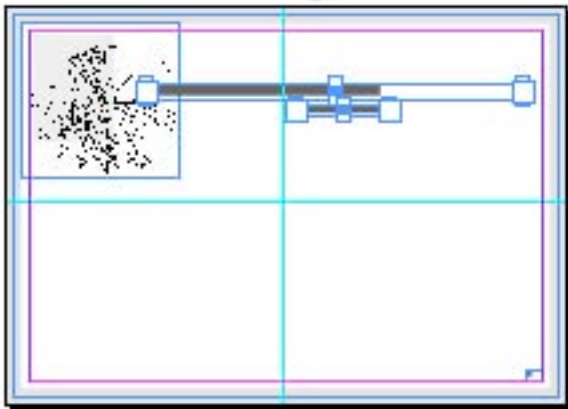


# simulation / mediation / proximity

a synthesis of contexts

This is the set of notes used for my presentation for the Synthesis module.



## Slide 1

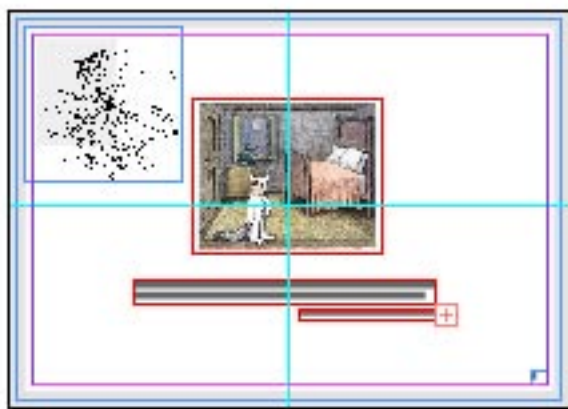
simulation / mediation / proximity – a synthesis of contexts

This synthesis is concerned with examining a theoretical and practical context for my practice.

Notions of digital space and our relationships with it, is a point of fascination for me. In each module of the Msc so far I have sought to explore elements of cyberspace / virtual reality / distributed networks / narrative space etc in different ways.

Conceptual explorations of digitally mediated space present both practical and theoretical challenges which I have attempted to negotiate throughout this research.

The following slides act as points of reference for my work.

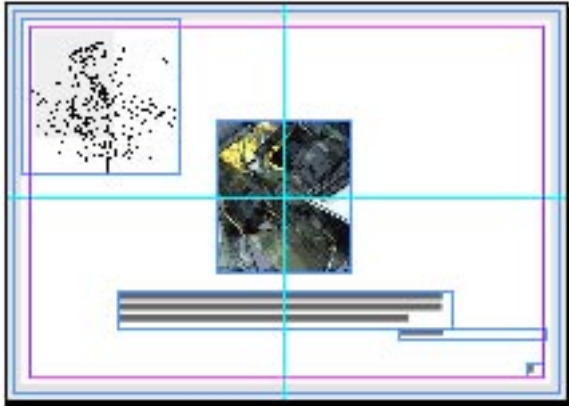


## Slide 2

This in a small way sums up some of the ideas I am working with... virtuality, immersive environments, stories / text / narrative etc.

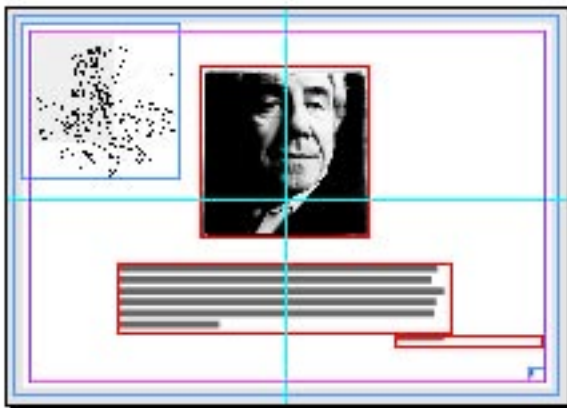
This set of images that I have animated together could be read in a number of ways. There are links with my work in relation to narrative spaces, imagination, allegory and story telling. Also quite intriguingly once I had compiled the images together another aspect becomes clear. As we move from the little boy standing in his room, into the beginnings of his imagination coming into play, the room expands. The physical dimensions of the illustrations grow. The illustrations also become more vivid and detailed. For me this has some quite compelling parallels with notions of Hyperreality as well as

links with Virilio and his notion of paradoxical logic (ref: 'The Vision Machine')



