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Winter, Judith and Paterson, Toby (2015) *Thresholds*. Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop.

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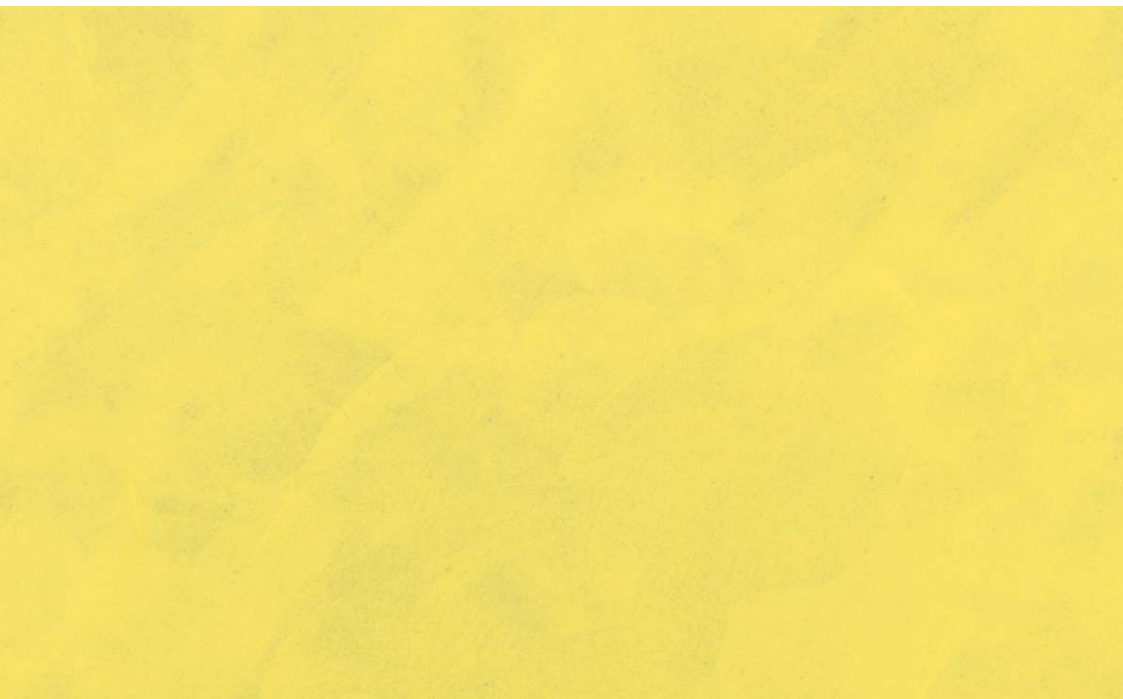
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An abstract geometric composition featuring several rectangular blocks of color and texture. A large yellow block is in the top left. A teal block is in the top right. A dark grey block is in the top center. A light grey block is in the top right, overlapping the teal block. A light grey block is in the middle left. A light grey block is in the middle right. A dark grey block is in the bottom left. A dark grey block is in the bottom center. A light grey block is in the bottom right. The text 'THRESHOLDS' and 'TOBY PATERSON' is in the bottom right corner.

THRESHOLDS
TOBY PATERSON



THRESHOLDS TOBY PATERSON

MAGGIE'S CANCER CARING CENTRES | CREATIVE SCOTLAND | EDINBURGH SCULPTURE WORKSHOP



FOREWORD SANDY NAIRNE

Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres have been created with the belief that good architecture and art have the power to transform: to support excellence in healthcare and to make effective connections between people. This is why new architecture and art have such an important role at each Maggie's Centre: places about people, community, hope and inspiration.

This new approach to cancer care was created by the landscape designer Maggie Keswick Jencks following her own diagnosis with cancer, together with her husband, the architectural theorist and landscape architect Charles Jencks. Towards the end of her life they worked closely with Maggie's medical team, which included the oncology nurse, Laura Lee, who is now Chief Executive of Maggie's as a nationwide charity. Maggie Keswick Jencks made the argument for creating places that would offer advice and support, on a walk-in basis, to complement the work of cancer units in NHS hospitals. Following the lead set in 1995 by architect Richard Murphy for the Maggie's Centre in Edinburgh, and then Frank Gehry for Dundee, each is designed by an architect of world class standing.

Charles Jencks has described these spaces as a kind of 'hybrid architecture', close to the hospital but far enough away to 'create another world'. In 1994 Maggie Keswick Jencks wrote a personal reflection on her own experiences, entitled *A View from the Front Line*, at the heart of which is an inspiring and courageous philosophy of life, with an understanding of how the environment constantly conditions one's outlook, making good design crucial to promoting wellbeing. As she put it: 'Above all what matters is not to lose the joy of living in the fear of dying'.

Over twenty years and with 18 Maggie's Centres (including one online centre) completed, Maggie's as a charity is widely respected for how it commissions architects and designers. An architect is invited to consider the location and circumstances of each potential centre. Some aspects of design develop from the need to make a welcoming building that can also house different functions: consulting and meeting areas, as well as the communal area and 'kitchen table' that is a central feature in each Maggie's Centre. The creative imagination of the architect is also linked with landscape design and interior work to establish the right fittings, textures and furnishings. Chairs and cushions, as well as flowers and surrounding plants, matter very much!

Art within Maggie's has developed perhaps more idiosyncratically. There is a notable and growing collection of art works, mostly donated or lent by artists, with major gifts such as that from the Eduardo Paolozzi estate, an artist who was close to Maggie Keswick Jencks, or small groups of works such as those offered to Maggie's Glasgow by Callum Innes. In 2010 the Maggie's Art Group was formed, as a group of arts professionals: to advise on collections development and management issues, help suggest artists to approach, and guide discussions as to what art might complement the ideas and approaches of each architect. Maggie's Board members Charles Jencks and Marcia Blakenham have been amongst those to make very productive connections with artists. As Chair, I hope the Maggie's Art Group can offer a critical perspective across the growing number of Maggie's Centres, and help guide partnership and collaboration with local and national organisations, and with curators and potential donors who share the same belief in the positive relationship between good architecture, good art and a profound sense of wellbeing.

