

## 4 Materiality and Related Joycean Issues in Contemporary Art

Joyce reflected in a unique way on the materiality of his media, as well as on the down-to-earth substances about which he was writing. Primarily one thinks of *Ulysses*' "language of flow" (U 11.298) and *Finnegans Wake*'s heightened fluidity, as well as the ultimate material objects that Joyce gave us: books. In the history of art, furthermore, time and a particular kind of "choreography" akin to Joyce's has come to evolve from a literary device to one pertaining also to sculpture and, of course, to performance. Since we are there to read the "signatures of all things" (U 3.2), such elements take on a life of their own on their anti-mimetic trajectory.<sup>1</sup> Not surprisingly, these aspects have become invitations for artists to engage with his writings. In the first instance, this is evident in Joyce-inspired work that follows a typographical route and that uses his sigla and diagrams. Since this is particularly true for Conceptual artists, some arguments and protagonists just introduced will be revisited. It will also become clear that a focus on art's media in a Joycean sense is for artists something that always carries meaning, usually on several levels. Joyce's concepts of epiphany and transubstantiation are helpful in this regard.

### 4.1 Typography, Portmanteau Shapes

**Typography** Joyce's wish to render each episode of *Ulysses* unique in visual terms is well known. So are the musical score in *Ulysses* and the occasional typographical deviations from the norm in *Finnegans Wake* (diagrams, footnotes with sigla, the unique layout). That aspect of Joyce's work presumably originated in *A Portrait of the Artist*, where Stephen locates himself in the universe by means of a centred, chalice-like column of words.<sup>2</sup> Only a retrospective glance at the first block-like paragraph of *Dubliners* ("The Sisters") reveals a last line that does not take up all the space allocated to it, a quasi (i.e. a mathematically imprecise) rendering of the geometrical shape that is named in this paragraph: gnomon. Already in that early work, Joyce deviated from the norm by shunning quotation marks. He cared about the appearance of all his works, inside and out.

The instances where Joyce displays to every reader a visual sensitivity and uses language for non-phonetic ends are relatively rare when compared with such visual poets as Mallarmé, Apollinaire and Christian

79 **William Anastasi,**  
**bad from Bababad**  
**Series**  
1989

80 **Michael Craig-**  
**Martin,**  
**Wall Drawing 111-B**  
1990

81 **Zbigniew**  
**Gostomski,**  
**Pascal's Triangle**  
1973

82 **Bazon Brock**  
(idea)  
**Thomas Bayrle,**  
**Bernhard Jaeger**  
(realization)  
**Bloom Newspaper**  
1963

83 **Ecke Bonk,**  
**Finnegans**  
**Wake 383**  
1997

## IT WAS OF A NIGHT

long time ago in an antostane eto-  
when Adam was delm and his madameen  
spinning water-sites when milk mounty-  
notted man was everybilly and the first  
leal ribberrobber that ever had her any-  
way everybuddy to his lovesaking eyes and  
everybilly lived alove with everybuddy else  
Jarl van hoocher had his burnt head high up  
in his lamphouse laying cold hands on him-  
self and his two little jimmies cousins of ourn  
Christopher and Hilary were rickatheeing there  
dumny on the outloch place of his homeigh-  
castle and earthenhouse and beedemot who  
come to the keep of his inn only the meece of  
his in-law the prankquean and the prank-  
quean pulled a rosy one and made her wit  
foreninst the door and she lit up a fire  
and was ablaze and she spoke to the door  
in her petty persuasion: mark the Wans  
why do I am a look alike a pass of porcer  
peace?

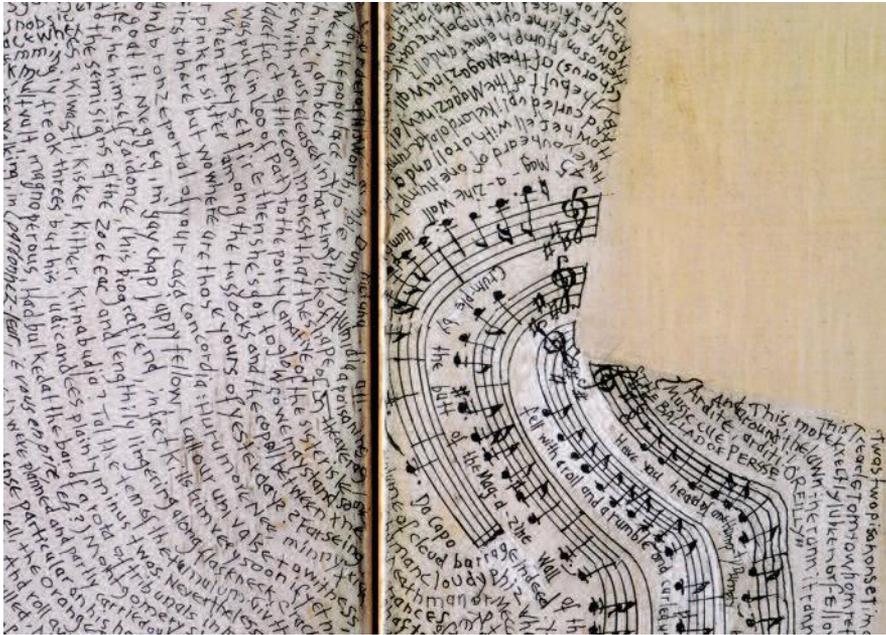
AND THE SKIRMISH BEGAN

84 Timothy O'Neill,  
Finnegans Wake  
(p. 21), written in  
the style of the  
Book of Kells  
1981

Morgenstern or with the long tradition of illustrated manuscripts of all descriptions. These elements are vital, however, because they help to render Joyce's texts non-paraphrasable: form and content are inseparable.<sup>3</sup> Joyce was among those many of his contemporaries in the visual arts (Futurists and Dadaists especially) who were aware of working in line with the traditions of visual poetry, rebus, pictograms and hieroglyphics. Why then would artists choose Joyce as a source of inspiration in this respect?

In Sorel Etrog's case, the comparisons between Joyce and his more visually inclined contemporaries using typography are precisely the point.<sup>4</sup> There is no doubt that Joyce knew much about Futurism and that other contemporaries shared an interest in typography and the autonomy of the letter. In comparison with Etrog's designs, however, the typographical appearance of Joyce's texts strikes one as even more understated and pared down than has previously been noticed. Etrog's work is interesting for its quasi scientific approach, using both primary and secondary sources, but if it was meant to make a "Zeitgeist" comparison, the visual display undermines, rather than supports, the hypothesis.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the main motivations for typographic work on Joyce are the beauty of his manuscripts and the fact that he himself reflects on various



85 Gereon Inger,  
**Finnegans Fake**  
 2000

aspects of writing (Shem the penman, the scribe’s occupation, more precisely the Book of Kells, the appearance of letters). This has attracted calligraphers and artists with a calligraphic approach. Timothy O’Neill has transcribed Joyce quotations in a variety of styles and for various purposes.<sup>6</sup> He has delivered scholarly lectures and written about calligraphy in a Joycean context. Most prominent is his choice of page 21 of *Finnegans Wake* (lines 5 to 19), the fairytale-like rendering of the beginning of the prankquean’s story, i.e the origins of all battles, of all history. That passage, the artist/scribe, who works as a historian, chose to write in the Irish manner (of, for example, the Book of Kells):<sup>83</sup> a commentary on the similar modes of exegesis that the Bible and *Finnegans Wake* attract, as well as on the quality of the stories told in both. Moreover, the typographic convention to set the first line larger is for us now so closely associated with the newspaper – today’s bearer of “all history” – that we tend to forget its origin in Irish manuscripts. O’Neill aptly brings together both contexts in Joyce.<sup>7</sup>

Gereon Inger’s *Finnegans Fake*, 2000,<sup>84</sup> seems to make a similar point. The artist says – similar to John Cage’s motivation for his *Writing Through* work – that he cannot read *Finnegans Wake*, only copy it.<sup>8</sup> Just as with medieval scribes, mistakes are impossible to be avoided in Inger’s

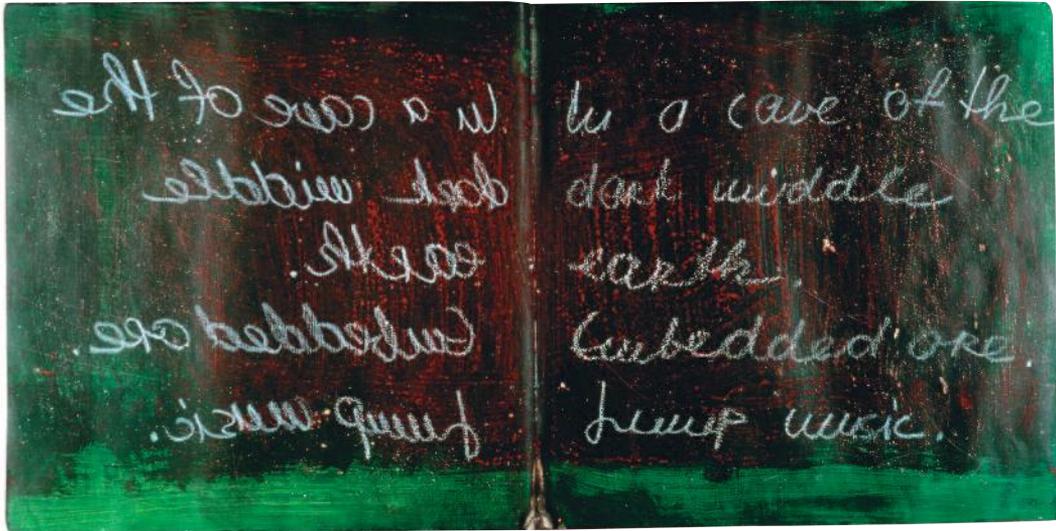
painstaking miniature work, whose outline takes the shape of Dublin Bay: on four hinged panels of a screen – hence *Finnegans Fake*.

Owen Griffith and Michael Sauer in 1992 reprinted six instalments of *Work in Progress* as a typographical and artistic collaboration. Michael Sauer complemented the text with “printable sculptures” that possess profiles, which were inked and printed (unobtrusively) over the text itself.<sup>9</sup>

Despite the normed evenness of the letters in any printed text, there are jagged edges as a result of various aspects of the printing process, most notably the fact that paper is a natural product. In *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce reflects on the printing process and encourages a microscopic perspective on life, where the world of an earwig appears magnified out of proportion. William Anastasi highlights such Joycean pursuits in his *Bababad Series* paintings, begun in the mid-1980s, to which he has periodically returned ever since.<sup>79</sup> Giant-sized enlargements of some of the letters from *Finnegans Wake*'s thunderwords are common to them all.<sup>10</sup> The artist arrived at the exact, wavy outlines by projecting Joyce's text and retracing the letters onto the canvas. The surrounding space (the page?) is taken up by a brightly coloured abstraction, featuring zigzag lines. These may refer to Joyce's text as a colourful if hermetic world, but they also evoke lightning. In the context, the outlines of the bumpy letters themselves similarly connote electrical discharge, drawing attention to papermaking and printing as energy-intensive processes. Again, this time at a microscopic level, an artist has focused on the significant materiality of Joyce's text.<sup>11</sup>

Writing and the time that handwriting takes is also a focus in Jean Willi's *Ulysses* work, which he carried out parallel to the day-long radio broadcasts of *Ulysses* in 1982. Fluid handwriting echoes a fluid language, gives readers and listeners the chance to become as active as the text wishes them to be. Alternatively, text becomes texture and signals become impenetrable – also in the sense of unscalable psychological depths through graphological individuality. Sometimes, however, that subjective desire exhausts the resulting work.<sup>12</sup> Combinations of the end and the beginning of *Finnegans Wake* just by writing out the combined text occur very frequently indeed and does not qualify as adequate artistic engagement with Joyce.<sup>13</sup>

More interesting typographical experiments in a Joycean context would be those that involve cryptography<sup>14</sup> – thus commenting on the difficulties involved when reading Joyce – or those adding another element like diaphane and mirrored writing.<sup>15</sup> Verena Schindler's

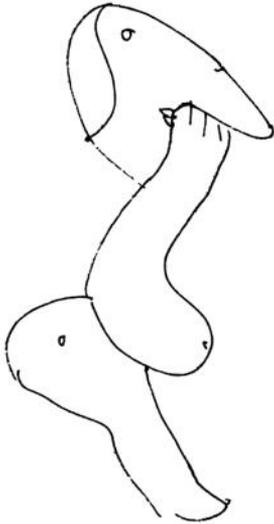


86 Verena Schindler,  
**Simultaneous  
 Ulysses**  
 2001

*Simultaneous Ulysses* from 2001 is an example of the latter.<sup>85</sup> Her custom-made and leather-bound book object contains her favourite quotations from *Ulysses*, simultaneously written in both normal and mirrored writing. This ambidextrous feat relates to the kind of thought processes that reading Joyce requires: we need to involve both sides of the brain, turn palindromes around in our heads, and recognize a siglum, whichever way it may be turned.

If in *Stephen Hero*, Stephen “put his lines together not word by word but letter by letter” (SH 34), anthropomorphic or human alphabets are not far from commentators’ and artists’ minds. Wilhelm Füger has investigated Joyce’s use of “Scripsigns” and his closeness to that long tradition.<sup>16</sup> Lucia Joyce’s *Lettrines* may also have played a role in inspiring artists to work on letters in a Joycean spirit. Fritz Janschka evokes in his *Ulysses-Alphabet* the early Joyce’s contemporaries in his art-nouveau-inspired aesthetic.<sup>17</sup> The erotic undertones of many human alphabets are also – aptly – present. Erwin Pfrang, in *Odysseus und kein Ende*,<sup>18</sup> attempts a humorous, Mulligan-like metamorphosis in *And the Word Was Man. Initial Difficulties in Building Letters: Language Artists During Warm-up Time*.<sup>19</sup> Patrick Ireland, in his marginalia to *Finnegans Wake*, developed ALP into a female figure consisting of these three letters.<sup>86</sup>

# FINNEGANS WAKE



87 Patrick Ireland,  
annotation to  
Finnegans Wake  
not dated

An important field of (Futurist) typographical activity is the newspaper. Given its centrality in *Ulysses* (“Aeolus”), it is not surprising that artists have created “*Ulysses* newspapers”. In 1963, Bazon Brock and others used the German yellow press title *Bild* (the issue of 8 April 1963) to collage a *Bloom Newspaper*.<sup>20</sup> 87 We are informed that Bloom distributes his lotto winnings and wishes to remain Chancellor: appropriate reports to have originated in “Bloomusalem” (“Circe”).<sup>21</sup>

→ 4.5

Joyce’s fascination with the printing process has let its physical constituents enter the *Wake*: “Mister Typus, Mistress Trope and all the little typtopies [... appear alongside] what papyr is meed of, made of, hides and hints and misses in prints”.<sup>22</sup> Apart from newspaper adaptations, artists have worked directly with Joyce’s texts:<sup>23</sup> Erkki Soininen, when walking around Dublin in Bloom’s footsteps in 2000, picked up papers with letters on them from the debris in the streets. He cut these out and distributed them in the text. The resulting pages are then “returned” to some of the sites mentioned in *Ulysses*, like the Martello Tower at Sandycove and Sweney’s Chemist in Lincoln Place.<sup>148</sup>

Hannes Vogel approached Zurich in a similar way in 1990, when he chose letters from characteristic signs around the city in which Joyce had written parts of *Ulysses*. These letters are recreated in neon and

assembled to read “Dick & Davy”, <sup>150</sup> after the Dublin medical students in *Ulysses*. Vogel thus “transposed” them as the central element in the design for the Zurich medical students’ café, which lies close to the hospital in which Joyce died.

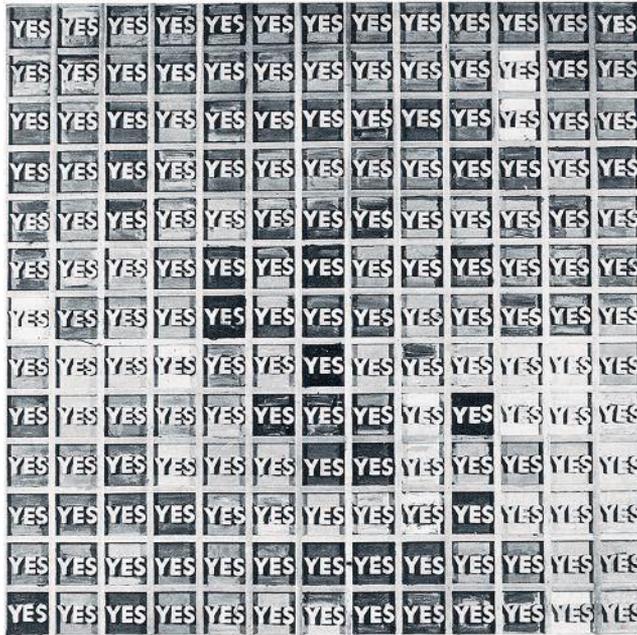
Rodney Graham told Patrick T. Murphy in the late 1980s that he had “altered” a passage or some words in a copy of *Ulysses*.<sup>24</sup> This amounts to a typographical work on Joyce by stealth, inspired by the “changes” in and of language that occur in *Ulysses*: from L. Boom, to wor(l)d and POST 110 PILLS. Graham also makes a witty comment on Duchamp<sup>25</sup> and on genetic Joyce studies and editorial practices in relation to his works. Is there a definitive text? Asked recently about this work (one of his many book objects), Rodney Graham cannot remember it – or so he says.<sup>26</sup> It does not seem to exist (any more). The resulting effect, intentional or not, is that anyone who has acquired a second-hand copy of *Ulysses* must now wonder if he or she has an “original” Rodney Graham on their shelves or an unremarkable edition of *Ulysses*. Scholarship and detailed attention to the book as printed letters on paper assumes another aspect. Who will “continue” Graham’s work, initiated conceptually by the artist telling somebody about it and take up what amounts to an implicit invitation to “reproduce” or fake the fake *Ulysses*?

Joe Tilson created with *Page 1, Penelope*, 1969, <sup>88</sup> a relief similar to a thick woodcut block. It is kept at the British Library’s St. Pancras building in London and consists of 169 “yesses”, inserted in a grid. Lists and catalogues, catechisms and the like can claim Joycean roots,<sup>27</sup> but what about seriality or the work’s stringent grid that is varied only by means of some muted coloration? Rosalind Krauss understands the grid as communicating “modern art’s will to silence, its hostility to literature, to narrative, to discourse.”<sup>28</sup> Not an appropriate lineage? Krauss continues to comment about

[...] the grid’s imperviousness to language. ‘Silence, exile and cunning,’ were Stephen Dedalus’s passwords: commands that [...] express the self-imposed code of the avant-garde artist. The grid promotes this silence, expressing it moreover as a refusal of speech. The absolute stasis of the grid, its lack of hierarchy, of center, of inflection, emphasizes [...] its hostility to narrative.<sup>29</sup>

It is intriguing that Krauss should support her argument of “hostility to language” by means of a literary quotation. Joyce is being set up as an anti-literary (and anti-formalist) example. This supports earlier findings. Consciously or not, Tilson accepts this argument and combines the mute grid with language, but with a repeated, serial “yes” that is

3.2 ←



88 Joe Tilson,  
Page 1,  
Penelope  
1969

taken from the most hierarchy-less, centre- and inflection-less piece of literature imaginable: Molly Bloom's soliloquy, framed by "yesses" in the way that the grid frames the "yesses" here. In the process, Tilson reminds us that a seemingly endless repetition of lines finds its equivalent in the lines of printed letters in books, retracing the writer's medium in a similar way to the canvas or pictorial medium. Tilson is also affirming – like Joyce before him – the inevitable repetition and unoriginality of art, Modernist and postmodernist, with which Krauss links the grid.<sup>30</sup>

**John Cage** This reminder of earlier discussions brings the present chapter to the typographical work on Joyce that is best known: John Cage's repeated *Writings Through Finnegans Wake*.<sup>31</sup> Cage, as both a composer and a visual artist, was inspirational for many Conceptual and Fluxus artists. That work helped Cage to muster up the discipline to read the work in a way similar to Gereon Inger's stated experience and how, I argue, Beuys also used his *Ulysses-Extension*. The *Writings Through Finnegans Wake* take on the form of poetry or the understated typographical elegance of the textual manifestations of much Conceptual art. Weiner and Kosuth should be mentioned again, since typography is often – alongside the Conceptual work's installation – the

only aesthetically apprehensible, i.e. visual, aspect of the work.<sup>32</sup> As a rule, these typographical manifestations are as pared-down and almost as classic as Joyce's texts are – with minor and sensitive (rather than glaring, Futurist or Dada-inspired) deviations. Furthermore, they often point to the political and social intentions already outlined – as in John Cage's case. Cage's late and intensive preoccupation with *Finnegans Wake* began in 1976. He wished to

[...] break down the last remaining hierarchy that he saw functioning in Joyce's language [...]: conventional grammar. [...] Cage set out to create monosyntactical language out of fragments of *Finnegans Wake* [...] a demilitarized version of Joyce's global language.<sup>33</sup>

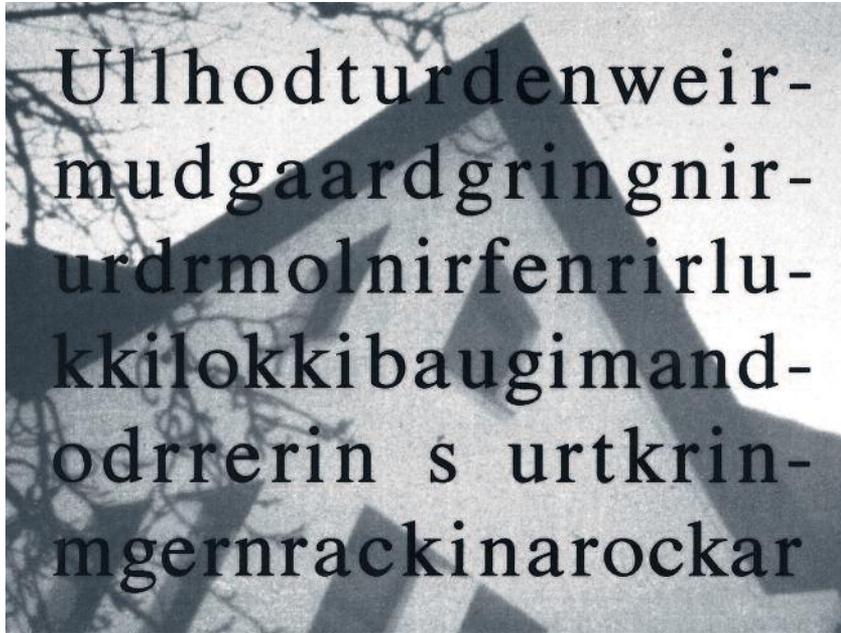
As well as “demilitarizing” *Finnegans Wake*, for instance by scattering the now superfluous punctuation all over the pages of his *Writing for the Second Time Through Finnegans Wake*, Cage also personalized and musicalized Joyce. The fact that he finds the writer's name in his text, akin to what Joyce encourages readers to do with HCE and ALP, has been mentioned. Authors writing about this well-known work, however, have not pointed out that Cage turns it into a musical score. The mesostics with the letters “JAMES JOYCE” as a column in the centre, split the text into sets of two five-lined units: the line arrangement from paper music, where the capitalized letters would take on the position of notes. The first ten lines read and look like this:

wroth with twone nathandJoe  
 A  
 Malt  
 jhEm  
 Shen

pftJschute  
 sOlid man  
 that the humptYhillhead of humself  
 is at the knoCk out  
 in thE park<sup>34</sup>

Cage thus draws attention to *Finnegans Wake*'s well-known auditive qualities, while appropriating Joyce's work to the medium with which he as a composer would traditionally work: a musical score. It was to serve him as such for *Roaratorio*, where the score looks far less traditional than his mesostics.<sup>35</sup>

Using the ten thunderwords from *Finnegans Wake* (i.e. the two times five units required for such a Cagean exercise), Hannes Vogel created



89 Hannes Vogel,  
Wylmermeer  
detail, in 1996

*Wylmermeer*, a ten-part photo work, in 1996.<sup>36</sup> 89, 179 Instead of mesostics, it features spaces on either side of the highlighted letters. These, however, do not combine to read Joyce's name but Joseph (formerly Josef) Beuys'; that artist had allegedly read *Finnegans Wake* in the Expressionist house shown on the underlying photographs. The inhabitants were Else C. Kraus, a pianist and Stockhausen student (like Cage), and Alice Schuster, who, around 1950, attempted to translate *Finnegans Wake* into German. Vogel's work is a commentary on the accumulation of "coincidences" surrounding the house that Beuys called Wylmermeer, instead of Wylerberg. A name with "hill" apparently did not suit the house, owing to its female inhabitants. Despite knowing the real names well, Beuys undertook a Joycean kind of correction or renaming. This he devised in his *Lifecourse/Workcourse*, a curriculum vitae from 1964 that is in itself a piece of typewriter poetry in Joyce's wake.<sup>37</sup>

Returning briefly to John Cage, it needs to be pointed out that *Roaratorio*, the setting to (Irish) music and sounds from places around the world mentioned in *Finnegans Wake*, "is an homage, not only to Joyce, but to the technology of multitrack tape recorders and computers."<sup>38</sup> Typography has its limits, since it suggests a rather linear, two-dimensional movement of the reader's eyes across the pages. Joyce

has, in the views of many, anticipated hypertextual links and other rhizomatic structures.