### Slide 3

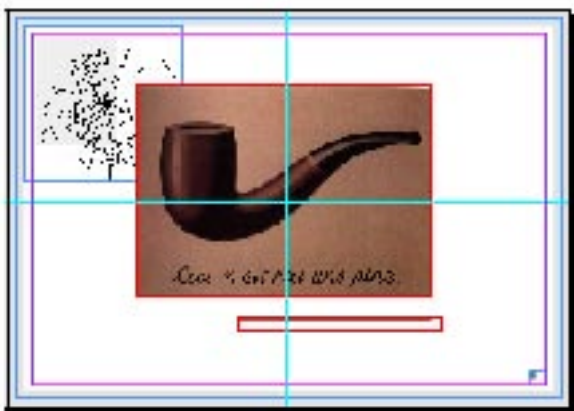
This quote is particularly inspiring for me and allows for a very optimistic view of cyber spatial potentialities. While I am certainly interested in Novak's interpretation of cyberspace and find aspects of his methodology very compelling, I am not entirely convinced of his outcomes. For me his work fails to live up to his theory.



### Slide 4

Baudrillard is a cultural theorist / philosopher generally associated with postmodernism and post-structuralism.

Baudrillard is central to any enquiry into the nature of simulated or virtual environments or at least his ideas need to be addressed in some way. This quote, as with numerous others gives an idea of his interest in simulation and his ideas around it.



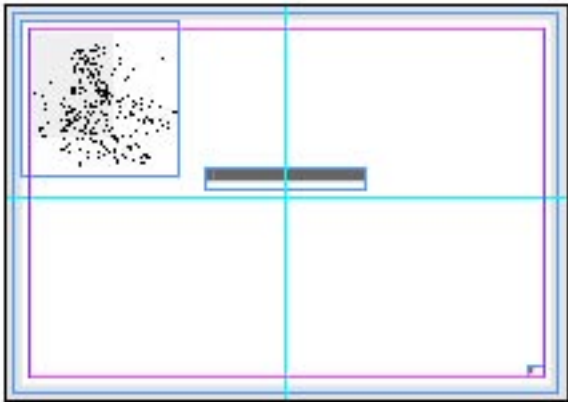
### Slide 5

Magritte was essentially a surrealist but dealt with the relationship between image and meaning in a way that can be used to engage with digitally mediated virtual space / representation.

This painting is a classic example. Entitled "this is not a pipe". The image of the pipe is of course not itself a pipe

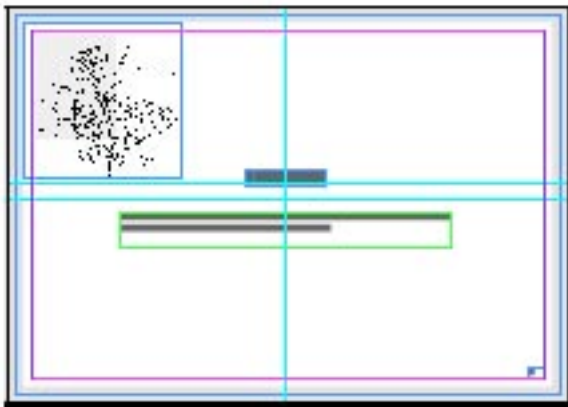
This is perhaps a key reference point for dealing with visual imagery and representation. This can be linked with visual aspect and meaning of a sign.

