

The Lounge

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(Cover: stills from Caroline Ward's Six Screens)





Editorial

Ironic it may seem for a deaf arts magazine to make sound its theme, but artists like Caroline Ward do explore it, if often only tangentially (p. 8).

Rather than bemoan our lack of access to sound, however, we are highlighting the pointlessness of it being in our lives without a visual reference. If we can't see or feel it, then it doesn't count; thus Sheng-Kai Chou's imaginative vision of the wind's whistle resonates (p.7).

Maybe you think differently. Maybe you are hard-of-hearing and just want to turn the radio up. In that case read *Perspective* (p.4).

We look forward to your letters.

Melissa Mostyn

News

Now that another fabulous

experience with Stour Valley Arts is over, we're already beginning work on our DVD. As well as a vibrant photo gallery and a new *Salon in King's Wood* documentary – given a fresh, contemporary look by Samuel Dore – the DVD promises in-depth reports of individual artists' work-in-progress.

From early September 2007 250 free DVDs will be distributed nationwide and we're starting a reserve list for members, artists, partners and Trustees. Email marketing@salonart.org.uk to get extra copies.

The remarkable Mr Dore also filmed Colin Redwood for a short DVD profile following our one-day workshop at Modern Art Oxford (see *Perspective* for

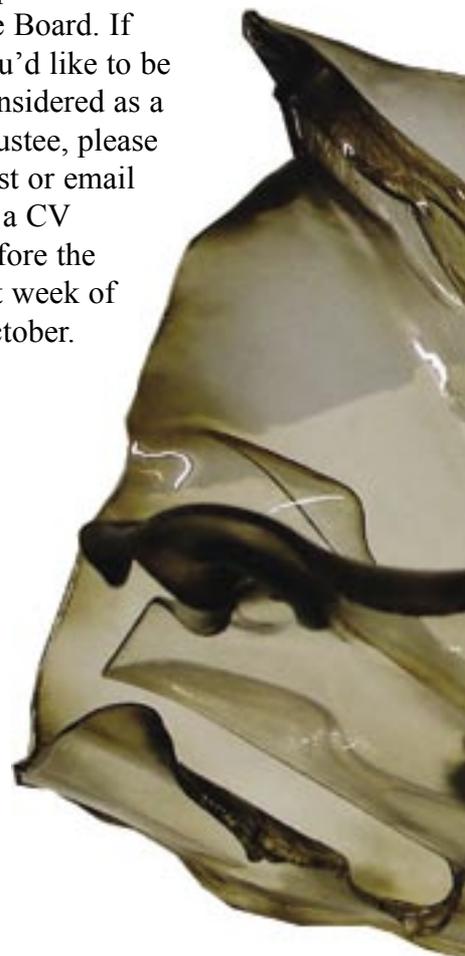
more info).

Thanks to terrific editing work by Bim Ajadi, Colin is in line for a dynamic 'visual CV' that he can use to attract freelance work. Could you be next in 2008? Watch this space.

Not yet approached us about our web gallery? Email us now! Plans are under way for an online gallery linked to Salon's website. This will take 35% commission on sales of works by deaf and hard-of-hearing visual artists who meet our selection criteria. Contact: info@salonart.org.uk

At the time of going to print, Salon's Trustees will have had their quarterly meeting at Tate. Last April's meeting went well, with two new policies presented for approval and a third, our Equal Opportunities Policy, being drafted.

We are still seeking bright, lively, committed, reliable people with fund-raising experience for the Board. If you'd like to be considered as a Trustee, please post or email us a CV before the 1st week of October.





