

BEYOND THE PALE AND BACK AGAIN:
CONTEMPORARY BRITISH ART AND THE CASE OF MARK WALLINGER

By

BRANTLEY BALDWIN JOHNSON

A DISSERTATION PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2010

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To the most important professors who helped me see this project through:
Tom Johnson and Mary Baldwin

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I thank first and foremost my faculty committee members: Dr. Alexander Alberro, Dr. Florence Babb, Dr. Elizabeth Ross, Dr. Eric Segal, and Dr. Shepherd Steiner. My Floridian friends, students, and mentors have enhanced my confidence and reassured my unease during many stressful occasions. Several colleagues in London were critical in the research and planning stages: most notably Anthony Spira at the Whitechapel Gallery and Milton Keynes Gallery. The staff at the Anthony Reynolds Gallery (Maria Stathi in particular) allowed me unlimited access to rare video works and press materials. This dissertation was enriched as well by the generosity and candidness of Mark Wallinger himself.

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Brantley Baldwin Johnson

May 2010

Chair: Eric J. Segal

Major: Art History

Mark Wallinger's career has sought to critique structures of political authority and popular culture in the United Kingdom. My dissertation elucidates the methods by which he deconstructs these social configurations. In each thematically-organized chapter, I argue that he forms his appraisal through the investigation of modern mythic narratives and a cunning manipulation of literary tropes and devices. Each chapter includes a close reading of four artworks. Wallinger's artistic career has progressed both in its scope and its intelligence over the past twenty-five years, and I will outline the progression his art practice has made in its evolution since the mid-1980s. My monograph will display the ways in which Wallinger's initial interest in exposing how Britain's national character is rife with contradictions has been expanded in recent years to include works that comment on local and universal systems of surveillance and segregation. In his ironic parodies and appropriations of traditional British political, pop, and spiritual configurations, Wallinger is attempting to move away from what he sees as British art's parochial burden. As an artist he often returns to the same concepts and subjects which interest him, and I will propose that this repetitive re-visitation of certain thematic inquiries has become an important mode of production that cannot be ignored.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

I think the most an artist can do is unpack the rhetoric of power.¹

—Mark Wallinger

Since the mid-1980s, British artist Mark Wallinger has been making art that critiques Great Britain's structures of political authority, civic power, leisure activities, and popular culture. My dissertation will chronicle the methods by which he deconstructs these social and political configurations. I will argue that he forms his appraisal through the investigation of modern mythic narratives, culture critique, and a cunning manipulation of literary tropes and devices. Wallinger unpacks the ways in which language and images are used to persuade and construct identity. Through thematically organized chapters, I will reveal how he returns again and again to certain issues throughout his career—and that while his methods and materials evolve and change over time, at mid-career he has displayed a consistent looping back to particular ideas that are worthy of our consideration. One of the most evident of these trajectories is the theme of the threshold and the metaphorical border in works that point to the visible and invisible divides between societal classes in the United Kingdom. Through a close reading of some of his most powerful artworks, I will also show how Wallinger artistically presents the various layers of British national identity as a complex set of metaphors—his subjects are doubled, reversed, and mirrored in a way that is unique and deserving of both formal and conceptual analysis.

This dissertation will examine Mark Wallinger as a crucial figure for both British and international contemporary art in a two-fold manner; firstly, it will engage in a “small scale”

¹ The epigraph for this dissertation is Mark Wallinger speaking to Yve-Alain Bois, et. al., in “An Interview with Mark Wallinger,” *October*, no. 123 (Winter 2008): 199.

explanatory look into and critical evaluation of a select cross-section of works made by the artist between 1987 and 2007. Secondly, it will attempt to give a “big picture” insight into why Wallinger is deserving of placement within the vast canon of important contemporary European sculptors and video and installation artists. Although a handful of paintings will be discussed in this dissertation, I will primarily be interested in positioning Wallinger as an artist working on the cutting edge of site-specific sculptural installation. Through compact, intimate readings of sixteen of Wallinger’s most complex projects (four in each of the four thematic chapters), I will reveal important insights into both the potential and limitations of his art practice. My engagement with these artworks will meaningfully mirror Wallinger’s engagement with the political, cultural and ideological realities he critiques by persistently questioning the varied forms and content of British identity and systems of control and power that lay within those systems.

Building on this foundation, my dissertation will spotlight some of the key strategies developed and used throughout Wallinger’s now twenty-five year career. In place of a chronological assessment or evaluative course, I have chosen instead to group the works I will be discussing into four thematic veins. Even though my ordering system will segregate the pieces into niches built upon subject matter and conceptual undertones, it is my hope that I can make clear that certain stratagem are repeated throughout, and that a career that may seem jumbled or artistically schizophrenic to the uninitiated viewer is in fact cohesive and evolutionary in its working terms. One of the first objectives is for me to show how Wallinger’s artworks ask questions about what it means to be English in a globalized and post-colonial world, and to show that the artist is interested in unpacking and toying with identity politics and national stereotypes in cotemporary England. Although this is perhaps the dominant consensus in the interpretation of

his work to date—that Wallinger is an “identity artist”—it is still an area of analysis worth plumbing. Here I will consider this point in relationship to how Wallinger’s early career concerns in identity and societal divisions evolve and develop into critiques of similar divisions in belief systems, politics, and other types of thresholds and divides.

Mark Wallinger’s artworks point to the decline and fall of one truly unified idea of “British-ness.” As an English artist interested foremost in identity and where identity can be broken down, Wallinger has given himself the task of determining what does and what does not constitute as “British” in the twenty-first century, and ultimately whether or not these arguments are valid anymore as the British capital of London becomes more and more of a multicultural icon. Investigating these kinds of questions requires a delicate manipulation and deconstruction of the systems and schemes that rule and regulate British culture. His works discussed herein take their stance by unraveling cultural systems and breaking them down both by showing their hidden underbellies and revealing them through showing their opposites.²

In addition to paying attention to the artist’s very visible interest in English culture and all its permutations, I will be looking at how Wallinger has a critical and ideological interest in twenty-first century spirituality that is part of his inquiry into nationalism, often teasing out the increasingly uncomfortable relationship between the role of religion and state power in his work. In doing so, he investigates the duplicity found in the simultaneously redemptive and controlling nature of religion and language. Throughout his career, he is able to convert a personal sense of moral and political outrage and religious curiosity into bitingly bold and funny works of art.

² The term “deconstruction” is one developed by French philosopher Jacques Derrida, and is a method of analysis wherein contradictory meanings of a text are undone and incompatibilities and inconsistencies in the foundations of meaning and their opposites are investigated in order to show that certain features of a text can “undo” its essential message.

Virtue and vice, redemption and damnation, silence and proclamation—all these polemics have a place in his work, and I will trace these ideas throughout my thematic chapters as well.

I believe that one of the most overlooked interpretative horizons in need of validation and interpretation is the role that speech and narrative play in Wallinger's career. Language, speech, poetry, and colloquialisms appear again and again throughout all of Wallinger's projects, and I will use this as a cohesion to link the four thematic tropes that form the backbone of this dissertation: Icons and Flags; Horses and Royalty; Religion and Crossings; and Politics and Zones. Within Wallinger's career, one can find numerous and varied connections to literature and literary devices. In several of his most notable works, Wallinger literalizes certain figures of speech (such as the *double entendre* or the palindrome), or turn certain phonetic and linguistic devices into three dimensional artworks (such as the flag piece *Oxymoron*, to be discussed early on). He is a poet-artist, with an interest in not only producing paintings, sculptures, and installations, but also in referencing classical Hollywood films³ in his works, and composing sonnets while visiting the grave of Shelley in Rome.⁴ One can also find an interesting play between metaphor and metonymy in his work.⁵ Artworks that reference language systems are successful if they are able achieve a clever manipulation of the nuances of the text being appropriated in order to reveal the structures or forces at play. Wallinger's works that quote and allude to Shelley, Joyce, Shakespeare, and others propose that the written or spoken word can be,

³ Such as 1955's *The Night of the Hunter* and the horror classic *Frankenstein*.

⁴ Wallinger's poetry can be found in the catalog *Prometheus* (Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Portikus, 2000). The poem that is reprinted there is "The God of Proportion," a response to Leonardo's 1487 work *The Vitruvian Man*. Wallinger has also written poetry inspired by Masaccio's 1425 fresco *The Holy Trinity*.

⁵ Metaphor refers to the interchangeability of two ideas, where one word is substituted for another. The meaning of one word is carried over to another in a changed manner. Saying someone is "like a wall" means they are strong willed rather than actually possessing the literal physical characteristics of a wall. Metonymy is found where an object or idea is not called by its most obvious name, but is instead given another title. Calling the British monarchy simply "The Crown" is an example of metonymy.

for a visual artist, as much a vehicle for power as the image is, and the artist is often able to combine the persuasion of both facets into his works—and this is what makes much of the work dynamic and engaging.

I will show how his work has progressed both in its scope and its intelligence over the past twenty-five years, and outline the progression his career takes in its evolution from a focus on the social and political onwards to the metaphysical, and then back again to the political. My dissertation elucidates how Wallinger's early career interest in Britain's national character has been expanded in recent years to include works that comment on universal systems of surveillance and segregation. As an artist he often returns to the same concepts and critiques which interest him, and I will propose that this repetitive re-visitation of certain thematic inquiries has become an important mode of production that cannot be ignored.

Aesthetically, Mark Wallinger's career is as thematically diverse as it is materially varied: he creates video art, installation, paintings, sculpture, performance art, public commissions, and nearly immaterial conceptual pieces. The question of subject matter is crucial to understanding Wallinger's work and my dissertation will argue that he uses the repetition of certain subjects as an ordering system by which he is able to either elevate or collapse their ideological power. His artistic style and subject matter have been influenced by a diverse class of modern artists, writers, poets, and political figures based in the United Kingdom. These range from the British equestrian painter George Stubbs and the poet Percy Shelley, to the Irish novelist James Joyce, to the infamous and evangelistic anti-Iraq war protestor Brian Haw. The legacies of these types of public and historic figures are often seen referenced, copied, or parodied in his work. These highly varied artistic influences point to a kind of push-and-pull felt between “old” and “new” Britain in his work—Wallinger displays a need to look both backwards and forwards in his

assessments of modern cultural and artistic mythmaking. In his parodies and appropriations of traditional British political and spiritual configurations, Wallinger is attempting to move away from the parochial burden he perceives the history of British art and culture to be carrying.

Certain overarching issues will be present throughout each chapter and will serve to link all of the veins of production: themes of loss, disappearances, border crossings, and the literary will be traced throughout my analysis. Some notions of loss will be examined in a grand social sense, such as the loss of England's empire or the loss of faith in Wallinger's religious works, while other types of disappearances will be seen quite literally, such as in the artworks *TARDIS*, *Zone*, and *Ghost*, where the immateriality and disappearance of the work is crucial to its meaning. The "disappeared" or "vanished" object will be a reoccurring theme in the works I have chosen to discuss herein.

Although all these facets are discussed separately in this dissertation in relationship to the thematic I am pairing them with, ultimately they are all linked, and looked at together they will form a portrait of this intelligent and often visually devious and cynical artist. At the same time that one encounters tragic losses in Wallinger's work, there are also very complex notions of humor, irony, and parody at play in many of his performances and installations. I believe these juxtapositions are of great importance, I will point out when he is using a "visual gag" to both elevate and undo his subjects.

To understand Wallinger's subject position, methods, and goals in the specific pieces that will be discussed in the dissertation, one must first look at the artist's background and emergence into the world of contemporary art in England. Wallinger was born not in London but in Essex, in 1959, making him only five or six years older than most of the "Young British Artists" (abbreviated henceforth as yBas) he came to prominence with during the scandalous and highly

publicized debut of Charles Saatchi's *Sensation* show at London's Royal Academy in 1997.⁶ I will return momentarily to an evaluation of why this moment in 1997 was so crucial for London on the global art stage. The distinctions between Wallinger and his then-yBa artistic cohorts do not end simply with an age difference; Wallinger's interest in class struggle, political injustices, Shakespeare, and the fallacies in religion set him apart from many of his fellow yBas and their artistic one-liners that often focused on sex, money, and death in order to create controversy (and ultimately sell). Ironically, in the late 1990s, Wallinger's work was met with much less publicity and critical acclaim than most of his Saatchi brethren for precisely this reason; Damien Hirst's mad scientist-esque animals suspended in tanks of formaldehyde solution and Tracey Emin's appliquéd quilts, decorated with fiery narratives formed by sewn-on letters, were praised as wholly representative of a new and trendy "Cool Britannia."⁷ It is part of my overall goal in this dissertation to suggest that Mark Wallinger's legacy and contribution to contemporary art will ultimately outlast the yBa figures that once eclipsed him in the 1990s.

The freshly elected Tony Blair and his New Labour movement, who won a landslide victory for the Labour (Democratic Party) in May 1997, were anxious to publically endorse this emerging generation of artists. The stuffy, downtrodden, and artistically stagnate Thatcher years were going to be washed away by all "Cool Britannia" had to offer. At least this was the impression one was given through the endless media coverage of New Labour's support of the arts, the yBas, the opening of the Tate Modern in 2000, and the revitalization of the London

⁶ The exhibition "Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection" ran from September 18, 1997, until December 28, 1997 at London's Royal Academy of Art before travelling on to Berlin and New York.

⁷ The phrase "Cool Britannia," one that was used to describe yBa artists in the late 1990s (as well as the cultural revival seen after the election of Tony Blair's New Labour party in 1997), is a pun on "Rule Britannia!" which was a patriotic poem written by eighteenth century author James Thomson that was later set to music. The tune is now used in a variety of pop culture forms and incarnations in the United Kingdom.

alternative rock music scene which included bands such as Blur and Oasis.⁸ London finally would, as numerous magazines and newspapers proclaimed, “swing again.” Mark Wallinger’s works, which sought to unpack less of what made up the new “Cool” and more of what made up the new “Britannia” part of the equation, were pushed to the sidelines in the press and popular media until late 1999. If simply viewed in exhibition catalogs and newspaper reviews alongside the more scandalous yBas, many of Wallinger’s pieces lacked the immediate “punch” or shock value that had become the main aesthetic tactic of the yBa artists. So while various outrageous and sensational art projects and unruly, out-of-control yBa celebrities defined the re-emerging London art scene in the mid-to-late 1990s, Wallinger and his work were often overshadowed. In an *Artforum* article published in 1992, Michael Corris suggests that the yBa generation both adhered to and rebelled against predetermined notions of “Britishness:”

The ‘new generation’ of ‘young British artists’ is a cultural phenomenon formed out of specific needs expressed primarily in terms of a presumed national culture...brought to bear by historical responses to the collapse of British colonialism, its neocolonial aftermath, and the prevailing consciousness of the subordination of the early-20th-century English avant-garde in painting and sculpture to the Continental avant-gardes, and, domestically, to the practice of literature.⁹

But did the more prominent yBas such as Hirst, Emin, and the Chapman Brothers actually rebel against the Thatcherite mindset, at least in terms of their artistic self-preservation? While one could easily note the aesthetic differences between Wallinger’s work and the other yBas, the artist himself sees the divide as a political and generational one. Wallinger said in a recent 2009 interview that, “To a degree, there was a sense they [the yBas] were Thatcher’s children. They

⁸ In his sardonically-titled book *Lucky Kunst: The Rise and Fall of Young British Art* (London: Aurum Press, 2009), Gregor Muir discusses how Tony Blair’s inauguration parties in 1997 were famously attended by members of the young London art and rock music world.

⁹ Michael Corris, “British? Young? Invisible? w/Attitude?” *Artforum* 30, no. 9 (May 1992): 106, n.1.

had all that entrepreneurial can-do and stuff. I was old Labour really and never had that.”¹⁰ The two works Wallinger exhibited in the Charles Saatchi’s *Sensation* show, *Race, Class, Sex* (made 1992) and *Angel* (made 1997) will be discussed in this thesis, both within the context of their original debut and within the overall chronology of Wallinger’s career. In the 1990s, Mark Wallinger held a contradictory position in regards to the media blitz created and sustained by the yBa artists. His work often criticized the capitalist Thatcherite mindset employed by the yBa artists, yet he was still ultimately and ironically a beneficiary of the Saatchi regime, being collected and displayed by the elusive yet powerful super-collector.

Despite the fact that Wallinger is not so easily lumped into the glitz and glamour surrounding the yBa phenomenon (the text written for the *Sensation* catalog does not single Wallinger out in any meaningful way) perhaps here it is relevant to mention the impact of *Sensation* (the full and proper title being *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*) as a whole on the London art world, since it is in this climate that Wallinger’s own career was first nourished. Although the exhibition premiered at the Royal Academy in London in 1997, the show met the most controversy when it traveled to the Brooklyn Museum of Art in 1999. Because of the sexually charged and religiously and politically scandalous works,¹¹ the show drew great protest from conservative British and American citizens, and met with the very public disapproval of the then mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani (who announced publicly that the featured works were “sick stuff” and “insulting to Catholics”¹²), who threatened

¹⁰ Tim Adams, “The Interview: Mark Wallinger,” *The Observer*, February 15, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2009/feb/15/mark-wallinger-art-sculpture> (accessed March 16, 2009).

¹¹ The most controversial works included Tracey Emin’s *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-95* (1995), Chris Ofili’s *The Holy Virgin Mary* (1996), Marcus Harvey’s *Myra* (1995), among several notable others.

¹² *The New York Times* vigorously covered the “Sensation” scandal: see for example the September 24, 1999 article “Giuliani Threatens to Evict Museum over Art Exhibit” at <http://www.nytimes.com/library/arts/092499brooklyn-museum.html> which discusses the then-mayor’s outrage over the content of the exhibition.

to cut all city funding for the Brooklyn Museum if it went forward with displaying the work. The organization of the exhibition and the grouping of these artists was a calculated marketing decision made on the part of Charles Saatchi, who recruited many of these artists right out of art college, most notably Goldsmiths, a division of the University of London. Saatchi was not naive to the ways of publicity and press—he was a vice-president of the well-known marketing firm giant Saatchi & Saatchi, a successful corporation he ran with his brother from 1970 until 1995.¹³ The company still operates today, without its original namesakes. Charles Saatchi’s “sensational” artists were positioned by the general media as obtaining recognition as much because of their subversive-ness as the merits of their work. Because of this media attention, the yBas simultaneously became “deviant” and “cool,” and most, if not all, of these have been unable to escape the association with Saatchi and the media frenzy surrounding the exhibition, now well over decade old. This dissertation will remedy this unfortunate associative defect, arguing that the yBa generation was not as cohesive a group or “movement” as it was so marketed in the late 1990s.¹⁴ I ascertain that Wallinger has moved beyond being obscured by his associative connection to the yBas.

Wallinger is now rightly set apart from the other yBas, not just because he slightly surpasses most of them in age, but rather because of the diversity of methods and materials in his oeuvre and that he embodies a kind of humility despite his vast career success. Wallinger’s work has never had a “signature style,” but, as the Tate Liverpool’s Lewis Biggs commented in Wallinger’s *Credo* retrospective catalog: “political satire and moral commentary underlines his

¹³ Saatchi & Saatchi designed and showcased the pivotal “Labour Isn’t Working” slogan and campaign posters in 1980 that helped to elect Margaret Thatcher’s conservative party into office.

¹⁴ For more on the “myth” of the cohesion and creation of the yBa group, see Simon Ford’s essay “The Myth of the Young British Artist,” in *Occupational Hazard: Critical Writing on Recent British Art*, eds. Duncan McCorquodale, Naomi Siderfin, and Julian Stallabrass (London: Black Dog, 1998), 130-141.

practice.”¹⁵ Wallinger’s work is deserving of detailed analysis and criticism because now, more than ten years after *Sensation*, the artist is representative of the state and climate of intelligent contemporary British art. The longevity of the artist’s impact on the face of British art in the twenty-first century is undeniable and demands a close analysis.

Organization of Dissertation

My thesis will not discuss every work of art made by the Mark Wallinger since the mid-1980s; to attempt to do so would only do a disservice to the complexity and acumen seen in the individual pieces. While his 1990s paintings critiquing horseracing, snobbery, and the Stubbsian aesthetic will form a chapter. Wallinger’s site-specific works, installations, and performance art pieces completed after the year 2000 will figure more prominently as they are the most multi-layered examples of the artist’s mature work. In essence this also shifts the focus onto his mature work, which documents a shift away from painting, where he began his career in the late 1980s. As mentioned before, I have abandoned the traditional fashioning of the chronological monograph in favor of grouping based on Wallinger’s own obsessions with subject matter; this will undoubtedly prove more fruitful than tracing the ups and downs of a career that already spans more than a quarter century. My dissertation is organized into four different chapters elucidating the most prominent thematic tendencies revealed in Mark Wallinger’s work. They are as follows: 1. Icons and Flags; 2. Horses and Royalty; 3. Religion and Crossings; and 4. Politics and Zones. My chosen organizational mode in each chapter will roughly follow a chronological path of developments in Wallinger’s art practice; however, I have grouped the works more with a consideration of concepts and ideas instead of simply mapping a timeline.

¹⁵ Lewis Biggs, “Introduction,” in *Mark Wallinger: Credo* (London: Tate Gallery, 2000), 11.

The first thematic chapter, “Icons and Flags,” will open with two works that utilize the flag of the United Kingdom (the Union Jack), *Oxymoron* and *Tattoo*, in order to make statements about violence and colonialism. I would not be the first to suggest that much of Wallinger’s work is about symbol and modern myth, and this chapter will look at the ways in which symbols of pop culture are manipulated in order to create new questions about identity. Wallinger has an uncanny knack for combining elements of popular culture and “high” culture (Dr. Who, football, and Robert Mitchum mingle with figures such as Joyce, Shelley, and Stubbs). In my evaluation of the performance piece *Sleeper* from 2004, I will investigate the role of the bear as an icon of Cold War espionage and of Berlin’s civic pride, as well as the psychological connection that the artist feels toward the once sequestered East Berlin. Similarly, the piece *Time and Relative Dimension in Space* speaks to notions of memory and trauma.

Chapter three, “Horses and Royalty,” will trace the artist’s interest in and critique of horse breeding and racing as a marker of British upper class civility and leisure. It will also draw connections between the practices of horseracing, pedigree and the monarchy in Britain and how Wallinger carefully manipulates these two poles in his work to challenge the systems of power and politics in the country. This chapter will include be the only instance where Wallinger’s oil paintings are discussed in a consideration of the work *Race, Class, Sex*, which showcases the effects of “good breeding” in presenting stud horses as stand-ins for aristocratic racing enthusiasts. *A Real Work of Art*, which is a real working horse that Wallinger purchased, will update the notion of the Duchampian readymade. Video installation pieces and light box works, such as *Royal Ascot* and *Ghost*, will cleverly exploit the horse and the monarchy as a symbol of England’s cultural heritage in an ironic fashion.

Chapter four, “Religion and Crossings,” will trace the role of spirituality in Wallinger’s work by looking at specific pieces that deal with the modern roles Christianity and faith (or a lack thereof) inhabit in society. Spirituality is considered by the artist as both a dying pastime and a powerful ordering system in society. Video works will dominate this chapter (*Angel*, *Threshold to the Kingdom*, and *The Underworld*) in addition to the powerful and popular 1999 inaugural Fourth Plinth commission known as *Ecce Homo*.

Chapter five, “Politics and Zones,” will look at the political sphere in Wallinger’s work, and how zones and thresholds, both real and imagined, are created and tested in his art. The installation *State Britain*, which hinges on notions of authenticity and the replica, will be the starting point of this chapter. Important site-specific commissions for the 2001 Venice Biennale (*Façade*) and the 2007 Münster Sculpture Project (*Zone*) will be evaluated. The chapter will conclude with *The Russian Linesman*, his 2009 curatorial experiment which is a culmination of all of Wallinger’s interests and passions up to this moment.

The conclusion chapter, chapter six, will end with briefly reviewing several of the main conceptual linkages that can be found throughout all the works discussed in this dissertation in an effort to show the evolution of Wallinger’s career.

Mark Wallinger’s work is about identity and how identity is shaped by the social. Roger Malbert, a curator at the Hayward Gallery, notes Wallinger’s interest in how “the individual’s subjective conscious is immersed in – and participates in – the wider collective consciousness, how we negotiate the many levels of phenomena experienced in daily life, shifting between the personal, the practical, the social, and the poetic.”¹⁶ Almost all of Wallinger’s works, whether

¹⁶ Roger Malbert’s afterword in Mark Wallinger’s self-authored exhibition catalog *The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders, and Thresholds* (London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2009), 129.

they are traditional painting, or installation, video work, or sculpture, seek to find meaning and identity through pointing to the contradictions which make up a people. He explores his sense of self and his idea of his homeland through a thematic use of alter-egos, mirror images, doppelgangers, twins, hybrids, oxymorons, poetic loops, temporal jumps, and mass culture fun and fantasy. He exposes truth through use of a variety of fictions, and this thesis will look at the way in which he so cunningly and creatively manipulates the line between fact and invention.

Mark Wallinger systematically re-works the icons of British society and heritage. Some of these instances are taken from the angle of adoration and homage, others are brazenly critical. The complexities of these works often rely on the fact that the signs and symbols he uses have lost their original meaning. What once might have been a boisterous sign of empire might now be a visual whimper, a kind of imperial kitsch. Since the 1980s, Wallinger has simultaneously challenged and romanticized the anachronistic aspects of British society. He offers this critique of (and from within) white Anglo-British society.

Whatever thematic Wallinger is referencing in his works, he seems to be unapologetic about the stance and the cultural niche he is referencing. For example, *Ecce Homo* is one of the most overtly religious works to be showcased in Britain recently, and *State Britain* is one of the most loudly political. And works like *Oxymoron* and *Façade* are the most nationalistic and self-consciously English works to come out of the contemporary art movement in Britain. Although all of these facets will be discussed separately in this dissertation, ultimately they are all linked, and looked at together they will form a portrait of this highly intelligent and often devious and cynical artist.

Mark Wallinger is an artist who has had the experience of both the privilege and disenfranchisement of maturing artistically during two very disparate and conflicting eras in

London—he has lived and worked on either side of the Thatcher years and the New Labour government. He became well known for *Ecce Homo* in late 1999, on the eve of both the millennium and the revival of contemporary art in London with the opening of the Tate Modern in 2000. My dissertation will argue that London as a city and as a site has become a unique pedestal upon which the artistic happenings and the direction of Wallinger's work of the past twenty years has been contingent.

Artist's Biography and Career History

Wallinger is a figure closely associated with London and the artist grew up decidedly middle-class as the son of a fish merchant in Chigwell, in the Essex region of England, less than an hour's train ride east of London. He attended the Chelsea School of Art in London from 1978-1981 before getting his M.A. from Goldsmiths in 1985, where he was also subsequently a tutor until 1992. His thesis paper was based on the literary work *Ulysses* by James Joyce, and references to Joyce remain littered throughout his work up until the present day. His career as an artist began well before his inclusion in Saatchi's *Sensation* show in 1997; he was independently established in London nearly ten years before this moment. Four important early group exhibitions in London he was featured in before *Sensation* were the *New Contemporaries* exhibition at Institute for Contemporary Art in London in 1981; the *Whitechapel Open* at the Whitechapel Gallery in London in 1984; *Young British Artists II* in 1993 at the Saatchi Gallery (then at its original Boundary Road location); and, importantly, the 1995 Turner Prize exhibition at the Tate Britain, to be elaborated upon herein.

Wallinger was quickly picked up by the Anthony Reynolds Gallery in London while finishing his graduate degree at Goldsmiths: Reynolds showed his final year M.A. show at the gallery. Wallinger continues to be represented by the gallerist and dealer as of this writing in late 2009. This loyalty to Anthony Reynolds is another fact that sets Wallinger apart from many of

the other yBas, many of whom were snapped up by Jay Jopling's White Cube gallery during the 1990s. Wallinger continued as a part-time tutor at Goldsmiths in the late 1980s following his graduation, ironically tutoring some of the artists (such as Damien Hirst) who he would later be grouped with as belonging to the Saatchi generation.

In 1998, Mark Wallinger won the Henry Moore Fellowship to study at the British School in Rome. He was the first British artist to win the commission to place a sculpture atop Trafalgar Square's empty Fourth Plinth (*Ecce Homo*, in 1999). Wallinger had a mid-career retrospective (entitled Mark Wallinger: *Credo*) at the Tate Liverpool in 2000, and the artist followed the success of both the Plinth sculpture and the Liverpool retrospective with being selected to represent Great Britain at the Venice Biennale's British Pavilion in 2001. He participated in the DAAD (German Academic Exchange) Artist's Program in Berlin from 2001-2002, where the seeds for his phenomenal 2004 performance *Sleeper* were undoubtedly planted. He exhibits internationally, and recently in early 2009, curated an exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in London entitled *The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Border, and Thresholds*. *The Russian Linesman* was an opportunity for Wallinger to bring together work by artists from many different centuries using many diverse methods and materials who were interested in some of the same issues as he. Just a week before his Hayward curatorial project debuted, it was announced that Wallinger won the Ebbsfleet Landmark Project Commission for his design for the "Angel of the South" landmark in Kent, England. The sculpture to be realized will be a giant statue of a white horse, and while it will not be discussed in this thesis extensively as it will not be completed and unveiled until close to 2012, the sculpture will surely add to the debates surrounding public sculpture in the United Kingdom and to the on-going motif of the horse in Wallinger's *oeuvre*.¹⁷

¹⁷ Near the completion of this dissertation in February 2010, Wallinger's plans for *The White Horse* (the working title of the massive public sculpture) had just recently been submitted to the Gravesham Borough Council planning

The artist's popularity and visibility have blossomed over the past several years. In 2007, Wallinger made international headlines with his Tate-commissioned anti-war installation *State Britain* (to be discussed in detail later). In December of that year, only a few short months after *State Britain*'s run at the Tate Britain ended, it was announced that Wallinger would be the 2007 recipient of the Turner Prize, (named after famed 19th century British landscape painter J.M.W. Turner) the most prestigious annual contemporary art award in Great Britain. Wallinger had been shortlisted for the prize once before, in 1995 (he lost to none-other-than Damien Hirst), but the 2007 win signaled that *State Britain* was being recognized as a serious and valuable contribution to British art, and that Wallinger was finally being acknowledged as one of the most intellectually intricate and multifaceted artists in the United Kingdom.

The revolving commissions for Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries, to which *State Britain* belonged, like the Fourth Plinth Project in Trafalgar Square, the Unilever Series in Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, and Wallinger's upcoming Ebbsfleet commission in Kent, are all part of a shift toward the integration of public, revolving contemporary art projects in England with more "traditional" notions of art and public space. Wallinger has been fortunate that several of his works, beginning with *Ecce Homo*, have been promoted on a platform such as this—in a way that allows for the general public to view them, and not just the initiated elite. I would argue that at least for the past fifteen years these types of publically funded, highly visible installation projects have had much to do with defining and supporting (as well as glorifying) British art in London. The emergence of a newly revived and internationally competitive (to use a word perhaps too tied to "the market" but nevertheless appropriate here) is easily partly based on types of artistic competitions such as the Forth Plinth Project, the Turner Prize, the Ebbsfleet

board. If approved, the stallion will stand at over 160 feet, becoming the largest public artwork in Britain. It has been dubbed the "Angel of the South" as a counterpart to Antony Gormley's public work in Gateshead.

Commission, the Tate Modern's Unilever Series, and so fourth. Building a sense of competition into the development of art projects in the public and popular culture sphere has elevated and boosted interest in contemporary British art and artists in the lull after the rise and fall of the yBa phenomenon, and Wallinger's close ties to and success in the inaugural Forth Plinth sculpture undoubtedly helped to separate and promote him beyond the "Saatchi decade." The Plinth work, *Ecce Homo*, is a crucial one, and a discussion of it will open chapter three within this dissertation.

Literature Review

As of this writing in 2009 and early 2010, a singly-authored Wallinger monograph unrelated to a specific exhibition by the artist has not yet been published. That is to say, all books currently in existence whose pages are devoted solely to Wallinger and his work were written in conjunction with an exhibition. That these catalogs were commissioned to be written by a museum or gallery does not take away from their impact; in fact, almost all are valuable resources. Wallinger's career remains somewhat unplumbed as a whole outside of the parameters of the institutional gallery system.

Twelve solo exhibition catalogs featuring essays on the artist have been published thus far, the earliest (without an essay) was put out by Anthony Reynolds Gallery in 1988, and the most recent produced in 2008, published by JRP/Ringier in conjunction with Wallinger's retrospective show at Kunstverein Braunschweig in Germany and its Swiss counterpart Aargauer Kunsthau in Aarau. There is also the poetic journal-style catalog written by Wallinger on the occasion of his curated show *The Russian Linesman* at the Hayward Gallery in 2009, which should be included in the literature on the artist despite the fact that it is authored by the artist himself. However, since a consideration of *The Russian Linesman* and its exhibition catalog will become part of the final thematic chapter, I will leave an analysis of it until later. Another work authored by

Wallinger is the 1998 essay “Fool Britannia: Not New, Not Clever, Not Funny” included in the book *Who’s Afraid of Red White & Blue?* which is edited by David Burrows. Pieces authored by Wallinger himself are invaluable because the artist is so deeply committed to producing both thoughtful works and writings, and his literary style is equal parts poetic, caustic, and clever. His own writings often include sarcastic jabs at the London art institutions—for example, in 1998, three years after losing the Turner Prize to Damien Hirst, and almost ten years before he would finally win it himself, Wallinger stated that “Faced with an inadequate budget, and an incoherent policy on contemporary practice that is its corollary, it is small wonder that the Tate’s credibility rests so heavily on the annual speech day that is the Turner Prize.” Talk about biting the hand that feeds you—Wallinger does not hesitate to be critical of the marketing system that the Tate uses to promote contemporary art. He continues by saying “Although, true to Establishment instincts, it seems the appearance of authority is always more important than the substance.”¹⁸ These comments were written by Wallinger in 1998, and it is interesting to note as well that less than ten years later, Wallinger presents a major work, *State Britain*, in the Tate, which explicitly challenges the spaces of authority and power that dominate in London. Wallinger was “making a meal of the hand”¹⁹ that he had so long criticized, and was criticizing the “state” within a museum that stays afloat partly due to state funding.

I have tried, when possible, to illustrate my points in this dissertation using quotations from Mark Wallinger himself. Being able to locate Wallinger’s own writings, comments, and transcripts from interviews has often proved more helpful and insightful than reading secondary reviews and analysis of his exhibitions and installations. The excepts to this are the author Yve-

¹⁸ Mark Wallinger, “The Pygmalion Paradox,” *Art Monthly*, no. 218 (July-August 1998): 3.

