

'6 Elements of Installation'

BA Dissertation [distinction]1994



Synopsis:

An examination [theory / appreciation] of the specific areas of installation art that are related to core fundamentals of Architecture: space - light - surface - form - shelter - structure - context - elements - etc.

Installations are usually generated in relation to a specific context , be it urban, rural, or gallery.

The process by which the artists produce some of their works and the frequently finite existence of the pieces excites me. The element of Interaction both by the artists and the spectator interests me.

INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

There can be a fine boarderline between Architecture and Art. Architecture does sometimes resemble the forms of sculpture,(and indeed could be viewed as sculpture) ,and Art does sometimes resemble the built form, which is the end result of architectural endeavor. The division of the two is in the attitude of the beholder. My observations of this division have lead me to discovering the field of Installation Art which seems to embody, within its makeup,the very essence of architecture.In its physical manifestations, what I view as Installation Art, all have a direct corelation with what I recognise as the core fundamental properties of Architecture. It is these so called 'fundamentals' that form the body of my investigation with both there physical and intellectual relationships to both Architecture and to Installation Art.

Installation Art may have as many topics within its agenda as there are people with points to make or ideas to deal with working in the medium. However the majority of contemporary makers of installation, tend to work primarily with in an urban historical and social context which suggests that relationships to our built environment are close to hand, be they primary or resultant relationships.

The medium differs from other artistic traditions in key ways which seperates it from them. It can be viewed as an expression of Gesamtkunstwerk, whose concept is that of a 'total work of art'. Its very existence in the visual arts is a product of the visual arts. It is in a sense a hybrid of a vast spectrum of disciplines, as "It grows out of the individual narratives presented by architecture, painting, sculpture, theatre and performance"¹ . It is also important to note that it is not only artforms that make up the ingredients of Installation, as contained within its fabric exists strong influences by art movements such as Concept Art, Land Art and Dada.

Many people have little idea of what I'm on about when I mention the subject, as indeed I did not before realising that it was what I was trying to write about with out knowing it. I wish then to examine Installation Art with an overview of its relationships to architecture. The main focus being an investigation into what the essence of Installation Art is, by an examination of its wide spectrum through examples which speak most clearly to me about its apparent merits, thereby describing through analysis. It is then the following 'Elements' which I am proposing group together in making up the description of Installation Art...

ELEMENT 1 Site-Specificity

"Sculpture should bear a direct relationship to the space around it". Ruskin.²

Ruskin saw sculpture as an essential element of his architectural projects as can be seen when experiencing his buildings. The decoration becomes part of the whole aesthetic helping to shape the visual effect of the building. This sculpture forms an integral part of the building as it is located within the very fabric of the building. It is inseperable. It's site is the building and the building, in part, is its sculpture. A symbiotic relationship.

For me the heart of Installtion Art must be the realisation of 'site-specificity'. The very term 'Installation Art' suggests the

element of installation to be a fundamental requirement. Installation is after all the process of placing something in an environment which implies that it has a direct relationship with that environment. The difference between an 'installed work' and 'Installation' is of prime importance. To install a work of art is to simply locate it within an environment, and to create a piece of Installation is to make it with a direct correlation to the environment with which it exists. There must be a direct physical relationship to its location.

A minimalist modern sculpture which finds itself in front of a huge office building can not be described as an Installation as it has only been installed there. Someone has merely located it due to its ownership. Thus its failure, in terms of installation, lies in the lack of its physical relationship to its environment. It will then appear to be more like a giant logo rather than a work of Art robbing it of its possible merit. According to Thierry de Duve, Naum Gabo 'sculpture'(1.1) at the Bijenkorf (1954-57) in Rotterdam is one such failure. An understanding of the work of Gabo will however relinquish his responsibility as he stated with his brother Antoine Pevsner in their 'Realistic Manifesto' of 1920 that his sculpture did not shape itself from the outside, but from the inside thereby negating any relationship to its environment. It is therefore, in a sense, able to be located at such a site if viewed as an object, the problem then being its association with its environment at the Bijenkorf. Speaking as an Architect though I'm not sure that I agree with Thierry de Duve. Personally I feel that the sculpture is well related to the building.

Le Corbusier's buildings also have a void relationship with their locations, being part of the International Style. The Villa Savoye (1.2) seeming to 'float' above its location and hence being able to be to 'sail' around the world to any site. It negates a relationship to place which is so fundamental to Installation. As Rosalind Krauss suggested, "it may be easier to explain what sculpture isn't rather than what it is"³. I'm therefore describing what Installation isn't to try and gain a clearer picture of what it is, I'm not trying to take anything away from these artists, I admire them for their works.

Sculpture is an art form of physical reality which talks through form and material etc. and most importantly space, as Carl Andre said "Sculpture is about seizing space and holding onto it"⁴ It is therefore inseparable from architecture which shares these exact same necessities. The difference between these and Installation is that Installation takes all of these elements and invents itself. The site being its essential component, as a building is landed and formed in its own specific context, installed, borrowing the space and harbouring that space. Andre's 'seizing space' refers to space in relation to the 'object', not to the environment. The importance of this element of space can be seen in many of the examples that I have chosen to represent the notion and importance of site-specificity.

As suggested by the co-directors of the Museum of Installation in London, "The Suprematist, El Lissitzky created what is arguably the first installation, the 'Proun Environment' in 1923 (1.3). He alluded to the notion of space as a physical material with properties such as wood or stone. Space could therefore be turned into a form."⁵ He therefore, 'claimed space'. The architect builds around it and the 'sculptor' creates within it. Kurt Schwitters was also building his works in parts of rooms during the same period, gradually adding parts bit by bit to 'realize' the theory of the Gesamtkunstwerk. The example shown is called 'Merzbau'.(1.4)

Bierut born Mona Hatoum's installation at the Mario Flecha Gallery in 1992, entitled (or not as the case may be) 'Untitled'(1.5), subtly encloses spaces within the gallery using stainless steel wires as boundary elements. This piece embodies the inherent qualities of installation. Without its environment being present the work would not exist. Its environment is indeed a white gallery, but it is an entirely white gallery, even the floors have turned white. This is not, I suggest, so that the gallery recedes into nothing, but instead it becomes integral. The wires do not act as a support for a painting, but are the work itself. The effect is extremely minimal, yet the result captures the energy retained within the space that it contains. The wires pass through the walls of the environment at times thus depriving us of witnessing the conclusion of the tension enclosed within the taut steel. It is this direct physical relationship with the gallery which is its 'site-specificity', wrapping around the column and passing through the walls, It exists as part of the gallery, and not within it, the two merge into one.

