

foam

a body of work by Hilary J Baker

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Hilary J. Baker (b. Cheltenham 1962)

www.hilaryjbaker.com

Internationally acclaimed artist Hilary Baker's latest 'body' of work is exactly that – a unique challenge to the supposed sterility and isolation of today's living spaces using bodily residues.

Hilary, whose work is collected and commissioned worldwide including the National Portrait Gallery in London, uses etchings, paintings, ceramics and sculptures to articulate how all bodies leave visible traces of their interrelation within an environment.

Hilary also works as a Consultant in Creative Education enabling students to unleash their creativity, find a voice and explore a wide range of media.

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I CAN'T REMEMBER when my hands started dripping, nor when my feet started to drip with sweat too.

I leave trails of sweaty fingerprints behind on everything that I touch and footprints where I walk barefoot.

This is perhaps why my new work explores the visible and invisible human traces.

Or perhaps I am searching for ways that other people leave traces of their interaction with an environment.

Either way, **foam** explores the idea of creative archaeology, utilising a range of captured residues and vibrations left by myself and by other people, and challenges the notion of today's seemingly sterile, traceless environments.

Hilary J Baker , Bewdley, October 2010





Head of Eve
Mono-print on layered discarded tissue
2007

Foreword

This morning I wrote my name in a patch of condensation on my bedroom window. I want to explain how this demonstrates the transformative power of Hilary's art.

In my Ludlow studio recently, Hilary talked to me about her latest work for **foam**. She explained how her 'creative archaeology' identifies traces people leave behind them and challenges the notion of sterile isolation in today's world. After she left, I was disappointed by the lack of visible traces from her visit. I found myself searching for finger marks, smudges, footprints, wheel marks from her car, even dents in cushions.

This preoccupation with traces has stayed with me. Of course, I have always known that breathing forms condensation, but thanks to Hilary's sticky ideas I now know it in a different way. This morning I recognised the condensation on the window as a trace and a sign of my own existence. Hilary's visceral redefining of the 'foam society' with blood, sweat and tears is a powerful antidote to isolation.

Lin Charlston, October 2010

Biography

Having carried out research in pharmacokinetics and worked for fifteen years in secondary science education, Lin Charlston made a creative leap and gained MA Book-Arts with distinction at Camberwell College of Arts in 2000. Since then, her artist's books have been purchased for public collections including Tate Britain, The National Art Library at the V&A, and the Joan Flasch Collection in Chicago.

Lin is a founder member of the exhibiting group 'FACTION' www.faction.org.uk who have mounted four exhibitions in London and run workshops at the V&A and Tate Britain.

Lin was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in 2006.



*Lead Head –
spent lead*

With Foam I am challenging the notions of today's singular, cellular foam-like society and the supposed sterility and isolation of living spaces.

Chinese newspaper image
August 2010



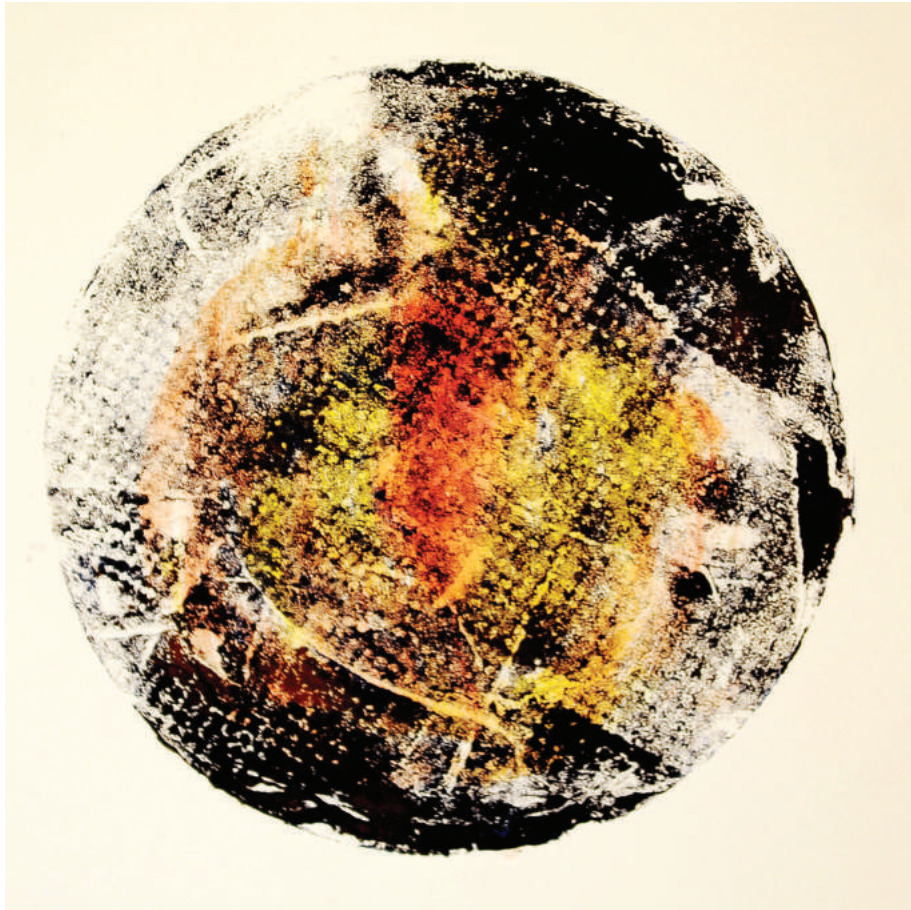
Through etchings, paintings, ceramics and sculptures,
I explore how all bodies leave visible and invisible traces
of their interrelation with an environment;