It is this creative ethos which has been an important touchstone for the *Thresholds* project, proposed by artist Toby Paterson and independent curator Judith Winter. The Art Group was drawn to a proposal that did not set a specific brief ahead of time, but instead enabled the artist and curator to share their vantage point as visitors, with the staff and visitors to Maggie's Centres across Scotland. Their role was largely as interlocutors – individuals in conversation – within these significant places. And like the architects, they enjoyed an intensely creative process, but in their case relating to spaces that already existed. So *Thresholds* emerged from responses to the seven centres completed or being built in Scotland: Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh, Fife, Glasgow, Inverness and Lanarkshire. This freedom to follow a generative impulse was only possible through the generous support of Creative Scotland, which has been keen to support arts professionals working in new ways. Members of Maggie's Art Group hope that the success of this project will feed into conversations about the transformative potential of collaborations between artists, architects and designers and into continuing debates about art within a healthcare context.

We were delighted that Toby Paterson was willing to work as an artist in such an open project. His work seemed particularly appropriate as it has been informed by how we perceive and move through architectural spaces. Like many artists, he is engaged with how art can be part of everyday life. But he has also been rethinking the legacies of abstract painting and post-war art and architecture in ways that seemed particularly relevant to the merging of the public and domestic realms, a characteristic of Maggie's Centres. His response has been to develop a series of new, modest-scaled works that mirror his experience of walking between the hospital and each centre. The project has had a deliberately slow gestation, guided by its curatorial collaboration, resulting in a sequence of drawings which Paterson

describes as 'memory drawings' and, ultimately, in a group of constructed reliefs. The works will be presented at Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, as part of the 2015 Edinburgh Visual Arts Festival, and taken together they form the starting point of this publication.

Following their collective display, each relief and associated drawing will be sited in the centre that influenced its making. The Maggie's Art Group hopes that as a sequence of works *Thresholds* might trigger further conversations between the staff and visitors in each centre. And while each relief will be in a separate place, they exist as a group formed out of the same process of construction and curating. We are equally pleased that Judith Winter has been able to support the Maggie's creative team through her curatorial expertise, both on site and in shaping this publication.

On behalf of the Maggie's Art Group I should like to thank Marie McQuade, Development Director (Culture and Innovation) for Maggie's, and Kathryn Lamont-Smith, Arts Coordinator, and all the Centre Heads and their staff, across Scotland, for making the project possible. Further thanks go to Sorcha Carey, Director, Edinburgh Art Festival, and Dan Brown at the Edinburgh Sculpture Workshop, for enabling *Thresholds* to reach a wider audience. I should also like to thank all those who have contributed to this publication including Art Group member and writer Richard Cork, the social anthropologist and writer Rachel Harkness, Jo Deans, designer, Gilmar Ribeiro, photographer and Die Keure, printers. Finally, Maggie's would like to thank Toby Paterson, Judith Winter and Creative Scotland for creating this innovative pilot project, which we hope will lead to the support of other similarly creative initiatives in the healthcare field.

SHAPING THE WORLD WE INHABIT RICHARD CORK

Art is far too important to be confined within galleries alone, and our environment desperately lacks the humanising force of the artist's imagination. The rise of the gallery system, taken as a whole, has managed to imply that art should be equated with exhibits made for display in showrooms unrelated to all the other social spaces where artists are no longer encouraged to work. The cornucopia of images held by the commercial galleries clustering together in a few major western cities contrasts bitterly with the expanses beyond. Most of our urban environment today is dominated by the blank, standardised facades of an architecture which has eradicated the artist's potential contribution altogether. The only visual images permitted widespread circulation within this impersonal context are advertisements. Their proliferation has vastly exceeded the prophecies of John Ruskin, who complained as early as 1872 that 'the fresco-painting of the bill-sticker is likely, so far as I can see, to become the principal fine art of Modern Europe: here, at all events, it is now the principal source of street effect. Giotto's time is past...but the bill-poster succeeds.'

All the same, there are plenty of other places in our cities, both interior and exterior, where imaginative artists could benefit from the opportunity to ally their work with the specific character of a location. Just as Henry Moore did when he was alive, they would surely welcome invitations to give art a particularised setting, where it has room to establish an identity away from the press of other visual distractions. If a work is good enough it deserves to be lodged in a space of its own, where the experience of looking at art is bound up with the larger experience of visiting the place it inhabits. Instead of

hunting for an artist's work in the immense, anonymous depositories which museums often resemble, the viewer would be able to find it in a context where its individuality is honoured to the full.

I believe the time is propitious for such a venture. Attitudes are changing, not least within the architectural profession which used to be so intolerant about the prospect of collaborating with artists. Now that dissatisfaction with the barest and most functional extreme of architecture has become so widespread, we are surely entitled to hope that far more buildings in the future might be vitalised by contributions from artists. I do not mean bland embellishments in the foyer, commissioned as an afterthought and tacked on to a structure designed without any consideration of the potential role art might play. Nor am I recommending that 'community' muralists continue to see their work in terms of grappling with the doomed task of 'brightening up' -- what a terrible expression -- the mistakes made by architects of the past. I am talking about a new state of mind on both sides, whereby artist and architect learn once again how to enter into a fully collaborative relationship with each other.