5.3 →

Sarat Maharaj, in his essay on “Typotranslating”, reflected on Richard Hamilton’s engagement with Marcel Duchamp’s notes and the move involved from the realm of Gutenberg through handwriting to electronic modes.<sup>39</sup> In a connected oeuvre, Ecke Bonk, founder of the typosophic society in the late 1980s (since then renamed *typosophes sans frontières*), locates his practice between the genres of art, typography and philosophy, as the aptly chosen *portmanteau* word reveals. Bonk stepped into Richard Hamilton’s and Duchamp’s own footsteps by publishing his book *Marcel Duchamp, The Portable Museum, Inventory of an Edition* in 1989. Subsequently, Bonk and Hamilton began to exchange letters and collaborate in the early 1990s, culminating in the *Typosophic Pavilion*, 1996-97, one part of which was presented at *documenta X*, 1997, and is included again in the *Joyce in Art* exhibition, Dublin 2004. It is

3.2 ←

[...] composed of subjectively chosen elements: two computers [...], plasma screens, a page of *Finnegans Wake* by James Joyce, a Wilson Cloud Chamber [...], paintings [or prints] including Dürer’s *Melencholia* [...], and an illuminated manuscript. In this presentation, text and texture are the main vectors of the typosophic society, whose recurring leitmotif is the [...] palindrome, ‘AIDE MOI: O MEDIA’.<sup>40</sup>

The typeset page from *Finnegans Wake* on this list <sup>82</sup> confirms the apparent impossibility of leaving Joyce out of the equation when working on typography (and Duchamp) in a contemporary setting.

The lead-typeset page in its pronounced concreteness reminds one of the fact that Joyce did not have computer technology at his disposal when writing the *Wake*. The piece, however, also consisted – and again consists in the RHA exhibition – of small pieces that were returned to the typesetters’ store and reused for other books: this duplicates Joyce’s work in more than one way. The group effort among students involved in typesetting the page in the first place also plays a role. Another element is the reversed nature of this page, recalling Leonardo da Vinci’s scientific work before Joyce, Joyce’s sigla – and the quarks from quantum physics that were named after the writer: “Three quarks for Muster Mark!” (FW 383.01). Bonk’s choice was for the page on which the term occurs, 383.<sup>41</sup>

**Sigla, Diagrams** It has already been noted that the sigla that Joyce used to refer to *Finnegans Wake*’s changing characters have been important for artists seeking multi-faceted modes of identification in and with Joyce’s



90 Hannes Vogel,  
**Finnegans Wake**  
 School of Seeing 1  
 1999

← 3.2

oeuvre. Here a reminder of Tony Smith’s and Joseph Beuys’ “F”-works and David Smith’s use of letter(s) in a Joycean way will suffice to introduce a brief consideration of some other instances where artists have used some of the sigla. Out of this will emerge a discussion of the related topic of Joycean diagrams, while remembering that the purpose is to collect evidence of how the materiality of Joyce’s texts has affected current art practice.

The sigla were chosen for their visual economy, something that phonetic language could not achieve. Simultaneously, they are a pseudo-language, meaningful in expressing multiplicity and character change and they suit perfectly the tendency in the 1960s to shun sculptural illusionism and metaphor. Artists wished to explore what the world is like and depended on the body (anthropomorphic shapes), as well as arbitrarily chosen signs (letters or sigla), paradoxically imbued with meaning, even divine meaning.<sup>42</sup> Robert Morris’ “L”s from 1965 are examples. Whether Morris had seen or heard about Tony Smith’s earlier “F” sketches remains unknown.

Hannes Vogel has varied Joyce’s (or HCE’s) “E” in *Finnegans Wake School of Seeing 1* <sup>90</sup> and 2, 1999. Vogel accumulated “E”s, turned in all directions, remind the viewer of an optician’s chart. The sign for HCE is

not only rendered female, as in Beuys' work (see below), but the siglum for the ear and hearing turns out to be a means to test eyesight.<sup>43</sup>

**Joseph Beuys** Beckett's early eulogy of *Work in Progress* focuses on what artists like Joseph Beuys were pursuing: "Here is the savage economy of hieroglyphics. Here words [...] are alive".<sup>44</sup> Beuys annotated his Viking Press first edition copy of *Finnegans Wake* with lists of English vocabulary beginning with "C". He also let his underlinings start or end on a loop, thus turning the "C" into walking sticks or "J"s (clearly Joyce's initials in the context). Eventually, these shapes were extended to spirals, threshold signs as he called them – Irish or "Celtic" ones at that.<sup>45</sup> A wealth of connections becomes manifest when one realises that Beuys understood HCE's middle initial, the quasi chemical formula in Joyce, literally, i.e. chemically. Carbon in the shape of coal or graphite, as well as the basis for all organic composites like fat and oil, were to become "his" sculptural substances.<sup>46</sup> It is the chemical materiality to which Joyce's sigla refer (as signifier and signified) that interested Beuys. Joyce himself, however, may have traced this way of thinking back to medieval times. In the Book of Kells, the Tunc page presents such an elaborate "T", partly because it refers to or almost illustrates the crucifixion on or as a T-cross: "Tunc crucifixerant" are the following words. This way of thinking was familiar to Joyce, who tells of a "dryingline with two crucified shirts" (U 3.156) and who can also be said to have used the letter "C" as something akin to a siglum.<sup>47</sup>

Beuys turned around the letter E in his 1974 work *Telephon S* —  $\text{E}$ , **91** a simple communicating device consisting of two cans and a piece of string.<sup>48</sup> Again, Beuys uses Joycean means to draw attention to inner qualities of the forms, materials and letters he employed: here the ear-like receiving character of the " $\text{E}$ ", which stands for "Empfänger" (German receiver), whereas "S" is the sender. In so doing, he remains close to *Finnegans Wake*, where the "E" stands for the ear or hearing.<sup>49</sup> It is now clear what Beuys meant when he maintained that he did not normally work with symbols: "But in order to achieve that transfer of energy into some kind of image or writing, one has to use signs or ciphers"<sup>50</sup> – sigla.

Other artists' use of sigla is not always as over-motivated and programmatic as this. Nevertheless, many others have made valid commentaries. I am thinking of Adolph Gottlieb's noted pictographs from 1950 with the titles *T*, *Met* and *Night*,<sup>57</sup> or John Hart's work.<sup>51</sup> Robert Motherwell's *Shem the Penman* studies from 1972 at times complete the



91 Joseph Beuys,  
Telephone S – E  
1974

open, square bracket that stands for Shem to form a rectangle. One can, however, also find an “E”. This refers to the addition or “completion” of both Shem and Shaun’s sigla, making up their father’s sign.

**Delta** The writer’s use of the delta ( $\Delta$ ) for ALP, its duplication in the centre of the Euclidean diagram, as well as the unique delta-shaped layout of the beginning of the “Anna Livia” chapter, are clearly established.<sup>52</sup> Apart from sigla for Shem, Robert Motherwell seems to have taken up the Delta. In a series entitled *Summertime in Italy*, 1960, this shape, as a silhouette, dominates the sky. H. H. Arnason reports that “David Smith, who liked to photograph his own sculpture in this manner, wanted to help Motherwell make steel sculptures from this shape, but the project was never realised.”<sup>53</sup> Considering his long-lasting interest in Joyce, the indication is that Motherwell had found in “Anna Livia” the fluid analogies and evocations of larger connections that he pursued in his work. His second home, Italy, dominated by the Apennine (as the Sugar Loaf dominates the Wicklow Mountains, visible from Dublin) transfers that motif to the landscape, where HCE had been placed. Not least of all, David Smith’s interest in these pictorial formulations by the artist, who was then still his friend – a decade after he had himself

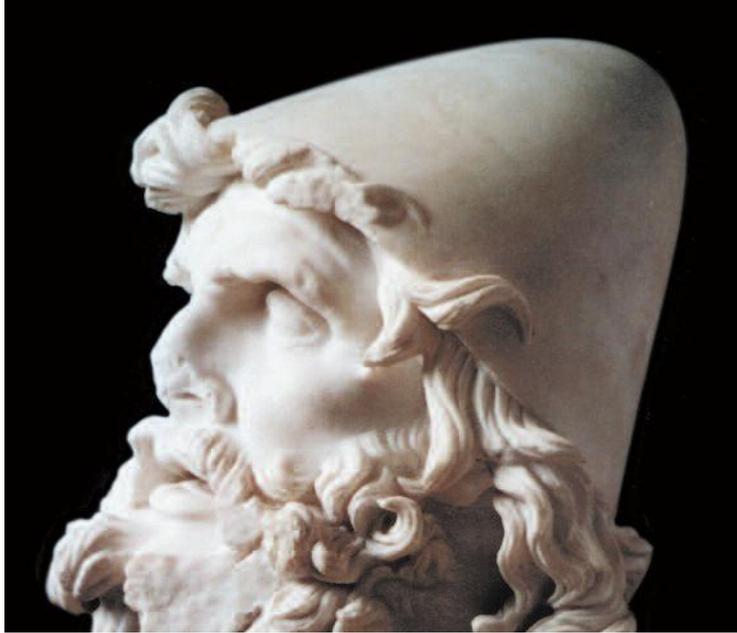


92 Joseph Beuys,  
Penninus  
1958

worked on Joyce's sigla, renders it inevitable that Joyce was the topic of their conversations, while they were planning to collaborate.<sup>54</sup>

Joseph Beuys' concurrent use of the Delta in his *Ulysses-Extension* displays rather similar traits. Beuys repeatedly drew an open delta-like mountain with an "O" or small circle on top and commented on it: "Book with Penninus-motif".<sup>130</sup> It is the leitmotif in exercise books three to six and appears often in clusters, similar to flocks of flying birds. Beuys was most likely referring to both the *Finnegans Wake* layout and to *Ulysses*, since tumescence and detumescence feature strongly in that work (especially in "Nausicaa", with its recurrent "O"s).

Beuys did not always distinguish between *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, preferring to view Joyce's works as a unit. After all, Joyce had himself "extended" the former in the latter, taking up previously unused material. Beuys spoke about the main protagonist of his *Ulysses-Extension: Penninus*.<sup>55</sup> <sup>92</sup> He can be identified as Shem the penman, including the meaning of pen as pin or ben, i.e. mountain. Indeed, Penninus is the Celtic mountain god after whom the Italian mountain chain, the Apennines, the Pennine Alps, as well as the Pennines in England, are named – a veritable mountainous body or spine running through Europe. Beuys thus extended Joyce's anthropomorphic land-



**93 Head of Odysseus**  
Alexandrian copy of  
a Greek original  
from ca 440 BC

scape when he placed Penninus, not Tim Finnegan, in Europe's, not Dublin's, landscape.

However, the Penninus- or delta motif is not just male; ALP's "sugar-loaf hat with a gaudyquiviry peak" (FW 208.07) connects ALP and Penninus. It achieves even more, since the delta-shaped hat is iconographically a clear identification of Odysseus.<sup>56</sup> <sup>93</sup> Thus, Beuys had good reason to conflate both sexes and Joyce's main works. The (river) delta as the female and the seafarer's realm is now linked in a utopian manner with the male, in a mountain-shaped cap, who walks rather than sails across Europe.

→ 5.3 Not long after Beuys, in 1965,<sup>57</sup> Royden Rabinowitch created his first *Greased Cone*, which he says implicitly refers to Joyce.<sup>58</sup> <sup>169</sup> The artist's background is a mathematical and Joyce-interested household. In the work, he extends Joyce's Euclidean diagram into the third dimension, which Joyce implied by referring in both *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* to Dante's *Inferno* as one of his main sources of inspiration.<sup>59</sup> The delta or conical gyroscope shape is again combined in an artist's oeuvre with grease or fat. The cardboard disc in Brancusi's *Joyce Portrait*,<sup>7</sup> with its cut to the centre, similarly suggests that its sides can overlap in order to form a cone.

In 1973, the Polish Concept artist Zbigniew Gostomski held a second Joyce-related exhibition at Galeria Foksal in Warsaw.<sup>60</sup> Its starting point is a quotation from *Ulysses* (“Ithaca”):

[...] each one [...] is always the last term of a preceding series even if the first term of a succeeding one, each imagining himself to be the first, last, only and alone, whereas he is neither first nor last nor only nor alone in a series originating in and repeated to infinity.<sup>61</sup>

In a similar, mathematically motivated, *Finnegans Wake*-schooled and conceptual move, Gostomski exhibits seven panels, one with the quotation, five with number cones or deltas, and one with a photograph of several conical mountains of sand or slag.<sup>81</sup> The numbers are those of the possibly infinite Pascal’s triangle. They illustrate and comment adequately on the quotation as well as on Joyce’s own deltas. They begin with:

I  
 I I  
 I 2 I  
 I 3 3 I  
 I 4 6 4 I  
 I 5 10 10 5 [...]

This work links *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* in the same way that Beuys understood the connections. Gostomski also sees Joyce – like Beuys – as somebody who has deposited language as a sculptor would deposit materials. The “sedimentation” of etymological variations of words, the occurrence of lists and inflated, bulky, “Ithaca”-like answers has prompted several artists to work in similar ways – in their respective media.<sup>62</sup>

4.2 →

When discussing work using typography in a Joycean context, sigla and diagrams, several such points concerning Joyce’s materiality in art could be made in passing. This central theme is not exhausted. It will be taken up again, following the typography-related issue of *portmanteau* words and shapes.

4.2 →

**Portmanteau Shapes** The *portmanteau* words that Joyce employed in *Finnegans Wake* are instances where two or more words are conflated to arrive at a third that is more loaded with meaning than the constituents could be if they were isolated (“chaosmos”, FW 118.21, is a popular example). They often function by means of the grapheme.<sup>63</sup> In order to understand *portmanteau* words, the visual aspect is vital. Joyce’s delta is already a visual element, which nevertheless works in a similar way,



94 Lawrence Lee  
(Khui Fatt),  
Are we speakin  
d'anglas...  
1988

simultaneously denoting a Greek letter, a hill and anatomical features. I call this technique – and many other such instances in artists' works – *portmanteau* shapes.

Mario Praz sees “interpenetrations of words and meanings in the language of Joyce [... as a straightforward correspondence to the] Interpenetration of planes in painting, sculpture and architecture”.<sup>64</sup> Can this be upheld? First of all, *portmanteau* techniques can serve as an additional and intriguing explanation for the noted art-historical “contradictions” in Joyce-inspired oeuvres: “Pollock, as Osorio noted, appreciated Joyce’s use of *portmanteau* words to suggest multiple and contradictory meanings”.<sup>65</sup>

Michael Craig-Martin, when asked about possible Joycean inspiration for his wall drawings,<sup>80</sup> where the outline of one object becomes that of another everyday item, responded enthusiastically: “I tried to read *Finnegans Wake* so many times ...”.<sup>66</sup> The *portmanteau* technique is obviously among the aspects of Joyce’s work that are particularly suggestive for visual application and further development, especially when combined with the quotidian.

As in Joyce, everyday items become estranged and telling. Craig-Martin’s Irish roots, which he stressed in the interview quoted earlier,

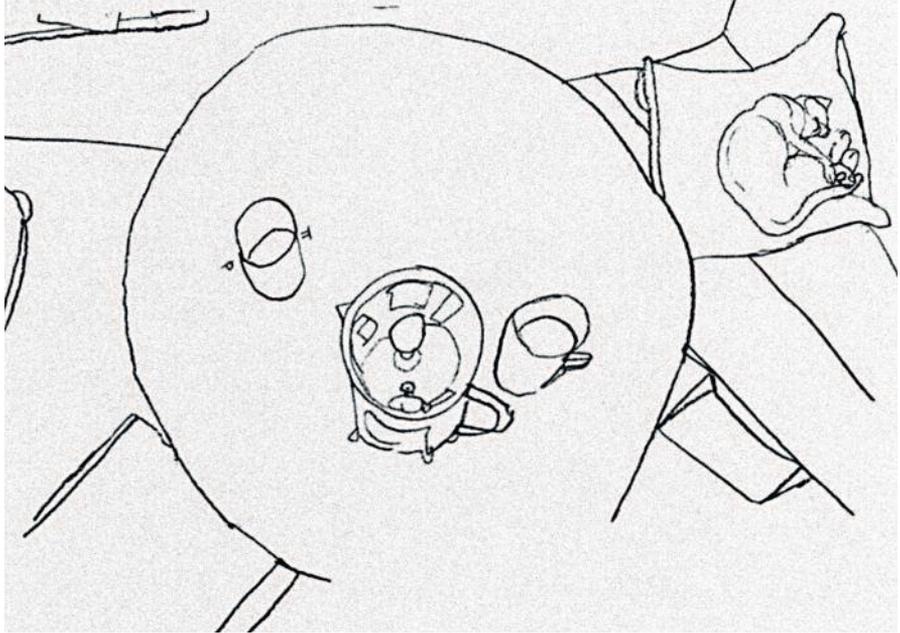


95 Alexander Roob, CS, detail, installation view, Art Cologne 1993

could lead one to suspect a common ground: the mutability and shape-shifting qualities of Celtic ornament.

Lawrence Lee (Khui Fatt), an artist associated with the Zurich James Joyce Foundation, painted a Joyce-portrait <sup>94</sup> that includes a hen, an egg and other objects that intermingle with writing and parts of the writer's head: an appropriately *Wakean* solution for displaying multiple meanings, as well as the interwoven nature of Joyce's life and his characters.

*Portmanteau* shapes are also a possible avenue for artists to pursue narration. Alexander Roob has since 1985 worked on his "pictorial novel" *Codex Scarabäus*, otherwise *CS* or "Sieh es" ("see it" in German).<sup>67</sup> <sup>95, 96</sup> The drawings are sparse, even crude, but all the more evocatively sketched. Roob lets one image or scene evolve out of the next in the meandering arrangement of electrical circuits. Far from limiting himself to *portmanteau* shapes, however Roob has researched and created Joycean *portmanteau* words. In *Alchemie und Mystik* (inspired by William Blake's theories on vortex and "Ulro") he proposes the "P" – otherwise the Greek letter "rho" – from the Euclidean ALP diagram (FW 293) as a "key" in the space between the end and the beginning of *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>68</sup> By inserting the cyclical "o", "the-o-ri" and the "O[h]r" (German for ear) take their rightful place as connectors.<sup>69</sup> Several drawings from



96 Alexander Roob,  
CS,  
vol. 45  
1992

Roob's *CS* elaborate on this, while he contributed drawings on the unrelated topic of a present-day Bloom-like character to *Joyce in Art*.<sup>96</sup>

Joseph Beuys' Penninus-motif<sup>130</sup> is a far more economical *portmanteau* shape in its leitmotif-like character. It establishes chains of associations and thus accumulates ever more universal meanings beyond what *portmanteau* words can achieve. Those of Beuys' motifs that vie for *portmanteau* shape status include the clock / flower / sun-shape of the "Joyce-portrait" from the *Ulysses-Extension* and the "J" / walking-stick / runners motif. The Penninus-motif itself can be viewed as a hill with sun, as Golgatha with Jesus Christ, as a bird, a breast, a pregnant woman's belly with navel, a hat and so on. Following such chains of associations can unlock many works' multi-layered meanings.<sup>70</sup>

It may be easy to see in E.M. Escher's pictures a similar technique at work as Jess' noted *Deranged Stereopticon*, 1974<sup>64</sup> and to suspect Joycean links. Barbara Stevens Heusel has proposed such an approach and writes: "James Joyce and M.C. Escher provide masterfully the necessary moments of surprise, *trompe l'oeil*, and tricks of the brain, to give us insight into cognition".<sup>71</sup> Joyce indeed draws our attention to cognitive processes and devises a world that could better be read in terms of the Möbius strip rather than a simple circle.

Praz's view that *portmanteau* words are akin to interpenetrations of planes in various art forms has not been found to be the decisive moment for artists using *portmanteau* shapes. Interpenetrations of shapes or outlines would be more applicable. An accumulation of meaning – while maintaining an economy of means as well as a suggestive estrangement – is also clearly in evidence.

*Portmanteau* strategies can also be extended to refer to endeavours to fuse the genres. Eva Hesse extended her paintings into space and worked with simple but texturally compelling materials. When speaking about her college years, 1957-59, the artist said: "At Yale [, I] began to read a great deal; Gide, Nabokov, Joyce [...] I have become a reader – the thing I've wanted most [... Lucy R. Lippard comments:] She began to make lists of word definitions, a habit combined later and intensified [...] by searches for sculpture titles."<sup>72</sup> Evidently, Hesse was subsequently a match for Tom Doyle, whom she met in 1961, "a lively and charming Pennsylvania and Ohio Irishman [...] and Joyce addict."<sup>73</sup> While I am not suggesting direct influence, certain aspects of Joyce's texts – namely materiality, genre blurring and wordplay – may have confirmed Hesse in her innovative approaches to producing works and entitling them.



