

Victoria Miro Gallery

Press Release

Stephen Willats

8 July – 1 August 1997

Private View Tuesday 7 July 3pm-8pm

Stephen Willats presents three major new works which celebrate the richness of urban life in London where each individual builds his own space and reality in the face of a bombardment of everyday sensations.

Extending ideas in earlier collaborative projects, *Going Home* and *In Taking a Walk* investigate the divergence of different individual's experiences of reality and the way we confront that reality. *Going Home* is a spontaneous work which evolved from a specific event in time at Bond Street station in London. Eight artists boarded a train simultaneously and armed with cine cameras, each was asked by Willats to focus on and record a particular aspect of the journey such as people and objects, the spaces between people or signs. A snapshot of transient experience is then created by taking film stills from this jumble of information and setting them in grids, accompanied by various philosophical proposition in the manner, for example, of Plato or Descartes which address the nature of reality.

Freezone is an interactive computer simulation which models the social processes by which people form society. The piece requires two participants to activate it and the aim is to progress along Oxford Street from Marble Arch to Oxford Circus. Screened off from each other, the participants are presented with a set of problem situations pertaining to the perception of a group of collaborators who have recorded their own progression along this same route. Questions about the problem situations can only be answered using a given thesaurus and progress along Oxford Street can only be achieved if the participants agree on their perceptions of the situations and people presented, building a mutual representation of that society.

These new works represent a stage further in Willat's exploration of the richness of the language of urban society and our environment by locating them directly in that society, reflecting the move towards a more fluent and interactive culture.