



Andrew Stones *Outside Inside*

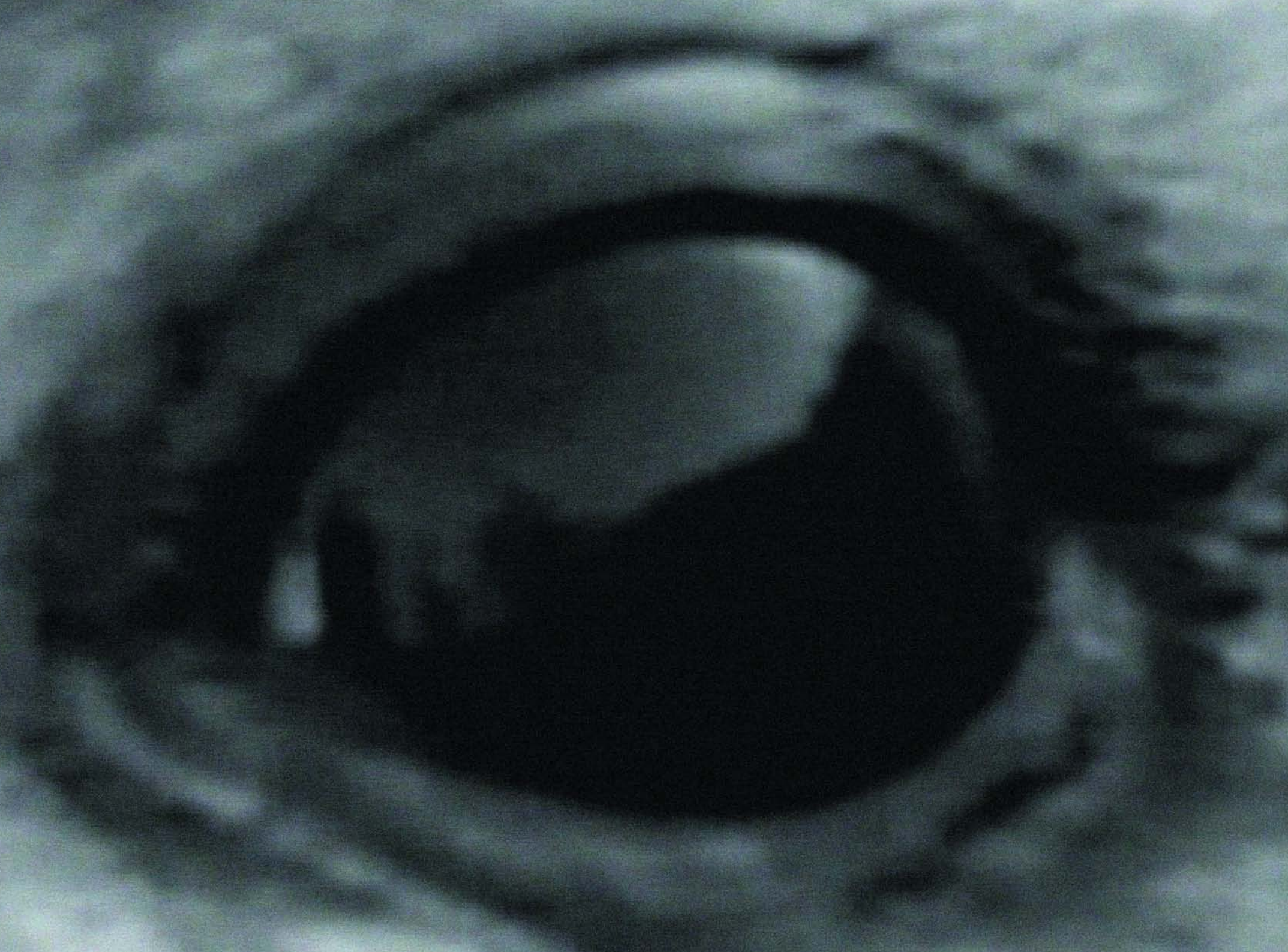