a form of creative forensic archaeology



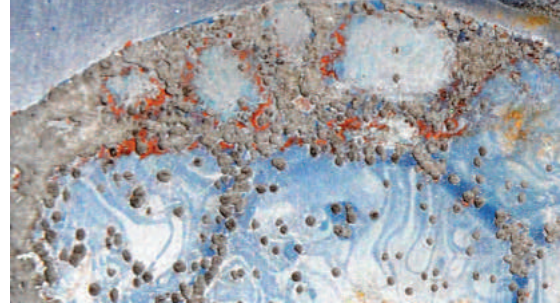
Dynamic Flow of Incessant Interaction – forensic etching

Sociologist and Demographer Thomas Mayne coined the term 'Connected Isolation' during the early 1970s to describe the emergence of the need to create specific human interiors, which externalise to form existential living spaces that provide protection against perceived physical, psychological and viral threats.



*Cell Heat –
mono-print*

These existential spaces have now expanded to include the total inhabited space –



forming isolated and sterile bubbles of existence



Foam – forensic etching plate

Fed by fashion edicts and product promotions
today's living spaces often show little evidence
of individualist belongings or personal stylisation.
Physical traces are scrubbed away to leave
germ free, vacuous environments.



*Vacuum Cleaner –
paper made from contents of Dyson*

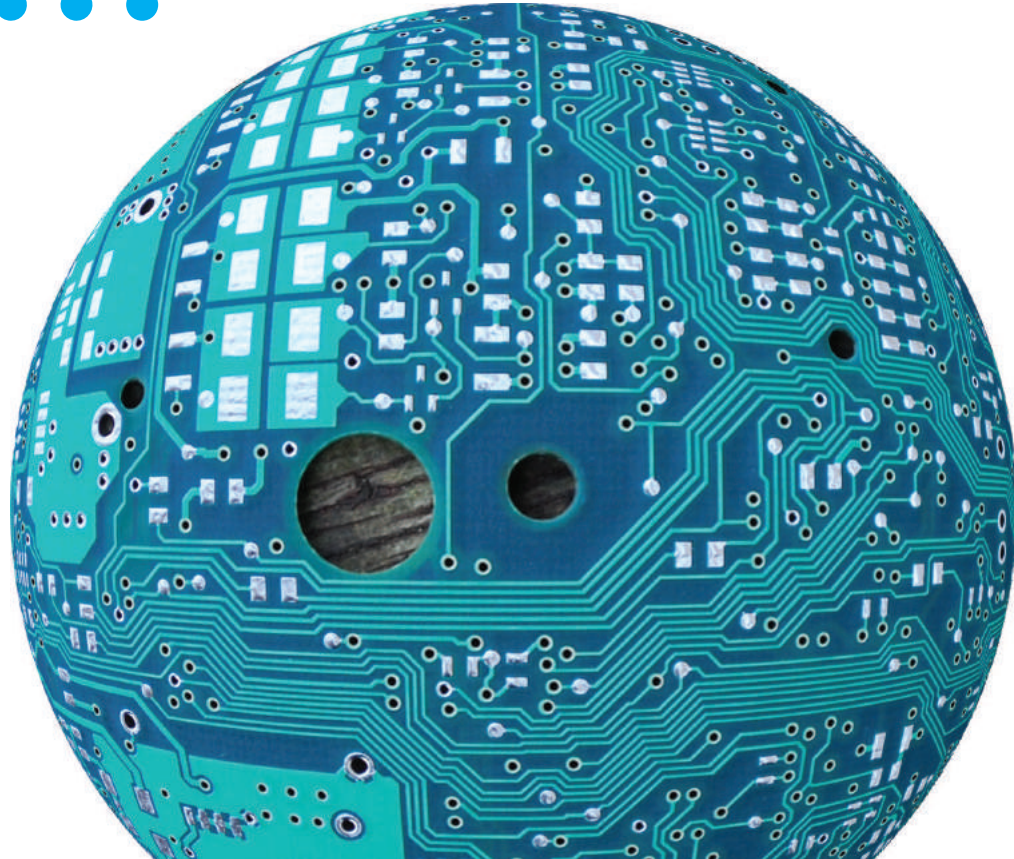
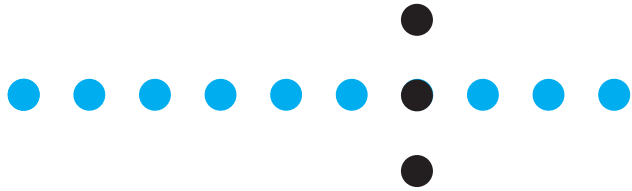
These individual bubbles of existence are now interlinked by multi-media connections that grow and dissipate with changing internal and external pressures forming foam-like living spaces.

German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk wrote the trilogy 'Sphären' (Spheres) from 1998 to 2008 that traces this sociological development from 'Bubbles' to 'Globes' and then to foam.

*Spheres –
copper sulphate saline
etching fluid*



Sloterdijk describes this multiplicity of modern life as Foam Making – individuals are living in specific bubbles within communicating foam, a specialized immune system – the bubble immunizes against the perceived threats of the outer world but simultaneously links with the social and commercial world through the media, mobile phones and the internet.