¹⁹ Mark Wallinger, e-mail message to author, February 5, 2010.

Alain Bois, Adrian Searle, and Ralph Rugoff, whose writings I have given careful consideration to and quote passages from more than others. In fact, I have included in this dissertation an appendix that reproduces, in full, email conversations I shared with the artist between October 2009 and February 2010 because of his invaluable candidness and openness regarding the manner and methods of his artistic production.

Two especially helpful interviews were conducted after Wallinger gained recognition for his Fourth Plinth sculpture in 2000 and his subsequent showing in Venice in 2001. These two interviews are “Situations: Mark Wallinger in Conversation with Kathrin Rhomberg” in the book *Sculpsit: Contemporary Artists on Sculpture and Beyond*, published in 2000, and the interview in Sandy Nairne’s book *Art Now: Interviews with Modern Artists*, from 2001. In both of these examples, Wallinger’s candidness about his distaste for the Thatcher regime during his development as an artist is apparent. Critical reaction to the leadership of Margaret Thatcher is indeed a dominant and perhaps now overly-saturated motif in British art in the decade of the 1990s, but nevertheless relevant despite its now all-too-common appearances. The yBas, Wallinger included, were almost all attending art school during this period, and the correlation to their artistic rebellions that became so popular in the press and in the market are intertwined with sentiment against Thatcher. The yBas, in essence, were popular because Thatcher was so unpopular. It should be no surprise that Blair’s political team latched on to this cultural phenomenon. In Nairne’s, Rhomberg’s, and several other published interviews or videos, Wallinger reveals himself to be a figure that is able to comment on and discuss his own work without hesitation or apology.

Thus, his artist statements (such as the surreal and poetic one written for *Sleeper*²⁰ in 2004), his essays (such as “The Pygmalion Paradox” in a 1998 issue of *Art Monthly*, which is quoted from above), his published interviews (such as the ones in the books *Sculpsit* and *Art Now*) and his 2009 *Russian Linesman* catalog will be analyzed in conjunction with his artworks throughout. Wallinger is a writer and sometimes poet (although he remains humble about his talents; in an email exchange he wrote “Poetry has always appealed to me and I have tried in vain down the years to write it myself. I can’t but I love the very [fact] that words have found a unity of sound and sense”²¹), and it is one of my goals that his interest in the manipulation of language becomes apparent through my quoting of Wallinger’s writings. The aforementioned dozen or so solo catalogs and the artist-authored texts—these are the most substantial and well-research literature on the artist to date.

There are also several valuable edited volumes that contain chapters devoted to the artist, such as Paul Bonaventura’s essay from 2000 “A Day at the Races” found in *Locus Solus: Site, Identity, Technology in Contemporary Art*, edited by Julian Stallabrass, Pauline van Mourik Broekman, and Niru Ratnam. This essay focuses on Wallinger’s interests in horseracing and the ways in which racing has been appropriated as a national pastime in England even though the provenance of the thoroughbred begins in the Middle East. In this essay connections are drawn between the art world and the racing world in that they operate under their own set of rules and are, as Bonaventura puts it, “rigidly patriarchal.” Another book featuring a single chapter on Wallinger is the eponymously titled one in Kevin Davey’s 1999 book *English Imaginaries: Six Studies in Anglo-British Modernity*. In this book Wallinger’s politically motivated works are

²⁰ This artist statement can be found in the retrospective catalog *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries (Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2008), 133. This statement was originally published in a modified form in London’s *Frieze* magazine, Issue 91, May 2005.

²¹ Mark Wallinger, e-mail message to author, February 5, 2010.

featured among the likes of musician Pete Townshend and clothing designer Vivienne Westwood, placing the artist in the kind of company that suggests that he is among the avant-garde of creativity in late twentieth century England. Because of the timing of its publication (1999), Davey's essay only details the early career works like as the oil paintings of horses and the series known as *Capital* from 1990.²² The chapter is focused on Wallinger's interest in constructing, re-constructing, and deconstruction notions of British identity in works that deal with national pastimes

In my research I have discovered countless newspaper, magazine, and journal articles on Mark Wallinger, some more substantive than others. Most of the reviews and articles are brief and repetitive; however, the occasional journalistic gem exists, such as Yve-Alain Bois's review "Piece Movement: Yve-Alain Bois on Mark Wallinger's State Britain" from the April 2007 *Artforum*. Articles such as these add to the critical discourse on Wallinger's work, and I happily take them into consideration in this dissertation. Although I have read most of the brief reviews and blurbs about Wallinger in the press, only the crucial ones will appear in my bibliography. To try to include bits from them all would prove impossible and exhaustive. I would estimate that close to one thousand articles on and reviews of Mark Wallinger have been published since his first solo exhibition at the Minorities in Colchester, England, in 1983. As I suggested before, there has been a noticeable spike in the press coverage of Wallinger since the debut of *State Britain* in early 2007 and his winning of the coveted Turner Prize in that same year. During the height of the popularity of the installation *State Britain* and the video piece *Sleeper*, the latter of

²² Although *Capital* is a major series and one that had some controversy in its debut, it is not discussed at any real length in the dissertation. Let me then briefly describe the series—it is a grouping of several full-body portraits of Wallinger's friends dressed up and posing as homeless people standing in the doorways of large, recognizable financial and banking institutions in London. The portrait series is perhaps now made more poignant than at its inception with the recent international financial crises and recessions endured in 2008-2010.

which was shown at the Turner Prize exhibition, some prominent British newspapers printed multiple articles on Wallinger in a single week.²³

Exhibition catalogs for group shows that the artist has been in (such as the multi-authored “Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection”) also make mention of Wallinger, but these are usually so brief or vague that these are rarely good sources of information. For example, within the “Sensation” catalog’s nearly fifty pages of essays, only one line of text is devoted to the artist.²⁴ I alluded to the peripheral position Wallinger was sometimes given in relation to the yBa movement earlier on. In some ways, however, omissions or lack of writing on the artist in certain academic arenas can be telling as to the under-appreciation of his work before the year 2000, and further substantiate the need to revisit his career in its entirety now. Julian Stallabrass’ scathing account of the Saatchi decade and the yBas, entitled *High Art Lite: The Rise and Fall British Art in the 1990s*, which was first published in 1999 and revised for a second updated edition in 2006, also makes scant mention of Wallinger. When Stallabrass does include Wallinger in his unflattering “high art lite”²⁵ category, the result is, dare I say, almost complimentary. On Wallinger’s career, Stallabrass writes that the artist is able to combine “high

²³ For example, on December 3, 2007, Charlotte Higgins, arts correspondent for *The Guardian*, wrote an article on Wallinger’s Turner Prize win and popularity, and she authored another similar article on December 5, only two days later. For both see Charlotte Higgins, “Bear Man Walks Away With Turner Prize,” *The Guardian*, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/dec/03/art.turnerprize20071>, and Higgins, “It’s a Good Day for Bears,” *The Guardian*, at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2007/dec/05/art.turnerprize2007>.

²⁴ On page 28 of *Sensation*, Martin Maloney makes brief mention of “Wallinger’s perfectly executed horse paintings...” in his essay “Everyone a Winner!” in *Sensation: Young British Artists from the Saatchi Collection*, Norman Rosenthal, et al. (London: Royal Academy of Arts; New York: Thames and Hudson, 1997). As an addendum to this footnote, I must say that upon meeting the artist in his London studio in October 2009, one of the first items he showed me was a newly published, hardback special edition of the *Sensation* book, not readily available in the United States as of this writing in late November 2009. I was shocked to see that Thames and Hudson had asked Wallinger to create the design for the “special edition” cover image after an analysis of Wallinger’s works were so obviously skipped over in the original 1997 publication. Wallinger’s design featured a police-blue thumbprint, pertinent to the ideas of surveillance and policing so often seen in his work.

²⁵ The “lite” in “high art lite” was meant to suggest that the techniques used by the yBas are shallow and trendy in a derogatory sense. It is my best guess that Stallabrass lifted the word “lite” from the paper *London Lite*, a free entertainment and gossip rag given out around subway stations daily in London.

art lite tactics and political engagement...to convey a message without patronising the viewer or settling into propaganda.²⁶ This luke warm assessment was not enough to sway Wallinger's dealer and gallerist, Anthony Reynolds, to allow Stallabrass to include images of any of Wallinger's artwork in the book—where Stallabrass had planned to show reproductions of Wallinger's pieces in *High Art Lite*, only blank boxes with the words “permission to reproduce denied” appear.²⁷ So it seems likely that Wallinger's dealer took issue with the artist's inclusion in a text that lumps his artistic tactics in with the likes of Hirst, Emin, and Ofili.

High Art Lite explores the phenomenon of the Young British Artists in the decade of the 1990s, and how the controversial nature of the works of these artists combined with the marketing prowess of Charles Saatchi catapulted this brat pack of English artists into internationally revered figures. More than the history, Stallabrass questions whether the yBas had or have any real talent, or if their over the top works and public debaucheries was nothing more than an art trend that has since faded. The book looks at the ways in which British art remade and revamped itself in the 1990s, and how this “Renaissance” is tied up with mass and consumer culture. *High Art Lite* thinks of the phenomenon of the yBa “aesthetic” as a period or movement in order to flesh out what its lasting effect on the art world will be, and it challenges the sometimes frivolous, trivial, and sensational nature of the London art world during the Saatchi era.

Of the solo and group exhibition catalogs, six in particular stand out as being most representative of the artist's work in total: the earliest I will consider is the catalog *Mark*

²⁶ Julian Stallabrass, *High Art Lite: The Rise and Fall British Art in the 1990s* (London, New York: Verso, 2006), 239.

²⁷ Stallabrass makes a point to include Anthony Reynolds in his “acknowledgements” section at the beginning of *High Art Lite*, albeit giving Reynolds an “anti-acknowledgement,” saying that the art dealer saw portions of the unpublished manuscript and, “Not liking what he read, denied permission to reproduce the illustrations.”

Wallinger, designed on the occasion of a major show of the artist's work traveling between the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham and the Serpentine Gallery in London, which was published in 1995. The main essay written for this catalog is Jon Thompson's "Doing Battle with Decomposition: The Work of Mark Wallinger 1985-1995." Thompson discussed Wallinger's work in terms of its commitment to the political history of England and he points out that Wallinger is defined by the cultural histories that he questions and parodies in his work. Thompson says that Wallinger is "possessed of a profound affection for the unconscious eccentricities, even the downright stupidities of his subject, and for the very reason that he is discovering traces of them in himself all the time."²⁸ Thompson's essay points out, and rightly so, that Wallinger's critical gaze as an artist is pointed at himself when he makes work about the state of the English nation. The essay addresses the roles of satire and irony in Wallinger's early work. Thompson makes the statement that Wallinger is "an incipient carrier of the diseases he is looking to cure,"²⁹ where he is suggesting that the artist is morally invested in the structures that he wished to critique, and therefore implicated as much as his subjects are. This may be the case in regards to the works that critique horseracing and soccer as national pastimes, but I do not believe Wallinger mourns the fall of Britain as a colonial economic giant. Thompson's essay is valuable in that it is one of the first to address the construction of meaning in Wallinger's art—and the question of "truth."

Another important catalog essay is Pier Luigi Tazzi's "Mark Wallinger: A Reading" in *Mark Wallinger is Innocent*, which was written on the occasion of his solo show in Brussels at the Société des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts in 1998. Tazzi looks at Wallinger's work in

²⁸ Jon Thompson, "Doing Battle with Decomposition: The Work of Mark Wallinger 1985-1995," in *Mark Wallinger: Ikon Gallery/Serpentine Gallery*, 7-22 (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery Ltd, 1995), 8.

²⁹ Ibid.

relation to the social, and characterizes Wallinger as an artist who “establishes a direct relationship with the world of his immediate surroundings, and his surroundings finally sustain him as he expands into the spaces to which he turns his attention.”³⁰ Tazzi argues that Wallinger’s unique position as an artist dealing with the social climate around him arises from a personal sense of isolation, even though his day to day life is spent in familiar surroundings. The argument is that it is nearly impossible for Wallinger to simply look beyond his surroundings in order to confront the world and determine his place in it. Rather, despite his marginalization, “he remains unequivocally a part of his own environment.”³¹ This statement is bolstered by the fact that Wallinger is undeniably an English artist in the sense that his works deal with the English landscape, both a literalized geographical entity and a psychological one as well. The signs and symbols of Englishness that Wallinger uses in his work are already so charged that one comes to view the work with certain presuppositions, and must negotiate that with the new meanings brought about by Wallinger’s reconstitution and alteration of them. Wallinger’s artistic gaze is not a detached one. He is implicated in his subject matter as much as his subjects are.

The third vital catalog is *Mark Wallinger: Lost Horizon* published in Basel by the Museum für Gegenwartskunst in 1999, on the occasion of his solo show there. An essay by Andrew Wilson and an interview between Theodora Visher and Wallinger make up the text of this catalog. Visher’s line of questioning is centered on notions of British-ness and decorum, structures of power, and horseracing, which were some of the dominant themes in Wallinger’s work up until 1999. Wilson’s essay opens with a discussion of the newly-premiered sculpture, *Ecce Homo*, then moving on to discuss earlier works such as *Fountain* and *Race, Class, Sex*. In

³⁰ Pier Luigi Tazzi, “Mark Wallinger: A Reading,” in *Mark Wallinger is Innocent*, translated by Henry Martin, 37-43 (Brussels: Société des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles, 1998), 37-38.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 38.

doing so Wilson traces the themes of public versus private space in installation art. As in the Visher interview, the interrogation of identity and the power structures which govern us are at the core of the discourse.

Mark Wallinger: Credo, which was published by the Tate, stands as an early career retrospective of Wallinger's work up until the year 2000 that was held at the Tate Liverpool. The main essay in *Credo* is "Protesting Innocence," penned by Ian Hunt. This essay discusses some of Wallinger's most poignant works, namely *Oxymoron*, *Ecce Homo*, *Royal Ascot*, and *Angel*. He also discussed some of Wallinger early oil paintings from the mid 1980s, not discussed in this thesis. Ian Hunt's essay looks at the themes of innocence and experience in Wallinger's work. He also addresses the many British literary references seen in Wallinger's early work, from William Blake to James Joyce to Oscar Wilde to Shakespeare. Indeed much of Wallinger's *oeuvre* is infused with a poetic sensibility and his works often have either symbolic references to or direct quotations from England's literary past. There is a lyrical sensibility in Wallinger's practices.

The fifth important catalog claims to pick up where *Credo* left off: it is titled *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries, and was published by JRP/Ringier, in 2008. It was published on the occasion of a solo show that traveled between the Kunstverein Braunschweig in Germany and the Aargauer Kunsthaus in Aarau, Switzerland. This book boasts four well researched thematic essays: Richard Grayson's "A Number of Disappearances;" Janneke de Vries' "The Known Invisible;" Michael Diers' "In the Exclusion Zone of Art;" and Madeleine Schuppli's "Wallinger and Religion." Between 2000's *Credo* and 2008's *Mark Wallinger*, nearly every major work in Wallinger's now over twenty-five year career is presented. Grayson's essay explores Wallinger's work in a socio-political context,

examining how mass culture infiltrates every aspect of Wallinger's career. Janneke de Vries focuses her essay on the 2007 work *Zone*, and themes of transgression and border crossing. Diers' essay is about the politics of *State Britain*, and Schuppli's writing looks at the role of spirituality and God in Wallinger's work. These four essays, while some of the most carefully constructed and deeply researched writings on the artist, are not the first to break the ground. The issue of "Wallinger and Religion" had been investigated before by Tom Lubbock in *Modern Painters* in 2001,³² and *State Britain* had already received its share of press and academic ponderings, such as Yve-Alain Bois' aforementioned article "Piece Movement" in *Artforum* in April 2007³³ which pondered some of the issues of spectacle tied up in the work.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the essay inside the catalog for the 2001 Venice Biennale is a vital one written at the point when Wallinger was chosen to represent Great Britain's art scene on an international pedestal. Within the catalog entitled *Mark Wallinger: The British Pavilion at the 49th Venice Biennale 2001*, published by The British Council in 2001, is Ralph Rugoff's "Jesus is an Oxymoron." Rugoff's essay is one of the most insightful and creative pieces written about the artist after his rise to prominence and will be quoted often in this dissertation. This essay is peculiar in its structure; is simultaneously champions Wallinger as the British representative in Venice and memorializes the originally commissioned author slated to write the essay, Willa Memory, who mysteriously disappeared before she was able to complete her piece. Rugoff's essay is part contemplative art criticism and part speculative obituary for the catalog's vanished author that investigates the ambiguities and subtleties in Wallinger's artistic contributions to the 2001 Biennale. Rugoff simultaneously chronicles some

³² Tom Lubbock, "Wallinger and Religion," *Modern Painters* 14, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 74-77.

³³ Yve-Alain Bois, "Piece Movement: Yve-Alain Bois on Mark Wallinger's *State Britain*," *Artforum* 45, no. 8 (April 2007): 248-251.

of the issues of “lostness” seen in the works exhibited at Venice while trying to piece together the disappearance of the person slated to be the original author of the essay. Rugoff (who is now director of the Hayward Gallery) rightfully suggested that Wallinger’s art defies strict categorization because of its constant toying with the “mechanics of representation”³⁴ that undoubtedly opens up many layers of meaning.

³⁴ Ralph Rugoff, “Jesus is an Oxymoron,” in *Mark Wallinger: The British Pavilion at the 49th Venice Biennale 2001*, 5-17 (London: The British Council, 2001), 17.

CHAPTER 2 ICONS AND FLAGS

In beginning the assessment of Mark Wallinger's artistic frameworks, "Icons and Flags" will deal with the use of national icons, signs, and symbols in his practice. This chapter is about Western Europe's icons, both popular and political, and how their authoritative power begins to wane in the light of the metaphorical slippages between borders and identities. England's growing sense of non-conformity to concepts of "Englishness" will also be of importance. For the most part the icons discussed in this chapter will be British ones; however, the performance *Sleeper*, which begins the chapter, is Wallinger's attempt to bridge the gap between Germany's and Britain's troubled identities and Cold War histories. What links the works discussed in this chapter is that they reveal the artist's interest in the politics of representation. When it comes to national pride, there is a growing sense of global iconophilia—take for example popular culture's co-opting of the American flag after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on New York City, where United States citizens rushed to hang flags on their front stoops or bumper stickers proclaiming support for soldiers on their cars. National identities are often reduced to a few key central images or figure heads, and this chapter will look at how Mark Wallinger engages with the icons relevant to him in an attempt to come to terms with the often elusive character of a seemingly unified European state.

As suggested before, Mark Wallinger is generally regarded as an artist interested in concepts of identity and Englishness. "Englishness" is a term that is slippery, and some might say is becoming obsolete. London is a global, multicultural city. According to the 2001 British Census, one in four people living in London was born outside of the United Kingdom. London is the most populous city in the European Union, with an official population of 7.5 million in its center. The 2001 Census questions were translated into twenty-four languages; including

Swahili, Croatian, Cantonese, and Arabic, among others, to allow for the citizens of the city to be able interpret and respond to the questionnaires. The exact 2001 Census figures for Londoners break down as such: persons born in the UK: 5,229,187; persons born elsewhere in the EU: 377,048; persons born outside the EU: 1,565,856.¹ London is the capital city of England, yet its diversity, size, and culture make it unlike any other part of Britain. By its nature, London challenges the notions of what “Englishness” is. London is simultaneously a national and global icon, and the art scene in London is quickly establishing itself as one at the helm of the major art and museum centers of the world. In the 1980s Thatcherism and gentrification transformed the city, both ideologically and physically.

The Union Jack flag will figure prominently in this chapter, because Wallinger sees it as a nebulous and complex conglomeration of symbols that references a wide array of relationships between Britain and its citizens, as well as the relationship between the countries within Great Britain.² However, let us begin with a recent, often misunderstood work from 2004 and move backwards, which will allow us to consider Wallinger’s complex evolution of signs in his corpus from the present moment as we become accustomed to thinking about the works as singular ideas, but also as pieces that, taken together, form unlikely associations between one another.

Oxymoron (1996)

Mark Wallinger’s piece *Oxymoron* (Figure 1) from 1996 is a Union Jack flag whose colors have been changed into their optical complement (so that the red becomes green and the blue becomes orange), thus metamorphosing Britain’s Union Jack into a flag whose colors now

¹ Statistics can be found at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/>

² I should note here that there is a fundamental difference between the terms “English” and “British” that is often overlooked. Whereas English refers specifically to those from the country of England, British can actually refer to people from any part of Great Britain: England, Wales, Ireland, and Scotland. There is often a perceived interchangeability between the two terms that is less than accurate.

correspond to the Irish tricolor—the flag belonging to the Republic of Ireland. By definition, an oxymoron is a pairing of words where the adjective contradicts the meaning of the noun it precedes, creating a humorous and unlikely coupling of images in one’s mind. Examples of this phenomenon in use in everyday life are “deafening silence” or “friendly fire.” An oxymoron marries two contradictory terms. The piece *Oxymoron* is a visual contradiction as well – it substitutes one country’s symbols for another – calling into question the strife between borders within one seemingly “unified” kingdom. In *Oxymoron*, a rhetorical device is actualized into an artwork, and the work is one of several pieces of art where Wallinger consciously incorporates literary devices into his art. And this artwork is a real and functional item—it not only mimics the size and dimensions of a real flag, but it *is* a real flag (unlike, say Jasper Johns’s iconic American flag piece, which is more of a meditation of assemblage and the contradictory elements of sculpture and painting). *Oxymoron* is a functional flag, but it cannot ever exist as a “true” Union Jack. It is stuck in some sort of iconographical limbo between functionality and uselessness.

Oxymoron was first shown as part of the 1996 *Pledge Allegiance to a Flag?* exhibition staged by the London Printworks Trust who asked several artists to present “new works about current attitudes towards national flags in multicultural Britain.”³ The red, white, and blue Union Jack flag brings together the standards for all parts of the United Kingdom; it combines three crosses: St. George’s cross representing England, St. Patrick’s cross for Ireland, and St. Andrew’s for Scotland. (One must note, however, that Wales is left out of the configuration, and as recently as 2007 members of Parliament called for an incorporation of the Welsh dragon into

³ As stated on <http://www.londonprintworks.com/art09.html>.

the current design of the Union Jack.⁴) Thus, by its triple-cross design the Union Jack is meant to symbolically represent the unification of the British Isles both politically and patriotically. Its design, typical of flags around the world, represents a bringing together of different elements. *Oxymoron* undoes this harmony by breaking the visual codes that one would use to identify the object as a Union Jack.

By changing the colors of the British flag, Wallinger seeks to both usurp and point to the colonial and often violent history built into the symbol of the flag. For different sects, the national flag can connote different ideals. The artist says, “Ironically...my work has been criticized for being too English. Middle class squeamishness of self-analysis only allows Englishness as a term denoting parochialism and nostalgia. Remember how the National Front successfully annexed the Union Jack as a symbol of white supremacy?”⁵ In addition, to this day, dozens of both independent and dependent territories incorporate the Union Jack into their current flag.

Oxymoron has made appearances at various exhibitions since its inception in 1996: it flew in front of the British Pavilion during Wallinger’s stint as artist-representative at the Venice Biennale in 2001. Earlier, in 1997, Wallinger and several friends raised the flag in the Brixton area of south London, atop the roof of a building.⁶ In a photograph documenting this raising, Wallinger looks at the camera and smiles mischievously. Ian Hunt notes that: “The photograph

⁴ See the Labour MP Ian Lucas’s argument on http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/7114248.stm.

⁵ Mark Wallinger, “Fool Britannia: Not New, Not Clever, Not Funny,” in *Who’s Afraid of Red White & Blue? [attitudes to popular & mass culture, celebrity, alternative & critical practice & identity politics in recent British art]*, ed. David Burrows, 78-82 (Birmingham, UK: Article Press, 1998), 80.

⁶ This image shows Wallinger and several friends raising the *Oxymoron* flag atop a damp rooftop. The flag has been caught by the breeze and is fully displayed. Wallinger looks at the camera, gleefully smiling.

inevitably parodies those iconic records of American flags raised by troops in battle.”⁷ It also flew along the edge of London’s Jubilee Gardens in early 2009, a small park which hugs the Thames River next to the iconic Ferris wheel and tourist mecca known as the “London Eye.” The Ministry of Defense building sat across the river and was reflected in the plaque labeling the artwork. The flag was being flown in 2009 conjunction with Wallinger’s curated show *The Russian Linesman* at the Hayward Gallery, only a short walk from Jubilee Gardens. Because the theme of the *The Russian Linesman* (to be discussed in detail in chapter 5) was dealing with borders and thresholds, it is fitting that Wallinger chose *Oxymoron*, which blurs the line between Irish and British identity, to be flown symbolically “over” the exhibition.

So often our identities are predicated on being different or opposite to something else. Such is the case with *Oxymoron*, both the Wallinger artwork and the linguistic device. Ralph Rugoff makes the astute analysis of the flag:

Wallinger’s Irish Union Jack may be a fiction, yet its effect is bracingly real, connecting us to the storm of violent and heartfelt emotion that swirls about the polarized identities of Northern Ireland. On reflection, though, *Oxymoron* exudes an unsettling uncertainty—should we view it as an emblem of a British-dominated Northern Ireland or of a United Kingdom miraculously transformed into Ireland’s sister republic?⁸

The national flag is a symbol deeply rooted in emotion and a sense of personal identity in every country across the globe. Very few other symbolic items are able to elicit such visceral reactions in those who look upon them. Citizens pledge in their name, hang them in their yards, or hold them during a demonstration. When a soldier’s body comes home from a war zone, it is a flag that is draped on the coffin. The flag, both in the United Kingdom and in the United States, is a stand-in for a kaleidoscope of functions, both positive and negative. As Andrew Wilson suggests

⁷ Ian Hunt, “Protesting Innocence,” in *Mark Wallinger: Credo*, Lewis Biggs, David Burrows, and Ian Hunt, eds. 15-31 (London: Tate Gallery, 2000), 15.

⁸ Ralph Rugoff, “Jesus is an Oxymoron” 8.

of Britain's flag, "In Northern Ireland the Union Jack is a symbol of hatred, love, and broken promises; emotions that are felt individually and collectively and focused on the flag as surrogate representation for a particular authority and as an object of real power itself."⁹ The Union Jack is a readymade –its form and pattern is predetermined. Although it is a cultural-historical readymade, the artist's gesture has further complicated the meaning of the object.

At its essence, Wallinger's *Oxymoron* flag is a symbol that suggests both unity between England and Ireland, and also points toward an insensitivity that the identities could or should simply be merged. Although *Oxymoron* has only been discussed in the literature as pointing towards the relationship between England and Ireland, I would posit a second analysis here, that the orange, white, and blue tricolor also references India's flag. India's flag is almost a mirror of Ireland's, where the same colors are just presented in horizontal stripes rather than vertical. This possibility opens up a new level of meaning for the work, one that makes a statement about Britain's colonial rule in India and its subjugation of its people. British colonial rule in South Asia, including India, lasted from 1858 and 1947, for nearly one hundred years. Although Wallinger does not point toward a connection to the colonization of India in any of his explanations of *Oxymoron*, the fact that the piece hinges on the power of color patterns and their national associations allows for the easy revelation that, if only on a subconscious level, the relationship between England as a political state and those she has called her subjects over the centuries has several implications.

⁹ Andrew Wilson, "A Sea Change into Something Rich and Strange," in *Mark Wallinger: Lost Horizon*, 34-62 (Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1999), 48.

Tattoo (1987)

Another artwork in which Wallinger utilizes the imagery of the Union Jack is *Tattoo* (Figure 2). Made in 1987, *Tattoo* is one of the earliest works that will be discussed in this dissertation. The trio of hanging flags that make up *Tattoo* were created in response to an experience Wallinger had while working at Collet's International Bookshop, a Communist run business in central London on Charing Cross Road in 1986. From 1981 until 1988, the artist worked at the leftist bookshop which was pay rolled and run by Soviet Communist Party members. In 1986, members of the British National Front, an all white right-wing hate group, stormed the bookshop during an organized march and attacked many of the staff. In an essay Wallinger summarizes the attack bluntly: "...the National Front paid a visit and I got my head kicked in."¹⁰ He then goes on to say "In 1986 Englishness *in extremis* was imprinting itself firmly upon my mind."¹¹ *Tattoo* was made shortly after this violent encounter, and was one of the earliest instances in which Wallinger appropriated explicitly British national symbols in his work. To quote Wallinger in detail on the attack:

In the 80s there was a Republican march in Islington every year which would be confronted by the British National Party, a racist far right group who raised funds for the loyalist paramilitary in Northern Ireland. They were/are also virulently homophobic. [In 1986] Having fought the Irish nationalists in Islington they moved on to cause damage to *Gay's the Word* bookshop and then headed towards *Collet's*, the next target in their spree. I was startled out of my tea break in the shop just as the mob was fleeing. With a shop colleague we followed them down Charing Cross Road but then became their next targets. I got badly beaten up. After the event I pondered their psychotic attachment to origins. But the only answer I could get to was "Just because," which is the last answer one gives to a child's inexhaustible "why?" That is the only real answer to the two incontrovertible facts of anyone's existence: being born somewhere, of a woman. No amount of nurture can alter their nature, it would appear. To live it is simpler to obey and I thought that to make

¹⁰ Mark Wallinger, "Fool Britannia: Not New, Not Clever, Not Funny," 78.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 80.

Rorschach blots of their symbols of certainty would threaten their denial of self-knowledge.¹²

In this recollection, Wallinger points to their “psychotic attachment to origins,” which displays the strange mix of racism, nationalism, and religious strife that was loaded into his experience. The three flags, which hanging vertically on the wall, consist of the painted Union Jack icon on a material known as PVC ground sheet. PVC ground sheet is akin to a plastic tarpaulin material one might use for camping or military purposes, and in this particular piece, the three tapestry-like works have the sandy color of a burlap bag. The first of the flags has the proper colors of the Union Jack, yet the edges of the pigments are blotted and blotched, producing the appearance of liquid stains on a cloth. The flag appears blood soaked. The center flag also has the traditional red and blue colorations, and has a black colored stain in the center which looks like a Rorschach blotch test and vaguely resembles something of the insect variety. The third flag abandons the red, white, and blue altogether in favor of an all black Union Jack. The word “MUM” is printed across the front of all three flags in black, white, and red, respectively. On each flag the word is printed in a different typeface. This word can hold two connotations: most obviously, “mum” is the British colloquial word used for “mother.” It is a term used for maternal affection in the United Kingdom, but not in the United States. Also, “mum” may refer to “keeping mum” or not speaking up about certain events witnessed. In this regard, “mum” may be Wallinger’s way of making a statement about silencing and authority in relation to the violence that rocked south London in the 1980s.

As for his motivations in making the piece, Wallinger said, “*Tattoo* was my attempt to come to terms with the passion of bigotry.”¹³ Violence and racism went hand in hand in England

¹² Mark Wallinger, e-mail message to author, February 5, 2010.

¹³ Mark Wallinger, “Fool Britannia: Not New, Not Clever, Not Funny,” 80.

in the 1980s. In addition to gangs of National Front members like the one Wallinger encountered in 1986, there were several prominent race riots in Brixton in the 1980s. This is the area of the city where Wallinger kept his artist's studio and also where he raised his *Oxymoron* flag. In April 1981, nearly 5000 people were involved in race riots after a controversial "stop and search" policy was enacted by police, giving them the right to search people on the street at their own discretion. In September 1985, another riot broke out after a mother was shot and paralyzed when police entered her home in order to search for her son, who was not there.¹⁴ For much of the 1980s, many believed the London police were getting away with institutional racism.

One could easily surmise that the trio of flags are called *Tattoo* because the word "MUM" is probably one of the most common tattoos obtained in the twentieth century in Britain and America (although in the US, "Mom" is the standard). The word is so easily recognized as a popular tattoo that the selection has become cliché. And since Wallinger created the piece after a bloody run in with supremacist members of the National Front, it seems more than likely that he got his "head kicked in" by men sporting the word "MUM" inked on their biceps. As he wrote about his attackers in an essay entitled "Fool Britannia," "For all their violence, they struck me as a bunch of mother's boys scared of anything different, or 'other.'"¹⁵ The tattoo itself mixes the concepts of affection and maternal appreciation with the pain and permanence of obtaining a tattoo and the machismo earned by enduring the process and freely showing off the body art.¹⁶

¹⁴ For more information on the early riots see Martin Kettle and Lucy Hodges, *Uprising!: Police, the People and the Riots in Britain's Cities* (London: Pan Books, 1982).

¹⁵ Mark Wallinger, "Fool Britannia: Not New, Not Clever, Not Funny," 80.

¹⁶ Interestingly enough, *Tattoo* is not the only example of Wallinger adding text to a Union Jack flag; in 1994 he added the word "Wallinger" to a flag and carried it to a soccer match, where he was able to entice the crowd into chanting his name over and over. The work in question, documented in a large scale photograph of Wallinger and a friend holding it aloft, has the lofty title: *31 Hayes Court, Camberwell New Road, Camberwell, London, England, Great Britain, Europe, The World, The Solar System, The Galaxy, The Universe*.

Sleeper (2004)

For ten nights in October 2004, Mark Wallinger was on the prowl—literally. Dressed in a full-body brown bear suit, the contemporary British artist roamed the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin in character in a bear suit as part of a performance piece known as *Sleeper* (Figure 3). The glass walls of the iconic German museum Wallinger inhabited acted as both a cage for the artist and a neatly structured display case, where inquisitive passers-by could stop and ogle the grown man charging toward them, crawling about, or lying exhausted on the floor. The previous exhibition staged at the Mies van der Rohe designed Neue Nationalgalerie (the structure was finished in 1968¹⁷) had just come down, so the space was virtually empty aside from Wallinger’s roaming nocturnal creature. The bear suit that the artist wore during the performance exists somewhere between appearing funny and frightful—at times both comical and uncanny in the videos that document that piece. Sally O’Reilly describes the bear suit as “half-gormless, half-aggressive”¹⁸ in its remarkable captivity during *Sleeper*. The head of the suit is somewhat realistic, but the body is generic and unspecified and Wallinger moves about with a labored gait—his anonymity as the wizard behind the curtain could have surely been preserved if the artist had so chosen.¹⁹

While watching video of the performance, it is obvious that the figure moving about the Neue Nationalgalerie is human, but the human inside the animal cloak is not visible, and this

¹⁷ Mies van der Rohe was a German-born architect, and Berlin’s glass modern art gallery was one of his final projects, as he died in 1969, the year after its completion. The Berlin Wall went up in 1961; thus the gallery was not enjoyed by Easterners until after Germany’s re-unification in 1989.