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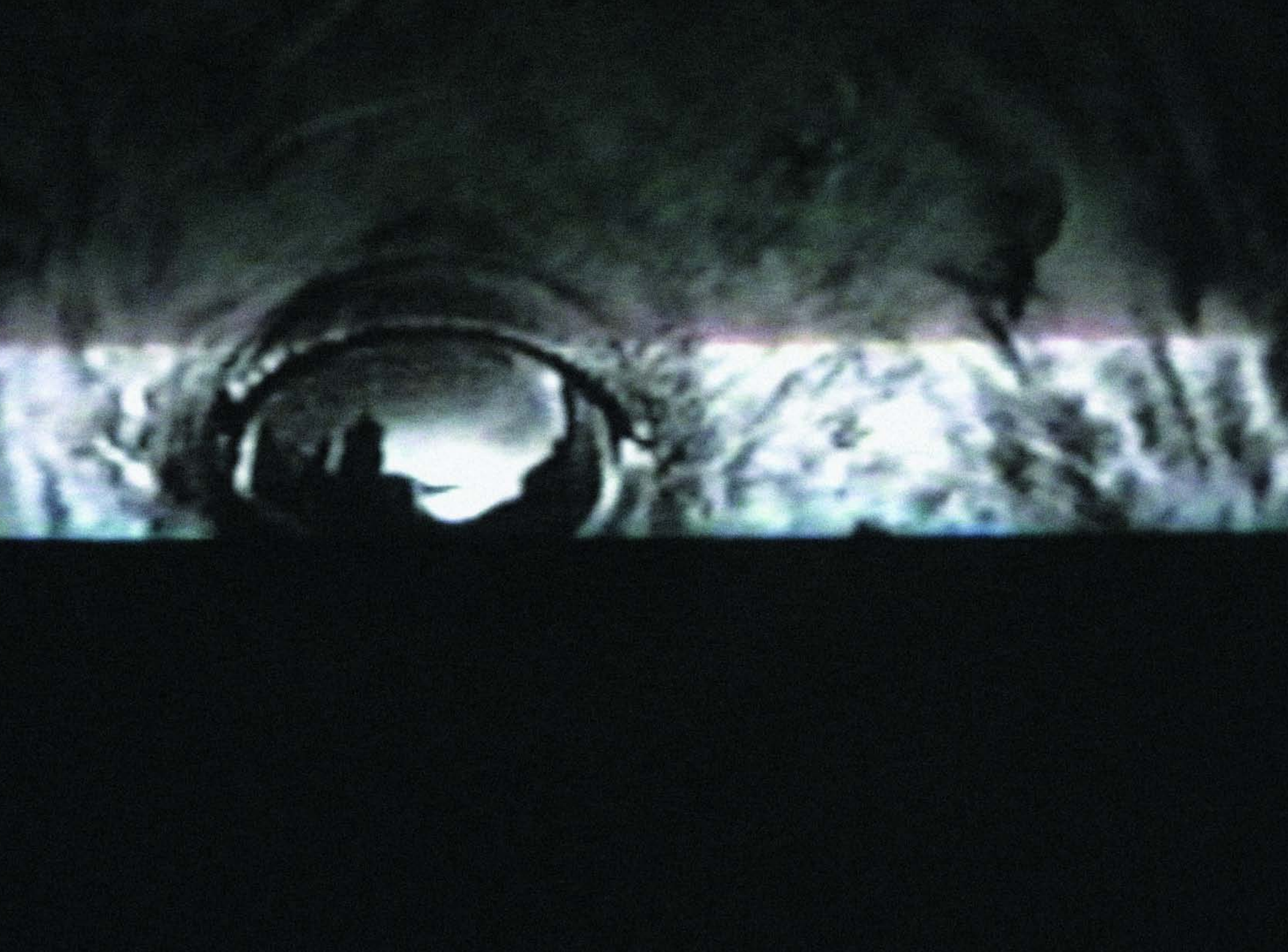


