

David Jenz

POSTGRADUATE REPORT

SCULPTURE

1985

BIOGRAPHY.

- 1957 Born Melbourne, Victoria.
1975 Studied one year in Japan.
1977-79 Studied at the Riverina College of Advanced Education.
1985 Studied Canberra School of Art, Postgraduate (Sculpture)

Selected Exhibitions.

- 1979 R.C.A.E Gallery, performance with Wendy Teakel.
1980 ACT 2 Canberra, performance with Wendy Teakel.
1980 Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide, performance with Wendy Teakel.
1980 Wollongong Art Purchase Exhibition.
1981 First Australian Sculpture Triennial, Melbourne.
1981 ANZART, Christchurch, New Zealand, performance with Wendy Teakel.
1984 Canberra School of Art Gallery.
1984 Second Australian Sculpture Triennial, Melbourne.
1985 Wagga Wagga Regional Gallery.

Forthcoming Exhibitions.

- 1986 Arts Council Gallery, Canberra. (June)
1986 Gryphon Gallery, Melbourne. (July)

Selected Publications.

- Art Network 2
Art and Australia Summer 1981 and Autumn 1985.
Canberra School of Art Exhibition Catalogue (essay by Peter Haynes)
The Canberra Times 22 May 1984.
Catalogues 1st and 2nd Australian Sculpture Triennials.
Wagga Wagga Daily Advertiser 11 April 1985.

Introduction

Since the beginning of my postgraduate studies at the Canberra School of Art I have given much thought to this report: how it should be presented, what form it should take, and how much I should write about my work. During the course of the year I have changed my views many times, although one point has remained constant; that this year's work should not be looked at in isolation, but rather, that it be seen in the context of my work over the last six years. I have decided, therefore, to present a mainly visual report which covers my work from 1979 to 1985.

Henry Moore wrote,

"It is a mistake for a sculptor or painter to speak or write very often about his job. It releases tension needed for his work. By trying to express his aims with rounded-off logical exactness, he can easily become a theorist whose actual work is only a caged-in exposition of conceptions evolved in terms of logic and words."^①

It is not my intention to become a theorist. I have found that whilst in the process of making work, if I explain too much about what I am going to do then very often the impetus for the work is lost.

Moore goes on to say,

"But though the non-logical, instinctive, subconscious part of the mind must play its part in his work, he also has a conscious mind which is not inactive. The artist works with a concentration of his whole personality, and the conscious part of it resolves

conflicts, organises memories, and prevents him from trying to walk in two directions at the same time."^②

Of the works made thus far, the most important are those which have been basically intuitive. Ideas which have formed in my mind with no conscious intellectualisation were made and completed with only the physical technical problems needing any conscious deliberation.

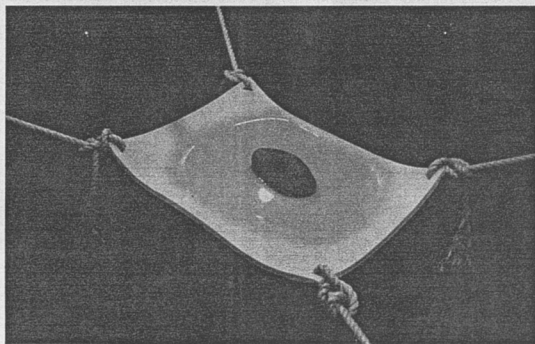
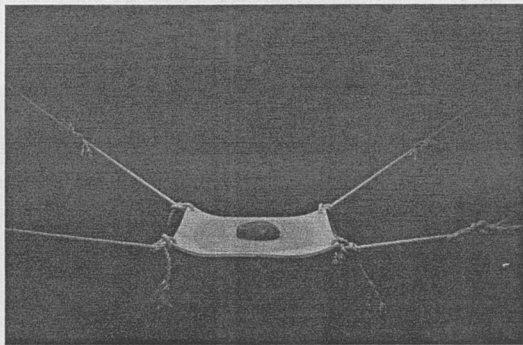
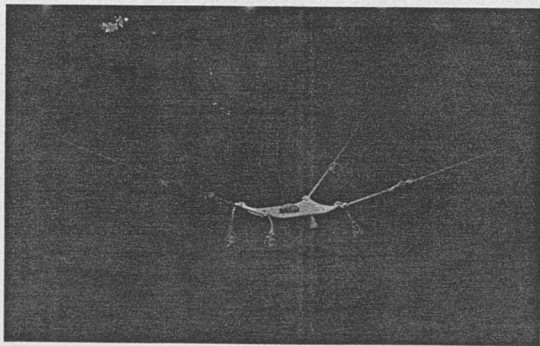
It is only after a work is completed that any real process of conceptualising occurs. Deciphering and analysing what I have made is usually very rewarding. It matters little to me whether the audience sees the work the same way I do. The process is one of self-education. Abstract concepts become concrete and my understanding of how I see the world and think becomes clearer.

My work evolves from the use and combination of a variety of natural and man-made materials; timber, steel, lead, wax, water, stone, rope etc. Usually I like to use a strong material with a more ephemeral one, but in such a way that, in the work, they have equal power.

Finally, I am not a writer, but a visual artist, and I make no pretensions about this report. It is written simply for those people who must assess my work. I hope that it will be of some use to them.

