognitively; upon how we come to know things and upon how we represent things'. The second strand, constituted a non-formal, expressionistic approach, exemplified by the work of Bruce Nauman and Vito Acconci, in which video was used as a recording device to document actions and events, 'giving a "directness" to its subject matter because of the newness of the medium' and 'to evoke psychological and emotional disorientations in the spectator'. She concluded that Lange wasn't concerned with either of these approaches: 'instead, he is a realist. And so his videotapes impose little upon his subject but merely represent, with an air of objectivity, the

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<sup>11</sup> For instance, Sean Cubitt, in an interview with LUX speaking about the British video art in the 1970s and referring to the 1975 'The Video Show' at the Serpentine Gallery, mentions Lange as an example of a participating artist in the show who became a forgotten figure. He stated: '[it] is also quite intriguing for the people who were there who are not particularly remembered, so there are a number who appear on the LUX REWIND DVD who were there, and there are number of people who appear in the documentation for it who are really forgotten, like Darcy Lange who was not covered by press at the time, but his slot is on the floorplan, and his contracts and so forth, they're all in the REWIND archives.' See Blog/ Video Art, England's Avant-Garde, an interview with Sean Cubitt.

<<http://lux.org.uk/blog/video-art-englands-avant-garde-interview-sean-cubitt>> [accessed 5 May 2015] Another instance is David Curtis's comprehensive and inclusive account *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain* (London: BFI, 2007), in which he devotes only a couple of short mentions to Lange's work, in relation to the subject of work (pp. 183–84) and to conceptual art and early installations (pp. 217–18). Further, in *Studio International's* 1976 special issue devoted to video art, which offered essays on national video artistic scenes mainly in North America and Europe, Lange's work is not included in David Hall's account of video art in Britain. However, his work features in a single page profile in this issue. 'Darcy Lange: Video Studies 1975 & 1976', *Studio International*, vol. 191, no. 981 (May/June 1976), p. 242.

<sup>12</sup> Rosetta Brooks, 'Darcy Lange at the Jack Wendler Gallery,' *Studio International*, vol. 186, 1973, p. 109.

activities of people in their normal working life.<sup>13</sup> Brooks's remark supports the kind of accounts of history of early video that Rosler has criticised for adopting a Modernist approach that negated the notion of video as a social tool.<sup>14</sup> Further, Marita Sturken has pointed out that the problem is fundamentally tied to video's relationship to modernism, 'a relationship complicated by video's emergence in modernism's final stages'.<sup>15</sup> Hence, much of the socially engaged video production and community video has subsequently gone unrecorded, when in reality there was a cross-dialogue between artists and social community practitioners.<sup>16</sup> British video artist David Hall claimed, contrary to other historical accounts, that early video art in Britain derived from a conceptualist rather than a modernist formalist approach, which he maintained was separated also from much of the filmmaking of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Hall added:

this important (though often confused) distinction was what, as well as its production and display systems, separated it not only from current obsessions in the mainstream plastic arts but also from formalist avant-garde film of the time with which it has often been identified. Conceptualism was intended as a liberation from the shackles of the object and consequently its filmic counterpart (preoccupation with materiality), encouraging for some a potential for greater social engagement.<sup>17</sup>

Second, verging on immateriality, the artist film, photography and (its degraded companion) video did not enjoy the degree of exhibition, collection and reception of traditional media at the time.<sup>18</sup> This relegated Lange's work to a small scene of alternative avant-garde spaces with

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<sup>13</sup> Brooks, (p. 109).

<sup>14</sup> Rosler, (pp. 31–50).

<sup>15</sup> Marita Sturken, 'Paradox in the Evolution of an Art Form: Great Expectations and the Making of a History', in Hall and Fisher, *Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art*, pp. 101–25, (p. 115).

<sup>16</sup> Sean Cubitt, in an interview with LUX speaking about the British video art in the 1970s, remarked about this exchange: 'for example, around Hoppy's (John 'Hoppy' Hopkins) famous first portapak, and its application in what would become the community arts movement, so it was squatters' tapes, rent strike tapes, that sort of activist work, which was also a major strand in early video, and people actually migrated between these strands'. Cubitt, <<http://lux.org.uk/blog/video-art-englands-avant-garde-interview-sean-cubitt>>

Further, see PhD researcher Ed Webb-Ingall on the subject of community video in Britain at LUX. Blog / Ed Webb-Ingall, 'Community Video #1: The Act and the Object'

<<http://www.lux.org.uk/blog/community-video-1-act-and-object>> [accessed 25 November 2016]

<sup>17</sup> David Hall, 'Early video art: a look at a controversial history', in *Diverse Practices: A Critical Reader on British Video Art*, ed. by Julia Knight (London: Arts Council of England; Luton: University of Luton, 1996) pp. 71–80 (based on 'Before the Concrete Sets', first publ. in *And: Journal of Art*, no 26, 1991 and *London Video Access*, 1991).

<sup>18</sup> Cubitt denounced the lack of institutional support for video: 'it was neither art nor film, and therefore it fell between all stools'. He added: 'it never had an institutional home, for example the BFI and the National Film Television Archive didn't really handle it. The national collections such as The Tate Gallery, didn't handle it, the British Council bought some pieces, and they've always had a much more interesting collections policy than any other national collections, but it did mean that video was kind of growing up in a space without an institutional base. David Curtis at the Arts Council was in many respects the saviour of it, and I think without his personal input, it's really unlikely that anything much would have occurred. There were centres at the different art schools...had a really important role to play

limited financial support. More detrimental, in the early days of video, was the fact that not many institutions had the equipment necessary to exhibit video; further, the existence of both NTSC and PAL formats prevented easy circulation of videotapes around the world, as it took some time, not until late 1970s, for institutions to acquire the equipment necessary to play both formats. Further, the length of Lange's studies meant that they rarely had the opportunity to be properly shown, or when shown it was for short runs. His studies, shot in real-time, were long and demanding, even to the common high standards of endurance at the time in the avant-garde art circles. More often, constrictions of time or equipment meant that only a small selection of chapters of his works were presented in galleries, adding to a sense of fragmentation and undermining the scope of his investment and ambitious undertaking.

His multi-media installations too, such as *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), which combines video, photography and film, were equally challenging for institutions with scarce financial and equipment resources. This meant that many of these works were not shown in their full form, with only fragments of the video elements being screened. *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* (1977), including twelve hours of video plus photographs, having been commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, was exhibited there in full in 1977. Whereas its earlier predecessor, *Studies of Three Birmingham Schools* (1976), similar in length, was only shown a couple of times, at the 1976 Venice Biennale and in the exhibition 'Dauerleihgabe Ingrid Oppenheim' at Städtisches Kunstmuseum Bonn in 1983, and in a considerably compromised form — only a 60 minute video selection of these studies without photographs. The cumbersome amount of tape and viewing hours required reveals Lange's disregard of practical consideration for their suitability for exhibition, even within the greater standards of tolerance and endurance for durational works among the avant-garde circles. Even nowadays, with considerably greater resources, the straining viewing time means that institutions tend to show a more palatable and trimmed version to audiences. In 2016, Modern Art Oxford in its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition only showed four of the twelve studies of the Oxfordshire school series. Time was also a constraint even in the recent generous five-screening programme at Tate Modern devoted to Lange; in this case, the 90–120 minutes allocated screening time prevented showing works in full, opting instead for combining sections across themes with the aim of providing a sense of the scale of his inquiry, at the cost of 'sampling' his work and being illustrative.

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in providing equipment, amongst other things; The Royal College of Art had equipment, but many art schools didn't, and it simply wouldn't occur to them to purchase it, video in particular – it just wasn't on the cards, it was not a resource that anybody particularly wanted, it didn't appear in foundation courses, and because it didn't appear in foundation, people didn't go looking for it.' Cubitt, <<http://lux.org.uk/blog/video-art-englands-avant-garde-interview-sean-cubitt>>

Thirdly, being a non-British artist from a Commonwealth country could have also had an impact. Yet other non-North American and European artists — namely John Latham, David Lamelas and David Medalla — were much acknowledged as being central to London's artistic scene. British curator Mark Francis remarked about Lange's nomadic existence and how he was perceived as often being absent, suggesting how this contributed to preventing him from fully being part of the local artistic scene.<sup>19</sup> Dan Graham also recognized Lange's nomadic lifestyle.<sup>20</sup> Further, he believed his outsider position in the art world fuelled his gravitation towards industrial cities like Bradford, Leicester and Birmingham rather than London. Ever since his arrival in London in 1968 and until his final return to New Zealand at the end of 1983, Lange maintained a divided geographic existence. He lived in London, often travelling to Leicester, Bradford, Birmingham, or Oxford for teaching or videotaping. He also travelled regularly to Spain motivated by his flamenco guitar lessons with maestro Diego del Gastor in Moron de la Frontera, Seville, stopping along the way and staying with artist friends in Barcelona (with New York-based conceptual artist Muntadas) and Peñíscola (with New Zealand painter and flamenco guitarist Keith Paterson), where he also produced his work *Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village, Maestrazgo, Spain* (1975).

Further, he made three-to-six month visits to New Zealand, in 1974 and three trips in 1977–1978. Starting in 1976, he also spent long periods in the Netherlands, before moving there in 1980 and until his final relocation in New Zealand. Also, between 1975 and 1978 he spent time in North America, teaching at Nova Scotia School of Art and Design in Halifax, Canada and through many stopover visits in Los Angeles and New York as result of his trips to New Zealand. Travelling across the world to this extent was quite remarkable in the 1970s. It would have been quite taxing at a personal, artistic and professional level as well, adding to the sense of strangeness and displacement from any of these scenes and the fracturing of identity that results, not to mention the pressure of survival in financial terms. His travel was often financed through screenings and short teaching engagements, making Halifax and Vancouver, Los Angeles or New York, necessary stopovers to help finance his travels between London and New Zealand.

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<sup>19</sup> Mark Francis in a phone conversation with the author, 2 September 2016.

<sup>20</sup> Graham wrote: 'He was a gypsy at heart; Darcy's life-style when he was living in Europe was equally nomadic. Travelling from video shoot and to gallery exhibitions with his car and video equipment, he was typical of other younger artists from former colonies trying to deal with the modern 'old Europe'.' Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Great Artist and Friend', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 183–84 (p. 183).



Despite these factors, Lange's works featured in some of the early video surveys and conceptual art exhibitions at the time in London, such as 'A Survey of British Avant-Garde' (Gallery House, 1972), 'The Video Show' (Serpentine, 1975), 'Art for Society' (Whitechapel Art Gallery, 1978), 'Lives' (Hayward Gallery, 1979), and at the BFI in 1975 and the ICA in 1975, 1976 and 1977. He also exhibited in Europe, organized by the British Council and Tate Britain to introduce new directions of British Art, at Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1973 and 1974, at the 1975 Paris Biennale and the 1976 Nice Biennale, the Venice Biennale in 1976, to name a few. In the 1970s the artistic scene in London was small, more so among video practitioners. Lange was a participant, yet remained somewhat a solitary figure not being quite suited for the art world careerism of London. He was close to the American art dealer Jack Wendler who gave him a show at his gallery in 1973 (alongside John Murphy and Bruce Robbins). Through this alliance, Lange befriended some of the American conceptual artists that later became prominent figures such as Sol LeWitt, Michael Asher, David Askevold, Lawrence Weiner and John Baldessari, and Europeans such Mario Merz and Daniel Buren, whom Wendler introduced for the first time in England during the brief but significant life of his gallery (1971–74). In London, Lange had a small circle of friends and supporters namely Guy Brett, Barbara Reise, David Tremlett, John Blake, Catherine Lacey, David Elliot and Mark Francis at Modern Art Oxford, Nicholas Serota at Whitechapel, Barry Barker and Lynda Morris at the ICA, and Richard Cork at Studio International, who commissioned one page for *Studio International's* special issue on video art in 1976.<sup>21</sup>

Even though Lange used film, he was never part of the circle of structural/materialist filmmakers around Peter Gidal and Malcom Le Grice and the London Filmmakers' Co-op founded in 1966,<sup>22</sup> nor of the London Video Arts (LVA).<sup>23</sup> He did not have either much affiliation with video community groups, with rare and occasional exceptions — such as The Albany Centre Community Video Project, from which he borrowed equipment, and Fantasy Factory, founded by John Hopkins and Sue Hall, as indicated by contracts signed in 1976–77, in which they agreed to distribute and exhibit his work in Berlin and the UK.

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<sup>21</sup> 'Darcy Lange: Video Studies 1975 & 1976', *Studio International*, p. 242.

<sup>22</sup> British artist Peter Blake, a friend of Lange, recalls him not being part of the London Filmmakers' Co-op. Blake wrote: 'I don't think Peter [Gidal] knew Darcy...I showed several times within the Coop, don't recall Darcy ever did, don't think he would have expressed much interest in their hard-core, materialist film approach...more orientated to the working class labour & craft (as subject).' Email to the author, 4 March 2016. Peter Gidal subsequently confirmed not having much exchanged with Lange during the RCA years or afterwards through the London Filmmakers' Co-op, in a conversation with the author, 14 April 2016. There is only one document from Guy Sherwin at London Filmmakers' Co-op, a receipt of payment for a workshop, joint membership 23 November 1976. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>23</sup> There is, however, not much evidence in the Darcy Lange Archive of Lange being involved with these institutions. Having said this, David Curtis has pointed that it is likely that Lange would have had exchanges with LVA, as the main lender of video equipment to artists at the time, without necessarily leaving any paper trail. Curtis, in conversation with the author, 5 March 2014.

In February 1975, Lange befriended Dan Graham, whom he met at the 'Video Art' exhibition held at the ICA in Philadelphia<sup>24</sup> and became ever since an interlocutor of the video ideas and scene in Manhattan around *Radical Software* magazine.<sup>25</sup> Lange returned to New York in the summer of 1975 to show his work at MoMa's 'Video V' exhibition curated by Barbara London, and at The Kitchen. The following year he returned to The Kitchen where his work *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974) was presented in full as an installation featuring photographs, film and video. Further, Lange met Howard Wise, who had just founded Electronic Art Intermix, with whom Lange signed a contract for video distribution which never went ahead for reasons unknown. Lastly, Willoughby Sharp interviewed Lange in the office of his magazine *Avalanche* in June 1975.<sup>26</sup> There were numerous postcards exchanged (the means to keeping up with travels and arranging meetings at the time) with many others namely Lucy Lippard, Barbara London, Sol LeWitt, Lawrence Weiner, Hans Haacke, Dara Birnbaum, Gordon Matta-Clark in New York, and David Askevold, and John Baldessari in Los Angeles.

In Canada, Graham invited Lange to teach at Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, Halifax in 1977–78 where he befriended Ian Murray, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Gerald Ferguson, Krzysztof Wodiczko, Kasper König, among others.<sup>27</sup> In Toronto, he found support in critic John Bentley Mays and curator Peggy Gale, first as Director of A Space and subsequently as Director of Art Metropole; and in Vancouver, Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker,<sup>28</sup> curator and later director at the Vancouver Art Gallery and Brian Dyson, Acting Curator, Alberta College of Art Gallery who organized screenings of his work. Lange was clearly forging connections in the United States and Canada with some key conceptual artists and video artists and supporters of video art at the time.

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<sup>24</sup> This exhibition was organised by its director Suzanne Delehanty, who as per David Ross suggestion, invited Lange to place a video in this exhibition. Lange explained his video *Clem Coaxhead, Study of Cow Milking in Opunake* (1974) was turned down 'because they said they had enough land art', adding, 'They probably did not watch it long enough to see the work section.' Lange, *Video Art*, p. 78. Further, Lange recalls Graham offering him a place to stay, 'it was as though we had known each other for a year, marking the beginning of a friendship which is today still intact'. Lange, *Video Art*, p. 78.

<sup>25</sup> Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Great Artist and Friend', (p. 183).

<sup>26</sup> 'Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', *Avalanche* (Summer 1975), 12–13.

<sup>27</sup> Dan Graham's plan for the course involved the production of collaborative cable TV programmes. Darcy Lange was assigned to teach a five-week course concerning 'documentary film and video with reference to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Realism and political concerns'. Other artists teaching this course were Dara Birnbaum, Martha Rosler, Amy Taubin and Jeff Wall. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>28</sup> Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker recalls that at her arrival at the Vancouver Art Gallery in 1977, she established a dialogue between curators with a common interest in video: Barbara London at MoMA, New York and David Ross at University Art Museum, Berkeley. All three shared among themselves their knowledge of video art practices and often toured their screening programmes. Birnie Danzker, in conversation with the author, 20 November 2016. Lange's works feature in *Videospace* at Vancouver Art Gallery, curated by Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker, 15 January 1978. Correspondence between Lange and David Ross in the late 1974 and 1975, while Ross was at the Long Beach Museum of Art (1974–77), prior to working in Berkeley, about exhibiting *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* 1974, which did not transpire for reasons unknown. Darcy Lange Archive.

In the Netherlands, Lange collaborated with René Coelho, founder of Montevideo in Amsterdam, and Leonard Henny, sociologist professor at the Sociological Institute's Centre for International Development Education in Utrecht. Rudi Fuchs and Jan Debbault, director and curator respectively at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum (the museum changed name in 1990 to Van Abbemuseum) supported *Maori Land Project* and exhibited it at the museum. He also met there Belgian curator Chris Dercon; Dutch art historian and curator Coojse Van Bruggen who introduced him to the Netherlands and to the Academy of Art and Design (AKI) in Enschede, where he taught in 1978–79; Wies Smals the director of de Appel who had an agreement with Studio Oppenheim to show Lange's videos; and Rene van Hoften at Rasa Theatre who produced Lange's multimedia performance *People of the World* (1983). In Germany, collector Ingrid Oppenheim was one of Lange's strongest supporters and acquired his videos as part of her collection, as well as often providing financial support; artist Ernst Mitzka in Hamburg; curators Rene Block and Kasper König; Rüdiger Schöttle Gallery in Munich, a key supporter of Conceptual art, who exhibited his work in 1979; and German curator Wulf Herzogenrath included his work at 'Projekt '74' in Cologne in 1974 and considered showing *Works Studies in Schools* at 1977 'documenta 6' (in a special section devoted to video), although it did not happen for reasons unknown.

With Lange's return to New Zealand in 1983, public access to his videos ended, precluding their later reception and historical revision. Indeed, David Curtis expressed his own difficulties in tracking down copies of Lange's works in the UK for the survey 'A Century of Artists' Film in Britain' he curated at Tate Britain in 2003.<sup>29</sup> In the end, the only tapes he found available in the UK were in the collection of the Industrial Museum Bradford, where *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* had been exhibited in 1976. This meant that his work was significantly underrepresented in histories of early video practices.

### **Preliminary engagement with Darcy Lange's work predating this research and concurrent activities parallel to this research**

This thesis extends my existing research and ongoing curatorial, archival and scholarly efforts in recovering the legacy of Darcy Lange, which I have undertaken for over a decade. These efforts started while I was working as Curator of Contemporary Art at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (2005–2012) in New Zealand and as Darcy Lange Curator-at-Large (2012–2014) for this gallery. In 2005 upon Lange's death, I initiated the preservation and cataloguing of

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<sup>29</sup> Curtis, in conversation with the author, c. December 2008. The lack of distribution and access of Lange's works in the UK has also been acknowledged by William Fowler, Curator for Artists' Moving Image at British Film Institute, Benjamin Cook, Director at Lux, and Lucy Reynolds, among others.

Lange's films and videos, working in collaboration with the Darcy Lange Estate and the New Zealand Film Archive where his work was deposited shortly thereafter. I also formed the Darcy Lange Archive at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery. Over the years, I organized a major survey on his work at Govett-Brewster that toured in New Zealand, and curated numerous exhibitions of Lange's work at international institutions such as Ikon Gallery, Moderna Galerija (Ljubljana), Yale University, Cabinet (New York), Camera Austria, Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castelló (Spain) and NTU CCA, Singapore (for a full list, see Appendix 2). I also secured the international distribution of his videos by Electronic Art Intermix in New York. Lastly, I edited *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work* (Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Ikon Gallery, 2008), the first significant monograph on the artist featuring essays by Guy Brett, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Dan Graham, John Miller, Geraldene Peters, Pedro G. Romero and myself. My early writings on Lange were also published in *Camera Austria International* and 'documenta 12''s *Magazine no.3: Education* (see Appendix 2).

With the support of the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and the Royal College of Art, the Darcy Lange Archive travelled to London, loaned to the RCA's Archives and Special Collections for the duration of my studies. It arrived in September 2013 and returned to New Zealand October 2016. The archive contains the artist's correspondence from late 1960s until mid 2000s, more than fifty exhibition catalogues, periodicals and ephemera, printed matter such art brochures and booklets featuring the artist, around a hundred of the same featuring other artist peers, more than eighty books (of various subjects such as art, literature, political science, sociology, education, philosophy) as well as his full collection of photographic negatives, contact sheets and working prints expanding over two decades. The archive was catalogued and contains a digital database but its contents have not yet been fully digitized.

The Darcy Lange Archive was brought to the RCA as a key research tool for my studies and to provide the vital context of London for the archive, ensuring interested curators, scholars and artists had access, subsequently contributing to the knowledge and dissemination of Lange's work in the UK and internationally. Indeed, some of these visits led to beneficial outcomes with works of Lange featuring in several exhibitions in 2016, namely in Andrew Wilson's exhibition 'Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979' at Tate Britain, in its accompanying screening programme as well as in the exhibition catalogue; *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* featured in Jeremy Millar's exhibition 'Notes on Gesture' at Siobhan Davis Studios, London; a selection of videos from *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* (1977) featured in the 'Kaleidoscope' at Modern Art Oxford; and a series of videos and photographs from *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77) were exhibited in Tom Holart's exhibition 'Learning Laboratories' at BAK, Utrecht. Lastly, Lange's *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (1972)

and *Studies of Family Groups* (1972) will be exhibited at Raven Row, London as part of a survey tracing the history of Gallery House in early 2017 (see Appendix 1). These historical surveys redressed Lange's absence from previous historical accounts acknowledging his vital contribution to the British artistic context of this period; more importantly, they have rendered this material public again. Further, his work has been presented and framed within contemporary discourses, for instance in regards to the present crisis in education that has prompted a search for critical pedagogical models in the past, rendering a renewed interest in Lange's *Work Studies in Schools* which has taken a new poignancy today (for full listings of these exhibitions, see Appendix 1).

During these three years while enrolled in my doctoral studies, I continued my engagement in curatorial and academic projects involving Darcy Lange. These provided opportunities to research specific aspects of Lange's work by placing him in different cultural and intellectual contexts, which has further informed my research as well as offered new platforms to present Lange to different audiences and contexts. For instance, 'Darcy Lange: Enduring Time' at Tate Modern in 2016, five-screening programme as part of Tate Film Pioneer Series; and 'Darcy Lange: Hard, however, and useful is the small, day-to-day work' at Centre for Contemporary Art, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore in 2015, as part of the overarching research framework 'Place.Labour.Capital'. I also convened the symposium 'Turn to the Archive! Ethics and the Making, Encountering, Imagining and Missing of the Archive', held at the RCA in 2015, in which I gave a paper on the Darcy Lange Archive (see Appendix 2).

This long-time commitment with Lange's work has had obvious benefits for my thesis. It has provided an important context for my current doctoral research and my intimate knowledge with the archive has been the foundation for this thesis. It has also created a close identification on my part, more so given the fact that I formed the archive and was its 'keeper' for over ten years. I have sought to maintain the necessary distance for a critical assessment of his work. This is especially needed given the lack of existing scholarship or even public access to Lange's work as until recently it has not been widely shown nor there is any presence of his work online. In this thesis, there is biographical content that comes from having had access to the artist archive. I have adopted concrete biographical material, as I believe the stock of past experience does influence an artist's work and the kind of decisions she/he makes, as do also character traits. These may be useful if employed strategically and as springboards to elicit some arguments borne out of my doctoral research.

This thesis draws on research from the Darcy Lange Archive and features previously unpublished archival material and research. Research for the *Maori Land Project*, examined in

Chapter 5, was also conducted at the Van Abbemuseum Archive in Eindhoven and de Appel Archive and LIMA Archive, both in Amsterdam. I did some preliminary research also at the British Artists' Film & Video Study Collection at Central Saint Martins and at Tate Britain Library. In addition, I have conducted interviews with those who met Lange or were contemporaries of him, artists, critics and curators, namely Jenni Boswell-Jones, Guy Brett, Ben Cook, David Curtis, Rene Coelho, David Elliot, Mark Francis, Jasper Holthuis, Alyson Hunter, John Miller, Lynda Morris, Ismail Saray, David Tremlett, Jack Wendler, Richard Wentworth, and Richard Woolley, among others, to help me draw some arguments and connections (see List of Interviews).

There are issues of accuracy and managing information when dealing with archives and conducting interviews. The over forty years' gap plays a toll on people's memories and in sourcing reliable information. There were at times contradictory accounts from the artist or a lack of evidence to ground his intentions. Some were minor, like dates or titles of works; others had further implications, such as defining an intention that later was contradicted. For instance, Lange once stated his intention to 'abstract an essence from their [workers] activities'.<sup>30</sup> Yet he contradicted himself when he claimed to be trying to avoid turning his video and photography into 'an end in itself'.<sup>31</sup> And again, 'I am not in this project to build a creative abstraction but to do a service to the people with whom I am working —to truthfully render situations.'<sup>32</sup> It demanded examining the context of an assertion. I understood, however, that contradiction is essential in human condition. One also becomes aware of the issue of dealing with too much detail and the need to avoid getting caught in minutiae that in the thick of research may seem interesting but, overall, are not. This is preciously time-consuming and can be even counter-productive, by providing too much data to the detriment of proper analysis. This was the case of the additional research conducted at the aforementioned archives in the Netherlands, which offered the unique opportunity to view the actual tapes shown in the 'Maori Land Project' exhibition held in the Netherlands and Belgium in 1980, material I had not had access to before. It made also available further letters, documents and printed matter that were rather inconsequential.

### **Chapters and structure of the thesis**

The thesis focuses on Lange's artistic practice while living in London and the Netherlands and during his most active period, between 1968 through 1983. While Lange continued his video

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<sup>30</sup> Darcy Lange, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, [n.p.].

<sup>31</sup> Darcy Lange, 'To Effect a Truthful Study of Work in Schools', in *Work Studies in Schools* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1977), p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Lange, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, [n.p.].

practice afterwards — with *Lack of Hope* (1986), arguably a continuation or a part of his *Maori Land Project* (1977–80), and his final series *Artists, Musicians, and Poets at Work* (1998–2000) — he concentrated mainly in flamenco music, producing multi-media productions such as *People of the World* (1983–84) in the Netherlands, and *Aire del Mar* (1988–94) after his return in New Zealand. Lange had also an artistic life as musician, he played flamenco guitar since early age and practised for hours daily throughout his life. He performed in theatres and museums around New Zealand as well as busked in the streets of Auckland, as he had done in London playing in pubs and at the ICA's restaurant. This thesis focuses in his artistic career as a videographer, rather than as sculptor or musician.

This thesis establishes a wider array of conceptual and methodological approaches that serve to analyse and contextualise Lange's work — namely, art historical debates concerning Conceptual art, film theory and analysis of ethnographic and structuralist filmmaking, discourses around representations of labour and social documentary approaches in photography and film, notions particular to the medium of video such as 'feedback' and 'real time', and participatory and socially engaged artistic practices, in the context of the cultural and political climate in Britain during the 1970s. This wider context provides the means for a richer understanding of video art outside the predominant structuralist tendencies of the time and of the cultural history of the neo-avant-garde artistic practices in Britain in the 1970s.

Chapter 1, 'From Sculpture to Photography and Film', examines Lange's transition, in 1971, coming out of the Royal College of Art where he trained as a sculptor to his adoption of film and photography. It provides an aesthetic analysis of his sculptural practice and establishes a key set of influences that might have played a determining role in his early artistic development. It proposes Lange's transition as result of, on the one hand, ontological concerns regarding artistic definition that were indebted to Conceptual art, and on the other hand, an increased interest in the documentation of a social subject and an expressed commitment to realism. It elucidates Lange's evolution from his early abstract large hard-edge steel sculptures on his arrival at the RCA, to his increasing interest in the figure and in 'environments', and his final shift to representational media, drawn by his interest in the subject of class and marking the beginning of his studies of people at work. It proposes Conceptual art's post-medium condition and reductionist tendency, and the Duchampian intention to free 'art from the dominium of the hand' as influencing Lange's adoption of camera lens media. It also establishes an analysis of Lange's early interest in photography and draw parallels between Lange's aesthetically uninflected way of documenting labour as process and as the unfolding of an action and the documentation of performance art. It examines the introduction of social reality and Lange's expressed intention to leave a memory or a 'factual' record of the social world. This chapter

concentrates mainly on *Irish Road Workers* (1971), Lange's RCA graduation project and his last sculpture, and on his Super-8 film and photographic series *Social Documentation, Communication and Observation* (1971).

Chapter 2, 'Ethnographic, Structuralist and Real-Time Filmmaking', picks up the baton from Dan Graham, who described Lange's work as being 'between three poles of film: the anthropological, structuralist, and 'real time' 'narrative' filmmaking'.<sup>33</sup> This chapter introduces film aesthetic and theory analysis to examine Lange's real-time, sparsely unedited, observational style that shared some of the structuralist parameters, namely the static or very limited mobility of the camera and the use of long takes — parameters that Noël Burch also saw operating in early films and termed as 'primitive cinema', such as the use of a single continuous shot, a fixed point of view, and a trust in the camera's capability in replicating reality 'as it is'. The chapter also introduces ethnographic film discourses that offer an examination of culture in representation and raise questions around the empiricism of the camera, the nature and the politics of representation, the position of the filmmaker with the subject and the social and political inflections embedded in representation.

Chapter 3, 'Images of People at Work', explores Lange's representations of labour seen alongside other artists committed to the recovery and re-evaluation of the social function of photographic practice as a critique of Modernism that emerged in the 1970s. Despite the diverse approaches, they revived the ideological objectives and utopian aspirations of the socially engaged documentary tradition of the 1920s and 1930s — those of the 1920s Soviet factographers's film representations of the collective experience of industrialization, the Worker Photography movement of the interwar years, and the seminal photographic work of Lewis Hine and the 1930s Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, for whom Lange expressed admiration. This chapter examines also Lange's representations as grounded in and in dialogue with Conceptual art and within a decade of intense politicisation in Britain, during which labour became a subject of examination and criticism among the more politicized socialist Conceptual artists. For Lange video became a tool for performance analysis; this chapter examines the image of work in its manifold meanings including: work and the human body, as an expression of class and identity, as process, and the notion of skill.

Chapter 4, 'Education, Participation and the Making of the Subject', examines Lange's *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77) from three discursive frameworks. Focusing on pedagogical practices

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<sup>33</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', *New Observations*, no. 29, 1985, [n.d.]



in the classroom, Lange explored the implications of video for teaching and learning, inviting his subjects to offer their own analysis of their experiences of work and class. Lange grounded his analysis in human experience and opted for the dialogic possibilities of video. One framework takes on the notion of video's 'feedback' as determinant in promoting new forms of participatory or shared documentary. Another discursive framework allows an exploration of the notion of the dialogic and proposes *Work Studies in Schools* as a pedagogic project, that is, not one that adopts education as a method or as a form, but one that intervenes in an existing pedagogic situation to bring about awareness and self-empowerment. My approach draws from experimental pedagogies appearing at the time, such as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) that saw conventional education as reinforcing the system's power structures, promoting instead new models of open, self-directed education and forms of self-empowerment through collective class awareness. Lastly, the fundamental shift in the dynamics between the artist, the 'artwork' and the audience introduced in this work, allows it to be situated within post-studio, socially engaged, participatory practices that sought to activate the role of the artist in society. This chapter thus also examines Lange's work under the theoretical framework of participatory art as defined by Claire Bishop.

Chapter 5, 'Social Activism', focuses on Lange's *Maori Land Project* (1977–80), which marked a shift in Lange's artistic trajectory as he joined the efforts of fellow activists and documentarians to raise awareness and mobilize support for land claims by the Maori people, during the so-called 'Maori Renaissance', a movement which actively sought indigenous self-governance and self-determination. Lange collaborated with René Coelho, director of the video gallery Montevideo in Amsterdam, and Leonard Henny from Werkgroep Internationale Solidariteit, a centre in Utrecht University's Sociology department, dedicated to the research of media as a political tool. As a result of these collaborations, three video programmes about the Maori land rights were produced: a 30-minute version edited for NOS Television (the Dutch Broadcasting Foundation), produced by Coelho; two 20-minute versions for a university research project by Henny; and a much longer artistic version of 140-minutes<sup>34</sup> edited by Lange. These were exhibited at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum and the International Cultureel Centrum in 1980. Theoretical debates about cultural difference framed this project, driven also by Lange's desire to further extend social agency through his videomaking. An activist impulse also lay behind his political multimedia musical performances *People of the World* (1983) and *Aire del Mar* (1988), also briefly introduced at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>34</sup> According to Miller and Peters, there are two artist's versions in the Darcy Lange Estate, one of 150 minutes and another of 300 minutes long. Miller and Peters, 'Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project—Working in Fragments', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, fn. 24, p. 149.

My research has been driven by a desire to understand the significant concepts and intellectual preoccupations of the period in which Lange was active rather than retrofit recent theory. There have been instances, however, where I have adopted a contemporary approach. One of such instances is in chapter 4, where I introduce Claire Bishop's notion of 'participatory art'. In her analysis of socially engaged practices today, Bishop traces a genealogy that recognizes certain artistic manifestations of the 1970s, such as the Artist Placement Group, as precursors to these current practices. The way Bishop establishes the parameters of participatory art, in my view, offers the means by which one can expand the vocabulary and understanding of Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*, in ways that neither Lange nor Guy Brett was able to clearly articulate at the time. That is, beyond being inscribed within the debate around video as a medium and the regime of image production, as they did, to frame it within its *socially relational* dimension. Might one see the video recordings of *Work Studies in Schools* as a form of expanded documentary, adopting Jean Rouch's notion of 'participatory anthropology' or ideas of collaboration brought about by the video's 'feedback' feature, that incorporated dialogic exchanges with (and among) the subjects, having an impact on them and in the resulting discrete artwork whose destination is the art gallery? Or rather, might one see *Work Studies in Schools* as primarily a *project*, wherein the video recording (seen as an intervening activity in a real *situation*) is the catalysts for a dialogic exchange (that would otherwise not have taken place) among the subjects (who are the primary audience and participants), which itself constitutes the *medium* and the core aim of the *project*? Further, might these video recordings capturing the exchanges and processes of the project be shown later in a gallery to a secondary audience (the public) — who can learn also by the extended principle that *everyone* can learn by the distance they assume as observers to an experience other than their own? Furthermore, might the act of participation (through the analysis of the tapes) by the teacher and pupils mirror the participation Lange sought from the public as the diversity of the tapes may encourage their own comparative analysis across the various teachers, schools and subjects?

In instances such as this, I have traded consistency within the intellectual archaeological approach mostly adopted in the thesis, given that the issue of participation was core to Lange's work from early on, even though he would not have articulated his practice in the theoretical terms employed by Bishop today. Further, one could claim *Work Studies in Schools* as a proto-work to these socially engaged practices appearing from the 1990s onwards. My aim however was not to create a legitimising argument, but to use Bishop's parameters defining participatory art to better understand this work.

Another example is my engagement with Catherine Russell's 1999 book *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* in chapter 2. Russell examines the interplay

between the critical methods of structural and ethnographic filmmaking to explore how these might mutually challenge one another. Her approach helps to bring together two distinctly separate film languages in ways that I found useful to analyse Lange's work, as defined by the aforementioned three modes of filmmaking: ethnographic, structuralist and real time. In this case, Russell does not introduce the potential of a new reading to Lange's work, as Bishop's notion of participatory art in my view does, but offers a methodological model that I have adopted in this chapter.

This thesis extends my previous research initiated with the monograph *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*. This publication was a significant undertaking in the sense of compiling, cataloguing and providing an overview for the first time of the breadth and scope of the artist's oeuvre. It gathered essays by some key art historians and critics — some contemporaries of Lange, as well as current writers — to provide different approaches to and readings of particular aspects of Lange's practice. It has been a valuable reference, and indeed has served to set a context for and introduce his work to contemporary audiences, as well as those who were already familiar with Lange's work but unaware of the breath of his production. Having said this, the publication was produced in the very early stages of my involvement and rediscovery of Lange's work and my contribution to this book was mainly as editor and writer of its introduction. Therefore, I felt the need to undertake a more in-depth research and critical examination of his work. While this monograph established the groundwork, the collection of essays appeared as individual entries loosely linked and demanded a more synthesising examination. Furthermore, at the time of its publication, the Darcy Lange Archive had not been properly catalogued and the writers, including myself, had little access to its contents.

This thesis covers the same period of Lange's career as the book, mainly the 1970s. However, this research has focused on examining Lange's practice and artistic career within the context of London's artistic scene and its distinctly British cultural and political context. My research has been informed also by my own relocation to London from 2013. It recognizes that whilst there was a certain degree of internationalism and flux of artistic ideas and debates, with artists like Lange and curators traveling between Europe and North America, and to New Zealand, artistic scenes at the time remained still significantly local. This thesis takes an art historical approach, but it does not place Lange within the history of video, not strictly, indeed quite the contrary to my preliminary intention. One of reasons for not writing Lange within the realm of video art, as I argue in this thesis, is because his work encompasses other registers; it is informed by Conceptual art, strongly bound to representational and documentary traditions of film and photography, as well as to socially engaged artistic practices where art sought to perform a social purpose.

My purpose has not been to reappraise the work of Darcy Lange but to demonstrate that an analysis of his career provides the means for a richer understanding of video art by providing another approach to video outside the predominant structuralist tendencies of the time and of the cultural history of the neo-avant-garde artistic practices in Britain in the 1970s. Further, it is vital to examine and recognise the significance of singular artists whose contribution might have been missed. This risk of becoming invisible was indeed at the heart of Lange's own aspirations in documenting, not the working class, but the people, individuals at work, as well as in *Work Studies in Schools*, ultimately facilitating a platform for expression to those who were deprived of a voice, to challenge and transform established teaching and learning dynamics between teachers and pupils.

Lange's output in the 1970s when he was most active was not small and the body of work, I shall argue, is consistent and committed in its inquiry, and carried on quite singularly and on its own. But of course the significance of an artist is not measured by quantity; the brilliance of a single work alone can establish an artist's name. His relevance can be asserted also regardless of the degree of influence his work might have had among his peers, as other posthumous receptions of marginal figures have proven. This, we know, is contingent on the realities of power in the art world, capricious fluxes of artistic trends and market demands, and even the obstinacy of a particular curator. Moreover, Lange represents the story of other missing artists overlooked by a North American- and European-centred Modernist art history; being written off also by accounts of video history that privileged structuralist videomaking for its aesthetically ground-breaking experimentations, ignoring the more socially committed counterparts, even by the histories of Conceptual art that focused on notions of the dematerialized or analytical forms and saw photography, film or video as purely documentation instruments leaving those Conceptual moving image works in the hands of video historians — a predicament still seen today in the recent 'Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979' at Tate Britain where video works were screened in the theatre rather than on monitors in the gallery space.

My original contribution here lies not only in the detailed reconstruction of his career, but in my research and characterisation of wider — intellectual, social and artistic — contexts in which he operated and, as such, it enhances the intellectual history of artists' film and video and the neo-avant-garde artistic practices in the UK in the 1970s. This thesis employs a wider array of conceptual and methodological approaches that serve to analyse and contextualise Lange's work. Some of these approaches and my claims are speculative, 'unproven' by lack of evidence or unacknowledged by the artist, and obviously contingent upon my own interests and interpretation of his oeuvre. These are also speculative in the sense of adopting a

transdisciplinary approach. I consider transdisciplinarity to be valuable in establishing propositional alternative readings that are open-ended and that expand and enrich the understanding of Lange's work, and that by extension can be transferred to other artistic practices that similarly have fallen outside mainstream discourses for not fitting in neat categories.<sup>35</sup> Transdisciplinarity can be seen in this thesis in the use of some concepts, namely 'participation', appearing in different chapters and functioning across different artistic media and disciplinary discourses. For instance, Lange speaks of seeking participation in his early minimalist sculptures, as in *Formality II* (1967) made of parts that can be re-arranged by the audience, or in the use of slide projections in his last sculptural environment *Irish Road Workers* (1971) to achieve 'maximum participation'. Chapter 2 addresses Roach's notion of 'participatory anthropology' as a precursor of participatory forms of representational and documentary practice that might have informed Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*. In Chapter 4, participation appears as the buzz word among video practitioners, here introduced by video's 'feedback' feature (a term borrowed from cybernetics) and communication theories, with participants being able to seeing the recordings of themselves, retro-feeding the image. Lastly, chapter 4 introduces Claire Bishop's definition of 'participatory art', which offers new conceptual parameters in the realm of the relational and introduces the legacies of socially engaged artistic practices bringing art in relation to society. This is one instance where a transdisciplinary approach has proven to be necessary, by introducing subtle different understandings and uses of the notion of participation across different contexts (sculpture, video, relational artistic practices), allowing for comparative analyses among these across disciplines and historically in time, in turn offering new ways of examining Lange's own evolving notions and manifestations of the term.

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<sup>35</sup> An advocating position towards transdisciplinary research approaches has appeared in the humanities in the English-speaking world, which since the 1960s have been transformed by French and German philosophy and critical theory that operate across the boundaries of existing disciplines. See for instance, the research project lead by British philosopher Peter Osborne at Centre for Research on Modern European Philosophy at Kingston University in London.  
<<http://fass.kingston.ac.uk/research/crmep/projects/transdisciplinarity/>> [accessed 28 November 2016]

## CHAPTER 1. From Sculpture to Film and Photography

The title of Darcy Lange's *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation* (1971) laconically enunciates the faculties of his first film series. It reveals Lange's attempts to state the nature (and aims) of his new artistic activity, one that by now had abandoned sculpture for film and photography. It is exemplary of the kind of titles assigned to artworks and exhibitions of this time which stood for the wide range of activities and processes that constituted Conceptual art — namely, Harold Szeemann's exhibition 'When Attitudes Become Form', from 1969, and subtitled 'Works—Concepts—Processes—Situations—Information', or Richard Serra's *Verb List Compilation: Actions to Relate to Oneself* (1967), a list of actions that related to expanded notions of sculpture. Lange's titles, shared with Serra's, in Peter Osborne's words, a 'linguistic definition of their contents in terms of a specification of acts'.<sup>36</sup> Lange's choice of nouns, however, designated the artwork's attributes or functions in the realm of the social, communication and representation. Therefore, they were not strictly related ontologically to the field of sculpture as in Serra's verbs, which were bound to materials and concerned with the experience of 'making'. Paul Wood has remarked that the period of Conceptual art experienced a raised self-consciousness that went beyond questions of method about art making. He wrote:

What it was to be an artist, and what it was that an artist was supposed to do or make, became unavoidable issues to confront, issues that required more than simply methods of 'making' or 'doing' in order to be adequately confronted. What seemed to be needed was a form of 'second-order', or 'meta-level' practice. Modernism had repressed the cognitive dimension of art. Now, in the ruins of modernism, language returned with a vengeance.<sup>37</sup>

Art in this new conceptualisation implicated a process of investigation, or postulations, about the sort of activities that could constitute, or claim in a post-Duchampian sense, the status of a work of art. Lange's tendency was not towards language and the more analytical side of Conceptual art. His sensibility and concerns were in part tuned with the avant-garde and Fluxus's understanding of art as engaged in the world rather than being a separate autonomous activity. It became non-medium-specific, which for Lange meant abandoning sculpture for photography, film and video, used as non-artistic media, and chosen for their indexical capacity to document social reality.

Following Osborne's typology of Conceptual art practices based on a schema around the principle of negation, Lange would subscribe to '*the negation of medium* by a generic conception of

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<sup>36</sup> Peter Osborne, 'Survey', in *Conceptual Art*, ed. by Peter Osborne (London: Phaidon Press, 2002), pp. 22–23.

<sup>37</sup> Paul Wood, *Conceptual Art* (London: Tate Publishing, 2002), p. 43.

“objecthood””, influenced by Minimalism.<sup>38</sup> His shift from a sculptural practice to film and video encompassed, for a brief moment, and was, in part, influenced by formal-critical concerns with the dematerialization of the object and the falling of the boundaries between medias as well as being driven by concerns with artistic definition, while sustained by an interest in documenting social reality, concerned with the issues of class and labour, and an expressed commitment to examine the nature of realism.

Rather than claim Lange’s early films as being part of the Conceptual art movement, I argue that Lange’s move to film would have been influenced by Conceptual art, in ways I will examine in this chapter. He shared with Conceptual artists the intention to break with modernist principles around the art object. However, his move was too strongly bound to notions of representation and realism, and to the documentation of social reality. The introduction of the social subject in his work in this early period is crucial, particularly his interest in portraying social class divisions in Britain, which Lange attributed to his increased political awareness on his arrival in London in 1968 and the heightened labour struggles that occurred in Britain during the 1970s. For Lange, labour, incipiently appearing for the first time in his Royal College of Art graduation sculptural environment<sup>39</sup> *Irish Road Workers* (1971), became the central subject of his artistic practice for most of the 1970s. This chapter will not engage in an analysis of Lange’s representation of labour or elucidate the political, cultural and historical contextual conditions that might determine Lange’s interest in labour, which becomes more prominent later in his development, and it is examined in Chapter 3.

*Irish Road Workers*, produced at the end of Lange’s studies at the RCA, was his last sculptural environment. It would be plausible to attribute his departure from sculpture to the fact that after graduation, Lange would not have had a studio or the resources to continue producing ambitious large-scale sculptures like *Irish Road Workers*. Yet in his memoirs, written in 1985, Lange attributes his transition to the prevailing Conceptual art movement, as well as to ‘the falling away of the

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<sup>38</sup> Osborne, *Conceptual Art*, pp. 18–19.

<sup>39</sup> Since 1969 Lange referred to his sculptures as ‘environments’. Environmental sculpture was a term commonly used in the 1960s and has been defined as: ‘20th-century art form intended to involve or encompass the spectators rather than merely to face them; the form developed as part of a larger artistic current that sought to break down the historical dichotomy between life and art’.

<https://www.britannica.com/art/environmental-sculpture>

Further, Julia M. Bush uses the term mainly to define non-figurative sculpture that involves the audience spatially in something that verges on architecture, exemplified in works by Louise Nevelson, Tony Smith and David Smith. However, the term has been extended to figurative sculptures by artists such as Edward Kienholz and George Segal that qualify as environmental for not being displayed in a pedestal, instead occupying, and sometimes intervening in the space where they are placed, and whose space is also shared with the audience who experiences rather gazes upon them. Julia M. Bush, *A Decade of Sculpture: the New Media in the 1960s* (Philadelphia: Art Alliance Press, 1974).

restrictions of the Royal College of Arts [*sic*].<sup>40</sup> The Sculpture department encouraged experimentation across the boundaries of media and an approach of critical inquiry about what art was, how it was made and what it was for, which I shall examine in this chapter.

The important transition that Lange made from sculpture towards photography and film, before he settled later in video, is the focus of this chapter. It represents a key moment in Lange's development that was guided by a self-conscious and reflexive critique of the nature and function of sculpture, which lead him not to engaging with new forms of sculpture in its expanded field, but to altogether abandoning it. In this chapter, and throughout the thesis, I will draw on references to artistic notions and tendencies and other artists' works, sometimes guided by Lange's own expressed influences and antecedents, other times following my own reading, more speculative in nature. I will propose plausible historical connections to form a contextual framework for Lange's transition derived from historical contemporary writings of the time as well as more current retrospectives of this period.

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Lange's sculptural practice shifted during his years at the RCA. It evolved from his previous free-standing, large-scale, geometric abstract structures, made while a student at Elam School of Fine Arts in Auckland, New Zealand (1964–67), and in line with the sculptural trends in America and Britain during the early 1960s. These sculptures were studies of composition of forms in space much influenced by a Constructivist aesthetic and Minimalism, then ascending in America, though without the latter's stark austerity. Lange built his sculptures by assembling and welding steel plates (at times using aluminium and tin too) obtained from industrial scrap metal, thus responding to particular shapes, rather than by being prefabricated. The early ones such as *Unnamed Monster* and *Scarlet Chrome*, both of 1966, combined linear, fluid contours with solid shapes that playfully approached movement (of expansion and contraction) and negative and positive space and, being large in scale, engaged the viewer with architectural space.

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<sup>40</sup> Darcy Lange, *Video Art* (Auckland: The Department of Film, Television and Media Studies, Auckland University, 2001), p. 18.





FIG. 1 *Unnamed Monster* (1966); FIG. 2 *Scarlet Chrome* (1966). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

The following year his sculptures became more planned, working from drawings and models, and adopting solid forms of basic geometric primary shapes like the sphere, square, triangle and cylinder, as in *Formality I* and *Formality II*, both of 1967. These were made of several separate components and the audience was invited to interact playfully with the sculpture to change their arrangement. With this gesture, Lange challenged the modernist conception of the autonomous artwork, perceived as a fixed and complete entity, instead suggesting the idea of sculpture in a constant process of becoming by its infinite recomposition. Inherently it was the notion of social sculpture, whereby the audience could become an active participant in the artistic process.



FIG. 3 *Formality I* (1967); FIG. 4 *Formality II* (1967). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

In works such as *Extended Formality I* and *Formality III*, also from 1967, the geometric units were assembled together in a fixed composition, using the flat surfaces of planes and three-dimensional modules as building blocks to hold onto other pieces suspended in the air. They played with notions of weight, gravity and balance.

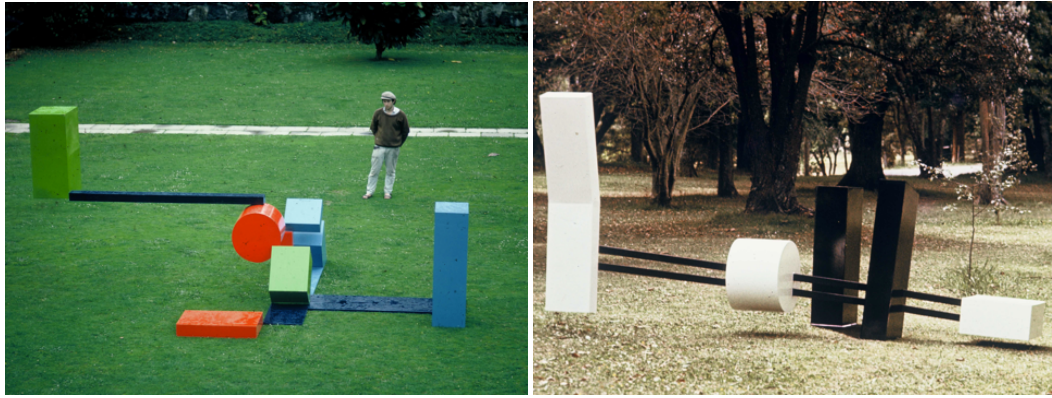


FIG. 5 *Extended Formality I* (1967); FIG. 6 *Formality III* (1967). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

The choice of painting the sculptures provided, according to Lange, ‘another plane — a painterly one — for instance, [in *Extended Formality I*] the form on the right seems to be bursting out of the ground and the cylinder echoes a calm strength of the upright box on the left’.<sup>41</sup> The use of colour seemed to perform a purely visual and abstract compositional function. Lange recognized the work of Dutch painter Piet Mondrian as being one of his strongest influences at the time, admiring the ‘geometric perfection’ of his work and his use of colour.<sup>42</sup> In some cases, as in *Extended Formality I*, colours were purposefully allegorical: blue for sky, green for nature and red for New Zealand’s house roofs.<sup>43</sup> Lange also admired in Mondrian’s work ‘his remarkable perfection of landscape and its progression in his work from reality to a perfect abstraction’.<sup>44</sup>

In the 1975 interview with Willoughby Sharp, editor of the magazine *Avalanche*, when asked about how aware he was while a student in New Zealand about the artistic production in New York, Lange replied that, thanks to his tutor Kurt von Meyer who had moved from America’s West Coast to teach at Elam, he had been very well informed. He told Sharp, ‘We knew about Edward Hopper, David Smith, Kline, Motherwell, Barnett Newman, and early Pop Art’.<sup>45</sup> Later in the interview, Lange speaks of his early sculptural concerns at the time as being around composition and ‘very structurally oriented’, citing Johannes Vermeer, Paul Cezanne, Constantin Brancusi, Giovanni Bellini and Mondrian, and concluding: ‘the work I did in New Zealand was hard edge, three dimensional steel Mondrian type things’.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Lange as quoted in Les Montajees, ‘Architectural Sculptor D’Arcy Lange’, *Craccum Art Supplement*, 2 September 1968, p. 13.

<sup>42</sup> Darcy Lange, ‘Concerning my Work: Sculpture Department’, unpublished, c.1970, p. 1. This is possibly an artist statement written as part of school assignment. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>43</sup> Montajees, p. 13. Further, New Zealand painter and Lange’s longtime partner (between 1964 and 1976), Alyson Hunter explained he used the same colours of the tractors in his family farm. Hunter in conversation with the author, 24 November 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Darcy Lange, ‘Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, *Avalanche* (summer 1975), 12-13 (p. 12).

<sup>46</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 12).

New Zealand art history lecturer at Elam, Les Montajees, in a review of Lange's sculptural practices, published in 1968, points to the American sculptor David Smith as being a strong influence in his work. In particular, he noted Lange's interest in Smith's *Cubi* series, which themselves were inspired by the neoplastic compositions of Mondrian. He wrote: 'the Cubi series are much closer to the 'strict forms', or rigid, self-inflicted limitations of Mondrian, whom both Smith and Lange admire greatly'.<sup>47</sup> Of Smith, Lange also commented on their shared interest in landscape. Lange often placed and photographed his sculptures outdoors, also painted them to protect them from the effects of weather, which denotes that he conceived them as outdoor sculptures. He noted how Smith's works were 'generally viewed against that fantastic pine forest and farmland where he lived,' and concluded: 'It is therefore possible that one almost enjoys the environment more than his art, or at least both in conjunction with each other.'<sup>48</sup> Montajees goes on to draw other influences in Lange's sculpture such as the work of Brancusi, which he claimed Lange admired for its 'cleanliness of line and form'. Montajees wrote: 'One cannot draw comparisons between works, for such pieces as *Bird in Space* and *Mademoiselle Pogany* are closer to moving forms of sculpture than those of Lange's but the perfection of the smooth surfaces has influenced Lange a great deal.'<sup>49</sup> Montajees's last remark in his review is revealing: 'It is significant that although Lange has been working in geometric forms that are perfect in themselves, he still feels that he has not yet perfectly related them to the human context.'<sup>50</sup> This quote presaged Lange's subsequent developments towards the inclusion of figurative elements and later of the human figure in the sculptural environments he produced at the RCA from 1969 to 1971.

Soon after his arrival at the RCA in 1968, Lange incorporated figurative and modelling still life elements into the earlier geometric structures,<sup>51</sup> creating life-size studies of figure and ground made of steel, lacquer and fibreglass that were painted in monochromatic colours (black, white and grey), as in *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)* and *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Chair and Still Life)*, both of 1969.

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<sup>47</sup> Les Montajees, pp. 12–13. The same year Montajees travelled with Lange to London, both to pursue their respective studies: Lange at RCA and Montajees to study art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art.

<sup>48</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> Montajees, p. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Montajees, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup> Lange wrote: 'At this time I left my art school environment in New Zealand and had to re-evaluate my position as a producing artist, as it became an impossibility to continue working in steel, as I had done under the protection of an art college with its readily available working space and welding facilities. I had to find a way of working that would be as stimulating and would be less difficult in getting started. I began to model from life, working also from still life, etc.' Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 2.



FIG. 7 *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)* (1969); FIG. 8 *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Chair and Still Life)* (1969). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

Lange's influences were rather traditional and disparate. He admired Brancusi's studies of still life, as well as Gian Lorenzo Bernini's 'drapery, his virtuosity with marble, his portraiture and his ability to take sculpture much further than figure'. In René Magritte, he not only found his 'ability to transplant objects into settings which are strangely incompatible' inspiring but also his ability to 'transform the objects by their surroundings', as well as 'his frequent use of still life, landscape, architecture, elements, buildings and people'. In Giovanni Bellini, who to him seemed to 'combine all of what Cezanne and Mondrian offer', he found his 'relationship of the figure to landscape' useful.<sup>52</sup> He was also drawn to Paul Cezanne for his realism (for the first time, the word realism appeared in the titles of his works). In the interview with Sharp, Lange explained his artistic development at the beginning of his studies at the RCA: 'And then in London I moved gradually into realism, or representationalism, in other words moving back into a Vermeer thing, where it's hidden under the structure of the work.'<sup>53</sup> Lange's interest in figuration and realism would seem a rather regressive move at the time from his previous works, something that Lange was aware of and did acknowledge.<sup>54</sup>

It is interesting to remark that Lange had been using photography all along since his studies at Elam to document his sculptures, but around this time started to use photography as well to help him think through and resolve compositional issues in his sculptures. Thus, he engaged in

<sup>52</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 2.

<sup>53</sup> Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p. 12).

<sup>54</sup> Lange wrote: 'most of my colleagues were horrified by this seemingly reactionary step'. Further, 'In the Sculpture School it was very much more difficult to carry on with a seemingly retrogressive style of sculpture, as there was still prevalent domination of abstraction. There were, in fact, no people in the Sculpture School who could see beyond self-indulgent art and no person who could see beyond the need to get past compositional studies within abstraction.' Lange, 'Concerning my Work', pp. 2-3.



comparative visual exercises between sculpture and the flatness of its photographic image. Among Lange's contact sheets, there is one of a series of snapshots he had taken while developing *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)* (c. 1969).

These depict a young woman wearing a coat, posing and moving freely in between the geometric components that made up this sculpture. It would seem that the photographs would have helped Lange to observe and capture the right swing of the coat, helping him to determine its placement within the composition. Comparing the above contact sheets (FIG. 9) with those of the photographs taken of the finished sculpture (FIG. 10), there are clear differences in their camera position. In the former, photography is frontal and is aimed at freezing real movement in order to then accurately reproduce it in sculpture. Conversely, in the latter, the photographs were taken using multiple viewpoints, severe angles, cropping, etc., in order to produce a visual trick or cinematic illusion of the coat moving as if it were going for a walk.



FIG. 9 Contact sheets of photographs of model with coat as part of *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)*, (c. 1969). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive



FIG. 10 *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)*. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

The aforementioned Lange's reference to the strangeness of Magritte's juxtaposition of objects within surroundings is here illustrated.<sup>55</sup> This effect of movement is stressed by the sequencing of photographs in the contact sheets. This simple reversing of actions in these photographic exercises, freezing real movement and animating the stasis of sculpture, might have reinforced the limitations of sculpture in reproducing reality when treated as a mimetic medium. More importantly, it introduced a level of reflexivity about the essential representational qualities of both sculpture and its photographic image that would have resonated later on when Lange's work develops towards the use of multiple camera lenses.

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<sup>55</sup> Lange wrote: 'I have often used an element of surrealism in my recent work with particular reference to the coat of the first sculpture I did at the College, and the chromium wine glass and bottle of the next two works; also the use of drapery in the works to date. I have been interested in Magritte but it is not directly to a style of his that I am aspiring. I am trying to make a statement which could be the captured object, the still moment or the feeling achieved from a frozen moment, as in the case of a motion picture that has suddenly stopped. So possibly the feeling would remind one of something slightly ghostly, a spirit perhaps which has just gone, although this element is not to be overemphasized.' Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 14.

Lange visited the 'Pop Art: Exhibition' held at Hayward Gallery in 1969,<sup>56</sup> and expressed his feeling of being drawn too to James Rosenquist's 'environment painting', which he described in experiential terms, as follows:

It was constructed in a room-like area and I noticed the extreme illusion and pleasure people seemed to have while walking around in this area. There seemed also to be a very interesting interaction occurring between these people walking in front of a painted image, actually not unlike the technique used in the theatre and film production of back-drops and back projection. I found this idea firmly ingrained in my mind and since then I have developed three works extending this particular concept.<sup>57</sup>

The three works he refers to here are *Environment of Mokau and Reminiscence* (1969), and *Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie* (1970)<sup>58</sup> and *Commentary—Equality* (1971)<sup>59</sup>. They all share in common a wall-contained tableau model that created a sculptural environment (as in the title of the earlier work), no longer conceived as an object to be gazed upon, or a composition of elements to be handled or walked around.<sup>60</sup> Instead, the environment was a new order of delimited space that was shared with the audience and that demanded to be walked into. Lange expressed his aim to make works that had 'the ability to help people become an integral part of their environment'.<sup>61</sup> Thus, a shift had taken place from an inward looking into the object or composition to the outward surroundings and the physical space that the audience occupied as well as an outward reference to landscape and a social context however tentative this is at this stage.

In his first sculptural 'environment', *Environment of Mokau and Reminiscence*, the painted walls inside depicted a sea view of Mokau River mouth on the West Coast of New Zealand, where the artist grew up. If the presence of the human figure was symbolically represented in its absence in his previous works, by the element of the coat as in *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)* or by the chair as in *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Chair and Still Life)*, in *Environment of Mokau and Reminiscence* the human figure is the artist himself. Lange literally 'occupies' it by photographing

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<sup>56</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 3. 'Pop Art: Exhibition' was held at Hayward Gallery in London, 9 July–3 September 1969.

<sup>57</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', pp. 3–4.

<sup>58</sup> On the back of one of the photographs documenting this sculpture is written 'Reality Extended'. This title is listed in the catalogue of the exhibition 'Young Contemporaries' where the work was exhibited 6–26 November 1970. *Young Contemporaries* (London: The Royal Academy of Arts 1970), p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> On the back of a photograph documenting this work it is written: 'Social Sculpture, March 1971: Negro and English girl, dead sheep on beach'. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>60</sup> Lange also acknowledged that the wall structure was also in response to a need to physically separate himself from his peers. He wrote: 'Because of my general inexperience of the English educational system and possibly my inability to cope with the recurrence of the public school administrator (not at all unlike those I experienced in my secondary schooling) I felt the need to make a very positive barrier between myself and the outside world, a need to reconstruct an environment which was more personally acceptable. Hence the development of the somewhat romantic, if not adolescent introversion; a creation of four great surrounding blocks, upon which were painted four related views of the coastline most familiar to me in New Zealand.' Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 14.

himself sitting down at the table placed inside, posing with a chromium wine glass in hand as if making a toast commemorating his homeland. Here too there is an attempt at animating the stasis of sculpture but also a sort of surrealist gesture, whereby the work is completed with Lange's own presence.

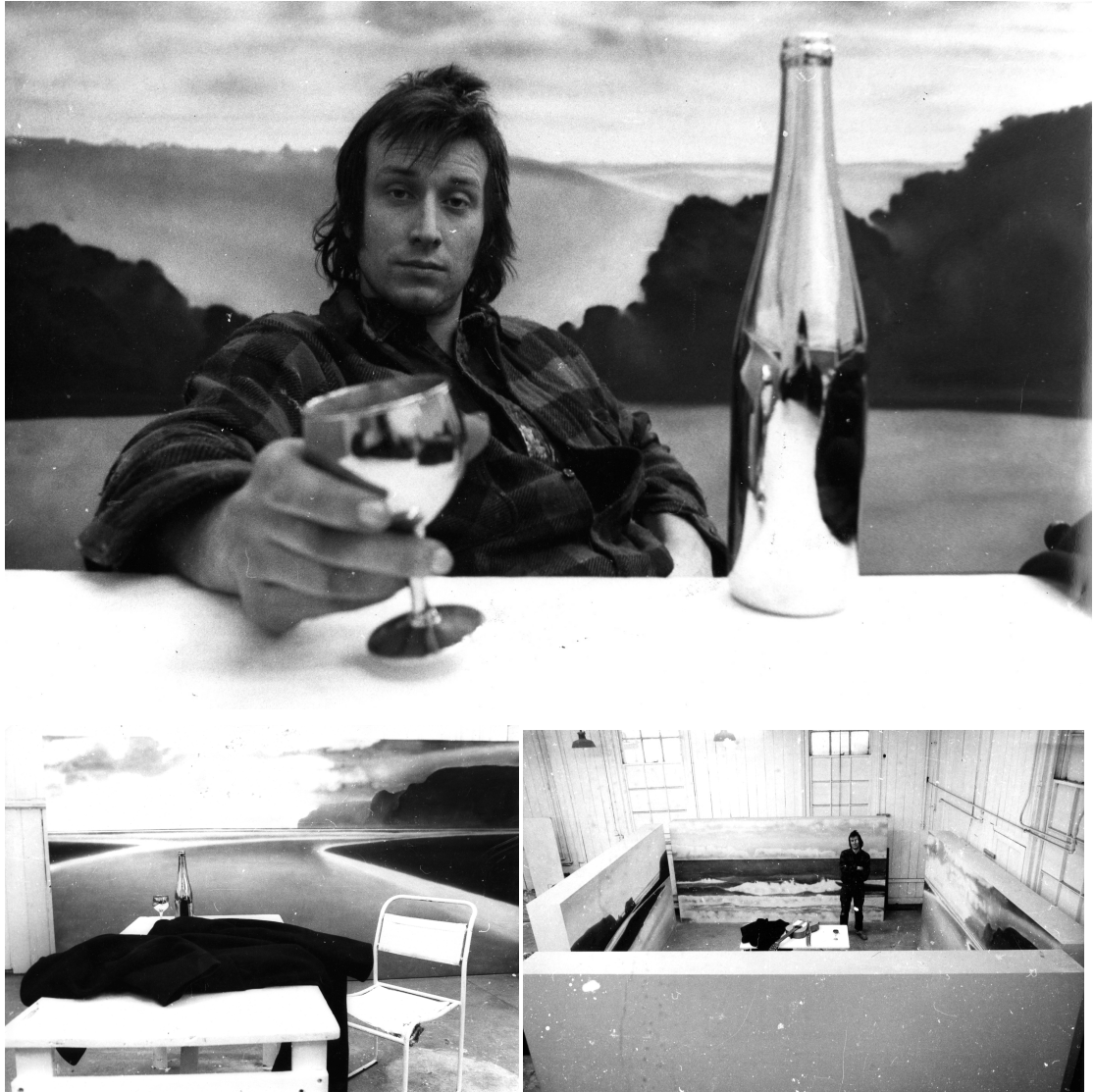


FIG. 11 *Environment of Mokau and Reminiscence* (1969). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

Unlike Gilbert and George's 'living sculptures', initiated in 1969 whilst students at St Martins, Lange's gesture might have been more playful rather than assertively claiming his presence to be part of the sculpture. Nevertheless, this signals experimentation with the material limits of sculpture and an incipient interest in the play between sculpture and photography, seen as a conduit to suggest a relation of sculpture with the body. There are several photographic documentations of this sculptural environment with still-life permutations: with him seating at the table with wine glass in hand, with his coat over the table, and even with his Spanish guitar, mixing sculptural elements, real objects and his own presence. On the reverse of one of these



photographs the words ‘Reconstruction of New Zealand Coastal Landscape with Still Life, 1969’ are written. The landscape was significant for Lange: New Zealand landscape for its dramatic climate conditions and light variations, whereas he found the English landscape ‘too quiet’, ‘boring’, ‘garden-like’, and ‘frequently trodden on’.<sup>62</sup>



FIG. 12 *Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie* (1970). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

His next environments *Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie* and *Commentary—Equality* also had the inside walls painted with natural seascapes: the former depicting the Cornwall coast in England, and the latter, Taranaki, his region on the western side of New Zealand's North Island. Concerned that his use of the New Zealand landscape would be seen as ‘nostalgic self-indulgence’, in *Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie* he changed to English sea scenery instead.<sup>63</sup> They were painted from photographs and slides,<sup>64</sup> as in *Commentary—Equality*, in which the single billboard-like backdrop was executed by spray-painting a projected blown up black and white photograph.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Lange dedicated a section to landscape as one of his influences. He wrote: ‘Firstly, the New Zealand landscape has been important because of its clear light and its variations between sunshine and the heavier more dramatic aspects of its climatic conditions — rains and thunderstorms. This landscape has been a constant source of information for me although until recently it was more emotional. Lately, I have used it for landscape environments which I have been making. The landscape in New Zealand will remain an important background in my work. It has remarkable cloud formations, land forms, mountains, hill country, coastlines, rock, violent seas and dramatic surf, all displayed in dramatic colour.’ Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, p. 9.

<sup>63</sup> Lange wrote: ‘I feel the need to use English landscape for I think that if I use New Zealand too often my thoughts would be lost and would be branded as nostalgic self-indulgence.’ Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, p. 9.

<sup>64</sup> In the Darcy Lange Archive, there are negatives of seascape studies taken by Lange in the West Coast of New Zealand where the artist grew up.

<sup>65</sup> This particular image Lange used in *Commentary—Equality* was taken by Rodney Charters, a RCA alumnus of the School of Film Studies (1968–71) and old-time friend from childhood who grew in Taranaki and often documented Lange’s sculptures at Elam School of Fine Arts and at RCA. Rodney Charters in conversation with the author, 11 February 2015.



FIG. 13 *Commentary—Equality* (1971). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

What was new in *Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie* and *Commentary—Equality* is the presence of life-size cast human figures, painted in white, which have now replaced altogether the previous still life motifs and geometric compositions. *Stonehenge and Bourgeoisie* recreated two men, one sitting, the other standing, looking out to the scenery and chromium-casted binoculars placed on top of a folding stool. Instead of the four horizontal walls, the multiple vertical painted panels symbolically represented the prehistoric monument. The Cornish landscape depicted in these walls was painted in colour in stark contrast to the monochromatic white painted figures.<sup>66</sup> *Commentary—Equality* recreated an interracial couple holding hands, ‘a negro and an English woman’, standing next to a dead sheep in front of a beach view of his Taranaki region. The sheep was likely an allusion to the sheep farming economy of this region where the artist grew up, and where his father owned a mixed farm of sheep and cattle.

<sup>66</sup> Lange wrote: ‘Stonehenge has always been an important reference, because of its unique spatial sympathy. In my last work I have used a composition which is quite similar to that of Stonehenge.’ Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, p. 11.

In these works, Lange made a more definite turn towards a realistic aesthetic that bore a strong resemblance to the tableaux created by American sculptors Edward Kienholz and George Segal.<sup>67</sup> Although the resemblance with Segal's sculptures would seem greater at first sight, Kienholz's work was indeed the one that had most impact on Lange. He recalled being 'deeply impressed' in his first encounter with Kienholz's 'grand monument' at the 'Pop Art: Exhibition'. He exalted his 'remarkable life size reproductions of an obvious natural American reality', his use of resin in the reproduction of people, and the versatility of materials and objects of his collage approach, 'while still managing to retain a compositional uniformity'.<sup>68</sup> He also noted Kienholz's use of music, a feature that Lange included too later in *Irish Road Workers*.

Lange's tableaux however were far simpler than Kienholz's, lacking the messiness, painterly surfaces, and expressionistic materiality of the American artist's assemblages made of found objects, junk and flea market items, as well as his use of symbolic and literary elements. Rather, Lange's shared Segal's sparse elements and sensibility. His life-size cast figures of ordinary people, painted in monochromatic white, were too closer to Segal's, framed in their realistic everyday settings — a kosher butcher in a shop, a man in a bar, an encounter in a diner—. These were reflections of everyday people much like, according to the American Abstract Expressionistic painter Mark Rothko, 'walk-in [Edward] Hoppers'.<sup>69</sup>

Regardless of Lange's differences with Segal and Kienholz, all three share a formal technique: the syntax of the tableau and the use of life casts, made by wrapping plaster of Paris on live models and using plaster on real clothing<sup>70</sup> to achieve greater likeness to life. This indexical relation to the real subject is a trait with the strongest connotations, in hindsight, to Lange's later transition to photography and film, for instance, when Lange uses photography to help recreate sculptural objects as in *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)*.

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<sup>67</sup> Coincidentally, all three artists grew up in farms: Lange's family had a sheep and cattle, dairy farm; Kienholz was also a farmer's son from Fairfield, Washington, and George Segal's family moved to a poultry farm in New Jersey where Segal grew up, although he was born in New York.

<sup>68</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', pp. 4–5.

<sup>69</sup> Mark Rothko cited in Graham W. J. Beal, 'Realism at a Distance', in *George Segal: Sculptures*, ed. by Martin Friedman and Graham W. J. Beal (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 1978), pp. 57–80 (p. 68).

<sup>70</sup> Alyson Hunter explained that Lange made his life-size figures and 'cast them in sections in plaster and scrim, filled with fibreglass and then joined together. He did a few clay heads as it is hard to cast heads because of the breathing and eyes.' Email exchange with author, 30 April 2015



FIG. 14 George Segal, *The Restaurant Window* (1967); FIG. 15 George Segal, *The Execution* (1967)

In his monographic essay on Kienholz, the American critic Robert L. Pincus acknowledges the obvious similarities with Segal's work, but makes a distinction between them that might usefully be applied to Lange's own environments. He wrote,

Segal concentrates much less on what is depicted than on how it is presented, while Kienholz achieves a greater balance between the two. In other words, Segal emphasizes formal presentation over and above social context: the uniform look of the figures; their poses; and the relationship between figures and props. Those props may reveal the patina of use and age, but Segal's figures seem quite disconnected from the things that surrounded them; they are phantoms who gently haunt their prosaic surroundings. His work, even when explicitly socially critical as in *The Execution* (1967) diffuses its content with its style. Though the tableau depicts three corpses lying on the floor and one suspended by his feet, it is not grisly so much as curiously cool depiction of this scene. Thus, Segal's approach contrasts strongly with Kienholz's commitment to an intensified version of the depicted social scene. Segal used (and still employs) the tableau to create a studied sort of realism, while Kienholz created a persuasive—perhaps the most persuasive—socially critical art of the second half of the 1960s.<sup>71</sup>

In a statement on realism, written as a student at the RCA, Lange remarks on the work of Kienholz as being exemplary, with his 'finality and clarity', of the renewal of art as social commentary art underway in the United States. He wrote:

In the last five years there has been a revival of realism in America. This has happened primarily on the West Coast. It is a combined result of the influences of Pop Art and traditional unwavering realism, principally Hopper and to a lesser extent Wyeth and Colville.

There has been another gradual development, that of social commentary art, which has developed much closer to Pop Art. It is largely started with Rauschenberg and Johns and has developed through people like Warhol and Oldenburg, ending up with the finality and clarity of Kienholz.

[...]

With the Rauschenberg, Warhol and Keinholtz [*sic*] group there has been a definite attempt to reach more people, although it seems to have been inspired by sensational occurrences [*sic*] such as a war, tragedy, popular culture, comics, films and the advertising world and popular figures. The only really committed and

<sup>71</sup> Robert L. Pincus, *On a Scale that Competes with the World: The Art of Edward and Nancy Reddin Kienholz* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 73–74.



possibly constructive social commentator apart from Warhol and his films, seems to be Keinholtz [*sic*].<sup>72</sup>

In claiming a revival of realism in America, Lange gives hints of where he places himself, making a distinction between the ‘traditional unwavering realism’ — typified by the works principally of Hopper, but also Wyeth and Colville — and a more progressive ‘social commentary art’ aligned with Pop Art. He clearly sees his work as being closer to the latter group with Kienholz as the key figure and Warhol’s films too (this is discussed in Chapter 2), with whom he shares greater affinities than with the other Pop artists whose interests lie in the imagery of popular culture, advertising and mass media. This distinction is not strictly stylistic, the aesthetic gap between the two groups is obvious, but more importantly in intention: the latter group adopted a more active function of art becoming a ‘critical commentary’ (to the service of social change), instead of simply being a ‘depiction’, of social reality. His remark that there is in these Pop artists ‘a definite attempt to reach more people’ expresses a more egalitarian desire, that he shared too, for art to move away from the elite and adopt more popular artistic languages and subjects. Lange stressed as imperative for his art the notion of being able to communicate and to reach the ordinary people, an early acknowledgement of the class system in Britain.<sup>73</sup>

American painter and theorist Stuart Davis remarked in the 1930s about the misuse of the prefix ‘social’ in art history: ‘the term “social content” in art is ill chosen and destructive since it implies a lack of social content in art other than itself. The term should be changed to one which describes the intention, namely “social comment”’.<sup>74</sup> Lange intentionally adhered to an art of social commentary, as in the title *Commentary–Equality* which advocated for racial and social equality.

The critique that Pincus made of Segal’s ‘studied sort of realism’ that suffered from the criticised detachment between the figures and their social frameworks might be extended to Lange’s environments. This is however absent in his next work *Irish Road Workers*, his RCA graduation work and last sculpture. In this work, the stylistic choices of the previous works that tended to abstract the subject are disposed of. Instead, Lange reaffirmed his adherence to realism. This is stressed not only stylistically but also in his choice of a subject matter that now addressed the working conditions of a particular immigrant community in Britain. Lange abandoned the monochromatic white figures instead painting them to achieve a greater

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<sup>72</sup> Darcy Lange, written statement possibly for a school assignment while being a student at the RCA, [n.d.], c. 1970. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>73</sup> Darcy Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, p. 13.

<sup>74</sup> Stuart Davis as quoted in Pam Meecham, ‘Realism and Modernism’, in *Varieties of Modernism*, ed. by Paul Wood (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 80.

naturalistic look, further supported by the use of real objects as props (clothing and gigs, shovels, drill, gravel, scaffolding steel and so on), colour slide projections and wild sound.



FIG. 16 *Irish Road Workers* (1971), Royal College of Art. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

Drawn by his intent to recreate reality in a naturalistic way, Lange previously photographed the very Irish road workers on site, to render them with the greatest verisimilitude. Workers were vividly recreated as caught (by the photographs) in the midst of their action, depicting a scene that exuded the hardship and arduous reality of road repairing, in its dirty and polluted setting.



FIG. 17 Study photographs documenting road workers. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

Here too there is an interesting visual play between the photographs documenting Lange's recreated figures and those of the actual road workers whereby their differences are flattened having both been reduced to stillness. However, the sequencing and dramatic framing of the sculpture by using multiple angles to achieve the illusion of actual movement is remarkably different to the rather straightforward frontal shots of the real workers. This interplay with movement was similarly caught in the photographic sequences of the model with the coat in preparation for *Untitled (Composition and Realism with Coat)* and the photographic documentation of the final sculpture.

