



Flash@Hebburn

by Charles Quick

Urban Art in the New Century

Edited by Jonathan Vickery

a flash —

is the perfect way to symbolise the industrial connection
to the riverside, with the spark from a welder's torch
being a regular sight from yesteryear.

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Foreword

In the early 1990s, it would have been surprising to think that the North East of England would soon become a leading region in Europe for culture, and particularly for public art. The phenomenon of Antony Gormley's Angel of the North in Gateshead (completed in 1998) created a wave of aspiration for the North East. In South Tyneside, outstanding figurative sculptures by Juan Munoz and Irene Brown were realised as part of a longer term Arts Council lottery funded project called Art on the Riverside. Our ambition for Art on the Riverside was that in facilitating a series of both artists' commissions and artists' residencies, the people of the region would be reconnected to the rivers Tyne and Wear.

When we first conceived the artist's brief and then shortlisted artists for a site in Hebburn, our goal was to find a way of celebrating the local electrical engineering company Reyrolles, who have been a significant national innovator and a local employer for over 100 years. When artist Charles Quick won the commission and made his way through the initial design process, it was interesting to see the change in mindset of the local councillors and business people involved in the process, who had initially expected an artwork in the form of a statue. They selected a proposal for an interactive artwork using light – quite a remarkable decision, but one that recognised the need to celebrate the electrical wonders at Reyrolle. This entailed making something different, which the community could engage with, and to create a special place of the Riverside Park between the shipyards and engineering works – quite a challenge for one artwork!

The actual selection of the design proposal for FLASH took all of 45 minutes. The design development, community consultation, planning, airtraffic control, wildlife, and other permissions, made the whole process a long journey. Yet instead of eroding the vision and wearing the artist down, the difficult work of design and negotiation over the seven and half years became a vital process. More people became involved, more people began to understand and be inspired, and eventually FLASH became a project that simply had to happen.

It is fascinating that an artist can engage multiple community groups in helping to create a rather minimal and challenging conceptual artwork. It is an even harder job to make something that teenagers have fun with, and something which the older members of the Hebburn community recognise as a technological celebration of their work and a rich industrial past.

Matthew Jarratt
Arts Council England North East

Introduction

Hebburn's FLASH is the last art installation to take place as part of the Art on the Riverside project in South Tyneside. The project, sponsored by the Arts Council, National Lottery, along with the Tyne and Wear local authorities, is one of the largest public art programmes in the UK. Within South Tyneside, the Customs House arts centre and South Tyneside Council have worked with artists including Irene Brown, Bruce McLean, Juan Munoz and Martin Richman, to provide a series of major sculptures along many miles of the Tyne riverside.

Each of the sculptures has its own story to tell, and FLASH even more so because of the many obstacles it had to overcome. Like most public art projects that succeed, it required courage and commitment from the artist and the many unsung heroes who all helped make it happen. Matthew Jarrett, Pauline Moger and Heather Walton continued to 'see the light', and shared a common passion that public art can be a catalyst for change. The local Hebburn Elected Members have also continued to have faith in the project.

Hebburn has a rich industrial legacy, with shipbuilding, marine engineering and particularly Reyrolle Electrical Switchgear who alone transformed the prospects of the area for much of the 20th century. Dramatic steel structures and lighting were a dominant part of the local landscape, and as with many industrial regions, the poignant images of the past bring to mind the fact that when industry declines and redevelopment takes place we are often left with a visual vacuum.

FLASH@Hebburn is a new beacon for Hebburn Riverside, and has continued the tradition of innovation in technology of which Reyrolle, Hawthorne Leslie, and other industrialists, would have been proud. The project has overcome a number of challenges as it has developed, and with each prototype the artist has produced, FLASH has used changing technologies to enhance its objectives.

Throughout the journey of the art work's creation, many local residents have been involved, designing their own creative 'sequences', which reflect the emotions of those who worked in industry, on the river, or just current users who walk or cycle in the area. For them the flashes or 'sparks' of light relate to their everyday experience, and with a wide range of age groups from the very young to the very old the project has cut across and united different generations. These groups have developed a special relationship with the artist, who in turn has developed a special relationship with Hebburn and its industrial heritage.

Tuesday 3rd March 2009, when FLASH@Hebburn was switched on for the very first time, was a very powerful experience. The rain and wind that provided a challenge up to the last minute, could not dampen the enthusiasm and delight of the supporters who gathered on the river. Over the next few weeks the project received considerable media attention, and this was a proud period for the Hebburn Elected Members, officers of the Council, and the various community groups who had been engaged in the project. As each week goes by new converts admire FLASH and have new stories to tell. It is now a recognised navigational aid on Port of Tyne shipping maps.

That FLASH@Hebburn is a new light in the sky for Hebburn, is a testament to artist Charles Quick who has been determined to see the project through, no matter what obstacles were put in his way. Charles's determination to not give up when consultees of the various planning applications struggled to comprehend the scale and intensity of the installation, which in the event would attract neither large swathes of aeroplanes nor fleets of super tankers to Hebburn Riverside, nor disturb wildlife

In the end, all the stakeholders of the project can celebrate a new dawn for the region. FLASH is a true beacon for the regeneration of the Riverside.

Tony Duggan
South Tyneside Council

“Flash at Hebburn is a poignant way for the residents to celebrate their little town of industry. Most people, who are born and bred in the area, love where they live and are simply bursting with pride.”

“I think that Flash at Hebburn will be seen as the perfect way for people to reflect, remember and recognise what Hebburn stands for, and a way for those individuals involved to give something back to their local community.”

Ron Tatum



Hebburn Collier, 1792 – 1931.

I was interested in Hebburn Collier when I heard about its connection to Humphrey Davey's Safety Lamp. Mines have always been places of light and shadows, and to begin with they used candles, which could cause explosions when mixed with the various gases in the mines.

In 1815, the inventor Humphrey Davey took gas from Hebburn 'B' pit in order to test his new lamp invention. Wine bottles of methane ('firedamp') were drawn from the pit and taken to London, where the gas was used in tests in his laboratory. The new lamp was then tested in Collier at Hebburn.

Miners all around the world soon benefited from this new 'Davey' safety lamp, which not only functioned successfully, but actually burned the 'firedamp' entering the gauze, slightly increasing its efficiency to produce light. The name of Hebburn, for this reason, would have been known in all countries that mined coal. The collier had three pits – A, B, and C. The B pit closed in 1832 after a strike, but the other two lasted until 1932.

A. Reyrolle & Co Ltd.

Reyrolle was the first industry that I visited in Hebburn. In 2001 I had a tour of the manufacturing and development facilities, as well as a tour of the British Short Circuit Test Station and the Clothier Laboratory. I was left with the impression of an industry whose products that were focused on controlling these massive arcs of electricity that had the potential to melt the very switchgear that was controlling it, in particular with the high voltage circuit breakers of 400,000 volts. For an artist interested in electrical energy, it was a great opportunity to gain a lot of information first hand. I think they must have been impressed with my enthusiasm and interest, as later I was invited to watch a series of electrical experiments organised for the IEE at the Clothier Laboratory. Here I witnessed man-made lighting inside the building. It was a formative experience, as 10 meter strikes of lighting were produced and I was left with the feel of the 'bang' in my chest and the smell of ozone in my nostrils.

Alphonse Reyrolle established his first factory in Hebburn in 1901, and a few years later Henry Clothier joined up with him to begin a company that became world famous for its innovative switchgear for the power generation industry. It stayed on the same site for over 100 years, during which time like all big business it entered into partnership with many other companies eventually being bought out. At the moment it is part of the pan-European group VA Tech, and soon production will cease altogether on the site. At its height, the company had a workforce of 10,000 people. It was always seen as a world leader with its continuing move towards innovation in the design of its products, and in 1929 it opened its high power testing facilities, which later became the British Short Circuit Test Station. In 1970, the Clothier Laboratory was opened there. Research and development and testing became a very important part of the company's activities. The Clothier Laboratory, only one of three such facilities in the world, is now run by NaREC the New and Renewable Energy Centre.

Hebburn's Shipyards

R & W Hawthorn Leslie and Co. Ltd.: 1853 to 1993.

The shipyards were a major source of the flashes of light and the sparks that lit the local night sky, whether it was generated by the use of hot rivets in the early days, or the use of welding later on. At night, I have been told, it was 'like firework night every night, with the welding and the arc lamps lighting up the banks of the Tyne'. Many people told me that you didn't need a watch if you lived in Hebburn, as you could hear the routine sound of the shipyard sirens, announcing start and finishing times for the shipyard workers, night and day. I first visited the Hawthorn and Leslie site in 1989 when I was taking part in a coach tour of sites for the TSWA Four Cities Art Project. We walked through the yard to get to HMS Cavalier moored on the Tyne, which was to be one of the sites for a temporary artwork. Little did I know at the time that sometime later I would be looking through those famous gates again.

Hawthorn and Leslie were involved in many innovative designs. One the first being the world's first turbine driven warship. HMS Viper was built and launched from Hebburn in 1899, with a top speed of 37knots, still fast by today's standards. The ship yard went on to build many ships for the Royal Navy. One of the most famous was the K- Class Destroyer, which was the first to have its hull constructed longitudinally and with just two boilers. The most famous of these was the HMS Kelly, which was captained by Lord Mountbatten and launched in 1938. The ship had a very famous and heroic war history, which included hitting a mine and then later being torpedoed, yet managing to return to Hebburn to be repaired. The Navy Controller at the time wrote that she survived "not only by the good seamanship of the officers and men but also on account of the excellent workmanship which ensured the water tightness of the other compartments. A single defective rivet might have finished her". Eventually the ship was sunk in the Mediterranean by a German bomber.

The British war film, *In Which We Serve* (1942), starring Noel Coward, and telling the story of HMS Torrin, is based on the story of HMS Kelly. In the 1950s and 1960s this part of the Tyne became famous for the building and launching of tankers, with Hawthorn and Leslie developing many new designs, including the first deep sea gas tanker.

Palmers

Palmers originally started a yard in Jarrow, and in 1911 took over yards in Hebburn that Robert Stephenson and Co. Ltd. had started in the 1800s. They had constructed and fitted the engines of the 'John Bowes' for Palmers, the first iron screw collier in 1852. The Palmers yard at Hebburn developed as a yard for repairing ships, and over the years prided itself on having one of the biggest dry docks around. Palmers in Jarrow closed in the 1930s, but the yard at Hebburn was taken over by Vickers Armstrong Ltd. and formed the company Palmers (Hebburn) Ltd. The repair yard has had a long history and has had many different owners since then, but is still working on ships today, managed by the A&P Group.



London Lion
Super-tanker at Wallsend
Feb 1972 by N Dunn



The Banks of the Tyne

It is hard to imagine that where the Riverside Park and Hebburn Marina are now, was once a thriving industrial area. There was once a chemical works, the Tenants, United Alkali Co. Ltd., which began in 1864, later joined by the Tharsis Sulphur and copper company, which began in 1869. Their chimneys dominated the skyline on that part of the river.

At the southern end of the area, there was the coal loading staiths, where the coal from Pelaw Main was loaded into the colliers. By the 1960s these industries had gone, and some of the area was used as a rubbish dump, which continued up until the early 1970s. Work then began on the 75 acre site, developing it into the park we see today.

Monkton Coke Works

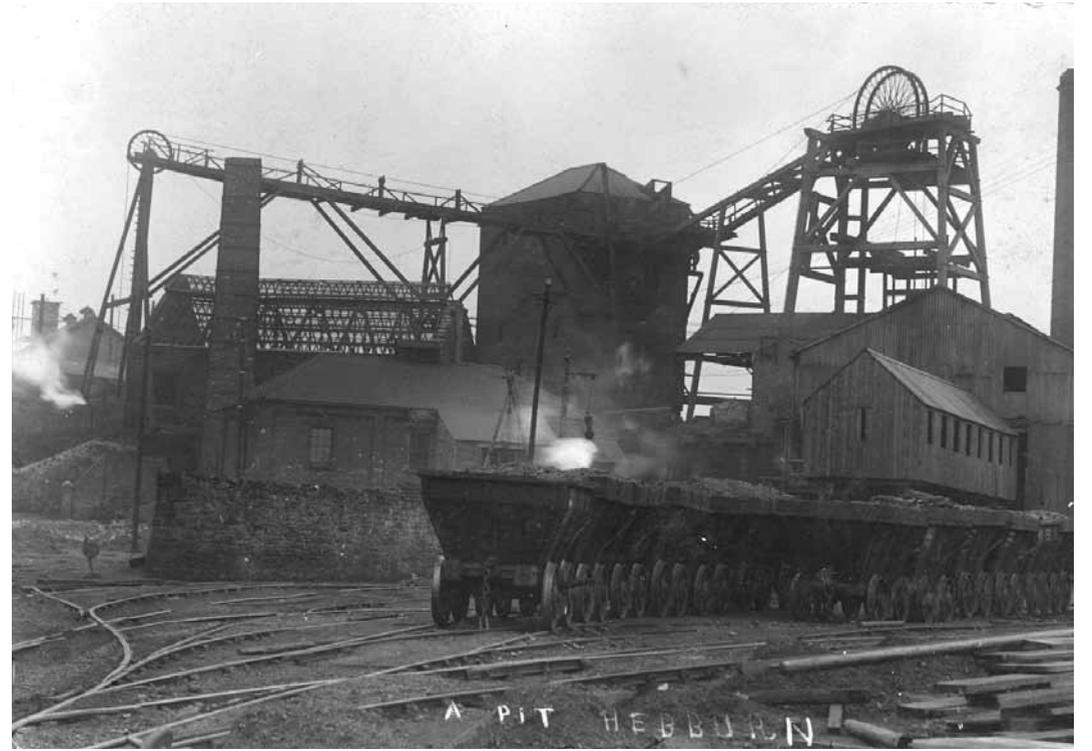
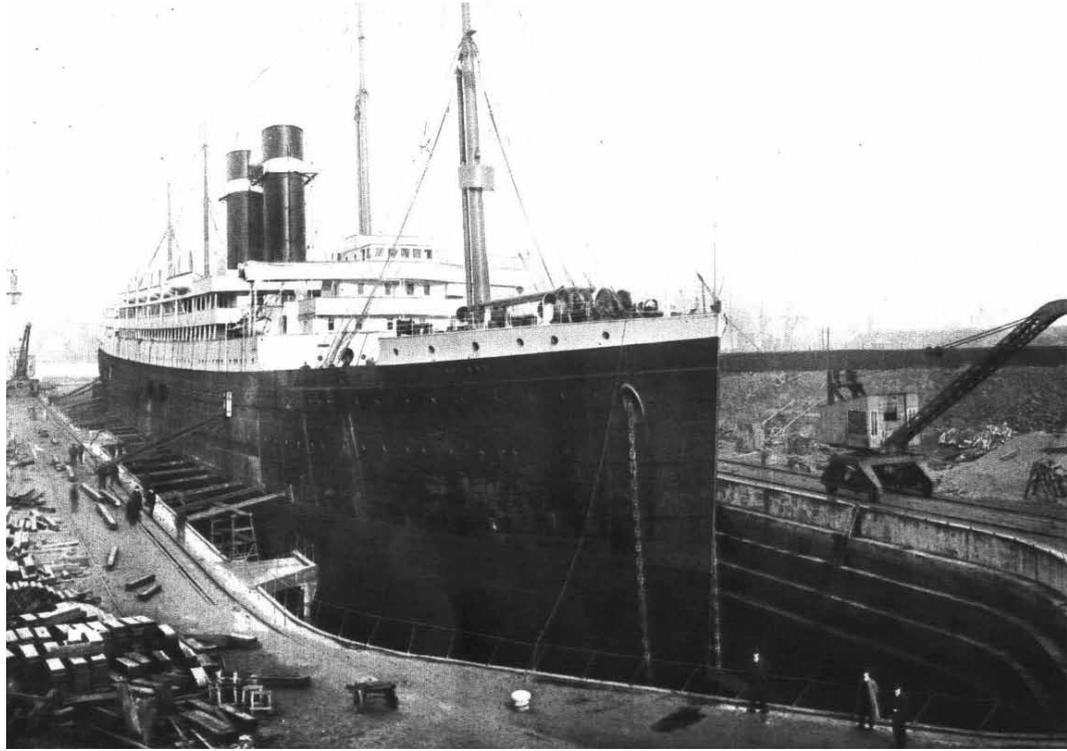
The coke works was built and brought into service in the 1930s, where it was fed by the many coal fields in the area. When I first saw colour photographs of it, I thought I was looking at the works on fire; I later learned that it always looked like that at night. One local person's granddaughter described it to me as 'looking like a 'dragon's mouth''. Many people in the area have commented that their relatives coming to visit always knew when they were getting near to Hebburn, as they could see the sky beginning to light up.

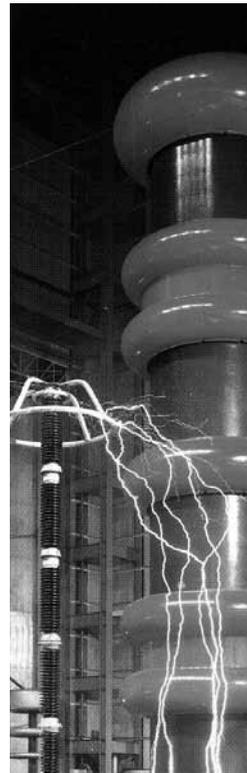
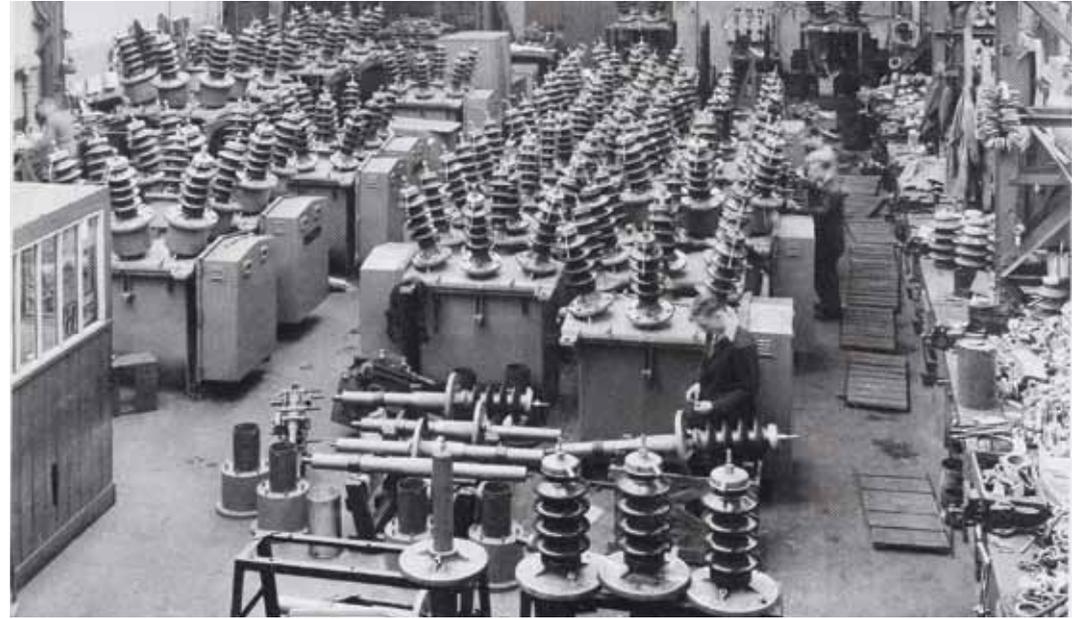
It is said that the German Luftwaffe used the site as a landmark during the war for their bombing raids, as production didn't stop, for the coke was continually needed in industry and for the war effort generally. During the 1980s, local residents took part in a long-running campaign, complaining about the industrial emissions. Eventually, after a public enquiry and a general health assessment, British Coal shut the plant in 1990, demolishing it in 1992. The area is now a park and a new industrial estate.