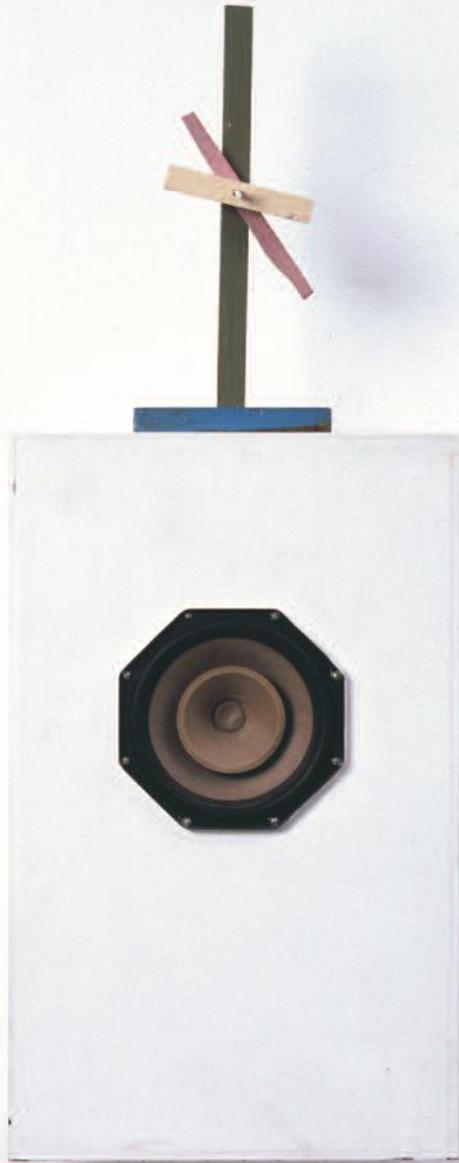


**SLIP IT  
TO ME**











## 4.2 Materiality, Substances, Epiphany

**Substances** The subject of Joycean materiality is by no means exhausted by noting the fact that Joyce paid great attention to the visual aspects of the signifiers of his texts, that he programmatically manipulated them as sigla, changed the layout and inserted diagrams. These predominantly visual (furthermore self-referential and “formalist”) strategies serve artist-readers as pointers to Joyce’s unique understanding of materiality on another level: the significant and content-related materiality of his subject matter and certain objects or substances that he almost treated as characters. Form and content again appear as analogies of one another;<sup>1</sup> the formerly ideal separation between object and subject in literature is suspended. The simultaneity of both types of materiality contributes to the tension in oscillating readings.<sup>2</sup>

In *Ulysses* and more radically still in *Finnegans Wake*, things speak their own elemental language. From reformulating the cat’s utterance to letting the sea and rocks speak in “Proteus”, from understanding *Ulysses* as the odyssey of a piece of soap to Joyce’s demand that writers take into account protagonists’ speed, size and physical condition,<sup>3</sup> Joyce’s showing rather than telling builds up an evidential discourse.<sup>4</sup> It speaks of universalist ambitions and is inspired by Romanticist notions of nature and artistic insight. In the process, however, Joyce also sacrifices coherence – in pursuit of the same goal: style changes alert the reader to language and its materiality. Furthermore, it is probably Bloom’s insight in and reflection on what his creator does – that there is “a medium in all things” (U 15.878) – which resonates particularly strongly with visual artists. For them, such carefully chosen media or substances are usually the preferred means of communication. Thus, they can rightly understand Joyce as one of their own. Furthermore, since Concept art at the latest, artists have taken up the conventions that link words and objects, signifiers and the signified. In Joyce, words oscillate between everyday use and being carriers of (philosophical) thought. This “handicap” inherent in the material breeds ambiguity, which has been established as Joycean, open and positive.<sup>5</sup>

Tadeusz Kantor, who had devised a stage-set for his play *The Return of Odysseus* in 1944, subsequently turned to visual art and performance. In 1967, he conducted a *Sea Concert (Panorama Happening at the Sea)* in Osieki on the Polish Baltic coast.<sup>104</sup> Perched on a ladder in the surf and dressed in a tuxedo, he literally conducted the breakers.<sup>6</sup> Time (in

97 **Edward Weston, Excusado (Mexico)**  
1925

98 **Richard Hamilton, Epiphany**  
1987/89

99 **Michael Rogers, In The Wake**  
2004

100 **Gerhard Hoehme, James Joyce Epiphany**  
1961

101 **Kathy Prendergast, The End and the Beginning**  
1996

102 **Jürgen Partenheimer, Anna Livia Plurabelle**  
1983

103 **Julião Sarmiento, 1995/6.**  
Something Obscene  
(Dublin – Cornell  
1909)



104 Tadeusz Kantor,  
**Sea Concert**  
 Panorama  
 Happening at  
 the Sea, 1967

→ 4.3

performance art), as well as fluid, *Wakean* works will also have to be dealt with. Jaromir Jedlinsky repeatedly refers to Joyce in his catalogue text on Kantor, noticing a dualism of locality and universality in both oeuvres, linked by means of epiphany.<sup>7</sup>

What has been said about Beuys' motivation of fat as a sculptural substance in a Joycean context needs to be recalled, since it can be understood in yet another Joycean way. In *Finnegans Wake*, "The spatial ordering of Book I must merge into the temporal ordering of Books II and III and the last sections of Book I provide this transition."<sup>8</sup> The positioning of the "Burrus and Caseous" fable could be seen as the beginning of this process. It witnesses a portrait of Shem, songs and games, the making of ink out of Shem's excrement and, most importantly, the "Anna Livia" chapter with another metamorphosis (that of two washerwomen into tree and stone). Whether consciously or not, artists have taken account of Joyce's procedure for merging the realms that Lessing traditionally allocated to visual art and literature respectively. They have literally melted matter and used fat to turn space into time.<sup>9</sup> Artists have considered trees and stones, as well as sedimentation and even bodily discharges, in a fluid, metamorphosing way. It is possible to conclude that a revolutionary use of sculptural material in the 1960s occurred in Joyce's wake or

was at least developed among artists interested in Joyce's work. Among them is Dieter Roth. His *Portrait of the Artist* busts,<sup>32</sup> which were meant for birds to eat and are also major constituents of Roth's *Mould Museum* at the Roth Foundation in Hamburg: art that anticipates its demise – but “lives” all the more forcefully in the meantime.

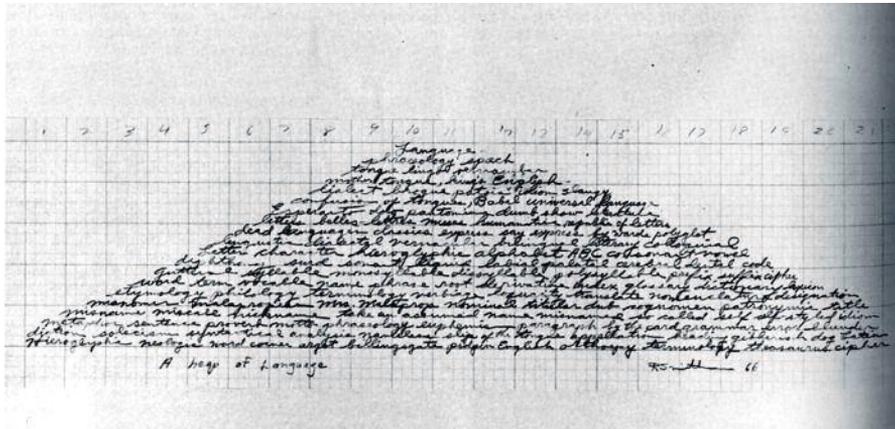
Such less than savoury approaches in Joyce-inspired art remind one of Bloom's thoughts in “Hades”, where decomposing bodies are presented in a matter-of-fact taxonomy: fat ones rot more quickly and are more beneficial for flora and fauna. Bloom muses that the cells “Live for ever practically” (U 6.781).<sup>10</sup>

**Accumulation** I need to return to Joseph Beuys, who created many works that reflect sedimentation and accumulation of both organic matter and language in a Joycean way. There is *Hasengrab (Hare's Tomb)*, a heap of “debris” on top of a hare's bones, 1962-67. The hare, “h”,<sup>11</sup> stands for the human being (homo or H(CE)), who is buried under a “midden-hide hoard of objects!” (FW 019.08 ). Beuys was certainly of the opinion that Joyce's “recycling” (FW 99.05) of everyday objects was an apt procedure when trying to find out the “truth” about humans. This echoes not only Dublin detail in *Ulysses*, but particularly HCE's characterization in ALP's letter, which the hen scratches up from the dungheap.

Presenting a cumulative, materially bulky, catalogued universality is part of an artistic procedure, where one work emerges out of the other,<sup>12</sup> where a store of materials is kept for later inclusion and where recipients are activated by the necessity of shifting – at least metaphorically – large amounts of materials in their heads. Joyce stated: “The elements needed will fuse only after a prolonged existence together”,<sup>13</sup> and Beuys echoed that they need time to “signal” when they should, or even “wished to”, be used.<sup>14</sup> By referring to the “rich incrustations of time” (U 12.1463-64), Joyce considered this approach of accumulation and sedimentation as being applicable to history, to his writings (the quotation concludes one of his long lists in “Cyclops”), as well as to visual practice – in this case an embroidered handkerchief.

This is an approach that is common to Joyce and Beuys, and it is also helpful when it comes to considering the medium of language itself. Etymology plays a vital role<sup>15</sup> and is understood – at least by Beuys in Joyce – as a way of viewing language as piled-up material. Robert Smithson's *Heap of Language*<sup>105</sup> expresses a similar view. Beuys kept lists of his works' titles. Many of the drawings in his *The Secret Block for a Secret Person in Ireland* (a likely reference to Joyce), some of which

5.3 →



105 Robert Smithson,  
A Heap of  
Language  
1966

derived from the *Ulysses*-Extension, were untitled. Beuys thus devised ———? as a suitably cryptic alternative title,<sup>77</sup> rendering the list as the “block” to which *The Secret Block* refers. Was he inspired by Joyce’s use of dashes instead of quotation marks? Beuys also referred to blocks of various materials (language, lines, felt, copper) as “battery” and “fond”. One such *Battery*, 1974 – created with Ireland in mind – is a newspaper parcel (an apt comment on Joyce’s use of the newspaper in “*Aeolus*”), where one can view the individual articles as such blocks.<sup>16</sup> The more block-like prose of “*Penelope*”, however, would correspondingly be even more energy-laden – a commentary on Molly Bloom or women in general which Joyce may indeed have intended.

In such a corresponding inclination to accumulate things, one may see a trait that complements the characters of some people who have witnessed poverty and war. When this becomes part of an artistic procedure, it may typically present quotidian material in a laboratory situation, rendering it insightful for the recipients.<sup>17</sup> Joyce particularly activates his archaeologically minded readers when presenting the contents of a drawer in the Bloom household and of Leopold Bloom’s pockets. *Finnegans Wake*’s “*adamelegy*” (FW 77.26) describes the writer’s strategy.<sup>18</sup>

Only readers and artists from Beuys’ generation onwards could then



106 **Piero Manzoni,**  
**Merda d'Artista**  
1961

interpret Joyce's Viconian and accumulative "recycling" as an ecologically responsible way of treating material resources. Beuys elaborated on this somewhat. Joyce's wordplay not only on god and dog, but also on bog (which means God in Russian), helped Beuys understand the layered, accumulative and ecologically important bog as yet another Joyce-related entity.<sup>19</sup> Although Joyce's way of thinking in art will be given attention later, we can already here note the fact that Joyce's predilections for cyclical, non-teleological thought have endeared him to artists.

5.3 →

**Discharge** The mentioned sedimentation in Joyce's works (in etymological, archaeological and even typographical terms) finds a correspondence (as so often) in what Joyce's characters ruminate on and on which objects the writer chooses to elaborate, or more precisely, which substances he has them produce. Human discharges are indeed written about in *Ulysses* as never before in literature. They have attracted scholarly and artistic commentary.<sup>20</sup>

The most notorious work in this regard – the corresponding gesture that introduces excrement into visual art – is *Merda d'Artista* by Piero Manzoni, 1961. <sup>106</sup> While there are some other art-historical motivations underlying this work, I would not exclude the possibility that Manzoni

too is referring to Joyce.<sup>21</sup> After all, in the following year, 2 June 1962, he issued his friend Umberto Eco with an authenticity certificate, turning the author of *The Open Work* himself into a work of art for life.<sup>22</sup>

Edward Weston's reaction to reading *Ulysses* was to photograph his flush toilet in Mexico in 1925.<sup>23</sup><sup>97</sup> The resulting works, which could easily have been introduced among "Early Responses" are powerfully monumental, Modernist close-ups that only show "manners" in the title: *Excusado*.

Joyce's treatment of human discharge has also fascinated Julião Sarmento. He has used quotations from Joyce's correspondence with Nora Barnacle for the titles of a suite of evocative, "open" images; "white paintings" from 1995/96. *The Brown Stain that Comes Behind (Dublin – Trieste 1909)* is one of them. What the artist designates as mixed media on canvas is indeed somewhat stained and in the autoerotic image *Something Obscene (Dublin – Cornell 1909)*,<sup>103</sup> there are stains that do not originate from pencil marks; something that is also true of Beuys' Joyce-inspired drawings.<sup>24</sup> A fine balance between aesthetic and erotic pleasure and repulsion; "that strange and seductive connection between desire and dread",<sup>25</sup> – as Nancy Spector writes of Sarmento's Joyce-inspired paintings – is indeed what some artists have sought in their works. They have clearly found a source of inspiration in Joyce.

Richard Hamilton's fascination with the "dirty protests" of IRA hunger-strikers, as featured in *The Citizen*, 1982-83,<sup>76</sup> is undoubtedly informed by the artist's knowledge of *Finnegans Wake*, where Shem makes ink out of his excrement and subsequently writes all over his body's "hide". William Anastasi has viewed what he calls *Autobodyography* – the title of a series of photographs of *Finnegans Wake* passages projected onto Anastasi's body, 1994<sup>107</sup> – as a central expression of an artist's transubstantiating activity. While a reference to Franz Kafka's *In the Penal Colony* may give a precedent for the inscription of a prisoner's body with his crime, this was not part of Hamilton's approach in *The Citizen*; the excremental marks are seen only on the walls. Equating the hunger striker with Shem, the artist, who produces approximations of Celtic ornament with his excrement, uses Joyce in a rather one-sided political manner.

Joseph Beuys had Caroline Tisdall photograph him at the Forty Foot men's bathing place below the Sandycove Martello Tower<sup>137</sup> – more precisely overlooking Dublin Bay while standing in a U-shaped "tower" there: a urinal. Beuys apparently valued Joyce's ways of breaking taboos. In his U-shaped tower (U for *Ulysses*?), he thus enacts Bloom and



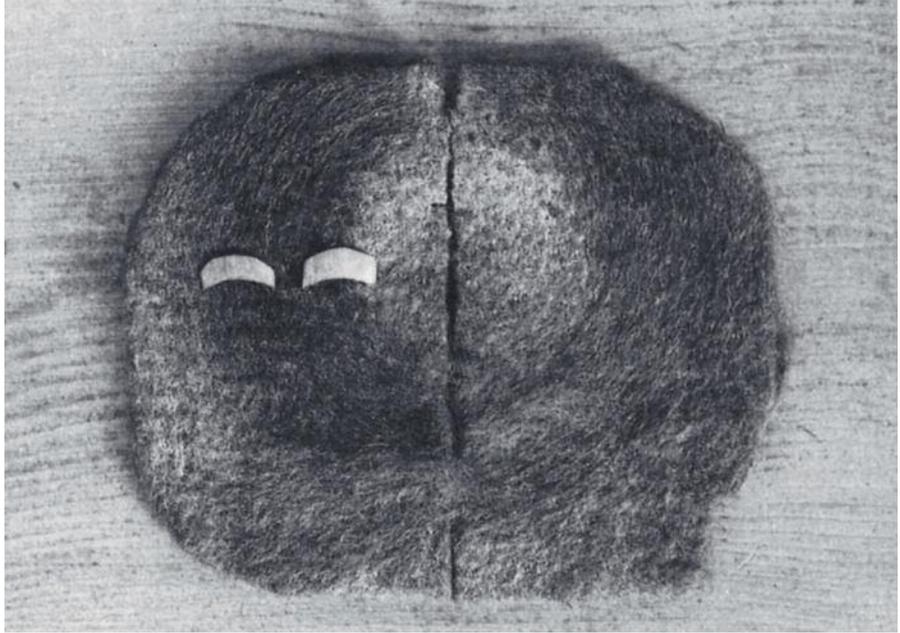
107 William Anastasi,  
*Autobodyography*  
1994

Stephen's "performance" near the end of Joyce's novel, thus referring to its end at the point of its beginning: a meeting of waters indeed.

The decisive moment, however, has to be the art-historical reference embedded in Beuys' gesture: Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, the quintessential ready-made, a ceramic urinal turned on its back, creates an inescapable point of comparison. One difference is that Beuys' urinal is not a water closet. It may thus reflect on "Aeolus", where Joyce mockingly establishes the fact that the wc was the foremost British colonial contribution to Irish culture (U 7.489-95).

Beuys took another different and fascinating route in order to express further his view that the materiality of Joyce's texts requires simultaneous reflection on sedimentation and human discharge. While the stag's antlers (in which fluid circulation slows and stagnates or "incrustates" further and further) were a good reason to follow Joyce in identifying with that proud animal,<sup>26</sup> fingernails and toenails are similar human products that grow over time like a bog, like language or the layers of earth on an archaeological site. Accumulative deltas have been mentioned.

In *Toenails on felt with fat*, 1973 and *Fossil*, 1975,<sup>27</sup> <sup>108</sup> Beuys placed cut off toenails on a base of compressed organic matter: felt (with fat) and peat respectively. A subtitle or dictum pertaining to these works reads:



108 Joseph Beuys,  
Fossil  
1975

“This is how I earn my pocket money!”<sup>28</sup> Beuys apparently wished to comment on his work as an artist in general. He seems to reflect on the “Proteus” episode of *Ulysses*, which features a sculptural piece by Stephen Dedalus – or so Beuys undoubtedly understood it – that consists of snot deposited carefully on a rock on Sandymount Strand. Stephen had lent Buck Mulligan his dirty handkerchief that morning and now had no choice but to dispose of his secretion in some way or other. That act could indeed be understood as the culmination of Stephen’s creativity on that day, or even throughout that character’s career in Joyce’s works.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from commenting on the similarities of organic substances (toenail, felt and fat), Beuys also highlights the fact that the rock was formerly fluid matter, formed and compressed. It thus shares vital characteristics with snot. Indeed, when considering Joyce’s idiosyncratic reformulations of the chain of being (involving a barnacle goose), as well as the metamorphosis of the washerwoman Miss Doddpebble (FW 620.19) to stone in *Finnegans Wake*, the connection that Beuys makes is not too far-fetched. Accumulation and compression over time find adequate expression in *Finnegans Wake*: “Till tree from tree, tree among trees, tree over tree become stone to stone, stone between stones, stone

under stone for ever.” (FW 259.I-2) – a feast for artists from Beuys to Smithson and Gostowski.<sup>30</sup>

**Wakean Flow** *Ulysses* is an epic of the human body, but *Finnegans Wake* goes further still in dealing with corporeal materiality. Its fluids are not just metaphorically those of Dubliners walking through the city’s “arteries” or, more literally, the contents of Molly Bloom’s chamber pot. *Finnegans Wake* is flow – with the “Anna Livia” chapter assuming its most popular and (maybe partly because of this) its special place among artists’ sources of inspiration.<sup>31</sup> ALP’s deltas have been discussed.

Fluidity is an aspect of visual art, especially of painting, which many artists since Impressionism have explored.<sup>32</sup> Jean Lancri painted *The Windows of the River* in 1972 and in his blue-green seascape (reminiscent of Paul Klee’s work, although less angular) included the beginning of *Finnegans Wake* written in it.<sup>33</sup> Wavy river-lines also feature in André Masson’s *Hommage à James Joyce*,<sup>109</sup> created for the cover of the proceedings of the Paris Joyce Conference in 1975. The design was used on the covers of both volumes of the anthology. Once in black on white and once in white on black: a reminder of the impeded visibility during the night of *Finnegans Wake*. This is something that not many representational painters after Joyce have noted, although it certainly warrants reflection, considering Joyce’s own insistence on such matters of material logic.

Barrie Cooke is a painter who has negotiated the watery forces of the Irish landscape for many decades. His canvases – particularly *Anna Livia* from 1998 – arrest the paint’s fluidity in a characteristic and intuitive way that seeks the vicinity of Joyce’s work through the title of an individual painting, pointing towards a shared experience in literature and painting, without going so far as to interpret Joyce.<sup>34</sup>

Robert Motherwell also stresses a Joycean fluidity as a painterly element in some of his works, especially *Riverrun*, 1972.<sup>110</sup> Marcelin Pleyne explains:

With *Riverrun*, Motherwell has not chosen the title of his painting from the first word of *Finnegans Wake*; he has chosen the current (run) which brings back the last sentence of Joyce’s work [...] to the first [...] This] manifests most explicitly the declaration of the painter’s art [that we] find in *Riverrun*, namely the current, the pictorial flux whereby what is ancient returns eternally to the new [...] and never comes to an end.<sup>35</sup>

John Hart has developed a “waterscript” in response to *Finnegans Wake* – or so says the title of a 1973 collage in ink and chalk on paper.

109 **André Masson,**  
**Hommage à**  
**James Joyce**  
1975



While the general impression is that of an (almost Pollock-like) abstract agglomeration of forms, the work also echoes microscopic views of organisms – life’s source in water: an appropriate comment on both Joyce’s subject matter and technique. *Finnegans Wake’s* flow has been established as a valid topic from a painterly point of view, especially because the subconsciousness appears not to think or feel in ideas, but in images.<sup>36</sup>

On the other hand, a largely Conceptual art movement was also attracted to that aspect of Joyce’s later work. Predictably, ALP’s fluidity, the “thunderwords” from *Finnegans Wake*, as well as the “language of flow” (U II.298) from *Ulysses* provided ample material to artists who worked in the context of the international Fluxus movement (for example, John Cage, Joseph Beuys and Robert Filliou).

Although Fluxus considered word-based art traditional, Joyce seems once more to be excluded from such criticism. For artists with a keen sense of materiality, flux also needs a clear possibility of stasis. Maybe that is why the metamorphosis of the washerwomen fascinates. They take on the status of performance relics, of sculptures: tree and stone. It is, therefore, quite possible that Robert Watts referred to the “Anna Livia” chapter when creating his *Flux Soap* around 1966. It is made of



110 Robert Motherwell,  
Riverrun  
1972

wood and has the letters “FLUX” cut into it, instead of the brand name “LUX”.<sup>37</sup> The work was originally covered with a thin film of soap, thus simultaneously representing all relevant objects (and their metamorphosis): the washerwomen’s tool, an easily metamorphosed soap bar, a tree (wood) and a stone (the bar of soap shape). Joyce stands “corrected”: a stone is not the ideal material to choose for a metamorphosis.<sup>38</sup>

Closer to Joyce’s materials is (or was) Dublin’s “Floozie in the Jacuzzi”, 1988. The stone “fountain” on Dublin’s O’Connell Street (through which water flowed and carried with it everyday flotsam, the detritus of city life) is no longer in place. A paper manufacturer (whose business requires water and produces material for literature – or, rather cardboard for industry) had paid for the work in 1987. Anna herself was conceived of in a figurative, manneristically elongated, way. Ailbhe Smyth has taken the sculpture as a starting point for reflecting in a flowingly associative way on being an Irish woman. She quotes *Finnegans Wake* in passing, but does not mention the sculptor’s name: Eamonn O’Doherty. Smyth rightly highlights the motivations behind the commission and states that ALP “cannot represent her plurability any more than she can represent the [...] diversity of all/Irish/Dublin women [... but is] a symbol of civic power [...] an empty signifier”.<sup>39</sup> Such openness is indeed at

odds with the traditionality of the sculpture and thus cannot be interpreted as positive.

A more sensitive sculpture, with the title *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, is a 1983 wall sculpture by Jürgen Partenheimer,<sup>102</sup> who knew Carola Giedion-Welcker well.<sup>40</sup> It includes a white loudspeaker – an invitation to the viewer to recall ALP’s sounds in his or her inner ear. Looking at it is almost like listening to a shell, where one’s bloodstream can be said to resemble *Finnegans Wake*’s mumblings and mutterings. On the loudspeaker stands a small, delicate “windmill” made of subtly painted sticks. Is it a figure, a water mill, a toy? Partenheimer’s daughter is called Anna; the sculpture was a gift to her. The artist, who wrote a doctoral thesis on Brancusi’s work, remains between figuration and abstraction and evokes flow in all media: wind, water and sound – a sculpture to contemplate.

Alighiero Boetti has painstakingly researched over many years which one thousand rivers in the world are the longest. In the final work he shows no traces of that research, or of the fact that he was given widely varying lengths for some rivers. Boetti listed the rivers, arranged according to length, in a book object and had them stitched on to an evocatively “snot-green” tapestry: *The World’s Thousand Longest Rivers*, 1976-82. When I asked him about a possible reference to Joyce and the rivers in the “Anna Livia” chapters of the *Wake*, he said he had read only *Dubliners* when he was young: “but what an important reference”.<sup>41</sup> Sometimes coincidental correspondences are even better than direct ones.

Brian King has echoed Joyce’s materiality in his works in many ways. One example is *HEAT*, 1982.<sup>111</sup> The artist placed the (“HEALY’s”-like) individual letters made of red ice into the river Liffey’s source. Red is associated with blood and heat, giving the piece a “living” quality.<sup>42</sup> The ice melted, releasing the red pigment into the water, which in turn must have joined the sea or evaporated, repeating the cycle of *Finnegans Wake*. In this piece King has worked on Joyce’s works’ materiality, using precise and evocative means. It is no surprise that, in King’s oeuvre, the cycle of Joyce’s life also finds representation. Also in Joyce’s centenary year, the artist has executed many – one could say minimalist – variations on drawings of circles. Into some of these he incorporated soil, and one of the drawings in particular<sup>112</sup> contains the earth from nowhere else but Joyce’s grave in Zurich. In this way, at least some atoms of the writer’s body have become part of a circular artwork, turning it into a secular relic. Joyce himself may have viewed this as the ultimate, epiphanic expression of immortality.<sup>43</sup>



111 **Brian King,**  
**HEAT**  
1980

112 **Brian King,**  
**Zurich**  
1982

Glass and water, evoking and complementing one another, feature in several artist's work on a *Wokean* flow: Michael Rogers' work *In The Wake* – glass bottles with engraved handwriting – has been mentioned.<sup>99</sup> Danny McCarthy commemorated the centenary of Joyce's birth by throwing bottles "for Joyce" off O'Connell Bridge into the river Liffey: *One-hundred Bottles for James Joyce*.<sup>113</sup> McCarthy's messages in bottles can be interpreted as an attempt to contact the dead artist in another world, that to which Anna Livia had retired. Bottles replace the Guinness barrel on the Liffey in *Finnegans Wake*; the writer preferred to drink wine. McCarthy's messages also served to outline his performance and ask the finder to write back to the artist. Thus the bottles went abroad in the wake of Joyce and other emigrants – from Irish monks to the young, educated Irish at the time of the performance. Some bottles were indeed found and messages returned to McCarthy. The cycle was completed. Others have been lost or are still outstanding: the performance, one suspects, will never come to an end.