*Salmon Song* 1986

*The Animals on the Island* 1987

Waiting for nightfall. With elasticated cords I have secured the camera (colour, single-tube) onto the ground-level platform which forms the lowest level of my camera barrow (pine, plywood). The monstrous portapack (colour, U-matic) is strapped to the other platform higher up, where its weight imposes maximum strain on my shoulders and back but will not push the double-edged, central wheel too deeply into the sand. The wooden wheel: between long struts protruding out behind the camera, illuminated by two flashlights taped-on higher up the barrow. Half a dozen videotapes (U-matic, 20 mins) collectively the size of an industrial toaster, and spare portapack batteries like lead bricks, are in a rucksack on my back. The whole apparatus weighs about the same as a small microlight, and I hope it might somehow help me to make a work which is like flying along the edge of my country, thinking thoughts about the intricacy and preciousness of life and how it could be hemmed in by the circumstances of nature and nationality. I've been reading about Whitehall, DNA and cosmic origins. When it is dark I leave the house and trundle the huge contraption through the streets of Whitley Bay towards the beach. On several occasions. During the daytime too, when even more people can see me.



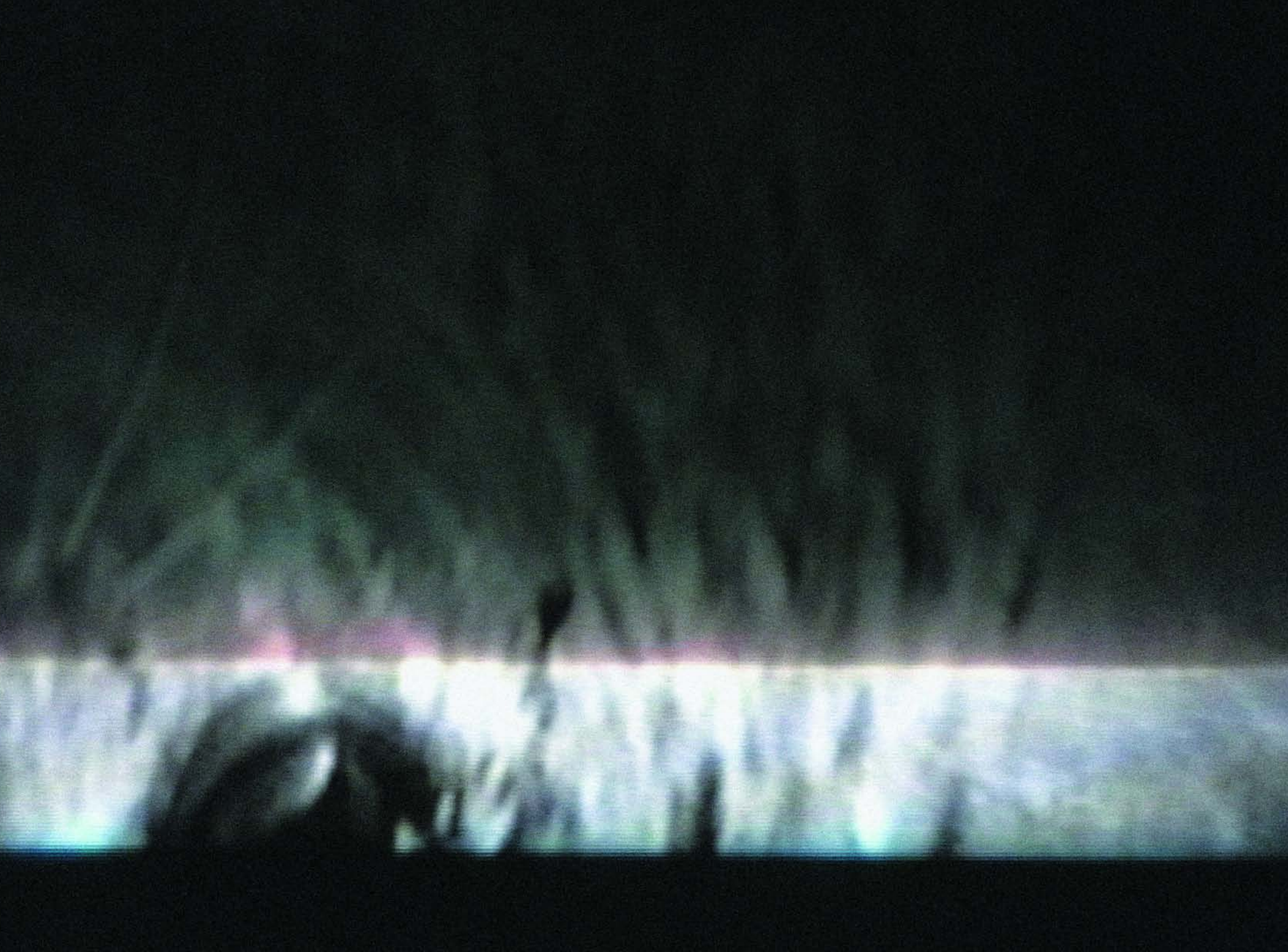




### *Common Knowledge 1989*

The dog in the woods at night. Some dogs run away when you shout at them, others attack, still others stare and pant and dribble, unable to comprehend. The huge video camera (colour, three-tube) has fixed beneath it a crossbar (pine) and a portable halogen inspection light (single 12 volt lamp) powered by a battery belt heavier than diving weights. The