



# POPULAR MECHANICS

With the right disposition or a sympathetic imagination you could say the potential for change has no limit. Paradoxically change or choice of change is a situation that is at once revered and feared. A natural response to multiple choice often being mixed, producing a narrowing of options, an increase in pressure and a contraction rather than expansion. A situation of choice can remain, perhaps out of necessity an intangible time and place, a future point not yet reached, a point of intersection always in the distance to which all decisions are deferred. A possible point of infinity where routes converge and chances increase. A space for action and idea that can fade from view as quickly as it appears. Popular Mechanics is the construction of such a site where action and idea collide, producing its own form of fractal geometry, fractured self-similar structures of unpredictable pattern where direction, distance and velocity are seemingly random, perhaps due to limited vision or ignorance of hidden causes. This work also employs and critiques a minimalist aesthetic, itself a proposition for change and advancement. Arguably no more than a reductivist formula built on the notions of linear progression and autonomy snowballing to the inevitable whiteout. Trading on one of the more questionable equations developed in the latter half of the century; i.e. less form equals more thought. This is a minimalism reworked in reflective white roadline marking resin and other forms associated with road building. Materials normally used to signify and control speed and movement in actual space, a punctuation of form, proposing to open up territory in a suprematist sense, a framework of conceptual space, the 'zero of form', simultaneously elevating activities associated with sweat, manpower and the rhythm of physical labour. Incompatible factors creating a further splitting in a relationship under stress, calling to mind the last words of Beckett's *The Unnamable*, " where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on."

# home economics

nevermind  
mentally  
stripping it  
phosphorescent blackening  
gods grout

sitting proud from the wall                      dead proud

glistening heartburn  
a barium meal for the highway  
not normal colouring  
not normal cooking

roadworks in the mouth  
closing down the alimentary canal  
black hack  
all white and nervous

hospital basecoat  
combed down the throat  
an irresistible suction  
vibrating air

running hot on this recipe  
an accidental spill on the rim  
my weak wrists  
secrete sleep

skirting flex  
blitzed back  
reflective bubbles on the lino  
like nothing youve ever felt before

70 miles an hour in the dark  
headlights off  
pupils dilating  
on a blind corner

cold sweat  
pressure piped

some relief

im tripped up  
caked  
baked on the run

terribly still

drinking in  
staring out  
into the atlantic

i wish my mother would hold my forehead                      right now

give me intensive care  
ordinary or special  
all the days of my life  
in the lords own house shall i dwell

solution  
on the boil  
swallowing a tumbler full of baking soda  
vomiting suds

that's a dirty habit i fell into

here i am now  
at night  
transmitting on the channel  
stiffening

hairs and fibres  
dirt along the edges  
unduly sensitive

i shouldn't have pulled my hand away  
she wanted to hold on to it

clear

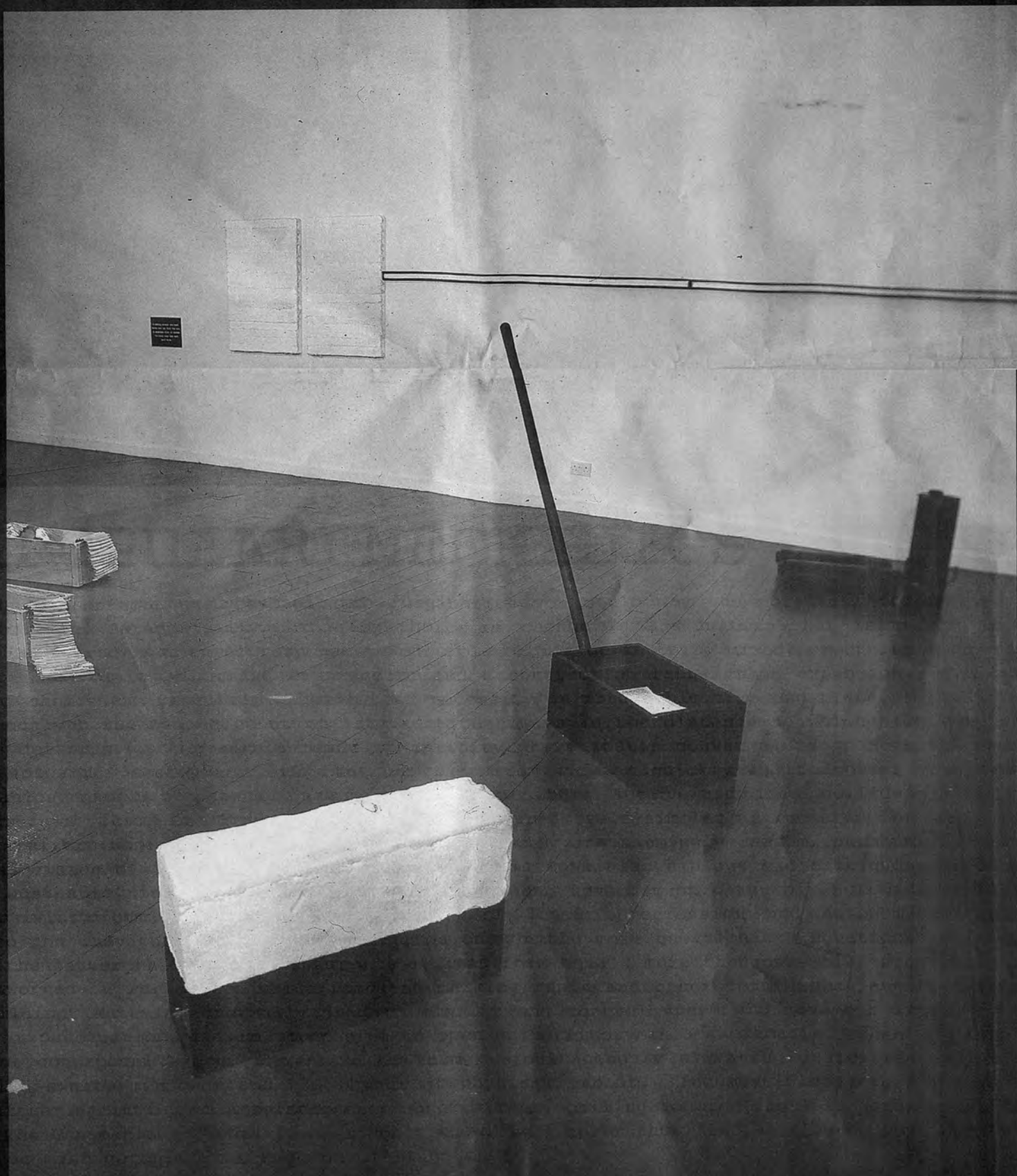
b.                      i.                      n.                      g.                      o.