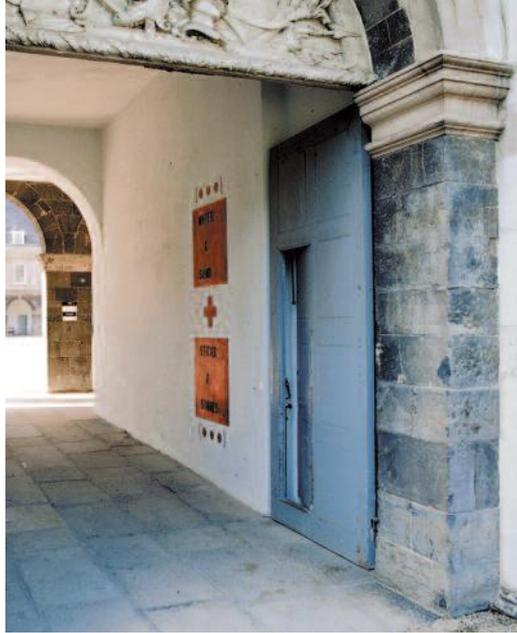
**Tree and Stone** Like the combination of water and tree in Michael Craig-Martin's *An Oak Tree*,<sup>73</sup> the juxtaposition of a tree and a stone in a work of art that also examines metamorphosis and life cycles is a clear



113 **Danny McCarthy,**  
**One-hundred**  
**Bottles for**  
**James Joyce**  
1982

but not a failsafe mechanism for recognizing a Joycean inspiration.<sup>44</sup> Joseph Beuys' *7000 Oaks*, initiated at *documenta 7*, 1982, most likely contains a Joycean aspect. This large-scale tree-planting "action" was intended to revive Kassel ecologically – a city heavily bombarded in World War II. A basalt column accompanies each tree. Beuys had visited the Giant's Causeway in County Antrim, knew of Romanticist interest in basalt, such as formations at Fingal's cave on Staffa, as well as Joyce's use of such traditions in *Finnegans Wake* (198.32–33). Basalt records the lava's flow and cooling process. Thus its metamorphosis is still visible. Now unchanging, the column serves as a yardstick to measure the tree's growth, while also safeguarding its continued life.

Lawrence Weiner was "most curious as to how [I] arrived at"<sup>45</sup> my association of his work with Joyce. He did not wish this to be too obvious, but could not resist referring to the writer when working in Dublin in 1993.<sup>114</sup> He confirms that the piece he installed, including the lines "STICKS & STONES (...)", had to do with *Finnegans Wake's* washerwomen and claims that the *Wake* "is the only thing that interests me about Joyce".<sup>46</sup>



114 Lawrence Weiner,  
*Water & Sand +  
Sticks & Stones*  
detail, 1993

**Thunderwords** Some artists have pursued the metamorphosing materiality of *Finnegans Wake* – particularly suggestive not only in ALP’s flow, but also in the thunderwords’ rumbling<sup>47</sup> – by extending their practice into the auditory realm. This is not only true for John Cage’s *Roaratorio*. Patrick Ireland’s *Purgatory* installation also contained sound: the randomly arranged lines from the opening page of *Finnegans Wake* read as a litany, with the curator (Patrick Murphy) and others responding “pray for us”.<sup>48</sup> Hannes Vogel’s Wylermeer photo work with all ten thunderwords is now also accompanied by sound, courtesy of Corsin Vogel.<sup>49</sup>

Paul Heimbach decided in 1989 that viewers should become listeners – in keeping with Joyce’s readers – and themselves “re-create” the sound of Joyce’s hundred-letter-words (one is 101 letters long). Heimbach has created sound books and named the series “Joy..”.<sup>115</sup> When you stand in front of the pedestal, wear the headphones provided and turn the pages of the book object, you can hear a thundering or rushing noise. It is amplified, but in general what you hear is yourself turning the pages. Heimbach thus hopes to create a “Joy..”ful experience for the viewer who engages with the work – his audio-visual piece and Joyce’s.<sup>50</sup>

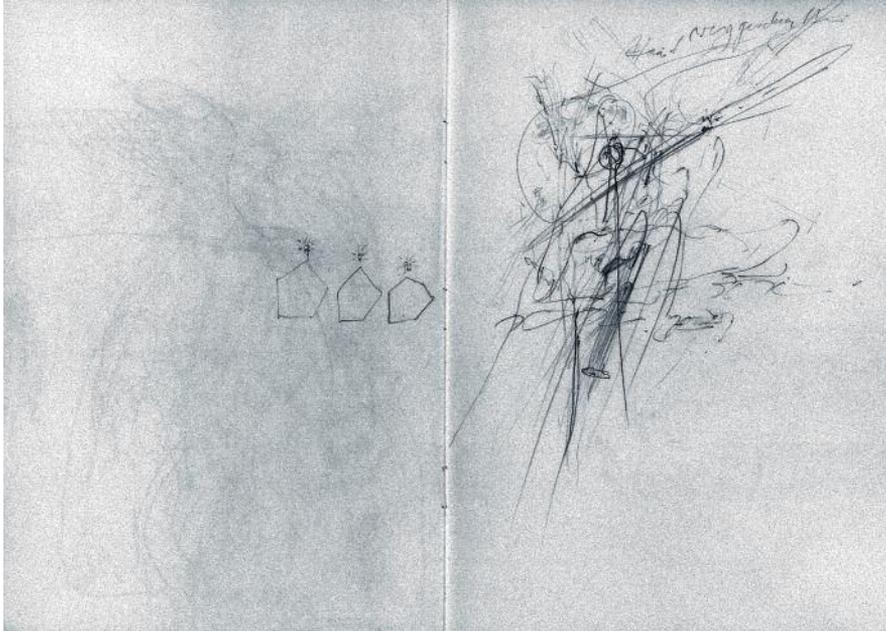


115 Paul Heimbach,  
Joy.. Series  
Soundbook  
1989

**Interior Views** Joseph Beuys includes what he called “blood images”<sup>51</sup> in his *Ulysses-Extension*. There are many images denoting flow, while one particular drawing bears the inscription “skin cut away”.<sup>116</sup> Into the pages Beuys had at one time inserted red pieces of yarn: Ariadne’s threads as well as arteries.<sup>52</sup> I have argued elsewhere that it was not only the Book of Kells’ ornamentation recalling blood vessels that attracted Joyce, but the book’s materiality as such: its hides of “taut vellum” (U 3.42), bearing the living word.<sup>53</sup>

Mirosław Balka echoed a similar understanding of the materiality of Joyce’s works, manifest in both Bloom’s and Stephen’s reflections, when he attached square sheets of the finest, most translucent and delicately fragrant pieces of “paper” to the front and back papers of a 1993 exhibition catalogue.<sup>54</sup> These sheets are in fact pigs’ intestines, signalling a crossover between Bloom’s breakfast and Stephen’s musings on writing on paper or on his mother’s or Eva’s belly. A rather Joycean sense of synaesthesia pervades Balka’s bookish multiple work by stealth.<sup>55</sup>

Beuys’ *Ulysses-Extension* shows many “inside views”, often focusing on the speech apparatus and bones or the digestive tract. Beuys regarded speech and the circulation of blood as sculptural processes – and he believed Joyce’s works to contain a similar understanding.<sup>116</sup> In 1970,



116 **Joseph Beuys,**  
**Ulysses-Extension,**  
 book 2, pp. 16-17  
 ca. 1957-61

Beuys told his collaborator Henning Christiansen that their “action” (performance) *Celtic (Kinloch Rannoch) Scottish Symphony* was “Joycean – a dissolved word: meaning becomes sound”.<sup>56</sup> He conveyed this view by inserting into *Celtic* and several related actions and installations<sup>57</sup> schematic drawings of how sounds and words are produced physiologically. The materiality of the body, while producing speech and sound, is already reflected in *Ulysses* (“Proteus”), for instance where Stephen’s breath forms sounds in imitation of the sea. *Finnegans Wake*, a work ideally to be read aloud and thus enacted with the reader’s body, obviously takes that element further again.<sup>58</sup>

**Vivisection** “Vivisection” understood as the awareness of what happens inside the body when reading or performing a work is thus part of the strategies in art to involve the viewer. This is already true of Futurism.<sup>59</sup> Moholy-Nagy in *Vision in Motion* in the 1940s explained Joyce in terms of vivisection, where inside and outside are visible simultaneously.<sup>60</sup> In an art-historical context, vivisection has – problematically – been used to establish correspondences between Joyce and Cubism.<sup>61</sup> More generally, Mieke Bal has suggested that “Opening bodies is [...] the very project of painting.”<sup>62</sup> In more concrete, motif-related ways, Paul Thek

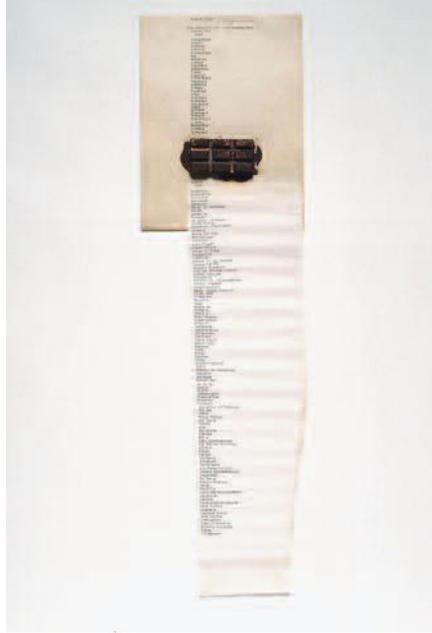
5.2 →

and Damien Hirst are the prototypical vivisectionists among contemporary artists, with respective creations of synthetic *Meat Pieces* and formaldehyde-preserved animals, cut in half. While Thek may very well have had an interest in Joyce, Cecilia Sjöholm mentions Hirst in relation to Lacan's work on the writer.<sup>63</sup> The Catholic artist Hirst himself, however, declines any connection. He reportedly "has not done as of yet any art inspired by James Joyce".<sup>64</sup> I would not be so sure.<sup>65</sup>

Kathy Prendergast has not only "dissected" anthropomorphic landscapes in her *Body Map Series*, but she exhibited her *Sundial Piece*, 1982, at the Joyce centenary exhibition at the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin in 1982. It featured a torso painted onto glass which cast shadows underneath. Several elements come together in the *Body Maps*: Tim Finnegan in Dublin's cityscape becomes the reclining woman, alias Molly Bloom and *gaea tellus*, whose body's epic *Ulysses* largely is. The *Sundial* work simultaneously acknowledges the gnomon (sundial) of *Dubliners*, as well as the single day on which *Ulysses* is set. While retaining a broader universality, the work can be seen to tackle specifically Joycean themes.<sup>66</sup> Prendergast has also reacted to Joyce's (specifically *Finnegans Wake's*) circularity of bodily productions or "discharge" in *The End and the Beginning*, 1996.<sup>101</sup> Around a wooden spool are laid knotted-together hairs from three generations of her family. Anna Livia's "tresses" aptly complete life's cycle.

One can conclude that vivisection is a term that can refer to a variety of artistic strategies as applied by Joyce and visual artists after him. Joseph Beuys may well have developed the most elaborate Joyce- and language-related vocabulary of "inside" views in his (*Ulysses-Extension*) drawings. He possibly understood this as an interior monologue in response to the materiality of Joyce's oeuvre. The varying and even contradictory applications by artists of Joycean terms do not (usually) point to more or less valid works on the writer. They rather testify to the adaptability and resourcefulness of both Joyce and current art practice.

**Transubstantiation** Metamorphosis, flux, the change in a material's state, particularly in relation to (Beuys' use of) fat: several aspects of the Joyce-inspired use of artistic materials have been encountered, where the topic of transubstantiation arises. Stephen Dedalus' fear of the chemical workings of the holy communion give a clear sense of the centrality of such ideas in Joyce's oeuvre and the way in which artists have been able to use it.<sup>67</sup> Joseph Beuys has already been quoted as praising Joyce's mastery in creating living works of art and changing the universe.<sup>43</sup>



117 **Joseph Beuys,**  
**Two Women with**  
**Luminous Bread**  
1966

Both artists were at pains to justify and aggrandize their activity in terms of the Romantic notion of the artist as a God-like creator. The Book of Kells, with its multiple references to life becoming art (sheepskin, organic pigments) and art turning into life (circulation, the living word), suited Joyce and Beuys ideally. Both Catholic artists found similarities between the mystery of the mass and their works that largely employ found materials.<sup>68</sup>

Beuys mentions the sacramental character<sup>69</sup> of his piece *Two Women with Luminous Bread*, 1966, <sup>117</sup> most likely in direct reference to a similar remark by Joyce<sup>70</sup> concerning transubstantiation in his work. In fact, the radiance or luminosity that he singled out for praise in Joyce appears further to translate Stephen Dedalus' translation of Thomas Aquinas' *claritas*.<sup>71</sup> *Two Women with Luminous Bread* consists of a list of Paris Métro stations with "Télégraphe" as the connecting "transmitter" at either end. The work traces a cyclical journey through the "underworld" of Paris, where a bar of chocolate in the centre, painted brown, stands for the host, the "luminous bread" of the title.

Ten years after completion of this piece, Beuys created another related multiple, using this time a Métro map of Paris. Its title is *Initiation Gauloise*. Beuys most likely chose the Latin name for the Celts, as



118 **Marta Minujin,**  
**James Joyce**  
**Tower**  
 1980

opposed to “French initiation”, because Joyce lived in Paris while writing his cyclical night book *Finnegans Wake*, where one travels through the dark for most of the journey. While there are certainly other sources of inspiration to be considered – from Walter Benjamin (for the Métro stations) to Marcel Duchamp (for the chocolate) – Joyce looms large. “Volta” (Joyce’s Dublin cinema venture) and “Radiance” are terms among the list of Métro stations. Stephen Dedalus’ chalice-shaped (and thus transubstantiative) geographical positioning in *A Portrait* (P 14) should be recalled, as well as Joyce’s dictum that, with *Work in Progress*, he felt as if he was digging into a mountain, not knowing what he would find.<sup>72</sup>

But who are the two women archaically called *Fräulein*? Biblical models are most promising, especially because of the involvement of something luminous (lamps) (Matthew 25.1-13). *Finnegans Wake*’s washerwomen or any two siblings could be meant, including Joyce’s two halves of Issy and even Shem and Shaun. But the possibility should be entertained that the two women are Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier.<sup>73</sup> This would turn *Ulysses* as a whole into the “luminous bread”: a transformative experience.<sup>74</sup> For both Joyce and Beuys, transformation was as close as one could come to life’s “unshakeable foundations”.<sup>75</sup> “I am interested in transformation,” Beuys declared, ‘trans-

formation is a founding idea: transformation, transubstantiation.”<sup>76</sup>

While Beuys’ “luminous bread” consists of chocolate, Marta Minujin has made suggestively transubstantive use of actual bread in a Joycean context. In 1980, she placed another “Martello tower” beside the one in Sandycove. Hers was covered with wrapped loaves of Downes’s bread.<sup>118</sup> Downes’s cake shop is mentioned in both “Clay” and “Gas from a Burner”. Dorothy Walker has aptly interpreted Minujin’s later distribution of the loaves (they were, it seems, also detached and taken home by eager passers-by) as “a sacramental gesture that could be constructed as a continuation of Buck Mulligan’s incantation ‘Introibo ad altare Dei’ from *Ulysses*”.<sup>77</sup> It remains open as to how uplifting in a religious or a Joycean way – or indeed how sacrilegious – eating the bread felt to the viewers-cum-communicants.

Bread is clearly an apt substance for artistic exploration in the context. Joyce’s and Beuys’ use of soap in their works finds similar motivation,<sup>78</sup> but butter also comes to mind<sup>79</sup> in what is essentially a way for artists to give meaning to the substances that surround us in the world. This is no longer the priest’s responsibility,<sup>80</sup> while theology remains a much-used source of inspiration – often in the oeuvres of artists from a similar Catholic background to Joyce, such as Beuys, Minujin, Patrick Ireland or Balka. Joyce led the way and secularized the notions of transubstantiation and epiphany.

3.1 ←

**Epiphany** This is a related, similarly secularized term, although it approaches the production of art from the perspective of life’s experience, rather than from the artist’s divine capabilities. The stress is not on a changing materiality, as with transubstantiation, but on deeper insights into life (or art) that something simple, usually overlooked (everyday objects, gestures or remarks), can provide. Sudden revelations are nothing new in visual art or literature. There was a rich history for Joyce to draw on.<sup>81</sup> He has Stephen Dedalus explain epiphany in the following way:

[...] we recognize that it is that thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany.<sup>82</sup>

Joyce’s epiphanies as recorded snippets of conversations were illustrated by Darek Ostrowski and have already been mentioned. Other direct illustrations are by Susan Weil and Noel O’Connor,<sup>83</sup> who have both used the green oval leaves on which Stephen Dedalus noted his



119 Susan Weil,  
*Epiphenomenon*  
1992

early literary attempts. Weil's *Epiphenomenon* leaves from 1992 <sup>119</sup> are attached to a string and thus resemble leaves on a branch – a commentary on how a common object (in nature and art) may be revealing.

It is difficult to gauge and quantify epiphany, since it rests in the eyes of the beholders as much as in an artist's intention. Furthermore, Joyce distanced himself from this concept and has Stephen mockingly state in *Ulysses* "horseness is the whatness of allhorse" (U 9.84-85). However, some art historians have attempted to go beyond illustration and locate epiphany in artworks and artistic strategies. Werner Spies has found correspondences in Max Ernst's work,<sup>84</sup> and Antje von Graevenitz has applied epiphany to Matisse's *Chapelle du Rosaire* in Saint-Paul de Vence, as well as to Joseph Beuys' oeuvre.<sup>85</sup> To draw conclusions concerning the extent of the influence of Joyce's theory from these few incidences of scholarly attention is clearly unsatisfactory.

I would like to argue that an epiphanic mode can be registered two-fold in relation to a work of art. Firstly, an artist experiences a revelation when choosing quotidian material for her or his work and combining or dislocating (or dislocuting) it in order for it to enter the oeuvre. As Umberto Eco has put it, "The epiphany confers upon the thing a value which it did not have before encountering the gaze of the artist. [...] the

epiphany is now the result [or indeed the starting point] of an art that dismantles reality and reshapes it according to new means.”<sup>86</sup> Epiphany is thus part of the artistic strategy of selection.

Secondly – and arising from the first case – epiphany rests in the beholder. It is thus non-didactic. It can occur wherever artists seek the viewer’s activity, provide materials and tools, often accumulating mundane objects, in order to facilitate the possibility of the viewers engaging with their open works and reaching a deeper insight. It may be interesting to note that these two modes are combined in showing the work, in assembling an exhibition and in offering it to the viewers (installing an installation, delivering a performance). Indeed, Fritz Senn has, as previously mentioned concerning the “Joyce in Art” exhibition, translated the Greek word *epiphanein* as “to hold up on show”.<sup>87</sup>

To note that most non-didactic art can be epiphanic may, however, be too vague an approach. This could in the context of this study merely register the fact that Joyce was in tune with artistic production in general and found a new term for a vital aspect of it – however critically he viewed it later. I thus initially need to take a rather narrow approach and look at the rare instances where the word epiphany appears in artworks’ titles. Again, two approaches can be isolated: white (and black), largely abstract work that appears to present a predominantly formalist but viewer-activating “heightened whatness”, and quotidian epiphanic moments that emulate life and which you may come upon “by chance”.

**White (and Black)** Epiphany is open and perceptual. A work that acquires epiphanic potential can most clearly do so if it follows the metaphors of light usually applied to insights. Monochrome white paintings have thus more than once been seen as the ideal bearers of the title “epiphany”. Gerhard Hoehme’s *James Joyce Epiphany*, 1961, <sup>100</sup> is an abstract, Art Informel painting that includes a collaged typewritten list of other works by the artist. Hoehme thus incorporates other paintings in a notional way: as a quasi exhibition.

The painting’s main feature consists of thinly sketched ovals, which cluster together and just miss managing to form letters. Perhaps Hoehme was looking for common denominators of letter shapes – literally “the single word that tells the whole story [...] the simple gesture that reveals a complex set of relationships.”<sup>88</sup> There are also rows of dots in this painting: all tantalizingly close to writing, making viewers aware that there should be something more – something that they then have to add themselves: open works indeed. This was precisely Joyce’s strategy in his

manuscript *Epiphanies*, prompting Morris Beja to focus on these multiple dots, the frequent ellipses.<sup>89</sup> What Beja has said concerning Joyce's *Epiphanies* is also true of Hoehme:

[...] if an artist conveys a sense of perplexity and mystery, he or she may not have failed to communicate. And after all, if the meaning and significance behind an epiphany were readily or logically graspable, the experience of epiphany itself would be redundant.<sup>90</sup>

While mystery and a failure to communicate are what Hoehme does indeed communicate, he does so rather precisely. He was intensively occupied with Joyce, especially *Ulysses*, in the late 1950s and early 60s.<sup>91</sup> Another painting, *Epiphany of Art Informel (Epiphanie des Informel)*, 1977, elaborates on the earlier work, while the title *Blank Quotations (Leerzitate)*, 1966/67 and the design for a 1984 exhibition catalogue with the words "Das offene Bild" (The open work/picture) reveals that Hoehme reflected theoretically on Joyce and openness (Eco and Iser).<sup>92</sup> In the context of Hoehme, another, better-known artist needs to be mentioned, whose epiphanic "white" paintings contain writing and mythological references: Cy Twombly. Tacita Dean has established a connection between Joyce and Twombly.<sup>93</sup>

Werner Schmidt entitled one of his exhibition catalogues *Epiphania*. In it, the clearest reference to Joyce is a snowy, white painting with the title *Schnee fiel über ganz Irland*, after the last page of "The Dead". Indeed, a layer of "snow" – alias Schmidt's hand-made, water-based paint – renders this painting simultaneously materially representative and abstract (with some circular and square scratches). As if that was not sufficient a reference to Joyce, an "Irish green apple" – Schmidt uses rotting apples as constituents for his paints – invisibly underlies the painting.<sup>94</sup> Its biblical but secularized connotations again provide much scope for interpretation or epiphany.

In the 1970s Thomas Chimes created dark portraits of Joyce, Jarry, Duchamp and their contemporaries in an appropriated old-masterly way.<sup>156</sup> In the late 1980s, he turned to white oil on wood paintings with small gradations outlining shapes or portraits and sparse writing – pata-physical (related to Jarry) and Joycean.<sup>95</sup> Donald Kuspit describes Chimes' as "a truly alchemical, gnostic idea of art: the transformation of black coal into luminous diamond".<sup>96</sup> One could also use Joyce's alchemically inspired theories and speak of epiphany. That is what the artist himself seems to hint at when saying:

What lays hidden and mysterious in the [...] portrait panels seems to show forth in the whiteness [...] The white explains nothing but

simply points to the mystery as if to say – there it is. There is something profoundly dark about such mystery, and yet at the same time, full of light.<sup>97</sup>

Ad Reinhardt's abstract Black Paintings, on which he worked from 1960 onwards, contain vertical and horizontal three-part structures (a cross).<sup>98</sup> The paint thus does not swallow the light equally. The paradoxical reflections and transparent effects can turn to a negative image of lightness. Evan R. Firestone has connected Reinhardt's black paintings with Stephen Dedalus' theories on epiphany. He quotes Reinhardt as pursuing "color that gives off light".<sup>99</sup> The artist was also observed (by Thomas B. Hess) as "enjoy[ing] the phrasing of Joyce – young Stephen's trinity of wholeness, radiance and harmony".<sup>100</sup> Although the interviewer did not retain the correct order of these terms, radiance is nevertheless an aspect of Reinhardt's black paintings, one that the artist himself more than likely identified as Joycean. Furthermore, Firestone cites Lucy R. Lippard as someone who has described the experience of viewing these paintings in epiphanic terms. The author can thus conclude "that this aspect of the writer's work may have had some influence on Reinhardt's thinking or at least reinforced it."<sup>101</sup>

3.2 ←

The by now characteristic coincidence of opposites contributes to a Joycean conglomeration of issues and preferences: Kasimir Malevich's *Black Square*, 1915, and its acknowledged spirituality still condition the way we view Reinhardt's late work today, imbuing it (along with its own cross-structures and transparent application of paint) with spirituality. Simultaneously – or rather in an oscillating way – the whatness or quiddity of the object appears and blends with the artist's well-known entirely unromantic, cantankerous personality that found expression in "art jokes" like *A Portend of the Artist as a Yhung Mandala*. The black paintings' dialectics, their sacred profanity and their "full emptiness"<sup>102</sup> again bring Georges Didi-Huberman's argument to the fore. He describes Reinhardt's paintings as neither specific nor mystic, but simply intensive forms:<sup>103</sup> epiphanies for some.