The Work, 1979-84

This untitled work was made in my final year at college. It was a bisque fired ceramic dish suspended 18 inches from the floor by ropes attached to the corners of the room. It contained water and a river stone. The stone was the indestructible centre. The water had a threefold nature; it evaporated into the atmosphere, soaked into the dish, leaving the rest to stagnate. The mind is capable of projecting thoughts and indulging in thoughts of itself, leaving the rest unused. In much of my work the polarities of a situation are given which merely serve to define the limits of that situation. After the

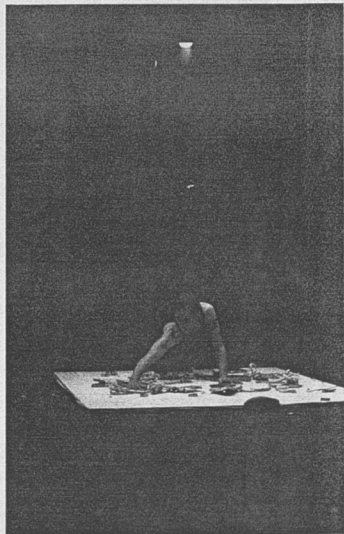
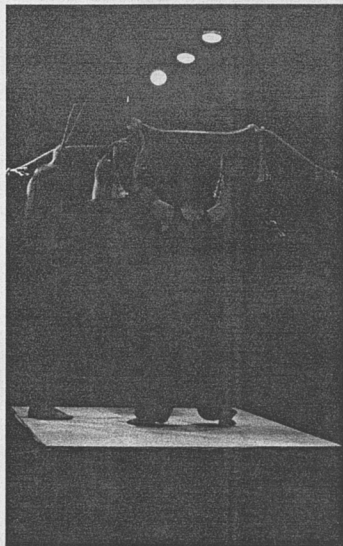


"Untitled"

Rope, Ceramic, Water, Stone.

Height 2m Width 8m Depth 6m.

piece had been displayed for a week and the water had begun to go stale, it seemed important to break down the work and release the stagnant water. In collaboration with my colleague, Wendy Teakel, it was decided that a performance work should be used. In the performance the initial structure was broken down and a new symbol was formed. The ropes were used to define a square. The pieces of broken dish were formed into a circle and lengths of poplar stick which were introduced in the performance, were made into a triangle. The stone was placed, again, in the centre. The performance lasted for about 45 minutes and became known as "Self Investigation 1". The final statement was that the 'self' cannot exist in an unchanging atmosphere.



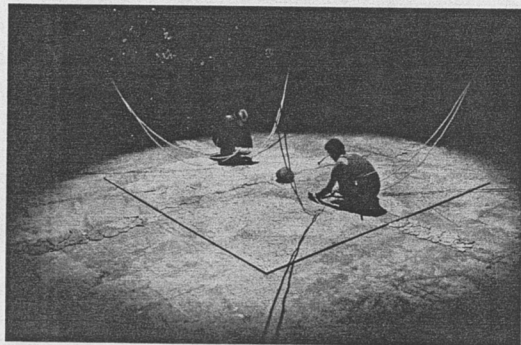
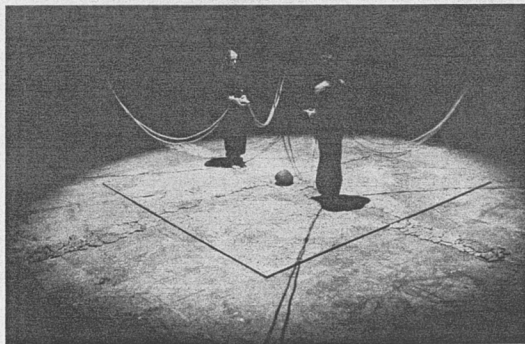
"Self Investigation 1"
R.C.A.E Gallery, 1979.
Ceramic, Rope, Water, Stone.
Performance. 45 minutes.

After leaving Art School it was important to continue working, but with no studio and little equipment this was extremely difficult. Performance was one art form which did not require a studio or any equipment. In April, 1980 the ACT 2 performance festival was held in Canberra. Wendy and I submitted a proposal which was accepted and we presented "Self Investigation 2". The work grew out of our first performance. A 12 foot square of cracked clay was installed prior to the performance. A pulley and length of rope were suspended over each corner of the square and a stone was placed in the centre. Sections of clay were removed from the square and relocated outside to form pathways in towards the stone as well as extending out from the square. The idea was related

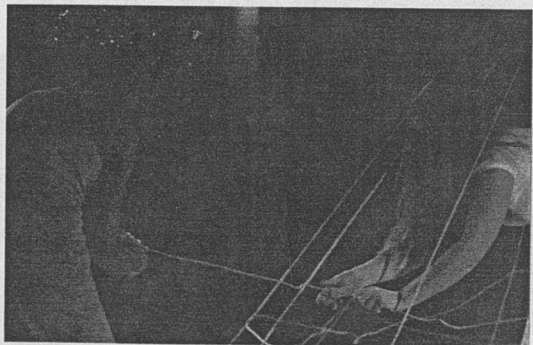
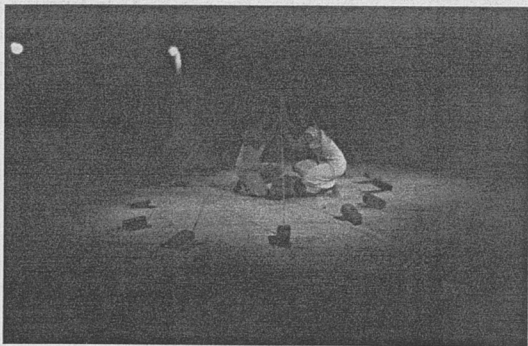
"Self Investigation 2"

ACT 2 Canberra 1980.

Performance 45 minutes.



to extending one's knowledge or experience by using what you already know as building blocks to move into unknown areas. After the paths were completed, the stone was lifted into the air from opposite ends of the pathways using the pulleys and ropes. It was held there for 10 seconds and then dropped. Finally, the ends of the pathways were linked by a trail of sand, which formed two triangles with their apex meeting at the stone.



Later that year we presented another performance, the last in a series of three called "Self Investigation 3" at the Experimental Art Foundation in Adelaide. A stone was placed in the centre of a square of sand which was surrounded by a border of leaves. Ropes were placed under the leaves and twelve bricks were situated around the square of sand. The performance consisted of a set of tightly choreographed movements which eventuated in the formation of a conical rope structure over the stone. Wendy was 'woven' into the structure, from which, she later cut her self free. The performance ended with the ropes forming a tangled mat around the stone.