Outstanding ventures have occurred throughout the past century, and no one would dispute the magnitude of their achievement. Monet's great series of paintings, the *Decoration des Nymphéas* installed in elliptical rooms at the Paris Orangerie according to the artist's own specifications, was the culmination of his long career. Schwitters never surpassed his *Merzbau*, the proliferating chambers of memory and fantasy which

filled room after room of his house in Hanover until it threatened to expel the artist himself from the premises. Both these examples are intensely personal works, and in Schwitters' case always remained very private: an Allied bomb destroyed the *Merzbau* in 1943. But other, equally eminent modern works have been created for more public venues. Picasso's *Guernica*, now lodged in a Madrid museum, was originally painted for a site of very specific dimensions in a building designed by Josep Lluís Sert as the Spanish pavilion at the Paris World Exhibition of 1937. Nor is this list confined to interior works. One of the most potent and memorable of all modern sculptures is installed on the outskirts of Tirgu-Jiu, where Brancusi's *Endless Column* extends its reiterated steel units far into the Romanian sky.

I can see no reason why works of this stature should cease to be placed in spaces other than galleries and museums. Indeed, if we acknowledge the importance of ensuring that imaginative art penetrates as many aspects of our daily lives as possible, then we should become able greatly to spread the activities of artists throughout society. But we must never allow this process to happen indiscriminately. If the widespread dissemination of art beyond the gallery is initiated without any genuine awareness of the places involved, then the whole enterprise will be irretrievably betrayed by a flood of inferior work.

We should pursue our aims with the understanding of context exercised by an artist like Richard Long, whose attitude towards the spaces where he works always seems to me exemplary. Long has never abused the remote regions of the world by disfiguring them,

or erecting alien structures which pay no attention to their surroundings. He respects the earth, and always takes his cue from the places he explores. The terrain itself suggests the form which his work will assume. He only uses the materials he finds there and his rearrangement of the stones, branches, bones or pebbles is kept within very discreet limits. In every case, the marks and rock-clusters he leaves behind are simple, direct and fused with the locations they occupy.

It would, of course, be unwise to suggest that all artists who work beyond the gallery should aim at establishing such an intimate and harmonious relationship between a work and its setting. There are as many ways of making art as there are potential sites waiting to benefit from its presence, and every artist will have individual views about the most appropriate strategies to pursue. But I believe that something valuable can be learned from Long's insistence that 'my outdoor sculptures are places. The material and the idea are of the place; sculpture and place are one and the same.' This acute consciousness of and responsibility towards the setting should always be held at the forefront of the artist's mind. If it is neglected, and the art is merely dumped in a courtyard or a stretch of parkland without any attempt to respect the context, then we might as well pack in all the talk about humanising our environment and conclude that museums have become the only appropriate repositories for modern art. That is why it is so important to bring about a genuine shift in our awareness, away from visual muzak for hotel lobbies and towards a close understanding between patron and artists which produces works able to play a potent role in shaping the world we inhabit.

THRESHOLDS JUDITH WINTER & TOBY PATERSON

Maggie's Centres all have their own character and sensibility, having been designed as a response by individual architects to a very open brief that focuses simultaneously on the vision for a new model of cancer care and the specific characteristics of each site. These buildings are not designed by planning committees or through competitive competition, but are borne of meaningful conversations between individuals. Architects are invited to develop their proposals by those whom Maggie Keswick Jencks and her husband, the writer and landscape architect Charles Jencks, entrust to continue the legacy of their vision. The invited practices have all established their international reputations through the design of notable buildings and public spaces, here we notice that the scale and context allow these architects to create something that lies between public and private focused on recognising individual lives and 'open to anyone with any type of cancer and their families and friends.' (Laura Lee)

We started at the entrance of Maggie's at Gartnavel in Glasgow, a building designed by OMA founding partner Rem Koolhaas as a series of L shaped interlocking rooms that hold a garden within their interior. Like all Maggie's Centres it neighbours an existing NHS hospital. Early in the process we reflected on the centres as spaces that were inhabited and shaped through a complex range of experiences and human stories. Initially we moved forward and backwards in time to the narrative that led to the blueprint for this new cancer caring model created by Maggie shortly before her death in July 1995. We read again the very personal text that she published in *A View from the Front Line* in 1994 and it effortlessly became the leitmotif for the subsequent unfolding of our project.

This project emerges through conversation with staff, Maggie's Art Group and Creative Scotland. It begins by considering the role that art plays within each centre and exploring ways that artists and

curators might work beyond a museum or gallery context. As curator and artist we have a shared interest in thinking about these spaces that fall between categories. We are clear from the onset that the project should not be labelled as public art or socially engaged practice and we have no intention of moving across the professional territory into art therapy. The project then emerges unconventionally without a brief, but simply with a personal and professional interest in exploring the context and the founding principles that underpin the unique legacy of Maggie Keswick Jencks. We were both particularly moved by her clear and open account of dealing with a cancer diagnosis. At the heart of this blueprint was the consideration of the hospital environment. This is emphasised in her poignant description of how she is ushered from diagnosis to a windowless NHS corridor following news that her cancer had spread. This moment of being diagnosed and then moved into a corridor to deal with the life-changing prognosis creates a chain of meaningful thoughts and questions that are perpetually relevant. How do you shape environments that focus on human relationships and create conditions that give people time and space to absorb the complexity of the information they've been given and reflect upon such life-changing experiences? As Maggie noted:

"In general, hospitals are not patient-friendly. Illness shrinks the patient's confidence, and arriving for the first time at a huge NHS hospital is often a time of unnecessary anxiety. The NHS is obsessed with cutting waiting time – but waiting in itself is not so bad – it's the circumstances in which you have to wait that count. Overhead (sometimes even neon) lighting, interior spaces with no views out and miserable seating against the walls all contribute to extreme mental and physical enervation. Patients who arrive relatively hopeful soon start to wilt."