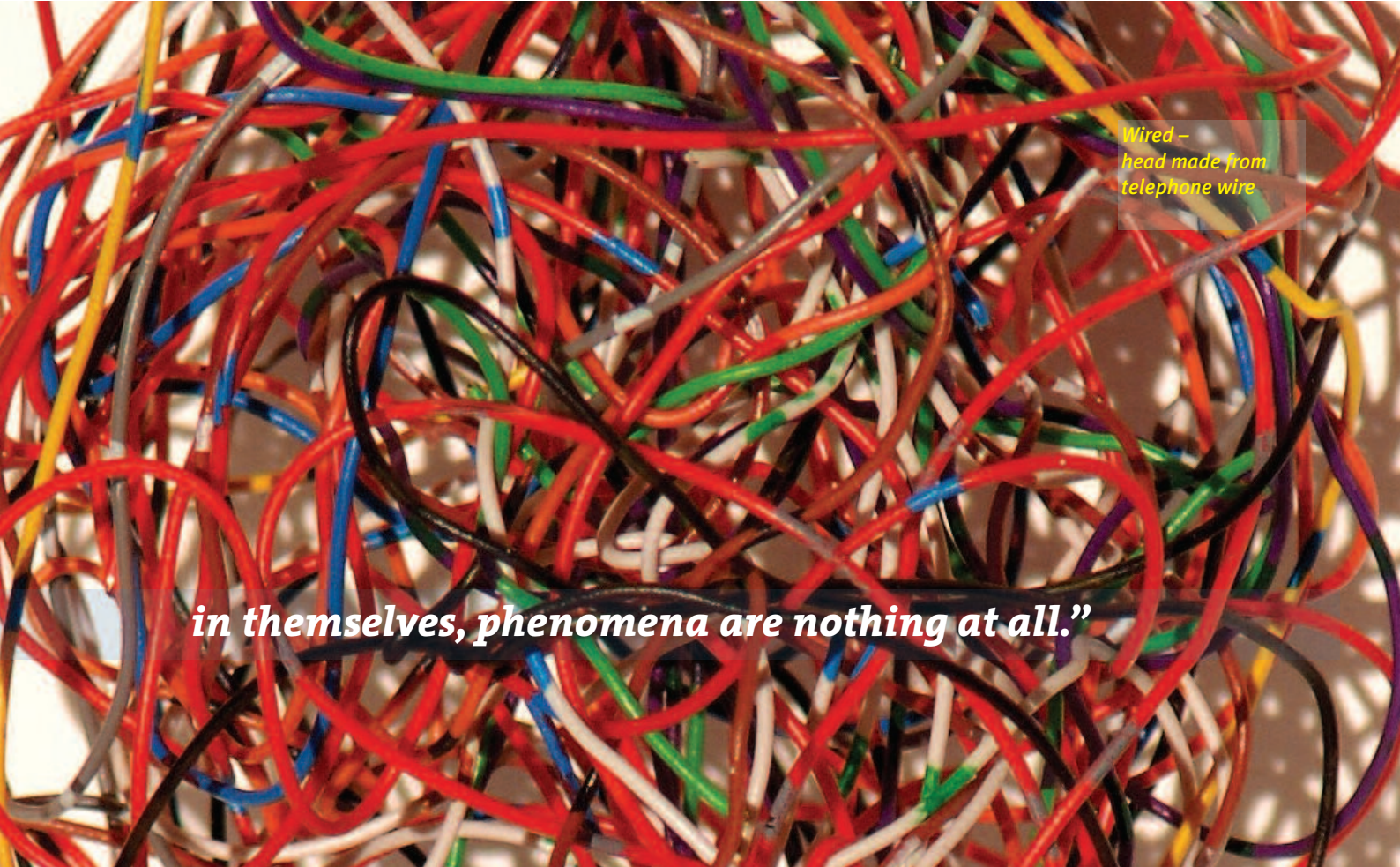


*Connected Isolation –
altered image of circuit
board*

In reality, it is impossible for an individual not to interact with life inside and outside a bubble of existence. There is an incessant interaction that determines our reality and the conditions of our existence.

As Nagarjuna, the 2nd Century Indian philosopher, said ...

“The nature of phenomena is that of mutual dependence;



*Wired –
head made from
telephone wire*

in themselves, phenomena are nothing at all.”

foam explores the transient nature and nonseparability of life using actual traces left by individuals of their interaction with their environment;

a form of creative archaeology

*Katherine –
etching*

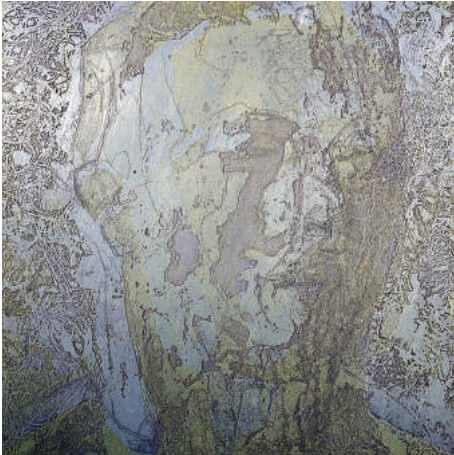


Using natural resists gathered from the residues and vibrations left by an individual, and the resistant properties of their natural secretions, each work is a form of actual forensic portraiture.

As Robert Rauschenberg stated in 2008

“A painting is more like the real world

Absent in Reality – etching plate



if it is made out of the real world”


Movements of the body, the coolness of a cast shadow and even static energy of emotions are also salvaged, noted and utilised.