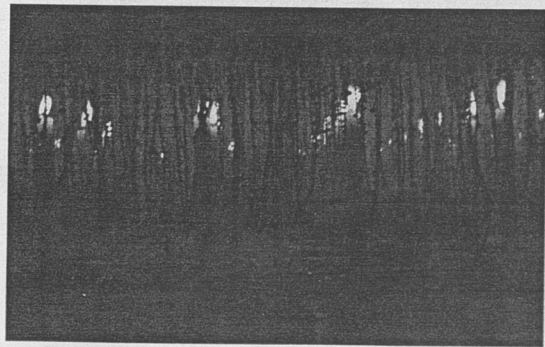
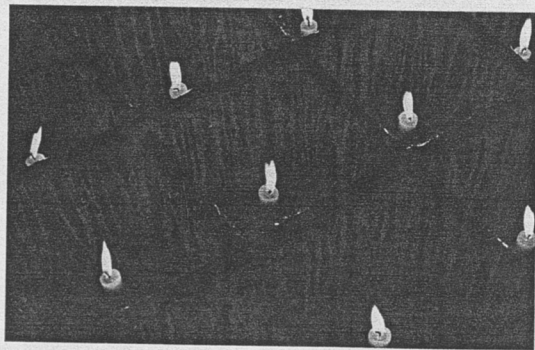
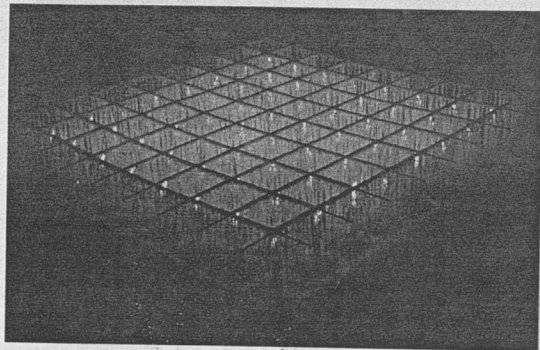
"Self Investigation 3"
Experimental Art Foundation
Adelaide 1980.
Performance 35 minutes.

"Candle Grid"

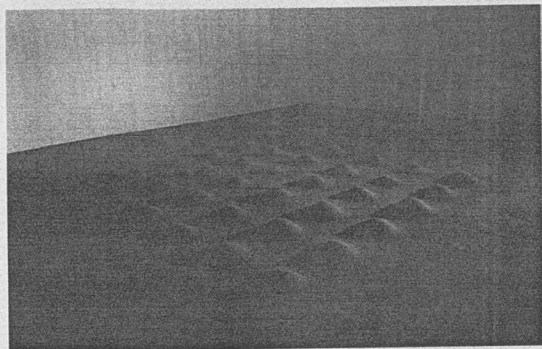
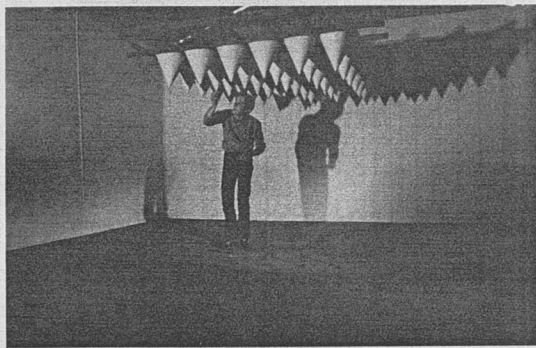
1982.

Steel, Wax, Candles.

Height .3m Width 1.8m Depth 1.8m



After moving back to Wagga Wagga from Sydney in 1982, I made a work which I called "Candle Grid". It consisted of a six foot square of reinforcing normally used in concrete, supported one foot off the ground by fine legs. Paraffin wax was dripped all over the grid until stalactites formed almost touching the ground. Candles were set in the wax in each square of the grid. The laws of nature that govern everything in existence are represented by the grid. Everything that lives and happens in our universe is controlled and kept in balance by these laws. The grid pattern of wax on the floor of the piece (what manifests in our universe) is a mirror image of the grid 'floating' above it. The candles burn the residue, the unused, the dead and the cycle repeats itself over and over again.



The second work made in the Wagga studio was "Sand Cones". A timber grid six foot square, was suspended six feet from the floor and supported 36 conical bags of sand. The piece was set in motion by releasing the grains of sand. Over a one hour period the falling sand formed cones on the floor. At the time I was reading various creation myths. A concept common to many of these was that the creator made the world in his own image. Certainly, there is a universal idea in esoteric philosophy of 'As above so below' symbolised by the diagram:



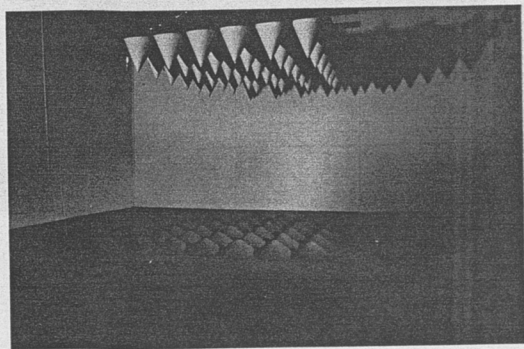
I liked the idea of making a work which created something of its own. I became the catalyst in this physical relationship.

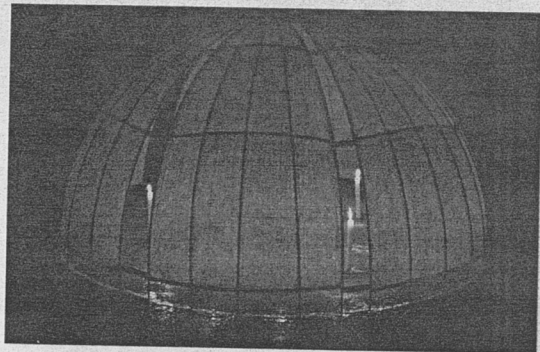
"Sand Cones"

1982.