(ref: Hjeltmslev / semiotics etc)



### Slide 6

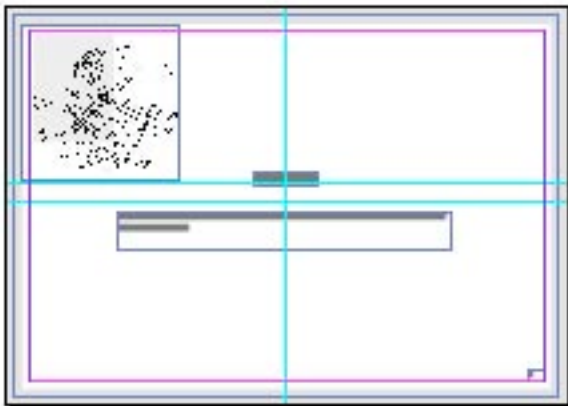
Augmented Proximities is the primary title for my enquiries



### Slide 7

Augmented -

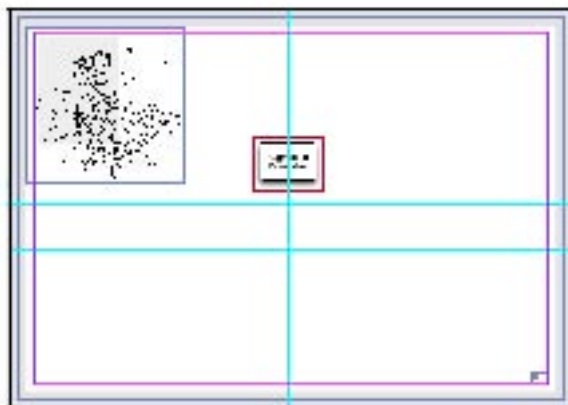
Augmentation suggests an extension or addition; a widening of experience, and specifically refers to machine-mediated experience



### Slide 8

Proximities –

Proximity is used to imply a question about the theoretical 'location' of digital or virtual interaction

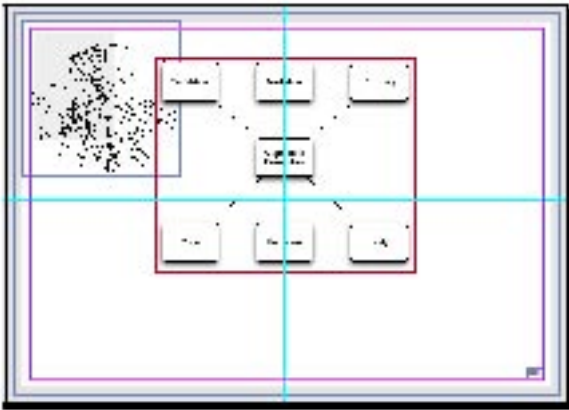


### Slide 9

I will now show how this relates to particular areas of my research.

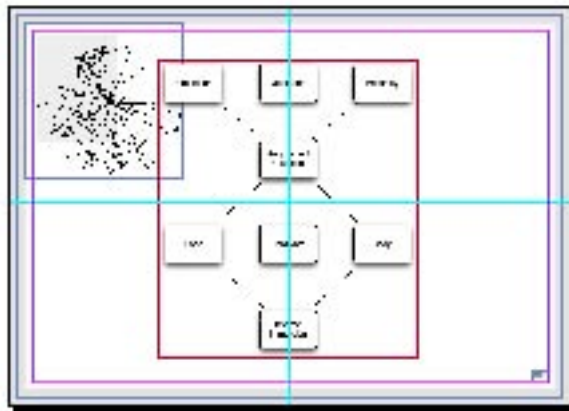
### Slide 10

Here we can see that simulation, mediation, and proximity are a subset of augmented proximities and represent my primary interests in this research.



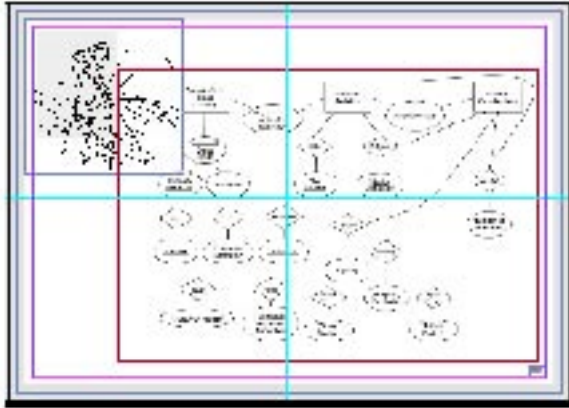
**Slide 11**

We can now see a mirroring of these three categories in: Code, Hardware, and Body. Simulation is linked directly with code, mediation is a function of hardware, and proximity is a location of body in relation to both code and hardware. In some ways these are more practical building blocks to work with.