Indeed, the terms harmony and radiance are apt to describe both sides of that oscillating equation: the formal perspective in relation to an artwork and the content-related one that "looks at us" and facilitates the viewer's experience. Joyce's epiphany concept in fact updates his sources by stressing the stages of experience involved in an epiphanic moment. What, following Didi-Huberman's argument, an application to harmony (which seems in some way to encompass wholeness for the present purposes) and radiance can achieve is to establish epiphany as a fragile,



**120 Chapelle du Rosaire, Vence,**  
with works by  
Henri Matisse  
1949-51

fleeting moment that cannot be captured, but must be experienced again and again. This, I suspect, would be in Joyce's interest, because he preferred non-teleological concepts.

Whiteness (and "black light") have been established as possible carriers of epiphanies. This may also be true of white sculpture, most notably George Segal's. He wrote: "My teachers were Baziotès and Tony Smith. Smith discusses James Joyce, noting on the same page, near and far reality, memory of a person; the connection of this approach to that of the movies [...]"<sup>104</sup> Segal has also been asked if his figures signified Everyman: "Everyman? Yes, they are, but I am very perverse and contradictory, because I want the figures to be quite specific to a person who poses. [...] I don't think it's an either/or choice."<sup>105</sup> Not only Joyce's interest in the *coincidentia oppositorum* can be cited to account for this, but also epiphany, since the specific gives rise through its "open" whiteness to insights of a more general kind.<sup>106</sup>

As the last "white" work to be discussed, I would like to go back in time and suggest that Matisse's Vence chapel works, 1949-51,<sup>120</sup> which previously have been linked with Joyce's epiphany term, may indeed be a good example for such an approach in art. Matisse's window drawings cast ever-changing specks of coloured light on to the pallid floor, altar

and white walls of the chapel, which bear nothing but black outlines of saints, the Virgin Mary and angels. The work in the first instance speaks of a religious revelation, which is directly illustrative of the biblical message of Christ as the Light (something that underlies all stained glass in churches).

There is, however, also an artistic message for which the artist may have followed Joyce's path of secularization.<sup>107</sup> Following his *Ulysses* illustrations, there can be no doubt that Matisse knew about the guiding principles of Joyce's work. Despite his illness, Matisse followed current artistic trends and wished to find a way to engage with abstraction, since it was then dominant, while arguing that there was no need for such polarity.<sup>108</sup> The multi-coloured "paintings" that the light draws in the white space can be viewed as Matisse's epiphany. The black, figurative outlines will never be filled with colour in a mimetic way. The "proto-all-over" that Matisse had developed early on in his career comes full circle and forms a "carpet" of light that even "improves upon" Pollock's work, as it moves and changes constantly.<sup>109</sup> Thus Matisse exceeds and secularizes religious messages and works with the white space's "openness".

As in Joyce, the "Catholic faith becomes a most useful analogy [...], since it stresses, in its insistence on the existence of strict mystery, both the limits of reason and the possibility of somehow knowing something".<sup>110</sup> Since the 1960s, the limits of reason have gained the upper hand. The secularization of religious traditions has had to be one of the guiding principles of art. Joyce was among those (with Nietzsche and others) who formulated ways of instrumentalizing this position to benefit art. It is not by chance that Thomas McEvelley has called his exploration of twentieth-century sculpture, *Sculpture in the Age of Doubt*.<sup>111</sup> "Spiritual Traditions" and "Secular Iconographies" are his labels for grouping texts on contemporary art – and Joyce has shown artists one way (or many ways) to move between these two categories.

Following some thoughts on Matisse's glass paintings – and earlier those on inside views and other aspects of a Joycean materiality in art – the diaphane should be discussed briefly, before I can further explore what one can call quotidian epiphanies.

**The Diaphane** While Joyce can be said to have developed the diaphane as an ideal state of art in "Proteus", the stained-glass window in Book IV of *Finnegans Wake* provides another instance and possible source for artists' works. But it was seemingly not taken up to a great extent – possibly apart from Matisse.<sup>112</sup> Glass bottles are, however, common to

Michael Rogers' <sup>99</sup> and Danny McCarthy's works on Joyce. <sup>113</sup> <sup>113</sup> Transparent air, water and other materials, such as Balka's pig intestines, show that there is a suggestive selection of art materials to be gleaned from Joyce or linked with the writer. <sup>114</sup>

Joyce's concept of the diaphane is interesting in an art-historical context, because it seems to go against the opacity of the picture plane, which is fundamental to Modernist concepts of art. Quiddity would be another way of referring to this. Although one needs to be careful not to identify Joyce's "adiaphane" ("Proteus") with art-historical opacity, the introduction of the diaphane as a state to be aspired to may have given artist readers of Joyce another confirmation of views that go beyond high Modernism. <sup>115</sup> Quiddity and the diaphane radiance of an epiphany can thus indeed be said to stand for the two oscillating concepts previously encountered. They are both embedded in Joyce's (Stephen's) definition of epiphany, quoted earlier, where he identifies whatness with the soul of an object.

**Quotidian Epiphanies** Epiphanic works have been introduced so far that focus on openness and use white or black (transparent) pigments or glass. Now it is necessary to turn to artists who work in a way that is somewhat closer to Joyce's in that they at least partly select and accumulate their materials, as noted earlier. The ready-made or found object, selected for its suggestive, revealing connotations, can be used in a transubstantive or epiphanic way (by artists and viewers).

Sarat Maharaj has, in the Joycean context of his essay on "Typo-translating", observed that by means of "the Catholic Mass-produced object' [of the ready-made] Duchamp draws us into the interplay at the heart of 'transubstantiation' – a going beyond and a staying put, a sense of transcendence and its inversion."<sup>116</sup> One thus again encounters an oscillating perspective, as well as the double ancestry of Duchamp and Joyce. When it comes to wordplay, the emphasis is no longer on recounting a moment of epiphany, but language itself brings about the epiphany. That conceptual moment has a clear Joycean pedigree and is implicitly viewed as such by Richard Hamilton, Ecke Bonk and Sarat Maharaj. A more conscious link could here be established.

← 3.3

Hamilton's work *Epiphany* from 1963 – and again (larger) 1987-89 <sup>98</sup> – refers directly to Joyce's explanation of epiphany in *Stephen Hero* as "a sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (SH 188). "Slip it to me" possesses that certain vulgarity – or a blasphemous reference to

Holy Communion – albeit both in a way that defies logical clarity. This is also true of the form of the large advertising sign, while still referring to Leopold Bloom’s profession. Nothing is advertised. Instead, the sign’s orange and blue colour combination recalls Duchamp’s *Fluttering Hearts*, 1936.<sup>117</sup> References thus abound, without the work fitting into any category: a good prerequisite for an epiphanic work.

Metaphors of light continue to play a role in works that hope to bring about epiphanies in their viewers. If Hamilton’s sign can be interpreted as a sun disc, or indeed “luminous bread”, Joseph Beuys’ *Capri Battery* from 1985 is another such “enlightening” work. Beuys bought a light fitting in Italy that can be directly plugged into a socket. This he combined with two further “ready-made” items: a yellow light bulb and a lemon that is plugged in. Citric acid between metal can produce small quantities of electricity. The bulb, however, will not light up without the viewers’ intellectual participation, i.e. imagination.

Claes Oldenburg, in his soft objects and furnishings (for example, *Ghost Toilet*, 1966) and later with large-scale objects in public spaces (in collaboration with Coosje van Bruggen), presents a view of reality that is close to an epiphanic condition, where objects have their own say. They appear estranged from normal, unreflective discourse, and thus reactivate the senses and demonstrate the interconnectedness of subject and object. In this way they change their state and maybe the viewers’.<sup>118</sup> Oldenburg has not issued any statements about Joyce,<sup>119</sup> but it may be part of the empowerment that epiphany brings about in the viewer that such an informed guess can be made. As a member of a circle that included Robert Barnes and other Joyce-enthusiasts, it is hardly possible that he did not know about epiphany. His alter ego Ray Gun’s slogan is “Annihilate – Illuminate”.<sup>120</sup>

Epiphany is a mode of organizing life and art in a way that is potentially charged with meaning. “When a writer [or visual artist] refuses to shape his materials to illustrate ideas or values, he is left with the problem of how art may be ordered at all”.<sup>121</sup> Two ways have been encountered: an elemental one, focusing on the “openness” of monochrome, white canvases, and an accumulative one, providing (quotidian) materials, suggestively combined, to represent the world that can let us experience epiphanies. Joyce’s universality and his bricolage techniques thus require further attention.

**Bricolage?** Artists do not require Joyce as a precursor when working with collage techniques. These were pioneered during Joyce’s lifetime

and general cases have been made for the likelihood that Joyce was inspired in this regard by visual art. But if Cubism was to be the parallel and the grounds on which to base Joyce's collage or *bricolage* techniques, this has already been pointed out as too general and not entirely in keeping with art-historical assessments.<sup>122</sup> However, some further applications to art have been proposed:

Clive Hart has called *Finnegans Wake* 'the most outstanding example of what can be done with object trouvé collage in literature' [... the term *bricolage*, which Margot Norris has introduced into Joyce studies, is applicable:] the parallel is obvious with Pollock's amalgamation of materials in *Full Fathom Five*.<sup>123</sup>

*Bricolage* is perhaps more useful when charting an artistic technique that includes Modernism but also goes back beyond it to the medieval. Umberto Eco has stated that "To me Joyce was the mode where the Middle Ages and the avant-garde meet [...] a paradoxical meeting."<sup>124</sup> This is relevant, because the term *bricolage* stems from Claude Lévi-Strauss' *Le Pensée Sauvage*. Eco continues to comment:

The technique of the inventory is also typical of primitive thought, as explained by Claude Lévi-Strauss in *Le Pensée Sauvage*. The 'Savage Mind' arranges the world according to a taxonomy that builds coherent wholes through the technique of *bricolage* [...]. In listing the artefacts of a past civilization, the medieval mind examines them to see if a different answer might be born from a new combination of pieces. [...] we find it in contemporary art [... But] for Joyce the first inspiration was of medieval origin.<sup>125</sup>

← 1.2 Joyce's disagreement with Wyndham Lewis over Rouen Cathedral<sup>126</sup> can clarify several artists' approaches to their works as mediated by Joyce – and also a way in which not to see the engineer and the *bricoleur*, as situated on opposed poles, as Lévy-Strauss had positioned them. Commenting on *Le Pensée Sauvage*, Derrida sees the engineer as a myth, invented by the *bricoleur*, because nobody could create the totality of one's language or discourse. The engineer and the scientist are also *bricoleurs* in their own way.<sup>127</sup>

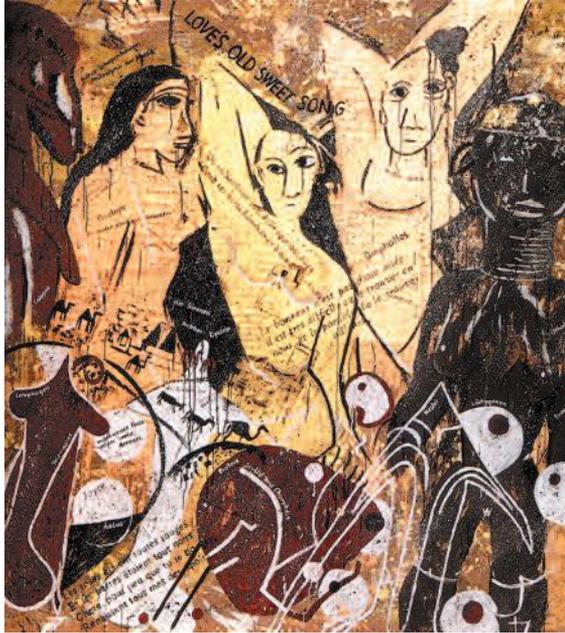
Joyce inspired at least one artist, Joseph Beuys, to a work that is a kind of "scientific *bricolage*" in that he connects the material manifestations of his thoughts and convictions in a phenomenological, traceable way, which nevertheless requires familiarity with his procedures and (biographical) motivations. Harald Szeemann has called this private mythology. This probably comes – and not only in Beuys' imagination – quite close to how Joyce worked before him.

The medieval analogy can serve to make sense of another mode of construction of Joyce-related work: Tony Smith's sculptures *Wandering Rocks*, *Gracehoper* and others are made up of tetrahedrons and octahedrons. Furthermore, Smith often combined parts of other works to create new ones (for instance, *Willi* 1962).<sup>128</sup> This could be seen as a response to Joyce's playfulness, a *bricolage* element. Robert Ballagh used much simpler shapes than Smith – enlarged children's building blocks – for his stage set of a theatre adaptation of parts of *Finnegans Wake* (*The Wake*).<sup>129</sup> The way in which these shapes can be accumulated to larger but similar shapes echoes the correspondence between microcosm and macrocosm and is thus a way to build a universe – that of a cathedral or that of a universalist book like *Finnegans Wake*.

**Universality** Whereas Samuel Beckett is usually associated with an open, elemental approach – for example, white paintings – Joyce is recognized as the universalist par excellence, despite the noted leanings towards the marginalized. He is a major antecedent for artists with a universalist approach, for collectors at heart and those with an interest in the complexities of labyrinths. What Marcel Brion has noted in relation to *Finnegans Wake* in *Our Exagmination* is also true for these artists: “[*Work in Progress* may] appear to us at first sight as chaos. This chaos is the condition necessary for all creation”.<sup>130</sup>

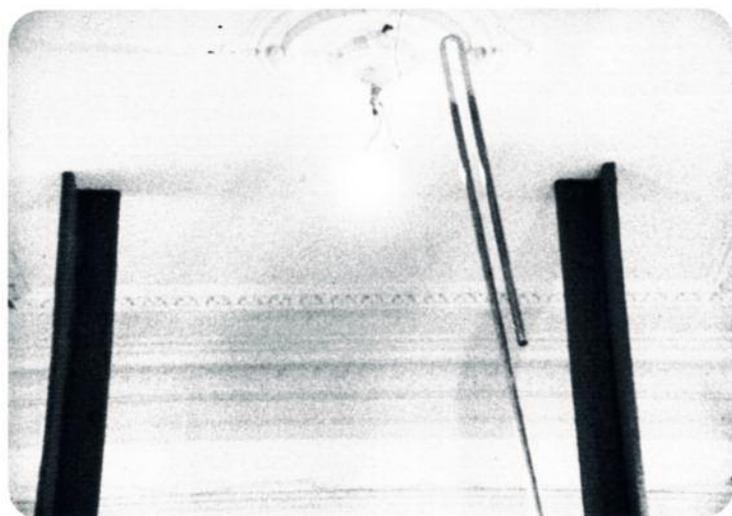
Jess falls into this category. He has created collages brimming with set pieces from reality that originate in an encyclopaedic archive of cut-out pieces yet to be used. Inge Prokot calls her work encyclopaedic painting. Quotations of words and images from a wide variety of sources adorn her canvases. *Love's Old Sweet Song*, 1989,<sup>121</sup> incorporates Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon* as well as African and prehistoric work – beside the (working) titles of *Ulysses'* episodes. *Madam I'm Adam*, 1986, shows geishas in front of an abstract background. It does not come as a surprise that Prokot also juxtaposes similarly minded artists or writers like Joyce and Beuys, creating clusters of inspiration. Beuys' *Hare's Tomb* and many other “store” works could be mentioned again, as well as Dieter Roth's accumulations of “debris”.<sup>131</sup>

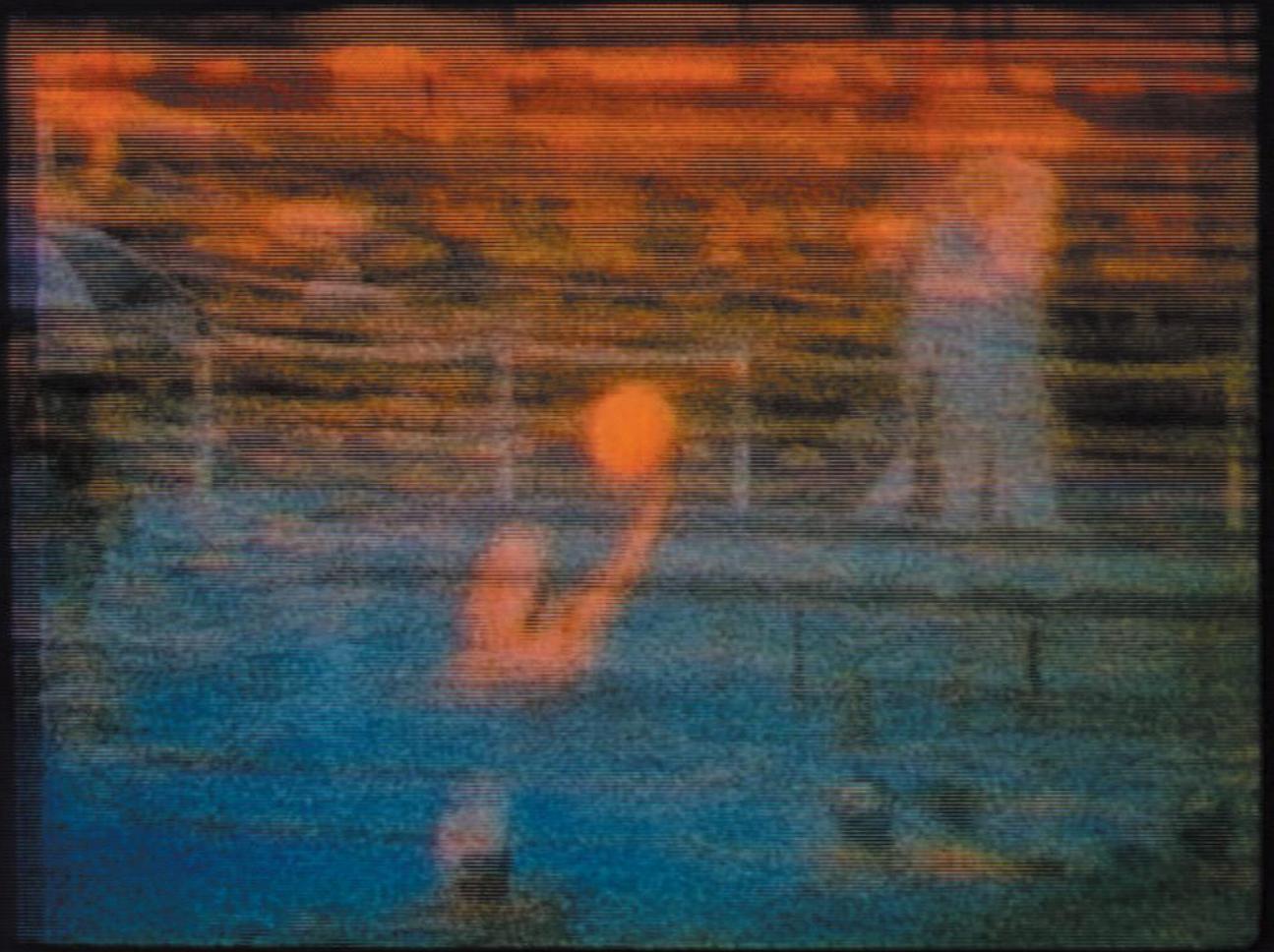
Universality also has a personal side, where the particular becomes generally applicable by means of analogies.<sup>132</sup> For this, Joyce can also be a precedent, as has been noted, based on his autobiographical material, and literature as such is inherently exemplary and universal. Countering complaints “that in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake* Joyce was willing to use any detail at all [French has noted:] But this is precisely the point. If



121 Inge Prokot,  
Love's Old  
Sweet Song  
1989

everything in the world is interrelated, [...] then any detail will serve; there is significance in everything”.<sup>133</sup> If this seems a little too arbitrary, one should remember that a source of inspiration for artists may be particularly useful if it mediates reality to such an extent that whatever one chooses to make use of in visual work can at first glance be perceived to be a particularly pertinent commentary on reality – not on Joyce. Maurice Beebe has formulated: “It is easy to find in Joyce almost anything you may be looking for, including opposites, because he seems to have attempted to accommodate everything. He is at once the most democratic of writers and the most superior.”<sup>134</sup> Artists have found a universe in Joyce, materially intact in its particularity and brimming with epiphanies.





### 4.3 Time, Parallax, Gesture

In order to continue the current exploration in a way that is related to universality – while moving towards the important theme of time – Joyce’s use of parallax and cosmic themes should be investigated as they occur in Joyce-inspired art. Cosmic themes are frequently to be found in art from the 1960s and 70s, when the moon landings could have inspired artists to an enthusiastic reception of technology and progress. Instead, they prompted interest in prehistoric techniques of measuring time and the simplest and most natural indicators of the passing of time. To use ephemeral materials was one strategy – one that has been discussed in the current context – but now cosmic themes, time, gesture and a Joycean choreography need to be assessed. However, I shall first remark briefly on parallax.

4.2 ←

**Parallax** It has been noted that artists employing repetition in a non-serial way could find correspondences in Joyce. This notion of telling things twice, hundreds of pages apart, could be called parallax. Since (universally minded) artists often include leitmotifs, treating their concerns again from a different point of view, it is rather difficult to gauge if such “parallactic” procedures are Joyce-inspired. With the exception of one of Bruce Nauman’s *Dream Passages*, I have not encountered any works that carry the term parallax in their title.<sup>2</sup> A better idea of how artists have indeed used Joyce’s universality and parallactic technique can be gleaned from a statement by Joseph Beuys concerning his *Ulysses-Extension*: he appreciated “Joyce’s encyclopaedic dimension, the element of cosmic references, [...] constellation and radiance.”<sup>3</sup> Parallax is thus an element in Beuys’ work – as in Joyce’s – i.e. not only notionally linked with epiphany (“radiance”), but involving the unity of an oeuvre that is universal or “cosmic” in its ambitions. The visual artist relies on this even more than the writer, owing to the large number of smaller works that are ordinarily viewed in an isolated way.

4.1 ←

**The Cosmos** From the point of view of motifs, Joyce made use of the cosmos as a central and crucial theme – revealing his universal ambitions and his poetics – at the end of *Ulysses* (the two principal protagonists’ star-gazing). This motif has found its way directly into Joyce-inspired art. Richard Hamilton renders the space above the Blooms’ bed as a starry sky in his *The Heaventree of Stars*, 1998. In *Constellation Joyce*, Hannes

122 **Joseph Beuys,**  
**Eurasiastaff**  
1967/68

123 **Ladislav Galeta,**  
**Water Pulu 1869**  
1896, still  
1988

124 Hannes Vogel,  
Constellation  
Joyce  
1991

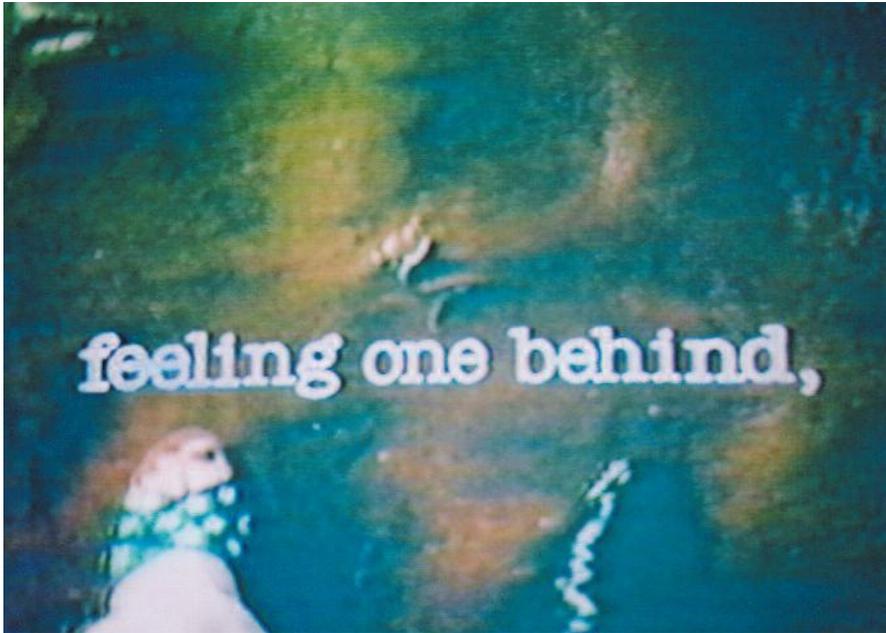


Vogel in 1991 created an alternative starry night over Zurich by highlighting Joyce's favourite restaurants in a bird's eye view of the city. <sup>124</sup> When connecting the points, as Vogel does, they curiously form the letter or constellation "Y", the "trivial" letter from Joyce's name.