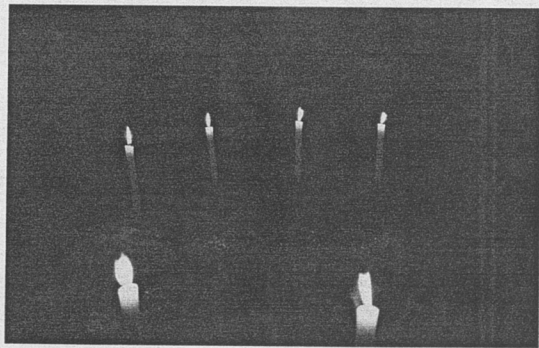
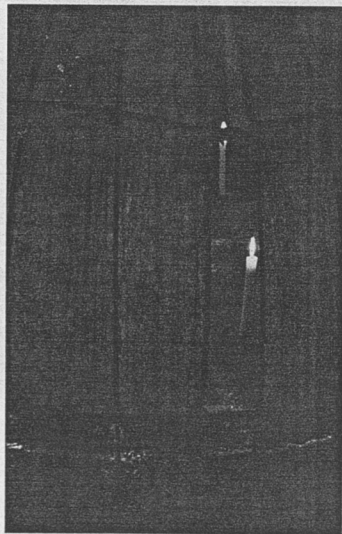
Timber, Calico, Sand, Steel.

Height 1.8m Width 2.1m Depth 2.1m



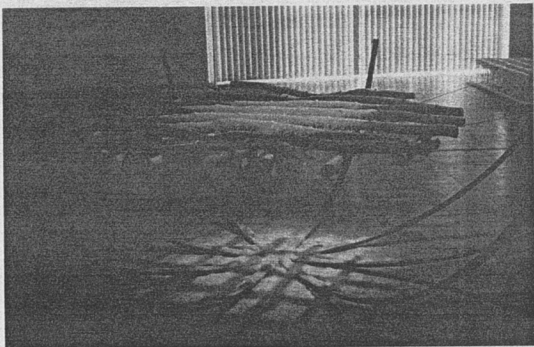


"Dome" is six feet in diametre and made from wax, muslin and steel rod. Twelve candles inside the work light up the translucent structure. I have always associated this work with the human head; the spiritual aspect of light in darkness, the irrational, intuitive and subjective.

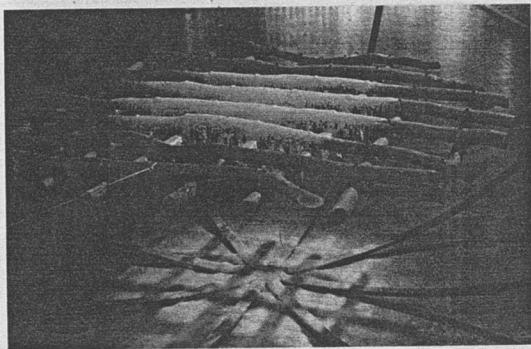


"Dome"
1982.

Steel Rod, Muslin, Wax, Candles.
Height 0.9m Width 1.8m Depth 1.8m



"Suspended Grid" is a curved steel cradle which supports a wooden grid made from stringy bark saplings. Organic growths of molten wax hang from the centre of the grid. Correspondingly, wax has built up on the floor reflecting the grid above it. The idea relates to an earlier work exhibited in the First Australian Sculpture Triennial. The mind is an open container, but is limited by its own ability to see, here represented by the grid. What the mind does see and act on is a reflection of how it works.



"Suspended Grid"

1983.

Saplings, Steel, Cable, Wax.

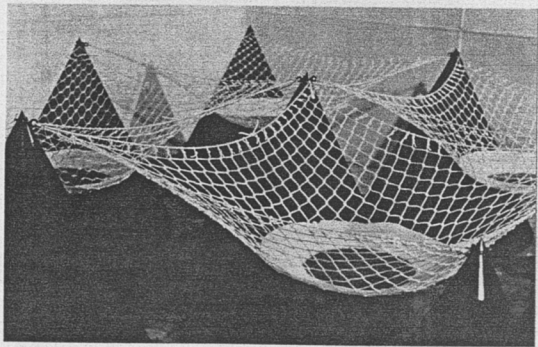
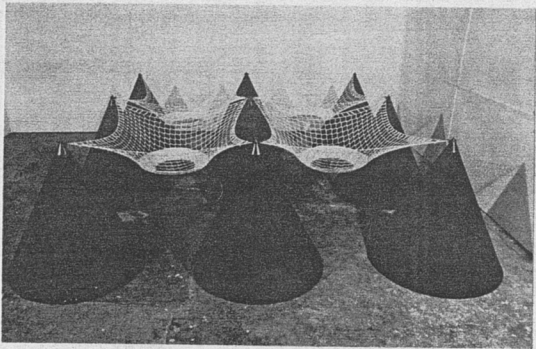
Height 0.9m Width 3.6m Depth 3.6m

"Cone Piece"

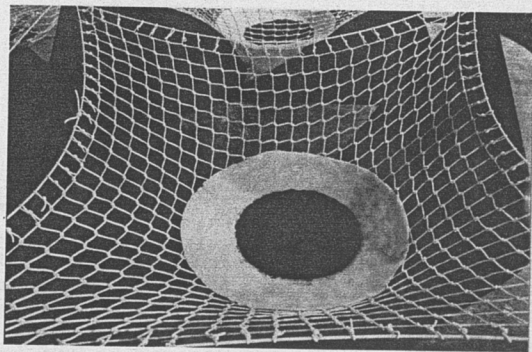
1983.

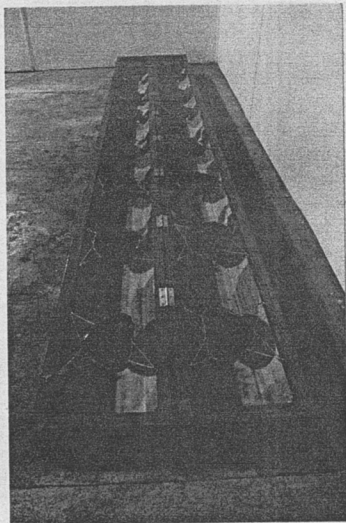
Steel Rod, Material, Nylon Cord, Wax, Sump Oil.

Height 0.9m Width 3.6m Depth 3.6m



"Cone Piece" consisted of nine black cones situated in a square grid. Four nets which stretch between them support wax dishes containing sump oil. This is perhaps, singularly, the most formalist of all my work. The cones which sit securely on the floor have an upward moving energy, while the nets which link the cones together are pulled down by the dishes containing sump oil. The work has an internal, interrelated energy which requires and justifies the existence of all the individual elements.





