



## Modern Art

I think my voice isn't carrying very well today so I'm going to speak to the microphone. This is going to be essentially a visual lecture: I'm going to show a lot of images. These images will all fundamentally be my own work – I mean fundamentally because in some cases they've been collaborative works with other agencies. Just to give you some history of my involvement with UCL, I came here in 1982 as head of sculpture, and five years ago I became director of the slade.

I've given several lectures before to the language centre students, particularly in the summer, and what I've addressed generally is the cause and effect, i.e. I look at things, places, objects, architecture that have influenced my work and the sculptures or installations have evolved out of those secondary motivations. This time I'm looking at 'form and enigma'. This was the title of a recent exhibition, and I'm looking at how the invitations to make works came about, and the enigmas that occurred. Enigma in this case means something which is hard to define; to pin down; or make sense of. It can also refer to a difficulty in finding the meaning.

So today I'm going to talk about the interaction between the artist and the public, as represented by the physical artwork – in this case my own work. I've been involved with working with public and private clients for many years. This has involved commissions with many of the public bodies, such as Regional Development Agencies, the Arts Council, Lottery funds, the NHS, and public commissioning agencies; as well as other agencies in Britain and abroad. I've also worked closely with private individuals and private companies, university galleries, private galleries, public art galleries and museums. In all cases negotiation, interaction and cooperation with curators, engineers, architects and planners played a greater or lesser role. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the materials used, and the technical process employed, enabled works which are [...] ambitious, [...], to be realised in a way which achieves not only my intentions, but satisfies or challenges the client or gallery, and their expectations.

The last time I gave this talk I began probably thirty years ago and worked my way forward to the present day. That can take a long time. Today I'm going to start with some works I did in 1999. All of these works that I'm going to show were either located in public places, in the wider sense of the community, or else in galleries; and they range from things which are very modest interventions into city- and street-scapes, to really rather huge multi-dimensional and also multi-agency works which are really on an architectural scale, for various city squares in London and America.

So, this is an exhibition which happened in Limerick in Southern Ireland in 1999. It was an interesting exhibition because it's wholly an exhibition of visual art; and what happens is, the whole of the city is turned over to artists' interventions, right across the whole spectrum of places in the city: it can be in public museums, it can be in the street, it can be in the shops, it can be in the bars, it can be in the churches, it can be wherever the artist actually identifies as being a significant place to show. I decided that I would show this work in four places: two outside and two inside. This is an example of an old eighteenth-century building which was formerly used for a women's prison near Limerick. Its made out of a very cold, grey limestone, and on top of this limestone I positioned some small, highly polished, granite blocks. [pointing] One there, one at the top, one round the corner, and one right at the top there. These were shapes which had come out of an earlier exhibition that I'd done at the Tate and survives; and also Lisbon, at the [...], and they were intended to be located rather like – this might turn into a long story – but they were based on the shapes of a number of small fortresses which are located around the city of Lisbon, and I wanted to try to take this abstract shape and then re-position it in places that looked like maps, so the building became a map, and these became buildings set within this map. The thing which happened with these, because they were on this very grey, sterile; and because these objects were very highly polished, it was Brazilian granite, and it wasn't exactly black, but it was getting close to black, and the reflections of the surrounding buildings, trees, sky, sunset, were captured in these rather like a video camera would capture an image, so the composition of the granite almost created a pixelated image like you could see on a computer. This is pretty obvious these two images are capturing the medieval cathedral tower, a window in the cathedral tower, and the tree is on the one on your left. This is the entrance door for the medieval cathedral and you can see here this pixelated, rather mysterious but moving image on this piece of stone. This is some public housing on the other side of the road. And this one is a very strange, almost like a Photoshop - it's not, it's real - but it looks like a Photoshop dropped in on top of this mirror-like polished image of, I think, a car, a red car, and some garages and roofs and sky behind.

At the same time as those pieces on this old façade, I got another warehouse building from the eighteenth century and I located two photographic works in a cathedral, in this case, and I located it on a column which had a lot of memorial plaques – it was a Catholic cathedral and it had a lot of plaques which not only recorded people who had been alive in anything from the seventeenth century up to the twentieth century, but also recorded saints and other religious relics.