customarily massive portapack (colour, U-matic) almost fills the rucksack on my back. Fluorescent blue ropes run from the crossbar under the camera, converging where they are attached to the dog's collar. The idea is to have the dog run along an overgrown path in the pool of light cast by the halogen light, 'pulling' the camera, and hence the point of view, through the woods at night. A wild thing in harness: in my mind it has something to do with radioactivity.

Having arrived at the start of the designated run, plugged everything together and switched everything on, I stand enmeshed in a tangle of cables, straps and bits of rope, bearing the weight of the borrowed video equipment which cost more than my annual income. I urge the dog to trot along the path, "as you do on your normal walks." The dog stares at the light, and puckers her brow. I coax and cajole and begin to shout. The dog salivates, open-mouthed, turning her head rapidly left and right and left... she's eager, but puzzled as to my precise needs. The gear starts to feel heavier. There is some cursing, perhaps from both of us, and eventually the realisation that help is needed. I need someone else running in front of the dog, someone whom the dog prefers to me, who will make the dog believe it can get away from the shouting man.



## *Class 1993*

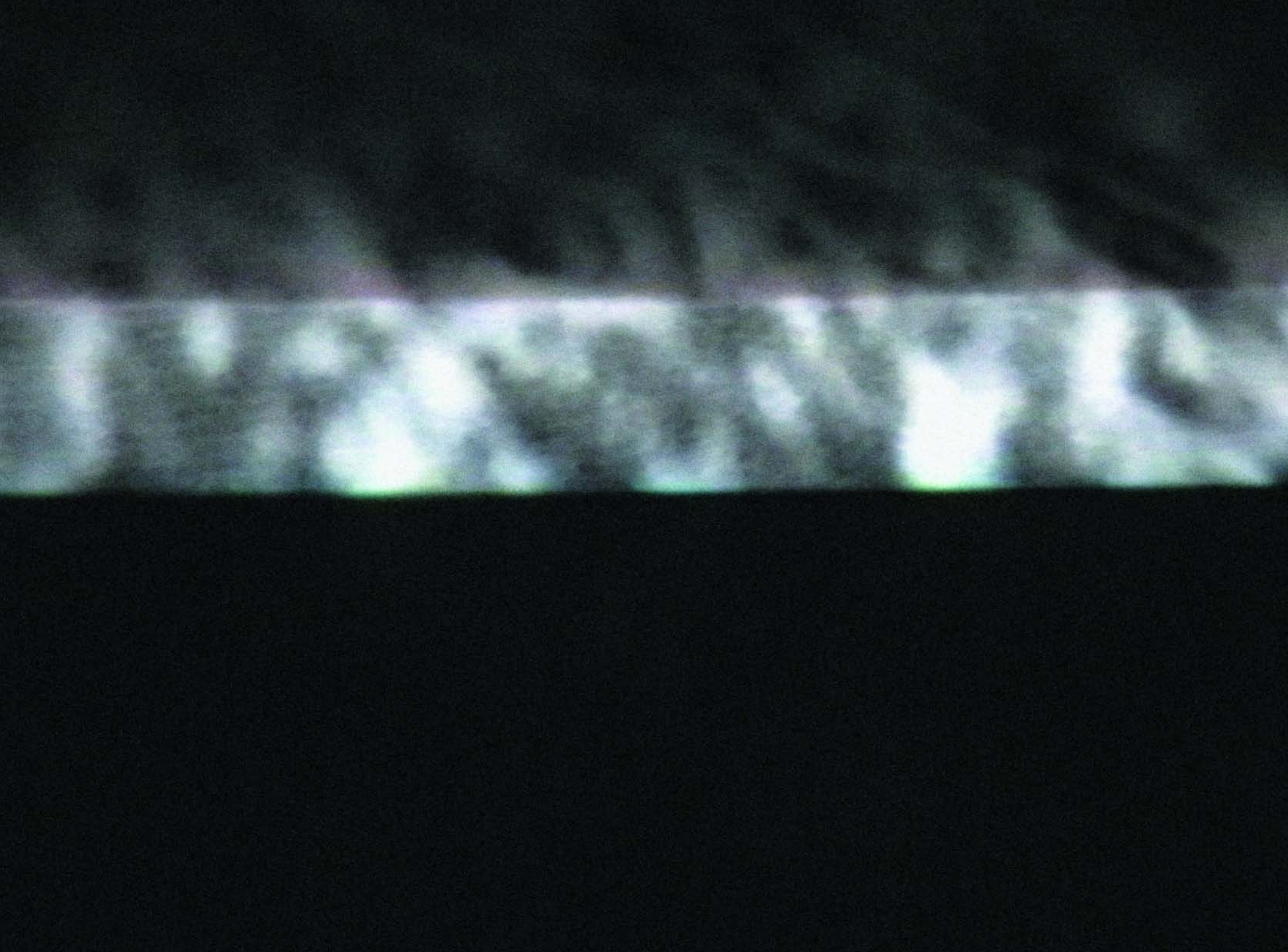
After showing installations in Video Positive a couple of times, I am selected for a show of British video art in Berlin. Unwisely, I elect to mount an installation with multiple video, OHP and slide projection, suspended screens, school desks which are also light-boxes, and specially wired lighting. All the bits are packed into a van in Sheffield and sent off to Germany. I'll have week to install...