"Box" is displayed open to reveal sixteen lead containers which hold water. The box itself is lined with patinated copper hinting at the presence of water. The containers were made by wrapping lead around river stones. The two halves being suspended opposite each other in the box so that when the box is closed the space enveloped by the lead is that of the stone. However, the box cannot be closed because of the water held in the lead bowls.

"Box"

1983.

Timber, Copper, Lead, Water, Wire.

Height 0.2m Width 0.35m Depth 3.6m



"Container for Residual Opposites" was shown in Melbourne in 1984. Eight large wooden ribs support a huge suspended lead container or bowl. Drippings of paraffin wax form a grid pattern inside the container and in the very bottom a pool of sump oil. The wax pattern forms as a result of an imaginary grid suspended over the piece itself. The wax and sump oil, although derivatives of the same raw material (crude oil) are opposite in colour and mood. One is white, clean and geometric, the other black, dirty and formless. They represent the extremes in the situation and all that exists between those extremes. The work is related to the installation in the First Australian Sculpture Triennial and "Suspended Grid". It is enough to say that it is about the mind and how it works. I might add here too, that although I have discussed my work in terms of the individual i.e. the microcosm, it can also be viewed in terms of the macrocosm.

"Container for Residual Opposites"

1984.

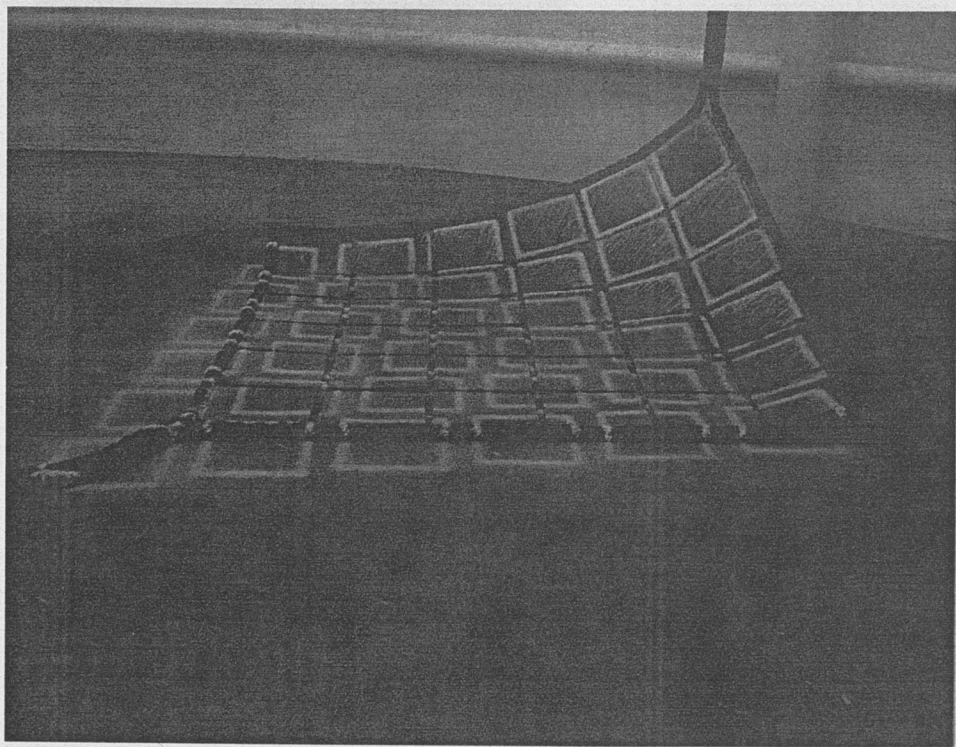
Timber, Steel, Lead, Wax, Sump Oil, Cable.

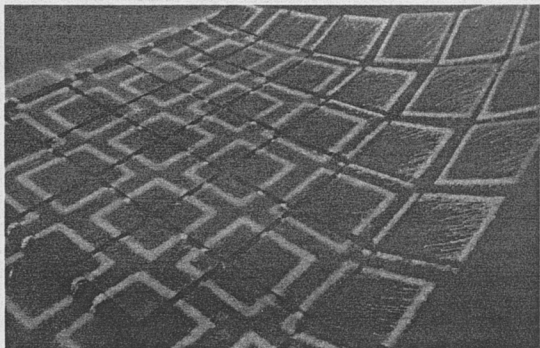
Height 2.8m Width 2.5m Depth 2.5m

THE

POSTGRADUATE

WORK...