entertainment and not that popular



"I have ripped through the blue lampshade of the constraints of colour. I have come out into the white. Follow me, comrade aviators. Swim into the abyss. I have set up the semaphores of Suprematism. I have overcome the lining of the coloured sky, torn it down and into the bag thus formed, put colour, tying it up with a knot. Swim in the white free abyss, infinity is before you"  
1919

"Freedom of the individual can only be in accordance with the common freedom; hence no personality has any private property, for all its forms are a phenomenon of the general economic movement. Hence arises the collective - a group of personalities linked by the agreement of collective individualism on the basis of common economic action - and forming a unit of the general unity"  
Kazimir Malevich 1920



Did Malevich find with his work and the Russian Revolution a means of fusing the spiritual and the material, the individual and the collective? The two statements quoted above, while perhaps not entirely contradictory, are hardly complementary, either. In the 1920 piece, he speaks eloquently of the societal and cultural aims of communism (as opposed to the Stalinism which soon after denied his legacy) - where could one find a more enlightened expression of the beauty of the classical world? The four "I haves" in the previous years essay are blots on a utopian landscape. Malevich was there, and his Suprematism may have resulted in part from the turmoil surrounding the revolution, but I'd say that his association with Bolshevism comes more from the Constructivism of Lissitsky et al, which relied so heavily on the influence of his work.

Conor McFeely's Context installation quotes from Malevich's White on White- swimming in his white free abyss and, with his road marking paint, reflecting infinity back onto us. Those whose concern is the spiritual in art can, then, gain a lot of contemplative fun from Conor's work.

But this is hardly the point. Conor's work is made more to provide intellectual consideration of the realities of our harsh existence than to provide aesthetic pleasure (even if it does). The reflective traffic sign and white lines are semaphores not of Suprematism but of the supremacy of the state. They signify, whether we think they're a good idea or not, the social control to which we must all adhere, and Conor's use of them is a subversive, perhaps revolutionary, act.

He has taken the white road marking, made some of his own and put them in boxes, arranged in an apparently arbitrary fashion, directing his audience in no direction but a haphazard zigzag. If one accepts the Marxist definition of the state as a mechanism for the suppression by the ruling class of all other classes, then one can see this as an act of subversion, an anarchistical refusal to obey. In the past he has made work from stolen property and proclaimed it as such. He aims with his work to make us uncomfortable with our lot, forcing us to recognise our own acceptance of our socialisation.



Creating a further paradox, Conor refers his audience to Minimalist painting and sculpture. In doing so he again leads one to recognise the dissimilarity between that period and his own work. This installation creates a strange visual bond between itself, with its social commentary, and a form of art which purged itself of any external referent. It is this paradoxical iconoclasm which perhaps gives the work its true anarchic identity.

In terms of strategy however, matters are less clear. Running through the wall pieces is a wooden line, or channel, painted sometimes externally, sometimes internally with the same reflective paint. It has been burned. At the end of the line smoke has stained the gallery wall. Conor described this to me as a fuse. I had already recognised this, but had read it not as the electrical fuse he intended, but as the kind used by Bugs Bunny and the Mission Impossible crew to detonate bombs. The former implies built-in weakness, the self-destructive economic basis of the State, waiting to pop as its internal contradictions reach their critical point. The latter is a revolutionary time line, interrupted on occasion by the fluorescent white of Conor's Suprematism, pointing to the historical conclusion of the current phase of historical development.