Lange also shot a series of colour slides of an intersection in Oxford Street in London with a motorised Nikon F camera with a wide-angle lens. Located in two positions in the centre of the street, the camera recorded the traffic and the passers-by. In the graduation work, the slides were projected by four carousels with two dissolving units onto four screens surrounding the sculptural figures, to create the illusion of movement: on two opposite walls people and cars were in constant movement, and on the other two, the images were still. The work was also accompanied by a wild sound recording, that is, sound intended to be synchronized with film or video but recorded separately. Kienholz's work had also incorporated radios or televisions on occasion, animating the inertness of the sculpture, yet these devices acted mainly as metaphors for alienation, while here the sound and slides activated the space and served to further support a realist rendition of the workers' surroundings. The leap here from painting a seascape from a blown-up projected slide as in *Commentary—Equality* to choosing the slide projection is a reductive indexical move with formal and ideological connotations. This is key as it serves to understand the grounds by which Lange abandoned sculpture altogether, finding it redundant to recreate reality from a photograph by sculptural means (or painting) when photography and film itself reproduced indexically this reality.

The photographs, slides and sound provided a move towards an indexical relation to reality and social context, anchoring the subject within the particular present time and, and in this case, in the city of London. Ideologically, it meant a turn to society, depicting the harsh physical labour carried out by an immigrant community, the Irish, who were subjected to racism in Britain at the time. Although the slides were taken to complement the sculptural environment, Lange later claimed each to be 'a strong enough statement to be shown on its own'.<sup>75</sup> These were exhibited in the survey given to the artist *Land Work People* at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Zealand in 1985.

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<sup>75</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 20.

*One*, a live event by British artist Ian Breakwell held at Angela Flowers Gallery, 10 February 1971 offered images of physical labour inside the space of the gallery in ways that resonate with *Irish Road Workers*. In *One*, a group of labourers placed in a circle, shovelled respectively a mound of earth onto the next man's mound, simultaneously for the eight hours that the event lasted (with periodic tea breaks).

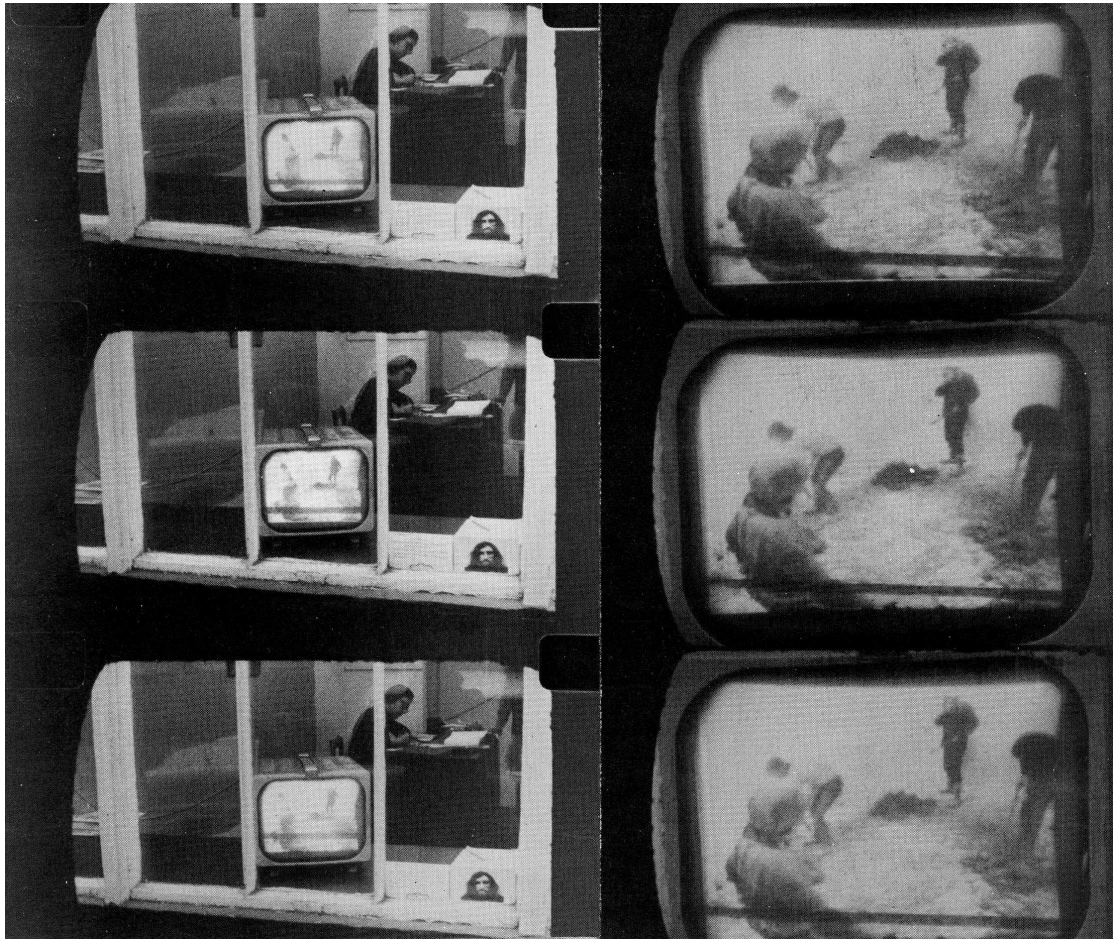


FIG. 18 Ian Breakwell, *One* (1971). Images reproduced in the catalogue of 'The Video Show', Serpentine Gallery, 1975.

Situated in the second floor of the gallery, this activity was transmitted on closed-circuit television to a monitor, placed in the window fronting the street below, which could be watched by passers-by. Breakwell's event was a commentary on the hardship of physical labour, seen in the monitor, side by side with someone working in a gallery. The work also was a pun since that particular day the Apollo astronauts on the Moon digging up samples of rock and every TV shop window was transmitting images from the moon, thus leading to confusion as some passers-by confused Breakwell's performances for the images taking place in the moon. There is no evidence that Lange would have seen *One* at the time (although the video recording of this event was later screened as part of the *The Video Show* at Serpentine Gallery in 1975 that also featured some of Lange's videos). Amidst remarkable differences between their works, Lange and



Breakwell were interested in bringing into the privileged space of the gallery the realities of physical labour. They were also drawn to the interplay between the real and live performance and its mediated image: Lange choosing to recreate reality in sculpture in its most realistic form from photographs, whereas Breakwell approached the subject symbolically through performance that was itself televised.

One could also draw a parallel with the American artist Robert Whitman, best known for his experimental theatre pieces organized in the Lower East Side in New York during the 1960s, working alongside artists Allan Kaprow, Claes Oldenburg and Jim Dine, who were known for their happenings and environments. Whitman's series *Cinema Pieces* produced in the mid-1960s combined live action, film, slides and everyday objects. In *Shower* (1964), Whitman recreated a functional shower and projected onto the shower curtain the film of a woman bathing.

Although these two works seem to have reversed propositions — Whitman's is cinematic in nature expanding into the realm of sculpture and performance, while Lange's is sculptural adopting the projected slide component to introduce an almost cinematic movement — they both experiment with the recreation of a physical experience and a realistic, naturalistic representation of the physical world, by expanding the boundaries of media.<sup>76</sup>



FIG. 19 Robert Whitman, *Shower* (1964)

At the time of making these works, Lange articulated what he understood by realism and what he aimed at it by adopting this aesthetic approach. He expressed a desire to 'make a statement which is only one step from reality and which in fact forces an immediate attention because of its immediate imitation of reality', further, 'to help people become an integral part of their environment'.<sup>77</sup> His statement would seem to imply an aspiration that the work not only would depict a reality but, although inadequately expressed, it would create a greater degree of public's involvement, at a phenomenological but possibly ideological level as well. He wrote *c.* 1970:

I have a strong intention in my work to achieve a feeling of 'superreality'. It is naturalism which, because of its strength of pictorial image, leaves the spectator in a position in which he is unable to think or feel any emotion except that which is described to him directly in the image. He sees and immediately becomes involved in the reconstruction before him. The possible power of realism will be in that everybody enjoys it; it has a history and continues in a natural progression. It is just another aspect of humanity. Not art, but an image for man to see reflections of

<sup>76</sup> <<http://www.diaart.org/exhibitions/introduction/24>>

<sup>77</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', p. 14.

himself and his environment, and himself within his environment. This surrealism will be used with naturalism, adding force and guts to the naturalism. It must be to do with an objective and searching study of the environment, and that it must involve and use the most suitable devices and techniques available. What I mean by surrealism is realism with an extra boost; overrealism, accentuating the important features of the subject and helping its image to become more obvious and clear. What I mean by naturalism is that quality in anything which makes it seem relaxed, belonging to the environment.<sup>78</sup>

Lange's environment might have still lacked the gritty and even sordid visual imagery and psychological abjection and decay of some of Kienholz's tableaux of the mid-1960s and early 1970s such as *The Beanery* (1965) or *The State Hospital* (1966),<sup>79</sup> yet it is clear that Lange shared his interest in focusing on the reality that lurks behind the artwork, which acts as a social commentary on the American way of life.



FIG. 20 Edward Kienholz, *The Beanery* (1965); FIG. 21 Edward Kienholz, *The State Hospital* (1966)

Perhaps the difference in tone might have to do with Kienholz's critical response to a sense of exuberant optimism of his cultural milieu coming out of West Coast America in the 1950s, while Lange's reflected the British working class context. In the 1975 interview with Sharp, Lange reflects on what he perceived as an increased politicisation of his art on his arrival in London,

I think there are political roots in my work, coming from New Zealand where there was relative equality and then becoming aware of this incredible class system which still prevails in England, and by the time of my last year in the college, my work was no longer a quiet observation. It was becoming more aware in a political sense and more concerned with

<sup>78</sup> Lange, 'Concerning my Work', pp. 14–15.

<sup>79</sup> The 1966 Kienholz retrospective at Los Angeles County Museum, which initiated the *11+11 Tableaux*, travelled through Europe and was shown at the ICA in London in 1971. In the Darcy Lange Archive among his books there is a copy of Edward Kienholz's *Tableaux* catalogue published as part of the exhibition held at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, 28 March–10 May 1970.

social commentary. [...] I think it [*Irish Road Workers*] was social realist in an almost classic sense, quite influenced by Maoist art.<sup>80</sup>

And yet his work was not militant or seeking revolt. Lange expressed the imperative need for art to ‘involve communication with the masses’. For the progression of his work, he expressed the need to develop his knowledge of reality: ‘this could mean an involvement with social conditions’ and ‘to spend a great deal of time involving myself with social and observational photography’. He remarked: ‘It is immensely important to spend much time involving myself with real people and real problems of life.’<sup>81</sup> Lange’s empathy for his manual workers pervaded and portrayed them with a restrained detachedness and stoicism, neither as victims nor as anonymous figures representing traits of a decaying society (as depicted by Kienholz). Being himself a Commonwealth immigrant, Lange felt a kinship with Irish manual workers who, since 1950s, had come to Britain to fill gaps in the labour market by doing the lowest-paid, unskilled jobs. They were subject to racism and bigotry in British society. Chapter 3 will examine in detail Lange’s motivations and influences in choosing labour and the working class as the subject of his work, drawing on other examples of artists, historical and contemporary, who likewise aligned their artistic practices with socialism and supported the working classes and their struggles.

Stylistically his realist rendition may seem as rigidly too literal and regressive, yet the very placement of these workers in the space of an art studio was a bold gesture. Its impact would have been felt not by means of a hyperbolic political message but by the infringement of the reality of a working class into the privileged social context of art and an institution such as the Royal College of Art. Since 1968, art schools, including the RCA, had been experiencing an increased politicisation of their students, as art historian John A. Walker noted, that continued during 1970s with student protests and occupations prompted by fee increases, cuts and academic issues.<sup>82</sup>

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At Royal College of Art, Head of Sculpture Bernard Meadows heralded the modernist aesthetic of the sculpture establishment (he had been an assistant to Henry Moore) and a selected coterie of privileged students. Sculpture tutor Peter Atkins (later he changed his name to Peter Kardia) had a lasting influence on other students interested in a more ephemeral practice, concerned with process over materials, and largely taking place outside the studio. Atkins arrived at RCA after having been a tutor on the vocational sculpture course at St Martin’s, which during the late

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<sup>80</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 12).

<sup>81</sup> Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, pp. 16–17.

<sup>82</sup> John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London: Tauris, 2002), p. 59.

1960s and early 1970s was known for encouraging a progressive and experimental approach that was a conscious antithesis to Anthony Caro's modernist aesthetic language. Caro's near 30-year tenure in the Sculpture department at St Martin's had had an enormous influence, dictating during the 1950s and 1960s some of the sculptural principles — lack of plinths, extended use of materials — that became stylistically dominant at the time. He formed a generation of sculptors including Phillip King, David Annesley, Michael Bolus and Tim Scott and helped earn St Martin's a reputation as the leading school for sculpture. Atkins changed the discourse from notions of artistic style about the art object to questions of 'process', radically changing the direction of art education by introducing new teaching methods and with teaching experiments such as the infamous 'Looked Room', conceived in 1969 by him with Peter Harvey, Garth Evans and Gareth Jones.<sup>83</sup> Atkins subsequently influenced the next generation of artists, including Roger Ackling, Richard Long, Hamish Fulton and Bill Woodrow.<sup>84</sup> Later in 1973, Atkins went on to set up the Department of Environmental Media<sup>85</sup> at the Royal College of Art, which he ran until its closure in 1986.

British artist David Tremlett,<sup>86</sup> a sculpture student at RCA (MA Sculpture 1966–69) who overlapped with Lange for a year, recalled Atkins' influential presence. Atkins resolutely encouraged and stimulated a rigorous critical inquiry, indebted to Conceptual art, which questioned the nature of sculpture's expanding definitions: what was art about and what was it for, and its existence in relation to society and its political, cultural and social issues. Tremlett's recollection of Atkins was as being 'only interested in asking why you were making something, rather than what is was made of'.<sup>87</sup> This resonates with Lange's expressed conviction: 'the important issue is to realise what your work is doing and make it clear politically'.<sup>88</sup> Atkins encouraged the practices of Lange and Tremlett, as well as Hamish Fulton, who enrolled briefly in the MA Sculpture at RCA in 1969 before leaving the college. According to Tremlett, they felt somewhat isolated from and dismissed by Meadows's more orthodox approach to sculpture and

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<sup>83</sup> Niamh Coghlan, 'Peter Kardia: Alternative Pedagogy', *Aesthetica*, 2010 <<http://www.aestheticamagazine.com/peter-kardia/>> [accessed 23 December 2016].

<sup>84</sup> For an account of the legacy of Peter Kardia's (né Peter Atkins) art education at St Martin's and in relation to Anthony Caro's tenure in the school's sculpture department, see Malcolm Le Grice, 'History Lessons', *Frieze*, 1 October 2011 <<https://frieze.com/article/history-lessons>> [accessed 23 December 2016].

<sup>85</sup> Environmental Media appears for the first time in the RCA prospectus for the calendar year 1972–73, as a 'syllabus for course in Environmental Media leading to a Master's Degree', under the School of Sculpture. 'RCA Annual Prospectus 1972–73', p. 53.

<sup>86</sup> I am indebted to David Tremlett for this background information regarding the activities at the RCA sculpture department at the time and the influential role Peter Atkins played in some of the students like Tremlett and Lange. Tremlett in conversation with the author, 25 May 2016.

<sup>87</sup> David Tremlett quoted in Andrew Wilson, 'An Art of Searching', in *David Tremlett, Retrospectiva 1969–2006* (Grenoble: Actes Sud/Musée de Grenoble; Prato: Centro per l'arte contemporanea Luigi Pecci, 2006), pp. 31–39 (p. 31.)

<sup>88</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 10.

his support of the art establishment, which Lange himself strongly opposed to.<sup>89</sup> Atkins supported the notion of art being a response to and an observation of the surrounding environments, anticipating, as the 1970s rolled on, the shift from an art's self-referentiality towards an outward engagement of art with society and the world in which existed.

Despite Lange's engagement in material sculpture and in a studio practice that was initially concerned with issues of composition and the play between abstraction and figuration, Atkins's influence can be felt in the direction that his work took towards the end of his studies at the RCA. His turn towards social realism might have seemed at the time a regressive formal move,<sup>90</sup> yet it privileged art's placement in the world over aesthetics, ideologically rejecting Modernist concerns. He sought a formal language that would reach the working class subjects that he recreated, as exemplified in his graduating sculpture environment *Irish Road Workers* (1971).

This outward look at society is also reflected in one of Lange's teaching assignments when he started teaching in Fine Art departments at polytechnics in Britain after his graduation.<sup>91</sup> His syllabus proposed the students to be instructed in 'technique' and 'observation', that is 'modelling, drawing, conversation, film (discussion, involvement)'. Further, it stated: 'I would like to encourage students to make visits to various groups of people in the working and social community. The students will be encouraged to converse and make friends with these people whenever possible. Also they would take notes and drawings of interesting visual and verbal exchange.'<sup>92</sup> In another document proposing an art assignment, he wrote: 'Select an area of reality and document it, making drawings and photographs, sketch models, consider it as an

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<sup>89</sup> Lange wrote: 'I disagree with art which is carefully geared to be of value to the collector and the dealer. I disagree with this aspect of in institution such as the RCA which tries to make itself a prestige institution of art. I disagree with people who use art for their ego. I disagree with institutional people who, because they happen to be involved in this particular aspect of society have the conceit to assume a stance of arrogance. I disagree with art being unable to exist for what it is, an instrument for developing the individual perception of the particular participator and for giving something to less naturally and technically suited people. I disagree with the pomp of the leader of our institution, and his need to impress on people his position of administrative elevation. I would hope that people like our particular administrative phenomenon may one day be subjected to a public relations reasonability test. One can only bring to mind, when one thinks of this type of person, the language which Benvenuto Cellini expressed himself. God help the professional, professional art and art education manipulation. I think that if people want to get a great ego kick, they ought to become pop stars, and they should accept art as one of those areas which are not suitable for personal exaltation.' Lange, 'Concerning my Work', pp. 18–19.

<sup>90</sup> Lange wrote: 'in the Sculpture School it was very much more difficult to carry on with a seemingly retrogressive style of sculpture, as there was still prevalent domination of abstraction. There were, in fact, no people in the Sculpture School who could see beyond the need to get past compositional studies within abstraction.' Lange, 'Concerning my Work', pp. 2–3.

<sup>91</sup> He taught sculpture at City of Leicester Polytechnic (1971–72), City of Birmingham Polytechnic (1972–73), Central School of Art and Design (London, 1973–74), The Polytechnic Wolverhampton (1973–74).

<sup>92</sup> This undated document contains also a statement title 'Concepts and Approach' which is the same as the one printed in the flyer of his exhibition featuring *Irish Road Workers* at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, 16 November–4 December 1971. Darcy Lange Archive.

information to an art object, do through investigations into all aspects, physical and sociological.<sup>93</sup>

Another fact that might have been determined the direction of Lange towards exploring additional media in his sculptural environments was the close proximity of the Sculpture and the Film & Television departments, which were located side by side in the College. The British sculptor Richard Wentworth (RCA MA Sculpture 1967–70, overlapping with Lange) has commented that this physical proximity played a role in eliciting fertile cross-dialogue and even collaborations between sculptors' concerns and those of time-based media artists.<sup>94</sup> The progression of the expanded field of sculptural practice towards 'environments' and the projected image of film environments in the gallery space, emerging at the time internationally, mirrored the kind of experimentation across media encouraged by the College. This laid the ground for the Department of Environmental Media formed shortly after, which was set up for 'students requiring extended or mixed media facilities and for those whose work includes proposals for redefinition of conventional fine art boundaries'.<sup>95</sup> Further, according to the College's prospectus, '[Environmental Media] students [were] expected to create for themselves the conditions which [would] enable them to work self-sufficiently for limited periods, isolated from criticism.'<sup>96</sup> This reflects the progressive experimentation and cross-pollination of media and formats supported by the College, and indeed, it might have been conducive to Lange's use of slide-projections in his sculpture environment *Irish Road Workers*.

*Irish Road Workers* was Lange's last sculpture. His movement from sculpture might be considered a result not only of the experimentation occurring at the RCA which Lange acknowledged — 'the falling away of the restrictions of the Royal College of Arts [*sic*]'<sup>97</sup> — that encouraged a self-reflexive interrogation and the questioning of the ontology of the art work within Conceptual

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<sup>93</sup> It also proposes 'People to be consulted' and lists the following artists Bellini, Van Eyck, Vermeer, Van de Weyden, Velazquez, Cotar, Goya, Manet, Cezanne, Mondrian, Hopper, Wyeth, Colman, Oldenburg, Warhol, Kienholz, Richard Long, Hamish Fulton; filmmakers Eisenstein, Fellini, Pasolini, Czech filmmakers (Forman), Ken Loach, Berman and Warhol; and photographers Weston, Adams, Cartier Bresson, and Dorothea Lange. Unpublished document with the heading 'Department of Fine Art', c. 1971. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>94</sup> Richard Wentworth in conversation with the author, 4 March 2014. Indeed, Lange was closed to Rodney Charters (RCA MA Film 1968–71), who he knew since childhood and studied with in Auckland University. Charters photographed and filmed Lange's sculptures. Richard Woolley (RCA MA Film 1970–73) collaborated with Lange as film cameraman in his *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities, Nottingham, UK* (1973).

<sup>95</sup> RCA Annual Prospectus 1976–77, as quoted in the press release of the CCA exhibition *Shadowboxing* held at the RCA in 2011, <<http://shadowboxing.rca.ac.uk/artists/marysia-lewandowska/#/exhibition>>

<sup>96</sup> RCA Annual Prospectus 1974–75, <<http://shadowboxing.rca.ac.uk/artists/marysia-lewandowska/#/exhibition>>

<sup>97</sup> Lange wrote, referring to his departure from sculpture, '[it] was influenced by the growing conceptual art movement and the falling-away of the restrictions of the Royal College of Arts'. Lange, *Video Art*, p.18

art, which was occurring more broadly. It also had to do the prevalence of his commitment to an art practice that engaged with representation and that was socially engaged. In his artist statement underlining his 'Concepts and Approach', printed in the exhibition brochure when *Irish Road Workers* was exhibited at Ikon Gallery in November of 1971 (he had already started to shoot *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*), Lange reiterates his desire for art to communicate with the world. His statement reflects this transitional moment where his concerns are being transferred from sculpture into film and photography. He wrote:

I am making an intense study of the truths which are in our environment, the things of importance in the visual world. The intent is to capture and create a moment of memorable beauty of depth. The idea is to be a way of devising an art diary through the translation of what one experiences, into the sculpture.

There is a vast need for artistic consciousness which is oriented towards the visual environment. There is a need for an uninhibited investigation and communication with the world around us.

I am involved in the development of a social conscience, and a development of a record and memory of the physical world. Art seems to have become isolated. It is perhaps true that a bad understanding of our fellows could lead to uncommunicative art.

Because of the need to understand, there is a need to communicate. We need to create a reaction, as a reaction from the audience is needed by the artist, for him to begin to be able to judge his successes.

It is a vicious circle. The public, despite fifty years of abstraction and the knowledge and education of its existence, prefers to accept and feel an affinity with pictorial and representational art.

It is therefore reasonable that I have involved myself with a kind of representational approach. The necessity of communication may be questioned, but it seems that if the artist is going to feel justification for his work, he will need to have an audience. One cannot live and work in a vacuum.<sup>98</sup>

Lange finally left his sculpture studio practice at the end of his studies at the RCA in 1971 and shifted to photography and film. This shift was a 'natural' move that supported his need for art to communicate and his willingness for art to be an activity not dissociated from life but one that engaged with more overtly social content. He would have left his sculpture studio practice also, as Guy Brett noted, 'to bring himself closer to people' and to find a social purpose to his artistic practice.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Darcy Lange in the exhibition flyer *Darcy Lange* (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 1971). This exhibition featured *Irish Road Workers*, 16 November–4 December 1971.

<sup>99</sup> Guy Brett, 'Introduction', in *Work Studies in Schools* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1977), pp. 3–5 (p. 4).

Shortly after graduating from the RCA, Lange produced *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*, a series of six super-8mm films. Each film, lasting 3 to 8 minutes, was mainly made of single takes, with occasional in-camera-edits in order to make more succinct the recorded activity. Some were silent and others had wild sound recorded on top. These film studies captured a woman putting out her washing, hardware shop employees in South Kensington, a farmer burning off wheat in Kent, a man milking cows in Sussex, a cattle auction in Bradford and a transport café in London. They mark the beginning of Lange's studies of people at work and the movement into the documentary area of film and photography. In his memoirs, he described them as follows:

#### PINI'S RESTAURANT

This is a transport café in Goldhawk Road, Hammersmith, London. Such cafes are a very important part of the worker's way of life in England  
3–4 minutes. November 1971

#### CATTLE MARKET

Shot in a small market town between Bradford and Harrowgate on the Yorkshire moors while the auction was in progress 3–4 minutes. November 1971

#### A WOMAN PUTTING OUT HER WASHING

This film was shot in London and records the very everyday occurrence of hanging out washing. October 1971

#### COWMAN MILKING

This is a recording made of cows being milked at a farm in Sussex. The sound of the machines are [*sic*] something one never forgets if brought up in a farm.  
3–4 minutes. November 1971

#### HARDWARE STORE IN SOUTH KENSINGTON

This is more of a class statement than the other films in this series.  
7–8 minutes. October 1971

#### BURNING OFF WHEAT IN KENT

This is a short recording of the burning of rows of straw, which are left by harvesting.  
3 minutes. October 1971<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, pp. 21–22. These descriptions appear in italics to indicate that were from notes written around that time, not from 1985 when he wrote his memoirs, however, there is no indication of their provenance. There are no records in the artist's archive of these film series ever being shown.





FIG. 22 *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation (Hardware Store in South Kensington) (1971)*  
Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

Lange also used photography, even though the status of these photographs is unclear: whether Lange conceived these as a constitutive part of the films, more so, since there is no record of *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation* having been exhibited at the time of its making.<sup>101</sup> He described this period, however, as ‘a movement into the document area of film and photography and the beginning of the documentation of people at work’.<sup>102</sup> He stated that this move was also ‘a continuation of the desire to make portraits, started with the use of clay portraiture in the *Irish Road Workers* sculpture and my previous sculptures of that year’.<sup>103</sup> Defining these as ‘portraits’ asserted his interest in the representation of the human subject and in particular in the photographic portraits of Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans (I shall discuss his interest in social photography in Chapter 3). He added: ‘My attitude is that of careful observation and a study of our environment and society. This could occur in many different ways, by using photography, making a careful study of people and people faces, by life drawing and life modelling, drawing intensively, and by reconstructing people using polyester resin, plaster, etc.’<sup>104</sup>

Further, among his personal unpublished notes, there is a proposal titled ‘The Play’ that would seem to have been an initial draft for these studies. The title introduces a theatrical notion and, in the notes, he proposes actors performing activities, instead of documenting real situations.

Lange wrote:

#### The Play

Several approaches of social realism and social involvement [*sic*] art.

- I. The use of projection and environmentalism similar to that used in the last sculpture executed in the College except using players instead.  
 Backdrop: The use of slide techniques of film or large blow-ups, which reproduce a particular situation and also enabling a moving one.
- A. Shooting from all angles and taking out most care in creating equal viewpoints from all four directions. This if controlled well could be a moving dolly shot and cold [*sic*] make the whole group of players appear moving.

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<sup>101</sup> In his archive there are no photographs for each of the studies of *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*, which supports the fact that photography here is not yet used systematically and therefore is possibly perceived only a supporting medium to film. The archive contains only negatives of the following films: black and white and colour negatives of *Hardware Store in South Kensington*, and black and white negatives of *A Woman Putting Out Her Washing* and *Cowman Milking*. Also, black and white photographs of the two studies in *Studies of Family Groups*, as well as colour photographs of the study *Basil Cox* from the latter series.

<sup>102</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 18.

<sup>103</sup> Lange, p. 18.

<sup>104</sup> Unpublished notes. In further notes under the title ‘Instruction’ (c. 1971), possibly from a teaching assignment for his art students, Lange lists three aspects of instruction: technique, observation and production of tangible statements. Under observation appears: ‘modelling, drawing, photography, conversation, film, discussion, involvement’. He wrote: ‘I would encourage students to make visits to various groups of people in the working and social community. These students would be encouraged to converse and make friends with these people whenever possible. Also they would take notes and drawings of interesting visual and verbal exchange.’ Darcy Lange Archive.

B. Action in conjunction with the backdrop. A cycle motion in which the image and the action reoccur together

C. An emphasis. An accentuation of the moment. Superreality.

The idea seems to be an accentuation of a small fact of reality. Of everyday existence. A repetitive play of a highly isolated but significant moment.

Women making tea

Tractor driver rubbing his head

Typical actions of people. Small details of personality

The help of recorded sound could help to strengthen the reality. (There could be a recorded tape and the players converse with the tape and the film creates the image.<sup>105</sup>

These notes, written after Lange finished his studies at the RCA, are still closely linked to his sculptural environments. In a letter to Keith Lucas, director of the BFI, c. 1973, Lange explained his shift to camera lens media: ‘This occurred initially because of the desire to use a more naturally suited media for the documentation of reality, in order to transform static three dimensional representationalism into moving, naturalistic and direct documentation.’<sup>106</sup> By ‘social involvement’, he implied the spectator’s participation with the work, which is conceived as a phenomenological experience rather than an object for passive contemplation. Similarly, in a funding application from 1971 to support the making of a film about his sculptures, Lange aimed for the film to place ‘the emphasis on using sculpture to its maximum with human participation’.<sup>107</sup> He uses the word ‘participation’ (the idea of participation this will be examined in Chapter 4) in regards to sculpture demonstrating his aspirations for art to engage the public, even though what he meant by participation was different in this early work from, for instance, in his series *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77).

Several elements seem to support the notion of the environment conceived as an experience. Lange’s drawing sketches attached to these notes show the transformation of his earlier four-walled tableau model into a film set for the performance of live-actions or vignettes of brief everyday activities and gestures (a woman making tea, a tractor driver rubbing his head). The choice of replacing the life-size human sculptures of the *Irish Road Workers* by the dramatization of everyday activities with actors reveals Lange’s attempts at bringing ‘life’ into the sculptural medium, which is further animated by the use of film projections, blown-up photographs, and recorded sound. There is also interplay between a live performance and its filmed image that is

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<sup>105</sup> Lange, unpublished typed-written notes from hand-written drafts. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>106</sup> Darcy Lange, letter to Keith Lucas, Director, British Film Institute, [n.d], c. 1973. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>107</sup> Darcy Lange wrote: ‘This film will be shot at Beachy Head near Eastborne. It will be treated with the emphasis on using sculpture to its maximum with human participation. [...] I intend the film to be suitable for educational purposes.’ Darcy Lange in a letter to David Peters, Queen Elisabeth II Arts Grant of New Zealand, 24 November 1970. The film, which was never made, was meant to be 20 mins long and in colour. It aimed to document his last two sculptures and was to be directed and shot by Rodney Charters. Darcy Lange Archive.

further activated by the use of camera movement techniques. All of these formal decisions were intended, according to him, to enhance ‘emphasis’ and achieve a form of ‘superreality’.

In the aforementioned notes ‘The Play,’ Lange included the following proposals: ‘A study of a woman at her work’ about a woman hanging her washing (which later became the film *A Woman Putting out her Washing* from his series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*); ‘Table film’, about a working class family seating at the table eating and in conversation (which later evolved into his 16mm film series *Studies of Family Groups* 1972). A third proposal about three films shot on a farm lists under the heading ‘Concepts’ the following activities: cow milking (*Cow Milking* also from *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*), feeding the animals, tending the animals (cleaning out), operating machinery, general manual work, cropping, harvesting.



FIG. 23 *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation (Cow Milking)* (1971)



The proposal also indicates under the subheading ‘Characters’, that both the people involved and the animals should be portrayed. This is particularly represented in the study *Cattle Market*, in the series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*, where Lange’s camera focuses on the particular cow that is being auctioned, rather than on the individuals conducting the auction, inspecting the cow with the keen experienced eye of a farmer (his father owned a mixed farm of cattle and sheep). This is also revealed in the study *Cow Milking*; he also confesses the sound of the milking machines as being utterly familiar referencing his upbringing on a farm. In their modesty and very preliminary nature, Lange’s selection of activities reveals an attempt to cover different kinds of labour that includes female domestic work, agricultural and shop keeping, before he engages more ambitiously with the subject of work in factories and mines. Further, in the footer of the page the words ‘Social Art by Darcy Lange’ are written.<sup>108</sup>

*A Woman Putting out her Washing* is the first film shot of this series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*, and the closest to the proposal above.<sup>109</sup> This brief domestic chore (lasting the length of the film) that took place within the contained space delimited by the backyard walls resembled the previous walled sculptural tableau. The camera set on a tripod starts with a long shot that almost covers the length of the clothesline, follows her activity from her back, panning and zooming gently to keep her in the frame and to briefly capture her facial and hand gestures. It ends after she collects her empty basket and walks out of scene, holding the shot of the clothesline for a few seconds as if to display the result of her work. It feels like a single shot, even though there are two in-camera edits (namely to stop and restart filming) when the woman, realizing she is missing some of her washing, goes out of the scene to collect it. It is likely that the scene would have been staged, unlike the other films of this series which capturing real events that would have escaped Lange’s control forced him to film them as they actually occurred. Some of these activities happened in open spaces like the street (*Pini’s Restaurant*) or land fields (*Burning off Wheat in Kent*) or were longer in duration (*Cattle Market*). Thus, the films could only capture a segment in the continuum of the event.

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<sup>108</sup> Lange, unpublished type-written notes from hand-written drafts.

<sup>109</sup> Lange’s synopsis for this study reveals him seeking props, dramatic effects and embellishments to his naturalistic image, where the scene is seen as a set and still very close to his recent sculptural environments. He wrote, ‘The woman will be filmed from a fixed viewpoint and will be putting her washing upon the line. It is hoped that wind will be blowing and a dramatic effect will be achieved with the blowing of the cloth. On the ground, a cloth basket and possibly a domestic animal a cat. The film will be begun and finished [*sic*] as the work is begun and completed.’ He also refers to these studies as ‘plays’, implying the notion of theatrical performance. Unpublished artist notes, c. 1971. Darcy Lange Archive.



FIG. 24 *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation (A Woman Putting out her Washing)* (1971).  
Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

In 1985 Lange described the aim behind these films: ‘the idea was to capture a few minutes of life-action, in a way like a pose held over ten minutes’.<sup>110</sup> This analogy might refer to modelling in sculpture, while seeking to extend its spatial-temporal coordinates with the use of moving image. Further, Sharp in his interview with Lange inquired of him about the relationship of his early films to photography. Lange responded that he had done ‘a lot of photography’ and that ‘it was there all the time even in my three dimensional work’.<sup>111</sup> He described these films as ‘single takes’ and as ‘coming out of the three-dimensional era of presenting a moment in time, which goes back to still photography’, further emphasizing: ‘The way I used it [super 8 film] was like a prolonged still photograph.’<sup>112</sup> The photograph’s stillness mirrored the stasis of the sculpture, and therefore these early films paradoxically seemed contrived by still adhering to sculptural parameters.

Speaking of his transition from sculpture to film and photography in the interview with Sharp, Lange stated: ‘Then I thought it’s just ridiculous reconstructing people in the round; it seems obvious that you should literally present them as they are. And what’s the best way to do that?’

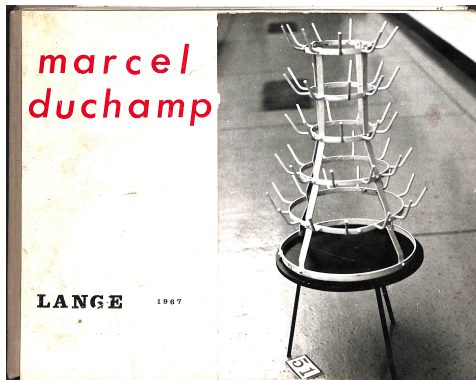
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<sup>110</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 18

<sup>111</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 13). This is manifested too by the amount of negatives in the artist’s archive and the care Lange took to preserve them.

<sup>112</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, p. 13.

Film and photography.<sup>113</sup> Lange might have come to the recognition that replacing a performance with real people for life-cast human figures was as *superfluous* as sculpture, when he could directly captured the real subject *as it is* by film and photography. He abandoned this proposal ‘The Play’ altogether and produced instead his first film series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*.



Further, Lange, who wrote his graduation thesis on the work of Marcel Duchamp in 1967 whilst a student at Elam, made a remark about Duchamp that might have helped him come to this realization. Lange wrote: ‘Duchamp summed up brilliantly the Dadaist belief that art should be a piece of reality itself, rather than an interpretation of reality.’<sup>114</sup> Duchamp described the readymade as a ‘snapshot’.<sup>115</sup>

FIG. 25 Darcy Lange, ‘Marcel Duchamp’, unpublished Master thesis. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

It was not uncommon for artists to move from sculpture to film and photography at the time whether temporarily or permanently. British artist David Hall studied sculpture and turned to the media of photography and film at the end of the 1960s before taking up video; and John Hilliard, who also trained as sculptor during the late 1960s at St Martin’s School of Art, became dissatisfied with his large metal sculptures and embraced photography and 16mm film. As Walker has written: ‘what he [Hilliard] carried over from sculpture to photography was a ‘truth to materials’ aesthetic. Since cameras recorded what was in front of them, photographs were representational and had a direct, indexical relation to the real.’<sup>116</sup>

By Lange’s statement he implied two things: first, that he saw sculpture as being superfluous — ‘the ridiculous act of reconstructing people in the round’ — which echoed the prevailing modernist crisis of sculpture as a medium, as Rosalind Krauss proclaimed in 1979, where the concept or idea took over its materialization, consequently the notion of media becoming irrelevant and inducing an expanded field and fluidity across media. A process could stand for its outcome object, and a film or photographic record for the activity that it documented

<sup>113</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, 1975, p.12

<sup>114</sup> Darcy Lange, ‘Marcel Duchamp’ (unpublished master’s thesis, Auckland University, 1967), pp. 11–12. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>115</sup> Rosalind Krauss, ‘Notes on the Index: Seventies Art in America’, *October*, vol. 3 (spring, 1977), 68–81 (p. 77).

<sup>116</sup> Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain*, p. 35.

acquiring its status. The shift towards the radical ‘dematerialisation’ of the object rendered the purely formal language of sculpture futile and unengaged.

Further, it would seem to respond also to a reductivist formal tendency to strip art to its essentials: why recreate in sculpture the same reality that has been already captured by the photograph? American sculptor Robert Morris, writing on the painting series *Flags* and *Targets* from the 1950s by American painter Jasper Johns, stated, ‘The whole process was not one of stripping art down but of reconstituting art as an object.’<sup>117</sup> As Morris avows, Lange’s process might have entailed a reductivist gesture, but in the process, there was a reconstitution of the artwork into something ontologically other than what it was: the work was being reconstituted in film and photography.

Krauss remarked in 1979 that since the late 1960s sculpture’s ‘infinitely malleable’ condition reflected and carried within the questioning about what constituted the ‘sculptural field’, materially and non-materially, to the point of sculpture being ‘in danger of collapsing’.<sup>118</sup> This move ‘beyond the domain of sculpture’, Krauss explained, could be understood as such:

for, within the situation of postmodernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium—sculpture—but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium—photography, books, lines on walls, mirrors, or sculpture itself—might be used. Thus the field provides both for an expanded but finite set of related positions for a given artist to occupy and explore, and for an organisation of work that is not dictated by the conditions of a particular medium. [...] on the grounds of material, or, for that matter, the perception of material. It is organized instead through the universe of terms that are felt to be in opposition within a cultural situation.<sup>119</sup>

Krauss’ argument serves to understand Lange’s own leap from sculpture to film and photography, which he explained in the following words: ‘I passed through the stage of needing to put things into three dimensions, but I don’t think I stopped being a sculptor. The medium is never very important. [...] I used three dimensions to carry out my ideas. It’s fairly idea-oriented.’<sup>120</sup> This notion of art that places an idea above its material form was much in line with Sol LeWitt’s core definition of an artwork as an idea, introduced in his 1967 seminal essay ‘Paragraphs on Conceptual Art’.<sup>121</sup> Conceptual art challenged the traditional divisions between media. Krauss’ claim that practice was no longer defined by medium, but by ‘the logical operations on a set of cultural terms for which any medium might be used’ does resonate also

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<sup>117</sup> Robert Morris, ‘Notes on Sculpture, Part IV: Beyond Objects’ (1969), in *Conceptual Art*, p. 196.

<sup>118</sup> Rosalind Krauss, ‘Sculpture in the Expanded Field’, *October*, Vol. 8. (Spring, 1979), 30–44 (p.33).

<sup>119</sup> Krauss, (pp. 42–43).

<sup>120</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 12).

<sup>121</sup> Sol LeWitt, ‘Paragraphs on Conceptual Art’, *Artforum* 5, no. 10 (June 1967), 79–83.



with Lange's own shift of concerns towards processes or faculties — 'social consideration, communication and observation' as in the title of his first film series — which defined both the faculties of his artistic endeavours and of his newly adopted media of film and photography.

Peter Osborne has also remarked on the contribution of performance to Conceptual art in terms of art's 'dematerialization' and the role of its documentation in reconstituting the work in a material form by means of representation. He wrote:

It is tempting to see the contribution of performance to conceptual art as lying in the conception of the work as an act or event, constituted through and disappearing into time, and thus sustaining itself over time, and into history *only at the level of its idea*. However, this is to neglect the importance of prospective and retrospective constructions of a more enduring, but nonetheless partial, actuality for the work through its 'scoring' and documentation, respectively. On the one hand, performance might be considered a paradoxical 'dematerialization' or dissolution of objecthood into time, through movement, in the very act of embodiment of the work. On the other hand, performance is always accompanied by supplementary means of representation which prefigure, retain (generally photographically) or reconstitute it, re-materializing it through various material modes of registration of its ideal form. (This must be so, if only in memory and recollection, if the act is to attain any social reality.)<sup>122</sup>

Second, the aforementioned statement implied also that Lange found photography and film as the most suitable media because of their indexical capacity to represent social reality. He would have shared André Bazin's belief in the camera's ability to *faithfully* and *automatically* capture reality.<sup>123</sup> As Peter Wollen reminds us, Bazin was committed to realism and representationalism; he 'based his commitment on an argument about cinematic ontology and essence, which he saw in the photographic reproduction of the natural world'.<sup>124</sup> He posited photography as superior to painting (and by extension, to sculpture) on the basis of its 'likeness' and in relation to its indexical condition. Bazin wrote:

Painting is, after all, an inferior way of making likeness, an ersatz of the processes of reproduction. Only a photographic lens can give us the kind of image of the object that is capable of satisfying the deep need man has to substitute for it something more than a mere approximation... The photographic image is the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it. No matter how fuzzy, distorted, or discolored, no matter how lacking in documentary value the

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<sup>122</sup> Osborne, p. 20.

<sup>123</sup> André Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', *What is Cinema?*, trans. by Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967) pp. 9-16.

<sup>124</sup> Peter Wollen, 'The Two Avant-Gardes' (1975), *Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, eds. by Philip Simpson, Andrew Utterson and K. J. Shepherdson (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 127-37 (p. 131). First published in *Studio International*, vol. 190, no. 978 (November-December 1975), 171-75.

image may be, it shares, by virtue of the very process of its becoming, the being of the model of which it is the reproduction; it is the model.<sup>125</sup>

In effect, the trust Lange placed in photography and film (and later in video) as media best suited to *truthfully* represent reality — what Bazin defined as a fundamental faith in reality — was due to his adherence to realism. This is conveyed in hindsight in the artist's statement printed in the brochure of his exhibition at Bradford Museums and Galleries, Bradford Industrial Museum in 1976:

It is due to my interest in realism and progress from naturalism and realist constructional sculpture, that I have become more interested in this area of direct and natural recording of a given live situation. I am committed to the development of a social conscience, and a development of a record and memory of the physical world.

My approach is to reveal the social truth through the particular way I use video. I am not in this project to build a creative abstraction, but to do a service to the people with whom I am working —to truthfully render situations.<sup>126</sup>

Here Lange sums up the premises of his art making as falling under the realm of representation and realism: 'the *direct* and *natural* recording of a given live situation'. Lange believed in film and photography in the same terms as Bazin, that is, as Daniel Morgan argued, 'insofar as it comes closest to or bears fidelity to our perceptual experience of reality'.<sup>127</sup> Film for Bazin, Christopher Williams pointed out, 'has the primary function of showing the spectator the real world'.<sup>128</sup> Morgan has argued that Bazin's claim that the photographic image is the object itself is, indeed, by virtue of its genesis not of its likeness. This distinction is significant in understanding Lange's adoption of camera lens media in relation to his expressed aim to leave 'a record or a memory of the physical world'. If indeed the argument was by virtue of its likeness, a realistically rendered sculpture could have served also to leave a memory of the physical world. However, it is the photography's genesis from the ontology of the model that truly constitutes for him a record of its existence.

Morgan has posited that classical theories in and of film under Bazin's legacy 'start with the idea that the nature of the physical medium is a necessary part of our thinking about the images it supports'.<sup>129</sup> This tallies with Lange's investigations into the way the respective lens media he

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<sup>125</sup> Bazin, 'The Ontology of the Photographic Image', (p. 14).

<sup>126</sup> Darcy Lange, exhibition brochure, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, Bradford Galleries and Museums, Industrial Museum, 16 May–13 June 1976.

<sup>127</sup> Daniel Morgan, 'Rethinking Bazin: Ontology and Realist Aesthetics', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 32, no. 3 (spring 2006), 443–81 (p. 444).

<sup>128</sup> As quoted in Morgan, (pp. 444–45).

<sup>129</sup> Morgan, (p. 443).

used help him think through the images that he was about to produce. That Lange chose photography and film is a testament of his belief in the objectivity with which these media were able to render reality. It is also implied that Lange rejected a stylistic approach in his expressed intention to avoid producing a 'creative abstraction'. His early use of photography and film aimed to be a straightforward documentation, minimizing his subjective intervention in the making of the image. And yet, when Lange asserts using photography to think through his use of video, or in his simultaneous use of multiple media, it proves he was aware of the choices he made in the process of capturing reality, thus refuting the notion of the image as being automatically produced.

Lange's adherence to realism is in accordance with the kind of formal strategies used to render it closer to the visible reality, something that Bazin described as 'perceptual realism'. This kind of realism in filmmaking, according to Bazin, employed features such as the use of depth of field, the long-take, real locations and non-actors, natural light and contingent and ordinary events. By choosing non-edited (or sparsely edited) long takes, whereby reality unfolds in real time, Lange's videos and films offered the viewer the chance to see everything that the camera had captured. As Bazin remarked, 'the camera cannot see everything at once but it makes sure not to lose any part of what it chooses to see'.<sup>130</sup>

Raymond Williams in his 1977 seminal essay on realism makes a distinction between naturalism and realism, assuming the accepted conventional definitions whereby naturalism has come to be defined as the method that reproduces the external appearance of reality in a static way, meanwhile realism, conceived in the Marxist tradition, is 'the method and intention which went below this surface to essential historical movements, to the dynamic reality'. He goes on to assert that naturalism has been largely abandoned, but even realism 'although permitted a wider extent because of the reference to dynamic movement, has tended to be swept up in this abstract and ultimately rejection — with various complications about psychological realism, neo-realism, and so on'.<sup>131</sup>

Williams described the move towards realism based on three features: a conscious movement towards social extension, placing action in the contemporary present and human action as secular. It meant the extension of dramatic material towards areas of life and social groups that

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<sup>130</sup> Bazin, 'The Evolution of the Language of Cinema', *What is Cinema?*, vol. 1, pp. 23–40 (p. 27).

<sup>131</sup> Raymond Williams, 'A Lecture on Realism' (1977), *Afterall Journal*, Issue 5, (spring/summer 2002), <<http://www.afterall.org/journal/issue.5/lecture.realism#cite1871>>. This text is a transcribed version from Williams' lecture given at SEFT/Screen weekend school on Realism held at the London International Film School on 8–10 October 1976, and first published in *Screen*, vol.18, no.1 (Spring 1977), 61–74.

had been excluded from the bourgeois dramas representing subjects and situations related exclusively to their privilege social class. He later added a fourth one: ‘the consciously interpretative in relation to a particular political viewpoint’, understood as the intention of interpreting an event rather than simply offering an event for mere empathy. The latter would seek ‘the familiar methods of establishing recognition’ while the former choose ‘the alternative method of a hypothesis within that recognition, a hypothesis which is played out in realistic terms, but within a politically imagined possibility’. Therefore, realism implied militancy, a call for action.

Returning to Lange’s second paragraph of his statement, he expresses at least two social functions to his activity: ‘the development of a social conscience’ or ‘to reveal a social truth’ and the ‘creation of a *record* and a *memory*’ of the physical world (art as document, for archival and historical purposes); and at last, a moral duty: ‘to do a service to the people with whom I am working’. Note that this statement was made in 1976, at a time when his relationship with the subject and the social function of his art activity is central to his practice; thus, I won’t address these claims, which will be examined in Chapter 4.

Further, for Lange the photographer was ‘the person who has always to observe’ and ‘only one step removed from reality’, thus, ‘he can, and often does, become deeply involved in the situation before him’.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, he perceived photography and film as being more directly engaged with the people he represented and valued them for their communicative potential. This communicative potential that he sought in his work was directed to those who he represented as well as to his audience, aiming to reach out to ‘ordinary’ people. To him, these media and the language of realism offered a more accessible and egalitarian notion of art, and therefore, were more suitable to his socialist aspirations. Lange wrote:

Socialism is a very important part of my thought process. I believe that at all costs I must be honest with myself and with those people with whom I would like to encourage participation. I therefore must have an art form which communicates. The people with whom I wish to communicate, and for whose benefit I wish to make statements, are probably the mundane and underprivileged people of the working classes, also the deprived and lonely people of any other particular group which may exist in this society. Because of my constant frustration with the lack of free speech (class) in this country, and the constant difficulty of achieving physical and mental elevation due to the chronic class structure, I feel a need to say something which will communicate outside the upper and middle class gallery cliché. Although some kind of social structure may be necessary to protect the value of the art market (socially) and its marketers, I can’t help feeling that it would be nice if art could reach more often the ordinary people.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Lange, ‘Concerning my Work’, p. 5.

<sup>133</sup> Lange, p. 13.

His desire for art to be accessible and to become a form of communication fulfilled his socialist aspirations. When asked by Sharp about the reasons for using film, he responded:

Right, right. I am a filtering mechanism. [...] This is the way that you translate what you see outside, the way you present it. It's an entry device. It is a way of making things accessible. It has to do with communication. It comes back to a realization of certain socialist aspirations. I am not an active socialist—maybe I should be—but I am always been frightened of the artist's special role, I mean why should the artist have a special role when in fact everybody has a special role to play.<sup>134</sup>

Film historian A. L. Rees has identified the two avant-gardes: on the one hand, those avant-garde filmmakers whose aim was to assert film's medium specificity as an art form; and on the other hand, those minimalist, process and conceptual art artists making films, such as Nauman and Serra, Robert Morris and Yvonne Rainer, who were less concerned with film as a medium than with testing and examining, through film, notions of duration and process.<sup>135</sup> For them Andy Warhol was a major influence (I will discuss in Chapter 2). Like Lange, they made videotapes as well as films, and embraced film as part of being avant-garde, working across and challenging conventional divisions between media. Their films reflected, and were an extension of, their concerns in sculpture and performance art and involved their bodies, which had now replaced the sculptural object. Film was seen in the context of the gallery space and site-related art. They were not interested in film per se as the subject of their investigations, but adopted it for its documentary value and as the means to examine phenomenological questions that had to do with sculpture, process and conceptual art. Film was used as an analytical device introducing to these activities a degree of self-reflexivity. These documentations seemed to operate too at a Duchampian nominalist level, whereby their processes were conferred the status of art. Lange used film also as a recording device and as well as a reflexive one, that is, the camera allowed him to observe and analyse recorded activities.

In his essay 'The Mimesis of Thinking', Boris Groys claims that Minimalism and Conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s introduced a real shift in the sense that the artwork was understood 'as being inscribed in a certain system of image production and communication'.<sup>136</sup> Art took the character of a 'project'. He wrote:

A typical project is formulated as a description of certain methodological and practical steps that are supposed to lead to a result that is defined in advance. Art that practices the mimesis of thinking, by contrast, causes a shift of attention from result to the activities that are supposed to produce that result. The documentation

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<sup>134</sup> Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p. 12).

<sup>135</sup> A.L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), pp. 70–71.

<sup>136</sup> Boris Groys, 'The Mimesis of Thinking', in *Open Systems: Rethinking Art c.1970*, ed. by Donna De Salvo (London: Tate Publishing, 2005) pp.50–63 (pp. 52–53).

of the virtual and real steps necessary to realise the project becomes the main object of artistic interest.<sup>137</sup>

For Lange, capturing a few minutes of ‘life-action’ as in *A Woman Putting out her Washing* introduced notions of movement and duration as well as the body which had close affiliations with ideas of process and performance that were ascendant at the time. Film and photography were becoming commonly used by Conceptual artists as recording devices to document their actions, but also as a way to engage in exploring notions of sculpture in its expanded field and reassess what constituted an art activity. For instance, between 1967–1970, American artist Bruce Nauman recorded his everyday activities in the studio in a deadpan manner, such as *Walking in an Exaggerated Manner Around the Perimeter of a Square* (1967–68). Richard Serra’s film *Hand Catching Lead* (1968), using a fixed framing, recorded a hand trying to catch pieces of lead dropping in space. In Britain, artists Richard Long and Hamish Fulton recorded their walk performances in the country with cameras; Keith Arnatt in *Self-Burial (Television Interference Project)* (1969) photographed himself as he buried himself in the earth; and in Bruce McLean’s photographic series *Pose Works for Plinths* (1971), his body playfully acquires status of sculpture by falling off pedestals and plinths. It is easy to see the influence of these kind of ordinary performances in Lange’s recordings of labouring bodies whereby the worker’s activities were seen as constituted through movement and time, thus, choosing film as the means of representation.

The difference between Lange and these artists relied in the nature of their respective recorded activities: Serra, Nauman and Long recorded their immaterial, bodily procedures or activities aimed at expanding the boundaries of sculpture and used the documentation of these in lieu of the lacking material art object. Meanwhile, Lange recorded activities — ‘cow milking, feeding the animals, tending the animals (cleaning out), operating machinery, general manual work, cropping, harvesting’ — that belong to the social world. However, in labelling these as ‘concepts’ they entered too into the realm of art occupied by Nauman and Long. Speaking of his video *Craigdarroch* (1973), documenting a day’s work of a Scottish shepherd, Lange wrote:

in some ways the videotape was a satire of Richard Long’s walk [*Walking a Straight 10 mile Line Forward and Back Shooting Every Half Mile*, Dartmoor, England January 1969] that I had seen on film and I must say it [*Craigdarroch*] was and perhaps is one of the truest balances between conceptual art and a documentation of actual work or social reality.<sup>138</sup>

The working body in Lange’s studies can be seen as an expression of performance, and of the process of work, Dan Graham noted, ‘as an activity (and also the process of the cameraman’s work in recording it as an activity); its rhythmicity, periodicity, and its containment within the

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<sup>137</sup> Groys, (p.61).

<sup>138</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 37.

external environment (landscape) or architectural enclosure'.<sup>139</sup> Yet Lange distanced himself from these Conceptual artists' performances and the kind of ontological exercises engaged with the definition of sculpture because of what he might have perceived as a lack of a meaningful engagement with the social world surrounding them.

Art historian Benjamin H.D. Buchloh has remarked that in focusing on the working body, Lange introduced a fundamental shift in the process of reclaiming the centrality of the body in sculpture:

by situating the principle of sculptural production now in the very performative operations of labour and production at large as they occur at all times within the bodies of the labouring collective. So what had been the necessary, yet empty, bodily phenomenological exercises and task performances, for example in Bruce Nauman's acting in the studio in 1968, now become the full and functional performances of the school teacher teaching a class of students, or the farm labourer scything or ploughing the earth in Spain.<sup>140</sup>

For Lange, the parallel use of both media imbued the act of observing with an additional level of reflexivity, which was not prescriptive but intuitive in this early work. This offered him the possibility of exploring the intrinsic differences of photography and film in representing reality; thus, to some extent, Lange's engagement with photography shared some of the aforementioned artists' structuralist investigations, which I will examine in Chapter 2. His embrace of camera lens media was affirmative of its essentially depictive and documentary nature. He conceded content as his predominant motivation and as the value of his work, as did *Life* photographer Tom Hutchins, who taught Lange at Elam that 'whatever happens in front of the camera is what makes what you do with the camera valuable'.<sup>141</sup> Thus, in these early works, Lange was thus caught between the structural concerns of film and photography and the ideology of camera lens media realism.

While Conceptual artists succeed in expanding the status and ontological nature of what constituted a work of art, one could easily criticise Lange's artistic investigations as being, in a Modernist avant-garde sense, more conservative. Lange embraced realism, treating camera lens media as a 'transparent' window to the world. He held a Marxist's belief in accessibility, which remained prevalent around this time, before the arrival of French philosophy in Britain, by

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<sup>139</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange, Work and Music', *New Observations*, no. 29, 1985, [n.p.]

<sup>140</sup> Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'Darcy Lange: Paco Campana', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 49–64 (p. 59).

<sup>141</sup> Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p. 12).



which a dialectical approach engaged in the analysis of the visual image as containing ideology, became imperative for political artists such as Victor Burgin.<sup>142</sup>

Lange's engagement with a wider social reality placed his practice outside the kind of 'cultural confinement' that Robert Smithson had warned about in his text written in 1972 for 'documenta 5'. Smithson stated the danger of becoming hegemonic if the artist failed to look beyond the institutions of culture, 'doing his tough little tricks' in the place assigned to do them (not unlike a Modernist artist), rather than turning his efforts to reveal this confinement.<sup>143</sup> What Smithson was addressing, and foresaw, was the need for a politicisation of art, which followed shortly after, that is, away from the analytical concerns with the definition of art that were ultimately self-directed and kept art in its autonomous realm towards concerns about the art's function and use. By then Lange's work had further developed towards a socially engaged practice with few ties to the concurrent developments in Conceptual art. Paul Wood remarked about the gap in time between the development of an increasing politicisation in the art world, started in the late 1960s, and the signs of such politicisation in the Conceptual art practice of the English speaking world, which were not visible until the early 1970s.<sup>144</sup>

By means of a conclusion to this chapter, it should be noted that Lange's transition from sculpture towards film and photography in this still early stage of his career revealed a kind of tension shifting between, on the one hand, ontological concerns regarding artistic definition that were indebted to Conceptual art, and on the other hand, the documentation of a social subject and an expressed commitment to realism. That is, the influence of Conceptual art reflected in Krauss' announced post-medium condition of the artwork with its 'aggregative' and 'reductivist logic of modernism',<sup>145</sup> and a Duchampian intention to free 'art from the dominium of the hand' induced Lange's adoption of camera lens media. It was also perceived in the aesthetically uninflected way of documenting labour as the unfolding of an action that was reminiscent of the documentation of performance art.

Lastly, Lange's recordings of work could be seen as an examination of process, over the resulting art object, trading the idea of the unity of finished work for a process made of fragments, postulations and variations. This in Lange translated in his simultaneous use of various lens media that tended to present an image of work that was multiple and self-reflexive, and introduced the idea of study, that is, the artwork not as an object of contemplation but one of

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<sup>142</sup> Victor Burgin, 'Socialist formalism', *Studio International*, vol. 191, no. 980 (March–April 1976), 148–52.

<sup>143</sup> Robert Smithson as quoted in Wood, *Conceptual Art*, pp. 48–49.

<sup>144</sup> Wood, *Conceptual Art*, p. 55.

<sup>145</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea": *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000).

analysis and investigation. Lange's studies were straightforward recordings of a reality not dissimilar to the recordings of artists' process activities and performances, but rather than being directed internally towards the ontology of the artwork, they had an extroversive nature, choosing social reality as their subject and with an expressed intention of leaving a memory or a 'factual' record of the social world. Insofar as his work embraced the social subject and an expressed commitment to realism, to *truthfully* represent his subjects, Lange's studies aimed to serve the epistemological functions of the social document, a theme that I will examine in detail in Chapter 3.

## CHAPTER 2: Ethnographic, Structuralist and Real Time Filmmaking

[Darcy Lange's] use of the extended duration shot using a more or less static camera links him simultaneously to documentary filmmakers like Robert Flaherty as well to the avant-garde (Michael Snow, Andy Warhol, Chantal Akerman). It places Lange between three poles of film: the anthropological, structuralist, and 'real time' 'narrative' filmmaking.

— Dan Graham<sup>146</sup>

Structural filmmaking informed Lange's early film- and videomaking, which was anchored in the extended observation enabled by the long take, or 'real time' filmmaking. His self-reflexive structuralist approach, grounded in the ontology of the medium, brought attention to the relation of the camera to reality. Lange's early work also shared, despite not strictly adhering to scientific principles, some similarities with ethnographic film: among these are the issue of documentation and the belief in indexical character of film/video as 'transparent' and objective media. It examined the conventions of realism in observational filmmaking, as well as the impact and the politics of social observation, his own position as filmmaker/observer and the relationships established with his recorded subjects.

American film historian P. Adams Sitney coined the term 'structural film' in an article published in *Film Culture* in 1969.<sup>147</sup> The term defined a kind of filmmaking in which 'the shape of the whole film is predetermined and simplified, and it is that shape that is the primal impression of the film', and 'what content it has is minimal and subsidiary to the outline'.<sup>148</sup> Most of the filmmakers to which Sitney referred — Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton and Paul Sharits, as well as George Landow, Tony Conrad, Ernie Gehr and Joyce Wieland — had been trained as painters or sculptors and responded to the kind of aesthetic and philosophical concerns and self-referentiality articulated in Minimal and Conceptual Art during the 1960s. Structural filmmaking adopted a

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<sup>146</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', *New Observations*, no. 29, 1985, [n.d.]. More recently, Graham referred to anthropology when comparing Lange's *Maori Land Project* (1977–81), a video project in which Lange aligned himself with Maori activists' struggles to establish land rights in New Zealand, to Juan Downey's videos of indigenous communities in his native Chile. Graham wrote: 'His work can be compared to the Chilean video artist, Juan Downey, who made agit-prop, anthropological videos of indigenous South American Indians. Darcy turned, in his later work, to the dispossessed Maori people of his own country. Both artists didn't merely study the people they documented, but attempted to provide tools to both effect social change and to re-contextualise their native cultures. Such a position builds on the work of the French anthropologist Claude Levi-Straus, in his book *Tristes Tropiques*.' Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Great Artist and Friend', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 183–84 (p. 183). I will not be engaging with Lange's work in this anthropological sense, that is, in the notion of the representation of the culture of indigenous communities in New Zealand, but more expansively to ethnography as the discourse of culture in representation. I refer also to ethnographic film and theory, rather than anthropological film, as ethnography is the branch of anthropology responsible with the documentation of culture in all media — film, photography, video, audio or writing.

<sup>147</sup> P. Adams Sitney, 'Structural Film' (1969), in *Film Culture Reader* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2000), pp. 326–48. First published in *Film Culture*, 47 (Summer 1969), 1–10.

<sup>148</sup> Sitney, 'Structural Film', in *Film Culture Reader*, (p. 327).

kind of self-reflexiveness akin to the one that Walter Benjamin had attributed to Soviet montage and Annette Michelson to 'epistemological' film.<sup>149</sup> It rejected the film of pure vision, and viewing was understood as an act of *reading*, in which form itself became the content and was free of symbolism and narrative. Sitney described structural filmmaking as having four distinctive characteristics (even though not all structural films would adhere to all four): 'fixed camera position (fixed from the viewer's perspective), the flicker effect, loop printing (the immediate repetition of shots, exactly and without variation) and rephotography off the screen'.<sup>150</sup> Of these four features, the fixed frame was a feature that Lange adopted in his film- and videomaking, and, as such, one that I shall discuss here in brief.

Film historian A. L. Rees notes that the Minimalist and Conceptual artists such as Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra and Robert Morris who were making films were not concerned with film as a medium as much as with testing and examining, through the medium, notions of duration and process as an extension of their phenomenological concerns in sculpture and performance art.<sup>151</sup> Film was shown in the context of the gallery space and site-related art.<sup>152</sup> Rosalind Krauss notes that Serra found in the 'inexorable forward movement' of Snow's *Wavelength* (1967), a key example of a fixed frame camera exercise, an 'abstract spatial metaphor for film's relation to time', one that paralleled his own search 'to make sculpture a condition of something like a phenomenological vector, itself the experience of horizontality'. She concludes that Serra found in structuralist film 'support for a newly conceived idea of an aesthetic medium, one that, like film's, could not be understood as reductive but again, like film's, was thoroughly modernist'.<sup>153</sup>

In Snow's films *Wavelength*, *Back and Forth* (1969) and *La Région Centrale* (1971) projection became a 'concrete' experience in its own right; both explored phenomenologically the act of viewing and the experience of filmic time. This phenomenological awareness of the act of viewing was also strongly present in Lange's multimedia installations, such as *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974). By presenting simultaneously shot photographic, film and video recordings of the same subject together in the gallery space, his multimedia installation engaged with the

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<sup>149</sup> A.L. Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), p. 72.

<sup>150</sup> Sitney, p. 327.

<sup>151</sup> Rees, pp. 70–71.

<sup>152</sup> Rosalind Krauss recalled how the Anthology Film Archives in New York in the 1960s and early 1970s offered, thanks to its founder Jonas Mekas, an eclectic film programme of Soviet and French avant-garde cinema, British silent documentary, early American independent film and Charles Chaplin and Buster Keaton comedies, alongside the work of structuralist filmmakers such as Michael Snow, Hollis Frampton and Paul Sharits. Krauss claimed that for artists in the audience, namely Richard Serra, Robert Smithson or Carl Andre, this provided the 'discursive ground' within which they 'could imagine their way into a kind of film that, focused on the nature of the cinematic medium itself, would be modernist in its core'. Rosalind Krauss, *"A Voyage on the North Sea": Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2000), p. 24.

<sup>153</sup> Krauss, p. 26.

matter of medium-specificity by means of contrast, effectively drawing attention to the representational limitations and possibilities of each medium. That is, the viewer experienced stillness versus movement, as well as the distinctive temporal nature of film and video. Video, unlike 16mm film, allowed Lange to take lengthier shots, thus enabling further exploration of the notion of real time. The juxtaposition of media exposed how the construction of ‘reality’ is directly related to the methods and procedures of observation, much like the approach of structuralist films. The prevalence of the social subject in Lange’s work, however, distanced it from the pure exploration of the mechanics of vision seen in Snow’s films.



FIG. 26 Michael Snow, *Wavelength* (1967)

A parallel contribution to structural filmmaking in Britain came from London-based filmmaker Peter Gidal and British filmmaker Malcolm Le Grice. In 1974 Gidal added the term ‘materialist’ to structural film, to distinguish it from the primarily modernist American structural films, and defined it as being non-narrative and critical of representation.<sup>154</sup> Adopting Brechtian techniques of anti-illusionism and informed by Althusserian Marxism, Gidal’s structural/materialist film fused an aesthetic programme with a political critique in the Vertovian tradition of anti-narrative experiments.<sup>155</sup> Chris Kennedy has argued that British structural/materialist films, unlike the American structuralist films, were

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<sup>154</sup> Peter Gidal, ‘Definition and Theory of the Current Avant-Garde: Materialist/Structural Film’, *Studio International*, vol. 187, no. 963, (February 1974), 53–56. See also: Gidal, ‘Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film’, *Studio International*, vol. 190, no. 978, (November–December 1975), 189–96. See also Malcolm Le Grice, *Abstract Film and Beyond* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977) and a later Derridean reading of his structural film theory in *Materialist Film* (London: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>155</sup> Peter Wollen saw Dziga Vertov’s film *The Man with the Movie Camera* (1929) as a precursor of both *cinéma vérité* and structural film, as a film ‘caught between an ideology of photographic realism and one of formal innovation and experiment’. Peter Wollen, ‘The Two Avant-Gardes’ (1975), *Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Philip Simpson, Andrew Utterson and K. J. Shepherdson, (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 127–37 (p. 132). First published in *Studio International*, vol. 190, no. 978, (November–December 1975), 171–75.

models of interrogation, engaging the viewer in the process of deciphering experience by analytically taking apart and recomposing vision [...] and tended to reflect upon the larger cinematic apparatus (the trappings of ideology as reflected in the 'construction' of a viewer through narrative and representation) by creating a process-oriented work that questioned the coherence of cinematic practice.<sup>156</sup>

Lange was not part of the circle of structural/materialist filmmakers around Gidal and Le Grice and the London Filmmakers' Co-op, which had been founded in 1966.<sup>157</sup> Nevertheless, in his early brief period of filmmaking activity (between 1971 and 1974), in which he mostly combined photography, film and video simultaneously, Lange adopted some of the structural real time/space principles advocated by Sitney and Le Grice — mainly the static or very limited mobility of the camera and the notion of real time — without embracing the severe rigidity and rigorous systematicity of the structural exercises in exploring and decoding visual perception. Gidal shared the structuralists' ethic of process, inherited from their formal training as painters and sculptors and their links to Abstract Expressionism and Minimalism, and the kind of austere minimalist aesthetics that made duration a basic structural unit in their films.<sup>158</sup>

According to Rees, duration became the hallmark of the work of British structural filmmakers. This interest in duration linked them, via Snow and Frampton, to American post-Warholian structural filmmaking.<sup>159</sup> Le Grice, in his seminal 1972 essay 'Real TIME/SPACE', examined the notion of 'real time', a term which had its origin in the field of computers before it was adopted with wider implications by experimental filmmakers and video artists.<sup>160</sup> 'Real time' rejected the illusion of suspended time and space produced by commercial film, dealing instead with the issue of 'actuality' and 'reality' in film production and presentation. He advocated transparency and the employment of techniques that would bring attention to the film's structure and processes. This entailed a political and ethical reconsideration of the audience's role as well, against the passivity conditioned by commercial film that was so pervasive that it affected even documentary and

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<sup>156</sup> Chris Kennedy, 'Paul Sharits + Peter Gidal', *Early Monthly Segments*, no. 21, (19 October 2010). <<http://earlymonthlysegments.org/#21-tuesday-101910-paul-sharits-peter-gidal>>

<sup>157</sup> British artist Peter Blake, a friend of Lange, recalls him not being part of the London Filmmakers Co-op. Blake wrote: 'I don't think Peter [Gidal] knew Darcy...I showed several times within the Coop...don't recall Darcy ever did...don't think he would have expressed much interest in their hard-core, materialist film approach...more orientated to the working class labour & craft (as subject).' Blake, email to the author, 4 March 2016. Peter Gidal subsequently confirmed not having much exchanged with Lange during the RCA years or later on through the London Filmmakers' Co-op, in a conversation with the author, 14 April 2016.

<sup>158</sup> Gidal, 'Definition and Theory of the Current Avant-Garde: Materialist/Structural Film', p. 54.

<sup>159</sup> Rees, *A History of Experimental Film and Video*, p. 77. Furthermore, in 1971, Tate Gallery held a large-scale exhibition on Warhol and Gidal published his book *Andy Warhol, Films and Paintings*. Snow moved to New York in the early 1960s and lived there until his return to Canada in the early 1970s, becoming a central figure of American structural filmmaking. Gidal and Snow would have been seen each other's films through Gidal's visits to New York and the close alliance that existed between the New York and London filmmakers co-ops.

<sup>160</sup> Le Grice wrote: 'In computer terms, an operation in 'real time' is one which is going on as results are calculated and output, rather than one where results are stored 'off-line' for future consultation. 'Real time' is *now*. Real TIME/SPACE is *now* and *here*.' Malcolm Le Grice, 'Real TIME/SPACE', *Art and Artists magazine*, (December 1972), 33-43, p. 39.

politically and socially conscious film.<sup>161</sup> I shall return to this later in the chapter when I examine Lange's relation to observational documentary and to Direct Cinema.

Gidal differentiated between three modes of duration: real time, seen in Andy Warhol's long takes which referred to pure, physical duration; illusionistic time, seen in fiction films via editing and montage, and relativistic time, seen in the dialectical experience of a structural film. He defined the latter as 'post-Newtonian, Einsteinian time', with 'no absolute value other than the interaction of film-moment and viewer'.<sup>162</sup> Warren Buckland, in his reading of Gidal's essay, notes that to claim relativistic time was to dismiss the notion of real time as a fixed reference for understanding the heightened, reflexive duration in structural/materialist film.<sup>163</sup> Gidal privileged the real-time aesthetic whereby the time of viewing was equal to the time of recording. Duration and attention to the materiality of the medium were anti-idealist techniques that thereby subverted the illusionist practice of montage and the meaning-production mechanisms of dominant ideology.

Lange shared with Gidal and Le Grice their commitment to a real time aesthetic against the illusionist practice of montage and of suspended time and space produced by commercial film. However, their rejection of illusionistic representation necessitated a return to film's own materiality, whereas for Lange film was understood as the representation of something outside film itself. What fundamentally distanced Lange's film- and videomaking from Gidal's and Le Grice's structural/materialist filmmaking was its documentary nature and the representation of the social subject.

One could argue that Lange's use of the long take was in accordance to a realist perspective, one that André Bazin would define as belonging to the kind of filmmakers 'who put their faith in reality' as opposed to those 'who put their faith in the image'. The latter was represented by Soviet directors who embraced montage and German expressionists who saw the image as a sort of plastic material that could be sculpted. Adopting a 'faith in reality' meant allowing the camera to act as a tool that observes and records the events it encounters, forming an image that provides the viewer with enough time to discover 'reality' for him or herself.<sup>164</sup> Describing the long take in Robert Flaherty's documentary *Nanook of the North* (1922), Bazin writes: 'the length of the hunt is the very substance of the image, its true object'.<sup>165</sup> Flaherty's use of the long take, according to Bazin, aimed at avoiding betraying Nanook's time-consuming hunt and the 'documentary pact'

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<sup>161</sup> Le Grice, 'Real TIME/SPACE', p. 39.

<sup>162</sup> Gidal, 'Definition and Theory of the Current Avant-Garde: Materialist/Structural Film', p. 54.

<sup>163</sup> Warren Buckland, 'Structural/Materialist Film', in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Film Theory*, ed. by Edward Branigan and Warren Buckland (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 450.

<sup>164</sup> André Bazin, 'The Evolution of the Language of Cinema', in *What is Cinema?*, vol. 1, trans. by Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 23-40, p. 28.

<sup>165</sup> Bazin, p. 27.

that the filmmaker established with the subject. Lange's use of extended duration shares Flaherty's ethics as well as the intention not to disrupt the flow of time, even though Lange recognizes that filming supposes a slice of a time-continuum reality.

Warhol's films brought attention to the filmmaking process by his use of continuous takes, leaving in the end of reel white leads and exposing the background noise or his own voice giving instructions to his subject. These features can be seen in his early films, including *Sleep* (1963) and *Empire, Couch, and Blow Job* (all 1964). The static and elongated temporal qualities of films like *Eat*, a 40-minute fixed frame shot of Robert Indiana eating a mushroom; *Sleep* (1963), a nearly six-hour-long take of Warhol's lover, the poet John Giorno, sleeping, or *Empire*, a film consisting of more than eight hours of continuous footage of the Empire State building in New York City, were key references in the origins of structural cinema.



FIG. 27 Andy Warhol, *Eat* (1963)

Keeping editing, if at all, to an absolute minimum, Warhol would set the camera on a tripod in front of his subject, turn the camera on and let the subject do the work. Consisting of unedited segments, his films often lasted as long as the reel or the length of the recorded action. The boredom caused by the deadpan nature of his films demanded the viewer's endurance and in exchange enhanced his/her visual perception: the slightest movement of the sleeper or every sensuous bite of the mushroom would be magnified. Such phenomena would have otherwise been missed, consumed by the story, in a conventionally narrative film.

At times Warhol used the camera freely, with constant vertical and horizontal pans and in and out zooms, yet within the limits of a space marked by the fixed tripod. Examples of this camerawork can be seen in *Poor Rich Girl* (1965) and the Marie Menken episode of *Chelsea Girls* (1965). This



created a space, according to Sitney, that was less 'solid' than the fixed frame, yet was one that had been minimalised in a 'structural monotone'.<sup>166</sup> The notion of 'static' in structural film, according to Sitney, was not only caused by the stasis of the camera fixed on a tripod, or by the fixity of the space restricted by the single standpoint of the camera, as seen in Snow's *Wavelength*. Rather, structural film was static because it was 'not modulated internally by evolutionary concerns' or 'climaxes'; structural films were 'audio-visual objects whose most striking characteristic is their over-all shape'.<sup>167</sup>

Lange's use of real time was not driven by avant-garde experimentation —with the exception, perhaps, of his early films *Studies of Family Groups* (1972)— but rather served his recorded subject. The extended temporal duration of an unedited shot revealed characteristics of work processes, the singularities of workers' skills or the repetitive alienating qualities of factory labour. The long take allowed the viewer to see into and linger on the image and what it contained. Moreover, the viewer shared the worker's time, as viewing time correlated with the time that the worker took to perform the task. In this sense, it resembles Flaherty's treatment of the long take in which he requires the viewer to observe and wait alongside Nanook, a treatment of duration that invites the viewer's commitment, rather than the distancing effect of Warhol's compulsion to boredom. The temporal dimension of Lange's videomaking thus has different implications: it has an epistemological nature as well as an ontological one.

In this chapter I will examine Lange's *Studies of Family Groups* at length, as one of the early works in which he adopted some of the structuralist principles described above and as the only one shot in 16mm film only.<sup>168</sup> Two films document, respectively, a working- and middle-class family from London in their homes during a domestic gathering. *Studies of Family Groups* is clearly indebted to Warhol and structural filmmaking in the systematic set of instructions for camera shots that brought attention to the filming process and were articulated by Lange prior to filming and not in response to the pro-filmic reality. These instructions, printed in the exhibition catalogue when the films were screened at Gallery House in 1972, were as follows:

Structure - each film is 30 minutes in length. The first eight minutes is filmed with a long shot, the camera held on a fixed frame. The camera zooms in gradually after the eight minutes, following the conversation and actions until the last eight minutes where it returns to its original composition.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Sitney, 'Structural Film', *Film Culture Reader*, p. 332.