Brian King has also focused on *Ulysses'* cosmic aspects in his video *Feeling One Behind*, <sup>125</sup> which was in 1982 exhibited at the Douglas Hyde Gallery and accompanied, among other things, by a small wooden boat painted with a starry sky. In the video, one can see the two feet of the artist, who (otherwise invisible) holds the camera. One foot is meant to be that of a man (wearing a cowboy boot) and the other that of a woman (wearing a sandal). King walks in a large circle on Sandymount strand, at whose centre point is a dead dog, such as Stephen encountered on Bloomsday. Dorothy Walker has aptly observed that

The dog ma[ark]s the peripheral point of an intersecting vertical circle whose diametrically opposite point is the dog-star Sirius directly overhead. The arc of the [second, vertical] circle passes through the two constellations Leo (Leopold) and Vega (Molly) [on a hand-made sky].<sup>4</sup>

King and other artists who were affiliated with land-art, have seemingly understood Joyce as sharing their interest in megalithic culture.



125 **Brian King,**  
**Feeling One**  
**Behind**  
1980

Carola Giedion-Welcker already established that link, suggesting to the writer that he go to see the menhirs at Carnac in Brittany.<sup>5</sup> *Finnegans Wake*'s "museomound" (FW 8.05) with "museyroom" (FW 8.09) must in this context be understood as a passage tomb, and both the cyclical or spiral-shaped structure of the book and *Ulysses*' one day are a related way of measuring a day, a year or other cycles. Conflating ancient and current time frames was indeed one of Joyce's preferred strategies. In her book *Overlay*, which traced these tendencies in art, Lucy R. Lippard does not, however, refer to Joyce.<sup>6</sup>

**Time** Each date painting in On Kawara's *Today Series* <sup>126</sup> was completed on a single day before midnight, starting on 4 January 1966; they use time as a motif – seemingly the only one. That elemental reductionism is, however, open for Joycean interpretation. Before he became a Conceptual artist, On Kawara in the mid-1950s created figurative works that show crowded but unpopulated workshops with much tubing. T. Minemura has interpreted these works as an engagement with Daedalus.<sup>7</sup> From Daedalus to date paintings: this step can in my view be explained with recourse to Joyce.<sup>8</sup> Stephen Dedalus' diary entries in *A Portrait* may indeed point to diary-like paintings. Kawara's *Today*



126 On Kawara,  
 “Today”  
 Series (1966...),  
 7 Feb. 1969  
 1969

*Series* paintings are sometimes accompanied by a short statement (like a caption) about what the day brought (from political events like the Vietnam War to personal occurrences). With each date painting in its handmade cardboard box, Kawara also usually encloses a newspaper or newspaper cutting. The equation of one day = one work is not very far removed from *Ulysses*' concerns.

Films by Ivan Ladislav Galeta all depart from Joyce and his use of time in one way or another – while also showing an underlying engagement with many other artists and thinkers. Indeed, his approach could be called over-determined to the extent of being universal. Galeta fills thick notebooks with quotations and diagrams of alchemical density. One of these notebooks consists of a photocopied and bound Croatian translation of *Ulysses*, the white side of which he used for notes and drawings. Galeta's life-work of eighteen short films on Joyce's book correspond not only to the novel's eighteen episodes, but also to the nineteen letters of “introibo ad altare dei”, whereby the first and last “i” are identical, completing the cycle. In no particular order, Galeta completed seven films between 1971 and 1989, [123](#), [128](#) and a complete set of eighteen films *ENDART* between 1999 and 2004 – in time for the *Joyce in Art* exhibition in June-August 2004 at the RHA in Dublin. The latter series

follows the year in Galeta's garden in mock-didactic style. It is more loosely connected with *Ulysses*; while focusing on ecological concerns, it nevertheless displays some of the compositional finesse of Galeta's earlier work.

Galeta's "Nausicaa" film ("T" from "altare") is *Water Pulu 1869 1896* from 1988.<sup>123</sup> The ball game reflects aptly the tumescence and detumescence of the episode's firework display. The difference is that, in Galeta's film, the camera is focused on the ball to such an extent that it remains as central as possible, while the scenery or universe moves – a soaring, central sun in treble exposure (and no mean feat for Galeta the cameraman). The artist refers to the ballgame that the Aztecs played as a sacrifice to the sun. Thus far, this is understandable and even applicable to Joyce's manipulation of the narrators' perspectives, as well as to the writer's use of similar beliefs for the Humpty Dumpty motif in the *Wake*. László Beke has, also involving Joycean correspondences, compared *Water Pulu* to the tip of an iceberg – or indeed literally to the ball, the head and arms of players in a game of water polo with the struggle taking place below the surface.<sup>9</sup> Timing is of the essence; in Beke's words: "mathematical montage".<sup>10</sup> Galeta achieves exact symmetry, for example in terms of sound (based on Debussy's *La Mer*). The film reaches detumescence, i.e. total calm, at the centre. ALP's watery delta is inverted in time – and her "O" figures appear as the stationary sun in space.<sup>11</sup>

Galeta complements "Sirens" with a film on Waltzes, *WAL(L)ZEN – WEL(L)ZEN*, 1989. He has a piece performed by a pianist played in a normal way, as well as backwards. The recordings – and the corresponding film images of piano-playing hands – are then played in the way they were recorded – and again in inversion. The result, of course, required intricate arranging in turn. *PiRâMidas 1972–84* shows train tracks, filmed from the back of a moving train. Speed and the angle at which the tracks are seen are the constituents that have been manipulated. Galeta worked on this concept for years. It is in fact so simple and so over-determined that the result no longer pleases him.<sup>12</sup> Galeta emerges as a Joycean (more precisely as a *Wakean*), universalist mind dealing with a medium, whose every constituent (most prominently time, but also sound, colour, titles) he has manipulated.

Joseph Beuys – not in film but performance – has also examined time in relation to Joyce. He stated that "in a formal way, I am interested in the prolongation process in Joyce, as it really is a mental form of movement."<sup>13</sup> He gave expression to this view first in his so-called "plays":



127 Joseph Beuys,  
and in us ...  
under us ...  
land under  
1965

*Gioconda III*, 1961, is a “two-second play” and his *1 Second Play* was written in 1963. They are nonsensical typewriter poems that give humorous directions to mythological figures in the spirit of Fluxus.<sup>14</sup> In 1965, Beuys’ “action” *und in uns ... unter uns ... landunter* lasted for 24 hours.<sup>127</sup> Although other Fluxus-related artists were performing for the same length of time at Galerie Parnass, Wuppertal, Beuys seems to have been the only artist to link that duration with Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

Beuys had already chosen six exercise books to contain his *Ulysses-Extension*, most likely to complement and “complete” the 18 episodes to reach 24 and thus correspond to 24 hours. For the 1965 performance, he was perched the entire time on a box. A text on *und in uns ... unter uns ... landunter* includes the word “Joyceregion”.<sup>15</sup> This most likely refers to the box as an island – and to Joyce’s comparatively stationary *Odyssey* on the island of Ireland (the title’s “land under [water]”). The box was covered with a white gnomon-shaped sheet of plastic that he later turned into part of an artwork. Beuys’ head hovered over a “glacier” of fat: reminders of the fact that Beuys saw Joyce as “hibernian” and thus “wintry”. Moreover, the compression of materials previously noted now seems to be partly motivated by Joyce’s treatment of time, its compression and prolongation.

The duration of the “action” was quite strenuous for an artist not in the best of his health after multiple war injuries. In fact, Thomas McEvilley links the work with body art from that time, in which artists subjected themselves to great suffering in their attempts to “heal” society.<sup>16</sup> Perched on his box, Beuys literally reached behind him to previous works that he had distributed on the floor – and that were thus “in flux”, floating on the imaginary water around the box as “island”. Similarly, Joyce’s island-bound *Ulysses* alluded to traditions, of which the *Odyssey* is the most prominent. Otherwise, nothing much happens. This is another possible parallel to Joyce, because the writer conceded that this was also the case in the first hour of reading *Ulysses*.<sup>17</sup>

If the *Odyssey*’s decades last for a day in Dublin, Beuys, in his 24-hour “action”, had occasion to hark back to Joyce’s manipulation of narrated time.<sup>18</sup> Fritz Senn has elaborated on Joyce’s technique of sequential close-up: Joyce, “just like the new film-makers, was fascinated by how movement evolves in time, how we come to perceive it, and how in artificial creations we can manipulate it.”<sup>19</sup> *Nebeneinander* enriches, even turns into, *Nacheinander* in much contemporary (performance and lens-based) art.<sup>20</sup> I agree with Mieke Bal when she states: “We must discard the notion that verbal works are processed sequentially, in time, whereas visual art can be viewed in a single moment [...] signs, indeed, are events, and that we viewers are the subjects who bring about these events.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, according to Umberto Eco, our terminology encourages spatial metaphors to refer to duration, but not the other way around.<sup>22</sup> This factor accommodates visual artists, who must have found it all the more surprising that Joyce (the best example would be “Wandering Rocks”) has come so close to a spatial way of thinking. Many visual artworks on Joyce have focused on this point and base themselves on maps, recreate odysseys in city streets, and so on. They will be introduced under the topic of the city.

4.5 →

Stretching or protracting time through a lack of action – perhaps inspired by the rite of the (Catholic) mass, as can be witnessed in Joyce’s and Beuys’ works – is also characteristic of James Coleman’s projection pieces and other works. This Dublin-based artist has worked with and on narrative conventions. The soundtracks to his meticulously engineered works are incoherent, poetry-like statements that provide the viewer with a unique, memorable experience. Although not quite as over-determined as Galeta’s work (despite multiple layers of references), Coleman’s pieces resonate in the mind and are open in Eco’s sense. The time spent with the work that itself often speaks of time is crucial (for

instance *Initials*, 1993/94). Coleman's intention is to make audiences work – in much the same way that one has to work when reading Joyce. Intricate slide projections differ from film as far as the duration between the stills heightens the feeling of arrested time, passing time and openness. One has to imagine the movement that has occurred from one static scene to the next. Coleman has also protracted and contracted time in video, film or audio loops.

A correspondence with Joyce has already been observed in Coleman's work:

[...] one senses a specifically Irish past, with its long chain of literary antecedents stretching from James Joyce and Samuel Beckett to Celtic roots. As Beckett noted, however, in a 1956 interview, 'The more Joyce knew the more he could [do]. He's tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with impotence, ignorance [...]' James Coleman is on the side of 'omniscience and omnipotence' in his complexity and verbal display; he would also seem closer to Joyce than to Beckett in his optimism, eloquence and voracious curiosity.<sup>23</sup>

The reference to Joyce highlights a further element: Coleman can use narrative conventions without the need to be narratively coherent or mimetic. The manipulation of time plays a major role as a means of estrangement, of drawing attention to the artful construction of the work and requiring viewer participation.<sup>24</sup> Coleman himself has established the link to Joyce – and not just by virtue of his nearly two decade-long residence in Italy. In 1982 he created a work for 7 Eccles Street.<sup>140</sup>

**Gesture** Gesture, the body's movements in time, is naturally crucial to performance art and artists such as Coleman, who freezes gesture in his slide frames.<sup>25</sup> There are examples in Joyce from *Exiles* to "Hades", where a narrow idea of sculptural gesture is ridiculed. David Hayman has explored Joyce's "lifelong interest in what may be called a semiotics of the minimal expressive act".<sup>26</sup> Joyce<sup>27</sup> and Stephen Dedalus early recognized rhythm as a leading constituent of (any) art practice.<sup>28</sup> For Moholy-Nagy, Joyce's rhythmical elements were crucial – and in quite a specifically theatrical way, as his *Light Prop for a Ballet/Light-Space Modulator*, 1923-30, reveals. Rosalind Krauss has viewed this work as "a surrogate person, an actor in technical disguise".<sup>29</sup>

Within actual (non-surrogate) performance practice, Joyce's gestural awareness has also left its traces, and so has his speech as performance. Joseph Beuys was even inspired by concrete Joycean motifs in this regard. In *Handaction/Corneraction*, 1968, he held the "right, open hand

in front of his face in varying ways”.<sup>30</sup> This can be linked to passages in *Finnegans Wake*, parts of which Beuys had underlined:

His handpalm lifted, his handshell cupped, his handsign pointed, his handheart mated, his handaxe risen, his handleaf fallen. Helpsome hand that holemost heals! What is het holy! It gested. [Also:] with knockbrecky kenees and bullfist rings round him and a fallse roude axe-hand (FW 407.23-25; 534.19).

Body angles play a central role in Beuys’ “actions”. He used gesture in a deliberate manner, often repeating sequences several times. In this way, he indicated body angles and sometimes marked them with fat, as in *Eurasiastaff*, 1967-68.<sup>31</sup> <sup>122</sup> *Mainstream*, 1967, even contains a sequence that comes quite close to the “skool and crossbuns” motif in *Finnegans Wake* (FW 308, F2): the artist’s right hand points to the left elbow. Beuys has expressly referred to Joyce’s “choreography”.<sup>32</sup>

Beuys was also most likely aware of this choreographic element in relation to another temporal aspect of Joyce-inspired art: the time that it takes to view sculpture. Tony Smith’s *Wandering Rocks*,<sup>47</sup> for example, choreographs the viewer’s experience and seems directly to reflect Joyce’s early statement that “a work of sculptural art must be surveyed according to its rhythm and this survey is an imaginary movement in space”.<sup>33</sup> Although it is apparent that Joyce himself reflected on viewing time in relation to sculptures and not only on the relationship between reading time and narrated time, where his major innovations lie, not many artists have responded to this link.

More pertinent is another related aspect, one that has been alluded to when dealing with typography: the time that writing takes. Gereon Inger, Jean Willi and On Kawara could be cited. Hanne Darboven’s practice of filling walls with hand-written sheets in diary format and the like has been interpreted with reference to Joyce’s lingualization and textualization of language in *Ulysses*.<sup>34</sup> However, by far the most suggestive and inspiring element for artists working on Joyce and time is his manipulation of it. When in *Our Exagmination*, Marcel Brion writes about “The Idea of Time in the Work of James Joyce”, he states “one of Bloom’s minutes might have filled a library. This is the mystery of the relativity of time.”<sup>35</sup> Contemporary physical and mathematical worldviews in relation to this theme should be explored at a later stage.

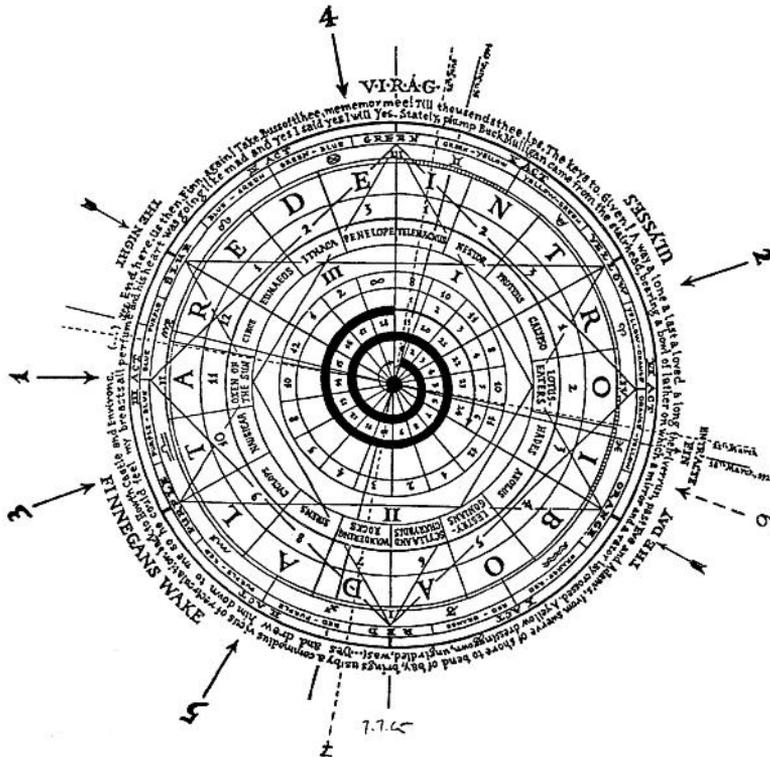
5.3 →

**128 Ladislav Galeta,**  
**Introibo ad altare**  
**dei, schema**  
ca. 1989

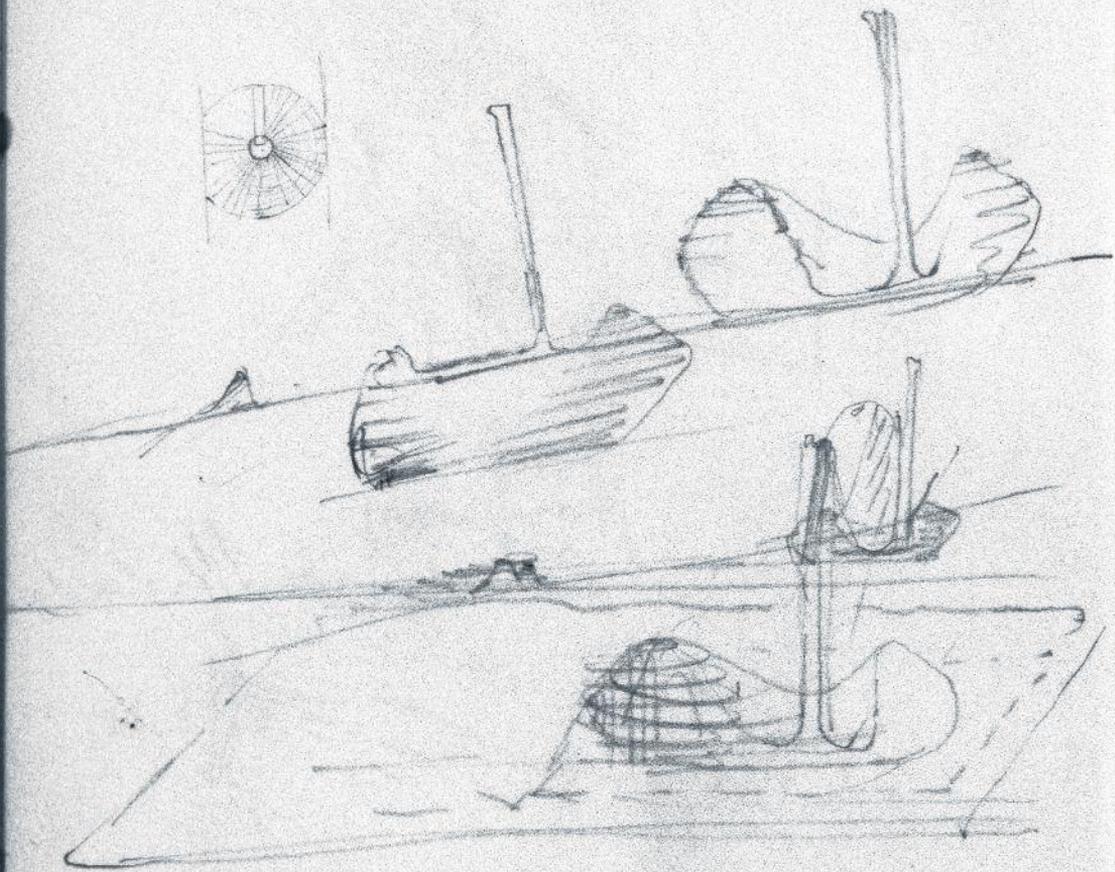
# V. I. R. â. G.

(WORK IN PROGRESS)

- A — (OXEN OF THE SUN) — „sfaira 1985 — 1895” (1971—84)
- R — (CALYPSO) — „DVA VREMENA U JEDNOM PROSTORU” (1976—84)
- T — (NAUSICAA) — „Water Pulu 1869 1896” (1987—88)
- E — (PENELOPE) — „PiRâMidas 1972 — 1984” (1984)
- A — (SIRENS) — „WAL(L)ZEN” (1977—89)
- I — (HADES) — „B.A.C.H.” (u pripremi)
- D — (WANDERING ROCKS) — „St(R)EETs” (u pripremi)



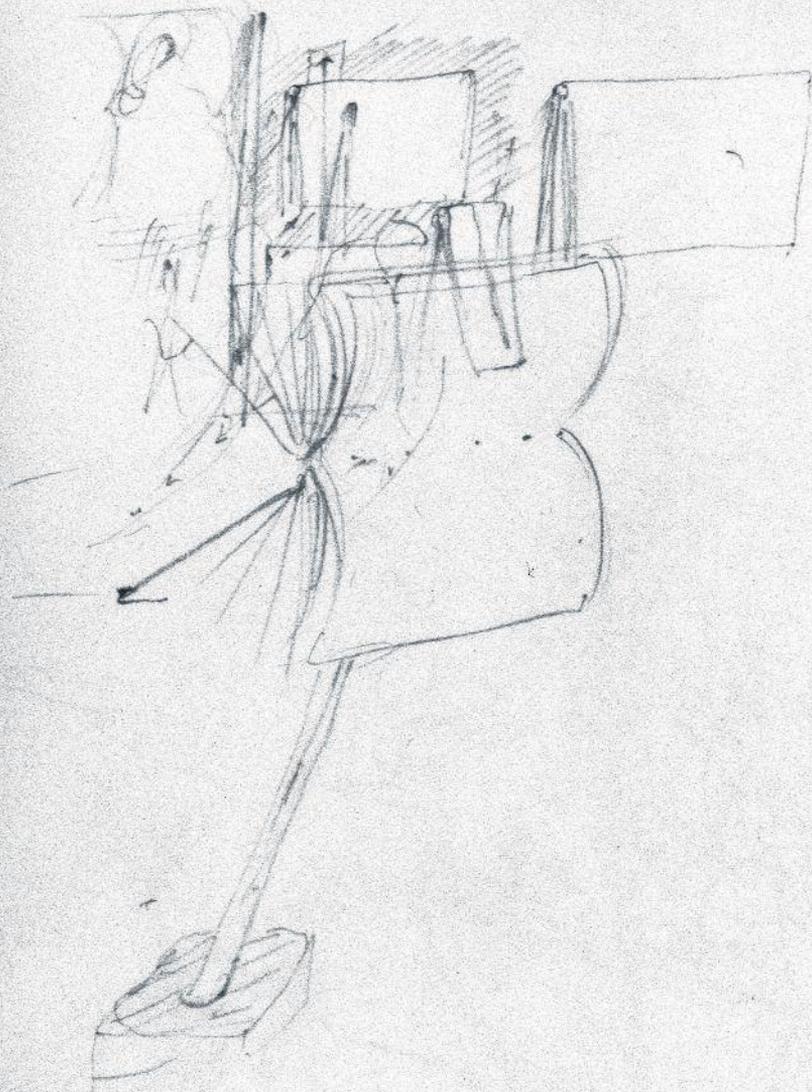




20  
 Auslieferung der 4 Kisten  
 Justizamt  
 Altsitz für



Tisch mit 4 Stühlen  
 rechts





## 4.4 The Book

**Covers** Joyce paid great attention to the material detail and appearance of his volumes. *Ulysses*' characteristic blue-green hue in its first edition (Shakespeare & Company, 1922) answers the colours of both Greece and Zurich, as well as the colour Stephen Dedalus has in mind for his similarly coloured handkerchief, his mother's bile and the sea. It is an intrinsic, interpretable part of the work. Furthermore, Joyce played with bookish conventions (like footnotes in *Finnegans Wake*) and undermined the book as an object by introducing newspaper layout in *Ulysses* ("Aeolus"). With this he reflects printed matter's reproducibility and a mass audience. The artist's book (as the art form has been understood since the 1960s) has followed a similar route, with cheaply produced pamphlets – at least according to artists' intentions, who nevertheless mostly sold their pamphlets in galleries and thus reached (as did Joyce) mainly a culturally initiated audience.

Having said this, many artists have also provided artwork to adorn covers of Joyce's texts and they have even been involved in designing such covers.<sup>1</sup> Most recently, awareness seems to have set in that the cover of *Ulysses* was indeed part of the reader's experience as conditioned by the writer. Richard Hamilton has – in consultation with fellow *typographe sans frontières* Ecke Bonk – chosen to reverse the colours of Joyce's first edition for his *Imaging Ulysses* catalogue, thus following the second edition of *Ulysses*. In his turquoise antique lettering, he substitutes "*Imaging Ulysses*" for "*Ulysses*" and "Richard Hamilton" for "James Joyce". Hamilton/Bonk thus complete the circle in an appropriate homage to Joyce's visual sensitivity.