This was a photographic work that I'd done in Luxembourg in 1996, and I wanted to position it in the same place as some of these relics or nominations of remembrance if I could, so it was a cobblestone from the [...] in Luxembourg and I had relocated it to the main city square in Luxembourg and painted it bright red, but what interested me was this indentation in the centre of it, and I located this on the wall at exactly head-height so somebody standing and looking at it, their forehead – average height – their forehead was more or less located where this stone had been worn away.

The next one is horizontal, more-or-less the same photograph but this is located inside a bar, a pub in Limerick, and it is where somebody's head would be when they sat down at a table to have a pint of Guinness, so their head was sort of [...] by this red rectangle. And they were drinking their Guinness off a red table.

A very different intervention, but also trying to do something similar to the last one, this is in Aberdeen at Tyrebagger Forest, and I'd been invited to make a proposal for some sculptures to go into this combination of Forestry Commission and heathland. And it's a very difficult thing to do, because a forest is full of interesting occurrences, it's an area which is permanently in motion, the trees are moving, it's very mysterious and quite magical place, and a very loaded space as well, it's difficult to determine what might go in there and stand any chance against all the things that are going on. So, I walked around this forest for maybe three or four days and eventually, rather than thinking what I might put into the space I thought, where in this forest do I find it personally interesting, where do I like to go in it, where do I find this kind-of area that makes me want to stay, and then how can I put something into those places which will make other people look at that spot, other people think what's going on here, why has somebody done this, this is an interesting place, why? And one of the first places I looked at, this was a glacial boulder on top of a hill with these trees silhouetted against a skyline behind it. One of the things that struck me was, in a forest there's almost no black and white, everything is shades of green or shades of brown. So I decided to make these sculptures out of black and white material, black granite and white granite. And in this case you have to walk up a hill to get to it. I carved the edge of this boulder so it was flat, and then stuck this using resin glue onto the edge of the boulder. So it became like a ladder, it was a ladder that took you up to this series of vertical and horizontal bands of white and red. In fact, the trees became silhouetted with a very dark grey against the white sky and clouds, so black and white only really existed once you moved up to the skyline of the forest. You could see this, it's quite small but you could see it from quite a long way away, it acted as a sort of beacon so that as you walked towards it you could see what it was, and it was an invitation to climb the hill to this rather beautiful little glade of trees.

The second one was even smaller, this is – well, it's thirty centimetres long, it's fifteen centimetres of black and fifteen centimetres of white, and I carved it into a ready existing, again glacial, boulder, which was beside a path through the forest. And what I wanted it to be was act rather like in a lot of forests you get little bands of colour showing you the way between one path and the next path, and this became an enigma because it didn't refer to any particular path, it only referred to my interest in this particular stone in this place. So, it didn't represent any information for anybody, but it did represent a very strong statement given how small it was.

The third one was located at the edge of the forest and the heath, and this was a small stream that was acting as a border between these two areas. In this case I put two horizontal bands of black and white right in the centre of this small stream. Sometimes when the stream was low, the granite looked as if it was floating on the water, sometimes it was under the water and sometimes it was making a big disturbance in the water as the stream flowed around and over it.

And the fourth one was in a very strange place where the trees had been blown over by the wind, and again there were a lot of boulders. And in this case I wanted it to look rather like a marker for taking measurements for the Ordnance Survey, so it was something which looked as though it had purpose, but in fact had no purpose whatsoever except to draw attention to this place. So I wanted it to look as if it had dropped out of the sky, it's very carefully and beautifully made, it's highly polished, it's very accurate dimensions, but completely incongruous in this particular forest clearing.