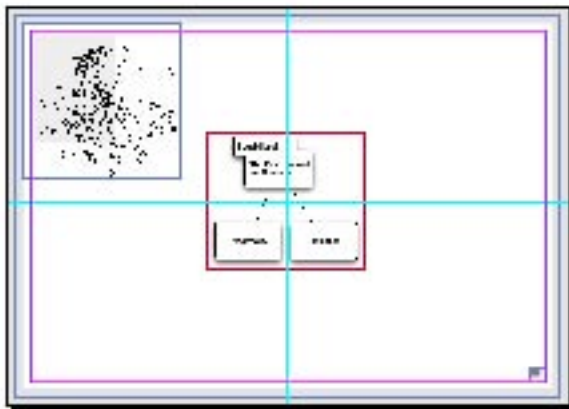
**Slide 12**

From these I am proposing a possibility for a state of Inverse Immersion. Whereby we can achieve a phenomenological experience of the real through an interaction with the virtual. In some way, by exposing its limitations for example, the virtual thrusts us back into the real. Both of the works produced for modules this term reference this in some way.



**Slide 13**

This is a map of relationships between key areas of interest for me. And while by no means complete, offers some idea of the breadth of inquiry.



**Slide 14**

We need to look more specifically at a key reference point.

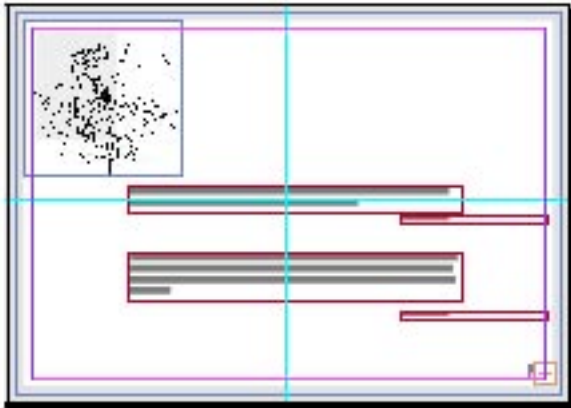
Baudrillard's main contributions to my research are his ideas of Hyperreality and Simulation (or precession of simulacra).

We can sum up Baudrillard's proposition by saying that our perceptions of the world in which we live are so fundamentally compromised by this 'precession of simulacra' that it is impossible to distinguish between reality and representation. It is no longer possible just to say that our culture is artificial because the very concept of artificiality suggests we have a

perception of 'real' reality with which to compare it. So if we are to take the interpretation of ideology in the Postmodernist sense, that it informs the basis of our experience of 'reality', then it is impossible for us to transcend it in any meaningful or useful way. Because we rely so heavily on language to form our perceptions any re-presentation of reality is essentially ideological and thus a simulation.

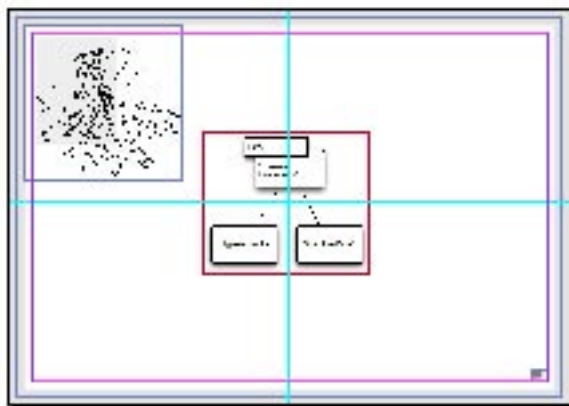
If required include:

“In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a Single Province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point” (Borges & ‘Of exactitude in science’)



### Slide 15

Here are some quotes that further articulate his hypothesis.