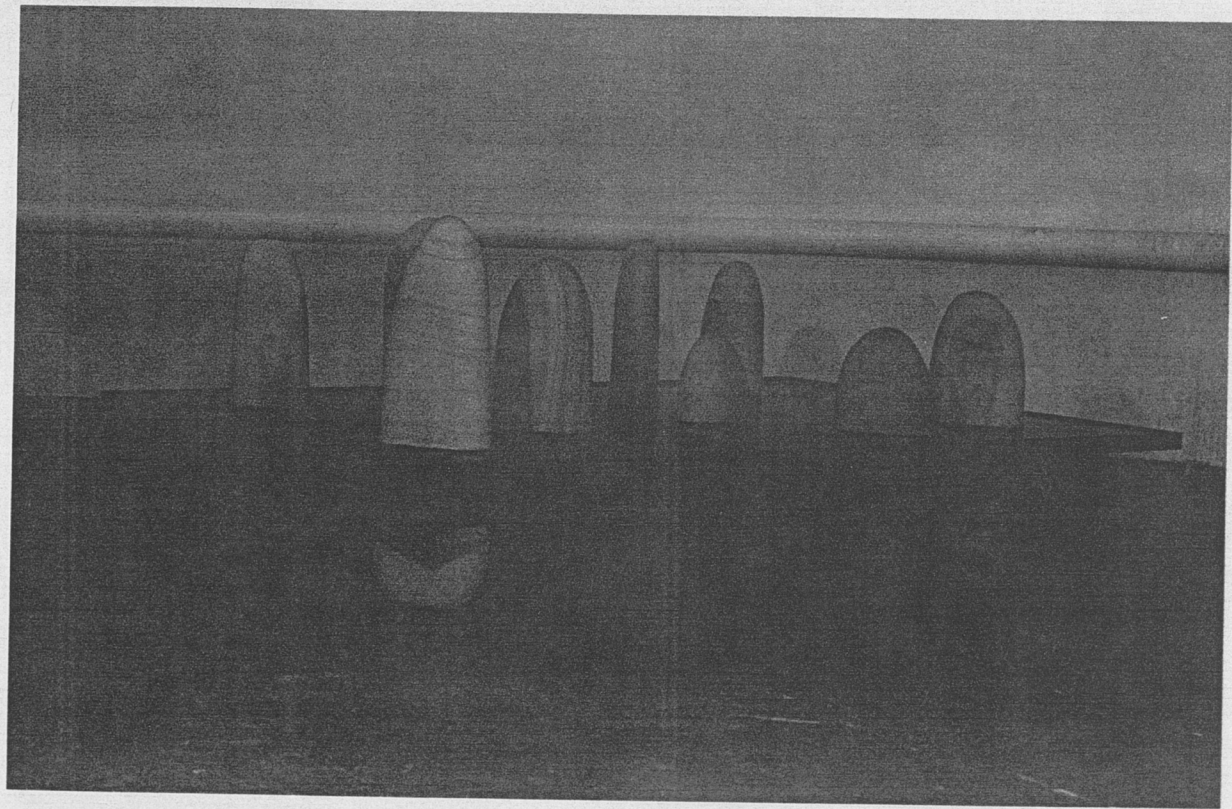
"Fallen Container"

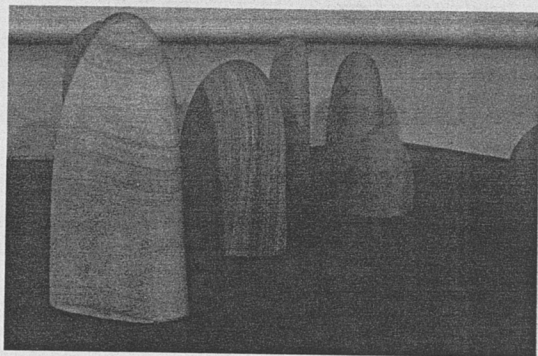
1985.

Rope, Lead, Steel, Wax.

Height 5m Width 5m Depth 4m





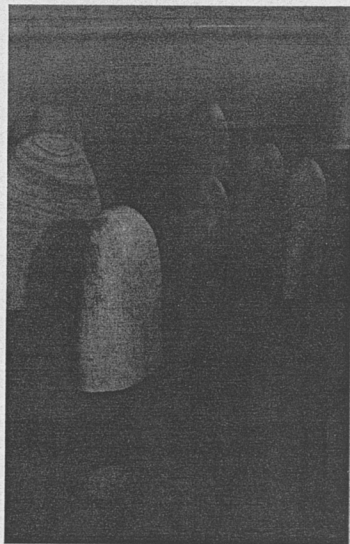


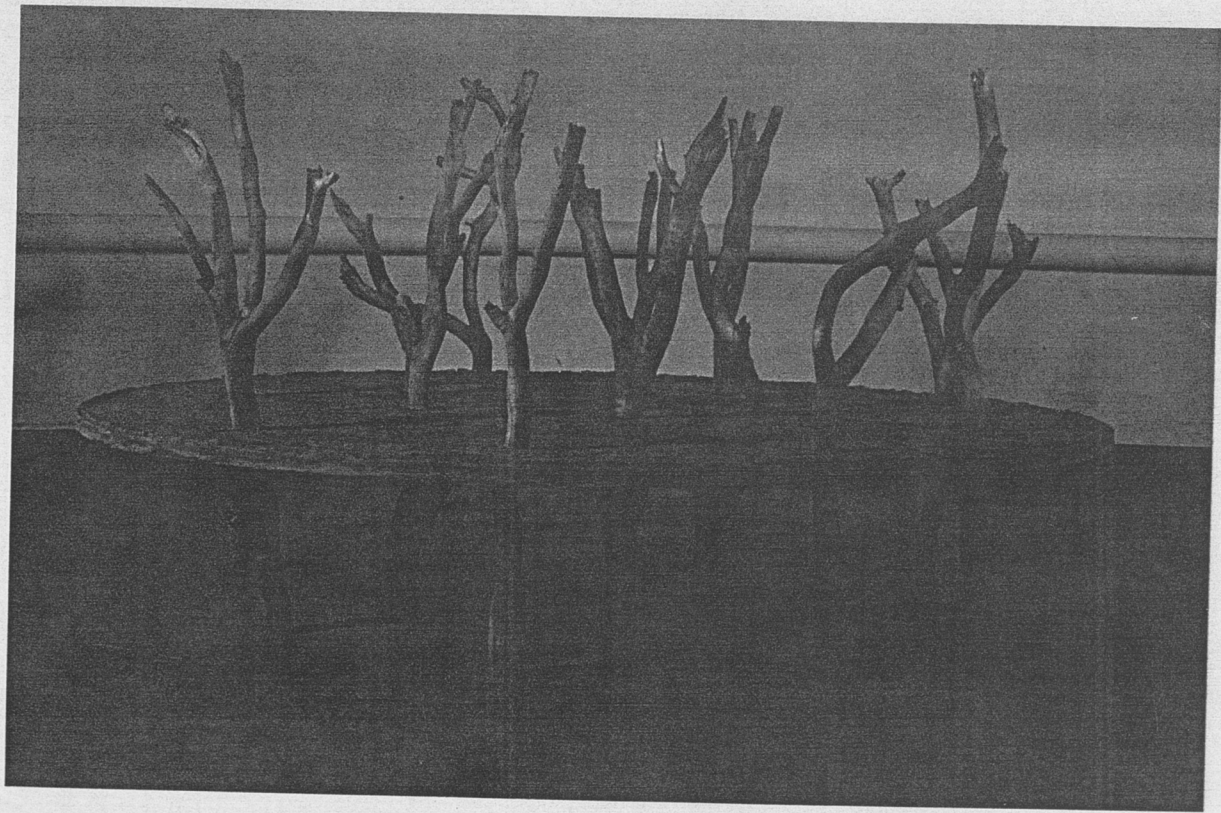
"Riverscape"

1985.