At the same time I was working on a very large project for Derry in Northern Ireland. This was a very loaded political site and a very loaded historic site, it was one of the bastions of the seventeenth-century walls of the city of Derry. And politically sensitive because the walls represent, even today, this struggle between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, and I used as a symbol of the kind of wars – [...] the actual war that was going on in the seventeenth century but the wars that socially have continued ever since. So the work had to be non-partisan, it was thought that it shouldn't be figurative, it was thought that it shouldn't be able to be interpreted by one community or other as having any particular significance. So I decided I would use the city itself as the subject of this sculpture, to make a portrait of the city as form. I made four sculptures, two either side of the bastion. And as you can see here, the walls are made up out of a sort of rough rubble, and it's on a very irregular site. But the city itself was one of the first urbanly planned cities on a grid system, so the street plan is right-angled streets rather like Manhattan – rather smaller than Manhattan, but right-angled streets with a very irregular outline. And – I hope this is clear from this – it's in four quarters, these are two of the quarters in plan, so the right-angled section at the top of this one and the left of that one is actually the central core of the city, it's a square based in the centre, and then the main roads run North-South and East-West. So I divided the city into four quarters, and then this shape on the top of each of these is a representation of those shapes. Then the strata give a sense of how this hill was constructed is running down through it, and these strata represent the complexity of the difference between the peoples who live there. Largely these stones were sourced in – the black one was sourced in Africa – in Angola – the grey one was sourced in Portugal, and the bands of colour were sourced mainly in Brazil.

The other side of the bastion I used just tones of grey, so the one in the foreground, again representing one quarter of the city, began as almost a black colour at the top gradating down to a light grey. And the one beyond, in the circular enclosure, began as a light grey and worked its way down to a black. So, the black was on the same plane across this space. Again I was interested in the notion of movement in these very inanimate objects. You can see in the foreground the fact that the sky, the clouds and the [...] of the sky, or planes or even reflections from people on the walls would give this an animation rather like a film being played across this plane.

And I think in this photograph you can see the fact that this is on a very steep hill. These two objects – all the objects – were placed in a very horizontal position and then the walls themselves were going down to the sea on a 1:10 basis.

Similarly while I was working on that piece I was doing a project for the Urban Studies Plaza in Portland in Oregon. Portland is a model city as far as public art's concerned but also a model city as far as urban planning. It was one of the first cities in America to take on board 1% for art. It was one of the first cities in America to decide that the downtown region / area should be vital and that people living in it, shops and in general move away from everything going out to the suburbs, and to re-energizing the inner city's core, and they've done that extremely successfully. So, in Portland is a very important centre for the study of government and for urban studies, and one city block was taken over by this new building and completed in 2000. I was invited to join the team, not intensive designing of the building or the landscaping, because that would be rated in design, but to work with them as it was being built, to install a concept for what I decided would be four large scale sculpture installations. I was interested in the fact that this city is extremely well-organised, and rather beautiful in a quiet sort of way, that it's surrounded by huge nature – it's got the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains to the east and it's got the Columbia Gorge to the north and the Pacific Ocean to the west. It's also got a huge [...] – the Cascade Mountains are very active volcanoes, Mt. St. Helens is to the north, Mount Hood is directly west of Portland, and this raw big nature of glaciers, very fast flowing rivers, volcanic flows of lava, and a kind of new nature: nature here was millions of years old, a lot of nature in the north-west of America is within my lifetime and certainly no older than ten thousand years. So, these pieces that you can see here – the one at the very top coming over the stadium steps, was really thinking about how a glacier might slide over this, it's leading towards where one of the entrances to the building was.

The one on the left here is rather similar to the shapes of the piece in Derry, it's as if one of them's fallen over, and again another great spill, like a coffee cup's fallen over, the spill of liquid coming down is shooting right up to the entrance of the college where everyone studies. There's another flow on what became a light railway track which ran through here – or is there now – each one of these squares is one metre by one metre. And this is about twenty tonnes weight, it's a very large piece of, four pieces of stone put together so the highest dimension is 2.40m. And because it gained this high polish it has this almost cinemagraphic effect of recording in a kind of millisecond anything that goes on around it or in front of it. So, if you're sitting still, there's a very active engagement with these pictures which emerge and fade away on the surface of this stone.

At the other entrance to the building there's this one which again is looking at a – almost a volcanic plug and flows of lava. This single block is very large, it's 4m long by 1.5m wide by 2.5m high. And it's the fractured edge of the top, it's as it was taken from the quarry, so as you look up you see this jagged edge – and I don't think I've got a... no I don't, I'm sorry – you can vaguely see it there but as you look up you see it against the buildings, but fifty miles away or eighty kilometres beyond it is actually the Cascade Mountains, so you're seeing a kind of representation of the profile of the mountains, which you can't see because the buildings are in the way.