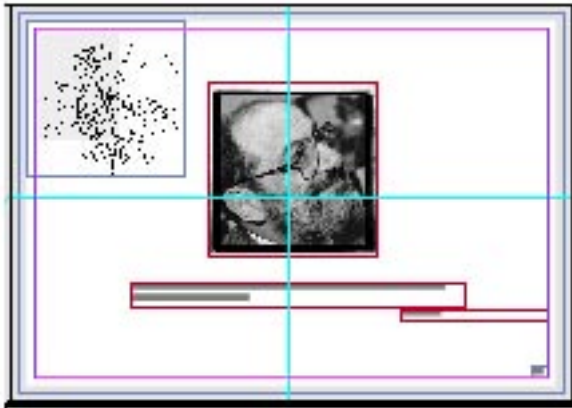
### Slide 16

Umberto Eco

Main points:

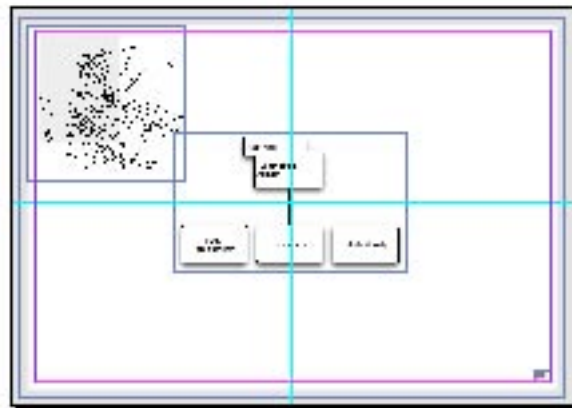
Semiotics  
Hypertextuality  
Hyperreality

Literary theory concept of hypertextuality The interconnectedness of all literary works and any interpretation of them.



### Slide 17

Eco quote: “the sign aims to be the thing, to abolish the distinction of the reference, the mechanism of replacement.”

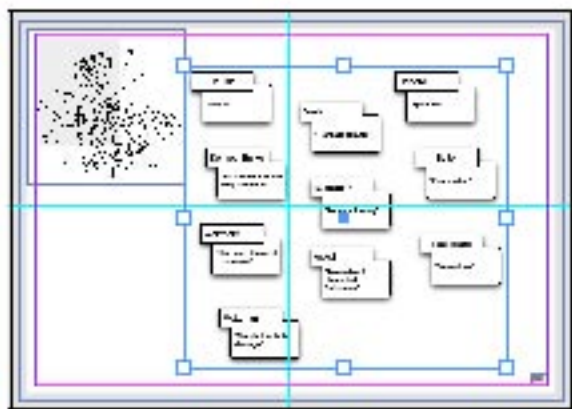


### Slide 18

Barthes Map

Intertextuality

Concept of intertextuality implies that *meaning* is brought to a cultural object by its audience/viewer and does not necessarily reside in the object.



### Slide 19

General Theorists

**Derrida** – Mimesis

Mimesis - imitation or representation of aspects of the real / phenomenological world.

Derrida’s mimesis “is between two producing subjects and not two produced things,” thus each subject cannot exist without the other and production is a constant process. This seems to also connect to Derrida’s “supplement” (i.e. “you can’t have one without the other.”)

**Virilio** - Transparence

Hypermodern and ‘logistics of perception’ - Discuss?

**Debord**

‘spectacle’ – “the seductive nature of consumer capitalism”  
Political / marxist - Discuss?

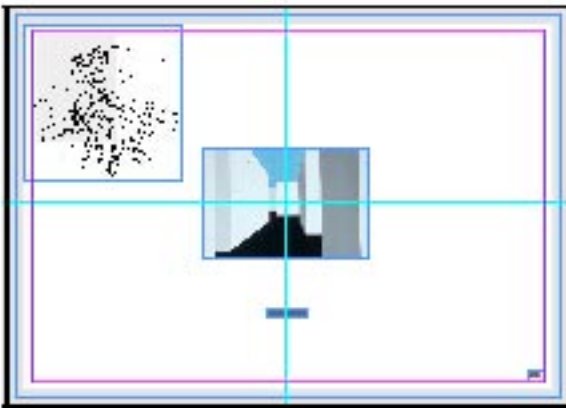
**Borges.**

“In that Empire, the craft of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of a Single Province covered the space of an entire City, and the Map of the Empire itself an entire Province. In the course of Time, these Extensive maps were found somehow wanting, and so the College of Cartographers evolved a Map of the Empire that was of the same Scale as the Empire and that coincided with it point for point” (Borges & ‘Of exactitude in science’)



#### Slide 20

This piece of work Sealed Computers by Maurizio Bolognini is from his series of infoinstallations. This work comprises a number of CPU's, collectively running an image-manipulation programme. None of the machines have any user interface. They have no keyboard, mouse, or monitor and, in fact, the monitor port is sealed with wax. This piece of work is of primary interest to me as it deals specifically with notions of an interior digital space and an exterior phenomenological space. The act of removing any point of interaction presents a 'closed system' that keeps us out.