Ballast Hill and Celebration

The Ballast Hill, on the banks of the River Tyne in Hebburn, was a landmark on the river for the people of Hebburn up until the 1970s when it was removed. The hill was formed by ships emptying their ballast, which they had taken on board and placed in the bottom of the hold to keep the vessel steady. Ships took on ballast at their port of departure when they did not have a weighty cargo to transport.

The hill became a famous viewing point for many events and celebrations on the river, including the launching of ships, usually from the Swan Hunter yards on the opposite side. When the Esso Northumbria was launched in May 1969, a big wave soaked many of the people standing on the hill. Celebration on the launching of new ships was an important part of the life of a ship building town. It was a time of a powerful mixture of emotions – on the one hand a sense of pride as a ship is finished, and on the other anxiety, as for some people it would mean the end of their employment until the yard got a new order.









The Sculptural Imagination of Charles Quick

Jon Wood in conversation with the artist

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Jon Wood: I want to start by asking you about the form and aesthetics of FLASH@Hebburn. Its industrial and functional look is immediately striking. You mentioned to me briefly that solar-powered speed cameras, of which there are a number in the district keeping the roads under surveillance, figured in your thinking for the LEDs of FLASH. Could you elaborate on this, and say a bit more generally about why the twelve light masts look as they do?

Charles Quick: I think the answer to this question might be universal for a number of works that I have created in the public realm. There are two very strong influences present in any work that I create. The first is that the sculptures perform a technical function (for example, give light, lighting something up). The second is I want them to speak the same 'language' as the place they are situated in, so that they reveal something of that place.

The site of FLASH overlooks the last remnants of an industrial landscape on the north side of the River Tyne, with cranes, machinery and engineering works. FLASH@Hebburn is located in a park on the south bank of the river. It also used to be an industrial site itself, but in the beginning of the 1970s it was landscaped to create the Hebburn Riverside Park. I have tried to create an industrial-looking art work, which references its surrounding environment and the past industries of Hebburn, as well as working within the physicality of the present site.

You mention my interest in the solar-powered speed signs that have sprung up across the county. I have been interested in solar-powered, independent electrical objects for some time. I created my first for the project Champion, which was a series of interventions in the Water Lane area of Leeds back in 1997. It was called Protected Generator. I like the idea of electrically powered art objects being independent of the electrical system and not connected to the electrical infrastructure. Let's now fast forward to FLASH: When I had decided on the final design I formed a working relationship with a company that has experience of designing and manufacturing the solar-powered signs on the highways. I often form partnerships with organisations that are working with the same technology that I want to use to create the works. This way I am using tried and tested technology to industrial standards, but subverting it to create art.

JW: You have established a reputation as a sculptor who works closely and subversively; as you say, with technology. Electricity seems to have a special place in your sculptural imagination. Can you say why this is?

CQ: Electricity started out as a material I used, and then became the subject of the work. I have worked with electrical light as a material in my work for a long time, but around the beginning of the 1990s I started to investigate what it was that powered the light, where did it come from, and how it was transferred from the power station to my work. Out of this research, which also involved several visits to power stations, I developed an interest and understanding of the social, political and physical power of the material I was working with.

From that initial research I started to examine infrastructures and how our way of life in the western world is wholly dependent on them for its existence. Electrical energy is the most evident of all these. It is no mistake that it is now called 'the power industry' because, as history has shown, whomever controls the generation of electricity has 'the power' – be it the miners union in the past, or later Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher. The first thing we attack when we wage war on another country is their power stations.

So in many ways, electricity and energy are fundamental to our way of life and just as important a power base as the first Neolithic fires of our ancestors. I now use light as a metaphor for energy. Hence, my excitement at being able to create an independent electrical infrastructure to power an art object, which is outside the usual controlling forces of the electrical system of this country.

JW: Your sculpture strikes me as a fascinating blend of independence, as you say, and site-specificity; both standing alone and in close relation to the multi-layered environment that surrounds it. I recall you also saying that the work is now – after some interesting discussions about how the lights might be read from passing boats – registered on official navigational charts. Can you say more about this, and about how you now see the relationship between the work and the river Tyne that runs past it?

CQ: I am glad you asked me about the episode regarding the maritime charts, because it is a good example of how the process of creating a public work has to engage with so many things, which eventually come full circle.

There are always permissions that are required in order to create a piece of public art. Because I construct functional work that uses new technologies, which can be outside most people's everyday experience, the work is often described as 'challenging'. You soon realize that not everybody has the same 'image' or understanding of the work that you do. This usually results in conducting tests and demonstrations on site, in order to gain permission for certain aspects of the project. This is also an important part of the development of the work, and in the ensuing course of things I learn something about the materials I am using in that environment.

We carried out a demonstration in the park at midnight in the summer of 2008, so that Mike Nicholson, Harbor Master of the Port Of Tyne, could be satisfied that 'FLASH@Hebburn' could not be confused with or mistaken for navigational lights in the River Tyne. This led to Mike taking an interest in the work and also attending the launch event. He was then instrumental in having FLASH placed on the maritime chart for the River Tyne, as a landmark in the landscape, which (in turn) could assist navigation. On the chart it is titled 'Hebburn Flash', which highlights another aspect of public art: The title for a work in the public realm, unlike work in art galleries, seems to develop out of a dynamic colloquial or common usage. It's not the first time I have heard that variation of the title, since the work was installed. As I said at the beginning, it is a good example of how the work becomes owned by the people involved in the processes of its creation.

Initially the work had a relationship with the history of the ship building in Hebburn, based on the Tyne. Ex-shipyard workers and residents told me that the Tyne at night was like Bonfire Night every night, as the flashes from arch welding and riveting lit up the sky like fireworks, against a backdrop of arch lights that enabled the ship yards to work 24/7 (when their order books were full, that is). Now there is a range of more immediate and physical relationships between the installation and Hebburn – for example, as the blue LED lights are reflected in the river, after dark it appears to turn the water blue when viewed from the other side of the Tyne, or from a boat.

JW: I was struck by this particular relationship, so striking when seen from the shipyards across the river too. Furthermore '3' is one of the light sequences created by Retired Ladies from Reyrolle to signify the three minute sirens that would go off to tell workers to go back to work. Before we go into this 'participatory' side of things in more detail, I would like to ask you about the work as a piece of sculpture and in relation to other pieces of sculpture that you have been interested in over the years. For me, FLASH recalls works by a number of artists, from Jean Tinguely to Stephen Willats, from Walter de Maria to Chris Burden. Can you say a bit here about how sculptures by other artists might have informed the work and helped orientate its concerns?

CQ: The works that have had the greatest influence on the way I think as an artist, and then in turn will have helped inform FLASH@Hebburn, are ones of which I have had direct first-hand experience. Two come to mind that have endured in my consciousness.

The first was a temporary work by Audio Arts called Radio Garden, which was part of the 'New Necessities' exhibition in Gateshead in 1990. I was particularly drawn to this work because it successfully combined physical spatial form, context and function, which were all beautifully linked and supported one another. As a viewer, you had to walk across the Radio Garden to understand the fact that you were, conceptually, walking across the world. It has stayed with me because it was a piece that used technology, not as a gimmick but as an integral part of its form, and one in which function had influenced the form, including the use of off-the-shelf industrial objects. I suppose you could also include Jean Tinguely within this category.

The second work is the Empty Library by Micha Ullman, Bebelplatz, Berlin, from 1995. It was a piece commissioned to commemorate the Nazi burning of books on that site in May 10, 1933. It has to be one of the most successful contemporary monuments I have ever seen, where 'absence' is used to commemorate loss. I feel that the sense of loss the people of Hebburn felt about their industries, became an important element of FLASH.

Lastly, Christo was the first artist that I researched in reference to working in a public context, including his approach to an 'audience'. I suppose none of these three examples have particularly influenced me directly in terms of the development of the specific form of my sculpture, but all have had a lasting influence in terms of their approach or methods and validation of a practice.

JW: Can you say briefly what this means for your practice today?

CQ: Briefly, I would say that for Audio Arts it would be the balance of form, technology, and the concept of the work. For Micha Ullman, it would be that works don't have to be large physically in a public space to have a large impact. And for Christo, I would highlight the importance of communicating with the audience of a public work, and the ability to get permission for work while pushing the boundaries of acceptable practice in a public place.

JW: The composition of the elements of Audio Arts' Radio Garden is also interesting in the light of your three-by-four gridded group of twelve masts at Hebburn. Can you say a bit about why you opted for that number and arrangement?

CQ: I think sometimes decisions are taken as a result of relying on a creative instinct and some have more of a history. The three-by-four grid of twelve lights came about as a result of both. The final layout developed from spending a number of days on site, marking out the grid in different ways, recording it, assessing it, and making final adjustments. It was a very sculptural, spatial exercise, about placement and environment and sight lines, especially from across the river.

JW: What is the 'celebratory' sequence, what does it consist of, and what kind of local community collaborations does it give a brief insight into?

CQ: The celebratory sequence is a special sequence that is activated at midnight on New Year's Eve, which compliments the hooters and sirens let off by the ships in the River Tyne. It is also the sequence that can be activated by the local community at their own celebratory events in the park, using a hand control device.

The appearance of the sequence is a sampling of all eight of the sequences created by eight separate individuals and groups from Hebburn. The full length sequences last about fifteen minutes each, but on this sequence each one lasts about two minutes, adding up to a combined sequence of about sixteen minutes long.

The collaboration element of this project, for me, is one of the most exciting aspects of it. It is something I have been slowly working towards in previous pieces, like Towerscan and Red Pass. With FLASH I have managed to find the right place for the collaborative element. In many ways I have created an independent creative infrastructure, which then has a space for the local community to inhabit through the designs of the sequences.

The piece has been designed to produce sequences so then it becomes quite natural for the local community to design the sequences, which represent their views about the piece and its relationship to their environment, including the past and present activities and histories of Hebburn. That's why some sequences are about welding and the industrial rhythms of a community, and others reference walking and cycling up and down hills and mountains.

JW: FLASH@Hebburn also seems to work particularly well on the slope, since the work as a whole is visible from the path below and also from the other side of the river. Was the grassy slope a crucial part of your thinking of exactly where this work should go?

CQ: Yes, definitely. The slope represented a way of presenting it to the audience outside Hebburn – the audience across the river. All my initial thoughts were about that audience, one which would then know where Hebburn was during the day and especially at night. It only dawned on me later, after talking to other people involved in the project, that people would be making a special trip to visit FLASH in the park at night. It was while I was looking at the position of FLASH that I realised it should also work during the day, because of its physical relationship to the top path. So as people walk along the top path, the LED elements are in their line of sight. They can see a thirty second sequence every fifteen minutes, which comes on automatically. These sequences are designed by me (but aren't nearly as interesting as the ones that come on at night and are designed by the local community).

JW: How do you see 'light' as both part of Hebburn's past and its future, in relation to the ambitions of FLASH@Hebburn?

CQ: My first introduction to Hebburn was by way of the high voltage electrical industry in the form of VA Tech Reyrolle's factory, which had been there for a hundred years. Their main aim was to control the arc of light that a 400,000 volt switch produces before it melted the switch, and they were at the cutting edge of new designs in this technology. As I did more research I became aware of a long list of industrial facilities based in Hebburn, where flashes of light occurred as part of the process – shipbuilding and welding being examples. So it became apparent that flashes of light were a common theme that could be used to represent the past industries of Hebburn.

As I talked to more people in Hebburn it seemed that there was a real sense of loss. A town that had been transformed from a place that Ron Tatum described as 'our little town of industry', and was known throughout the world for its particular innovations, to the present of just one small repair shipyard. I didn't originally set out to produce a piece of work that was trying to represent the history of Hebburn; I didn't want the piece to just have historical references. In the end it was more my response to the present people and the place. There are many traditions in European towns and cities involving celebration and light, especially in the darker months of the year.

I felt that it was important for Hebburn to have an 'infrastructure' that could be used by the community for celebrations of its own in the future, as it had had a culture of celebration in the past connected to its lost industries. Another way of making references to its past and future was to use the latest cutting-edge technology; Hebburn's industries had always been innovators in their respective fields. So we tried to make the work technically innovative by using photovoltaic powered LEDs, making it independent of any electrical system, and controlled by radio technology.

JW: Thinking about your account of FLASH, I really sense an intriguing combination of optimism and melancholy; celebration and sadness in the work, as well as a curious coalition of human warmth and technological un-sentimentality...of looking back and looking forward. Do you recognise this description at all?

CQ: Yes, I recognise all those elements, though I can't claim to have analytically set out to achieve them. I think they came about as a result of the process I used to engage with a place, and so they are reflective of the place.

JW: It was striking, when we visited Hebburn together, to hear you talk as much about letting go of the piece as about wanting people to encounter it and understand it. Do you think that once a public work like this is up and running it is ultimately 'theirs' not 'yours'? Or do you think the artist has an obligation to 'bring it up' in the first few months of its life?

CQ: It's an interesting question. I have found with other 'permanent' public works that I have created, that the public always saw them as belonging to me, even though legally they belong to the commissioner or client; I suppose this is how all art works are identified. The difference with public works is that all sorts of things can happen to them in public that the artist does not have control over.

Because of the way FLASH was designed and created, there was already a sense of shared ownership with this work. This developed from the sequence design workshops, and all the partnerships that were formed with members of the local community in order to realize the work. I tried to make that element as visible as possible. One way this was achieved was through the way it was presented in the press, where the work was photographed with people who had been involved in its creation. It was interesting that it appeared in the Society supplement of The Guardian newspaper, which was evidence of the success of this approach.

I have always planned and crafted celebration events to launch a work, and with FLASH I was not only very keen to get all the people who had been involved in the project to attend, but also as many of the people of Hebburn as possible. The park is not that well used by the population of Hebburn, so I saw this as an opportunity to engage a new audience with the work and the Riverside Park too. All the houses in the town were leafleted, posters were put up, and there was a lot of coverage in the local press radio and TV.

It was estimated that about four hundred people turned up on the night to see FLASH switched on. What was also interesting was that the commissioner and client, South Tyneside Council, also felt a sense of pride in the work, and so they hired a ferry to travel up the river. This was attended by mayors and deputy mayors from South Tyneside, Gateshead and Newcastle-upon-Tyne councils. It also included local Hebburn councillors, and many of the local and regional administrators who had supported the project over the years. It all ended up being a very emotional occasion.

At both occasions I told the audience that it was now their FLASH and not mine, and I hoped that they would use the radio controller to host their own events in the future. I am going to keep reminding the owners that they should use the controller to host their own events, and when that happens I think my work will be finished.

JW: How do you see the work being refreshed and revived over the forthcoming years? Can, for example, new series of light flash sequences be added, or the work modified?

CQ: I am not sure I see it in those terms, and in many ways it is untried territory for me. I still think the important first step is to see if the local community will use it to host their own events in the park, now that one has occurred. That would be a great achievement.

It is possible to re-program the sequences, but that will only happen if there is a desire by the legal and local owners of the work. Though I have described the work as permanent, it is only as 'permanent' as any other electrical object in the public realm. Street lighting and light fittings last about ten years. In my contract for the work I have a de-commissioning clause that suggests it be taken down after ten years, and the site be restored to its original state. The work is designed to be virtually maintenance-free up to that time. Also by that time the technology will have moved on, and it will be hard to source replacement parts.

JW: Please say more about why you have added a de-commissioning clause in the contract after ten years of the work's life?

CQ: The idea of a decommission clause in a contract of this kind has been around for a while. I had one in the original contract for A Light Wave at Wakefield Westgate Station over 20 years ago. I think it is important with public works that use technology, that the artist is realistic about how long they will last and be able to function. All the technical elements of FLASH@Hebburn will last for ten years without maintenance, but after that some elements will need replacing, which will present a range of problems to solve for the client.

I remember seeing a permanent installation by Jean Tinguely and Niki de Saint Phalle, The Fantastic Paradise, outside the Moderna Museet in Stockholm. It was a mechanical as well as sculptured collection of pieces, and when I saw it, it had lost many of its belts and some of the motors had stopped working, so you were left with sad twitching movements. I know that Tinguely thought that the mechanical life of his art works was the same as any other machine, in that they work for a period and then stop working. No machine works forever, so when it stopped working it was up to the collector to sort it out. And, of course, some did and some didn't. I would rather my work was taken down while it was still working well, and that way it will have a positive legacy in the memories of people who have seen it. Also perhaps, it is because as an artist I have always made far more temporary than permanent public works. So this is just another way of acknowledging the temporary nature of the activity and the materials I choose to work with.

JW: Why have you titled this work of yours FLASH@Hebburn, evoking at once the site-specific and the virtual, a place and a non-place?

CQ: I find the entitling of permanent public art works problematic, and I always leave it until the last possible moment. The 'FLASH' part of the title was easy, and I could have left it at that, which in the first instance was simply a direct description of the visual effect. Over time I expect that will be what it will be called. But I wanted to acknowledge the place Hebburn, so this wasn't just any flash, the flash happened and belonged to Hebburn. The '@' symbol, as you say, places it in the virtual, and references technology and communication, but it is also a useful visual device to make the 'Flash' at 'Hebburn' one linguistic entity.

As for 'Flash' being a place or 'non place', I suppose it could be either. I know that Marc Augé wrote about non-places, and suggested that places such as shopping centres, motorways and airport lounges were non-places because they were transient spaces that we just passed through and were not connected to historical or socially activities. Also I think that there is an interesting aspect to these non-places: architecturally they are industrial buildings, supporting the industries of retail and transport. This means that they do not have a long life span, usually twenty years maxim. After this time, they are gutted, refurbished, or completely demolished in order to respond to new economic trends.

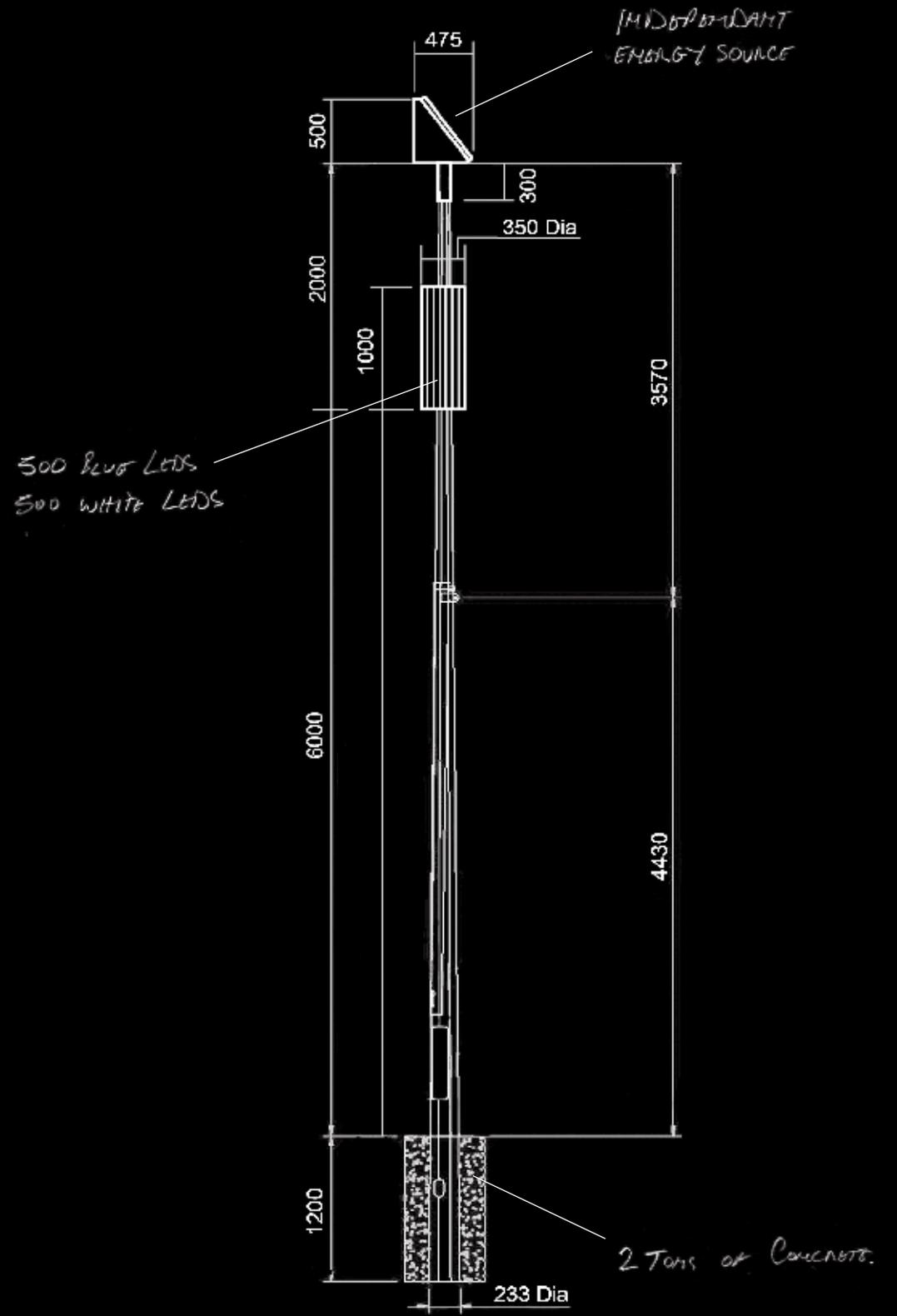
So because FLASH@Hebburn will have a limited life span, perhaps it is a non-place. On the other hand it references a very real place, with historical and social roots.