The technician at the venue in Berlin is very busy building some sort of chair for Marina Abramovic. It is clear that most of my stuff is missing, and he finds out that it is probably scattered in various depots across Europe. I'll have to wait, and in the meantime do what I can with the few bits which have arrived. Berlin is in the very early stages of reunification, and it would be fascinating to go out and see some of it. I spend a lot of time underground on the U-Bahn between my hotel and the exhibition venue, where I have to wait every day in case more of my installation turns up. It is suggested that I visit DIY stores to price the items I will need if nothing more arrives, and I get a nice folding ruler from Bauhaus. With two or three days to go to the opening, someone comes to fetch me from the cold cavern of my exhibition space. They take me across a courtyard to a garage where, it seems, my entire installation has been waiting for over a week: "no-one knew it was in here..."

Critical feedback from the show:

- a) "you are the Mayakovski of video art" - Yugoslavian artist;
- b) "you tried to do too much" - a director of the event which didn't know it had received my work until two days before the opening.







### 1990s Man With A Camcorder (Hi8, colour, single chip)

To cheer myself up during a period of having not much money and no commissions I decide to cycle from Spurn Point to Flamborough Head in foul weather, camcorder packed in intricate plastic wrappings. So, on a weird campsite on England's east coast my tent is lashed by rain and gales, with myself and the bicycle and the camcorder inside. The following day I'm chased on a bleak Lincolnshire road by a vengeful alsatian which takes advantage of my sluggish, overladen progress. I shout and pedal desperately, and the dog gives up.

A day later, on the final stretch approaching Flamborough, the head-wind is so strong that I think I'm going to die. I treat myself to a Bed and Breakfast where every cranny smells of bacon, and I can't find a power socket to charge up the camcorder batteries. That night, on my own in a pub down the road, I try surreptitiously to plug in the charger under the seat, but I give up because I look too shifty...