Sandstone, Timber, Water.

Height 1m Width 1.7m Depth 2.1m





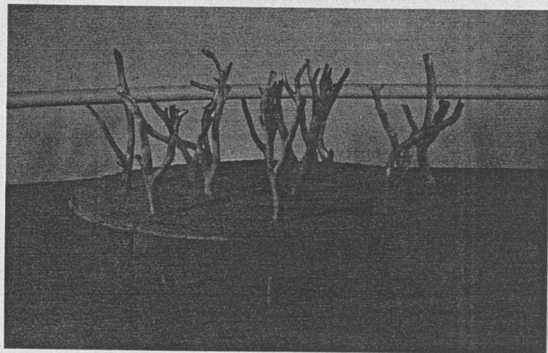


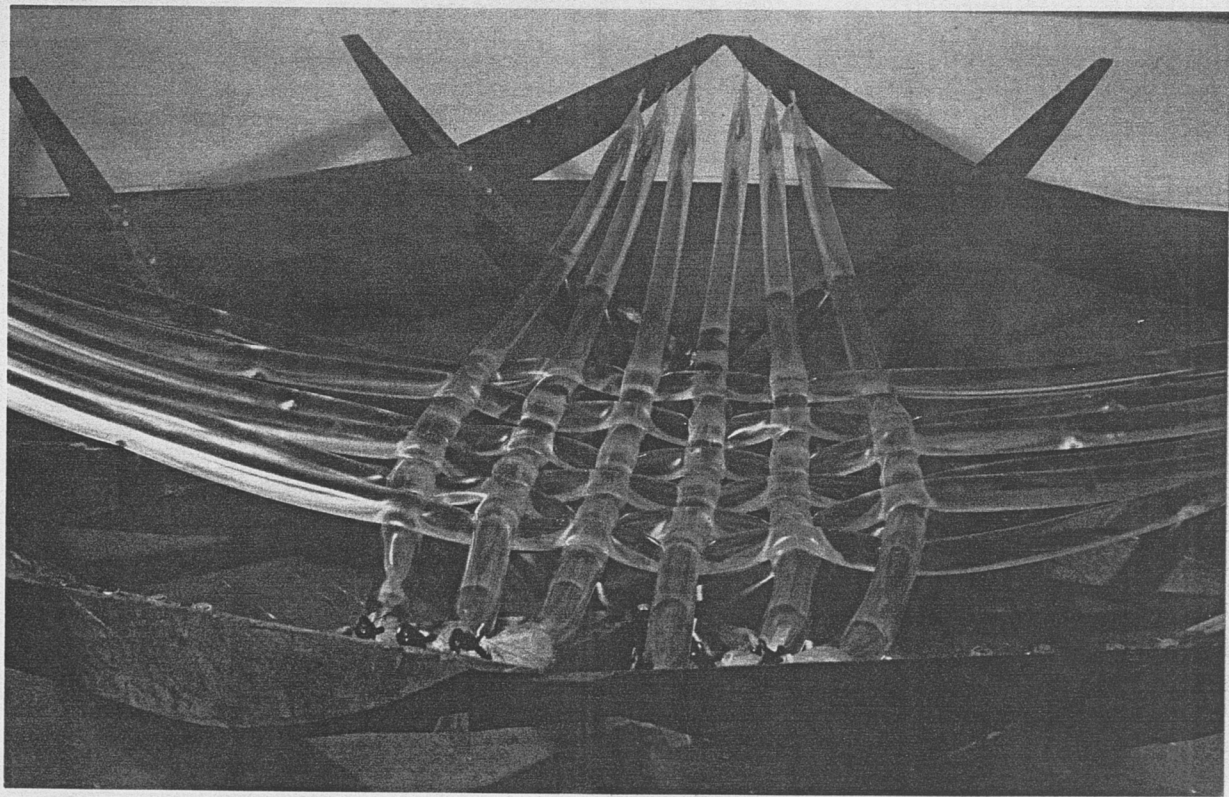
"Landscape"

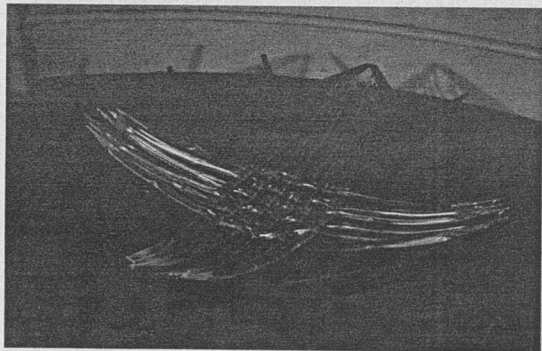
1985.

Sticks, Clay, Steel.