JW: Is there is a particular aspect of FLASH@Hebburn that will be used in future works that you create, or that has generated ideas for new works?

CQ: Well there is always a range of things that you identify in a work that may inform other works. Some are technical, and others are based around the process or just the concept. Technically, the use of a mixture of blue and white LEDs and the quality of light that FLASH has produced, is something I will explore further. This will include exploring other colours, as well as the ways the curved polycarbonate functions like a lens when at night. These were both new to this work, and are things that have added to my range of technical options for future works. I will certainly examine new ways to involve social communities in future projects, as this has been a significant development in the work. At the moment I am thinking about how to achieve that in some of my temporary projects. FLASH@Hebburn has also started me thinking about specific rural issues and rural sites for new public works, which I think could open up some exciting terrain for urban and public art.

Dr Jon Wood
Henry Moore Institute

Working it out



a release of electrical energy

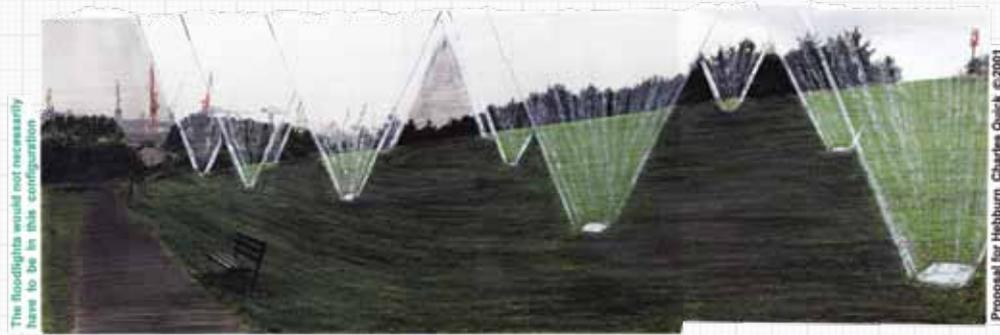
Weather conditions would allow for various effects

Could be triggered by an outside force

Individual light sources would merge into one source

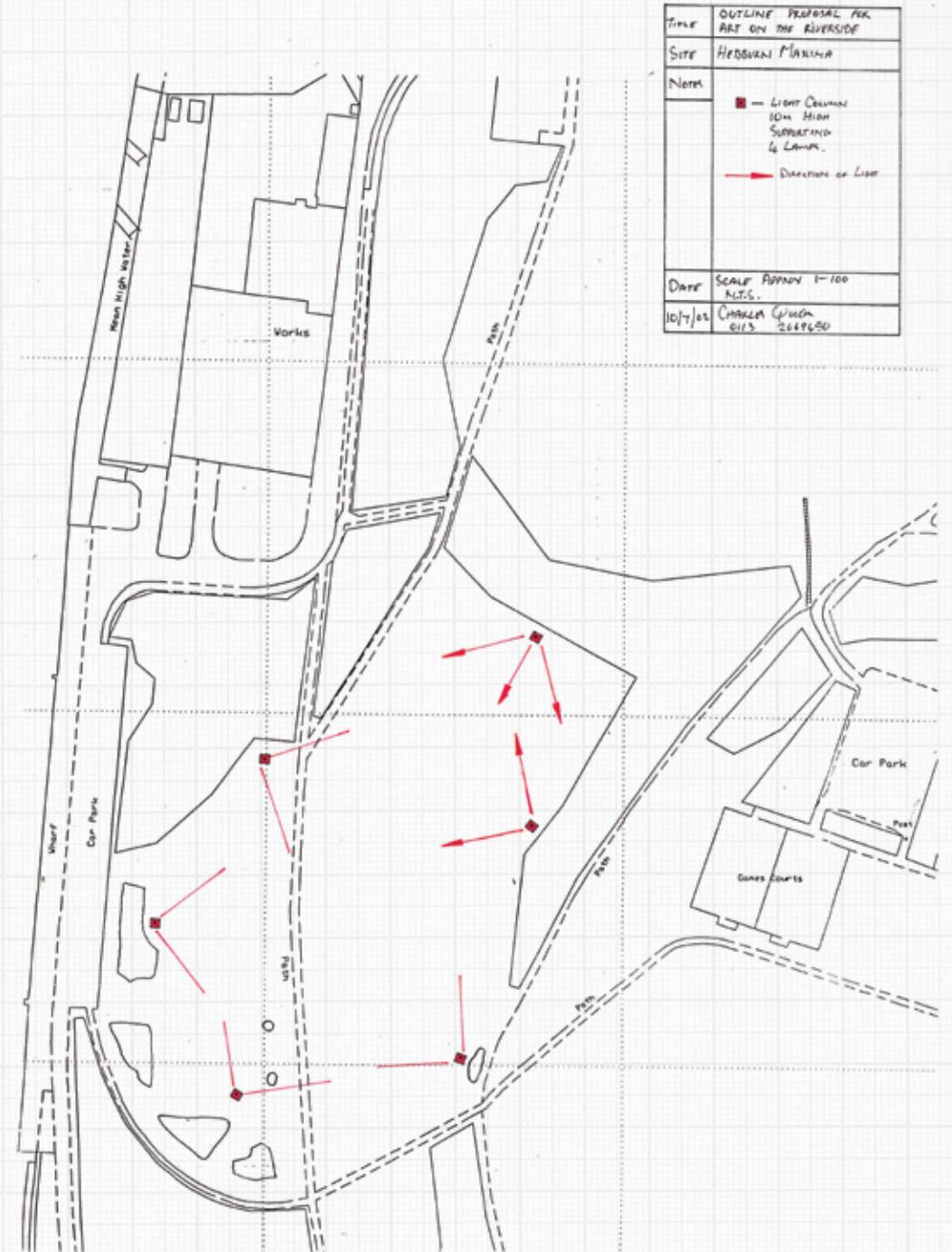
cloud
rain
mist

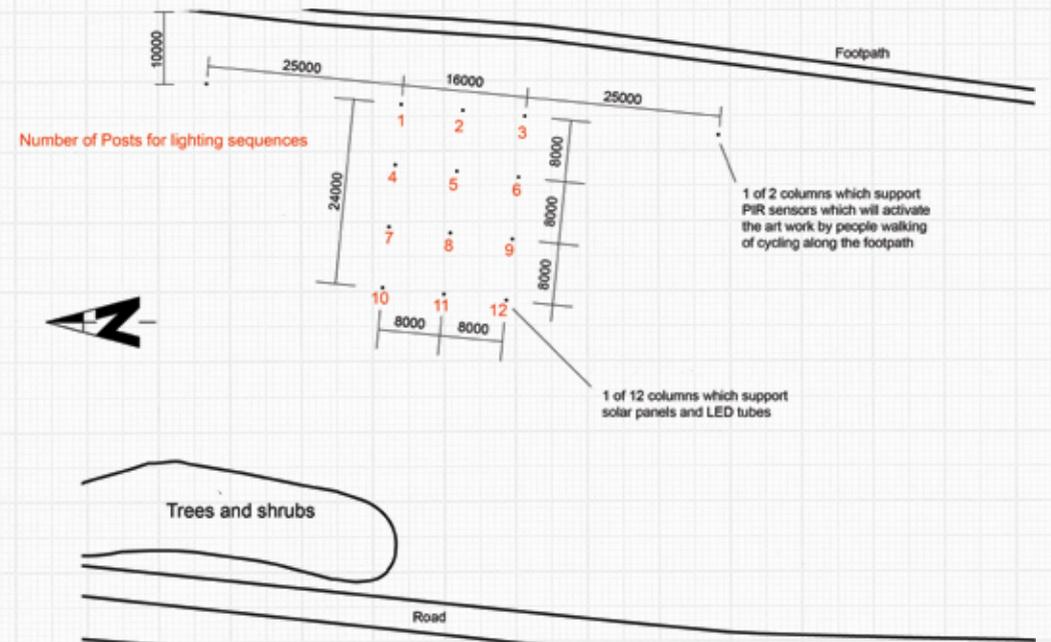
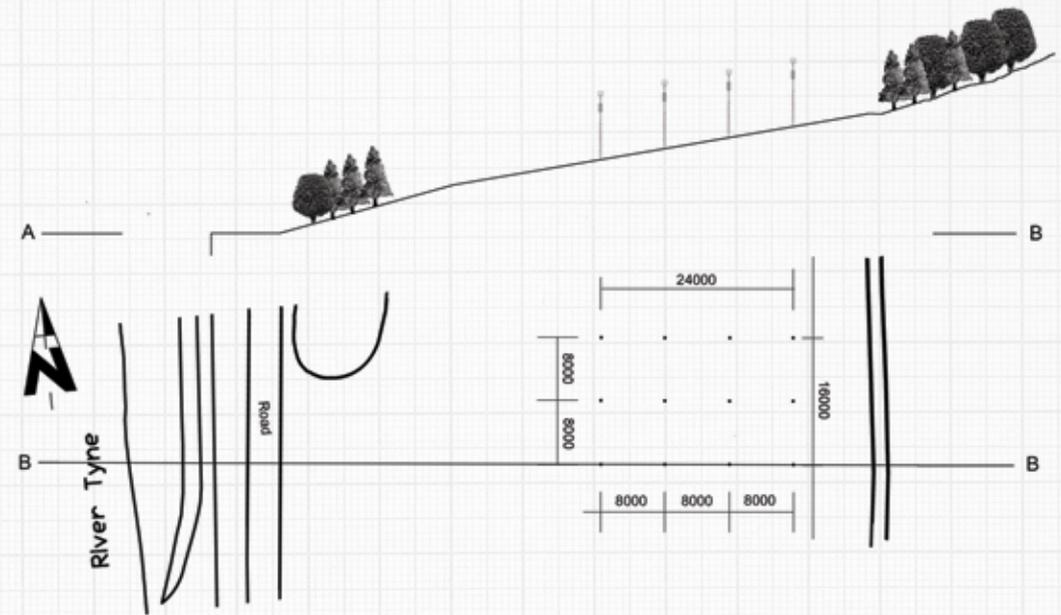
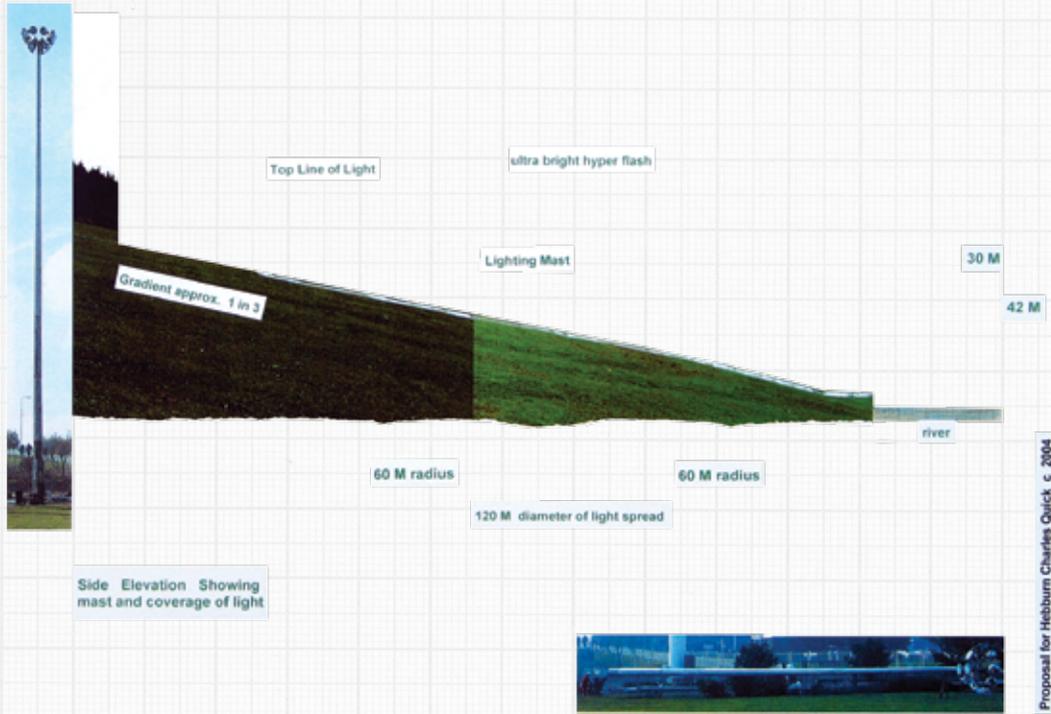
An artwork to work on the same scale as the river and the surrounding industrial structures



The floodlights would not necessarily have to be in this configuration

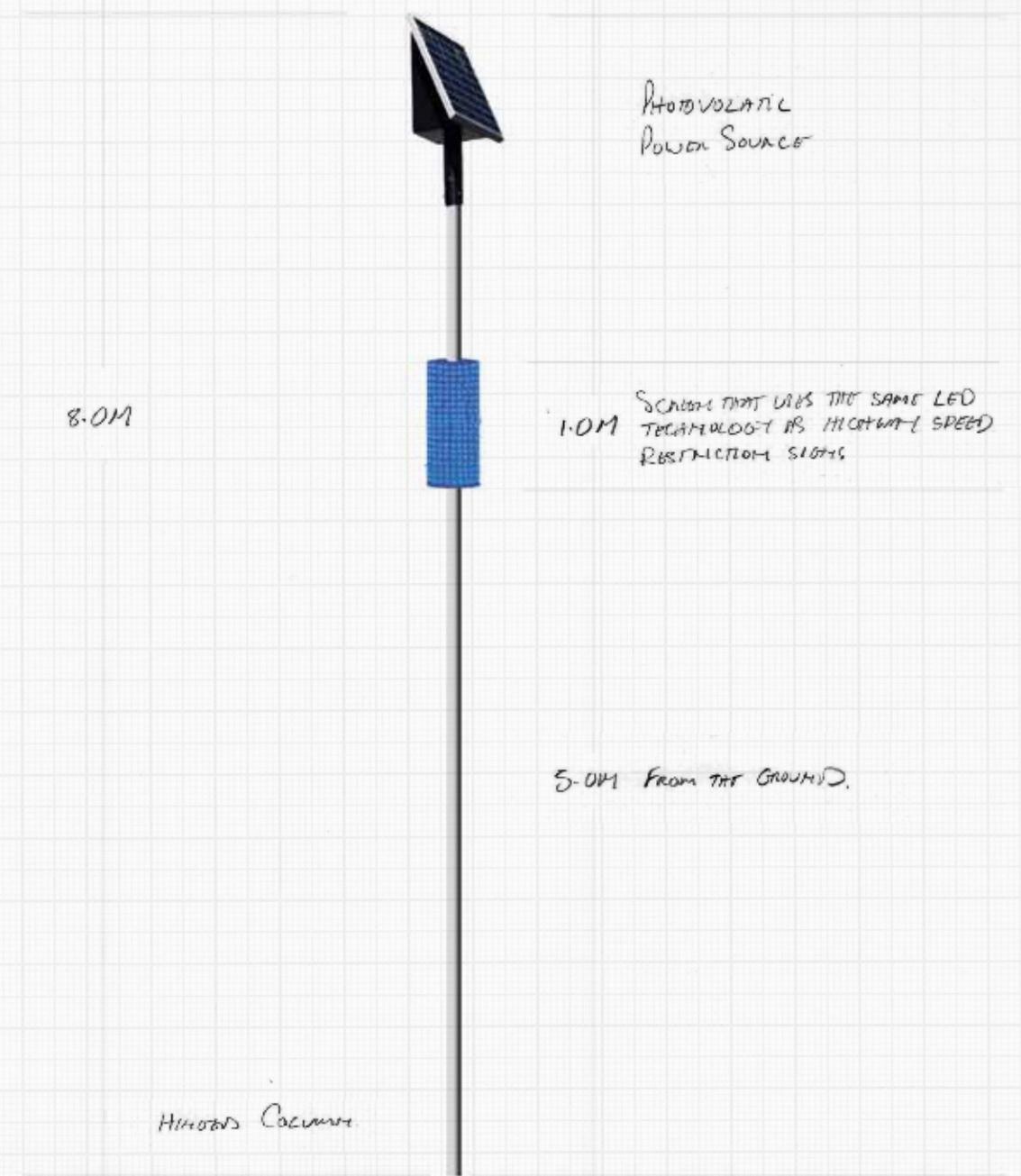
Proposal for Hebburn Charles Quick ©2001







RADIO TECHNOLOGY
TO SEQUENCE INDIVIDUAL
MODULES.



“The workshop was really interesting and informative as it delivered a wonderful take on the history of Hebburn. I was very impressed with Charles’ knowledge of the region.”

“Every time we cycle along the quayside, Alistair eagerly asks when he’ll be able to see his sequence up in lights. We hope that Flash@Hebburn is around for years to come.”

David Swailes

Infrastructures: Creating FLASH@Hebburn.

by Jonathan Vickery

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Pages 44—60

'Concealed infrastructures define the urban' — Charles Quick.

FLASH@Hebburn, to various onlookers, might seem like just another public art commission, emerging from another urban regeneration scheme, conveniently situated in a local park. On the other hand, FLASH doesn't look like a work of art. It looks like an industrial installation, signalling coded messages to river traffic or the airways. Its visual appearance is animated by light sequences, visible for miles around, where also a blue-white resonant field of light is created in and around the site of the park. The work is radio controlled, emitting light at set times of day and night, whereupon small groups of visitors gather to watch, walk around, think, wonder. The short light sequences are meaningful to some local residents, whose daily activity it articulates, but more are more cryptic for others, where the staccato of the flashlight punctures the largely immobile de-industrialised landscape around it, signifying something about past history and future possibility.¹

The creation of FLASH@Hebburn spanned a period of seven and a half years, from the initial commission to the official unveiling. In this essay we will attempt to uncover and assess something that is usually concealed from view – the artist's method, the way FLASH@Hebburn was created.² First, we need to set down the essential elements of the creative history of FLASH@Hebburn.

Quick, since 1980, has worked and exhibited sculptures and installations, often using light, energy, engineered or manufactured units that inhabit architectural and urban space. For this, and other projects, he is technician, project manager, site manager, contracts director, and plays a major role in the educational, publicity and public relations dimension of the project. He also facilitates the discussion and criticism that emerges from the work's installation and reception.³

FLASH was in effect one element in a broader public art scheme, though the individual commissions were quite distinct and thematically unrelated. The scheme was Art on the Riverside, which featured four major public works for four communities on the Tyne, the last being for Riverside Park at Hebburn.⁴ The region has a history as a major industrial site, is co-extensive with Gateshead-Newcastle a few miles upriver, and to some extent sharing their history of industrial activity and capability. Through this artwork Hebburn now participates in the nationally renowned urban regeneration effort, including one of the most intensive public art schemes in Europe.