<sup>167</sup> Sitney, p. 344.

<sup>168</sup> Although Lange took photographs as well, their status as a constituent part of this work is not clear, as the photographs were never shown alongside the films.

<sup>169</sup> Lange, *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain*, vol. 3 p. 24.

While he followed to some extent this structural method, the films were actually shot more freely and responsively to the scene. Each study shared the filming structure of three-parts — long-static shot/zooms and pans shot/long-static shot — and was recorded within the restricted space afforded by the static camera set on a fixed tripod.

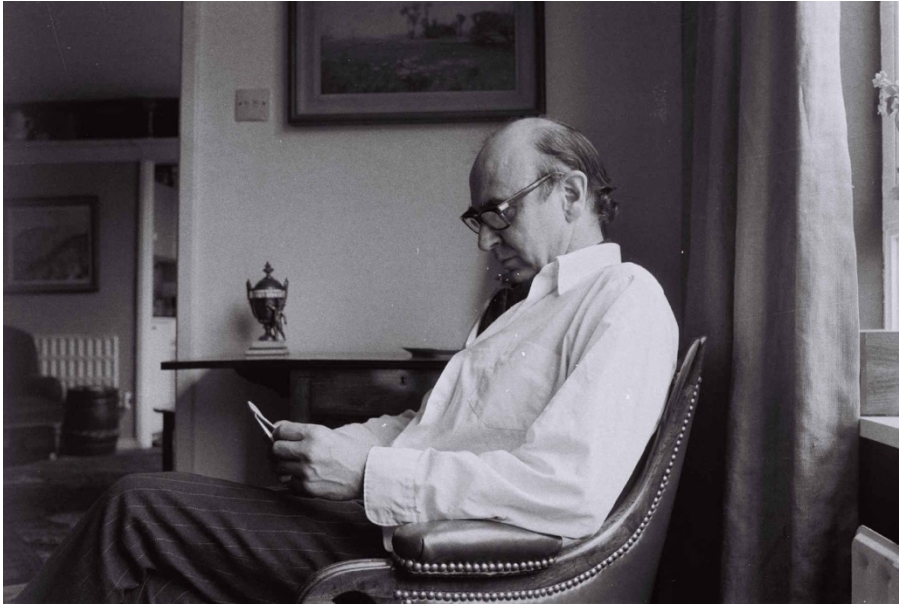


FIG. 28 *Studies of Family Groups* (Basil Cox) (1972)

The first study of *Studies of Family Groups* (Basil Cox), filmed in Maida Vale in February 1972, recorded Basil Cox with his friends having dinner at home in this affluent residential neighbourhood in London. It starts with the static, long-take (not of 8 but 4 minutes), middle-length shot that frames the group sitting at the table, thereby giving sufficient time for the viewer's gaze to roam through the domestic space and inspect the details of the room, the subjects and their dynamics as a group. Then the camera, while still set on a tripod, begins zooming in, presenting close-ups of the subjects' faces, hands, mouths, the items on the table and their plates, slowly panning and zooming freely like a searching eye seeking to take on as many details as possible. The camera's gaze mirrors the viewer's in the previous shot, inviting now a close-up exploration of each subject — what they wear, their mannerisms, how they eat, look at and interact with one another at the table. The viewer becomes aware of the limitations of framing and engrossed in looking freely while listening to their conversation in the background. Their talk touches on subjects such as art, travel, restaurant dining and buying property in London, clearly reflecting their cosmopolitan and educated backgrounds. The camera moves from one subject to another regardless of his/her role as the main speaker or marginality to the conversation. Shot in real time with a single camera, there is nothing of the conventional cinematic cuts in dialogue scenes. In the last section, the camera zooms out again to return to the same initial static middle-

length frame, and ends abruptly, with the end of the film reel, while the characters are still at the table.

This shift of camera treatment, from static long shot to restless movement that is imposed on the scene, taking over the control of the viewer's eye with restless pans and zooming close-ups, much like Warhol's in *Poor Rich Girl* and the Menken episode of *The Chelsea Girls*, rather than responding to it, has an effect of drawing attention to the act of filmmaking and the viewing experience. The symmetry of the film's three-part composition — long-static shot / zooms and pans shot / long-static shot — shares too this structural sensibility, insofar as it dictated in advance rather than by the pro-filmic material.

Furthermore, reflexivity is also stressed in the leaving in of the roughness of the filming. Included is footage from the camera tests, adjusting focus, aperture for lighting, zooming in and out on close-ups and panning shots of the characters, and of the camera focusing in transition and of restricted viewing shots of the subjects, as they move in and out of the frame or become hidden behind other subjects or objects that get in between blocking their vision. The only cuts seem to be produced by the end and change of the reels every 11 minutes, leaving also in the white leads and abrupt endings and beginnings. This demonstrates an anti-interventionist approach that Lange shares with Warhol. We see a clapping hand to synch sound/image, and the characters turning to the camera for a brief second so as to confirm that they are now back 'on camera'. At another point, one of the characters verbally acknowledges that the film is not silent and that their conversation is being recorded too. These brief incidents break with the conventions of film's illusionism, as well as putting into question the transparency and veracity of the document and their performance and the degree of *acting* when they conduct themselves as if the camera was not there. It is also a signpost reminding the viewer the fact that this is a 'film'. Therefore, this study documents the process of filmmaking as much as the pro-filmic scene.

This rigid structural approach can be seen as formalist in constructing an image, where form intervenes and qualifies the realist imagery, rather than serve as a documentary instrument. Film critic Rosetta Brooks, writing about Lange's video *Craigdarroch* (1973), heralded this work as being more successful in comparison with his earlier works (referring to *Studies of Family Groups*). The reason why, she argued, had to do with the eradication of the earlier tape's austerity, which was an 'interference': 'since it stresses the formal aspects of the work at the expense of his subject matter. Fortunately, his latest tape has resolved this difficulty and made the "medium" more transparent and "compatible" with the observations he is engaged in making.'<sup>170</sup> Clearly what

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<sup>170</sup> Rosetta Brooks, 'Darcy Lange at the Jack Wendler, London — July', *Studio International*, vol. 186, no. 958 (September 1973), p. 109.

Brooks meant by ‘transparent’ was different from the structuralists like Gidal; for him, ‘transparent’ meant to reveal the filmic processes taking place, while for Brooks, it meant to see the subject of the film without the distractions introduced by these formal aspects.

The second study of *Studies of Family Groups (Mr and Mrs Mates’ Family)*, of the working class family, was filmed in their home at Kent House in Pimlico in April 1972. It opens also with a long, wide shot framing the Mates’ living room, but, unable to cover the entire room, it slowly pans at the beginning of the shot to provide a view of the whole room and of all the family members. The people portrayed are seated on sofas, talking among themselves while the television, showing a sports programme, is mainly ignored. After this showcasing, the camera returns to the left side of the room, where Mr Mates sits in profile on a single armchair, facing the television, next to two (possibly twin) daughters in their early twenties and a younger son, all three sharing a sofa facing the camera. Closer to the camera, in the opposite margins of the frame we see two more people in profile and fragmented, disappearing out of frame when leaning backwards in their seats.



FIG. 29 *Studies of Family Groups (Mr and Mrs Mates’ Family)* (1972)

The style of the camerawork and the quality of these two studies differs. Since Lange himself had trouble operating the film camera, it is plausible that different cameramen could have shot the studies, although there is no evidence in the artist’s archive confirming this fact.<sup>171</sup> The opening shot of the Mates family film, unlike the Basil Cox study, *establishes* the scene, showing the room and the family as a guided tour for the viewer, rather than strictly following his prescribed instruction. The camera is also more responsive; for instance, it zooms in at about 4 minutes

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<sup>171</sup> Lange confessed: ‘the film studies weren’t a success because I had a lot of technical problems. They were completed, but the cost of the film was a major setback. I had to rely on friends at the College to sneak the equipment to me. And I used a cameraman — I didn’t do the camera work myself — which I later realized was a mistake.’ Darcy Lange, ‘Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, *Avalanche* (summer 1975), 12–13 (pp. 12–13).

(instead of the prescribed 8 minutes), when Mr Mates excitedly points at the televised horse racing. The camera stays with him in close-up, showing how he smokes and talks, giving us a sense of who he is before it pans one-by-one to his daughters and son, and to other members. One of them stands up and moves a bottle, possibly after being told that was blocking the sight of the mother. Leading the conversation, Mr Mates seems to be the main protagonist, the camera granting him lengthier shots. He drinks bitter from a half-pint dimple mug and smokes roll-up cigarettes; the women sip from their wine glasses. Crisps and peanuts are passed around. They talk about working wages and unions, and Mr Mates discusses his highly conservative views and explains why he has not joined the union.

In this study, the jump cuts produced by the end of the film reels are bridged for continuity by cutting to another frame, rather than abruptly as in the Basil Cox study. The camera is static, remaining in the same position and on a tripod at all times, only panning and zooming. The opening and closing wide-shots are greatly reduced in time, lengthening the middle section of close-ups, some very close to their faces and showing their expressions and singularities. This might have been intended to offer a closer identification with these characters. Some of them are clearly more shy than others when sensing the camera is on them, looking downwards rather than acknowledging the camera. In the third reel, the family members have shifted spaces, and more people, possibly friends, have joined in. The new visitors sit with their backs to the camera, while the family members cramp together on the sofa facing in.

The two-person crew with film and audio equipment would have been intrusively present in the close quarters of their living room. The family get on with their conversation and painstakingly try not to gaze at the camera; thus, the study provides a sort of candid portrait. Having said this, early on the viewer is made aware of the filmmaking activity, when Mr Mates, pointing at the camera, explains to the others they can tell when they are 'on camera' by the turning on of its little red light when recording. There is also an instance when the mic can be seen accidentally. However, Lange in this study has cleared the white leads and any other elements of the act of filmmaking appearing in the previous study.

The subjects in the two studies are not contextualised by means of an introductory voice-over commentary. Nothing is disclosed about who they are, why there were selected or about the kind of relationship that Lange had with them. The brief information afforded — name of the family, place of living (to signal their social class status), date of recording — is all the contextual detail given to the audience in the exhibition catalogue, alongside a statement outlining Lange's intentions:

Three half-hour 16mm films with synchronised sound, a study of three different family groups and their friends. The intention of this series is to make a natural

observation of people entertaining (eating and drinking among friends). There are three different classes of people presented: Middle class, Working class, and Agricultural worker-farmer. The films hope to show interesting things about society, personalities, and mannerisms etc. The study is from an objective standpoint and almost from a still life approach.<sup>172</sup>

One can compare Lange's 'still life approach' of these studies with Warhol's 'stillies' or Living Portrait Boxes as he referred to his *Screen Tests* (1964–66), the over 400 short black-and-white portrait films that he made documenting the micro-culture of artists, musicians and friends around him, such as Lou Reed, Nico, Edie Sedgwick, Dennis Hopper, Duchamp and Susan Sontag.



FIG. 30 Andy Warhol, *Screen Test (Lucinda Childs)* (1964)

Warhol shot these at standard speed for sound film (24 frames per second), but projected them at the conventional speed for silent films of early cinema (16 frames per second) and played in a continuous loop. Lange's studies may feel stifling in comparison to the laconic and minimal formal parameters of Warhol's recorded sitters, who were framed against a plain background and told not to move or blink for over the two minutes that the Bolex camera rolled. Nevertheless, both artists offered with their voyeuristic cameras, the opportunity of looking and analysing; they allowed the viewer's gaze to scrutinize a human face, and in Lange's those of the family members, their body language and their interpersonal dynamics.

Presented without any commentary to contextualise the visual information, Lange's films strictly rely on observation, on the documentary *veracity* of the indexical image, establishing an

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<sup>172</sup> Lange, *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain*, vol. 3, p. 24.

epistemological equation of visibility and realism. Further, without contextual information, the members are rendered anonymous; they might seem like archetypal ‘characters’ in a family. Although they speak as themselves, rather than from a script, their brief appearance and the lack of knowledge about who they really are, makes it difficult for the viewer to engage or identify with them. Further, as a comparative ethnographic exercise, seeing these two films side by side as studies of class, the differences in the two families’ manners, English accents, the respective subjects of their conversations, the home décor of their living rooms, and so on, seem to accentuate their role as archetypes of their respective class backgrounds.

In 1974, the BBC produced the documentary series *The Family*, directed by Franc Roddam and Paul Watson, which followed the everyday living experiences of a real working family, the Wilkins, in Reading. It was modelled on the 1972 observational television series *An American Family*, directed by Craig Gilbert. Its fly-on-the-wall style was seen as a precursor to reality television. Despite evident differences with Lange’s *Studies of Family Groups*, *The Family* serves as an interesting comparison in its similar premises, also being an observational study of class through an examination of a particular working class family in Britain in the early 1970s. This series was shown between April and June of 1974.



FIG. 31 BBC television series *The Family* (1974)

*The Family* adopted, in television standards, a progressive style to documentary conventions; for instance, while it retained the voiceover commentary in the introduction that provided a set point of view, Watson inscribed himself in the scene. We see him seated around the table with the members of the family discussing with them ‘on camera’ the objectives, potential risks and problems of being on air and making public the intimacies of their domestic lives together, for the first time ever on British television. Watson openly addressed the predicament of them being televised, for ethical purposes as well as to break the wall of illusion with the viewer. He relied on this agreed exhibitionist formula for the success of such an experiment, one to which each member of the family engaged with in various degrees of acceptance and for different motivations. The mother, who was the most outspoken, expressed on camera her desire that



the series might finally break with the stereotypes of television and cinema, by revealing the crude realities of a ‘real’ working family and how they actually lived.



FIG. 32 BBC television series *The Family* (1974)

In both scenarios, Lange and Watson give us a slice of reality, adopting a *cinéma vérité* style and rejecting to some extent a fly-on-the-wall approach. Lange films the Mates family gathering in the company of friends with remarkable candour. The relationship that Lange established with his subjects was not disclosed to us, the viewers, unlike *The Family*, and there is no archival information about how he knew these two families or the degree of his proximity to them.<sup>173</sup> There are also clear differences, for instance, in terms of time frame; *The Family* series covered a substantially lengthier period — the director and crew spent two months with the Wilkins getting to know them before filming, and the series was edited from eighteen hours of filming, each day over the course of three months.<sup>174</sup> This had an impact on the kind of documentary *The Family* could be as it allowed in-depth character development and the use of dramatic events in the Wilkins’ lives as narrative devices. *The Family* had also wider implications in terms of its reception and impact on the British public, as well as on the lives of the Wilkins themselves transforming their lives. None of these had any parallel with Lange’s studies, which were screened only during a two-week-run film programme at Gallery House, reaching out to a small circle of avant-garde art followers in London.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Alyson Hunter, Lange’s partner at the time, explained that Lange was a friend of Les Mates, one of Mr Mates’ sons, who played flamenco guitar and travelled with him to Spain. The son appears seating closer to the camera, in profile and mostly off frame. He knew therefore the family prior to filming and was outraged by Mr Mates’ conservatism. Lange also knew Basil Cox, a film director with Shell Film Unit and a film lecturer at the Royal College of Art. Cox was very supportive of him. Hunter, email to the author, 4 October 2016.

<sup>174</sup> Joe Sieder in <<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/444743/>>

<sup>175</sup> The dates of the third part of this exhibition series presenting the film and video programme were 12–30 September 1972.



*The Family* was built around dramatic events in the Wilkins' daily lives; it was therefore shaped by narrative as in fiction films, while in *Studies of Family Groups* there was no narrative or it was dramatically reduced. Shot in real time, the temporality of Lange's study was contained in the pro-filmic and determined by a structural approach. It had a 'segment' quality and length, like a short moment in time, a scene in a continuum reality stressed by the fact that the recording started when the gathering had already begun, and ended abruptly, at the end of the film reel, while the meal was still continuing. This reinforced an open-ended quality to Lange's film, challenging the self-contained narrative conventions in commercial filmmaking, something I will return to later in this chapter when discussing early non-fiction cinema as well as the premises of ethnographic filmmaking.

Lange's studies relied on an acute, heightened observation of appearances — their manners, clothes, home décor, and so on — rather than experiencing (through vision too) what *occurred* to them. They were defined by an established filmic structure that captured a reality that unfolded seemingly freely and was open to chance, and which was being interrupted by the needs of the filmmaking activity. The camera movement, fragmentation and disruption of the image stressed the contingency of the image and produced a desire to look for what had been denied; a close-up focusing on one speaker meant compromising another element in the pro-filmic reality that had gone unrecorded. The rawness and seeming 'primitivism' of the filmmaking, whilst it was not a purely formal exercise in deconstructing the codes of perception, as it might have been for other structural filmmakers, nevertheless challenged conditioned codes of viewing, and as a result, enhanced the viewer's awareness in the act of looking. In this shift of attention from the pro-filmic reality to the act of filmmaking, *Studies of Family Groups* might be seen as an ontological exercise in vision and endurance, one indebted to the legacy of structural filmmaking and more so to Warhol's films, yet without compromising, or to some extent not completely, the film's social documentary value.

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'A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain', a series of three exhibitions held at Gallery House, London in 1972, and organised by its director Sigi Krauss and exhibition organiser Rosetta Brooks, devoted the third edition to film and video. It had two respective separate film and video programmes that featured Lange's 16mm film *Studies of Family Groups* and his first video series *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces*, both of 1972. These exhibitions provided the opportunity to show film and video within the context of other artistic media, thus, it brought up resonances among artists working with and sometimes across different

media.<sup>176</sup> Whilst some of the participant filmmakers were associated with the London Filmmakers' Co-operative such as Gidal, Raban, John Du Cane and Stephen Dwoskin, most of them, like Lange, had backgrounds in the fine arts, namely David Hall, John Latham, Denis Masi and Carolee Schneemann. Brooks in her introduction to the exhibition catalogue devoted to film and video acknowledged the plastic arts context from which most of these contributing filmmakers and video artists emerged: many of whom, she argued, 'continue to regard their work as being rooted in this tradition', therefore, the need to critically examine their works within the context. Brooks wrote:

Much significant work from a tradition of the 'plastic arts' is presently being conducted in the medium, though not necessarily in the tradition, of film. The adoption of this wholly temporal 'medium' and its main entailments for artists who assume primarily the tradition of the 'plastic arts', in itself implies the necessity of a revision of the *modus operandi* of modernist criteria of evaluation and an attempt to stretch the minimalist ontological norms. This might be regarded as oversimplifying the issues in the wide range of contemporary work of this kind, however in so far as categorisation of artistic endeavour in terms of *media* has any validation besides the rather dubious credence newly inherited from the conventions of modernist criticism, it seems no great oversight to refer to the general entailments metaphysical or otherwise of the straightforward act of using film outside of the tradition and thus apart from the traditional issues of film activity.<sup>177</sup>

For Brooks, this distinction was fundamental and it reflected the fact that the two traditions of 'plastic arts' and film had developed quite autonomously (a claim that was also examined and defended by Peter Wollen in his 1975 seminal essay 'The Two Avant-Gardes').<sup>178</sup> Brooks' introduction addressed the concerns, shared among the filmmakers exhibited in 'A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain', with the kind of metaphysical notions with which the plastic arts were involved, that is, 'with temporal entities'. Thus, in her view, their films demanded a 'more stringent examination of the nature of time and of temporal succession in relation to the ontological *fundamentals* assumed in the plastic arts'.<sup>179</sup> Further, these films and videos reinforced the kind of self-reflexivity and reductive approach that in the more accentuated cases,

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<sup>176</sup> The exhibitions emphasised and displayed the eclecticism and plurality of the avant-garde scene. Brooks spoke of 'unity in variety' and quoted John Stezaker's dictum 'maximum extension — minimum intention', conveying the concern that art in potentially being able to be anything could risk becoming meaningless as a term and as endeavour. They featured participatory sculpture such as David Medalla's 'biokinetic constructions and participatory works related to the three revolutionary struggles: *the Struggle of Production, the Class Struggle and the Struggle for Scientific Experimentation*'; Graham Steven's photographic documentation of his massive, outdoor inflatable sculptures; performances such as Stuart Brisley's legendary *Three Life Situations* and Anthony McCall's events; and artworks displaying simultaneous use of diverse media (by Ian Breakwell and John Blake). Rosetta Brooks, 'Introduction', *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain* (London: Gallery House, 1972), vol. 2, p.1, 12–30 September 1972.

<sup>177</sup> Rosetta Brooks, 'Introduction', *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain* (London: Gallery House, 1972), vol. 3, p.1. The dates for the third exhibition were 2–15 October 1972.

<sup>178</sup> Peter Wollen, 'The Two Avant-Gardes' (1975), *Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, eds. by Philip Simpson, Andrew Utterson and K. J. Shepherdson, (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 127–37 (p. 131). First published in *Studio International*, vol. 190, no. 978 (November–December 1975), 171–75.

<sup>179</sup> Brooks, 'Introduction', vol. 3, p. 1.

remarked Brooks, risked falling into a ‘formalistic cliché’ and ‘formal mannerisms’. She wrote in the catalogue:

The most interesting films in this area of work tend to acknowledge their (unavoidable) speculative component and thus are less concerned with an absolutist reductionism (*reductio ad absurdum*) but are rather involved with developing (albeit implicitly) prescriptions for further filmic activity or at least general speculations based on some ontological fundamental. Film which most neglects this aspect (i.e. its function) leaves itself gratuitously and sometimes even welcomingly open to formalists’ revisionism. [...] The effect is consistently a return to a formalistic involvement in the incidental and often purely methodological traits (like self-reference) which are considered apart from their necessity or function.<sup>180</sup>

Another common trait among these structuralist filmmakers, Brooks observed, was their reluctance to ‘formulate conclusions’, which she saw as an inheritance from the plastic arts. She wrote:

When many of the issues involved in this work are purely metaphysical, it is common to merely elucidate a full range of metaphysical possibilities without dealing with the ramifications or any single ontological commitment. This sketching-out process is invaluable in eradicating persistent prejudices which might interfere with and stylise the film activity. However, [...] the logical objective of reductionistic film-making must be in the construction of new norms of action. A blind insistence upon reductionism as norm is ultimately self-defeating. A prescription at this point might be to make more explicit the speculative component of film works because to ignore this aspect, i.e. to leave it as an implicit component in the film work is to prescribe ‘reductionism ad absurdum’.<sup>181</sup>

In his essay for the catalogue of ‘A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain’, British filmmaker and critic John Du Cane remarked too on the self-referentiality that characterized these films, describing in detail the structuralist exercises of Gidal’s *Movie* (1972), Dowskin’s *Dirty* (1971), Raban’s *Broadwalk* (1972) and *Colours of This Time* (1972), Mike Legget’s *Shepherds Bush* (1971) and John Latham’s *Earth* (1971). He wrote: ‘The survey ranges from film that is little more than a documentation of extra-filmic events to film which is systematically and conceptually self-referential. It is the work at the latter end of the spectrum which is generally the strongest, clearest and most exciting.’<sup>182</sup> To Du Cane, Lange’s *Studies of Family Groups* might have fallen into first category and, therefore, it was not worthy of mention. Conversely, Du Cane’s single paragraph devoted to video in this introduction was dedicated to Lange’s *Breaker Metalworks* (from the series *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces*), which struck him as exemplary of video used for what it is best: ‘situation retrieval’.<sup>183</sup> In his review for *Time Out*, Du Cane highlighted this work and expanded the concept:

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<sup>180</sup> Brooks, p. 1.

<sup>181</sup> Brooks, p. 1.

<sup>182</sup> John Du Cane, ‘Film and Video: Part 3 of a survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain’, in *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain*, vol. 3, p. 2.

<sup>183</sup> Du Cane, ‘Film and Video: Part 3 of a survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain’, p. 2.

that is, recording a situation for its own sake, as a piece of information to be stored for future public use. Lange conveys the full immediacy of the factory work with no meditation by commentary or interview. His subjective response — gentle and curious — as cameraman, and the worker's playful acceptance of his presence makes it a powerful personal communication of a specific social activity.<sup>184</sup>

*Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces*, made in 1972, marked the beginning of Lange's factory observations and the first time he used video. The studies, conducted in East London, Leicester and Birmingham, included: knitting, metal works and clothing manufacturing factories, a woodcarving furniture workshop and a wood manufacturer.<sup>185</sup> In his first videotape, *Breakers Metalworks*, shot in Birmingham, the recording style was that of a walk-through of the factory with a roaming hand-held camera that aimed to convey the atmosphere and realities of factory life. It also included one brief interview with the owner of this factory. The raw and poor visual and audio quality of these videotapes looks tentative and preliminary, when compared to the later, more structured, factory series, *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*. Yet *Five Working Studies* established Lange's style of real-time, unedited, long observations of people at work that came to characterise his *Work Studies* series (1972–77).<sup>186</sup>

It is interesting that while Du Cane emphasized Lange's video study as being remarkable, he dismissed *Studies of Family Groups*, which was not dissimilar in their retrieval of a social activity. According to Lange, his intention was to make a 'natural observation of people entertaining (eating and drinking) with their friends' and hoped 'to show interesting things about society, personalities and mannerisms, etc.' The study was, according to him, from an objective standpoint, 'almost from a still life approach'.<sup>187</sup> Perhaps Du Cane's criteria differed when evaluating film and video, positing the self-reflective structuralist as the best approach in filmmaking, while conferring the documentary or 'situation retrieval' properties to the medium of video, and he missed the structuralist influence in Lange's film *Studies of Family Groups*.

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<sup>184</sup> John Du Cane, *Time Out*, 13–19 October 1972.

<sup>185</sup> These studies were recorded in Marbett Manufacturing Co. Ltd. (London E2), Breakers Metal Works (Balsall Heath, Birmingham), Wild, Mellor and Bromley (Leicester), E. Brennan General Woodcarving Furniture Workshop (London E2) and Burns and Lux (London E2). Lange resided across from E. Brennan General and taught art at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, Birmingham and in Leicester. These studies were recorded with a 2100 Portapak, which allowed for a 20 minutes maximum of recording time. He also shot colour and black and white photographs, a roll of each per study.

<sup>186</sup> I have adopted the abbreviated *Work Studies* which Lange used when referring to the works he produced between 1972 and 1977, all sharing the theme of 'people at work', although these are individual works or series. *Work Studies* includes the following: *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (1972), *Allotment Gardens* (1972–73), *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coal Mining Communities, Nottingham, UK* (1973), *Craigdarroch, Scotland* (1973), *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974); (eight studies produced in New Zealand in 1974) *Jack Jury, Stockman, Uruti; Clem Coxhead, Study of cow milking in Opanake; Vern Hume, Aerial top dressing, Okato; Waitara Freezing Works; Competition Axemen at Agricultural and Pastoral Show, Stratford; Hewa, Study of a Maori Tree-feller at Waitaanga, King Country; Bert Phillips, Study of a Fencer; and Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast; Cantawieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village, Maestrazgo, Spain* (1975); and (the two *Work Studies in Schools*) *Study of Three Birmingham Schools, UK* (1976) and *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools, UK* (1977).

<sup>187</sup> Lange, *A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain*, vol. 3, p. 24.



FIG. 33 *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (E. Brennan *General Woodcarving Furniture Workshop*) (1972)

FIG. 34 *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (Wild, Mellor and Bromley) (1972)





FIG. 35 *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces (Breakers Metal Works)* (1972)

FIG. 36 *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces (Burns and Lux)* (1972)

Lange stated that it was during the exhibition ‘A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain’, in presenting both works in film and in video, that he came to the realisation that video was more convenient to him. He preferred video because of its synch sound, the possibility of long takes and immediacy. He enjoyed ‘even the television quality’, ‘the documentary quality’ and ‘the TV news quality relevant to political feeling I have in my work’.<sup>188</sup> For him, the pace of video allowed time for observation. There were also technical and economic reasons for Lange to opt for video. He confessed the cost of film being a major challenge and necessitating loaned equipment from the RCA, and that, in not having full command of the film camera, he relied on cameramen.

<sup>188</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 13).

British artist and scholar Lucy Reynolds, writing retrospectively on the film and video programme of 'A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain', has remarked on the role of video and film as media for the documentation of art performances such as Anthony McCalls' film of his fire performance *Landscape for Fire* (1972), Bill Lundberg's *Fire Construction I and II* (1972) and Carolee Schneemann's film *Plumbline* (1968-71) and Ken McMullen's 1972 video of Joseph Beuys's performance at Tate. Meanwhile, she framed Darcy Lange's works with those of the Artist Placement Group artists who directed their documentations outside the confines of the art world.<sup>189</sup>

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Film studies scholar Catherine Russell, in her 1999 book *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video*, has drawn a stylistic parallel between the minimal styles of structural filmmaking and of the early non-fictional cinema that preceded Robert Flaherty's documentary in 1922, arguing that in disposing of the film's institutional and narrative codes, structural films returned to the cinema's origins, wherein pictorial composition, montage (or the lack thereof) and address were still in their raw or primitive state, uncontaminated by 'bourgeois' narrative codes.<sup>190</sup> Structural filmmakers were drawn to early cinema in their search for alternative modes to the narrative principles that came to dominate the institutionalisation of cinema.<sup>191</sup> For Warhol, the return to early cinema allowed him to rethink representation as a form of observation that was never pure; as Russell noted, 'even if the gaze could be rendered neutral, the framing and the long takes alone constitute a form of desire'.<sup>192</sup> Moreover, the early non-fiction films, noted Russell, as a form of ethnography differed from the scientific gaze of John Grierson's documentary or the humanistic gaze of Flaherty and the *cinéma vérité* filmmakers.<sup>193</sup>

In 1978, Noël Burch dubbed early cinema, made before 1907 (before D. W. Griffith), as 'Primitive Cinema', one that was a 'purer' cinema reduced to its basic elements as a technology of modernity and yet untainted by the bourgeois ideology of commercial cinema. He identified a set of formal features in early film that he coined as 'Primitive Mode of Representation' (PMR)<sup>194</sup>:

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<sup>189</sup> Lucy Reynolds, 'A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain; Gallery House, October 1972' <[http://www.luxonline.org.uk/histories/1970-1979/survey\\_of\\_the\\_avant\\_garde.html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/histories/1970-1979/survey_of_the_avant_garde.html)>

<sup>190</sup> Catherine Russell, *Experimental Ethnography: The Work of Film in the Age of Video* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1999), p. 63.

<sup>191</sup> Russell offers ample examples of structural films that directly reference the early cinema, such as Al Razutis's *Lumière's Train (Arriving at the Station)* (1979), Ernie Gehr's *Eureka* (1974) and David Rimmer's *Seashore* (1971) or Warhol's *Kiss* (1963) modelled on Edison's film *Kiss of May Irvin and John C. Rice* (1896). Russell, p. 63.

<sup>192</sup> Russell, p. 172.

<sup>193</sup> Russell, p. 85.

<sup>194</sup> For Noël Burch's distinction between the 'primitive mode of representation' (PMR) and the 'institutional mode of representation' (IMR), see Noël Burch, 'Porter, or Ambivalence', *Screen*, 19.4 (Winter 1978-79), 91-105. Burch introduced the concept Institutional Mode of Representation (IMR) in

‘autarchy of the tableau (even after the introduction of the syntagm of succession), horizontal and frontal camera placement, maintenance of the long shot and ‘centrifugality’’.<sup>195</sup> More relevant was ‘*the non-closure of the PMR*’, referring to the constructed narrative of film that soon became entrenched in cinematic and since then internalised.<sup>196</sup> Before *the ending* in cinema was invented, noted Burch, in the filmmaking of the Lumière brothers, the end of the film (the shot) was the termination of the film reel.<sup>197</sup> In the non-closure of the Lumière’s film/shot, implicit was the understanding that the action existed before and went on after the filming. This was something that changed soon after with the arrival of staged films and the instauration of the spectacular, catastrophic or punitive endings of a story. The complete *closure* of its semantic function subsequently developed, with the creation of the beginning shot that introduced or summarised the film’s argument or ‘ideological point’.<sup>198</sup> This particular primitive feature, the *non-closure*, was one Lange used in his film and videomaking, as described in *Studies of Family Groups*.

Another aspect of primitive cinema was its strictly ‘external behaviourism’ and the lack in the recording of anything alluding to internal or psychological states. In the absence of ‘human presence’ — still not introduced by the close-up of faces and, more importantly, of the human voice — the presence of the actors was expressed through body language, one that relied on the *language of gestures*.<sup>199</sup> In early non-fiction film, notes Russell, the camera had not yet assumed the guise of the eye, as it was still rendered as a mechanical apparatus, to enable what Benjamin called the ‘physiognomic aspects of pictorial worlds’ to become visible.<sup>200</sup> Benjamin, speaking of photography, noted: ‘It is indeed a different nature that speaks to the camera from the one which addresses the eye; different above all in the sense that instead of a space worked through by a human consciousness there appears one which is affected unconsciously.’<sup>201</sup> Lange’s early filmmaking was still characterised by Burch’s ‘centrifugality’ and a reliance on the visual surface of reality, that would seem to evade Benjamin’s ‘optical unconscious’ — the potential of the camera

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his 1969 book *Praxis du cinéma* (Paris: Editions Gallimard). He claimed that IMR was a bourgeois practice driven by a desire for totalizing illusionistic representation. Bazin spoke of the ‘myth of total cinema,’ a desire to represent reality as completely as possible, which came about with the innovations introduced in cinema such as sound, colour, widescreen and more sophisticated editing. Burch argued that IMR was no more realistic a system than its alternatives.

<[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional\\_mode\\_of\\_representation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Institutional_mode_of_representation)> Further, according to Thomas Elsaesser, a ‘new historicism’ emerged from the 1978 FIAF conference in Brighton that introduced a new way of reading and writing film history, highlighting the legacy of Burch’s conceptualization of ‘primitive cinema’. See *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. by Thomas Elsaesser and Adam Barker (London: BFI Publishing, 1990).

<sup>195</sup> Noël Burch, ‘A primitive mode of representation?’, in Noël Burch, *Life to those Shadows*, trans. and ed. by Ben Brewster (Oakland: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 186–201 (p. 188).

<sup>196</sup> Burch, (pp. 186–188).

<sup>197</sup> Burch, (p. 191).

<sup>198</sup> Burch, (pp. 193–96).

<sup>199</sup> Burch, (p. 197).

<sup>200</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, pp. 85–86.

<sup>201</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘A Short History of Photography’ (1931), trans. by Stanley Mitchell, *Screen* (spring 1972), 5–26 (p. 7).



to reveal the hidden, invisible dimensions of things — and yet to be freed of his own subjectivity, a theme to which I shall return later. Insofar as Lange's early filmmaking operated by the principles of one-shot format involving no editing, non-narrative, non-closure, single camera position, and so on, affinities can be drawn with some of the features of primitive early cinema alluded to by Burch.

*Actualités*, a term coined in 1895 by the Lumière brothers in France, were non-fiction films that preceded documentary, made of unedited footage of real events and places, and not structured by a narrative. Lasting no more than a minute or two, the duration of the filmstrip, in their brevity, actualités were strongly related to still photography. Lumière's *La sortie des usines Lumière* (*Workers Leaving the Factory*, 1895) was the earliest actualités film. Lange's first films, *Social Consideration*, *Communication*, *Observation* (1971) hold a resemblance with the actualités as these were very short recordings, of 3 to 8 minutes long, of a social event or activity and devoid of narrative. The six Super-8 films that form this series were made like a single shot, with occasional camera stops, some accompanied by a sound track from a tape recorder. These were, as described in Chapter 1, Lange's first moving image recordings of people at work and portrayed the following subjects: a woman putting out her washing in London, two hardware store employees in South Kensington, farmers burning wheat in Kent, a man milking cows in Sussex, a cattle auction in a market outside Bradford, and the transport café, Pini's Restaurant, in London. Like the Lumière brothers who shot in a specific type of framing to keep an eye out for the action that may unfold in front of their camera, Lange also sought to capture something of the everyday reality, in all its ordinariness. These films empirically recorded the world in front of the camera, that is, Benjamin's 'physiognomic aspects of pictorial worlds'. In these works, Lange trusted the camera's indexical capacity to represent the world outside in a naturalistic way and with the least interference, in a mechanical way so to speak. He adopted purposefully a non-interventionist approach to the image and rejected montage.



FIG. 37 Lumière brothers, *La sortie des usines Lumière* (*Workers Leaving the Factory*, 1895)

*Social Consideration, Communication, Observation* were made of unedited footage, some lasting the run of a filmstrip<sup>202</sup>(*Hardware Store in South Kensington*, lasting 8 minutes, involved several filmstrips), without beginning or end shots reflecting the external activity. However, these films differed. For instance, *A Woman Putting out her Washing*, unlike the other studies in this series, was structured by the ‘diegesis’ of the activity being recorded and had a closure insofar as the film ‘started’ and ‘ended’ with the beginning and ending of that activity. In other studies, the pro-filmic spatial/temporal parameters of the activity exceeded that of the film’s constraints, whether this was because the temporal length of the activity surpassed the filmstrip — the auction of cattle or, in the absence of a temporally-defined activity as in *Pini’s Restaurant* — or spatially, when the action took place in different locations — as in the studies of the milking farmer or of the burning of wheat. Filming in these scenarios appeared to accord with Burch’s definition of non-closure characteristic of early films. This non-closure fed into the contemporary notion of unfinished work in sculpture, which emphasized process over completion, and which Brooks remarked on as characteristic of the films in ‘A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain’.

The straightforward approach of Lange’s *A Woman Putting out her Washing* shares the empiricism of Eadweard Muybridge’s serial photographic studies of human motion, the systematic and aesthetically uninflected way of recording the unfolding of an action, without sharing the impetus of the photographer’s scientific investigation. In Muybridge’s studies of human anatomy in motion, the subjects were photographed undertaking specific everyday activities and working movements. The human body was partially abstracted as the nakedness of the subjects’ bodies

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<sup>202</sup> Common lengths of super-8 film allowed filming of about 3 minutes to 4.5 minutes at 12, 15, 16 and 18 frames per second. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8\\_mm\\_film](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/8_mm_film)

stressed anatomy over character, and the motions were codified conveying notions of the ideal physical body, further emphasized by comparative studies with the elderly, the deformed and the disabled. Abstraction was stressed too by the sheer repetition of the still shots serialised into grids to convey motion, which also professed a sense of measurement and accuracy. One could easily establish a comparison, for instance, between Muybridge's *Woman Emptying a Bucket on Seated Companion* (1887) and Lange's film, insofar as both assumed a 'mechanical' recording of a very concrete 'real' (although clearly staged) physical activity. Lange's film is also a 'study', or an illustration, of 'a' woman hanging the washing. She is, in this sense, an anonymous abstraction — further stressed by being recorded from her back — an object to be seen, and ultimately, an archetype of the activity she performs.

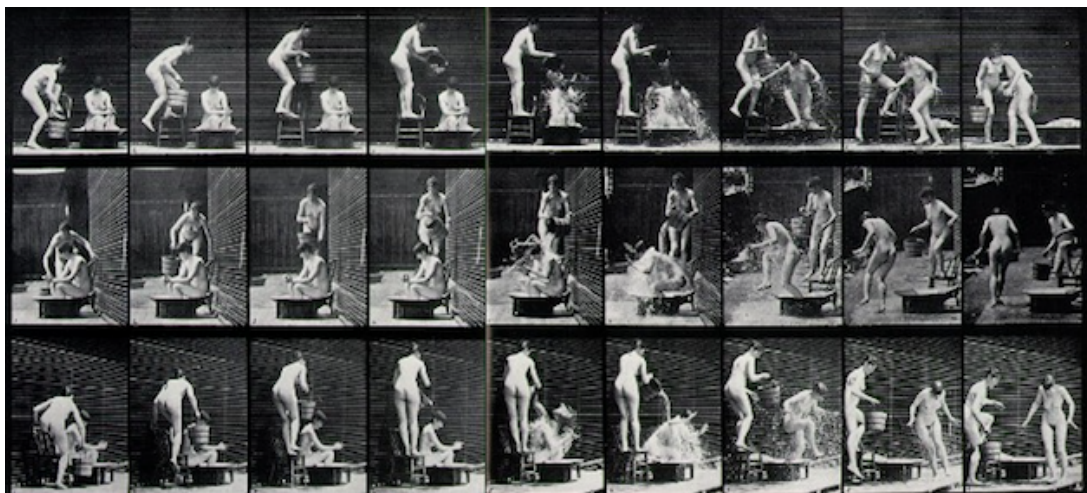


FIG. 38 Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Emptying a Bucket on Seated Companion* (1887)

It is revealing that Lange titled his films and videos with labels such as 'studies' or 'documentation' — e.g. *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham* (1973), *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), *Studies of Three Birmingham Schools* (1976). His film and videomaking adhered to a notion of documentation that was 'antidocumentary, but not nondocumentary', as it didn't ascribe to the narrative conventions of documentary filmmaking. Or else, in John Grierson's terms, as it had 'documentary value'<sup>203</sup> rather than being 'documentation', that is, understood as a proof that is independently verifiable.

The word 'study' first appeared in *Studies of Family Groups* in 1972 and Lange used it for the last time in *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* in 1977. He never employed the word in the titles of his sculptures, and so this might rule out the meaning of study as a sketch or a preliminary

<sup>203</sup> John Grierson wrote in a 1926 review of Robert Flaherty's *Moana*, 'Of course, *Moana*, being a visual account of events in the daily life of a Polynesian youth and his family, has documentary value.' Grierson as quoted in Eliot Weinberger, 'The Camera People', in *Visualizing Theory: Selected Essays from V.A.R., 1990–1994*, ed. by Lucian Taylor (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 3–26 (p.5).

visual exercise in preparation for a finished work. Neither did he conceive the notion of using film the way he did photography earlier while being a sculptor, that is, as a preliminarily visual tool used to analyse and resolve issues of composition, form or perspective involved in rendering his sculptural environments. The term ‘study’ actually appeared with his adoption of film, therefore, was linked to representation. Lange might have initially conceived his studies of people at work, produced between 1971 and 1977, as visual records that functioned epistemologically by accumulation and comparison, as an archive or inventory of raw images. His works remained as raw footage and were episodic, loosely structured by chapters, using titling credits specifying taxonomies —types of tasks within a work place, across industries in a city, or comparing work and leisure activities. Other studies were structured around time —duration of a working task, of a day’s work—, looking at the same type of work in different countries —for instance, shearing in New Zealand (*Ruatoria*) and Scotland (*Craigdarrok*)—, or by comparing the skills of different workers performing the same working task (two packers in a mail order warehouse company in Bradford), and so on. Lange explained that he sought to do studies of specific work in different countries ‘almost systematically’, and intended to do another shearing study in America, in New Mexico, which he never realized.<sup>204</sup>



FIG. 39 *Craigdarrok, Scotland* (1973); FIG. 40 *Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast* (1974)

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Around 1973, a more exploratory and systematic approach to media developed when Lange began working with video, in addition to film and photography, in series such as in *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities, Nottingham, UK* (1973) and *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974). In *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham*, Lange used for the first time multiple media: the work was made of six videotapes (20 minutes each), two continuous 16mm film loop (4 minutes each) simultaneously shown in a dramatic double-projection of few metres-long, vertical loops, photographs and

<sup>204</sup> Darcy Lange, ‘Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, *Avalanche* (Summer 1975), 12-13, (p.13).

audiotapes. He experimented with video's synchronised sound and 16mm film's wild sound. The film was shot at the same time as the video and, according to the artist, was a summary of the video content, acting as a continuous image source for the total project.<sup>205</sup> The work was exhibited in 1973 at the New Zealand House in London with all components shown side by side in the gallery.<sup>206</sup> British documentary filmmaker Richard Woolley (a RCA alumni, 1968–72), who collaborated with Lange in this project as his film cameraman, described Lange's style as being observational, and a document rather than documentary because its lack of narrative.<sup>207</sup>



FIG. 41 *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities, Nottingham, UK* (1973), in the exhibition 'Land Work People', at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in 1985.

In a review for *The Times*, art critic Guy Brett highlighted the 'informality' of Lange's recordings, in comparison with the 'cursory, schematic arguments of 'documentaries', the hysterical undertone of chat-shows' of television, which, to him, exposed the manipulative approach of this medium. Lange's long, real-time, unedited sequences were due to the relatively inexpensive Portapak video technology that, when compared with film, allowed for longer takes, and in part also, to the restrictions imposed by video's limited editing facilities.

<sup>205</sup> Lange, unpublished notes, [n.d.], Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>206</sup> During these early stages of video, the opportunities to exhibit in museums and galleries with proper equipment and funding were rare. More often, Lange presented his videos in screenings; he was not always able to exhibit all components at once. However, *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* was exhibited in full as an installation in the exhibition 'Six New Zealand Artists' which toured to Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand (August–September 1974, subsequently toured in New Zealand and Australia); Oppenheim Studio/Art Fair in Cologne, Germany (October 1975); at The Kitchen in New York (24 February - 6 March 1976); at Bradford Industrial Museum in Bradford, UK (16 May–13 June, 1976); and ICA in London (24 January 1977). *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coal Mining Communities, Nottingham, UK* was also shown in the exhibition 'Six New Zealand Artists' at New Zealand House in London (13–23 February, 1973) and in his survey 'Land Work People' at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (4 April–5 May 1985).

<sup>207</sup> Richard Woolley in a phone conversation with the author, 27 November 2014.



Because it was ‘less easily cut into’ is why Lange, Brett further explained, preferred video to film. He wrote:

videotape is more continuous and comes closer to the real way time passes, and the way people speak and act. It is obvious from the tapes that Lange has not blundered into the proceedings as film crews, loaded with equipment, so often do; he has not acted either as a candid-camera spy. He recorded what he saw and heard with sympathy and detail.<sup>208</sup>

Unlike Brett, Richard Cork in his review of this exhibition found Lange’s ‘multi-media report’ on the coal mining community ‘diffuse’ and lacking ‘the shaping focus’ demanded by this kind of project, if it was ‘to transcend the mundanity of everyday life’.<sup>209</sup>

Lange recognised the need to provide an internal structure to his studies and this structuring approach became fully developed in *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), possibly his most systematic series. Even though the Bradford studies were initially conceived as a continuation of the miner studies, what Lange perceived as the need for a structure and a ‘dialectical’ use of multiple lens media drove this work.<sup>210</sup> He set a priori, distinct criteria of shots for each medium respectively and shot both black and white and colour still photography, nearly always before video. The number of rolls he used depended on the subject, approximately an average of a roll of stills of each (colour and black and white) per ten minutes of videotape. He shot photography quite differently from film and video, as quick snapshots,<sup>211</sup> unlike videotaping, which, as he stated, was ‘very much a result of thinking a lot while I am taking the stills’.<sup>212</sup>

He selected four factories — which he termed ‘situations’ — and in each of these, chose the working tasks of single individuals, three to five workmen per factory — which he termed ‘studies’. He titled each study with the working task or working station and the worker’s name. A total of 15 studies were grouped in these four situations. According to the artist’s notes published in the exhibition leaflet, he devised the following structure: for each ten-minute

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<sup>208</sup> Guy Brett, ‘Leaving their legends behind’, *The Times*, London, 20 February 1973.

<sup>209</sup> Richard Cork, ‘The Mixture: take with care’, *Evening Standard*, 16 February 1973, p. 21.

<sup>210</sup> Lange stated: ‘The initial idea for the Bradford project was to be a continuation of the miner’s project, a study of workingmen’s clubs, life in the home and life at work. But as time progressed ... I realised that I must take a more precise approach to the studies. It became a somewhat dialectic approach, with the use of colour, and black and white still photography, 16mm colour film and video.’ Lange, *Land Work People*, exhibition brochure, (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 1985) [n.p.]

<sup>211</sup> Lange explained his photographs were taken quite quickly, most of them being snapshots. Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 13). In the sequence of snapshots taken of the study ‘Hardware store in South Kensington’, the clock in the store shows 5 minutes to 3pm, in the shots of the next customer the clock shows 2 minutes to 3pm, proving that the sequence of shots would have been taken without much preamble as customers came in the store.

<sup>212</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 13).

videotaped study, there was two half-minute 16mm film takes, at the beginning and end of the videotaped take, plus fifteen photographs, one per each study conforming this series. Yet in the work itself, Lange did not seem to keep this strict systematic conception, instead showing a more flexible attitude in regard to the timings of the takes and camera work (similarly to his approach in *Studies of Family Groups*). He used too, different camera and sound techniques adapted to the rhythm and gesture of each subject's task, alternating between hand-held camera and fixed- and fluid- tripod shots, and camera- and location microphones. He explained, 'so you have the same framing, the same thing happening at the same time in both media [video and film]', concluding, in order to 'convey the subject matter, but also to show the different media'.<sup>213</sup>

Thus, structure for Lange seems to have meant a device at the service of his observational activity; it was a way of organising the reality that he documented by pre-establishing formal principles that draw also attention to the media. Meanwhile, in this work the coexistence of film, photography and video installed in the space of a gallery carried over sculptural concerns in as much as it played out the phenomenological spatial experience of encountering physical objects — a projected film, a video presented in a monitor, and photographs hung on the wall. For him, photography and film were 'educational' and supportive to video which he saw as the central medium. He gave instructions and made drawings of their installation in space, and stated that if presenting all three components in the gallery was not achievable, only video could be shown by itself, or alternatively video and photographs without the film:

The film and photographs act as an introductory and educational element of the video tapes. The film and photographs are not aesthetically important, and do not stand as individual work. Hence the film and photographs must be shown in a space together or in two areas which can easily be cross referenced. The video tapes must be shown totally on their own in a situation which demands the total attention of the audience.<sup>214</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> Lange, (p. 13).

<sup>214</sup> Typed notes (from the artist's handwritten notes), under the subheading 'Notes on Installation of Darcy Lange 'Bradford Working Life' 1974', contained in Barbara Reise archive deposited at Tate Britain Archive. TGA 786/5/2/92, Collection Barbara Reise. These notes indicate an intention to send the proposal to Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels and Long Beach Museum of Art in California. Additional correspondence exchanged between the artist and David A. Ross, Deputy Director Television/Film, Long Beach Museum of Art, confirmed these intentions. However, the exhibition seemed not to have taken place due to the lack of proper equipment with the PAL-NTSC conversion feature, stating the museum will have one next winter. David Ross, letter to the artist, 19 February 1975. Darcy Lange Archive.

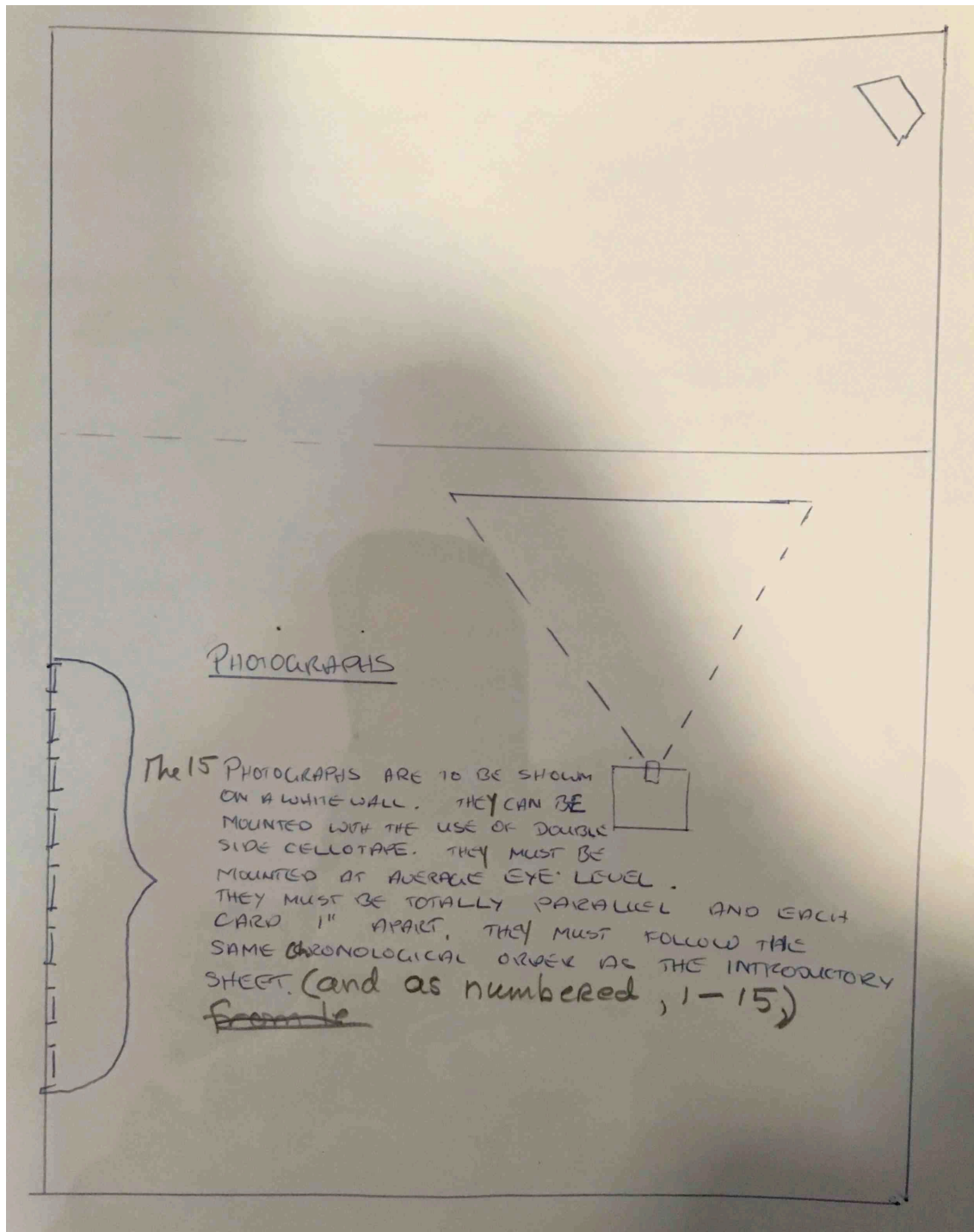


FIG. 42a Installation diagrams of *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974). Barbara Reise Archive at Tate Britain Archive



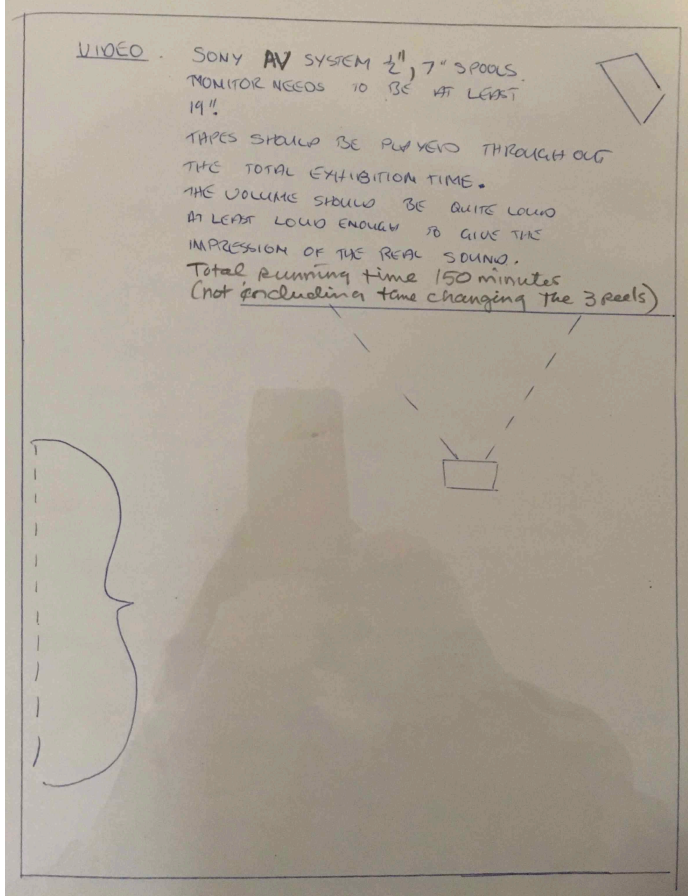
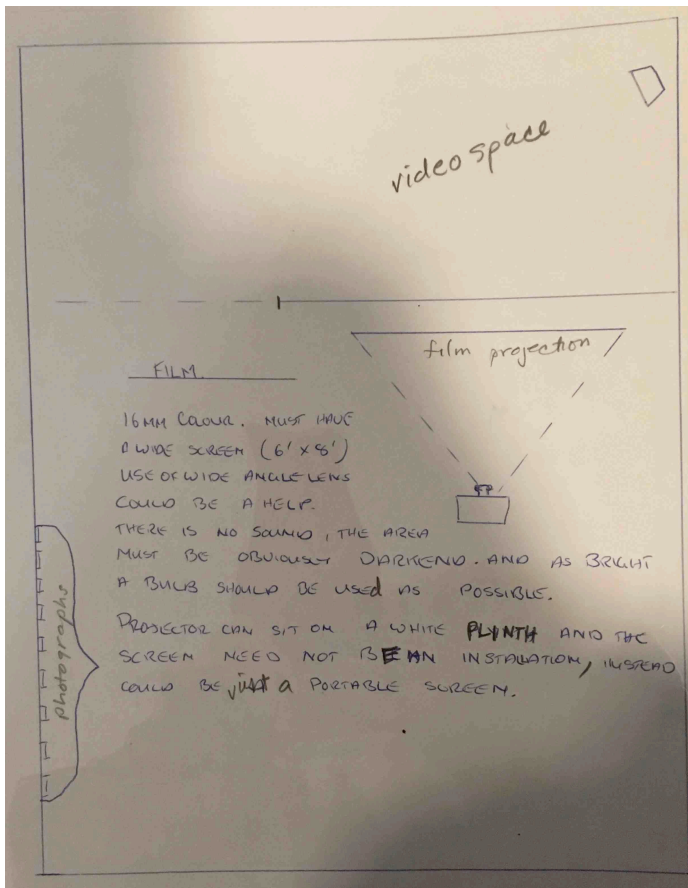


FIG. 42b-c Installation diagrams of *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974). Barbara Reise Archive at Tate Britain Archive



FIG. 43 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), at The Kitchen in New York, 1976.

British curator and scholar David Curtis, who was also Film Officer at the Arts Council of England (1977–2000), draws other similar experiments to Lange’s of combining still and moving image that were essentially engaged in exploring the nature of film and alternative ways of exhibiting film by bringing it into the gallery space.<sup>215</sup> John Blake’s *Arrest* (1970) was a projected film, a 10-minute take of his own head moving in and out of frame, shown with a printout in photographic paper of the filmstrip hung around the walls of the gallery. Likewise, the Argentinean-born David Lamelas’s projected film *Cumulative Script* (1971), which documented the actions of two people through cumulative takes, was exhibited alongside a series of contact sheets from the film in strips, which played as a synopsis of the film, pinned to

<sup>215</sup> David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), p. 217.

the wall. Both artists adopted minimalist displays in their use of seriality and the grid, and their self-referential exercises, unlike Lange's, were strictly geared to reveal the intrinsic workings of the filmic image and its essential photographic nature. These works by Blake and Lamelas were exhibited in 'A Survey of the Avant-Garde in Britain'.<sup>216</sup>

This reductionist, systematic approach and use of a typological method as well as Lange's simultaneous use of various lens media tended to be denaturalising and self-reflexive, drawing attention to the intrinsic qualities of each medium. Overall, the work of this time reflected a tension between this self-referential approach, which afforded distance and drew perceptual attention to the qualities of the medium, and the prominence of the social subject, emphasized by a direct straightforward realist, observational style.

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Karl G. Heider in his seminal book *Ethnographic Film* (1976) charted a series of rules for ethnographic filmmaking. Some had to do with avoiding the filming intervening in the scene and distorting normal behaviour (by interaction with the crew and by staging or reconstructing the scene), others with time and continuity distortion, use of natural sounds, or the dictums 'whole bodies', 'whole acts' and 'whole people'.<sup>217</sup> These rules were to dictate the technical parameters of filmmaking and, in effect, promoted the use of long shot, long-take recordings, synch and natural sound, and the minimization of montage. For Timothy Asch, one of the most respected ethnographic filmmakers working in the second half of the twentieth century, the proposed solution to the problem of obtaining raw footage suitable for research analysis was 'leaving the camera running for long uninterrupted periods'.<sup>218</sup>

Ethnographers such as Margaret Mead working in the 1940s and 1950s considered film to be 'objective' methodology of recording information and the solution and complement to 'subjective' field notes. Although she was aware that this presumed objectivity in film had been disputed, she believed in the objectivity of film and also suggested ways of achieve it:

Finally, the oft-repeated argument that all recording and filming is selective, that none of it is objective, has to be dealt with summarily. If tape recorder, camera, or video is set up and left in the same place, large batches of material can be collected

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<sup>216</sup> Blake's *Arrest* was shown in the film programme at Gallery House only as a film projection, without the photographic strip. The fact that Blake was not able to show his photographs might explain why Lange did not show his own photographs from the series of *Studies of Family Groups*. In the Darcy Lange Archive there are negatives, photographic prints and contact sheet for this series, and the Gallery House exhibition catalogue printed some of these instead of film stills. It remains unclear whether he would have chosen to exhibit them, having had the choice.

<sup>217</sup> Karl Heider as quoted in Weinberger, 'The Camera People', p. 14.

<sup>218</sup> Timothy Asch as quoted in Weinberger, 'The Camera People', (p. 14).

without the intervention of the filmmaker or ethnographer and without the continuous self-consciousness of those who are being observed. The camera or tape recorder that stays in one spot, that is not tuned, wound, refocused, or visibly loaded, does become part of the background scene, and what it records *did* happen.<sup>219</sup>

Mead's defence of film's objectivity and how to overcome the ethnographer's subjectivity and the camera's effect on the subjects might not have concerned Lange initially. In *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation and Studies of Family Groups*, Lange assumed and treated the camera as a mechanical instrument that recorded 'real' people in 'real' places and adopted the position of a disembodied observer looking out at a scene. Neither his subjectivity nor the politics of representation in regards to its subjects were self-consciously addressed in these works. In *Studies of Family Groups*, as seen above, Lange purposefully left in the trails of his filmmaking (white leads, clap hands, Mr Mates pointing at the camera, etc.), thus exposing his presence and revealing how filming intervened in the 'natural' scene. In his early works, however, self-reflexivity was ultimately directed at the medium, rather than at questioning the politics of these representations. This matter was addressed subsequently in *Work Studies in Schools*.

Lange adopted certain filming methods and strategies to achieve a kind of documentary integrity to the image. British video artist David Hall described Lange's style as 'unadulterated analogue', noting: 'his work appears as socially-oriented documentary, but his handling involves unique, insistent scrutiny which sets it quite apart from the conventional distortion of say, social druggery. The work is precise and unadulterated analogue which presses the viewer into an acute state of real-time awareness.'<sup>220</sup> Lange's approach echoes what ethnography filmmaker David MacDougall prescribed: 'focusing on discrete events' and 'rendering faithfully the natural sounds, structure and duration of the events',<sup>221</sup> a credo suitable to Warhol's films also and one that Lange adopted in various degrees of systematicity.

Guy Brett remarked that Lange's eschewal of montage and use of real time and static camera gave his work a sense of immediacy. In the 1977 catalogue of *Work Studies in Schools*, Brett wrote:

There is no montage, no building up of sequences. There is no easy way of shooting different things going on simultaneously, or the same thing from different angles, and adding them together to form a whole afterwards. But what's missing in drama and orchestration is repaid with a kind of steady observation. The behaviour and movement of people and things really impresses itself on us because time passes at the same speed on the

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<sup>219</sup> Margaret Mead, as quoted in Weinberger, 'The Camera People', (p. 12).

<sup>220</sup> David Hall, 'The Video Show', *Art and Artists*, vol. 10, no. 2 (May 1975), 20–25 (p. 22).

<sup>221</sup> David MacDougall, 'Beyond Observational Cinema' (1975), in *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, ed. by Paul Hockings (The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1975), pp. 109–124 (p.110).

screen as it does for us, watching. In some ways Lange has returned to a more primitive and static use of the camera. When a tape starts we find ourselves all at once in a particular place, with particular people, a particular camera position. All the background noise floods in. Work is in progress. The camera may not move for a long time, or if it does, it moves very slowly sideways or with a gradual use of the zoom. In the study of 'Spinning' made at Whiteheads Woollen Mill, Bradford, there is time for the complexity and power of the machine to make a strong impression, and the relationship of Mrs Alice Jennings to it as she walks backwards and forwards endlessly adjusting the threads, to become very clear.<sup>222</sup>

Willoughby Sharp his an interview with Lange in 1975 described Lange's camera as 'an eye, a structured eye', by which he seemed to imply the notion of the filmmaker's construction of reality, and as being 'compositional'.<sup>223</sup> Lange replied by saying: 'Sure, this is the way you translate what you see outside, the way you present it. It is an entry device. It is a way of making things accessible. It has to do with communication.'<sup>224</sup> This echoes the way MacDougall explained the film's structure:

when you are filming you are constantly thinking about what you are doing ... You might shoot a particular thing, something that happened in front of you, and you film that. But to make that comprehensible to an audience, then you realised that you will have to shoot another scene that would explain it and will give the context for it. Therefore, throughout the filming there is a process of structuring.<sup>225</sup>

Here MacDougall describes the filmmaking's structuring process of sequencing and editing to support the film's diagnosis. This ultimately would not apply to Lange's filmmaking as his was not being structured by narrative. However, this inherent structuring feature that MacDougall explains can be extended to all aspects concerning framing, camerawork movement, length of the shot, and so on, which did apply to Lange's filmmaking. MacDougall's approach to ethnographic film refuted conventional forms of documentary that 'artificially' violated the reality that the camera tried to capture, whether on grounds of aesthetics, or by being too directional or didactic on grounds of content or point of view.

Further, Brett qualified Lange's approach as a 'kind of primitivism' that was aimed at countering the professional and manipulative nature of mass media, of television, stating that 'despite their apparent casualness, his long takes of people working are a passionate criticism of television'. Brett argued the long takes 'show, by contrast, how television never gives us time to observe things

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<sup>222</sup> Guy Brett, Introduction, *Work Studies in Schools*, (p. 3). The study that he describes is part of the series *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974).

<sup>223</sup> Sharp, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p.12).

<sup>224</sup> Lange, (p.12).

<sup>225</sup> David MacDougall, in an interview with Ruth Ann Barrett, EarthSayers.tv, 26 April 2014, as part of the conference 'What is Documentary?' held at the University of Oregon in Portland, 24-26 April 2014. Transcription by the author <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TllyonuU2pc>>

properly, to reflect and think, to meet on equal terms with the persons or situation represented so that we might relate them to our own lives'.<sup>226</sup> Brett wrote:

Lange himself says that he is trying to observe the environment without manipulating it, to present it directly to the audience. He counters the highly sophisticated manipulative techniques of the mass media with a kind of primitivism. His tapes give you the feeling of 'being there' in a kind of elementary, naïve fashion. Because the tapes are not cut, not edited to follow an argument or produce an entertainment, you are both brought very close to the subject and also paradoxically distanced from it. For me these videotapes brought home what it's like to work in a factory, made me think about the process of 'education' – better than many documentaries where the arguments are set out and systematised. This modest procedure of observing and 'distancing' from everyday life can carry with it a surprising force, because it can lead to the making of comparisons.<sup>227</sup>

Sharp also remarked that in Lange's films his 'imposition on self is minimal'. His films are rather intended 'to be centred on other's people pride in their own work [labour]'. Lange's reply to Sharp by way of an analogy in music is revealing. He referred to Bach as influencing him, saying:

...[Bach] used very tight structure, and let the structure carry what he was saying. Unlike Wagner or Beethoven or Brahms maybe, he didn't seem to allow his individual feelings to get in the way of the structure. That is a subtle thing to put forward. And by standing off and just arranging things, presenting the arrangement of life, you say something in a finer way, a more obscure way perhaps ... So in other words you are an interpreter. I get more satisfaction that way; maybe it is a subtle way of being selfish. I don't think so. I don't know. It has to do with a slightly bourgeois socialist attitude, which I have, a middle class social feeling that if you express yourself by presenting something else, that's a very healthy way of doing it.<sup>228</sup>

In these words, Lange seems to underpin Sharp's remark about him focusing on the recorded subject, hence not 'allowing his individual feelings to get in the way of structure'. Lange's 'standoff' position might be read as a rejection of any form of expressiveness in terms of content and aesthetics. However, this approach is not devoid of subjectivity, insofar as he understands structure as 'a way to arrange life' and his role as being that of 'interpreter'. Graham quoted Lange expressing his intentions: to 'personalize (the) camera...to give the feeling that the camera is the person working...the shots (being) taken from the same angle as people would assume when standing or sitting'. Graham argued that his strategy prevented 'a romanticised (Hollywood) view for the spectator of the subject'.<sup>229</sup> Further, in the camera adopting the position of the worker, Lange established a relation of empathy with the subject. However, this empathy is not so evident in the earlier works, where the camera seemed to be distant, looking in at the working task and the subject.

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<sup>226</sup> Brett, Introduction, (p. 5).

<sup>227</sup> Brett, (p. 5).

<sup>228</sup> Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p.12).

<sup>229</sup> Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', [n.p.].

The impact of the politics of social observation and the effects of representations on the subjects are issues of examination in ethnographic film. In 1975, Lange voiced to Sharp his qualms about the nature of his representations, as well as the ultimately social function of his filmmaking,<sup>230</sup> a theme to which I shall return later. Lange expressed an intention to *truthfully* represent his subjects, his impetus being not scientific but rather of an ethical stance, that is, aimed to represent his subjects with a degree of ‘honesty’, which in retrospect might seem naïve.<sup>231</sup> Lange expressed a willingness and responsibility to understand and examine the nature of his representations. He wrote:

We have a responsibility to keep questioning the nature and power of realism. Are there ways for the camera to record without stripping people of their spirit, without sloganizing, without replacing a deep sense of community by a shallow voyeurism? My video work has always been an engagement with questions of this kind.<sup>232</sup>

In ethnographic film, individuals can be abstracted into general social patterns to become representative of cultural practices or ‘human’ principles. Filming strategies can dictate and reinforce the parameters of how a subject is being portrayed and instrumentalised to serve scientific purposes under an assumption of objectivity. An example of this was Heider’s set of rules: ‘whole bodies and whole people in whole acts’ and ‘close-up shots of faces should be used sparingly, for entire bodies at work or play or rest are more revealing and interesting than body fragments’.<sup>233</sup> Christian Hansen, Catherine Needham and Bill Nichols have argued, however, that such dictums create ‘a tendency toward “mere footage” or cinematic data rather than text. (The distinction is one of degree more than of kind.)’. Further, they write:

Long-take, wide-angle and long-shot shooting styles do offer a means to authenticate and individualize simultaneously, but an underlying tension remains: idealization lingers in the desire to transform individual practice into typical practice. Though sometimes assigned a name and even personality, the value of an individual’s action lies in a generalization, its typicality within the culture in question.<sup>234</sup>

This is something that Lange struggled with as he attempted to avoid the study of a particular worker signifying the work of others or turning into an illustration of a working task. In his studies of workers in *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* a sense of their singularity and identity is retained, insofar as the subjects did not take on assumed roles but appeared as themselves in their

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<sup>230</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p.13).

<sup>231</sup> For Marxists, truth/reality did not necessarily exist in the image, but in the circumstances of its making or in exposing a historical truth through artifice e.g. photomontage. See Walter Benjamin’s ‘Author as Producer’, *New Left Review*, 1/62 (July–August 1970). This discussion might not have taken place in the structural film circles, but it appeared in the engaged photographic practices of *Camerawork* magazine and Photography Workshop, which I shall discuss in Chapter 4.

<sup>232</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 17

<sup>233</sup> Karl Heider, *Ethnographic Film* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976), p. 125

<sup>234</sup> Christian Hansen, Catherine Needham and Bill Nichols, ‘Pornography, Ethnography, and the Discourses of Power’, in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary*, ed. by Bill Nichols (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 201-28 (p. 220).



real working environments. This series reveals Lange's growing awareness and engagement with the nature and political dilemmas in representation.

There is a greater focus on the worker, purposefully referring to 'studies of people at work' rather than being a documentation of work. Even though the overall title of this series refers to an examination of working life in different factories in the city of Bradford, each study is titled with the name of the worker, their profession or working task, and the name of the workplace and its geographical location. For instance, *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 1<sup>st</sup> Study: 'French Combing'—Mrs. O' Connor)* or *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Third Situation: Hepworth and Grandage Ltd., 1<sup>st</sup> Study: 'The Verson Press'—Roy Penny)*.

The purpose of this might have been to acknowledge the worker's identity and to stress particularity, in order to overcome the risk of producing stereotypes standing for abstract categories. Lange documented workers displaying various degrees of absorption by the demands of their work, yet they often acknowledged the camera, exchanging glances, smiles or words with Lange. These glances and words 'humanized' the worker and gave hints of their singular personalities. These exchanges also offered greater transparency, insofar as they acknowledge Lange and the camera, the other parallel unrecorded reality, that of filmmaking.



FIG. 44 Clem Coxhead, *Study of cow Milking in Opunake, NZ* (1974); FIG. 45 Vern Hume, *Aerial Top Dressing, Okato, NZ* (1974)

Further, in the studies conducted in New Zealand in 1974 — such as *Vern Hume, Aerial Top Dressing, Taranaki*; *Clem Coaxhead, Study of Cow Milking in Opunake, Taranaki*; *Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Shearing Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast*; and *Hewa, Study of a Maori Treefeller at Waitanga, King Country* — Lange extended his recordings of people's working activities with the documentation of the same subjects during their lunch break, a section of the videos he titled 'Personalisation'. By personalisation, Lange might have meant for this to be a portrait of them rather than of work or



possibly implied that the subjects were intrinsically more themselves during leisure than when working, therefore suggesting the notion of work as an alienating force.

Furthermore, in this section the distance established between Lange while videomaking and the recorded subject dramatically changed when he, also taking a break from his own work videotaping to join them for lunch, left his position as observer behind the camera, while still recording, and ‘entered’ the frame of the lunch scene. This gesture shifted Lange’s relationship with his subjects as well as with the viewer, breaking the film’s wall of illusion. Paradoxically, the camerawork in the ‘Personalisation’ section — as a static, camera-on-tripod, long-shot, single long-take — produced a neutral distance that contrasted with the ‘Work’ section which, with Lange behind the camera, was shot using zooms and pans and close-ups responding to the scene. The latter conferred an intimacy and empathy with the worker that was lacking in the disembodied camera treatment of the former.

In *Ruatoria*, the ‘Personalisation’ section documented two activities: a lunch at the communal cooking house and the building of the *marae* (community house) by a group of workers, but Lange does not join in the meal with them. Maori custom is one of great hospitality and he would have been welcome to sit with them and share a meal. *Ruatoria* was the only study produced outside his region and it is plausible that Lange would not have known the subjects as well as his Taranaki acquaintances and family friends. The shots, however, are intimate and at their level, shot from the standpoint of him seating at the table.

Lange expressed a will to present the recordings to his subjects, which he did for the first time in his project *Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village* in 1975, showing his daily rushes every night. However, it became a fundamental feature in his *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77) with the recording of the teachers and pupils’ responses to the recording of themselves, which is the subject of study in Chapter 4. During a recorded conversation in January of 1976 with one of the teachers, Mr. Perks of Ladywood Comprehensive School in Birmingham, Lange confessed his intentions to go back to Bradford and show his recordings to the workers. However, this never happened, for reasons unknown. The *Bradford* studies were shown in an exhibition at the Bradford Industrial Museum, later that year.<sup>235</sup>

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<sup>235</sup> Lange in conversation with Roger Perks, recorded in *Studies of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Perks, Teacher’s Response)* (1976), c. January 1976.



FIG. 46 *Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village* (1975)

In observational filmmaking a hierarchy is formed between the active observer and the one passively observed that is represented as mute. French filmmaker and anthropologist Jean Rouch in *Chronique d'un été* (1961), shot during the summer of 1960, introduced the notion of 'participatory anthropology' to overcome the ethnographic filmmaker's primacy as interpreter through the negotiation with the interpreted subject. His film *Jaguar*, which Rouch began in 1953 but which was not released until 1967, had been Rouch's first attempt at this principle of 'participatory anthropology'. Rouch did not have access to synchronous sound at the time, so he showed the film to the protagonists and recorded their voices describing their wanderings, which he then used as the soundtrack of the film.<sup>236</sup>

Rouch further continued and experimented with this collaborative approach in *Chronique d'un été* (1961), using synchronous sound cameras for the first time. Rouch with his co-director, the sociologist Edgar Morin, intervened in the diegetic space of the film, appearing on camera sitting around and interacting with their protagonists, who were given the opportunity to express their thoughts on camera about their own ideas of happiness. Further, Rouch regarded the camera as a causal agent or a catalyst of the reality it recorded; the notion was against the dogma of the presumed distance to be maintained by the observer. This was a breakthrough to a new proclaimed authenticity and a form of realism that would be called *cinéma vérité*, and that opened up the field to new methods and ways of thinking of audiences that greatly influenced French New Wave filmmakers. Lange's lunch break scene might have been indebted to Rouch too.

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<sup>236</sup> <[http://der.org/jean-rouch/content/index.php?id=der\\_mead](http://der.org/jean-rouch/content/index.php?id=der_mead)> [accessed 27 March 2016]



FIG. 47 Jean Rouch, *Jaguar* (1967)

Rouch's *Chronique d'un été* includes also scenes of workers at the Renault car factory. These are quick glimpses at workers and have a 'documentary' quality, standing as 'illustrations' of their work, which is one of the implicit themes in the film's inquiry into happiness. In the absence of lengthier shots that might have recorded the workers' labour (how they did it, how long it took them, how skilful they were at what they did, and so on), they appeared simply as signposts or signifiers of the subject of work. This treatment of the work scenes contrasts with the general treatment of the film, which is spontaneous and intimate, shot mostly in close-ups and medium shots and built mainly around a few characters who appear on camera expressing their views.