I took this theme of these two objects, the sort of elliptical cone and the angular object, and then started attaching miniature versions of these to various pieces of furniture inside the Urban Studies Building. This was to try and make people who were inside not only be able to see these things from their windows, but to be able to see them in their working environments. So they were getting rather enigmatic, you didn't quite know whether they were waiting there for something to happen to them or to be taken somewhere else, or they were part of the furniture but why would they be part of the furniture. Again, they were highly polished so they were changing as the light changed in the building [...]. That's one taken out of context and just shown as it might be in a typical gallery space. As is that.

I was then invited by a private client to make a large one of these for a new house he was building north of London. Slightly different shape, it's one piece of granite from Zimbabwe. And it was hand cut to make this elliptical, truncated, cone. And it was on a single spindle so it could be moved through 360 degrees. And again it's highly reflective which means it's reflecting its surroundings whichever position it's in. And in this case, exaggerating it because of the curved surfaces so as the sky moves across it goes through a series of distortions.

Now this is going back a little bit, this was an exhibition that I did in 1996, at the same time as there were small stones which were at the Tate and St. Ives, I did this bigger exhibition in the Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, and in this case it was looking at how urban environments could be negotiated, so these were almost synonymous with city blocks, you entered into this gallery from the staircase at the top-left, and once you came into it you were automatically in the centre of this work, so you couldn't look at it from a distance, you had to enter it, to negotiate a way around it like a maze. And I used in it a series of metal constructions with different-coloured granites inside. This was always intended so it could go through a number of different processes, develop itself in a number of different ways.

The second place I showed it was at the Villa dei Laghi in Torino. This is the old summer hunting palace of the kings of [...] and this was in the garden by the side of this hunting palace, and I used exactly the same pieces of granite, exactly the same steel structure as I'd used in Lisbon. But this was a very different environment, there were these baroque formal over-life-size sculptures in this garden. It also had a baroque fountain with a lot of bronze mystical figurines. And I wanted this to look almost as if something very rich and lavish had been taken out of the palace like a carpet or a precious table, and put onto the lawn. It's very large, it's 14m by 5m wide, and again, multi-coloured, very rich coloured granites which were highly reflective so as you negotiate your way around this part, this piece changed very dramatically.

This is a private gallery in Portland, Oregon. While I was working on the big project I started to make a series of prints and small sculptures which were made in Portugal; and the prints were made by a master print-maker in Portland, a series of diffographs, which came out of both of these previous projects I've shown you. Also, I was looking at interesting pieces of stone which I found in the quarry in Portugal. This is an example of, when a quarry is first opened, the upper surface has been weathered generally by the effects of nature over millions of years, but the inner stone is still pure as it would be if you were quarrying it for kitchen-tops or floors or whatever. So you can see here this crust, this cross-section of where weather has actually broken down the nature of this granite and leached out the colour until you get five or six centimetres into it and then it's pure black. So I found a lot of these discarded objects, and started to work them up into miniature landscapes. This is a spectacularly exotic granite from Brazil, a couple of hundred kilometres north of Rio and [...]. Just some painted stones, related very much to big lithographs. This again is the top of another piece of stone which was excavated in Africa, it's a red African granite. And this is one of the lithographs with one of those previously shown sculptures.

Again, the next exhibition was shown in [...] and this is using that exotic stone from Brazil and treated in a slightly different way. This stone, it's history is almost verifiable, I don't know exactly but I did speak to the geology department at UCL and they were telling me that it's probable my rationale for where it came from is correct. A meteor apparently hit the continent of South America and Africa when they were joined and this crater over millions of years slowly filled up with water-borne stones which were brought down from the various mountains in that vicinity, and as the continents split the contents of this crater were absorbed into the earth and fused together with heat and pressure so they were turned into a stone, granite. So this stone looks rather remarkable because it looks like you're looking through water at the rocky bottom of a stream. Particularly when it's polished, but in this case what I did was polish the stone and isolate various different stones within it, so in this case the white is a quartz, the black is a black granite pebble; and then sand-blasted the rest away so you're looking at these two isolated units which are highly polished and the rest is a rough texture.

Similarly with this, all the little bits of black that I could find, or red, I isolated and then sand-blasted around them.