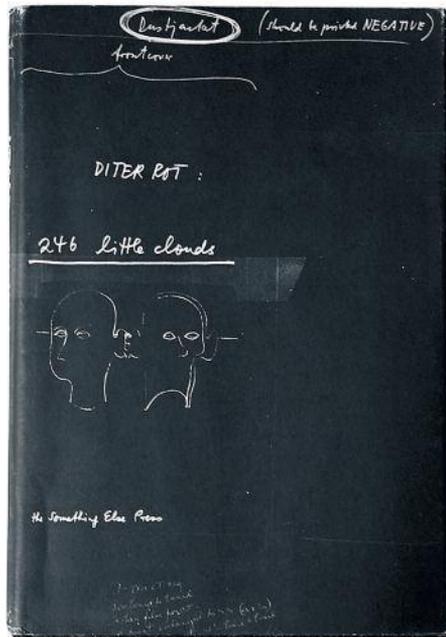
**Artists' Books** The majority of material included in this chapter does not stem from large-scale publication projects,<sup>2</sup> but from artists' own initiative to use the book as the subject or object when reacting to Joyce. Not only did artists from Bazon Brock<sup>3</sup> to Blinky Palermo<sup>4</sup> quote Joyce in their artists' books, a Joycean cluster in the anthology *A Book of the Book* is even more telling: Richard Hamilton writes here about Dieter Roth, whose *246 little clouds*<sup>132</sup> have been mentioned and Jess features with *O!*, a spiral-shaped text that leaves the confines of the "O" at the word "the" and ends on "the VOICE".<sup>5</sup>

Several artists who have designed book objects or artists' books on Joyce have already been mentioned: Mary Reynolds' binding<sup>6</sup> and

**129 Joseph Beuys, untitled installation**  
on window ledge  
ca. 1962

**130 Joseph Beuys, Ulysses Extension,**  
book 3, pp. 74-75  
ca. 1957-61

**131 John Latham, Shaun**  
1958



132 Dieter Roth,  
246 little clouds  
1968

← 2.1

← 4.1, 4.2

Matisse/Macy and Robert Motherwell with their lavish illustrations. Susan Weil, Mimmo Paladino, Gereon Inger, Verena Schindler and Paul Heimbach have created book objects on Joyce, which have been discussed under various topics. They already present a wide range of approaches to the book in Joyce's wake. Susan Weil's square "frames" for *Brideship and Gulls* 26 and cut-out pages in object shape for *The Epiphanies*, 1987, and *Giacomo Joyce*, 1989, are bibliophile gems published by Vincent Fitzgerald. *Sandymount Strand* should also be mentioned in this context, a collaboration between Felim Egan, Seamus Heaney and A. R. Penck with the Kaldewey Press. It is a book of circular shape, bound in green calf leather, which includes some passages from "Proteus". All the participants live on Strand Road, Sandymount and are aware of treading Joycean ground.<sup>6</sup>

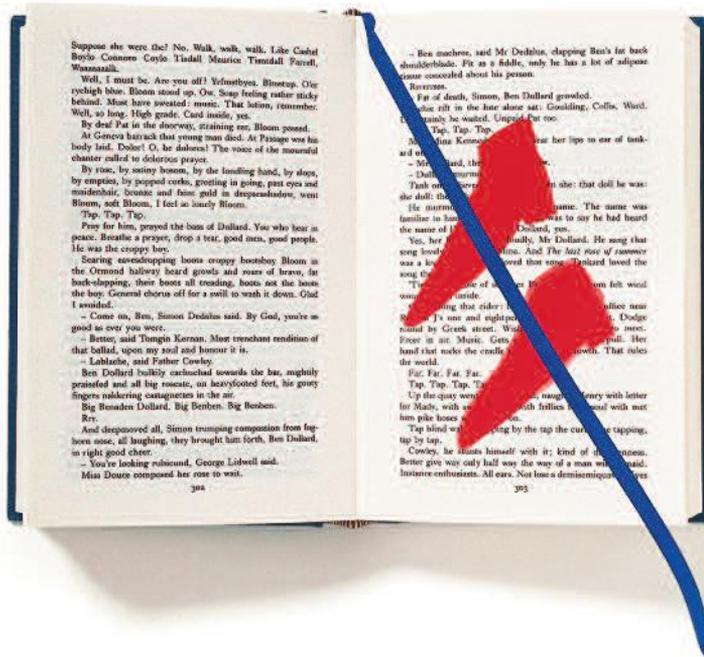
Bibliophile publications in small editions should be distinguished in intention from artists who use a common edition in order to create one-off works or devise new book(-like) works. Both strategies (and others) have, however, been subsumed under the term artist's book. This genre has attracted artists from all styles with very different kinds of messages within the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries.<sup>7</sup> Work on Joyce is no exception. One example is Susan Weil's *Ulysses*



133 Susan Weil,  
*Ulysses relief*  
1990

relief, <sup>133</sup> for which she cut out shapes of various objects (like a bed or a bathtub) and glued them in the appropriate place within the book; they protrude from the pages and create a fan effect. Béatrice Coron's one-off *Joyce: The Dead* is from 2003. In three silhouettes, she portrays the dinner party, a cityscape and a window with Gabriel's and Gretta's outlines. The medium is appropriate in its seasonal and nineteenth-century references.<sup>8</sup>

Mimmo Paladino's approach to various editions and translations of Joyce's work is less mimetic, but "illustrative" of aspects of Joyce's work, most notably the recycling of sources.<sup>9</sup> Paladino uses Joyce's books as material to draw on and to cut reliefs into. One of the images shows golden spectacles (maybe Stephen's or the reader's glasses), another one shoes.<sup>134</sup> These may be Stephen's (Buck Mulligan's) boots or Bloom's, i.e. the wanderer's accessories. The blue ribbon laid across the red shoes becomes Stephen's ashplant or, more likely, the blind stripling's cane, as his taps punctuate the opened page. The visual artist is clearly preoccupied with seeing and not seeing, as well as with the two- and three-dimensional aspects of the book. Paladino cut a triangular space through the pages of the "Circe" episode of a German translation of *Ulysses*. A gold-painted head and a chalice appear inside. *Ulysses* literally turns into

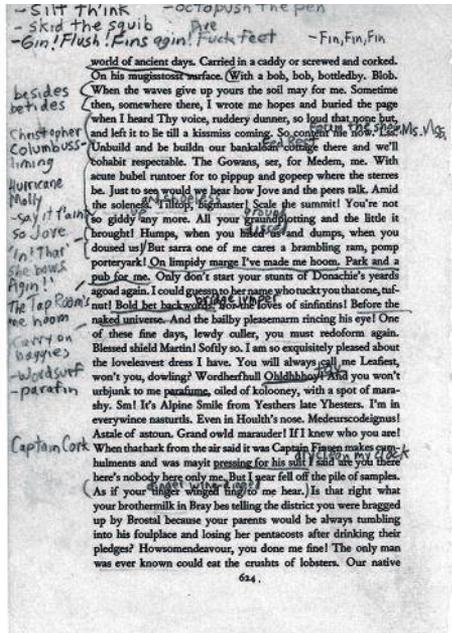


134 Mimmo Paladino, *Ulysses*, book with original drawing, accompanying the edition, No. 16/18 1994

a shrine, since in his oeuvre Paladino has sought to draw attention to and renew the power of myths.<sup>10</sup> He apparently regards Joyce as a like mind and is attracted by his “secrets”.

Gereon Inger’s (already noted) rubber stamps<sup>18</sup> are intended to turn viewers’ or readers’ copies of *Ulysses* (or of any other book) into an unlimited edition of Joycean work. Verena Schindler’s *Ulysses Simultan*<sup>85</sup> is a book object that doubles as a notebook or quotation book of a personal reading (and ambidextrous writing) and an artist’s log of colour variations and moods; hand-bound in navy leather.<sup>11</sup> Paul Heimbach’s small edition or series of *Joy.* sound-books,<sup>115</sup> on the other hand, is an interactive sculpture that retains the shape of a book in order to clarify references and to guide viewers in their participation: they need to turn the pages. Heimbach’s sound-books, complete with amplifier and headphones, let one hear the turning page as rumbling thunder.

One can also encounter the book as a (sculptural) object – again conveying various approaches to Joyce – in the works of Tony Smith, Joseph Beuys and others. Tony Smith owned a first edition of *Ulysses* and (as noted) made a box or had a box made for it. If one knows that Smith usually worked with cardboard maquettes of geometric shapes when assembling his sculptures, the idea that the box introduces that particular



135 Raymond Pettibon, annotations to *Finnegans Wake* not dated

copy of *Ulysses* into Smith’s oeuvre by filling the interior space of one of his “sculptures” does not seem so far-fetched.

Some artists have not only collected bibliophile Joyceana – Jürgen Partenheimer is a prime example<sup>12</sup> – but also appropriated their copies of Joyce’s texts in various ways. This usually (and predictably) takes the shape of explanatory annotations. Tony Smith annotated more than did Robert Motherwell (but not in his first edition). Raymond Pettibon<sup>135</sup> and Patrick Ireland<sup>86</sup> are among further annotators.

Joseph Beuys’ annotations are somewhat more complicated to the point of becoming a work.<sup>45</sup> It has been noted in the context of the Peninus-motif that the *Ulysses-Extension* – itself consisting of unusually conventional book objects – reflects the book as an object: in one of the drawings,<sup>130</sup> a book balances on its spine on a pole that is in turn supported by a (sculpture) base. The covers approach one another and render the object as cyclical as its contents – *Finnegans Wake*. Beuys must have shared E.L. Epstein’s interpretation of Shem and Shaun’s materiality in *Finnegans Wake*.

In the physical object which is the individual copy of the book *Finnegans Wake*, ‘Shaun’ is the material of the page and the binding and the ink on the page, and ‘Shem’ is the subvocalic ‘representation’ of the

marks on the page which is the ‘reading’ of the text by the reader. Shaun is an object in space, a book, and Shem is a process in time, a reading.<sup>13</sup>

When considering Joyce’s materiality in such a way, regarding *Finnegans Wake* as a history of the book, as Carol Shloss has rightly proposed,<sup>14</sup> as well as looking at Beuys’ cyclical sculpture / book drawings, it becomes understandable why Joyce is often seen as having questioned the form of the book.<sup>15</sup> Beuys followed this route in the *Ulysses-Extension* drawings – but only for a short time, as he reaffirmed “bookness” soon afterwards.

In 1962, the year following summary completion of this *Ulysses-Extension*, where drawn book objects feature strongly as roofs (Penninus-motifs) and round sun/flower/clock shapes,<sup>16</sup> <sup>130</sup> Beuys displayed on the window ledge of his living and working space his copy of *Ulysses* (in Georg Goyert’s translation and with Carola Giedion-Welcker’s insightful introduction).<sup>129</sup> As part of this installation – together with the mentioned *JOYCE* cardboard sign <sup>41</sup> that is so prominent in *Arena* <sup>46</sup> – *Ulysses* appears as a devotional object, as well as an invitation to interpret Beuys’ work in a Joycean way.

Edward L. Bishop has established that Joyce’s texts’ covers and dust jackets can be telling with regard to an era’s perspective on the writer, just as they condition readers’ responses.<sup>17</sup> In this light, Beuys’ copy of *Ulysses* with its jacket (designed by Max B. Kämpf) deserves some attention – especially since it became part of an artwork. While the back shows Dublin’s O’Connell Street with the Nelson pillar, a scene from what is probably Manhattan takes up the front and spine of the cover. A photograph of Joyce (superimposed over the skyscrapers) towers above the busy street. The design thus tells of Joyce’s universal depiction of everyday life – and it points towards what the young European artist apparently aspired to: a connection with the dominant art world of the day in the United States.

In a way similar to Beuys’ installation but much later, John Cage, in his *Rolyholyover: A Circus*, 1994, included a copy each of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.<sup>18</sup> Viewers had tables, chairs and an enormous chest of drawers at their disposal. The drawers contained many of Cage’s favourite books, all arranged alphabetically. Exhibition viewers were thus encouraged to read Joyce and other authors. The gallery space turned into a library, a reading space. Patrick Ireland, in his *Purgatory* installation, also provided a reading space at the table with the beginning of *Finnegans Wake* on it and the rope-framed letters HCE in front of the viewer.<sup>19</sup>

Following on from the importance of book covers and artists’ uses of

Joyce's books for their annotations, drawings and installations, it will be no surprise that artists have even used the covers of Joyce's works as motifs for their paintings. While this reflects on the writer's canonicity and hints at appropriation techniques, as well as the use of popular culture in artworks on Joyce, it also stresses the prominence of books as both subject and object in Joyce. Julião Sarmento and Heather Ryan Kelley have had covers of the writer's works enter their own oeuvres, both showing on their comparatively large images the books' front covers *en face*. Ryan Kelley's painting of a rather unremarkable, worn paperback copy of *Finnegans Wake*, which bears the price of \$2.95, is a personal exercise in devotion, as much as Beuys' installation was. Much of Ryan Kelley's work reacts directly to or even illustrates the *Wake*. Sarmento's silkscreen print from 2003 reads "Selected Letters of James Joyce / edited by Richard Ellmann".<sup>20</sup> The colour scheme is white and black on green. There is no mention of a publisher. The image is thus a slightly altered representation of what such a cover could have looked like at the time of the book's first publication in 1974. Neutral but nevertheless dated typography and design are one focus of Sarmento's series of prints (Books 1 and 2). In the first instance, however, they display the artist's sources of inspirations and "tools", pointing to his series of paintings on Joyce's correspondence with Nora Barnacle.<sup>21</sup>

5.1 →

5.2 →

John Latham in his oeuvre has combined Joyce-inspired – and thus book-related – aspects with those that are "libroclastic". When he created the book reliefs *Shem* and *Shaun* in 1958,<sup>131, 136</sup> which are his first major book relief works, rather than presenting a portrait, he expressed the brothers' characters by means of materials and the direction of the collaged elements in the work. *Shem's* "artistic" blue-grey and vertical orientation is as clearly decipherable as *Shaun's* monetary gold/silver and the horizontal orientation of postal communication.

Latham's attitude to books was ambivalent: simultaneously, he attacked and preserved them. Similarly, he admired writers such as Joyce and Dostoyevsky, but he was critical of language as a medium of communication and of books as reservoirs of received knowledge.<sup>22</sup>

Correspondences with Joyce's attitude to his sources and literary traditions are immediately discernible. The books that Latham has used for his book reliefs are rendered useless by means of paint and glue – mere reminders of their status and materiality. Books are themselves thus used in an experimental way – as Joyce used language in *Finnegans Wake*. Indeed, Joyce's radicalism and iconoclasm find what one can possibly term corresponding expression in Latham's book-related shock tactics.



136 John Latham,  
Shem and  
Shaun,  
the artist  
1958

← 2.1

These culminated in the burning of books, i.e. of regularly stacked Encyclopaedias: *Skoob Tower Ceremony* (in June 1966 on London's South Bank).<sup>23</sup> Considering the widespread but not verifiable belief that Joyce's books were victims of Nazi book burnings,<sup>24</sup> the message is ambivalent if not read within the context of Latham's theories on time-based event structure. One should relate the strategy to Joyce's "piling up" of similarly inflexible received knowledge in "Ithaca", designed to undermine such thinking.

It is possible to conclude that book works on Joyce are as multifaceted as artists' involvement with book-related matters. Artist's books are not only those (Joyce) books that were owned, annotated, customized, or exhibited by artists. Joyce-inspired artists have created books of bibliophile nature and pamphlets or zines inspired by comics like Roth's *246 little clouds*.<sup>132</sup> Typography and printing have been (re)defined as part of artistic practice in the late twentieth century by Joyce-inspired artists (Ecke Bonk and Richard Hamilton). Books feature as specifically Joycean cyclical and roof-shaped motifs or material components of artworks that either focus on their outer appearance or – more potently – on their Joycean materiality.



A photograph of a curved brick wall. A blue street sign with white text is mounted on the wall, curving with its shape. The sign reads "BACHELORS WANK. 1". There are some dark leaves in the upper left corner of the frame.

**BACHELORS WANK. 1**

...I hate an unlucky man...

CORAL

41



30





## 4.5 The City: Literary Sites as Art Spaces

Joyce deployed the spatial aspects of his work; he treated its physical space, i.e. its materiality, in terms of the shape of letters, its layout and the book itself as an object. This, it has been established, prompted artists to respond by using their own spatial means. Joyce furthermore used and mapped Dublin, its streets and the bay, in what I would interpret as another deliberate move to unite space and time. Artists have also – predictably – been inspired by what can be understood as borrowing from their own visual disciplines, but also as an opening up of these disciplines in the direction of time and the described choreography, i.e. what many artists have aspired to since the 1960s.<sup>1</sup> Such an argument, however, if it is based on a binary opposition of time and space, needs questioning – and Joyce had already undertaken such criticism in ascribing to Stephen Dedalus a contempt of Lessing’s binary theory of the *Nebeneinander* and *Nacheinander*. W.J.T. Mitchell echoes and expands on this criticism.<sup>2</sup> He rightly explains (as Eco quoted earlier) that literature, as the traditionally time-bound discipline, is in many of its vital aspects spatial, because we have no way of referring to time other than the spatial metaphors of “long”, “short”, “before” and “after”, as well as “structure”, “form” and so on.

It would be better to say then that Joyce in *Ulysses* maximizes a reader’s engagement with space (by means of Dublin’s topographic detail and the peripatetic theme), while presenting disjunctive, manipulated time that draws attention to tectonic aspects of the composition, variously described in terms borrowed from visual art as constellation, all-over construction, and so on. Again what is peculiar – and particularly inspiring – about Joyce is that such terms refer to motifs (map, labyrinth, constellations) as well as to formal means of the work’s construction. His motifs and metaphors of the city and the body testify to this. And in especially apt works, they come to be more than motifs or metaphors – namely, ways of thinking and devising art both metaphorically and literally.

Otto Dix and George Grosz recognized Joyce (as did a writer of their generation, Alfred Döblin) as somebody who portrayed the underbelly of post World War I cities with their cripples, pimps and prostitutes. Grosz in fact even preempts the timelessness or simultaneity that a juxtaposition of myth and modernity suggests in *Ulysses*. He comments on his *The Big City* painting from 1916/17:

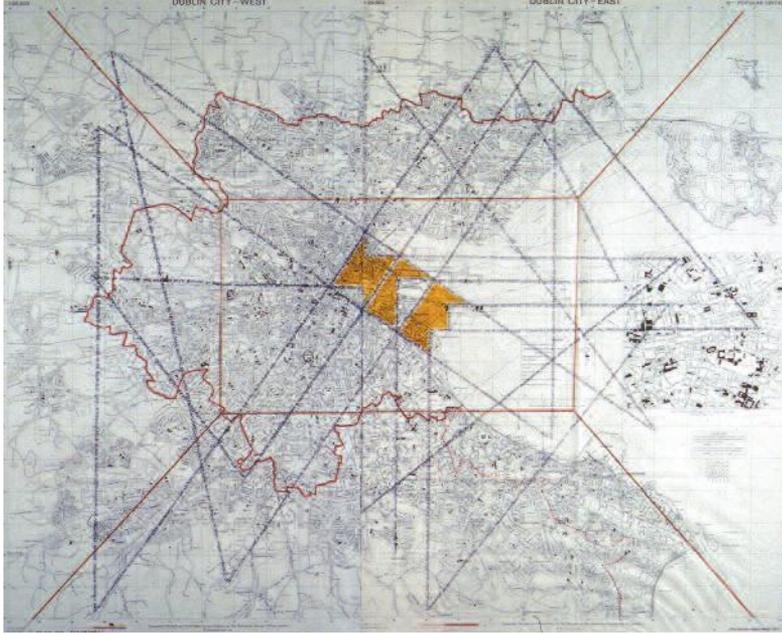
**137 Gary Coyle, Holy Water**  
1991

**138 Sarah Kenny, Downtown**  
detail, 2002

**139 Frances Hegarty, Andrew Stones, For Dublin:**  
Nine manifestations  
in neon of James  
Joyce’s Molly Bloom  
1987

**140 James Coleman, Ulysses Project**  
1982

141 Patrick Ireland,  
Study for  
Purgatory  
1985



Oh sacred simultaneity: streets rushing onto paper; the starry sky circles above [...] women scream in childbirth, whilst knuckledusters and still knife rest peacefully in the [...] pocket of the pimp; the labyrinth of mirrors; the magic street gardens where Circe transforms men into swine.<sup>3</sup>

Otto Dix's *Metropolis (Triptych)* from 1928 can, however, have already responded directly to Joyce – or rather recognized the artist's own preferences in the writer. *Ulysses*, which Dix read in German translation “soon after it appeared in 1927 [...] was an important inspiration”.<sup>4</sup> His appropriation of the secularized triptych format and old-masterly technique, including “various style codes”,<sup>5</sup> would point in Joyce's direction.

**Dublin: Literary Sites as Art Spaces** Following such disjunctive, Modernist work,<sup>6</sup> recent art has been more organic and specific in relation to Joyce's Dublin, while sociological perspectives are still today in evidence. Anthropomorphic landscapes featuring the interior views discussed earlier, as well as universal themes can be found. Maps provide guidance and orientation and are only rarely distorted. Again – this time in relation to Dublin sites – the question arises of whether or not mimeticism is an apt approach to Joyce.



142 **Santiago Calatrava, James Joyce Bridge** 2003

143 **Mary-Ruth Walsh, Body & City Drawings:** The Circle of Willis to Bull Alley, Golden Lane and Bridge Street 2001

When Beuys used the motif of Tim Finnegan supine in Dublin's cityscape and applied it to the Celtic Mountain God Penninus, he showed his rural affiliations. Kathy Prendergast has been mentioned as an artist who combines the (female) body and the landscape in a way that resonates with sources of inspiration from Leviathan to Freud and Joyce,<sup>7</sup> whose context she herself has sought. Prendergast's ongoing series of *City Drawings*, 1994–99, with their fine graphite veins also belong into this context. Santiago Calatrava's *James Joyce Bridge*,<sup>142</sup> which leads up to the Misses Morkan's house on what was once Usher's Island (from "The Dead"), is a suitable structure to be so named. The arches are not only white and can therefore be said to refer to Modernism, but they tilt and thus question a Modernist angularity and solidity. Doing so, they suggest a prostrate eight or infinity sign. This sign for Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* is among other things meant to be understood anthropomorphically, in the manner of the anthropomorphic landscape. The intersection of the two halves of Dublin's map (or Molly's bottom – or the *Wake's* Euclidean diagram) is, simply put, located on the Liffey bridges.

Mary-Ruth Walsh's ongoing series of *Body and City Drawings*, 2002,<sup>143</sup> shows a bird's eye view of Dublin, with blood circulation in various body parts allocated to matching streets.

The correspondence that Joyce established between the body and the built-up environment may be primitive in origin, but he also used it to involve readers. In “Wandering Rocks”, where that kind of circulation reaches a climax, the reader finds herself or himself integrated through self-reference: at roughly the centre of book, in the middle of the day, Bloom reads. In the same 2002 Derry exhibition in which Walsh showed her drawing, Graham Martin exhibited *Mapping Life: The Journey Home – Storm Tossed and Becalmed*, 2002, a hand-made map on which he wrote “Modern Odyssey”. This is accompanied by decidedly contemporary stages of life akin to a Pilgrim’s Progress.

Maps can be found in several artists’ responses to Joyce.<sup>8</sup> At times they are merely evoked, with the aim of conveying the constellations or choreography that Joyce establishes in “Wandering Rocks” and in his compositional technique in general. Choreography in that sense can even be understood literally. John Cage’s *Roaratorio* became a sound/music/dance event with Merce Cunningham’s collaboration.<sup>9</sup> In the original piece, Cage had sound recorded from as many place-names mentioned in *Finnegans Wake* as possible. Their location in the book (rather than in reality) determined their location on the soundtrack. Even more specifically, John Cage stressed and emulated the balancing of components that is usually found in visual compositions. He has commented that *Finnegans Wake*

[...] seems to me like a whole world, rather than part of a world, it is this bringing together of opposites [...] if Joyce mentioned a part of Dublin which was north of the Liffey, he then followed it by mentioning something south of the Liffey. So that it’s like ‘laughtears’ again, but in terms of geography.<sup>10</sup>

Frances Hegarty and Andrew Stones pursued a similar labyrinthine effect to “Wandering Rocks” in their *For Dublin: Nine manifestations in neon of James Joyce’s Molly Bloom*, 23 July–31 October 1997.<sup>139</sup> The pink neon quotations from Molly Bloom’s soliloquy in public spaces around Dublin’s inner city evoke a correspondence between a passage in *Ulysses* and a location in Dublin. Joyce established such links in *Ulysses*, but “Penelope” is perhaps the episode that is least rooted in the city’s fabric, exploring instead Molly’s thoughts. The artists thus avoid mere illustration in the sense of allocating a text to the “proper” site, in the way in which the visually not very successful bronze plaques on inner city Dublin pavements do. The quotations instead comment wittily and critically on the place for which the artists selected them: for example “... itd be much better for the world to be governed by the women in it ...”