FIG. 48 Jean Rouch in *Chronique d'un été* (1961)

Conversely, the factory scenes are brief and abstracted, and workers are faceless, anonymous and mute, lacking an opportunity to speak about their work and its importance in their lives. This treatment of the work scenes seems to support the message expressed by some characters on screen, namely that work is alienating and lacking fulfilment. The difference between the participatory style of the scenes with the protagonists and the factory shots portraying anonymous workers that seemed not to be affected by the camera and treated like conventional documentary footage, become more revealing when seen side by side. Furthermore, shifting between filming formats, like the 'Work' and 'Personalisation' sections in Lange's videos, offered different registers of reality and transferred the attention from the pro-filmic reality to the act of filming itself, ultimately challenging the presumption about the objectivity of filmmaking.



FIG. 49 Jean Rouch in *Chronique d'un été* (1961)

At the time, the new lightweight 16mm equipment allowed Rouch to film long, unbroken sequences, much like the way the new video equipment made this possible to Lange. This kind of equipment meant one person could do the recording, and this had an effect in the kind of relation established between the filmmaker and the subject. It facilitated a one-to-one relationship that was more equal and a greater sense of intimacy. More importantly, video's novel feedback feature, which 16mm film lacked, allowed for the immediate playback of the recordings, which became central in his *Work Studies in Schools*.

Rouch in his essay 'The Camera and Man' (1973) recognized Robert Flaherty as the first filmmaker to show his rushes to the subject of his film *Nanook of the North* (1922). For Flaherty filming the life of the Eskimo of Canada, noted Rouch, meant filming 'one particular Eskimo, not an object, but a person. His basic honesty required that he show the subject what he was doing'. In hindsight, Rouch saw Flaherty's approach as a form of 'participant observation', something which anthropologists and

sociologists like himself experimented with three decades later.<sup>237</sup> Rouch, re-paraphrasing Vertov, claimed that ‘film is the only method I have to show another just how I see him’; further, that his prime audience was the ‘other person, the one I am filming’.<sup>238</sup> The ‘participant camera’ was for him an extraordinary tool for communication with the subject of his study, one that could have considerable influence on his notion of ‘shared anthropology’. He wrote:

The projection of a film called *Horendi* on the initiation rites of possessed dancers in Niger has allowed me, by studying the film on a viewer with priests who had participated in the ritual, to gather more information in a fortnight than I could get from three months of direct observation and interviews with the same informants. [...] This a *posteriori* information on film is still on its early stages, but it is already producing completely new relationships between the anthropologist and the group he is studying. This is the start of what some of us are already calling ‘shared anthropology’. The observer is finally coming down from his ivory tower; his camera, his tape recorder, and his projector have led him [...] to the very heart of knowledge and, for the first time, his work is not being judged by a thesis committee but by the very people that came to observe.<sup>239</sup>

For Rouch, this technique, which he also called as ‘feedback’, had also further consequences, that is, the anthropologist could no longer be ‘an entomologist observing his subject as if it were an insect (putting it down) but rather as if it were a stimulant for mutual understanding (hence dignity)’.<sup>240</sup> He concluded that a participatory approach was the only ethical and scientific possible attitude in anthropology. He envisioned a time in the future when technology would put the cameras into the hands of ‘those who were, up to now, always in front of it’ and the anthropologist would no longer monopolize observation; instead, ‘both he and his culture will be observed and recorded. In this way ethnographic film will help us ‘share’ anthropology.’<sup>241</sup>

Lange did not share the fundamental editing and narrative principles of documentary filmmakers, his work being ‘documentation’ rather than ‘documentary’. Neither did his film- and videomaking correspond with the cinematic mode of display and reception, as his works were shown primarily within the setting of the art gallery rather than the cinema. However, it is useful to take into consideration some of the practices and discourses of observational and participatory documentary film to establish parallels and differences within Lange’s film- and videomaking. What brings them together is their primary concerns with realism: how to represent social reality and the impact of the politics of social observation, as well as some common styles and techniques. Some of these shared concerns have to do with the indexical character of film (and photography) as ‘transparent’, or

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<sup>237</sup> Jean Rouch, ‘The Camera and Man’ (1973), in *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, ed. by Paul Hockings, pp. 83–102 (p. 86).

<sup>238</sup> Rouch, ‘The Camera and Man’, (p. 99).

<sup>239</sup> Rouch, (pp. 99–100).

<sup>240</sup> Rouch, (p.100).

<sup>241</sup> Rouch, (p. 102).

objective, media, and the relationship of the real to empirical appearance, the position of the observer in relation to their subjects and the questioning of the authority and claims to truth of the document.

In the 1950s, a new generation of documentarians in North America, principally in the Canadian province of Quebec and the United States, which included Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, Don Alan Pennebaker, Frederic Wiseman and Albert and David Maysles, eschewed the propagandist and instructional nature of much conventional documentary. Direct Cinema, a term coined by Albert Maysles to define the American version of *cinéma vérité*, embraced an observational practice that, like that of his counterparts in France, shared a desire to directly capture reality and represent it truthfully while questioning film's relationship to reality.<sup>242</sup>

Technological developments, including the advent of lighter portable cameras (designed initially for ethnographic cinematography) and synchronous recording equipment, allowed filmmakers to record events more freely and less obtrusively. They adopted a non-interventive 'fly on the wall' approach, aimed at minimising the effect of their own presence during shooting by using zoom lenses or directional microphones to the scene at a distance. They let the events unfold as if they were not there, capturing naturalistic performances as if people were 'being themselves'. Films like Drew's *Primary* (1960), in which he and his crew followed the president-elect John F. Kennedy during his primary campaign for the US Presidency, or Wiseman's *High School* (1968), documenting the teacher-student relationship in the classroom, are classic examples of Direct Cinema.

Film historian Bill Nichols notes how in observational cinema the crew, often comprising one or two people, had to 'cohabit' the space of a scene 'from which they absent themselves': that is, 'they must move and position themselves to record actions without altering or distorting those actions at the same time.'<sup>243</sup> Lange shared some of these principles. When making *Work Studies in Schools*, he discussed with the teachers his position with the camera, adjusting it accordingly in order to minimise disruption during shooting in the classroom. He initially placed himself in the back of the classroom, later adopting a more visible, frontal or central position in order to capture the facial expressions of pupils. Consequently, his camera was visible to them at all times (as captured in the pupils' exchanged glances with the camera, or in their shy declining to face it).

Rouch challenged this 'fly on the wall' approach, and made the act of filmmaking more apparent by interacting with the subjects and intervening visibly in the pro-filmic scene. The issue of objectivity

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<sup>242</sup> See Dave Saunders, *Direct Cinema: Observational Documentary and the Politics of the Sixties* (London & New York: Wallflower Press, 2007), and Jonathan B. Vogels, *The Direct Cinema of David and Albert Maysles* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2005).

<sup>243</sup> Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 14

in cinema was key in *cinéma vérité*, which took its name from the Russian term *Kino Pravda* ('cinema truth'), a concept that was introduced by Soviet filmmaker Dziga Vertov in the 1920s. Like Direct Cinema, *cinéma vérité* filmmakers captured events that occurred in front of the camera in real time, and used available light and natural sound and locations. They rejected voice-over commentary, music or any sound external to the observed scene. They strove to convey in their films a feeling of 'being there'. As Richard Armstrong has noted, recalling Bazin, 'these [*cinéma vérité*] directors tried to reveal, rather than capture, the 'truth' of the scene, according to the idea that real experience is all around us in all its ambiguity rather than contained in an essential state to be isolated from the real by the camera.'<sup>244</sup>

There were, however, differences between the approach of Direct Cinema and *cinéma vérité*, as Erik Barnouw explains:

The direct cinema documentarist took his camera to a situation of tension and waited hopefully for a crisis; the Rouch version of cinema vérité tried to precipitate one. The direct cinema artist aspired to invisibility; the Rouch cinema vérité artist was often an avowed participant. The direct cinema artist played the role of uninvolved bystander; the cinema vérité artist espoused that of provocateur.<sup>245</sup>

The differences between Direct Cinema and *cinéma vérité* summarised by Barnouw would correlate respectively with Lange's *Work Studies* and *Work Studies in Schools*. Lange's *Work Studies* subscribed ontologically to the premise of a reality that exists outside as visible reality, and, as such, mechanical reproduction was therefore to capture reality 'as it is' —Vertov's 'life caught unawares' or Bazin's 'the camera shows us what happened'. This approach dictated the kind of formal decisions required to achieve a lesser degree of intervention such as the use of natural light, static camera position and long takes. Lange captured workers' performances within a space and time (real time) that was continuous within the long take, not constructed by editing according to a narrative structure.

In many ways Lange's *Work Studies* and Direct Cinema were not unlike the silent films of the Lumière Brothers, or *actualités*, as in *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895), that recorded employees leaving a factory, documenting everyday events as they happened in an unobtrusive matter and with no camera movement. And yet, Lange's use of multiple modes of recording, as discussed earlier in this chapter, exposed the intrinsic differences between these media, challenging the notion of a 'straight' recording of reality and adding a level of self-reflexivity, initially directed at the medium. Meanwhile, in *Work Studies in Schools* these constraints were no longer an issue. He accepted and revealed his own relationship with his subjects, interacting with them as part of the documentary process. This implies a shift in Lange's ethical considerations from his expressed concerns with image-making and the

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<sup>244</sup> Richard Armstrong, *Understanding Realism* (London: British Film Institute, 2005), p. 81.

<sup>245</sup> Erik Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 254-55.

truthfulness of his representations to an emphasis on giving voice to his subjects and letting them assess for themselves his recordings. This shift in concerns might have been intuitive, rather than deliberate and clearly articulated.

Further, in *Work Studies in Schools* Lange's thinking about his videomaking and role are revealed in the recorded dialogue with his subjects, especially with those as engaged and articulate as Mr Perks. When Mr Perks, a teacher, is interviewed about Lange's recordings, he poses questions to Lange about the nature and intentions of his activity, his working process and the exchanges and interactions taking place between him and his subjects, all of which is recorded and becomes incorporated into the work. These moments are revelations with multiple registers, small epiphanies for Lange and for us as viewers, inviting greater complexity and relational potentialities, thus affording a level of self-reflexivity. Rather than being a provocateur in this way, perhaps Lange arrives at the recognition that acting as an uninvolved bystander is not only untruthful to the process, but more importantly it denies his subjects the right to their own voice. This well-intended egalitarian gesture of inviting them to express themselves, however, bypasses the fact that Lange, as the 'artist', would still retain authorship over these recordings, ownership of copyright, and control over their distribution.

This approach of intervention contrasts with the kind of observational passivity and abstention from demonstrating the filmmaker's presence that was characteristic of works by Direct Cinema filmmakers. For instance, in Wiseman's *Hospital* (1970), when one of the subjects expresses his frustration verbally after someone hangs up the phone on him while looking at Wiseman, the film cuts to another scene, thereby saving Wiseman from replying to him. Lange, even when unseen, remaining behind the camera, engages in a full dialogue with Mr. Perks: at times he even appears in the frame (as in the interview with the teacher Ms Webb).

Direct Cinema is characterised by specific properties such as indirect address, i.e., speech and dialogue that belong to the events being recorded rather than by subjects speaking to the camera. Like Lange, Direct Cinema filmmakers use long takes and exhausting depiction of everyday life rather than selecting key moments to summarise an argument. If something is abridged, it is to be able to provide real-time comprehensive observation of the relevant events it records, so cuts and edits are made to underline temporal and spatial continuity rather than logical continuity, which conveys a sense of present-tense. The sounds and images are recorded at the moment of the observational filmmaking, rather than constructed or added in the editing room, as in earlier expository documentaries.

Nichols invokes a set of codes and procedural operations that documentary practice relies upon:



Situations and events, where a temporal dimension comes into play, usually retain the chronological arrangement of their actual occurrence (though they might be abbreviated or extended, and arguments regarding causation or motivation may be applied). Individuals will retain their everyday appearance; what is more, they will represent themselves over time, that is, perform in a manner commensurate with their everyday presentation of self (unless...to indicate how the presence of a filmmaker disrupts their normal style of self-presentation as communicated by an apparently unnatural degree of self-consciousness—in which case this very effect is indexically documented for us to see).<sup>246</sup>

Referring to films by Wiseman such as *Hospital*, *High School* and *Model*, Nichols notes that the indexical bond between what happens in front of the camera and its historical referent ‘draw us not only into the details of the everyday but also into the formulation of a perspective on these institutional domains of the real’. He explains:

We process the documentary not only as a series of highly authentic sounds and images that bear the palpable trace of how people act in the historical world, but also as the serial steps in the formation of a distinct, textually specific way of seeing or thinking. [...] Documentary also begins with the concrete representation of people and places, situations and events but depends for its success far more on its ability to induce us to derive larger lessons, broader outlooks, or more overarching concepts from the details it provides. Every edit or cut is a step forward in an argument. It may seem like a wound on the surface of the world for a Bazinian aesthetic of ‘respect for reality,’ but it is also a fundamental building block for the reality of a statement or argument about this world.<sup>247</sup>

One could argue that Lange’s *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*, consisting structurally of twelve studies of independent sequences, is specific or concrete in these terms. And in their accumulation they are an instantiation of something more general, of a broader reality that relates to Lange’s concerns with issues such as class, for instance. However, in Wiseman’s work there is a point of view that shapes the editing, and an expectation for a critical moment to unfold in front of the camera during the process of the filming. This ‘moment’ serves his reformist message. This reveals Direct Cinema’s journalistic heritage, initiated by Drew’s reportage for *Life*.

Further, Nichols notes that in the absence of commentary, the avoidance of the use of images to illustrate generalisations ‘encourages an emphasis on the activity of the individuals within specific social formations such as the family, the local community or a single institution or aspect of one’, as in many Wiseman’s films. Therefore, observations may be shaped around ‘the representation of typicality—the types of exchanges and activities that are likely to occur (*High School*), process—the unfolding of a set of relationships over time (*An American Family*), or crisis—the conduct of

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<sup>246</sup> Nichols, pp. 27-28.

<sup>247</sup> Nichols, p. 29. Andre Bazin’s embedded quotation refers to the ability of film to capture ‘the object itself, the object freed from the conditions of time and space that govern it.’ Bazin, ‘The Ontology of the Photographic Image’, in *What is Cinema?* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), vol. 1, p. 14.

individuals under pressure (Primary).<sup>248</sup> In Lange's *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*, however, there is the assumption that in the sheer amount of footage correlations would reveal themselves, without the need for editorialising, an approach that is aligned to the conventions of ethnographic filmmaking.

In *High School*, Wiseman shot hundreds of hours of footage to get a sense of the overall events, which he then edited to shape his critique of the system. As this example demonstrates, filmmakers bring attitudes and decisions to their filmmaking, and that facts make sense only within systems of meaning; the same fact can be placed differently to present different meanings. As Nichols observes, 'indexicality plays a key role in authenticating the documentary image's claims to the historical real, but the authentication itself must come from elsewhere and it is often subject for doubt. [...] Referentially depends not only on the image and its properties, but also on large textual effects.'<sup>249</sup>

Criticism of the classical observational model and its assumed transparency, as well as the filmmaker's effacement, increased in the late 1970s, generating what has sometimes been characterised as a crisis of representation. *Cahiers de Cinema* critics of the 1970s argued that realism didn't exactly 'reproduce' the real. Jane M. Gaines notes that in retrospect, however, 'it might seem that *Cahiers* critics may have "overrated" given that the invocation "reality" is probably a strategic rhetorical move just as often as it is a deference to empirical fact.'<sup>250</sup> The issue of 'recording' reality is that it assumes that there is a real 'out there' in the natural world, that can be shown, or that may reveal itself without the use of linguistic or cinematic signs. For the poststructuralist, reality outside of the cultural sign does not exist. Further, Gaines notes that from the standpoint of Marxist theory, critics writing on documentary such as Bill Nichols have dealt with 'what might be termed the need for an ultimate reference point (sometimes "the real") by holding out or reserving history and revolutionary struggle as this point' and assumed "'real historical actors" and revolutionary events'.<sup>251</sup> And as such, documentary as visible evidence could function as social advocacy.

Returning to Lange's claims to question the nature and power of realism, his ethical stance was concerned with the role of the filmmaker in portraying his subjects and the potential risks embedded in representation — something which seems to become more apparent to him and was expressed in the 1975 interview with Sharp. On the other hand, in Lange's claim about the need to question the nature and power of realism, there is an implicit recognition of his own subjectivity embedded in representation and of him coming to terms with the contested notion of the camera's

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<sup>248</sup> Nichols, pp. 40-41

<sup>249</sup> Nichols, p. 153.

<sup>250</sup> Jane M. Gaines, 'Introduction', in *Collecting Visible Evidence*, ed. by Jane M Gaines & Michael Renov (Minneapolis, MN and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), pp.1-18, p. 2.

<sup>251</sup> Gaines, p. 3.

empiricism, objectively recording a reality 'out there'. Yet he did not examine the notion of representation as itself being socially constructed, as carrying within his own subjectivity.

Nichols speaks of the ability to *see film* as a cultural representation, not to *seeing through* film, as if the medium was a transparent neutral device.<sup>252</sup> If early on, he adopted structural strategies that might have been directed towards an experimentation with medium specificity, his growing awareness about the complex nature of representation, the relationships established with the subjects of his recordings and the social function of these representations begins to surface and become more apparent, as discussed above, after making his *Work Studies* in New Zealand in 1974.

In his recordings, Lange stressed workers' individual differences to avoid them being essentialised. Therefore, one could claim that Lange's representations of workers challenged the humanist tendencies in ethnographic and documentary traditions and the universalist impulse of realist aesthetics, joining other attempts such as the anti-documentary, poetic and subjective documentary films of Joris Ivens, Humphrey Jennings and Johan van der Keuken, and in cinéma vérité and free cinema movements of 1950s and 1960s. Russell has remarked the need to rethink the 'human condition', 'as one of ongoing examination of encounter, translation, and transition of images' and, to her, the avant-garde, more so than documentary, can offer the means for this examination.<sup>253</sup>

In representing people, the notion of the gaze must be considered, raising inevitably questions about who is looking and why. Martin Jay has suggested that '...glancing is not somehow innately superior to gazing, vision hostage to desire is not necessarily always better than casting a cold eye, a sight from the situated context of a body in the world may not always see things that are visible to a "high-altitude" or "God's eye" view'.<sup>254</sup> Structural film, as seen before, was the site of a very specific form of cinematic realism that foregrounded the role of the viewing subject in non-narrative cinema. Russell examines the work of filmmakers such as Akerman and Warhol who, in adopting structural film techniques of observation that operated 'as experiments in seeing', enhanced a self-reflexivity whereby 'the film looks at itself looking at others'. This enabled an analysis of the cinematic gaze as subjective, as an embodied technology.<sup>255</sup> As Russell writes: 'By rendering the "window on the world" a surface image, an image without a depth, the observer — filmmaker and spectator — can always catch him- or herself watching. But this effect is only

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<sup>252</sup> Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 83.

<sup>253</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, p. xvii.

<sup>254</sup> Martin Jay, *Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique* (New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 124.

<sup>255</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, p. 158.

created when there is something or someone to be seen.<sup>256</sup> This has major implications for those who like Lange were trying to work out what kind of cinematic eye ought to be employed to produce social portraits that were ethically right and not exploitative of their recorded subjects.

For Akerman the problem of the seeing subject was central to her filmmaking and she adopted different structural film strategies to question her own ethnographic gaze. She had an acute awareness of the politics of representation, described by Ivone Margulies as ‘the politics of singularity’.<sup>257</sup> The question of representativeness for her, of types and stereotypes, of people ‘standing in’ for abstract categories of culture, was to be challenged by way of introducing her own subjectivity. She exercised a heightened sense of her own relationship with, and sense of respect for, her subjects. In referring to making her film *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975) Akerman remarked: ‘The camera was not voyeuristic in the commercial way because you always knew where I was. You know, it wasn’t shot through the keyhole.’<sup>258</sup>



FIG. 50 Chantal Akerman, *Jeanne Dielman, 23, Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (1975)

In the film *D'Est* (1996), Akerman gazed at her subjects too but here they returned back their look at her and she captured and held their returned look in the film. Whilst in many ethnographic films, it is common for the camera to capture a brief and fleeting glance, challenging the film’s transparency, in *D'Est*, the return look is persistent. This has the effect, Russell noted, of ‘putting

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<sup>256</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, pp. 160–161.

<sup>257</sup> Ivone Margulies, *Nothing Happens: Chantal Akerman’s Hyperrealist Everyday* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), pp. 1–20.

<sup>258</sup> Chantal Akerman, ‘Chantal Akerman on *Jeanne Dielman*’, *Camera Obscura*, no. 2, (fall 1977), 118–21 (p. 119). Interview conducted in November 1976.

her on trial even in her invisibility, decentering the film and destabilizing the apparatus of vision'.<sup>259</sup> In the past, the filmmaker had to observe a number of cardinal cinematic rules in order to achieve realism; chief among them was for the ethnographic subjects not to look at the camera.<sup>260</sup> This was like this until reflexivity itself became the signature of realism, and that look back assumed another level of truth. Trinh T. Minh-ha noted: 'what is presented as evidence remains evidence, whether the observing eye qualifies itself as being subjective or objective'.<sup>261</sup> Subsequently, documentary film became increasingly 'subjective' and liberated from its bond with the real and from its long-held assumptions about truth and meaning.

Akerman's film essay *News From Home* (1976) is a sort of travelogue of New York City with the director's voiceover reading letters from her mother sent to her between 1971 and 1973 while the filmmaker was living there. The film was shot in 1976, after Akerman had moved back to Belgium, returning to New York and revisiting some of the places familiar to her. As a European newly arrived in America, Akerman's camera gaze in the film, noted Russell, was a revision of the colonial gaze of discovery, commenting on her own sense of distance as an émigré.<sup>262</sup> This film is an openly diarist work, anchored in Akerman's subjective position embodied in her camerawork — by the extreme structural static camera imposing, and making the viewer aware of her own presence — and in the personal content introduced by the letters. Meanwhile, the film maintains the integrity of the documentary imagery by the use of long shots, long takes and minimal editing.

To some extent, one might argue that Lange's camera, understood as a 'structured eye', was comparable to Akerman's, insofar that their use of the camera was not mechanical or disembodied, but subjectively structured the reality that they choose to capture, and understood film as an interpretation of such reality. Writing at the time, Graham argued that Akerman's camera position echoed Lange's in its relation to its subject. He cited Akerman's aforementioned quote from her interview with *Camera Obscura* in 1976 in his 1985 article on Lange. Their differences, however, lie in the fact that Akerman acknowledged and exposed herself in her role as the observer, while Lange's largely bypassed it. This difference might have been determined by their respective gender positions: Akerman purposefully embraced her subjectivity and paired her alterity as émigré and as woman, whereas Lange, despite conceding his subjectivity as an interpreter, expressed a 'standing off' position embodied the *non-gendered* gaze of the male artist. Russell drew a similar comparison between Akerman's and Warhol's gazes:

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<sup>259</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, p. 163.

<sup>260</sup> Chris Marker makes reference to this in his film *Sans Soleil* (1983).

<sup>261</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 35.

<sup>262</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, p. 167.

It [the image] bears the trace of an encounter between the viewer and the viewed. In this sense, it can be understood as a dialectical image, one that registers the time of encounter, a long, drawn-out present tense; and at the same time, it dramatizes the conversion of experience into image, cut off by the rigorous framing, from the 'real' from which is extracted. Both filmmakers have cultivated the art of staring, but they stare very differently, a difference that constitutes very specific inscriptions of subjectivity of the gaze. Both viewers may be invisible, but where Warhol attempts to vacate himself absolutely, Akerman alludes to her 'self' as a viewing position that escapes other codifications.<sup>263</sup>

Lange's sense of alterity would have been felt as a form of cultural displacement, something that Graham supported in noting that Lange 'was typical of other younger artists from former colonies trying to deal with the modern 'old Europe''.<sup>264</sup> Early films such as *Studies of Family Groups* reflected Lange's reversed colonial gaze directed at the culture in Britain, as one other than his own, yet nonetheless shared a history and a familiarity with his New Zealand culture as its direct descendant. To him, the characters in *Studies of Family Groups* were both concrete in their singularities as well as abstract; they constituted an ethnographic document of a middle and working class family in London in 1972. An alien perspective would have been prevalent too in him looking at Britain's industrial labour for it was nothing like his farming upbringing.

In his introduction to German-born photographer Bill Brandt's *The English at Home*, the critic Raymond Mortimer wrote of the photographer's fascination with English life, as the result of him being a newcomer to England in 1931: 'Mr Brandt shows himself not only to be an artist but an anthropologist. He seems to have wandered about England with the detached curiosity of a man investigating the customs of some remote and unfamiliar tribe.'<sup>265</sup> Mortimer in his famous quote explained in terms of 'anthropologic curiosity', the effects of the artist's arrival to a new country. His ensuing displacement and distance conceded the kind of self-reflexivity and reversed colonial gaze that seems comparable to Lange's in his films/videos made in Britain or Akerman's in her film *News From Home*.

Lange's ethnographic distance with his subjects clearly shortened in his *Work Studies* shot in New Zealand in 1974, reflecting the artist's close relationship with his subjects (many of whom were friends and family acquaintances) and familiarity with the rural labour they performed. This is apparent in the close observation of the subjects and their farming activities characteristic in these studies. Lange's camera knew with exactitude what was to be captured, lingered on details and was delighted in showing its findings. Even the cattle itself became at times the centre of attention,

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<sup>263</sup> Russell, p. 175.

<sup>264</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Great Artist and Friend', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 183–84 (p. 183).

<sup>265</sup> Raymond Mortimer, 'Introduction', in Bill Brandt, *The English at Home* (London: Batsford, 1936)

as in the early study of the cattle auction in a market outside Bradford in *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*, where Lange's camera followed his trained eye inspecting the cow. The aforementioned 'Personalisation' or lunch-break section introduced in this series might have happened naturally in the situation and triggered by the shifting positions felt in relation with his subjects: from being an outsider in England and to industrial labour, to being once again one among them in his native New Zealand and family farming community. The lunch-break scenes made patent Lange's collegial relationship with the subjects and how easily he fitted in this rural environment. And yet, despite the closeness with his subjects, Lange would have felt a sense of strangeness, as an artist and as an expat having lived away from the country for eight years by 1974. Being on familiar grounds, he might have also become even more aware of engendering the observer position, intruding in a familiar reality with a camera aimed at recording it.

Further, while his own 'ethnographic' gaze would have shortened in distance in his New Zealand *Work Studies*, paradoxically these works might have been perceived as more 'ethnographic' by his contemporaries in the North American and European artistic context, their exoticism being exponential to the distance of his geographically isolated country. Warhol turned his camera to the denizens of his factory and became, Russell noted, 'a little like the ethnographer's "own" villagers, whom he or she has come to know well enough to film'.<sup>266</sup> Lange too turned into the ethnographer of his 'own' villagers, the farmers of his native country, and in the process came to the recognition of what Rouch had proclaimed, that film was 'the only method [he had] to show another just how [he saw] him'. The politics of representation and the relationship established with his subjects subsequently became more prominent in Lange's videomaking, the subject of examination in the next chapters.

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<sup>266</sup> Russell, *Experimental Ethnography*, p.17.

### CHAPTER 3. Images of People at Work

‘My intentions are to convey the image of work as work, as an occupation, as an activity, as creativity and as a time consumer.’<sup>267</sup>

—Darcy Lange

‘The Engels of videotape’<sup>268</sup>

—Krzysztof Wodiczko

From his last sculptural environment *Irish Road Workers* (1971) to his series *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77), labour was the dominant subject of Darcy Lange’s practice. During this period he developed numerous *Work Studies*<sup>269</sup> that documented labour in domestic, industrial, agricultural and teaching contexts across Britain, New Zealand and Spain.

Written with inverted commas and as the heading of an artist statement, Lange’s words above suggest the image of work as a concept or an abstraction, which is corroborated in Lange’s expressed aim: to ‘abstract an essence from their [workers’] activities’.<sup>270</sup> Yet Lange elsewhere asserted his intent to avoid turning his video and photography into ‘an end in itself’.<sup>271</sup> And again, this time acknowledging an ethical position and social purpose in regards to his subjects, when he stated: ‘I am not in this project to build a creative abstraction but to do a service to the people with whom I am working — to truthfully render situations.’<sup>272</sup>

This apparent contradiction indeed was the result of a shift in Lange’s artistic development from earlier ontological concerns that were indebted to Conceptual art as described in Chapter 1. That is, in the aesthetically uninflected way of documenting labour as the unfolding of an action that was reminiscent of the documentation of performance art, the artwork’s reductionist and systematic approach, and the employment of serial and typological methods, such as the

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<sup>267</sup> Darcy Lange, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner* (Bradford: Bradford Galleries and Museums, Industrial Museum, 1976), [n.p.]. Exhibition dates: 16 May–13 June 1976.

<sup>268</sup> This quote appears in a letter by Canadian critic John Bentley Mays to Darcy Lange, Toronto 8/7/76. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>269</sup> I have adopted the abbreviated *Work Studies* which Lange used when referring to the works he produced between 1972 and 1977, all sharing the theme of ‘people at work’, although these are individual works or series. *Work Studies* includes the following: *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (1972), *Allotment Gardens, UK* (1972–73), *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coal Mining Communities, Nottingham, UK* (1973), *Craigdarroch, Scotland* (1973), *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974); the next eight studies produced in New Zealand in 1974: *Jack Jury, Stockman, Uruti; Clem Coxhead, Study of cow Milking in Opunake; Vern Hume, Aerial Top Dressing, Okato; Waitara Freezing Works; Competition Axemen at Agricultural and Pastoral Show, Stratford; Hewa, Study of a Maori Tree-feller at Waitaanga, King Country; Bert Phillips, Study of a Fencer; and Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast; Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village, Maestrazgo, Spain* (1975); *Study of Three Birmingham Schools, UK* (1976) and *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools, UK* (1977).

<sup>270</sup> Lange, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, [n.p.].

<sup>271</sup> Darcy Lange, ‘To Effect a Truthful Study of Work in Schools’, in *Work Studies in Schools* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1977), p. 18.

<sup>272</sup> Lange, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, [n.p.].



simultaneous use of various lens media, that tended to be denaturalising and self-reflexive. Yet insofar as his work embraced the social subject and an expressed commitment to realism and to *truthfully* represent his subjects, Lange's studies evolved towards the epistemological concerns and functions of the social document. He sought for his studies to become a record of, and to build a memory of, the working class.<sup>273</sup> Furthermore, by the mid-1970s, in reassessing the politics of representation and the relationship established with the subject, Lange adopted the dialogic qualities offered by video. In *Work Studies in Schools*, he saw his recordings as 'studies' ('researchers') for analysis of the processes of teaching and learning, and as a form of social exchange with and among his subjects that could effect social change, which will be the subject of Chapter 4.

This chapter will examine the shift in Lange's representations of labour to reflect on how they evolved as a result of his development and in dialogue with concurrent artistic practices and debates. Lange's documentations of people at work can be seen alongside, and contributing to, a movement during the 1970s led by artists committed to the recovery and re-evaluation of the social function of photographic practice, among them, Allan Sekula and Martha Rosler in the USA, and Victor Burgin, Jo Spence and Terry Dennett in Britain. Despite their different individual approaches, they shared many of the ideological objectives and utopian aspirations of the socially engaged documentary tradition of the 1920s and 1930s — those of the 1920s Soviet factographers's film representations of the collective experience of industrialization, the Worker Photography movement of the interwar years, and the seminal photographic work of Lewis Hine and the 1930s Farm Security Administration (FSA) photographers Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans, for whom Lange had expressed admiration. This interest in the intellectual legacies of these 1930s documentary traditions was considerable during the 1970s, partially driven by the parallel economic crisis that hit Britain in 1973, which was ubiquitously manifested culturally and politically. This chapter examines how the legacies of film and photography documentary traditions might have informed Lange's practice, directly or indirectly, while his work was also grounded in the Conceptual art movement and within a decade of intense politicisation in Britain, during which labour became a subject of examination and criticism among the more politicized Conceptual and socialist artists.

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<sup>273</sup> Lange stated his aim to create 'a record and a memory of the physical world'. This quote appears in the artist's unpublished notes, a version of which was published in the exhibition brochure *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, [n.p.].

In the early 1970s, Lange's first representations of labour were still informed by sculptural concerns, namely with physical processes of production that were somatic and phenomenological. His first super 8 film series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation* (1971) exhibited the kind of sculptural, three-dimensional structural concerns with the object in space and spatial-temporal relationships in respect to the human body. This is revealed in the framing of Lange's subjects operating in their space as working bodies coming in and out of the frame, the timing of their activity being the driving force of the scene — as seen in the study *Woman Putting out her Washing of Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*.

In *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), work is represented focusing on the body's performance, emphasizing the rhythmic, periodicity, and repetition of assembly-line work. Workers are shown engaged in their various tasks — combing, spinning, packing, grinding and inspecting pistons — using straightforward, prosaic shots that cast the stoic expediency of the assembly-line workers. The recordings exposed the repetition inherent in the breakdown into menial tasks of this model of mass production. At times, the camera captures the dexterity and speed of a worker's hands, as in the study *Whiteheads Woollen Mills Spinning-Tessa Hird*.



FIG. 51 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 4<sup>th</sup> Study: Spinning—Theresa Hird)* (1974)

While at other times, Lange sympathizes with the visible signs of weariness and boredom of a worker's long suffering, enduring the infinite repetitiveness of a menial task, as in the study *The Verson Press-Roy Penny* at Hepworth Grandage, England's largest producers of piston rings. Here

a steady shot frames the worker standing on his feet, rhythmically executing the gesture of lifting open and shutting down the aperture of the press with one hand, slightly twisting his body to the side to pick up a piston and introduce it in the machine with his other hand — whilst he still manages to politely cover his mouth when yawning, without disrupting his steady pace.

Lange's shift from a sculptural practice to his documentations of labour by film and photography involved a fundamental deferral of attention of the working body: from the artist's body involved in the making of a sculpture to the labourer's body executing a working task. Art historian Benjamin D.H. Buchloh sees in this shift not only Lange's intention to 're-incorporate the somatic dimension of production and performative dimensions of sculptural execution into the recording of the spatio-temporal processes of the situated body in space', but, more significantly, the fact that he locates these dimensions in the very working bodies of the labouring class. Drawing a comparison with American artists Bruce Nauman and Dan Graham, Buchloh writes:

Bruce Nauman and Dan Graham had positioned themselves most polemically against the minimalists through this manifest and literal 'incorporation' of both the making and the viewing processes, leading to a phenomenological radicalisation. While clearly indebted to their definitions of the sculptural body as a performing body, Lange reversed their stances dialectically by situating the principle of sculptural production now in the very performative operations of labour and production at large as they occur at all times within the bodies of the labouring collective. So what had been the necessary, yet empty, bodily phenomenological exercises and task performances, for example in Bruce Nauman's acting in the studio in 1968, now become the full and functional performances of the school teacher teaching a class of students, or the farm labourer scything or ploughing the earth in Spain.<sup>274</sup>

For Buchloh, Lange's transferral of the performing body to the labouring bodies was politically noteworthy as it reintroduced the social dimension in art, at least when compared to Nauman and Graham's 'empty' bodily phenomenological exercises, which were still fundamentally Modernist and inwardly directed and engaged with ontological concerns regarding sculpture in its expanded field.

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<sup>274</sup> Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, 'Darcy Lange: Paco Campana', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 49–64 (p. 59).



FIG. 52 *Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village, Maestrazgo, Spain (Ploughing with Bulls)* (1975)

Lange did not regard his artistic activity reductively as Conceptual art, not at least in its early more analytical phase, since his work introduced broader social concerns and gave prevalence to the social reality it represented, namely the subject of labour and the working class. He would have agreed with Victor Burgin when he proclaimed in 1972 the need to produce an art that had ‘more than just *Art* as its content’.<sup>275</sup> This was expressed in his following remark made in 1985, wherein alluding to *Craigdarroch*, he distanced himself from the Conceptual performances of British artist Richard Long. He wrote:

It ended up as a video portrait of a day’s work by four shepherds in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. In some ways the videotape was a satire of a Richard Long walk [*Walking a Straight 10 mile Line Forward and Back Shooting Every Half Mile*, Dartmoor, England January 1969] that I had seen on film, and I must say it [*Craigdarroch*] was and perhaps is one of the truest balances between conceptual art and a documentation of actual work or social reality.<sup>276</sup>

His alleged ‘truest balance’ was one that recognized the social dimension of his representations, and vice versa, whereby aesthetics — not in the sense of artistic expression but of Conceptual art’s critical inquiry — played a role in preventing the document from falling into its purely reportorial social function.

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<sup>275</sup> *Situational Aesthetics: Selected Writings by Victor Burgin*, ed. by Victor Burgin and Alexander Streitberger (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2009), p. 4.

<sup>276</sup> Darcy Lange, *Video Art* (Auckland: The Department of Film, Television and Media Studies, Auckland University, 2001), p. 37.



FIG. 53 *Craigdarroch, Scotland* (1973)

Fellow London-based, New Zealand artist Boyd Webb produced a photographic series documenting the stages of a sheep-shearing session that were presented in the exhibition *Six New Zealand Artists* at New Zealand House, London in 1973, alongside Lange's *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coal Mining Communities, Nottingham, UK* (1973). British critic Richard Cork writing on Webb's photographs, draws an analogy about the 'sculpting' process of the shearers' work that echoes Buchloh's analysis. Cork wrote:

Although his decision to photograph the various stages of a sheep-shearing session in sepia tints seemed, superficially, to be the act of an innocent country lad, it really sprang from a sophisticated understanding of how other modern artists have studied similar rituals in the same stage-by-stage manner. Absorbed in his superbly practiced task, the shearer drove his razor through the wool like a sculptor shaping his raw materials, and Webb emphasized this analogy by presenting the whole operation as a series of decisive moments which gradually transformed the animal's whole identity. But it was the reality itself, not Webb's treatment, which held the attention.<sup>277</sup>

Webb's photographs executed in the form of a straightforward, stage-by-stage, indexical recording of the process of execution of an action were not dissimilar to Lange's film and video documentations of the processes of labouring bodies. Both artists would have been much indebted to the documentation of performance art, treating labour as a form of performance. Indeed, Webb's photographs might have been an inspiration to Lange's video *Craigdarroch*,

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<sup>277</sup> Richard Cork, 'Boyd Webb and other debuts' (24 July 1975), in *Everything Seemed Possible: Art in the 1970s*, ed. by Richard Cork (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), p.121.

*Scotland* (1973), documenting a day in the working lives of Scottish shepherds.<sup>278</sup> Lange's study of shearing, however, expanded in time, rather than singling out a particular activity, as well as in space, introducing the landscape and the social environment in which shearing took place. *Craigdarroch*, therefore, lacked the systematicity and process-like documentation of Webb's photographs. Such traits can subsequently be seen a year later in Lange's factory studies *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*. In some of these Bradford studies, his camera scrutinizes a working task to the point by which, in its repetition, the task is entrenched into a pattern. There are ample examples in his *Work Studies*, for instance, in the aforementioned study of the operator of a piston press, the packer's expedient hands in wrapping up a parcel, or the swinging body of an axe man chopping a wood log. Graham supported the notion that in Lange's tapes, the working body can be seen as a form of performance presented in its contextual work environment.



FIG. 54 *Competition Axemen at Agricultural and Pastoral Show, Stratford, NZ* (1974)

Moreover, Lange made an interesting remark in a 1975 funding application to the British Film Institute to produce what he called *Study of Flamenco as Work* (a project which he never produced after being declined financial support). In this document, he traced the development of dance movements to working patterns:

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<sup>278</sup> Indeed Lange acknowledged Webb for helping him establishing a connection with a fellow New Zealander working in sheep farms in Scotland which lead to *Craigdarroch*. Darcy Lange, *Video Art*, p. 37.

When compared to the growth of the dance and rhythms of Flamenco, much of these patterns and rhythms, as is true of other folk and indigenous music, came from abstractions of work and narrations about work.<sup>279</sup>

This parallel risks turning his images of working bodies into abstractions, insofar as the attention is placed in its performative dimension as an artistic notion, rather than activating an awareness of its inherent political dimension. There is a sense in which all forms of representation are abstractions; language itself is a kind of abstracting of the palpable. I would argue, however, that this sense of abstraction in Lange's images is not one of depoliticising the image of labour by aesthetising it; rather, in them lay an understanding of abstraction in a Marxist sense as alienation. By turning working tasks into patterns, Lange's representations highlight the actual alienating nature of factory work by emphasizing its repetition, unskilled character, and so on.

In *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*, unlike his previous studies, Lange focused on a specific worker and his/her personal performance, rather than conveying the atmosphere and realities of factory life or by representing the chain of working tasks in the factory. There are some exceptions, in the form of studies presenting several workers when the task demanded a joint effort of workingmen. This decision to concentrate his recordings around a single worker had to do with structural decisions about how to convey his subject, as discussed in Chapter 2. It had to do also with his aim of portraying his subjects as individuals — supported by the act of titling each study with the worker's name.

The fact that Lange at times recorded two workers performing the same task in a factory also supports this claim, as it draws attention to each worker's particular skills and abilities. This can be seen, for instance, in the studies of two different packers, John Wood and Burford Manders, in the mail order warehouse company Grattan Ltd; the two workers, Michael Normington and Kevin Bulner, in the order assembly line of the same company; the two women, Alice Jennings and Theresa Hird, both operating the 'spinning' type of woollen mill machine in Whiteheads Ltd. Lange seems to have aimed at demonstrating how even in the most repetitive scenarios, a degree of human dexterity prevails, allowing one's own ability to master and even to make use of one's own creativity. In an earlier, unedited version of the statement that opens this chapter, Lange defined work as 'creativity and performance', possibly alluding not simply to the notion of

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<sup>279</sup> Lange wrote: 'treating Flamenco as work, covering associated areas also, i.e. people working the land, in olive processing plants, working in industry; people who have worked in Germany and France as guest workers, people in tourism and generally getting income. (Possibilities of prostitution and living off friends, tourists and pupils.)' Darcy Lange, grant application for his new project *Study of Flamenco at Work*, submitted to the British Film Institute in London, c. 1975. Letters from Peter Sainsbury at BFI: of receipt of the proposal 21 July 1975, and of declining funding due to insufficient funds, 22 August 1975. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive.

performance as the carrying out of an action, but qualitatively to the skilfulness with which is performed.<sup>280</sup>



FIG. 55 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 3rd Study: 'Order Assembly'—Michael Normington) 1974*; FIG. 56 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 4th Study: 'Order Assembly'—Kevin Bulner) (1974)*



FIG. 57 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 2nd Study: 'Study of a Packer'—Burford Manders) 1974*; FIG. 58 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, 1st Study: 'Study of a Packer'—John Wood) (1974)*

In his selection of workers in the *Bradford* series, Lange chose at times the most competent, for a task well done has more cinematic appeal than a poor performance, but it also served to highlight the worker's own sense of pride. Exemplary of this is *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Fourth Situation: Grattan Ltd, a large mail order warehouse, 1st Study: 'Study of a Packer'—John Wood) 1974*. The dexterous and expedient way that Wood packs a large bundle of parcels has a

<sup>280</sup> Lange's early statement, 'My intentions in these studies is to establish work as creativity and performance as well as what it is - work i.e. an occupation, a time consumer, and a way of survival.' Lange, unpublished notes, c. 1974. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive.



fascination of its own. He swiftly unties their band, takes off the invoices and counts all packages as indicated, stamps both invoices and places them in separate boxes, picks up a large paper bag and skilfully slides the packages in, staples the bag, turns it around, sticks an address label on it, pressing twice over to ensure it is properly glued, and tosses the package onto a cart. This is repeated over and over during the 10-minute length of the study, but the different types and shapes of the packages introduce small iterations in the cycle. Wood's physical fitness and expediency makes the worker next to him seem painfully slow and uninteresting to watch in comparison (which Lange would surely have been aware of). His extrovert and content disposition communicates a sense of worth and his charisma absolves him of slightly showing off to the camera.

Lange didn't shy away from recording the unskilled worker and the ultimately fragmented repetitiveness of his task, revealing its alienating force and effects on the worker. This is captured in the study *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Third Situation: Hepworth and Grandage Ltd., 1st Study: 'The Verson Press'—Roy Penny)* 1974, recorded at Hepworth Grandage, England's largest producers of piston rings.



FIG. 59 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Third Situation: Hepworth and Grandage Ltd., 1st Study: 'The Verson Press'—Roy Penny)* (1974)

The camera set on a tripod records Penny rhythmically executing the same gesture over and over without a pause: his left hand lifting open and shutting down a shutter, while his right hand picks

up a piston and introduces it in the machine every 3 seconds (the 5-minute length of the study gives a hint of the job's arduous repetitiveness). The middle shot, framing him in profile, reveals his face. He wears earplugs and yawns a couple of times. This study reinforces vividly Walter Benjamin's words when he noted: 'the unskilled worker is the one most deeply degraded by the drill of the machines. His work has been sealed off from experience; practice counts for nothing there.'<sup>281</sup> Ultimately, Lange's studies displayed an intimacy, modesty and sympathy for his subjects, aiming to treat them all with equal dignity.

The notion of work and creativity is painfully slim in some of the other cases he recorded, as in the aforementioned study of *The Verson Press—Roy Penny*. It is clear that his camera never performed as an instrument of surveillance or to scrutinize the worker's performance with a Taylorist eye for human efficiency; quite the contrary, he attempted to underline the worker's individual singularities, by showing him/her performing the nuts and bolts of making things. Graham quoted Lange expressing his intentions: to 'personalize (the) camera...to give the feeling that the camera is the person working...the shots (being) taken from the same angle as people would assume when standing or sitting'. Graham argued that his strategy prevented 'a romanticised (Hollywood) view for the spectator of the subject'.<sup>282</sup> In the camera adopting the position of the worker, Lange aim to establish a relation of empathy with his subject.

While Lange's film and video recordings engaged in labouring processes, in the nuts and bolts of work (the workers' skilfulness and work's deskilling, monotony and alienation), his photographs were portraits of the workers, with them occasionally absorbed in their task but mostly posing, often cheerfully, for the camera. His representations of people at work sat between images of work (taxonomies) and portraits of the very people at work performing their tasks. There was implicit an affirmative recognition of labour as a central condition of their identity, as defining who they were. They also revealed, without adopting a purposeful critical position, the working realities in these factories.

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<sup>281</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'Some Motifs in Baudelaire' (1939), in *Illuminations*, ed. by Hannah Arendt, trans. by Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p.176.

<sup>282</sup> Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', [n.p.].



FIG. 60 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 2<sup>nd</sup> Study: Traditional Combing—Alah Dad)* (1974); FIG. 61 *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Second Situation: Whiteheads Woollen Mills, 1<sup>st</sup> Study: French Combing—Mrs O'Connor)* (1974)

The exhibition of *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* at Bradford Industrial Museum was delayed two years, according to Lange, due to the director's concerns about its impact on his own career.<sup>283</sup> This was despite the fact that Bradford Art Galleries and Museum had commissioned Lange to do this work and the museum's director had also facilitated the contacts with the local industries and city councillors.<sup>284</sup> When the exhibition was finally held in 1976, workers were invited to the opening. The work was shown also at the ICA in London in 1977. Merete Bates, a reviewer for *The Guardian*, characterised Lange's *Bradford* studies as 'open', 'modest' and 'natural'. Bates wrote:

The mindless monotony of the work — whether Mrs O'Connor cleaning her machine or Burford Maunders packing boxes, or a team rolling mills — in its exaction of a minimal exhausting concentration is as evident as the converse of racial intolerance. Here the dark and yellow skins labour as assiduously as the white. To whose benefit? Hardly entirely their own. Lange's understanding is implicit and possibly closer to reality than [Andrew] Turner's 'Reyo[sic]-realism'.<sup>285</sup>

Narrowing each study to a single worker and with the camera performing as an observing device, these studies 'became performance analysis' for Lange; they 'searched the monotony of the work' and 'questioned the workload and the suffering due to the work'.<sup>286</sup> His videotapes exposed the ingrained Taylorist principles of human efficiency and were a critical reflection upon the prevalent production values of high productivity and the rationalisation of human work, and consequently Lange saw these studies as a kind of 'uncomplimentary social realism'.<sup>287</sup> Noting this description *uncomplimentary*, Buchloh argued that Lange 'would knowingly adopt the very term of "social realism"'

<sup>283</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 44.

<sup>284</sup> The Darcy Lange Archive contains the letters from some of these factories accepting and others declining their participation in this project.

<sup>285</sup> Merete Bates, 'Bradford Industrial Museum. Andrew Turner and Darcy Lange', *Guardian*, 31 May 1976, p. 79.

<sup>286</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>287</sup> Lange, p. 44.

with hindsight, yet inverting it into the heretofore-unknown concept of what he calls “uncomplimentary” when describing the development of his work studies project’.<sup>288</sup> There is implied a sense of a social realism that portrayed these workers as neither heroes nor victims.

Furthermore, his studies made visible other social aspects of the assembly-line model, such as the fact that being un-skilled labour, many of these jobs were filled by women in an increasingly feminised workplace, as revealed in the mostly female staff of the woollen mill factory Whiteheads Ltd. What is more, the deskilling processes brought with it the demise of traditional craft forms. *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* included a study of a large knitting factory, Wild, Mellor and Bromley in Leicester, and the study E. Brennan General Woodcarving, a family business of hand-made furniture manufacturers, wherein craftsmanship would have been passed along generations. Seen side by side, they revealed striking differences about their respective working conditions and environments.



FIG. 62 *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (E. Brennan General Woodcarving Furniture Workshop) (1972)

British critic John Roberts, in 2010, remarked that the deskilling process or end of artisanal skills in art is not comparable to the process of deskilling in productive labour, as art is not subsumed to the same law of value.<sup>289</sup> Therefore, an artist does not suffer the denigration and loss of autonomy of the productive labourer as a consequence of his/her subordination to the coercive capitalist control over the production and process of productive labour. Roberts recognises that Marx did not reflect on the distinction between deskilling in artistic labour and in productive labour, because he preceded C20th conceptions of autonomy in art shaped by Duchamp and others.

<sup>288</sup> Buchloh, ‘Darcy Lange: Paco Campana’, p. 56.

<sup>289</sup> John Roberts, ‘Art after Deskilling’, *Historical Materialism*, 18 (2010), 77–96, p. 86

Nonetheless, Roberts argues that in *Capital*, there is implicit the notion that ‘the future struggle for workers’ autonomy is through the adaptation of technique, not its abandonment, despite the subordination of general social technique to capital’.<sup>290</sup> Roberts attributes this conclusion to Benjamin in his 1934 essay ‘Author as Producer’, first published in English in 1970, re-examining Marx’s ideas in regard to the issues of skill, artistic production and labour, and reading against the artisanal humanism and pastoralism of the classical Marxism.<sup>291</sup> Roberts concludes:

The new artist becomes a model for the new worker, and the new worker in his or her machino-technical proficiency becomes, potentially, a new artist. In this sense, there is no nostalgia for lost skills, artisanal creative all-roundedness, or any other humanist shibboleth regarding the release of the ‘essential creativity of the masses’; in fact, for Benjamin, such things actually get in the way of the pursuit of new forms of autonomy and knowledge.<sup>292</sup>

Further, Roberts states that Productivism brought a reflection on ways that artistic praxis would presage and model emancipated labour, as the Productivist theorist Boris Arvatov acknowledged. Productivism reiterated too this assimilation of the worker into the artist and the artist into the worker to be able to transform the alienated character of both; just as Constructivism insisted on ‘the need for the artist to incorporate the technical results of productive labour into artistic practice if art was to find a place beyond the its own alienated aestheticism’.<sup>293</sup>

For Roberts the readymade (and later Conceptual art) fundamentally challenged the notion of artistic value based on the expressive hand qualities of the traditional media of painting and sculpture, consequently leading some modernist artists from the 1920s onwards to disavow artisanal production and adopt mechanical/technical modes of production, with further consequences, such as the transformation of art into social praxis.<sup>294</sup> Mechanical reproduction, Roberts writes, ‘and interdisciplinarity become the motor of art’s passage into the everyday and collective experience. [...] Avant-garde art moves to embed itself, across a variety of social locations, in the material and symbolic fabric of the world. Constructivism, of course, is central to this transformation.’<sup>295</sup> Benjamin, in his 1936 essay ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, shared the Productivists’ ideals and their departure from the

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<sup>290</sup> Roberts, ‘Art after Deskillling’, pp. 86–87.

<sup>291</sup> Walter Benjamin, ‘Author as Producer’ (1934), *New Left Review*, I/62, July-August 1970. First published in its original German language in *Versuche über Brecht* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1966).

<sup>292</sup> Roberts, ‘Art after Deskillling’, pp. 87–88.

<sup>293</sup> John Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form: Skilling and Deskillling in Art after the Readymade* (London: Verso, 2007), p. 2.

<sup>294</sup> Roberts, *The Intangibilities of Form*, p. 2.

<sup>295</sup> Roberts, ‘Art after Deskillling’, (p. 91).

spiritual or auratic qualities of art in favour of a critical and collective function of art (which, of course, Lange embraced too).

With regard to the issue of deskilling in Lange's work, Buchloh argues that rather than taking a stand in relation to notions of artistic skill, Lange opted instead to acknowledge the presence of skills in every worker.<sup>296</sup> Further, Lange recognised them, according to Buchloh, 'as the foundation of a socially unrecognised subjectivity (in contrast to the hypertrophic cult of the artist for example), an authorial presence that surpasses by far the mere claim, or assignment to an admittedly once radical promise to transform authors into readers.'<sup>297</sup> Lange understood labour as being the central condition of human self-definition. Reflecting on this condition under capitalism, Buchloh wrote:

[...] the agency and authorial initiative of the autonomously labouring subject would be central to his construction of a dialectical model of subject formation. [...] that it is only in the recognition of the subject's skills and capacities to produce and reproduce itself in acts of work and production, that the subject can constitute itself and resist a final and fatal process of collective de-sublimation. In fact, in view of the total devastation of subjectivity that the culture of consumption has wrought onto the collectivity, it appears as though the sole remaining forms of economic, political and psychological resistance and opposition can be found in the subject's foundation in gestures and practices of skilled forms of knowledge and production.<sup>298</sup>

Buchloh goes on to note that it is not surprising that Lange's *Work Studies* coincide with the beginning of the new global economy, when the exporting of labour becomes the next strategy of maximum profit, turning him into the 'factographer' of an imminently disappearing industrial labour in England — 'The Engels of videotape' as Krzysztof Wodiczko once described him.<sup>299</sup> Even though, as Bates' review in *The Guardian* seems to point out, there was an internationalisation of labour that preceded this, with labour being imported into the UK from British Empire in the 1950s. Furthermore, Buchloh notes that it is right at the moment when deskilling in labour becomes fundamental to the global dislocation of industries, that Lange produced his studies of old traditional farming in Spain, as in his video *Cantavieja, Study of Work in a Spanish Village, Maestrazgo, Spain* (1975). It would appear to Buchloh that only when deskilling in labour has been so pervasive would other forms of labour, such as the archaic methods of agriculture in Spain, be seen commendable to Lange as the last traces of non-alienating work. Buchloh wrote about one of the studies *Scything Greens*, of the project *Cantavieja*:

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<sup>296</sup> Buchloh, 'Darcy Lange: Paco Campana', (p. 60).

<sup>297</sup> Buchloh, (p. 60).

<sup>298</sup> Buchloh, (p. 61).

<sup>299</sup> As quoted by John Bentley Mays in a letter to Lange, Toronto 8/7/76. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive.

The body in the rhythm of the task-oriented performance, the sure-handedness, the almost balletic elegance of the execution of what would appear to be an excruciatingly exhausting plight, are performed (and recorded by Lange) with an elegance and consonance with the given necessities that give the work both the heroism and the realism of the great exceptional moments when modernism dared to depict labour: ranging from the radical beauty of Gustave Coubert's *Stonebreakers* to George Seurat's small, yet monumental sketches of field workers, to Alice Lex Nerlinger's aerial photographs of men fitting a mosaic of stones to build yet another road.<sup>300</sup>

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The 1970s saw a growing politicisation of the British artistic scene, partly as a result of a serious economic crisis in Britain. It is necessary to recall the historical political, economic and social circumstances that brought Britain to a 'state of emergency' during the early 1970s. The country was afflicted by several economic and social crises that peaked in 1973 with the oil crisis, high rates of inflation, rising unemployment, and the government freeze on pay rises, all of which brought great unrest across all industries, most radically in mining. This oil crisis, generated by the Arab states' embargo against Western support for Israel in the Arab-Israeli war, triggering the dramatic rise of oil prices that brought about the recession and inflation in the industrial world, had particularly severe consequences in Britain. Supplies of the country's main fuel had already been affected by strikes organised in power stations and coal depots in 1972, bringing Britain to this state of emergency.<sup>301</sup> In the early months of 1974, the Conservative Government (1970–1974) introduced the Three-Day Week as one of several measures to save electricity — the industry had to reduce its electricity consumption to three specified consecutive days per week which had considerable effects on employment. Parallels have been drawn between the economic crisis of this decade and that of the 1930s, despite the experience of crisis in the 1970s being less extreme.<sup>302</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Buchloh, 'Darcy Lange: Paco Campana', (p. 63).

<sup>301</sup> Alan Travis stated, 'The cabinet papers confirm that the emergence for the first time in the 1972 strike of the 1,000-plus flying pickets targeting power stations and coal depots, and organised with military precision by the Yorkshire National Union of Mineworkers, were a devastating new industrial weapon. Within weeks the British economy was brought close to paralysis as electricity output was reduced to 25%.' Alan Travis, 'Flying pickets paralysed Heath cabinet', *Guardian*, 1 January 2003 <<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2003/jan/01/past.politics1>> [accessed 1 November 2016]

<sup>302</sup> Jim Tomlinson wrote: 'The mid-1970s saw the worst economic crisis in Britain since the 1930s, but one with wholly unprecedented features, not least the combination of high inflation and high unemployment. Unsurprisingly such traumatic events have produced a great deal of contention as to what exactly happened and why.' Jim Tomlinson, 'Managing the economy, managing the people' (1994), in *20<sup>th</sup> Century Britain: Economic, Cultural and Social Change*, ed. by Francesca Carnevali and Julie-Marie Strange (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 233–246, (p. 240).

The 1970s was a traumatic economic decade of stagflation, a three-day week and the return of a high unemployment not seen since the 1930s. Yet, despite this crisis, it was also a decade of rising living standards, the growth of credit and rising property prices.  
<<http://econ.economicshelp.org/2010/02/economy-of-1970s.html>> [accessed 3 December 2015]

As a result, there was a remarkable growth in political and social consciousness among artists in Britain who reflected on these conditions, whether critically representing particular political struggles and/or actively collaborating with left-wing movements and campaigns. British art critic John A. Walker provides a concise picture of the political and economic situation during the 1970s that brought a number of socialist artists to identify with the efforts of trade unions and workers and fuelled collaborations with them. Walker wrote:

Interestingly, the decade was bracketed by two Conservative regimes, while Labour was in office during the middle years. Historians maintain that consensus politics — the similar political programmes of Conservative and Labour governments — broke down during the 1970s and that an intensification of the class struggle ensued. While the rich became richer, the poor and the unemployed faced a daily battle to survive and this is why so many workers felt compelled to strike to defend their living standards, even if this meant being vilified by right-wing politicians and journalists.<sup>303</sup>

British critic and moving image historian David Curtis acknowledged that the first to respond to the rising political crisis in the early 1970s in Britain were not the filmmakers but the artists who took a critical stand against the Heath government's anti-union legislation and growing unemployment.<sup>304</sup> A greater political focus on issues of class, labour and gender appeared within Conceptual art and performance art practices, mainly from a feminist perspective, wherein the domestic chores carried out by women artists were turned into the material of their performances.

A milestone of Conceptual art in Britain addressing the issue of female workers was Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly's *Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry* (1973–75) which examined the implementation of the Equal Pay Act passed in 1970, in a metal box-making factory in South London, an industry that since WWI had had a predominantly female work force. Hunt had a personal history with this factory as her mother and aunts all had worked there. The installation at the South London Art Gallery in 1975 displayed a variety of forms of information such as white and black photographs, charts, photocopied documents, video and audio works. Official statistical data was presented side by side with recordings of the female participants' subjective views on their roles and working conditions, both at the factory and in non-remunerated household work.

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Other authors have expressed similar views in recent historical and cultural accounts of the 1970s. See Dominic Sandbrook's 2010 book *State of Emergency, The Way We Were: Britain, 1970–1974*; Andy Beckett's 2009 book *When the Lights Went Out: Britain in the Seventies*; and Keith Jeffery and Peter Hennessy's 1983 volume *States of Emergency*, among others.

<sup>303</sup> John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London: Tauris, 2002), p. 15.

<sup>304</sup> David Curtis, *A History of Artists' Film and Video in Britain* (London: British Film Institute, 2007), p. 183. Curtis presented Lange's video *Osborn Steels Ltd* from the series *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), in a programme devoted to the theme of Work, alongside Conrad Atkinson's *Industrial Relations Bill* (1971) and an extract of Berwick Street Film Collective's *Nightcleaners* (1975), in his survey 'A Century of Artists' Film in Britain', Tate Britain, 19 May 2003–18 April 2004).



The film documentation of women working in the factory was shot in an observational and relatively unmediated, straightforward style, similar to Lange's studies. The takes were however only a few seconds long, and so therefore they function as illustrations, rather than showing the process of work as Lange did in his long takes. The two films in *Women and Work* were projected side by side, one film depicting the male workers, the other female workers, making visible the still prevalent division of labour marked by their different respective working roles. The style of this presentation clearly reflected the influence of minimalism and conceptualism, in its austere look, pervasive documenting nature and use of grids in the display of the photographs.



FIG. 63 Margaret Harrison, Kay Hunt and Mary Kelly, *Women and Work: A Document on the Division of Labour in Industry* (1973–75). Installation at Tate Modern, 2016.

Harrison described the collective being influenced by the work *Strike at Brannans* by Conrad Atkinson (her husband), shown at the ICA in London in 1972, which likewise displayed a variety of information materials.<sup>305</sup> In a spirit of inclusiveness and with a desire to expand the rarefied confines of the art world by not supporting the social divide between artists and workers, the workers in *Women and Work* were invited to the ICA opening. According to Walker, they were pleased to see themselves and their struggles to be portrayed and acknowledged, contrarily to the male management who, upset with the contents, prohibited the artists from visiting the factory again.<sup>306</sup> Paul Wood described *Women and Work* as occupying 'the border area between historical-political documentation (with its roots in the Mass Observation work of the 1930s) and contemporary Conceptual art installation, and this 'undecideability' was part of

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<sup>305</sup> Walker, *Left Shift*, p. 145.

<sup>306</sup> Walker, p. 146.

its character.<sup>307</sup> A comment that could also be applied to Lange's *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*, which I shall briefly return to.

The political aspirations of *Women and Work* paralleled those of the avant-garde documentary film *Nightcleaners Part I* (1975) by the Berwick Street Film Collective, which also featured Mary Kelly as one of its members, alongside filmmakers Marc Karlin, James Scott and Humphry Trevelyan. *Nightcleaners* was conceived initially as a campaign film, to galvanise the women night cleaners in London, to unionize them and to achieve better working conditions. The film has set a benchmark of avant-garde political filmmaking in Britain, according to Annette Kuhn.<sup>308</sup> It embraced Brechtian formal strategies in the use of sound and editing, much like European avant-garde filmmakers Jean-Luc Godard and Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet intended to bring a degree of self-reflexiveness to the documentary.

Walker in his book *Left Shift, Radical Art in 1970s Britain* recalls how during this decade there was awareness and sense of responsibility among political artists of the need to reach audiences beyond the confines of the art world and to convey to political and community groups, activists, workers, and so on, the notion that art could help their campaigns and be a 'weapon' against the Establishment.<sup>309</sup> Among these artists there was a plurality of political positions and approaches; however, embedded was a tension between a demand for accessibility, for art to be egalitarian and in service of its political function, and the need for self-reflexivity. Griselda Pollock writing on *Nightcleaners* characterizes the film's avant-garde approach as a need to address 'the fundamental contradiction between the typical cinematic means of producing a "truth" about working-class life... and the political aesthetics of a film that advertised its own manufacture'.<sup>310</sup> In the same essay, Pollock recalls the criticism the film received for adopting what was regarded as an intellectual stance.

While Lange's works shared a commitment to the proletariat, and adopted too the perspectives of his subjects, his standpoint was not one condemning or defending any particular cause. Rather, his aim was to expose the physical existence of factory workers, farmers and teachers in order to bring greater visibility to, and to dignify the work they performed. This modest stance contrasted with the more doctrinaire, revolutionary impulses and politically programmatic agendas of many

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<sup>307</sup> Paul Wood, *Conceptual Art* (Tate Publishing: London, 2002), p. 72.

<sup>308</sup> Annette Kuhn, 'Berwick Street Film Collective (1970–1978)' <<http://www.james-scott.com/about/press/film-reviews/36-to-2/lux-cinema-screening-in-london-200/berwick-street-film-collective/>> [accessed 24 November 2015]

<sup>309</sup> Walker, *Left Shift*, p. 8.

<sup>310</sup> Griselda Pollock, 'The Pathos of Poetics in Four Films of the 1970s', in *Work in Modern Times: Visual Meditations and Social Processes*, eds. by Valerie Mainz and Griselda Pollock (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000), 193–223 (p. 205).

of his feminist and socialist peers. The function of art and who benefits from it — the question of *Art for Whom?*<sup>311</sup> — might not have yet been formulated by Lange in these early works, made before mid-1970s. However, he purposefully adopted a language that was accessible to the subjects he recorded, and stayed away from the kind of avant-garde aesthetics evident in *Nightcleaners*, considering them to be distancing to working people, and for reinforcing the labour divide that avant-garde artists claimed to indict. The issue of accessibility and the positioning of the intellectual artist with regard to the representation of the working class was a common subject of disagreement among political artists at the time.<sup>311</sup>

In addition to the feminist artists addressing the particular working conditions of women described above, Conrad Atkinson was one of Britain's most critically engaged artists to confront the state of labour affairs in the country at the time. Despite their different formal and conceptual approaches, Atkinson's work is perhaps the closest contemporary reference to Lange's in their shared class-conscious commitment to, and personal affiliations with the working class (Atkinson grew up in the mining community of West Cumbria). A socialist artist, Atkinson's work can be seen, Timothy Rollins argues, 'under a particular British influence —the socialist artistic tradition that developed under the conditions of industrial revolution in 19<sup>th</sup> century England. From Shelley to Dickens to William Morris, this radical tradition was based on a class-conscious commitment to the English proletariat's historical self-discovery.'<sup>312</sup>

Atkinson adopted an agitprop strategy and always targeted specific political causes. One of his earliest works, the performance film *Industrial Relations Bill* (1971), shown at the exhibition 'Art Spectrum London' in Alexandra Palace in London, criticised the Conservative government's new Industrial Relations Bill that severely restricted trade union rights and prompted massive protests in London and strikes among dockworkers and miners. The Industrial Relations Act banning secondary action did not come into force until the end of February of 1972. A few months earlier in February, Heath's government, under a state of emergency, had given into the demand made by to National Union of Miners when it went on strike led by the British trade unionist Arthur Scargill.

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<sup>311</sup> Walker recalls the discrepancies between Art and Language and Victor Burgin, the former accusing Burgin's posters as 'being offensive to the working class and primarily career moves on the part of a bourgeois artist. (For his part, Burgin thought A & L's work was 'satire').' Further, Walker quotes A & L stating that their poster 'would not contribute positively to the development of culture or the advancement of the visual arts', but rather function 'in contradiction'. Walker, *Left Shift*, p. 202.

<sup>312</sup> Timothy Rollins, 'Art as a Social Action: An interview with Conrad Atkinson', *Art in America*, (February 1980), p. 119.

Lange addressed some of these struggles in his project *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham*, shot in January of 1973, shortly after the success of the 1972 miners' strike. Lange, referring to this work, wrote:

It was negotiated through the Coal Board and was made together with Richard Woolley, a filmmaking colleague who went on to make several class analysis movies in England... The studies included portraits in the Miners' Welfare, a kind of workingmen's clubs. It was a series of interviews covering feelings about the recent strike, and studies of pit-head machinery and the steam winder which rather uniquely was still in operation at Pleasley. People were good to us, telling jokes and giving interviews of colliery life. This included brass bands, sports and of course, politics.<sup>313</sup>

In this study, quite exceptionally in his work, Lange interviewed several miners, introducing their voices and political concerns. British documentary filmmaker Richard Woolley (a RCA alumnus, 1968–72) was influential in facilitating the discussions with the miners about the current political situation and the history of mining in the UK. They provided an analysis of this strike and the Heath government's futile attempts to break it.<sup>314</sup> One of these interviews, with miner Patrick Phelan who spent many years working as a miner, served as an introductory documentation to the project. It was presented in the form of a transcript on paper and an audio recording, when the project was shown in the exhibition *Six New Zealand Artists* at New Zealand House, London in 1973.

Lange did not go into the pit with the miners. According to Brett, in his review of this work in *The Times*, 'it was impossible for safety reasons to make a tape at the face'.<sup>315</sup> And so Lange documented aspects of the miners' social life at the colliery. The studies contained scenes of leisure activities such as playing bingo, cards and snooker at their club, rehearsing with the colliery brass band, entertaining at their local pub, attending a trade union meeting, and so on. Labour, thus, was implied, rather than portrayed, as the defining force of a community in terms of class and identity.

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<sup>313</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 27.

<sup>314</sup> Woolley conveyed that Lange lacked a political agenda, and described him as being straightforward and very natural at chatting to people. Woolley explained that they established a collegial relationship with the miners and that during the shooting they stayed at one of the miner's house. He added that Lange rejected the use of montage or editorializing devices and that for him it was important to adopt a language that was accessible to the subjects he recorded. Further, he argued that miners, unlike industrial assembly-line factory workers, were closer to rural life and to Lange's farming background. Richard Woolley in conversation with the author, 27 November 2014.

<sup>315</sup> Guy Brett, 'Leaving their legends behind', *The Times*, London, 20 February 1973.



FIG. 64 *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham, UK* (1973)



FIG. 65 *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham, UK* (1973). Installation at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in 1985.

He also referred to these studies as ‘installation-type documentation’,<sup>316</sup> or multimedia analysis of reality. The work was made of photographs, videotapes and two looped 16mm films projected side by side, audio tapes, and so on. This information quality of the work would seem to share affinities with Atkinson’s factographic installations and the aforementioned Harrison, Hunt and Kelly’s *Women and Work*.

Atkinson, like Lange, had abandoned painting for photography and embraced an anti-art approach that favoured accessibility and information, and sought a social function for art even though, at this stage, he had not yet articulated how his studies could be put to use. Two of Atkinson’s early landmark works were both shown at the ICA in London: *Strike at Brannans* (1972)

<sup>316</sup> Lange refers to this work as ‘installation-type documentation’. Lange, *Video Art*, p.27.

and *Work, Wages and Prices* (1974). His factographic documentary tableaux combining mixed media — news clippings and stock exchange prices in juxtaposition with photographs of people at work and of their low-wage payslips — chronicling politically significant histories, were shown in art galleries, as well as trade union halls and industrial contexts. They drew the public and media's attention, more often appearing in the daily press than in art journals. The use of photography, as curator Francis Marshall noted, was itself contentious, insofar as to the Arts Council in early 1970s neither photography nor video were seen as art.<sup>317</sup>

In *Strike at Brannans*, Atkinson documented the year-long strike held at the thermometer factory in his hometown Cleator Moor, led by female workers many of whom were his former classmates. The exhibition was polemic and, according to the artist, had political impact instigating the unionization of another Brannan factory in London.<sup>318</sup> *Work, Wages and Prices* exposed the inequalities of British society by displaying a variety of sources of information. He adopted an anti-hierarchical inclusiveness in his work, and rejected the belief, held by some Marxist artists, that the middle class would explain the material struggles of the working class to them when, in fact, the former had more to learn from the latter. He complained too about artists' overemphasis on Marxist theory of class struggle, 'instead of engaging with the actual material struggles of the present day'.<sup>319</sup>

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For Lange, the representation of people at work was both a personal and political matter. His emotional identification with the working class and his own commitment to their class struggle can only be properly understood in the context of his farming upbringing. Lange was the son of a *Pakeha* (European descendant) farmer who owned a mixed sheep and cattle dairy farm. Farming labour was commonplace for him,<sup>320</sup> and influenced by his father's Calvinism, work would have been perceived as dignifying. Writing in 1985, Dan Graham noted the strength of Lange's

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<sup>317</sup> Francis Marshall noted that it wasn't until 1973 that the Arts Council hired an officer to support photography. Francis Marshall, 'Museum of London / Recent acquisition of Conrad Atkinson's *Garbage Strike: Hackney, 1970*', *Photomonitor*, May 2012 <<http://www.photomonitor.co.uk/2012/05/atkinson/>> [accessed 17 November 2015]

<sup>318</sup> Atkinson in Rollins, 'Art as a Social Action: An interview with Conrad Atkinson', p. 122.

<sup>319</sup> Rollins, p. 122.

<sup>320</sup> Lange, speaking of his video *Craigdarroch*, stated: 'the tape was very much a reflection of my own background of stockwork and yardwork as a child'. Lange, *Video Art*, p. 37. Further, New Zealand art historian Les Montajees saw in Lange's environment *Commentary—Equality* (1971) a direct reference to his farming upbringing. He wrote: 'It was a very large painted panel in black and white [...] depicting a New Zealand rural landscape, with steep, dark hills. In front of it was a sculpture of a man slaughtering a sheep, something Darcy had done many times on the family farm.' Les Montajees in email correspondence with the author, 13 March 2014.

Calvinist heritage, reiterating how in his work there was ‘a more guilty sense that only work, in its “original”, unalienating form, is sanctified’.<sup>321</sup>

While New Zealand had its own class divide, with most of the contracted and seasonal labouring population being Maori,<sup>322</sup> a sense of egalitarianism also prevailed there. Lange held the same ingrained egalitarian values, and was known for being straightforward, sociable and at ease among the working class. A close friend of his student years, Les Montajejs, described Lange having ‘an affection for ordinary working people’, and ‘people being his thing’, even before arriving in England.<sup>323</sup> Lange acknowledged that his encounter with the English class system led to an increased political awareness and influence within his work, and was a turning point in his interest in the issues of class and labour. Furthermore, it would appear that his choice of representational media responded to a desire to return to the realm of the working environment of farms, factories and mines, and to abandon the isolated and rarefied studio practice. In a way, Lange thought his move could be seen as a return to a former life.<sup>324</sup>

Lange’s egalitarian upbringing and experience of physical labour would have given him a fundamental understanding of and solidarity with the working class. Drawing from this upbringing, Lange differed from other artists and filmmakers who also approached labour and the working class as intellectuals and artists but had no personal experience of and relationship with the working class. Michel Cadé, in his essay about the representation of factory work in the films of Jean-Luc Godard, discusses the filmmaker’s reluctance to present images of labour in his films — as in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d’elle* (1966), ‘where work appears as background noise’, and even in those

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<sup>321</sup> Graham, ‘Darcy Lange: Work and Music,’ [n.p.]

<sup>322</sup> With regard to labour, during the economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, there was a major migration of the Maori population to urban centres. According to Te Ara, The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, ‘By 1966 70% of Maori men worked in production, transport-equipment operation and labouring, away from the rural economy. Concentrated in freezing works, sawmilling, road maintenance, transport, building trades and certain types of factory work, they joined the unions of freezing workers, labourers, waterfront workers and drivers in increasing numbers.’ *Te Ara, The Encyclopedia of New Zealand* <<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/nga-uniana-maori-and-the-union-movement/page-2>> [accessed 13 December 2015]

<sup>323</sup> Les Montajejs wrote: ‘He had, I think, an affection for ordinary working people even back then. A couple of small examples come to mind... In Rome I was the pig in mud, dragging an increasingly bored Darcy around the great treasures. He indulged me but seemed happier chatting to the whores on the Spanish Steps or the old ladies in the fruit and veg markets. People were his thing. The everyday figures and the great carthorse in Caravaggio’s *Conversion on the Way to Damascus* held more appeal for him than the wonders of the Sistine Chapel.’ Montajejs, email to the author, 13 March 2014.

<sup>324</sup> Sharp suggests that in Lange’s work there is a sense of the loss of a life he left back in New Zealand. He said: ‘because you gave up a life there that would have been similar to that of the people you work with now’. Lange replied: ‘This is what’s interesting about these tapes because I went back afterwards.’ Further, Lange confessed enjoying being in the situations he recorded, ‘partially because it was an excuse to get away from the world actually’. Sharp inquired: ‘To return to a former life?’ Lange replied: ‘Maybe, or to go ahead to a former life.’ Sharp and Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p.13).

devoted to work such as *Opération béton* (1953), *British Sounds* (1969) and *Tout va bien* (1972).<sup>325</sup> Cadé wrote:

It is easy to understand Godard's refusal to recreate (by technical means used, incidentally, in factory videos) a labour process of which he had not direct experience. But by including, toward the end of the part dedicated to the strike, static long shots of work—generally brief, a little under a minute and thirty seconds for six fixed shots, very noisy, with commentary provided by voiceovers or intermediate shots—he introduces, in a desire for the Brechtian distancing with which he identified, an unadulterated representation of labour.<sup>326</sup>

Godard's ethical concerns about speaking as an outsider resulted in him declining to directly represent work. Instead, he took up the subject discursively and attempted 'to transcend labour while questioning it'.<sup>327</sup> He employed such formal strategies as the use of commentary, in the form of voiceovers presenting, in multilayered texts, his Marxist views. Conversely, Lange did not engage in a political argument; the lack of voiceover in his videos imposed no explicit point of view on the viewer. They relied strictly in the positivist power of his visual images to convey the subject of work — like Godard's last shots of an 'unadulterated representation of labour' — and a reductionist set of recording parameters in regards to framing, camera movement and minimal editing, intended to minimize any expressionistic elements that would detract from the prevalent status of the positivist image. Godard's 'unadulterated' shots were ultimately embedded in an essentially narrative structure, acting like signposts to his argument.