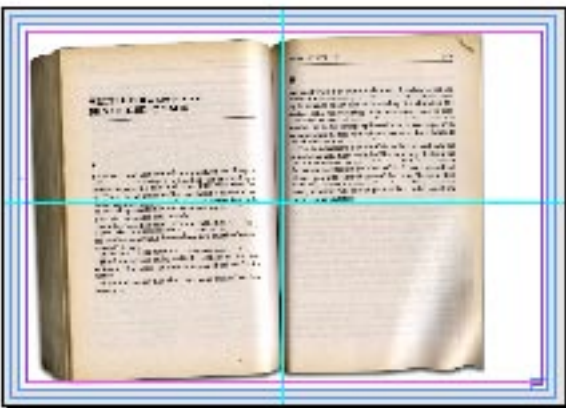


#### Slide 21

Julian Opie.

This artist and this series of works in particular have been of great interest to me. They comprise a number of suggested virtual spaces.

His work moves from the reconstruction of reality prevalent in modernism into a consideration of the virtuality of reality. What is interesting for me is his use of traditional or perhaps 'obsolete' methods of artistic production, sculpture, painting, printmaking etc as well as 'obsolete' architectural traditions such as model making, in order to critique issues surrounding digital media.



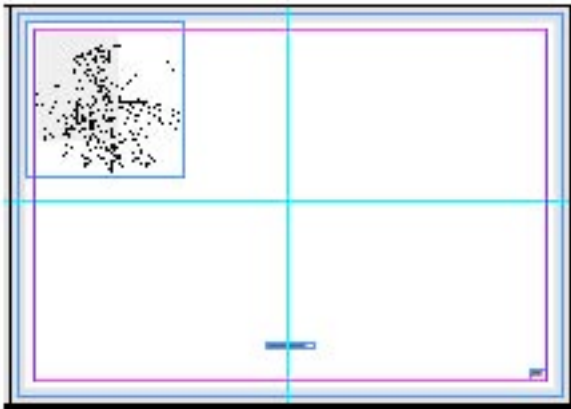
#### Slide 22

Narrative descriptive spaces

Bryan Catling is a performance/ installation artist and poet. This piece of work represents a particular strand of his work and takes the form of a series of texts proposing installation spaces. These pieces are highly descriptive and the spaces described are intricately detailed. This particular piece is indicative of this type of work. These spaces are often fantastical and often conjure fatal outcomes. Generally these proposed installations

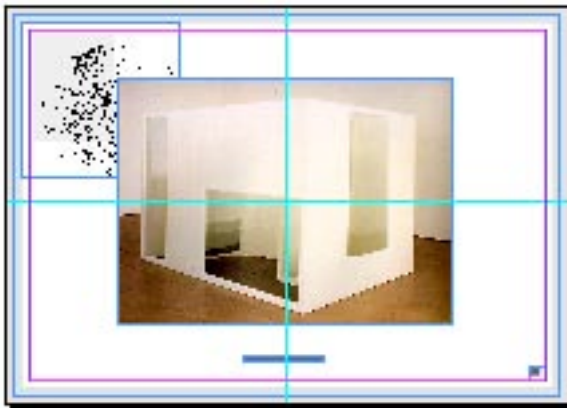
are never actualised as they are often impractical, improbable, and certainly potentially harmful.

This work is linked to my Written Spaces work.