Other objects like this you can see in the foreground here. One of the things that happens when you cut through this material is that the stone which [...] when it's embedded in the rock, as you cut it suddenly becomes like a skin, so we can see here how it suddenly starts to wrap itself around the stone, and sometimes wraps itself entirely around the stone so it looks like it's two-dimensional, where as in fact it's a solid block sitting inside this cut block. In this case this rather striated rock in the foreground does actually go all the way around like a piece of leather laid over it, and in fact it is, literally, embedded in there.

This is another piece of that – in the foreground is another piece of this rock from Brazil, and in the background a sculpture I made using the one from South Africa. To make a kind of archetypal face or the kind of panelling you might experience in a doorway. And you can see where this sort of rather crumbling effect of almost like a landscape on top of each of these pure layers of black.

Again another stone from Africa which I worked up with this pitted surface underneath and this face. And this is painted stone which I've used quite a lot in the last couple of years, where I take a very bland piece of material, like silver and grey, and paint these black shapes onto it so it became rather exotic and articulated, like, a series of walls and fields or city blocks or how a brick wall or a rough stone wall might be constructed. So it changes your notion of the scale. These are very small wall pieces.

These are using granite blocks which are normally used in the street, for architecture and so-on: the stones that they make granite pavements with.

And these were large lithographs. So you can see the development of these shapes, where they might be coming from, what they might be related to. And these are using all the technical process connected to print-making, it's a series of individual plates which are printed in various combinations, they're printed onto the front and back of the paper, then other layers of paper are glued on top, then there's another print done. So in this case, there's maybe six or seven different plates that have been used to print each of these images overlapping on top of one [...].

And this is a proposal really, it's a proposal for a building in Bristol, it's for a pavement. And the idea, largely based on those previous prints, was to have various layers of very thick glass with some of it masked out black and with lights underneath so where the various – each time one of these lines overlapped, instead of getting a grey on top of a black, you got a pure flash of light, so as you walked across this very large pavement you would be getting these little flashes of light depending on where you were in relation to these overlapping sections of plain glass as opposed to glass which was masked

out. So I wanted it to be rather like a journey across a city at night in an airplane, or a journey where you'd be moving and stars would be coming into focus or out of focus as you moved. Unfortunately it was too expensive to make.

This was a small square in Mayfair, beside Hyde Park, where I was invited to make some sculptures which related to a new development, but would serve a dual purpose. So they would be sculpture but they would also be seating. And I decided to use these, again, highly polished blocks of white and silver-grey granite which were glued together and then very roughly and harshly broken off around the edges, so it was a process of refinement on one hand and then a very brutal act of splitting the stone on the other. And this square – well, Mayfair is a very grand area of London, very expensive property, and this was a strange mixture between eighteenth-century houses and an eighteenth-century stone mansion looking over Hyde Park, and some new modern architecture which was added onto this. So I thought the notion of these two things joined together was quite important. And as you can see at the top left, the brickwork of the old houses was actually painted black and had been painted black for many years. This is the new bit which was designed by [...]Hopkins architects. It was a very cold day, that's why I'm hunched up. As you can see, the top surface of each of these seats is slightly at one angle across five centimetres, and this was something which the developers said, 'how are we going to stop tramps sleeping on these benches?', and I said, 'well, it's Mayfair and I don't think they're going to allow tramps to sleep there.' But we did come up with this idea of, because it's highly polished, if we put it on a slight incline, anybody who attempted to sleep on it would simply slide off in the night. And I wasn't too keen on this idea because I thought it would spoil the sculpture, but frankly they look better because what happens is, they're angled in towards each other so the people sitting and having their lunch or whatever would have more of a sense that they were communicating with the people sitting on the other side. Here in the foreground you can see how they were split. Now, when I say split, they are literally hit very hard with a very large hammer, and it just [...] off the stone. We see it there, very [...]. And looking through the entrance to one of the new buildings you see Hyde Park beyond. And on the other side of the square, this is slightly before it was finished, but this is one of the rather grand entrances to the [...] houses. So that's the Hilton hotel, on Hyde Park corner.