The outer rims of Newcastle and Gateshead are visible from Riverside Park, a park that forms a great green embankment on the south side of the Tyne, concealing the urban expanse of Hebburn New Town from the river itself. Art on the Riverside is one of the most expansive public art commissioning schemes attempted in the UK, mostly funded by Arts Lottery, with support from other public and private sector bodies. The scheme was originally commissioned by Tyne & Wear Development, but since 1998 has been effectively managed by the four local authorities involved. It has offered high visibility locations for work by notable British artists like Perminder Kaur (permanent installation 'Dudes' in Port of Tyne International Ferry Terminal), and international contributors, such as American minimal art-era sculptor Mark di Suvero ('Tyne Anew' in the Royal Quays Marina).

FLASH@Hebburn as an artwork is both tangible and intangible: it operates with two distinct modes of 'presence', its obvious physical presence in the Park as a series of columns, but also its presence as light. Physically it comprises fourteen steel columns (not unlike street light columns), each 30 metres high, twelve of which are stands for high intensity flash lights, two of which are for radio control of the light sequences. Optically, the light, its quality and the sequence of its transmission through space, is modified by the weather and atmospheric conditions and time of day or night. The only physical addition to the installation is an information sign, situated on the roadway at the foot of the riverbank. The sign plays no visual role in the work.

The primary aesthetic characteristic of FLASH@Hebburn is light – the 'sequences' of flash lighting, of flashes of blue-white light out towards the river and down towards the earth. The flashing light, as content, is complex in the sense that it intentionally signifies many concurrent layers of meaning, some of which will be opaque to successive viewers and yet are intrinsic to its history and emergence as an art work in a specific social space. On one level, for example, the sequence signifies the pace and motion of activities in and around the park – such as walking, riding, group interaction, undertaken daily by particular local people. On another, there emerges the historical 'aesthetics' of industrial production, the fire, sparks and light of the welding, metalworking and large scale industrial production that in days past characterised the riverside at Hebburn. The visual is experienced in different ways, particularly by a local sensibility embedded in the socio-historical rhythm of the industrial life and identity of the place – the geo-physical

routine of heavyweight industrial production. This experience was conveyed in an emotive way to the artist through the testimonials of local long-term inhabitants, each expressing a form of cultural bereavement at having lost this distinct experience of time and space, of meaning and location. FLASH@Hebburn, however, moving around historical, contemporary social and cultural imagination, is no nostalgia piece. Its use of solar energy and LED innovation stimulates a vision of possible futures – environmentally-informed but also the more uncertain techno-scientific future of new means of creating energy, the driving force of all the surrounding industry. The physical facility for lighting will also change – in years to come FLASH@Hebburn could be engaged in some very different frames of reference, and with different people.⁵

In any public commission, the 'audience' features as a contractual stipulation. Does this work address a specific 'audience'? Intellectually, FLASH@Hebburn is another major reference point in cultural policy and the planning of public projects in the North East. It is also a part of national and international art world discourse, particularly concerning 'new urban arts'.⁶ As a site-specific public work, however, it has four primary constituencies: local Hebburn residents, to whom this has become a cultural landmark; visitors to the park, local regional and the surprising number of 'art pilgrims' who following the increasingly inventive public art schemes in the region; the industrial or business residents on the Tyne river, who continually witness the operation of the work, particularly after dark; and, interestingly, the residents of both Gateshead and Newcastle outskirts who view the work from their homes and workplaces, ironically perhaps, not possible to immediate residents of Hebburn.

Despite its function within an established public art scheme, with the usual models of the commissioning procedure, FLASH@Hebburn was not a predictable project. In it, we find many of the elements that have provoked debate in current art criticism, academic research and policy 'advocacy' research on public projects, whether called 'public art' or 'urban art'. These issues involve the role of the artist, the project management and creative organization of public projects, audiences and the social context, and the relation of all of this to the aesthetics and visual meaning of the work, which is what the art is usually remembered for and how it is reported or publicised.⁷ Even terms like 'art' or 'artist' seem to be self-evident in their meaning, given their historical weight, and yet in urban or public contexts, like FLASH@Hebburn, they are re-cast,

and need qualification. The artist is a different kind of cultural producer when in an urban context, and whose skills-set and creative reference points can be distinct from mainstream contemporary art, or what we might call 'art gallery art' (although Quick also exhibits in galleries).

The (non-art) conditions of urban art

On the publicity poster for FLASH@Hebburn issued in 2007, designed and distributed by the Arts, Heritage and Museums sector of South Tyneside Council, there stands a single quotation, one assumes to be the voice of 'the commission': 'As a cultural investment, Public Art has aided economic recovery in many places, attracting companies, their sponsorship and helped create employment. I believe Charles Quick's work will aid regeneration of the area, contribute to local distinctiveness and be a symbol of civic pride' (Quick, 2007).⁸ This statement, by a Councillor McAtominey, is succinct and for us is relevant as it sets out the explicit and implicit demands that face the artist in the public realm, that is, before they even think of the art or even begin the creative process. These demands are strong and permeate local cultural policy contexts, and animate the frameworks of authority and legitimisation for public commissions or the expenditure of public funds on art. For Quick, the intellectual negotiation of policy contexts is internal to the creation of urban art. In fact, urban artists like Quick distinguish themselves from mainstream 'public art' exactly by this intellectual quest.

Looking at each of the terms Councillor McAtominey uses, we can identify what these contexts are and what policy demands emerge from them. Art is an 'investment', (providing a return, that can be quantified as such, the anticipation of which is in part the initial justification for commission); art is a strategic component of regional or local cultural planning (not random or spontaneous or initiated wholly by artists, or operating outside planning conditions); art is a stimulus to economic recovery (art as cultural industry, which is a component of the economy, not simply lodged within civic or municipal cultural subsidy, such as education); art is commerce (engaging in mutually enhancing projects with companies and corporations); art is work (internal to the leisure and tourist industries, providing new employment); art is urban regeneration (a component of the restructuring and re-design of the urban landscape); art is local culture, expressive of the socio-cultural particularity of its location; art is a valuable symbol of civic life, history, achievement or aspiration.⁹ I hope I have exhausted this short quotation.

For us, this quote adequately identifies the 'conditions' – largely public policy conditions – of urban-public art projects. Many contemporary artists avoid public commissions for just this reason. However, the nature of these conditions, I would argue, is also guarantor of the significance of public work, or the opportunity of significance – and not simply as an art object playing a visible role in the symbolic economy of a region. Urban art, as part of its very process of artistic creation, has possible routes of access into the socio-political constructs and the policy discourses that empower the mechanisms of socio-urban change. Counsellor McAtominey's statement does not signal political appropriation or the authoritarian voice of the commissioner intentionally placing restrictions on artist's creativity (a routine assumption in the art world). This voice is expressive of the mechanisms of cultural planning and public 'accountability' that is internal to the functioning of local democracy; questioning these conditions entails a necessary questioning of local democracy (a worthwhile project for a public artist, and one almost always avoided).¹⁰

These 'conditions', while self-evident to us now, each have a history and emerge from literatures of policy-making and a political struggle since 1997 to create in Britain a 'cultural democracy' (even though the term is still curiously vague in its very utterance). Throughout the 1980s there was a strong motivation to find a new role and identifiable position for art with the new orders of value animating a new wave of national socio-economic development (affectionately known by some as 'the Thatcher economic boom' of the late 1980s). This was a period of questioning for Charles Quick, who like many of his generation, found the world of abstract sculpture to be facing radically changing horizons, in part registered by the sudden rise of 'installation art'. This generation of artists were also confronted with a sudden rise in the commodity value of art and unprecedented success in the art markets, along with a renewed vigour in the power of the art institution and the larger public art galleries (operating, as they did, with rationales shifting unpredictably between commercialism and public patronage). In the 1980s, apart from his lecturing and work in education, Quick was a key member of Leeds Art Space Society, on the management board of Yorkshire Art Space, and a director and trustee of the public commissioning agency, Public Arts (Wakefield), and intellectually aware of this change.¹¹ While later in the decade some public bodies attempted to create a new professional framework for artists working

in urban contexts, (such as the Department for Environment's sponsored research project resulting in the substantial publication *Art for Architecture – A Handbook for Commissioning*, edited by Deanna Petherbridge, 1987) most artists viewed the urban environment with disdain, as a place where art was divested of its intellectual autonomy. For most artists, the contemporary gallery was still the only sphere of professional credibility, if not creative interest; public art was doomed to a policy-driven populist aesthetic, to easily recognized art historical pastiche.¹²

Quick, however, was steadily moving towards a third sphere of activity – between mainstream contemporary art and routine 'public art' – to what we may call urban installation. Urban installation is still emerging as a distinct project within contemporary art, quite apart from what would be called 'public art' (though a close association still exists). This could be wood or steel structures incorporated into buildings or architecture, or manufactured objects for the interior or exterior of buildings. Major examples would include Quick's *Light Wave* (1988) at Wakefield Westgate train station, *The Pump Station works* (1994) at Cardiff Bay, *The Navigator* at the Coventry Canal (1997-9), and *Red Pass* (2007) at the Ramparts Business Park in Berwick-upon-Tweed (Quick, 1995; 1997).

Quick's art education in the late 1970s was framed by the British 'reception' of American contemporary art: since 1960, American modernist sculpture had been increasingly concerned with 'space' as an aesthetic category, which the anti-modernist movements of the late 1960s continued apace – with minimal art, conceptual art, process art, land and environment art, kinetic art, and of course, performance. Most of the new movements initially emerged from the smaller New York galleries, but became the dominant international art genres of the 1970s. The new art acknowledged the aesthetic inseparability of its location or 'siting' from both our visual experience and our cognitive-linguistic interaction with it. Much art of this time therefore found a more natural habitat in social or urban spaces outside the gallery, often co-extensive with their site of production. The spaces within which the broader cultural economy operated began to open up, diversify in the artist's uses of those spaces. Between 1980 and 1995, Britain's shifting economic aspirations from heavy industry to services and venture business, offered enormous opportunities for artists to claim the abandoned, de-industrialised spaces for art.¹³

The artistic turning point for Quick's understanding of site and space was his project at Leeds Metropolitan University between October 2001 and July 2002 – Towerscan (Quick, 2002). The Towerscan project, subtitled 'the realization of the electrical energy that passes through an architectural space', was centred in 'H Building' a ten-storey research and teaching tower block. The products were information-based documents of various kinds, and an exhibition of 535 colour photographs of the outwards-facing lines of sight from within the building, positioned in a strictly linear formation around the walls of the University Gallery. The photographs were composed so that the walls of the gallery were visually punctured by every window view in the building, oriented in the correct direction, as if the gallery were the building in toto. The exhibition affected an 'interactivity', as it demanded a conceptual exploration on the part of the viewer, it was dense with information, such as the documents, plans and maps Quick had acquired during the course of research, and these were superimposed with projected moving imagery. The layering of research information and visual data, as well as the involvement of the inhabitants of the site, became important strategic moments in FLASH a few years later. However, the key conceptual moment of Towerscan, was the use of one small site within a location as an heuristic, revealing the entire spectrum of the activity and experiences of that location.

Towerscan was essentially a research project, and with a quantifiable object of investigation – data on the supply and usage of power within delimited urban location, calculated in part on the basis of power-grid supply. This research object yielded data (on power consumption, distribution, supply and patterns of demand) that could have all kind of industrial application; but this application was not the task of the artist. Quick was concerned with the way artistic method (the process of creating a public work) could activate lines of inquiry not open to any other form of research, whether industrial or scientific. Given that the capacity of the entire UK electricity power grid at any given time is determined by estimates on patterns of consumption, the nature of this consumption and the potential for aberration, is serious. If a power-supply experiment were to orchestrate the occupants of several large streets turning their light switches on and off simultaneously, enough unpredictable energy demand could disable a local sub-station. Insofar as this precarious situation came about through a politicization of public policy – the national utilities privatization starting in

1984 – energy is a subject with serious political dimensions.¹⁴

Quick's object of investigation in Towerscan was electricity, his medium was documents and photographic records, both his own and those historical to the site; his method was what we might call spatial mapping, which in practice had two strands: (i) archival research and data analysis of existing energy specifications, architectural and structural drawings, utilities and services plans; including faculty campus floor plans; and (ii) interaction with users, site and functional apparatuses within it, attentive to both the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of that experience. This second strand operated with a variety of investigative tools common to ethnography and 'action research', though the method was not pre-formulated that way. Over the course of a year, Quick interviewed an occupant in every room of the building, creating a database of information on their diverse experiences of the architecture, space, physical structure, urban context. He also documented the visual data on viewpoints and vistas, and the new perceptual horizons the building had opened up for the urban area. Despite the 'concrete' object of his research (a building), this project for Quick was exploratory – not solution-driven but knowledge driven – in which lines of investigation were set up as artistic method. This 'method' was understood at the time in terms of a continuation of his past interest in 'interaction' – where the artist would simply create the conditions for participants to activate the space as 'art'. This may have simply entailed anticipating the visual play of viewer's shadows in and around the installation site; or it may have involved using interactive sensors in light installations, again activating the viewers' presence in or around his objects. Towerscan was never an object, but always a series of 'frameworks' in which the 'art' was figured as an activity. It also generated more ideas, becoming a platform for a range of research proposals from participants.

Two of the great shifts in contemporary art in decades of the 1970s and 1980s were aesthetic – involving the fundamental conditions of our experience of art. New terms like 'interactivity' and 'site specificity' signified the change, particularly influencing sculptors and playing no small role in generating the new genre of installation art, a formative influence for Quick. Viewing was redefined as 'interactive' whereby the artist presupposed an active mobile (physically embodied) viewer, who was able to reflect on the perceptual conditions

of their own process of viewing (the various orders of meaning the work made accessible by its positioning and situation in a specific time and place, often in relation to other art works around it). Similarly, where art was made 'site-specific' (even if that site was itself temporary) the reflexive viewing process extended into the social or geo-physical space around the art work. In a sense, the term 'site-specificity' presupposed 'interactive' viewing, as both art work and the physical space in which it was situated were intrinsically related (the art was 'interactive' with its context as the viewer was with the art). While collapsing classical distinctions between figure/ground and work of art/context, and creating enormous possibilities in art's physical morphology, these terms also inadvertently reinforced an ontological distinction between the categories of 'art', 'viewer' and 'site' (or context). They made possible a series of new 'relations' or synergies between these terms, but these enduring distinctions reinforced a conception of art as delimited entity, to be situated and positioned, defined against that which is other to it – the viewer, its context. This was not fortuitous, for artists rightly valued the hard-won institutionalised autonomy of art, its radical separation from the rationalized utility of everyday life. They recognized the animated hostility to art perceptible in the urban environment; they remained protective of those lines that define art as entity, if only to protect their intellectual property. But 'art' was prevented from too close an identification with the urban (or similarly, with nature).

In Towerscan, no such radical delineation of object, viewer, site, time and space, is sustained, or at least none that supports any workable concept of interactivity or site specificity. What Quick later developed in his 'infrastructures', similarly dissolves all distinctions and entails possible objectives that are not conventionally 'artistic' at all, but might set objective reference points for industry, for example. This, in a sense is Quick's working concept of 'autonomy' – where art is not a delineated entity separated from the potentially hostile geo-political conditions of the public sphere, but a process of intellectual practice working within those conditions, 'immanent' to them.¹⁵

Creating 'infrastructures' does not entail a particular method, an entity or object with properties, or a space with specific characteristics (we might recall the photographic representation-of-absent-art-referents of Land art in the early 1970s, or the Conceptual art gallery-as-information-laboratory earlier in the late 1960s).

Infrastructure is not static (like a facility or series of resources), but a process, a dynamic, in that it needs to be recreated with every new spatial location and stage of a project. It is not the contention of this essay that FLASH@Hebburn is where the full potential of 'infrastructure' is explored – rather, FLASH@Hebburn was a process whereby the artist first fully encountered a series of situations, confronted a series of conditions, that opened up enough intellectual material to construct such a concept for urban art practice. Quick, through the project, emerged with an understanding of his work as creating 'infrastructures' (both singular and plural).

The cultural infrastructure of forming

There is a strong sense that FLASH@Hebburn as a project was an exercise in historical retrieval. This was not a conscious objective on the part of the artist, but what was uncovered in the process of the project were aesthetic presuppositions that had emerged in a recent history of contemporary art, the suppressed moment out of which our concepts of interactivity and site-specificity emerged: this was 1966-72.

We could cross-reference many different artists and works using the research of many critical historians of this period, from Jeffrey Kastner to Simon Dell, finding the terms of a general but substantive cultural-philosophical shift.¹⁶ The various art movements of this era together reconstructed the concept of art, moving through the 'interactive' and 'site specific' to a fuller understanding of art's capabilities. Art was not a particular kind of object, nor an object-world relation, but more of an artist-world relation, in convention terms, the artist's creative-work-as-project. This was not a return to a romantic 'art as personal journey' or intellectual pilgrimage, but it did entail an understanding of 'art' primarily as a spatio-temporal 'site' through which an artist engaged with both place and its people (viewers and non-viewers), as social space and as geo-physical environment.

For the artists of this era – Robert Smithson, Michael Heizer, Christo, Richard Serra, Robert Morris, Dennis Oppenheim, and so on – the artist's project may involve dominant physical objects created by the artist; it may entail several objects, made or simply found and appropriated; it may mean no objects, simply a re-ordering of space. It always meant stepping out of the sphere of the art commodity, making work that could not be 'exhibited' as art, or appropriated for the art economies of display and exchange. It often entailed an occupancy

of a 'site' in a way that created an ethical obligation for 'excavating' that site, uncovering the suppressed sense of identity within the site's own processes of historical formation and deformation. The site of art was a space of intellectual labour for 'viewers'; the primary objective of this art-as-project was a certain form of experience, a site within which and through which artist, viewer, objects and location would find productive synergies, opening out onto specific knowledge-forms. The 'art' was therefore not a discrete parcel or entity to be possessed in the viewers' own store of cultural information. It was perhaps closer as a concept to what Wittgenstein would call a 'form of life' – a micro-world, as cognitive as it was physical, capable of generating particular uses of language as it is configuring certain kinds of social participation; it was discrete in the sense of taking place in particular spaces, but not hermetic, as it opened out onto other 'worlds' of which it was just a part.¹⁷

This is no place for an historical summary of this complex and compelling intellectual epoch 1966-72, though we could take a brief cross section from 1967/8, with essays like Robert Morris's 'Notes on Sculpture, Part 3' or 'Anti-Form', or Robert Smithson's 'A Sedimentation of the mind: Earth Projects'.¹⁸ For Smithson, art should register the concurrent processes of change, creation and atrophy that constitutes the organic substances of human mind and geo-physical earth; art was an opening of this process, discovering a new set of relations and meanings within a space or location, that is, outside of our ingrained cognitive habits of appropriation and utility. Robert Morris probed the psychology of this creative process, where, he observed, art needs to understand 'the cultural infrastructure of forming'. For the 'forming' of an artwork uncovers the basic perceptual structure of our task-oriented interaction with the objective world. Where this would seem to conflict with Smithson's avoidance of habits of appropriation and utility, Morris was conversely attempting to identify the suppressed aesthetic conditions of this (necessary) human disposition. Morris was a realist, not taken by the romantic streak in left-leaning contemporary art that derided the industrial as 'anti-nature' (human or material). Industry in essence is the fundamental propensities of our bodies and propensities of common materials in a dialectic of productivity. The cultural infrastructure of forming was 'cultural' in the sense that the basis of this dialectic (as it operates within the particular concrete conditions of a location), the basis of our industrial intelligence and manual dexterity, was our perception, our sensory knowledge, our sensibility

and experience of our environment; the basis of art.