Lange's intention was to make a record, as an acknowledgement, of people at work. The intimate and sympathetic relationship he established with the worker, a certain modesty and honesty with his subjects derived from his subjective identification with them. This is especially obvious in a number of studies he conducted in New Zealand, whose subjects were often friends and acquaintances. In 1974, Lange spent six months in New Zealand and produced eight studies, all of farming occupations with the exception of one factory study, *Waitara Freezing Works*. They were all shot in his Taranaki home region, except *Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast* made in East Cape. Lange stated his intentions in a grant application: 'the project will record directly and truthfully everyday life with an emphasis on work situations including:

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<sup>325</sup> Cadé wrote, 'The films in which factory work is represented as a central element, if not emphatically, span the relatively brief period from the 1968 'revolution' in France to that of Solidarity in Poland, two contradictory (if not opposite) moments in the worker-intellectual alliance which, in those years, so captivated Godard. Before, workers had been in the backdrop; later, they would altogether merge into the background. For Godard, with the exception of *Opération béton*, the depiction of the worker, and hence of factory work, is dated.' Michel Cadé, 'The Representation of Factory Work in the Films of Jean-Luc Godard: Reaching the Impossible Shore', in *The Legacies of Jean-Luc Godard*, eds. by Douglas Morrey, Christina Stojanova and Nicole Côté (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014), pp. 53–66 (p. 53).

<sup>326</sup> Cadé, (p. 55).

<sup>327</sup> Cadé, (p. 57).



mustering, shearing, milking, timber and scrub cutting, aerial top dressing, social and cultural sports activities (AMP shows, sports, wood chopping, rodeos, hunting, music, etc.). The New Zealand landscape will be a strong feature of the project.<sup>328</sup> Exemplary of this prominence of the natural landscape can be seen in his study *Clem Coxhead, Study of cow milking, Opunake*, of which he said: 'Of interest in this tape is the contrast between the magnificent landscape and the arduous nature of the work.'<sup>329</sup> It featured Mount Taranaki in the background, a prominent element of the landscape of this region. This acknowledgement of the natural landscape is expected given that rural labour is commonly performed out in the fields. Yet, particularly in the New Zealand studies, its prominence and acknowledgement has to be understood by, and is deferential to, Maori communion with nature and the landscape's special features, which are defining traits in the identity of each particular individual according to Maori belief.

These studies were different from previous works in the way most of them were divided in two sections, titled 'Work' and 'Personalization'. The 'Work' sections portrayed individuals performing working activities, while 'personalization' portrayed workers during their lunch. By personalisation, Lange might have implied a portrait of them rather than of work or that the subjects were intrinsically more themselves when portrayed during leisure than when working, thus acknowledging work as an alienating force. In these studies, as in the Bradford studies, Lange clearly acknowledged his subject as individuals, with the titles of the works, naming them and their respective occupations, ensuring that they would not be turned into mere illustrations of work occupations. Lange was becoming increasingly conscious of the relationship he established with his subjects. His early studies would seem to record more generally working communities, around a city (Bradford) or a trade (miners), and even used in the titles the word 'documentation' rather than 'study'. Starting with the Bradford series, but more fully in the New Zealand works, he focused on particular individuals and their working tasks, reflecting his identification with these familiar subjects.

The close proximity with his subjects is most apparent in these lunch-break scenes. Joining in the communal lunch, Lange left the camera to record the scene entering the frame, in egalitarian terms equating his videotaping to their work. Despite this proximity to the subjects and his familiarity with their activities, Lange was aware of his advantaged position as artist and expressed the ambivalent relationship he felt between his artistic activity and productive work, as

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<sup>328</sup> Lange, unpublished grant application for Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council of New Zealand, 15 July 1974. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive

<sup>329</sup> Lange, exhibition press release 'Two Video Studies', British Film Institute (9–25 May 1975). It presented this study and *Vern Hume, Study of Aerial Top Dressing, Okato* (1974) and *Clem Coxhead, Study of cow Milking in Opunake* (1974). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive.

he found himself having to take on alienating menial work at times while living in England to get by. Lange expressed his ambivalent relationship to work as revealed in the following notes:

I would say that the problem that arises concerns my personal identity. I may work, for instance, on documentation for five months and then find that for financial reasons I am obliged to take similar, or even more menial work than many of the people that I have been recording. In other words, I make video tapes about people at work and then I do the same kind of work myself, so that my orientation is rather different to others who may observe, but never participate. Perhaps the logical conclusion to my documentation work is that I am preparing myself for an ordinary working life which may be realised soon. The difference between myself and the people I have studied however, is that I have alternatives in my life.<sup>330</sup>

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In 2006 Buchloh situated Lange's work within the historical framework of the re-emergence of documentary practice that took place during the 1970s, countering the tenets of conceptual photography. It was led by a group of photographers such as Allan Sekula, Martha Rosler and Fred Lonidier in the USA, Jeff Wall in Canada, and Victor Burgin in Britain, many of whom became key writers of photographic history and theory. Seminal essays such as Allan Sekula's 'Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)' (1978) and Martha Rosler's 'in, around and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)' (1981) lead these debates in the USA.<sup>331</sup> Even though Lange never articulated theoretically this criticism, Buchloh claims that this critique was also formulated in Lange's work, 'quite independently with uncommon programmatic clarity'.<sup>332</sup>

Despite broad differences between the artistic approaches and interests of these artists' practices, a common purpose linked them: namely the recovery of the documentary dimension of photography, its legacies, and the epistemological and social functions that had been foundational in photography and suppressed by Modernism.<sup>333</sup> What Conceptualist photographers disavowed, Buchloh argues, was the notion of the photograph as a social document, that is 'as an image that gave a relatively reliable account of structures, processes, performances, contexts, determinations, and, most importantly of all, of agency', to both the

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<sup>330</sup> Lange, unpublished notes. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive. A French version was published in the catalogue for the '9e Biennale de Paris' in 1975, [n.p.]. Further, Lange confessed that in returning to London after shooting the Bradford studies, 'I was forced to do worse physical labouring jobs — shop fitting — than those I had filmed.' Lange, *Video Art*, p. 44.

<sup>331</sup> Buchloh, 'Darcy Lange: Paco Campana' (p. 55). There is no reference in Lange's writings or in his archive to Sekula or Rosler. His *Work Studies* predated the theoretical writings and discursive articulations of their canonical texts appearing at the end of the 1970s and early 1980s.

<sup>332</sup> Buchloh, (pp. 49–50).

<sup>333</sup> Buchloh, (p. 52).

author and the photographed subjects.<sup>334</sup> In addition to this agency, the photographic document, Buchloh argues,

presumes the possibility of a motivation of the signifying process, that it assumes the implied dimensions of communicative action in the photographic representation, and that it aims at the cohesive organisation of a narrative in both individual images and their archival accumulation as a desirable and available structure. It also presumes, most importantly perhaps, the desire for either a mnemonic retrieval of political critique or a horizon of social transformation, an intervention within the merely given facticity of everyday life.<sup>335</sup>

These artists adopted different positions in their engagement with the documentary legacies and practices. Some, such as Allan Sekula<sup>336</sup> or Victor Burgin, chose structural semiotics to engage with the complexity of social representation, as well as, ideologically with the history and theory of photography. Others, such as Jo Spence and Terry Dennett, averse to theoretical and aesthetical leanings, embraced instead a socialist approach and sought in photography its transformative and empowering potential, which I will discuss in this chapter.

As Sekula articulated in ‘Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary’, the recovery of the documentary and the legacy of the 1930s documentary practices meant two things. First, the act of ‘dismantling Modernism’ and its adoption of photography as art, in order to recover the social dimension of photography — the epistemic, archival and dialogical values of the photographic document — that had been diminished in Modernism. This demanded a shift that was essentially anti-artistic and geared towards the re-politicization of photography and its social function. Second, it meant also the reinvention of the socially reforming documentary tradition, away from its positivism and its liberal reformist notions of justice, which had resulted in paternalistic and victimizing representations of its disempowered subjects that reinforced the inequalities that it indicted. For Sekula, photography alone, understood in terms of its positivism, had served little to critically reveal the ideologically social and political mechanisms operating behind the visual phenomena it reproduced.<sup>337</sup> Further, Sekula argued that a critical reinvention of the documentary would question the relationship formed with the subjects of representation and establish a ‘new documentary contract’, by which these relationships would be made explicit and negotiated. It

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<sup>334</sup> Buchloh, (p. 54).

<sup>335</sup> Buchloh, (p. 54).

<sup>336</sup> Buchloh identified the four theoretical models that laid the foundation of Sekula’s work in the early 1970s: Marxist theory, structural semiology, the legacies of documentary photography from Lewis Hine to the FSA photographers, with particular emphasis on Evans, and the dialogue with the linguistic and the photographic reorientation of artistic practices in late 1960s Conceptual art. Buchloh, ‘Interview by Benjamin D.H. Buchloh’, *Allan Sekula: Performance Under Working Conditions*, ed. by Sabine Breitwieser (Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2003), pp. 20–52 (p. 35).

<sup>337</sup> Allan Sekula, ‘Dismantling Modernism, Reinventing Documentary (Notes on the Politics of Representation)’ (1978), in *Photography Against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works 1973–1983*, ed. by Benjamin H.D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (Halifax, Canada: The Press of Nova Scotia School of Art and Design, 1984), pp. 53–75.

drew its inspiration from some of documentary photographic legacies of Soviet factography practices, as well as the Worker Photography movement and the Film and Photo League, and the formal avant-garde strategies of Bertolt Brecht.

The representation of work and the working classes had been one of the ‘silent and enduring doxas’ in Modernism that Buchloh had condemned in his writings. Modernism wanting to perform a critique of alienation, he noted, had to ‘perform the ludic negation of necessity, it had to induce the semblance of the subject’s universal access to acts of self-determination and self-constitution outside the realm of instrumentalization’.<sup>338</sup> Whenever the labouring body had been represented, it had been as a victim by the bourgeois class with its own reformist aspirations or as an idealised depiction of alienated forms of labour by state socialism or fascist ideologies. For Buchloh, the recovery of the working body had to address these histories.

The Soviet factographic culture of the 1920s and 1930s, whose representations of the collective experience of industrialization were brought to the realm of aesthetics, contributed to building the identity of the working class. Eisenstein, Vertov and his Kino Eye group shared a commitment to proletarian consciousness-raising and understood the importance of the collective bond that results from the workers seeing themselves portrayed. Vertov recognized this in his statement made in 1925: ‘Workers ought to see one another so a close indissoluble bond can be established among them.’<sup>339</sup>

Russian constructivist Sergei Tretyakow, who popularised the term factography, supported the idea that new technology such as film and photography could be used by the workers to produce factographic works, something which influenced Benjamin and Brecht. Roberts supported their view of the impact that the indexical qualities of film and photography had on the development of the identity and historicization of the working classes. He stated:

Under the demands of consciousness-raising, the indexical functions of photography and film provided access to forms of self-identification for the working class, in as much as workers saw themselves not just represented, but represented as part of a historical process. Photography and film, therefore, had a crucial part to play both in narrating the revolution back to the participants and in transforming, in general terms, people’s expectations of the everyday.<sup>340</sup>

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<sup>338</sup> Buchloh, ‘Darcy Lange: Paco Campana’, p. 58.

<sup>339</sup> John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>340</sup> Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, p. 26.

This memorial function of photography was both defended by Benjamin<sup>341</sup> and Trotsky, in referring to the Worker Photography movement as the *memory of the class*.<sup>342</sup> British art critic John Berger, reading Benjamin, goes further to extend the argument to art history, and defend the need for a new social history of art. Berger wrote in his 1972 seminal book *Ways of Seeing*: ‘A people or a class which is cut off from its own past is far less free to choose and to act as a people or class than one that has been able to situate itself in history. That is why — and this is the only reason why — the entire art of the past has become a political issue.’<sup>343</sup>

Roberts in his 1998 book *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* has reinstated the place of realism within the avant-garde to counter the devaluation that realism and photography’s social reference experienced by privileging the avant-garde critique of representation with the rise of post-structuralism.<sup>344</sup> He has defended the realists claims of photography, the notions of ‘making visible’, the ‘memory of the working class’, ‘historical consciousness’, and ‘counter-knowledge’, all sharing a commitment to the ‘truth-telling’ powers of photography.<sup>345</sup> Roberts, however, differs with Sekula’s criticism of photography’s naturalism as being positivist, seeing realism and positivism as identical, and thus extending his theoretical attack to the philosophical claims of realism. Instead, Roberts proposes a dialectical theory of photography, wherein ‘realism’s understanding and recovery of the world is based on socially produced and self-qualifying nature of signification, in which things and their relations and representations are in *dynamic* movement and tension’.<sup>346</sup> A dialectical realist or ‘genetico-explanatory’ method, he argues, ‘allows social practices and their objects to “speak out” of the contradictions that produce their identities’.<sup>347</sup> Roberts, thus, stands for the communications and dialogic functions of photography against the aesthetic and psychoanalytic approaches.

For Roberts, photography’s relationship with the everyday and the realist claims of photography are what allow the reinsertion of art with its social function. He writes:

Photography’s intimacy with the everyday connects the categories of art to the agency and consciousness of specific subjects, in specific social contexts, faced with specific problems. This is not a false sublimation of art into life – something that Adorno rightly objected to – but the rejection of art’s alienation as an abstract ethical principle. In Raymond Williams’s

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<sup>341</sup> While there are no references in Lange’s writings or personal documents to Walter Benjamin, his ideas circulated among the progressive artistic community. Benjamin was made popular in the 1972 BBC2 television series *Ways of Seeing*, directed by the neo-Marxist art critic John Berger. The first chapter gives credits to Benjamin’s ideas about photography and the mechanically reproduced arts appearing in his 1930s canonical writings, which only were published in English in 1970.

<sup>342</sup> Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, p. 48.

<sup>343</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 33.

<sup>344</sup> Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, pp. 2–3.

<sup>345</sup> Roberts, p. 3.

<sup>346</sup> Roberts, p. 5.

<sup>347</sup> Roberts, p. 7

great phrase, this book is about the ‘ordinariness of culture’, which I hold to be one of the central propositions of the early avant-garde’s use of photography and which renders unstable all transcendental defenses of aesthetic value.<sup>348</sup>

Lange recognized some of these documentary legacies as having a lasting influence in his work, mainly the FSA photographer Dorothea Lange and Walker Evans as well as Edward Weston and Ansel Adams.<sup>349</sup> He might have been informed about the documentary photographic legacies of Soviet factography and Worker Photography, but there is no record of it.<sup>350</sup> He had been introduced to documentary photography by his tutor at Elam in New Zealand, Tom Hutchins, a *Life* photojournalist who had photographed Mao’s China in 1956. In comparing Lange’s photographs with some of the photographs produced by Worker Photography there are some affinities, namely the prevailing amateur, non-artistic aesthetic they both espoused. There is also strong affinity between some of Lange’s images of factory work and Lewis Hine’s photographs. Hine, who was trained as a sociologist and thus seen at the time as an amateur photographer, used photography to inspire social reform. His groundbreaking documentation of child labour, from 1908–12, both denounced exploitation and defended the dignity of work.

He would have been closer to the facticity and naturalist style of the Worker Photography movement than with the structural semiotics approach adopted by some of his artistic contemporaries — for instance, Martha Rosler’s *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* (1975), Victor Burgin seminal photo-text series *UK76* (1976) and his book *Work and Commentary* (1973), and Sekula’s *Aerospace Folktales* (1973), to name a few. Their criticisms of photographic naturalism and positivism lead to experiments with dialectical strategies, such as the use of text as a framing device. They sought to go beyond and contest the authority of the image itself and provide an extended narrative structure.

Lange adopted some structuralist techniques, such as his experimentation with the simultaneous use of multiple media, as in *A Documentation of Calverton and Pleasley Coalmining Communities in Nottingham* (1973) and *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974). These works contested the primacy of the single image through the use of photography, film and video, introducing a fragmentary and de-naturalising effect to what were essentially positivist documentary images. Lange’s formal de-naturalising strategies are thus equivalent to Rosler’s

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<sup>348</sup> Roberts, p. 4.

<sup>349</sup> Lange acknowledges Hutchins introducing him to Edward Weston, Ansel Adams and ‘all the American good photographers’. He added: ‘I think one of the major influences in the photography in terms of actual subject matter, the social side, has been Dorothea Lange...her feeling for people. She was a propaganda photographer in the sense that she went to do a job.’ Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 12). Lange elsewhere reiterates this interest, stating, ‘especially the photography of Dorothea Lange, Edward Weston, Walker Evans and others’. Lange, *Video Art*, p. 18.

<sup>350</sup> There are no references to the Worker Photography movement in his writings, but he mentions the American left-wing newspaper *The Daily Worker*. Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (p. 13).

use of the grid in *The Bowery in Two Inadequate Descriptive Systems* or Sekula's sequence of images as in *Untitled Slide Sequence* (1972), which like Lange's, echoed the serial and typological methods of Conceptual photography.



FIG. 66 Allan Sekula, *Untitled* (1972)



FIG. 67 Allan Sekula, *Portraits of Salespeople* (1973)



In *Untitled Slide Sequence*, a slide projection made of 25 black and white slides depicting workers leaving the factory, a direct reference to the Lumière Brothers' film *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895), Sekula experimented with the mechanics of representation. In another early photographic series *Portraits of Salespeople* (1973), described by him as 'an experiment with the 'sociological' frontality of August Sander', he used seriality. These were strategies aimed to avoid the pictorialism of early documentary photography.

Lange's use of quick snapshots demonstrated a refusal of either the expressionistic or the aesthetic qualities of photography. Instead, he chose, and used, photography for its documentary function and undermined, or treated casually, its formal presentation. For instance, the photographs of *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* were printed and displayed in one exhibition as a portrait format, on A4 sheet with an empty white band at the bottom and with a clipped glass framing (as they were exhibited at Oppenheim Studio in Cologne in 1975).

Meantime, at Bradford Industrial Museum, the photographs adopted a horizontal format and were similarly framed, with the photograph's label inside the frame. Also, unlike the other installations of this work, he exhibited both colour and black and white photographs and did not restrict it to one for each study as he prescribed in his instructions.<sup>351</sup>



FIG. 68 Photographs from the series *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974) as exhibited at Bradford Industrial Museum, Bradford in 1976.

<sup>351</sup> Lange, *Darcy Lange and Andrew Turner*, [n.p.]. It lists also colour photography as confirmed by the photographs from this series in the collection of the Bradford Industrial Museum.





FIG. 69 Darcy Lange standing in front of the installation of *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974), at Oppenheim Studio Köln, October 1975.

Sekula's practice was primarily driven towards a critical examination of the signification of representation, while in Lange's, despite his expressed intention to critically examine realism, his work retained an undercurrent positivism and humanism. Lange's growing politicization and awareness about the politics of representation guided his development towards embracing the dialogic and communicative functions of video and photography and their transformative potential.

In Britain, socialist artists Jo Spence and Terry Dennett joined the 1970s revival of interest in these documentary legacies, through their seminal work with Photography Workshop founded in 1974, the photographic journal *Camerawork* (which they founded in 1976 and edited until they left in August 1977), as well as the anthology *Photography/Politics: One* published in 1979. They led the historical recovery of the German Worker Photography movement in Britain, which informed, and indeed was the foundation for, their community and activist work. In their editorial to *Photography/Politics: One*, they defended a broad and inclusive definition of photography (clearly distancing themselves from those who ascribed to 'creative' photography only) and openly declared the primacy of their politics: '...our starting point is class struggle'.<sup>352</sup> In this publication they devoted attention to the international Worker Photography movement — the first contribution to the history of this movement published in English<sup>353</sup> — which had flourished during the interwar period with the support of various Communist parties and led by the Third International. It included articles on the German, English, Scottish Workers Photography as well as some information on other Workers Photography manifestations in Netherlands, Belgium and the United States. The movement promoted working-class self-expression by giving cameras to

<sup>352</sup> *Photography/Politics: One*, ed. by Terry Dennett, David Evans, Silvia Gohl and Jo Spence (London: Photography Workshop, 1979), p. 1.

<sup>353</sup> Jorge Ribalta, in *Not Yet: On the Reinvention of Documentary and the Critique of Modernism*, ed. by Jorge Ribalta (Madrid: Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, 2015), p. 30. Rosler in her 1981 essay 'In, Around and Afterthoughts (On Documentary Photography)' also acknowledges Spence and Dennett's historical recovery of Workers Photography.

workers, turning these amateur photographers into photojournalists, whose photographs depicting their working class life and struggles from their Marxist point of view were published in the Left-wing press. Spence and Dennett saw in Worker Photography the kind of self-empowering strategies that they adopted for their activist work.<sup>354</sup>

Duncan Forbes recalled in 2014 that the interest in the intellectual legacies of the 1930s was considerable during the 1970s, partially driven by the parallel economic crisis that hit Britain in 1973, and was ubiquitously manifested culturally and politically. Forbes explained:

The trajectory of this interest in relation to theory has been well charted, but the range of organic intellectual activity in Britain that led back to 1930s collectivism was considerable. This is seen in the people and labour history movements (especially History Workshop); or the turn to Brecht (embedded also in the school curriculum); or the mass popularity of realist television drama; or in modes of political documentary revived by the Vietnam War. Many of these looked at the 1930s as a resource [...]. However, sustaining that contact into the 1980s would only become harder. Working-class collectivism was further eviscerated by a renewed wave of deindustrialization, the brutal Conservative government response to the miners' strike in 1984–85 (very much a dismantling of working-class community), and a more general atomization of culture. By the late 1980s, 1930s historicism had become occluded by the top-down Tory espousal of Victorian values.<sup>355</sup>

Socialist schoolteacher Ken Worpole, writing in *Camerawork* in 1978, traced the emergence of the New Left back to the 1950s, with the publishing of seminal books that laid the ground for the historicization of working class culture in Britain. They included: Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* in 1957, Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* in 1958 and *The Long Revolution* in 1961, and E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* in 1963. These authors were concerned with the dialectic between the forms given by the dominant ideology and those self-produced by a working class in a state of permanent resistance and struggle. Though some of these authors came from the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham, Worpole criticized them for not taking side with the struggles of the working class, but rather contributing to the formation of an avant-garde sociological study addressed to academics. Instead Worpole claims that the History Workshops organised at Ruskin College were exemplary of this kind of engagement. Ruskin was the trade union supported Oxford College

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<sup>354</sup> On the subject of the reception of Worker Photography in Britain see 'Conversation with Rosa Casanova, Duncan Forbes, Patricia Hayes, Sarah James, Fred Lonidier, Silvia Pérez Fernández, Martha Rosler, Rolf Sachsse, and Siona Wilson. Moderated by Jorge Ribalta', in Ribalta, *Not Yet*, pp 46–104. This conversation includes two relevant sections subtitled 'The Reception of Worker Photography and the new documentary culture in Britain' (pp 62–67) and 'Documentary struggles and political movements in Britain' (pp. 67–74) tracing the different documentary practices and contributions to the re-examination documentary legacies during the 1970s and 1980s in Britain. For a more general account on the history of Worker Photography see Jorge Ribalta (ed.), *The Worker Photography Movement (1926–1939)* (Madrid: TF Editores, 2011).

<sup>355</sup> Duncan Forbes, 'The reception of Worker Photography and the new documentary culture in Britain', in conversation with Sarah James and Siona Wilson and moderated by Ribalta, in Ribalta, *Not Yet*, p. 65.

established in 1899 to provide education for working-class men who were denied access to university. History Workshops, founded in 1966 by Ralph Samuel, emphasized personal testimony and oral history as a foundational material from which an authentic working class cultural tradition could be established.<sup>356</sup> Indeed, Spence and Dennett's Photography Workshop took its name from Samuel's History Workshops.

Worpole also regarded Mass Observation as a project that likewise was able to revive and develop a concern for the significance of working class experience and self-expression.

*Camerawork* devoted a whole issue to Mass Observation in September of 1978.<sup>357</sup> Another source was the British photographic journal *Creative Camera*, which through one of its founding editors Colin Osman and his sustained interest in photojournalism and the German worker photography movement, published between 1968 through 1985 a series of articles on these subjects.<sup>358</sup> He also curated the Arts Council exhibition 'The British Worker: Photographs of Working Life 1839–1939' that demonstrated his interest in Worker Photography and was critical of Steichen's support of a depoliticized and sentimentalized depiction of the working class experience.<sup>359</sup> In 1981, *Creative Camera* adopted a more radical Left approach by inviting key writers such as David Mellor, John Berger, David Green and Victor Burgin to reflect on the shift of debates then underway from class struggles towards identity politics.<sup>360</sup>

The Centerprise Publishing project (1972–77),<sup>361</sup> established by an editorially independent group at a community centre with a bookshop and a café in Hackney, produced a number of books that collected local histories told by the neglected working class people from this London borough. One of these projects, *Working Lives* (1976) was built around a series of interviews with

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<sup>356</sup> Ralph Samuel started the first of the annual 'history workshops' at Ruskin College in 1966 and they ran until the 1980s. He encouraged students to pursue historical research built on their own experiences, and to present their findings alongside established academics. The workshops attracted mainly students and teachers from Britain. In 1976, Samuel founded the *History Workshop Journal* and remained an active editor until his death in 1996. The journal echoed its commitment to accessibility pioneered in adult education and combined a popular front politics with anarchist notions of history from below. <<http://www.bishopsgate.org.uk/content/1135/Ruskin-College-and-History-Workshop>> [accessed 2 November 2016]

<sup>357</sup> Ken Worpole, 'Oppositional Culture: Yesterday and Today', *Camerawork*, no. 11 (September 1978), 10.

<sup>358</sup> David Brittain, 'Introduction: Mirror with a Memory: Thirty Years of Writing in Creative Camera', in *Thirty Years of Creative Camera* (Manchester, UK: University of Manchester Press, 1999), pp. 1–27. Among them, Colin Osman published in *Creative Camera*, no. 197–198, May/June 1981, an issue devoted to the British Worker Photography. It included the essay by Erich Rinka 'The First Conference of Workers Photographers 1927: Memories of Erich Rinka'.

<sup>359</sup> Jane Torney, *Cities and Photography* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 70.

<sup>360</sup> Ribalta, *Not Yet*, (pp. 65–6).

<sup>361</sup> For more on Centerprise Publishing project and the local history of working class in Hackney visit, <<https://hackneyhistory.wordpress.com/2011/06/27/centreprise-working-class-history-and-local-publishing-1977/>> [accessed 20 December 2015]

working people in traditional local industries accompanied by photographs. It promoted an inclusive group editing approach with the interviewed workers. It recognised the need for working people to express themselves and aimed to record forms of local history that was suppressed in the wider culture. Worpole, who was involved for the five years that the project lasted, explained: ‘At present most people’s lives go unrecorded, as if they possessed no inner life worth knowing. [...] The struggle for self-expression is often thwarted in schools, totally denied at work, and ignored by the communication industry.’<sup>362</sup>

The touring exhibition *Factory Photographs* by Nick Hedges, a series of photographs taken over two years in five factories, was presented in 1978 in the Half Moon Gallery in East London, a gallery established in 1972 by a photography cooperative that included Spence and Dennett.<sup>363</sup> Hedges too interviewed many workers and extracts of the workers’ statements were presented alongside the images. Interestingly, the editors of *Camerawork*, rather than prioritizing these images, only published one and deployed the rest of the page to the workers’ revealing comments. This editorial decision might have had to do with their belief that language would provide a richer context than presenting the images alone; it also gave prevalence to the workers’ own voices, speaking for themselves about their realities, over the images that spoke for them.

The use of personal testimonies gave voice to those who were normally silent, enabling them to speak for themselves about their own realities, and bestowing a sense of validation. Further, their individual particularities that came from their own experiences prevented the photographic images of people at work standing for a general portrait of a class. This approach recognised and countered the ability of photography to conceal its ideological power, being able to portray specific individuals, as John Tagg argued, ‘in all their particularity, as both composing and representing the social class or classes within which their individuality is realized’. Tagg added: ‘The processes of life — most remarkably those of labour — are thus bereaved of their reality, divorced from the conditions in which they occur, and abstracted to the point where they hardly retain any meaning.’<sup>364</sup> Tagg would have voiced Brecht when he pointed out that the camera, as an instrument that records the world of appearances, is not able to tell us anything about the economic and material forces governing a factory and the lives of its workers. Brecht reflecting on a

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<sup>362</sup> Ken Worpole, as quoted in Tom Picton, ‘Life at Work’, *Camerawork*, no. 6 (April 1977), 5.

<sup>363</sup> This cooperative included, aside from Jo Spence and Terry Dennett, the following photographers: Wendy Ewald, Ron McCormick, Julia Meadows, Paul Trevor, Mike Goldwater and Tom Picton, who set up the gallery and a workshop project with a strong emphasis on social documentary. <[http://fourcornersfilm.co.uk/domains/fourcornersfilm.co.uk/local/media/images/medium/Four\\_Corners\\_Archive\\_Project\\_press\\_release.pdf](http://fourcornersfilm.co.uk/domains/fourcornersfilm.co.uk/local/media/images/medium/Four_Corners_Archive_Project_press_release.pdf)> [accessed 20 December 2015]

<sup>364</sup> John Tagg, ‘The World of Photography or Photography of the World?’, *Camerawork*, no. 6 (April 1977), 8-9 (p. 8).

photograph of the interior of the Krupp factory remarked on the limitations of a naturalistic depiction:

For the situation is complicated by the fact that less than at any time does a simple *reproduction of reality* tell us anything about reality. A photograph of the Krupp works or GEC tells almost nothing about these institutions. Reality proper has slipped into functional. The reification of human relations, the factory, let's say, no longer reveals these relationships. Therefore, something has actually to be *constructed*, something artificial, something set up.<sup>365</sup>

There is no evidence of Lange having been part of these debates, nor is there of him having been active in the socialist circle led by the activist photographers Spence and Dennett, who were averse to both academic and avant-garde approaches. Spence's populism had been formed, Siona Wilson notes, through a 'sustained autodidactic mode that produced a political practice of *proletarian amateurism*'.<sup>366</sup> Wilson uses this term *proletarian amateurism* to distinguish Photography Workshop's approach from Buchloh's claim of the concurrent dominant 'deskilled' aesthetics of Conceptual photography. Wilson goes on to illustrate the radical differences between, on one hand, the *proletarian amateurism* and communitarian style embraced by the British feminist activist collective Hackney Flashers and their project *Women and Work* (1975), who adopted a do-it-yourself approach and a notice-board aesthetic and, on the other hand, the aforementioned Harrison, Kelly and Hunt's *Women and Work* exhibition, whose installation conformed to Buchloh's notion of an 'aesthetic of administration' that characterised much of the aesthetics of Conceptualism of the 1960s.<sup>367</sup> These examples were used to illustrate the divide between the different artistic groups and their *modi operandi*, ranging from those political artists with artistic leanings to those who embraced their politics and operated in the realm of activist and community work.

Lange's work would have perhaps been perceived by Spence and Dennett as less politically radical in comparison, being as it was informed by and in conversation with other political artists, such as Conrad Atkinson and Harrison, Kelly and Hunt, whose work was seen in the context of the art gallery rather than being rooted in the former's grassroots activism. Nonetheless, it is likely that Lange (who also lived in Hackney at the time) would have been aware of their work and of the shifting intellectual debates around the representation of the working class that Spence and Dennett endorsed in the essays published in *Camera work* and through their Photography Workshop collective activities. Furthermore, while Lange's work did not develop in conjunction with any community or activist groups, the kind of working methods and self-empowering strategies that he deployed in his later *Work Studies in Schools* series (1976) shared much in common with the activities

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<sup>365</sup> Bertolt Brecht, as quoted in Walter Benjamin's 'A Short History of Photography' (1931), *Screen* 13, (1993), 5–26 (p. 24).

<sup>366</sup> Siona Wilson, 'Documentary Struggles and Political Movements in Britain', in conversation with Duncan Forbes and moderated by Jorge Ribalta, in Ribalta, *Not Yet*, p. 68.

<sup>367</sup> Wilson, in Ribalta, *Not Yet*, p. 70.

of the Photography Workshop, not least Spence and Dennett's community educational workshops with children.

While Lange shared empathy and intimacy with the working class as well as working knowledge and experience in farming, he was clearly an outsider to the realities of the British working class in the factories and mines that he recorded. Despite the fact that his images might not have been so different from the kind of photography that was produced and advocated by Worker Photography groups, the obvious and fundamental different subject positions (Lange being an artist not a worker) as well as the respective different functions clearly keep them apart. Worker Photography recognised that much 'objective' representation of the working classes had been produced by the bourgeois class looking down, with sympathy and compassion on their subjects and a reformist appeal to improve the conditions of the struggling working classes. Rejecting bourgeois depictions, Worker Photography was, by contrast, far more radical and self-empowering, and proposed their own proletarian aesthetics without apology. Advocate of *Arbeiter-Fotografie* in Weimar Germany, Edwin Hoernle articulated his vision as follows:

If the bourgeoisie depicts proletarians and their world of suffering, it is only to provide contrast, a dark background to set off the glories of the bourgeois 'culture', 'humanity', 'arts and science' and so forth, so that sensitive folk can enjoy a feeling of sympathy and 'compassion' or else take pride in the consciousness of their own superiority. Our photographers must tear down this façade. We must proclaim proletarian reality in all its disgusting ugliness, with the indictment of society and its demand for revenge. We will have no veils, no retouching, no aestheticism; we must present things as they are, in a hard merciless light.<sup>368</sup>

Lange shared Hoernle's aesthetic principles of workers' depictions, as his representations did not represent workers with pity nor did they sentimentalize their struggles, and his images retain some of the straightforward approach and 'merciless light' prescribed above.

However, Lange's *Working Studies* had been produced for and exhibited within the artistic scene, rather than produced, shown and disseminated primarily among workers, unions and worker press media, as Worker Photography did. This is something that Lange acknowledged and corrected as he recognised the need for his images to reach a wider audience outside the artistic realm and to be returned to his subjects — something he intended, but failed, with his series *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* and endeavoured in *Work Studies in Schools*.<sup>369</sup> Lange

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<sup>368</sup> Edwin Hoernle, 'The Working Man's Eye', 'Der Arbeiter-Fotograf' (1930), quoted in Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, p. 48.

<sup>369</sup> Lange wrote: 'Questions were often asked after I had shown them to people not in Bradford: "Did you show these tapes to the workers filmed? Did they find the film a true reproduction and positive or negative example?" My reply to that was: "I was not allowed to show the tapes in the Bradford Industrial Museum until four years after, possibly because the Gallery Director was afraid of the impact on his

acknowledged the transformative potential of showing his images to the very subjects of his recordings as a means of self-identification and self-empowerment.<sup>370</sup> To be able to reach out to non-art audiences would have required Lange to present his work in other spaces, as, in fact, other artists did at the time (such as union halls, high schools, community colleges). It also required the facilitation of more democratic vehicles of communication, such as discussion and dialogue, rather than the one directional, 'authoritarian' art exhibition.

Worker Photography groups were well aware of the ideological relevance of the context where their images were seen and the need for these to represent the standpoint of the working class. While the movement understood that shared political interests and goals would make possible an alliance between workers and intellectuals, it always had to serve the workers' standpoint and ensure that the photographic material would be appropriately exploited.<sup>371</sup> These Worker Photography's aspirations were recorded in 1973 in *tendenzen*, a journal primarily supported by the East German state, in the following paragraph:

Making images out of the factories is difficult, as is taking pictures of the jobs, of the real conflicts in the residential areas, of the demonstrations on the street. Even more difficult is, at the same time, to allow the people concerned to speak for themselves, to show their experiences, their perspective, their struggle. Only real workers' photography is capable of taking a real picture of the workers. Such photography does not draw its benchmark from the aesthetically named society rules of bourgeois photography. [...] [I]t must cope without bourgeois photography's assistance; it cannot and will not get taken in by advice that dictates an interest that is foreign to it. [...] And, of course, today's workers' photography is still subject to what bourgeois 'objectivity' did to it before: it has no visibility in the bourgeois context. The photographers on this side are not going to be circulated in full-page newspaper ads as branded items for illustrated newspapers.<sup>372</sup>

It is important to qualify Lange's own position and personal motivations in regard to his representations of people at work, which underwent their own development during the 1970s. Lange's early studies were motivated by an aim to create a record of work and of the working class, whose images had been largely suppressed or romanticised. However, this is not to say that he participated in the creation of class consciousness of an ideological programmatic agenda of a political group or a State. This gave to his work a degree of indecisiveness and

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career. When I did start showing tapes back, I also recorded the viewers' reactions, as I had in the Oxfordshire schools project.' Lange, *Video Art*, p. 44.

<sup>370</sup> Lange discusses the implications of showing his work in different situations and of seeing his work as 'something very close to social activism'. He stated, 'This is where I have to get a lot more serious about getting the work shown to a wider audience, and making a real effort to get it back to the people it was recorded from.' Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p.13).

<sup>371</sup> 'On the topic of Worker Photography', 'Zum Thema Arbeiterfotografie', *Arbeiterfotografie*, no.1 (November 1973), as translated and reprinted in Ribalta, *Not Yet*, pp. 113–14.

<sup>372</sup> Workers' Photography in the FRG, *Tendenzen*, no. 86 (December 1972–January 1973), in Ribalta, *Not Yet*, pp. 107–8.

irresolution and a failed potentiality, which could have driven the development of his work in search for its social placement and efficacy.

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German filmmaker Harun Farocki denounced that while the first film ever made, the Lumière brothers' *Workers Leaving the Factory* (1895), portrayed workers exiting a factory for photographic goods in Lyon, film had hardly recorded industrial labour, to the point that 'commercial film's dread of factory work is second only to that of death'.<sup>373</sup> He wrote:

The first camera in the history of cinema was pointed at a factory, but a century later it can be said that film is seldom drawn to the factory and even repelled by it. Films about work or workers have not emerged as one of the main film genres, and the space in front of the factory has remained on the sidelines. Most narrative films take place in that part of life where work has been left behind. Everything which makes the industrial form of production superior to others — the division of labour that break down the production processes into minute stages, the constant repetition, a degree of organisation which demands few decisions of the individual and which leaves him little room to manoeuvre — all these make it hard to demonstrate the vicissitudes of the workplace. Over the last century virtually none of the communication that took place in factories, whether through words, glances, or gestures, was recorded on film.<sup>374</sup>

Lange in his early *Work Studies* entrusted the camera's capacity to convey a truthful depiction of the reality of working life. His uncompromising, compelling observational portraits of workers performing their tasks were an acknowledgement of, and a humble aim to correct the invisibility of work. As his greater politicisation and awareness grew, his notion of *truthfulness* shifted. It would have no longer simply implied a positivist belief on the camera lens's ability to represent reality *as it is*, 'to truthfully render situations', unengaged with and unselfconscious of its ideological nature and function. Rather, *truthfulness* would seem to be conceived first in the sense of integrity, of honesty with the subject it portrayed, something that involved his own subjectivity. W. Eugene Smith, writing on photojournalism in 1948, made a differentiation when he stated: 'Honest — yes. Objective — no'.<sup>375</sup> The notion of truthfulness, therefore, changed for Lange from an indexical — truth to reality, concerned with image-making — to an ethical and transformative dimension — truth to the subject and the agency of the image. Benjamin saw this shift proclaimed in Productivism, wherein the naturalistic photograph was no longer subordinated to 'the 'truth' of the indexical but to the demands of critical

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<sup>373</sup> Harun Farocki, 'Workers Leaving the Factory', in *Harun Farocki Working on the Sight-Lines*, ed. by Thomas Elsaesser (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2004), p. 237.

<sup>374</sup> Farocki, 'Workers Leaving the Factory', p. 238.

<sup>375</sup> W. Eugene Smith, 'Photographic Journalism', *Photo Notes* (June 1948), 4-5 p. 4.



intervention'.<sup>376</sup> It demanded a greater awareness and examination of the politics of representation, the relationship to his subjects and the efficacy of his social practice, issues that were increasingly raised within the British artistic debates by mid-1970s, as have been discussed in this chapter.<sup>377</sup> Lange expressed this responsibility towards his subjects, which to him entailed an expressed critical examination of realism:

We have a responsibility to keep questioning the nature and power of realism. Are there ways for the camera to record without stripping people of their spirit, without sloganising, without replacing a deep sense of community by a shallow voyeurism?<sup>378</sup>

The factographic impulse to 'make visible' meant that in 'bringing the subject out of the fixed (though not mute) place in the naturalistic photography, it is able to tell its own story', that is, 'to speak through the experience of class in order to give social agency to class experience'.<sup>379</sup> For Lange, it became obvious at a certain point: first, the need to return the image to his subjects in order to activate the image's potential of self-identification and social transformation; and second, that the image had to be grounded in the experience expressed by the subjects' own voices, which led to his series of *Work Studies in Schools*, examined in the next chapter. Lange continued the observational, naturalist approach of his recordings in *Work Studies in Schools*, now invested with an additional interpretation of the image by the subjects' recorded reflections after viewing the recordings of their own interactions in the classroom. Realism as such was seen as socially produced. These recordings operated both epistemological function as well as dialogic powers, as material for a self-reflexive analysis that was directed at the subjects and at the artist as well. It is through the recording of the subjects' reflections in viewing these tapes that the subjects were brought out of their 'mute' fixed naturalistic image, and in so activated the image's dialogic powers and social agency. That is, in Roberts' words, the naturalistic image became 'de-positivised through the re-positioning of photography as a social practice'<sup>380</sup>.

Spence also defended photographic naturalism for its dialogic value, offering the ground material for the discussion of shared experiences that might have been repressed and marginalised. Spence supported an anti-aesthetic naturalism, insofar that it afforded the directness and accessibility that served the epistemological social function that she saw in photography. In an interview with Roberts, Spence explained:

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<sup>376</sup> Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, p. 42.

<sup>377</sup> In addition to the aforementioned artists and their activities, some of the debates about the social function of art became more prominent in the British context by mid-1970s, as evident in the British art journal *Studio International*, which devoted its March/April 1976 issue to 'Art and Social Purpose'; also appearing in Stephen Willats' *Control* magazine, among others.

<sup>378</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 17.

<sup>379</sup> Roberts, *The Art of Interruption*, p. 211.

<sup>380</sup> Roberts, p. 213.

You can't deconstruct something until you've already seen it and it has currency. There are some experiences that have never been given credibility because they are continually suppressed in the image-making process. So the making of the images that engage with these things at a naturalistic level could be quite useful.<sup>381</sup>

This defence addresses the need to create an image of a reality in order to give credibility to that reality, to make it visible in order to make it *real*, almost in the sense of evidence of its existence as well as of legitimacy or 'currency', moreover, as a form of knowledge. This is a counter-hegemonic action that reclaims the image of a reality that has been suppressed from a culture's imaginary, and as such, it participates in the building of alternative histories that had been suppressed.

At the heart of Lange's affectless instrumentality, there was a rudimentary working-class pragmatism and an ingrained egalitarian relationship with the worker that rejected aesthetic expression as being narcissistic and self-serving, and for being superior and distancing to his subjects. Engaging in a theoretical approach would have likewise heightened the divide between intellectual and manual labour that he aimed to bridge, a form of class exclusion. For Lange the capacity for video to provide live and taped feedback, unlike film and photography, made the video a valuable means for analysis. Thus, rather than being engaged in the examination of the image's process of signification through structural semiotics, he grounded this analysis in human experience, opting for the dialogic qualities of camera-lens media. Focusing on pedagogical practices in the classroom, Lange explored the implications of video for teaching and learning, allowing his recorded subjects to speak through their own analysis of their perceived experience of work and class, not unlike what the Worker Photography movement did with worker photographers. In so doing, his images of people at work conferred agency, realising Lange's expressed 'socialist aspirations' and transforming his work into 'something very close to social activism'.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>381</sup> John Roberts, 'Interview with Jo Spence', in *Selected Errors: Writings on Art and Politics 1981–1990* (London: Pluto, 1992), p. 141.

<sup>382</sup> Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (pp. 12–13).

## CHAPTER 4. Education, Participation and the Making of the Subject

Made during the twilight years of the previous Labour Government, this latter aspect of the work [*Work Studies in Schools*] has since acquired a poignancy that we could have hardly anticipated at the time — our notions of what constitutes ‘public’ and ‘private’ have now been completely turned on their heads. Who better to create such a materially modest, yet spiritually ambitious work as this than Darcy Lange? His energy, openness and ability to communicate gave this work its unique attraction. This was ‘real life’ — cinema verité if you like — but through a prism of innocent enthusiasm that completely negated the reflexive post-structuralist approach of so many video artists of the time, as well as the potential boredom of its grisaille medium. Darcy’s work transcended the specificity of each school to give a portrait of adolescence and control to which we could all relate.  
— David Elliot<sup>383</sup>

*Work Studies in Schools* was the title of an exhibition held at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford in 1977, and was how Lange referred generically to what were in fact two separate, although related, series: *Studies of Three Birmingham Schools* (1976) and *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* (1977). *Work Studies in Schools* was a continuation of his *Work Studies*, here focused on teachers in the classroom. What distinguished these from the earlier studies was that, for the first time, Lange expanded his observational studies of people at work by videotaping the teachers’ and pupils’ reactions to these recordings, and these taped responses became part of the work and guided its development. The interaction with his subjects, something that had appealed to Lange from early on, achieved further meaning when he formalised the notion of playing his recordings back to their subjects. This reflexive process added another dimension to the studies; by exposing this process, Lange turned these into studies of videotaping itself as a work activity. However, rather than create a structuralist exercise, Lange sought to effect change for and in his subjects. By inviting teachers and pupils to become critical viewers as well, the artist introduced a potential for social transformation, and diminished the extent to which his tapes might operate exclusively as an ‘artwork’ for the benefit of art audiences.

*Work Studies in Schools* was initially conceived as a study teaching as work, while at the same time allowing a socio-economic comparison of teaching practices and their results. In the exhibition catalogue, Lange formulated the guidelines to his school studies as follows:

1. to investigate teaching as work
2. to illustrate the skills of the teacher through vocal and gestural communication with the class and also the class’s response to this.
3. to illustrate the process of teaching and learning in the classroom
4. to illustrate the social breakdown within each class

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<sup>383</sup> David Elliott, email to Guy Brett, 1 April 2007, quoted in Guy Brett, ‘Preface to the Introduction of the 1977 *Work Studies in Schools* catalogue’, in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 89–94 (p. 92).

5. I am particularly concerned to prevent what I make, whether it be photograph or video from becoming an end in itself—not dissimilar to the loved art object<sup>384</sup>

In the first series *Studies of Three Birmingham Schools*, Lange carefully chose institutions representing different social classes, recording in both state and public schools.<sup>385</sup> Three schools selected were: Ladywood Comprehensive School, a racially-mixed secondary state school in one of Birmingham's lowest income areas; King Edward's Grammar School, a privileged, boys-only school where students were accepted based on academic merit; and Leabank Junior School, also a racially-mixed primary school in a low-income neighbourhood. He also videotaped a range of school subjects in his examination of teaching methodologies — English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics, Music, Geography, Biology and History, with topics such as 'Industrial relations cooperatives' and 'Business studies' at King Edward's, or 'Orwell's *Animal Farm*' and 'Data Studies' at Ladywood Comprehensive. He also recorded other events and activities outside the classroom, such as the Christmas party at Ladywood, an assembly speech at Leabank, and a theatre group performance at King Edward's.

*Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*, conducted a year later, was a more structured examination of four schools in Oxford, each representing different social classes (two public and two state schools) and Lange surveyed only the teaching of three subjects: Art, History and Science. In the Birmingham studies, Lange videotaped the class study and played it back to his subjects, and started to tape the teachers' reactions to the recordings (those of Mr Perks and Mr Hughes). However, it was in the Oxfordshire studies when he systematically recorded the students' and the teachers' responses to the tapes, incorporating these recordings into the structure of the project. The exhibition catalogue printed a diagram showing this structure with the names of the schools, the pedagogic subjects and the teachers — that echoed the diagrams of sociological studies made by British conceptual artist Stephen Willats such as *The Lunch Triangle* (1974) and *Living with Practical Realities* (1978) at the time. In total, thus, the Oxfordshire series were made of twelve studies, each of three parts: 'classroom study of the teacher in action', 'teacher discussion after looking at tape', and 'student discussion after looking at tape'.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> Darcy Lange, 'To Effect a Truthful Study of Work in Schools', *Work Studies in Schools* (Oxford: Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 1977), p. 18. Further, the year before his list of aims was published with a slight variation: 1. To illustrate the skills of the teacher through vocal and gestural communication; 2. To illustrate the work involved on the teacher's part and to present teaching as work; 3. To illustrate the mental effects of education on both teachers and students; 4. To illustrate our social structure, its resulting problems and inner manipulations. Darcy Lange, 'Darcy Lange: Video Studies 1975 & 1976', *Studio International*, vol. 191, no. 981 (May/June 1976), p. 242.

<sup>385</sup> In Britain, a public school isn't a state school, but a term used for a private one. Comprehensive and Grammar schools are state schools, however the latter provide a privileged education to pupils based on academic merit.

<sup>386</sup> The diagram is titled, 'Structural System of the Oxfordshire Project, Banbury School; Informal study of Julia Swift [Science teacher], Tony Morgan [Art teacher] and Peter Garwood [History teacher]'. With a note indicating that the same structure applies to the other three schools. Lange, *Work Studies in Schools*, p. 20.



FIG. 70 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Brandon, Mathematics, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976)



FIG. 73 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Infants Assembly, Leabank Junior School) (1976)



FIG. 71 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Rigby, Biology Class, King Edward's Grammar School) (1976)



FIG. 74 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Theater Performance, King Edward's Grammar School) (1976)



FIG. 72 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Trott, English Class, King Edward's Grammar School) (1976).



FIG. 75 Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Christmas Party, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976)





FIG. 76 *Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Roger Perks, 'Orwell's Animal Farm', Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976)*

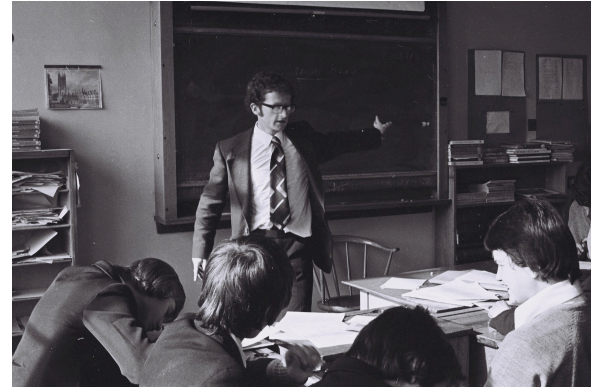


FIG 79 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Wright, History Class, Cheney Upper School, Fourth Form (14-15 years old) (1977)*



FIG. 77 *Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Roger Perks Interview, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976)*



FIG 80 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Wright viewing tapes, Cheney Upper School) (1977)*



FIG. 78 *Study of Three Birmingham Schools (Mr Perks Students' Responses, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976).*



FIG 81 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools (Mr Wright Students' Responses, Cheney Upper School) (1977)*

Lange had also intended to further develop these studies with a third project titled *Film Studies in Comprehensive and Grammar Schools, UK* (1976–1977) (which appears as a separate work in the list of works printed in the exhibition catalogue). He conceived these studies in 16mm film (colour and sound), where ‘the film (script included) is the conclusion of the video studies’, and following the structure of a teacher’s class, the teacher at home, and one of the students at home, also across different private and public schools.<sup>387</sup> He might have understood that learning processes take place in different spaces, at home too, not only in those of formal learning, such as classrooms. The project did not continue for reasons unknown<sup>388</sup> and some parts are lost.<sup>389</sup>



FIG. 82 Contact sheets from *Film Studies in Comprehensive and Grammar Schools, UK* (1976–1977), featuring Mr. Trott (King Edward’s) and Miss Kanta (Ladywood) in their homes and classrooms

<sup>387</sup> Brett in the exhibition catalogue also refers to this more extended scheme: ‘The studies of teaching all follow the same schema: a tape of teaching in the classroom, a tape of the teacher at home, discussions with the students and teachers after the first tapes have been made, and also interviews with outsiders who have a special interest. There’s no reason it couldn’t be extended further.’ Guy Brett, Introduction, *Work Studies in Schools*, pp. 3–5 (p. 4).

<sup>388</sup> Lange made a film grant application to Arts Council of Great Britain for these studies to be shot with the assistance of Dutch filmmaker Jasper Holthuis as cameraman and ‘a top BBC technician’ using his gear. Funding grant to Arts Council of Great Britain, 24 January 1976, courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive. Further, in his memoirs Lange wrote, ‘Ironically the project tragically collapsed when the Dutch New Zealand camera man helping me became a neurotic mess and feigned sickness when confronted by a rebirth of his New Zealand childhood experiences in the classroom.’ Darcy Lange, *Video Art*, (Auckland: The Department of Film, Television & Media Studies, University of Auckland, 2001), p. 78. Holthuis recalled him visiting the Arts Council of Great Britain to persuade them about the relevance of the project and the need of funding, which was subsequently granted. He also confirmed becoming seriously ill soon after they arrived in Birmingham and being unable to continue filming, in detriment of the project, especially after having rented expensive film equipment. To Holthuis, the failure of these series had to do with Lange’s inability to convey his vision and to work collaboratively with a filmmaker, hence, his preference for video, a medium that he could operate unlike film for which he had to rely on others. Holthuis, in a phone conversation with the author 15/05/2016.

<sup>389</sup> Only the following studies remain: Mr. Trott’s class study, Mr. Trott’s home study, and student Nicholas at home study, all from King Edward’s School; and Miss Kanta’s class study (sound missing) from Ladywood Comprehensive School.

Lange hoped to exhibit *Work Studies in Schools* in full, including these film studies, at ‘documenta 6’ in 1977, which did not happen. This was the first time that documenta included a video section, which was curated by Wulf Herzogenrath. Herzogenrath had exhibited Lange’s work at ‘Projekt’74’ in Cologne and was interested in his *Work Studies in Schools*.<sup>390</sup> Lange wrote Herzogenrath with a proposal titled ‘Looking at Work, Media, Education,’ stating:

GROUNDWORK —this is a continuation of work studies of people teaching in schools, some of which were recently shown at Venice Biennale[...]These studies are now continuing in Oxford, London and Bradford.[...] MEDIA— it will be executed in half inch video studies and will assimilate [*sic*] the same approaches as the film. The film (script included) is the conclusion of the video studies. Please refer to film script. A publication will be made of all concepts towards the process. PRESENTATION I propose an installation [...] the inclusion of the film is of paramount importance. The media used for the exhibition is: Documentation (written and otherwise), photography, video ½ inch Sony AV, film 16mm colour. An enclosed space will be necessary (approx 20 ft x 35 ft) divided by a panel so the two enclosures are available, one for video the other for film. The documentation and photographs can be presented on the walls. The film (as a media examination) should be shown in the film section of documenta.<sup>391</sup>

*Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* was commissioned by Museum of Modern Art Oxford by the newly appointed director David Elliot and curated by Mark Francis, and exhibited from 22 March until 9 April 1977. The series were presented in full, with videotapes shown in monitors set up in separate viewing rooms and with the photographs hung unframed on the walls and labelled with the names of the teachers (pupils were not named). It also contained a diagram to show the structure of the project as well as visible labels under each photograph with the name of the teacher as well as the name of their teaching subject and the name of school. The photographs were displayed in groups by schools and teaching subjects and each group depicting the teacher in the classroom as

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<sup>390</sup> Herzogenrath confirmed being interested in exhibiting this work. Herzogenrath in conversation with the author, c. May 2008. This was supported by the correspondence exchanged between Lange and Herzogenrath, copied and forwarded by Herzogenrath to the author, 20 May 2008.

<sup>391</sup> Lange wrote, ‘The video studies are a part of the process and the film will complete this. The Museum of Modern Arts in Oxford [*sic*] will display the video studies and further preparatory work. The film will not be finished at that stage (2<sup>nd</sup> of March) and will therefore not be shown. The ideal, first complete showing would be documenta.’ Further, this letter seemed to indicate that additional funding was requested from documenta 6 to develop the project; in addition to Museum of Modern Art Oxford, which funded the production of the video studies, Lange proposed for the production costs of the film studies to be split by Arts Council of Great Britain (£1250), Oppenheim Studios (£1500) and documenta (£1500), the latter ‘by buying print and installation exhibition’. Lange, letter to Wulf Herzogenrath (c. 1976). Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive. Lange’s work was also absent in the next documenta. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh in his review of Rudi Fuchs’ ‘documenta 7’ wrote, ‘In both its inclusions and omissions, the selection policy for ‘documenta 7’ constituted a symptomatic display of repressive tolerance, an intensified form of amnesia with regard to real historical conditions. It is not so much a question of the absence of individual artists (although one can certainly speculate about the omission of political artists such as Victor Burgin, Darcy Lange, and Steve Willats from the otherwise virtually complete repetition of exhibitors that Rudi Fuchs, documenta’s Artistic Director, had shown at his home base at the Stedelijk van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven). Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, ‘Documenta 7: A Dictionary of Received Ideas’, *October*, vol. 22 (Autumn, 1982), pp. 104–126, (p. 104). Lange in his memoirs mentions the ‘excommunication from Eindhoven’, which might indicate a falling out with Fuchs after Lange’s exhibition *Het Lan van de Maori* (*Maori Land Project*) at the Van Abbemuseum, 12 January–10 February, 1980. Lange, *Video Art*, p. 85.



well as shots of the teacher and students during their viewing of and responses to the tapes. As for *Studies of Three Birmingham Schools*, a small selection of video without photographs was presented at Venice Biennale in 1976<sup>392</sup> and as *Teaching Studies* in the exhibition ‘Dauerleihagbe Ingrid Oppenheim’ at Städtisches Kunstmuseum in Bonn in 1983.<sup>393</sup>

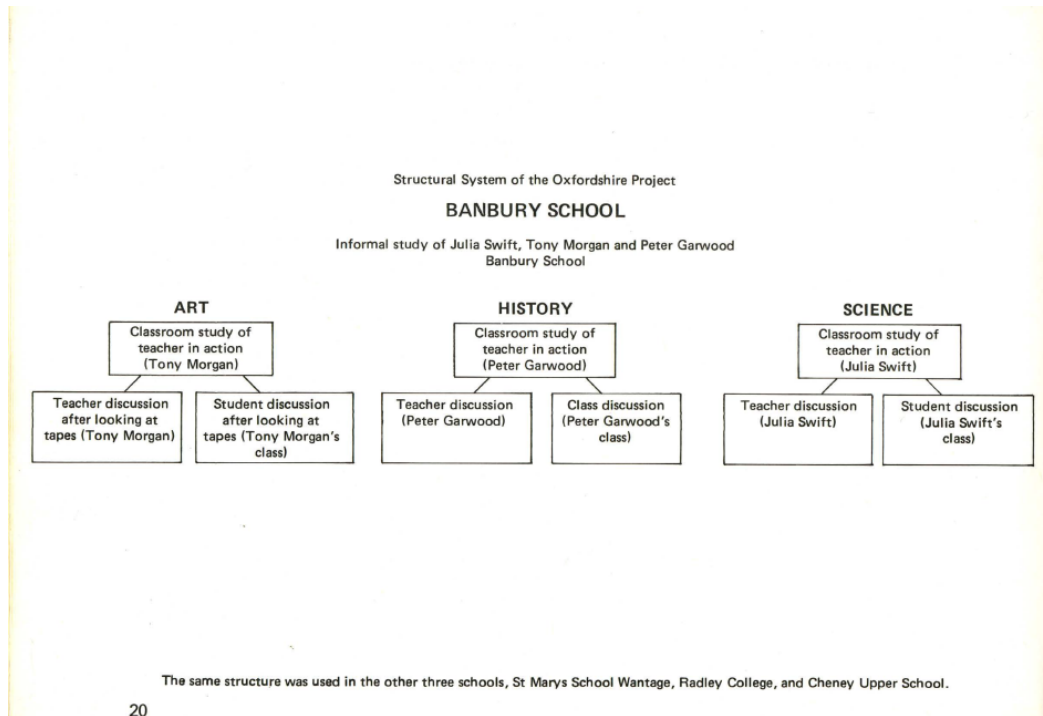


FIG. 83 Diagram shown at the exhibition and printed in the exhibition catalogue for the Oxfordshire schools project.

The Birmingham school studies were initiated through one of Lange’s acquaintances, New Zealand artist Phil Slight, who introduced him to his colleague, the educationalist Ron Jones. Lange acknowledged them: ‘through their co-operation and in fact enthusiasm plus that of the school of Art Education in Birmingham, I received substantial support’.<sup>394</sup> The studies were shot in January and February of 1976. Jones negotiated most of the contacts with various schools and introduced him to Roger Perks, Assistant Headmaster of Ladywood Comprehensive, who became a strong supporter and an articulate interlocutor about his project, as the recording of his response to the tapes study attests.

Helen Legg, co-curator with me of the exhibition of *Work Studies in Schools* held at Ikon Gallery in 2008, made an interesting finding while researching the origins of the Birmingham series. It linked

<sup>392</sup> The selection of studies shown at Venice Biennale in 1976 were: Mr. Hughes, ‘The Wheel’, Leabank Junior School, Mr. Brandon, ‘Geometry Class’, Ladywood Comprehensive, and Mr. Trott, ‘English Literature’, King Edward’s Grammar School.

<sup>393</sup> The selection (running 60 minutes) included the following studies: Mr Trott, English Literature, Class A ages 16–17, King Edward’s Grammar Schools; Mr Brendon, Geometry, ages 13–14, Ladywood Comprehensive School; and Mr Hughes, History, ages 7–8, Leabank Junior School.

<sup>394</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 72

Lange with the Birmingham School of Education where video cameras were starting to be used as a performance assessment tool for prospect teachers. This would have been influential to Lange in conceiving these works. Legg wrote:

Between 1971 and 1977, though based in London, he [Lange] made frequent extended visits to Birmingham: the city proved to be a place in which he found it possible to work, not least because the Birmingham School of Fine Art offered him a teaching position. More pertinently though, was the peculiar fact that under its auspices sat the only centre for the study of education in the country housed within an art school, an institution Lange became part of, albeit informally, sitting in on lectures and discussions and making use of its resources. The centre's liaison officer arranged access to the three schools Lange filmed and the camera used also belonged to the institution. 'I went up to Phil Slight's place, a friend who taught in an educational college in Birmingham, and he showed me his video machine, and it just seemed obvious that it was what I wanted to use. And I used it. The first tape I did was in Birmingham.' The camera had been purchased to record both expert and student teachers at work, after which footage was played to tutorial groups in order to dissect, analyse and appraised the skills of teaching and processes of learning—a system identical to the one developed by Lange. Pupils would discuss techniques used by the teachers, their responses to and handling of the classes' behaviour, the clarity of their communication and use of teaching aids. That these considerations found their way into Lange's videos is clear; he frequently frames and focuses the camera on hand gestures and facial expression, zooms in on text books or writing and diagrams on blackboards, drawing attention to the specifics of communication in an analytical way. Books in the artist's library included volumes designed for student teachers, offering methods for the documentation of classroom situations, reinforcing the possibility that Lange was studying techniques used by educationalists.<sup>395</sup>

Among Lange's books on education found in his archive<sup>396</sup> is Rob Walker and Clem Adelman's *A Guide to Classroom Observation* (1975) a handbook that encourages participant-observation as methodology providing guidelines on how to observe in the classroom and the use of video as an aid for observation. This reveals that Lange was aware of and paid attention to the way video and the practice of observation were being used for pedagogic purposes. Without access to the video aid tools to prospective teachers used at the time at the Birmingham School of Education,<sup>397</sup> it is difficult to assess the similarities in styles and approaches between these and Lange's. Regardless, what would

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<sup>395</sup> Helen Legg, 'Darcy Lange: Work Studies in Schools', *Camera Austria*, 108/2009, pp. 44–49 (pp. 46, 48). Lange's embedded quote, 'Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', *Avalanche* (Summer 1975), pp. 12–13, (p. 13).

<sup>396</sup> Other titles are Ivan Illich's *Celebration of Awareness - A Call for Institutional Revolution* (1977), James D. Koerner's *The Miseducation of American Teachers* (1965), Herbert Kohl's *36 Children* (1973), Jan Swidzinski's *Art, Society and Self Consciousness* (1979) and Michael F.D Young's *Knowledge and Control — New Directions for the Sociology of Education* (1971). Further, among his notes there is a handwritten list of relevant books (not in his handwriting): Leach, E *Culture and Communication* (Cambridge Paperback 1976); Leach, E *Lévi Strauss* (Fontana 1974); Douglas, M *Rules and Meanings* (Penguin 1973); Young, M (ed) *Knowledge and Control* (Macmillan 1971); Culler, J *Sassure* (Fontana 1976); Roland Barthes *Mythologies* (Paladin 1972); Duvignaud, J *The Sociology of Art* (Paladin 1972); and (by his handwriting) Weingartner, C *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (Penguin, 1971); and Walker, Rob and Edelman, Clem *A Guide to Classroom Observation*.

<sup>397</sup> Incidentally, some of Lange's tapes from the Birmingham series appear listed among the Birmingham School of Education videotapes made as teaching aids, proving that Lange's observational videos were similar to them and offer sufficient visual information to be of use to prospect teachers. It also supports Lange's intention to give these works a social function rather than strictly showing them in an art context.

have set them apart are their respective purposes and constituencies. Lange's tapes adopted an egalitarian approach that involved both teachers and pupils. Their aim was to facilitate a reflexive analysis involving both parties, where pupils could comment on their performances as well as their teachers', and they would have challenged the very pedagogic approaches that would have been prescribed in the aid tapes. Jones also remarked how Lange brought 'another point of view' and how 'someone from outside the profession looking into the profession could be useful'.<sup>398</sup> This was precisely the argument made by the Artist Placement Group, which I shall discuss later in this chapter.

Primarily, the Birmingham series, and even the Oxfordshire series, were studies of teaching performances, with the camera focusing mainly on the teacher (as a study of a worker), attentively recording facial expressions or the use of hands or body movements in the teachers' interaction with the students, as exemplified in the class study 'Mr Hughes, The Wheel' from Leabank Junior School. As Lange's studies became more inclusive, introducing the pupils' views to the tapes as in the Oxfordshire series, the project shifted from a detached form of observation to something more participatory and layered that revealed the classroom as a complex social system.

Lange resisted manipulation of the image, choosing long shots and never moving the camera that was set on a tripod from its fixed point in the room. He zoomed slowly and panned steadily through the room and almost independently of the specific interactions undergoing between the teacher and pupils, in order to capture not just central but also 'marginal' moments. Aiming to minimize his presence during the recordings of the classroom by keeping the camera in the same spot, nevertheless, the camera was visible at all times. Lange experimented with the camera position, initially placing it in the back, which reinforced the teacher's protagonist role. However, after Mr Perks' suggested the need to see the pupils' facial expressions and reactions, Lange switched positions to the front of the classroom, at times even placed the camera at the very centre of the room surrounded by the pupils' desks, as evidenced in the photographs taken by Lange.

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<sup>398</sup> Ron Jones, recorded discussion with Lange and a group of teachers at the Birmingham School of Education, c. 1976. All transcriptions from this videotape recording are the author's.



FIG. 84 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* (Peter Garwood, *History*, Banbury School, Fifth Year O Level) (1977)



FIG. 85a-b *Study of Three Birmingham Schools* (Paul Nagel, *Roman Roads*, Ladywood Comprehensive School) (1976).

He countered the techniques used by mass media to influence viewers, aiming instead at a more ‘neutral’ observational or ‘subtly interpretative’ approach that might serve the teachers and pupils, and his larger audience, to interpret on their own these recordings. David MacDougall has noted that observational films are open to other meanings that might transcend the filmmaker’s analysis. This ‘stance of humility’ before the events and subjects of his recordings implicitly acknowledges that the subject’s story is often more important than the filmmaker’s, and this was a necessary step toward a more participatory cinema.<sup>399</sup> Lange often discussed a priori with the teachers some generic guidelines about how to shoot the class study, with various degrees of their involvement; some studies were more directed by Lange, while in others he compromised his view to recreate the teacher’s vision.<sup>400</sup>

<sup>399</sup> David MacDougall, ‘Whose Story Is It?’ (1991), in *Transcultural Cinema*, ed. by Lucian Taylor (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 150–64, (p. 156).

<sup>400</sup> Lange explained, ‘sometimes I had discussed with the teacher how to record the class so in a way is a recording from her point of view. Sometimes it was a compromise between how I subtly interpret the class and the teacher’s. Different techniques in different studies, and because you have the teachers and the students speaking.’ Lange, videotaped panel discussion at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 23 March 1977. All transcriptions from this videotape recording are the author’s.

These tapes served both teachers and pupils as a form of personal and collective assessment. Moreover, their reflexivity and responses extended to Lange's act of filmmaking, both internal to the film and experientially — both teachers and pupils discussed the effects of being videotaped, Lange's role and the work's aspirations, and their relationship with him, among others. Their responses had an effect on the further development of the recordings, altering the shape of these. Further, their comments entered in conversation with the audience, not as an active participant but as witness, who as well became aware of these issues.

Moreover, in Lange's use of long takes and unedited sequences, time became one element with greater implications. In the panel discussion at Modern Art Oxford organized with the teachers and pupils at the opening of the exhibition, Guy Brett highlighted: 'there is a great deal of time to watch and to think, and to think about what you think about'. Jones also added: 'unlike television, where the limitation of time forces to cut down things to the essentials'. Editing was thus associated with television and as such perceived as problematic, as Ms Webb remarked, 'as putting things out of context'.<sup>401</sup> In contrast with television, Lange's videos did not use commentary, avoided montage, and in not relatively providing a particular point of view, allowed viewers to make their own judgements.

The issue of the truthfulness or how representative these studies were to the reality they portrayed, was one of the recurring considerations for the teachers, who discussed the 'authenticity' of both the teachers and pupils' performances as result of Lange's presence and their awareness of being 'on camera'. Some of the more articulate teachers shared their opinions: Mr Wright thought the camera did not affect the teachers at all but did, perhaps, the children; Ms Webb, that it was different with different age classes, and that juniors were much more affected than seniors; Mrs Shalgowski, that Lange being a male interfered in an all-female school; and Mr Garwood, that these were not objective at all and expressed not enjoying being filmed, 'felt constrained, my jokes went flat and the children were much more quiet during the class and in their taped responses'.<sup>402</sup> More importantly, *Work Studies in Schools* introduced and examined language for the first time in Lange's *Work Studies*, particularly how the subject (teachers and pupils) is defined by the linguistic parameters marking social differences such as gender, race, class, cultural and economic backgrounds. As Lange selected public and state schools, social as well as ideological differences became even more apparent through speech — such as is captured in 'Mr Perks' lesson on Orwell's *Animal Farm*' in one of the Birmingham studies. Mr Perks points out, after seeing the videotaped class, the absent look of an Indian student

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<sup>401</sup> Guy Brett, Ron Jones and Ms Webb, videotaped panel discussion at Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 23 March 1977.

<sup>402</sup> Ms Webb, videotaped panel discussion at Museum of Modern Art Oxford.

when the material discussed did not culturally speak to her background and how she switched again when the discussion became relevant to her; thus, according to Perks, there was a need for teachers to be inclusive and aware at all times that their lessons might exclude pupils depending on social and cultural contexts. Lange perceived education as a system of production and reproduction of class identity; thus, the issue of class and education ran central to these studies and was revealed in subtle ways throughout these recordings. In Lange's writings he offers ample examples the coercive effect of education when discussing the tapes:

As I begun to watch the tapes back, several elements became interesting such as the power of the teacher, the brainwashing of the students and the teacher's condescending paternalistic attitudes. At the same time as investigating the authoritarian nature of the various deliveries...<sup>403</sup>

Seeing these studies juxtaposed, Lange noted, 'one gets the feeling of hopelessness of the system before the humanism of Perks's comprehensive'.<sup>404</sup> Of Perks, Lange wrote:

along with a good social and political understanding was enormously successful in dealing with the possibly dangerous potential of various racial groups in the school. In fact he turned this completely around the other way into a positive force. His lesson on George Orwell was followed by a discussion with the class which introduced me to the kind of work he was doing with the students. Taking the senior students around old people's homes and to hospitals integrated the philosophy of Orwell with the problems faced by young people in British cities at the time. Had there been more people like Roger Perks, fewer racial confrontations would have occurred in the area later.<sup>405</sup>

This contrasted with Mr Hughes, of whom he wrote:

The deputy principal of Leabank Junior School was the opposite, a man who in a sense was sincerely authoritarian, who completely overshadowed the students' sensitivities. He gave forth a generously loud Welsh, well-spoken but crushing vocal performance which hinted at his gratitude to escape from industrial shit job anonymity to his position as orator to a classroom of eight year olds.<sup>406</sup>

He noted that King Edward's Grammar School 'in imitation aspired to the upper class, through the normal class ladder-isms of the desperate middle class', and added:

However, the very good English teaching Mr Trott was typical of the kind of necessary learnings of the young sons of the generally privileged class, and although he did give them the perfect way to speak, he also tried to guide them into thinking away from prejudice. Tragically many of the students would tend to reflect his speech and accent rather than the content of what he said.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 77.

<sup>404</sup> Lange, p. 77.

<sup>405</sup> Lange, pp. 72, 74–5.

<sup>406</sup> Lange, p. 76.

<sup>407</sup> Lange, p. 76.



FIG. 86 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*  
(Tony Morgan, Art Class, Banbury School) (1977)



FIG. 87 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*  
(Mrs Shalgowski, Art Class, St. Mary's Girls School) (1977)



FIG. 88 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*  
(Mr Spencer, Art Class, Cheney Upper School) (1977)



FIG. 89 *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools*  
(Charles Mussett, Art Class, Radley College) (1977)



Lange would have shared the radical ideas around pedagogy of Paulo Freire who recognized education as a political instrument, as Richard Shaull pointed in his 2005 Foreword to Freire's book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968):

There is no such thing as a *neutral* educational process. Education either functions as an instrument that is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, *or* it becomes 'the practice of freedom,' the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.<sup>408</sup>

Lange's tapes cast teaching as a socially constructed and constructive process that highlighted differences in class and education, without overtly assigning a value to these practices. Lange considered the process of education to be 'subtly but totally political', and 'concerned with the establishment of values and parameters of behaviour; its criteria of success are mostly orientated towards middle class academic aspirations.'<sup>409</sup> The issue of class, thus, runs central in Lange's studies where education is perceived as a form of socialization and of production and reproduction of class identity.

*Work Studies in Schools* invites multiple discursive frameworks for its examination: some within its own historical conceptual, social and artistic terms, while others engender artistic notions that might have still been unformulated at the time. I shall briefly introduce three discursive frameworks that I will examine in the chapter.

One discursive framework for *Work Studies in Schools* focuses on video and the notion of 'feedback' (a term originated in cybernetics), a technical novelty intrinsic to this medium that allowed playing back the recording immediately after, using the same video equipment. This feature saw a proliferation of self-reflective 'close circuits' installations and performances in the 1970s. *Work Studies in Schools* explored the implications of video feedback for teaching and learning environments and might be seen as a progression towards a 'participatory or shared documentary' brought about by video's playback feature, as well as influenced by current epistemological, philosophical and ethical concerns about the politics of representation that questioned the position of the artist as author and demanded that the subjects speak for themselves.

Another discursive framework is seeing *Work Studies in Schools* as a dialogic and pedagogic project, not one that adopts education as a method or as a form (as in the work of Joseph Beuys), but rather intervenes in an existing pedagogic situation and uses the reflexive qualities of video's feedback to promote awareness about teaching and learning and self-empowerment. Therefore, it connects with

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<sup>408</sup> Richard Shaull, Foreword, in Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968), trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2005), pp.29–34 (p. 34).

<sup>409</sup> Lange, 'To Effect a Truthful Study of Work in Schools, in *Work Studies in Schools*, p. 18.



the kind of experimental pedagogies appearing at the time, such as Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* or Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society* (1971),<sup>410</sup> who saw conventional education as reinforcing hegemonic power structures. They promoted new models of open, self-directed education that contested and replaced authoritarian pedagogic ones of transferring knowledge and that sought the pupils' empowerment through collective class awareness. Focusing on pedagogical practices in the classroom, Lange enabled a situation where the social exchange between the teacher and the pupils could be observed and analysed collectively, turning a closed process of exchange into something more open that could potentially be mutually redefined and transformed.

Lastly, *Work Studies in Schools* introduced a fundamental shift in the dynamics between the artist, the 'artwork' and the audience. It can be seen under the discursive framework of a post-studio, socially engaged, participatory practice and one that examines the role of the artist in society. I propose to approach an analysis of this work within the theoretical framework of the socially relational and participatory art as defined by Claire Bishop.

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*Work Studies in Schools* was grounded on the medium of video, not of film, and borrowed concepts and ideas circulating among video practitioners, rather than theoretical writings, as video had yet to develop its own discourse. Some early writings on video were published in magazines such as *Radical Software* in the United States or the British *Studio International*. The first issue of *Radical Software* came out in the summer of 1970 founded by a group of artists and radical media activists, and with regular contributors that included Gregory Bateson, Dan Graham, David Ross, Nam June Paik, Buckminster Fuller and the collective Ant Farm.<sup>411</sup> It promoted a belief in the notion that with the arrival of low-cost half-inch portable video equipment, people would start to make their own television, in order to control, decentralise and 'humanise' information. The editorial stated:

Power is no longer measured in land, labor, or capital, but by access to information and the means to disseminate it. As long as the most powerful tools (not weapons) are in the hands of those who would hoard them, no alternative cultural vision can succeed.<sup>412</sup>

In turn, they promulgated 'new media ecology', funded on 'ecologically valid media processes and their relationship to the social and psychological nourishment of human beings'.<sup>413</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Among Lange's books in his archive, there is a 1977 Penguin paperback edition of Ivan Illich's *Celebration of Awareness — A Call for Institutional Revolution*.

<sup>411</sup> Lange was close to Dan Graham and also knew David Ross, as it is evident by the existence of correspondence with Ross in 1978–79. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>412</sup> Ira Schneider, *Radical Software*, vol. 1, no. 1, Radiance Foundation, New York, 1970.

<sup>413</sup> Beryl Korot and Ira Schneider, *Radical Software*, vol. 2 no. 1, 1972, front inside cover. This issue is in the Darcy Lange Archive.