¹⁸ Sally O’Reilly, “Things That Go Bump in the Night,” *Modern Painters*, vol. 18, no. 5 (June 2005): 84.

¹⁹ The artist explained his tendency to lumber about and crawl during the *Sleeper* performance: “To be honest two things effectively hindered any playing to the camera. Firstly I was not feeling well at all, and secondly my glasses steamed up from the very beginning. Crawling was a useful and prudent way around the building until I had cooled down sufficiently to be able to see again!” Email message to author, February 5, 2010.

creates a sense of unease. Wallinger's performance in Berlin was broadcast back to his home country through a live video feed at the German Embassy in London during the 2004 Frieze Art Fair. Thus, in its real-time broadcast, the performance built a kind of symbolic bridge between London and Berlin; this joining between two fellow states became the overarching metaphor that blanketed this entire piece. The live screening during Frieze in October 2004 was not the only appearance of the bear—approximately two hours of the documented video of *Sleeper* were also shown as a projected work the following year at the 2005 Venice Biennale in *The Experience of Art*, curated by Maria de Corral. The video was also shown as Wallinger's entry at the Tate Liverpool's 2007 Turner Prize exhibition.

Now that the stage is set, let us turn to an unpacking of this performance. The bear is a symbol of Berlin; it is the city's mammalian mascot, and even the words "bear" and "Berlin" share a phonetic likeness. A bear standing on his two hind legs, seen in profile, is the image on the city's coat of arms. Thus, I am suggesting that Wallinger, an Englishman, was locked inside a costume that forced him to see the German capital through the eyes of its own symbolic animal as he meandered as most of the bustling capital slept. Wallinger sees this connection—"how the symbols of a certain culture impinge upon the consciousness of a people"²⁰—as crucial to the meaning of *Sleeper*. The bear is a duplicitous creature—it is often seen in children's narratives as either a symbol of fear and threat (as in the fairy tale *Goldilocks*) or paternal watchfulness (as in Kipling's *Jungle Book*). The creature is a recognized symbol whose connotations can reference a vast array of emotions ranging from delight to unease—and Wallinger experienced this spectrum

²⁰ Wallinger in an interview on the webcast video "Meet the Artist: Mark Wallinger, Turner Prize Nominee," TateShots, November 2007. The video can be seen at <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/33804615001>

of reactions during his night of roaming about on display.²¹ Indeed Wallinger's performance in its entirety reads much like that of an enchanted happening, as he peered night after night through the transparent "looking glass" of the gallery out onto the cosmopolitan nightscape. His bear is the Minotaur without a maze. As Christy Lange describes Wallinger's gallery confines:

The most remarkable aspect of Mark as a bear was the way he managed to bring the museum itself to bear on his performance. He brought out the building's nature - its essence as a giant vitrine. At times he ran wildly from one corner to the other, or hid between the two wooden walls, or lay splayed on the floor. But when he disappeared behind one of its columns, or got lost in the reflections in the glass, he left something behind - the building was still animated, even alive. Despite the museum's immense proportions, manufactured materials and cold exterior, all it needed was this one living thing to make it breathe.²²

Here let me highlight the final word of this quote: "breathe." There is an element of institutional critique here—the museum acts as a "cage" for symbols, and extends a critique of modernist architecture. *Sleeper* stands apart from the other three works in the chapter (and indeed the entire dissertation) because it is a performance, and is a one-time, "live" occurrence. In it, Wallinger himself "breathes" and lives in a way that makes his body a part of the work—he is doubly the orchestrator and subject in an artwork full of dualities. The title of the performance piece also holds double meanings. On the surface, the word "sleeper" may refer to the inherent tendencies of the bear to hibernate in the winter months. In this train of thought, on some levels the Neue Nationalgalerie, empty and still at night, is modern architecture's equivalent of nature's solitary bear cave—it has become a sign of both captivity and refuge for the artist. The term "sleeper" also refers to the secret world of espionage and double agents, and it is this association that inspired Wallinger to pursue this project. Also notable here is the fact that the actual display

²¹ In the webcast video in the aforementioned footnote, Wallinger described how some people loitering about the Neue Nationalgalerie ran away frightened at the sight of him charging the glass, while other appeared merely puzzled or unimpressed at the sight of him.

²² Christy Lange, "Captive Audience," *Tate Etc. Magazine Online*, Issue 9, Spring 2007. This article can be found at <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue9/captiveaudience.htm>.

spaces at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin are entirely underground—the ground floor level encased in glass that served as Wallinger’s zoo-like theater is primary used as a ticketing and reception space during normal museum working hours. Thus, the gallery is itself hidden underground, which adds to the complexity of the association with the hibernating bear and the secret world of sleeper agents, whose missions often force them to remain “underground” and undetected.

“Sleeper agents,” who are both the stuff of spy films and real life, are governmentally pay-rolled agents who have taken up residence in a target country, and are able to blend in with everyday citizens while awaiting instructions on their “mission.” Their identities are assumed, and they are often planted months or even years in advance of their call to duty—therefore being able to act like “natives” in the area they are assigned to live in. Sleepers survive in their surroundings because their disguises are invisible. Richard Grayson describes the sleeper agent as thus:

The term ‘Sleeper’ comes from the Intelligence Services and signifies those in the pay of a government buried deep in a foreign organisation, just doing what should be done day to day, not drawing attention to themselves, unremarkable. In theory they are agents of an opposing power, perhaps an opposing ideology, but whilst they are a sleeper they remain dormant, entirely mute, latent.²³

In addition to the reasons stated above on why Wallinger has chosen the bear suit for the *Sleeper* performance, the artist also makes reference in his writings and in interviews to a German television program that simultaneously delighted and frightened him as a child, the “Singing Ringing Tree.” The show “The Singing Ringing Tree” was a 1957 German version of a Beauty and the Beast-esque fairy tale story produced at the Babelsberg Studio in communist East Germany that later aired in England in the 1960s as part of a “Tales from Europe” children’s

²³ Richard Grayson, “A Number of Disappearances,” in *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries, 7-21 (Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2008), 17.

series on the BBC. The Babelsberg studio has quite a history: classic German films such as *Metropolis* (1927) and *The Blue Angel* (1930) were produced there, and it still functions as a studio today. It is in itself an icon of German cinematic dominance and innovation in Europe. Because the German-language “The Singing Ringing Tree” was shown in only East Germany in the 1950s before being dubbed over and broadcast a few years later in the United Kingdom, Wallinger realized only recently that he had a “primal psychic link...to people beyond the wall”²⁴ which ignited an interest in doing this peculiar and complex performance in Berlin.

The plot of the television show reveals another link to the figure of the bear. In the show “The Singing Ringing Tree,” an over-confident prince on a quest for a magical tree is turned into a brown bear by an evil gnome when he fails to immediately capture the love of a princess. The prince is not doomed to live as a bear forever—by the end of the tale he has thankfully regained his human form. The themes of transformation (both physical and moral) guide the story throughout, and the overall plot would be recognizable to many as following closely in line with “Beauty and the Beast.” But despite its happy ending, the children’s program is not without its share of frightening beasts, near-death escapes, and protagonists in peril. When “The Singing Ringing Tree” was broadcast in the 1960s and part of the “Tales From Europe” series, it was broken into several segments that would have been shown over a series of nights. Thus, for the English children following the series, the conflict and terrifying transformation of the Prince into the bear would not have been resolved immediately, extending the trauma of the viewing experience.²⁵ Many of those who experienced “The Singing Ringing Tree” as children were able

²⁴ The webcast “Meet the Artist: Mark Wallinger,” from November 2007, can be viewed at the Tate’s video archive at: <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/33804615001>.

²⁵ As Wallinger explained in personal conversation with the author, October 29, 2009. In a follow up email, the artist wrote that “my generation was shaped by the world conjured up by the TV, just as a previous generation had been enraptured by the cinema. They both made the transition from monochrome to colour.” This is expanded upon in Appendix A of this dissertation.

to re-live the experience when the film was brought to London for its first British screening as part of a film festival in 1990. For many attendees, seeing the bizarre fantasy film as an adult both resolved and enhanced their understanding of the work. Wallinger himself commented in October 2009 in an interview that he was amazed with the first image came up on screen and the movie played in color, as he had only seen it in it in black-and-white as a child.²⁶

Thus, for Wallinger, the bear, with its connection to espionage, hibernation, and television fantasy, is a many-sided symbol for redemption, change, childhood trauma, and Berlin. As the exhibition catalog for *Sleeper* states: “The work develops the artist’s interest in the idea of transmutation by exploring the mechanics that underpin Berlin’s civic symbolism.”²⁷ The Neue Nationalgalerie, where *Sleeper* took place, is positioned immediately west of the Potsdam Square. Today, this area, with its bright neon lights, tall buildings and hotels, and iconic Sony Center, is a geographical and consumerist symbol of a reinvigorated Berlin after the dissolution of the wall.

Wallinger describes in an interview how he originally came up for the idea for *Sleeper* while visiting the brown bear enclosure in the Berlin zoo. The artist lived in Berlin from 2001-2003 while on a DAAD artist’s fellowship. There, he saw a placard describing how the bears in the local zoo were not allowed to breed due to the abundance of the species in captivity.²⁸ The domesticated bear, the bear that lives inside the artificial enclosures of a zoo, will not reproduce.

²⁶ Wallinger in conversation with the author, October 29, 2009. A detailed analysis of “The Singing Ringing Tree” and its moralistic and transformative themes and well as its importation into Britain in both the 1960s and much later in the 1990s can be read in the essay by Rosemary Creaser: “Cocteau for Kids: Rediscovering The Singing Ringing Tree,” in *Cinema and the Realms of Enchantment: Lectures, Seminars, and Essays*, edited by Duncan Petrie, 111-124 (London: British Film Institute, 1993).

²⁷ As quoted in Nigel Reynolds, “Mark Wallinger’s Bear is Turner Prize Favourite,” *The Telegraph Online*, October 19, 2007. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3668619/Mark-Wallingers-bear-is-Turner-Prize-favourite.html>

²⁸ From Wallinger’s artist statement for *Sleeper*, in *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries (Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2008), 133.

The bear is only allowed to be viewed passively, not actively participate in his own survival and progeny. The animal in the zoo has been planted there for a purpose, to be gazed upon by a public—he remains highly visible—and Wallinger’s bear has a similar fate. The caged bear has nothing to do but wander, as Wallinger does during his performance. Of the fate of the bears in the Berlin zoo, Wallinger mused, “When the last one dies, will they raze the whole sorry zoo to the ground like they did with Spandau Prison after the death of the idiot Hess?”²⁹ Here Wallinger makes an obscure reference to Rudolf Hess. Hess was a ward at Spandau for forty years, from 1947 until 1987, after he was found guilty of war crimes against Jewish citizens at Nuremberg. For the latter half of his sentence, Hess was the sole resident of the prison, all the other war criminals having been released in 1966 or earlier.³⁰ Wallinger is drawing comparisons between the lonesome wanderings of a German captive bear and the German man behind bars. The two were caged for very different reasons, yet their fate is somewhat similar.

The bear in a zoo is a “sleeper,” as he is planted in an unfamiliar habitat just as a double agent is. Perhaps it is too simple to suggest that Wallinger identified with the plight of the caged bear during that trip to the zoo, and therefore caged himself in the Berlin gallery for ten days. The connection is not so literal or built upon too much empathy between man and beast. Perhaps more it is about natural and unnatural habitats and how both the caged bear and the sleeper agent blend in with and adjust to the artificial, fictive surroundings they are given. Wallinger’s intimate, journal-style artist statement written for *Sleeper* gives many insights into the artist’s reasons for sequestering himself in the Neue Nationalgalerie. He begins:

As a bear I don’t claim any special knowledge. Only that which I have experienced and how it led me here. Growing up in the shadow of the wall was not about

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ For further information see Norman J.W. Goda, *Tales from Spandau. Nazi Criminals and the Cold War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

proximity. Imagine casting a stone into water and finding that the ripples, expanding in concentric rings, never diminish. Berlin was part of my subconscious before I ever set foot here.³¹

Here Wallinger suggests that the dominating effects, both psychological and political, of the wall dividing east and west Berlin were not only felt by those in Germany. Living in Berlin for two years, from 2001-2003, Wallinger seems to be hinting toward the fact that the psychological remnants of the wall remain as a lurking ghost within the city.

In his bear suit, Wallinger possesses two identities: that of his human self and its furry counterpart. He is the prince trapped in the skin of another not unlike the bear in “The Singing Ringing Tree.” The artist has become the very figure that frightened him as a child. His inside is human, and his outside is the foreign animal that those who stand outside the glass of the Berlin gallery see. He is at once a possessor of two sides, not unlike the geographical state of Germany during the occupation of the wall. Wallinger sees his own physical split during *Sleeper* as analogous to the geographical German split:

The two realms of Germany were like twins separated as children and raised in completely contrary ways. Having to cross irrevocably from one realm to another, or be divided without appeal. This is what I have learnt and it seems very cruel. Germany invented the unconscious, which is not normally credited with respecting borders.³²

It is interesting to note that Wallinger describes the divided Germany as “twins separated.” This concept of doubling/twinning plays heavily into *Sleeper*. A bear “twin” even interjected itself literally into the performance. At the end of the seventh night of the performance, an unknown member of the German public showed up in an identical bear costume, lurked about briefly, and then disappeared back into the night. The artist found the appearance of the other bear unsettling and a bit frightful. Wallinger did not know, and does not know to this day, the identity of “the

³¹ Wallinger, artist statement for *Sleeper*.

³² Ibid.

other bear” who he playfully called: “My German brother. *Mein doppelganger*.”³³ The artist was once in possession of the security camera footage that picked up the presence of the other bear, but unfortunately that documentation was mysteriously and unexplainably lost in the artist’s many travels back and forth between London and Berlin.³⁴

A doppelganger is one’s twin and duplicate. Encountering one’s own doppelganger is, according to some folklore, a dark omen or even a sign of impending death. The poet Percy Shelley, a figure that emerges in some of Wallinger’s photographic works, was said by his widow and fellow author Mary Shelley to have claimed to have had visions of meeting his own doppelganger only months before the fatal drowning that took his life.³⁵ Wallinger then was right to be afraid of the person who mysteriously showed up to act as his double. Although the performance was conceived of as a solo venture, a second bear mysteriously appeared, thus doubling the symbol. Wallinger’s bear and the duplicate, were, but for a brief moment, the dueling icons—a symbolic Ursa Major and Minor illuminating the Potsdam Plaza in Berlin.³⁶

The documents left behind that were not lost chronicling *Sleeper* produce very different effects. The still photographs of the performance reproduced in exhibition catalogs and online are bizarre and arresting, dare I say sinister, in an unsettling way. In photographs, Wallinger’s lumbering and baggy costume is reminiscent of a low budget horror film; with its mouth agape

³³ From the last line of Wallinger’s artist statement for *Sleeper*.

³⁴ In October 2009 I met Wallinger in his London studio, and one of the first questions I asked the artist was concerning this mysterious twin bear...he stated: “tragically the vast majority of the documentation got lost, including CCTV pictures of this other bear...which was a bit upsetting at the time.”

³⁵ The photographic works are part of the *World in the Desert* series from 2000, which are not discussed in this dissertation. On the Shelley issue, see for example Mary Shelley’s letter from the summer of 1822 in Betty T. Bennett, *The Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 245.

³⁶ Here I make reference to the twin bear constellations of “Ursa Major” and “Ursa Minor” to further push this idea of twinning and doubling in relationship to this performance. Interestingly, Simon Patterson, another British artist from the yBa generation, created a work entitled *The Great Bear* in 1992, which was a four-color lithograph print on paper where the London Underground (subway) system was envisioned as a great constellation of important artists and literary figures.

and white teeth bared it seems more suited for a carnival hall of spooks than for a meditative piece on Berlin's identity.³⁷ Watching the video of the performance produces a different effect. Wallinger runs about the interior of the gallery space, as if looking for a place to hide from the glares coming in from curious and startled pedestrians. The all-glass construction of the ground level floor in the Neue Nationalgalerie makes finding a suitable hiding place difficult for Wallinger's creature. At times he drags about as if exhausted, sitting or lying on the floor when the suit becomes unbearably hot.

Wallinger's bear represents a series of black-and-white childhood memories finally being able to come out of their "hibernation" through the duration of his hypnotic, humorous, and unsettling performance. The cavernous space of the Neue Nationalgalerie is a liminal one that exists as a stand-in for various examples of "in-between-ness" such as the leap between childhood and adulthood, the border between East and West Berlin before 1989, and the psychic partition between the fantasy created on a Babelsberg soundstage and the reality of experiencing a frightening television show in your parents' living room. In an interview, Wallinger stated that having the opportunity to view *The Singing Ringing Tree* as an adult was akin to "the discovery of something withheld, and the way history, both personal and geo-political, led to our chancing upon its reality years later. A secret revealed. I think there was also engrained into my generation a monochrome vision of the whole Eastern Bloc. For East Germany, read Kansas, there is no way back to either of them."³⁸ *Sleeper* releases sleeping childhood traumas into a new, updated arena that may neither be safe nor welcoming. Not unlike the Elizabethan theatre strategies that

³⁷ I would expand here that in this low budget horror style there is an evocation of early German film moments, some that could very well be tied to the film studio in Babelsberg.

³⁸ Mark Wallinger, e-mail message to author, February 5, 2010. The mentioning of "Kansas" makes reference to the American state that the character of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* is from. The film *The Wizard of Oz*, like *The Singing Ringing Tree*, is one that the artist has stated traumatized him when he viewed it as a child.

made London famous for its dramatic arts in previous centuries, Wallinger's "performance" is a tragedy and comedy in one. It reveals that the visual and memory implants that are dormant within us can be awakened by simply opening the door to imagined spaces.

Although they are two entirely different works, *Oxymoron* and the performance *Sleeper* both toy with symbols of national identity and seek to blur the lines between seemingly hard edges between nation states, and *Sleeper* is an evolution of the ideas brought forth in *Oxymoron*. Wallinger's bear is a cipher between two worlds just as *Oxymoron* is a cipher between two nations.

Time and Relative Dimensions in Space (2001)

Another work that deals with popular culture references and childhood memory is *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* (Figure 4). This life-size piece is a stainless steel sculpture that copies the form of a now virtually extinct form of communication booth: the British police call-box. In its original incarnation, the call-box would have been blue, and not unlike the shape and stature of telephone booths common in the United States and other Western countries. The purpose of the police call-box would have been three fold: first, a civilian could pick up the receiver on the outside of the booth to get in touch with the police station if they found themselves in trouble; secondly, a policeman on the beat could be contacted by the station through the call-box (the light atop the box would flash signaling for the policeman to call in); and thirdly, the inside of the call box could be used as a temporary holding cell for a ruffian or two while the apprehending policeman on foot waited for a squad car to arrive. The call-box was, in essence, the earliest form of the mobile command post or communication center in Britain.

Time and Relative Dimensions in Space starts with the symbol of the call-box and merges and updates it with an icon of British pop culture and science fiction—the TARDIS. The TARDIS (which is an abbreviation for "time and relative dimensions in space") is the mode of

transportation for the “Doctor” on Britain’s long-running television show “Dr. Who,” which has been on the air since 1963. Wallinger wrote of the TARDIS: “For the BBC to appropriate it as a time machine was a stroke of genius, a “found object” to rival Duchamp’s *Fountain*.”³⁹ The TARDIS can move through time and space, and although it retains the unassuming and ordinary look of a call-box on the outside, the shape and layout of the TARDIS’ interior is large and transcendental—so that when the “Doctor” enters his TARDIS the space opens up into several large chambers and piloting room. On the television show, the TARDIS goes generally unnoticed on the streets of London because of its unassuming exterior, and simply dematerializes when it begins a journey through time, leaving no trace.⁴⁰ The TARDIS has the ability to be materially transient and is a changeling. Wallinger utilizes this theme of “disappearance” in many of his works. Not only is the worldly, actual call-box a disappearing British icon, but the other-worldly, fictionalized call-box from television subsists on its ability to appear and disappear.

As with the piece *Sleeper*, Wallinger is interesting in fleshing-out the mythologies generated by a set of symbols and object that hold resonance for him because the memories of that object are tied to his childhood. The artist said in an interview:

The residual authority that the *TARDIS* carried from its days as a police box gave the object some subversive clout for a small boy growing up in the sixties. But the mischief of seeing such a jumped-up bit of street furniture as a portal through time and space effectively erased its original function. Occasionally I have reserved the right to make work that is particular its time or place in the mythology of my own childhood. Looking back the police box that was the *TARDIS* was an extraordinary object, a small symmetrical building with double doors taking up all four sides like a conjuror’s box.

³⁹ Mark Wallinger, e-mail message to author, February 5, 2010.

⁴⁰ For an extensive background on the concepts, history, functions, and cultural phenomena surrounding the TARDIS and its role in “Dr. Who,” consult the detailed Wikipedia page at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TARDIS>

Wallinger has updated the call-box TARDIS by replacing the iconic royal blue exterior with a silver, reflective one. In his discussion of the TARDIS-inspired sculpture, Ralph Rugoff draws meaning out of the mirrored surface Wallinger has given the work, saying that the piece is a “a rhetorical reflection on the means by which art transports us; how it lures us with promises of escape only to return us to ourselves.”⁴¹ This existential reading of the work is one that puts emphasis on the experience that the viewer has while in the presence of the piece—a tactic often used in minimalist sculpture.

The mirrored surface used in Wallinger’s *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* calls to mind the *Mirrored Cubes* sculptures from the 1960s by Robert Morris (Figure 5). Wallinger’s sculpture is consciously referencing the earlier Morris sculptures, which are now themselves icons of conceptual and minimalistic art. Both the TARDIS and Morris sculptures become somewhat invisible as they absorb and reflect their surroundings. They take on the appearance of the gallery floor below them as its reflection camouflages the sculptures.

In her essay “Reinventing Derivation: Roles, Stereotypes, and ‘Young British Art,’” Elizabeth Legge draws comparisons between British artists working in the 1990s to their American Minimal and Conceptual art precursors. For example, she notes how Damien Hirst’s giant ashtray piece recalls Robert Morris’s minimalist floor sculptures. For Legge, comparisons between young British artists and Americans reveal that the “clichéd aspect of the British identity crisis involves self-definition in opposition to the United States”⁴² Legge’s rather dismissive reading of the British art revival in the Saatchi decade argues that the yBas were

⁴¹ Ralph Rugoff, “Jesus is an Oxymoron,” 15.

⁴² Elizabeth Legge, “Reinventing Derivation: Roles, Stereotypes, and ‘Young British Art,’” *Representations* 71 (Summer 2000): 9.

“screaming for attention” within an already established contemporary canonical history that is American by nature.

As suggested before in relation to the *TARDIS* sculpture, Wallinger draws inspiration from American Minimalist and Conceptual precursors, yet in a more cynical way than his fellow yBa artists such as Hirst or the sculptor Rachael Whiteread. For example, Wallinger’s 1987 sculpture *A Model History* (Figure 6) is a miniature Stonehenge constructed out of bricks – drawing a humorous connection to Carl Andre’s *Equivalent VIII* (Figure 7; known as the “fire bricks”) that were so controversially purchased by the Tate in 1972. *Equivalent VIII* is a floor sculpture made out of 120 reddish-colored fire bricks. The sum that the Tate paid to acquire Andre’s bricks created a media firestorm because the museum public perceived that a work made of nothing more than pre-fabricated bricks was not worth the millions paid for it.

This understanding of the *TARDIS* can also be grounded by a more practical reading that falls in line with themes Wallinger has always been interested in: that of surveillance and policing. Perhaps the *TARDIS* sculpture is nothing more than an astute comment being made on the proliferation of modern day surveillance by our own governmental agencies? One must keep in mind here that the United Kingdom is one of the most heavily surveilled countries in the world: with over four million video camera collecting images at any given time, it has the most CCTV cameras operating on the streets and subways than any other country in the world.⁴³ Living in England, then, is truly living in a surveillance state. And *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* is a work that combines a series of extremes: a television show that is the longest running science fiction program in England, a comment on Britain as the surveillance capital of the world. Perhaps also Wallinger’s mirror surface box makes a bit of a Duchampian joke about

⁴³ See for example Paul Lewis’s March 2, 2009 article, “Every Step you Take” in *The Guardian* on the prevalence of monitoring cameras in London.

a policeman's watchful gaze. After all, the police call box was implanted on British city streets to keep order and hold criminals, and, a mirror does nothing more than capture our own image.

In the exhibition catalog for Wallinger's 1999 show *Lost Horizon*, Andrew Wilson considers the uses of mirrored surfaces in several of his artworks, drawing comparisons between the mirror, the self, and the literary construction of the palindrome:

The mirror marks out another space for identification and imagination in which the reversals inherent in its action enact a doubling of the subject. [...] In these works the real thing and the reflected image seem to coincide. Although this could also suggest ways in which a mirror can take on the character of a palindrome – endlessly repeating itself, forwards and backwards, as a perpetual inversion – it also suggests, in more recent work, how the imaginary space of the mirror can serve as a representation of belief.⁴⁴

As Wallinger is a confessed lover of classic literature hailing from the United Kingdom, such as Percy Shelly, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett, it seems only natural that certain literary devices begin to pop up, transformed, in *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* and several other of his three dimensional artworks.

Endnote: National Anthems

Mark Wallinger continues to play with the icon of the national flag in his more recent works, and by means of a conclusion to this thematic I will briefly mention a flag piece that strikes out into new conceptual ground by bringing the United States into the mix. In December 2006, he exhibited an American flag at the Art Basel Miami convention entitled *US*, which was made that same year (Figure 8). To my knowledge this is the only example of the artist using the American flag to make a statement about tensions within American-British relations. As was the case with his Union Jack interpretations discussed in this chapter, *US* was a slightly altered polyester textile flag (the title *US* was being used as the acronym for "United States" but also

⁴⁴ Andrew Wilson, "A Sea Change into Something Rich and Strange," 56.

plays with an ironic “US versus THEM” global mentality). The one altered part of the *US* flag could be easily spotted in the lower right hand quadrant of the flag—Wallinger added one extra blue star. While some people at the Art Basel Miami fair erroneously believed this star to be representing Puerto Rico, the star was in fact is a stand-in marker for Britain, the statement being about Britain’s complicity and cohesion with America’s political and militaristic policies during the Bush/Blair years. Although the United Kingdom exists in relative geographical isolation from mainland Europe, and North America, its mythologies and symbols are all inextricably linked. City emblems, be they of London, Berlin, or others, work their way into our subconscious, and they can change and morph over time based on one’s cultural experiences.

Oxymoron, Wallinger’s most famous flag piece to date, tricked the mind in the dualities and national confusions loaded into the simple piece of textile. There is also an optical trick loaded beneath the surface of *Oxymoron* as well—if one stares at the blue and red of the Union Jack for an extended duration, an afterimage of alternate colors appear when one looks away. The hanging flag trio known as *Tattoo* has the memory of a violent experience permanently etched into it, and simultaneously expressed the artist’s vulnerabilities and the vulnerabilities of those members of the National front who attacked him in 1986.

The Berlin performance *Sleeper* showed the artist at his most exposed and vulnerable state, despite the fact that he was hidden bodily from his viewers. The performance, complete with Wallinger’s trapped yet endearing beast, was both comical and rich with the sadness of isolation. It is an example of nationalism pushed to a frightening and violent edge. The *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* sculpture is a science fiction fan’s dream, complete with astute art-historical references to American Minimalism and all its overblown machismo and theatrical objectivity.

Wallinger's artworks often revolve around symbols, modern myths, and pop culture, and the irresolvable contradictions that linger within. To find connections between these four very different works of art discussed in the first thematic chapter, one must be able to think about them in terms of what they both reveal and conceal in terms of identity.

CHAPTER 3 HORSES AND ROYALTY

In the most basic sense, this is a chapter about money, privilege, and the aristocracy in England, and how these themes are articulated and critiqued in Wallinger's works that have to do with sport and racing. Below the surface of the glitz and glamour paraded about by the wealthy upper class, however, I argue that Wallinger reveals the true ironies of the demise of the old aristocratic ways in Britain: that the monarchy is all but obsolete and horse racing—the “sport of kings”—no longer truly belongs to the English, even though many British citizens continue to imagine it defines their identity.

To understand why Wallinger devoted so much energy to making work about sport in the mid-1990s, one must understand the artist's own personal investments in horse racing. He was a fan of the industry since childhood, often placing bets through older family members before he was legally able to gamble. Racing was a national past-time, and it created a sense of pride in the artist, and a sense of excitement.¹ In an interview he reminisced: “I can remember as a child of five or six running home from school to catch T.V. coverage of Arkle winning the Gold Cup.”² This sort of personal loyalty to and interest in racing places Wallinger in the situation where, as a fan, he must critique from within the system and find the critical distance by which to examine the politics of the sport.

The exalted role of the horse in Great Britain and in British art cannot be disputed. One only needs to walk along the grand hallways of London's National Gallery or Tate Britain to see

¹ See Paul Bonaventura, “A Day at the Races,” in *Locus Solus: Site, Identity, Technology in Contemporary Art*, Julian Stallabrass, Pauline van Mourik Broekman, and Niru Ratnam, eds., 73-85 (London: Black Dog, 2000); and Sarah Kent, *Shark Infested Waters: The Saatchi Collection of British Art in the 90s* (London: Philip Wilson, 2003).

² Theodora Visher, “Upside Down, Back to Front, and the Wrong Way Around: Interview with Mark Wallinger,” in *Mark Wallinger: Lost Horizon*, 6-33 (Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1999), 14.

how and where the glorified beast is portrayed in all his valor and splendor in the work of many treasured European artists. While sporting and racing scenes are perhaps not the most abundant subject matter in the annals of art history (racing paintings by Degas are one of several notable exceptions) Wallinger sees sporting as having a special position in securing notoriety and prestige for the United Kingdom. In a 2001 interview he stated:

The British genius has been being able to invent a number of games that have retained their hold on a large part of the world. Sport also seems to be in common with the causes of the best of art that is forever sustaining and different within a closed set of rules, and that interested me too.³

Indeed, many of Britain's most beloved traditional painters, such as Stubbs, have chosen the horse and its related sporting events as their chosen subjects, and it is this historical relationship between "classic" English art and the horse that Wallinger is interested in. When the George Stubbs' painting of a rearing majestic stallion known as *Whistlejacket* was purchased by the National Gallery in 1997, the museum proclaimed its beloved new eleven million pound procurement by projecting images of *Whistlejacket* on the exterior of the museum façade. *Whistlejacket's* acquisition by the National Gallery was touted in the media like an actual and metaphorical homecoming.⁴ Its purchase made a statement about the prominence and purchasing power of the National Gallery, just as the pedigree of a racehorse makes a statement about the social pedigree of its owner. Wallinger sees the dynamics of the racing world as "...a kind of exaggerated microcosm of British society. You're either upper class or you mucking out the stables."⁵

³ Jean Wainwright, "An Interview with Mark Wallinger," *Audio Arts Magazine*, volume 19, Numbers 3 & 4, 2001. This interview can be found online at http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/audioarts/cd4_1_transcript.htm.

⁴ See the article in *The Guardian* from December 20, 1997, entitled "11 Million Stubbs Bought for Nation." Prior to this purchase the painting had been in the Rockingham family since its creation in 1762.

⁵ Sandy Nairne, *Art Now: Interviews with Modern Artists* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002), 82.

Wallinger's paintings of horses and his works that deal with national heritage, the royal family, and sporting seek to point out the imbalances and contradictions that exist between popular pastimes that are supposedly geared toward the masses and the goals and ideals of the Thatcherite period under which he became an artist in the 1980s. As Kevin Davey says about Wallinger's work during the late 1990s:

...by using film, video and performance as a means to analyse the breeding and racing of horses as an important nexus of sport, power and Anglo-British national identifications, Wallinger destabilised the fields of sport and art, and by doing so contributed to the process of making the English strangers to themselves.⁶

The fact that Davey evokes the image of the English becoming "strangers to themselves" elicits the idea that a general unification of the people as a single race or nation with a unified sense of culture and heritage is dissolving.

This chapter will focus almost exclusively on works made by Wallinger between 1992 and 1995, a period that marks a mature phase of productivity when his interest in issues directly involving British class identity formation was reaching its peak. (One must take note, however, that Wallinger began investigating the notions of a clichéd sense of "Britishness" as early as 1985, and his seminal early painting *Lost Horizon* was one of the first examples where he parodied the legacy of Stubbs in relationship to pop culture.⁷) This is also the only chapter in this dissertation to include the medium of painting, as Wallinger all but abandoned this, his early-career format of choice, for more than a decade after 1995.⁸ I begin this chapter with

⁶ Kevin Davey, "Mark Wallinger," in *English Imaginaries: Six Studies in Anglo-British Modernity*, 171-202 (London: Lawrence and Wishart Ltd., 1999), 172.

⁷ *Lost Horizon* is not discussed in depth in the dissertation; however it falls in line aesthetically with the early paintings discussed herein. It portrays a kitschy china shire horse and a figurine of a Royal Guard in a Stubbsian-esque background.

⁸ Wallinger began his career after finishing at Goldsmith's primarily as a painter, and works such as *Lost Horizon* (1986) and *Common Grain* (1985), which will not be discussed in detail here, show his early inclinations toward dissecting British identity politics. Wallinger returned to painting after a long hiatus with his 2007 series of *Self Portrait* works that were all painting of the letter "I."

commentary on a series of horse paintings that could easily be said to be some of Wallinger's first well-publicized and critically analyzed works of art.