Space, which is so important to site-specificity, is indeed the source of all matter as, "Physics has shown that all matter is born from the vacuum"^{5a} So physical creations which deal directly with a particular space then must be one in the same, as the matter is originated from space and the space embodies the matter. "The amount of potential energy in a cubic centimetre of so called empty space, the vacuum, is immensely greater than the entire energy content of the visible universe!"^{5b}. It is this embodiment of that energy which I feel in Hatoum's piece.

Whereas Hatoum has 'defined' space, 'Desireline Intersect'⁶ (1.6), 'divides' a route set in space. This response to a desireline footpath in central Manchester slices the footpath in two, both physically and intellectually, the notion being that people create barriers for themselves and to overcome them you must interact with them and thus pass beyond them (a point which I will return to in 'Element 4'). The installation was built as a direct response to the site using material found on the site. The environment has thus been changed through manipulation, not through addition or dematerialisation. The environment has been changed into a 'place' with the intervention of the wall. As Andre believed, "a place is an area within an environment which has been altered in such a way as to make the general environment more conspicuous".⁷

In 'House' (1.7) by Rachael Whiteread which was completed at the end of October 93 the element of in-situ space brings architecture and sculptural installation together. The two are as important as each other. It was the most noticeable piece of Art to have been produced in 93. The Late Show even hyped it as being, "one of the most important works of art to have ever been produced in Britain to date"⁸. This is due to the enormous publicity that it has received due to public siting. The negative public reaction can not be due to its subject matter as it can not possibly be conceived as scandalous to the public consciousness. It is indeed a monument to traditional living. This aside, I wish to consider its installational elements. The overwhelming nature of House is its historical nature. Its process is discussed in 'Element 5'. The importance of its form can be seen as all, as it is a sculptural object. In terms of installation it is the relationship of the form to its history which is of importance. House was conceived as the encasement of space in a concrete solid. The object would not exist as it does if it had not been located precisely where it is in the cosmos. It could not be the 'House' it is today if it were the 'House' of tomorrow. Had the possibility of its existence been possible earlier, then its physical reality would be different. The house chosen would have been a different former for the concrete. Its site-specificity ensures that it is as we see it today.

The cerebral element of House plays an important part. It is easy to understand the relationship that the object has to its history, there is a direct visual link to its origins. This is one of the important elements which excites me. The whole concept

of the solid being a physical version of the space that was once contained by a now missing shell, a negative embodiment of space. It really is a 'space-object', it materialises the immaterial. David Thorpe described it perfectly in his response to House, "If you imagine having your mouth full of marbles or cotton wool, you have a physical sensation of the volume inside your mouth"⁹.

I remember seeing, 'She came in Through the Bathroom Window' (1.8), by Richard Wilson, during the time of its existence in 1989, (on telly I think). It must have been one of the first contemporary installations that I saw. I remember half thinking that the idea of going to all the effort of displacing the window plane was odd yet fantastic. Its purpose was itself. Bringing outside inside, but not really. It meant something to me. Especially as it dealt with architectural elements. The important point is its dealing with space, it extrudes it. The play of the installation in the usage of architectural metaphor. You enter the building as you would always do, then as you enter the space the installation reveals its self not just through its physical presence but through oddity. It makes you think about the function of buildings. You can not escape the fact that the glazing unit is itself the original. You mentally relate it to its former location which in turn tells you about its present location. Very simple, very strong.

The element of light is brought to bear on this theme of glazing in, 'Natchland' (1.9) by Kazuo Katse at Gallery Wanda Reiff in Maastricht, 1990. Katse deals with the negative of light reflected through an ordinary window in the gallery, (as with the negative space of House). It is the memory of the light which exists painted on the floor. The paint though is black suggesting shadow not light, yet the image is not of shadow, it is the memory of light. It is almost as though it is the memory of night casting a negative night light. The work is of a philosophical nature but is displayed as part of the gallery. It is installed in relation to the specific environment, being painted onto it as it is. Sculpture talks visually about light and shadow, among other elements, whereas illustrated by 'Natchland', installation communicates this quality but in relation to a specific light source. The controlled light of the defined environment.

The work of Gordon Matta-Clark opened my eyes to the world of Installation Art. After visiting the Serpentine show (summer 93) I realised that the shear energy exposed in his work was what Art was all about for me. The creation of an objective. This is all about process, (see Element 5). What Matta-Clark achieves in his works is the revealing of new unthought of spaces in derelict buildings. He trained as an architect but gave it up in order to fulfill his experimental dreams. He invented his own artform which he called Anarchitecture, working with existing architecture and in a sense deconstructing it to reveal new relationships within the building, what I would suggest was 'installing new space' within the existing fabric. Interpreting buildings in a way not usually experienced. Take 'Bronx Floors: Double Doors' (1.10) for example, made in 1973. Using a derelict house in the Bronx, New York, Matta-Clark set about removing the floors around both the entrances to a doorway. In doing so he transformed the spatial relationships which directly associated themselves with that door. In 'Splitting' (1.11), probably his best known work, he sawed a house in two, opening up the house to the space in which it existed. In both of these works he installed space into the building. His concern was with altering attitudes to buildings, "By undoing a building ... I open a state of enclosure which had been preconditioned not only by physical necessity but by the industry that proliferates suburban and urban boxes as a pretext for ensuring a passive isolated consumer"¹⁰.

The same ideas are embodied in (what I presume was) an accidental 'installation' that I found in Hulme during its current destruction. In, 'Construction Detail' 11 (1.12), the creation of space in relation to its locality summed up my feelings about the destruction of Hulme as we presently saw it. The divide as expressed in, 'Desireline Intersect', has here become a negative representation of both the barrier and of the sadness at seeing it dying. The reinforcing bars acting as a link to the past spanning the gap which then becomes a suggestion of time. The photograph becomes a memory and record of that feeling and object accordingly (see Element 6).