The routine objections of art critics in the late 1960s to an art constructed from industrial materials or pre-manufactured units, rang hollow for Morris, for whom art was internal to industry; in fact, art could only justify its cultural existence as an extension of the human need to innovate forms of productive interactivity with our environment. Industrial labour was never wholly instrumental, but concealed a profound aesthetic dimension and creative saliency; art can rediscover this potential for industry. Rather, it was our tendency to 'functioning idealism', our instrumental modes of rationality, demanding single solutions for isolated problems, separating means from ends, that for Morris locked up for the cultural power of industrial labour in the 'technicity' of assembly-for-function. We have lived in an age of 'technicity', where nature was reconceptualised as an industrial resource, where the lives of people were reconfigured as industrial labour, but where production itself became dissected – product, process, place and people divorced, and the ingenuity and skill of industrial creation become specialized, abstracted and separated from industry's people and their places. Through the era of technicity, our methods of 'thinking' have become hostile to the very processes through which materials themselves come into being, and are formed into objects, where objects were primarily for people in particular places. The problem was instrumental rationality, not industrial labour, which became its victim.¹⁹ FLASH@Hebburn is explicit in its interconnection of earth and industry with the simple repetitive placement in the mathematical grid, its use of industrial units, tokens of both standardization and specialization. In doing so Quick achieved what were for Morris the minimal aesthetic conditions for art: 'openness, extendibility, accessibility, repeatableness, equanimity, directness and immediacy'.²⁰

At the time Morris was, of course, talking of minimal art between 1965-1968, and while we can identify an emphatic 'minimalist' aesthetic in FLASH@Hebburn, what is more important is where Morris realized where this relation between labour-body-ground had taken him, articulated in the essay 'Anti-form', written a few months later.²¹ This short essay was in part a corrective to an assumption in the 'Notes' that an art that activated the cultural infrastructure of forming would necessarily result in a delimited spatial entity, an enclosed object of series of objects that would stand as a finished product, demanding only the attention of our perceptual faculties, thus create intellectual closure.

'Anti-form' demanded that the art 'object' retained within itself what he called 'the process of making itself': its own material and intellectual processes of artistic formation remained a visible constitution of the final work.²² A physically delimited object was limited in its ability to do this, so Morris's practice began to entail the creation of a continual and ongoing field of activity, a 'field' both in the sense of an extended conceptual subject matter as well as an expanded physical composition. This 'field' was where 'the forms and the order of the work were not a priori to the means', but rather reference points in a process, whose meaning and significance in our perception changed as this process continued. Along with his concern with the conditions of making, came the conditions of viewing, and Morris's art of 1968-74 became investigation-based, of setting up 'fields', constructing the conditions for a distinct form of experience, opening up new dimensions of existence in a specific site. In FLASH@Hebburn we find a similar form of art constitution, primarily as a field through which the unseen or concealed of the subject is explored.

Quick, as a young sculptor, tracked the progress of British sculpture in the 1980s – attracting international attention with its project-based creation of sites, an attentiveness to the creative process and the spatial orientation of the artist's activity, a phenomenological understanding of viewing, of the specific propensities of materials and their industrial configuration, and so on. And yet, by the end of the decade it seemed that the ideas of 1966-72 had changed, or had congealed into principles for new 'works of art'. The concepts of interactivity and site specificity were appropriated in a way that salvaged the primacy of the spatially delimited art object, the enigmatic work of the famous, and aloof, artist, whose fundamental motivation and professional destiny was the space of the grand museum. The reasons for the repression and dissolution of the socio-philosophical trajectory of 1966-72 is an interesting historical project for urban art history, as it would explain why urban art did not become the central cultural enterprise that this trajectory made possible. Our concern here is how many of the ideas of this period remerge in Quick's FLASH: the aesthetic of industrial labour; industry against 'technicity'; art as project; art investigating the specificity of a place, creating 'fields' or a site within which art can open up a 'world'.

Artist-action-process

In Towerscan, the participants (occupant of the building) were not independent creative actors,

but sources of research data for the artist. In FLASH, contributors become creative actors, and the art, artist, the creative process, the viewers or audience, the spatial context, environment, are no longer discrete elements or separate moments in a sequence; they have no linear or hierarchical relation. Quick's developing 'method', the form of his creative project, was where a 'field' of investigation was initiated, but then whose talk was to convert this (largely conceptual project) into a 'site' for art: the 'site' itself had to be created; the 'site' was not equivalent to the geo-physical ground of an art object, a flat plinth for some art work. Site was not presupposed as 'context'; and the 'creativity' of making a site was not conventional artistic creativity.

Site, as I will point out, involves a composition, but a composition of 'dimensions' of activity rather than of fixed material elements. Dimensions are spatio-temporal and might involve objects, ideas, spaces, (and change over a period of time). The dimensions can be actual or in potentia. The dimensions we find in FLASH@Hebburn I will call (using spatial metaphors) 'territory', 'location' and 'environment', terms which we will differentiate as we continue. These three terms – 'territory', 'location' and 'environment' – are the three ways in which a particular place is formed in the age of technicity, three ways in which a place is appropriated or (re-) created through an instrumental rationality. Here, however, they are brought together and made over into aesthetic form, acknowledging their function and the very real history through which they were formed, but excavating their aesthetic bases. The way Quick does that is to create a 'site' within which the detached dimensions of this place come together and co-habit; the place becomes one place. 'Site' is central to 'infrastructure': the 'infrastructure' is the way that the composition of 'site' emerges, reveals itself or is represented at successive stages of the project. Infrastructures were used by the artist as spaces of engagement or co-creation, with Hebburn residents; infrastructures could consist of communication networks, using people or information, dialogue or any visual representation, as media. And here, Quick's conception of art as infrastructures (i.e. as plural, as process) emerged through his participation in what was a standard method of public art commissioning in FLASH@Hebburn.

The method by which a public project is managed, often tabulated or schematised by artists, consultants, commissioners and funders is usually defined in terms of a fivefold phasing or a variation

of such. We will use this 'phasing' as a simply format to throw into relief Quick's non-programmatic approach, retaining our grip on the 'technicity' endemic within the commissioning process, cognisant of the policy-generated rationales that the artist's project has to work within and through.²³

Our starting point is the commission briefing – often, like this Art on the Riverside, held in the form of a competition, in this case a 'limited competition' where four committee-selected invited artists submitted proposals. This stage of the process demands that the artist coordinates the project – its subject matter and aspirations – with their own strategic planning, as public commissions are notoriously open to instability, changing project managers, obstructive planning departments, inflexible budgets and politically-induced truncation. Our Phase 1 is officially recognised as the point of initial research and concept design by the artist and commissioners: first meetings, site tours, understanding objectives of main stakeholders: a commission is always replete with motives and latent or manifest political capital at stake. In this case the motives were relatively benign and Quick experience no direct intervention in his creative aspirations. FLASH@Hebburn was not, at the outset, 'politically' complex, and Quick was invited on account of work previously done, which is usually the most amenable basis for an invitation. The initial brief only stipulated three requirements: the location in Hebburn; the occasion – the urban regeneration effort; and celebration – expressing the historical emergence of local industry. The entire project may have lasted less than a year had Quick used an 'off the shelf' art idea, but the research intensive project that ensued ran from May 2001 to March 2009.

Art on the Riverside comprised a steering committee and for each of the four projects an appointed project manager (such as an art curator of a local gallery), who effectively commissioned and manage the artist's project. In this case an arts officer of the South Shields arts centre The Customs House took the role. For each of the projects, local funding partnerships were attempted, in the case of Hebburn, VA Tech-Reyroll and Co. initially agreed. As is not untypical of medium-term art sponsorship, the company finally withdrew as a consequence of changes in business ownership, by the end of the project the original funding source had to meet the total costs of £150,000. For the initial competition, Quick submitted a number of variations in the form of over-drawn photomontages, all conveying his essential concept: the flash. Quick had three months

of preparation for an initial understanding of Hebburn, where VA Tech-Reyroll and Co., its British Short Circuit Test Station and the world renown Clothier Laboratory within it, was the first research visit. This visit stimulated Quick's growing interest in networks, grids and energy infrastructures, visible in past work, such as the solo exhibition in 1995 at Leeds City Art Gallery, *The Dark Side of the Bright Lights*, with its look at the relations between technology, power and public life.

This preliminary phase found Quick intellectually engaged along similar lines, but not with some the glib possibility of 'celebrating' local industry. He was first confronted with the visible paradox of national energy supply – what appears to be massive, solid, guaranteed and automatic industrial power and its products, is in reality an outdated, volatile and precarious system, fragile at the intersections of source, supply and delivery. The withdrawal of VA Tech-Reyroll and Co. from the project was also symptomatic of another curious paradox – that industry did not grow and develop according to an internal strength of inherent industrial capability and development, but rose and fell on the back of transnational business and the blind self-interest of investors and the money markets. Hebburn was bereft of industry, not because it was not capable or did not have the facility, but for reasons that were non-industrial, capricious, promiscuous, oblivious to human needs.²⁴

Phase 2: specific design accepted; budget and schedule agreed with contractual commitments: Often public contracts are awarded through competition or tendering, or the artist is sub-contracted directly by an appointed masterplanner of the public project (often an architect or civil engineer).²⁵ Quick usually avoids competitions and the products-for-contracts working culture they generate. FLASH@Hebburn was in the event not made complicated by a surrounding architectural or urban design scheme; it stood alone in a parkland, project managed by one arts officer working with The Customs House arts centre in South Shields – after a few years the project was managed directly by an officer in South Tyneside Council. Quick throughout the project negotiated a schedule that accommodated his research requirements.

Contractual delivery of a large public project can become a professional trap for an artist; time is eaten up, designs compromised, cultural preferences move on, contracts rarely protect an artist's professional welfare, even though public procurement and commission conventions will obligate the commissioner to include a paragraph

on the artist's 'moral rights'. The contractual structure of FLASH@Hebburn was unusual – there were three successive contracts for each of the successive designs that emerged over the following years; that is, the contracts were design contracts (with a final contractual agreement for the physical installation). The artist as the project creative director, was supported by a routine schedule of payments, but the final outcome or product was not contractually predetermined. Quick, again, rejected a 'product on demand' schedule, preferring research and prolonged interaction with the environment to determine any creative outcome.

This phase should have seen the artist contractually obliged to reproduce a design proposed as a solution to a problem, created after a preliminary acquaintance with the allotted space and its context. The proposal was for a general concept, and the contract was for the artist-project rather than a specific product. In his brief experience of Hebburn, he had found that the determining element of his subject, the industry of Hebburn. This was his first step to conceptualising Hebburn as a 'site' for art: site as territory.²⁶ Territory, for our purposes, is the fixation and quantification of a space, its demarcation for specific utility, and upon which its built facilities are expressive of various forms of ownership. Territory is an appropriation of space for purposes other than its own; it is where its resources are abstracted for ends that are far off, not local. Territorialisation is a function of technicity.

At this point Quick undertook an exhaustive phenomenological tour of Hebburn and surrounds; it was 'phenomenological' in the sense the he charted an experience of the place, understanding how the place generated specific forms of experience of its separation and use for certain industrial purposes – and how 'experience' in this sense is inter-determined by a history of this activity: a particular organization of time as production time or working routine, mechanised activity, in part manifest in the current visual form of its built constructs. This research was primarily manifest in 'visual knowledge', a mapping of spatial coordinates, photographic record, both aerial and ground-level, narrative construction (artist's own ideas and thoughts as he moved 'through' this experience), drawing, noting the viewpoints and closures of the industrial occupancy of the space. 'Territory' in the sense we are using it, is itself dialectical, where the activity (what people do there) and the physical facilities (their buildings, yards, roads) are of course co-dependent and co-creative. For the most part, this involves 'alienated labour', where

people are making things not for themselves or for Hebburn, but for elsewhere, for little in return, in a process of production that is fragmented and divided up in the cause of mechanical efficiency and not human development or fulfilment. And yet, as any Hebburn worker will testify, it is more than that. Their human investment simply makes it more, if that 'more' is difficult to articulate.

Phase 3: design specification and location set; planning permissions and scheduling of installation cleared: For FLASH@Hebburn, the designated space for the work changed several times, but remained within Riverside Park. This is usually the point at which public commitments are made and the public-response process begins, whether in the form of formal consultation or a time-saving publicity campaign. For Quick, without a predetermined product, publicity did not begin until the last year of the project – the immediate public learned about the proposed art work when Quick began research, surveying, gathering documents, photographing, questioning and conversing with local people, interviewing various companies and businesses. The commission was awarded largely on account of the concept – the 'flash' of light as metaphor for the life of this industrial region. It did not stand for any single source of light – the fireworks of the massive welding operations of the shipyards, engineers or metalworkers, or the factory lights, the river lighting and the lights of river traffic. As a metaphor it operated as an abstract concept; this was appropriate as Hebburn is now an abstract urban life – life abstracted from the industry through which it was created.²⁷

The territory of Hebburn, the 'dynamics' of Hebburn, the processes of change that had empowered its industrial rise, were invisible, and yet like electricity, while precarious and capricious, was manifest as massive, solid industrial facility: factories, shipyards, loading bays, docks and cranes strong enough to lift a small ship. These facilities, so laden with weight and strength, carried a promise of an enduring future. They were a driving motor of historical narrative, where the history of a nation became industrial history. They never conceived of a time when the narrative would collapse. Having uncovered the dynamics of the 'territory', Quick began understanding Hebburn as location, as a place fixed on a map, with an identity animated by (and restricted by) a social populace; the people had been placed there for specific industrial-instrumental purposes, and yet demonstrated a certain strength of self-belief and understanding. As Quick discovered, industry and

the heavyweight ingenuity that we find in the history of places such as Hebburn, was and could only be, born out of a specific form of industrial community; that is, 'industrial' is as much a social category as an economic one.²⁸ More than that, Hebburn was an industrial culture, a community that had defined its own purpose and value in and through industrial innovation, where its own industrial labour generated a means of ethical and political understanding and knowledge of the world.

Understanding Hebburn as a location, was understanding the nature of 'industry' as a mechanism through which social identities were fixed and yet a certain process of subject-formation emerged. Industry was the dialectic of human and material propensities in a specific place, a dialectic that always, as Morris would point out, reveal a 'cultural infrastructure of forming'. In Hebburn, despite the territorial and location-based fixity of human resources and identities, a measure of 'real' industry emerged. This industry emerges where the object and its processes of construction, maintains a physical proximity and identification with its source, and is motivated by a continual conflict between past and present, an exploration of continual change – in other words, innovation. 'Innovation' at Hebburn, though compromised by its territorial appropriation, became central to the identity of the people. It was not a solution-based technique-driven R&D exercise carried off-site, outsourced, but was intrinsic to the collective life and understanding of its labouring community. Quick embarked on a period of socio-historical research and ethnographic analysis, carried out in part by generating conversation with local inhabitants.²⁹ Archival and historical material provided a narrative structure through which the location of Hebburn could be communicated, and the self-recognition of the people of Hebburn understood. The metaphor of light as innovation – even though it won the competitive contract, was only ever fully understood by local Hebburn people. 'I found this a curious and interesting thing, where my art concept was immediately understood and accepted by this community, by not always be people from outside'.³⁰

The first design for FLASH@Hebburn was for 24 ground-level lights shooting an intensive flash into the night sky, but also discovered that skyward beams are only visually effective with low-lying cloud. As for all the lights, various sequences were considered, from a two-minute mega-flash per night, to a single flash per year. The second major design was for a series of six columns each ten metres high, with four lights mounted on each

– two facing the sky and two facing the ground. This concept was truncated on the objection of the local airport. The third design was for one single 30 meter high column mounted with twelve xenon high-intensity lights facing both down and out. It was with this variation that Quick developed the idea of sequencing, but the scheme itself became too expensive due to a new substation being required to power it. The third design variation was where the final design germinated, twelve xenon high intensity flash lights, pointing outwards and downwards rather than upwards. The downward light was rejected for the final version, only unexpectedly returning as an effect of the internal composition of the lamp. The fourth design was FLASH as it currently stands. The precise location for the lights was finally chosen, but the local authority planning department consistently made objections that seriously attenuated the project's timeline. Quick was project manager of all construction, delivery and installation, although no collaborative work was needed until our fourth phase.³¹

Our third term of composition for 'site' is environment: the topography and the social appropriation of the natural landscape (i.e. the way the town, its houses, churches, parks and other facilities are placed on and within a distinctive physical landscape). This is the point conventionally identified as the place of the work of public art, its geo-physical orbit, i.e. the object placed on the surface of a particular piece of ground. For FLASH, the aesthetic, perceptual, sensory experience of the work of art – the columns of lights in the park – is but one term in the project, one dimension of the site, whose form of experience is as much the rest of Hebburn itself. The 'environment' dimension of Hebburn, in its capacity as an expression of technicity, would convince us that the earth of Hebburn, its landscape, is simply a surface, a ground, upon which the activities of territorialisation and location take place. This ground may have a certain natural charm, its lush 'greenery' pleasing to the eye, but its current significance little beyond its instrumental uses, and the social additions to this – the church, the club, the sport centre, all bolted on to an industry workforce, increasing its fitness for work. In terms of the work of art: in the environment of technicity, the work is just that physical object, on that piece of ground. And yet, as everyone knows, the topography is more than just ground – the nature, the green, the lay of the land, means something; it is more than its appearance as environment, yet during the routine of the day this 'more' is somehow concealed, cannot be seen.

Phase 4: sourcing of materials, technology and construction: here the artist usually creates the objects or elements, where their specification is inspected and often changed (a material, dimension, texture or finish can be disputed), and technological problems usually emerge. Quick, using design software, drew up plans and elevations to scale, accurate working drawings on which an industrial designer could construct technical drawings indicating manufacturer's specification (as the external form or 'casing' of the technology is always interrelated with the internal technological components). The final model designed was a tubular column form constructed from galvanised steel; on top was situated a photovoltaic panel and a sealed gel battery in a zinc plated and black powder coated enclosure. Below this is a tube of diagonally-arranged blue and white LEDs, the source of the flash. Mid-way on the column is a great hinge, whereby the column can be swung down for inspection or repair. A 'bespoke' piece of technology in this context depends on industrial collaboration. The problem with industrial collaboration is finding a partner who understands the design process and innovation, and is willing to engage in the kind of dialogue needed for the creation of a unique art form. This Quick found in the company Light Wave Displays, an entrepreneurial electrical engineering company, who maintained a design policy geared towards invention, holding a number of patented designs.

The artistic dialogue with Light Wave Displays lasted over six months, where photographic sketches based on Quick's lighting simulations were sent back and forth for discussion and analysis. The final design chosen required four categories of component: the electronics, light boards and solar panels; the LED insertion; the power-coated steelwork (the columns); and the radio control technology (for the lighting sequences). As for project management, during this stage Quick was managing six groups of people. There were the manufacturers and suppliers of the columns; the surveyors (establishing the object-ground relation, both the planting of the columns as well as the positioning and levels); and the planning authorities, maintaining an overview of the situation (rarely constructively). There were structural engineers advising on the construction; the company Light Wave Displays, who project managed their own technology network to manufacture both lights and power sources; and lastly, the company Roadlite, who were charged with excavation and the planting of the columns (though not installation of the technology, which was left

to the fabricators, important with bespoke products). Quick, throughout this stage was personally sub-contracting, budget and schedule managing all parties; this was never merely administrative, but an intrinsic part of the creation of the 'site'.

The collaborative nature of the art work's construction was concurrent with the collaborative nature of its programming, where the sequences of light would be devised, at successive stages, by various groups of people in Hebburn. This itself prefigured the 'collaborative' nature of the viewing process, at least where 'viewing' would often be in groups, sharing information on the work, often passing by, walking or socialising with friends, or indeed watching while at work in the surrounding industrial facilities that remain. Many of the sequences presuppose a socialisation process – sharing of information on the origins and thus meaning of the sequences. The process of actual mechanical construction, however, has a further significance we will consider in a moment.