I've been allowed to shoot in the old coastguard look-out at Spurn Point. In the top of Flamborough Head lighthouse the keeper has pushed around the huge, faceted lens by hand so that I can make a series of tracking camera sequences: England fragmented in the glass. In a couple of years' time the coastguard shots will form the introduction to *Colonial Difficulties*, which is well received at the World Wide Video Festival in Holland. Lovely though the lighthouse sequences are, it becomes difficult to use them when an artist is shortlisted for the Turner Prize with a film shot in a lighthouse. By 2001 all my Hi8 tapes from this period have deteriorated too much to ever be used, and after taking the camcorder to pieces a couple of times it stops working properly.



## *Victorian Car Chase* 1995-2003

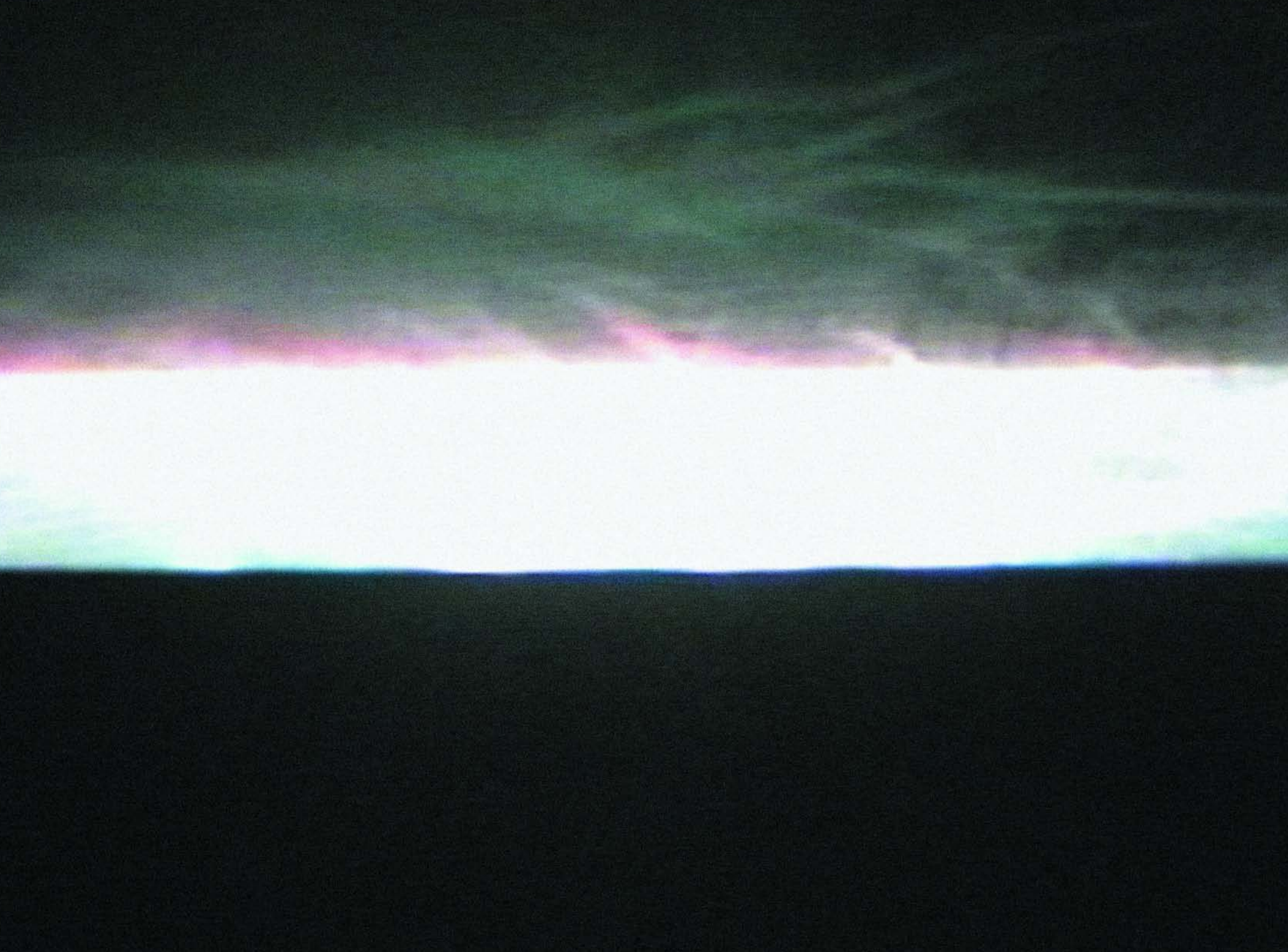
It starts with an old Sherlock Holmes film. Holmes is trying to identify a pitch which will kill a housefly. He twangs out patterns on the violin as a fly buzzes around the apartment. Something about this self-contained performance/experiment grabs my attention and I copy this part of the soundtrack from my recording of the film (VHS to DAT). I transfer it to my first computer (40/66MHz, integral audio/video inputs) and in digital form cut it up and combine it with various other recordings from British radio and TV (two separate hard disk audio applications). Is this process telling me anything interesting about Englishness?