The practice of Art in the realm of Installation, as expressed through things existing just for the sake of existing, is exemplified by the work of Siah Armajani. His preoccupation was also with the division of sculpture and architecture (as explored by Whiteread and Matta-Clark). 'Bridge over a Nice Triangular Tree' (1.13), from 1970 fulfills the notion that the sculpture exists for no other reason than to transport the participant along its route. This, ordinarily is the exact function of a bridge to span over or traverse a barrier and thus allow us to overcome the physical existence of that barrier. A bridge in the ordinary sense has a legitimate function as with the walkway of 'Construction Detail'. What Armajani's bridge does though is negate this reasoned functional aspect. Its only purpose is to transport us over a very small tree! In so doing we form a personal and physical relationship with that tree even though the tree itself is totally overwhelmed by the act of doing it. The whole construction is related to the tree and tailored for it. It is almost an act of ceremony. A lot, or most art, is indeed produced for its own end. Each artist choosing their own way of expressing something important to them. I feel though that the attitude of, 'Bridge over a Nice Triangular Tree', expresses this element with particular clarity.

Bulgarian born Christo Javacheff is another of those artists whose work has a direct correlation with the sites he uses to bring his work to life. His work relates to all the 'Elements' that I consider vital to the making of an Installation. In terms of its site specificity he works both in an urban context as with, 'The Pont Neuf Wrapped' (1.14), and in the tradition of, 'Land Art', with the production of, 'Wrapped Coast' (1.15) (1969). Again the piece is its site. Christo carried out this enormous undertaking 14.5 kilometers southeast of Sydney, Australia using one million square feet of synthetic woven fibre and 56 kilometers of rope. The works finite form is precisely dictated by the surface of the coast that it engulfs. It is the installation of material in its location which necessitated its installational quality. He (and his 125 strong team of helpers) did not merely locate an object, as say a Henry Moore is located as part of a landscape, but worked with that landscape to physically transform its very self. This transformation then becoming the net result. The Temporal Element of the lifespan of Christo's works is just as an important part of its whole which brings us to the consideration of time in forming another of Installation Arts important ingredients...

ELEMENT 2 TEMPORALITY

"A flower that blossoms for a single night does not to us seem any less lovely. Nor can I understand any better why the beauty and perfection of a work of art or of an intellectual achievement should lose its worth because of its temporal limitation", Freud.¹²

Temporality belongs to the element of Time. The space-time cosmos that all exists in. The world is a product of time. We see ourselves in a direct relationship with time, as our existence is framed by time. Einsteins expressions of thought talked of the metaphysical notion that all time, past present and future exists within the same space, therefore space can be seen to be,

Time. In relation to this concept, Temporality defines itself as a finite embodiment of that space-time. 'Temporal' is a word which implies a physical relationship to worldly things as opposed to the spiritual affairs of Metaphysics. 'Temporary' in its own definition talks of time as lasting for a limited period, or a defined fraction of that Time. Thus the two consummate their relationship and become one. As discussed in, 'Element 1', Physics has shown that matter is born from the vacuum, (that is space), which then becomes the physical representation of Temporality in my analysis. The property of Time will then be taken to represent the metaphysical notion that it records itself within its own whole.

"How long is a piece of string?" Anon. This classic phrase introduces the next ingredient to be mixed into the meltingpot. This being the philosophical consideration of the relationship of time to the temporal nature of some installational works. What does the image of the word itself conjure up about installation? You can install something and leave it to exist for seconds, years, decades or for many lifetimes. It can be said that all matter has finite existence therefore everything is temporary, but I wish to talk about Installational temporality, which, to me, suggests the link with hours, weeks and months rather than with years, decades and centuries.

In terms of Christos work then, temporality becomes essential to the whole. The work itself is only allowed to exist for a foreseeable finite reality, and it is this which helps it to become what it is; a temporary installation. As noted by Marina Vaisey, "The final work questions the whole notion of permanence in art, for Christo's vast environmental sculptures which take place in the real world, have a deliberately limited life, for a few days, at the most two weeks" 13. It is Christo installations that excite me, I love his wrapped sculptures, but these live on, and are of a human scale. Somehow I can relate better to his 'massive' sculptures that no longer exist. You can look at memories, and perhaps have an experience of that event, but you know that it is now cast in past recorded time (history). This has a direct influence upon your attitude towards it.

In the work of Andy Goldsworthy, I find a real sense of excitement. He, as with Christo, enters the many different fields of installation. The temporality found within his body of work is an expression of the cycle of nature which is itself a 'repetitive cycle of temporality'.

Goldsworthy engages nature on its homeground, working with it to define its beauty, by exposing it through his transitional process. What defines longevity in his work is the work itself. If the materials he uses to produce a piece are stone then it may well last for years, but if that material is snow on a hill, or sand on a beach, then its lifespan may be days or hours.

In the late winter of 1988/89, Goldsworthy made eighteen large snowballs (2.1) in Perthshire and then preserved them in cold storage until July that summer where they were displayed in the Old Museum of Transport, Glasgow. There they were laid in line to live out their life. It took a total of five days for them to melt, slowly revealing their individual contents throughout that time, as each snowball was blended with a different element from nature, such as fresh pine needles, or willowherb stalks.

"When snow melts things hidden away emerge - evidence of time laid on the ground" 14. It is this 'evidence of time' which the piece deals with, both in terms of its manufacture and its temporality. When allowed to react with the summer heat the snowballs both come alive and begin to die at the same time. Their destiny is determined. The work only exists as it fades away. You can visibly see the passing of time as recorded by their dematerialisation. This is as important to the work as its process.

Five days is temporary, and so is 1/60th of a second, the rough shutter speed of the camera that caught Goldsworthy's installations in space-time when creating, 'Hazel stick throws' (2.2), in 1980. Here he created a multitude of mini-installations with each throw of the sticks that he made. This is so because the camera only happened to catch just one of these mini-installations, which by implication means that it didn't catch all the other exact co-ordinates of the sticks as they flew through gravitational space on their return journey to the ground. This 'sculpture' has at its core a real element of built-in obsolescence. There is no way ('on earth!') that this fraction in time could set out to be anything but temporary. This is then perhaps an example of installation which is the epitome of temporality. Its very inception implies its immediate fate. This 'built-in obsolescence', is also instilled in Matta-Clark's work. The way he works with derelict buildings means that from the first touch or even the first thought his work is inevitably destined to be destroyed with the eventual transformation of the building into rubble. His interaction with the building also adds to the temporance of that building as he frequently undermines its structural stability. He then is part of the demolition process, but in a controlled sense. In 1975 he was lucky enough to be given permission to work with a building located adjacent to the Centre Georges Pompidou during its construction. He set about burrowing through the walls and floors creating a 'Conical Intersect' (2.3) for the Paris Biennial. The house he worked on was built in 1699 and was one of the last properties due for demolition as part of the Pompidou modernizing programme of the Plateau Beaubourg. The work was as provocative and controversial as ever ensuring that all who encountered it were forced into thought.