Again, right about the same time I was doing a very large project down in Temple Quay in Bristol. This is a new development which they asked me to do seating, lighting – at least, sculptural lighting – and historic interpretation for this street which ran along the line of the old city wall, so the twelfth-century city wall from the Knights Templar had to be exposed as part of this project and I worked very closely with the city architect but also the city archaeologist and the developers. I uncovered where the city gate had been, and one of the briefs of the project was how to make this city gate come alive again in some way, to make [...] just excavated it, filling it in. So I came up with a number of proposals, one of which was to show where the city wall was by representing it on the surface of this street. So the cobblestones here are where the wall was. This is where the gate was. The wall travelled down to where it changed angle and there's another tower there, and it went off to another tower at the corner. And this black structure in the foreground was in effect a seating area and lighting but it also presented a window which you could look down and see the archaeological remains of it. And it had some text which explained what was there. And the idea was if you entered in from the other end of the street, this construction slowly made itself up into a complete unit, so in this case four units go together to make this object, with lighting above and below. And as you went down the street or came in the street it slowly either dissolved or began to be constructed. So this is three of the units, one's missing. Two of the units. And finally, one of the units. Now if we reverse that and the dusk starts to fall, the lighting starts to come on - [...] - and this lighting gets stronger as the darkness descends. It starts to lead you up the street back to this original one which you can then look into and see that this window is positioned directly above where the entrance was – through the medieval watergate.

And to come pretty well up-to-date, this is a work which I showed at Canary Wharf at Easter – from Easter to June – and following that theme through from the [...] in Lisbon to Villa dei Laghi in Torino this is now the same material reworked yet again and put into this, the entrance of one – well, the foyer of one [...] of the square at Canary Wharf. So as you can see it's the same steel squares bolted together with these exotic granites put into it. And in this case, it's redone as a tunnel with layers of black and white wood and laminate inserted into it. I wanted this work to have a kind of crudity within this highly corporate environment but also locate the pieces very close to where people would be obviously sitting, having coffee, reading. So they wouldn't be entirely sure whether these were works of art or whether they were pieces of furniture. Or what purpose they were actually serving in this building. But they couldn't ignore the fact that they were there.

A smaller version, round the corner. And this was another flat version rather like the Villa dei Laghi but with the stones set flush with the top of the steel. This was a very strange day because the people in the background are actually the Prime Minister and his entourage who were coming for a press conference and they got very fussy about what we could and couldn't do in terms of filming this piece.

And then from that highly corporate environment to a very small local gallery in [...] in the south of Portugal. This used to be a stables for donkeys for this factory which is right on the river [...]. And I did an exhibition of some of these prints that you've already seen and also three new sculptures on the floor using this exotic stone from Brazil. And what I wanted to do was make the stone look as if it wasn't stone, I wanted it to look like it could be – well in fact, almost like a piece of wood or a piece of reed. It's hard to really see here but, it's very much [...], the techniques I've used but it also looks as if it could be rather softer than stone. It's isolating one of these river rocks on either end, so it's just taking – choosing one and then cutting between two of these rocks.

And that leads me on to the final work, which is outside University College on the Euston Road. The Slade was part of a big scheme to introduce art into the new University College Hospital building. We did a series of studies for it. And finally put forward a very ambitious program of works which - some of which were realised and some of which still have to be realised. One of them was the signage to actually announce the hospital so this is the rises of the steps as you go into the main entrance on the Euston Road. And this is a piece which I did using this Brazilian stone and made in Portugal over the last year and installed in the summer. It is a very modest piece of work and it did manage to conjure up a lot of publicity and when I was in France in the summer on holiday I did get a phone call from one of the national newspapers saying did I know my sculpture was on the front page of the Sun newspaper. Of course I didn't, but the headline was, "Off their rockers! Hospital spends £70,000 on giant pebble. Insult to 7/7 victims treated on these wards." This took off, the inside being "Rocky Horror Show". The Daily Mail, "A £70,000 gall-stone." "Treat for rock fans." "£70,000 stone [...]" "They've hit rock bottom." And "Art attack." But I think the best one - oh yes and also, [...] Sun, "Brazil nuts" - and last week in the Guardian we had, "Is hospital art a waste of money? Not if you're the one making the art it's not. The new University College Hospital famously paid £70,000 for the sculptor John Aiken to install a piece of [...] granite in its main entrance this summer." And finally, I think the best comment of all was from Keelie, 19, from Kent, who was on page 3 of the Sun last week. "The Sun was in no doubt yesterday about the extent of the scandal. The splashed headline on its front page over an alleged £9 million NHS art bill was brutally short, "Taking the Picasso". On page 3, Keelie, 19, from Kent, stripped down to the smallest of thongs, declared in a newsbrief - get it - that she was disgusted." So on that happy note, Keelie as art critic, I will finish. Any questions?