Phase 5: Delivery, installation and event management: the installation is a moment where imagined or projected effects must become a reality, though often are not; the infinite environmental variables of light, weather, security, and physical visibility create the unexpected. There were two material aspects to FLASH@Hebburn that were hard to anticipate: the first being the ability to acquire and manipulate available or bespoke technology for the planned form of visual communication; second, the actual visual impact can only in part be anticipated. A public environment possessed infinite variables, and 'light' is a complex medium in this regard. Public projects do not often have the resources to engage in an extensive prototyping and testing stage as would the design and development of an industrial product; Quick, however, does so, and planted a temporary six metre column with a battery-driven LED light for inspection. The worst problem was the physical planting of the columns, given that the Riverside Park had a previous life as a refuse dump, all kinds of rubble obstructed excavation and made for an unstable foundation. The structural engineers finally insisted on around two tonnes of foundation concrete for the individual planting of each column. Quick was careful not to churn up the entire parkland site by requesting that the foundations be dug by hand, but after a week only six had been dug; a JCB was called in to undertake the rest.

The radio technology and LED light together delivered a very clear form of light, precise and instantaneous, whose quality was unexpectedly crisp; moreover the curved polycarbonate protective shield inside the LED light unit acted as a lens, making visible to any viewer on site each individual unit on the LED boards. A further unexpected characteristic was the impact of the light on the river – the light hit the river at an angle by which the source was dissolved in favour of diffuse blue glow. At night FLASH@Hebburn is as much an aesthetic presence on the river as it is on the site of the Park; the river was finally able to find a dimension of presence beyond its historical determination as industrial utility.

This point about the river is important – the river does not cease to be in the process of an instrumental appropriation, in its instrumental role in Hebburn as territory, location, and as environment. And yet through this, FLASH opens up something of the river itself, where the river stands apart from each of these dimensions of life through which (and only which) it is always encountered. The river shows us something of itself and for itself: a river that is just a river.

Infrastructures

The 'site' for FLASH@Hebburn was not an already existing place, an unproblematic space for art occupancy, still less a clear plinth delivered up by the commission for some interesting urban symbolism. The artist understood this commission as a project, creating an investigation, not an opportunity for asserting and inserting his own professional ideas. Quick understood Hebburn as a place whose meaning was not apparent, but had to be discovered, unconcealed through a protracted process, by initially making it into a 'field', where ideas, narratives, people, spaces and events, could be unconcealed and situated in relation to one another. This created the possibility for a 'site' for art, and understanding what it meant to make Hebburn a site for art. Hebburn's own self-creation and understanding was excavated, the dimensions of the space – territory, location, environment – were discovered over time, as dialectic, each an expression of technicity and yet never congealing into a stasis of total technical control. Hebburn was a territory of industrial appropriation, yet a crucible for innovation; Hebburn was a location of social-class imprisoned identities and yet community of resilience and ingenuity; Hebburn was a socially appropriated landscape, where the nature of the natural was just a ground for social facilities; and yet, as the people had testified,

the natural landscape, the hills, the incline of the roads, the viewpoints, the river, were formative of a local sensibility, their way of 'feeling' their place in the world. Because of the irrepressibility of the presence of industry, this sensibility was encountered only in the loss of its object, that is, only realised on leaving Hebburn and being somewhere else. Each of these expressions of technicity – territory, location and environment – through the project expressed their opposite, and whose relation was explored through the artist's representations, presentations, activities involving the local people – in other words, through infrastructures. The site for art – a site that enabled an art for Hebburn to take place – was created by successive infrastructures where territory, location and environment provided the material out of which the art was created.

But there is a sense in which we have not touched on the essential element of the artist's role; his own creative ingenuity – how infrastructures form a creative method. We have described the stages of his project and separate activities – his field of investigation and the creation of a site. But what about the 'creative' moment – infrastructures as artistic method? Is Quick's project another instrumental appropriation of Hebburn in a larger context of the 'new creative economy', another expression of technicity? Is FLASH simply a logical signifier of the information on this place systematically collected and summarised like a technical report? I would say not, on account of the character of Quick's intellectual application to this process – what I would call a 'mimetic thinking' that is also a practice, a behaviour. The term 'mimesis' here does not entail 'representing', depicting images or even expressing what he has discovered; what is mimetic is the creative behaviour of setting up infrastructures. Robert Smithson in his essay, 'A Sedimentation of the Mind', described his art as an extension of specific patterns simultaneous growth and entropy that is visible in the earth around a particular place. Mimetic behavior, in an aesthetic sense, is where an artist finds a process of creation that is an extension of the processes of creation and entropy simultaneously apparent in the subject, in this case Hebburn's living character and fragmented industrial past. In this way, the art is an extension of the dynamic of experience and meanings that is the subject, but obviously revealing something more, as it is once removed from that subject, in dialogue with it.

This mimetic behaviour was not wholly conscious on the part of Quick, but it did not need to be. Mimetic

behaviour – and we can find differing accounts of this in Merleau-Ponty as Adorno – is where an artist finds an affinity with his subject, inhabits an aesthetics of empathy, where the process of making art somehow echoes the life of the subject, or gives voice to the subject that has no voice.³² Morris spoke of something similar when he talked of the need for 'holding on to the process of making itself' within the art object, where the work is never mere product but is process and a process that opens up or reveals the conditions of its own making. Quick's art 'objects' – the columns and lights and the sequences of flashing – while only one term in the art-as-project, are mimetic of the dialectics of territory and location and environment, where the form, materials, aesthetic presence of innovation is revealed as the conditions of Hebburn's own self-recognition. The people of Hebburn can locate both their past and possible futures in the terms of this work. FLASH itself is an industrial creation of Hebburn, but one where the innovation of Hebburn has overcome the instrumentality through which it was created as a place.

In March 2009 the construction and installation of FLASH@Hebburn was complete, though the project continued in various forms, such as public events, and of course its ongoing 'critical reception' and Quick's role in that. For Quick, the 'events' around the work are important (we could say, as mimetic of the event that is the work itself). The installation itself was designed to be maintenance-free, or physically autonomous. Quick scheduled a decommissioning for March 2019. This essay attempted, through close attention to the management and organization of FLASH@Hebburn, to find essential reference points in the artist's creative process (call it 'method'). These provided us with material to consider the possibility for a new model of urban art – the creation of 'sites' through mimetic creativity. Quick's practice is not intellectual adventurism, but has retrieved significant dimensions of artistic practice from 1966-72; this was a period that provided intellectual conditions for the extension of contemporary art out of its geo-physical confines in the cultural economy, conditions that were repressed or simply avoided. Urban art had, and still has, real potential to affect the conditions for cultural change. In Hebburn, Quick's project, in being attentive to the complex socio-historical construction of the place over time, was able to open up a half-dead de-industrialised community to the power of active memory-formation, constructing narratives, reinserting itself into a changing economy, understanding the conditions of its marginalisation as contingent and not necessary.

Through an investigation of this place as territory, location and environment, in creating a site for art, FLASH@Hebburn offers us the opportunity to re-think artistic method, but also urban art as means of maintaining an objective presence in society in ways that really matter.

Notes

1: I have two objectives in this essay – an art criticism of FLASH, and constructing a framework for developing a new model of urban art practice. This is a part of a larger research project, locating art's potential for thinking, motivating and creating the conditions of cultural change in urban spaces.

2: The artist's method or working process is not a subject that is common within art theory and criticism, even though it is often referred to, and notwithstanding recent studies such as Laurie Adam's *The Methodologies of Art* (Westview, 1996) and Gillian Rose's *Visual Methodologies* (Sage, 2001), which concern art rather than artists. The work of artist and art historian James Elkins is unique in this regard; however, his concept of art is image-based, and as instantiated in books like *Why Art Cannot be Taught: A Handbook for Art Students* (University of Illinois, 2001) Elkins would not subscribe to the notion of artistic 'method' in the sense of a procedure that can be codified. My argument here does not conflict with this position, as we are not discussing image-based art making. A general overview of artist's method by Graham Sullivan in his *Art Practice as Research* (Sage, 2005) covers almost every academic discipline, and is worth noting. Apart from the countless design studies texts on visual literacy and design method, and the now established fields of visual sociology and visual ethnography, there has also been research on the work of the artist in art education (see the journal, *Studies in Art Education*), and significantly in general management studies (such as the work of Pierre Guillet de Monthoux in Sweden) and organizational aesthetics (the work of Antonio Strati in Italy).

3: There is now considerable 'advocacy' literature (positive policy-based research, strategies and statements) on the management and organization of public projects, particularly for artists project managing their own work in the public sphere: cf. Arts Council England, *Public Art South West and their Public Art Online service*, as well as Ixia public art think tank. See Corner, L. and Summerton, J. (2006) *Managing Public Art Projects: A Handbook for Artists* (Exeter: Public Art South West), and IXLA *Public Art Think Tank* (2007) *Public Art and the Planning System and Process in England: Guidance on a Supplementary Planning Document for Public Art* (Birmingham: IXLA).

4: The factual content of this paper was the product of a field trip conducted with the artist over the weekend of the 18th October 2009, with numerous other consultations in 2009-2010. Art on the Riverside was funded by a £3.5m National Lottery grant and £2.7m from the public and private sectors, was organized in

part as a 'trail', taking the viewer around Newcastle, Sunderland, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Gateshead. For an overview of public art in the region, see Usherwood, P., Beach, J. and Morris, C. (2000) *Public Sculpture of North-East England*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

5: Recently the serious questions concerning the socio-economic and demographic context of public art have largely featured within urban studies and human geography: see Graeme Evans' (2009) recent article, 'Creative Cities, Creative Spaces and Urban Policy' in *Urban Studies*, 46: 5-6:1003-1040; and Hall, T. and Robertson, I. (2001) 'Public art and Urban Regeneration', *Landscape Research*, 26:1: 5-26.

6: The term 'public art' and 'urban art' are often used as synonyms, though they are not the same thing: see Malcolm Miles's (2004) *Urban Avant-gardes: Art, Architecture and Change* (London: Routledge) for a view on the latter. The criticism and historical analysis of recent public art in the UK has been largely constructed in conceptual contexts provided by American art history, the central reference points for which are adequately summarised in Cher Krause Knight (2008) *Public Art: Theory, Practice, Populism*, (Oxford: Blackwell). One could add to these categories by pointing out the emergence of 'new genre public art' in the 1990s [Lacy, S. (1995) *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Bay Press.], and more recently the term 'Outdoor Arts'. The former term is US in origin, the latter popularized by Arts Council England; neither have become established. On the latter see, *Open space - Art in the public realm in London 1995 – 2005* (London: Arts Council England and Central London Partnership, 2007) and particularly, *New Landscapes: Outdoor Arts Development Plan 2008-11* (Arts Council England, London, 2008): I quote: 'Outdoor arts activity is accessible, time-limited performance and installation work that happens in outdoor locations in the community, in rural and urban environments, on rivers and beaches and in the air'.

7: Current academic research here would include Larkinson, E. (ed.) *Desirable Places: The contribution of artists to creating spaces for public life*, London: Article Press. The cases and commentary in *The Public Art Journal*, published during 1999-2002 by Ixia, is still a good resource in this regard. Currently, even 'advocacy' has become deeply problematic following the increasing sophistication of public projects evaluation methods emerging from Whitehall – the criteria by which art in the public sphere is assessed as to its public value (a value it is never quite able to demonstrate); for a survey of the issues, see Reeves, M. (2002) *Measuring the Economic and Social Impact of the Arts: A review: Arts Council of England Research Report 24*, (London: Arts Council England). For an example of such evaluation frameworks, see *The White Book: DCMS Guidance on Appraisal and Evaluation of Projects, Programmes and Policies*, (London: DCMS/ Stationery Office.)

8: Quote taken from 'FLASH AT HEBBURN: An installation

by artist Charles Clarke' (2007) [information leaflet/poster], South Tyneside: South Tyneside Council. Councillor McAtominey is representative for Hebburn South on South Tyneside Council, and one of the longest serving councillors. Each of these 'demands' are the effective conditions of art's role in public policy and the assumptions underpinning them; they are, however, a constant headache for evaluation schemes and professional assessment exercises. The established introduction to the public policy frameworks within which public art has functioned since the late 1980s is Sara Selwood's (1995) *The Benefits of Public Art: The Polemics of Permanent Art in Public Places* (London: Policy Studies Institute). For a more recent assessment see Vickery, J. (2007) 'The Emergence of Culture-Led Regeneration: A Policy Concept and its Discontents' (CCPS Research Papers, University of Warwick).

9: The debate concerning value and 'impact' is of course historical: it is embedded in a struggle to situate art in the service of society or state and often masked by a demand for public accountability, which in turn is often self-defeating as 'accounting' methods are entirely opaque to public scrutiny and not themselves an object of public evaluation. See the report by Ixia and OPENspace (2005) *Research on Public Art: Assessing Impact and Quality Final Report* (Birmingham: Ixia). Ixia, and before it, Public Art Forum, held a number of conferences and seminars addressing the evaluation of public art, its impact and audiences; see the recent research report, *Ixia (2009) Public Art: A Guide to Evaluation* (Birmingham: Ixia). For a recent historical-critical overview, see Bennett, O. and Belfiore, O. (2008) *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

10: For a good overview of the political-urban context that still prevails for public artists (particularly with regard urban regeneration policy), see Inrie, R. and Raco, M. (2003) *Urban Renaissance? New Labour, Community and Urban Policy* (Bristol: The Policy Press).

11: The late 1980s saw arguments for art's public value explicitly articulated in economic terms making its way into policy discourse, registered at the time by John Myerscough and colleagues: Myerscough, J. (1988) *The Economic Importance of the Arts in Britain* (London: Policy Studies Institute). Furthermore, a concerted attempt was made to reconcile the modernist principles prevailing in the arts establishment with the new opportunities for art in urban space: two such publications registering this very real dilemma were Arts Council of Great Britain's (1989) *An Urban Renaissance: The Role of the Arts in Urban Regeneration*, and the British and American Arts Association's (1989) *Arts and the Changing City: An agenda for urban regeneration*. The 'agenda' at the time attempted to reconcile established assumptions on the nature of art's autonomy with the instrumentalist contexts of urban projects, where of course measurable non-aesthetic value needed to be demonstrated. An intellectual history of British art would no doubt characterise the 1980s as the era of emerging post-modernism. And yet, an enduring and emphatic insistence of art's institutional and aesthetic

autonomy – art as a distinct discourse, with its own value-embedded modes of visual communication – characteristic of modernism, was routinely reinforced in cultural policy discourse. This is illustrated in the nature of the Arts Council policy review of UK culture at the end of the decade, initiated as the very first ground-breaking national arts and media strategy, Arts Council of Great Britain (1993) *A Creative Future: The way forward for the arts, crafts and media in England* (London: Arts Council of Great Britain). Conceptually, postmodern medium hybridity was bolted on to modernist (social) 'autonomy'.

12: The prevailing attitude, the hard project management skills needed for artists to work within a contractually rigid construction industry context, and the need for local authorities to commission and control the work of artists, were factors that came together to motivate the establishment of public art agencies and the arts consultancies that emerged in the 1990s, a significant development in the recent history of public art. For a particular case, see Everitt, S. (2007) 'Defining Roles: The work of the Public Art Commissions Agency (PACA) 1987-1999' (Birmingham City University): unpublished PhD thesis.

13: For the developing relation between art objects and space in artistic practice during this period, see Harrison, C. 'Sculpture's Recent Past', and Cooke, L. (1981) 'Between Image and Object: The 'New British Sculpture'', both in Terry A Neff, (ed.) *A Quiet revolution: British Sculpture Since 1965* (London: T&H); and also, Thompson, J. et al. (1993) *Gravity and Grace: The Changing Condition of Sculpture 1965-1975* (London: Hayward Gallery, South Bank Centre).

14: While most industry commentators support privatization in retrospect, the consequences were serious: for an account see Thomas G. Weyman-Jones (1989) *Electricity Privatisation* (Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Company).

15: A strong argument prevails that aesthetic autonomy only survives through its commodification (as user or consumer experience), a standpoint characteristic of politically-left art history, from T. J. Clarke to Julian Stallabrass to John Roberts; a defense of aesthetic autonomy in urban space is part of what this current article is about.

16: Simon Dell's (2008) *On Location: Siting Robert Smithson and His Contemporaries* (London: Black Dog) is a good retrospective critique of this period. A classic, if under-researched, primary text from this time is Lippard, L. (ed.) *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966-1972* (Berkeley, London: University of California Press); and for a specific (if more popular) focus on art in outdoor spaces, see Kastner, J. ed. (1998) *Land and Environmental Art* (London: Phaidon).

17: Used by Wittgenstein only five times in his *Philosophical Investigations* [e.g. section 23] — and not entirely explained, the

concept 'form of life' has become well-known in articulating the way language generates and in turn is generated by specific social arenas of activity; for me, this generative situation holds the potential for a transmutation of social into unique cultural forms of life. For a recent study, see David Kishik's (2008) *Wittgenstein's Form of Life*, London: Continuum.

18: Robert Morris's texts are all in Morris, R. (1993) *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT): 23-39; 41-49; for Smithson similarly, Flam, J. (ed) *Robert Smithson: Collected Writings* (LA and London: University of California Press): 100-113; My general point is that this era provided the intellectual conditions for artists to negotiate the public sphere in ways that could have had a major cultural impact (in the UK, that is). Throughout the 1980s, artists at once demonstrated their understanding of these developments and yet turned away from their implications and thus potential. The successful October group of critics in New York (October journal: MIT Press) emerged on a similar premise to my point here, though without an emphatic concern with the public sphere as urban space.

19: I use two terms that have a strong intellectual history: the term 'instrumental rationality' is derived from Adorno, which became a major theme in his work with *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (with Max Horkheimer) in 1944, for me justified in part with its appropriation by Herbert Marcuse and his intellectual influence in and around the formation of minimal art between 1962-67. The correlate term 'technicity' is appropriated from Martin Heidegger's essay of the 1940s 'The Question Concerning Technology', but also relevant to his 'The Origin of the Work of Art', a decade earlier [the former is in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt (New York: Harper and Row, 1977); the latter in *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971)]. In 'The Origin' essay, Heidegger, in speaking of the Greek temple, says it 'first gives to things their look and to men their outlook on themselves' (p.43), which may sound similar to what I am saying here (i.e. art is 'world disclosure'); however, as his later mediations on technology convey, in modernity any meaningful sense of place only emerges through a conflict with the conditions of technicity, and truly important art will serve to open up a new world, hence create discontinuity (a new 'epoch', in Heidegger's terms) as well as a sense of historicity or historical continuity in the life of the people and their place in the world.

20: Morris (1993): 33.

21: This, of course, one of the seminal texts in what came to known as 'process art', whose understanding of 'materiality' is relevant to a further study of urban sites for art.

22: Morris (1993): 43.

23: A five phase commissioning process is employed in various

forms, used here simply as a foil to Quick's creative method. We find such a structure in Petherbridge (1987: 60), but I have taken this one from Janet Kagan (2005) of the agency Percent for Art Collaborative, quoted in Basa, L. (2008) *The Artist's Guide to Public Art* (New York: Allworth Press): 88-89.

24: Unlike Germany or even France, Britain has maintained a deep cultural ambivalence to its heavy industry and industrial history, its role in the national economy since the 1930s becoming little more than an expendable business resource. This subject is explored by Weiner, M. (1981) *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

25: Local Government Acts of 1988 and 1992 generated compulsory competitive tendering at the heart of local authority services, which extends to the purchase of 'cultural' services. While competitive bidding does obviate outright public patronage, the selection process is often facilitated by public officials other than cultural professionals.

26: It may sound as if I have derived these terms from urban or spatial design, such as Carmona et. al. (2006) and his urban 'dimensions' in *Public Places Urban Spaces* (London: Architectural Press); while urban design is apposite to this subject, my terms are not substantive in this sense but heuristic, and used to construct a provisional framework; they emerged out of dialogue with the artist.

27: Given the paucity of published history of Hebburn, indeed the North East of England in general, historical data, albeit unofficial, is available from local interest group websites: see www.hebburn.org.