The same is true of Racheal Whitread's 'House'. It has been the reactions of the public which have helped bring it to international attention. Or at least it is these reactions which have made it so controversial. Now that it has been demolished during the writing of this dissertation it lies in the memory banks of society. For me, the destruction of 'House' was necessary for its completion. Many regard its destruction as a negative thing. Whitread herself did not want it to be destroyed. From its inception though it was always known that it was going to be destroyed (the role of process [Element 5] is important here), as with a Matta-Clark work. This knowledge of its imminent death added to its worth in my opinion. It made people want to go and experience it before its removal. It heightened its existence, as its time was limited. Its temporality added to its 'worth', as it helped induce debate and thus its media coverage which brought it to a wider public.

Architecture is something that is usually 'built to last', for economic reasons more than anything else. It is not usually seen as temporary. Having said this though 'temporary' architecture is designed and constructed. The reality of this though is that it stays put for much longer than intended. Vienna has a long tradition of building temporary structures that were intended to exist for a year or so but in reality have stayed put. Portacabins in schools solved accommodation problems quickly but have lasted well beyond their sell-by date in actuality. Buildings are in fact temporal but not in the sense of Installational temporality.

Temporality can then add to the experience of Installation Art. It can be a singular part of the whole, or the whole itself. I find it gives a real sense of excitement to the process of involvement in installation. It also excites me when observing the records of past temporary installations. The very knowledge that they no longer exist I feel still adds a real sense of involvement to the experience of discovering their past history.

ELEMENT 3 CEREBRAL

In many of the works which I would generalise as being installations, I find the existence of the 'idea' or 'concept' to be as important as the object or creation itself, that being a separate experience. This has strong ties with the history of twentieth century art, from which Installation has grown. It was after all Mr. Duchamp who broke through the philosophical boundaries of the possibilities to be explored within art. As Jenny Holzer has said, "what I liked about the early conceptual work, was that it got to become respectable to emphasise your mind and to de-emphasize the object....there was the freedom for art to be almost anything. It didn't have to be a stretched canvas covered with paint"¹⁵. Duchamp's most honoured piece was the 'ready made' 'fountain' (3.1) of 1917. Here he emphasised the concept of the action and not the object, which was the visual focus. It was then the idea that was the important element, not the signed utilitarian urinal.

This 'cerebral' element is not a separate entity in the experiencing of art. All art evokes emotion, is that not its purpose? Indeed all art is based on the artist's concept. It is the combination of cerebral thought and emotional feeling that gives aesthetic enjoyment. What I'm trying to suggest is that it is the dominance of the intellectual interaction with most installations which I enjoy most. For me it is not something which is primarily visually pleasing, it engages me primarily through my mind not my heart. I tend to think about it more than feel it, as I may say, "isn't that 'interesting', 'a good idea' or 'clever'", rather than, "isn't that beautiful". It is the idea as expressed through its realisation which is most clear to me, or the thinking about how it was done which becomes foremost in my mind. This is true of a lot of other artforms but nowhere as engaging for me as those works examined within the body of this work (which is in itself not an exhaustive list).

The grounding of this cerebral element in installation is derived from conceptualism's histories. Unlike say Duchamp, contemporary 'post-conceptualism' installation has realised the limited mileage of the thought alone becoming the whole, as did Duchamp himself. Installation addresses the aesthetics of the object in relation to the cerebral concept instead of being anti-commodity. This is well expressed by Jeff Koons, himself a practitioner in the artistic field. "I always enjoyed the conceptualism coming out of Duchamp. But I always felt for myself sometimes that it leaned too much on the cerebral and I've always enjoyed when other needs of the viewer can be met"¹⁶.

Conceptualism worked in the paradigm that the artist's material could be his 'thought' alone. The production of visual stimuli was secondary. When certain works by Sol Lewitt come up for sale they do so in the form of a typed set of instructions telling the purchaser what to do. This was also the case with the most famous of 'conceptual art's' products in the 60's and 70's, that of Carl Andre's 'Lever' (3.2). In 1972 the Tate could no longer resist the extreme seduction of Andre's 120 firebricks. They contacted him and agreed a price. Andre scribbled the request into his orderbook. He had previously been unable to sell it when it was first exhibited and thus had returned the bricks to the builders yard in order to get his money back. So Andre phoned a builders merchant and asked them to despatch 120 of their finest quality firebricks to the Tate Gallery London. Then he drafts a letter to the curator telling him how to arrange said bricks when they arrive. In turn the delighted curator instructs his conservation department to run up a special green felt box to house the bricks in their long periods of storage. It is the idea that has been sold to the Tate in reality, and not the bricks.

Where installation comes in, is in its re-focusing of importance on the object in the aesthetic experience. The attitude of its production gives it a different role in the work from that of only communicating an intellectual idea about, say, 'the boundaries of exactly what art is'. I am aware that this may be construed as dangerous ground, but it is the attitude held within my experience of observation which I am trying to communicate. Installation does clearly talk about ideas, but not only ideas. The products themselves are, quite often, sculpture in a more traditional sense, as with Goldsworthy, he brings to it his touch as with the art of the artisan. They can be termed 'installation' as they are not permanent and have some sense of link with the immediate environment (elements 1 and 2). The art of installation is engaged in the fusion of other clearly defined areas within the visual arts, it is then not one but all of them at once. The cerebral element playing its role within that cast. What I am trying to suggest is that installation is attempting to emphasize the mind and re-emphasize the object at the same time in direct relationship to its conceptual history, which concerned de-emphasizing the poor old object.