Thumb print – graphic scan

*Sound Jar –
raku fired pot
with scratched
word*



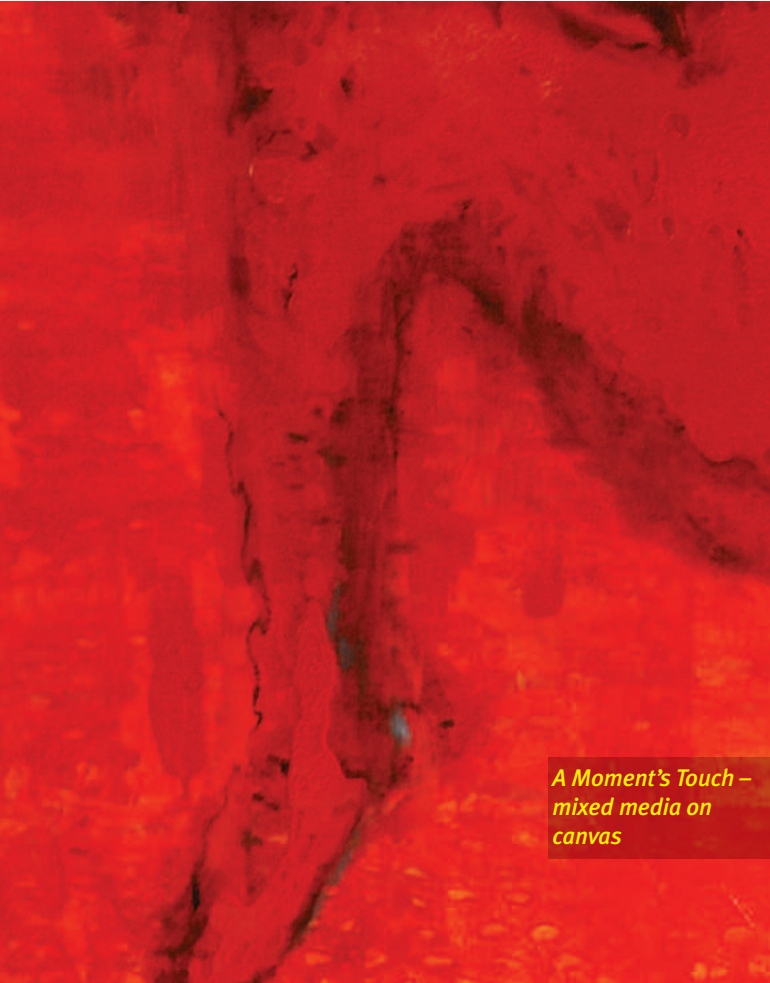


Intaglio and relief plates,
sculptures and installations
are also made using residues
and found objects
from an individual's environment.



*Lamella –
found object
with sculpted
stand*

Based on life size Rayographic prints of my own body,
multi-textural paintings evoke a layered residue of a human form;
an archaeological impression, constructed from different layers
of soot, clay and natural pigments.