144 **Esther Shalev-Gerz, Daedal(us)** detail, 2003

(U 18.1435) on Dublin's City Hall and "... I wouldnt give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning ..." (U 18.1564-65) on Trinity College. Furthermore, the work raises the issue of the female body (stereotypically and in Joyce associated with the horizontal landscape) in the verticality of the male-dominated cityscape, pink neon surrounded by a more sombre tonality.

Hegarty/Stones allude to, rather than resolve, the questions surrounding Joyce's position within feminist theory.<sup>11</sup> There is an anthropomorphic cityscape with a difference. The work for its duration also involved the viewers on their labyrinthine walks through the city: re-collecting previous encounters with the neon signs and connecting them possibly to a reading of *Ulysses*. The paths and the unchanged Dublin streets thus became part of the work.

Esther Shalev-Gerz carried out her *Daedal(us)* project in Dublin's North Inner City, i.e., "Joyce's territory".<sup>144</sup> It could also have been called "D(a)edal(us)", since it involved not only the largely disadvantaged community there and brought a labyrinthine element to the city during November nights in 2003, but also – in doing so – reflected Joyce's mythical treatment of ordinary Dublin citizens. Shalev-Gerz photographed façades and projected their images on others. Since the

inhabitants had to agree to host the projectors in their flats, they were consulted throughout the project and acquired ownership of it. Viewers gained from their local knowledge, making connections between the projected site and where it could be seen – a Joycean kind of labyrinthine dislocation.<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Kosuth devised a piece for the *Joyce in Art* exhibition at the RHA that reflects the eighteen sites of *Ulysses*. Its eighteen blue neon clusters – “The School”, “The Beach” and so on – are distributed on the gallery’s dark grey ceiling, as opposed to the walls that previously bore such signs.<sup>13</sup> <sup>72</sup> In the horizontal, they therefore appear like a constellation of stars literally and simultaneously in and over the streets of Dublin. Just like Joyce did before Kosuth, they thus transpose Dublin sites on to the universal, cosmic level – and vice versa. Within the gallery’s white cube, they point outwards to the real sites like a compass.

Patrick Ireland, in his 1985 *Purgatory* installation <sup>52</sup> – updated for the RHA in 2004, refers to the Dublin city centre location of the exhibition in two accompanying map pieces, <sup>141</sup> where lines of text span the streets, instead of rope within the gallery. This renders the piece interpretable in terms of a labyrinth – in more than one way. The texts on the maps (quotations from Joyce) allude to the compositional intricacy of Joyce’s late work, as well as its interwoven paths within Dublin’s fabric. Both labyrinthine text and ropes simultaneously echo the patterns in the Book of Kells, kept in the building adjacent to that in which the Douglas Hyde Gallery, the first exhibition venue, is located in Trinity College. Ireland may thus also refer to the access to Trinity College that his Catholic environment effectively denied him in his youth (he studied medicine at University College Dublin instead).

Within the history of art, suspended ropes recall Duchamp’s *Mile of String* 1942 staging, which prevented the viewers from getting an unimpeded view of the *First Papers of Surrealism* exhibition in a New York gallery. Ireland’s (as opposed to Duchamp’s) string labyrinth is significant in that it does not only provide the maze, but also the uninterrupted string that will yield orientation: Ariadne’s thread frames the letters HCE, depending on the position of the viewer. Lastly – and similarly to Kosuth – Patrick Ireland as a latter-day Daedalus points to the built-up environment, if not the cosmos, outside the gallery space, linking points on the map that are of Joycean and personal importance.

One place in greater Dublin important to Patrick Ireland is the house on Martello Terrace, Bray, in which he lived in his youth. It is the one next door to where the Joyces once lived and where *A Portrait’s*



148 **Michael Scott,**  
**Geragh,**  
**Sandycove**  
1938

Christmas dinner is set. Patrick Ireland has recalled this emotionally loaded proximity in another rope drawing, *House Call, Martello Terrace*, 1986, installed at the Clocktower, New York. In a black space, a “house”, made up of white ropes, frames three abstract wall paintings in red, blue and violet with a horizontal green “sea” at the bottom. This is not the colour scheme of Dante’s brushes in *A Portrait*, but the colours can evoke a warm and a cold relationship towards the neighbours on either side and a sea view in front.<sup>14</sup>

Although Ireland’s installation concerns a particular site in Bray, the installation in New York’s Clocktower designates this work as one of the many that transplant “Dublin” in pursuit of Joyce’s universal applicability. Let us, however, first turn to Dublin’s literary sites – those linked with Joyce and *Ulysses* – as spaces for art. The writer has employed an imagery of setting with great care. His claustrophobic rooms in *Dubliners* and the beach in *Ulysses* as a site of more liberated thoughts are well chosen. They mirror the mind.

Michael Scott’s Geragh House, Sandycove, 1938,<sup>145</sup> has “Joyce’s” Martello tower as its closest neighbour. Depending on the approach, it dominates the site above the Forty Foot bathing place. “I thought of the house as a series of descending circles, each one wider tha[n] the other



146 Gary Coyle,  
Lovely Water  
No. 2, 1999

[, Scott said.] It's my tribute to the tower and to James Joyce. The port-holes were a symbol of modern architecture at the time which I clung to".<sup>15</sup> Scott also adhered to a Modernist openness on ground level, where pillars (pilotis) support the structure above. That element in Modernist architecture is inspired by Grecian temples, mediated by Le Corbusier's travels in Greece. As an admirer of Joyce, Michael Scott can be said to have built for a modern-day Odysseus an ocean liner beside the omphalos-tower – complete with built-in film-viewing facilities: a combination of site specificity, old and new that Scott rightly perceived as being an homage worthy of the writer.

One of the few Modernist villas in Ireland, Geragh is only a stone's throw from what could have been one of the few truly postmodernist building projects in the country. Daniel Libeskind made a proposal for the redevelopment of Dun Laoghaire, formerly Kingstown, pier. It displays an awareness not only of the history of Irish emigration connected with that pier, but also of the literary site of Sandycove that it would have overlooked.<sup>16</sup>

Gary Coyle has devised his own long-term performance around the Forty Foot bathing place. He is one of those who swim there all year around and (almost) daily. That recurring bathing ritual can stand for



**147 Christo and Jeanne Claude, Walkways of St. Stephen's Green, proposal, 1977**

immersion in holy water, a baptism. *Holy Water* is the title that Coyle gave to a multiple work: a jar that contains water from the Forty Foot, 1991.<sup>17</sup> **137** The title *Holy Water* refers also somewhat ironically to Beuys, whose photograph at the bathing place's urinal adorns the jar. Beuys – creator of a multiple work with Rhine water – was on his Joycean pilgrimage and left “holy water” at the scene, rather than bathing there. Thus, Coyle (as opposed to Beuys) does not follow Stephen's, the hydrophobe artist's, abstinence (the water reminds him of his mother). Coyle is immersed and photographs the waves around him from the unusual perspective of the swimmer. **146** The photographs do not include any land or incidental detail. Nevertheless, they vary greatly with the weather: universally fluid images that profit from the knowledge of their background in Joyce, Beuys and a year-long performance.<sup>18</sup>

Farther into the city of Dublin, Christo and Jeanne Claude proposed to wrap the walkways of St. Stephen's Green, 1977. **147** While a portrait bust of Joyce (by Margaret Fitzgibbon from 1982, opposite Newman House, in which the writer studied) reminds passers-by that this is also Stephen Dedalus' green (P 224), Christo and Jeanne Claude wished to highlight the “holy ground” in other ways. Through temporal obstruction – i.e. wrapping of the walkways – the park would never have been



148 Erkki Soininen,  
Ulysses Project  
2000

the same for Dubliners, redolent with the memory of being treated to a golden “carpet”. One’s every step would have approached the state of a performance. Joyce’s effect on readers is similar in promoting awareness. Not only gallery spaces imbue daily life with a heightened consciousness that enhances modes of interpretation. Literary sites do so too. They are apparently – because of an inclination towards epiphany – particularly suitable for performances or for public artwork.

Erkki Soininen has, as noted, roamed the streets of Dublin in the wake of Joyce’s characters. The pages of *Ulysses* with collaged letter connote Dada techniques, John Cage and Joyce’s own eternal re-writings. He returned some of the pages to the literary scenes, where they have remained since 1990, for instance blending into the “woodwork” of Sweney’s Chemist’s windows.<sup>19</sup> 148

James Coleman’s *Ulysses Project* from 1982<sup>140</sup> takes as its topic 7 Eccles Street, Leopold and Molly Bloom’s fictional home and «castle» (U 13.47). This house was demolished in the same year that the centenary of Joyce’s birth was being celebrated: 1982. James Coleman created a both scathing and subtle, critical and aesthetically pleasing work for this site. On the blocked-up doorway he mounted a garland made of a plant, xeranthemum, which he chose for its ironical meaning: “cheerfulness under

adversity”.<sup>20</sup> He had aptly consulted a dictionary of the “language of flow...” (U II.298). The closed-off door and typical Dublin fanlight take on the appearance of a headstone, such as one finds in a Jewish graveyard, where many tombstones have rounded tops. While the garland remained in situ and was – for all we know – carted away with the rubble, Coleman also had this wreath cast in silver and contributed it to the Douglas Hyde Gallery’s centenary exhibition. The cast’s wall-facing surface was painted green, subtly – “epiphanically” – casting a green reflection on the white gallery wall. With this garland/wreath, Joyce is honoured as a dead Irish hero, who continues to suffer abuse (demolition) while being celebrated. Coleman tells us that Joyce remains “cheerful” at such incongruence – cheerfully absent.<sup>21</sup>

**Photography** “*Ulysses* is used as an exhibit of both modernist hermeticism and the culmination of realism”,<sup>22</sup> Jo-Anne Isaak has noted. Photographs of the literary sites of *Ulysses* would have to belong to the latter category. But no matter how apt the photographic medium is – as one featuring strongly in *Ulysses* itself – one needs to follow Isaak’s argument to see what the implications are of Joyce’s claim that he meant to give so complete a picture of Dublin that the city could be reconstructed using just his text.

[...] for a work so little concerned with description suggests that it is not by way of description that Dublin was intended to be recreated in *Ulysses*. The only way it could be reconstructed would be through some process of distillation, whereby the fragments of the raw materials that composed the work could be extracted and reassembled. Fragmentation is one of the keys to this central aesthetic paradox of certain modernist works, that is, their nonmimetic, yet intensely realistic nature: elements of reality were incorporated into the artistic discourse, actually presented, not represented.<sup>23</sup>

In this way, photographs of Dubliners and Dublin places require something more discursive,<sup>24</sup> disturbing or something that goes beyond mimeticism, in order to turn sites into Joyce-inspired artwork.

Erich Hartmann was a Magnum photographer who came to Dublin in 1964. His approximately 3000 images include Joyce’s birthplace and nearly every corner of Dublin where *Ulysses* is set.<sup>25</sup> Hartmann displays something of a sociological approach that was pioneered before Joyce (by August Sander), but has since been applied to photography that shows a Joycean awareness – for example by Walker Evans. Evans’ *Subway Passengers*, New York 1938, focus on working-class subjects, who are most

often unaware of the lens that bestows universality. The point can be made that Evans learned this approach when reading Joyce and others: “Avant qu’il découvre la photographie, son premier amour fut la littérature et il voulait devenir écrivain. Il lut T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, [and] James Joyce”.<sup>26</sup> Hartmann combines a sociological perspective with formal interests in shadows, light sources, rain and grids like the windows of the Nelson pillar through which he looks down on O’Connell Street as if illustrating the parable of the plums from “Aeolus”. Foregrounding photography’s technical and formal means, however, aptly disturbs the merely mimetic.<sup>27</sup>

Paintings, one suspects, need suffer less from inappropriate mimeticism. However, painters have not always aspired to showing more than the “correct” street corner in Dublin when reacting to Joyce.<sup>28</sup> The issues that were relevant concerning portraiture and illustration should be remembered.<sup>29</sup>

James Hanley was given the wonderful opportunity to react to the interiors of Newman House with the commission of a site-specific painting in three parts in 1992.<sup>30</sup> The well-executed, somewhat expressive paintings remain faithful to *Stephen Hero* and *A Portrait* in providing a document of fictional events – if there can be such a thing – for the unsuspecting Joyce reader, who comes across the Catholic University’s former home without having made that connection. But which reader of Joyce would be unsuspecting when entering that building? To those attending Joyce Summer Schools and the like, the works do not provide more than mimetic illustrations. As such, they reduce rather than enhance one’s own mind’s images at a place that could (without the prescriptive paintings) resonate with past or fictional events and expand the imagination. Similar problems arise with much topographical work that is in the first instance illustrational. Alan E. Cober’s work is just one example.<sup>31</sup>

Moreover, the Georgian scenery of Dublin lends itself far too readily to absorption into a period drama that pays little attention to what Joyce achieved in *Ulysses*. Milton Hebdal’s *Ulysses* images, 1967, constitute such a period drama, placing an emphasis on horse carriages and top hats.<sup>32</sup> It may be a personal preference to favour works that update Joyce; but much gets lost – at the very least Joyce’s controversial nature – if artists do not perceive his works as constituting commentaries on what was then the present. Apart from this, most depictions that purport to be historical are even historically incorrect: the century or century and a half between the erection of Georgian houses in Dublin and Bloomsday

should result in the buildings being somewhat at odds with their inhabitants and the stories told of them. In 1904 it was impoverished tenants who mostly occupied Georgian houses, not the original owners. In *Ulysses*, Georgian Dublin is a shoe that does *not* fit. The further in the past 1904 lies, the more difficult it apparently is to notice such differences. While these idiosyncrasies may go unnoticed in Bloomsday fancy dress frolicking, they should not do so in art – especially art with historical interests.<sup>33</sup> In that regard, Geragh <sup>145</sup> serves one better – or the reminder that Joyce may have stayed away partly to avoid the trappings from taking over and turning *Ulysses* into a period drama.

An updated or timeless Dublin “illustration”, is an apt perception of Madeleine Moore’s *Stephen II* painting, 2002. It shows a simple barstool and an otherwise empty space.<sup>34</sup> Moore refers to pub scenes, the drinking habits of Joyce and his characters in utilitarian establishments. Her painting bears the hallmarks of a new, conceptually founded painterly practice. It also refers with irony to the drinking with which Bloomsday celebrations have become synonymous. Artists in Dublin and elsewhere are among those who enjoy Joycean festivities. Lawrence Weiner told me that while working in Dublin, he went on a Joycean “pilgrimage” as “a rationalization to get drunk”.<sup>35</sup> His work has other rationalizations in relation to Joyce.

5.3 →

The light-hearted, even controversy-seeking approach to Joyce’s Dublin is however possible in art. Sarah Kenny, for an installation (and her research), has used the same popular, pictorial *Ulysses* guide through Dublin by Frank Delaney in which Joseph Beuys recapitulated his Dublin wanderings towards the end of his life.<sup>36</sup> While Beuys frequented many “Joyce pubs” in Dublin, they may have been the wrong ones: the nicely designed and affluent ones that won them their inappropriate title, a publicans’ award advertised on plaques. For her videos, on the other hand, Kenny joins rowdy north inner city Dublin in the early hours of the morning, when much drink has been taken and the language is accordingly descriptive. Kenny, ironically motivated, has “guided” a pre-Bloomsday tour through Monto, the former red-light district immortalized in “Circe”. She has also altered Dublin street signs <sup>138</sup> or devised new ones that include wordplay and notoriety of a Joycean (“Circean”) kind – if slightly updated to what may now be close to as offensive a level of vulgarity as that with which Joyce shocked his contemporaries. For example Parnell Square (where Kenny lives) turns into “Pornell Square”.



149 Irving Petlin,  
**Ulysses: Red**  
1998

**Dublin Elsewhere** As *Ulysses* establishes Dublin's universal character as a city, artists do not need to engage with it when, for their art, they use a location in a Joycean way. They have frequently turned to Joyce's adopted cities, whose experience the writer used to augment Dublin's universal nature in his work. But they have also chosen their own places of origin or residence, underscoring the possibilities for the transfer of experiences made in or with literature to the personal realm.

Guram Tsibakhashvili, a Georgian artist who works with photography, has confessed that he loved the style of Joyce and that he recognized much of what he wrote about Dublin, because the atmosphere was the same as that in Tbilisi.<sup>37</sup> Tsibakhashvili records usually impoverished Georgians in a sociological way. To his images he allocates quotations from *Ulysses* and looks at his home town with the same eyes with which we regard Joyce's Dublin literary sites. Tbilisi has in short become an exhibition. That instant effect of reading *Ulysses* is what underlies an exhibition in book form from 1984: Vienna regarded as an exhibition. Joyce quotations accompany the publication.<sup>38</sup> A similar approach was taken when Joyce's Dublin was introduced to the inhabitants of Barcelona in exhibition and publication format.<sup>39</sup>

Just as Patrick Ireland has worked on his former "neighbour" in Bray



150 Hannes Vogel,  
Dick & Davy  
Zurich, 1990

across the decades, Irving Petlin lives in a Paris apartment above one of Joyce's residences. The entrance and yard that they "share" by virtue of time delay have become the subject of a series of works on Joyce from 1998. *Ulysses: Curtain*, *Ulysses: Bloom in Nighttown* and *Ulysses: Red* <sup>149</sup> claim this Paris house as the proper site of *Ulysses*.<sup>40</sup> Hannes Vogel's Zurich design for *Dick & Davy* <sup>41</sup> <sup>150</sup> has performed the similar service of reclaiming Joyce for the continent on which he lived and worked and without whose contribution Dublin – as mediated by *Ulysses* – would look rather different.

Ian Whittlesea's five black canvases from 2001, <sup>151</sup>, <sup>152</sup> on which in multiple layers of white acrylic paint he has painstakingly painted Joyce's various addresses since leaving Ireland, convey the same message – and more. The title, *Studio*, alludes to an artist's exile in such a working space. The foreign-sounding street names stress that notion of exile, physical and mental: "By reading you're there [...] Anywhere is a place for creation."<sup>42</sup> Whittlesea wishes to highlight the banality of these addresses, which do not appear in *Ulysses* and are not on the ordinary tourist trail. Whittlesea's choice of art-historical points of orientation is also telling. At the 2002 Trieste Joyce conference, he chose a quotation from Ad Reinhardt for the title of his presentation on his *Studio* painting.





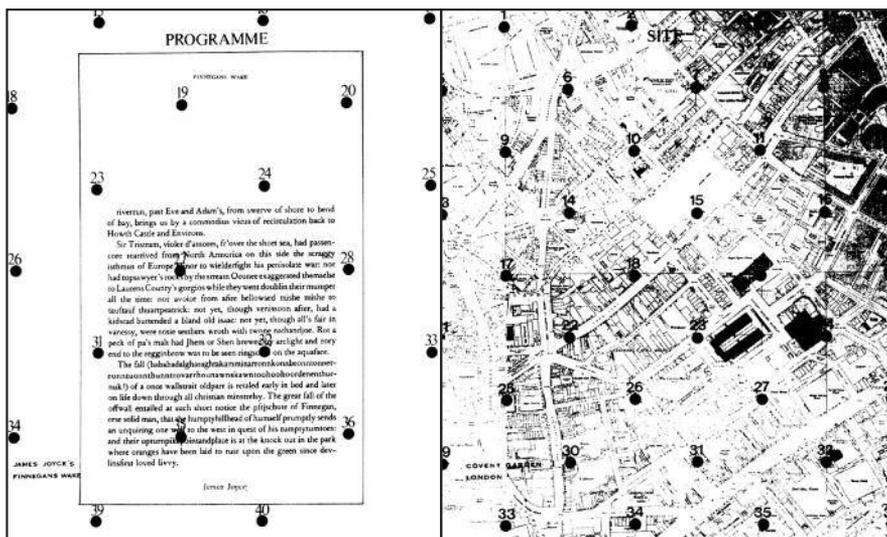
152 Ian Whittlesea,  
Joyce Studio  
Painting  
detail, 2000

temporarily to lose sight of *Finnegans Wake*, merely opposing the site or the project to the grid. Consequently, intermediary designs turn out to be three-dimensional wallpaper or Escher-like constructions, repeating themselves with the frequency of the point grid. The various designs were, however, quoted and thus entered *Joyce's Garden* only selectively and multi-stylistically. Tschumi therefore seems to have been aware of the issues surrounding Joyce and the grid, here noted in relation to Joe Tilson's *Yes* relief.<sup>88</sup> The project eventually leaves the impression of a particular and intricate constructedness that can indeed be compared to the *Wake*.<sup>47</sup>

In calling this text a programme, Tschumi seems to me to allude to the conceptual basis of Joyce's writing. Whether in Dublin or elsewhere, artwork or architecture relating to Joyce – while tackling the subject of site and space – does, in the best instances, take into account such a Joycean notion of (spatial) construction<sup>48</sup> that borrows equally from mazes, constellations and choreography.

**Labyrinths** Tony Smith, as an architect and sculptor – like Tschumi – shows evidence of such an understanding of Joyce. His *Maze*, 1967, quite similar to what he devised in *Yes*,<sup>55</sup>

[...] may refer to another labyrinthine construct: James Joyce's

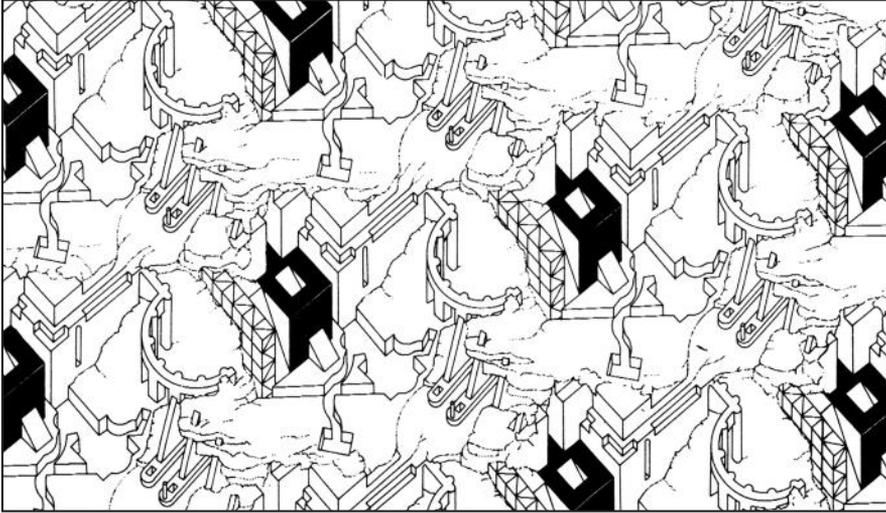


153 Bernard Tschumi, Joyce's Garden, project, details, 1976-77

*Finnegans Wake*. There is a clear affinity between the plan of the maze and a series of drawings of interrelated rectangular elements Smith made in 1964 titled *Yes* and captioned with the initials 'HCE'<sup>49 55</sup>.

The labyrinth has already been encountered in various guises: the blood vessels and entrails of interior views (vivisection), all-over (drip) paintings, and *Ulysses*-Extension drawings with red thread as book markers. Salvatore Bartolomeo thus rightly transposes or collages the young Stephen D(a)edalus (with a cow) into the maze-filled setting of a Baroque garden,<sup>50</sup> while Françoise van Kessel has entered musical notations into a drawn labyrinth. The work with the title *Mélorie mentale ou la Ballade de Finnegans Wake* is a collaboration with the composer Jean-Yves Bosseur. Van Kessel wishes to “generate new itineraries. [...] Time as a factor overthrows the concept of space.”<sup>51</sup> Her partially interactive work, as well as a crossover between artistic genres, pursues “the intricate structures and patterns in different media”.<sup>52</sup> It has been shown that such labyrinths, constellations and constructions are common to a great variety of work inspired by Joyce.

While Joyce has explored space in a more distinct and versatile way than other writers, art inspired by him has partly yielded relatively conservative work concerning Dublin's literary sites, as well as artists' own



“Dublins”. Several artists, however – Kosuth, Ireland, Hegarty & Stones, Whittlesea and maybe Beuys in *Two Women with Luminous Bread* <sup>117</sup> – have used the city, its constellatory maps and its labyrinth of streets to create work, often installations, where a reading in space characteristically and innovatively combines the genres.

5.3 →