28: The thesis that 'industry' denotes an inseparable relation between social communities and the means of production around which they grow animates, of course, classic social histories like E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963); while this is a partisan thesis to some, I use it here simply as an economic observation based on discussions with the artist and his discussions with the community.

29: The archival material is kept by the artist; his previous work *The Navigator* (Coventry: 1997-9) is held in the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds.

30: Interview with the artist, 20 December 2009.

31: The design for the columns were used again in the public project, *Red Pass*, at Berwick-on-Tweed (which, as it transpired, was constructed before FLASH@Hebburn) 2006-7.

32: Adorno uses the term 'mimesis' as a creative relation to the subject of art: Adorno, T. and Horkheimer, M. (1973) *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Allen Lane): 51-57; Adorno, T. (1984) *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt, (London: Kegan Paul): 162 and passim. Merleau-Ponty does not use this term, but his understanding of artistic creativity emerges from his understanding of the activity of the human senses as 'mimetic' of the physical world (which is the process of perception): for example, in 'Eye and Mind' (1961), he says, 'Things [objects in the world] have an internal equivalence in me; they arouse in me a carnal formula of their presence' (from *The Primacy of Perception*, Northwestern University Press, 1989: 164).

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Jonathan Vickery

Centre for Cultural Policy Studies,
University of Warwick

*Testing
Making
Installing*

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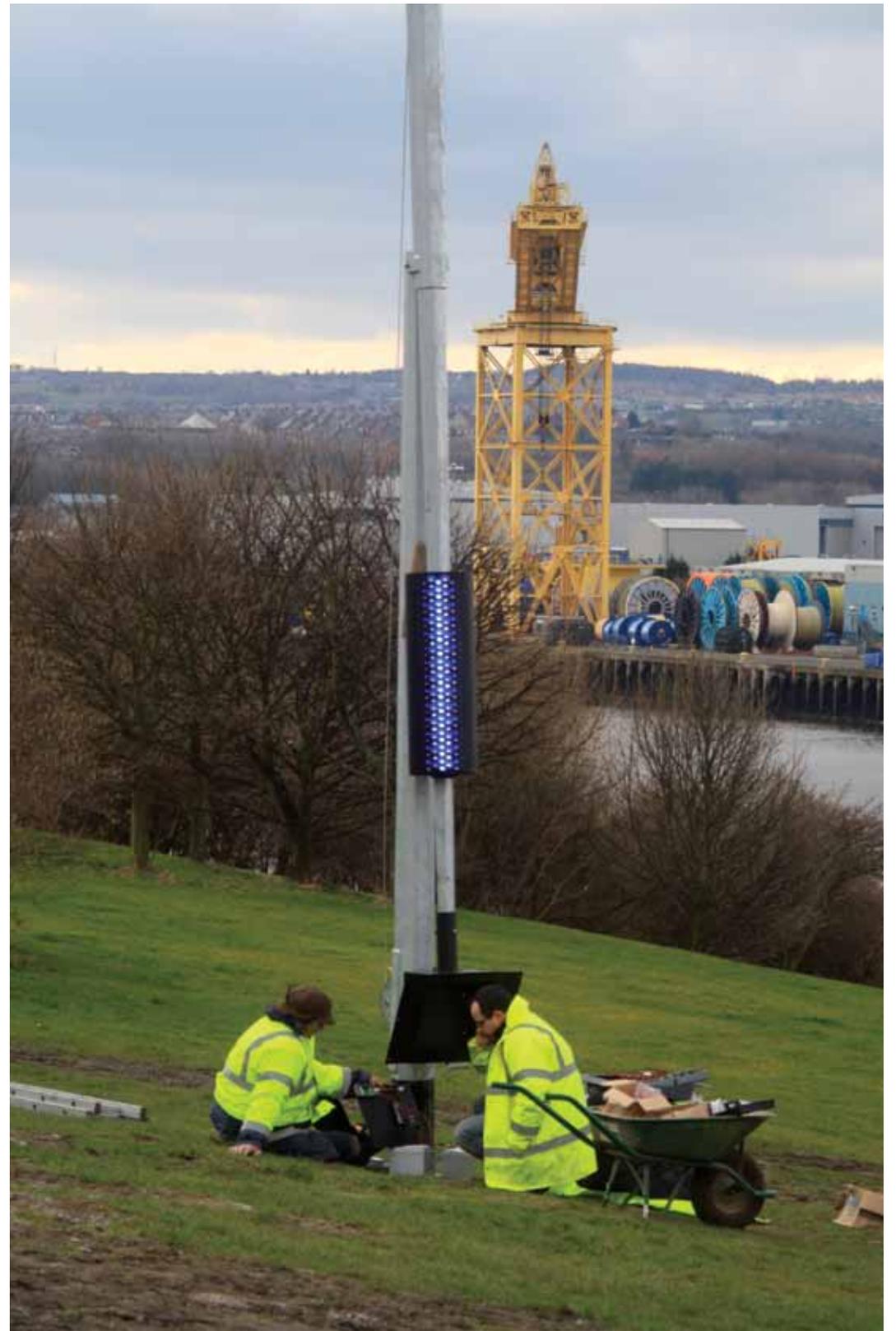












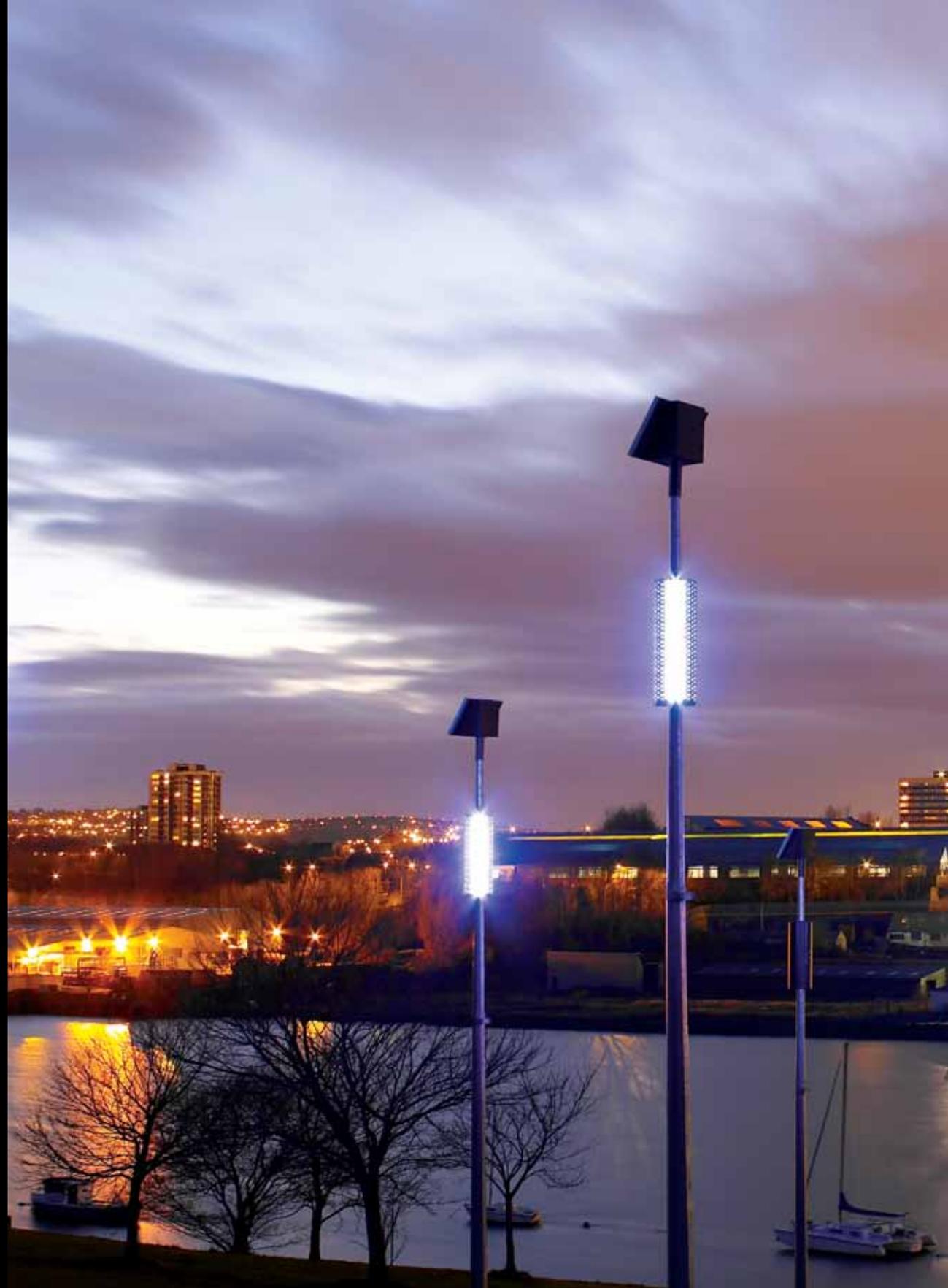
“It will be something different for the region, a real talking point. Flash@Hebburn will be enjoyed by a host of people as a wide section of the community use the riverside, from dog walkers to anglers.”

“It was a good move to get a varied selection of people to contribute to the lighting sequences, as they’ll be able to look back in time, and say, I had a part to play in making this happen. It’s good the community has been involved.”

Chris Shieber

Flash@Hebburn

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The Launch



Celebrating FLASH@Hebburn

On a blustery night in March, a group of us traveled to Hebburn in South Tyneside to see FLASH, by artist Charles Quick. Staying in South Shields we had to take the Metro and then walk to the Riverside Park, situated on the banks of the Tyne.

Groups of other people were also heading in the same direction through the darkness, lured towards the sound of a loud hailer and glimpses of light through the trees. Getting closer revealed a large crowd of people gathered on a path at the top of a grass slope; torches were being flashed, some people were twirling threads of luminous light above their heads. It felt like a carnival in the dark: Bonfire Night perhaps, when you're all layered-up against the cold wind and excited about what you're about to see.

Seven years ago Charles Quick, who is based in Leeds and is Reader in Art in Public Places at the University of Central Lancashire, was invited to propose a piece of artwork for this site as part of the Tyne and Wear Art on the Riverside programme. As with most projects of this size there were the inevitable problems and delays: planning consent; objections from the airport nearby; design changes; and so on. In Charles's speech over the loud speakers he thanked 'spirited individuals' who had been determined to keep the momentum going and see it through to the end.

We were all invited to participate in a 'mass flash' with our torches – the hillside must have twinkled from afar, then after a brief interlude of music blasting out from loud speakers (famous pop from the North East – Sting, Lindisfarne, Jimmy Nail, and the like!) a hush descended on the crowd, and the whole park fell silent.

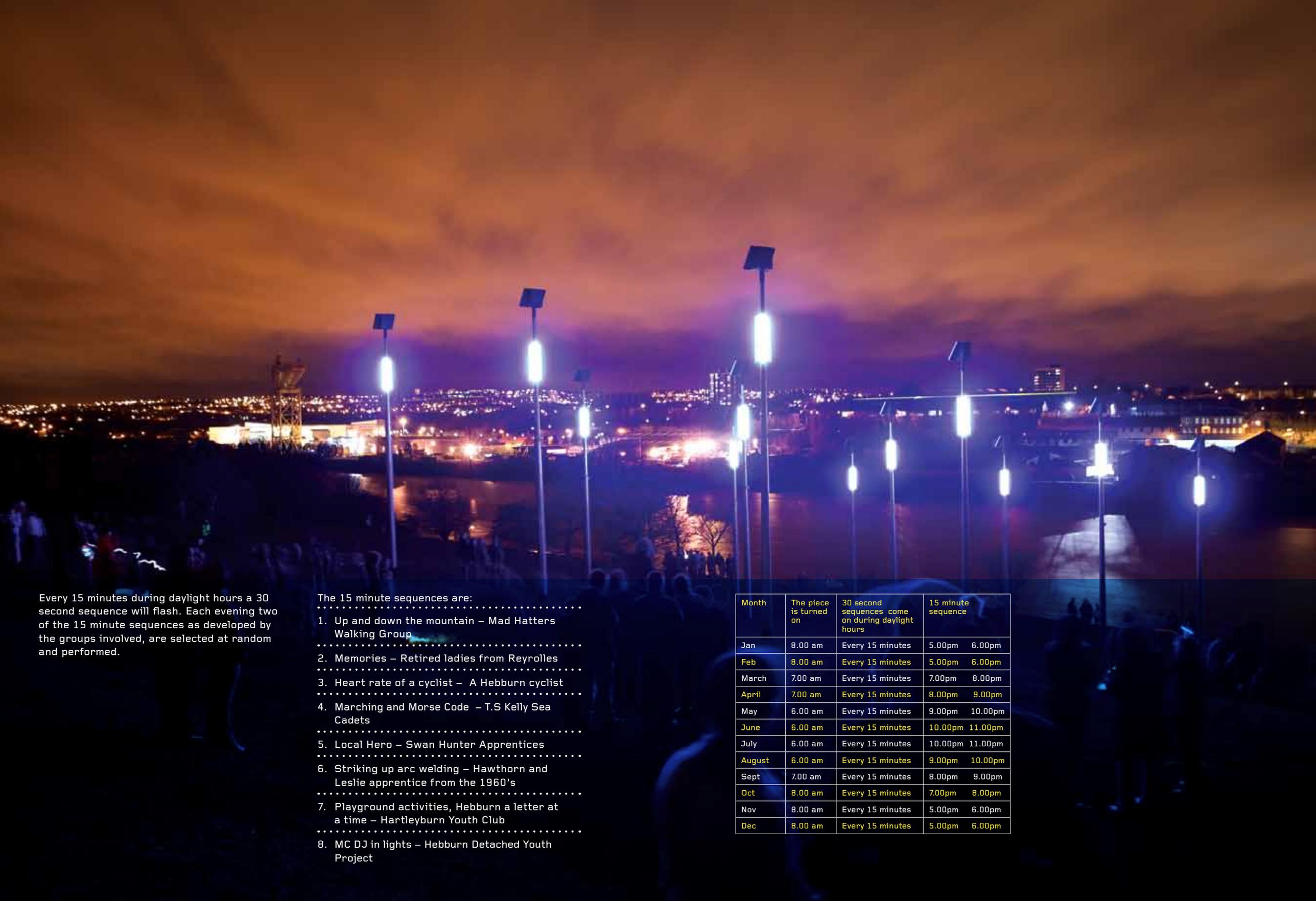
It's strangely uplifting to watch flashing blue lights outside in the dark: the sequences and rhythms were gentle and a ripple of muffled applause crossed the park (everyone was wearing woolly gloves). The installation consists of 12, 8.5 metre high columns arranged in a 3 X 4 grid, each with a one metre high section of blue and white LED tubes that create the flashes. Each one is powered by sustainable energy through photovoltaic panels at the top of each column. Eight different local community groups, ranging from the Mad Hatters Walking Group to the Retired Ladies from Reyrolle, along with the Swan Hunter Apprentices, designed the sequences with Charles Quick and each was developed through dialogue about their experiences and stories about the area.

As the sequences finished, and the commentator concluded his announcements, everyone started to drift away back into the night. I really enjoyed the whole evening of events: it felt like a celebration, not only of the past history of a place, but also the present situation during redevelopment and the aspirations for the future.

From now on, FLASH will come on automatically at dusk each night showing one of the eight different fifteen-minute sequences and during the daytime a thirty-second sequence will come on.

Rebecca Chesney
Artist – Preston





Every 15 minutes during daylight hours a 30 second sequence will flash. Each evening two of the 15 minute sequences as developed by the groups involved, are selected at random and performed.

The 15 minute sequences are:

1. Up and down the mountain – Mad Hatters Walking Group
2. Memories – Retired ladies from Reyrolles
3. Heart rate of a cyclist – A Hebburn cyclist
4. Marching and Morse Code – T.S Kelly Sea Cadets
5. Local Hero – Swan Hunter Apprentices
6. Striking up arc welding – Hawthorn and Leslie apprentice from the 1960's
7. Playground activities, Hebburn a letter at a time – Hartleyburn Youth Club
8. MC DJ in lights – Hebburn Detached Youth Project

Month	The piece is turned on	30 second sequences come on during daylight hours	15 minute sequence
Jan	8.00 am	Every 15 minutes	5.00pm 6.00pm
Feb	8.00 am	Every 15 minutes	5.00pm 6.00pm
March	7.00 am	Every 15 minutes	7.00pm 8.00pm
April	7.00 am	Every 15 minutes	8.00pm 9.00pm
May	6.00 am	Every 15 minutes	9.00pm 10.00pm
June	6.00 am	Every 15 minutes	10.00pm 11.00pm
July	6.00 am	Every 15 minutes	10.00pm 11.00pm
August	6.00 am	Every 15 minutes	9.00pm 10.00pm
Sept	7.00 am	Every 15 minutes	8.00pm 9.00pm
Oct	8.00 am	Every 15 minutes	7.00pm 8.00pm
Nov	8.00 am	Every 15 minutes	5.00pm 6.00pm
Dec	8.00 am	Every 15 minutes	5.00pm 6.00pm



“I think Flash@Hebburn will bring a bit more culture to the region, along with some welcomed visitors. It’ll also provide the group (Mad Hatters) with something different to look at during our regular riverside walks.

“The launch and switch-on of Flash was absolutely brilliant and quite emotional because we had been involved in what was a very exciting project for the town.”

Lisa McAtee

CYCLISTIC LIGHTS FANTASTIC

Project features pair's art-beat



BIG READY FOR FANTASTIC

Shedding light on art project



QUICK AS A FLASH... artist Charles Quinn

m has the light
t work of art

Artwork goes on the map

Flashing sculpture on maritime chart



ARTIST SHEDS LIGHT ON FLASH PROJECT

Forum is put in the picture

AN ambitious £150,000 art project for South Tyneside was due to come under the spot light today.

By TERRY KELLY



side's latest breaking
www.shieldsgazette.com

ALL SET FOR THE BIG SWITCH-ON

Flash@Hebburn is to be switched on on Saturday evening - with big crowds expected.



DOCS CAR VALETING SERVICE
Phone show up anytime
open 7 days a week

Protect your home with Age Concern Home Insurance
You could also save money with Age Concern

Flash@Hebburn
12-5 public art installation by artist Charles Quinn

LAUNCH EVENT
Flash@Hebburn is a public art installation by artist Charles Quinn. It features a large sculpture of a ship's wheel, which will be illuminated at night. The installation is located in Hebburn, South Tyneside.

FLASH
For more information email: Kathleen.McIntyre@southtyneside.gov.uk
or telephone 0191 4247803

www.flashathebburn.co.uk

FLASH IN PAN OR LIGHT FANTASTIC



Press coverage for Flash

2006

'Artwork Light Fantastic', Shields Gazette, 3rd March, 2006.
Terry Kelly, 'Riverside bid for Flash arty mast', Shields Gazette, 11th November, 2006.

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'Flash project unappealing', Shields Gazette letters page, 8th February, 2007.
Terry Kelly, 'Spotlight on costs of Flashy artwork', Shields Gazette, 28th July, 2007.
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'Flash in Focus', Chronicle Extra, 20th Feb, 2008.
'Shedding Light on £150k artwork bid', Shields Gazette, 12th February, 2008.
'Lighting up the sky', Evening Chronicle, 13th February, 2008.
'Lights dimmed on river art project', Shields Gazette, 25th February, 2008.
Terry Kelly, 'River project under scrutiny', Shields Gazette, 11th June, 2008.
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'Credit Crunch delays project', Shields Gazette, 8th January, 2009.
'The Headliners film town's Flash project', Shields Gazette, 13th January, 2009.
'Making light work of art', Shields Gazette, 22nd January, 2009.

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'It's riverside's time to shine', Shields Gazette, 24th February, 2009.
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Tony Henderson, 'Tatum has the light idea for work of art', The Journal, 4th March, 2009.
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David Batty, 'Shedding Light On Tyneside heritage', The Guardian, 1st April, 2009.
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'Flash point', A-N Magazine, April 2009.
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Mondo*arc, June 2009.