*Studio International* dedicated a special issue to video in May/June 1976 that was international in scope, with reports on the incipient video scenes in North America and Europe (and Australia). British video artist David Hall's essay on British video practitioners did not include Lange, but the magazine's editor Richard Cork commissioned one page dedicated to his work in this issue — with images of *Cantavieja* and Lange's own writing on *Cantavieja* and *Study of Three Birmingham Schools* — thereby featuring his work more prominently than it would have been if appeared in Hall's account. As evidenced in this issue, video was perceived mainly as a 'communications' medium and informed by ideas taken from communications theory, general systems theory and cybernetics.<sup>414</sup> Artists were particularly drawn to its unique feedback feature. Sue Hall and John Hopkins wrote in this issue:

What distinguishes our approach from that of film culture commentators, for instance, is that it is a communications approach. So, we see video primarily as a communications medium which has an 'aesthetic' or 'expressive' component (or subset). This component is significant, but not in our opinion a dimension whose values exceed those of other dimensions [...] We take the view that a work (of art, expression or other type of communication) only exists in its actual use, and not otherwise. A video tape or TV programme only realises its potential when it is exposed, communicated, distributed, experienced. [...] Although it is possible that at this moment masterpieces are being created which will later receive critical acclaim, it is not the job of media workers to create archives except as a spin-off. The statement that a work exists only in its showing/experiencing leads us immediately to a dynamic view of communication artefacts. The existence and value of a work may change and develop in time, according to the exposure it gets and the feedback or response that is stimulated.<sup>415</sup>

This emphasis on 'showing/experiencing' leading to a dynamic communication, reinforcing the idea of function over aesthetic values, rings close to the last aim expressed by Lange when he formulated the guidelines for the schools project (quoted in the beginning of this chapter): 'to prevent what I make, whether be photograph or video from becoming an end in itself —not dissimilar to the loved art object'.

Great potential was seen in feedback and its various uses in the context of communications theory, as Hall and Hopkins stated:

The theory must also look more closely at the meaning of response (or feedback); metaprogramme (motivation, intention, objective); actors involved, whether persons, organisations or a combination; and contexts in which the actors act and engage in communication. Take feedback, for example. This does not always mean, simply, a direct reply to the source or sender. In the case of broadcast TV, feedback may be perceived by an advertiser as increased sales; by a pop star as more fan mail or increased record sales; by a political party as more votes; by a TV station owner as higher ratings; by a government as reduction of oppositional 'public opinion' [...]; and

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<sup>414</sup> For further reading on this subject see Sue Hall and John Hopkins, 'The Metasoftware of Video', *Studio International*, vol. 191, no. 981, May/June 1976, pp. 260–64.

<sup>415</sup> Hall and Hopkins, p. 261.

by a viewer as ‘seeing oneself on TV’ or having one’s point of view accurately presented in a positive context.<sup>416</sup>

The word ‘feedback’ referred to cybernetics and system theories applied to computer technology and communications, and that brought ideas of self-organisation and self-determination. Willats’s interests and research were drawn to these ideas manifested in his artistic practice and his writings, and as editor of his pioneering magazine *Control*,<sup>417</sup> which he founded in 1965. His artworks dealt with social systems and behavioural response, and through an interactive and participatory practice he examined the variables of social relationships and settings. They represented systems of thought processes and his analytical works sought to find an application in the social realm. He worked with people, who were typically seen as anonymous participants in a scientific sociological research at the time, collecting, analysing and interpreting data that he turned into visual multi-media, pseudo-research displays composed of diagrams, photographs and factual information. Willats had been a student of Roy Ascott’s unique programme at Ealing School of Art in London in 1961, where cybernetics and behavioural sciences were regular studies.<sup>418</sup> Legg suggests that Willats’s work might have been a point of reference for Lange in his *Work Studies in Schools*, despite their different approaches. Legg writes:

Stephen Willats, with whom Lange also exchanged ideas, had developed a pioneering body of work by the mid-seventies, detailed in a number of texts written by the artists including ‘The Artist as an Instigator of Changes in Social Cognition and Behaviour’ (London: Gallery House Press 1973) and the influential ‘Art and Social Function’ (London: Latimer New Dimensions 1976). Willats’s concern with ways in which the social structure organised and determined its own continuance through ideology, in particular through models of communication networks, and his proposal that artists might develop works as ‘social models’, using data from an audiences’ own environment in order to trigger a shift in their self-image, clearly resonates with Lange’s own thinking.<sup>419</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Hall and Hopkins, p. 261. In the same page, a still from a video shows a man in front of a blackboard with a caption that says, ‘Private seminar on problem-solving. Professor Brian Lewis at Fantasy Factory, December 1974 (learning)’.

<sup>417</sup> In the Darcy Lange Archive there are *Control* issues, no. 6 and no. 9, from 1975.

<sup>418</sup> British educator, artist, and theoretician Roy Ascott became known in the 1960s for his work on the subject of cybernetics and telematics, and the impact of digital and telecommunications networks on consciousness. His theoretical work on interactive art brought together certain characteristics of the avant-garde (Dada, Surrealism, Fluxus, Happenings, and Pop art) with the science of cybernetics championed by Norbert Wiener. Ascott’s notion of cybernetic vision in the arts proposed that interactive art must free itself from the modernist ideal of the ‘perfect object’ and, like John Cage, that the artwork be responsive to the viewer, rather than fixed and static. For Ascott, the ‘spirit of cybernetics’ offered the most effective means for achieving a two-way exchange between the artwork and its audience. Ascott’s utopian vision embraced the new medium and its potential to empower the spectator and deepen his or her experience. <<http://cs.colby.edu/courses/J16/cs267/papers/Ascott-BehavioristArt-Cybernetica60.pdf>> [accessed 4 November 2016]

A letter from Ascott while still at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, announces he is about to become vice-president of the San Francisco Art Institute. He regrets that there are no lecture opportunities for Lange in Minneapolis, but possibly in San Francisco, if the video outfit in Berkley merges with the SFAI. Roy Ascott, letter to Lange, 5 March 1975. Courtesy of the Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>419</sup> Legg, ‘Darcy Lange: Work Studies in Schools’, (p. 46).

To some extent, it is possible to see elements (such as the use of diagrams) of the organising and methodological principles of a sociological research in the structure that Lange developed for his Oxfordshire studies (and possibly in *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* too). Lange shared Willats's interest in art as a site to explore social models (work, housing, education). However, Willats's was predominantly a sociological and cognitive practice, in which the codes of behaviour, intentions or attitudes of people were seen as data to be collected, processed and displayed, using formal strategies that were part symbolic and documentary, and whose aims were to reach both new understandings of, and to possibly offer new solutions to social realities.

Unlike Willats's, Lange's work was primarily experiential and intuitive, drawn to the particular realities of individuals with whom he engaged through video, and where 'research' wasn't processed but presented raw and unedited. Rather than engage with general systems theory aimed at defining 'Who says what, to whom, by what means, and to what effect' (a methodological dictum propounded by H. D. Laswell in 1948<sup>420</sup>), Lange would have sided with Raymond Williams, who in 1974 humanised this dictum by adding, 'to what purpose'.<sup>421</sup> Thus, despite being informed and influenced by some of the basic notions of cybernetics and communications theories popular at the time among video practitioners, these would have felt too theoretically barren and abstract to aid his prevailing face-to-face, personal investigation approach, and his genuine desire to use video as a means to effect change with the people with whom he engaged.

Regarding the notion of feedback, a key figure in Lange's explorations and application of this video feature was Dan Graham.<sup>422</sup> Lange videotaped one of Graham's performances *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1975), according to Graham, at Lange's insistence.<sup>423</sup> Lange's photographic negatives demonstrate he videotaped this performance at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam in 1977, and the EAI circulating copy of this performance, taped in Video Free America in San

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<sup>420</sup> H. D. Laswell, 'The Structure and Function of Communication in Society' (1948), in *The Communication of Ideas*, ed. by L. Bryson (New York: Institute of Religious and Social Studies, 1964).

<sup>421</sup> Raymond Williams, *Television — Technology and Cultural Form* (London: Fontana, 1974). As quoted in Hall and Hopkins, 'The Metasoftware of Video', p. 262.

<sup>422</sup> Lange wrote, 'The Oxford series of video studies had quite a strong relationship with Dan's work. Mainly in the area of the watch-back process — the structure of class study, the teacher's reaction and the student's reaction. We tried to make a good comparative cross-section — a history teacher, a science teacher and an art teacher, with the reactions of both the teacher and the students respectively.' Lange, *Video Art*, pp. 78–79.

<sup>423</sup> Dan Graham, in a conversation with Sabine Breitwieser, recalls: '...normally I don't videotape pieces. In fact, I didn't even want to videotape it [*Performer/Audience/Mirror*], but Darcy insisted on being there and doing it.' MoMA Archives Oral History: D. Graham, conducted at The Museum of Modern Art, November 1, 2011 (transcription by Janet Crowley, completed November 15, 2011), pp. 1–68, p. 37.

<[http://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/learn/archives/transcript\\_graham.pdf](http://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/learn/archives/transcript_graham.pdf).>

The video distributed by Electronic Art Intermix of Graham's *Performer/Audience/Mirror* performed at Video Free America in San Francisco in 1975, gives credit to Darcy Lange as videographer. However, in the Darcy Lange archive, there are photographic negatives and prints of this performance at De Appel in 1977, which would seem to contradict EAI's copy, unless Lange documented both performances.

Francisco in 1975, gives credit to Lange as video cameraman. Whilst Graham used video to document his investigations into perception awareness and real time informational feedback using a mirror as a self-reflexive tool (according to him video functioned semiotically as a mirror), for Lange video was about ‘learning process, and feedback’, according to Graham, who added, ‘But it all goes back to all the great work of Paul Ryan and people in *Radical Software*.’<sup>424</sup>



FIG. 90 Dan Graham performing *Performer/Audience/Mirror* (1975) at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam in 1977

In ‘The Video Show’ organised by Sue Grayson at Serpentine Gallery in May 1975, Graham exhibited *Past Future Split Attention* (performed for the first time in January 1972 at 98 Greene St, New York), a taped performance at Lisson Gallery in London in March 1975. In *Past Future Split Attention*, the performers follow these instructions: ‘Two people who know each other are in the same space. While one person predicts continuously the other person’s future behaviour, the other person recounts (by memory) the other’s past behaviour.’ A proliferation of works emerged from the adoption of the triangular feedback as ‘the analogical mirror’—camera looking at the artist/participant looking at him/herself fed live from that camera in a process of self-referring consciousness. Many installations and performances involved close circuits installations that demanded audience participation, such as Roger Barnard’s *Corridor* (1973–74), David Hall’s *Progressive Recessions* (1975) and Steve Partridge’s *Installation No. I* (1976). These often were presented with elaborated diagrams visualising their workings.

<sup>424</sup> Graham, in conversation with Breitwieser, pp. 37–38. In the Darcy Lange Archive, there is a copy of *Radical Software*, vol. 2, no. 1, Changing Channels, (winter 1972).

Lange participated in *The Video Show*, an event promoted as ‘a festival of independent video’. This was the first major video survey in London, mainly of British productions but also international in scope. It stressed the prominence of video beyond the fine arts, to include the work of community art practitioners — such as Inter-Action and Delves Junior School, Metropolitan Borough of Walsall in West Midlands — whose presentation in an art context would have been unusual: at the time, their work was shown only among the communities they served. The open call extended to any independent videomakers working in Britain to present up to one hour’s worth of videotape. Politically leaning community organisations demonstrated the experimental approaches to using the medium in ways that were tailored to their political causes and aimed at empowering their less privileged communities.

In his catalogue essay for *The Video Show*, Hopkins also conveyed video as an independent medium and an alternative form of television broadcasting, fulfilling the utopian democratising aspirations held at the time by videomakers: ‘The new technologies enable them to make television on their own, simply and cheaply.... Television as art (a few years ago the phrase sounded so odd!) demands our attention.’ Here, video was seen too as an intimate, informal and portable tool able to capture ‘personal moments of feedback’. Its capacity to play back immediately recorded images meant that the audience could see themselves, with potential transformative effects. Hopkins wrote, ‘Seeing myself from the outside can change my idea of my body; my sense of identity, my attitude and behaviour towards others.’<sup>425</sup>

The show demonstrated the clear divide between video artists and community arts groups in the diverged methods and aspirations. This was something David Hall had acknowledged, writing in *Film Video Extra* in 1974:

Video Artists are, by inference, undoubtedly equally aware of the potential of the Popular Medium as independent political and community organisations yet their methods and objectives are usually quite different. Such work takes on two forms, though the two often overlap. One is the production of videotapes, the other live performances and closed circuit installations.<sup>426</sup>

The festival presented live performances and CCTV (close-circuit television) installations that invited audience interaction and participation, and showcased the ways community groups had made portable video useful and available to people. Whilst sharing the solidarity and convictions of some of these community groups, their methods and experiments promoting principles of self-expression and self-representation would have stood apart from Lange’s observational *Work Studies* also screened at

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<sup>425</sup> John Hopkins, ‘The Video Show’, in *The Video Show* (London: Serpentine Gallery, 1975), [n.p.].

<sup>426</sup> David Hall, ‘Video Art and the Video Show’, *Film Video Extra*, Greater London Arts Association, London, 1974, p. 2.

the festival.<sup>427</sup> Coincidentally, Cablevision (Wellingborough) Ltd. presented the videotape *People at Work*, announced as ‘a Wellingborough shoe factory speaks for itself’. Then again, some of these community projects echo his *Work Studies in Schools*, which he began a few months later, and these might have been a source of inspiration to Lange.

Inter-Action travelled around the country in a van offering local people and organisations the opportunity to experiment with the group’s video equipment and use it for their own purposes.<sup>428</sup> Their ‘non-directive’ principles sought to foster grass-roots creativity and self-expression. This collective presented a compilation of tapes produced by different communities in the Festival. *Video and Community Work* stated their aims thus: the ‘uses made of video by community groups and voluntary agencies: as a catalyst to form a group; presenting a case to a local authority; attracting grass roots support; informing others about their rights and benefits; publicising and recording a neighbourhood festival. Video is emphatically not a cure-all; but in the right situation, accompanied and followed up by other forms of community action, it can — and does — get results.’<sup>429</sup> In *Kids’ Video* they trained emotionally disturbed and handicapped children encouraging them to shoot their own videos and ‘producing a tape that helps them demystify the television programmes they might otherwise passively consume’.<sup>430</sup>

Another participant in the festival was the Delves Junior School, from Walsall in the West Midlands. The school had been experimenting with the use of CCTV as a means of expression and communication since 1973. Pupils, aged 8–11, operated the cameras and produced their own programmes, following a teaching project, and provided editorial contents and their own opinions.

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<sup>427</sup> Lange exhibited ‘The Verson Press — Roy Penny’ from the series *A Study of Bradford Working Life* (1974), ‘Mutton Chain’ from *Waitara Freezing Works, Taranaki, NZ* (1974), and ‘Portrait of Sidney’ from *Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast, NZ* (1974). These were screened at the West Gallery Playback as part of a scheduled programme 4 May 1975 alongside works by artists Ian Breakwell and Nigel Wolfe. These works would have been also available at the tape library during the running of the show.

<sup>428</sup> Interestingly, John Miller and Geraldene Peters stated that Lange too was hoping to travel with a ‘media van’ in New Zealand while working on the *Maori Land Project*. They wrote, ‘While visiting Hoani and Ra Park, Lange used the camera and CRT monitor to show footage shot in Ruatoki to the extended family group. He was to follow the same kind of travelling video process in Ruatoria, effectively communicating news of activity within the district to different community groups. Although the practice of travelling film or video for internal community or district use and for communication between community groups was not uncommon, new technological developments enabled a more immediate process of recording and viewing. This process had been intrinsic to his practices in Europe. This was exemplified formally through the *Work Studies in Schools* series, and informally when Lange showed his footage to the Bradford workers and the farmers in Cantavieja. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, it may have also been an opportunity for Lange to follow up on plans established as early as 1978 to apply for Arts Council funding of a ‘media van’ equipped to travel between marae and other rural stations recording and screening material made for local communities.’ John Miller and Geraldene Peters, ‘Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project—Working in Fragments’, in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008) pp. 143–55 (p. 153).

<sup>429</sup> Inter-Action, Community Media Team, Community Media Van, *The Video Show*, [n.p.].

<sup>430</sup> Inter-Action, [n.p.].

At the festival they screened two videotapes made by pupils and one by a teacher. Their page in the catalogue, written by themselves, stated: 'Educational establishments are increasingly recognising the value of CCTV systems and of VTR and VCR equipment in particular. For many junior schools a VTR provides the invaluable facility for teachers of having off-air (BBC and IBA) programmes at times most suited to the school's needs, in addition to still-frame and repeat-use facilities.'<sup>431</sup>

Hopkins and Hall, under the newly established organisation Fantasy Factory, founded a post-production and training centre for video in 1974 and were strong supporters of community video practitioners. They were funded by the Community Arts Committee, the Gulbenkian Foundation and the British Film Institute production board. A contract between Lange and Fantasy Factory signed in 1976, found in the artist's archive, would seem to indicate Lange's leanings towards a more community arts approach. Fantasy Factory showed Lange's work in the UK and brought it to Berlin.<sup>432</sup>

These accounts demonstrate that video was stimulating new forms of representation that were more participatory (a notion that had already been introduced in film by Jean Rouch in the late 1950s, as discussed in Chapter 2). Like 16mm film cameras, the new video equipment had a lightweight mobility, was easy to handle by one person, and had sync sound. More importantly, its unique feedback feature facilitated (even more) and invited an exploration of collaborative forms of representation. There was thus an overt tendency at the time to think of *Work Studies in Schools* as result of video's feedback feature, an understandable tendency given its novelty at this time. Brett, writing in 1977 in the Introduction of the *Work Studies in Schools* catalogue, stated:

This quality of video can change the activity of documentary-making and draw its boundaries in a new way. The people originally filmed can comment on the tape, give their reflections and criticisms and this becomes incorporated into the work itself. Thus its relationship to reality can become more active and also in a way more humorous. A criticism of the means of representation is included too. The form of Lange's documentary is suggested by this technical fact of video.<sup>433</sup>

For Lange the capacity for early portable video to provide live and taped feedback — unlike film or photography — made the medium a viable tool for criticism and analysis, and a catalyst for social change. Lange believed in the potential, unforeseen benefits of video and the sense of empowerment that the tapes could have in the teachers and, more so, in the pupils, as Brett emphasized in the statement below:

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<sup>431</sup> Delves Junior School, Metropolitan Borough of Walsall, *The Video Show*, [n.p.].

<sup>432</sup> There are some contracts with Fantasy Factory in 1977 to show the section *Scything Greens* from *Cantavieja* (1975) at the Video Show at the Swindon Viewpoint Cable TV Station and another contract to show the same work at Merseyside Video Shows (1–12 February 1977). Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>433</sup> Brett, *Work Studies in Schools*, (p. 4).



But something quite new is brought to the subject by the use of videotape. Video in the way Lange has used it has been able to reveal new aspects of the relation of people to their work, and to stimulate new feelings and questions in the audience. This is tied up with its peculiar possibilities and limitation as a medium.<sup>434</sup>

It was a common belief at the time that for the recorded subjects, being able to see themselves could have too beneficial transformative effects. Brett wrote:

Many practical possibilities flowing from this have been seized on. The simple distancing of a person from himself or herself can have a profound therapeutic effect. People who have injured themselves for example make quicker recoveries when they can see tapes of how they were a few days before.<sup>435</sup>

American documentarian George Stoney, writing in 1976, saw half-inch videotape as a 'highly personal medium', and while he did not 'depreciate its potential as a means of reaching vast audiences', he founded it 'most effective, and most satisfying' when he used it 'to enhance communication with the people with whom I already have eye contact'.<sup>436</sup> This prevalent quality of video as an inherent tool for communication was what drew in community workers and video artists alike with a penchant for social change. Stoney, who in 1971 helped found the Alternate Media Center in New York, a university project for training students and community members to use video cameras, was adamant about the importance of showing the tapes to those whom he had recorded and stressed their benefit of helping to establish better forms of communication.<sup>437</sup> He wrote:

This summer while in England I videotaped conversations with aged grandparents to show my children. Later, I recorded the simplest daily chores performed by Irish cottager hosts on a remote island beyond Connemara Bay and played it back to them and their neighbours. In both cases, the very act of recording and playback encouraged an immediate intimacy that could have taken months to develop. Back home the 'primary audiences' for both tapes asked for repeated showings involving friends. As part of the recording and the playback I found I could advance rather quickly and directly to a new level of intimacy and find a welcome response.<sup>438</sup>

This of course records Stoney's view; how the cottagers might have perceived this experience is unknown to us. Contrarily, Lange in *Work Studies in Schools* documented how the teachers and pupils perceived being recorded by Lange and seeing themselves portrayed in his recordings. Stoney found video also an effective tool of communication with students, for whom 'video often becomes an initiator of communication. Relationships are formed that grow without need for further use of any recording device.'<sup>439</sup> A moral sense of the need to give back to the people their recordings seem to

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<sup>434</sup> Brett, (p. 3).

<sup>435</sup> Brett, (p. 4).

<sup>436</sup> George Stoney, 'Learning to Show as well as Make Video', *Film Video*, no. 6 (spring 1976), 16–17 (p.16). This particular issue of the magazine containing this essay is part of the Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>437</sup> Alternate Media Center participated in *The Video Show* held at the Serpentine Gallery in 1975.

<sup>438</sup> Stoney, (p. 16).

<sup>439</sup> Stoney, (p. 17).

have been a code of proper conduct among ethically-minded documentarians such as Stoney.<sup>440</sup> There was a growing awareness about the ethical need to establish a relationship of trust between documentarians and their subjects and that political effectiveness should be measured within specific contexts, conditions, and audiences. Lange too expressed this sense of trust: ‘I should like to express my gratitude to everybody who over the years has suffered cameras being pointed at them, and have cooperated with my activities. I feel that many of these people have offered me their friendship and given a part of themselves and their trust.’<sup>441</sup>

Writing about British art critic John Berger’s 1967 photobook *A Fortunate Man*, a collaborative project with photographer Jean Mohr, John Roberts described Berger’s sense of ‘a shared intimacy with the emotional lives of others, of fraternity’.<sup>442</sup> His description of Berger’s intimacy with his subjects echoes how Lange understood art as a mode of human communication anchored in concrete social relations, but one that could also have reciprocal transformative effects. Lange wrote:

... making videos and photography in other people’s areas, as I have done with my art—whether it be walking in their area, entering their houses, absorbing their ideas or recording them on their burial grounds or their places at work—was due to many motives, not all good, I must say—at times it was for my career, at other times in search of a new image for art. But these motives were balanced by the reciprocal respect that caught me as I entered other people’s territories, as I explored those people so they explored me, and we changed together.<sup>443</sup>

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In *Work Studies in Schools*, Lange recorded spoken language for the first time in his studies of work. Formal education is generally dialogic in its methods and treats human exchange at its core activity. During the 1970s and 1980s, Marxism, feminism and Lacanian psychoanalysis as well as the cultural studies writings of Raymond Williams and Stuart Hall, contributed to critically extend the understanding of representation in its social and psychological relationships. The making of meaning was understood by these intellectuals as being contingent on circumstances, dependent on the respective identity and position of the speaker and the observer. Therefore, the question of who

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<sup>440</sup> Stoney wrote: ‘I’ve often said that my chief reward has been the chance filmmaking has given me to stick my nose into other people’s business. Looking back, I blush to think how many times I’ve filmed and learned without giving anything much in return. But a larger reason is the tradition of filmmaking itself that is so strongly dominated by ego. In the eyes of the documentary filmmaker Fred Wiseman, Ricky Leacock and Peter Davis are as much *auteurs* as Ford, Hitchcock, and Bogdanovich. This tradition is growing in video, too, I fear. Perhaps it makes sense in reference to video artists like Emschwiller, Paik and the Vasulkas. It makes no sense at all for tape makers who honestly want their work to serve as a link between one group of people and another.’ Stoney, (p. 17).

<sup>441</sup> Lange, *Work Studies in Schools*, p. 2.

<sup>442</sup> John Roberts, *The Art of Interruption: Realism, Photography and the Everyday* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1998), p.129

<sup>443</sup> Darcy Lange as cited in the brochure of the exhibition *Land Work People*, (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 1985), [n.p.].

speaks became of crucial relevance and stimulated the ethics of giving voice to subjects. Some filmmakers during the period addressed the question of who speaks and countered the authoritarian voice of the filmmaker through their films, namely Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Marguerite Duras, Chantal Akerman, and Jean-Luc Godard.<sup>444</sup>

A discursive framework can be established to examine *Work Studies in Schools* as a dialogic and pedagogic project. Russian literary theorist and philosopher Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin introduced in the 1930s the term ‘dialogism’ in reference to literature.<sup>445</sup> It has subsequently been borrowed in other disciplines concerning language and communication. In the field of education, dialogic learning has been proposed as a form of learning, achieved through the egalitarian means of dialogue among the subjects involved, teachers and learners. Bakhtin recognised that all language, including the ideas that language contains and communicates, is dialogic, that is, it is dynamic and relational, and engaged in endless redescriptions.

It is necessary to clarify the distinction between the inherent dialogic nature of representation and the dialogic method that Lange facilitated in inviting the teachers’ and pupils’ responses to the video recordings of themselves. The first recognizes the making of meaning as dependent on context, constituencies, cultural values, and the multi-subjectivities at play. The second uses dialogue as a way to analyse and exchange people’s perspectives. Lange came to recognise both. Brett acknowledged the dialogic condition of representation when he wrote:

At the same time the idea of ‘non-manipulation’, if it is taken too far, can become the opposite. It can turn into an attitude of neutrality and indifference, a sort of aesthetic phantom, because there is no such pure state of non-manipulation. The artist is always forced to make choices. And whatever he or she produces is going to be seen differently by different individuals and groups within the audience. The tape of a worker operating a steel press is going to be seen differently by workers in the factory, than by someone who has never been inside a factory. Teachers will see the classroom tapes in a different way from the students. For some people, even the unpretentious style of filming will seem like just the opposite and will be difficult to pay attention to, in the same way that for some, to be photographed ‘informally’ without being prepared and properly arranged before the camera, means a loss of human dignity. All this bears on the relation between the artist’s point of view, the point of view of the subject, and of the audience. All these influence each other, ‘manipulate’ each other.<sup>446</sup>

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<sup>444</sup> On the subject of who speaks, see Constance Penley and Janet Bergstrom, ‘The Avant-Garde: History and Theories’, *Screen* 19, no. 3 (autumn 1978), 113–27.

<sup>445</sup> Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975), ed. by Michael Holquist, trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). One of the four essays contained in this anthology, ‘Discourse and the Novel’, first published in 1934–35, introduced the notion of ‘dialogism’ and the essential ‘dialogic’ nature of the novel (against the monologism of poetry and the epic), where meaning is constantly created and recreated through dialogic processes. His writings on dialogism have influenced scholars in the field of Marxism, semiotics, structuralism among others, and in disciplines such as literary criticism, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology and psychology.

<sup>446</sup> Brett, *Work Studies in Schools*, (p. 5).

In seeing these works as ‘our collective truth’, Lange revoked the authorial monologic position (his as videomaker and that of the teacher), introducing instead a ‘polyvocality’. That is, a co-authorial relationship to the work whereby representation was no longer conceived as having a fixed meaning, but as emanating from multiple and evolving meanings produced relationally, through communicative interactions between the participants: filmmaker, the recorded subjects and the viewers, all alike. The learner and the viewer were both seen as producers of meaning through dialogue and reflection. It was in recognition of the polyvocal nature of these representations and on egalitarian and ethical grounds that Lange let the subjects speak for themselves. In reassessing the politics of representation and the relationship established with his subjects, he adopted the dialogic qualities of video and his recordings as a form of social exchange with his subjects.

The notion of dialogic action was adopted by Paulo Freire and is key in his writings. He understood dialogue as a right and as ‘essential necessity’, because through dialogue and communication with others, we create and recreate ourselves. Freire wrote:

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming — between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied to them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression. If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the word, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings. Dialogue is thus an existential necessity.<sup>447</sup>

According to Freire, teachers should facilitate the conditions for dialogic learning to promote understanding, cultural creation and liberation, and should reject conventional (non-dialogic) models that deny dialogue and reproduce power and oppression. They should enable the students’ empowerment through a collective and non-authoritarian collaboration. According to Donaldo Macedo, Freire ‘never abandoned or devalued class as an important theoretical category in our search for a better comprehension of conditions of oppression’.<sup>448</sup> In fact, Freire believed that dialogue occurred in an established hierarchical context that was unavoidable; it did ‘not exist in a political vacuum’. He wrote: ‘It is not ‘free space’ where you say what you want. Dialogue takes place inside some programme and content. These conditioning factors create a tension in achieving goals that we set for dialogic education.’ Further, ‘Dialogue means a permanent tension, authority continues to be because it has authority vis-à-vis permitting student freedoms which emerge, which grow and mature precisely because authority and freedom learn self-discipline.’<sup>449</sup> For Freire, the dialogic action and the more democratic problem-posing education model have further implications that contribute to the subjects’ self-determination and transformation. He wrote:

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<sup>447</sup> Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (p. 88).

<sup>448</sup> Donaldo Macedo, ‘Introduction’, in Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, pp. 11–28 (p. 14).

<sup>449</sup> Freire, (p. 102).

People develop their power to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in the process of transformation. Although the dialectical relations of women and men with the world exist independently of how these relations are perceived (or whether or not they are perceived at all), it is also true that the form of action they adopt is to a large extent a function of how they perceive themselves in the world. Hence, the teacher-student and the students-teachers reflect simultaneously on themselves and the world without dichotomizing this reflection from action, and thus establish an authentic form of thought and action.<sup>450</sup>

Macedo clarifies that rather than understanding the dialogic as a mere method, the radical goal of Freire's dialogical practice is 'to create a process of learning and knowing that invariably involves theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogue process'.<sup>451</sup> Freire wrote:

In order to understand the meaning of dialogical practice, we have to put aside the simplistic understanding of dialogue as a mere technique. Dialogue does not represent a somewhat false path that I attempt to elaborate on and realize in the sense of involving the ingenuity of the other. On the contrary, dialogue characterizes an epistemological relationship. Thus, in this sense, dialogue is a way of knowing and should never be viewed as a mere tactic to involve students in a particular task. We have to make this point very clear. I engage in dialogue not necessarily because I like the other person. I engage in dialogue because I recognize the social and not merely the individualistic character of the process of knowing. In this sense, dialogue presents itself as an indispensable component of the process of both learning and knowing.<sup>452</sup>

In the field of community photography, artist Jo Spence and Terry Dennett promoted forms of self-representation through documentary-related photographic practices and developed a critical and educational programme described in their 1976 essay 'Photography, Ideology, Education' published in the first issue of *Camerawork* in 1976. It laid out the ideological and methodological basis of the work they had begun with the children's photographic workshops inspired by Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Understanding that pupils can learn not as just as passive listeners but through their own experiences, they saw in photography a tool for empowerment that could have multiple uses (for Spence in therapy too). Through dialogue, the subjects were brought out of the fixed (though not mute) place in the naturalistic photograph and were able to tell their own stories; for Spence, naturalistic images offered an effective means of grounding discussion of shared experiences.

Likewise, in Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*, the viewing of the teachers and pupils recorded offered an opportunity for individual and group self-assessment; it created, what Freire described above as 'a process of learning and knowing' that involved 'theorizing about the experiences shared in the dialogue process'. The dialogic value of Lange's recordings, by being discussed as a group, was commensal (from medieval Latin *commensalis*, from *com-* 'sharing' + *mensa* 'a table') and exponential —

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<sup>450</sup> Freire, (p. 83).

<sup>451</sup> Macedo, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (p.17).

<sup>452</sup> Paulo Freire and Donald Macedo, 'A Dialogue: Culture, Language, and Race' in *Harvard Educational Review*, vol. 65, no. 3 (fall 1995), 377–403 (p. 379).

influencing, and being influenced by the other pupils and the teacher's own impressions of how they saw themselves and one another. This not only expanded their individual and collective learning and knowledge, but they could also transform it, and, in the process, it also transformed pupils from being passive listeners to active becoming subjects of knowledge.

These deconstructive efforts in *Work Studies in Schools*, as in Spence and Dennett's Photography Workshop with children, were constituted in and by the actual experience and through the dialogic exchange among specific subjects in their specific social contexts. Lange, like Spence and Dennett, would have shared American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey's notion of 'art as an experience' introduced in 1934 in his book *Art as Experience*.<sup>453</sup> Dewey believed that the experience of an artwork should not be restricted to its material state and its perception, but rather conceived as a process that involves establishing social relations between human beings. Dewey believed that it is precisely in experience and in the artwork's dialogic powers that its emancipated and transformative potential lie; further, that education could be used to counter hegemonic power relations and incite consciousness-raising in his subjects to help overcome class difference. The sociologist George Herbert Mead believed in remodelling a society's values through education, with art at its centre, and that art can raise social consciousness not in the abstract but through creating an empathy with the other. Action was very important to his social theory which also occurred within a communicative process, yet unlike Dewey, the key was not simply human action, but rather social action.

Having said this, hierarchies in *Work Studies in Schools* were not dismantled altogether, for the obvious reason that Lange was still in charge of the camera. The recordings were led by him as were the questions addressed to the teachers and their pupils. Brett, who joined Lange in some of the recordings at the schools, also contributed to form these questions.<sup>454</sup> Lange never gave the camera to the teachers and pupils, unlike other experiments using photography and film where the subjects operated the cameras to portray themselves and their environments — namely the Workers Photography groups, Chris Marker with the Medvedkin Group<sup>455</sup> formed in the post-May '68 spirit, the aforementioned Spence and Dennett and their Photography Workshop in the 1970s, and community video groups whose projects were presented in *The Video Show*, which I shall discuss later. These groups all believed in the emancipatory potential of photography and film, and handed the

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<sup>453</sup> John Dewey, *Art as an Experience* (New York: Putnam, 1934).

<sup>454</sup> Darcy Lange recalled in his memoirs Guy Brett's close involvement in the Oxfordshire project. He wrote, '[Brett] came to several of the video making sessions, and helped put some of the questions to the students'. Lange, *Video Art*, p. 79. Brett can be seen briefly caught by the camera in some of these studies. He also participated in the open discussion celebrated at Museum of Modern Art Oxford on 23 March 1977 alongside Lange, Ron Jones, David Elliot and a large representation of teachers and pupils.

<sup>455</sup> For further reading see Trevor Stark, 'Cinema in the Hands of the People: Chris Marker, the Medvedkin Group, and the Potential of Militant Film', *October* 139 (winter 2012), 117–150.

cameras to workers and children in an effort to produce culture ‘from below’ and to support workers’ struggles for self-determination.

To give one example, Group Medvedkin was formed as a result of Chris Marker’s film *À bientôt j’espère* (1967–68), filmed with the Communist filmmaker Mario Marret and the SLON team (*Service de*



*lancement des oeuvres nouvelles*). The film depicted the workers at the Rhodiaceta textile factory in Besançon, France, during the workers’ strikes that culminated during the period of civil unrest period in May 1968. When *À bientôt j’espère* was first screened in April of 1968 to the workers and the union, it was received with disapproval.

FIG. 91 Group Medvedkin, *À bientôt j’espère* (1967–68)

The debate that took place afterwards, which was recorded on tape, captured the workers’ criticisms of the film. They felt the film had portrayed them as victims and had failed to capture their hopes and aspirations. They also criticized Marker for adopting a romantic view of the workers and the union. As a result, Marker understood the predicament of his well-intended but ultimately deceptive outside position. Marker stated:

We have also carried out a parallel activity, putting cameras and tape recorders into the hands of young militants, led by a hypothesis that is still evident to me: that we will always be at best well-intentioned explorers, more or less friendly, but from the outside; and that, as with its liberation, the cinematic representation and expression of the working class will be its own work. With audiovisual equipment in hand, workers themselves will show us films about the working class, about what it is to go on strike, about the inside of a factory. We could be ten thousand times more crafty, and less romantic, and still be limited by the cinematographic reality that one experiences all the time, whether among penguins or workers, that, of course, one can only ever really express what one lives.<sup>456</sup>

His response to these criticisms was the realisation that the workers at Rhodiaceta should make their own films, leading to the formation of Group Medvedkin.<sup>457</sup> Subsequently, between 1967 and 1971, Group Medvedkin produced a number of extraordinary films with the support of Marker and the film-production cooperative SLON, which provided 16mm film cameras and film equipment and

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<sup>456</sup> Transcription as quoted in Trevor Stark, ‘Cinema in the Hands of the People’, p. 126. The recording of the debate that took place 27 April 1968 is included in ISKRA’s Groupes Medvedkine DVD collection.

<sup>457</sup> The group as per Marker’s suggestion was named after Soviet filmmaker Alexander Medvedkin, inspired by his collectivist approach, resuscitating the legacy of the Soviet factographic impulse. Medvedkin turned a train into a film production studio, the ciné-train, and travelling through the Soviet Union in 1932 produced films of workers in factories and screened them right after to them. Medvedkin himself, through Marker, met some of the workers at the Rhodiaceta factory and was an inspiration to them.

taught film workshops to interested workers. Group Medvedkin completed their first film *Classe de lutte* in 1969; it was filmed during the strikes and occupations of May 1968. The group followed a non-hierarchical model of production with Marker eschewing any authorship. Marker explained in an interview from 2003 that his aim was ‘to give the power of speech to people who don’t have it, and, when it’s possible, to help them find their own means of expression’.<sup>458</sup>

While the strikes in Rhodioceta amounted to nothing in terms of achieving better working conditions for themselves, they gave the workers a sense of social consciousness and of their power as a collective.<sup>459</sup> The Besançon strikes contested the very foundation of a political order based upon the division of manual and intellectual labour. Film historian Trevor Stark states:

The workers in Besançon contended that culture was a mechanism for the maintenance of class hierarchies; and by extension, in recognizing themselves as the constitutive exclusion of the cultural sphere, the strikers called into question the conception of culture as a separate category within bourgeois society, supposedly divorced from the means-end rationality of productive existence.<sup>460</sup>

Marker rejected any distinction between those who were experts or teachers, and those amateurs; instead, he trusted and fostered the capability of anyone to express oneself. Moreover, he was driven by a need to abandon representation for praxis and to make his and the workers’ film activity useful. He drew inspiration from Medvedkin and the ideas supported by the Soviet factographic project which, significantly, was driven by a commitment to de-professionalization, and supported by, as Stark notes quoting Sergei Tretyakov, ‘an “operativist” emphasis on deskilling and de-specialization stemmed from the conviction that representation was not ‘a unique individual skill’ but rather ‘the property of public education’.’<sup>461</sup>

Whilst there is no evidence that Lange would have been aware or had access to Marker’s films as these would have not been easily available in Britain at the time, it is easy to draw a parallel between Lange’s own transition from depicting workers in factories to the more collaborative approach of *Work Studies in Schools* and Marker’s shift experienced after *À bientôt j’espère*, fostering a *cinéma ouvrier* (workers cinema) with Group Medvedkin — even though Lange never gave the cameras to the teachers and the pupils. What became apparent to Marker was the need to contend with how to document the workers’ struggle in film without re-inscribing the existent power relations, between those who have the power to represent and those who being reduced to be represented.

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<sup>458</sup> Chris Marker, ‘Marker Direct,’ *Film Comment* 39, no. 3 (May–June 2003), 38–41, 39, p. 39.

<sup>459</sup> Marker’s voice-over in *À bientôt j’espère* states, ‘The tangible result of the strike is not the percentage of pay augmentation achieved but the education of a generation of young workers who have discovered in the identity of their conditions, the identity of their struggle.’ Marker, transcription trans. by Stark, in Stark, ‘Cinema in the Hands of the People’, p. 123.

<sup>460</sup> Stark, p. 120.

<sup>461</sup> Stark, pp. 131–32. Stark quotes Sergei Tretyakov, ‘The Writer and the Socialist Village’, *October* 118 (fall 2006), p. 69.



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When Brett stated, writing in 1977 in the introduction of the *Work Studies in Schools* catalogue, ‘nobody knows quite how to categorise this kind of work’, he was not making a case for Lange’s originality.<sup>462</sup> Rather, his comment revealed hesitation. Unable to pin down the nature of the new work, he noted that Lange saw these tapes as ‘researches’ and ‘an educational process’ rather than finished artworks, suggesting further development into something Lange could not quite envision.<sup>463</sup> It would seem that Brett (and perhaps Lange too) saw the project as being in a state of preliminary rawness awaiting further completion. They recognised the unfinished and open nature of a work that was formed in its interpretation, being exponential and activated in each viewing, first by and with the recorded subjects and later by and with the audience; hence, its undefined nature might be central to its dialogic nature. The fundamental shift of parameters and relationships between the artist, the artwork and the audience in *Work Studies in Schools* called for an altogether different discursive framework, that of the field of relational or socially-engaged artistic practices.

Brett was close to Lange during the development of this project, to the extent that at times he accompanied Lange to the schools during the recording sessions and participated in some of the conversations taking place with the teachers and pupils. This gave him an insider position.<sup>464</sup> He understood Lange’s transition to video as a way to escape the isolation of studio practice, and because of feeling disenchanted with the lack of real purpose he saw in sculpture; video was to Lange ‘a means of getting closer to “real people”’. But not merely as subject-matter.<sup>465</sup> He quoted Lange saying, ‘Unfortunately my artistic life has been mostly spent in an institution (art school). I feel it is immensely important to spend much time involving myself with real people and real problems of life.’<sup>466</sup> This isolation also extended to the audience, Brett added: ‘To try to end his isolation the artist searches also for his *audience*, he tries to redefine his activity in relation to the public in a new way to bring himself closer to the people. This is a very difficult problem.’<sup>467</sup>

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<sup>462</sup> Brett, *Work Studies in Schools*, (p. 3).

<sup>463</sup> Brett wrote: ‘These videotapes should not be seen as a finished and completed work. Darcy Lange describes them as ‘researches’. [...] It is hard to say what final form this accumulation of material could take.’ Brett, (p.3).

<sup>464</sup> Lange wrote, ‘Guy Brett, who was initially art critic of *The Times* at the period of the Ziggy [*sic*] Krauss Gallery House days, came to several of the video making sessions, and helped put some the questions to the students.’ Lange, *Video Art*, p. 79. Further, Brett briefly appears on camera, caught sitting in the classroom during the recording of the students’ response to the study of the history class by Chris Wright of Cheney Upper School in Oxfordshire.

<sup>465</sup> Brett, *Work Studies in Schools*, (p.4).

<sup>466</sup> Lange as quoted in Brett, (p. 4).

<sup>467</sup> Brett, (p.4).

Further, Brett conveyed that Lange sought a sense of social purpose for *Work Studies in Schools* and an expanded life outside the gallery. This was a desire supported in one of Lange's guidelines for these works ensuring that his photography or video not turn into an end in itself. Brett wrote:

Darcy Lange is searching for ways to make the best possible use of his tapes even while continuing to make them. A set-up like this in a gallery, with a number of separate viewing rooms and chairs, is only provisional, for nobody knows quite how to categorise this kind of work. Particularly important for the artist in knowing how to develop this work further are the reactions of audiences; both the people participating in the tapes when they see them played back afterwards, and different individuals and groups among the public. An exhibition in an art gallery naturally puts the emphasis on the artist, the author. But in this case the emphasis should fall on the *project*, and what is revealed by it.<sup>468</sup>

When Brett states that 'the emphasis should fall on the *project*,' his use of italics might have intended to stress emphasis, but it denoted too, albeit in unarticulated way, the expanded nature of a project that could no longer be described strictly in terms of documentation or 'studies'. The ontologically distinct nature of the *project* entailed a discursive and relational dimension that was collaborative, porously dialogic and evolving, and that operated not in the realm of the gallery space but in the expanded field of social experience. Radical changes in the arts introduced by performance, fluxus, conceptual and minimal art (and video) brought about the notion that an artwork could be conceived in the form of a social exchange, structured by time and duration, and involving audiences in varied forms of participation. It took art away from the studio and into the street to concern itself with society (with issues of class inequality and gender identity).

In hindsight, *Work Studies in Schools* might be seen as a precursor or proto-work to the kind of artistic practices that appeared in the 1990s and came to be known as 'relational aesthetics', a term coined by Nicolas Bourriaud in 1998.<sup>469</sup> The *social* exchange based upon the dialogic processes inherent in *Work Studies in Schools* could indeed be the constituting core of this *project*, that is, in Claire Bishop's terms, 'people constitute the central artistic medium or material in the manner of theatre or performance'.<sup>470</sup> In fact, Bishop notes that the term 'project' replaced 'work of art' when referring to long-term, socially engaged artistic practices. The term was borrowed from conceptual art in the 1960s, which denoted a *proposal* for a work of art, yet in the 1990s it acquired a different connotation. It replaced the finite object of art for an 'open-ended, post-studio, research-based, social process, extending over time and mutable in form', a description which would seem to fit Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Brett, (p. 3).

<sup>469</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, trans. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with the participation of Mathieu Copeland (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002) (first publ. by Les presses du réel, 1998).

<sup>470</sup> Claire Bishop, Introduction, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, (London: Verso, 2012), pp. 1–9 (p. 2).

<sup>471</sup> Bishop, 'Former West: Art as Project in the Early 1990s', in *Artificial Hells*, pp. 193–217 (p. 194).

I would like to borrow from Bishop's recent critical writing on what she has defined as *participatory art* (rather than other categories such as socially-engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogic art, littoral art, interventionist, research-based or collaborative art)<sup>472</sup> as one of the theoretical frameworks through which to examine Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*. In her seminal 2006 *Artforum* essay 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents', Bishop wrote about the surge of these contemporary practices known as 'relational aesthetics' and expanded her research in her 2012 book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Here she developed a theoretical and art historical framework that traced a genealogy for these practices, linked to the historic and the neo avant-gardes, the latter particularly of relevance to Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*, to which I shall return later.

Neither Brett, nor Lange, articulated, at the time, the notion of *project* as being inscribed in the very process of collaboration understood as an artistic activity; rather they would have seen collaboration as the means of creating an 'artwork' that explored new forms of participatory documentary. As Bishop has noted, in discussing the Artist Placement Group's<sup>473</sup> and Joseph Beuys' pedagogic and discursive activities, in the 1970s 'it was not yet possible to conceptualise public discussion as an artistic activity,' despite these artists placing great emphasis on and shifting their attention to the social relations their activities established, over the making of material objects.<sup>474</sup>

It is worth noting that Brett had been very close to Brazilian artists Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark in the late 1960s. He was instrumental in Oiticica's reception in London through the seminal 1969 exhibition 'Hélio Oiticica: Whitechapel Experience' held at the Whitechapel Gallery in London — Oiticica had been invited by Brett to exhibit at his Signals Gallery in London but with the demise of the gallery he negotiated the show to be held at the Whitechapel. The notion of 'experience' was conceived as turning the space of the gallery into a 'total environment' and offering the spectator an experiential immersive sensorial encounter. It is clear that Brett was exposed to — and embraced — expanded notions of art that engaged and descended from a phenomenological discourse introduced

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<sup>472</sup> Claire Bishop, 'The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents', *Artforum*, vol. 44, no. 6 (February 2006), 179–83 (p. 179).

<sup>473</sup> Artist Placement Group or APG was founded in 1966 in London by Barbara Steveni with her husband John Latham, with the aim of placing artists in government, commercial and industrial organisations. The idea behind was that artists are isolated from the public by the gallery system, and their outsider status could bring new and beneficial ways of thinking into the realities of industry commerce and government. In 1966 Steveni and [Latham](#) were joined by Jeffrey Shaw and [Barry Flanagan](#), soon followed by [Stuart Brisley](#), [David Hall](#) and Ian MacDonald Munro. APG staged a major exhibition at the Hayward Gallery, London, in 1971. The group continued until 1989 when it was reconstituted as O+I (Organisation and Imagination). APG archive is now deposited at Tate Britain Archive. <<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/a/artist-placement-group>>

<sup>474</sup> Bishop, 'Pedagogic Projects: How do bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?', in *Artificial Hells*, pp. 241–74 (p. 245). In her footnote, Bishop writes, 'the nearest thing to dialogue as art was the tightly structured, dematerialised but certificated 'discussions' of Ian Wilson from 1976 onwards, and to a lesser extent, Tom Marioni's free beer salons (1970—)'. (Endnote 17, p. 356).

by minimalism. While Brett could see the *relational* aspects in Oiticica's *experience*, as sensorial encounters or exchanges with the audience that expanded spatial and corporeal conditions of perception, he seemed to have missed the fundamental *relational* discursive nature of Lange's *project*. Hence, Brett framed Lange's work under the discourse and concerns of video art, at the time integrally linked to television, whilst in his tentative ways (referring to it as a *project*), he recognised its expanded nature. His cornerstone references in *Work Studies in Schools* were still inscribed within the discursive framework of video as a medium and the regime of image production, rather than the *social* dimension of the *project* as its defining core.

It is clear that *Work Studies in Schools* was an extension of his previous video studies, but a radical shift had occurred too. First, as result of re-examining the representation of the other, Lange gives voice to the teachers and pupils to discuss how they see themselves portrayed in the tapes and assess their performance and dynamics. Moreover, their reactions influenced the further development of Lange's project, hence, his renunciation of his authorial position for 'our collective truth'. This was not however entirely void of hierarchies, as Lange remained the initiator of the project and the one defining its overall conceptual parameters, exhibition and artistic authorship, themes that I shall discuss later. Second, more relevant to this is the fact that, unlike his previous *Work Studies*, his subjects now turned into primary audiences and participants fundamentally transformed these from *studies* into a *project* in the expanded field of relational practices. That is, Lange's video was now not (or not only) the documentation of, but the *means* facilitating the exchange with the teachers and pupils. The emphasis was on 'collaboration' and the 'collective dimension of social experience', much like Bishop remarked when she wrote:

Although the photographic documentation of these projects implies a relationship to performance art, they differ in striving to collapse the distinction between the performer and audience, professional and amateur, production and reception. Their emphasis is in collaboration, and the collective dimension of social experience.<sup>475</sup>

Lange was no longer the producer of discrete objects (videos) but a catalyst of a *situation*, intervening first in the existing reality of a classroom by videotaping it and then by turning the recordings into a dialogic means. One could see the video recordings of *Work Studies in Schools* as a form of expanded documentary that incorporated these dialogic exchanges with (and among) the subjects, having an impact on them and in the resulting discrete artwork whose destination is the art gallery. Or rather one might see *Work Studies in Schools* as primarily a *project* wherein the video recording (seen as an intervening activity in a real *situation*) is the catalyst for a dialogic exchange (that would otherwise not have taken place) among the subjects (who are the primary audience and participants), which itself constitutes the *medium* and the core aim of the *project*; and wherein these video recordings capturing

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<sup>475</sup> Claire Bishop, Introduction//Viewers as Producers, in *Participation*, ed. by Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel; Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), pp. 10–17 (p. 10).

the exchanges and processes of the project are shown later in a gallery to a secondary audience (the public) — who can learn also by the extended principle that *everyone* can learn through the distance they assume as observers to an experience other than their own. The act of participation (through the analysis of the tapes) by the teacher and pupils mirrored the participation Lange sought from his larger audience; the diversity of the tapes encouraged their own comparative analysis across the various teachers, schools and subjects.

While the Oxfordshire studies were commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art Oxford in 1977, the earlier Birmingham studies were produced without the promise of an exhibition. Moreover, the vast amount of tapes and viewing hours required also reveals a certain lack of practical consideration for their suitability for exhibition, even within the greater standards of tolerance and endurance for durational works among the avant-garde, driven by a counter-commercial attitude. Regardless, Lange conceived his practice as art and its reception within the art world, however marginal his presence might have been.

The reason for bringing Bishop's writing on participatory art to bear on Lange's project is not so much to make a claim for this work as a precedent of today's participatory artistic practices. Rather, it is because the parameters of *Work Studies in Schools* seem to exceed the realm of representation, as a form of participatory documentation — which would explain why Brett and Lange himself were at odds in attempting to define its conceptual contours, social purpose and reception. *Work Studies in School* seems rather to fit with Bishop's definition of participatory art, that is, as one wherein the 'intersubjective space created through these projects becomes the focus — and medium — of artistic investigations'.<sup>476</sup>

Bishop defines as the hallmark of these new practices a 'desire to overturn the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience' and whereby

the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of *situations*; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term *project* with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now repositioned as a co-producer or *participant*.<sup>477</sup>

Further, Bishop claims that *her* artists — namely Thomas Hirschhorn, Tania Brugera, Pawel Althamer and Paul Chan — unlike the artists discussed by Bourriaud — including Philip Parreno, Pierre Huyghe, Liam Gillick, Douglas Gordon, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Rirkrit Tiravanija — are 'less interested in a relational *aesthetic* than in the rewards of collaborative activity, whether in

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<sup>476</sup> Bishop, 'The Social Turn', (p. 179).

<sup>477</sup> Bishop, *Artificial Hells*, (p. 2).

the form of working with pre-existing communities or establishing one's own interdisciplinary network'.<sup>478</sup> This rings true for Lange's *Work Studies in Schools* whose aesthetic concerns had subsumed to the social function of this project. Lange was more invested in the impact that these recordings had in his subjects and how his video activity could be used to effect change in them, serving as a tool for their own self-empowerment and to raise their own class awareness, as it is embedded in education, and ultimately facilitate the redefinition and transformation of the inherent power dynamics in education.

*Work Studies in Schools* can be read as having different acts and registers. The first act, the one involving the video activity with the participant subjects, was driven by a desire to serve a social function whereby Lange intervened in a given 'real' life situation with the aim of effecting social change (much the same as the Artist Placement Group which I shall return later). Here the language, concerns and parameters of the exchange with the (non-artistic, active) subjects/participants would be different than with an art audience when presented in a gallery. The second act is when Lange, having been commissioned by the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, returns from his 'exile' to the art gallery with an 'artwork' to be conventionally 'exhibited' to an art audience. Having said this, the panel discussion that took place at the museum after the opening of the exhibition continued Lange's commitment to his primary audience; the teachers and pupils were the participants and the work's only audience as nobody from the art world attended the panel.<sup>479</sup> This event brought together teachers and pupils of different schools and social backgrounds that had not met before. Moreover, it displaced these exchanges from the familiar school setting to the extramural setting of the art museum, with the inevitable shift of physical environments and of discursive frameworks — their exchanges now being proclaimed and framed as art, I shall return to this later — that brought about further reflexivity and new set of dynamics to their project. For Lange (and Brett) it would have been unconceivable at the time to declare the project as constituted in its first act (as participatory art). It would have been also unconceivable to deny the institution of a material artwork (even if residual as documentation) and a form of spectatorship as conventionally understood, despite intuitively getting it right by acknowledging the gallery as possibly not the ultimate destination and purpose of the project.

The role of the artist in society became a core concern of artistic practice and discourse by mid-1970s. There are some examples marking this new direction: namely, the seminar 'Art: Politics/Theory: Practice' held at the RCA in 1974 that brought together activists and artists from the Netherlands and Britain; Richard Cork's commissioned issue of *Studio International* dedicated to 'Art and Social Purpose' in March/April 1976 and his exhibition 'Art for Whom?' held at the

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<sup>478</sup> Bishop, 'The Social Turn', (p. 179).

<sup>479</sup> Lange stated, 'No members of the art world were present.' Lange, *Video Art*, p. 79.

Serpentine Gallery in 1978; and the exhibition ‘Art for Society’ at the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1978 (which featured Lange’s *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*). Cork in his editorial of ‘Art and Social Purpose’ reflected, ‘the most important challenge facing art in the second half of the seventies [was] to restore a sense of social purpose, to accept that artists cannot afford for a moment longer to operate in a vacuum of specialized discourse without considering their function in wider and more utilitarian terms’.<sup>480</sup> Some of the issues raised at the RCA seminar would have been most pertinent to Lange’s practice. Curator of Modern and Contemporary British Art at Tate, Andrew Wilson, writing in the catalogue of his 2016 exhibition ‘Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979’, summarized some of these issues:

Among some of the several questions discussed were whether the artist could be a member of the proletariat, or ‘Is the production of meaning different from the production of commodity?’; ‘the problem of ‘form and content’ in political propaganda’; the problems faced by individual art workers and collectives in the context of capitalist system; the relationship of the artist’s struggle for, and control of means of production?’<sup>481</sup>

German conceptual artist Joseph Beuys was a reference for contemporary artists like Lange engaged in the issue of education. Beuys came to London on several occasions: he participated in Tate’s ‘Seven Exhibitions’ in 1972 with a six-hour lecture performance titled *Information Action* explaining his ideas of education as a means for social and political change, and at ‘Art into Society — Society into Art’ exhibition held at the ICA in 1974. It is likely that his ideas would have reached Lange, and even though their practices remain worlds apart in many respects, there are affinities. Beuys orchestrated workshops, lectures and seminars as part of his support of free education for which he gained popular notoriety and that, as Bishop has stated, ‘was for the most part dependent on his own charismatic leadership, rendering unclear the line between education and one-man performance’.<sup>482</sup> The art circuit was the realm and outreach of his endeavours. Lange, on the contrary, placed himself in existing social realities and processes, so his work could be seen as a more hands-on intervention in a real life situation. Further, although led and initiated by him, Lange did not adopt Beuys’s demagogic and authorial position, but a more humble and earnest camaraderie with his teachers and pupils alike geared to facilitate participation and empowerment, and where equality was a working principle aimed at reinforcing a mutual position of teaching and learning — Lange’s also, through a reflexive act of videomaking and as recipient of his subjects’ feedback.

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<sup>480</sup> Richard Cork, Editorial, in *Studio International*, vol. 190, no. 980, (March/April 1976). This issue contains writings by Terry Atkinson, Rosetta Brooks, Victor Burgin, Gustav Metzger, John Stezaker, Terry Smith, Caroline Tisdall, John A. Walker and Stephen Willats; and featured the German artists Joseph Beuys, Klaus Staeck, and Hans Haacke, the Artist Placement Group, and Margaret Harrison.

<sup>481</sup> Andrew Wilson, ‘Action Practice’, in *Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979*, ed. by Andrew Wilson (London: Tate Publishing, 2016), pp. 86–93, (p. 87).

<sup>482</sup> Bishop, ‘Pedagogic Projects: ‘How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?’’, in *Artificial Hells*, pp. 241–74 (p. 244).

Nevertheless, Beuys's dictum 'Everyone is an artist' strongly resonates with Lange's own ideas and makes evident that both shared the belief in creativity not as a special faculty which only artists are endowed with and exclusive to the realm of art, but one found in every human being who is able to apply his/her own creativity in all areas of life and, thus, be able to transform society through creativity. Lange thought of art and creativity in broad terms: 'there is no word for art in the Polynesian language, and the Polynesians attempt to do everything as creatively as they can'.<sup>483</sup> For him, creativity was not privileged to artists but he recognized it in workers performing their working tasks (as seen in Chapter 3) and in the teaching of any subject, the arts and sciences alike, as he expressed in the following statement:

Creativity in schools is not necessarily confined just to the art class [...] Art is important because of its observation of material life. Creativity when applied through music, poetry, art, to life and work could become a protection against object worship, beyond functionalism. It might help to recreate involvement and creativity within manual work or build non-object recreational expression.<sup>484</sup>

Creativity, as Thierry de Duve remarks writing about the changing notions of art teaching, supplanted the notion of talent promulgated by the academic model of teaching, one based on technique and imitation.<sup>485</sup> More importantly, he argues that the Bauhaus model, which fostered creativity, implied notions of progress and invention and ideologically stood hand in hand with notions of democracy and egalitarianism. The May '68 slogan 'all power to imagination' might at the time still be relevant before it was criticized as neo-romantic and replaced by 1970s and 1980s' 'critical attitude' brought by the ascending politicised discourses of linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and feminism.<sup>486</sup>

The Filipino London-based artist David Medalla was another politically conscious artist who believed in democratizing art at this time. His installations stressed forms of audience participation, breaking down distinctions between the artist and the public. His thinking was informed by his interest in kinetic art and performance, and influenced by Buddhism as well as ideologically by Marxism and Maoism. Both Beuys and Medalla had shown at Harald Szeemann's exhibition 'When Attitudes become Form', held at the ICA in London in 1969. Medalla's laudable ideals regarding the democratization of art<sup>487</sup> and the forging of closer links between art and society echoed Lange's own: 'I am not an active socialist—maybe I should be—but I always have been frightened of the artist's

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<sup>483</sup> Lange, *Work Studies in Schools*, (p. 18).

<sup>484</sup> Lange, (p. 18).

<sup>485</sup> Thierry de Duve, 'When Form Has Become Attitude – and Beyond' (1994), in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, ed. by Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), pp. 21–33, (pp. 24–5).

<sup>486</sup> de Duve, 'When Form Has Become Attitude – and Beyond', (pp. 28–30).

<sup>487</sup> In 1976 Lange participated in the International Arts Festival for Chilean Resistance, organised by Artists for Democracy, established at the Royal College of Art in 1974 by David Medalla, Cecilia Vicuna, John Dugger and Guy Brett.



role, I mean why should the artist have a special role when in fact everybody has a special role to play.<sup>488</sup> The democratisation of culture and the liberation of communications technology for public access were in the air at the time. And yet, to some extent Lange would share the scepticism expressed by Gustav Metzger and other critics, who distrusted Beuys's mystifying language and found his political ideas too rhetorical and lacking pragmatic purpose in how to effect change in society.<sup>489</sup>

Rather than with Beuys, Lange had greater affinities, in his broader idea of creativity as a transformative means in society and by the artist's insertion in working institutions, with the utopian programmatic aspirations and belief in the transformative potential of art held by the Artist Placement Group (APG).<sup>490</sup> Founded in 1966 by John Latham and his wife Barbara Stevini, APG placed artists in industrial and governmental business and organisations for extended periods. The premise behind the APG was that artists with their creative ways of thinking could make a useful contribution to society by acting as 'independent consultants' or 'researchers', and exercise a beneficial influence on these organisations. Without determining how to act or what sort of outcomes were to be expected, the nature of and level of success of these exchanges varied widely according to each scenario. Success was dependent on power dynamics and where the artist was placed within the structure of the organisation, as well as whether the prospective change was to bring awareness among upper management or provide some sort of empowerment to the workers, which would have been met with various degrees of acceptance and resistance.

Their placements in governments proved to be more successful because of less conflict rising from diverging value systems between artists' ideals and the priorities of a profit-driven industry. Under APG's axiom 'context is half the work', it was precisely the diverging differences that the placement aimed to lessen. Lange was offered a placement that fell through at the start and there is not much information about this attempted placement.<sup>491</sup> That Lange had been introducing himself since 1972 into factories, mines and other working environments would have qualified him as an experienced candidate, despite him initially entering these environments to document a reality with no intention of intervening. On the contrary, his aim was to represent the reality without altering it. This changed

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<sup>488</sup> Lange, 'A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp', (p. 12).

<sup>489</sup> See John A. Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2002), pp. 69–70.

<sup>490</sup> This principle of artists working with business and industry had other parallel models: in the USA, Experiments in Art and Technology (EAT) set up by Bells Labs scientist Billy Klüver with artist Robert Rauschenberg in 1966, and the Art and Technology programme at LACMA; Groupe Recherche d'Art Visuel in France, among others. In Britain, sculptors working with new materials such as Eduardo Paolozzi collaborated with steelwork factories and Philip King with glass fibre manufacturers. However, APG placements were not based on sponsorship or as a way to have access to new technology, rather its premises were of another kind, that art could have a humanising and positive effects upon industries.

<sup>491</sup> According to Barbara Stevini, conversation with the author, 15 June 2015.

in *Work Studies in Schools* when Lange came to the understanding of the shortcomings of critical representation for being insufficient for the transformation of society, and that praxis and intervention were necessary, hence, the need for participation to replace the failures of representation. He increasingly recognized in his videomaking (and turned it into) an effective means of enabling a positive social transformation in his subjects.

The Hayward Gallery held the exhibition 'Inno 70' (also known as 'Art and Economics') in 1971 showing the achievements of APG placements, the content of which was agreed by the artists and their hosting industry partners. The material varied from information displays with reports and photographs, video recordings of interviews between artists and representatives of industries and governmental agencies, to sculptures produced by artists with new materials sourced in their placement. Stuart Brisley took on an APG placement at Peterlee New Town, a 'new town' housing project planned after World War II to provide housing to this northern mining community. His project *History Within Living Memory* (1976–77) produced an archive of photographs and interviews with the local population to draw a from-below history dating from 1900 until 1976. He trained women in the community how to use recording equipment and undertake interviews that would form the basis of the archive. His project was greatly influenced by the model of Hackney Writers Workshop in East London that used people's own stories and writings to build their own history (see Chapter 3). What APG introduced was a new framework of thinking about artistic production that was defined by dialogue, interdisciplinary research, long-term engagement, and hands-on exchange between constituencies from different backgrounds and holding different value systems. John A. Walker remarked:

In general the fact that the context was experienced over a lengthy period of time and the fact that no particular works had been commissioned caused a shift of emphasis from artistic product to process, from physical object to concept. Clearly these changes were part of a broader movement which took place in the late sixties, but Latham's advocacy of a time-based cosmology rather than a space-based one was a crucial influence, especially within the evolution of APG.<sup>492</sup>

Another term for the kind of artistic practices adopted by some socially and politically minded artists dedicated to democratise art and facilitate creativity and to give access to art for less privileged groups was 'community art' (or 'community-based art'), a term that Lange never used. APG rejected labelling themselves as a 'community art' organisation. The community arts movement in the UK started to flourish in the late 1960s and by 1974 the Arts Council's Experimental Projects Committee defined this new category, citing 'video and inflatables' as 'suitable techniques'. This report is revealing and worth quoting as its description has strong echoes with Lange's *Work Studies in Schools*:

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<sup>492</sup> John A. Walker, 'APG: The Individual and the Organisation: A Decade of Conceptual Engineering', *Studio International*, vol. 190, no. 980 (March/April 1976), 162–72 (p. 164).

‘Community artists’ are distinguishable not by the techniques they use, although some (e.g. video, inflatables) are especially suited to their purposes, but by their attitude towards the place of their activities in life and society. Their primary concern is their impact on a community and their relationship with it: by assisting those with whom they make contact to become more aware of their situation and of their own creative powers, and by providing them with the facilities they need to make use of their abilities, they hope to widen and deepen the sensibilities of the community in which they work and so to enrich their existence. To a varying degree they see this as a means of change, whether psychological, social or political, within the community. They seek to bring about the increased awareness and creativity by involving the community in the activities they promote... They therefore differ from practitioners of the more established arts in they are chiefly concerned with a process rather than a finished product; a many-sided process including craft, sport, etc., in which the ‘artistic’ element is variable and often not clearly distinguishable from the rest.<sup>493</sup>

Lange was not affiliated with community arts, nor did belong to any video collective such as London Video Arts. Perhaps this was because he was politically far less dogmatic and lacking in the skills of political advocacy of the grass-roots activism undertaken by the community art groups. He shared ideologically their philosophy of community education geared to work with marginalised or less privileged people by bringing art into their daily lives, involving them in creative processes as participants and using a very wide range of media. Community arts groups rejected art’s criteria of success based on aesthetic quality in favour of social and political change, fitting with the democratic aims of community work in general. Their emphasis on process and participation was the central strategy in opposition to the elitist cultural hierarchies of the art world.

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The day after the opening of *Work Studies in Schools*, an open public debate was held at Museum of Modern Art Oxford. All parties involved were invited to participate. The recording of this event shows the participants: Lange, Brett, educationalist Ron Jones and David Elliot, surrounded by a large number of the teachers and pupils recorded in the Oxfordshire project. The debate was purposefully recorded on video; the invitation card announced that the event was to be recorded and shown as ‘part of the final exhibition’. Questions prepared by the teachers were read by Jones and addressed to either the attendants or the artist, concerning their impressions in the aftermath, about the nature of the project, the ‘authenticity’ of its representation, the purpose of this activity, the future use of the tapes, and so on. ‘How objective does the artist feel his films are in showing teachers at work?’ ‘What does the museum expect as an end product of this particular project?’ ‘Who do we expect to benefit from this work?’ ‘Will it be any following by the museum and how will the tapes be used?’

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<sup>493</sup> *Community Arts: The Report of the Community Arts Working Party, June 1974*, (London: The Arts Council of Great Britain, 1974), p. 8

In the debate Brett proposed thinking about the reception and use of these tapes, and contrasted Lange's free approach with the manipulative style of television. Further, he raised the question of the use of and the right context for these recordings: 'What use could be made of these tapes?'<sup>494</sup> He continued:

Because he [Lange] has grown in an art context and studied in an art school this is where we think the work lives, but this could be a temporary thing. It could be a better human situation in which to show them. One thing we ought to compare with is with other things made in this media, the media of television, I would hope that these tapes would be compared with other television programmes. One very obvious difference, which has a lot of meaning and implications, is that you have [a] great deal of time to think about what you think in looking at these tapes. Normally when you look at television, because of pressures of all kinds, it zips before you, it is immediately compare with something else, and all the thoughts are manipulated in a certain direction. A programme of a Comprehensive school in Panorama, a programme in television, it created a furore, it gave a completely distorted vision, it shot about 15 hours and cut down to 50 minutes, an enormous amount was cut out and we don't know what it was. Whereas in these tapes with Darcy, nothing is cut out.<sup>495</sup>

Whilst Lange thought about his activities as art, he could not articulate or had trouble to explain to the teachers, as indeed Brett did too, when they asked why what had taken place — the videomaking of a 'normal' class under progress, as well as the act of viewing the recordings and the taping of their responses to the tapes — should be defined as 'art'. For Lange (and Brett), this was not a Duchampian strategy of nominalism, but rather a belief, a legacy of Constructivism, in the dissolution of disciplinary boundaries between art and life. His responses might seem muddled and defensive as recorded in another taped conversation between Lange, the teachers and Jones that took place at Birmingham School of Education around that time. When asked by someone in the room 'Are you making these tapes as an artist or as an educator?', Lange replied: 'I don't believe in this differences, I don't believe in fine arts.' Someone objected, 'The art world finances you.' to which Lange defensively replied saying, 'Yes, but don't see it as the end of these studies, don't believe in Fine Arts, there is visual creativity and you just apply it to the reality of the situation, a Fine Arts film does not exist.'<sup>496</sup>

Despite a general support from teachers and pupils for Lange's project, a similar disbelief seems to have prevailed in the panel discussion that took place at Museum of Modern Art Oxford, when Jones

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<sup>494</sup> Brett might have been expressing Lange envisioning broadcasting these works in the future. In the tape of the study of Mr Perks's response, of Ladywood School in Birmingham, Mr Perks mentions the prospect of the tapes being broadcast someday, which would seem to reinforce that Lange might have been pondering this option. In the Darcy Lange Archive, there are also letters from BBC Man Alive and BBC Panorama showing interest in the *Work Studies in Schools*. There is no evidence whether these tapes were actually broadcasted. There is also a note (ca. 1973) from television and radio documentarian Phillip Donnellan, of BBC in Birmingham, a politically engaged documentarian of Birmingham life interested in Lange's *Work Studies*.  
<<http://flatpackfestival.org.uk/2008/11/lange-and-donnellan/>> [accessed 26 May 2016]

<sup>495</sup> Brett, videotaped panel discussion, Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 23 March 1977.

<sup>496</sup> Videotaped discussion in Birmingham School of Education, c. 1976.

asked ‘This has been labelled as a work of art, would you like to voice your opinion on this?’ History teacher Ms Webb replied: ‘It is a new idea to me. I didn’t think we were participating in making a work of art. I approached it from the practical point of view. He came to record a class. He did not want to change anything. It would take a lot to think that what we did that afternoon was a work of art.’<sup>497</sup>

This reflected a lack of consensus regarding what constituted art at the time and Lange’s ideas not being well articulated, which only became more accentuated (and confusing) by the change of contexts. It reflected also Lange’s ambivalence and contradiction in both claiming the project as art — by the blunt logic of ‘I am an artist, thus, my activity is art’ — and rejecting ‘fine arts’ by opting for art to be instrumentalised as a path for social transformation, refusing to be an end in itself. Bishop has noted this was a common tendency among socially engaged artists, to ‘adopt a paradoxical position in which art as a category is both rejected and reclaimed’. Bishop wrote: ‘they object to their project being called art because it is a real social process, while at the same time claiming that this whole process is art’.<sup>498</sup> However fruitful or futile these exchanges between the different parties might have been, the fact that Lange’s work engaged teachers and pupils who were willing to be part of and accept the challenge of engaging in a dialogic exchange that gave them a voice, was where the potential agency of *Work Studies in Schools* lay.

Rather than engage in the examination of the image’s process of signification through structuralism and semiotics, Lange grounded his analysis in human experience and opted for the dialogic possibilities of video. Focusing on pedagogical practices in the classroom, Lange explored the implications of video for teaching and learning, inviting his subjects to speak through their own analysis of their experiences of work and class. In enabling a situation where the social exchange between teacher and pupils could be observed and analysed collectively, Lange turned a closed process of exchange into something more open that could be mutually redefined and transformed. In so doing, his images of people at work sought to confer agency, in an effort to realise his expressed ‘socialist aspirations’, and as such he transformed this project into ‘something very close to social activism’.<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Videotaped panel discussion at the Museum of Modern Art Oxford, 23 March 1977.

<sup>498</sup> Bishop, ‘Pedagogic Projects: ‘How do you bring a classroom to life as if it were a work of art?’’, in *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, pp. 241–74 (p. 255).

<sup>499</sup> Lange, ‘A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, (pp. 12–13).

## CHAPTER 5. Social Activism

By 1975, Darcy Lange felt the need to transgress the conventional boundaries of the art world — ‘why should a videographer be confined to galleries and the art world?’ — and defined his work as ‘being something very close to social activism’.<sup>500</sup> His practice by then relied primarily on an experiential and communicative relation with his subjects and was driven by a belief in its potential to effect change, which he saw as being reciprocal. Disillusioned with the art world and feeling the isolation of working alone as an artist, Lange sought collaboration with others and shifted yet closer towards the field of documentary.

In 1977, Lange joined the efforts of fellow activists and documentarians to raise awareness and mobilize support for land claims by the Maori people in New Zealand. Working in collaboration with Maori activist and photographer John Miller, he developed the *Maori Land Project* (1977–1980).<sup>501</sup> In New Zealand, the 1970s saw the rise of the so-called ‘Maori Renaissance’, started in the late 1960s, which actively sought indigenous self-governance and self-determination. It demanded reforms in regards to biculturalism and around land issues. These reforms lead to the revival of *te reo* Maori (Maori language) that culminated with the passing of the Maori Language Act in 1987 and the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, which led to land claims and settlements starting in 1992 and continuing to the present time.<sup>502</sup>

*Maori Land Project* marked a radical shift in Lange’s artistic trajectory, both formally and in content, for reasons that I will elucidate in this chapter. It is unclear what brought Lange in the

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<sup>500</sup> Darcy Lange, in ‘Darcy Lange: A Conversation with Willoughby Sharp’, *Avalanche* (summer 1975), pp. 12–13, (p. 13).

<sup>501</sup> John Miller and Geraldene Peters, in their co-authored essay on *Maori Land Project*, stated that Lange referred to this project by different names such as ‘the Maori Land Video’, ‘the Aotearoa Land Pains project’, and ‘the Maori Social, Cultural and Land project’. However, ‘Maori Land Project’ was the title more commonly used and the one given to the exhibition at Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, The Netherlands (11 January–10 February 1980), and at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (ICC) in Antwerp, Belgium (29 March–27 April 1980). John Miller and Geraldene Peters, ‘Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project—Working in Fragments’, in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery and Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008) pp. 143–55, fn. 2, p. 143. I am indebted to their research and to the extent of their efforts painstakingly contrasting sources, in reviewing all relevant materials contained in Lange’s as well as Miller’s archives, and to Miller’s habit of meticulously recording matters concerning Maori affairs driven by his desire for historical accuracy. Together they produced an essay that offers the contextual information regarding the Maori historical events and individuals that Lange’s project documented, bringing light and a sense of internal coherence, chronology and set of influences and connections that informs this vast project. In this chapter, I will repeatedly refer to and quote from their findings, published in their 2008 essay, as well as introduce corrections when appropriate, as result of contrasting it to other sources I encountered in my research.

<sup>502</sup> *Te Ara, The Encyclopedia of New Zealand* <<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/maori-pakeha-relations/page-6>> [accessed 3 July 2016]

first place to become engaged on this project. He recalled that in returning to New Zealand in June of 1977, he met through a friend people who were involved in the Maori's struggles to retain and claim their land — possibly referring to New Zealand artist Phil Dadson.<sup>503</sup> Dadson, together with New Zealand filmmakers Leon Narbey and Geoff Steven had made *Te Matakite o Aotearoa/The Maori Land March* in 1975, a film for South Pacific Television. Their film documented the 1000 kilometres march that Te Rarawa leader Whina Cooper led, walking from the north of the North Island to Parliament in Wellington. People joined in as the march crossed towns to rally against the continuing alienation of Maori land. It became a historical turning point that had a significant political impact, and politicised large numbers of Maori people for whom this march represented the reassertion of Maori identity.



FIG. 92 Leon Narbey and Geoff Steven, *Te Matakite o Aotearoa/The Maori Land March* (1975)

Lange's *Maori Land Project* developed within the climate of this political moment. This complex and vast work, made of several parts, concentrated mainly on two land claims: Bastion Point, also known by its Maori name *Takaparawhau*, in Auckland; and the Ngatihine Block (land belonging to the Ngati Hine tribe), near Kawakawa, Tai Tokerau, north of Auckland. The former case concerned Maori land confiscated by the Government in 1840 and never returned to its original owners. An occupation took place for over sixteen months in 1977–78 and ended with the eviction and the incarceration of those who refused to leave. It became one of the most public events in the history of the Maori activist movement and one that polarised the country.<sup>504</sup> The Ngatihine Block, on the other hand, was a less well-known case. It involved a

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<sup>503</sup> Lange wrote: 'On return to New Zealand again in September 1977 I met, through a friend who had worked on the earlier *Land March Film*, several people involved in trying to do something about retaining land or returning it to its rightful owners.' Darcy Lange, *Video Art* (Auckland: The Department of Film, Television & Media Studies, University of Auckland, 2001), p. 85.