The *Thresholds* project values the possibility afforded by Maggie's Art Group and Creative Scotland to explore a way of working beyond the gallery that is formed by listening to what the process might have to tell us. Through this way of working a project began to suggest itself as opposed to being limited by potentially arbitrary predetermined constraints. We were also motivated by the question of how this process might shape and change our own practices and view, as arts professionals, on how life is lived, experienced and expressed.

For many personal and professional reasons we were very clear that we wanted to attempt to work slowly, to meander, to let ideas grow naturally and without unnecessary deadlines. Some of our thoughts were triggered following formal meetings in London with staff from Maggie's Centres, but more often than not they came out of incidental conversations that took place on journeys to and from each centre or through a chance remark around the kitchen table at the heart of each space. We found ourselves returning again and again to the moment of entering Maggie's from the neighbouring hospitals in Glasgow, Dundee, Kirkcaldy, Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Lanarkshire and Inverness. By focusing on this brief moment of unease, typical of an imminent event or something with an uncertain outcome, we both became aware of this liminal space and the transition from anonymous, prescribed systems to a space for the individual. Our understanding of this threshold relates closely here to the original meaning of the word from the verb in old German "to tread", rather than to a noun that describes a separation created by a wood or stone sill that delineates two distinct spaces. The seemingly prosaic movement from one space to another describe a boundary crossed or a turning point that begins to effect or elicit a whole series of new responses. However, in our view this crossing of a threshold is a relational process, where our sense of space is mobile: responding, exchanging, remembering and knowing.

This iterative quality is carried over into the making of the work itself, the physical outcome of our engagement with the people and places that constitute Maggie's legacy. Like the multifarious and characterful buildings that have been the locus for our contact with Maggie's Centre users, volunteers and staff, the works are carefully composed from a number elements: they incorporate texture and very specific colour and are constructed painstakingly. Rather than being guided by a universal brief, however, they have been generated in response to experiences of the distinct atmospheres within each of the Scottish centres, a manifestation of engagement with people and places.

These reliefs are made from aluminium, an adaptable modern material brought into being through intensive processes, but equally one that is touched and utilised without remark on a daily basis. It is quotidian. The reliefs have an architectonic quality that echoes (as do many of the centres) the history of modern art and architecture, a quality that speaks of the challenge of fulfilling high ideals. Collectively they are a family, a body of work borne from a linked series of encounters. Taken singly, however, they stand modestly as markers (or possibly punctuation points) for a very specific time and place: the individual centre from, and for, which they have been made.

Each has its own title, a prosaic term that is nevertheless salient to the total experience of the site of its eventual location. Together, as a body of work, the reliefs speak of solidarity, on their own they each embody autonomy. Gently they say that these two states need not be mutually exclusive.

For architects and others interested in ways of working these reliefs might create an association with constructed models, propositions of a future building or place. However, what we are proposing here is a counter-point to the model or prototype of the architect – a plan ahead of time. The reliefs are a construction of the artist's imagination, of his perception through movement in a given space and time. As the anthropologist Tim Ingold notes 'imagination is to roam, to cast about for a way ahead; it is not to follow a sequence of steps towards a pre-determined goal. In this sense, imagination is the generative impulse of a life that is perpetually pulled along by the hope, promise and expectation of its continuation.'¹ These constructed reliefs are at one and the same time distinct and connected, isolated and related. They reference a very specific memory and experience at each threshold, but are also tenuously linked like a family of works.

Through ongoing discussion with Maggie's Art Group and Creative Scotland we are delighted to be able to gift each work to its corresponding centre. The specific location of each work will be considered in collaboration with Maggie's staff. Further to this, we hope that this modest publication can act as a trigger for ongoing conversation about the meaning of art within each centre and the possibilities afforded by enabling art to be commissioned through a similar process.

contemplation
and conversation - nearby
a kettle boils

tongues enfolding
new ways of telling
life's story

kaleidoscopic -
the shadows dance
the sun's return

clutchable-forms
colour of heavy skies
offer welcome balm

interlopers
perched on high
sing to six brothers

together
we lift the walls of this place
restoring order

graphite nets
capture fleeting moments
palpable still

SEVEN POEMS AND SOME THEORY DR. RACHEL J. HARKNESS

The idea of the threshold is a rich one irrespective of approach, however in Social Anthropology - the study of contemporary human culture - we have particularly developed discussions of it in relation to the concept of liminality. In the main, this is due to the influence of two thinkers: Arnold Van Gennep, writing in the first decade of the 1900s, and Victor Turner, writing from the 1960s to the early 80s. They both took the notion of the liminal, from the latin for threshold (limen), and made it central to their thinking.

Van Gennep was researching rites of passage and ritual events in social life (marriages or coming-of-age rituals are good examples to think with) and in his theorising he determined a general three-part structure to these rituals - as experienced by the person undergoing them. These three parts are a first phase of separation whereby a person loses their social state or status, a second or middle transition phase which he dubbed the 'liminal', and finally a third phase of reintegration or re-assimilation where the person returns to a social role or status, but a different one to that held previously. Building upon this work by Van Gennep, Turner then looked in greater detail at the liminal phase. He argued that this period was one in which people would find themselves betwixt and between, neither here nor there in terms of their social world, somewhere in-between the structures of society. However, this phase was also where they would find, as he put it, "a realm of pure possibility", a space almost out of time and full of potential. Furthermore, those that would share the liminal space would be equalized by it and would together experience a powerful sense of community, called *communitas*.