Race, Class, Sex (1992)

Race, Class, Sex, a work that was part of the Saatchi collection exhibited in 1997's *Sensation*, is a quartet of full-bodied equestrian portraits (Figure 9). The four thoroughbreds Wallinger painted were based on four star racers—Dancing Brave, Shareef Dancer, Reference Point, and Soviet Star. These horses were not chosen arbitrarily as worthy of portraiture; the pedigree of these four can be traced back to the “Darley Arabian” one of the first three Arabian stallions imported into Great Britain for breeding purposes in the late seventeenth century.⁹ The “Darley Arabian” is so named because the Darley family of Yorkshire had a hand in the importation of the horse. The horses themselves, who all face to the left, are rendered with precise illusionism and hyper-realism: however, the backgrounds are non-descript and blank, which is a direct reference to some of the iconic horse portraits by George Stubbs such as his 1762 painting *Whistlejacket* (Figure 10; this work was mentioned earlier). (Stubbs would have painted the horse himself and left the background to be filled in by studio assistants—*Whistlejacket* remain unfinished.) In fact, Stubbs had himself once painted a portrait of Eclipse, a stallion who was descended from the Darley Arabian, the forbearer of the four horses seen in *Race, Class, Sex*. The title of the four-part work immediately reveals that the artist's goal is not only to paint majestic (although static) and detailed portraits of winning racehorses, but more importantly make a statement about “proper breeding” both in the sporting world and in the upper echelons of British society. Those who purchase, breed, and bet on the destinies of these horses are themselves products of proper breeding and aristocratic “grooming.”

⁹ Paul Bonaventura, “A Day at the Races,” 77.

Similar to the *Race, Class, Sex* portraits and worth mentioning here are the *Half-Brothers* series from 1994-1995, where sibling horses sharing maternal blood are painted in two halves and then placed side-by-side as if they are one animal sewn together by the portrait (Figure 11-13). Wallinger says about his interest in painting these creatures:

What I find both funny and disturbing about the series is the degree of anthropomorphism with which one invests the subjects... Maybe my unease in all this stems from a consideration of its human implications, about the implications of characteristics being handed down and improved upon generation by generation.¹⁰

Undoubtedly the issues that Wallinger raises in his hyper-real equestrian paintings such as *Race, Class, Sex* and *Half-Brothers* are those that surround proper breeding and the aristocracy in Britain. As with many of his works, Wallinger takes a very tongue-in-cheek approach to making his point. As suggested before, horseracing is historically a sport enjoyed by those with a rich and distinguished heritage so it is only fitting that *high society* pride itself on the purity of the offspring of their racehorses. One must keep in mind here that “high society” enjoys racing in a very different manner than the lower classes; in so far as the privileged find prestige in the fact that they *own* the stables and the horses rather than the fact that they might bet a small amount of money on the outcome of a given race.

Perhaps Wallinger’s interest in horses and their proper progenitors is more evident in the *Half-Brothers* series than in *Race, Class, Sex*, but the title of the latter straightforwardly and un-embarrassingly points to the fact that what beast sires a particular winning horse is regarded with the same kind of eugenic curiosity that British nobility might bestow upon who is marrying whom in the aristocracy. Wallinger, an artist who often infuses a sense of humor into his works, does so by having the *Race, Class, Sex* title existing as a triple pun and a series of *double*

¹⁰ Wallinger quoted in Paul Bonaventura, “A Day at the Races,” page 78. All quotations in this essay by Wallinger were taken from an interview published earlier by Bonaventura: “Turf Accounting” in *Art Monthly*, no. 175 (April 1994): 3-7.

entendres. The word *Race* is obviously punning on the nature of the sport, where the fastest horse wins, whereas *Class* refers to the class or division a thoroughbred runs under according to their statistics and experience, and *Sex* alludes to the fact that a stallion is simply put out to stud once his racing career is over.¹¹ Wallinger often toys with certain figures of speech in his works, and he notes how *Race, Class, Sex* uses the *double entendre* not only in its title but also in its positioning: “My [horse] paintings are dropped into this lineage and operate as *double entendres* – the look is art-historical – the meaning is genetic – and indeed, all my equestrian portraits are direct descendents of Stubbs in blood and paint.”¹²

There is also a great deal of irony imbued in the early exhibition histories of *Half-Brothers* and *Race, Class, Sex*: the former was shown as Wallinger’s entry in the 1995 Turner Prize exhibition (he lost to Hirst) and two years later the latter was included in Saatchi’s *Sensation* collection shown at the Royal Academy (Wallinger shared a gallery with Hirst). The true peculiarity is not that the paintings chart a strange path of rivalry between Wallinger and Damien Hirst in the 1990s, but rather that the Turner Prize and Charles Saatchi are so often criticized for being nothing more than elitist institutions. Thus, in this instance, paintings that criticize these types of exclusionary systems are ultimately embraced by the systems themselves.

The irony of *Race, Class, Sex* that Wallinger is most keen to comment on, however, is that at the time they were painted in the early part of the 1990s, this magnificent racing quartet were not actually owned by British racing enthusiasts or breeders, but by the Arab conglomerate made up of Sheikh Mohammed and his brothers, who ruled the Gulf State of Dubai. Sheikh Mohammed and his family are regarded as the unit responsible for keeping racing financially

¹¹ Wallinger summarized in Paul Bonaventura, “A Day at the Races.”

¹² Theodora Visher, “Upside Down, Back to Front, and the Wrong Way Around,” 20.

afloat during the 1980s recession in Britain—the family poured their wealth into the sport. So, in some ways, the ever-so-English hobby of racing has now been taken over by “outside forces.” Seemingly British racing “winners,” beloved by the English state, are owned by Arab royalty. Wallinger enjoys the paradox of this infiltration, saying, “I liked the idea that three hundred years on from the Darley Arabian, an Arab owner should spend so much money buying back the breed.”¹³ Perhaps Charles Saatchi, who bought and displayed *Race, Class, Sex* as part of *Sensation*, enjoyed this quirk of fate as well, as the collector himself is of Middle Eastern descent, having been born to Jewish Iraqi parents in Baghdad.¹⁴ These realistic paintings of horse revalorize “traditional” notions of portraiture and class in the United Kingdom while simultaneously pointing directly to their extinction and obsolescence. That British identity is already a construct rife with contradictions is further complicated by their co-opting of the Arabian horse, a symbol of the exotic “Other.” Their subsequent desire to incorporate it into life and leisure on the British Isles depends on a sense of identity built upon contact with the Other, but remaining differential from it.

In her book *Shark Infested Waters: The Saatchi Collection of British Art in the 90s*, Sarah Kent discusses Wallinger’s *Race, Class, Sex* quartet. She seems to unnecessarily dwell on the cliché of the horse as representative of masculine power and sexuality. In her description of the paintings, she says, “... Wallinger’s horses appear docile, yet their powerful frames are an embodiment of phallic potency,”¹⁵ moving on to suggest that “Wallinger’s stallions are the

¹³ Paul Bonaventura, “A Day at the Races,” 77.

¹⁴ Here I do not mean to conflate a Gulf Arab’s identity with that of a Mizrahi Jew; I make this point only to show how Charles Saatchi himself is a transplant to the United Kingdom to draw a conceptual connection between the identity of the infamous dealer and the imported stallions. Saatchi the man is seen as a staple of British art connoisseurship as much as the thoroughbreds are seen as staples of British identity.

¹⁵ Sarah Kent, *Shark Infested Waters: The Saatchi Collection of British Art in the 90s* (London: Philip Wilson, 2003), 97.

sublime embodiment of tamed sexuality.”¹⁶ Kent’s theories, however relevant to over romanticized notions surrounding the beast in general, miss the mark in their interpretations of the way sex is inflected in the context of Wallinger’s equine paintings. Horse racing is indeed about sex in many ways (breeding, lineage, the stud horse, etc.); but in the very clinical sense that the stallion is used as a machine for procreation—provenance concerning what pair of horses produces a winning foal is crucial when a young horse comes to the auction block. Who the young horse’s dam and sire are is as important to a potential buyer as an artist’s signature on a painting would be to an eager art collector. There are more connections between the racing world and the art world than there are connections between Wallinger’s *Race, Class, Sex* and our libidinal desires, as Kent suggests. Provenance is key to ascertaining value in both realms.

A Real Work of Art (1994)

Near the end of 1993 Mark Wallinger took his fascination with racing and turned it into a living piece of art—the artist purchased a real horse, a chestnut filly, and named the animal “A Real Work of Art.” This horse, purchased by a consortium of Wallinger’s supporters, became a living and performing sculpture (Figure 14) whose successes and failures could be measured in a real and financial way. Prior to the acquisition of the filly, it was decided that *A Real Work of Art* was to be boarded and trained in preparation to become an actual competitive racer, with the expectation that it could become a winning specimen. With the purchase of *A Real Work of Art*, Wallinger now symbolically “owned” a piece of the sport he had so adored from the age of five. He carefully went through the process of having professionals (specifically, the stable owner Sir Mark Prescott) assist him in the selection of a racer, and he secured funds through a consortium of art collectors and patrons in order to pay for the medical care of and boarding for *A Real Work*

¹⁶ Ibid., 98.

of Art.¹⁷ Wallinger could now participate in the sporting process that he so often sought to critique.¹⁸

Any racehorse purchased in Britain must have official colors registered with Weatherbys, the company that regulates the sport. Wallinger chose green, white, and violet – those of the British suffragist movement popularized in the early twentieth century. By taking on these colors, Wallinger is pointing to a specific tragic historical event. In an infamous act of protest and rebellion against the lack of equal rights for women, suffragist Emily Davison threw herself under the King’s horse during the 1913 Epsom Derby, later dying of her injuries. (Sarah Kent put the implications of this dryly when she wrote “Davison gave literal expression to the position of the disenfranchised: trampled under establishment hooves.”¹⁹) Wallinger’s decision to clothe his horse and jockey with green, white, and violet makes a broad statement about the historically masculine cast associated sport (women jockeys were not allowed at registered races around the world for the first half of the twentieth century) and the general injustices of a patriarchal society. In his work *Self Portrait as Emily Davison* from 1993 (Figure 15), which is a color photograph on aluminum, Wallinger has dressed up in a pseudo-drag outfit, sporting the Suffragette-colored jockey costume.

What was most remarkable about *A Real Work of Art* was that it was a living, breathing thing that was simultaneously a part of the racing world, the natural world, and the art world. It transgressed the boundaries set forth by any one faction. The idea of the real-life readymade or

¹⁷ Reproductions of the correspondence between Wallinger and Sir Mark Prescott on boarding his horse at Prescott’s Heath House Stables in Suffolk can be found at the end of the Ikon Gallery/Serpentine Gallery exhibition catalog.

¹⁸ Wallinger’s fore into horse ownership is expanded upon in the interview in Appendix A of this dissertation. Of his presence at the stables and the racetrack, the artist wrote in an email to the author: “Everyone asked me who in my family was from the racing world, as this would be the only explanation for my being there. The eugenics of breeding in horseflesh and the people that attend them are conjoined so in their minds.”

¹⁹ Sarah Kent, *Shark Infested Waters*, 97. The Epsom Derby is one-third of the British Triple Crown.

living sculpture in modern European art is not entirely new, however. In his 1960 work *Anthropometries*, French artist Yves Klein turned his female assistants into living paintbrushes as he dipped them in paint and directed them to move their bodies across long stretches of canvas. In his 1974 performance *I Like America and America Likes Me*, German sculptor Joseph Beuys became a work of art and a live spectacle as he lived confined with a coyote for three days in protest of the Vietnam War. The British performance duo Gilbert and George, made famous for their collaborative piece *The Singing Sculpture* in 1969, have dubbed themselves living sculptures—they are not seen apart from one another in public, and do not separate their art from the routine of their daily lives in London. Also in 1969 Jannis Kounellis tethered twelve horses to the walls of a Rome gallery for several days in an untitled installation piece. All of the examples are the precedents for a work like *A Real Work of Art*, one major difference being that whereas the appropriated and influential works mentioned above defy being bought and sold and resist the market in their ephemeral nature, Wallinger's racehorse attempts to function within and be a larger metaphor for the art market itself.

If nothing else, *A Real Work of Art* bypasses the tricky issues of representation encountered in traditional painting or sculpture by simply showing the thing itself. What Wallinger's living sculpture does is attempt to rescue the object (in this case a horse) from the fallacies of false representation (like in a painting) by showing reality, by being something that is "real." The chestnut filly that Wallinger purchased is "real"—but does it truly exist on a higher plane than any other work or art? It is, after all, auctioned, bought, marketed, displayed, and eventually sold off again in the same way any conventional painting, photograph, or sculpture would be in the art world. Wallinger's purchasing of a living thing not only comments on the fickle nature of horse ownership, but also is self reflexive and turning a gaze back toward the gallery system. Jon

Thompson asserts that Wallinger is using racing “as a critical lens through which to examine the more complex and illusive, institutional configuration which governs libidinal exchange through the evaluation, promotion, and marketing of contemporary works of art.”²⁰ Perhaps what is revealed is that the desire to own a “real thing” as opposed to merely a representation of that thing. And one must not forget that the “real” is a system of representation as well; the filly is just one aspect in the entire discourse of racing, with all that it entails regarding class.

Wallinger had played around with this notion of the “readymade” art object before he literalized it in a *Real Work of Art*. His horse is indeed a readymade, as was an earlier work entitled *Fountain* (in direct homage to Marcel Duchamp) from 1992 which consisted of a water hose that “pissed out” water from the Anthony Reynolds Gallery in London into the awaiting sewer grate outside, to be purified and enter the city’s water system again (Figures 16 and 17). Wallinger’s 1992 *Fountain* preceded his purchasing of the real horse by a mere two years, so perhaps they can be viewed as pendant works, as they both comment upon the cyclical nature of things—be it the life and career cycles of a racehorse or the cycling of water in a city purification system.

Royal Ascot (1994)

The video sculpture *Royal Ascot* is another artwork that directly relates to and satirically critiques the past-time of horses and sporting in Britain (Figure 18). Here Wallinger is narrowing his critical lens down from the wide panorama of racing specifically to focus on the royal British family. The work is made up of four video monitors sitting side-by-side atop equally-sized blue luggage cases. Each of the videos shows the royal ritual during separate days of Royal Ascot—

²⁰ Jon Thompson, “A Real Work of Art: The Race Course, Representation, and Reality,” in *Mark Wallinger: Ikon Gallery/Serpentine Gallery*, 81-82 (Birmingham: Ikon Gallery Ltd, 1995), 82.

specifically, the moment of HRH Queen Elizabeth II's and Prince Phillip the Duke of Edinburgh's entrance in a horse-drawn carriage during the opening procession of the event. Ascot is the name of the Crown-owned racetrack which is in Berkshire, in close proximity to Windsor Castle, one of several official residences belonging to the Queen. The soundtrack for each of the videos is first the BBC's original commentary at the sporting event, followed at the end with the British National Anthem taking over—this tune is famously entitled “God Save the Queen.” This national anthem was composed in 1744 and is still utilized in many of the Commonwealth realms in addition to Great Britain.

Each monitor plays its own separate audio commentary so the effect is an overpowering and jumbled mess of four days of play-by-play broadcasting simultaneously. While one might think for a brief moment that the four videos are all capturing the same day, when one realizes that Queen Elizabeth II is wearing different colored garments in each one, it is apparent that we are seeing four different days' footage—Tuesday through Friday of the event that year. The gag is obvious once when you recognize that the visual joke is based in the ridiculous reality of the procession itself and that Wallinger had to do little to no interference to make this video sculpture biting critical of the monarchy. The rehearsed nature of the royal carriage and its public pageantry are critiqued in this work—Wallinger has synched up the four films so that the viewer can instantly marvel at their staged-ness: Prince Phillip magically tips his hat in the same moment in each film, the royal waves mimic one another, and the National Anthem drums up with overzealous, automatic precision at the end of each video. The pomp-and-circumstance of the monarchy is being made painfully clear, as is the repetitive and practiced nature of its public

ceremonies.²¹ The quadrupled presentation of the ceremony reveals that the “natural” entrance of the royal family is in fact programmed and entirely unnatural, and can be visually synched up with very little effort.

The mid-to-late 1990s marked a moment when, as Ian Hunt notes, “the discussion of the monarchy was prominent in Britain and the question of whether it had its day was being asked.”²² Thus, *Royal Ascot* may be Wallinger simply holding a mirror up to growing widespread anti-monarchy sentiment. (Anger against Queen Elizabeth II and the Crown as an establishment has ebbed and flowed in the last few decades in the twentieth century, with frustration hitting a peak in 1997, when the Monarchy initially refused to comment publically on the death of Princess Diana or hold an official state funeral for her.²³) *Royal Ascot* reveals the notion of the “ceremonial” in England to be exactly that—a forced and tired production that gets re-done over and over again for the sake of appearances and tradition. As is the case with many of Wallinger’s works, the forcefulness of the piece lies in the revelations made through repetition as an ordering system. In this piece, the royal family is the serial object and ceremony is the serial system in which they navigate. In addition, the “God Save the Queen,” anthem which plays near the end of the Ascot procession, has become a repetitive, appropriated, and mixed symbol of both adoration and disillusionment as the flagship nationalistic song.²⁴

²¹ One might argue that that the rituals of the royal family were never perceived as “natural.” However, Wallinger’s *Royal Ascot* may be an exploration of the nature of that ritual or its incongruity in contemporary society. The medium of television is not “real” either—it simply repeats and projects a notion of real life.

²² Ian Hunt, “Protesting Innocence,” 22.

²³ Diana, Princess of Wales, died in a car accident in Paris in August 2007.

²⁴ On the day Queen Elizabeth II celebrated her Silver Jubilee, June 7th 1977, the British punk band The Sex Pistols released the second single off their album *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here’s The Sex Pistols*, which was a rebellious antimonarchical song ironically entitled “God Save the Queen.” On the day that the whole of London celebrated this important milestone in Elizabeth II’s reign, the band chartered a large boat and sailed down the River Thames playing songs from their newly released record, eventually stopping behind the Palace at Westminster before being boarded and arrested by the London police.

The video sculpture is most remarkable for the precise fact that it is not remarkable at all. The carriage scenes are not ones allowed to broadcast but to a privileged few, but rather they are shown *ad nauseum* to the entirety of Britain. Pier Tazzi says that *Royal Ascot* is “even more strikingly [English] when we note the condition in which we find it *inside* the work in which it’s used...that video footage of the royal family at Ascot is the very same footage that all of us have seen at home on our TV sets.”²⁵ The images themselves are not unique, nor are the motions and royal waving, smiling, or hat tipping seen acted out by the members of the monarchy. In this way the four-part sculpture set employs a ready-made image system. It is predetermined as much as royal etiquette predetermines how Queen Elizabeth II and her family act while on display in public. Important to note here as well is that the 1992 horse series *Race, Class, Sex* was also produced as a quartet of similar images side-by-side in militaristic formation—a shared formal device that suggests that the Royal Family are nothing more than proper blood stock paraded about the race course just as his four *Race, Class, Sex* horses are.

The proliferation of the televised image in the 1940s called for a reconsideration of how the royal family could and should manage their public image and its dissemination. On the subject of the artificial fanfare projected onto the monarchy by television and mass media, Wallinger commented in 2001 that:

Being well placed as being a bit of a racing nerd, I knew that the Royal family paraded down the course at each the four days of Royal Ascot and I also knew that the BBC covered it with such consistency, swapping to different camera angles at the same point each day. I thought, ‘Well, what if we take the point where the National Anthem strikes up as they reach the grandstand, as a sort of edit point and edit the four things as if they’re happening simultaneously?’ At that point something happens formally that is rather compelling and beautiful and could only come about by having a society so deferential to this mad institution. When you see Prince Philip

²⁵ Pier Luigi Tazzi, “Mark Wallinger: A Reading,” 38.

doff his hat at the same point every time they become like marionettes and you think ‘well who’s running who here?’²⁶

In *Royal Ascot*, Wallinger makes the royal family mechanically reproduced versions of themselves, moving about like Pavlov’s dogs trained to the sound of the national songs composed in their honor. Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip are reduced to caricatures of themselves in these types of national broadcasts, and they are easy targets for ridicule. National identity is proved to be defined by a contrived series of televised events that are unnatural and choreographed.

Repetition is the key tactic used in making *Royal Ascot* a powerful work. The meaning of the work hinges on the multiplicity of the carriage procession shown in four parts, and the overdone visual ellipses that lead one into the others. Of the four blue flight cases that support the monitors in *Royal Ascot*, I argue that they are used to mirror the themes of leisure and upper-class privilege that are reflected in the work itself. Travel and the ability to transcend borders are very much caught up in the themes of nationalism seen throughout many of Wallinger’s artworks.

Ghost (2000)

Mark Wallinger’s 2000 light box work *Ghost* is the literal, ethereal twin to George Stubbs’ iconic 1762 equestrian portrait *Whistlejacket*. In *Ghost*, Wallinger has turned *Whistlejacket* into its tonal negative, revealing the rearing stallion to be a mythical unicorn in a medical x-ray style of black-and-white (Figure 19). He has altered the original painting by inserting a long horn into the composition, playfully suggesting that if one were able to use x-ray vision to look underneath the layers of Stubbs’ paint, one would discover that the ordinary horse was in fact magical. The deep chestnut coat of *Whistlejacket* has become a glowing white in the Wallinger reversal. These

²⁶ Jean Wainwright, “An Interview with Mark Wallinger,” unpag.

two works are forever linked: *Ghost* retains the exact dimensions of *Whistlejacket*, its twin in subject matter and size, and both works are in the permanent collections two of prominent London museums: *Ghost* is owned by the Tate, and *Whistlejacket* is in the National Gallery collection. Wallinger made his *Ghost* homage just a few years after the National Gallery purchased the Stubbs painting in 1997, an acquisition which, as mentioned before, was lauded as a cultural triumph for the British state.²⁷ In addition, in 1984, as Wallinger was finishing his M.A. course at Goldsmiths, a major Stubbs retrospective was being mounted at the Tate Britain, undoubtedly entering Stubbs into Wallinger's subconscious mind at that point.

In Wallinger's *Ghost*, the natural world becomes fantastical and the Stubbsian attention to superb realism is given a fictional turn as twisted as the narwhal's horn that is fixed atop the horse's head. The unicorn is an animal once thought to be real, "documented" by scientists and explorers but rarely seen supposedly due to its elusiveness. Folklore also has it that unicorns can only be tamed by virgins, a legend that allows the unicorn to be linked symbolically to purity. The unicorn may also stand in for a Christ figure in some art historical representations and tapestries such as *The Unicorn Hunt*, where the animal is pursued and trapped by a mob of hunters in the woods. The unicorn is also found within part of the United Kingdom's coat of arms, which features a heraldic lion on the left side and a rearing unicorn on the right.

The title, *Ghost*, may refer to the warm, nebulous effect that the white in Wallinger's light box sculpture produces. The image is spirit-like and translucent, not unlike one would imagine a specter to be. Journalist Tom Lubbock suggests that the title *Ghost* should also bring to mind the idea of capturing a phantom image on a camera. He calls *Ghost* a "visual anagram," saying:

²⁷ In his book *English Imaginaries*, author Kevin Davey points toward the *Guardian* aforementioned article, "11 million Stubbs Bought For Nation" from December 20, 1997.

Ghost synchs the two dominant strains of English art: Stubbs' observational study is shown to hold within it a spiritual vision by Blake or Fuseli. The work resembles one of those conservatorial X-rays of an Old Master painting, which reveals the image that lies hidden beneath. It also suggests spirit photography, the camera revealing the invisible.²⁸

Should we associate the hidden ghostly image produced by the work with the paranormal?

Once again, as with *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space*, the themes of disappearance and transient existence are referenced in Wallinger's art. In the pre-cinematic world of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, traveling magicians and showmen used shadowplay, magic lanterns, hidden mirrors, smoke, and rear projection to terrify and delight crowds all across Europe. Some of the most popular genres of theatrical display were "phantasmagoria:" spectacular visual narratives whose themes dealt with ghosts, spirits, and black magic. The painting's reversal from showing a dark chestnut horse full of life into a transparent and fantastic spirit does change the original tenor and meaning of the exuberant work into something more contemplative. However, while *Ghost* may not have all of the eerie qualities that would identify it as a specter or something that connotes evil, it is indeed other-worldly.

Wallinger came up for the idea to make *Ghost* during an artist's residency at Oxford University's museum of natural history. He felt overwhelmed by the abundance of variation in the taxonomy of the equine. On the decision to make *Ghost*, the artist said: "...the unicorn struck me as a notion of something that was a kind of retort really, in the face of all this plenitude of species. Here was an animal that everyone could describe but that didn't ever exist!"²⁹

Ghost is a work whose meaning relies on the connotations produced by appropriation or doubling. The "copy" or double" is an inherent aspect of the remake. Twinning and

²⁸ Tom Lubbock, "The Independent's Great Art Series: Mark Wallinger's *Ghost*." *The Independent*, December 7, 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/great-works/wallinger-mark--ghost-2001-763417.html>

²⁹ Sandy Nairne, *Art Now: Interviews with Modern Artists*, 82.

doppelgangers are recurrent themes in Wallinger's work, and such is the case between the *Whistlejacket/Ghost* visual analogy. (The theme of visual "doubling" was seen in his re-imagining of the TARDIS sculpture as well as his Irish-British *Oxymoron* flag, both discussed in an earlier chapter.) *Ghost* is both a copy of an eighteenth century painting and a newly-imagined artwork. Because *Ghost* takes an oil painting and transforms it into a photographic negative, the work creates an instant dialogue between the mediums of painting and photography. Theorist Roland Barthes declares in his book *Camera Lucida* that "Photography has been, and is still, tormented by the ghost of Painting...it has made Painting, through its copies and contestations, into the absolute, paternal Reference, as if it were born from the canvas."³⁰

It is interesting that Tom Lubbock references William Blake and Henry Fuseli in his analysis of *Ghost*, as Wallinger often makes allusion to these exact Romantic poets in his work. He included two etchings by Blake in his curated exhibition *The Russian Linesman* in 2009, and has made photographic work (not discussed in this thesis) showing him standing at the head of Shelley's grave. The symbol of the horse is often seen in artistic and literary work by the Romantics as well. In 1757, Edmund Burke's (1729-1797) literary masterpiece, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, was first published in full. Burke's treatise does not neglect the potential terrible presence of animals in sublime images. He holds the horse's terrible powers above all, noting how the horse in the light of day is a most useful animal, but that its flaring nostrils and fierce stamping of the ground makes it one of the

³⁰ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections of Photography*, translated by Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983), 30-31.

most sublime creatures on the Earth.³¹ Fuseli makes use of this noble, yet terrible animal in his iconic painting *The Nightmare*.

Endnote: Turf and Tories

There is an irony in the fact that those who lose “the most” at the races are the lower classes. The people who own the most can afford to lose the most. Thus is the case in many other social institutions, British or otherwise. The mechanism of horseracing, placing high-stakes bets on an unpredictable outcome, mirrors the working of financial institutions and banking institutions that are now crumbling as we approach 2010. Perhaps now there is a larger metaphor at play here that can be applied to Wallinger’s racing and royal commentaries.

The works in the chapter are Duchampian in nature and highly critical of the national climate during the Thatcher decade. *Race, Class, Sex* put Wallinger into the spotlight as an artist not afraid to intermingle symbols of old and new wealth in Great Britain and beyond. In it, the artist updated Stubbs into the prickly lineage of a national pastime. *A Real Work of Art* broke free from the gallery system while ultimately commenting on its money-hungry nature. The video piece *Royal Ascot* thumbs its nose at the upturned and self-righteous face of the British royal family. The work *Ghost* played with the ghost of Stubbs as well, simultaneously resuscitating the work of beloved eighteenth century portraitist while pointing out his expired precedent and elder, is exactly that, now outdated and far removed from the changing notion of Anglo-identity in the twenty-first century.

³¹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, in *Edmund Burke: Essays* (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1937), 56.

CHAPTER 4 RELIGION AND CROSSINGS

As we have seen, much of Mark Wallinger's art is about belief systems: belief in country, belief in fantasy, belief that "seeing is believing." This chapter will look at belief in regards to spirituality and Christianity in the United Kingdom, in what could be deemed a "Post-Christian world" where organized mechanisms of faith are becoming less recognized, and different social codes often exclude faith from the public sphere. Wallinger's religious works point out the disconnect between organized religion and twenty-first century life. Wallinger's religiously-based sculptures and videos are works of theatre, where either the artist himself or an unconventional cast of characters are thrown into Biblical roles. His works challenge the validity and necessity of spiritual lore today, and the artist seems to be simultaneously engulfed and repulsed by the parameters of the Christian faith. While his works may produce imitations of faith, they are not mocking of believers. In a video piece entitled *The End*, from 2006, the names of every figure that appears in the Bible are run quickly across the screen chronologically just as actors' and filmmakers' names are run at the end of a movie during the credits sequence (Figure 20). The work is entirely non-figurative, yet each name (some more familiar than others) that scrolls by brings forth the image of a moralistic tale or fall from grace.¹ The question is: is the work called *The End* because it mimics the look of end credits in the cinema, or because the twenty first century is witnessing the end or the rule of organized faith in society in England? The Biblical list in the video work has an end, while a living genealogy should not. *The End* displays a critique and engagement with notions of genealogy.

¹ For a review focusing on the work *The End*, see Gilda Williams, "Review: Mark Wallinger: Anthony Reynolds Gallery," *Artforum* 45, no. 4 (December 2006): 326.

Religion-driven works, especially those that question the relevance and place of religion in the twenty first-century, will by their nature walk a thin line between having the power to enlighten and having the power to offend. Questioning a society's faith is, if not taboo, at least opens the possibility of an awkward interchange.

Wallinger's works often hinge on the relationship between visibility and invisibility, and in his religious work this notion transforms into the paradox between sight and blindness. The concept of blindness will emerge in relationship to belief—the figures of speech such as blind justice and blind faith will play a role in this chapter.

Ecce Homo (1999)

Wallinger's *Ecce Homo* (which translates as “Behold the Man”) was the first contemporary sculpture to grace the long-empty Fourth Plinth in London's Trafalgar Square in 1999 (Figure 21). From 1841 until 1999, the massive marble plinth (sculpture base) situated on the northwest corner of Trafalgar Square remained empty, unlike the three other plinths that showcase impressive statues of British generals and kings on horseback. The southeast plinth supports a sculpture of the general Henry Havelock made in 1861; the southwest holds a sculpture of General Sir Charles Napier from 1855; and the northeast bears the statue of George IV from the 1840s. The fourth plinth was originally intended to hold a statue of William IV; however, insufficient funding after his death left the pillar empty. This empty plinth has become known in popular vernacular as the “Fourth Plinth” because it has, and does, stand apart from the three other plinths in its long-running vacancy and now, as the platform, both literally and metaphorically, for contemporary art in an otherwise stuffy sculptural atmosphere.

In 1999, the Royal Society of Arts began a juried art project wherein artists could submit proposals in hopes of being temporarily awarded the space for their sculptural installations, and Wallinger was the inaugural winner. Public installations such as the Fourth Plinth Project reveal

new liberalized attitudes toward contemporary art in London and the ongoing project is a fascinating example of the blending of tradition and modernity in the city. As was the case with Wallinger's *Ecce Homo*, the contemporary sculptures placed upon the Fourth Plinth very much exist in an ideological and material contradiction to the dark, massive kingly equestrian sculptures that permanently inhabit the square.

The Fourth Plinth project has been a huge success, and has popularized site-specific sculpture in London over the past decade. Five sculptures have graced the plinth thus far: *Ecce Homo* by Wallinger (1999); *Regardless of History* by Bill Woodrow (2000); *Monument* by Rachel Whiteread (2001); *Allison Lapper Pregnant* by Marc Quinn (2005), Thomas Schütte's *Model for a Hotel* (2007), and Antony Gormley's *One and Other* (2009)². Now in its tenth year, the Fourth Plinth project has a sculpture by Yinka Shonibare slated for installation on the plinth in 2010. Other revolving juried commissions such as the Unilever's Turbine Hall series in the Tate Modern and the Duveen Commission at its sister institution in Tate Britain were established on the heels of the critical success of the Fourth Plinth project.

Ecce Homo is an unconventional portrait of Christ, standing solemnly, alone, and nearly naked. The title of Wallinger's plinth sculpture refers to the moment in the Gospel of St. John where the crowds were asked to "Ecce Homo" or "Behold the Man" - Jesus - who was put before them following the flagellation and crowning. It is a moment in the Biblical narrative not commonly represented in sculptural form. This contemplative, humanist sculpture is made of marbled resin and his crown is gold-plated barbed wire. It is interesting to note that the crown is

² I should note here that during a meeting with Mark Wallinger in his studio in late October 2009, only days after Gormley's *One and Other* project finished on the plinth, we discussed this most recent Fourth Plinth endeavor. Gormley's project allowed a single citizen of Great Britain to stand on the Plinth for one hour at a time—for 100 days 2,400 selected members of the public used the plinth as their artistic platform to sing, perform, dance, etc. Wallinger expressed distaste for Gormley's work, suggesting that it too closely mirrored his 1999 offering of the single Christ figure on the plinth.

one place where Wallinger consciously deviates from the Biblical narrative—the traditional crown of thorns is replaced by barbed wire, a modern cattleman’s invention—also known in a colloquial sense as “devil’s rope.”³ Barbed wire, of course, is an invention marketed to livestock owners in order to keep their animals fenced in—in this sense Wallinger having chosen to crown his figure in barbed wire may be an allusion to silencing the beliefs of a man who was killed, in a broad sense, for his ideas. Barbed wire is often used as a symbol of warning and a deterrent used at the edge of contested borders and property lines.

The sculpture is life size, the figure being cast from a humble studio assistant at the studio where the sculpture was fabricated. Adrian Searle at the *Guardian* made much out of the fact that the body was cast from an ordinary civilian rather than sculpted into some ideal form; he wrote: “That the living model was plucked from obscurity adds to his distinction, and obeys the metaphor and story of Christ the man.”⁴ In an interview Wallinger conducted in 2001, it is also mentioned that the studio assistant was 33 years old at the time of the sculpture’s fabrication, thus furthering the coincidence between he and Christ, who died at the same age.⁵ The figure looks ordinary and meek, his hands bound behind his back, wearing nothing but a loincloth. It is far from the glorious and regal sculpture of Christ that one might expect to see in a public setting.

Ecce Homo stood on the plinth for less than a year, surrounded by generals and war heroes in Trafalgar Square. Does Christ as a ruler and savior stand up and hold his own against

³ Madeleine Schuppli, author of the article “Wallinger and Religion” points readers to Alan Krell, *The Devil’s Rope: A Cultural History of Barbed Wire* (London: Reaktion Books: 2003).

⁴ Adrian Searle, “A Figure Apart,” in *Mark Wallinger: Ecce Homo*, 14-16 (Vienna: Secession, 2000), 15.