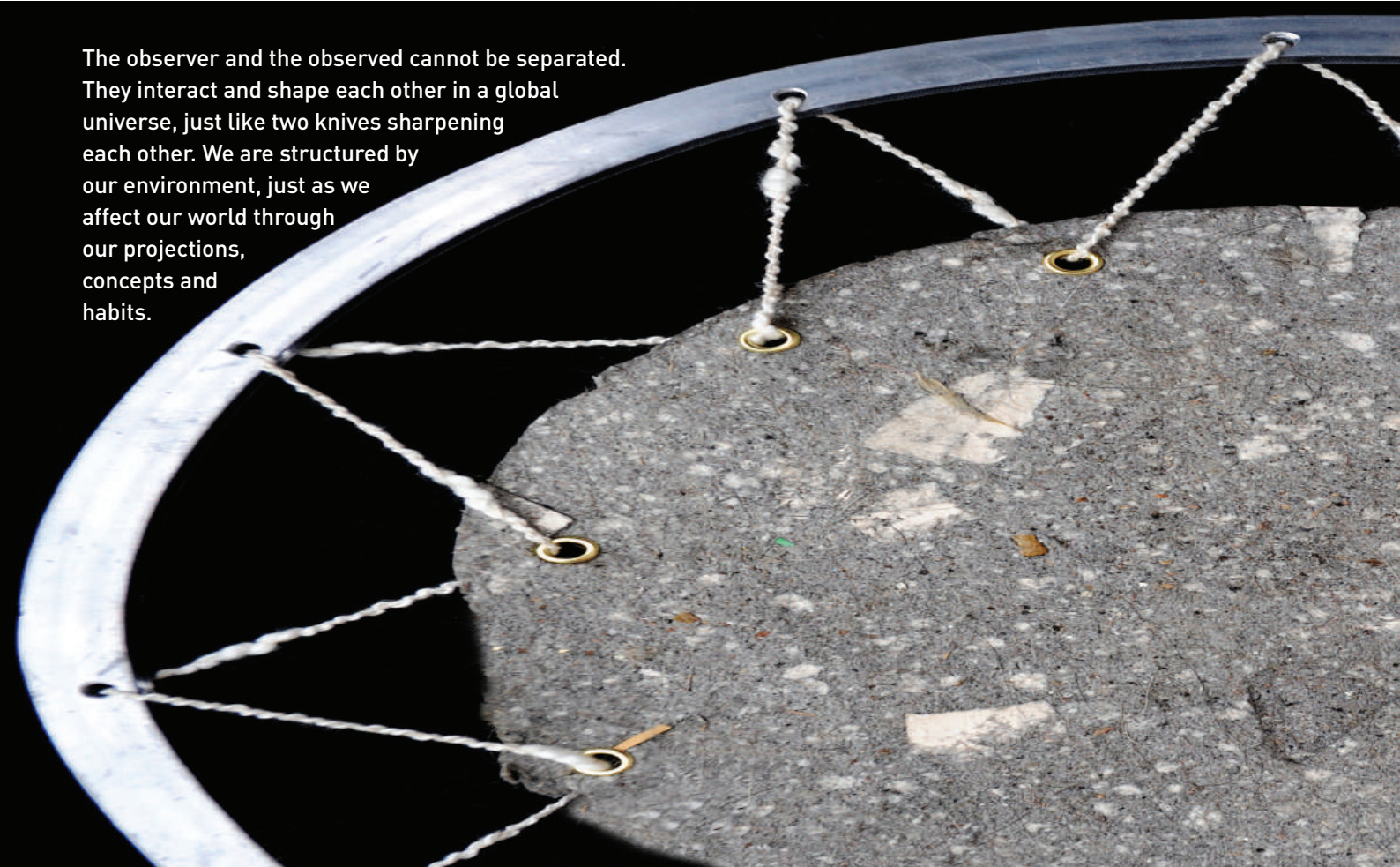


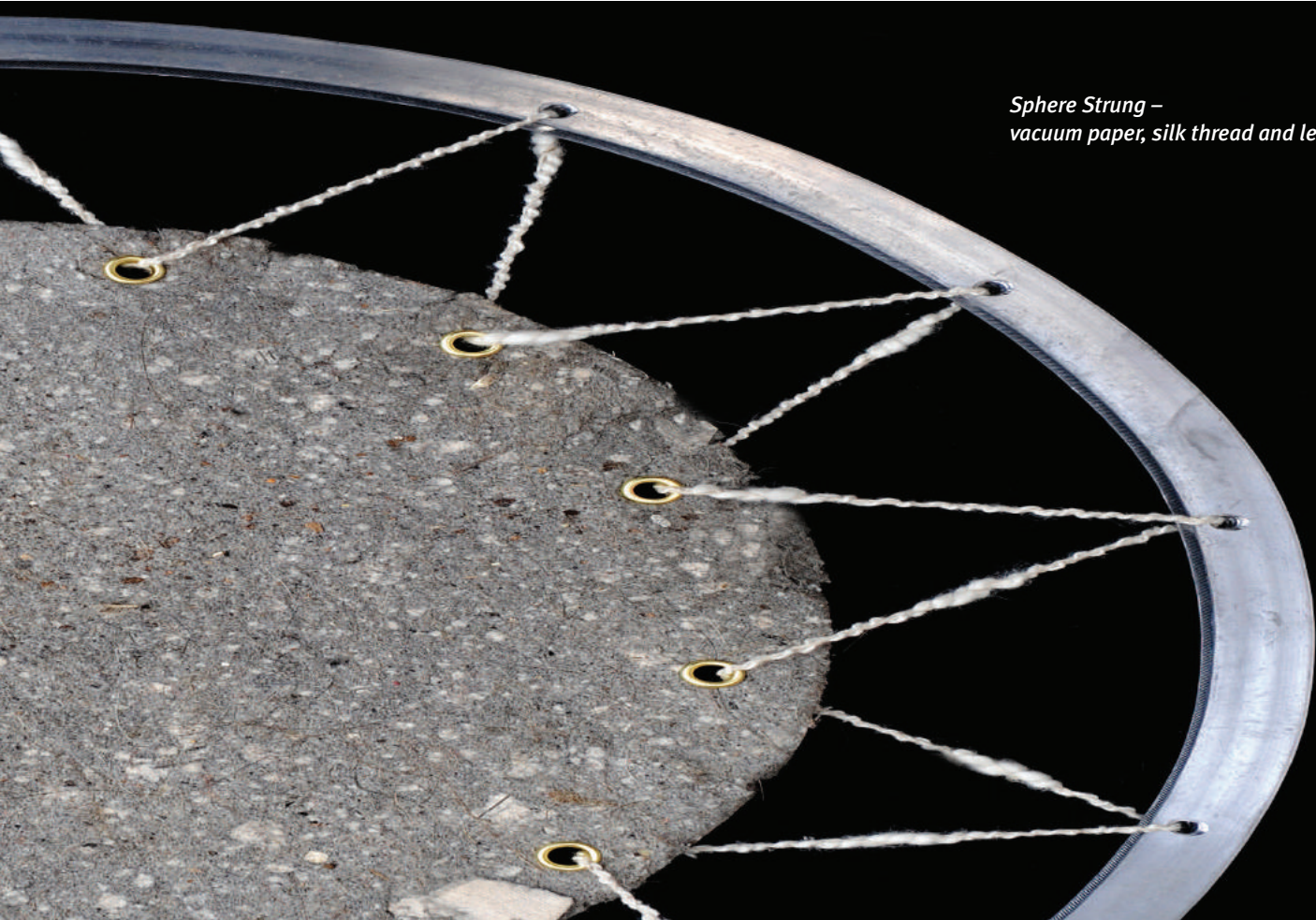
*A Moment's Touch –
mixed media on
canvas*