<sup>504</sup> The Darcy Lange Archive contains a folder with abundant newspaper clippings that documented how Bastion Point was portrayed by the press at the time and the extent of its impact in the public

legal battle to retain land from being leased by a forestry corporation, who had argued that it had been left underdeveloped by its Maori owners.<sup>505</sup>

Lange gathered over 30 hours of video recordings and continued over into the 1980s, making further recordings on the subject. John Miller and Geraldene Peters, in their 2008 co-authored essay ‘Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project—Working in Fragments’, stress the fragmentary nature of this project.<sup>506</sup> In this essay, they claim other later recordings such as *Lack of Hope* (1986)<sup>507</sup> as continuing and being part also of the *Maori Land Project*. *Lack of Hope* critically addressed the drastic neo-liberal reforms introduced by the Labour government (1984–90)<sup>508</sup> that led to an unprecedented scale of unemployment in New Zealand and proposed the Maori systems of communal work practices as a way forward to resolve this crisis. Miller and Peters argue that Lange revisited some of the sites of the *Maori Land Project* and had ongoing relations with individuals such as David Goldsmith and land rights campaigner Matiu Tarawa, both involved in the *Maori Land Project*.<sup>509</sup> Moreover, Lange edited all the footage down to six tapes, (in addition to the recordings of Bastion Point and of the 1980 Fourth Russell Tribunal in Rotterdam) with support from curator Ron Bronson at Auckland Art Gallery Toi O Tamaki. These tapes entered the museum collection and today are deposited at the New Zealand Film Archive (recently renamed Nga Taonga Sound & Vision) in Wellington. However, these six tapes are fragmentary in nature, and so therefore, as Miller and Peters argue, it remains unclear what part of the material constitutes the *Maori Land Project*. Lange revisited the subject and re-edited the footage on different occasions into the early 2000s, and parts were exhibited again at the Auckland War Memorial Museum after his death in 2005.

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domain. These materials were also shown when *Maori Land Project* was exhibited in the Netherlands and Belgium in 1980.

<sup>505</sup> See Andrew Sharp, *Justice and the Maori: Maori Claims in New Zealand Political Argument in the 1980s* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1990).

<sup>506</sup> Miller and Peters, pp. 143–55.

<sup>507</sup> For further reading on *Lack of Hope*, please refer to Miller and Peters, pp. 152–54.

<sup>508</sup> Deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation associated with neo-liberal economics of New Zealand’s fourth Labour government (1984–1990) caused rapid significant reforms to the country’s economic and social institutions during the late 1980s and early 1990s (Boston et al. 1999, Kelsey 1993). Indeed, evidence suggests that the reform of New Zealand’s Keynesian-welfarist institutions was faster and more extreme than elsewhere, including other ‘liberal welfare states’ like Australia or Britain (Ramia and Wailes 2006, Vis 2007). For instance, in 1975 New Zealand ranked 34 out of 54 countries on a range of indicators for ‘economic freedom’ (many of which are associated with neo-liberal policies), but by 1995 it had jumped to 3rd out of 141, with the biggest increase occurring in the latter decade (Gwartney and Lawson 2007). <<https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/journals-and-magazines/social-policy-journal/spj37/37-neo-liberal-reform-and-attitudes-towards-social-citizenship.html>> [accessed 5 November 2016]

<sup>509</sup> Miller and Peters, p. 143.



Lange never found adequate funding support in New Zealand for the post-production costs of *Maori Land Project*. He sought funding from the Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council<sup>510</sup> and made failed attempts to have the work broadcast in the country, approaching TV1 and TV2 with the support of his friend and journalist Virginia Shaw. In the United States, Lange also approached unsuccessfully the National Endowment of the Humanities and CBS television's producers of the *60 minutes* programme.<sup>511</sup> Correspondence corroborates his attempts to secure post-production support in the United States, possibly through networks established through his friend, the film producer Wieland Schulz-Keil in New York.<sup>512</sup> Furthermore, Lange sought support from Granada Television in Manchester with no results.<sup>513</sup>

He found support, however, in the Netherlands, where Lange collaborated with René Coelho, director of the Montevideo video gallery in Amsterdam, and Leonard Henny from Werkgroep Internationale Solidariteit, a centre in Utrecht University's Sociology Department, dedicated to the research of media as a political tool. As a result of these collaborations, three video programmes were produced: a 30-minute version edited for NOS Television (the Dutch Broadcasting Foundation), produced by Coelho; two 20-minute versions each for a university research project by Henny; and a much longer artistic version of 140-minutes<sup>514</sup> edited by Lange. These were exhibited at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum (renamed in 1990 as Van Abbemuseum) in Eindhoven (11 January–10 February 1980), and subsequently, at the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (ICC) in Antwerp (29 March–27 April 1980).

*Maori Land Project* also attracted the interest of Canadian curators and institutions, presumably because of the shared affinities and concerns with Canada's own indigenous population.

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<sup>510</sup> Lange received a \$2000 Queen Elizabeth II Arts Council grant and \$1000 from the Auckland Art Gallery with the intention of showing the project as part of the gallery's *Vanguard* series in 1977. However, with Lange leaving the country, it was postponed until November of 1978. The exhibition never took place because the gallery proposed to move it to their outreach space in Ponsonby, to the dissatisfaction of the Maori individuals involved in the project, who saw the move as 'an insult to the memory of our ancestors' and as an indirect way to censor what might have been perceived as politically polemical material. Robert Jones, 'Maori Film Row', *8 O'Clock*, September 1978. See also, Miller and Peters, p. 149.

<sup>511</sup> Miller and Peters, p. 147.

<sup>512</sup> Letters from Lange to Palmer Williams, from CBS *60 minutes*, and to Stephen Rabin, National Endowment of the Arts in Washington, both c. February 1978. Darcy Lange Archive. The remittent address is of his friend Wieland Schulz-Keil, whom Lange stayed with during a stopover in New York. Schulz-Keil was the founder of the documentary film production company WSK Productions, and a director and producer of documentaries for the BBC and PBS, as well as German and Japanese TV. Further, Lange in a letter during this stopover in New York to Alyson Hunter in London, c. February 1978, seemed optimistic about a potential interest in the project by BBC and German TV. He wrote, 'things could well be different over here with an interest from BBC and German TV'. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>513</sup> Letter to Lange from Mike Scott, Granada Television Ltd., 23 February 1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>514</sup> According to Miller and Peters, there are two artist's versions in the Darcy Lange Estate, one of 150 minutes and another of 300 minutes long. Miller and Peters, p. 149.

Correspondence with the artist indicates that there was an expressed intention of touring the *Maori Land Project* exhibition to Toronto, Alberta and Vancouver. At the time, Lange was establishing links in Canada, where he taught and exhibited regularly in the late 1970s. He was invited by Dan Graham to teach workshops at the Nova Scotia School of Art and Design in Halifax in the summer of 1977 and in October of 1978.<sup>515</sup> There he met Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, David Askevold, and Brian MacNevin, a video artist associated with Center for Art Tapes in Halifax.<sup>516</sup> He also met Canadian art critic John Bentley Mays in Toronto.<sup>517</sup> In April of 1976, via an introduction by Graham and Kasper Koenig, Lange also met Canadian video curator Peggy Gale, director of Art Metropole in Toronto (and later director of A Space, in Toronto, 1979–1981), who became a strong supporter of his work. During the making of *Maori Land Project*, Lange maintained a regular correspondence with Gale, as well as the artist Ian Murray, Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker (curator at Vancouver Art Gallery) and Brian Dyson<sup>518</sup> (acting curator at Alberta College of Art Gallery). They were all interested in touring *Maori Land Project* in Canada,<sup>519</sup> but it never happened.<sup>520</sup>

Whilst I recognize Lange’s involvement in *Maori Land Project* as lasting over the years, due to the non-concluded nature of this project, I will concentrate for the purpose of this chapter mainly on the edition of *Maori Land Project* produced for the 1980 exhibition held in The Netherlands and Belgium. Further, the historical and cultural Maori context that this project addressed is complex and populated with many voices. For the purposes of facilitating my analysis, I will

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<sup>515</sup> Dan Graham’s course plan involved the production of collaborative cable TV programmes. Darcy Lange was to teach a five-week course concerning documentary film and video with reference to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Realism and political concerns. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>516</sup> Postcard from Brian MacNevin, asking Lange if he is interested in a show at Center for Art Tapes in Halifax, 11–20 Oct 1978, c. mid-1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>517</sup> A postcard from John Bentley Mays to Lange, 8 July 1976: ‘your visit was a high point of the video series’. He quotes Krzysztof Wodiczko naming Lange ‘the Engels of videotape’. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>518</sup> Dyson in a letter to Lange also mentions a forthcoming international conference titled ‘Self-consciousness and local activities’, to be held in Banff in May or June 1980, and asks Lange if he would like to participate along with other speakers such as Christo, Jan Swidzinski, Joseph Kosuth, Joseph Beuys, Konrad Fischer, Fred Lonidier, Robert Filliou and [Paolo?] Soleri. He also mentions that Peggy Gale, who has been newly appointed director of A Space in Toronto, would be interested. Bryan Dyson, letter to Lange, 16 May 1979. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>519</sup> A letter from Lange to Fuchs, cc to Buchloh, Danzke, Gale and Byson, with subject heading ‘RE: ICC in Antwerp and other possible collaborators, Buchloh, Danske, Gale and Byson’, [n.d.], registered 8 June 1979. Van Abbemuseum Archive.

<sup>520</sup> Several letters exchanged during February and September of 1980, between Peggy Gale, at the time director at A Space in Toronto, and Jan Debbaut, curator at Van Abbemuseum, denote a serious interest in taking the exhibition to Canada. However, in a final letter from Gale to Debbaut of 10 September 1980, she wrote, ‘I think that we have made a final decision NOT to try to mount his Eindhoven exhibition here, or at least not during this season. I am still interested in the material, as I am interested in general in the work he is doing, but the current season is already very busy, and also we have already a number of programmes of work by European artists: I think it is important that we maintain a certain balance between local/national/international artists here. Also, Darcy will be continuing to work on that project and related ones, so I think we will try to think of something only next year or in farther future.’ Van Abbemuseum Archive.

summarize the main narrative of events in order to provide sufficient context to support my arguments, and will refer to Miller and Peters' essay, which provides a thorough account of the Maori historical events and key individuals surrounding this project.<sup>521</sup> Miller, who often served as cameraman or appeared in the footage, worked closely with Lange and was instrumental in introducing him to key Maori people who were politically involved in these issues, particularly in the Ngatihine Block case. Furthermore, he remained an interlocutor for Lange and assisted him in matters concerning Maori protocols, Lange being a Pakeha (European descendant). *Maori Land Project* was made possible too with the help of Ian Macdonal MacDonald, who at the time was the exhibitions officer at the Auckland City Art Gallery and a strong supporter, and was responsible for lending the gallery's 3/4 inch U-matic equipment to Lange for these recordings.<sup>522</sup>

### **Origins and content of *Maori Land Project***

During the four months Lange spent in New Zealand in 1974, he produced a series of *Work Studies* documenting rural activities in Taranaki, King Country and East Cape, remote regions the country's Northern Island with strong Maori heritage. Some of his studies documented Pakeha farmers, many of whom were his father's acquaintances — such as the subjects of *Clem Coxhead, Study of cow milking in Opunake* and *Vern Hume, Aerial top dressing* — but mostly were studies depicting Maori workers — such as *Jack Jury, Stockman, Uruti; Hewa, Study of a Maori Tree-feller at Waitaanga, King Country*; and *Ruatoria, Study of Sheep Gathering and a Maori Shearing Gang, East Coast*. These studies made the racial divide across the working class in his country apparent. Lange acknowledged his encounter with Maori meat packing workers during the shooting of his *Waitara Freezing Works, Taranaki*, as having a lasting influence in his involvement years later on *Maori Land Project*. He wrote, 'there [I] met many old school mates and was in an indirect way introduced to the other side of New Zealand and a subject which I embarked on three years later — "the Maori Land Issue"'.<sup>523</sup>

Lange was the son of a farm owner and during his upbringing he worked with and developed close relationships with some of Maoris labouring on the farm. The family farms were located in Urenui and Uruti, North of Taranaki,<sup>524</sup> and the family maintained close relationships with

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<sup>521</sup> Miller and Peters, pp. 143–55.

<sup>522</sup> Lange recorded the footage mainly in 3/4 inch Sony Pal colour videocassettes, and 16mm colour film.

<sup>523</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 49.

<sup>524</sup> The particular location of the Lange family farm, Uruti Valley, was in Maori heartland, a territory that once separated the Taranaki and Waikato Maori tribes who fought over this land. In the 1860s, with the invasion of European settlers in Waikato, the Waikato tribes were pushed south to the King Country region that was bordered in the south by Uruti, in the region of Taranaki. King Country was named after the proclamation in 1858 of the first Maori King, the Waikato leader Potatau Te

the local Ngati Mutunga community.<sup>525</sup> By the time he returned to New Zealand in 1974, his first visit since he left in 1968, Lange had developed a growing political awareness, born while living in London as a New Zealand immigrant. This awareness would have shed a new understanding of his country's colonial past and relationship with the Maori population. It would have also given him a new political perception of his own personal placement in regards to his family farm built on former Maori land, one that was in conflict with those of his own siblings now running the farm.<sup>526</sup> His return was also overshadowed by the recent death of his father a few months earlier. Lange's attempt to come to terms with these personal issues converged with the shifting political climate at the time and, in particular, the Maori Renaissance.

Lange had a close connection with the Maori community while growing up in Taranaki, yet the climate concerning Maori politics had changed and was very different upon his return from during his upbringing. Nothing in Lange's early memories of his relationship to Maori people reveals the sense of alienation in the Maoris working at his family farm and the underlying conflict of their relationship. He declared that he had been 'unaware of the nature of the relations between Maoris and Pakehas (Europeans) until nine years after he had left the country', in a letter Lange wrote to the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, quoted in the *Maori Land Project* exhibition catalogue.<sup>527</sup> His new political awareness would have brought about a new sense of his own ethical responsibility and solidarity with the Maori political struggles. He wrote:

I was appalled that many Europeans appeared ignorant about such a rich minority culture that exists in their very midst, and are distressingly oblivious to the damage that is being done to Maori culture as a result of the continual alienation of their land. Far from being a multi-cultural society, we have a situation where a minority communally-based culture has been struggling to survive in an environment totally dominated by European individualist workers.<sup>528</sup>

Being a Pakeha, Lange would have been perceived by the Maori people as an outsider. However, the liberal politics and activism embraced by a new generation in response to the

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Wherowhero. This marked the beginning of the Maori King movement, or *Kingitanga*, formed to unite tribes against selling land to the British Crown.

<sup>525</sup> Miller and Peters, p. 143.

<sup>526</sup> In a letter to his former partner, New Zealand London-based artist Alyson Hunter, Lange referred to his 'communist talk' and confronting views about the farm with his two brothers, stating 'that Roger and Newton would be pleased to see me go so they can get on with the conventional land farming and expansion with all its good and bad points traditional (handed down) and imposed by New America-New Zealand.' Letter from Lange to Alyson Hunter, c. February 1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>527</sup> Lange letter to Van Abbemuseum, [n.d.], c. 1978, in *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project* (Eindhoven: Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum; Antwerpen: Internationaal Cultureel Centrum, 1980), p. 32.

<sup>528</sup> Lange, as quoted in *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, p. 33.

conservatism of the National government meant that many Pakehas offered support to the Maori cause. Therefore, Lange's involvement would not have been unusual, and it may have even been welcome. Also, Miller and Peters remark on the fact that Lange had had close contact with Maori culture during his upbringing and that later he had nurtured friendships with key Maori elders (those bestowed with political power) in places with strong Maori political supremacy and heritage like Parihaka in Taranaki.<sup>529</sup>

Lange's connection with the land was obviously influenced by his upbringing. He acknowledged the Maori people who had strongly impressed upon him their sense of the spiritual value of and respect for the land. Lange conveyed the significant influence that his father and Maori Jack Jury had on him, 'who even more were like father and son than boss and foreman'.<sup>530</sup> Hence, it would seem that Lange was both part of a farming economy, while he shared a sense of respect and spiritual value for nature and the land passed on by his close kinship with Maori individuals whom he worked with. Disengaged politically with the issues concerning land ownership at the time, he might have been oblivious of the latent conflicting values and interests between Pakehas and Maoris. Lange stated once that the *Maori Land Project* was 'not only the biggest undertaking so far', but also one that had 'the most lasting effect on my thoughts and way of life'.<sup>531</sup>

When Lange returned for the second time in New Zealand in June of 1977, his initial intentions were to conduct further studies into the theme of work and schools, nothing to do with the Maori land issues.<sup>532</sup> Lange shot some observational studies in schools in Ruatoria,

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<sup>529</sup> They wrote: 'Although Lange could be considered as an 'outsider' in this area of work, he was not unfamiliar with Maori perspectives during the early stages of his lifetime. His family in Urenui, north of Taranaki worked closely with the local Ngati Mutunga community, and Lange himself had close friendships with local people such as 'Uncle' Ra Raumati, and later, Te Miringa Hohaia of Parihaka.' Miller and Peters, p. 143.

<sup>530</sup> Lange wrote: 'When talking about Jack Jury and my father there is a great deal of crossover in terms of guidance and influence. Jack who worked with my father from the time I was about ten has always been a great guidance to me probably in an indirect way. I remember many discussions about the trees and the forest after he had been mustering and would be taking a spell in the shade.' Lange, *Video Art*, pp. 51–52. Jack Jury was the subject of one of his *Work Studies* conducted in New Zealand, *Jack Jury, Stockman, Uruti* (1974).

<sup>531</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 86.

<sup>532</sup> This is corroborated by a grant application to the Art Council of New Zealand written *c.* mid-1977 in which he described these photographic and video studies: '1. In schools for comparison between Maori and white communities at home, at school, at work and in recreation; 2. On Work with Maori and pioneer European communities, at work, at home and in recreation; 3. Modern urban Maori and white communities or non communities at home, at work and in recreation; 4. In the oral cultural area of Maori society.' He proposed to conduct these recordings in Taranaki, the East Coast and the industrial areas and suburbs of Auckland and Wellington. He also specified the use of 35mm black and white and colour photography, and of video, Sony high-density 1/2 inch V60H and Sony 3/4 inch 20mins cassettes. He hoped to get the support of the Auckland Art Gallery and Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, without specifying in what capacity, while he would provide the necessary video and photographic equipment. The proposed dates were August–September for the schools studies and October–December for the rest

East Coast,<sup>533</sup> continuing in the line of his *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* produced earlier that year. The issue of class was, it seems, to be replaced by that of race, as he planned to contrast schools in Maori and Pakeha communities. Lange documented ‘cultural studies of the true New Zealand society,’<sup>534</sup> a material which he later included in *Maori Land Project* — according to Peters and Miller, this fitted ‘awkwardly’ within this project.<sup>535</sup>

By the time of his arrival in the country in June of 1977, the occupation at Bastion Point had already been underway for nearly six months. Miller claims Lange did not start his recordings until early September and continued these until mid-December when he left New Zealand.<sup>536</sup> He also recalls that when Lange first contacted him in early September, he had already been in touch with the Bastion Point Action Committee and was already, or about to begin, videotaping there. The occupation, according to Miller, was getting lots of publicity by now and many were going to Bastion Point to offer their support.<sup>537</sup> Lange worked closely with Joe Hawke, a leader and the spokesperson of the occupation, who appears throughout the recordings, his words providing the political, legal and historical context of this case. Hawke, joined by other activists, formed the Orakei Maori Action Committee that led the occupation to protest against and prevent the confiscation of the last remaining land in Bastion Point. The occupation lasted for 506 days (5 January 1977 – 25 May 1978) and ended with the police and the New Zealand Army finally evicting and arresting over two hundred protesters who refused to leave. Lange’s recordings of Bastion Point, therefore, covered a relative short period of the

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of the studies about oral culture and Maoris living in urban environments. Darcy Lange, funding grant to the Arts Council of New Zealand, [n.d.], c. mid-1977. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>533</sup> Miller corroborated this, ‘I had always thought he first travelled down to do some videoing at Manutahi Primary School, in Ruatoria, whose principal, David Goldsmith was already known to him. There is no doubt that he made this journey, as there is a tale I clearly recall about him stopping on the side of the road, past Rotorua, to do some landscape videoing and driving off, leaving the tripod on the roadside, which was fortunately retrieved by a passing motorist and handed into the police! So he may have returned even before August 1977.’ John Miller email to the author, 14 July 2016.

<sup>534</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 85. These studies were later added to the *Maori Land Project*.

<sup>535</sup> Miller and Peters, fn. 4, p. 143. The study is of David Goldsmith, at Manuatahi Primary School near Ruatoria and of other classes and ‘kapa haka’ activities or Maori performances (songs and dances) that serve Maori people to express their Polynesian cultural heritage.

<sup>536</sup> Miller claims he met Lange in late August 1977, after he first saw him playing his flamenco guitar on a local TV Arts programme, and not long before a friend of him, Julian Rosenberg, suggested to Miller he should meet him stating, ‘Darcy Lange, video guy/Marxist politics and flamenco guitarist.’ Miller recalled receiving a phone call from Lange (Friday, 2nd September 1977) from Taranaki and announcing coming up to Bastion Point to videotape Sunday evening. Miller concludes, ‘All this indicates that I must have met him sometime during the last two weeks of August 1977, by which time he had made contact with the Bastion Point Action Committee and was already or about to begin videoing there.’ John Miller, email to the author, 14 July 2016. Further, Lange wrote: ‘Shooting had finished 14 December 1977’. Lange, letter to Palmer Williams, CBS *60 minutes*, [n.d.], c. February 1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>537</sup> Miller was not involved in Bastion Point, residing at the time in Wellington, even though later he might have occasionally helped Lange in his recordings of Bastion Point. It was another local filmmaker, Peter Cathro, who regularly accompanied Lange on his shooting sessions. Miller’s friend Bob Tait could not recall anyone specifically introducing Lange to Joe Hawke and the others. Miller, email to the author, 14 July 2016.

occupation, from early September until mid-December. By the time he returned to New Zealand from London, in July of 1978, the occupation had ended.<sup>538</sup>

In September of 1977, Lange also started his collaboration with Miller documenting the developments of the Ngatihine Block Land dispute with the Carter Holt Farms and Forest Ltd.<sup>539</sup> They travelled together in the region interviewing Maori local landowners and recording shareholders meetings and Maori Land Court hearings. The dispute had started in 1974 when one of the land's seven trustees refused to sign a 99-year lease with the forest company. The dispute attracted public news and an investigation, which led to the first green ban placed on Maori-owned land by the NZ Trade Union Movement that caused controversy among those who blamed the power of the unions for blocking the forestry development.

In November of 1977, Lange met also the journalist Virginia Shaw, who became a strong supporter and kept Lange up to date with the news in regular correspondence after he left the country. Shaw was knowledgeable about Maori politics and history, herself being descendent of a Maori family linked to Kawhia, the ancestral home of the Tainui tribe and a place with strong ties to early Maori history, on the Tasman coast of the Northern Island. Shortly after meeting Lange, Shaw became a reporter with New Zealand TV1 and was able to provide advice and share contacts with politicians and key media individuals.

In The Netherlands, Lange further developed the ideas and aspirations of *Maori Land Project* through key collaborators who supported and helped him advance the project.<sup>540</sup> In 1977, before travelling to New Zealand, Lange met Leonard Henny, a Dutch filmmaker known for his socially engaged documentaries and pioneering work in the field of visual sociology. Henny was a professor at the Sociology Department of the University of Utrecht whose research focused on the effects and use of film, photography and video in secondary education.<sup>541</sup> Lange also met René Coelho prior to his trip to New Zealand, introduced by

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<sup>538</sup> According to Miller's notes, Lange left New Zealand 16 December 1977 and returned 3 July 1978.

<sup>539</sup> Miller refers to Lange's recordings dating from 'say August 1977 until the beginning of 1979 with the bulk of material dating from 1977-78'. Letter to Leonard Henny, [n.d.], c. May 1979. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>540</sup> Starting in 1976, Lange intermittently lived long periods in The Netherlands before he finally relocated there in 1981 where he lived until his final return to New Zealand. He met his future wife Miriam Snijders in The Netherlands in 1980, and with their one-year old son Darcy flew back to New Zealand on 30 December 1983, where he lived thereafter until his death in 2005.

<sup>541</sup> Henny traced the use of photography by early social photographers Lewis Hine and Jacob Riis and those who succeeded them in the 1920s, a new generation of photographers such as Walker Evans and Dorothea Lange. His renewed interest in the function of photographs in society set the foundation of visual sociology in the 1970s. Leonard Henny, *Film and Video in Sociology* (Utrecht: University of Utrecht, 1978).

Ray Kril and Gloria Lowe, members of the Victor Jara Collective,<sup>542</sup> who had been referred to Coelho by Henny.<sup>543</sup> Coelho was about to open a new gallery in Amsterdam, Montevideo (founded in early 1978), the first space in the Netherlands devoted to time-based media and offered Lange an opportunity to exhibit there.<sup>544</sup> ‘Video Analysis—Maori Land Issue’ (27 March–6 April, 1978) was one of Montevideo’s very first exhibitions. Lange also met around that time Rudi Fuchs, director of the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, who had invited him to have an exhibition there.<sup>545</sup>

According to the invite for ‘Video Analysis—Maori Land Issue’, it would seem that by the time of the Montevideo exhibition, the core notion of what became the 1980 ‘Maori Land Project’ exhibition, had already begun to shape conceptually. The invitation announced:

The project will start off with a 30-minute television documentary, to be followed with a 3 part sociological analysis with the Utrecht University, finally

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<sup>542</sup> The Victor Jara Collective, formed in Guyana in 1976, took their name from and to commemorate the Chilean poet, Victor Jara, who was assassinated in the military coup against the Allende’s government in Chile in 1973. The Collective consisted of Rupert Roonaraine (director), Ray Kril and Susumu Tokunow (cinematography & editing), Lewanne Jones (audio, research, editing), Gloria Lowe and Pippin Ross (production associates). The Collective was known for their 1977 documentary *The Terror and the Time*, which examined colonialism in British Guiana during the 1950s and the means by which the British government undermined the Guyanese people’s struggle for independence. See Ronald Schwartz, *Latin American Films, 1932-1994: A Critical Filmography* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1997), p. 239-40.

<sup>543</sup> Coelho wrote, ‘I think that Ray and Gloria were referred to me by Leonard Henny who knew me as a TV-documentary maker. They brought Darcy to Montevideo.’ Coelho in an email to the author, 8 June 2016.

<sup>544</sup> Coelho in a letter to Lange wrote, ‘How is your allergy for ART developing? If it is not too bad, I would like to suggest an exhibition of your work at Montevideo around March.’ Coelho, letter to Lange, 14 January 1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>545</sup> A letter from Nicholas Serota, director of Whitechapel, to Lange c/o Rudi Fuchs at Van Abbemuseum dated 14 March 1978, in regards to Lange’s inclusion in the Whitechapel exhibition ‘Art for Society’ (10 May–18 June 1978), would seem to support that Lange had already secured with Fuchs an exhibition at the museum. Van Abbemuseum Archive. The initial discussions between Lange and Henny, Coelho and Fuchs about the *Maori Land Project* started by letters while Lange was still in New Zealand, prior to his arrival in Amsterdam in February of 1978. By January of 1978, Coelho was already in contact with Henny and Fuchs at Van Abbemuseum and securing funding: Henny offering \$15 per minute of the used material (estimating 40 minutes, \$600) and NOS \$1500 for the 20 minute television documentary and suggesting that Van Abbemuseum would cover the cost of his airfare from New Zealand back to Amsterdam. He mentioned too receiving all the tapes from Nova Scotia, which were ‘with all the other tapes at the moment with Leonard’s team to be transcribed’. Coelho, letter to Lange, 18 January 1978. Further, how Lange’s tapes of the Bastion Point were sent to Coelho via Nova Scotia is unknown. A letter addressed to Lange, c/o David Askevold in Venice, California, 28 December 1977, might seem to indicate that Lange stayed with Canadian artist and friend Askevold at his arrival in Los Angeles in mid-December. Askevold at the time was based in Los Angeles, teaching at CalArts, and he might have been travelling back to Halifax over Christmas and taken the videotapes with him. Lange would have already left New Zealand for Los Angeles and Mexico, and had stopovers in Toronto, where he had screening at Art Metropole invited by its director Peggy Gale (‘Darcy Lange New Video Works’ screenings, Art Metropole, Toronto, 27 January 1977) and in New York, where he unsuccessfully approached CBS’s *60 minutes* and NEA for support, before arriving in Amsterdam.



leading to 4–5 hours series of documentaries supporting the Maori Land Issue.<sup>546</sup>

Coelho recalled that Lange was not sure how to proceed with the recordings of Bastion Point; he didn't have the facilities he needed, nor had he a precise notion on how to produce his documentary.<sup>547</sup> Montevideo did not have editing facilities nor funding, so it depended on other institutions that would get a copy of the material in exchange for the use of their facilities.<sup>548</sup> The idea of 'Video Analysis—Maori Land Issue' was to present 'the artist at work', whereby visitors would be able to see Lange while he was preparing 'an inventory' of his material and video tapes for his own documentary.<sup>549</sup> It was also an indication that the project was still preliminary and in progress, struggling to get the needed facilities and funding support.

Coelho, who had been a producer at VARA Broadcasting Association<sup>550</sup> but had recently quit his job, approached NOS (the Dutch Broadcasting Foundation) with a proposal for a documentary on Lange's Maori land material to be produced by him. NOS was interested but the documentary would have to meet television standards in terms of length and editing.<sup>551</sup> Coelho agreed to help Lange and together produced a 30-minute version, titled *The Maoris*, to be broadcast in NOS's Panoramiek, a topical programme with reports about foreign events. *The Maoris* was directed and produced by Coelho, edited by Ray Kril with assistance from Lange, and with a script by Gloria Lowe. Coelho recalled being very disappointed with the result, because of the very poor quality of these recordings. He also regarded Lange and the Victor Jara Collective as being 'amateurish'. To him, the documentary did not meet the professional standards of broadcast television, to the extent that he is uncertain whether the programme was ever broadcast.<sup>552</sup> Coelho's negative response is interesting as he, having

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<sup>546</sup> Exhibition invite, 'Video Analysis—Maori Land Issue' (Montevideo, 27 March–6 April, 1978). Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>547</sup> Coelho in a phone conversation with the author, 20 June 2016.

<sup>548</sup> Unpublished interview with René Coelho, c. late 1980s, in Dutch, abbreviated translation to English. Montevideo Archive deposited at LIMA, Amsterdam.

<sup>549</sup> Notes on the Montevideo exhibition. Montevideo Archive, currently deposited at LIMA, Amsterdam. The exhibition invite announced that Lange 'will be working in Montevideo-art-gallery on the on-going project "Video Analysis—Maori Land Issue"'.

<sup>550</sup> VARA, which was founded in 1925 as the Vereeniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs, originally focused on labour and socialism <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VARA>> [accessed 5 November 2016] This might indicate René Coelho's socialist leanings and his initial interest in Lange's work. Coelho had produced films as well; his film *Work* (1973) has great resemblance with Lange's *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life, UK (The Third Situation: Hepworth and Grandage Ltd., 2nd Study: 'Piston Inspection'—Miss June Bell)* (1974). See Coelho's film *Work* (1973) <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZBeT0G8zxc>> [accessed 12 October 2016]

<sup>551</sup> A letter from NOS to René Coelho, 16 June 1978, confirms meeting with Lange that day and their interest in the production of a programme about New Zealand Maori material for Panoramiek. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>552</sup> Coelho in a phone conversation with the author, 20 June 2016.

worked for over ten years in television, was appalled with and critical of the commercial direction of broadcast television. This was the reason for founding Montevideo, in order to support those conceptual video artists and experimental documentary filmmakers who could not otherwise find an outlet for their work. Regardless of whether *The Maoris* was broadcast or not, it was presented in the exhibition in 1980.

Henny produced two versions of the documentary *The Maori Land Struggle* from Lange's footage, under his direction, also edited by Kril, with a script by Cris Kooiman and production assistance by Lowe. The film credits present Lange as cameraman, whose footage had been transferred from video to 16mm film with optical sound. It was produced by the Center for International Development Education of the Sociological Institute in Utrecht. Henny produced these versions as part of the research he was conducting with secondary school children, investigating how media could manipulate or have an effect in the way they form opinions.

The result of these collaborations became the 'Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project' exhibition held in 1980 at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum and Internationaal Cultureel Centrum (ICC) in 1980. Jan Debbaut, curator at Van Abbemuseum<sup>553</sup> in a letter to Peggy Gale, described the contents and the layout of the exhibition as 'a "multi-purpose" set of information on the Maori issue' provided by Lange with which one could do whatever one liked and as a result of 'an integrated teamwork'. Therefore, he added, the installation at Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum looked very different from one at the ICC without explaining their differences. The contents were the same, and he described them as:

1. 3 video programs based on the same material, and when shown together, illustrating in an implicit way different forms of manipulating information on the same object:
  - a. a tape edited by Darcy himself, the 'artist's interpretation',
  - b. a program edited for professional broadcast-television (which means short, efficient, neutral, etc.)
  - c. two tapes produced by the Institute for Sociology of the Utrecht University to study the influencing opinion-making by children in schools; the first one is pro-Maori, the second one pro-government.
2. A set of documentation on the problems, including maps, letters, newspaper articles, etc.
3. The report and the results of the Utrecht University study, based on the experience of working with these tapes in schools.

All videos were in English and the report of the results of the sociological survey were in Dutch.<sup>554</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Jan Debbaut was the curator at Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum at the time of the exhibition (later becoming its director, 1988–2003). While Lange's initial contact was the director Rudi Fuchs, who invited him to exhibit at Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Fuchs was too involved with the forthcoming 1982 'documenta 7' as its artistic director and deferred to Debbaut regarding the organisation of Lange's exhibition.

<sup>554</sup> Jan Debbaut's letter to Peggy Gale at A Space, Toronto, 9 April 1980.

Another copy of Lange's version, titled *Bastion Point*, was also made in conjunction with the exhibition, introducing with Dutch digital overlay subtitles (and one with English<sup>555</sup>) basic facts about Maori history and Bastion Point. In the exhibition catalogue, Lange explains the exhibition as being divided 'to show different interpretations and usages', whereby 'a form of structure and analysis has been imposed on the material' adapted for its different exhibition, education and television contexts.<sup>556</sup>



FIG. 93 a-b *Maori Land Project*, at Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, 1980

The same material was used to make these different versions: Lange's videotape footage — a total of 30 hours of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch U-matic colour videotapes —, 16mm colour film and colour slides

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<sup>555</sup> A proposal *c.* 1978 for the production of a *Bastion Point* version with English overlay subtitles with Lange as director and producer and Brian Dew as assistant producer in New York indicates that Lange was sourcing further support in the United States. It is unclear whether the existing copy with the English overlay titles was produced for the museum, as a more didactic version of *Bastion Point*, or for seeking international distribution in the United States. Van Abbemuseum Archive.

<sup>556</sup> Lange, 'Note by Lange,' *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, pp. 41–42 (p. 41).

also taken by him.<sup>557</sup> It was recorded over the course of three trips to New Zealand between 1977 and 1979.<sup>558</sup> In addition, these versions also used fragments or clips from documentary films on the subject made by other New Zealand filmmakers: Phil Dadson, Leon Narbey and Geoff Steven's *Te Matakite o Aotearoa/The Maori Land March* (1975); Chris Strewé's *Waitangi: The Story of A Treaty and Its Inheritors* (1977); the soundtrack of Barry Barclay's eviction scene of Bastion Point from the *Tangata Whenua* television series (1974); and additional 16mm film footage by Murray Saviden. There were also early photographs and paintings depicting Maori life and history from the mid and late nineteenth century.

The exhibition catalogue, in English and Dutch, featured essays by Raymond Feddeman and Trucke Van Koeverdam, which offered a brief history and cultural basic knowledge of the Maoris in New Zealand, as well as an account of the current state of affairs of Maori people's active resistance and claims over their land. The catalogue also contained interviews with Lange, Coelho and Henny discussing their views on the project.<sup>559</sup>

### ***The Maoris, The Maori Land Struggle and Darcy Lange's Bastion Point***

*Maori Land Project* marked a radical change in Lange's trajectory towards a more politically conscious approach that was likely influenced by the strong politicization around Maori affairs in New Zealand and a desire for a more collaborative practice, influenced by the strong communal Maori tradition and ideas of collectivism, that would have also been aligned with and welcomed by his left-wing Dutch collaborators.

It would seem that Lange was making a transition from working alone to seeking a collaborative approach with others, and also towards documentary.<sup>560</sup> Lange was drawn to Maori's communal values and strong sense of community — one might say he even naively romanticised them — and demonstrated a willingness to share the material he recorded with others to be used for educational purposes and for a documentary suitable for television, as he expressed in the exhibition catalogue. It is equally true that he also held a desire to retain artistic autonomy.<sup>561</sup> This created an internal conflict within his own position, as well as with

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<sup>557</sup> Lange, 'Interview Darcy Lange,' *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, pp. 34–35.

<sup>558</sup> He made three visits: from June until December of 1977, from July until late September of 1978, and from late November of 1978 until mid-February of 1979.

<sup>559</sup> *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project* (Eindhoven: Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum; Antwerpen: Internationaal Cultureel Centrum, 1980).

<sup>560</sup> Virginia Shaw in a letter to Lange recalls discussing with Phil Dadson how Lange 'seems to be willing to make a transition from working alone to working with others making documentaries'. Shaw, letter to Lange, 11 April 1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>561</sup> Lange wrote: 'I must admit that it was difficult for me as an artist, trained to be an individualist, to have to work with other people on the project. [...] In spite of my theories about collectivism and the

others who might have become involved under the assumption that Lange was forging a collaborative exchange and, therefore, felt disappointed when such participation was not fully enabled. I will return to this later.

Virginia Shaw in a letter to Lange addressed his insistence on working collectively. Whilst she understood this could feel invigorating for him having worked for so long alone, she saw the downside of working in collaboration — as compromising certain professionalism. In a way, she foresaw some of the conflicts Lange was facing, having to compromise or take into consideration his collaborators' aims if he were to work democratically together with others. Shaw wrote:

I don't know why are you so obsessed with the collective ideology. I imagine that to work with a group like the Maoris that you were with, was an invigorating feeling after working solo for so long. But all the same there are lots of pitfalls in working collectively, which shouldn't be underplayed. I don't think it matters how you work. It's the attitude you work from that matters. [...] It is very important to produce a professional piece of work, which is not always possible if you work with people unfamiliar with film... You must be able to sell the finished product, or there is not much point to making it in the first place...As long as your finished product doesn't lose its integrity.<sup>562</sup>

Lange admitted embracing collaboration for 'political convictions': there were 'political and democratic reasons for handing over the material that was originally shot exclusively for the purpose of making a long, artistic version of my own'. He added, it was also informed art historically: 'artists in the post-Duchamp period, that is after the evolution from pop art to minimal art and from minimal art to conceptual, should work together with representatives of other disciplines'.<sup>563</sup> In this case, a sociologist and a television producer, and he explained this was one of the reasons for taking this project.

It is through Lange's collaborations with Henny and the Victor Jara Collective, during the development of this exhibition in 1979, that the notion of media manipulation and the political structures exercised by media became the focus of his attention. It is likely that they too could have conceived the idea of establishing a dialectical structure for this exhibition based on presenting contrasting versions of the same material.<sup>564</sup> Lange had also used a similar

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dangers that I can see in extreme individualism, I do think there are valuable elements in individualism.' Lange, 'Interview Darcy Lange,' *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, (p. 33).

<sup>562</sup> Virginia Shaw, letter to Lange, 7 March 1978. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>563</sup> Lange, 'Interview Darcy Lange,' *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, (p. 33).

<sup>564</sup> In a draft letter to Coosje van Bruggen ca early 1978, Lange wrote, 'we are also working with Utrecht sociology university to produce three 20 minute documentaries on the same subject: one for, one unbiased, and one against. These are essentially inspired by Leonard Henny, who is the professor at Utrecht, and eventually provide the support and preparation for towards a 3-4 documentary with the broad aim of broadening the world knowledge of the Maori people and their situation, but also helping at home Maori, and possibly (hopefully European) position and understanding.'

contrasting approach, albeit not as a rigorous methodology, as for instance *Family Group Studies* (1972) and more recently in his series *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77). Using Lange’s Maori land footage, different versions were edited for different purposes: for three different publics (television audiences, secondary class pupils, and museum visitors); by three different agents (a television producer, a sociologist, and an artist), and three different institutions (broadcast organisation, university, and museum).<sup>565</sup> It is easy to see this project, with its various components, as a continuation of Lange’s interest in ‘objectivity’ and ‘truth’, which motivated his early use of different media. However, the focus had shifted from a structuralist exercise with the material and formal qualities of the different representational media to issues relating to film editing, the plurality of publics and theoretical frameworks that shaped the form and content of this work. It was meant as an experiment in media analysis exposing the influential, or manipulative, power of media, and how form and content were determined by who edited the work, its intended usage and its target audience.

Leonard Henny’s *The Maori Land Struggle* (1979)<sup>566</sup>

At the Sociological Institute, Henny’s research with film and video at the time was invested in what he called ‘one-way and two-way communication’ studies.<sup>567</sup> Henny acknowledged the influence of Bertold Brecht’s radical notions of radio, turning it from a one-way ‘distribution apparatus’ to a two-way ‘communication apparatus’, in ways that would transform listeners from being passive consumers to be able to express themselves and produce their own radio programmes.<sup>568</sup> He also followed current progressive experiments with community radio and community television. The notion of two-way communication would have resonated with Lange’s most recent series, *Work Studies in Schools*, with the kind of two-way exchanges enabled in the teacher’s and pupils’ responses.

Henny was also looking at models of different ‘action-research’ groups that used video to propose and introduce ground-up solutions to governmental officials and agencies on issues such as the rehabilitation of neighbourhoods in Utrecht or in the struggle against poverty in

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<sup>565</sup> Lange, ‘Interview Darcy Lange,’ *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, (p. 32).

<sup>566</sup> A flier of the film indicates the film found US distribution by UniFilm Ltd. with offices in New York and San Francisco. Montevideo Archive, placed at LIMA, Amsterdam.

<sup>567</sup> Leonard Henny, *Action Research with Film and Video* (Utrecht: Media Studies Program at the Sociological Institute, University of Utrecht, 1978).

<sup>568</sup> Bertolt Brecht, ‘The Radio as an Apparatus of Communication’, in *Brecht on Theatre*, ed. and trans. by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964) <<http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/source-text/8/>> [accessed 5 November 2016]. Brecht’s theory of two-way communication was influenced by Walter Benjamin’s essay ‘The Author as Producer’ (1934), in Benjamin, *Selected Writings*, vol. 2, part 2, 1931–1934, eds. by Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith, trans. by Rodney Livingstone and others (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 768–782 (first publ. in 1970, *New Left Review* 1/62, July–August 1970).

Austria. Every year an action-research project would be chosen with the students. They would videotape interviews with the focus group to state their issues, and then show these to the very same people in the recordings to arouse their reactions, and subsequently return to further filming in order to convey their experiences as faithfully as possible. These final interviews would take the status of 'evidence' or assessment of the situations by the very same people that the film focused on. This strongly resonated also with Lange's own approach and prime objectives in *Work Studies in Schools*.

Henny was also experimenting with the effects of one-sided and two-sided media presentations in political education with teachers and other social agents to raise consciousness through the use of film in the West about 'the problems of third world people or concerning the ethnic and cultural minorities living in western societies', 'to bring far away problems closer to home'.<sup>569</sup> He was exploring alternative strategies to engage Dutch audiences in international issues that would be relevant to their society, as a Western industrialized country with a colonial past. Protests against the war in Vietnam in the 1960s had mobilized political organizations in The Netherlands in support of liberation movements in the Third World such as those in Angola and Chile, and the Nicaragua Committees, or the Netherlands branch of Venceremos. There were some of the many organizations formed at the time to bring awareness about East-West and South-North international relations and promote peace and non-military approaches to world crisis resolution.<sup>570</sup>

In 1971, the Dutch government had established the National Commission for Development Information and Education (NCO) to promote the discussion of Third World development issues. This political education programme was greatly influenced by the pedagogical writings of Paulo Freire, Oskar Negt and Helga Deppe-Wolfinger. These educationalists shared a concern for the emancipation and liberation of oppressed populations and supported methodologies that were grounded in the personal experiences of the oppressed individuals as a way of building self-empowerment.<sup>571</sup> Henny's efforts were aligned politically to this context, and the way in which Holland, as it was linked with the international system, was contributing to the unequal distribution of wealth, knowledge and power in detriment to the large masses of the population in the Third World. Thus, he emphasized the need 'to generate solidarity with oppressed population groups in the Third World'.<sup>572</sup> This is how Henny would have become

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<sup>569</sup> Leonard Henny, *Raising Consciousness Through Film: Audio-visual Media and International Development Education*, (Utrecht: Media Studies Program at the Sociological Institute, University of Utrecht, 1980), p. 2.

<sup>570</sup> Henny, *Raising Consciousness Through Film*, p. 4.

<sup>571</sup> Henny, pp. 5-6.

<sup>572</sup> Henny, p. 7.

interested in Lange's *Maori Land Project* and might have felt an ethical duty to support the Maori's struggles over their alienated land.

However, Henny was of the belief that making and screening a film was insufficient. To him what people learn directly from viewing a film was not as important as what people might learn from each other in discussion following a screening; further, the potential action that might take place, if consensus was reached, as a result of viewing and discussing the film. Henny was studying what type of films were utilized by these liberal organisations to address Third-World issues to learn which were more effective in generating discussion. He considered the type of film (genre, format, length), its ideological nature (conservative, progressive, ethical), the approach (informative, analytical, empathetic), the film language (Hollywood, documentary, epic), the screening contexts (schools, churches, third world solidarity committees), and the trends for certain films which were dependent on the relevance of their subject in the context of the world affairs.

Henny's study concluded that the most effective films in terms of generating discussion were not the one-sided kind that led to a closed conclusion, nor the open-ended that tended to produce an unstructured discussion. It was rather the two-sided format because it gave the audiences the 'opportunity to identify themselves with a specific point of view and to learn from others in the audience about the merits of their position'.<sup>573</sup> Juxtaposition in the film could then be transferred to juxtaposition among the audience giving each participant the opportunity to 'crystallize his or her thoughts'. At this stage, the audience was no longer discussing only the situation in the film but translated the problem elsewhere to their own situation. To Henny, this transferring of a story from the film to their own experiences — what Freire termed 'generative moment' which he developed in *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* — was key to raising consciousness. It was how people would reach an understanding of the social forces that might determine their own situation.<sup>574</sup>

In the context of these investigations, Henny, together with the Victor Jara Collective, edited the two versions of *The Maori Land Struggle*, which aimed to convey the struggle for self-determination over their land among the Maori people. Their purpose was to introduce Dutch audiences to New Zealand's multi-racial society and the struggles of the Maori population in order to obtain international recognition of their efforts to regain control over the land that they once owned — 'while in 1840, 2617 hectares of land were inhabited by 115,000 Maoris,

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<sup>573</sup> Henny, p. 21.

<sup>574</sup> Henny, pp. 21–22.



the figures for 1978 were 1,2 million hectares for 300,000 people'.<sup>575</sup> The film presented the predicament of the New Zealand government that claimed that the land had been legally bought by the European immigrants, while the Maori refuted this argument questioning the legality and procedures of their assumed ownership, hence their aims at bringing international public attention and solidarity to their claims and struggles.

According to Henny, the two versions they produced had two prime objectives: 'to investigate how conscious-raising can be attained through the use of film and other audio-visual media' and 'the dissemination of the appeal of the Maoris for international understanding and solidarity to their cause'. Ultimately, this awareness about the self-determination of Maori people could also be brought home, and serve to establish a parallel with other minorities around the world living in Holland such as the Surinamese, Moluccan and Mediterranean minorities.<sup>576</sup>

The two versions produced were very similar in style and content in order to study the effect of one-sided and two-sided presentations, despite the fact that both versions supported a Maori point of view regarding the land issue. The one-sided version was edited to represent a partisan view of the Maori perspective, while the second version presented a juxtaposition of Maori and Pakeha views. Each version was shown to sixteen comparable secondary school classes around the country — in terms of grade level, size of the class and proportion of the male and female pupils, similar curriculum and socio-economic backgrounds. All followed a precise format with a brief introduction to the film followed by a 25-minute discussion after the screening. The teacher was told not to intervene in the discussion unless arriving at a standstill situation at which point the teacher was to direct a question to a student or the class as a whole. The discussion was transcribed by two observers and also tape-recorded. The analysis of this data recorded after showing *The Maori Land Struggle* to these schools concluded that the teachers preferred the second version of the film with the juxtaposed arguments. They observed that often in the discussions generated by the two-sided version, such as, for instance, the Pakeha views of Maori expressed by people interviewed on the street, reminded the children of similar opinions expressed by the Dutch about immigrant workers or other cultural minorities living in Holland. This helped the pupils to see the problems of the Maori in New Zealand as being comparable to those of the ethnic minorities in their country.

Henny's two versions of *The Maori Land Struggle* were edited by Ray Kril. Kril stated he was left alone to edit the films, as Lange trusted his 'Marxist dialectic style, which he saw in my films,

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<sup>575</sup> Feddeman and Van Koevedam, *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, (pp. 31–32).

<sup>576</sup> Henny, *Raising Consciousness Through Film*, p. 25.

i.e. *The Terror and the Time*, the 1978 documentary film made by the Victor Jara Collective denouncing repressive colonial violence in Guyana.<sup>577</sup> Both versions start with the same establishing shots and an introductory narrative about the Maori relationship to New Zealand. The shot depicts a state visit of the governor of New Zealand to the Waitangi monument where the Treaty of Waitangi<sup>578</sup> was signed in 1840. The one-sided version presents statements by various Maori leaders who explain the significance of the land for the survival of their culture and spiritual values. First, we hear the voice of Eva Rickard (over visuals of the sea, mountains, land). Rickard was an influential leader of the land struggles in Raglan, a coastal city south of Auckland. She appears in a middle-frontal shot and her deep voice and poised manner exude the earnestness and moral strength invoked by her *mana* (prestige, power). She explains:

firstly, *whenua* is land, secondly *whenua* is the placenta within the mother that feeds the child before birth, and when it is born this *whenua* is treated with respect, dignity, and is taken to a place in the earth and dedicated to *papatuanuku* mother of the Maori people, and there it will nurture the child; our food and our living comes from the earth. And there also, this *whenua* of the child stays, and says, 'this is your little piece of land. No matter where you wander in the world, I will be here, and at the end of your days you can come back, and this is your *papatuanuku* and it will receive you in death'. This is the spiritual significance, I believe, for the Maori people.<sup>579</sup>

The two-sided version instead switches to a shot of Pakehas playing lawn bowls, a sport that represents the Commonwealth and result of the expansion of the British Empire. This is immediately followed by footage of one of meetings of the Ngatihine Action Committee Group, formed to prevent landholders from signing over a 99-year lease of Maori land to a pine forestry company. The same scene of Rickard appears later in this version. Conversely, in the one-sided version, the narrative is constructed by following a string of views from Maori representatives, starting with Rickard and followed by John Miller, Dick Kaki (former captain of the respected World War II The Maori Battalion, speaking in the Ngatihine Action

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<sup>577</sup> Ray Kril, email to the author, 23 June 2016. Further, Kril describes Lange in this email as 'a fun loving person with serious intentions including the Maori land issues. This way of thinking was the bond we shared.'

<sup>578</sup> This treaty made between Maoris and the British Crown is the founding document of the country, by which it guaranteed the Maoris full, exclusive and unhindered property of the Maori lands, forests, fishing waters and other possessions and the Crown the sole right to the purchase of the land and sell it by means of the so-called Maori Land Court. However, the treaty was not signed by all Maori *iwi* chiefs; many only signed the Maori version, as they were suspicious of a discrepancy in its translation. 'The English version guaranteed 'undisturbed possession' of all their 'properties', but the Maori version guaranteed 'tino rangatiratanga' (full authority) over 'taonga' (treasures, which may be intangible). Maori understanding was at odds with the understanding of those negotiating the Treaty for the Crown, and as Maori society valued the spoken word, explanations given at the time were probably as important as the wording of the document.' In the 1970s, the Treaty was the subject of serious revision and protests that lead to the formation of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1975, to investigate the alleged breaches of the Treaty by the Crown. <<http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/politics/treaty-of-waitangi>> [accessed 5 November 2016]

<sup>579</sup> Eva Rickard, transcript by the author. This footage is a fragment from the film *The Land March*. For further knowledge on the concepts of *whenua* and *papatuanuku*, see <<http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land/page-4>> [accessed 5 November 2016]

Committee Group), Mere Ransfield (one of the members occupying Bastion Point gathered around her family inside the *marae* or community house) and Joe Hawke.

While the footage is the same, it appears to be edited in different linear sequences to emphasize and support a particular point of view. Also, the two-sided version in addition has footage covering the Pakeha's views; therefore, it is longer (26 minutes) than the one-sided version (23 minutes). Another difference is the use of voiceovers, whereby the same speech at times is delivered by different voices. For instance, in the one-sided version, the Maori activist and anthropologist Taura Eruera, one of the founders of the Nga Tamatoa (young warriors), speaks on camera providing a radical critical view of the processes of colonialism; meanwhile, in the two-sided version, a female narrator (possibly the voice of Gloria Lowe, with what sounds like a Spanish accent) repeats part of Eruera's speech. Therefore, the one-side version provides the Maori's point of view in the first voice of Eruera speaking about his own history and on camera, allowing audiences to establish an empathy with him and his cause. Conversely, the two-sided version provides this view in the form of the third voice of an unknown female speaker, off camera, who speaks on behalf of Maoris and their history, one that is clearly not her own.

Furthermore, in the one-sided version, the story of the Treaty of Waitangi is told only from the Maori point of view, that is, that the treaty was devious and purposefully misleading; while the two-sided version contrasts this claim with the arguments of the Pakehas who defend the legality of their deal. Lastly, in the one-sided version, a section is allotted to explain the significance of the land for the survival of Maori culture. Meanwhile, the two-sided version gives voice to the Minister of the Maori Affairs of the National government, Duncan MacIntyre,<sup>580</sup> who makes contentious remarks — such as that the Maoris have been taken care of, that if they have more unemployment problems is because they have less education (although he clearly states they have equal intelligence!), and that New Zealand as a country has less racial problems than other western countries. It also includes the views of Pakehas being interviewed at a shopping centre in Auckland's multicultural suburbs of Otara and Browns Bay, expressing their contempt for the Maori's land claims, with some of their remarks reflecting strongly racist views. Both films end with the eviction by the police of the Maoris occupying Bastion Point and the closing scene of Mere Ransfield peacefully singing. She is surrounded by a group of people inside a community house in Auckland set up by Maori elders

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<sup>580</sup> Duncan MacIntyre and Matiu Rata, his Opposition spokesperson and former Minister of Maori Affairs of the Labour Party, were interviewed respectively by current affairs journalists Catherine Judd and Bill Ralston. Virginia Shaw, who had begun working as a current affairs journalist for television, was able to draw these contacts. The camera operator for the film version of the MacIntyre interview was left-wing New Zealand filmmaker Alister Barry. Miller and Peters, p. 145 and p. 145 fn. 13.

to support Maori youths, social outcasts and prisoners, to help them start a new life and brought together under a communal spirit of *aroha* (love).

To study the level of consciousness raised by the films, Henny and his team used four indicators: the knowledge that had resulted from watching the film; whether this knowledge was backed by an understanding of the issues; whether the film led to emotional involvement with the subjects; and whether it generated support for the Maori cause. The study concluded that the one-sided version tended to bring a better understanding and a stronger support for the Maori cause, while the two-sided tended to be more informative by providing additional information that came from the Pakeha's perspective on the issue. The one-sided version questioned the integrity of the filmmaker, which ultimately contributed to the raising of consciousness of the effects of media in the public domain. The study also differentiated between 'opinion' and 'consciousness' research, whereby 'opinion-research may have relevance for consciousness-research to the extent that the shifting of opinions may be part of a process of growth of political consciousness'.<sup>581</sup> Further, Henny wrote:

audience groups which already sympathize with groups that are in a social position like the Maoris of New Zealand, tend to value the one-sided version of the film which helps them to deepen their understanding and subsequent support the Maoris, while audience groups which are not a priori pro the Maoris or other ethnic minorities, tend to be more stimulated by the two-sided version of the film.<sup>582</sup>

All the materials resulted from the research process and findings were presented as documents at the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum and ICC exhibitions, as well as a pamphlet given in the schools with general information about the Maori people, with statistics and diagrams providing data, the organizational system of the Maori population, their values and relationship to the land.<sup>583</sup>

Renee Coelho's *The Maoris*

Coelho's *The Maoris* was produced for NOS. Seen side-by-side, Coelho's *The Maoris* and Henny's *The Maori Land Struggle* feel rather close in pace, style and length. *The Maoris* is complementary, rather than distinctively different. This might be because all three versions used practically the same footage and shared many edited sequences, and also due to the fact that their script and editing had the stamp of the Victor Jara Collective. In other words, *The*

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<sup>581</sup> Henny, *Raising Consciousness Through Film*, p. 47.

<sup>582</sup> Henny, p. 47.

<sup>583</sup> Unfortunately, there are no records at the Van Abbemuseum Archive about the reception of this exhibition from the public and media at the time.

*Maoris* did not have a distinct broadcast value or was edited following more conventional commercial guidelines for television. The style is rather almost too consistent across all three films. *The Maoris* was closer in content to Henny's two-sided version as it also presented the voices of Pakehas interviewed in the street of Auckland as well as the interview with Minister of Maori Affairs for the National government, Duncan McKintyre. However, *The Maoris* clearly offers a stronger portrayal of Maoris and their cause, provided through arguments that are directly presented by Maoris, using frontal shots, eloquently and earnestly speaking for themselves about their views on the land issues, only introducing at the end of the film, the Pakehas' views. Further, while *The Maoris* is informative in its content, this is provided through the Maori and Pakeha's appearances on camera, rather than the more mediated didactic approach in Henny's, with the use of a female voiceover narrator providing general information about New Zealand and the Maoris, and even when speaking the words of Maori speeches, the effect is of neutralizing their message.

The selection of shots and sequences seems to be dictated by the respective emphasis of each film, thus, for instance in *The Maoris*, the opening sets off with a sequence of traditional Maori *haka* (war dance) and *waiata* (Maori songs) performed as part of the Waitangi Day at Waitangi, the place where the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 was closed, and attended by Governor General Sir Dennis Blundell who appears briefly, an excerpt taken from Chris Strewes' film *Waitangi* (1977). Meanwhile, in *The Maori Land Struggle*, the opening sequence is of natural sources like the sea, the land, the mountain, while we hear a female Maori elder performing a *karanga*, a greeting call to the *manuhiri* or guests, usually conducted outside the *marae* (community house) as a signal to visitors to start entering it.

From the start *The Maoris* anchors the Maori's core spiritual value to the land by immediately presenting Eva Rickard's speech defining the land as being a constituting part of their identity. Subsequently, it introduces the politics and conflicting differences between the Maori's spiritual and communal relationship to the land and their desire for self-determination over the decisions of use and control of the land, and the European and government's economic plans to harness the land for capital gain. A scene where John Miller, standing in front of map of the Northern Island of New Zealand, gives a detailed analysis of the present situation, pointing to which areas have been affected and the kind of organizations involved. He explains how companies, partly financed by Japan and other international companies, who often bring their own labourers who take the jobs from the Maoris. Dick Kaki, ex-captain of the WWII Maori Battalion, appears speaking at a meeting with Maori land shareholders of the Ngati Hine Block and supporters of various political parties, ecological, union leaders, members of other Polynesian groups, etc. He proclaims that because all other channels have failed to achieve the

retention of the land, the time has arrived for young Maori warriors to come forward. As a result, an action committee is voted into place and plans made for the upcoming court hearing in order to prevent the leasing of the land of Kawa-Kawa by the forestry company, Caster Holt Ltd.

Conversely, in the two-sided version of *The Maori Land Struggle*, right after its opening sequence, it continues with the exact same opening sequence of *The Maoris* but here with the female voiceover narrator, who introduces New Zealand — as former ‘colony of England’, comparing its population, size with England, geography and location — and the Maoris as its indigenous communities who arrived prior to the British colonization. This cuts straight to the politics introduced by Dick Kaki. The section with Minister of Maori Affairs of the National government MacIntyre appears in both versions half way approximately, however, by the time it appears in *The Maoris*, his statement clearly falls flat and feels demagogic, on account of the eloquently strong statements previously made by Maoris having already established an empathy with them. MacIntyre is further ‘defeated’ by Miller’s and Eruera’s contrasting allegations, further supported by ‘evidence’ like shots of Maoris working in low-paid factory jobs and living in urban centres, being alienated because of having lost their land, as well as by further statements made by Matiu Rata, former Minister of Maori Affairs for the Labour party. In *The Maoris*, the editing strategy is to introduce the Maori’s statements first, followed by the interview with MacIntyre, whose poised demeanour and cagey words make the Maoris look trustworthy. Conversely, the scene with MacIntyre in Henny’s film appears earlier, and is backed up by the street interviews with Pakehas, that however contentious, strengthen the Pakeha’s point of view, hence, establishing a stronger dialectical tension in the film.

Therefore, the respective editorial decisions made in *The Maoris* and *The Maori Land Struggle* are only more evident when carefully watching the three versions together, by contrasting one against each other. The didactic approach offered by Henny would have helped viewers to look for these editorial nuances, providing an exercise in viewing media that would made these choices even more apparent, and more so when viewing Lange’s own (artistic) freer version, *Bastion Point*.

#### Darcy Lange’s *Bastion Point*

In comparison, Lange’s *Bastion Point* is a lengthier (140 minutes), freer and a more personal film. Having been there and shared the experience, Lange’s version conveys an emotional involvement with the Maoris not found in the other versions. As an informative film, it fails to

some extent, as if it does not stand alone without a supplementary contextual background and Lange re-edited later on, adding subtitles (I will return to this in brief). It does not follow the conventional practices of editing, neither of commercial television nor of the sort of Henny's didactic approach. It lacks a defined point of view and an ideological message, being neither informative nor analytical, but rather open-ended. Yet the film's intimate tone appeals to the viewer at an empathetic level that Lange establishes with the Maori people and their cause.

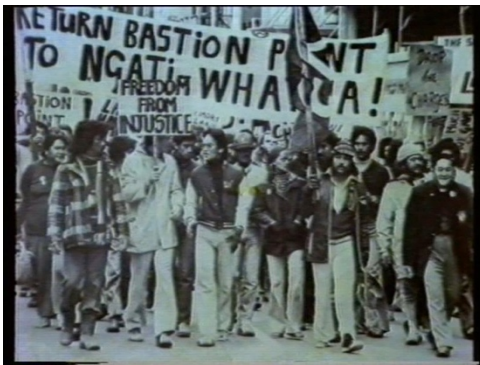


FIG. 94 Stills from Darcy Lange's *Bastion Point* (1980)

Lange expressed a desire to produce a ‘documentary quality of scientific research’, where accuracy, to him, proved pivotal in ‘attempt to provide legal proof’.<sup>584</sup> Lange explained how he structured the film chronologically, sticking to the chronology of the events as these took place in reality and in the same order as he experienced them. He explained why:

I have more faith in what I felt then than what I feel now. I thought it was safer to leave the events in the order in which they happened because I know how I feel when I am filming, how things developed gradually. I got to know the Maoris gradually, too, and the public gets to know them in the same way.<sup>585</sup>

In comparing *Bastion Point* stylistically with his previous work, Lange expressed that this was the first time he ‘succeeded in synthesizing my “long takes technology” [...] with editing techniques’. He continued the use of long take (‘five to fifteen minutes of real time video’), whose main purpose he explained: ‘the camera interferes as little as possible in what is going on. It just registers, often moving slowly, but sometimes it doesn’t move at all, and at other times it moves quite quickly. This way you get the feeling that you are actually there.’<sup>586</sup> In addition, he used ‘two sort of film sequences’: one in the more ‘traditional documentary style’ and ‘short sequences (max. ½ minute) shot with a wind-up Bolex 16mm camera’. The use of film was also due to the fact that Lange had to return the borrowed video equipment. Combining film and video footage demonstrates Lange’s residual attention to the intrinsic qualities of both film and video, as it is revealed in his statement: ‘because the colours of these [film] shots are clearer in sharper focus, which is partially due to the use of a fixed camera on a tripod, the images are more emphatic than the hand-held video takes. I used these typical characteristics of film to give a more truthful documentary value — by the contrasting media.’<sup>587</sup>

For the purpose of describing Lange’s *Bastion Point*, I have compared two different copies of this work from two different sources. One was obtained from the Lange estate now deposited in the New Zealand Film Archive, in Wellington. The other copy belongs to Van Abbemuseum collection, which had been preserved in 1993 and digitised, and is currently deposited at LIMA in Amsterdam.<sup>588</sup> The latter is made of three tapes of five tapes — three tapes for Lange’s version, one for Coelho’s and one for Henny’s, with its two-sections in the same tape — with all five tapes containing the same kind of opening film credits. These are presumably the tapes

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<sup>584</sup> Lange, ‘Interview Darcy Lange,’ *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, p. 34.

<sup>585</sup> Lange, p. 34.

<sup>586</sup> Lange, pp. 33–34.

<sup>587</sup> Lange, pp. 34–35.

<sup>588</sup> LIMA also holds another copy of Lange’s *Bastion Point* that belongs to the Montevideo Collection. Tapes 1 and 2 are exact copies of Van Abbemuseum’s tape 1 and 2. Tape 3, however, is longer (57’28”) than the Van Abbemuseum (36’12”). The tapes are exact copies, but Montevideo’s tape 3 continues with a black lead for 2 minutes and then back to the footage of what looks like the ending section of *The Maori Land Struggle*. It would seem that this tape was recorded over Henny’s film without deleting this section.



that were exhibited in the 1980 exhibition at this museum. The copy from the artist estate would have been produced after the 1980 exhibition. A voiceover was added to the opening sequence, that of Colin Clark's speech at the Fourth Russell Tribunal on the Rights of the Indians of North and Latin America, which was held in Rotterdam after the exhibition, in November of 1980, to which I return. Further, in the closing credits of this later version, Lange dedicates the film to Colin Clark and Roger Rameka, who both died in tragic circumstances, Rameka soon after the end of the Bastion Point occupation and Clark in 1982.<sup>589</sup> This copy contains also digital overlay subtitles all along the film, providing a chronology of historical key moments and of current developments concerning Bastion Point over the months of the occupation, using quotes from newspaper headlines. The Van Abbemuseum copy does not have these subtitles. Other than these differences, both copies are identical. I will therefore describe the later copy, under the assumption that this would have been Lange's revised and preferred version.<sup>590</sup>



FIG. 95 Colin Clark speaking at the Fourth Russell Tribunal, on the right image, he is holding a copy of the Treaty of Waitangi

Lange's film starts with an establishing shot of Bastion Point, of the One Tree Hill, while we hear the voice of Clark greeting in *te reo* Maori the Fourth Russell Tribunal attendants on behalf of his people, with great oratory command, before he continues in English. Shots of him at the podium are intersected with images of the Maori flag and news photographs of Maori

<sup>589</sup> According to John Miller, email to the author, 14 July 2016.

<sup>590</sup> A one-page description of Bastion Point, listing Lange as director and producer and Brian Dew as assistant producer with address in New York, states, 'To emphasize dialogue titles and historical information, digital overlay subtitles will be used', 'also use of voice over to clarify', c. 1978. Van Abbemuseum Archive. Further, a letter from Brian Dew to Lange of 18 April 1978 discusses putting an application to the WNET finishing funds with deadline June that year, and the logistics and costs of transferring from Pal to NTSC  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch video cassettes. Dew also suggests the need of a narrator, a Maori voice, and asks about the content of the 'cuts' or 'advertising inserts' that Lange included in his script. It is likely the one-page description would have been prepared for this funding application. In a later letter from Dew to Lange, 15 June 1978, Dew apologised for pulling out, as NEA and WNET ruled out putting two applications at once and he needed to request funding for his own film project. He suggested if another person in New York would act on his behalf, if Dan Graham would do it. Darcy Lange Archive.

protests and Bastion Point. A pan shot shows a view of the harbour bay of Bastion Point, dominating Auckland's skyline and the ancestral and burial ground of the Ngati Whatua of the Tamaki tribe. The next voice over is of Joe Hawke before a dramatic shot from high above descends down on Hawke who appears on the grounds of the Bastion Point settlement. He declaims:

I am standing on Bastion Point, a historical and ancestral land of the Ngati Whatua people. Our people have lived here for nearly eleven months in opposition to the plan of subdivision by the National government<sup>591</sup>. The rights of the Maori people in this country, for the last hundred and seventy or eighty years, have been trampled on by consecutive governments over the long time we have been residing in this country. And we stand here today, our people, to oppose the plan of exclusive subdivision on the sacred land of the Maori people. It is indicative of the treatment that our people have received in the hands of the capitalist bourgeois government.<sup>592</sup>

Hawke introduces himself in Maori tradition by acknowledging the ancestral links of his tribe to natural resources; the camera follows these features while he points at these in the landscape. He continues:

the church lands which were taken from our paramount chief of whom we are direct descendents and now there are aliens living in the land of our ancestors; the ancestral sea, in which the ancestral foods of our people were collected, for many centuries our people had crossed the seas; the sacred mountain Rangitoto of our people, the place where our chief Tamatekapua<sup>593</sup> drew blood; All now in hands of the government...We are landless in our own country.<sup>594</sup>

And he concludes by pointing to the place where the Europeans, at the time of their first arrival to the country, were met by the Maori chiefs.

Historically, the land of Bastion Point had belonged and been occupied by the *iwi*<sup>595</sup> Ngati Whatua before it was confiscated by the Crown in 1840. It had been a rich fishing and farming area before the Crown turned it into a military base because of its strategic location. When the government no longer needed it, instead of giving it back to its initial owners, the *hapu* of Ngati Whatua-o-Orakei, the government gifted it in 1976 to the Auckland City

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<sup>591</sup> The National government was lead by Robert Muldoon, who served as Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1975 to 1984.

<sup>592</sup> Transcription from the tape by the author.

<sup>593</sup> In Maori tradition, Tama-te-kapua is one of the early chiefs who arrived in New Zealand by canoe from Polynesia about 1350 <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tama-te-kapua>> [accessed 5 November 2016]

<sup>594</sup> Transcription from the tape by the author.

<sup>595</sup> The traditional Maori society is made of different tribes or *iwis* ('bone'), which are the largest organizational units. *Iwis* are subdivided in smaller groups, not bound to the authority of the *iwi*, called *hapu* ('pregnancy'). The *hapu* is the more tightly unit in Maori society and certain activities such as the construction of defences are done collectively by the *hapu*. The smallest unit is the family or *whanau* ('to give birth'). While the organizational structure and collective efforts of the Maori society is driven by their filial relationship, their material basis is the communal ownership of land. See Feddeman and Van Koeverdam, 'The Maoris', in *Maori Land Project*, p. 27.

Council for a reserve, which in turn decided to sell it for real estate development.<sup>596</sup> To the Maori community, this case was representative of the ongoing systematic violation of their rights since the formation of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 and of the increased possession of Maori land through both military and legal force and under the pressure of a fast growing British immigrant population. It vested the Government with the right to purchase and sell the land for economic development to private industries and investors. This breached the understanding of the cultural, emotional and spiritual significance that the land had for the Maori people. Later, as part of the Treaty of Waitangi settlement in the 1980s, the New Zealand Government returned the land to Ngati Whatua and offered them compensation.

Resulting from improper requisitioning of land instigated by the Europeans in 1860, war was declared between Europeans and Maori in the areas where land was most valuable. After losing the war, the Maori lands were confiscated in some places and in others the New Zealand government implemented a system of shareholders. The Europeans, who controlled the department of Maori affairs, would determine where the Maoris could farm, and when debts were incurred, the government would take hold of their land and subsequently sell it or lease on 100-year long tenures to Europeans. Maori land courts were also set up to prevent the renting or purchasing transactions for unfairly low prices. As result of the loss of land, large numbers of the Maori population moved to urban centres. Taura Eruera, in his interview published in the exhibition catalogue, argues:

by the mid-60s 50% of the Maori population were urban. The figure today [1979] is 70%. So there are 30% of the Maori living in the country, on what I'm not sure. The people have moved from the state of *hunga te whenua*, the people of the land, to *waitana hunga te whenua*, ghosts. People are now ghosts, because they are urban bound and very much tied up as a labour pool for the manufacturing and various other sectors.

The film subtitles, placed over the middle of the screen, provide the names of the individuals and specific locations appearing in the screen and a chronology of the Maori land history and current events drawn from newspapers headlines. It also brings excerpts from the aforementioned films to provide further contextual information. At times, there is interplay between what is said and the information given by the news headlines, reproducing the conflicted views between Maori claims and those of the media who often sided with the government's official story. For instance, Hawke explains that the Savage Memorial was built in honour of the first Labour Prime Minister of New Zealand, Michael Joseph Savage, who disrespected Maori land, paradoxically the memorial standing now on their very grounds; meanwhile, the subtitle announces 'the monument for the dying Maori in the old Ngati Whatua fortified village'.

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<sup>596</sup> See history of Bastion Point <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastion\\_Point](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastion_Point)> [accessed 5 November 2016]

Shots of downtown Auckland presents the city as prosperous, serving the interests of the Pakeha economy, while the Maoris are presented as sheep shearing and factory workers, and living in state housing. We hear Hawke reiterating the same message throughout the film: ‘we are homeless, landless people, who don’t own a house...virtually exiled in our own land’. There is a cut to excerpts from the Narbey and Steven film *Te Matakite o Aotearoa/The Maori Land March*, which documented a key historical event in the Maori protest movement, the 1975 march that gathered around 5000 people, including left-wing Pahekas, led by 79-year-old Whina Cooper. We see shots of the march crossing the Auckland Harbour Bridge, the leader holding the Maori flag, Joe Hawke being interviewed while marching, and Cooper speaking megaphone in hand to an impressive mass congregation outside the Parliament. It was one of the first instances where Maori were politically mobilised, bringing renewed hope and strength to the Maori cause.

Lange’s *Bastion Point* moves through a series of scenes collecting moments in the daily life of the occupants living in Bastion Point over the months that Lange recorded there (early September until mid-December of 1977, spring season in New Zealand). In a shot of a gray cold day at the settlement grounds, the *marae* in the horizon and its flag with graffiti written letters stating Ngati Whathua, appears sober and desolated. It cuts to light-hearted festive images at the camp in an early sunny summer day, with performances of Maori singing and dancing, portraying the pacifist atmosphere, people passing on flyers, and crowds of Pakeha youths who would have come from around the country to join in support.

Another central scene presents Jack Rameka, outside the *marae* joined by a group participating in the occupation — the credits announce them as a Bing Ngati Porou supporter, a female Australian supporter, Rex Hawke, Jack Rameka the leader of the camp, and Joe Hawke, Ngati Whatua spokesman. He acknowledges these supporters and the elders, who had stayed over the hard winters months, and the families living in camper vans and temporary dwellings. Overall, there were about 35 people occupying the camp. He states: ‘the only living *marae* in New Zealand today’. After the mic is passed along sharing each their own experience, the scene concludes with all signing the Maori anthem. The subtitles announce that ‘Tribal elders meet Prime Minister in February 1978, 2 million goes to the Bastion Point peace settlement, which is accepted but it does not satisfy the protesters’.

A fire in Bastion Point during the occupation, in September of 1977, caused the death of Joanna, a small girl in the Hawke family. Standing a few weeks later at her graveside, we see Joe Hawke joined by another two members, and all give their respects and speak to the child comforting her. Lange shot the scene from some distance, conferring a sense of both spirituality and normality, as it

is Maori custom to talk to the dead. The scene ends with them singing farewell. Hawke concludes that her death, was ‘a sacrifice made for fighting for our rights’, one that have given them ‘symbolic support and moral conviction’. Later in the film, a group of teenagers, sitting outside the *marae*, sing a mournful song they composed in memory of Joanna.

Arguably one of the most moving scenes is the one that takes place inside the *wharehuni* (meeting house), Arohanui, at night with Joe Hawke, family members and a small group of supporters. Elders and children are all gathered sitting and resting down on mattresses on the floor. The camera fluidly moves around the room, in Lange’s typically slow and observational style, intimately zooming in each individual as they speak about their personal experiences living through these months at Bastion Point. They sing Maori hymns; some speak in *te reo* Maori without the use of subtitles. Lange softly whispers, translating parts or commenting on the scene. One of the younger teenagers states, ‘I did not come here for nothing, we sit here mainly doing nothing, but everyone does something, and that is good, anyway’ — Lange adds, ‘It is a pacifist position.’ Joe Hawke talks about his ancestors systematically being demoralised, ‘made to feel that their tribal values were to be discarded’, while inserting early photographs of the old *papakaianga* (form of housing on multiply-owned Maori or ancestral land) and of dignified ancestral chiefs wearing their customary garments and adornments that conferred their status and *mana*. The under title announces, ‘Jack and Roger Rameka, Joe and Grant Hawke taken to court in March 1978’ and ‘Colin Clark, Nga Puhī supporter, disputed the land north of New Zealand’. Alec Hawke sits next to his partner Mavis — both parents of the girl that died in the fire — and speaks humbly about their experience at Bastion Point: ‘for Joanne this was a home for ten months ... she loved the place, for any girl or boy it would have been a dream place to grow up’ — images of newspapers of her burial and her grave stone are inserted — adding, ‘we could have left, but there is something strong here that made us stay, I heard from dad we get the strength from the mountain.’ The first tape ends with them singing together.

In the lengthier and slower pace of scenes such as this one at the *marae*, Lange’s film conveys a sense of *experiencing* how they live together, a ‘presentness’, being there with the subjects on camera, that leaves a vivid impression of how the Maori talk, behave among themselves, their customs, songs, the sound of their language, their spiritual values and sense of communal living, rather than *narrating* it. The film does not rush through a storyline of events or present a political argument. Lange stays back in his position, as much as one is able to while still holding the camera, choosing to become a witness to their history. In turn, the film confers a sense of earnestness and integrity to the Maori. Lange’s *Bastion Point* stands out from the other versions, making more obvious the others’ respective agendas, whether these are informative and

entertaining for television or are educational and political in accordance to Henny's experiments.