⁵ Kathrin Rhomberg, “Situations: Mark Wallinger in Conversation with Kathrin Rhomberg,” in *Sculpsit: Contemporary Artists on Sculpture and Beyond*, Kerstin Mey, ed., 40-50 (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).

the machismo-ridden images of kings and commanders on horseback? His unassuming size dwarfs him against icons such as Nelson's column which is anchored in the center of the square, climbing towards the heavens. His size is awkwardly disproportionate to the magnitude of the sculpture base that supports him—an intentional juxtaposition on the part of the artist. Different conventional representations of Jesus each evoke different aspects of his life's story, and choosing a convention is generally a choice to evoke the constellation of meaning that generally goes with it. The "ecce homo" scene has many such resonances, especially ones that draw on the abject and tortured condition of his body following the flagellating and beatings. The Romans mock Jesus for being a "king" by giving him an ironic and degrading crown of thorns, but the joke is ultimately on those who persecute him because he *is* the King of Kings. In speaking the words "behold the man" Pilate is suggesting that he seems just a man, beaten and humiliated, but he is an "unseen" God and a king--what looks the most abject is in fact the highest. This is perhaps why Wallinger depicts Christ's body as smooth, unmarked, and unadulterated—the artist is showing the "true" nature of the man on the plinth that would have been somehow "invisible" to the naked eye of the crowds that stood below him. In addition, although *Ecce Homo*'s form is contrasted against that of General Nelson in the center of Trafalgar Square, because Nelson himself was deformed (battle left him missing an arm and the sight in one eye) there is a connection in the idealization of the two different figures.

Ecce Homo's form takes up only a fraction of the plinth base, and he stands close to the south edge, as if he might be peering down at the crowds below. (As David Burrows put it, "one jump or sightless step away from the profane world of ordinary men and women."⁶) But, no such gazing is happening, as close-up photographs reveal that *Ecce Homo*'s eyes are actually closed.

⁶ Davis Burrows "Beyond Belief" in Mark Wallinger: Credo. Exhibition Catalog, pg. 34-36. London: Tate Gallery, 2000, page 35.

Perhaps the closed eyes are a calculated comment on the fact that many judgments, especially those rendered by a political or judicial conglomerate, are made on evidence that is not seen with the naked eye. As Ian Hunt remarks on how Wallinger's work stands out among its fellow monuments:

The surprise of many British viewers that they had never before looked at a serious Christian sculpture arose not just from the choice of an unfamiliar moment in the story, but from the lingering effects of a Protestant image ban which had delivered larger quantities of bronze generals to public places than it has sculptures that exalt the people or the spirit.⁷

Ecce Homo was installed in Trafalgar Square from July 1999 until February 2000, therefore standing atop the plinth during the millennium. Whereas the turning of the millennium was both celebrated (and feared, by some) across the globe, Wallinger's work brought forth the Christ figure for public viewing during a monumental anniversary of his life and death. The artist said in an interview, "I wanted to somehow point out our squeamishness about saying what we were celebrating was 2,000 years since the birth of Christ,"⁸ suggesting that what exactly the millennium marked was forgotten among the general populous.

Ecce Homo is a sculpture about Christ's role in contemporary society rather than being a simplistic devotional image. It is about belief and disbelief and the juxtaposition of Biblical heroes and martyrs placed alongside British military ones. And because the square is often popular with crowds of sightseers and museum-goers (the National Gallery sits directly behind the Fourth Plinth), the passing viewers become in some ways the biblical mob that stand below the figure being judged. There is a statement being made about the modern day lynch mob judging the relevance of a religious sculpture in such a public and secular square in London's

⁷ Ian Hunt, "Protesting Innocence," 16.

⁸ Tim Adams, "The Interview: Mark Wallinger," *The Observer*, February 15, 2009.

city center. Wallinger's work asks viewers to contemplate whether they would have seen the "truth" or if they would have been "blind" like the Roman mob.

Ralph Rugoff states that "Thanks to its exacting realism...*Ecce Homo* invokes the spectacle of a contemporary model posing in mythological drag as much as it calls to mind aspects of historical religious art."⁹ Because of the positioning of *Ecce Homo* toward the south edge of the plinth, the sculpture's audiences are put in the same location and stance as the crowds that would have judged the man in the Biblical narrative. In a reading of *Ecce Homo*, one must also take into account the history of public executions on Trafalgar Square, and that the site itself has seen its share of bloodshed and prisoner sacrifice. The sculpture invokes all of these historical happenings alongside its overt references to Biblical narrative.

Drawing on Rugoff's statement mentioned previously, Christ here is meant to be seen as contemporary figure as opposed to a Biblical one. It is perhaps a leap to suggest that a sculpture of the Christian god is secular in its nature and meaning, but here it is relevant. He certainly does not conform to the idealized images of Christ with flowing hair and resurrected glory that are often seen as conventional in Biblical works of art.¹⁰ It has been suggested that the figure stands in for an image of a political prisoner of war, a refugee, or a Holocaust survivor, "especially as the figure's tied hands and shaved head indirectly evoke contemporary victims of State power."¹¹ The choice to use barbed wire for the crown instead of a ring of thorns may support this reading. In both secular and religious terms, Jesus is indeed a political prisoner. Art historian and theorist Boris Groys has made the argument that "Jesus is a readymade" in the sense that he outwardly

⁹ Ralph Rugoff, "Jesus is an Oxymoron," 9.

¹⁰ Andrew Wilson points to a report of Christ's features given to the Roman Senate reproduced and translated in Michael Baxandall's *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy* (Oxford University Press, 1980), 77. He is reported to have thick curly hair, a parted beard, and skin with a "slightly reddish tinge."

¹¹ Ralph Rugoff, "Jesus is an Oxymoron," 9.

resembles a man, yet he is not truly just a man after he becomes divine.¹² The figure is an established trope in art historical representation, and one that is embedded with certain social and political connotations in addition to the Christian ones.

Ecce Homo is a work that exists in contradictions—it seems to be demonstrative and stoical at the same time. The quiet nature of the figure’s pose, the lean body, the hairless head—all these aesthetic choices make the figure seem downright un-kingly, yet it is these same features that add to the spiritual atmosphere of the lone man who might have even gone unnoticed by many of the passers-by. The moment being captured, the moment of the infamous “behold the man” being spoken to the angry and inquisitive mob, is a moment arrested in time, a moment that is devoid in Wallinger’s sculpture of any contextual clues, props, or other characters. The narrative moment seems to stand still, frozen and inert, just as the resin marbled sculpture is presented. Because the figure of Christ has been presented and sculpted in a way that is both aesthetically contemporary and classical, it could also be said that any connection to a specific historical time period is also ambiguous. The figure itself is both 2,000 years old and just born.

Although the vast majority of the press attention lavished upon Wallinger and *Ecce Homo* was favorable, a few critics took jabs at the sculpture’s appearance. For example, writing in the *Burlington Magazine* Tony Godfrey said that *Ecce Homo* “appears at first like some stray element from a plastic construction kit.”¹³ Adrian Searle, the witty art writer at *The Guardian*, was even less kind, writing that the Christ figure “brings to mind a fashionable gay clubber on

¹² See the arguments in Boris Groys, *Art Power* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008). However, there is a reactive against Groys’s thinking here in that most Christian doctrines believe that Christ is always both completely divine and human, and that there is not a Biblical moment of transition from one state of being to another.

¹³ Tony Godfrey, “Review: Recent Public Sculpture. Salisbury, London, West Bretton,” *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 141, no. 1161 (December 1999): 764-765.

bondage night, in ironic biblical drag.”¹⁴ Surely these types of responses are reactions against established Biblical tropes of representation. Searle quickly changed his critical tune regarding the sculpture, going on to write an entirely favorable catalog essay for a Vienna exhibition that the sculpture traveled to when brought down from the plinth in 2000.¹⁵ In an Artforum article from 2001, Rachel Withers also comments on the body of *Ecce Homo*:

...there’s something palpably out of kilter about the figure. Wallinger says he adjusted areas of its face and chest to add an echo of classical modeling, so maybe this supplies an explanation. Proportion is a troublesome thing: Tweak one measurement and all the rest will need rejigging. *Ecce Homo* is a mule, neither a full-blown instance of classical humanist figuration nor a one-off life-cast; neither transcendent *homo universalis* nor the Real, individual thing. Somewhere between concept and mere object, *Ecce Homo* could feasibly be labeled “object,” a term that returns it neatly both to the rejected Christ and the Duchampian urinal.¹⁶

The popularity of and discussion brought about by *Ecce Homo* and the Fourth Plinth Project led to Wallinger being selected to represent Great Britain in Venice in 2001, the year after *Ecce Homo* was symbolically “de-throned” from Trafalgar Square. The sculpture itself was included among the pieces Wallinger displayed at the Biennale. Most of the works that Wallinger decided to include at his exhibition in Venice have been or will be discussed in this thesis: works such as *Angel*, *Ghost*, *Oxymoron*, and *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space*. As for *Ecce Homo*, it is interesting to note the changes in the effect the sculpture has, in moving from an exhibition on the massive public plinth to inside the space of the Pavilion. For this international fair, the work was shown indoors, in a setting entirely unlike that of Trafalgar Square. In an enclosed space, the work lost the effect of the grand, elevated public martyr on

¹⁴ Adrian Searle, “The Day I Met the Son of God,” *The Guardian*, July 22, 1999, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/1999/jul/22/art.artsfeatures>.

¹⁵ Adrian Searle, “A Figure Apart.”

¹⁶ Rachel Withers, “Customs Man: Mark Wallinger’s Video Art.” *Artforum*. (Summer 2001) FindArticles.com. http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_10_39/ai_80485038/ I would add here that Withers is touching on something important in that the *object is ideal* in relationship to the sculpture.

view for judgment. At Venice, the sculpture stood in the front room of the pavilion, posed directly past the entrance doors, in a room all unto itself. The extreme whiteness of its marbled body camouflaged it against the stark white walls inside the building, and it seemed to stand delicately and precariously on the light colored woods of the pavilion floors. The greatest change that the sculpture possesses in moving between plinth to pavilion was the nearness it allowed its viewers. Atop the massive plinth, one could only gaze upwards toward the Christ figure, and discerning small details (such as the fact that his eyes were closed) would have been difficult if not impossible. In its installation at Venice, a viewer could approach and inspect the figure at length. The closed eyes, the bound hands, the golden barbed wire—all of this was in proximity.

The pose that *Ecce Homo* takes—standing in quiet contemplation with his hands behind his back—this pose is often unintentionally mimicked by the viewers who stop to take him in. When one looks at press images of visitors to the Venice exhibition, it is easy to notice that those surrounding *Ecce Homo* take a stance that mirrors him—tentatively standing about, often with hand clasped in front of them or behind their backs. In his Vienna exhibition essay Adrian Searle wrote that *Ecce Homo* possesses “a novelty of pose that accentuates that fact that the work is both an arrested moment and the conscious crafting of that moment. This is probably to affirm a kind of Joycean epiphany in its creation, where the boundary between discovery and invention cannot be discerned.”¹⁷ *Ecce Homo* presents both a motionless moment in time and one that those who are familiar with Christian narrative know is a moment the middle of a brutal and bloody Passion saga, when Christ’s body is nearing its most abused.

On the plinth in Trafalgar Square, *Ecce Homo* was a paradoxical figure with an equally paradoxical presence. He is a literal example of the “low bright high” in that his beaten and

¹⁷ Adrian Searle, “A Figure Apart,” 15.

abused outer body held within it the ideal body, close to resurrection. There is an inversion happening in what one sees at the “*ecce homo*” moment and what is actually there. Writing on Wallinger’s religious works, British art critic Tom Lubbock argues that:

Christ is always an anomalous presence, a reject, a destabiliser, at odds with worldly values and powers—and, in his own humiliation and victimization, a rebuke to those powers. If you didn’t know, you might have taken *Ecce Homo* for an Easter stunt by young Christians, hoping to confront the world with the gospel of powerlessness. Though conversely, putting Jesus on a civic plinth is also a reminder of how much, in fact, Christianity has embraced power. After all, it is still, in some sense, our state religion.¹⁸

It is this confusion as to whether *Ecce Homo* was presented as a “stunt” or not that makes the work interesting—there is a question over whether or not a purely Christian figure belongs in the public realm—this question lies at the heart of why Wallinger made the work precisely for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square. The Forth Plinth does not just restage the situation of the original “*ecce homo*” moment, but also engages deeply with the problem of the “low being brought high” means the social reformer is co-opted by the dominant power structure. This is enacted in both a conceptual sense and a literal one—the sculpture is placed on the plinth and high above the crowds below.

Because of its associations with “state religion,” *Ecce Homo* is as much a critique of British national identity as the horseracing works are—the solemn figure perched upon a domineering plinth is a reminder of the need for personal expression and freedom of religion—whatever form that may take. One must not forget that Great Britain has, in fact, a state religion—Queen Elizabeth II is the head of the Anglican Church.

Angel (1997)

The video piece *Angel*, made in 1997, debuted at the Royal Academy’s *Sensation* show that same year and was shown later in Wallinger’s 2001 Tate Liverpool retrospective show

¹⁸ Tom Lubbock, “Wallinger and Religion,” 76.

Credo (Figure 22). The highly choreographed performance was the artist's first major foray into video art that dealt directly with spirituality. The work also marked the unveiling of Wallinger's alter ego "Blind Faith," a blind, prophet-like figure. *Angel* is as technically complicated as it is bizarre and mesmerizing. As with the Berlin performance *Sleeper*, Wallinger himself is directly participating in the role-play that is involved in making the work—although his identity as the conductor is not anywhere near as hidden in *Angel* as it was in *Sleeper*.

Filmed from the bottom of an escalator in the Angel tube (subway) station in North London, the video shows Wallinger marching in place on the moving escalator, navigating the space in front of him with a wildly moving cane, with dark glasses on. During the eight minutes that he is on the screen, Wallinger chants a repetitive series of utterances. Wallinger memorized the first five verses of The Gospel According to St. John in reverse (a feat which took him over three months), and he chants them over and over for the duration of the performance. Because the film is played backwards (the people ascending the left side escalator appear to descend instead) the effect is that the reversed words come out in correct phonetic order. That is, for the phrase "and the Word was God," Wallinger actually memorized the words inverted—thus he recited "doG saw droW eht dna," which is vaguely comprehensible as the correct English language passage when played backwards in the video. The opening of the Gospel of St. John recited in *Angel* follows thus:

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.
3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
5. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

The auditory effect of his backwards-turned-forwards chanting of these verses is eerie; the Biblical passages he speaks are decipherable as English, but Wallinger's speech is slurred and he seems to speak in tongues or as if possessed or intoxicated. The opening of Gospel of St. John is decidedly repetitive. The first verse is particularly circular in its form, and this looping is exaggerated by Wallinger's almost compulsive repetition of it. Spoken in a palindrome-perverted reverse, St. John's Biblical proclamations seem more Satanic and robotic than uplifting. St. John's gospel is the fourth in the series of canonical New Testament gospels and it is generally regarded as falling out of narrative line with the first three synoptic gospels that are thought to have had the same author due to language, structure, and intonation similarities. Thus, in many ways the Gospel of St. John stands apart from the other three in its rogue narrative form.

Of his embodiment of the "Blind Faith" character in *Angel* and the disconnect between the figure itself and the speech he utters, Wallinger said, "I am a cipher – a notion of identity empty of image or personality so that I can pretend different roles. I never speak anything that has not already been written. I am an actor, a puppet, a hollow man. There is therefore a rift between the text and the utterance."¹⁹ If we generally understand that language precedes us, that it is a system established before we come to understand it, then how do we read Wallinger's manipulation of it? His "Blind Faith" character looks as if he is blind, speaks as if he is deaf, and moves as if he is uncoordinated. The performance is thus full of falsehoods in some ways—Wallinger is simply "acting the part" of a blind prophet. The video work is interesting because it is a visual and auditory puzzle—the meaning of the work is only realized once you are able to determine what it is you are actually seeing and hearing. There is a durational gap between when one begins to watch the performance and when one begins to decode it visually. Wallinger walks backwards

¹⁹ Theodora Visher, "Upside Down, Back to Front, and the Wrong Way Around," 26.

during the filming (not an easy feat to walk backwards on a moving escalator while reciting rehearsed lines), so when the tape is reversed it seems as if he is moving toward the viewer, testing out the space before him with his blind man's cane. Wallinger is interested in the visual confusion and alienation the piece creates; in an interview he stated that "Illusions became important to me because they both beguile the viewer but once the trick is mastered one is returned to an alienated state."²⁰

The accompanying music for *Angel* is Handel's boisterous and majestic composition "Zadok the Priest." This soundtrack is perhaps the one part of the work explicitly exemplifying a redemptive and spiritual atmosphere of the performance. This musical piece by Handel is the British royal coronation anthem which was originally composed for George II's ceremony in 1727, and it has been played at every monarch's coronation since that time. Its chorus is regal and lofty to the point of being overpowering: the lines sung in uplifting manner are "Zadok, the Priest and Nathan, the Prophet anointed Solomon King / And all the people rejoic'd, and said: / 'God save The King, long live The King, may The King live for ever!' / Amen, Hallelujah!"

Are we to read into this association with the coronation, that Wallinger is suggesting a connection between the anointment of the British monarchs and the Biblical saints? In this choice of soundtrack there is perhaps a dry comment lurking about the god-like presentation of the monarchs during coronation and anointment. The parody lies just below the surface of the musical selection that Wallinger has made.

Even though the ending of the piece, when Wallinger himself magically "ascends" up the long escalator to the chorus of Handel's voices, seems to offer some sort of redemption for the Blind Faith character, Ralph Rugoff noted:

²⁰ Kathrin Rhomberg, "Situations: Mark Wallinger in Conversation with Kathrin Rhomberg," 43.

...we find no escape from *Angel's* circular inversion of space and time, as it becomes ever more obvious that these final moments are not an ending, but the actual beginning of the single take we have just watched. [...] Enmeshed in games of visual duplicity and verisimilitude, our eyes fight with our intellect; we recognize the deception involved, yet remain reluctant, or simply unable, to break the illusionistic spell of an 'organic' forward-moving flow of events.²¹

Biblical allusions abound in the work: Wallinger moves in the center escalator in a group of a trinity of three, and long golden lights illuminate the passageway on either side of the immense cavern (in an artist's talk at the Tate, Wallinger stated that this set of stairways are actually the longest escalators in all of Western Europe).²² The passengers riding on the two side escalators ascend and descend into the underground world as Wallinger remains in one spot on the central escalator (as mentioned before, a feat he achieved by walking backward during his recitations so that appears that he is moving toward the camera during the playback of the piece). The escalator passengers on Wallinger's left were originally heading down in real-time, and now they move toward the opening at the top of the escalator. As is the case in conventional religious imagery, the figures on Christ's left in scenes of the *Last Judgment* are the side of the damned—(left = sinister = Latin *sinistra*) therefore, the originally dammed side of the composition are given a reprieve in that the backward video pulls them back up and toward the light of the earth.

At the end of the piece, when Wallinger's recitations are over, he is quickly pulled backwards on the escalator in a majestic ascension while the music builds to a crescendo-like spiritual and cinematic climax.²³ The ending of the piece as Wallinger disappears is moving and sobering after the bizarre affectations he seems to possess while reciting the gospel verses. All

²¹ Ralph Rugoff, "Jesus is an Oxymoron," 13.

²² "Artist Talk: Mark Wallinger," webcast, Tate Britain, 2007: <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/24895007001>.

²³ St. John's biblical avatar is the eagle, perhaps offering another level here of religious connotation here and an offered parallel between John's ascension in his gospel and Wallinger's movement out of the depth of the subway station. Of course we must realize that Wallinger's final ascension is truly just the beginning of the filming of the performance shown in reverse, as Wallinger rides the escalator downwards in order to begin his chanting.

that is left behind after his body leaves the scene are the illuminated, flowing escalator steps. His backward-speak coupled with a blind man's costume was both unnatural in its appearance and yet familiar too. As Richard Grayson points out the mass culture connections unveiled in the work:

A vast realm of arcane and popular reference and association is opened up here: the Black Mass is a Christian one performed backwards. When record players allowed one to push the vinyl backwards against the needle, it was popularly believed that backwards satanic messages were hidden in the run-out grooves at the end of records by Led Zeppelin or Judas Priest to brainwash adolescent listeners made susceptible by glandular chemistry and/or drugs.²⁴

Because the work *Angel* is so closely associated with the underworld landscape of the London subway system, and the Angel tube station in particular, the work is able to make a kind of "living theater" out of the city. The piece is London-centric, and relies on visual markers that are very explicitly connected to the city as a backdrop and raw material. Richard Grayson remarks on the piece *Angel*: "By taking images for our everyday lived experience and refracting them through the ontological and mythical constructions of the past they speak powerfully of the mechanisms of loss and our desire for syntax and meaningful structure."²⁵ As for the structure of Wallinger's looped soliloquy, it is easy to make the connection between his imposing delivery and the delivery of the contemporary Christian evangelical sermon. It is impassioned and convoluted; backwards and captivating.

In its original installation at the Royal Academy's *Sensation* exhibition in 1997, the video monitor screening *Angel* was hung above the staircase at the entrance of the academy; it

²⁴ Richard Grayson, "A Number of Disappearances," 11-12. I would also add here that in David Lynch's cult 1990-1991 television show *Twin Peaks*, the exact same type of reversed pronunciation of lines were enacted by evil characters in Lynch's incarnation of a psychological hell known as the "Black Lodge." Perhaps it is also noteworthy here to mention that the bookshop that Wallinger's worked for from 1981-1998, Collet's on Charing Cross Road, was firebombed for selling Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* after Wallinger left the shop.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

therefore greeted visitors to the museum, as it was the first piece to be seen inside the gallery. A bit of visual doubling was obviously at play in this installation choice: Wallinger's video which is full of staircases is shown hung above one. In addition, as visitors to the *Sensation* exhibit would have left the ticket counter and ascended toward the galleries, their movements would have mimicked those made by Wallinger.

Ultimately, *Angel* is about the science of language and signs, both visual and spoken, and the impact that the religious metaphor of the "word bringing life" has upon the viewer. The question being asked is whether speaking something can bring the idea into existence, or whether language is just another arbitrary set of signs in a system based on mythologies. Wallinger addresses this conundrum when he says that, "It's the central kind of logos of faith—the word is the word made flesh, i.e. Jesus Christ, but at the same time one could see the word as language, that then deconstructs the very faith that that text is supposed to affirm. At that point one realises that language stands in the same relation to the objects of the world, as the scriptures do to faith."²⁶ Because Wallinger learns the Gospel of St. John backwards for the video piece, he literally turns the idea of language on its head, inverting the phrases literally in an effort to call attention to the way that Biblical passages can be twisted in the interpretation and their message. The work is about deciphering codes and is an exploration of the structure of language and its relationship to truth. Understanding how the video was made is as much a puzzle as figuring out its meaning. As Wallinger went on to say: "I quite liked this notion of the viewer trying to unpick how the film was made, but being brought up short realising that language is just a series of noises that we all agree upon."²⁷

²⁶ Jean Wainwright, "An Interview with Mark Wallinger," *Audio Arts Magazine*.

²⁷ Ibid.

Wallinger's use of the beginning of the Gospel of St. John is a careful and loaded choice. The creation of the world is enacted in these verses and the relationship between the Holy Father and Son is visualized through language—but one must note that God the Father “precedes” language. The creation of Jesus is, in part, a speech act. The “word” is made flesh, unveiling a complex series of semiotic mazes.²⁸ In this performance, the “word” is performed by Wallinger's Blind Faith character. This concept of the performative of words has been written about by a number of theorists, one of the first being J.L. Austin. In lecture two of a series given at Harvard in 1955, entitled “How to Do Things with Words,” Austin discussed the idea of “performativity” in relationship to linguistics and in a break away from historical connotations of the theatrical. Austin defines performative utterances as phrases which perform the action that the sentence describes. He uses the example of the conventional ceremonial vow of “I take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife” as a phrase that is loaded with action.²⁹

To draw a conceptual connection between *Sleeper* and *Angel*, I would suggest viewers of both works to consider the importance of the architectural framework for the performances as well as the metaphor of the “underground.” Both contemporary performances by Mark Wallinger cleverly turn mundane public arenas into spaces of transgression and fantasy.

²⁸ Let me also make brief note here of a literary connection perhaps touched upon in the work *Angel* that is not discussed by the artist but is nevertheless interesting. In the German narrative *Faust*, the story opens up with the main character attempting to translate the beginning of the Gospel of St. John, struggling with the word “logos” which he ultimately translates as “act.” Faust makes a deal with the devil for knowledge and powers, and is eventually corrupted and drug off to hell.

²⁹ To elaborate further, Austin devises a schematic system that outlines what is necessary for performative utterances to function properly, or, in his words, be “happy.” Convention and social appropriateness are the types of situational conditions that ensure that these types of utterances are successful in their performativity, but if these conditions are broken, or “sinned against,” the utterance is “unhappy.” Thus, if one says the phrase “I promise to” but has no intention of keeping said promise, the abuse of procedure is called an “infelicity:” a situation where the linguistic performative misfires. For Austin, to say is to do. Words “perform” actions, but without the artificiality associated with stage theatre.

As a final note to this would I would be remiss not to mention that *Angel* is part of a trilogy of video works made by Wallinger between 1997 and 1999, in the time period when his work began to become known internationally. Preceding *Angel* is the video *Hymn* (1997) and following it is *Prometheus* (1999)—these three form what is commonly known as the “speaking in tongues” trilogy. All three works deal with the power of language and in them Wallinger recites well known children’s songs and literary texts and his voice is manipulated either by slowing down, reversing, or speeding up the audio of the videos works unnaturally.

Threshold to the Kingdom (2000)

Another video work that investigates the relationship between the mundane and the spiritual is Wallinger’s saintly-sounding *Threshold to the Kingdom*. This piece is a video work that documents travelers’ movements coming out of the international arrivals gate just beyond passport control and customs inside London’s City Airport (Figure 23). In Wallinger’s only slightly manipulated presentation of the airport, the mechanical gate is transformed into a visual metaphor for passing through the gates of Heaven. The video is slightly longer than eleven minutes, is projected on a slow speed, and was filmed in one continuous take. As was the case in *Angel*, the camera does not move for the duration of the piece. In the center of the frame, the automatic airport doors open gracefully and slowly, seemingly on their own, to allow newly arrived air passengers out into the terminal. In comparison to London’s Heathrow or Gatwick, City Airport is a small airport, and is the most centrally located in the city—only a few miles from the financial district and the site of the upcoming 2012 Olympic Games.

Because City Airport stands apart from the more tourist-filled larger airports, the clientele portrayed in *Threshold to the Kingdom* are mostly London business travelers arriving from nearby European locations such as Edinburgh or Amsterdam, and are therefore almost all dressed in somber, business attire. Indeed certain groups of freshly landed passengers in the video work

appear as if they could be arriving from a funeral. Some emerge from the automatic double doors alone, other walk in small groups; some passengers seem to rush and know exactly in which direction to head, while others still emerge looking disoriented or if they are trying to spot an awaiting colleague or friend. Whatever their personal mannerisms, each figure retains an ethereal and otherworldly air about them, partly due to the slow motion speed in which the film is projected, but mostly because of the soundtrack that Wallinger has chosen to accompany the video. As with *Angel*, the musical score is central to a reading of the work.

As the various travelers file through a portal marking a movement from the confinement of customs to the redemption and symbolic deliverance of their final destination, Gregorio Allegri's dramatic *Miserere* plays. It is a musical composition that incorporates the words of the 51st Psalm—a redemptive piece that was at one time meant for play only within the Vatican walls.³⁰ Thus, the soundtrack, as well as the setting, “takes up the question of an enclosed elite.”³¹ Psalm 51 begins with a phrase asking for clemency and compassion: *Have mercy on me, O God*—in Latin this is *Miserere mei, Deus*, hence the name of Allegri's composition. The lyrical Psalm 51 follows King David asking for repentance after his transgression: “Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow... Then will I teach transgressors thy ways.” As the title of the video work suggests, the central portal with its automatic doors is envisioned by Wallinger as both the threshold into the United Kingdom and the threshold to the kingdom of heaven. The title, *Threshold to the Kingdom*, is simultaneously a pun and a metaphor—the two meanings of “Kingdom” are enacted and the travel between states is likened to the passage into the afterlife.

³⁰ Janneke de Vries, “The Known Invisible,” in *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries, 105-112 (Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2008), 109. de Vries describes how the legend of how an adolescent Mozart heard the musical arrangement on Good Friday within the Vatican and then transcribed the music from memory later, allowing the world access to the composition

³¹ *Ibid.*

Because the video is shown at slow speed, the travelers' movements appear elegant and other-worldly. The hurried businessmen and women are transformed metaphorically into spirits transitioning into the afterlife. They move through the portal, and slowly evaporate before our eyes as they move about the frame. We are even shown a cynical, modern day version of St. Peter in the guise of a disgruntled and disinterested airport worker seated on the left of the doorway.

There is a certain amount of irony and parody built into the piece; one must not view the slow-motion effects as purely devotional. By having his film set in an airport, Wallinger grounds what must be a majestic moment in many people's minds in an experience of mundane and frustrating proportions. As Yve-Alain Bois says on this satire: "Grand narratives are often the butt of parodic spoofs. And the holier they are, the easier they are to lampoon. No wonder Wallinger feasts on Christian mythology."³²

Wallinger sees the configuration of the staging in *Threshold* as a kind of religious history painting—in an interview given after his *Credo* retrospective began, the artist said, "I thought if we shot this very symmetrically and used slow motion people's gestures would assume a kind of gravitas and become almost like Renaissance paintings."³³ Indeed, at certain points in the film the interaction seen between groupings of travelers are reminiscent of Biblical moments—specifically, the meeting of three women who walk toward each other and warmly embrace in the airport seems eerily akin to the "Visitation" meeting between the pregnant Virgin Mary and her cousin Elizabeth that is described in the Gospel of St. Luke. In this scene that is often presented by fifteenth and sixteenth century artists such as Pontormo (Figure 24), the pregnant

³² Yve-Alain Bois, "To Sing Beside," *October*, no. 129 (Summer 2009): 139.

³³ Jean Wainwright, "An Interview with Mark Wallinger."

Mary reaches out to begin to embrace Elizabeth, who is also pregnant, carrying St. John the Baptist. But an ironic parody lurks in this serendipitous occurrence as well, as Wallinger himself admits that many elements of his *Threshold to the Kingdom* are mocking the video work of Bill Viola, and American artist who deals with issues of spirituality almost exclusively in his work.³⁴

Perhaps an airport is not the kind of public space one would usually associate with the redemption and transfiguration of souls; however, it is a unique kind of space where passing through gates, checkpoints, and achieving the mercy of judging figures (in the form of various types of security personnel) around every corner awaits you before or after your trip. It is this category of outwardly mundane settings that Wallinger found full of spiritual metaphors.

Most would agree that airports, with their maze-like configurations and threshold guardians, can be intimidating. In a 2008 interview, Wallinger admits that he once had a fear of flying that he now understands to have really been a rooted in a fear of airports and their invasive security measures. In a series of six photographs known as *Passport Control* from 1988 (Figure 25) Wallinger has scribbled on oversized, standard-issue passport images of himself; he presents himself in masquerading in six stereotypical ethnic disguises such as ones that are obviously exaggerations of Muslim, Jewish, or African caricatures. Wallinger describes his experiences in airports as such:

Being under scrutiny, at every point being processed, then existing in this weird no man's land before being spat out on to the official terra firma of the state. There's a sense of guilt and vulnerability, so one emerges with a real sense of relief. It is where we experience the power of the state at its most overt: we are being judged, which I

³⁴ In my meeting with Wallinger in October 2009 we discussed the rather misguided comparisons of his work to Bill Viola's; misguided in the sense that some critics failed to see that his works such as *Threshold* parody the highly theatrical, high production values seen in Viola's works instead of trying to aspire to them. In one now infamous dismissal of Wallinger's work, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh called Wallinger a "retardataire humanist" and a "close second" to Viola in his *Artforum* review of the 49th Venice Biennale, in which Wallinger represent Great Britain. See Rachel Withers, "Review: Mark Wallinger: Anthony Reynolds Gallery," *Artforum* 42, no. 9 (May 2004): 223.

realized was analogous to confession and absolution in the Roman Catholic Church...³⁵

It is interesting to think of customs and immigration sectors of international airports as “stateless” entities. These confines and chambers are places where one’s nationality can be questioned, inspected, and possibly rejected. The judgments passed on a person’s right to travel are ones most invasive by the government, and Wallinger envisions this as not unlike the judgments passed upon souls in the afterlife.

The Underworld (2004)

In the 2004 video-based sculpture *The Underworld*, Wallinger has placed twenty-one television monitors in a circle on the floor (Figure 26). On each screen, video from a single live performance of Giuseppe Verdi’s chilling late nineteenth-century musical piece *Messa da Requiem* plays in a simultaneous, bewildering cacophony. The video screens are turned upside down and also face inward with the effect that the all the images cannot be seen together fully from any one viewpoint. The placement of the monitors prohibits viewers from seeing all the images at once—it is a work that demands that the audience move about the gallery space in a circular fashion that mimics the organization of the work itself. That is, its circularity spins the viewer around and demands that you process the image over a forced duration of experience and, inversely at that, as all the operatic and musical performers are shown flipped, hanging upside down. The audio on all of the television monitors is being belted out simultaneously, but the separate projections are not in any way synch with one another—because each of the twenty one televisions begins with a different movement of the musical score that then loops within the sculptural loop formed by the dark ring of monitors.

³⁵ Yve-Alain Bois, et al., “An Interview with Mark Wallinger,” 196.

A requiem by definition is a Roman Catholic mass for the dead, asking for the salvation of the deceased soul. In music, the word “requiem” can simply refer to a composition that utilizes part of the mass, be it a Gregorian chant or Mozart’s famous interpretation. In Verdi’s rendition, which premiered in 1874, a typical performance lasted ninety minutes, and included a quartet of solo operatic performers and two backing choruses.

The work is usually shown in a darkened gallery space, producing a sense of unease and a macabre tone.³⁶ In a darkened room the light from the video screens also makes the hellish circle glow in the interior, giving the appearance that is a portal-way on the floor, leading to somewhere frightening below the surface of the ground. When viewed from above, the monitors make a perfect circle, a loop, an arrangement which mimics the auditory looping that is heard in the Requiem.