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'£150k Artwork Shines', South Tyne Star, 13th August, 2009.
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Public Art Online
Public Art Directory
Entrepreneur.com
ledsynergy.co.uk
Visit Newcastle Gateshead.com
a-n.co.uk
landartnet.org
northern.lights

Charles Quick
Biography

Quick was born in 1957, growing up in Wiltshire and Gloucestershire. He graduated with first class honours in Fine Art from Leeds Polytechnic in 1980; he has remained in Leeds all his professional life.

At present Quick is Reader in Art in Public Places at The University of Central Lancashire, and has co-innovated a new MA program, the MA in Site and Archive Intervention. He has been a lecturer and visiting lecturer at various institutions including Leeds Metropolitan University, Sheffield Polytechnic (now Sheffield Hallam University), and Wakefield District College, as well as involved in professional training, such as the Training Education for the Arts programme, Public Arts Wakefield (1998-200). His work as an artist is held in collections by Wakefield City Art Gallery, Leeds City Art Gallery, the Henry Moore Institute, and he has recorded his artistic life through the British Library sound archive Artist's Lives project. He has won awards from HEFCE, Arts Council England, the British Council, and various regional awards.

Quick has over thirty years experience in contemporary art in public places, as both practitioner and manager. He is the co-founder and a project manager/curator for the In Certain Places programme, a new art initiative in Preston, Lancashire. Like a number of his projects, this is situated within a broader urban regeneration framework, and includes a curated temporary public art program supported by a series of talks and debates. Quick has worked as curator on a number of projects – Missing Pages (1998-99) and Champion (1996-97). Since 2003 he has been carrying out 'performance interventions': without permission he interferes with the electrical infrastructure of the environment, even introducing some of his own elements. With a yellow hard hat and high visibility vest, he is left alone on such occasions. His interventions have been documented.

In 2003 he was included in the exhibition Other Criteria: Sculpture in 20th Century Britain at the Henry Moore Institute, which holds the complete archive of a permanent project The Navigator. The FLASH project for South Tyneside Council was preceded by a similar work, Red Pass, for Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council. Currently Quick is working with Bauman/Lyons Architects as Lead Artist on a public realm development for the Spa in Bridlington in the north of England. He is also a member of the design team led by Landscape Projects that have won the international competition to design improvements for the Flag Market in Preston.

Charles Quick has worked at extending the professional scope of the artist in the public realm, engaging with the public, a wide range of stakeholders, including other professionals, like architects and engineers. Artistically, he has developed unique interests in the social function of technology as well as the aesthetics of electrical power. This often entails a more complex interest in subject matter and more complex art projects, where he works in the capacity of project manager, site manager, sub-contractor, as well as taking the educational, PR and marketing in hand. He has sat on many advisory boards and consultation panels, including membership of the expert panel advising on the public art strategy for the Northern Way, 1st Out Bursary, Irwell Sculpture Trail, contributing to the Arts Strategy for Lancashire with Lancashire County Council and North West Arts. In 1994 he was Manager of Leeds Sculpture workshop, which he joint-founded, and two years previous was Director and Trustee of Public Arts, Wakefield. He has been Member of the Management Board of Yorkshire Art Space, and Board member of Leeds Art Space Society (studio group).

Projects and Commissions

- 2008-09 Commission: Flash, Art on the Riverside, South Tyneside MBC.
Lead Artist: Spa gardens Bridlington Bauman/Lyons Architects.
Design: Flag Market, Preston: member of design team, Landscape Projects.
- 2006-07 Commission: Red Pass, Ramparts Business Park, Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council.
2004 Lead Artist: Tithebarn Master Plan Design Team, BDP Architects, Preston.
2004 – Design: Cleveleys Promenade, collaboration with Bauman Lyons Architects, Wyre Borough Council.
2003 Project: Regulator, Marshall Court Building, Marshall Mills. Leeds.
2003-09 Curator: of Here + Now, temporary art for a transitional City, Preston.
2002 Design: Computing and Technology Building University of Central Lancashire.
2002 Design: Flash, Art on the Riverside, South Tyneside MBC ongoing.
2001 Design: Lichtprojekten, Wasserwert and Bahn Viadukt, Witten, Germany.
Design: Orchard Tunnel, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Urban Design Team.
Design: Art on the Riverside, South Tyneside MBC.
- 2000-01 Project: Towerscan, Leeds Metropolitan University.
2000 Project: Interruptions, Harris Museum & Art Gallery and University of Central Lancashire, Preston.
1999-01 Commission: Dancer, Wakefield City Council, Lighting scheme for Wakefield Museum.
1999 Design: Lancaster City Council, Solar powered sculpture, Lune Valley.
1998-99 Commission: 'Night Vision', The Orangery, Public Arts, Wakefield.
1998-99 Curated: 'Missing Pages', Lancashire County Council, Northwest Art Board, Lancashire Libraries.
1997-99 Commission: 'The Navigator' Coventry City Council, Groundwork, Canal Tunnel, Coventry Canal, Coventry.
Designs: Sustrans, Cycle storage Facility, Temple Moor School, Leeds.
Project: 'Champion' Leeds Sculpture Workshop, Leeds.
- 1996-98 Commission: 'Area 52', York City Council, Sustrans: Cycle storage Facility, Burnholme Community College, York.
- 1995 Project: 'Power Source' Shelton Grange Power Station, Leeds.
Project: 'Galvanic', Leeds City Art Gallery, Leeds.
- 1994-96 Commission: 'Watermark' Cardiff City Council Engineers, South Glamorgan County Council Architects, Docks Pumping Station, Cardiff Bay, Cardiff.
- 1994 Commission: W. S. Atkins Architects, Oxfordshire County Council, Cheney Upper School, Oxford.
1993 Project: 'Four Sculptures', Francis Graham Dixon Gallery at the Economist, London.
1992 Project: 'Falls', Five Years Exhibition, Francis Graham Dixon Gallery, London.
- 1992 Commission: 'Lap Light', Bradford City Council, Merchants House, Bradford.
Project: 'To Power', David Massingham Dance Company, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne.
- 1991 Shortlisted: Cardiff Bay Arts Trust. Shortlisted: Coventry City Council. Shortlisted: Birmingham City Council.
- 1990 Project: 'A Beached Light', Artwork Festival, Southampton University.
1989 Commission: 'A Light Spray', British Railways, Wakefield Westgate Station.
Commission: 'Arc', Sheffield World Student Games – not realised.
Commission: Carbrook Hall Office Park, Sheffield - not realised.
- 1987 Project: 'A Light Barrier', South Hill Park Arts Centre, Bracknell.
1986 Shortlisted: Holbeck Triangle Sculpture Project, Leeds.
1985-88 Commission: 'A Light Wave' British Railways Wakefield Westgate Station
1985 Project: Sculptor-in-residence, The Henry Moore Centre for the study Sculpture, Leeds City Art Gallery

Solo Exhibitions

- 2001 Leeds Metropolitan University Gallery, Leeds.
1997 BBK Gallery, Koln, Germany.
1995 Leeds City Art Gallery.
1987 Arcade Gallery, Harrogate.
South Hill Arts Centre, Bracknell.
1986 Cirencester Workshops, Cirencester.
1985 Camden Arts Centre, London.
1983 Mappin Art Gallery, Sheffield.
Elizabethan Gallery, Wakefield.
1981 Breadline Gallery, Leeds.
1980 Breadline Gallery, Leeds.

Group Exhibitions

- 2008 Hazard, Manchester.
2007 Prestival, Preston.
2003 Artranspennine 03.
Other Criteria, Henry Moore Institute, Leeds.
2001 Another Place, Storey Gallery, Lancaster.
1997 Co-incident IX: Ignis, Koln, Germany.
1990 BAA Sculpture Commission shortlisted Artists: ICA London
Open Studios: Leeds Art Space Society.
1989 Exchanges, Kunsterhause, Dortmund, West Germany.
1987 Christmas Lights: Cleveland Gallery, Middlesborough.
1987 Platform for Artists: Touring.
1987 Landscape Elements: South Square Gallery, Bradford.
1986 Fresh Air: St. Pauls Gallery, Leeds.
1984 The 2nd International Performance Festival: South Hill Park, Bracknell.
1981 Summer Showspace Winner, Wakefield City Art Gallery.
1980 Yorkshire Graduates: St. Pauls Gallery, Leeds.
1977 Northern young Contemporaries: Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester.

Intervention Performance

- 2008 Hazard, Manchester
2007 Prestival, Preston.
2003 Artranspennine 03.

Conference and Symposium Presentations

- 'A Place for Creativity', National conference Rudi: Places Matter, The Lowry, Salford, 6 June, 2009.
'Spaces v Site: the commissioning equation', Tatton Park, 18 July, 2008.
'Innovation and Exploration', Urbis, Manchester, 13 June, 2008.
Art and the Built Environment Symposium, Art Gene, Barrow, 16th March, 2007.
'The City in Transition', The 2nd Annual National Public Art Conference, Liverpool, 17 September 2006.

Selected Articles and Reviews

- David Batty, 'Shedding Light On Tyneside heritage', The Guardian, 1st April, 2009.
'Flash point', A-N Magazine, April 2009.
Terry Kelly, 'All set for big switch on', Shields Gazette, 4th March, 2009.
Tony Henderson, 'Tatum has the light idea for work of art', The Journal, 4th March, 2009.
Bob Dickenson, 'Preston: In Certain Places', The Art and Architecture Journal 66/67, 2008.
Richard Holledge, 'The mystery of the market place', The Daily Telegraph, 12th April, 2007.

- Maria N Stukoff, 'The National public art conference, Liverpool, England', Public Art Review USA, spring summer, 2007.
Ian Banks, 'Urban Regeneration', Art and Architecture Journal, December 2005.
Robert Clark, 'Charles Quick', The Guardian, 19 July, 2001.
'Sculptor to light up their lives', Blueprint, June 2001.
Andrew Hewitt and Melanie Jordan, 'Dancer', AN magazine, June 2001.
Jonathan Jones, 'Interruptions', Exhibitions, The Guardian, 8 February, 2000.
David Mackintosh, 'Charles Quick - The Navigator', AN magazine, October 1999.
Showcase: 'Missing Pages', Graphics International, July 1999.
David Briers, 'Missing Pages', AN magazine, November 1998.
Planning, July 1998.
Jurgen Kirsters, 'Uber Sterne und Elektrizitat', Kolner Stadt-Anzeiger, 25 Nov, 1997
David Briers, 'Champion', AN magazine, October 1997.
Urszula Szulakowska, 'Champion', Untitled, Winter 1997.
Robert Clarke, 'Preview', The Guardian, 27 January, 1996.
Hugh Pearman, Cardiff Bay, Issue 4, Summer 1995.
Vic Allen, 'Cultural Resistance', Artsence, December 1995.
Mary Clarke, 'David Massingham Dance', The Guardian, 30 September 1992.
Artswork' Artist Newsletter, October 1990.
'Charles Quick putting Sculpture back on the line', Design Week, 6 Oct, 1989.
Artist Newsletter, October 1989.
'LASS' Aus Leeds Kulturtag-Kunst An Sunderweg', Dortmunder Rundschau, 12 May, 1989.
Art Monthly, February 1988.
Martin Wainwright, The Guardian, 12 January, 1988.
John Williams, The Daily Telegraph, 13 January, 1988.
'Light Barrier' Artist Newsletter, October 1987.
The Independent, 1 September, 1987.
Arts Review, 25 September, 1987.
Annette Kobak, 'Review', The Times Educational Supplement, 20 February, 1987.
Dave Lee, 'Andrew Darke, 'Charles Quick'', Arts Review, December, 1985.
Ken Rowat, 'Showspace the Winner Exhibition', The Guardian, 13 August, 1981.

Books

- Penelope Curtis, ed., Sculpture in 20th Century Britain, Volume II, essay by Nigel Walsh, 2003: 289-290.
Public Arts, Making Places (working with art in the public realm), 2001: 56, 57.
Design & Art Direction 2000 Annual, Missing Pages.
Lancashire County Council, Missing Pages, Publication to Project, 1999.
Charles Quick, Alan Rogers, Watermark, Cardiff Bay Art Trust, Publication to Project, 1996.
Charles Quick (with essay by Guy Julier) The Dark Side of the Bright Lights, Exhibition Catalogue: Leeds Museums and Galleries, 1995.
Sarah Selwwood, 'A light Wave, Westgate Station, Wakefield 1985-88', The Benefits of Public Art, 1995: 214-234,
Susan Jones, Art in Public (Artists' Handbook), 1992: 30.
Phyllida Shaw, The Public Art Report (Local Authority Commissions of Art for Public Places), 1990: 32.
Geraldine Prince, Sarah Cummings, Festival Landmarks, 1990: 35.
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Malcolm Miles, Art for Public Places, 1989: 108.
Christopher Pulleing, 'Art Sponsorship' Arts Review Year Book, 1988: 83.
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Web sites

- incertainplaces.org
www.southtyneside.info/hebburnflash

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Since the beginning of the project many people have contributed to the realisation of Flash@Hebburn. Charles Quick would like to thank each and every one. Without selecting individuals for a special mention, he has tried to list everyone that he has engaged with over the years. If your name is missing, he sincerely apologises but still wishes to thank you.

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Companies & Organisations

Art on The Riverside, Circurama, Comissions North, Hartleburn Community Association, Headliners, Hebburn Community Area Forum, Hebburn Comprehensive School, Hebburn Detached Youth Project, Hebburn Library, Ian Farmers Associates, Iona Club, James Christopher Consulting, John MacLean and Sons Electrical (Dingwall) Ltd, Lightwave studios, Mad Hatters, Mainstream Film and Media, Port of Tyne, Roadlite installations Ltd, Senior Youth Club Hartleburn Community Association, South Tyneside College Hebburn, South Tyneside Council, ST Joesph's R,C, Comprehensive School, Stainton Metal Co Ltd, Strictly Press, TS Kelly Hebburn Sea Cadets.

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Inside cover	Ariel photograph, originality The Ordinance Survey.
3/	Flash quote Peter Tallack.
13/	'Holyhead Ferry 1' being Launched on 17th February, 1965 at Hawthorn & Leslie: Tyne & Wear Archives Service.
16/	The River Tyne at night, with London Lion super tanker at Wallsend 1972: Norman Dunn. Crowds on Ballast Hill watching the launch of Esso Northumbria in 1969: Norman Dunn.
18/	Palmers (Hebburn) Ltd. dry dock: John Diamond Collection. Welder at Palmers (Hebburn) Ltd: John Diamond Collection.
19/	Hebburn Collier 'A' Pit: Durham County Record Office D/MRP 152/23(2). Burner at Work: Hawthorn and Leslies, 1940's: John Diamond Collection.
20/	Monkton Coke Oven at night, 1990: Stephen Dunn. The British Short Circuit Test Station, Hebburn.
21/	Reyrolle assembly shop, 1951. Inside the Clothier Laboratory, during a demonstration.
22/	Port of Tyne Authority ship Hedwin, River Tyne, Hebburn. The Clothier Laboratory, Hebburn.
23/	View of Hebburn from the top of Durham Court Flats with The Clothier Laboratory in the distance. Hammerhead Cranes loading communications cables , Walker, River Tyne.
24/25	Hebburn St Andrews Church in the foreground with Swan Hunters Ship Yard on the other side of the river. Hebburn Quay Hebburn Riverside Park taken from Walker.
35/	Drawing showing the final elevation of the whole light unit.
36/	Drawing for first proposal September 2001.
37/	Plan view of second proposal 6 columns, with 4 lights on each, July 2003.
38/	Top image: Side elevation of proposal three, 2004. Bottom image Plan Drawing showing proposed new site, 2004.
39/	Top image: Plan for planning permission, March 2008. Bottom image, plan for sequence design programmer, November 2008.

40/ Images top: Artist office with LED test.
Left to right: Image of test on site drawn over. First Photoshop image looking from Walker.
Bottom: Photoshop visualisation: Thompson Brand Partners.

41/ First Drawing of complete lighting unit.

63/ Charles Quick carrying out a LED light Test in the Park: Christopher Quick.

64/ Ron Tatum in the Hebburn Community Centre designing his sequence. Charles Quick being interviewed by pupils from Hebburn Comprehensive School in conjunction with Headliners: Christopher Quick.

65/ Hebburn Detached Youth Project. Production of MC DJ sequence. David Fulcher, James Henderson, Tony Brown, Jamie Lowson, Graeme Boyd, Chris Shieber.

Madhatters, Ladies Walking Group, creating their sequence left to right, Lisa Moore, Eileen Robinson, Carol Coyne, Ruth Taylor, Lisa Mcatee Christine Burton: Heather Walton.

66/67 Interior of LED cylinder: Tim Jarvis.

68/ Sample LED cylinder with black powder coating: Tim Jarvis.
LED cylinder being fabricated: Tim Jarvis.

69/ First one off the production line, is tested at Light Wave Displays: Tim Jarvis.

70/ Surveying and Installation Images left to right, Neil Patterson and assistant surveying the location, Roadlite Ltd excavating the foundations, Syd Cox Site Engineer and Coordinator setting out, the first pour of concrete, finishing off , preparing the columns with Les Lister Site Spervisor: Lightwave Studios , Installing the columns: Lightwave Studios, photovoltaic panel being fixed in place.

71/ Images from Top left to right. David and son Alistair Swailes, who designed a sequence, visit the site on their bikes: Lightwave Studios Roadlite install a column. Bottom: While Light Wave Displays receive a visit, while installing the hardware. Back row left to right Peter Tallack (local resident and supporter), John Rust (radio technology designer) and Graham, front row Tim Jarvis.

72/ Detail of LED cylinder

73/ The first one is lit and Graham and Tim Jarvis.

77/ Flash@Hebburn at night with Walker in the background: Lightwave Studio

78/79 Flash@Hebburn from the Riverside Park: Lightwave Studio

80/81 Flash@Hebburn at dusk: Lightwave Studio

82/83 Flash@Hebburn looking from the Walker side of the River Tyne: Lightwave Studio

84/ Detail of LED cylinder

85/ Flash@Hebburn with moon.

86/87 Sequence

88/89 Charging up

90/91 Short daylight sequence

92/93 Taken from Harbour Masters Launch

95/ Launch night in the park 7th march 2009: Chris Auld

96/ Launch night on the ferry 3rd March 2009 images clockwise, On outside deck of the ferry looking out for Flash@Hebburn. Mayor of South Shields Cllr. Alex Donaldson and Charles Quick switch the artwork on by remote control. Left to right back row Cllr Eddie McAtominey, Cllr John McCabe, Charles Quick Tony Duggan Cllr Joseph Atkinson. Bottom row Cllr Nancy Maxwell. Left to right Deputy Mayor of Gateshead MBC, Cllr. Joe Mitchinson & Deputy Mayoress Mrs. Jen Mitchinson, Charles Quick, Lord Mayor of Newcastle City Council, Cllr. David Leslie Wood & Lady Mayoress Mrs. Margaret Wood, Mayor of South Tyneside Council, Cllr. Alex Donaldson & Deputy Mayoress Mrs. Brenda Donaldson. All images Tony Cutter

97/ Launch Night in the Park. Images clockwise: Margaret Nicholson: Chris Auld. Ray Spencer compeer for the night: Christopher Quick. Heather Walton: Christopher Quick. Hebburn Community Centre: Christopher Quick

98/99 Launch in the park from the hill: Chris Auld

100/101 Mike Nicholson Port of Tyne Harbor Master and Charles Quick looking at Flash@Hebburn marked on the international navigation chart while on Board a launch on the River Tyne: Lightwave Studio.

104/105 Three years of newspaper cuttings and publicity material.
Outside of back cover quote Ray Spencer

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arrangements at the first opportunity.



a flash —

*is there and all too quickly gone, leaving the viewer with
a memory both unique and shared, with the artist and
the people of Hebburn.*

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