The intellectual involvement in installation can further be brought into the equation with the use of language. This most frequently occurs in the naming process of a given work which acts as a literary sound-bite/clue to the installation's meaning. Language has a written agenda with determined meaning which means that it may be easier to provoke the required intellectual response to the work rather than through its visual language alone. The title of figure (3.3) isn't a factual reference describing what the Installation is, rather it tells us about the idea 'behind' it. "The complete works of Jane Austin" refers to the fact that the air contained within the 'balloon' is the same amount of air used by a reader when reading the complete works of Jane Austin. This volume varies with the temperature of the room as would the amount of air vary depending on the speed of the reader. This role of language forms not only a clue as when this idea has been realised it forms an integral part of the whole.

So cerebral is defined as considering intellectual rather than emotional responses. When I view a Christo it is the ideas and the concepts that first engage me, not so much the emotional response to the work. I find myself thinking about how it was made and how it interacts with the object that it is wrapping. Of course I think that it is 'beautiful', but primarily because of my intellectual response to it. It is after all why I find myself identifying with it because it strikes a chord with my own artistic attitudes.

It is this attitude of the concept and its realisation that led me on a mini crusade to experience an installation near Uppermill just outside Manchester towards the end of 1993. I had been told of reports in local newspapers which talked about the 'discovery' of an old bungalow buried in the ground. Upon further inquiry it became clear that it had been placed there by an artist as an installation, and that it was due to be earthed over shortly. This temporality really forced me into having to go and experience it before it was covered over. The whole action of going to witness it was like a pilgrimage for me. A day trip to an historical event (in art). 'Pitdown Bungalow' (3.4) was conceived as an installation whose cerebral interaction dealt with the concept that this bungalow had been (and was in the future, to be) discovered by excavation. The work was comprised of an exact replica of an ordinary industrial bungalow from Uppermill which had been transplanted into a rural site and buried there. It was to be left uncovered for several weeks and then covered over and left to be found by future generations encouraging them to question its meaning. "The work attempts to raise questions rather than answer them, and encourage the audience to ask themselves how they view history"¹⁷. The bungalows that it represents were non-uments (to borrow Matta-Clarks term) before the artist transposed them into a romantic monument of the functional.

It was the whole idea of digging this hole and putting the bungalow in it, only to cover it up for good a short time later which appealed to me. The process, the thought, the action. The most interesting element of being there was seeing peoples

response to the work. A group of children turned up not knowing its origins and jumped in the hole and climbed all over it. They thought that it was a real excavation and a real cottage and couldn't understand the notion of it as art once the secret had been revealed to them. Their 'attitude' to it was different to mine. One couple walking the family dog stopped to wonder, but the wife seemed to be scared of it as she went off to wait up ahead while the husband really started to question its existence. He tried to get his wife to come back but she refused point blank.

In a way this transplantation resembles Duchamp's 'fountain', yet it is very different. For a start it is not gallery based. and it is a much more involved exercise than the 'readymade'. It questions society and its relationship to architecture. In two hundred years time, will tourists flock to our council estates in order to glory at the quaint rural architecture of the late twentieth century?

What installation talks about to me through its cerebral element is not ideas such as the boundaries of art, as with Duchamp, but the qualities of the 'Elements' that I am discussing in this analysis. The properties of what I view as 'the fundamentals of architectural consideration'. These being philosophical issues, and physical elements such as Light, Space, Structure, Surface, Context, Form and Interaction etc. It is on this plane of thought that it interacts with my mind. This is what I see as its cerebral element. It describes its own philosophical concepts through its physical narrative. The thought is in a sense an interaction of the mind and it is this 'interaction' which I wish to consider next.

ELEMENT 4 INTERACTION

"The spectator, who in the act of experiencing the work, acts as catalyst and receptor"¹⁸. Interaction is a part of everybody's day to day life. It could be said that all of our own personal environments are living examples of installation. These may not be classified as art, but nevertheless they are continually changing, and thus temporal in nature, and each is tailored to its site, that being the architecture container, within which, each is created. This was expressed by an artist called Collette in a work entitled 'My Living Environment' (4.1), produced in New York over a number of years, as she explains; "From 1970 to 1982 I lived as a work of art, in a work of art - my living environment..."¹⁹. This statement, alters the emphasis of the act of 'living', and turns it into an artistic reality. Our perception is altered by Collette's perception.

In terms of Installation Art throughout this century, Interaction, on both the physical and cerebral level, has had an important part to play in terms of its own genetic make-up. The making of art has often migrated from the gallery to interact or intervene with the outside world on its own terms. It may be the physical scale and presence of a work which forces the observer to not only observe but to actually exist with in it or as part of it. This is the case with the earth-work installation, 'Double Negative' (4.2) by Michael Heizer in the Nevada desert of 1969. The two forty foot by one hundred foot slots which were cut into the slopes means that, due to their enormous size and location, the only way of physically experiencing the work is to inhabit it like the way we think of ourselves as inhabiting the space of our own bodies. Yet as it is a mirror image it makes us look and relate directly to our own position. We can see ourselves dissipated from the solipsism by the nature of its duality. The opposing 'self' (or slot) on the other side of the ravine enables us to conceive the notion that we are standing looking at our own image as a kind of 'out of body' experience. So it is the very involvement or interaction within 'Double Negative' which brings about its meaning. Even if that interaction is a cerebral one, as with you or I. We are still able, I believe, to transport our mind (and hence imaginary body) into that void through thought travel, and gain some notion of its 'reality relation' (the real physical version of 'Double Negative', as opposed to the imagined one constructed on your mental monitor from its visual representation, the photo).

This same scale of interaction will be a necessity with the future completion of James Turrell's grand project, 'Roden Crater' (4.3) a volcano on the edge of the Painted Desert, America. Turrell is currently working on, or with to be more exact this vast crater overlooking the desert. He is creating a multitude of spaces within which certain perceptions of the cosmos can be viewed. It is not the manipulation of the crater which is important to him, it is what it facilitates that is important. "I wanted [to create] an area where you had a sense of standing on the planet. I wanted an area of exposed geology.....where you could feel geologic time. Then in this stage set of geologic time, I wanted to make spaces that engaged celestial events in light so that the spaces performed a 'music of the spheres' in light"²⁰. Turrell is trying to combine our experiences with those of the located crater in a joint interaction with the light and cosmos of the universe. A very powerful notion. Turrell's work has stemmed from his scientific background and a life long devotion to the experiencing of light. The qualities of the cerebral interaction which were evoked by 'Double Negative' are central to Turrell's own definitions of thought, as he explains, "Firstly I am dealing with no object. Perception is the object. Secondly, I am dealing with no image, because I want to avoid associative, symbolic thought. Thirdly, I am dealing with no focus or particular place to look. With no object, no image, and no focus, what are you looking at? You are looking at you looking. This is in response to your seeing and the self-reflective act of seeing yourself see. You can extend feeling out through the eyes to touch with seeing"²¹.