*Active Cohesion –
mixed media on
canvas*

The observer and the observed cannot be separated. They interact and shape each other in a global universe, just like two knives sharpening each other. We are structured by our environment, just as we affect our world through our projections, concepts and habits.





*Sphere Strung –
vacuum paper, silk thread and lead*



Rosetta Words – coloured embossing plate

***'and with my
enormous mouth,
in bubbles and
blood and phlegm,
I gargled my name.'***

***Carol Ann Duffy,
Fraud, 1993***



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Sound Artist Phil Harbon
Artisan Blacksmith Gaz H
Book Artist Lin Charlston
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Sophie Hedderwick
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Rajko and Nicholas Smiljanic

- 1 Head of Eve
- 2 Lead Head
- 3 Dynamic Flow of Incessant Interaction
- 4 Cell Heat
- 5 Foam
- 6 Vacuum Cleaner
- 7 Telephone Head
- 8 Katherine
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- 11 Lamella
- 12 A Moment's Touch
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- 14 Sphere Strung
- 15 Rosetta Words
- 16 Julia



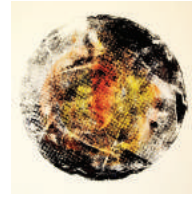
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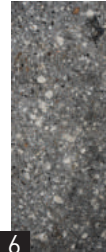
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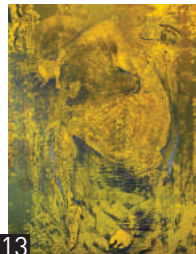
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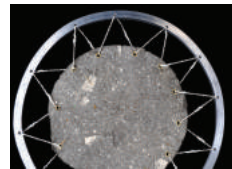
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foam – Sound Installation

Producing under the name Futurproof Recordings, Phil has been focusing on Atmospheric and Liquid Drum & Bass.

Known for his Modern contemporary style and haunting sounds; he also experiments to create artistic pieces, proving music can be what ever you want it to be!

www.reverbnation.com/futurproofrecordings

Futurproof Recordings – project foam track listing

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Imprint | Representing the space we use up or the Imprint we have on the environment |
| Shadows | The shape cast where light cannot reach or travel through our bodies |
| Void | The void is no interactions with the environment the emptiness,
the frustration, confusion |
| Grace | At peace, at one with the environment, absorbing, accepting |
| Lust (For Sunlight) | Being in a dark place wishing for the sunlight to fill the space.
Anticipation, Wanting, Lust! |