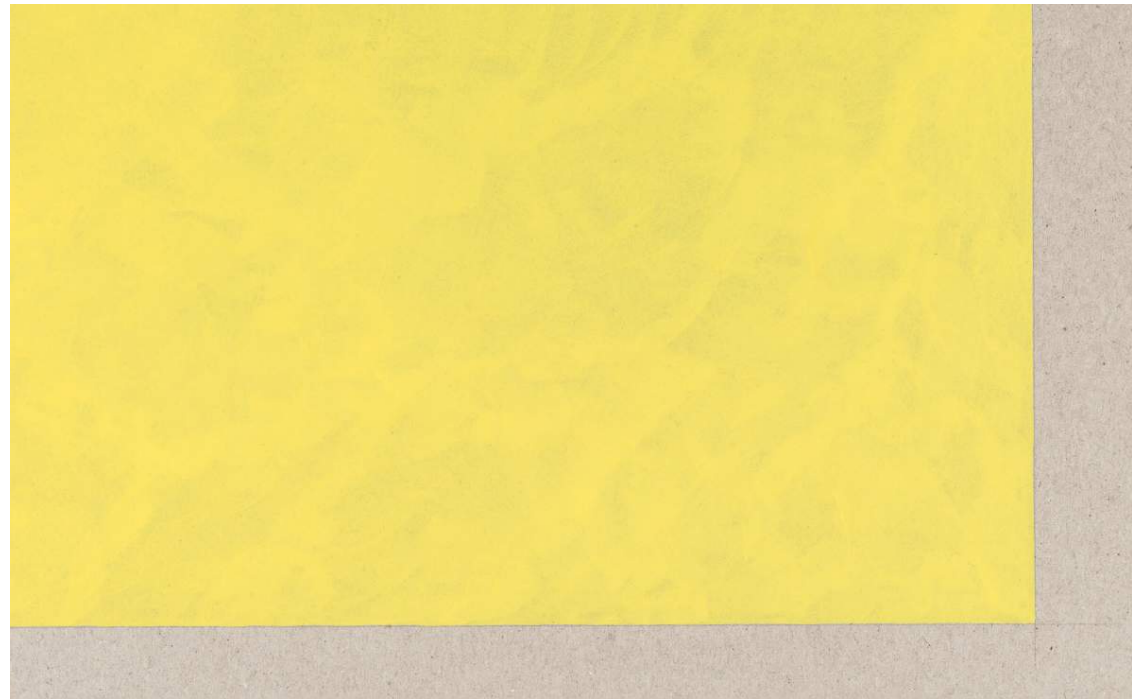
In light of these theories, the threshold becomes something broadened beyond its sense of the boundary or the part of the doorway which must be crossed upon entering or leaving a building. Turner and Van Gennep encourage us to think of the threshold in terms of *the journey* across rather than, say, the architectural object of the doorway. The *Thresholds* project for the Maggie's Centres in Scotland by Toby Paterson and Judith Winter seems to speak to this sense of threshold: it is to this movement, coupled with a quiet calmness, that the project keeps returning me.



THRESHOLDS

MAGGIE'S GLASGOW	Gartnavel General Hospital (Rem Koolhaas, OMA)
MAGGIE'S EDINBURGH	Western General Hospital (Richard Murphy Architects)
MAGGIE'S FIFE	Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy (Zaha Hadid)
MAGGIE'S DUNDEE	Ninewells Hospital (Frank Gehry)
MAGGIE'S ABERDEEN	Aberdeen Royal Infirmary (Snøhetta)
MAGGIE'S HIGHLANDS	Raigmore Hospital, Inverness (Page/Park Architects)
MAGGIE'S LANARKSHIRE	Monklands Hospital (Reiach and Hall)

MAGGIE'S GLASGOW

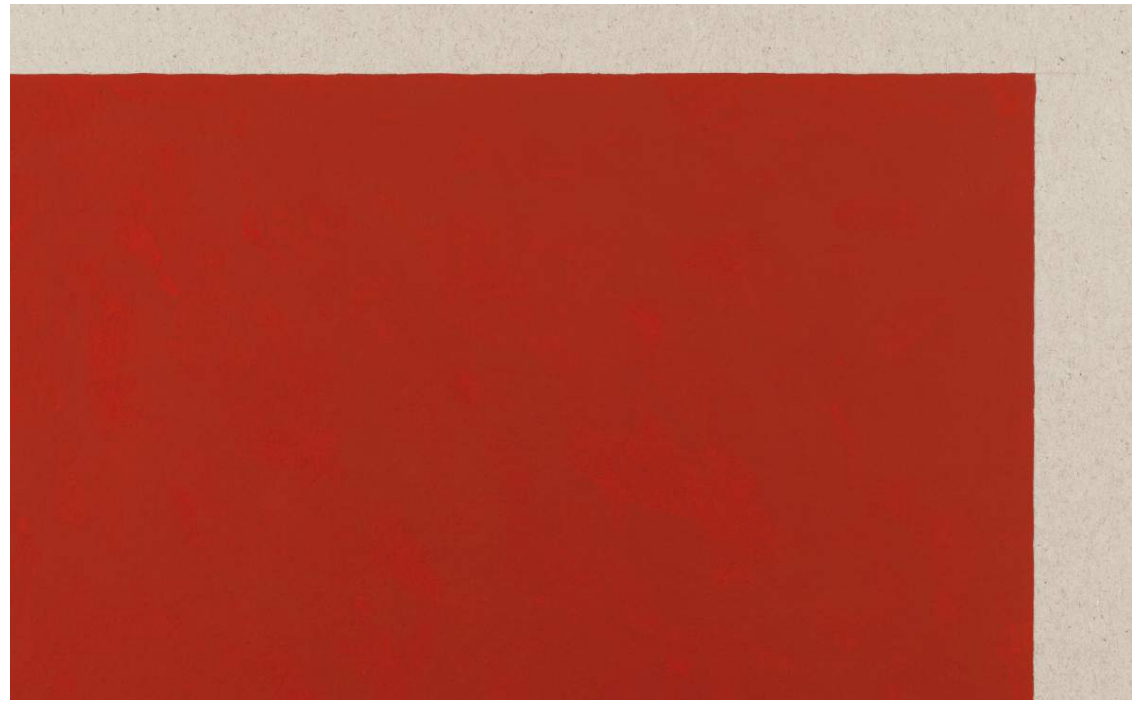


Crooked Path, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
270 x 305 x 210 mm