Turrell's most recent work was the light sensory chamber titled 'Gasworks' (4.4) built at Dean Clough gallery near Leeds. This is a true interactively sensual experience. The machine is comprised of a metal sphere containing light emitting gear with a conveyor belt leading into it. The person using it is conveyed into the sphere head first by a technician and then subjected to 15 minutes of visual sensual overload consisting of coloured lights and strobes. Turrell had to have it checked by an eminent psychoanalyst to make sure that it wasn't going to harm anyone mentally. The purpose of it is to transport the participant into another dimension. The machine is just that and exists only to be interacted with by humans. Without interaction of the physical and perceptual kind this machine would be redundant, purposeless. It is not the idea that counts here it is the experience.

This visual focus is the essential component of my next example. It is the actuality of the participant being the catalyst and the receptor at the same time which is embodied within Bruce Neuman's 1970 installation, 'Corridor' (4.5). It is the 'idea' and the 'action' which combine to make the whole this time. (It even made the front cover of a Rosalind Krauss book!). The work is only a tool waiting to be used as with Turrell's sensory chamber. When approaching the television screens at the end of the 'codditor' the viewer becomes the installation as their image appears on the screen via the video camera mounted high up behind them. As they approach the screens their image recedes. The closer they come to their own 'reflection' the smaller they get. The images of these interactions with the corridor are recorded as memory of the encounters.

The only intended memory of interaction concerning Ron Hasseldon's 'Belvedere' (4.6) installation in a forest is in the brain's 'Hippocampus zone' (the memory storage region of the human brain, first pictured in 1991). Hasseldon constructed a huge scaffolding structure in a forest in Dartmoor that allowed the viewer to climb to the top of the tree canopy and see the forest from an unaccustomed vantage point. Again this is a manufactured object which encourages the individual to interact with it to

gain a new perception of their universe.

The installation at '44 Bonner Rd' (otherwise known as The Showroom,) called '44 Bonner Rd.' (4.7) is another good example of the role of the viewer bringing the work to life. Francis Cape partitioned up the gallery space with three false walls which divided the gallery into three self-contained rooms. Upon entering the gallery one is confronted by the first partition which is clearly differentiated from the permanent architecture by subtle colour changes. Within this is an un-marked door which leads into the first room. Upon entering it you find the second panel on the other side of it and proceed towards it in order to find its enclosed entry/exit. When you get to the third room you try to do the same but you find in the panel that there is no access to the third room, it remains stubbornly firm. The narrative of the work is then revealed only through the viewers passage and investigation within its confines.

This narrative and revelation is also set up in Nat Goodden's very simple and engaging creation named 'Shadow Piece' (4.8) of 1974. Here Goodden takes the utilitarian relationship between the light bulb and its switch and introduces the 'interactor' into the room. On finding the room dark the interactor searches for the light switch and turns it on. This is the act which fuses the four elements together, for the fourth element is revealed to be a piece of wood (which is the installation) hanging from the ceiling preventing the light from 'touching' the switch and hand as this intervention blocks its journey. It is bathed in shadow. The light is turned off and the relationship ceases.

The majority of these interactive installations then, lay dormant until participation engages their active role. It is the case in these examples and other works, that the process of interaction is essential to the existence of the installations. This 'process' is also an important factor in the 'production' of some installations, hence the writing of element 5.

ELEMENT 5 PROCESS.

"The most profound thing that I can say about a piece of work is how it is made" Goldsworthy.²²

In the production of anything, a process must be undertaken which realises the end product. This action is then important. Is it though, more important than the result? "Yes and no, it depends"! is the answer.

In an equation ($a+b = c$) there are two parts. The first is the process, and the second is the result. Put the other way around ($c = b+a$) we have prescribed what the result is that we want, and how we should go about achieving it. This difference of emphasis on the 'process' or the 'product' is what is the key to understanding the role that process sometimes plays in Installation.

Process in Production can be zoned into Thought processes, Forming processes, and the process of Existence (which can lead to the eventual decay of the piece [Temporality]). What I am wishing to consider in this element is the Forming process by which many installations involve themselves. The thought process is the conceptual idea that leads to the production of a piece and this itself can be symbiotically linked to its implementation (forming).

The first examples of this emphasis on the process started in the early fifties with the so called 'Happening' in which the musician/artist John Cage involved a number of participants (musicians, artists, poets and dancers) and let them 'do what they do'²³ in front of an assembly of people. The act in itself was all it was, as there was no object created which had the process layered into it. It is the demands placed on the audience by the event in this case which is central to the understanding of installation. It is they who are left to construct the meaning of what is put before them. In this example we are dealing with the area of art which has shifted from art as object to art as process, from art as a thing to be addressed, to art as something which occurs in the encounter between the onlooker and the stimuli. This 'Process Art' is a field unto itself but helps us to relate to the role that process plays in Installation.

Contemporary installations tend to have absorbed the histories which helped to define the genre. The majority of works that I have selected for this examination into Installation exist in 'object form'. That is to say that the artists have always ended up with material creations as a result of a working process. They may have set out to create an object which addresses a theme ($c = a+b$) as with the work of Damien Hirst such as "In and out of love", (5.1) or the artist could have undertaken a process which resulted in a physical product ($a+b = c$), or indeed a mixture of the two depending on your own understanding of the artist and the specific piece ($a+b=c \sim a+b=c$). Each piece has to be examined on its own terms of reference.

The gallery installations of Richard Long utilise the materials that he encounters when taking long walks throughout the varying environments of the world. He also intervenes with natural settings on a human scale in those environments. What is crucial here is his methodology. The process is a process of investigation and enactment which leads to a result. He sets out a route, say a walk in a straight line from A-B, does this and memorialises it after and during its progress. The fundamental point is that he 'memorialises', which implies post-process. His work is all about what he does, walk. All his 'objects' relate specifically to his prescribed process. It is not the case that he takes a walk to find the raw materials for an installation in the Tate, but that he first takes the walk and then expresses his findings in the gallery environment. His poems and diagrams are accurate accounts of his walks such as "Dry Walk" (1989) (5.2) which is the account of a walk that he did in Avon, where he walked from one shower until the next. It lasted 113 miles. Long's installations occur both in the gallery (post recorded) and along his route (progressive recording). The installations in the landscape chart his journey through space and time. 'A line made by walking' (1967) (5.3) is an example of how the process and result are inseparable to the viewer. The action of walking repeatedly up and down in a straight line on the grass materialised the line. He knew what he wanted to do first BUT the process is essential in the experience of the work. I find it impossible to separate the result from its manufacture. Its layered meaning effects its observation.