### Slide 23

Telematics & Distributed Authorship



### Slide 24

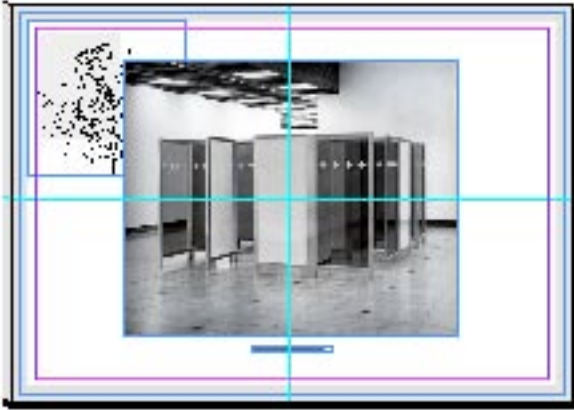
This is another Julian Opie work. It is a sculpture entitled HA/45-11 that is part of a series of sculptures that heavily reference public utilitarian objects. They invite a usage but deny any form of interaction or engagement. These pieces are generally of more interest now than his 'imagine' works to my researches as they represent a 'closed system'.

His work, or many of the forms it takes (strongly resembling vents, telephone boxes, cubicles, display cabinets, refrigerators etc) also deal with notions of displacement and 'mimesis' or imitation. (ref: Derida & Mimesis) The phenomenology of the 'everyday' perhaps?

Many of his works are also mass-produced in series or at least resemble or reference mass production in some way and so relate to other issues, modularisation and reproduction etc. (ref: Walter Benjamin & The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction)

His work is also specifically related to ideas of virtuality and digital space with regard to the body:

"Opie's work [] demonstrates that attempts at institutional control of the gaze, and the technological modelling of experience, end up, through their inevitable moments of failure, reminding us of the irreducibility of the body in perception, of finitude and the contingencies which the fantasies involved in information technology dream of overcoming." Michael Newman 1994



### Slide 25

This is another piece of work from this series. Again we see his use of materials that could be associated with phone boxes or toilet cubicles but do not allow for these uses.



### Slide 26

This is a piece of work I produced for the Histories and Futures 2 module. 'Written Spaces' is a series of randomly generated virtual spaces. These spaces are constructed with words taken from different sources and are combined randomly via a PHP script. With each re-configuration a new space is created.

To quote from my Readme file:

“This work functions as, but is not limited to, a response to the Roland Barthes essay “The Death of the Author”.

The initial aim of the work was to reduce the role of ‘authorship’ to a minimum (if not wholly removing it) while still exploring a continued interest in ‘digital space’.

‘Written Spaces’ is a series of randomly generated ‘Virtual’ spaces.

These spaces are constructed with words. Passages of text taken from different sources - Iain M Banks, Umberto Eco, Kurt Vonnegut, Iris Murdoch etc. Each text is primarily concerned with describing a space.

These passages of text are then ‘cut-up’ (see William Bourroughs and other ‘Beatnik Poets’) into sections, intermixed and then randomly reassembled.

This work takes the form of text based web page linked to a PHP script.

On each re-visit or click of the ‘Reconfigure’ button the page is re-assembled the PHP script re-run and a new configuration or described space is encountered. (you can click sections of the text to view the book / original author)

My proposition is that the resulting configuration can be read

as a description of a new, random and original virtual space.”

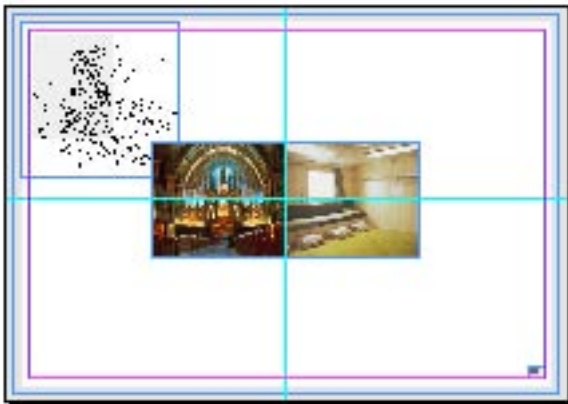
### Slide 27

Another configured space.