MAGGIE'S EDINBURGH



Two Ways, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
222 x 295 x 142 mm





MAGGIE'S FIFE



Overlooked Glade, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
232 x 240 x 160 mm





MAGGIE'S DUNDEE



Sundeck, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
195 x 272 x 202 mm



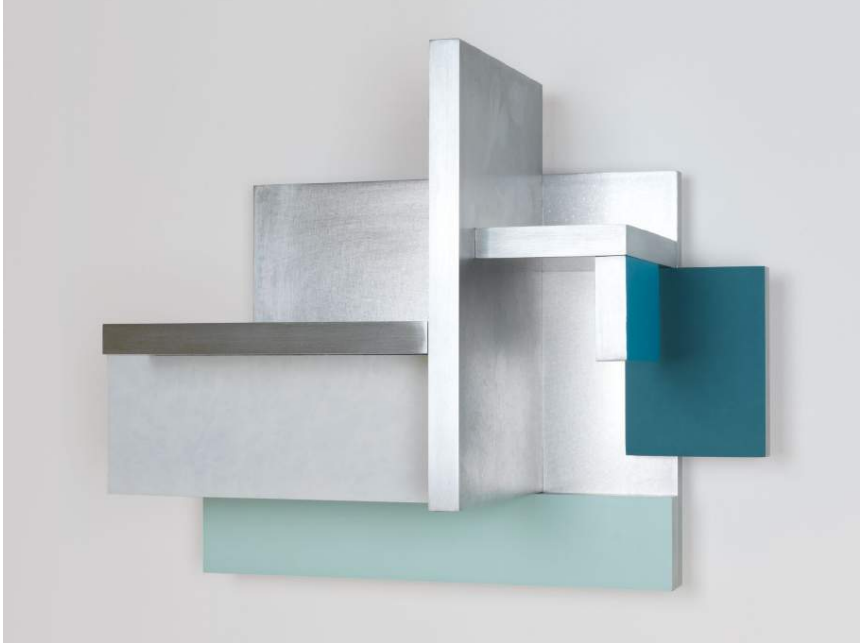


MAGGIE'S ABERDEEN



New Threshold, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
220 x 275 x 140 mm





MAGGIE'S HIGHLANDS



Verdigris, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
220 x 205 x 167 mm





MAGGIE'S LANARKSHIRE



Reflection, 2015
Acrylic on aluminium
270 x 215 x 192 mm





IN CONVERSATION

The following text has been edited from a series of ongoing conversations between the curator and artist .

Perhaps we should begin with the title that you have given to this project. Can you say something about why you refer to the project as *Thresholds*?

The title emerged during the experience of visiting each of the Maggie's Centres in Scotland, it came from a split-second flash of doubt and apprehension that I felt at the beginning of the project as I first entered the Glasgow Centre at Gartnavel. To feel this as a healthy person visiting a Maggie's Centre seemed absurd and was uncomfortable to me, but it offered at least a glimpse of the monumental emotional implications faced by those who turn to the centres for support.

Given that we were responding to a series of places that are so nuanced in terms of their form and so emotionally complex in their function, it seemed crucial that the way the project was presented immediately acknowledged the intricacy of the context. Ultimately the title was a way of suggesting both a literal and a metaphorical experience of moving between places or situations.

When you entered the space what were your first impressions?

The experience was overwhelmingly one of welcoming and open-minded human contact. Actually this has universally been the case, even once it was revealed that we were visiting as artist and curator and our role was simply to understand more and observe the centres' day-to-day working. We had no specific plan and were interested in just letting the process suggest a way forward and Maggie's staff seemed genuinely open to this approach. This openness has made an abiding impression on me, as of course has the unique nature of each of the pieces of architecture we've encountered.

What were your expectations?

Beyond the knowledge of each architectural practice and any association with other examples of their work I was most interested in their location, or at the very least the nature of one's route there. Maggie's Centres all have a very specific relationship to the more anonymous architecture of an adjacent hospital. However, this path or movement between spaces forms an impression that is always superseded in the memory by the welcome one receives on crossing the threshold.

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Your work usually responds to your perception of the built environment, but how do you think this project differed from your usual approach?

I am frequently interested in overlooked architecture and the work draws on the experience of moving through such spaces. This is sometimes expressed in wall-paintings, collage, installation and more recently in smaller works such as these constructed reliefs. Normally, this initial exposure to a place will be followed by a process that attempts to tease out which constituent elements made it intriguing to me: materials, spatial composition, colour, conditions of light or a combination of these things. All of this jostles for position as I review my documentary photographs of the site in question.

However, in the case of *Thresholds* I have attempted to strip this method out, not least because of my suspicion that I'm falling into reliance on a process within my work that could amount to a series of tropes. I tried to respond to the experiences of each space we visited in a much more passive way, allowing a subjective understanding of the nature of each place to develop slowly. I took this approach because I was acutely conscious of our position as observers of interactions and places that were already defined by an awareness of their meaning: it certainly

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doesn't take an artist to draw the attention of centre users, volunteers and staff to the gravity of the enterprise they're engaged in.