A similar recording of events that are enacted in the landscape is the essence of Goldsworthy's work. As discussed before he works with nature as he finds it. His process is one of chance quite often. He leaves home knowing that he wants to make something but doesn't know what until it reveals itself to him in a pragmatic fashion. This is expressed in an interview with John Fowles in 1987... "I take the opportunities each day offers - if it is snowing, I work with snow, at leaf-fall it might be with leaves, a blown-over tree becomes a source for twigs and branches. I stop at a place or pick up a material by feeling that there is something to be discovered."²⁴

When he finds the material its inherent characteristics and location define the way in which it can be worked, thus creating an object. In "Floating Hole" (1984) (5.4) he evidently came across the river with fallen leaves and thought what he could do with them. Layered into this must be an overview of his ideas that he carries around. The hole is one in a series that he was dealing

with at the time. What has always stood out in my experience of Goldsworthy's work is his process. When I look at an image of one of his pieces I do not just see the object, but I also see the process which led to its existence. Goldsworthy actually going out and making it. I do not feel that this is just because I have a background knowledge, I always experienced this.

In the gallery the element of process can also be felt. The painstaking way in which objects are assembled such as "Horse chestnut stalks and thorns"(5.5) from 1989. The doorways are filled with an intricate weave of the given materials which evokes an emotional response in relation to this tedious process. The way in which it came into being is a part of the whole.

Another example of the process in Goldsworthy's work combines the whole process from construction to decay as shown previously in "Snowballs in summer". In relation to process the whole cycle of birth and decay is the focus on process. It is an exploration of process.

Christo's work sets out to achieve an object, but it is how this object is created which is as essential to its artistic merit as the object itself. The very size of Christo's creations infer the element of process. You have to ask yourself about the way in which it came to being - process.

The emphasis that Christo places on the air inside "49,390 Cubic Feet Packaged"(5.6) can serve as a metaphor for the element of process. It is the emphasis within a piece of Installation upon its production which I am focusing on. I have a friend who is participating in the wrapping of the Reichstag in 1996. The whole process is therefore started years in advance and planned meticulously, with permissions having to be obtained, and money to be raised from the sales of Christo's drawings. This time consuming process is integral to its whole.

The recent work of Antony Gormley is similar in so far as it takes lots of people to materialise the given goal. The "Field for the British Isles"(5.7) involved the community of St. Helens producing 40,000 similar clay 'people' together to be exhibited in the Tate in Liverpool. Again the task here was prescribed and accomplished, yet the involvement of the community and the sheer amount of figures means that this is [again] essential to the experience of the work. Its process is fundamental.

In relationship to Architecture then the process of design and construction is quite often seen as being separate from the experience of the building by the occupant. The way in which a building is built is by the use of a set of drawings and literature. This is separate from the 'design process' which is as individual as the artist's approach to his/her medium. The result of the Architectural process is the building, and the attitude towards this environment has through time had a certain relationship and layered meaning imposed upon it. The majority of us are not Architects and thus not rehearsed in the supposed 'meanings' embodied within the medium. This then has an effect on the way we perceive the built environment. It is there, and has been all our lives. Buildings are essentially containers for activity and climate modification. We see the success of them in terms of comfort and efficiency in doing the job that they were intended for, not so much through the eyes of the designers' philosophy and artistic concept which aided and influenced its 'design'.

This then is the difference that I am proposing between Architecture and Art. Art has this layered meaning present when relating to it. It is somehow externalised and given a different set of rules by which to observe it. Architecture is not externalised as it is part of our physical environment. It is interesting though to observe the work of Sol Lewitt as when his works come up for sale they do so in the form of the written word and not in their three-dimensional form (as mentioned in element 3). The purchaser is given a set of typed instructions which say how the work is to be constructed. This is the same as the way in which a building is produced.

Inherent in several of the works which I have discussed is the notion that the process is as important as the result, and that the result may only be a record of that process. This record is frequently a photograph which accurately portrays the climax of the process. This is more often than not the only hard evidence of the process having existed at all. So an importance is placed upon it. The 'photo-record' is the final element which I wish to discuss.

ELEMENT 6 PHOTO-RECORD.

"A photograph is not only an image (as a painting is an image), an interpretation of the real; it is also a trace, something directly stenciled off the real, like a foot print or a death mask".²⁵ Susan Sontag.

All the work that has been presented to you in this 'book' has been in the form of photography and associated text. The only way in which you have experienced the works and related what you have seen to what I have written about is through the eye of the lens (unless that is you have witnessed their real life presence). Photography then, is vital to the true representation of the original. Without it we would only be relying on language produced images personal to each individual or perhaps drawn/painted interpretative images not true to the original as they have inherent opinion and time equation problems.

"Photography is an objective slice of space-time.... Its testimony is powerful but offers no opinion".²⁶

I view the photographic medium as a window into the world of the original subject, as I have suggested in earlier chapters. I feel that it is possible to picture and feel things that surround the image. It works on the cerebral level as well as the visual one. This is evident in War Photography and Photo-reportage with evocative images such as the South Vietnamese Girl running naked from an explosion. K. Jones described this ability as "a sort of umbilical cord link from the body of the photographed thing to my gaze".²⁷

The photograph is a memory of the actual event that was the Installation. I have suggested that most Installation is temporary and therefore not permanent, so memory is its residue. The photograph serves as a surrogate for the thing that it shows. Its transparency brings this memory into a real-time through the viewer's active mind.