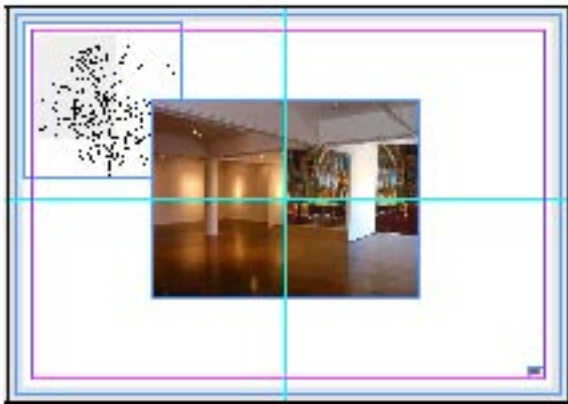
### Slide 28

This is the beginning of some work produced for Mike. The images are of interior spaces.



### Slide 29

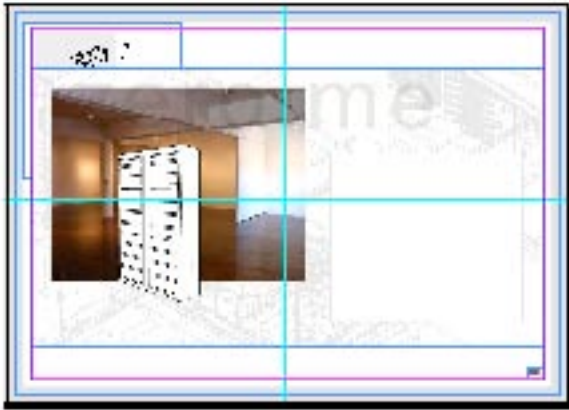
This is a proposed installation. The gallery space is transformed using projected images of photographed spaces. The images are projected on to the walls and changed depending on the number of people in the space. Key concerns are the representation of space, the possibility for it to transform our experience of space and the relationship between the represented ‘virtual’ space and the ‘real’ space of the gallery.



### Slide 30

This is series of proposed installations using rack mounted Web Servers. These servers are placed in a gallery/exhibition space. They have power but they are in no way connected to the ‘outside world’. There is no interface and no other way to access the data on the servers. A programme is running that zeros all the data on the hard drives. This work is time based; once all data is removed the cycle starts again. There is an interesting paradox in that virtual space is created with data and by removing the data more space is created.

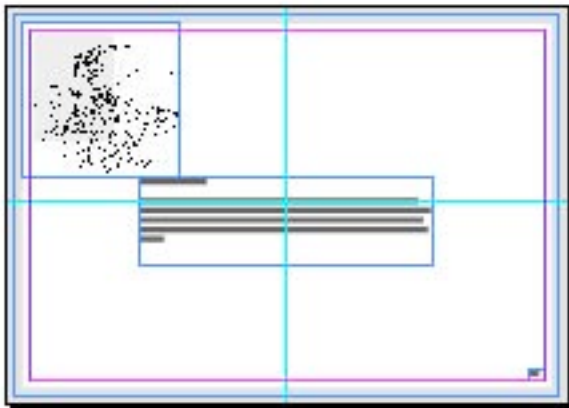




### Slide 31

This piece is similar but the relationship with virtuality or representation is extended, even the Web Servers are represented using a model. This could be interpreted as an attempt to negotiate an articulation of representation itself.

“The sign is haunted by the nostalgia for overcoming its own convention, that of being arbitrary. It is haunted by the idea of total motivation. It aims at the real as its beyond and abolition. But it cannot jump over its own shadow: this real is produced and reproduced by the sign itself. It is only its horizon. Reality is the fantasy by which the sign protects itself indefinitely from the deconstruction that haunts it.”  
(Baudrillard)



### Slide 32

Non Breaking Space: This is the work produced for Eduardo.

The work takes the form of a .php script placed on a web server. The script performs a simple function; it duplicates the HTML character code for a Nonbreaking Space, Unicode Character U+00A0 displayed in html as `&nbsp;`. It is also known as blank, white or hard space. The script is in effect creating a form of digital space, a potentially infinite expanse of code.

Both of these works deal with notions of virtuality, surface, frontier and boundary. We are given no access point to the web servers; we are given no visual references with which to perceive the space created by the non-breaking space. They both articulate a notion of a closed system and seek to explore the limitations as well as the nature of virtual space. They confront our experience of the virtual with a level of finality that offers no possibility of future engagement.