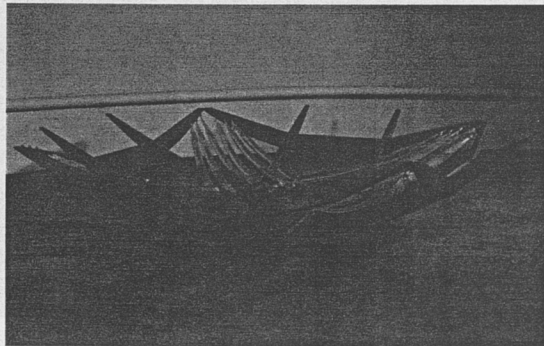
Height 0.9m Width 2.7m Depth 2.7m

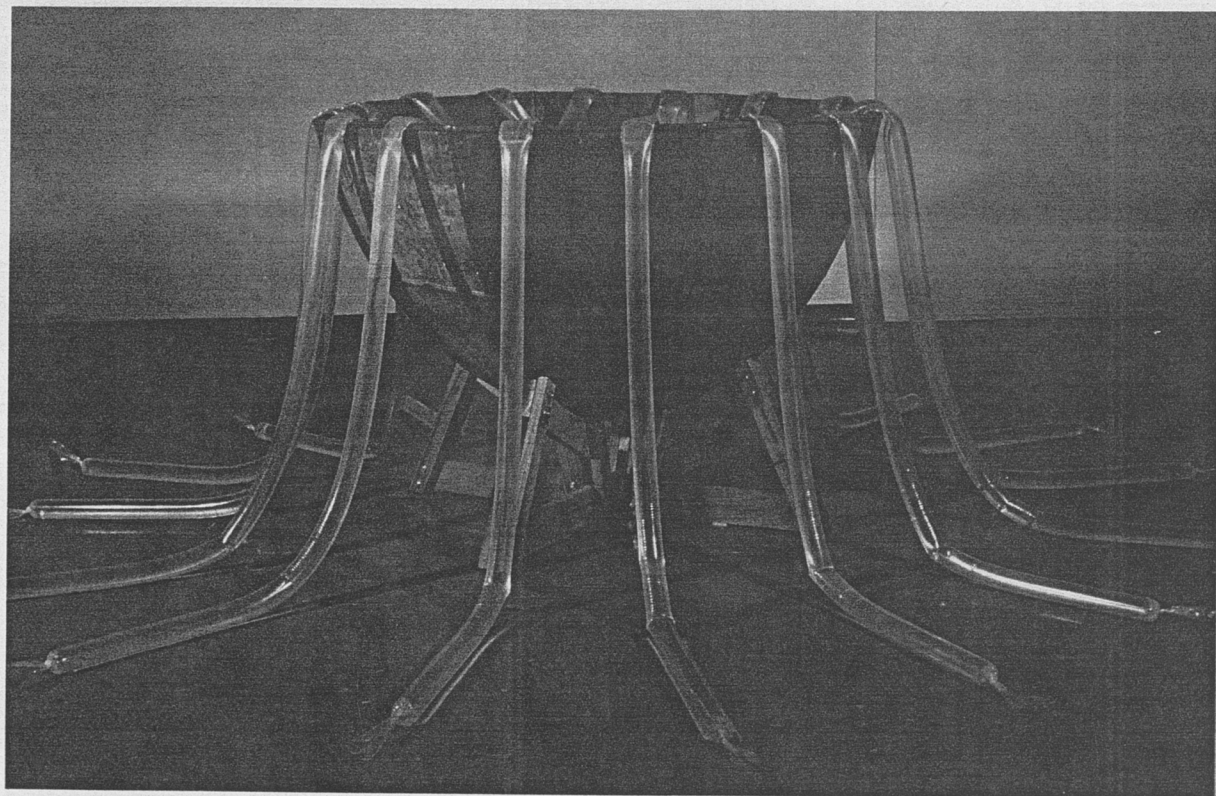




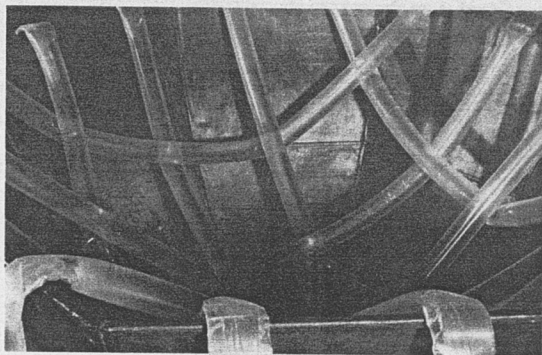


"Water Weaving 1"
1985.
Timber, Plastic, Water.
Height 0.9m Width 4m Depth 4m





Conclusion

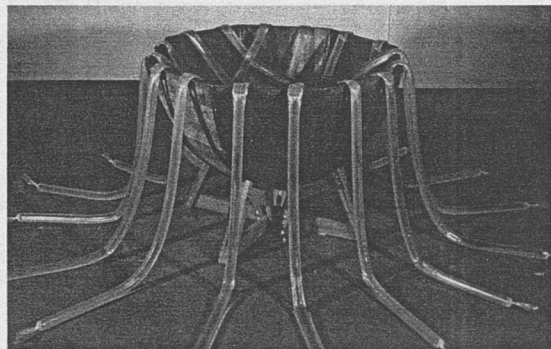


"Water Weaving 2"

1985.

Timber, Lead, Steel, Plastic, Water.

Height 1.5m Width 5m Depth 5m

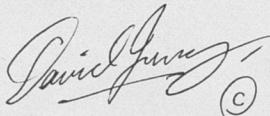


Conclusion

This report focuses on the ideas I have in relation to my work. I have not discussed the sensual aspects of the materials I use, although, they are often a lead in for those who say they do not understand the work. Indeed the materials, more often than not, initiate the creative process. I have also not discussed the technical problems of the work, for although I enjoy solving these at the time, a report full of technical expositions would make very boring reading indeed. The idea dictates how the work should be made. There is only one correct solution and I must solve all the problems so that it is right. Compromises are less than satisfactory.

I have written this report for my postgraduate assessors, it is not a document I wish to be held to in years to come. The ideas discussed are those that I hold now; I hope they will change and grow in the future as I do.

Of the work made this year only two will be shown in the Post-graduate exhibition ("Water Weaving 1" and "Water Weaving 2") as the works are large and the gallery space is limited. Wendy Teakel and I will have an exhibition of our work at the Arts Council Gallery, Gorman House, Canberra in June 1986. The three remaining works, "Fallen Container", "Riverscape" and "Landscape" will be exhibited in that show. We have also an exhibition of our work at the Gryphon Gallery in Melbourne in July 1986. This is part of the 'Sculpture for Melbourne' programme Ken Scarlet is running. We received a grant from the Capital Arts Patrons Organisation earlier in 1985 to produce an eight page black and white catalogue with introductory essay, to accompany these two exhibitions. You are all cordially invited to attend.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "David Yarrow". To the right of the signature is a small circle containing the letter "C", indicating a copyright notice.

1. Mitchinson, David Henry Moore Sculpture
Macmillan London LTD, London and Basingstoke 1981, Page 23.
2. *ibid*