The most common use of the photograph is for a facsimile/record of Installation. It is, however also used in the medium of Installation in its own right as an art form. A good example of this can be found in the work of Günther Förg. Förg uses many mediums in his Installation to weave a tapestry of media. The scale of his photographs of classic Modern Architecture create a sense of external space within the confines of the given gallery space (the umbilical cord). The photographs in their settings with their attention to various forms of light and spatial relationships mingle and blend together with these characteristics of the galleries in which they are exhibited. The reflective surfaces of the glazing covering these adds to this as the reflections further blend and subvert the images with those of the room (6.1). He frequently takes this idea a stage further by mixing in a few large framed mirrors.

Leaving the gallery again in physical terms (as opposed to via the photograph) the interaction of Installation and the everyday environment as explored earlier by Jenny Holzer is manipulated through photography by Dennis Adams in his use of the bus shelter as site(6.2). The photographs were time orientated topical images relating to a political trial at the time of their installation, the trial of Klaus Barbie in Germany. The use of the bus shelters meant that the images reached anyone who was unaware of their presence and happened to encounter them on their daily business. This externalising of Installation from the gallery means that their effect is more subversive in so far as the viewer has not been conditioned by the act of going into the gallery thus being provoked into thought on the subject without expecting it. This is in a sense similar to the advertising that would normally be in place of the photos. The photograph could then be seen as being a "museum without walls" as proposed by Marshall McLuhan, in both its dislocation from the gallery (more commonly seen in sculpture) and through its umbilical cord. The interweaving of photography into the realm of Architecture is not common, but does occur in Installation. This happens in a sense in the gallery, which is Architecture. Förg's work successfully manipulates this with his blurring and mixing reflections and images. A work by Genevieve Cadieux takes the site of the Canadian Pavillion at the 1990 Venice Biennale and layers the photograph into its fabric. She uses the glazing and fills the 'frames' with images of close-ups of the body in evocative poses.(6.3) This may suggest the inter-relationship of man and the built environment.

My final example of the use of photography in Installations uses photography's precise recording ability, to confuse and blur reality. In 'The way it was'(6.4) (1990) Alfredo Jaar took photographs of buildings on the opposite side of the street and then installed them in custom made light boxes into those same windows. In so doing he in fact replaced the real live view with a photographically frozen one of that same view. This used the inherent quality of the medium the freeze and record a moment in time. The meaning layered into this was associated with the division of East and West Germany having been reunited at that time which as mentioned in Element 3 raises the importance of the title to the success of the piece.

In terms of the 'recorded residue' the photograph is important to the process of Goldsworthy. "Taking the photograph is not a casual act. It is very demanding and a balance is kept in which documentation does not interrupt the making. Each work grows, stays, decays - integral parts of a cycle which the photograph shows at its height, marking the moment when the work is most alive. There is an intensity about a work at its peak that I hope is expressed in the image." 28

I discussed 'Hazel stick throws' in Element 2 with its inherent temporality. Without the photo-record it would not be the Installation it is. The camera froze the action and laid it down on film for the rest of us to interact with, visually. In 'Neighbours'(6.5) the medium of Installation is fused with photography as the photograph was the purpose and the Installation of the television/people were the means. Another of the Elements (Temporality) plays its role here and is important to the understanding of the photographs role. I intended that the camera should capture the event at a specified time, that being when the credits for the programme rolled. The whole nature of the picture would have been falsified if I had videoed this image. The fact that it is a photo adds to its worth. It is a reality as it did happen and was viewed with this intention. If it had not been Photo-recorded then we would have no evidence. Had it been a drawing of the event it would only have been an idea as such, not the reality 'stenciled off the real'.

The majority of this essay is taken from my own understanding and observation of Installation. This has come from the analysis of the works that have been put forward through the photographs presented in books and magazines. I have not yet found any one text which successfully explains what exactly Installation is. My reason for saying this is to emphasise the importance that photograph plays in the analysis of Installation. Installation expresses itself and this is replicated in the photograph. Hence I have been able to formulate my analysis from these images in conjunction with my own attitudes.

"A photograph can say a thousand words".29

CONCLUSION

To wrap things up, (as with a Chitso!) I have attempted to define in general terms what this thing called 'Installation Art' is. The Elements that I have presented are each a separate part of a complex whole. It is intended that any given Installation is comprised of a certain selection of these Elements dependant on its own particular characteristics, its own genetic make-up.

A work could have a direct relationship with its site(1), be short-lived(2) and only remain in photographic form(6) after it has been decayed, or it may have set out to engage the brain(3)through a process(5) which directly involved the viewer to interact (4)with it as part of this existence.

Installations on the whole are formulated around their specific environment as with Architecture. The relationship to their site is a key to their manufacture as they are built into specific environments intentionally. The environment is then a generator for their production.

Installations have a life span which means that they are governed by time and are finite within in a foreseeable future. They are temporary in nature and are intentionally not built to last often being dismantled when it is time for the next one to be materialised,especially in the gallery environment. The production of installations is a physical realisation of the intellectual notion and once this has been achieved and the work has lived out its life then it can left to be remembered in our minds and through photography.

Installation works not always just within itself but also with us the audience who bring it to life by interacting with it. In some examples it lays in wait for us to take part with it and use us as the raw material for its active ingredient.

The process of production of an Installation is often as important to its meaning as is the end product itself. We as viewers or participants can regard its production as integral to its whole on a higher level than a question of 'just' how it was made. The photographic residue left by the whole creative process of thought and production is often the only evidence left of its existence and becomes important to its life-cycle.

In a sense Installation Art is completely open ended and has arrived where it is today through the whole history of art which preceded it. There does seem to be though a cohesion in its existence which spans all continents, and it is the existence of this 'cohesion' which I have tried to analyze and discuss from my own viewpoint, understanding and practice.

Installation Art is an ever mutating Art form which refuses to have confines placed on it and therefore is difficult to pin down. It is this characteristic which is so refreshing to the audience. I suggest that it will continue to mutate adding many more layers to its already richly decorated patina. It seems to be the ever dominante art form of the ninties and this I will suggest become very important in the future of the art history over the coming decades.

FOOTNOTES:

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29. Anon.

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- 'Desireline Intersect' Janek. 1993.
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- 'She came in Through the Bathroom Window' Richard Wilson.1989.
- 'Natchland' Kazuo Katse. 1990.
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- 'Horse chestnut stalks and thorns' Andy Goldsworthy. 1989
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to Daniel and Richard for their guiding minds,
and to everything and everyone who make me laugh.
Laughter is the saviour of sanity.

Dedicated to the spirit of Jill Regan who diverted me onto the right path.

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