[question] What [...] is the most popular now?

Well, I think this one must be the most popular, a lot of people sit on it, a lot of people talk about it, and even the Queen when she opened it said she hadn't time to look at it in detail but she'd be very interested in coming back. And I think one of the ministers said, "is it really true that if you stroke it you get better?", so I said, "yes, of course". It's not.

[question] [...]

Well, I think one of the things that you have to do - I think, very often, the idea to use sculpture or art comes after the architects have already designed something. I think it's better when the artist and the architect work together in some way from the beginning. So I think it's very important to have a dialogue with the architect and with the planners, so that they're familiar with my work, I'm familiar with their work, and then we can come to some mutual understanding. And it's very often difficult because architects don't necessarily want art, but it's part of the - it's part of planning regulations now. So in Westminster or Camden it's a - if an architect or a developer wants to build a building, they have to make a provision for art. So I think increasingly interesting collaborations are taking place, where as in the past it would just be, 'we'll buy something and put it there.' Now I think it's much more interactive, much more meaningful.

[question] [...]

No, I suggested it. There's also a light in this piece which you can't see there 'cause it's made of wood but you can see it here - at night there's a light on top and then a light underneath, so the stone looks as if it's floating on light.

[question] Why is it so expensive?

It's not so expensive because what it doesn't - this isn't a true price, it's a - there's a lot of other - as I think I said on the radio, it costs less than that or it costs more than that depending on what you included in the price, because there's all the foundations, there's all the transport, there's all the groundworks, there's a second piece to this which is the steps with the lettering etc. So in fact it was quite an inexpensive piece of work. Unless you're a Sun reporter.

[question] How do you find [...]

Well, I found, the quarry I work with in Portugal discovered this quarry in Brazil. So they bought this area and then excavated one block, brought it back to Portugal, cut it, polished it, and I saw this fantastic stone. So, I was thinking of how I could use it. This came up as quite a good opportunity because the reason the new college hospital is there is because the old hospital and the Middlesex Hospital are merging into one new building. So there's all this separate, disparate, people and things and memorabilia and all sorts which are coming together in one new unit. And I thought that this stone was very much like that, lots of different things which have fused together into one unit. And then I [...] it that form. So it's symbolic of this unity and difference. It was perfect for that. In fact, I didn't even suggest we do this, I was just telling them about this stone and they said, that's perfect for our new hospital. So that's how it came about. Any other questions?

[question] Do you ever answer the question set by the Sun: how can you justify spending so many thousands of pounds that you could be spending on health?

Well, because - well one, it couldn't be spent on health, I mean if you used that argument you'd be saying the Sun's reporters' enormous salaries could be used on health. It isn't taking away hospital care. And actually I think one of the comments that was made in one of the other articles, one of the more positive articles, was saying that public art is vital for

enhancing health, for some people it was the only art they get: they may shun museums, they may read tabloid newspapers, they may eat junk, they may watch no-brain telly, and stuff their ears with Ipods with the bass turned up, but they can't avoid seeing fine buildings, grand squares, well-designed street furniture and magnificent sculpture on their way to work or school. They may have no other chance to open their eyes to beauty or elevate mind or spirit through the power of art. And I think that's an interesting point, because it – people going into hospital are not necessarily people that populate galleries or museums, so if they see good quality art in an environment which they don't expect to see it in, it may be the only time they see art. That's what I think anyway, and that's what he thinks.

[question] I agree, it's just the way [...]

Well, I don't, I think it's a non-question, it's a bit like one of those ones that if you answer it one way or the other you're doomed. Do you hit your mother – what is it?

[question] Have you stopped beating...

Have you stopped beating your wife? Yes... Okay. Thank you for your attention.