The experience you talk of also reminds me of Maggie's text *A View from the Front Line* that very openly describes Maggie Keswick Jencks' experiences following diagnosis...

I agree, alongside subjective impressions the collective and humane essence delineated so clearly in that text provided one of the triggers for the project. Maggie's evocation of being ushered out into a fluorescent lit hospital corridor seconds after being given her diagnosis is an image I've carried with me constantly and it's been at the forefront of my mind on every centre visit we've made and whilst considering my responses.

As a result of engaging with this context how do you think this approach differs from other public realm projects?

There is clearly something universal in the approach to life this ethos represents and it should hardly be surprising. It seems to me that Maggie was applying to her changing personal circumstances a previously held and deep-seated belief in the importance of well considered places being salient to the living of a good life. So consideration

of oneself in relation to one's environment is an essential element in the defining of personal ideas and identity. It follows that a direct connection can be made at a specific pressure point, such as the experience of a healthcare environment, but also that this can carry over into life in general.

As artist and curator it was maybe inevitable that we responded positively to a model that looks at ways to upend one's expectations of a type of spatial and cultural experience. Perhaps the main ways in which this project differs from a regular public realm commission has been the ability for artist and curator to essentially write their own brief or follow where the project might lead. We have operated free from constraints on our thinking or areas of activity and without any pressure of expectation about what might be the result. Despite the fact that these conditions should really be a pre-requisite for making art, experience tells me that this is rarely the case.

I'm also interested in how your own way of working as an artist might have changed through just being open to what is not yet known?

It is probably too soon to answer that question, but perhaps the most evident shift was that I made a decision not to use

a camera. At that first visit in Glasgow I felt the presence of a camera would detract from the conversations we were having and would register as intrusive. The flash of doubt I felt on my arrival fixed an image of entering the building in my mind and when I reflected upon the experience later, it seemed that this visual and emotional memory was a good starting point for considering the way forward. I made a sketch of what I recalled and that suggested an approach. The memory drawings came about as part of this process. It's an entirely different way of working for me.

So from those drawings you started to imagine a series of constructed reliefs. Can you say something about the form and scale of the reliefs?

The physical scale of the individual works was a result of the desire to link all of the Scottish Centres within the project by making a work specifically for each location. Practical considerations required any resulting work to be modest in size but it also seemed appropriate that they should be of a domestic scale that would reflect the buildings for which they were made. I hoped that this project could set up the notion of association across a family of things that nevertheless had their own distinct identities.

Through doing this I wanted to quietly reflect the co-dependent themes of individuality and collective experience that have emerged from our discussions.

I'm interested to know how these reliefs relate to other artists' work across time? I'm thinking here of works created by British artists like Victor Pasmore, Anthony Hill or perhaps more clearly to the works of Mary Martin...

The artists you mention have long fascinated me. Mary Martin's work is perhaps most apposite here, and not simply for the obvious similarities in orthogonal composition. Mary Martin thought a lot about how art can become a factor in everyday situations, most prominently in projects like her sculptural screen for Musgrave Park Hospital in Belfast, things that present themselves to the viewer with modesty rather than clamouring for attention.

About a decade ago at the Whitworth Museum in Manchester I saw a small Perspex relief by Mary Martin. When I walked into the large first floor gallery, it caught my eye and drew me in. On another day, under different conditions, maybe for another viewer, this might not have happened but once it was noticed the whole space seemed to pinwheel around this modest object. This visual experience has remained in my memory and has lately

reasserted itself. The scale of these reliefs means they almost need to be 'discovered' and that seems right for the context we're working with. I want to make things that don't demand your attention but that have the potential to draw your attention.

I like the way you describe these abstract works, because many people view abstraction as cold and impersonal. Can you say more about your working process and the materials you use?

If you look closely at Mary Martin's work you can see the fallible, human hand and ultimately that's what makes it so beautiful for me. The human effect of the making process both affirms and undercuts the idealism that a movement like British Constructionism stood for. When such approaches try to suppress the human evidence in the resulting work it seems to me they often unintentionally amplify it.

I'm looking for a way to make visual experience palpable, when it comes to the practical considerations of how to do this in a way that can be presented to a viewer it seems to me more appropriate to use prosaic or industrial materials like Perspex, aluminium or even the wall itself as a way of retaining a connection with the source

of the ideas. Parts of the process, such as the milling of aluminium components, are also handled by anonymous specialist fabricators so other locations beyond the studio and hands other than mine are incorporated into a collaborative process that reflects the aggregative nature of the thinking behind the making. I simply find the materials I chose to make my work with more appropriate than, say, oil and canvas. I want what I make to be images in the world rather than images of the world and I can see no reason as a painter to turn my back in a reactionary way on what was achieved by artists associated with the Bauhaus, De Stijl, Constructivism, Minimalism and so forth.

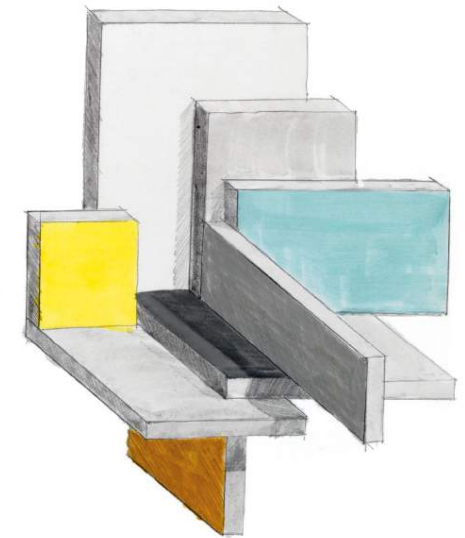
Whilst we were putting together this publication it was important to try and document how the forms change as you pass by them and that is why they are photographed from three distinct angles. I imagine that this is a way of trying to express movement through space?