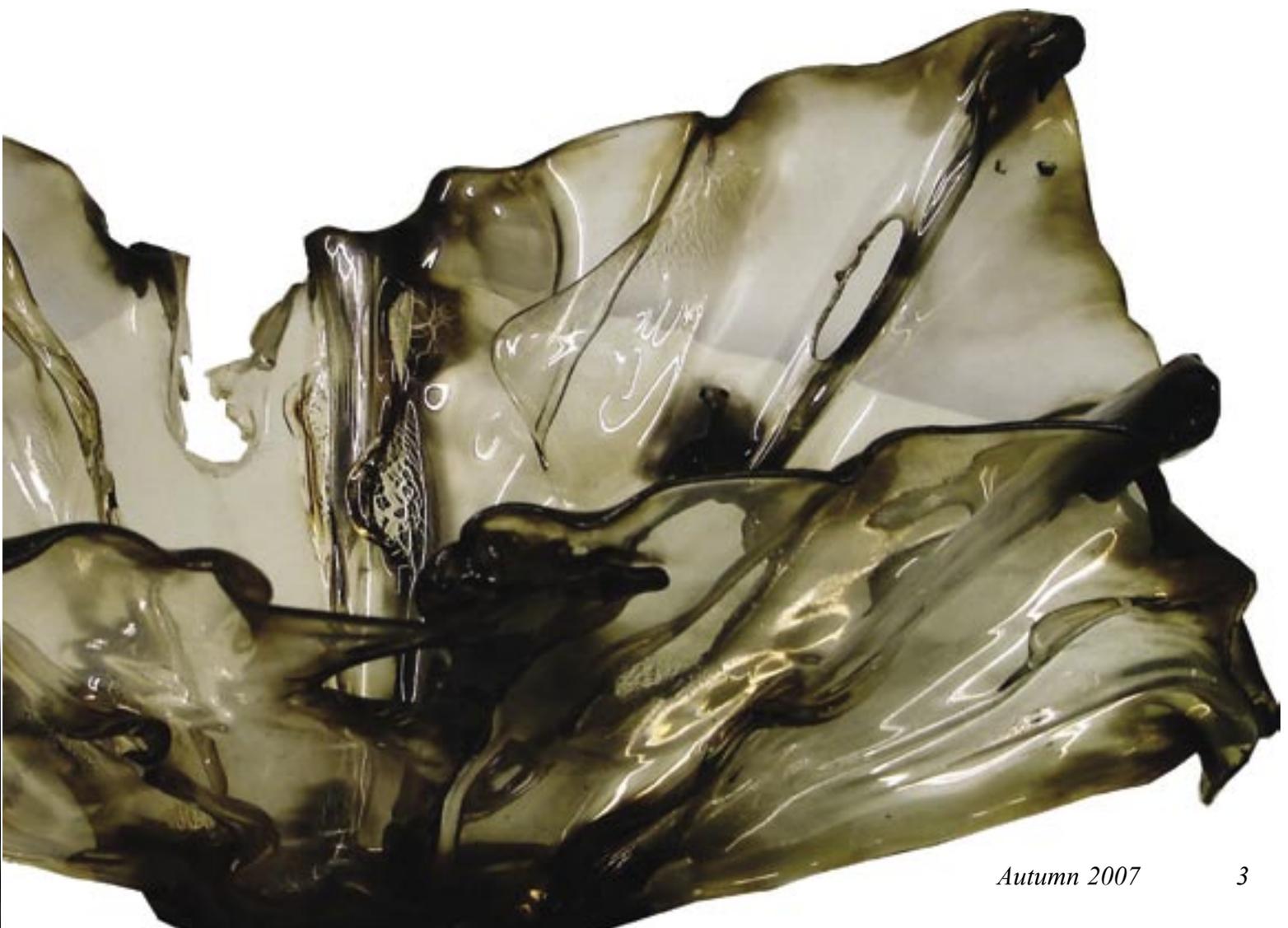
Left: Disconnected (detail) by Heather Veevers. Made during Redwood @ MAO workshop, June 2007. Photo: Fiona Heathcote.

Below: Soundwave by Colin Redwood, 2002. Exhibited during Redwood @ MAO workshop, June 2007. Photo (c) Salon.

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Any views and opinions expressed in the Lounge belonging to the individuals expressing them and are not necessarily shared by Salon. Ideas for contributions in our next issue are welcome, although publication is not guaranteed. Only clear, high-resolution jpg or tif images (300 dpi) will be considered. Deadline for next issue is Monday 24th September 2007.



Perspective

*Sound: nuisance or reassuring vibe?
Melissa Mostyn reports on differing
views during a recent Salon workshop.*

What do you think sound means to deaf people? Sea waves crashing upon the shore? Colours so lurid they give us tinnitus? Or furry vibrations from the dancefloor that, as far as we are concerned, are the only detectable part of the music?

For many artists attending Colin Redwood's one-day workshop last June, this was a challenging question indeed. After all, it wasn't the first thing that came to their minds when developing visual art projects (although several deaf artists do attempt, Wassily Kandinsky-style, to evoke music visually).