The second tape (46 minutes) follows with the scene inside the *marae*, kids now going to sleep tucked together in the mattresses where before the group was congregated, and later we see all having breakfast in the communal kitchen. Soon after, the pace changes, switching frantically to various footage: we see Colin Clark up north in the district of Te Aupouri and Te Rarawa living with his family in rural tent encampments and on the *marae* (shot in 16mm with no sound, because Lange had to return the borrowed video equipment from Auckland Art Gallery); back to eating fish at Bastion Point's communal kitchen, discussing the cost of food and where they get vegetables and fish from — a later scene shows people of all ages, children too, working on a vegetable garden and explaining the kind of vegetables they are growing; images of a Maori coastal camp settlement up north, cooking food in a camp fire, cattle running on the beach; quick jump cuts to news and clips from the eviction of Bastion Point; portraits of Maori chiefs and scenes of Maori life by Gottfried Lindauer, New Zealand's leading painter of Maori in the nineteenth century, etc. Some scenes have sound missing, at times filled with Maori songs, and disruptive cuts to black lead sections with no sound.

The switch of style is so striking that it can only be intentional. Lange explained he intended to experiment with editing and sound techniques. While he kept a non-manipulated chronological video approach, as in the scenes of the meetinghouse, at other times, he described, 'the videotape is edited as film or film itself is edited as film', as in the breakfast scene. Lange explained: 'For the breakfast scene I set to work in the way that is normal in film: the shots were joined together in chronological order, although the sound is left in the real order. [...] I also used the so-called "silent narrative style", a style that is derived from Eisenstein's film *Potemkin*.'<sup>597</sup>

This leads to another slow real-time scene taking place in front of the *marae* where all congregate to say goodbye to Alec and Mavis, Joanna's parents. Lange shot the scene from afar, leaving space in this emotional moment. The couple were off to travel around the country to give speeches and seek further support. Mavis turns her back to the camera, clearly not wanting to be filmed. This is followed by the next scene of Hawke standing at the Savage Memorial and discussing with Doc, a fellow demonstrator, the implications of the government taking the land by the Public Works Act, only to mount a memorial to a European parliamentarian on their ancestral grounds, and how the current Maori Labour party does not represent the Maori's interests. On location, Hawke explains the history of Bastion Point, which is conveyed in the format of an interview, in which Doc asks questions to Hawke.

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<sup>597</sup> Lange, 'Interview Darcy Lange,' *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, p. 35.

After another disruptive section similar to the one described before, it cuts back to the quiet scene of the evening inside the *wharenui*. Now we hear the elder Matiu Tarawa saying:

I get a strength from my mountain, I get a strength from my river Tamaki, my *tupuna* (grandfather or ancestor), and from the fact that my family is here, my wife. I also get impact from the practice of my own thoughts, from the people that are resident here at Bastion Point... the universities, all the groups that provide the necessities of life, to be able to stay here... It is very stimulating when you see a person you have not seen for some time... when you see people that have been away for some time, and they come back... it shows there is something here.<sup>598</sup>

Doc and Hawke also are seen above the yacht basin in the Auckland harbour, commenting that the Maori fishing rights have been taken away from them. Meanwhile they point at all the expensive yachts before them, none of which are owned by the Maoris. They stand overlooking where Governor Hobson, who was persuaded in 1840 by the Ngati Whatua to establish the capital of Waitemata and to this effect they ceded 3,000 acres for £200; today it is some of the most expensive land in New Zealand. One section was sold to a European living overseas, and the area where the Savage Memorial stands was not compensated at all. Compensations were given to those Pakeha, who took from the Maori people and were asked to leave to create the military base, while no compensation was ever offered to the Maoris. Joe Hawke denounces the fact that nothing in the treaty had been implemented; none of the promises had been kept. During these scenes, visuals often intersect, again changing frantically with the sound being disruptive too, going into long silences or no sound, or cutting in the middle of a sentence. We see images of fancy houses near the sea and a cut to the *Maori Land March* film footage.

In the beginning of the last tape (36 minutes), Doc prompts his mother, one of the living female elders, to tell her personal story looking at a photograph of Okahu Bay, part of the Orakei Claim that covers most of Bastion Point along with the reserve. She points at each of the houses that belonged to each of her aunties and relatives, the house of her grandmother where the old *marae* Te Puru o Tamaki was, the church, and so on, switching to black and white photographs from 1937 of some of these buildings, all of which the government seized, making compulsory acquisitions and demolishing these. In 1951, Maoris were pushed out of the bay and made to move to state housing.

The video then cuts to a parallel scene of Hawke talking to Doc, driving in the Okahu Bay, today one of the more exclusive areas outside Auckland, and pointing at where Governor Hobson first landed in New Zealand. Hawke and Doc show the grounds where the main buildings stood, and visit the old cemetery where Joanna was buried, the only place that the Maori can legally claim, where the church also stands. It follows with a repetition of the scene where Hawke and other

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<sup>598</sup> Transcription from the tape by the author.

members speak to Joanna at the graveyard. Hawke reiterates the meaning of her death, 'In her lost we have gained a tremendous strength to continue to the struggle for justice.' His voice continues over the images of the eviction of Bastion Point: of people standing in front of the *marae*; police proclaiming they have trespassed the land and Maori responding back: 'Bastion Point is Maori Land, you are welcome to stay'; images of the Maori flag; police marching; brass band playing a mournful Maori tune; Matiu Tarawa performing a *haka* in front the *marae*; a Maori and Pakeha protester standing on the top of the roof with the Pakeha raising his fist in defiance; someone holding a poster with red handwritten letters 'Bastion Point is Maori Land'; one of the Maori female elders sadly leaving the *marae* accompanied by other Maoris; a police officer pushing back a journalist-photographer; protesters being removed by police. Lange explained his editing decisions:

The implication is that the story is told in short, sharp sequences, without sound. The removal of the Maoris from Bastion Point was shot in different experimental styles: the sequences succeed one another chronologically while the sound doesn't necessarily correspond with the real sound that was heard during those scenes. Another style feature is that quick shots are cut into the film to hold the viewers' attention [...] In this case the original videotapes are the main body, while the inserts function as interruptions. The inserts consist of film shots, photographs or newspapers clippings. In other sequences, such as in the Bastion Point meeting house, black frames constitute the interruptions, while the sound goes on. Most of the time I did this to force viewers to dissociate themselves from the tape.<sup>599</sup>

Unlike journalistic approaches that concentrated on the news stories of the Bastion Point gathering at the crucial moment of bulldozing the last building on the *marae* where the Hawke family had held fast for 506 days to resist occupation, Lange's account was far more personalised and intimate, spending time with them in the *marae* and portraying them in the intimacy of their home environment. In his customary observational, real-time style — using long shots, slow zooms and pans — he recorded the activities of their daily lives over these months. He missed the most dramatic moment of the final eviction that made headlines news. This was captured by his fellow New Zealand filmmakers Merata Mita, Leon Narbey and Gerd Pohlmann in their *Bastion Point Day 507* (1980), a documentary made in support of the Maori cause that focused on the last days leading to the eviction. Footage from this film was used in Lange's *Bastion Point* as well as in Coelho and Henny's films. According to Miller, and based on the intimacy of these shots, it would seem that Lange established with Hawke and his family 'a relationship of trust',<sup>600</sup> at least in this initial stage. This trust was broken later due to discrepancies about the editing and authorship of the material, something I shall discuss later.

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<sup>599</sup> Lange, 'Interview Darcy Lange,' *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, p. 35.

<sup>600</sup> Miller and Peters, p 146.



## **Aftermaths and the Fourth Russell Tribunal**

Lange's *Bastion Point* would have been edited after his return from New Zealand in February of 1979, after his two trips to the country in the second half of 1978.<sup>601</sup> During the editing process, Miller remained in close dialogue with Lange and Henny through postal correspondence, continuing the conversations Lange held back in New Zealand with Joe Hawke, Taura Eruera and Matiu Tarawa. In a letter of *c.* April 1979, Miller conveyed to Henny the importance of Maori involvement in the editing process, something that Henny recognised also. Indeed, this issue was of great concern to the Victor Jara Collective, themselves sensitive to adopt a position of power over another community's political cause. Miller emphasized the need for 'one of us to come over to give some positive acknowledgement and support to your endeavours', given that the Maori land issue is 'one that has suffered for far too long from a lack of proper analysis and even in New Zealand at the present time, we are still developing this analysis'. Miller goes further to argue that although Lange's footage had 'value as a record of what has gone in recent past', he saw this material 'as being used in making short presentations that could perhaps lead on to some larger undertaking in the future'; and reiterated the need for 'a properly researched and scripted documentary which should be made from the ground up'. He, thus, did not see as 'feasible' producing a 5-hour version of the present footage: 'for one thing the Ngatihine land dispute is still evolving and my own perspectives on this whole matter have undergone great changes since September of 1977'.<sup>602</sup>

Further, Miller believed his comments back then 'would not do justice to those perspectives that I presently hold'. Thus, in speaking with Eruera, they concluded that 'a short compact programs for school use is appropriate', understanding that 'it might be a bit much to expect the present material to be able to sustain a five hour program'.<sup>603</sup> Miller's letter presented the need for Maori involvement as being key and conveyed the idea that whilst the subject may have willingly chosen to participate in the making, contributing to a participatory form of documentary, perhaps, more determinant, it was the subject's involvement in the editing process. The significance of the subject's involvement in forms of participatory documentary practice was discussed in Chapters 2 and 4. American anthropologist David MacDougall wrote in 1974:

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<sup>601</sup> Lange was seeking an editor for this material as indicated in his correspondence. In a letter from Richard Woolley to Lange of 1 August 1978, he discusses becoming involved in the editing but not being available until January–February of 1979. In the end, Woolley never collaborated in this project. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>602</sup> John Miller, letter to Leonard Henny in reply to Henny's letter to Joe Hawke of 5 April 1979, [n.d.], *c.* April 1979. Darcy Lange Archive.

<sup>603</sup> John Miller, letter to Leonard Henny, [n.d.] *c.* April 1979.

Beyond Observational cinema lies the possibility of participatory cinema ... By revealing his role, the filmmaker enhances the value of his material as evidence. By entering actively into the world of his subjects, he can provoke a greater flow of information about them. By giving them access to the film, he makes possible the corrections, additions, and illuminations that only their response to the material can elicit.<sup>604</sup>

Taking all of this into consideration and with the Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum agreeing to cover the costs of airfare for one Maori representative to come to Amsterdam, Henny invited Joe Hawke to come to the Netherlands to assist with the editing. Correspondence between Henny and Miller in 1979 reveal that Henny made great efforts too to raise the funding for a Maori representative to travel and Hawke was due to travel in May of 1979.<sup>605</sup> However, the funding failed and Hawke's trip did not happen.

In advance of Hawke's visit to Amsterdam, Miller was preparing a meeting with all parties to gain some agreement, he noted, 'as I am sure that amongst us, there are a number of opinions on the way things should go'. Miller also added the need for time and resources 'to work out, in our own space, how this issue should be presented' and concluded that the existing video material should hence be considered as 'an initial resource to be built upon in the future' and not 'to construct a "magnum opus" with the present material'. Therefore, they saw Hawke's forthcoming visit as 'an exploratory exercise' and to 'lay the ground for further visits by some of us in the future'. He stated, 'we in New Zealand will have to take our own initiatives sometime in producing such documentary' and so 'that any visits or trips overseas that any of us make should primarily be oriented towards bringing this goal about'. Further, he indicates that there is already film material in New Zealand, 'finance being the main stumbling block', but 'if we could establish our own infrastructure here, we could, I'm sure begin to produce our own documentary material'.<sup>606</sup>

All of this conveys a strong need and demand for self-determination. It signalled too a conflict of interests. There was a feeling, among some of the Maori people involved, of Lange's breaching their trust for going ahead with the exhibition without their input. Miller and Peters, writing in 2006, stated:

Although it's clear that Lange tried everything within his power to find the money to bring a Maori consultant to Amsterdam, ultimately there was no mandated representative participating in the production of the documentary and other films. From today's standpoint, the lack of informed consultation at the crucial editing

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<sup>604</sup> David MacDougall, 'Beyond Observational Cinema,' (1974), in Paul Hockings (ed.) *Principles of Visual Anthropology*, 3rd ed. (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2003), p. 125.

<sup>605</sup> Letter from Henny to Joe Hawke, 5 April 1978 and a letter reply to Henny from John Miller referring his conversation with Hawke after receiving the letter.

<sup>606</sup> John Miller, letter to Leonard Henny, [n.d.] c. April 1979.

stage and the decision to proceed with the films despite this, denied Ngati Whatua o Orakei the opportunity for self-determination through visual representation— although unintentional, this was effectively another form of colonisation.<sup>607</sup>

The trust was severed because of discrepancies about the editing and authorship of the material, between Lange's individual artistic vision and the ethical obligations to the Maori communities it represented. Miller's demand was also strongly supported by Henny and the Victor Jara Collective, who thought that failing to do so re-inscribed the very power relations that the project aimed to overcome, whereby Pakeha continued holding the power to represent while relegating Maori to be represented. Correspondence from Miller and Shaw to Lange gives evidence about their recurrent requests for him to return to New Zealand to edit the material there to allow for Maori appropriate input.

Lange understood this conflict of holding onto retaining artistic autonomy over the material, while recognizing on ethical grounds that the content 'belonged' to the Maori community (one to which he nonetheless was an outsider). He also recognized that it had been produced in the spirit of a collaboration and of collective action.<sup>608</sup> In the exhibition catalogue, under the heading, 'Note from Lange', Lange's acknowledges this tension and seems to express an apology:

To the Maori people, I hope that I have not hurt to [*sic*] many hearts or broken to [*sic*] many territories or spiritual sanctities, to bring forward a gesture of analysis, and my only hope that constructive things will arise from this work and not selfish and destructive and ambitious actions. I feel greatly privileged to have been able to participate in such a personally humiliating [humbling] and profound experience. And thus to you I send my *arohanui* (big love).<sup>609</sup>

Despite the tension, Miller honoured Lange's efforts in a letter to Henny in February of 1980, stating: 'Darcy should feel pleased with what he has managed to achieve' and acknowledged that Lange's video presented 'an "alternative" viewpoint to the New Zealand situation at the present day'.<sup>610</sup>

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<sup>607</sup> Miller and Peters, pp. 150.

<sup>608</sup> Miller and Peters, p. 147.

<sup>609</sup> Lange, 'Note by Lange', in *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, p. 41.

<sup>610</sup> Letter from John Miller to Leonard Henny 6 February 1980. In this letter, Miller gives Henny a thorough update, indicating that the Auckland Trades (Union) Council has offered office space and services for a Maori land resources centre, and other groups are coming forward with funding support. He encloses a map of New Zealand showing the attribution of Maori Land studies, newspapers and academic papers, and other relevant documents to provide detailed information about their cause. He also inquires about the forthcoming Fourth Russell Tribunal, presumably in response to Henny introducing this event in his correspondence to Miller and entertaining the possibility of Maori representation at the tribunal. Darcy Lange Archive.



FIG. 96 Colin Clark at Fourth Russell Tribunal held in Rotterdam in 1980

To remedy the situation and in an attempt to support Maori participation internationally, Henny continued facilitating connections for Maori with other indigenous groups also seeking recognition of their struggles from legislative assemblies, such as the United Nations, that were able to put pressure on national governments to address their rights. With funding he raised from the University of Utrecht and with lectures arranged with other universities, he was able to finally pay for an airfare for Colin Clark to participate in the Fourth Russell Tribunal held in Rotterdam in 1980.<sup>611</sup> The tribunal was organized by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation Ltd. to consider crimes of genocide and/or ethnocide against indigenous peoples in the Americas. Despite its focus on the American Indian rights, this tribunal offered the opportunity to other minority indigenous groups to make presentations and participate in the exhibition by including their materials. With the help of Henny, Lange facilitated also the participation of other representatives of South Pacific indigenous groups. Lange videotaped the public testimonies made by an Aboriginal Australian, an Eskimo from Greenland, Myron Mataoa from Tahiti representing Polynesia, and Colin Clark, acting as spokesman for the Maori people. These recordings became part of the extended *Maori Land Project* as included in the six tapes edited with the assistance of Ron Bronson.

With footings in the earlier writings of Franz Fanon and Albert Memmi, postcolonial studies were emergent in the late 1970s – the period when *Maori Land Project* was produced – becoming a major field of intellectual enquiry in the 1980s. A comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this chapter, so I shall thus concentrate on some of the cultural and political debates concurrent to this project that have focused attention on questions of ideology and the representation of the postcolonial subject, challenging the manner in which it was viewed and represented by and under colonial rule. These debates have drawn from poststructuralist theories that analysed the politics of knowledge and power,

<sup>611</sup> Letter from Leonard Henny to ‘friends’ (Lange, Miller, Hawke, Eruera, Clark, Tarawa and Shaw), 15 May 1980. He asked them to suggest a Maori representative to participate at the tribunal. Darcy Lange Archive.

seen particularly in the writings of philosopher Michel Foucault. Whilst it seems clear that Lange and his colleagues were not directly informed by what is now called postcolonial theory (and, in fact, many of the major intellectual concepts of the field were yet to be published), this body of critical thought offers an illuminating sidelight on the *Maori Land Project*. Here I identify two relevant issues: first, the notion of the representation of the postcolonial subject as a construct, linking knowledge to power; and second, the right for the postcolonial subject, the subaltern, to have his/her own voice.

In his seminal 1978 book *Orientalism*, Edward Said developed the notion of 'orientalism' to define the representation of Orient, the non-Western 'other', as a construct made by, and at the service of, Western hegemonic power. He described 'orientalism' as:

the corporate institution dealing with the Orient - dealing with it by making of statements about it, authorising views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. ....<sup>612</sup>

Said's conceptualisation was grounded in Foucault's understanding of the relationship between knowledge and power and his notion of discourse. Foucault treated discourse not in the Saussurian sense, 'as group of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or representations)', but, as he argued, 'as practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'. He wrote, 'Of course, discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this more that renders them irreducible to language (*langue*) and to speech (*parole*). It is this *more* that we must reveal and describe'.<sup>613</sup> Foucault was thus interested, as Said points out, in knowledge whose practice conceals its own fabrication. Accordingly, Said, following Foucault, suggests that 'ideas, cultures, and histories cannot seriously be understood or studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied'. For Said, 'orientalism' entails 'a relationship of power, of domination, of various degrees of a complex hegemony'.<sup>614</sup> He asserts that what we know of the Orient is what we have been told by the European who is arrogated to speak for or represent the Orient. Further, he understood that 'orientalism' is 'more particularly valuable as a sign of European-Atlantic power over the Orient than it is a veridic discourse about the Orient'.<sup>615</sup> In other words, it signals and depends upon the Western's '*positional superiority*', 'which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without

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<sup>612</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon, 1978), p. 3.

<sup>613</sup> Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Tavistock, 1972), p. 49.

<sup>614</sup> Said, p. 5.

<sup>615</sup> Said, p. 6.

ever losing him the relative upper hand'.<sup>616</sup> Said's 1978 book is rightly viewed as a landmark text in post-colonial studies. It was followed by the work of other scholars who sought to delineate a space in which some degree of agency could be restored to or discovered in actions and expressions of the colonial subject.

However, Homi Bhabha building on Said's work and using also poststructuralist methodologies, noted in 1983 that 'there is always, in Said, the suggestion that colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the coloniser, which is a historical and theoretical simplification'<sup>617</sup> Bhabha, who was later to become one of the most influential philosophers in postcolonial studies, perceived colonialism, and the culture that forms as result of it, as something always evolving, which further problematised our understanding of cross-cultural relations. Bhabha in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994) speaks of cultural difference instead of cultural diversity. He notes that the latter understands culture as a pre-given 'object of empirical knowledge' whilst the former defines the meeting of two or more cultures, which to him are discursively constructed, not as pre-given but as a 'process of enunciation of culture as 'knowledgeable'.<sup>618</sup> For Bhabha, it is in the act of enunciation that cultural difference is encountered and recognised; it is a process of identification. Therefore, his work challenges ideas of cultural 'fixity' and the stereotype, which is the basis of the construction of the 'other', instead introducing the notion of hybridity.

Indian postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in her groundbreaking essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' (1985), stressed the importance of contemporary historiography in conscientiously giving a voice to the subaltern and introducing the perspectives of those who had never been taken into account. Spivak, however, recognised the fundamental conflicts involved in 'speaking' in ways that required 'Western' or hegemonic patterns of thought, and expression, as well as the implications and contradictions in constructing a 'speaking position' for the subaltern, a project which effectively reproduces subordination and flattens heterogeneity.<sup>619</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin succinctly summarize Spivak's argument as follows:

For her, one cannot construct a category of the 'subaltern' that has an effective 'voice' clearly and *unproblematically* audible above the persistent echoes of its inevitable heterogeneity. Her conclusion is that for 'the true' subaltern group, whose identity is difference; there is no subaltern subject that can 'know and speak itself'. Thus the intellectual must avoid reconstructing the subaltern as merely another unproblematic

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<sup>616</sup> Said, p. 7.

<sup>617</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, 'The Other Question ... Homi Bhabha Reconsiders the Stereotype and Colonial Discourse', *Screen* 25 (November-December), 1983, p. 25.

<sup>618</sup> Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 34.

<sup>619</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. by Laura Chrisman and Patrick Williams (New York and Sydney: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), pp. 66-111. It was first published as 'Can the Subaltern Speak?: Speculations on Widow Sacrifice' in the journal *Wedge* in 1985.

field of knowing, so confining its effect to the very form of representation ('text for knowledge') the project sought to evade and lay bare.<sup>620</sup>

Like other *pakehas* at the time, Lange felt compelled to join the Maoris in their land claims struggles, genuinely feeling that his videomaking could help raise awareness and ultimately be beneficial to them and their cause. According to John Miller, Lange, like other progressive documentarians, were perceived as having the 'know how' and means to organise themselves, so their efforts were welcomed by the Maoris. This is proven by the close relationships Lange was able to establish with Miller, Hawke, Clark and others, and the degree of intimacy involved in inviting Lange into their homes. There appears to be no evidence that the Maoris ever questioned Lange's position when it came to recording and obtaining the footage; one could say there was an unspoken pact granting him permission to document them and their struggles.

The trust was breached when the material was to be produced and edited elsewhere, involving external parties and institutions that had not had a direct relationship with the Maoris portrayed. It was one thing to obtain footage; another very different and crucial issue for them was what to do with it — the editing, the story and how to narrate it — and who ultimately had the rights to the usage and distribution of this material. To the Maoris, this had to do with their right to self-determination. Conflicting perceptions might have contributed to these tensions. Lange, on grounds of artistic autonomy, saw the footage as 'belonging' to him, which fundamentally contradicted Miller, Hawke or Clark's expectations. They might have seen Lange as an activist like them and the value of the footage as serving their struggles. The other issue was the displacement of the project in being produced and edited, as well as received, outside the geopolitical context of its subject.

It is clear that the intention of Lange, as well as those of Henny and his collaborators, was to counter the dominant representations of Maoris in the media. Moreover, the fact that the same footage was used and adopted by different individuals representing different institutional languages (or what Foucault would call discourses) to different publics reinforces their understanding of the existence of multiple perspectives and how these can be conveyed in editing and creating different narratives. The capability of film to offer multiple perspectives on the Maori issue was implicitly acknowledged (certainly by Henny). Having said this, it would seem that neither Lange nor Henny seemed to be addressing the ideology of their own discourses.

In his book *The Order of Things*, Foucault was interested in examining 'the discursive rules and categories that are an a priori constituent and formative part of any discourse, and so fundamental to

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<sup>620</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), p.10.

its existence that they remain unvoiced and unthought', notes Robert Young.<sup>621</sup> These rules and categories confirmed the object of his 'archaeology', which determined different forms of knowledge. It would seem that Lange and his collaborators expected that something about the conventions and rules of their respective academic, televisual and artistic discourses might be revealed in exhibiting together.

*Maori Land Project* calls for a critical self-analysis about the means by which it was produced and circulated: that is, its multiple contexts representing hegemonic institutional systems of knowledge – academia, television, the art museum – and their publics – students, general public, art audiences. The project set out to raise consciousness about, and to effect agency for, the Maori people and their cause. However, how Lange and each of his collaborators, as well as their interests, understood this and the assumptions that they inevitably brought to bear in their films would have been different from Miller, Hawke or Clark's. They were mostly European (Lange was of European descent, and also experienced a more compromised position as a settler), white and male, with the exception of Gloria Lowe, and all shared a privileged position of power as documentarians.

What was fundamentally missing in the project was the discourse of the Maoris themselves. The various films captured their voices, but not their 'discourse'. As Bill Nichols notes, witness often give their testimony 'within a frame they cannot control and may not understand. The tone and perspective are not theirs to determine'. Further, he argues that their task is 'to contribute evidence to someone's else argument, and when well done [...] our attention is not on how the filmmaker *uses* witnesses to make a point but on the effectiveness of the argument itself.'<sup>622</sup> A film made by the Maoris surely would have added a more complex analysis of the colonial relations to the other films, and of their resistance to colonial power. It would perhaps have revealed and challenged some of Lange's and his collaborators' assumptions. One is left wondering what the film would have been like if Joe Hawke had been in the editing room.

As John Miller eloquently stated in his letter to Henny, the Maori land issue was 'one that has suffered for far too long from a lack of proper analysis and even in New Zealand at the present time, we are still developing this analysis'. By *we*, he clearly meant only the Maori people, an analysis of their issue and on their own terms. Further, Miller might have implied that the analysis of such issues had been controlled and constructed by the settlers for so long, therefore recognising that even, in the context of a de-colonising process and the Maori Renaissance movement, the Maoris' analysis might still struggle to find and develop an understanding of their issues on their own terms. This is

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<sup>621</sup> Robert Young, *Untying the Text* (Boston, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), p. 10.

<sup>622</sup> Bill Nichols, *Representing Reality* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), p. 37



to say that their perspective, even a politicised one, would not have been necessarily free of the dominant ideology. Perhaps this suggests Spivak's argument of the complex interrelations established between colonizers and colonized that problematises the issue of giving voice to the subaltern.

*Maori Land Project* failed to address the thorny issue of representing and speaking for the Maoris, by denying Maori involvement in the editing of the project. As Miller and Peters noted, it 'denied Ngati Whatua o Orakei the opportunity for self-determination through visual representation—although unintentional, this was effectively another form of colonisation.' And while the films depicted a positive, empathic portrait of the Maoris and their struggles, it reproduced the inequality of colonial power relations and perpetuated the colonial process of 'silencing' the voice of what Spivak called the subaltern.

Lange understood the significance of the subjects being able to speak for themselves as demonstrated in his *Work Studies in Schools*, although one might say that he exercised a degree of autonomy as an artist. For instance, in the schools project he never gave the camera to students, thus relinquishing the control over their representation (as others had one – for example, Chris Marker with workers as part of the Medvedkin Group). Even more paradoxically, it is the fact that the Maoris were not able to edit the film, when others like Henny and the Victor Hara Collective did. And while Lange and his collaborators were undoubtedly on the side of Maoris and intended to produce a narrative that represented their voices, denying them the right to edit the film imposed upon the Maoris the very premises of a colonial history that negated the speaking position of the subaltern.

### **Political Multimedia Musical performances *People of the World* and *Aire del Mar***

In the spirit of the *Maori Land Project* and of this growing political commitment, Lange embarked on a new project in the Netherlands, *People of the World* (1983), this time involving his music as flamenco guitarist.<sup>623</sup> This project was clearly influenced by Henny's aims at raising awareness of the responsibilities of the Dutch population to the problems faced by 'Third World' communities living in The Netherlands. Lange conceived this multimedia opera in

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<sup>623</sup> Lange's dedication to the guitar and flamenco music went back to his early youth. Bob Ellis, his painting lecturer at Auckland University, also played flamenco guitar and taught him. When Lange moved to London, his New Zealand artist friend Phil Slight, also a flamenco guitarist and flamencologist, introduced Lange to Don Pohren. Pohren was an American flamencologist and author of several books on the subject, who had written on the maestro of flamenco guitar, Diego del Gastor, from Morón de la Frontera (Seville, Spain). Lange subsequently studied with Gastor in Morón, every summer from 1969 until Gastor's death in 1973. Bob Ellis, in phone conversation with the author, 09/29/08. Lange dedicated the 'Maori Land Project' exhibition 'to his teacher, the gypsy flamenco guitarist Diego del Gastor.' Lange, *Darcy Lange: Maori Land Project*, p. 41.

collaboration with René van Hoften, Program Manager of the RASA Cultural Centre in Utrecht where *People of the World* premiered at on 16 and 17 June 1983.

The event looked at music as a channel for bringing together the cultures of the immigrant communities living in The Netherlands, in Lange's words: 'a kind of musical meetinghouse', a confluence of an identification of traditional folkloric musical traditions with the recuperation of old communal values, much informed by the Maori tradition.<sup>624</sup>



FIG. 97 *People of the World* in RASA Cultural Centre in Utrecht, 1983

Singing in the Maori tradition, as in the recording of the *Maori Land Project*, was seen as a form of harmony and solidarity as well as a means for political defiance and protest. Thirty-five musicians from seven countries — The Netherlands, Spain, Morocco, Turkey, the Maluku Islands, Surinam, and Greece — performed in front of huge multiple projections of a selection of images from Lange's previous *Work Studies*. Lange was credited as freelance director and spiritual father of this production and performed flamenco guitar. The project saw traditional folk music as a means of cultural affirmation and of escaping the alienation of the immigrant condition and lessen the discrimination to which these immigrant groups were subjected.

When Lange relocated to New Zealand at the end of 1983, the project was handed over to the Kultureel Front in Utrecht, which then managed its tour to theatres around the country. It eventually became a special UNESCO performance. Lange's correspondence indicates discussions about the making of a 5½-hour television series, each chapter devoted to specific cultures and workers, and a book of texts relating the experiences of these immigrant communities living in The Netherlands, which never materialised for reasons unknown.<sup>625</sup>

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<sup>624</sup> Lange, *Video Art*, p. 88.

<sup>625</sup> A letter gives indications of the difficulties that the Kultureel Front faced with managing *People of the World* as they were in need of financial support to tour the project. Letter from Richard Tuhumuri to the artist, 8 October 1982. Darcy Lange Archive.



FIG. 98 *People of the World*, installed at his survey 'Land Work People', at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in 1985

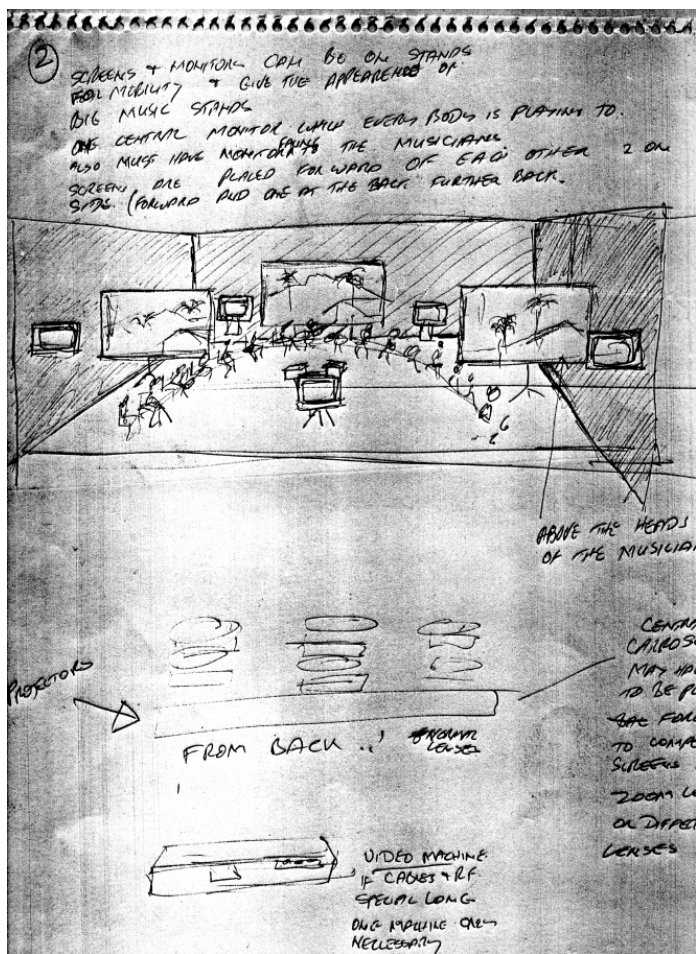


FIG. 99 Drawing by Darcy Lange of *People of the World*, c. 1983

Following the steps of *People of the World* in an attempt to fuse his music and video practice, Lange created the 'ecological media opera' *Aire del Mar* (1988), which he performed with his wife Miriam Snijders and different flamenco musicians available for each performance. New Zealand poet Denys Trussell also often participated, reading from his own poetry and the poetry of Spanish poet Federico García Lorca. This multimedia performance featured live

music, with video and slide projections providing an audiovisual backdrop. Lange played flamenco guitar, Snijders sang Spanish songs, danced, clapped and played castanets, and also directed the choreography. Projected on three screens, the slides presented an array of images celebrating nature, music and peace: landscapes from Aotearoa New Zealand, and Andalusia, flamenco and fiestas, Goya's paintings and lithographs from *The Disasters of War* series (1810–20) and photographs and video stills of Lange's earlier *Work Studies* series.

Two monitors placed between the screens showed a selection of Lange's videos from *Cantavieja* and *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* series, characterising the industrial and rural realities of work, thus adding an additional aural layer to the live music. Midway through the performance, live music gave way to a documentary video addressing the nuclear testing conducted in the South Pacific by the French Government during the early 1960s. The video touched upon the environmental, political and social effects that this had had on the nations of Polynesia, prompting as a result a rapid process of achieving independence. The 1985 South Pacific Forum had recently ended in Rarotonga, with the signing of the Nuclear Free Zone agreement. The performance supported the political ecological efforts of the antinuclear global campaign and promoted the pacifist and multicultural perspective embracing the indigenous cultures and in favour of Maori land rights. Lange summarised the aims of his project: 'the underlying essence will be Land-Peace-People'.<sup>626</sup> Ultimately, the work merges Andalusian gypsy and Maori ancestral spiritual beliefs. *Aire del Mar* was performed throughout New Zealand in public art galleries and theatres from 1988 until 1994.



FIG. 100 *Aire del Mar* (1988) at Govett-Brewster Art Gallery, 1988

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<sup>626</sup> Darcy Lange's proposal 'Aire del Mar – Hau Moana Ocean wind'. Letter to Wellington City Art Gallery, 16 October 1987, Darcy Lange Archive.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Lange's sense of nature had been greatly influenced by his experiences and upbringing growing in a farm. He acknowledged the Maori people and his close relationships with Maori foreman Jack Jury,<sup>627</sup> who strongly impressed upon him their sense of the spiritual value in and respect for the land. Jury was equally influential in Lange's life by introducing him to guitar playing,<sup>628</sup> which became so intrinsically fundamental to Lange throughout his life. Jack and his brother Henry were both guitar players and instilled in Lange, at an early age, the marrying of a sense of respect for nature with the musical yearnings of guitar playing.<sup>629</sup>

This potentially romantic communion with nature was nevertheless contrasted with the hardships of working the land of Uruti, a remote and sparsely populated part of New Zealand. There is an anecdote that might be of interest in conveying a picture of Lange's upbringing and these early influences. Lange wrote: 'Back to the road and we crossed again', and so it was at Uruti and Jack and dad... Although Banjo Patterson [*sic*] was very much an important part of life, so too was the other Banjo, the one used to shovel mud and dirt for post holes.'<sup>630</sup> Lange's father had been a WWI soldier posted in Egypt, where he met Australian bush poet, journalist and author Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson, who was also serving as a commander officer there. Banjo Paterson was known for his bush poems or ballads, a crossover between poetry and folk music that conveyed personal stories using colloquial language and depicting the character and scenery of the Australian bush. The ballads touched on themes such as mining, raising and droving cattle and sheep shearing and the relations between indigenous and non-indigenous communities in Australia. It drew from Australia's musical traditions traced to the English, Scottish and Irish folk songs brought by the convicts and the pastoral poets of the 1880s and the hymn tradition of the missionaries in the nineteenth century.<sup>631</sup> While there are known distinctive differences in the colonial and modern histories between Maori indigenous people and Australian aboriginals, and their respective relations to their lands, they too had strong affinities. The particular location of Lange's family farm, Uruti, was 'the outback' of New Zealand, and at the same time, in Maori heartland.

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<sup>627</sup> Coincidentally, Jury in the 1980s became his brother in law when marrying the sister of his wife Miriam.

<sup>628</sup> Lange acknowledged: 'the first guitar playing I really heard was Jack's playing, and then his brother Henry generously swapped my rather cheap Japanese guitar from the early days of Japanese guitar making for an instrument of much greater quality'. Lange, *Video Art*, p. 52.

<sup>629</sup> Lange recalled, 'I remember evenings of beautiful slide shows which Henry put on at our place. Henry is a person who has great feeling and understanding of the native forest and beauty within it of flowers and birds.' Lange, p. 53.

<sup>630</sup> Lange, pp. 52–53.

<sup>631</sup> See Banjo Paterson <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banjo\\_Paterson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banjo_Paterson)> and <[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bush\\_ballad](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bush_ballad)> [accessed 3 July 2016]

Lange once entertained the idea of conducting a series of videos that would study flamenco dancing and guitar playing as *work*, which for him was also another way to bring together his video and music practices, which he had kept separately until these multimedia performances. Dan Graham observed the confluence of Lange's interests in his proposed study of flamenco, stating:

Where his previous video-work had looked at 'work in an attempt ... to express the quality that work had as a performance,' the proposed flamenco videos would deal with the 'life style' areas surrounding the musicians ways of life: the marginalness [*sic*] of its status as work... 'living off of friends, tourist, pupils'. The studies would also examine flamenco as performance or as art. It takes on ethnographic significance as preservation of a dying culture now that the 'young people of Spain ... (are) subjected through radio and television to (the influence) of international pop music'.<sup>632</sup>

Graham claimed that Lange put 'the relation of music to work into a new, anthropological perspective'; further, he claimed that in his work there was a 'guilty' sense that 'only work, in its 'original', unalienating form, is sanctified'.<sup>633</sup> But Graham was too wary of music's effects, creating 'a kind of ideological illusion'. He even asserted that, 'music is not unlike religion' (this was in the context of the emergence of rock music coinciding with the new figure of the teenager in the context of the consumer culture in post-WWII America). He wrote:

It is only a temporary, ritualistic exorcism against the alienating effects of post-capitalist work and perhaps a fantasized glimpse into the communal pre- and post-capitalist state of oneness with nature. But, like religion, music can also be a kind of ideological illusion, contenting workers of the oppressed classes with their lot on earth by giving false, nostalgic 'memory' or promising them false (commercial) dreams. Music expresses a 'truth' which is not totally trusted; the only fixed 'truth' is to be found through work *per se* as almost *spiritual* identity.<sup>634</sup>

Graham believed that Lange's work not only reflected upon the political relations between work, music and art, but recognised a greater value in his work, allowing a popular and accessible documentary recuperation of the recent past that to him shared the aspirations and hopes in the role of history that Walter Benjamin supported. He wrote:

If one assumes that the dominant media attempt to impose upon the public their own framework in which to interpret the present, on which stifles 'popular memory', then Lange's videos, films and photo-books attempt to reconstruct another popular historical memory in order for the oppressed to glimpse a moment of their real, recent past. Lange's work concretizes a belief expressed by Walter Benjamin in his *Thesis on the Philosophy of History*, that the oppressed have: 'a retroactive force and their struggle calls into question every victory, past, present of the rulers...Nothing that has ever happen should be regarded as lost for history...To articulate the past historically... means to seize hold of a memory as

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<sup>632</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', *New Observations*, no. 129, 1985, [n.p.].

<sup>633</sup> Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', [n.p.].

<sup>634</sup> Walter Benjamin as quoted in Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Work and Music', [n.p.].

it flashes up at a moment of danger. Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convince that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins.<sup>635</sup>

In referring to *Aire del Mar*, Lange expressed his growing interest in music as his main artistic expression. He wrote: ‘this programme reflects my long-planned hope of moving away from video into a marriage between my musical worlds and the forming of these audio-visual, live music, ethnographic and musical creations out of a range of music and dance’.<sup>636</sup> Lange retired from video activity for over a decade, devoting himself almost exclusively to flamenco music. In his later years, however, he produced what became his last works, *Artist, Musicians and Poets at Work* (1999–2000), a series of documentary portraits of New Zealand’s leading figures, intended to leave a record of the artistic community in his country. With these portraits Lange sought to present a kind of counter-television, following the steps of his early ‘real-time’, sparse-editing approach. The series was aired on the independent Triangle Television channel in Auckland.



FIG. 101 Darcy Lange playing flamenco guitar, c. 2000s. Photo courtesy of John Miller

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<sup>635</sup> Graham, ‘Darcy Lange: Work and Music’, [n.p.].

<sup>636</sup> Darcy Lange’s proposal of *Aire del Mar—Hau Moana Ocean Wind*. Letter from Lange to Wellington City Gallery, 16 October 1987. Darcy Lange Archive.

## CONCLUSION

Darcy Lange's transition from a sculptural practice to film and photography, before settling later in video, was, in part, influenced – for a brief period – by formal-critical concerns with the dematerialisation of the object, with the dissolution of the boundaries between media and with ontological concerns relating to artistic definition that were indebted to Conceptual art. The development of his practice was guided by a critique of the nature and function of sculpture which, after he adopted a realist aesthetic in sculptural environments such as *Irish Road Workers*, led him not to join the move to sculpture in the 'expanded field' taken by others, but to abandon it altogether. His turn towards social realism might have seemed at the time a regressive formal move, as it prioritised social engagement over modernist ontological concerns. It was driven, as I have shown, by an early interest in documenting social reality, as shaped by class and labour in Britain.

Thus Lange's transition from sculpture towards film and photography revealed a kind of tension, shifting between, on the one hand, ontological concerns regarding artistic definition that were indebted to Conceptual art, Rosalind Krauss' 'post-medium' condition of the artwork, and a Duchampian devaluation of the expressive qualities of traditional media, thus welcoming mechanical modes of production; and on the other, concerns about the representation and documentation of a social subject and an expressed commitment to realism. The influence of Conceptual art is reflected in a reductionist, aesthetically uninflected way of documenting labour as the unfolding of an action that was reminiscent of the documentation of performance art, and the notion of study whereby the artwork is no longer an object of contemplation but one for observation and analysis. Insofar as his work embraced the social subject and an expressed commitment to realism, Lange's studies aimed to serve the epistemological functions of the social document, as I have discussed in Chapter 3.

His embrace of the camera lens affirmed its essentially depictive and documentary nature, the medium's apparent capacity to function as a 'transparent' window on the world. Lange understood realism initially as a naturalistic representation of the physical world, what André Bazin described as 'perceptual realism', as seen in Lange's first film series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation* (1971).<sup>637</sup> Presented with no commentary to contextualise the visual information, Lange's films rely strictly on observation, and on the documentary *veracity* of the indexical image, thereby establishing an epistemological equation of visibility and realism. He adopted his filming methods and strategies to give a kind of documentary integrity to the image: the use of static camera or very limited movement, and unedited (or sparsely edited) long takes in which reality unfolds in real time, gave his work a sense of immediacy.

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<sup>637</sup> André Bazin, 'The Evolution of the Language of Cinema', *What is Cinema?*, vol. 1, pp. 23–40 (p. 27).



Early studies such as *A Woman Putting out her Washing*, from the series *Social Consideration, Communication, Observation*, introduced notions of movement and duration as well as the (labouring) body, themes that had close affiliations with ideas of process and performance that were ascendant at the time. The working body in Lange's studies can be seen as an expression both of performance and of the process of work, as Dan Graham noted: 'as an activity (and also the process of the cameraman's work in recording it as an activity); its rhythmicity, periodicity, and its containment within the external environment (landscape) or architectural enclosure'.<sup>638</sup> Yet Lange distanced himself from the actions of Conceptual artists, such as those of Richard Long, and their ontological exercises designed to expand the definition of sculpture. Rather, his works represented, in his words, 'a balance between conceptual art and a documentation of actual work or social reality'.<sup>639</sup>

For Lange, the parallel use of multiple media offered him the possibility of exploring the intrinsic differences between photography, film and video in their ways of representing reality, and imbued the act of observing with an additional level of reflexivity, which was not prescriptive but intuitive, at least in his early work. As I described in Chapter 2, Lange adopted structuralist techniques in film, namely in *Studies of Family Groups* (1972), and in his multimedia installations, such as *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* (1974). These self-reflexive structuralist exercises grounded in the ontology of the medium in turn brought attention to his presupposition of the unmediated relation of the camera to reality.

A growing awareness and engagement with the nature and politics of representation is expressed in Lange's intention to *truthfully* represent his subjects — something he described in his 1975 interview with Willoughby Sharp. The notion of *truthfulness* would have no longer simply implied a positivist belief in the camera lens's ability to represent reality *as it is*, 'to truthfully render situations', unengaged with and unselfconscious of its ideological nature and effects. In his portraits of workers in *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* a sense of their singularity and identity is retained; and there is a greater focus on the worker executing his task, purposefully referring to 'studies of people at work' rather than being abstract documentations of work, as in *Woman Putting out her Washing*. Lange emphasised the social functions of his activity: 'the development of a social conscience', 'the creation of a *record* and a *memory*' of the physical world, and lastly, 'to do a service to the people with whom I am working'. His uncompromising, compelling observational portraits of workers performing their tasks were an acknowledgement of the invisibility of work, made with the humble aim of correcting this condition. However, this is not to say that Lange participated in the creation of class consciousness with the kind of ideological, programmatic agenda characteristic of a political group or

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<sup>638</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange, Work and Music', *New Observations*, no. 29, 1985 [n.p.]

<sup>639</sup> Darcy Lange, *Video Art* (Auckland, New Zealand: Auckland University Department of Film, Television and Media Studies, 2001), p.37

a state. This gave his work a degree of indecisiveness and irresolution, and perhaps even a failed potentiality, which, despite this, appears to have driven his search for social engagement.

His desire for art to perform a social function for the subjects of his recordings subsequently led him to recognise first the significance of returning the images to those subjects, in order to activate the image's potential for self-identification and social transformation; second, that the image had to be grounded in the experience expressed by the subjects' own voices. These understandings led to the series *Work Studies in Schools* (1976-77). Realism as such was now seen by Lange as being socially produced. Lange's growing awareness of the politics of representation guided his development towards embracing the dialogic and communicative functions of video and its transformative potential. As I discussed in Chapter 3, whilst there is no evidence of a direct or personal relationship with Jo Spence and Terry Dennett, I argue that it is likely that Lange would have been aware of their work and of the shifting intellectual debates around the representation of the working class to which they contributed in essays published in *Camerawork* and through their Photography Workshop collective activities. They argued for the kind of working methods and self-empowering strategies that Lange deployed in his later *Work Studies in Schools*. Such works shared much in common with the activities of the Photography Workshop, not least Spence and Dennett's community educational workshops with children.

*Work Studies in Schools* introduced a fundamental change in the dynamics between the artist, the artwork and the audience. In Chapter 4, I argue that *Work Studies in Schools* marked a shift from *representational* to *relational* parameters in his practice as an artist, and thus can be also framed in the realm of relational and participatory practices described by Claire Bishop. *Work Studies in Schools* can be described in terms of the discursive framework of post-studio, socially engaged, participatory practice that examines the role of the artist in society. Lange recognised the inherently dialogical nature of representation: that is, the making of meaning as being dependent on context, constituencies, cultural values, and the multi-subjectivities at play. He referred to these works as 'our collective truth', thus eschewing the authorial monologic position (his as videomaker and that of the teacher), introducing instead the notion of 'polyvocality'. He also recognised and employed dialogue as method of facilitating the teachers' and pupils' responses to the video recordings of themselves. In this way video was employed as a vehicle for dialogue and as the means for people to analyse and exchange their perspectives.

At the end of Chapter 4, I argue that while Brett and Lange referred at the time to *Work Studies in Schools* as a 'project', neither of them would have conceived of the notion of project as being inscribed in the very process of collaboration that was itself understood as an artistic activity. Rather, they would have seen collaboration as the *means* of creating an artwork that explored new forms of

participatory documentary, possibly informed by Jean Rouch's notion of 'shared anthropology', by Spence and Dennett's documentary approaches, or by video's capacity for 'feedback', among other influences. However, in framing *Work Studies in Schools* as primarily a *project* that was understood as relational, wherein the video recording (seen as an intervening activity in a real *situation*) is the catalyst for a dialogic exchange (that would otherwise not have taken place) among the subjects (who are the primary audience and participants), their exchange itself constitutes the *medium* and the core aim of the *project*. In my view, adopting the latter framework of analysis marks a shift away from video recordings seen as the *artwork* to the *situation* or *exchanged experience*. This, I argue, is closer to the core of Lange's intentions, even though he would not have been able to articulate the understanding of his project in such terms.

In this thesis, I have made an argument that the issue of political and social efficacy drives Lange's shift towards the field of activism and documentary in the production of *Maori Land Project*. Perhaps Lange felt *Work Studies in Schools* did not meet his transformative aspirations. Or perhaps, disillusioned with the constrictions of the art gallery, he felt the need to engage in direct political action. In *Maori Land Project*, Lange established relations with collaborators outside the field of art (a sociologist, an activist photographer and a television producer) that surely shaped his ideas and his artistic development. Earlier, the fact that he was working in isolation, at times without a community or a political movement, meant that Lange's work could not meet his socialist aspirations; and paradoxically, when it did (as in this project), Lange struggled with its political instrumentalisation, finding it difficult to forgo his authorship and the work's autonomy: for instance, during the editing process of *Maori Land Project*, as discussed in Chapter 5.

One of the threads throughout this thesis is biography; for me, understanding the DNA of Lange's artistic practice was essential. Why, on arriving in London, did Lange make such a change in direction, embracing figuration in his art? What in his early work can help us understand the leap from *Irish Road Workers* to his first film recordings of people at work? His seemingly conservative turn to figuration was also a step *forward* towards realism, and the first attempt at a marriage of art and politics that he maintained thereafter. Tellingly, Dan Graham, via T.J. Clark, once described Lange as 'a late 20<sup>th</sup>-century Gustave Courbet, a man of the New Zealand countryside who became an avant-garde, urban, political artist'.<sup>640</sup> Lange chose realism in solidarity with the working class in Britain, when, shaped by his experience as an immigrant from a farming background in the colonies, he was faced with the context of an elite art school in London and the British class system. His egalitarian upbringing, Calvinist ethics and sense of justice, perhaps more than the aesthetic debates

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<sup>640</sup> Dan Graham, 'Darcy Lange: Great Artist and Friend', in *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work*, ed. by Mercedes Vicente (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008), pp. 183–84 (p. 183).

and new ideas that he was quickly absorbing at the time, drove his work and his personal survival. In this light then, it is not a surprise that he turned to film and photography and, as soon as he encountered the Sony Portapak, settled on video, perceiving it, like others at the time, as a democratic medium.

This biographical dimension to this thesis inflects and particularises Lange's practice. Moreover, in taking Lange's oeuvre as a whole, this examination is centred on the artist: this tendency is perhaps somewhat endemic to a monographic study. Other writing on Lange: say, for instance, that by Benjamin H. D. Buchloh or Guy Brett, being fragmentary, affords these critics an opportunity to 'dip in', taking what they need for their arguments. As such, they are released from the need to be comprehensive, whereas my access to a larger body of work and resources, to the artist's archive, personal correspondence and so on, has required that all be taken into consideration. This has meant having to engage with the longer patterns of development in his practice and establish relations between works, as well as to deal with failed projects. As a result, I have had opportunities to point out the internal inconsistencies and tensions that surface in Lange's art and life. Perhaps this results in an imposition of order and logic which is not itself characteristic of the art or, for that matter, its maker. But this is also inevitable given that this thesis is the first thorough examination of the work of an artist who has been largely unknown.

Yet this research has set out to do more. It has recognised and sought to explore the intellectual and artistic debates of Lange's time in order to construct a constellation of influences and to establish his distinct contribution to contemporary art production. I have drawn in this thesis from a wide array of intellectual discourses, some of which were acknowledged by Lange as having informed his practice; others are more speculative, in order to establish a critical framework to analyse Lange's work — namely, drawing from art-historical debates concerning Conceptual art, film theory and ethnographic and structuralist filmmaking analysis, discourses around representations of labour and social documentary approaches in photography and film, notions particular to the medium of video such as 'feedback', participatory and socially engaged artistic practices and post-colonial theory, with the backdrop of the cultural and political climate in Britain during the 1970s.

Would I then say that Lange was an exceptional figure at the time, or was he rather a symptom of the intellectual and artistic developments of the period? Or is it in fact the work itself that possesses exceptional difference? I argue that it is both: Lange's work belongs to and embeds the ideas of his time, and was in dialogue with his contemporary artistic scene, as this thesis has demonstrated. For instance, his connection with Conceptual art practices has been recently recognised by his inclusion in Andrew Wilson's recent survey of these practices in Britain held at Tate Britain, 'Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979' (12 April–29 August 2016). It is proven by his participation in the early

surveys of video and avant-garde exhibitions in London, as well as in North America and Europe, and the connections forged with some of the key Conceptual artists and video artists, and supporters of video art at the time, all outlined in the introduction to this thesis.

Yet Lange was also a solitary figure, carrying out work that was obstinate, earnest and singular. The very qualities of his work that seemed ‘unfitting’ then — as Conceptual art, it was not rigorously analytical; formally, it had the rough edge of an amateur approach; politically, was non-programmatic; commercially, not a commodity; and in terms of exhibitions, largely unviable — paradoxically, its embrace of context and the social subject and its lack of political dogmatism make Lange’s work seem less dated, and his uncompromising vision and disregard for any commodity value in his work feels more audacious today than perhaps it did at the time.

The counter-commodity and impermanent nature of video art added greatly to its appeal to those artists in the 1970s who eschewed the art market, such as David Hall and Stuart Marshall, and of course Lange — ‘working “live” was itself a political and artistic statement’, Chris Meigh-Andrews reminds us. This is also one of the reasons why many important video works, even by better-known artists such as those mentioned above, have not been ‘written in’ to the history of this medium. The history of video, Meigh-Andrews argues, unlike that of painting and sculpture, cannot be rewritten ‘with reference to “seminal” or canonical works, especially when those have disappeared’ and ‘videotapes that are not considered “significant” are unlikely to be preserved, archived or restored’.<sup>641</sup> One can make similar claims for other artists working in photography and camera lens media who held similar attitudes about the function of art and, motivated by an aesthetic-political impulse, acted in social contexts outside and even against those supported by museums, collectors and the art market. Jo Spence’s work, for instance, was ignored for much of the 1990s, and Allan Sekula did not have a dealer gallery, nor did his work enjoy critical reception until relatively late in his career, whilst he was known and esteemed for his critical writings on photography.

These artists might not have enjoyed the benefits of recognition via the established networks and circles of exhibition, collection, and critical reception, but they were no less active, resiliently making work in and with the communities with which they engaged. The task of reasserting their significance and distinctive contribution to the field of art was left to curators (posthumously, in the case of Lange and Spence). Sekula’s photographs, for instance, were displayed for the first time at documenta 11 in 2002; the first major retrospective of his work (in Europe rather than in the United States) was at the Generali Foundation in Vienna in 2003, organised by Sabine Breitwieser, with Benjamin H.D.

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<sup>641</sup> Chris Meigh-Andrews, *A History of Video Art: The Development of Form and Function* (Oxford: Berg, 2006), p. 5.

Buchloh;<sup>642</sup> and he was represented by a gallery in Paris, Michel Rein, from the late 1990s, before an American one, Christopher Grimes Gallery in Los Angeles, began representing his work shortly afterwards. Spence's work featured for the first time in documenta 12 and there was a major touring survey of her work organised by Camera Austria and MACBA in Barcelona, in 2005 and 2006 respectively, and more recently at Space and Studio Voltaire in London in shows curated by Paul Pieroni in 2012.

Interestingly, the recovery of the public awareness of Lange's work is coincidental with these events. I organised the first retrospective of Lange's work in 2006, which was followed by an Ikon Gallery exhibition featuring *Work Studies in Schools* in 2008. These events, and an essay I published in documenta 12's magazine project, brought a renewed visibility to his work, subsequently engendering a series of shows in Europe and North America. In 2016, Tate Modern held a monographic screening programme of Lange's videos, *Enduring Time*, which I curated; his videos were also screened as part of Wilson's exhibition 'Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979' at Tate Britain, mentioned above, also featuring in the exhibition catalogue; *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life* was shown in Jeremy Millar's exhibition 'Notes on Gesture' at Siobhan Davies Studios, London; a selection of videos from *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* (1977) was exhibited during 'KALEIDOSCOPE' (2016) at Modern Art Oxford; and a series of videos and photographs from *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77) featured in Tom Holart's exhibition 'Learning Laboratories' at BAK, Utrecht. Lastly, in early 2017 Lange's *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (1972) and *Studies of Family Groups* (1972) were exhibited at Raven Row, London, as part of a survey tracing the history of Gallery House.

Is the recent increase in Lange's profile the result of a renewed interest in the 1970s? Within the current crisis of the social contract and function of art under the regime of capitalist culture, perhaps what Lange offers us today is a model of resilience and of working outside the confines of the art world and its careerism, in order to re-introduce a meaningful broader social dimension of art and build a more democratic culture. His work is an example of an artist pursuing a modest, self-effacing position that remains true to the values and the communities he serves, affecting (and sometimes failing) their lives. Lange wanted his work to reach out to wider audiences, and eventually found meaning for his work in recognising that 'his audiences' were the very subjects of his own recordings. This, I argue, was not a conceptual move, but a political one; and he instinctually got it right. It recognized the cultural and cognitive changes that drove the politics of representation and that also marked the shift from class struggles to the issue of identity, which in his case was not bound to race or gender, but to forms of alterity (as shown at the end of Chapter 2), and an awareness of power relations embedded in representation which he redressed in *Work Studies in Schools*, as discussed in

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<sup>642</sup> Buchloh has been one of Sekula's strongest advocates since the 1980s, as editor of his writing.

Chapter 4. But then again, this too felt insufficient to Lange, and he turned to politically activist documentary as his contribution to supporting the issue of Maori land reclamation, as examined in the last chapter.

In the late 1960s, the political philosopher Jacques Rancière, breaking away from his mentor Louis Althusser and searching for a new way of understanding Marxist ideology, criticised political philosophy for its tendency to abstract working-class identity from a generalised idea of proletarian daily life. In 1975, Rancière, influenced by Michel Foucault, founded with other philosophers the journal *Les Revoltes Logiques*. Its mandate was the construction of ‘an alternative historical memory’, based on the archival records of the ‘thought that comes from below’. This move was the foundation for his book *Proletarian Nights* (1981), a study of class grounded in the poems and autobiographical writings of French workers during the 1830s. He was taken by the fact that these workers spent time at night on intellectual pursuits, revealing in journals their yearnings for a better life. For these workers, Rancière wrote,

[...] to take back the time that was refused to them by educating their perceptions and their thought in order to free themselves in the very exercise of everyday work, or by winning from nightly rest the time to discuss, write, compose verses, or develop philosophies. These gains in time and freedom were not marginal phenomena or diversions in relation to the construction of the workers’ movement and its great objectives. They were the revolution, both discreet and radical, that made these possible, the work by which men and women wrenched themselves out of an identity formed by domination and asserted themselves as inhabitants with full rights of a common world, capable of all the refinement or all the asceticism that had previously been reserved for those classes relieved of the daily cares of work and bread.<sup>643</sup>

These ‘worker-intellectuals’, seeking another form of identity, crossed the divide of a system that had subordinated the proletarian to work and endowed the bourgeois with the privilege of leisure and thought. To Rancière, this finding offered him the opportunity to write a new history of revolutionary struggle, not one reduced to the request for better working conditions, but one that could imagine a different way of living. This would mean listening to the voice of these workers, with the proletariat as an active agent, rather than ideologically reflecting on the working-class historical condition. In the preface to the 2012 edition of *Proletarian Nights*, written some years after the first publication of the book, Rancière asked:

What paradoxical route led these deserters, who wanted to tear themselves free from the constraint of proletarian existence, to come to forge the image and the discourse of working-class identity? And what new forms of false construction affect that paradox when the discourse of workers infatuated with the night of the intellectuals meets the discourse of intellectuals infatuated with the glorious working days of the masses?<sup>643</sup>

The principles that guided and shaped Rancière’s political and aesthetic project resonate strongly with Lange’s: first, Lange built an archive of video recordings of working people, a ‘memory from

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<sup>643</sup> Jacques Rancière, ‘Preface’, in *Proletarian Nights: The Workers’ Dream in Nineteenth-Century France* (London; New York: Verso, 2012), p. ix.

below' – more remarkably, unlike Rancière's approach, collected directly from the workers. Second, Lange embraced a core essential equality that saw workers and artists as alike, one that recognized the presence of creativity in every individual and work as the foundation of a socially unrecognised subjectivity.

Lange's project was not ultimately to claim the dignity of, or to criticise the alienation of, labour, even though in his videos it is clear that he identified strongly with workers and recognised both features of their work. His aims were not to raise consciousness, nor were they driven by reformist aspirations as, indeed, Lewis Hine's photographs of child labour in the early twentieth century or the films of Frederic Wiseman, in their acerbic critique of the education and health services in the 1970s, had been. Lange did not join the struggles of activists and unions demanding better working conditions for workers, either, as the Berwick Street Collective did in their campaigning film *Nightcleaners* (1972-75), which succeeded in raising consciousness among the female night cleaners portrayed in the film, leading to their unionisation.

What distinguishes Lange's project is that he established a direct relationship with the workers. In his video recordings, he recognised that a worker ought to possess a human face, be singular, and express his/her own subjectivity. In *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*, this meant concentrating his studies on a single worker, keeping the camera in close proximity and using the elongated duration of the shot to capture something unique about his or her traits, working skills and personality, not shunning the glances and brief verbal exchanges directed at Lange behind the camera. Unlike the historian or social scientist engaged in the study of an anonymous working class as a collective, speaking in their name and representing their struggles, Lange was an artist. He understood his own individuality and saw in the worker his/her own subjectivity. Workers were his own equals, a position that was fundamentally egalitarian and saw no class division between the worker and the artist. More importantly, in coming to the understanding that only when the image returned to his subjects could it actualise its emancipatory potential, Lange began to share the recordings with the workers: at first informally, in *Cantavieja*, and later more systematically, in *Work Studies in Schools*. Yet this itself was intrinsically problematic: it validated a representation made by an artist about someone else—even when Lange perceived the other as equal—granting him the authority to represent the worker who was relegated to be represented.

Lange modified this approach in *Work Studies in Schools* by inviting the subjects to speak for themselves and evaluate these recordings in an act of analysis. Their voices stood out on their own, without his imposition of a critical framework for, or judgment on, their views and thoughts. The discussions that these recordings stimulated became multi-faceted and polyvocal, in which divergences and contradictions arose and were left unresolved. These recordings did not approach



the representation of the thoughts of every pupil, many of whom giggled and were shy and inarticulate, nor the effects that these might have had on them later and on the dynamics between the teachers and the pupils as a result. Nothing of this was recorded on tape. But what was remarkable in *Work Studies in Schools* was that it executed a redistribution of roles —between Lange and his recorded subjects, and between the teachers and the pupils— which in itself presupposed and exercised equality. All were granted the right to comment, enabling new relationships that suspended hierarchies and were reciprocal, as judgments and opinions ran in both directions: back to Lange, back to the teachers.

In this work, the notion of the single truth in representation became manifestly unattainable, because there was no consensus of opinion expressed by the parties, and no manifest opinion overrode another. When Lange, referring to these recordings, asserted these were ‘our collective truth’, he was not being naive. He actively exercised an assembly model that suspended hierarchical distinctions between him and his subjects, teachers and pupils, as individuals within the collective, and reinforced the notion of ‘truth’ as fundamentally open ended. It stepped beyond theory to actual praxis; it verified equality through praxis. Furthermore, in its dialogic format, *Work Studies in Schools* invited the viewer to engage with and alongside these exchanges, adjusting his/her own thoughts in relation to the external reality he/she witnessed and comparing it to his/her own experiences about learning, authority and power in relationship to knowledge.

This shift had fundamental implications. Lange’s images of people at work were no longer ‘a record of the reality of work’, a taxonomy, a typology, a representation in the abstract. His images were grounded in the realities and accounts of singular individuals. Moreover, in this process the recordings were no longer destined for an art audience, the bourgeoisie. His recorded subjects were the primary and fundamental *audience*, and as such the project adopted a social rather than aesthetic function.

One could sceptically ask: what exactly did the workers gain from Lange’s recordings? This is not something that could be assessed by scientific methods, which was Rancière’s argument when he advocated the importance of the knowledge conveyed in a few workers’ journals over the theoretical studies of science that forge historical accounts of the collective ‘working class’.<sup>644</sup> Lange enabled others to speak about their experiences of teaching and learning, and envisioning better ways of doing both. This, in my view, is his work’s greatest achievement.

In Rancière’s Preface to the 2012 edition of *Proletarian Nights* he sets out to question the relevance of his subject today: ‘How can the stories about French locksmiths, tailors, shoemakers, and

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<sup>644</sup> Rancière, p. xi.

typographers from the nineteenth century interest anyone in the age of digital revolution, non-material production, and the globalized market?<sup>645</sup> This is my question, too: How can Lange's recordings of people at work in the 1970s have resonance and agency today? When his book was first published, in 1981, Rancière noted that 'there was no talk yet of globalization, nor indeed of the end of the proletariat, history, and utopias'.<sup>646</sup> In drawing attention to the 'untimeliness' of his project in relation to our working conditions today, Rancière argues that

The world of artisans that it describes certainly does not resemble the modern world that so many philosophers and sociologists depict today: a world of computer programmers, high-tech workers, and consumers saturated with products and spectacles, from which misery and revolt have disappeared along with the factory chimneys. It remains to be seen whether this world does indeed resemble the one in which we live. The present forms of capitalism, the collapse of the labor market, the destruction of systems of social solidarity, and the precarious nature of employment are creating experiences of work and forms of life that may well be closer to those of the artisans of the past than that world of non-material work and frenetic consumption whose complacent picture we are offered.<sup>647</sup>

He is suggesting that the strategies of these worker-intellectuals who released themselves from forms of dominance by reimagining an identity unbound from the subordination of their lives as workers might indeed be a lesson of emancipation for us today.

Perhaps an undercurrent of failure surrounds Lange's work, unsuccessful as it was in meeting his ideals of a higher order: this was the failure of art to socially transform the world. Clark's words, in defence of Courbet's predicament, written in 1973, might be extended to Lange's activities:

A bourgeois artist is shown to fail to make his art 'revolutionary', but his failure is in its way exemplary and at least serious: it provides us with a touchstone for other such attempts or claims, and in particular it suggests the way in which a struggle against the dominant discursive conventions in a culture is bound up with attempts to break or circumvent the social forms in which those conventions are embedded. That effort in turn seem to me necessarily to involve some kind of action against the place of art itself, as a special social practice in bourgeois society. The results of such action have undoubtedly been inconsistency, unseriousness and waste: so many diversions from the main line of art followed in due course by crestfallen, half-hearted returns to grace. But in saying this we say no more than that we have to do so far with failures. That is testimony to the hold of art and its capaciousness, but it does not mean that the original impulse was misconceived.<sup>648</sup>

And perhaps the legacy of Lange's images of people at work rests on his recognition of the old humanism of work for which Jean-Paul Sartre in 1961 claimed, as Blake Stimson reminds us, 'a higher version of humanism's "ism"— the value conferred by "real, intelligent, skilful work"'.<sup>648</sup>

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<sup>645</sup> Rancière, p. vii.

<sup>646</sup> Rancière, p. vii.

<sup>647</sup> Rancière, p. xi.

<sup>648</sup> T.J. Clark, *Image of the People: Gustave Courbet and the 1848 Revolution* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973).

Stimson saw this higher humanism in Sekula's images, turning 'again and again to the nobility of the production and reproduction of our world through labour'.<sup>649</sup> One can also perhaps find it in Lange's studies portraying particular workers executing her/his specific working task, as in *A Documentation of Bradford Working Life*. Each study in this series, titled with the name of the worker, their profession or particular working task and the name of the workplace and its geographical location, stressed the worker's identity and in this way overcame the problem of stereotypes standing for abstract categories such as 'the working class'. His subjects often acknowledged the camera, exchanging glances, smiles or words with Lange. These glances and words 'humanised' the worker and gave clues to their singular personalities. These exchanges also signal an egalitarian reciprocity, insofar as they acknowledged Lange and the camera, engaged in the other parallel, but unrecorded, labour, that of filmmaking. These studies portray individuals executing their labours, specific skills and performances, and the processes, logistics and mechanics that sustain the production and reproduction of our world through labour. As a result, Lange's images of people at work bear the weight of labour, but not as a critique of alienated labour or of the suffering of labour. Nor are they a deceptive idealisation of the working body. Lange's images eschew the concealment and anonymity of work to posit the noble act of our labours and recognise that these are, indeed, the foundation of our socially unrecognised identity.

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<sup>649</sup> Blake Stimson, 'Towards a Humanism of Work', in *Reinventing Documentary: The Art of Allan Sekula* (Portland, OR: Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art, Lewis & Clark College, 2015), pp. 11-13, (p. 13).

## **LIST OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED AND CONSULTED**

I have contacted the following artists, critics and curators by email, phone or personal interviews during the course of my research:

Alyson Hunter  
Andrew Wilson  
Barry Barker  
Ben Cook  
Bill Fowler  
Dan Graham  
David Curtis  
David Elliot  
Dan Kidner  
David Tremlett  
Guy Brett  
Ismail Saray and Jenni Boswell-Jones  
Hilary Floe  
Jack Wendler  
Jasper Holthuis  
Jo-Anne Birnie Danzker  
John Blake  
John Miller  
Lynda Morris  
Mark Francis  
Peter Gidal  
Ray Kril  
Rene Coelho  
Richard Cork  
Richard Wentworth  
Richard Woolley  
Rudi Fuchs  
Rüdiger Scholette  
Saskia Bos  
Theus Zwakhals  
Willem Smit

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### **Archives**

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de Apple Archive, Amsterdam; Darcy Lange material

LIMA Archive, Amsterdam; Montevideo Collection; Darcy Lange/Maori Land Project

Tate Britain Archive, London; Barbara Reise Collection, Darcy Lange folder

Royal College of Art Archive, London

Van Abbemuseum Archive, Amsterdam; Darcy Lange/Maori Land Project



## APPENDIX 1 Darcy Lange Exhibitions and Catalogues

'This Way Out of England: Gallery House in Retrospect', curated by Alex Sainsbury and Antony Hudek at Raven Row, London (11 February–2 April 2017). It features *Five Working Studies in British Factories and Workplaces* (1972) and *Studies of Family Groups* (1972).

'Learning Laboratories' at BAK, Utrecht (2 December 2016–4 February 2017). It featured a selection of videos and photographs from *Work Studies in Schools* (1976–77)

'Kaleidoscope' at Modern Art Oxford (11 November–31 December 2016). This 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary exhibition series featured a selection of *Studies of Teaching in Four Oxfordshire Schools* (1977)

'Notes on Gesture', curated by Jeremy Millar, Siobhan Davis Studios, London (3 June–31 July 2016)

'Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979', curated by Andrew Wilson, Tate Britain (12 April – 29 August 2016), screening 4 July 2016. Lange features in George Clark, 'To Pour Milk Into A Glass: Film, Video and Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979' in Andrew Wilson (ed.) 'Conceptual Art in Britain 1964–1979' (London: Tate Publishing, 2016) pp. 140–47 (pp. 145–46)

'Really Useful Knowledge', curated by WHW (What, How and for Whom), at Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid (2014–2015)

'Unstuck in Time', curated by Bruce Phillips, Te Tuhi, Auckland (2014)

'Nothing in the World but Youth', curated by Karen Elsea, Turner Contemporary, Margate, UK (2011–2012)

'All I Can See is Management', curated by Antonia Blocker, Robert Leckie and Helena Vilalta, Gasworks, London (2011)

'Learning Machines: Art Education and Alternative Production Knowledge', curated by Marco Scotini and Alessandro Guerriero, NABA, Milan (2010–2011)

'School Days', Mathew Parker, Lewis Gluckman Gallery, Cork (2010)

'Simon & Tom Bloor: Hit and Miss', curated by Paul Luckraft, Modern Art Oxford (2010)

Nada Prija's *Forcing Language Beginners*, Manifesta 8, Murcia, Spain (2010–2011)

'This Could Happen to You: Ikon in the 1970s', curated by Jonathan Watkins (2010)

'Ostensions. Travail de l'archive, archives du travail', curated by Pierre Leguillon, Palais de L'Athénée, Geneva (2010)

'The Great Game to Come', curated by Chus Martínez, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt (2008)

'You and Me, Sometimes', curated by Sandra Antelo-Suarez, Lehman Maupin Gallery, New York (2008)

'Films in Real Time 1970–79' curated by Mark Williams (screening tour in Canada, US and New Zealand 2007).

## APPENDIX 2. Research Outcomes

### List of Exhibitions, Screenings and Workshops

'Darcy Lange: Enduring Time', Tate Modern (20–22 October 2016). A 5-screening programme as part of Tate Pioneer Series dedicated to Darcy Lange, the most extensive presentation of his films and videos in the UK to date.

'Darcy Lange: Hard, however, and useful is the small, day-to-day work', LAB, Centre for Contemporary Art, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (20 August–27 September 2015) Exhibition of a selection of Lange's *Work Studies* alongside documentation and research materials presented at The Lab, NTU CCA Singapore as part of the overarching research framework Place.Labour.Capital.

Darcy Lange 2-day workshop, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (21-22 September 2015) Workshop on the work of Darcy Lange in regards to the subject of labour and in relation to the work of the late Allan Sekula and the exhibition *Allan Sekula Fish Story To Be Continued*.

Speaker, Allan Sekula International Symposium, NTU CCA, Singapore (26 September 2015) Panel discussion with Hilde Van Gelder (Director of the Lieven Gevaert Research Centre for Photography, Leuven), Carles Guerra (Director of the Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona), and Roger Buerger (Director Johann Jacobs Museum, Zurich).

Convenor and Speaker, *Turn to the Archive! Ethics and the Making, Encountering, Imagining and Missing of the Archive* symposium, at Royal College of Art (23 April 2015). Participants: George Clark (Tate Modern), Sean Cubitt (Goldsmith University), Ruth MacLennan (artist and PhD candidate RCA), Jeremy Millar (artist and Tutor CWAD, RCA), and Etienne Sandrin (Centre Pompidou), and chaired by Juan Cruz (Dean School of Fine Arts, RCA) and Antony Hudek, (Raven Row).

Keynote speaker, Symposium *The Document Through the Lens: Archives, Whakapapa, Ethics*, St Paul St Gallery, Auckland University of Technology, 10-11 September 2015  
Invited by the Documentary Research Group I presented the Darcy Lange Archive as a case study.

'Darcy Lange: Estudio de un artista en su trabajo', Espai d'Art Contemporani de Castelló (EACC), Spain (20 January–29 April 2012)

'Fertilizer no. 1: Darcy Lange Work Studies in Schools', with Pierre Leguillon and Yann Chataigne, LiveinYourHead, Geneva University of Art and Design, Geneva (10 December 2010–8 January 2011)

'Darcy Lange Work Studies in Schools', Slought Foundation, Philadelphia (30 April–14 June 2010)

'Darcy Lange', Camera Austria, Graz (17 April–27 June 2010)

'Darcy Lange: Work Studies', Yale University, 32 Edgewood Gallery, New Haven (7 December 2009–31 January 2010)

'Darcy Lange: Work Studies in Schools', Cabinet, New York (4 December 2009–16 January 2010)

'Darcy Lange: Work Studies 1974–77', Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana (20 August–20 September 2009)

'Darcy Lange: Work Studies in Schools', co-curated by Helen Legg, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham (26 November 2008 – 25 January 2009)

'Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work', Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (29 July–24 September 2006); toured in New Zealand to at Adam Art Gallery, Wellington (23 March–13 May 2007) Percy Thompson Gallery, Stratford (11 February–14 May 2007) and Fritz Reuter Gallery, Inglewood (20 December 2006–14 January 2007)

### **List of Publications on Darcy Lange by the Author**

Mercedes Vicente, 'Darcy Lange', *Camera Austria*, No 108, December 2009, pp. 35–45

Mercedes Vicente (ed.), *Darcy Lange: Study of an Artist at Work* (New Plymouth, New Zealand: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery; Birmingham: Ikon Gallery, 2008); Spanish edition (Castelló, Spain: Espai d'Art Contemporari de Castelló, 2012). Introduction by Mercedes Vicente and essays by Guy Brett, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Dan Graham, John Miller, Geraldene Peters, and Pedro G. Romero.

Mercedes Vicente, 'Darcy Lange: Work Studies in Schools,' 'documenta 12'' *Magazine no.3: Education* (Cologne: Taschen, 2007), pp. 30–35

### **Darcy Lange Archive**

The archive was visited by film/video curators and artists with beneficial outcomes including: Dan Kidner (curator/critic), Beatriz Gibson (artist), Alyson Hunter (artist), Andrea Lissoni (Senior Film Curator, Tate Modern), George Clark (Assistant Curator, Tate Modern), Andrew Wilson (Senior Curator Modern & Contemporary British Art, and Archives, Tate Britain), Carmen Juliá, (Assistant Curator, Tate Britain), Jenny Lund (Assistant Curator, Tate Britain), Etienne Sandrin (Centre Pompidou), David Curtis (British Artist's Video and Film Study Collection, Central Saint Martins), Hillary Floe (PhD Candidate, University of Oxford/Museum Modern Art Oxford), Alex Sainsbury (Director, Raven Row), Antony Hudek (Former Executive Director, Raven Row), Amy Budd (Exhibitions Organiser, Raven Row), Lucy Reynolds (MRes Pathway Leader in Moving Image, Central Saint Martins), Carol Mancke (PhD Candidate, RCA Sculpture), Xavier Ribas (Photography Lecturer, University of Brighton), Mary Goody (artist), Ismail Saray & Jenni Boswell-Jones (RCA alumni and Lange's peers), Laura Vallés (Editor, Concreta Magazine), Ainara Elgoibar (artist, PhD Candidate, University of Barcelona), David Brandfield (Former Lange's Photography tutor, RCA).

The archive returned to Govett-Brewster Art Gallery 7 October 2016.