Because each of the monitors is playing a specific layer of music on top of each other, a sense of aural chaos is produced. Each screen shows a different singer or orchestra member, some male, some female, flipped over. Because of the intense sense of repetition loaded into the meaning and execution of the work, certain side-by-side screens may simultaneously feature the conductor wildly moving his baton. In this way the conductor figure becomes multiplied with the sphere of the work, production visual confusion and a visual doubling and often tripling or quadrupling of this key figure. Madeleine Schuppli describes this bizarre and mesmerizing work as such:

What contributes to the frightening, indeed infernal, mood of the work is the ineluctability which is expressed not only formally by the closed circle, but also through the endless repetition of the music, turning the enjoyment of listening into

³⁶ One video I was able to view in October of 2009 shows the work in a very dark space all unto itself as part of the exhibition *Mark Wallinger*, at the Aargauer Kunsthhaus, Aarau, Switzerland, 2008. In this video the cameraman spins about the gallery space in order to show the work from all viewpoints.

torture. The simultaneity leads to a deafening cacophony; a seething, surging and diminishing carpet of sound underpins the impact of the Hellish scenario.³⁷

The players and musicians involved in this vintage 1982 BBC-showcased production of Verdi's *Requiem* do indeed appear to be guests at Wallinger's hellish banquet of sound. Because of the circular placement of the television monitors, the individual "characters" sentenced to performing this musical mutiny are forced to witness each other's participation in what appears to be a never ending, ill-fated looping of opera.

The closed circle of the sculpture makes the work seem both exclusionary and off-putting to its viewers. The organization of the monitors, which are black on the outside, undoubtedly also reference the Britain's famous megalith stone circles, the most famous being Stonehenge in Salisbury Plain, which are said to possess pagan ritualistic powers. (Wallinger has paid homage to these stone-henges before, in the work *A Model History*, referenced earlier in this dissertation).

How does one begin to analyze *The Underworld*? Perhaps looking to its literary inspiration is where one should start. Throughout this dissertation I have always made careful note of what I perceive to be Wallinger's direct literary, poetic, and musical influences, as they are key to deciphering and fully understanding his work. In her essay quoted from above; Madeleine Schuppli makes notes of the literary reference that *The Underworld* "inevitably refers to" with its circular presentation—Dante Alighieri's three part epic poem *The Divine Comedy*.³⁸ In the first

³⁷ Madeleine Schuppli, "Wallinger and Religion," in *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries, 49-63 (Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2008), 57.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 56-57. In footnote 19 at the end of her essay, Schuppli also makes note of Wallinger's admiration of William Blake, who produced a watercolor series based on Dante's work. She explains that this may be one way to trace the linkage to the classic text. The author also sees *The Underworld* as a pendant work to the earlier Wallinger work *Heaven* (1988) which is not discussed in this dissertation. In this work a fishing lure is suspended in a metal birdcage. In an email dated March 29, 2010, Wallinger wrote to the author on the subject of influences for this work: "Dante and certainly Botticelli's illustrations of the *Divine Comedy* were part of my thinking. The requiem circles endlessly around the 21 monitors which are upside down to emphasise that they have reached the very bottom, can sink no lower."

installment of Dante's *The Divine Comedy* (which dates to somewhere within 1310-1320), known as the *Inferno*, Virgil guides the poet through the nine rings of hell, witnessing the various tortures and suffering of the damned at each level.³⁹ In the eighth underground circle, the simonists hang upside down in inverted baptism, with their feet burning.⁴⁰ These ecclesiastical sinners are being punished for the crime of auctioning off holy position within the church. This convention of showing the damned and misguided hanging upside down as punishment can be seen in various literary and art historical forms.⁴¹ So, then it appears Wallinger is adapting this form of cruelty as described by Dante in turning his video monitors upside down. As Wallinger's works that comment on religion discussed in this chapter all make reference to some sort of well-established Biblical, musical, or art historical moment, it should not be surprising that this sculpture updates and alters a classic text. The ring-like presentation of the monitors in *The Underworld* also appropriates Dante's presentation of hell as a many tiered layer-cake of punishment. The title of the installation, *The Underworld*, is the affirmation that Wallinger was indeed envisioning the work as a symphony of horrors.

Endnote: Blind Faith

It is my hope that this chapter has made the themes of looping and repetition in Wallinger's religious works apparent, be it repetition of holy phrases or cinematic looping. Each of the works in this chapter also walked a thin line between divisions of meaning. *Ecce Homo* brought the discussion of the importance of public sculpture to the forefront just before the turn

³⁹ Dante's three part structure is Inferno/Purgatorio/Paradiso.

⁴⁰ The simonists are those involved in the buying and selling of sacred items or holy position in church hierarchy.

⁴¹ The "pittura infamante" is a Renaissance convention of a defamatory portrait in which the accused is shamed—often shown as hung upside down or in some other degrading position or circumstance. Samuel Edgerton's chapter "Effigies of Shame" in the book *Pictures and Punishment. Art and Criminal Prosecution during the Florentine Renaissance* expands on this artistic trope.

of the millennium. The work explored the threshold between the secular and the divine in a myriad of ways. *Ecce Homo* was a crucial work in which Wallinger broke away from the Saatchi shadow and the other yBas. I argue that two revolving site-specific sculptural art projects that began in the new millennium in London have shaped the ways in which people think about site-specificity in London: the Unilever Series in the Tate Modern and the Forth Plinth Project in Trafalgar Square. These two ongoing ventures are funded corporately and by the national lottery, respectively. The success of these two communally-driven projects, as well as the Turner Prize, is largely due to the media attention devoted to chronicling the process of short-listing artists and to the eventual installation of each of the new “public” sculptures, environments, and exhibitions.

The video piece *Angel* displayed Wallinger’s ability to branch out from traditional artistic realms of painting and sculpture, and like *Ecce Homo*, it blurred the line between two realms, in this case, that between the holy and the demonic. *Threshold to the Kingdom* mixed symbols of the mundane with the extraordinary in order to create a metaphor for holy passage and forgiveness. *The Underworld* used looping in both a formal and auditory sense to create a sense of chaos and visual panic out of what would have originally been an awe-inspiring musical performance. Faith and redemption are the themes that link the works in this chapter, but faith is never truly defined in a concrete sense—Wallinger keeps us guessing as to his inclinations and preferences. The works in this chapter are intentionally obscure. Humorously enough, when asked the question “Do you believe in God?” by Keith Fletcher in a December 2007 issue of *The Independent*, Wallinger replied, “Which God would that be? There seem to be too many to choose from. I believe in James Joyce, who was a very Catholic non-believer.”⁴² Wallinger’s religious works do two things: first, they overlap the mundane, everyday rituals practiced by

⁴² Mark Wallinger, et al., “You Ask the Questions: Mark Wallinger, Turner Prize-Winning Artist,” *The Independent*, December 10, 2007. <http://www.independent.co.uk/artsentertainment/art/features/you-ask-the-questions-mark-wallinger-turner-prizewinningartist-764033.html>

every common man with the exalted, spiritually-loaded rituals one would immediately connect with Biblical potency. Secondly, they call into crisis the role that religion and spirituality have in the new millennium, and perhaps suggest that this role is diminished beyond resuscitation.

CHAPTER 5 POLITICS AND ZONES

This final thematic chapter will unpack the realm of the political in Mark Wallinger's most recent installations and projects, and attends to artistic spectacle in discussing his most defiant and radical works. This work will be understood in the context of large scale and personal transformations encountered at the start of the twenty-first century, ranging from the growing fear of terrorism worldwide, to Wallinger's conscious career move into work that expresses a growing sense of personal, moral, and political outrage. While some of the earlier themes and interests from this dissertation thus far will linger under the surface (such as spirituality and nationhood), I will show how the artist has, over the past ten years, made work of significant public importance, charting new themes of liminality and spatial power.

In doing so, this chapter will look at the different incarnations of and variations on the ideas of zones, sectors, borders, and spheres in Mark Wallinger's works. Some of these thresholds discussed will be literal ones, while others will exist metaphorically. The realm of the political machine and its societal control (and attempts to silence dissent) will also form part of this chapter, since notions of control, segregation, and exclusion are often tied up in the political. As Martin Herbert wrote in a recent issue of *Modern Painters*, Wallinger "has always been concerned with identifying where, and through what symbols, lines are drawn; with standoffs between beliefs, and with how belief relates to power."¹ Three of the works featured in this chapter fall into the category of the site-specific installation, while the fourth and final piece to be discussed is a 2009 exhibition curated by Wallinger himself. I have included this curated exhibition, entitled *The Russian Linesman*, because I believe it can be read as an extension of Wallinger's artistic self. I have placed it at the end of this discussion intentionally as it

¹ Martin Herbert, "I, Wallinger," *Modern Painters* 20, no 8 (September 2008): 77.

expressively encapsulates all of the artist's interests and preoccupations which will have been discussed in this dissertation. My analysis of *The Russian Linesman* is intended to provide a proper bookend to my thematic investigation of twenty-five years of Mark Wallinger's artistic practices.

State Britain (2007)

The installation known as *State Britain* is arguably Wallinger's most prominent, publicized, and controversial work to date (Figure 27). Let me introduce this work in the context in which I encountered it in its first and only public exhibition as of the date of this writing. During the summer of 2007, Damien Hirst's *For the Love of God*, a diamond-encrusted human skull on view at the White Cube gallery in London, became the most expensive *memento mori* the art world had ever seen (Figure 28).² As crowds flocked to see Hirst's audacious creation during the months of June and July, Wallinger's 40 meter-long installation entitled *State Britain* was wrapping up its eight month stint in Tate Britain's Duveen Galleries. Wallinger's piece occupied nearly the full length of the Duveen, the grand hallway that bisects the museum and serves as the main artery that one must walk through in order to enter the side galleries that house works by Constable, Turner, and Hockney, among others. From January 15 until August 27, 2007, Wallinger's *State Britain*, a re-creation of Brian Haw's Parliamentary Square protest, stood in the Tate in homage to and remembrance of Haw's original anti-war collection of photographs, signboards, stuffed animals, flags, and personal camping gear. Haw's anti-war protest site (Figure 29; the Tate website calls it a "peace camp"³) had been forcefully dismantled

² Hirst's solo exhibition, entitled "Beyond Belief," which included *For the Love of God*, ran from June 3 until July 7, 2007, at both White Cube gallery spaces in London. The diamond skull, worth close to 100 million dollars, was shown at the Mason's Yard location, which is a short distance from the Royal Academy.

³ The descriptions can be found at: <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/wallinger/default.shtm>

in the middle of the night by the British police on May 23, 2006, where it had existed alongside the Parliamentary Buildings for nearly five years.⁴

Whereas Hirst's *For the Love of God* trumpeted the marriage of death and vanity in ostentatious manner, Wallinger's *State Britain* lamented the death and corruption brought about by the war in Iraq. Wallinger's installation simultaneously memorialized Haw's protest efforts and stood as one of the most overtly political works of art that the Tate Britain had ever dared to display. Established in 1897, the Tate Britain exists alongside the National Gallery as one of the longstanding institutional giants in London.

Given the radical difference between these two works, they seemed to share little beyond the fact that they both received highly publicized presentation in London in June of 2007. However, in retrospect, the two artworks can be seen to have shared a similar kind of capitalization of the media, and to have been framed by their respective galleries in comparable ways. As suggested previously throughout this dissertation, Hirst and Wallinger have, at different moments, found their careers meeting at strange parallels. After all, Wallinger's *Race, Class, Sex* equestrian paintings had hung in the same room as Hirst's shark suspended in a tank of formaldehyde solution⁵ exactly ten years prior in 1997 at the *Sensation* show at the Royal Academy, when the yBas made their debut. Wallinger and Hirst also crossed paths at Goldsmith's and infamously at the 1995 Turner Prize. It is only fitting that the artists once again found themselves dueling for recognition. My argument here is that Wallinger's contribution to in 2007 is the more socially and politically relevant work—*State Britain*'s use of spectacle is unburdened by the weight of glamorization and self-promotion.

⁴ Brian Haw's website is <http://www.parliament-square.org.uk/>

⁵ The Hirst "shark sculpture" is entitled *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*.

Whereas the exhibition that showcased *For the Love of God* at White Cube exploited theatrics, monetary value, and exclusivity as part of the marketable “aura” of the work, *State Britain* was a replica of an already highly theatrical protest site. But, set inside the Duveen Galleries, the affected nature of Brian Haw’s original outdoor camp (complete with the sights, sounds, and smells of cabs blowing past, Haw’s evangelistic yelling, and the chaos of the tourist area around Parliament) was replaced with the kind of stately calm that one might expect to feel inside a prestigious institution such as the Tate. The sounds of Brian Haw’s impassioned soliloquies that he had belted out while on Parliament Square had been replaced with the murmurs of Tate visitors who were not quite sure what they were experiencing.⁶ Both *State Britain* and *For the Love of God* were controversial in their own ways and seemed to speak to a sense of the duality of fragility and excess. As I witnessed museum and gallery visitors’ reactions to both *State Britain* and *For the Love of God* during their respective tenures, it seemed that Wallinger’s work left viewers dazed and absorbed in a way that Damien Hirst’s 8,601 flawless diamonds did not.

Now, let me begin to shift from the context in which *State Britain* was produced and exhibited in 2007, to a close reading of the installation itself. *State Britain* is a massive pictorial and textual frieze that exposes the atrocities of war projected onto Iraqi children since the sanctions against that country began in 1990. The work also calls attention to issues of free speech and the right to protest in Great Britain, and the role of and power held by the art institution. It is estimated that half a million Iraqi children have died from malnutrition, disease, and birth defects since the sanctions began. Many of the placards and images that make up the

⁶ See for example Yve-Alain Bois, “Piece Movement: Yve-Alain Bois on Mark Wallinger’s *State Britain*,” *Artforum* 45, no. 8 (April 2007): 248-251, where Bois begins his essay by quoting an appalled spectator at the Tate Britain who exclaims “*Is this for real?*” upon encountering *State Britain*.

huge tableaux are disturbing, showing mutilated and distressed children. In an essay on *State Britain*, author Michael Diers calls the work a contemporary *danse macabre* –a cynical pictorial allegory on the nature of death. Diers says that *State Britain* is “comparable in its extent to the painted wall of a mediaeval cemetery” and like a *danse macabre*, possesses “the sharply accusatory tone characteristic of the [*danse macabre*] display as a whole.”⁷

Visitors to the *State Britain* installation in the Duveen Galleries were met with a museum sign that warned visitors that: *This display contains images of human suffering which some visitors may find distressing*. Over 600 items make up the work: everything from mangled dolls to placards calling for peace and for cars to “Beep for Brian” to gory images of George W. Bush and Tony Blair portrayed as ogres. Both British and American political figures are shown as calculating puppeteers and blood drinkers, while pictures of deformed infants born in Iraq and Afghanistan are stomach-turning examples of the uranium-induced birth defects imposed upon unwitting victims. Many of the items in Haw’s camp were given to him by passersby, friends, and fans in support of his call for peace. In that sense, one might say that the original work was “made” by a collective of many people and then maintained by a single guardian figure. Many who opposed Haw’s protest camp had argued that it was an eyesore, a blemish on the otherwise picturesque and grassy Parliamentary Square that sits opposite Westminster. In one of the popularly documented quips made by Mark Wallinger on the subject of the perceived ugliness of Haw’s encampment, the artist remarked: “I don’t know what Baghdad is, if this is an eyesore.”⁸

⁷ Michael Diers, “In the Exclusion Zone of Art,” in *Mark Wallinger*, edited by Madeleine Schuppli and Janneke de Vries, 89-96 (Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2008), 91.

⁸ Wallinger speaking in the online video *New Work: Mark Wallinger*, “Mark Wallinger explores the art of protest,” TateShots, 2007. Found at <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/26405340001>

In May 2005, the newly passed “Serious Organized Crime and Police Act”⁹ prohibited unauthorized acts of protest within a one kilometer “exclusion zone” that radiated outwards from the exact area that Haw had camped for half a decade. Before the month of year would pass, and after several legal battles over whether the law could be retroactively applied to Haw’s camps, his demonstration would be mostly dismantled and removed by police in an unannounced late night raid (Haw was allowed to keep three meters of his camp intact).

This idea of the “exclusion zone” is one of the most interesting in regards to the meaning of Wallinger’s re-creation, because the edge of the zone dictated by the Serious Organized Crime and Police Act happens to bisect the Tate Britain. The perimeter of the zone is an invisible barrier between freedom of speech and a silencing of that speech, which was made visually tangible by Wallinger through a wide piece of black tape he put down on the floor of the museum, marking the border of the “Organized Crime” border. In Wallinger’s placement of the black line on the floor, it is revealed that half of his installation is illegally within the zone, while the other half sits safely outside of the boundary. In a video posted on the Tate’s multimedia website¹⁰ Wallinger actually jumps back and forth over the line he has put own on the floor of the Duveen, moving instantly between the legal and illegal parts of his installation, in essence performing simultaneous acts of compliance and rebellion.

The Tate’s website for the *State Britain* exhibition¹¹ shows how close to fifteen studio assistant sand fabricators re-created each poster, placard, and text sign (various “flotsam and

⁹ Part IV of the Serious Organized Crime and Police Act refers to “Public Order and Conduct in Public Places.” Provision 132.1 of the act states a person “is guilty of an offence if, when the demonstration starts, authorisation for the demonstration has not been given” and following this, 138.3 states “No point in the area so specified may be more than one kilometre in a straight line from the point nearest to it in Parliament Square.” The entire act can be found at the Office of Public Sector Information at http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2005/ukpga_20050015_en_1

¹⁰ See <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/26405340001>

¹¹ See <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/wallinger/>

jetsam,”¹² as one reviewer for the *Telegraph* put it) by projecting photographs of Haw’s outdoor camp (these photographs were taken by Wallinger himself—he began documenting Haw’s protest before it was ordered destroyed) onto surfaces where the images could be traced and painstakingly re-made “exactly” how they were on the Parliament Square. Of course, this *exactness* is merely a mirage; whereas Haw’s signs were worn and tattered by age and exposure, Wallinger’s items and their weathered-ness is a complete fabrication. The yellowing of newspaper print has been induced, and the cellophane and cardboard placards have been crumpled and dirtied with precision and care by the employees of the Mike Smith fabrication studio in London. The original display was amassed over a five year period by Haw, whereas Wallinger’s items were made in about six month’s time in the relative comfort of an indoor studio system and with the aid of digital imaging and technology.¹³ The issue here is whether the question of the replication strategy has a purchase on the evaluation of the work.

There are large, eye-catching signs in the piece, such as the poster which is featured prominently in the center of the protest where red letters read: “Baby Killers / Bush, Blair, BLiar / And Power / Money Hungry Rat Pack.” It is in front of this inflammatory sign that Wallinger stands for many of the publicity photographs taken for the Tate website. In these photos, Wallinger stands or sits awkwardly in front of his replica, wearing all black, posed like a tourist who is getting his or her picture taken in front of a notable landmark. In these images, Wallinger’s figure stands in for the absent one—that of Haw. Wallinger has become the new author, the new protestor, but Haw’s legacy is and always will be built into the work.

¹² Serena Davies, “The Fine Art of Free Speech.” *The Telegraph Online*. Posted January 16, 2007. Found at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/arts/main.jhtml?xml=/arts/2007/01/16/bawall116.xml>

¹³ The fabrication of State Britain took place at the Mike Smith Studio in London at the cost of approximately 90,000 pounds. Wallinger was not actively involved in constructing the replicas.

In a review of the installation for *Art Monthly*, Richard Grayson makes the suggestion that the re-construction of the outdoor protest resembles the trendy, messy style of installation art that has become desirable and fashionable in the twenty-first century. He says that “Indeed, it is darkly comic quite how much the demonstration does resemble a global style of radical-chic art, with shouty text graphics and an abject aesthetic.”¹⁴ Could it be that *State Britain*’s appeal and success is partly due to the fact that it fits right in line with the aesthetic of contemporary artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija and Thomas Hirschorn who create beauty and conviviality out of seemingly chaotic environments and makeshift installation spaces?

As part of the *State Britain* installation, the Tate played a short, five minute video clip of Wallinger discussing his ideas for the work in a small room adjacent to the Duveen Galleries. The space was set up like an informal “sitting room” where one could sit and watch the clip on a loop feed. It featured Wallinger speaking candidly about his work while in the presence of it right after its installation, pointing out sections of the installation that he felt personally connected to, such as a poster that Brain Haw had originally made on a Christmas day that read “Peace / Salam / Shalom.”¹⁵ In the following pages, I will carve out three areas in which one can think about the implications of *State Britain*. Each area occupies a certain kind of conceptual movement or passage. These areas will help align *State Britain* into the overall theme of this chapter—Wallinger’s repetitive use zones and border crossings.

The first area addresses ideas that revolve around the concepts of replicas, lost objects and authenticity. This should not be surprising as Wallinger often deals with these same concepts in

¹⁴ Richard Grayson, “Review: Mark Wallinger,” in *Art Monthly*, no 304 (March 2007): 26.

¹⁵ *New Work: Mark Wallinger* “Mark Wallinger explores the art of protest,” TateShots, Issue 1, February 2007. <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/26405340001>

other works described thus far in this dissertation.¹⁶ The passage here is a movement between a threshold and a conceptual space of *before and after*. Can a notion of “faithfulness” to the original be retained in a work such as Wallinger’s *State Britain*? The installation obviously toys with notions of appropriation, authenticity, and replication. Citation is crucial to the work—both structural citations and a formal truth to materials. The Tate’s website for the *State Britain* commission calls the work “faithful in every detail.”¹⁷ But how can this be measured? In photographs documenting the fabrication of the installation at the Mike Smith Studio workshop, we see that the digital images Wallinger took of Haw’s protest (the last ironically taken on April 22, 2006, the day before police removed the work) are projected and traced on placards of the same sizes and shapes of Haw’s signs. Is Wallinger’s work linked to Haw’s because of its exact mimicry and spatial simulations? Is, or was, Haw himself an artist? The original makeshift altar’s status as a “high” art object is nebulous: it is the vision of a single person (Haw) or one that has been collaboratively produced? After all, the work is an “artistic replica of a non-artistic replica” which serves the purpose of “political acknowledgement, perhaps even as a form of reparation.”¹⁸ Diers here is making the suggestion that *State Britain*’s meaning exists partly in the sense that it “rights” a political “wrong.”

The nod that *State Britain* makes to the Duchampian readymade (in which the “uniqueness” of the object is unimportant) is clear. Even Marcel Duchamp’s most infamous work, *Fountain*, is just a 1964 replica of a lost “original” 1917 sculpture. Wallinger is well aware that his simulacrum will carry a different set of obligations inside the museum walls. His title,

¹⁶ In regards to replicas and appropriation one can look to works such as *Ghost*, *Oxymoron*, *A Model History*, or *Façade*, amongst others.

¹⁷ See <http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/wallinger/>

¹⁸ Michael Diers, “In the Exclusion Zone of Art,” 91.

State Britain, may also point to a playful kind of Duchampian linguistic game, in that a removal of the “S” at the beginning leaves behind the name of the institution which has commissioned and housed the work—State Britain is (S)Tate Britain. The “state” as a surveillant and controlling power is conflated with the authority of the museum. There are traces of Haw in Wallinger’s work, but much of its original radical impact was lost when the outdoor Parliamentary Square setting was lost. In contrast, inside the museum, Wallinger’s work is given a validity and kind of formal breathing room that Haw’s camp was not. In the Tate, the viewer can be “among” the pieces that make up the work in a different sense—with a freedom to explore and have the time and the space to read every placard, to peek behind the front façade of the peace wall to the hidden objects behind, to see things such as a tea-making station, makeshift sleeping quarters, and a jar filled with a conspicuous yellow liquid that is labeled “not for drinking.” Brain Haw’s actual presence is removed (which one could say was a bit intimidating anyway), but traces (or rather replicas of traces) of his body are present. This issue of being able to explore each element in the installation with a kind of “breathing room” is an issue investigated in Claire Bishop’s 2005 book *Installation Art: A Critical History*. Bishop’s study on installation is organized like a survey, yet she spends time on several case studies in order to elucidate different conditions and concerns of installation. She discusses how installation art’s meaning is closely intertwined with heightening a viewer’s perception and that the presence of a viewer (the “embodied” subject) within an “activated” space is what differentiates installation art from more traditional media such as painting or photography. Bishop traces the roots of installation back to Kaprow, Cage, Oldenburg, and the performance/installation events known as “Happenings.” Her analysis continues through Minimalism and figures such as Robert Morris, performances by Vito Acconci, and the video installation of Bill Viola. Her methodology is one that combines ideas of

psychoanalysis, phenomenology, relational aesthetics, and post-structuralism. Bishop argues, drawing from the writings of Merleau-Ponty,¹⁹ that perception does not rely just on vision, but is something that involves the whole body. She believes that installation art can be categorized by the way that the artist has created the environment and thus the way in which the viewer responds to it. In this sense, I would argue that *State Britain* “activates” its viewers not only in a physical sense as they move all around it in the Duveen, but also in the sense that it activates them politically by supplying them with images and information that had been traditionally hidden from public view.

The second set of issues that are crucial to understanding *State Britain* are those that deal with visibility, invisibility, and display. The passage here is a movement between the threshold of *outside and inside*, and the act of Wallinger bringing back a moment and a message into the public sphere, which has now been slightly changed. Was Brian Haw’s peace camp a site-specific entity? It would be easy to argue for this—seeing as Parliament Square’s governmental associations and geographic location were crucial to Haw’s decision to place his encampment there. It had a proximity to those whom he voiced his dissent against. The setting created meaning for Haw, and drew in many chance spectators because of the nearby tourist attraction of Westminster Cathedral. There is no doubt that Wallinger’s piece is an installation, and one that is made very poignant by the fact that the border of the exclusion zone circumference ran through the Tate Britain building. This border that invisibly infringes on the work is one of the lynchpins to discovering its meaning. Although installation art can include single paintings, sculptures, and photographs, the word “installation” suggests the presence of multiple art objects within an

¹⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty was a twentieth-century French philosopher who was interested in the concept of phenomenology, wherein it is argued that conscious perception and experience is affected by a first-person point of view including the body, subjective emotion, and one’s surroundings.

interactive environment, or at least some sort of dependency on that environment for meaning. The poignancy in installation is created through the inter-relationships forged between the objects, their setting, and the participation of the human viewer between the two. If installation art creates a dialogue between the artist, the object, space, and time, as many theorists have argued, both Haw and Wallinger depend on an additional factor in the equation: the current social/political climate of the city in which these kinds of works are being produced.²⁰

The movement from *outside to inside* is also one that encompasses and mirrors a passage from “non-art” to “art.” Brian Haw’s protest was not called art; not by people on the street who walked by it to get to their jobs, not by gallery owners, not by the media. But once Wallinger had appropriated the “look” of the work, its meaning and categorical taxonomy shifted. Once it moved inside the Tate’s Duveen Galleries, the piece made a leap from detritus to fine art, not unlike the work of Thomas Hirschhorn, not unlike the status shift of something like Duchamp’s *Fountain*. *State Britain* cannot be ideologically separated from its transplantation. *State Britain* should be viewed as an installation that stretched and challenged the borders and boundaries of art production and meaning, as opposed to being an artwork that sits comfortably in its status as a beautiful piece to be looked at.

The third and final grouping of ideas that drive this installation are speech, a silencing of that speech, and authority. The passage here is movement between *politics and art*. Haw’s camp spoke a political message, one that first rejected the sanctions against Iraq in 2001, evolving into an anti-war protest once invasion and war began, ending up as an evangelical-like abhorrence of and speaking out against the sins carried out against the innocents—children. Wallinger’s almost compulsive documenting, copying, and imitating strives to be both formally and ideologically

²⁰ For several crucial texts on contemporary installation art see my “further reading” list at the end of my bibliography.

close to Haw's original space of resistance. Wallinger has always been interested in structures of power, and this installation, in a very literal sense, is his most direct challenge to the political and authoritative machine yet. Nearly ten years before making *State Britain*, Wallinger wrote,

The concept of the Establishment is not the product of a conspiracy theory. It is real. Its existence and continuance are testimony to a basic human craving to trust in the veracity of paternal authority, an authority that is its own guarantor and requires faith rather than imagination from believers.²¹

But one must realize here that in Wallinger's work, because the artist *references* a political statement shouted by another and in doing so directly making one himself, it became "safer" for the viewing public. Wallinger's art/protest was sanctioned by the grander forces of the "institution" where Brian Haw's peace camp was deemed an "eyesore" and eventually condemned as illegal through the passage of legislation specifically written to oust Haw. It is clear though, that *State Britain* is a monument to Haw, and that Wallinger is attempting to give a voice back to Haw, whom he believes to be "the last protestor in Britain," as he says in the aforementioned Tate Britain video that accompanied the work. The notion of true and selfless *homage* is tricky ground however, because even with all of Wallinger's good efforts, in the end, it is Wallinger who wins the Turner Prize, not Haw, despite the fact that they have essentially created the same work of art.

In one of the signs in the installation, Haw/Wallinger offer a quote from Tony Blair, England's New Labour Prime Minister from 1997 until 2007: "When I pass protesters every day at Downing Street, and believe me, you name it, they protest against it, I may not like what they

²¹ Mark Wallinger, "The Pygmalion Paradox," *Art Monthly*, no. 218 (July-August 1998): 1-4. Wallinger explained how his feelings regarding the "establishment" haven't changed much—he said in an e-mail message to the author: "*Art Monthly* having run "The Pygmalion Paradox" refused "Fool Britannia," thereby bearing out some of my darker imaginings about cronyism. A shame, because as Adam Ant observed, ridicule is nothing to be scared of. I was obviously grateful and impressed with the Tate with regard to *State Britain*. It was making a meal of the hand it was biting. Both *Art Monthly* and the Tate regard themselves somewhat aloof from the art market-place, but both enjoy state funding."

call me, but I thank God they can. That's called freedom."²² This now ironic quote encompasses the goals of *State Britain*: to make a critical statement about the constraints on freedom of speech, and specifically pinpoint Haw's case as a moment of breakdown in the democratic system. There is no doubt that *State Britain* was viewed, treated, and handled very differently in its original state (Haw's protest) than it was in the re-worked state (Wallinger's art). Haw's work was taken down in the cover of night, by force, and loaded into police cargo trucks. There are obviously two poles of installation, collection, and eventually dismantlement. Wallinger's work was taken down carefully, with handlers wearing gloves; each piece was individually wrapped in protective paper before being put into art storage.²³ Haw's work is today in police custody while Wallinger's work waits to be shown again.

Wallinger is doubling the act of protest by protesting through the means of replicating a protest. It is a looping of ideas and materials. Each of the nearly 600 items included *State Britain* have been "made" over and over again. The re-making and re-assembling of State Britain was thus "an act of artistic protest against political thoughtlessness and consequently itself a political act that went hand in hand with a renewed contravention of the law in question..."²⁴ This issue of *(re)presentation* (where an item's potentially problematic display brings about a critical evaluation of surrounding judgment systems) is obviously complicated when the boundaries of exhibition arrangement are as limitless as art-making itself. Display decisions are so often subjective ones, left up to museum coordinators and curators, so much that exhibition "authorship" and corresponding dilemmas of authenticity do not have set rigid standards, and are

²² Tony Blair spoke these words while on a visit to the Bush senior Presidential Library in the United States in April 2002, more than four years before the forced dismantling of Haw's protest site.

²³ A fascinating video of the simultaneous dismantlement of both Haw's and Wallinger's camps can be seen at: <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/29405997001>

²⁴ Michael Diers, "In the Exclusion Zone of Art," 91.

often a problematic construct to interpret. Here, this problematic is pushed in an entirely different direction as the size, arrangement, and placement of *State Britain* was pre-determined by Haw's original construction. *State Britain* is what one could call a "simulacra," a concept theorized by Jean Baudrillard. The idea of the simulacra is that reality is experienced through a series of constructed cultural signs. As put forth in Baudrillard's configuration, "reality" is replaced by its representation, an idea that certainly has a purchase on Wallinger's *State Britain*. The installation is a "copy" that no longer has an "original."²⁵

In the introductory pages of his book on installation art, Mark Rosenthal argues that "contemporary installation has a particular transgressive thrust in relation to expectations about sculpture, and art in general, for the sanctity and sublime isolation of a sculpted art object, carefully if not extravagantly framed or literally on a pedestal, is absent."²⁶ So perhaps Wallinger's work is, at its core, a transgressive move, even without any kind of political overtones attached, because of its status as a transitory installation. *State Britain* is a crucial example of how British art has evolved and been reinvented since the 1990s through a progression of both critically and popularly successful sculptural installations and site-specific sculptural projects in London.

In the media, *State Britain* is championed as the work that "won Wallinger the prize" in 2007. The sheer amount of press the piece received in British newspapers such as the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph* is where the artwork has assimilated into the mainstream. How (and if) Wallinger's work attempts to assimilate into market is another matter that is not yet resolved. With Wallinger's victory, *State Britain* became synonymous with the achievement of the prize—

²⁵ For more on this see Jean Baudrillard's book *Simulacra and Simulations*, published in English in 1996.

²⁶ Mark Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art: from Duchamp to Holzer* (Munich; London: Prestel, 2003), 25.

a bittersweet notion, of course, when one considers that the artwork, in its original state as put together by protestor Brian Haw, was deemed a security threat and public nuisance by many Londoners. The Turner Prize gains much press attention due to the highly publicized announcement of the “shortlist” of British artists and subsequent group exhibition of works by the finalists, as well as the dramatic and anticipated televised announcement of the winner. The increasing amount of award money (it has climbed in recent years, with sponsorship, from the initial amount of 10,000 pounds sterling to 25,000 going to the winner) also speaks to the reputation of the prize and the opportunities for corporate sponsorship. Since 1991, the award has been geared toward the “young” artist: the age limit for consideration is now 50 years.

One must not overlook the religious connotations of *State Britain*, especially in light of Wallinger’s previous interests in the role of the religious icon in everyday life in modern England. This includes seeing Brian Haw as an evangelical figure—Haw himself would argue that his Parliamentary Square protest is as much an affirmation of his religious objections to the war in Iraq as his political ones. His protest seems to focus much of its outcry against the abuse of children during wartime sanctions. In this sense, Haw sets himself up as kind of dissident shepherd speaking out on behalf of the sins against the innocent in Iraq. This second way that religion can be considered is in that fact that the conceptual message of the Tate installation is similar to religious cycles in churches. Madeline Schuppli notes that the pictorial configuration of *State Britain* is somewhat akin to the visual program in a church altar, but “Instead of the figure of tortured or martyred saints we see pictured of disfigured and maimed children, victims of the Iraq war”²⁷ and, similarly, Margaret Iverson says that the installation’s “insistence on

²⁷ Schuppli, “Wallinger and Religion,” 58.