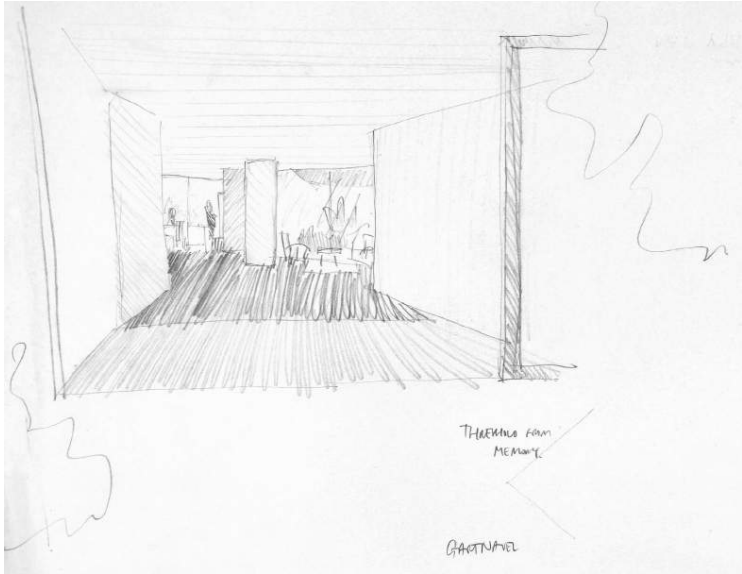
Precisely, the parallax is crucial to this notion of the work being in the world, especially in the case of this project with Maggie's. This is the point at which painting starts to fail for me, and has done historically for so many other painters. The impetus for much of my work comes out

of the tension inherent in the challenge of trying to fix something that's impossible to pin down because of the effect of time and proximity on one's perception. There is inevitably futility in this, possibly to the point of it becoming a quixotic pursuit, but engaging things can nevertheless come out of the process.

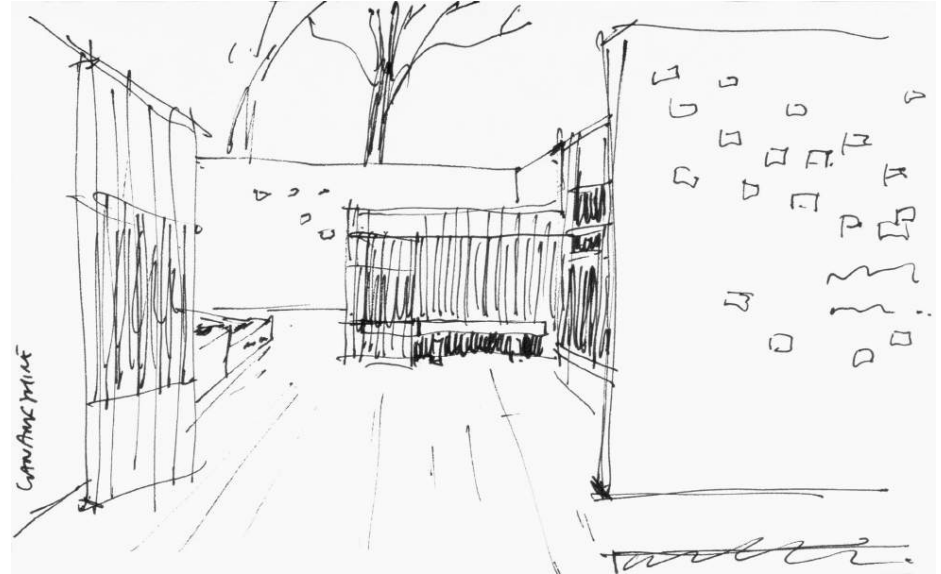
This series of works arises from a personal response to both the prosaic procession between buildings (home and hospital, hospital and Maggie's Centre) and the less immediately defined liminal space such movements can open up. Maggie's corridor experience was defined by her knowledge of what lay, metaphorically, to either side of that unprepossessing space.

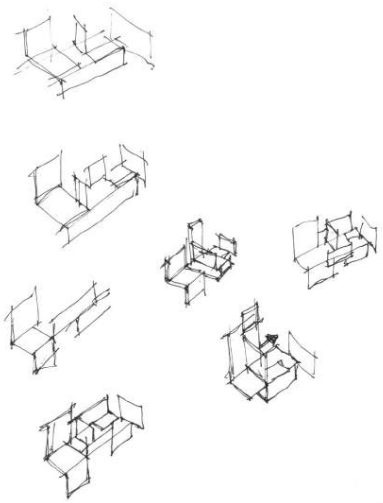
If these constructed reliefs are about anything, it's the uniqueness of each individual experience because they stand as a single instance out of a potentially infinite number of ways in which the impact of that movement might be articulated. As such they should be seen as the precise opposite of a definitive statement, a beginning...





Memory drawings, 2014 / 2015

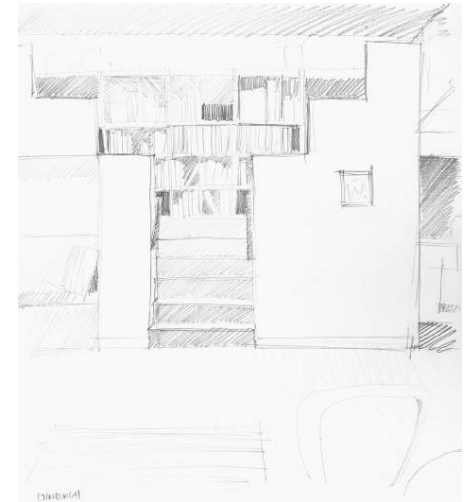




Thresholds study, 2014



Memory drawings, 2014



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