Yet the multitude of works Colin made that depended on sound for their impact came thick and fast at Modern Art Oxford: *Boom Box* (2003), a plastic tube with a loudspeaker and a microphone that people spoke into via a hole at mid-point, thus making their voices reverberate; *The Organoiser* (2001), an abstract 3D piece inspired by church organs with pipes and a lever that pumped out distorted whistling noises at various frequencies; and *Wind Rockers* (2007), two public art models of which either emulated Rolf Harris' didgeridoo in a tall frame, or gently echoed wind chimes.

This approach was certainly unusual. A born-and-bred Bolton man working in the mainstream, Colin had had few opportunities to meet deaf people who could share their own perspective of sound; indeed, the workshop was the first time he'd worked with deaf and hard-of-hearing adults. Surrounded by hearing people with little knowledge - if at all - of our culture, language and community values, Colin then evolved a practice around 'sound' sculptures, with a view to educating them about how people can struggle to hear the radio, television, and so on.

In Oxford, however, this was proved to be an incomplete view. Many of the attendees were late-deafened, yet none felt an affinity with the theory. In fact, the further removed we were from auditory concerns, the more we wanted to free up our visual imaginations. That famous Joshua Reynolds self-portrait? That wasn't us that day. We preferred to lipread, exchange notes or sign, and were surprised to find ourselves exploring a concept we hadn't really considered, or no longer related to.

Although our number was too small to properly represent a cross-section of the deaf and hard-of-hearing population, our attitude was typical of the many deaf people who view sound as being of little to no consequence in their lives.

In light of this, perhaps Colin Redwood could try exploring the cultural deaf sensibility and consider building other sensory aspects – sight, feel, touch, even smell – into his 'sound' sculptures much more. The subsequent responses from deaf participants could then be used to generate a far more rewarding glimpse into our culture – without alienating them.

See www.salonart.org.uk for a photo gallery of Colin's workshop at Modern Art Oxford.

Facing page: possibly the most famous work by a deaf or hard-of-hearing visual artist - Joshua Reynolds' Portrait of a Deaf Man, c. 1775. Printed with courtesy of Tate.



Comment

As part of our commitment to encouraging diversity within deaf and hard-of-hearing visual art practice, Salon makes a point of regularly presenting PowerPoint examples of artists over history who have creatively explored their deaf experiences in various ways.

These have so far generated the biggest response from artists and audiences – the following of which is just a selection:

“I am going to listen to the fire in my belly! The main thing I brought home with me afterwards was the question of identity relating to Deaf Art.”

“I have learnt a lot from the artists’ profiles, whether they were deaf or hard-of-hearing and how that contributed to their work.”

“I liked that Deaf Art presentation. It engaged us in interesting conversation.”

“Great motivation!”

“This really brought deaf and hard-of-hearing visual artists together by way of sharing ideas.”

“Proof that given the correct exposure, deaf visual art has the power to transcend all barriers.”

“I am now interested in finding ways in which the auditory and visual worlds have been interpreted by deaf artists in the past.”

“I have to say that presentation was my favourite part of the day. It was so fascinating, it never occurred to me that they would do that!”

The presentation will be shown again next year at Modern Art Oxford. For more info, please email info@salonart.org.uk

Photo by Miles Thomas



In The Frame

The Whispering Rhythm of the Wind by Sheng-Kai Chou, 2007. (Photo by Miles Thomas) A delicate piece created at King's Wood, Kent, already under threat from being within stampeding distance of fallow deer. Taking its cue from Wassily Kandinsky, *Whispering Rhythm...* entwines young, naked sweet chestnut branches with their own stripped bark into a lyrical visual interpretation of the undulations of the wind whistling through the forest. This can be seen in progress on our forthcoming DVD documentary, *Salon in King's Wood*.

Profile

Through drawing on her own experiences, Caroline Ward's televisual pieces highlight the inadequacy of sound in deaf people's lives. *Six Screens* (cover image), made with a Dada-South bursary in 2003, shows six television screens coming on, one by one, with a talking head. All six heads are filmed from the back, ensuring that the eventual babble of voices is never deciphered through lipreading: a perfect reflection of the everyday barriers we face.

Another video piece from 2004, *Out of Place* (below), explores our dependence on subtitles and how this exposes us to misinterpretation. With handheld camerawork applied documentary-style, the film follows a man on a journey to see his girlfriend. English subtitles accompany the Italian voice-over, but deliberately echo what the voice-over sounds like, thus breaching English linguistic rules and providing a translation completely out of sync with the picture.

Below: Still from Out of Place, 2004. Both Out of Place and Six Screens are © Caroline Ward.