[showing] dead babies seems to me like an unconscious repetition of the trope of the massacre of the innocents.”²⁸

Rebellion and creativity often go hand in hand, especially in the realm of contemporary British art, and such is the case with *State Britain*. What Mark Wallinger is interested in with this installation, in a broad sense, are the ways in which dissent and social critique evolve in artistic forms as the urban landscape of a city, in this case London, evolves, whether it be working-class attitudes toward the monarchy and social rebellion being manifested in counter-culture music or a gruesome, forty meter long protest. Realizing *State Britain* as an artwork follows the natural evolution of his career, in which he poses an out-right challenge to the English political and religious establishment.

When I experienced *State Britain* in late June of 2007, towards the end of its run, the piece dominated the portion of museum it was housed in. It was an *unavoidable* work of art, and despite the signs warning that some visitors might find the content of the work “distressing,” most of the visitors who viewed the work at the same time as myself (during all three occasions I went to see it) poured over every inch of it, reading all the placards, staring intently at the shocking photographs of war-torn areas and victims. *State Britain* was not sectioned off from the more “proper” works of art in the Tate; in fact, when one was inside of a side gallery gazing at a Pre-Raphaelite painting, Wallinger’s installation in the Duveen hallway was still present, always visible through the open doorways of the side rooms. Did the work “belong” in this space, alongside Turner, Bacon, and Constable? The responses were mixed. Adrian Searle of *The Guardian* places *State Britain* alongside some of art history’s greatest tragic history paintings:

²⁸ Margaret Iverson in conversation with Wallinger in Yve-Alain Bois, et. al., in “An Interview with Mark Wallinger,” 192.

State Britain could be interpreted as a continuation of Haw's protest by other means, in such a place and in such a way as to mock a law designed to curtail our freedom to protest. The whole thing is a *trompe l'oeil* fabrication, a still life, a 2007 history painting - the modern equivalent of Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, Goya's *Third of May* and Manet's *Execution of the Emperor Maximilian*, all of which referred in contentious ways to world events."²⁹

Inside of Tate Britain, the installation held its own among the abundant portraits of British aristocrats, the turbulent J.M.W. Turner landscapes, and the pre-Raphaelite mythologies. Although it was an expensively-made³⁰ replica of the long-lost remnants of one incredibly outspoken man's political efforts, it looked like the "real thing." It may have moved from outdoors to in, and received a new authorial name, but despite these changes *State Britain* is a remake whose impact and formal prowess will not soon be replicated. Although *State Britain* so obviously wears its status as a mere replication on its sleeve – or perhaps precisely because it does so, it provides insight into a range of discourses that cross at the intersection of the Tate Britain, Parliamentary Square, and the arbitrary and invisible line of the "exclusion zone." *State Britain* extends Wallinger's earlier historicist interests in expressions of British-ness and aristocracy into a pointed critique of institutions and political control.

Zone (2007)

For the 2007 Sculpture Projects Münster event, Mark Wallinger orchestrated the installation of a nearly invisible conceptual work entitled *Zone* (Figure 30). The work was an outdoor sculpture made of 4,800 meters (approximately three miles) worth of Dyneema fishing line that encircled the city center for the duration of the sculpture exhibition. Dyneema, a durable

²⁹ Adrian Searle, "Bears Against Bombs," *The Guardian Online*, January 16, 2007. <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1991380,00.html>. In the exhibition broadsheet published by Tate Britain for *State Britain*, Clarrie Wallis originally made similar connections, likening Wallinger's work to monumental tragic history paintings.

³⁰ I use this phrase with caution; the installation cost approximately 90,000 pounds to manufacture, which is actually a relatively small sum when compared to the commissioning and buying and selling of popular contemporary art. In winning the Turner Prize, Wallinger pocketed only 25,000 pounds.

thread-like material, was secured to various buildings and points along its continuous circular path with metal fixtures and clamps. The Sculpture Projects Münster main office was positioned at the center of Wallinger's circumference, and a metal disk embedded in the ground (with an appearance similar to that of a manhole cover) outside the administrative building demarcated the point as the "center of the zone" (Figure 31).

Wallinger was inspired for the project partly by the preexisting geographical nuances of the city itself. He wrote, "I was drawn to the remains of the old city walls and the moat that encircles the old city. Thresholds, the liminal: the point at which one enters a different state or space, have been an abiding concern."³¹ This initial idea was followed by the simple performative act of turning a saucer upside down and placing it onto a map of Münster while the artist was in a café; the ring traced around the lip of the upturned cup provided the first visualization of the piece for the project.³²

Sculpture Projects Münster has happened every ten years in this affluent and culturally rich part of Germany since 1977. It showcased only four artists during its inaugural event, featuring well-known figures in outdoor art such as Donald Judd and Claes Oldenburg. It has evolved in the past thirty years to incorporate more artists per show, and the work itself has become less figural and more conceptual. The sculptures shown at Münster more recently seems to deal with the urban space in a more interactive way as opposed to just existing within it. *Zone* is one such artwork that co-mingles with the urban landscape.

Wallinger was an invited artist to the Münster exhibition, and his work was written about in the both the catalog and press for the event, yet his boundary-suggesting, mostly invisible

³¹ Mark Wallinger, Sculpture Projects Münster exhibition catalog essay, in Franzen, König, and Plath, eds., *Sculpture Projects Münster 07* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König: 2007), 257.

³² This act was described to me by the artist during an interview on October 29, 2009.

Zone remained largely invisible to visitors to the exhibition, and to the general public who may have unknowingly entered into it between June 17 and September 30, 2007. Because of its camouflaged appearance against the sky and its position well above eye level in the city, *Zone* was a difficult work to first discover, and then not lose sight of. In an essay on the work *Zone*, Janneke de Vries wrote that as a consequence of the artwork's elusive existence in the city, that

...people generally followed *Zone* with the help of a map, without being able to assimilate the work visually – conscious in a strangely intense way of the fact that it was accompanying them through the town. For a long time now invisibility has not necessarily meant a lack of presence.³³

Calling attention to the boundary lines placed upon public space by political or religious forces was not new to Wallinger—it was this same concept used in *State Britain* to mark off the circular exclusion zone prohibiting forms of protest around London's Parliament. But the type of special construction Wallinger now had in mind for his work in Münster was based on the Orthodox Jewish notion of an “eruv.” As the Talmud defines it, an eruv marks a boundary surrounding a Jewish neighborhood—it is a defined area that allows for the extension of “private space” and ritual to move into the public sphere—thus allowing certain deeds and rituals to be carried out on the Sabbath. By this I mean that the eruv created one large community out of many separate domiciles—binding the community together by symbolically and literally encircling the community. The *eruv* allows for the circumventing of certain Sabbath laws that prohibit movement, the carrying of goods, and trade outside of one's private domicile during holy days. It is essentially a symbolic fence that is marked and maintained by the presence of an actual wire. Wallinger writes on the eruv, “The Talmud recommends that it should be an integral part of the city and invisible to the untrained eye. This assertion of religious communal identity,

³³ Janneke de Vries, “The Known Invisible,” 106.

quite discreet to the outsider, is the reverse of the ghetto.”³⁴ Thus, the artwork *Zone* must be invisible in order to exist within the proper standards of the type of Jewish community border that it pays homage to.³⁵

Zone is a work full of ambiguities. Its installation in Münster, a German city, further complicates and expands the potential readings of the work as an *eruv*. In the fifteen century, all Jews were expelled from Münster and not allowed back until the Napoleonic Wars. The relationship that Münster had with its Jewish population during World War II is also a complex one. While less “Nazified” than other regions of German, Münster’s city government did play a direct role in the persecution of its Jewish population, namely the expropriation of property.³⁶ Thus, Wallinger is invoking the troubled relationship that Münster historically had with its Jewish population.

Wallinger’s work encircles the city center of Münster, and thus encircles many of the public sculptures on view for the 2007 sculpture project. So perhaps then the statement that Wallinger is making with *Zone* is not exclusively about Jewish Sabbath laws, but also focused on the movements and transgressions within the public art sphere in Münster itself. And because *Zone* is made out of a very resilient type of fishing line, it could be said that Wallinger is “casting

³⁴ Mark Wallinger, *The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders, and Thresholds* (London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2009), 59. Similar comments were made by Wallinger two years earlier in his text written for the Sculpture Projects Münster exhibition catalog, in Franzen, König, and Plath, eds., *Sculpture Projects Muenster 07* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Köing: 2007), 257.

³⁵ A famous example of the modern pale is the “Russian Pale” first enacted under Catherine the Great, and in force between 1791 and 1917. In this “Pale of Settlement” Russian Jews were forced into impoverished areas along the Western border of Imperial Russia. There are also well known pales enacted by England’s empire such as the “Pale of Calais” formed in 1360 and the “Irish Pale” of 1446. Wallinger discusses *Zone* in the webcast “Contemporary Sculpture and the Social Turn,” which can be viewed at: <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/24872157001>

³⁶ For more information on the history of Jews in Münster see the 1984 book *Society and Religion in Münster 1535-1618* by R. Hsia published by Yale University Press and an article by Sabine Mecking, entitled “Initiatives, Actors, and Environment: The Münster City Council and ‘Jewish Policy’ in the National Socialist State” in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3 (Winter 2008): 475-496.

a net” around the sculpture event, and that spectators are either caught up within the line of the scope of the project or they are not. Does public art exist within an invisible boundary accessible to only those aware of its existence? Perhaps Wallinger is suggesting that art lives within its own conceptual *eruv*.

Janneke de Vries calls the *eruv*, and the work *Zone* a “known invisible,”³⁷ a concept not too far away from that of the notion of “blind faith” that Wallinger often utilizes (not coincidentally this is the name of Wallinger’s character in the video piece *Angel*). In both cases, the idea is that one must believe in something’s existence in order for it to have meaning or power for an individual. Adaptations of the concept of a symbolic threshold exist outside of the Jewish faith; for example, the medieval English phrase of being “beyond the pale” refers to another type of boundary separating home and enemy territory that originated during the reign of King Henry II. The *pale* is another type of strictly dematerialized yet potent geographical zone, a concept familiar to Wallinger as a British citizen.³⁸ The word *pale* is derived from the Latin *palum*, which refers to the stake that one could construct a fence with. During Henry II’s rule in the fourteenth century, pales were enacted to defend secure areas within Ireland that were claimed by the English state. It is a word that is virtually extinct in modern language except for the colloquialism “beyond the pale.” In English culture, one would not want to find oneself “beyond the pale” during the time of conflict between neighborhood clans and sectors. And, as Kate Bush stated in an *Artforum* article on the 2007 Münster event, these types of spaces, in which “the controlling power permits itself to suspend or enforce the law at whim,” can be seen in contemporary American society as well, “as most egregiously demonstrated at Guantanamo

³⁷ For more on this, see Janneke de Vries, “The Known Invisible.”

³⁸ See pages 259-260 in Wallinger’s essay for the Sculpture Projects Münster exhibition catalog, in Franzen, König, and Plath, eds., *Sculpture Projects Münster 07*, 257.

Bay.”³⁹ In addition, Wallinger believes that the British government essentially created a *pale* when they enacted the Serious Organized Crime and Police Act (discussed previously in relationship to *State Britain*) but what remains unclear is whether people are safer within or outside of its invisible walls. Such is the case with the evolving connotations that follow the *eruv* and the *ghetto* as well.

Wallinger’s *Zone* is a work about social space and how a community acts and interacts within it. This idea is not new. Since the early Modern period, one significant aesthetic or philosophical question that has been investigated is “what is one’s relationship to the physical world?” Nicholas Bourriaud’s book *Relational Aesthetics* argues that since society is no longer making “real” relationships important (partly because of the increased availability of technology), some forms of art have started to emphasize audience relations, interactivity, and participation. The book talks about art forms where creating sociability is essential to the meaning of the work, and argues that by bringing people together in a collective, a new more valuable meaning comes out of the interchange. Bourriaud’s book traces this notion of the aesthetics involved in this interchange. “Relational” art creates sociability. The sphere of human relations has started to bear artistic fruit. Also, interchanges in gallery spaces are raw material for art, because visitors define exhibition structure and meaning. The overall goal of relational aesthetics is to define a new kind of “artwork as social interstice.”⁴⁰ Works such as *Zone*, as well

³⁹ Kate Bush, “Provisional Authority: On Skulptur Projekte Münster 07,” *Artforum* 46, no. 1 (September 2007): 423. “Guantanamo Bay” refers to a detention camp run by the United State since 2002. Because the camp is located in Cuba, the camp exists outside of US legal jurisdiction and therefore the detainees are not entitled to the rights granted to prisoners of war as per the 1949 Geneva Convention.

⁴⁰ Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002), 14.

as other sculptures shown at Münster in 2007, are moving into the realm of what some are calling “situation specificity.”⁴¹

Zone is an outdoor work which is, in many ways, intangible. It is invisible, and “like many boundaries, Wallinger’s circle is not recognized as such.”⁴² Essentially, it is a public sculpture that is about art and the configuration of space, and it is not decorative. Rosalind Krauss’ essay “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” written in 1979, looks at the ways in which categories of sculpture have become “elastic” and “malleable” in the postmodern period. In many ways, form has become formless, or at least less narrowly definable because of new technologies, a move out of the studio, and an “opening up of art space.”⁴³ Through a discussion of earth art, installation, and site-specific art, Krauss details how sculpture was then moving beyond the pedestal, and provides theoretical ground to legitimize this move. Whereas sculpture would normally be defined as “figurative” or “vertical” in the modern period, the new expanded field of sculpture is a “nomadic” concept.

One of the major questions surrounding *Zone* is whether or not one really needs to see it in order to experience it, or, if like the *eruv* or the *pale*, it is enough just to know it exists and how one must act within in or outside of its boundaries. Münster is somewhat of a “containable” city, as it is a model for an idyllic scholarly, religious, Catholic European city.⁴⁴ As it is, the power lies within the zone of the city center—both the power to control and the power not to be

⁴¹ See for example, Kate Bush, “Provisional Authority: On Skulptur Projekte Münster 07,” 419-423.

⁴² Frank Frangenberg, *Sculpture Projects Münster 07: A Short Guide* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther Köing, 2007), 67.

⁴³ Rosalind E. Krauss, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Hal Foster, ed. (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983).

⁴⁴ For more on this see Mark Wallinger’s statements made during the panel discussion: “Contemporary Sculpture and the Social Turn,” webcast, Tate Modern, 2007. The full video can be viewed at: <http://channel.tate.org.uk/media/24872157001>

controlled. In some ways, *Zone* as an artwork is the spatial opposite of *State Britain*—the inside of the circumference in *Zone* is a zone of freedom while the inside of the perimeter in *State Britain* is a zone of oppression.

Façade (2001)

Façade debuted at the 2001 Venice Biennale and was designed specifically for installation at this internationally acclaimed art fair (Figure 32). This playful and sardonic work, along with *Oxymoron*, would be one of the first encountered by visitors approaching Wallinger's site-specific project at the British Pavilion in Venice, Italy. *Façade* is a replica of the front of the façade of the Pavilion made to scale on vinyl-covered material. The life-sized placard that made up the work *Façade* was installed so that it acted as a literal curtain or shield in front of the building that it itself replicated. It is a mirror image of the Pavilion and a disguise as well, appearing so real that in some installation photographs taken at the site it is not apparent that what one is looking at is not the building itself, but a huge fabricated, full-colored photo-on-board that conceals the true face of aristocratic, loggia-endowed building. In addition, a second set of trees and bushes were placed in front of *Façade* to further enhance the look of the false front.

Writing in *Modern Painters*, Craig Burnett points out the visual joke that only locals in the Venetian city might appreciate: "In Venice, buildings under renovation are veiled by scaffolding and a painted image of the building within; thus Wallinger plays with a local custom and erases the solemnity of the pavilion."⁴⁵ Visitors to the 2001 Biennale would have immediately come face to face with a representation of the building they were just about to enter—they would be able to experience the real thing and the copy within a matter of moments of one another.

⁴⁵ Craig Burnett, "Fools Walk In: Mark Wallinger on the Eve of His Installation at the British Pavilion in Venice." *Modern Painters* 14, no 2 (Summer 2001): 40.

Wallinger created a second set of steps leading up to the hollow façade, and had the exterior of his creation landscaped with the exact same configuration of trees and shrubberies that are planted outside the true façade of the pavilion to heighten the effect of the *trompe l'oeil*. From a distance it might be difficult to discern the stage-setting Wallinger had created. The realization of the trickery, however, is a fun moment—“a gag played at the expense of our belief in photography as a transparent window, offering a one-to-one correspondence with the real world.”⁴⁶ Visitors to the pavilion were actually able (and required) to ascend the false staircase, and pass through the opening in fabricated placard in order to enter the true British Pavilion building. Wallinger’s *Façade* installation usurps the idea that each national pavilion is unique in its character and its identity—Wallinger simply shows how reproducible the look and nature of the building itself is.

At the Venice Biennale, the participating countries and nations are each given a building in which a single chosen representative artist displays a selection of his or her work.⁴⁷ Wallinger’s *Façade* was Great Britain’s 2001 entry to the Venice Biennale. In the past decade, maturing yBas have often represented Great Britain: first Wallinger, then Chris Ofili was the 2003 representative and Tracey Emin was the 2007 representative. The thirty single nation-centric buildings stand in close proximity to one another, producing a veritable international meeting of the nations on one small parcel of land in Venice. It is a scene of supposed global artistic harmony, which some authors have described as Disneyland-like.⁴⁸ The British Pavilion, with its neo-Palladian façade and columns, symbolically lords over many of the rest of the buildings that surround it; it is at the end of the long row of pavilions and up on a bit of a hill. It was exactly

⁴⁶ Ralph Rugoff, “Jesus is an Oxymoron,” 8.

⁴⁷ However, occasionally a chosen representative artist is deceased when their work is installed at Venice.

⁴⁸ Such as Ralph Rugoff.

this feeling of the lordly and aristocratic sentiment surrounding his country's pavilion that Wallinger wanted to usurp with *Façade*: in an interview on the subject of the Biennale, he stated: "So I hoped this façade would let the air out of the pumped-up nationalism a bit and people could pass through it and then perhaps into a slightly different frame of mind for the works inside."⁴⁹ Thus, by making a new front for the pavilion, Wallinger is attempting to take the façade off of the artificiality of the Biennale's workings.

At no other international art fair is the meaning of the artworks so predicated on the sense of national identity imposed by the various pavilions and the segregation of the countries than at the Venice Biennale. The artist's inclusion, location, and stature at the art festival are therefore dictated by their birth or national origins. *Façade* ironically points out that methods used by the Biennale to celebrate international trends in art are themselves fake; the British Pavilion is not actually British, as it exists in Italy, and one artist representing the face of contemporary art for a whole nation is in itself a flawed notion. For that matter, any one thing or display representing the ideals of a vast state is an unobtainable, utopian idea. The layout and designation of the thirty national buildings were decided in the 1930s, during the period of the Cold War. Ralph Rugoff put it succinctly when he said that *Façade* "pokes fun at the hollow theatricality of official trappings of State, calling attention to the way the pavilion's architecture invokes an imperial past that still resonates within British national identity."⁵⁰

Because Wallinger often hides meaning within outwardly mundane sounding titles, perhaps it is necessary to think about the word "façade." We have seen before on several occasions that Wallinger's works possess double meanings and that he uses language to

⁴⁹ Interview in Sandy Nairne, *Art Now: Interviews with Modern Artists*, 79.

⁵⁰ Ralph Rugoff, "Jesus is an Oxymoron," 8.

complicate and enrich the scope of his objectives. There is no argument that the word façade, taken literally, refers to the exterior face of a building or structure. However, in a figurative sense, façade can refer to the false or dishonest character that one presents to others or colleagues. To “put one’s best face forward” is a figure of speech having to do with a conscious alteration of identity, and this concept is undoubtedly relevant to Wallinger’s site-specific *Façade*.

In both *Façade* and *State Britain*, Wallinger takes on the art establishment from within, both participating in and criticizing modes of reification of national identity. Eric J. Segal noted on the issue of grouping societies and cultures seen in these two works that “Art history in its Hegelian mode has historically served as a tool for evaluating peoples and nations and arranging them in hierarchical orders from primitive to civilized.”⁵¹ Publically-funded museums and international exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale, serve as tools for fabricating modern cultural identities under the rubric of unified, particular national ideals, and Wallinger’s *Façade* undermines this. Ironically, and very intentionally, he pokes fun at the very historical institutions that seek to include his work, and the results are site-specific pieces that depend almost entirely about the wedding of art and English nationalism. Should the nationalist function of art (pushed to the hilt in situations such as the one in Venice or in the annual fervor built around Great Britain’s Turner Prize) wither away, so would the coherence of much of Wallinger’s work, as *Façade* is radically specific to the context in which is it displayed (as are his other works discussed herein such as *Zone*, *State Britain*, *Sleeper*, *Ecce Homo*, and *A Real Work of Art*).

⁵¹ Eric J. Segal, e-mail message to author, March 1, 2010, in which he draws on ideas found in Donald Preziosi’s book *Rethinking Art History: Meditation on a Coy Science* (Yale University Press, 1991).

The Russian Linesman (2009)

The final work to be analyzed here, and the one which will bring this study of Mark Wallinger's *oeuvre* up to the present is an entirely unconventional one, and perhaps a milestone that some critics would argue is not an artwork (in the traditional sense) by Wallinger at all. I have chosen to bookend the body of my dissertation with Wallinger's curated exhibition "The Russian Linesman" (Figure 33) for two main reasons: first, that is the last major public installation by Mark Wallinger that I will have been able to examine by the end of this writing process, and second, the issues found in the works by other artists and performers that Wallinger chose to present together were the same that resonate with those whom Wallinger himself has pursued since the mid 1980s. In essence, "The Russian Linesman" says something definitive about Mark Wallinger as an artist that is as raw and revealing as any artwork discussed herein. The *Russian Linesman* reiterates themes that Wallinger pursues in his own work and extends his critical art practice to a realm that is simultaneously utterly specific to Wallinger's personal practice while also remaining distanced from his own work. As one reviewer succinctly and smartly put it: the "Russian Linesman" "...is an idiosyncratic tour of art history as well as the recesses of the artist's mind."⁵²

The beginning of 2009 marked the moment in Wallinger's career when his interest in real and metaphorical borders was expanded and realized as a major curatorial project. This venture moves the focus of this dissertation temporarily away from Wallinger as an artist and shifts onto Wallinger as a poet, writer, and a collector and appreciator of various historical ephemera. Making its debut at London's Hayward Gallery on February 18, before moving onto the Leeds Art Gallery and finally the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea later in the year, Wallinger's

⁵² Jess Bowie, "Mark Wallinger Has Turned the Hayward Into an Old Curiosity Shop of Liminality." *Architect's Journal* 229, no. 7 (February 2009): 52.

exhibition was titled “The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders, and Thresholds.” The title here is as loaded and rich with back-story as the works shown within the space. “The Russian Linesman” showcased a breadth of art forms, from a Durer print dating to 1498 to Muybridge motion photographs from 1887 to a Thomas Demand work from 2006.

Several of Wallinger’s own works previously discussed in this dissertation were exhibited in or around the Hayward Gallery as well, such as the *Oxymoron* flag from 1996 and *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space* from 2001. Despite the inclusion of a few of his own works in the show, the focus of the exhibition was distinctly turned away from Wallinger as a showman or performer himself—his personality and bodily presence were not overly displayed as part of the Hayward’s marketing scheme.⁵³ The central themes of the show were familiar ones to anyone keeping up with Wallinger’s own career: transgressions and border-crossings, false representations, mirror, and liminality.

One such border crossing was announced in the curious title of the exhibition, “The Russian Linesman,” which spoke not to art audiences but to footballers. Any European soccer enthusiast would instantly recognize the reference to the final game of the 1966 World Cup soccer match between England and West Germany with its still-controversial, breathtaking moment. After more than an hour and a half of play, with the score tied at 2-2, England’s Geoff Hurst made a shot that hit the underside of the goal’s crossbar, the ball hitting the ground and then ricocheting back onto the field. Referee Tofik Bakhranov, a Soviet from Azerbaijan, raised his flag, signaling to the uncertain gamers and spectators that the ball had indeed crossed the goal line. England used this momentum in going on to win the game 4-2. To this day, controversy and

⁵³ I must note here however that the week that “The Russian Linesman” debuted, it was announced that Wallinger won a major public sculpture commission entitled *The White Horse* to be realized in Kent in 2012. The Hayward, in light of this, did put the miniature of the sculpture to be made in the lobby of the Hayward next to the ticket counters, in order to showcase Wallinger’s victory in the competition.

speculation surround Tofik Bakhrarov's game-changing call (the "Russian linesman" was the generic name that Bakhrarov was given after his notoriety was established). Not surprisingly, to this day British soccer enthusiasts regard the goal as having been valid, while most Germans see the point scored as undeserved. The incident is one of the most long-standing contested and discussed events in sporting history. Wallinger's concept for the exhibition hinged on the call made by the "Russian linesman," on whether or not the ball had or had not crossed the goal line—a visible but at the same time intangible marker of a transgressive victory of one team over the other.

Such a simple thing - whether or not a soccer ball crossed the threshold that is demarcated by nothing other than a painted line on the ground and a metal bar above - yet the crossing (or not) of this line changed the history of one highly popular and competitive European sport. Sporting legend has it that when Tofik Bakhrarov was interviewed many years after his infamous ruling, the former referee was asked why he made the ruling in England's favor as he did. He is said to have replied with one word: "Stalingrad."⁵⁴

The line between appearance and reality are the links between all the works chosen by Wallinger to be included in the show. Upon entering the second-floor exhibition space via the Hayward elevator, a sound recording of James Joyce reading a selection from *Finnegan's Wake* greets the visitor, seeming to originate just overhead at the threshold of the elevator entrance to the gallery. Thomas Demand's work *Poll* from 2001 re-stages a Florida polling recount center from the contested 2000 presidential election in an all cardboard *trompe l'oeil* presentation. Bruce Nauman seemingly spins around on the ceiling in his studio in his 1969 video piece,

⁵⁴ The Battle of Stalingrad lasted many months during World War II. In this bloody conflict between Nazi-run Germany and the Russians, nearly two million soldiers were killed, including many recruited Azerbaijani. Bakhrarov, the "Russian linesman" was a Soviet from Azerbaijan.

Revolving Upside Down. A 1974 video of acrobat Phillip Petit walking on a high-wire that he strung illegally between the nearly-completed Twin Towers in New York puts the idea of the “crossing” to its best literal interpretation. In a favorable review of the Hayward show, Paul Ardenne notes how many of the issues created by the show are those that face the presentation and exhibition of art in a larger sense: “Art is the domain of artifice par excellence, of simulacra taken as the real thing, of the dead as seen if alive. Here’s that translated by transmutations whose validity depends on viewers’ own willingness to let themselves be convinced.”⁵⁵

The entire show feels much like a fantastic curio cabinet of works ranging from “high art” to works that were probably never intended to grace the walls of a gallery. The time span put forth by the works in the show represent nearly two-thousand years of creativity. A 1967 Klein bottle by Francis Oakes combines science with optical illusion. An ancient early Roman doubled headed herm shows the combined likenesses of Dionysus and Silenus. Amateur video footage taken from the popular website “YouTube” shows the dramatic flag lowering ceremony that marks the closing of the India-Pakistan border at Wagah at the end of each day. A Robert Hooke drawing of a flea from his 1665 study *Micrographia* ironically elucidates the body of the parasite then unknowingly responsible for the Great Plague. This list of imaginative curatorial selections for the exhibition goes on and on. All of these sculptures, videos, stereoscopic images, and documents are unlikely bedfellows in any other situation other than this one that Wallinger has devised for them.

Other themes that run throughout *The Russian Linesman* exhibition are the mortality of man, visual doublings and trickeries, comparative anatomy, and poetry. For many of the works in the show, this visual payoff is not immediate; it is only after a close inspection and reading of the

⁵⁵ Paul Ardenne, “Review: Mark Wallinger Curates,” *Art Press*, no. 356 (May 2009): 75-76.

wall text that the true weight of many of the works chosen can be felt. As Lucy Steeds writes in a review of the exhibition: “The exhibition installation hangs together overall on the basis of visual rhymes.”⁵⁶ One particularly moving work is Amie Siegel’s *Berlin Remake*, from 2005. In this video work, two screens are placed side by side in a darkened room. Projected on the right hand screen are clips from films made in East Germany before the fall of the Wall. On the left screen, Siegel has shot present-day footage of the same locations featured in the old films, but without any actors or props. The modern Berlin, sans the Wall, is shown as the sole character.

So, what of the artist-turned-curator? I include *The Russian Linesman* in this dissertation as the final work not just because it is his more recent big project, but because it shows him as an artist from a different “angle.” While he has not necessarily created the artworks themselves that are featured in the exhibition, he has created the venue and the atmosphere in which that are all brought together and re-contextualized. The situations beg the question: can an artist be a curator, and vice versa? Those at the Hayward gallery would argue that yes, this bridge is one that can be easily crossed. The exhibition guide published by the gallery begins with the statement: “An exhibition devised by an artist – especially a multi-disciplinary show such as this – is an act of creation, similar in many ways to the making of a work of art.”⁵⁷

For Wallinger, the exhibition itself is autobiographical—it is obsessive yet organized, personal and academic at the same time. In light of this, I would like to highlight one object spawned from Wallinger’s curating experience that deserves evaluation as both an exhibition document and a creative piece: the catalog for *Russian Linesman*. The exhibition catalog is a stream-of-consciousness book that is part-diary, part-confessional, part-travel journal. What it is

⁵⁶ Lucy Steeds, “Mark Wallinger Curates: The Russian Linesman,” *Art Monthly*, no. 325 (April 2009): 23.

⁵⁷ Helen Lockett, *Exhibition Guide: Mark Wallinger Curates: The Russian Linesman* (London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2009), unpag.

not is a traditionally-organized, explanatory essay that focuses on the works chosen for the exhibition. While it does indeed have the requisite “acknowledgements” section, a message from the senior Hayward curator, and a list of featured works in the show, the text that makes up the bulk of the catalog rebukes and rejects any sort of standardized exhibition catalog format. Some of the pages are autobiographical: for example, part two of the catalog features Wallinger telling the story of being in Berlin on September 11, 2001, and being simultaneously shocked and disappointed when heard of the collapse of the Twin Towers while standing in line at the store (as he put it: “I have a confession to make: I didn’t see the first tower collapsing and I regret missing the spectacle”⁵⁸). This brief anecdote, which may seem coolly distanced to some, is elaborated upon in a meditative way when one considers it in conjunction with two works that feature the Twin Towers that Wallinger included in the show. These are the video of Philippe Petit’s 1974 daredevil attempt to walk a steel wire bridged between the tops of the two buildings; and Joseph Beuys’ *Cosmos and Damien Polished*, a 1975 set of photographs of the Towers where Beuys has simply written the names of the two martyred saints on each of the World Trade Center buildings. On the page opposite Beuys’ work in the catalog, Wallinger first quotes from *Finnegan’s Wake* and then writes “In Arab culture the brothers [Cosmos and Damien] symbolize racial harmony.”⁵⁹ It quickly becomes obviously that every literary quotation, every image, and every personal confession in the catalog are carefully planned and thoughtfully inter-related. Quotations from James Joyce, Wallinger’s favorite author, litter the body of the text

⁵⁸ Mark Wallinger, catalog for *The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders, and Thresholds*, 9.

⁵⁹ *Russian Linesman*, page 11.

throughout. The line between Wallinger's life and Joyce's characters in *Ulysses* are blurred as Wallinger recounts a 1982 visit to Dublin for Joyce's centenary celebrations.⁶⁰

The intricacies of the *Russian Linesman* catalog are not, in my mind, debatable. The book is a work of creative merit, and should be viewed as a literary pendant to the exhibition itself. It should also be no surprise that Wallinger would engage with such a poetic venture since his artworks for the past twenty-five years previous have often dabbled with literary motifs such as puns, palindromes, and oxymorons.

In the online magazine *Art Vehicle*, David Foster speaks of the value of the Russian Linesman catalog, however pointing out that at times it is hard to tell whose life we are reading an account of within the body of the text:

The exhibition catalogue is also an integral part of the project, and further muddies the waters or adds to their glorious depths depending on your point of view, with copious and sometimes opaque reference to James Joyce...verse by the likes of Goethe and Keats, amusing and insightful accounts of events from Wallinger's own life, and snatches of prose dealing with subjects ranging from sleep deprivation to playing tag in the school playground.⁶¹

The *Russian Linesman* was an intensely complex exhibition that was paired with equally complex accompanying literature that was an extension of the show. The schizophrenic nature of the catalog, where, in the same passage Wallinger might move from a diary-like description of being followed by a stranger in New York City, to quoting from Blake or Joyce, to referencing one of his previous artist statements, simply does the same thing that many of his artworks do—transgress the boundaries between fact and fiction and reality and fantasy.

⁶⁰ 1982 marked 100 years since Joyce was born in 1882. Bloomsday, an annual holiday held on June 16, marks the date of Leopold Bloom's great odyssey in Joyce's *Ulysses*. See part 4 of the Russian Linesman catalog and the corresponding footnotes by Helen Lockett.

⁶¹ David Foster, "Review: Mark Wallinger Curates: The Russian Linesman: Frontiers, Borders, and Thresholds," *Artvehicle* 41, <http://www.artvehicle.com/events/267>

Endnote: Awake in the Nightmare of History

Many kinds of thresholds are interrogated and explored in Mark Wallinger's recent art practices. The artist seeks to overthrow the provisions set forth by the various types of borders he is interested in by setting up various ideological borders himself. These can come in the form of political protest, religious circumscription, and even in the form of enchanted doorways and portals that call to mind certain children's fables. The artist says:

The more or less coercive controlling powers of civic and religious power, generally disseminated through the homeopathic agency of ideology and unquestioning faith, become startling manifest when that power is threatened. Then the social contract begins to look like a very flimsy document.⁶²

All of the works described in this chapter deal with the notion of complicity; who complies with the law and convention, and who does not, and in turn why they do or do not. *State Britain* replicated an anti-war protest camp and in doing so was able to push installation art in London into a new sphere. *Zone* made the immaterial boundary material and invoked a series of spatial memories unique to England and Germany. *Façade* exposed the fact that Wallinger believes that the British Pavilion in Venice is at times most hollow when it is full with a proud nationalistic audience. And the *Russian Linesman*, with all of its complicated twist and turns, both in the exhibition itself and in the accompanying artist-authored supplement, pushed the limits of creative curating over the line.