I realise that the sound of the fly on the original film soundtrack is too feeble to hear properly, and that I should replace it with one of my own recordings (DAT) of a wasp in a jar. A year or so has passed, and I begin to lose interest in Holmes's experiment, but I still like the idea of the persistent fly, and the words of another film character arouse my interest. She apologises that her family has 'no history' meaning that, being of lowly birth, Holmes may not think her worthy of his help. The rejuvenated fly stays in. Ida Lupino - on her way from Brixton to Hollywood - joins it, along with David Dimbleby and Dixon of Dock Green.

More time passes and my first computer seems too slow. It's replaced (250 MHz) and I become fed up with my existing audio software and change that too, for something really complicated and time-consuming to use (new sound card needed). All my multitrack audio work has to be copied one track at a time and reassembled under the new software. Months later, a short audio piece called *Westminster Holmes* is nearly finished when my family and friends buy me a keyboard (hundreds of onboard voices, 4 wave generators, 64-voice polyphony) for my 40th birthday. I decide I could compose some additional music for the audio piece, but first I have to learn about MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface).

What about images? It could be a video piece. I finish composing the music, and pare down the other audio elements. The work is now called *Victoriana*. Another new computer arrives (867MHz). All my multitrack audio files have to be reformatted for updated audio software (new audio card required). Images are resisted: it's the soundtrack for a missing film. Nevertheless it will be released as a video work so I need to make a grey screen with subtitles using photo-editing and video software (video card required) and bring the mixed audio into that application. Six or seven years after starting it, a couple of weeks before being screened at the London Film Festival, I am copying the seven minute long *Victorian Car Chase* to a preview tape (DVCAM to VHS) when I notice a spelling mistake on the scrolling text at the end: 'Motorcyle crash from the Italian Job'. I toy with the idea of leaving it, but I can't. I go back...







## CERN 2003

CERN, the 'Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire', on the Swiss/French border, where everything, even a tree, or a sandwich in the restaurant, has a number. Supported by a Fellowship from the National Endowment for Science Technology and the Arts, I'm taking digital still photographs, digital video, and audio recordings in various restricted-access locations: the test hall for a section of a vast new particle accelerator; the underground tunnels of the SPS accelerator; and a huge underground detector chamber. Everything I need for all my work at CERN is in one wheeled case I can manage by myself, but listing all the separate items would require a long, tedious paragraph.

Based on a conversation I had with a Swedish artist in New York I have requested permission to film in the office of one of the top physicists at CERN. Actually, it turns out not to be the office I expected, but it's interesting in a different way and I go along on the agreed morning carrying my video equipment in one hand. The physicist moves back and forth between two laptops situated among neat towers of scientific papers a couple of metres high, and intermittently talks on the telephone. I count three languages. The second Iraq war has started, and in one of the conversations I overhear some anxious words about a centrifuge in a Middle-Eastern country. I spend ages fiddling around. The camcorder (colour, DVCAM, 3-chip) is working fine, but the panning head (12 volt high spec. mini-motor, MDF, bits of aluminium, nylon cogs) is something I built in the cellar at home and it keeps slipping at the same point in its rotation. "Don't worry," says the physicist, "photographers are in here all the time, messing about." Eventually I fix it with a rubber band, and start to shoot. "How English is that?" I say, explaining about the rubber band. "Very," replies the physicist, walking into, and drifting out of the frame.



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