⁶² From Mark Wallinger's essay in the catalog edited by Franzen, König, and Plath, eds. *Sculpture Projects Münster 07*, 257.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

By means of a conclusion to this project I would like to summarize briefly with outlining and revisiting four of the main conceptual linkages that can be found throughout the breadth of Mark Wallinger's career as it has been traced in the dissertation. In my extended critique of Wallinger's methods and interests, I have attempted to chronicle his work from his breakout exhibition at Anthony Reynolds Gallery following his studentship at Goldsmiths College up until the present moment, a track roughly following the twenty-five years between 1985 and 2010. The first vein I would like to summarize and conclude with has to do with what is perhaps the most visible theme in Wallinger's early works—national identity and British nationalism. The second trajectory has to do with childhood memory, nostalgia, and the way in which personal mythologies are imbedded through various popular media. The third theme deals with the intertwining of literature and poetry with art practice in Wallinger's entire *oeuvre*. The fourth and perhaps most substantial and longstanding conceptual vein is concerned with the concept of the threshold and border crossings which the artist himself has confessed a fascination with.

Pomp and Circumstance

Wallinger began his career in the mid-1980s as an artist concerned with identity politics and the changing face of multicultural Britain and its evolution during the turbulent Thatcher years. His *modus operandi* was to expose the ugly underbelly of social and class wars and division through both subtle and glaringly critical paintings and sculpture. The paintings known as *Race, Class, Sex* were what catapulted Wallinger's into the limelight following their acquisition by super collector Charles Saatchi and subsequent display in his *Sensation* exhibition. Wallinger's keen capacity to combine greatly opposing examples of high and low culture in his works that questioned the stability and longevity of the concept of a unified "Britishness" was

what made his early pieces such as *Oxymoron* and *Royal Ascot* so successful in their sardonic message. As reviewer Tony Godfrey said of Wallinger's 2001 retrospective, *Credo*, the "conjunction of everyday banality and English institutional grandeur is characteristic of much of Wallinger's work"¹ and this simple fact is key to what helped to establish Wallinger as a major player in the London art world following the sensation surrounding *Sensation*. However, as suggested early in this dissertation, Wallinger's subtle acts of artistic rebellion and revolution caused his works to be overshadowed by the more forceful and shocking pieces exhibited by the slightly younger generation of young British artists. It is my hope that this dissertation will help to reveal and enhance critical understanding of Mark Wallinger's work (both its accomplishments and its limitations) and his significance for artistic practice in Great Britain. I believe that his work will enjoy the longevity of appreciation that many of the other yBas will not. In his pieces made in the 1980s and 1990s, he dealt with the identity politics that reflected the growing anti-monarchical sentiment felt throughout Great Britain. Wallinger exposed the simultaneous tedium and hilarity of the repetitive and monitored existences lived by the royal family and those wealthy enough to buy and trade the commodity of the horse as well as the commodity of the art object. In doing so, he often paid homage to the reigning king of the artistic joke and the readymade object, the French twentieth-century Dada artist Marcel Duchamp. Wallinger's early pieces such as *Fountain* and *Oxymoron* are the most straightforward examples of this tendency. In drawing parallels between Gods and royals in a mocking fashion², Wallinger was able to poke the all-seeing eye of the establishment. Frequent Wallinger chronicler and prominent London art critic Adrian Searle wrote in 1993 that:

¹ Tony Godfrey, "Mark Wallinger: Liverpool," *Burlington Magazine*, vol. 143, no. 1174 (January 2001): 48

² For example in the 1997 work *Angel*, where Handel's royal coronation theme is played as the "Blind Faith" figure ascends the escalator at the end.

Questions of identity are at the core of [Wallinger's] project. Social structures, labels and presumptions fascinate him, and his breadth as an artist stems from a belief that only by playing with these structures can we be liberated from them. He is even prepared to adopt and pay lip-service to the most conservative aesthetics and subject matter, only in order to trash them; or to pick on what might seem an inconsequential idea, and worry it into revealing its richness. His is an art of disguises and subterfuge.³

Searle's comments, from a long-since published issue of *Frieze* magazine, point to the heart of how Wallinger was so cleverly able to manipulate notions of "traditional" painting and sculpture in order to create contemporary and relevant artworks. While *Ghost* and *Race, Class, Sex* might be the most obvious examples to mention here, the now-canonical Trafalgar plinth sculpture *Ecce Homo* also is worth mentioning; Wallinger used marbled resin to produce the appearance of a Renaissance inspired statue. Wallinger often created a circuit between the art historical past and the present in his most successful works; indeed, he often uses the method of having the "old" standing in for the "new."

Risking Enchantment

Works such as *Sleeper*, *Time and Relative Dimensions in Space*, and *A Real Work of Art* are all born out of childhood traumas and elations experienced by the artist. The first two are explicitly linked to the popularization and mass consumption of television in the home and Wallinger's upbringing in the 1960s, where fantasy and science fiction television programs (specifically, *The Singing Ringing Tree* and *Dr. Who*) became dominant imbedded images that would be awakened later in life and take on new and different meanings. The purchasing and racing of *A Real Work of Art*, a real-life racehorse, gave Wallinger a real-life entry pass into an auspicious lifestyle and exclusive sub-culture that he experienced as an outsider as a child. The bear in the East Berlin-produced *The Singing Ringing Tree* as well as the "TARDIS" time

³ Adrian Searle, "Fools and Horses," *Frieze* magazine, Issue 8, January-February 1993.
http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/fools_and_horses/

machine in *Dr. Who* were symbols of a simultaneously frightening and captivating “other side” in the same way that the racing experiences Wallinger had as an adolescent were an exciting peek into another world that was almost graspable.

The question of autobiography, then, is key in understanding Wallinger’s working mode. In this moment of summary I am pointing to the many ways in which Wallinger’s own personal traumas and memories find their way into his work. In *Sleeper*, Wallinger confronts and actually *becomes* the fairy-tale figure that was imbedded in his psyche as a child. With *A Real Work of Art* the artist is also able to possess a tactile memory—this time a pleasurable one. It could be argued that too much is implanted in these kinds of grand mythic origins of inspiration and production, however I believe the artist is sincere in his adult investigations of his adolescent preoccupations. In many of his art pieces, Wallinger revisits these experiences and memories in order to *possess* them fully, so that he can overcome the trauma of the original memory.

A Portrait of the Literary Artist

Mark Wallinger is fond of quoting Irish playwright Samuel Beckett’s famous quip: “In the beginning was the pun,” and the phrase is reproduced in at least one of Wallinger’s exhibition catalogs.⁴ Punning and visual gags are a frequent occurrence in the work discussed in this dissertation, and although I chose not to devote a thematic chapter to Wallinger’s poetic and literary allusions, throughout this dissertation I have attempted to point out the instances where Wallinger has taken literary devices and literalized or used them to create or enhance meaning in his artworks. These instances include, but are not limited to: puns, palindromes, oxymorons and the *double entendre*. Perhaps the flag piece *Oxymoron*, which intermingles the sign of the Union Jack flag with the color-sign of the Irish tricolor flag, is the most literal example, as the artist has

⁴ The Beckett quote can be seen reproduced at the beginning of the catalog *Mark Wallinger is Innocent*.

named the piece after the very construction for which it stands. If an oxymoron pairs two opposites together, so is the altered flag a combining of visual opposites.

Rachel Withers notes that “Operating at ground level, attempting an immanent critique of the barbed-wire entanglement of aesthetics, representation, and ideology, [Wallinger’s] work searches for traces of a transparent poetic language.”⁵ Other examples of Wallinger’s bringing together of literary tropes and artistic ones abound in his work: the title of the work *Angel* puns on both the location of the Angel tube station in the Islington neighborhood in North London as well as the less-than-angelic figure who treads awkwardly on the escalator headed nowhere. That figure is known as “Blind Faith,” a moniker which puns on the nature of belief as well as the detail that Wallinger wears dark glasses and holds a blind man’s walking stick as he enacts his demonic prayer in the video. Several of Wallinger’s works, including the aforementioned pieces *Oxymoron* and *Angel*, use semiotics and semiotic theory in their delivery. Wallinger is a satirist in both his visual execution and in his ability to manipulate language to enhance the biting punch lines in his work.

Beyond the Pale and Back Again

In an attempt to elucidate Mark Wallinger’s career, this dissertation traces several of the main thematic developments within his highly varied *oeuvre*. Wallinger’s interest in British identity politics in the mid-1980s developed and mutated into an interest in issues of spiritual belief and then onto political outrage as the turn of the millennium approached. I have followed in this dissertation an evolution from an artistic investigation of national identity to a spiritual one; as well as the movement from politics to metaphysics. Wallinger’s processes also developed over the years; more traditional mediums and methods such as oil painting, portraiture, and

⁵ Rachel Withers, “Customs Man: Mark Wallinger’s Video Art.”

sculpture developed over the course of twenty years into experimentation in video art, installation, and site-specific projects.

Throughout all of these career transitions, complete with shifts in both the mediums used and the issues dealt with, Wallinger has consistently returned to his interest in the concept of the crossing of the literal or metaphorical threshold. This can be seen the video work *Threshold to the Kingdom*, where airline passengers transition from the “no man’s land” of the customs area out onto the safe homeland on the other side of the sliding double doors. His curiosity in different kind of manifestations culminated in his 2009 curatorial project *The Russian Linesman*, the work with which I chose to conclude this dissertation. As a final note I will here quote from Mark Wallinger himself, as he reminisces about a childhood game in which one could declare a kind of immunity to the rules of reality: “Do you remember playing a game of tag at school in which you could cross your fingers and declare ‘fay knights,’ a sort of street injunction that rendered you briefly immune to the normal rules of the game? Perhaps art exists in such an interregnum.”⁶

During the mid-1990s, Wallinger’s art practice was nurtured by the “yBa” phenomenon, a major moment in contemporary British art pioneered by several key London art world dealers, artists and institutions. The yBas were a non-conformist, rebellious group. In many respects, non-traditional creative endeavors have become a tradition in England. Installation art, too, rebels—against notions of the isolated, autonomous art object on a pedestal. Today, Wallinger’s artistic intermingling of modernity and history in London’s urban landscape and in its art institutions sets an international precedent. I argue that with many of the works detailed herein, Wallinger will illuminate the status of London as a globalized metropolis whose art projects and

⁶ Mark Wallinger, from the *Russian Linesman* catalog, page 62. “Fay knights” comes from “fainites,” a medieval English declaration of a truce. See also footnote #39 in *The Russian Linesman*.

personalities have had incredible resonance on art production both in the United States and across the world.

Although his name was swept up in the yBa movement, his impact is not limited to the legacy of sensationalism and excess left behind during the “Saatchi decade.” Wallinger’s art is very often about how he negotiates being caught “in-between” the new and old English landscapes. The artist is on the vanguard of contemporary art because he is able to, with an informed skepticism, simultaneously parody, revere, and scrutinize his chosen subjects without the burden of over-interference as an artist. Mark Wallinger’s works from the past twenty-five years exist in a conceptual space of in-between-ness: they are simultaneously judgmental and judged, spiritual and blasphemous, as well as both watchful and surveilled.

APPENDIX A INTERVIEWS

The following is a result of email correspondence between Mark Wallinger and myself that took place between October 2009 and February 2010. I have retained the original spellings and capitalization used by both parties in the emails; no editorial changes have been made to the substance and wording of the writings. I have however italicized proper names of artworks, books, and magazines where necessary.

Brantley Johnson: We spoke in October about the experience you had at a London screening of *A Singing Ringing Tree* as an adult where you and others were amazed when the image on the big screen appeared in color. I've been thinking about this a lot—how your black-and-white memory was “updated.” It's a little bit like when Dorothy opens the door to OZ after the tornado and the world magically transforms into bright hues, no?

Mark Wallinger: Very much so - in a way the imagination of my generation was shaped by the world conjured up by the TV, just as a previous generation had been enraptured by the cinema. They both made the transition from monochrome to colour. Both were Studio bound creations, gaudy yet persuasive imagined spaces where a return to the real world seemed impossible. They were compelling because their power seemed a part of one's own imagination and that you would never find your way home. A different order was described or embodied, which obeyed dream logic that as a child I felt oppressive and impossible to escape. In fact *The Wizard of Oz* was the first film I ever saw and [it] so traumatized me I did not see it again for over thirty years.

The gasp that greeted TSRT was the discovery of something withheld, and the way history, both personal and geo-political, led to our chancing upon its reality years later. A secret revealed. I think there was also engrained into my generation a monochrome vision of the whole Eastern Bloc. For East Germany, read Kansas, there is no way back to either of them.

Brantley Johnson: In April of this year I took a few photographs of the label on the base of the *Oxymoron* flagpole in Jubilee Gardens. Looking back on the images, I can't help but note that the reflective panel reveals the Houses of Parliament sitting adjacent across the river...is this a serendipitous happening? I'm thinking of the political tensions imbedded in your altered flag.

Mark Wallinger: In fact part of the Ministry of Defense is visible, Parliament is little further upstream, but the fact that the flag had a prominent [position] on the South Bank was something I enjoyed.

Brantley Johnson: I think one of the most fascinating bits in your 1995 Ikon Gallery/Serpentine Gallery exhibition catalog is the reproduced correspondence from Sir Mark Prescott detailing the process of purchasing and boarding a horse at Heath House Stables in Suffolk. For me, his letters are such a captivating portal into upper-class hobby and lifestyle, I feel like an "outsider" peering into a private moment when I read them. As we approach 2010, fifteen years on, do you now feel like a complete "insider" on horse ownership and racing life? Or does any of it still feel foreign and an unlikely path to you, personally? I know that you own or part-own at least one racing horse now.

Mark Wallinger: My horse is running tomorrow but he is better employed these days as a model for the *White Horse*. We have been down to the stables with some technical experts from Slade UCL to scan Riviera Red. The small stable in Epsom is a world away from the big guns of Newmarket. It does seem strange to a degree but no stranger than dressing up as a suffragette jockey or a bear. It was another world and in truth the Oz analogy suits that experience as well. There are modes of being that have been so intricately codified over the years that the people inside have no idea of another life. Everyone asked me who in my family was from the racing world, as this would be the only explanation for my being there. The eugenics of breeding in horseflesh and the people that attend them are conjoined so in their minds. The strangest experience happens when you try to ask direct questions about any of these assumptions. They can find no answer because they simply don't recognize them as questions.

Brantley Johnson: I'm interested in the tension between the poles of "video art" and "performance art" in some of your works—how these two labels can co-mingle, and how they push against each other. I would suggest that films such as *Angel* and *Sleeper* walk an interesting line between being a "document" of a performance and a stand-alone work of art, afterwards disconnected from your bodily enactment. Would you agree, or no?

Mark Wallinger: That is a very good point and perhaps my instinctive attraction to liminality necessarily leads me to make works that are tricky to define categorically. In fact as I am writing this I am engaged with similar problems in realizing one or two works for my upcoming show in Oslo. The works in which I perform have some kind of degree of difficulty to overcome, sufficient to remove me from thinking at any point about acting. Pure method, if you

like. *Sleeper* is a unique piece in that I *am* the work when seen live, and retrospectively the author of the film.

Brantley Johnson: The night *Sleeper* was filmed (and a live feed was sent back to London during *Frieze* 2004, I believe) did you feel you were “performing” more with the camera there? Did you feel that night was set apart from the others because of the additional disembodied “audience” in London?

Mark Wallinger: I had a rehearsal with the director and crew the previous night. To be honest two things effectively hindered any playing to the camera. Firstly I was not feeling well at all, and secondly my glasses steamed up from the very beginning. Crawling was a useful and prudent way around the building until I had cooled down sufficiently to be able to see again!

Brantley Johnson: I’ve noticed many writers/reviewers make special note of your upbringing in Chigwell, Essex. I often can’t tell if they do so to make a point about “humble beginnings” (as the cliché goes) or possibly one about upward social mobility in relationship to your artworks that deal with class in Britain. What do you think about this? Despite the fact that the Essex region gets a bit of a bad rap, I get the sense that you grew up decidedly middle-class and had a fair amount of early exposure to the arts. Care to clear this up for me?

Mark Wallinger: Well this one is difficult because of its particularity. My parents were always extremely encouraging and were interested in the arts. Both well read. Labour supporters, CND and Greenpeace. My father left school at 16 and my mother, despite her talents, was forced

out to work by her mother when she was 14 (this was during the war). When my dad got back from the Middle-East after the war he carried on the family fishmongers in the East End. He sold up when I was about six and we went through a tricky period before he became a successful business man when well into his 40s. I was the first in my family to go on to higher education.

Chigwell is/was a small town with a mention in Charles Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge*. It is on the London tube, now regarded as an aspirational suburb. Essex got a bad name in the early 80s, supposedly typifying the white working-classes that returned Margaret Thatcher to Downing Street. Chigwell featured in a couple of early Mike Leigh films and was the setting for a long running sitcom on TV called *Birds of a Feather*, which was about two working class friends whose husbands were in jail. Essex and Chigwell, in particular, were seen as irredeemably vulgar. To be honest the Essex man and Essex girl jokes were borderline racist and were made unthinkingly or unquestioningly across all the media. No doubt certain American states get similar treatment.

Growing up I remember going to all the great galleries and cultural institutions in London – the National, The Tate, V&A, British Museum, the Royal Ballet, etc etc. I just presumed everyone did that sort of thing with their family. My mother still goes to the ballet and theatre. My sister trained as a dancer and now is a writer and performer.

Brantley Johnson: Building on the previous question, I often struggle on the issue of how much biography and background should be included in analysis of an artist's work. Sometimes it seems crucial (perhaps in regards to your *A Real Work of Art* project and personal fandom), and other times less so. One detail that must be acknowledged is that while in school you wrote a

thesis paper based on the literary work *Ulysses* by James Joyce. This was during your tenure at Goldsmiths, yes? Could you elaborate on what exactly your project was?

Mark Wallinger: I submitted my thesis in 1981 in my final year at Chelsea School of Art. I thought I had lost it long ago but last year I found it in a cardboard box of old papers. *A Background to Ulysses: Stephen's Manifesto and the Joycean Solution*. My idea was to see how the aesthetics that Stephen Dedalus outlines towards the end of *Portrait* are embodied in *Ulysses*. [To paraphrase my 21 year old self:] Much of this revolves around Joyce's reading of Thomas Aquinas, described in the terms, "rhythm of beauty," "aesthetic stasis" and "epiphany." Stephen elaborates the three things required for beauty: wholeness, harmony and radiance (*integritas, consonantia, claritas*) through which we might recognize the whatness of a thing, *quidditas*. "Once harmony has been achieved then we perceive the object's radiance, its whatness. The object achieves its epiphany at this point." This idea of epiphany is explained more explicitly in *Stephen Hero*, "By epiphany he meant a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself."

I would say that the epiphany became the dominant trope in the art of Duchamp and subsequent 20th century work. It exists debased into a thousand press releases that promise work that subverts, questions, realizes or overturns the prevailing mindset. All lay claim to that revelatory moment.

Brantley Johnson: Throughout my dissertation, I try to find links between the thematic veins in your work in order to avoid a purely chronological assessment. One instance of continuity is your use of literary devices and idiosyncrasies: I'm thinking here of the

actualization of puns / palindromes / oxymorons / double entendres in many of your artworks. I also know you've written some poetry yourself. Can you say something about the marriage of the literary and the visual?

Mark Wallinger: It is something with which I continue to puzzle out. The work that I am making at the moment is probably even wordier. Joyce was not greatly engaged by the visual arts. The only picture he had bought was a picture of the city of Cork made out of cork! I think English has a particular propensity for throwing up double meanings although we have to use French terms to identify the *risque* appeal they can have for us prurient English. Visual perception and verbal language are in a very unsatisfactory marriage of convenience, and puns mark the limits of language and its arbitrary attachment to things. The fact that the same word can define two or more contrary phenomena is ridiculous, therefore funny. How many comedies [are] about mistaken identity?

Poetry has always appealed to me and I have tried in vain down the years to write it myself. I can't but I love the very [fact] that words have found a unity of sound and sense. I quote Don Paterson at the end of *The Russian Linesman* catalogue: "We should never forget that of all the artistic forms, only the poem can be carried around in the brain perfectly intact. The poem, in a sense, is no more or less than a little machine for remembering itself: every device and trope whether rhyme or metre, metaphor or anaphora, or any one of the thousand others, can be said to have a mnemonic function in addition to its structural or musical one. Poetry is therefore primarily a commemorative act – one of committing worthwhile events and thoughts and stories to memory: poetry's elegiac tone is so universal and pervasive we've almost stopped

hearing it.”¹ I find poetry more and more moving as I get older, the thought and the voice in communion with the apprehension of meaning.

Brantley Johnson: One of your earliest works that I am writing about is 1987's *Tattoo*, a trio of altered flags. The central flag has the traditional Union Jack red and blue colorations, and has a black stain in the center which looks like a mix between Rorschach test and something of the insect variety. I know that a violent memory is embedded in the work, but can you expand?

Mark Wallinger: On leaving college I got a job at *Collet's International Bookshop* which was the largest [of] a handful of Communist run shops in Central London (It was next door to Foyles' Bookshop). Here my education continued. There was a large Eastern European section – history, politics and the complete output of Marx, Engels and Lenin in cheap translations. It was supported by the Soviet Trade delegation (and therefore expired with the Soviet Union in 1989). There was a folk and classical music department, and a plethora of newspapers and journals of the left. There was also a Gay books section. This was the destination for a far right mob. In the 80s there was a Republican march in Islington every year which would be confronted by the British National Party, a racist far right group who raised funds for the loyalist paramilitary in Northern Ireland. They were/are also virulently homophobic. [In 1986] Having fought the Irish nationalists in Islington they moved on to cause damage to *Gay's the Word* bookshop and then headed towards *Collet's*, the next target in their spree. I was startled out of my tea break in the shop just as the mob was fleeing. With a shop colleague we followed them down Charing Cross Road but then became their next targets. I got badly beaten up.

¹ Author's note: Here Wallinger is quoting Don Paterson's *101 Sonnets* (London: Penguin, 2006), an excerpt of which is featured on page 121 of the *Russian Linesman* catalog.

After the event I pondered their psychotic attachment to origins. But the only answer I could get to was “Just because,” which is the last answer one gives to a child’s inexhaustible “why?” That is the only real answer to the two incontrovertible facts of anyone’s existence: being born somewhere, of a woman. No amount of nurture can alter their nature, it would appear. To live it is simpler to obey and I thought that to make Rorschach blots of their symbols of certainty would threaten their denial of self-knowledge.

Brantley Johnson: In his discussion of the *TARDIS* sculpture in the Venice Biennale catalog, Ralph Rugoff draws meaning out of the mirrored surface, saying that the piece is a “a rhetorical reflection on the means by which art transports us...” Perhaps this rather existential reading of the work can be grounded by a much more practical one that falls in line with your interest in surveillance and policing? What do you think about the fact that the United Kingdom, with its over four million video cameras collecting images at any given time, has more CCTV cameras operating on the streets than any other place in the world? That frightening watchdog scope seems to rival George W. Bush’s P.A.T.R.I.O.T. Act here in the United States...

Mark Wallinger: I have often wondered about walking across London and seeing if it would be possible to piece together every step of my journey from the multiple perspectives of the witnessing CCTV cameras. All that remote surveillance would suggest we are a nation of curtain-twitchers and scolds. However, unlike America and the rest of Europe we are not required to carry ID with us on an everyday basis. This is not to say that the Labour government wouldn’t dearly love this to happen, but there is still great resistance to the idea among most of the public. Tony Blair, like Herod, saw every newborn as a potential threat. We enter the world

presumed guilty and he would have liked us all swabbed and filed on the police DNA database from birth.

To be honest this was not really my thinking. The residual authority that the Tardis carried from its days as a police box gave the object some subversive clout for a small boy growing up in the sixties. But the mischief of seeing such a jumped-up bit of street furniture as a portal through time and space effectively erased its original function. Occasionally I have reserved the right to make work that is particular its time or place in the mythology of my own childhood. Looking back the police box that was the *TARDIS* was an extraordinary object, a small symmetrical building with double doors taking up all four sides like a conjuror's box. For the BBC to appropriate it as a time machine was a stroke of genius, a "found object" to rival Duchamp's *Fountain*. Originally I had two of these remade for an exhibition at the University Museum in Oxford (which was the end of an artist-in-residence project). This building itself was similarly upright, square in plan and itself a kind of time machine, being built from a selection of rocks representing the geology of the UK, and exhibiting myriad life forms spanning millions of years. On the front lawn is a mature Sequoia tree. I positioned one tardis outside on the lawn and one tardis in amongst the museum exhibits. As it was impossible to see both of them simultaneously, one might infer that a small teleportation had occurred...

The mirrored TARDIS I made for the British Pavilion was in line with the theme of illusion and disillusion that linked the other works. In a simple early video effect employed in *Doctor Who* the TARDIS would slowly disappear, fade out, and I wanted to make an object that seemed to want to efface itself.

We are back with double meanings. *Transport* in the workaday sense of the movement of people and goods, and *transport* in the emotionally heightened sense, of rapture and ecstasy,

continue to comingle in a current work in which I am lifting images from the net of people asleep on buses and trains.

Brantley Johnson: 1998 was the year that you published two caustic essays: “Fool Britannia” and “The Pygmalion Paradox.”² They are bitingly funny. Have any of your opinions of any of these “establishments” changed in the past decade?

Mark Wallinger: Not really - *Art Monthly* having run “The Pygmalion Paradox” refused “Fool Britannia,” thereby bearing out some of my darker imaginings about cronyism. A shame, because as Adam Ant observed, ridicule is nothing to be scared of. I was obviously grateful and impressed with the Tate with regard to State Britain. It was making a meal of the hand it was biting. Both *Art Monthly* and the Tate regard themselves somewhat aloof from the art marketplace, but both enjoy state funding.

Brantley Johnson: The tropes of parody and homage seem to play out as rivals in your work. Bill Viola’s grandeur takes a bit of a beating in works like *Threshold*, as does the racing world in the sculpture *Behind You*. Several art historians (most notably Elizabeth Legge³) have suggested that contemporary British art owes much to American minimalism. Your 1987 sculpture *A Model History* is a miniature Stonehenge constructed out of bricks – drawing a humorous connection to Carl Andre’s infamous *Equivalent VIII*. Your *Time and Relative*

² Mark Wallinger, “Fool Britannia: Not New, Not Clever, Not Funny,” in *Who’s Afraid of Red White & Blue?* edited by David Burrows, Birmingham, UK: Article Press, 1998; and “The Pygmalion Paradox,” *Art Monthly*, no. 218 (July-August 1998).

³ Elizabeth Legge, “Reinventing Derivation: Roles, Stereotypes, and ‘Young British Art,’” in *Representations* 71 (Summer 2000).

Dimensions in Space calls to my mind the *Mirrored Cubes* from the mid-1960s by Robert Morris.⁴ So, I must ask, what's your feeling towards these minimalist predecessors?

Mark Wallinger: Like a lot of my generation my first awareness of Andre's work was through the medium of tabloid outrage at the money the Tate had paid for a pile of bricks. This has remained the exemplar for the relationship of contemporary art and much of the media ever since. If the Tate had purchased the work very cheaply there would have been no story, presumably. It is therefore hard to disentangle my feelings for this work from my feelings about this strange relationship. It became historical before I could experience its actuality. Consequently I have impure thoughts, so I can't sign up for the program and temperamentally I reject any card carrying -ism. In a way my Stonehenge is a scoff to the idea of the thing-in-itself: the bricks represent the ancient monument, whilst resolutely remaining house bricks.

⁴ Both the Carl Andre and the Robert Morris sculptures were purchased by the Tate Gallery in 1972.

APPENDIX B
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mark Wallinger: Selected Solo Exhibitions

- Mark Wallinger*, Kunstneres Hus, Oslo, Norway, 2010
- Mark Wallinger*, Carlier Gebauer, Berlin, 2010
- Mark Wallinger*, Aargauer Kunsthau, Aarau, Switzerland, 2008.
- Mark Wallinger*, Kunstverien Braunschweig, Germany, 2007.
- Mark Wallinger: The Human Figure in Motion*, Donald Young Gallery, Chicago, 2007-08.
- State Britain*, Tate Britain, London, 2007.
- The End*, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 2006.
- Easter*, Hangar Bicocca, Milan, 2005
- Sleeper*, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, 2004
- The Underworld*, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 2004
- Via Dolorosa*, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 2003
- Promised Land*, Tensta Konsthall, Spanga, Sweden, 2002
- British Pavilion, The 49th Venice Biennale*, Venice, 2001
- Time and Relative Dimensions in Space*, Museum of Natural History, Oxford, 2001
- Cave*, Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes/ Southampton City Art Gallery, 2001
- Credo*, Tate Gallery, Liverpool, 2000
- Ecce Homo*, Vienna Secession, Vienna, 2000
- Threshold to the Kingdom*, The British School, Rome, 2000
- Lost Horizon*, Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel, 1999
- Ecce Homo*, The Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London, 1999
- Mark Wallinger is Innocent*, Palais des Beaux Arts, Bruxelles, 1999

The Importance of Being Earnest in Esperanto, Jiri Svezka Gallery, Prague, 1997

Mark Wallinger, Serpentine Gallery, London, 1995.

The Full English, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 1994

Fountain, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 1992

Capital, Institute of Contemporary Art, London, 1991

Passport Control, Riverside Studios, London, 1988

Mark Wallinger, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, 1988

Hearts of Oak, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 1986

Mark Wallinger, The Minorities, Colchester, 1983

Mark Wallinger: Selected Group Exhibitions

This World and Nearer Ones, Creative Time, Governors Island, New York, 2009

Mark Wallinger Curates: The Russian Linesman, The Hayward, London, 2009

History in the Making, A Turner Prize Retrospective, Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, 2008

Zone, Münster Sculpture Projects, Münster, 2007

The End, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 2007

Belief, Singapore Biennale 2006, Singapore, 2007

How to Improve the World, Hayward Gallery, London, 2007

London Calling, Galleri Kaare Berntsen, Oslo, 2005

The Human Condition. The Image of Man in Art, History Museum of Barcelona, 2004

Contemporary Art in the Traditional Museum, Russian Museum, St Petersburg, 2003

A Bigger Splash: British Art from Tate, Pavilhão Lucas Nogueira Garcez, Sao Paulo, 2003

Thatcher, The Blue Gallery, London, 2003

Anatomy of the Horse: Mark Wallinger and George Stubbs, Harewood House, Leeds, 2002

Faux/Real, Borusan Art & Culture Centre, Istanbul, 2002

Century City: Art and Culture in the Modern Metropolis, Tate Modern, London, 2001

Vision Machine, Musee des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Nantes, 2000

Officina Europa, Villa delle Rose, Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Bologna, 1999

Changement d'air, Musée d'art moderne Lille Métropole, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 1999

Contemporary British Artists, Denver Art Museum, Denver, 1998

Made in London, Museu de Electricidade, Lisbon, 1998

Sensation, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1997

Pictura Britannica, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney/ Art Gallery of South, 1997

Pledge Allegiance to a Flag? London Printworks Trust, London, 1997

Offside!, Manchester City Art Gallery, Manchester, 1996

The Turner Prize, Tate Gallery, London, 1995

The British Art Show, Manchester, 1995

You've Tried the Rest, Now Try the Best, City Racing, London, 1994

Young British Artists II, Saatchi Collection, London, 1993

Whitechapel Open, Clove Building, London, 1992

Excommunication: Some Notions on Marginality, Grey Art Gallery, New York, 1989

The New British Painting, The Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, 1988

Appropriate Pictures, Anthony Reynolds Gallery, London, 1987

Canvass: New British Painting, John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, 1986

Prelude, Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, 1985

Whitechapel Open, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1984

Space Invaders, St Mary's Art Centre, Colchester, 1982

New Contemporaries, ICA, London, 1981

Mark Wallinger: Educational History

2003 Awarded Honorary Doctorate at University of Central England

1983-85 MA Course, Goldsmith's College, London

1978-81 Chelsea School of Art, London

1977-78 Loughton College

Mark Wallinger: Awards and Commissions

2009 Awarded Ebbsfleet Landmark Project Commission, Kent, UK

2007 Awarded Turner Prize, Tate Liverpool

2002 Awarded Honorary Fellowship of the London Institute

2001-02 Awarded DAAD Artists Program, Berlin

2001 Selected as British Pavilion Representative, Venice Biennale

1999 Awarded Fourth Plinth Project Commission, Trafalgar Square, London

1998 Awarded Henry Moore Fellowship, British School at Rome

1995 Short-Listed for Turner Prize, Tate Britain

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Brantley Baldwin Johnson grew up in Georgia, discovering her interest in art history and cinema studies early on while attending The Baylor School in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She completed her undergraduate degree at Tulane University in New Orleans, earning a Bachelor of Arts in mass communication with a concentration in film and media studies in 2002. Her minor area of study at Tulane University was art history. In 2003, she began graduate work in modern art history and theory at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Savannah, Georgia. Her Master of Arts thesis chronicled the use of appropriated language in the text paintings of American artist Glenn Ligon. Upon graduation from SCAD, she was short-listed as a finalist for *Excelsus Laureate* of the entire graduate school. In the fall of 2005 she began her doctoral work at the University of Florida as a Linton E. Grinter Pre-doctoral Fellowship recipient, specializing in modern and contemporary art history. While attending the University of Florida, she designed and taught several undergraduate art history courses. She travels to London often and hopes to continue her scholarship on contemporary British art after finishing her Ph.D. degree in art history.

Mark Wallinger is one of Britain's foremost contemporary artists and has been invited to produce an ambitious new work for the Duveen Galleries at Tate Britain. Wallinger's work engages with questions of personal and national identity, history and belief systems. Typically uncompromising in scale and intention, this major site specific commission explores issues relating to the liberty of the individual and freedom of speech. Mark Wallinger has recreated peace campaigner Brian Haw's Parliament Square protest. Running along the full length of the Duveen Galleries, State Britain consists of a me Mark Wallinger (born 1959) is a British artist, best known for his sculpture for the empty fourth plinth in Trafalgar Square, *Ecce Homo* (1999), and *State Britain* (2007), a recreation at Tate Britain of Brian Haw's protest display outside parliament. He won the Turner Prize in 2007. He is a studio holder at The Bomb Factory Art Foundation in Archway, North London.