

THE GLASGOW SCHOOL OF ART

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2014

“Harness”

*A one-person exhibition of 27 works at
Mummary & Schnelle gallery in 2008*

Submitted by Louise Hopkins



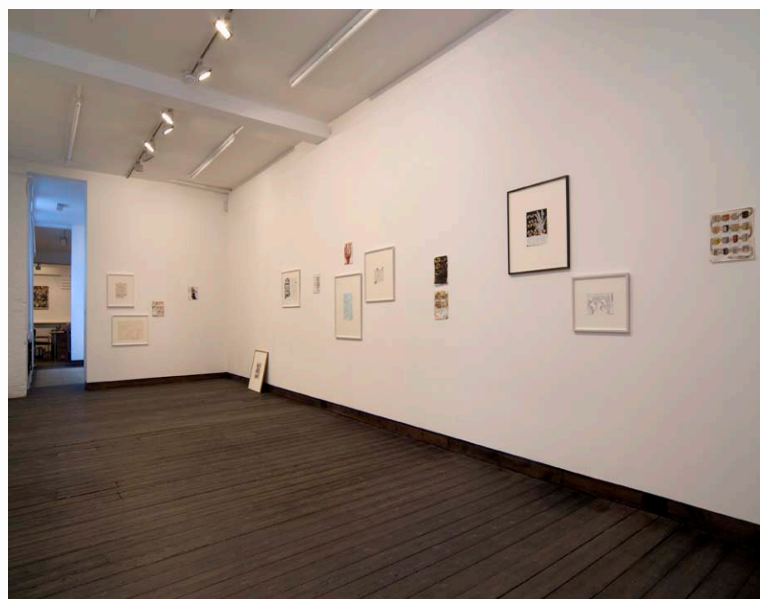
OUTPUT

Title
Harness

Submission No.
1

Authors/Creators
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A one-person exhibition 'Harness' in 2008 of 27 works at Mummery & Schnelle, London- an established contemporary gallery representing artists such as Stuart Brisley, Robert Bordo, and Carol Rhodes. The gallery has a reputation for curating exhibitions that provide, among other things, a carefully considered context for viewing contemporary painting. The exhibition consisted of paintings and drawings made on the surface of world maps, on pages torn from commercial catalogues, on sheet music and other found surfaces.



CONTEXT

In 2008 there had been some significant developments in my work, which led to a large new series of paintings and drawings. This development came from an experimental period in the studio which followed on from and directly responded to some of the works I made for a large one-person exhibition at The Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh in 2005, and works made for exhibition at the 52nd Venice Biennale in 2007, where I was one of 6 artists invited to represent Scotland. The body of work that I made in 2008 consisted of small and loosely painted works, and formed a dialogue with and challenge to the larger and more tightly painted works made before 2008. I wanted to explore the different intensities of large labour intensive works and small more apparently expressively painted works in relation to pre-existing surfaces. Both prior to and as a result of this exhibition, my work has been contextualised in relation to contemporary drawing, contemporary painting, contemporary Scottish art and contemporary British art. This has come about through discussion with artists and curators, and inclusion in exhibitions, publications and magazines.



CONTEXT

Some of the ideas and debates that inform my practice stem from paintings made in the early part of the last century during technological advance and political upheaval. In particular, Braque's Cubist collages and paintings, incorporating found elements such as newspaper. John Berger's 1969 essay 'The Moment of Cubism' explores this in depth and is a key reference point. Kurt Schwitters exploration of his idea 'Metz' is also of interest. More recently Elizabeth Cowling's discussion of Picasso and Braque's use of found surfaces in her essay 'What the wallpapers say; Picasso's papier colles of 1912-14' in the September 2013 issue of the Burlington magazine is of relevance too.

Through painting on found printed surfaces, I have become fascinated in the idea and activity of 'colouring-in' a pre-defined area. This might be an area between the creases in a crumpled piece of paper, a section of printed catalogue page, an area defined by the printed words in a world map. I have explored and expanded this idea in various ways.

I have become interested in how this apparently naïve act can become a political act in certain contexts such as a world map. Sometimes this has manifest as painting around, through or across the printed areas in a page taken from a catalogue. I have found one way of understanding and reflecting on this is through the semiological theory of Charles Sanders Peirce. What I am exploring could to some extent be seen as a shift from working with the more traditional iconic relation (of pictorial similarity) to an indexical one (of direct contact). The printed (or other kind of) edge is used as a means of registration for the paint, a way of deciding where the paint is to go. In this way the printed surface becomes a painted surface. The mass-produced becomes unique again. A chain in a series of reproductions. Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction by Walter Benjamin is also a reference point here.



Braque, 1914

METHODOLOGY

Many of my paintings and drawings are made on the surfaces of mass-produced printed matter, including comic pages, history books and patterned furnishing fabric. I am interested in painting as an exploration both of the medium itself and of the surfaces on which I work. I use paint to destabilise and reconfigure the printed matter. Painting can be a way of exploring doubt and uneasiness in relation to the cultural significance these surfaces may have. One example of this might be the way I appear to attack commodification by taking over and subverting with paint a selection of commercial magazine pages.

My paintings and drawings come about through long periods of studio experimentation, which includes testing out and reflecting, reworking, discarding and honing. At a most direct level, I am often looking for ways of using paint as a means of travelling across a surface, and of finding and constructing a new topography, a new shape or space in an already existing and seemingly flat printed surface. I find this often involves close discussion with other artists, often once certain stages of completion have been reached.

Some of the questions I am asking myself are 'How can this found surface become a painting?', and 'What kind of transformation can I bring to this generic, mass produced surface, using paint?', and 'What psychological weight or tension might be evolving in this process, and how might this speak about the original context of the found surface and how might it be developing beyond the original context?'



DISSEMINATION

In November 2008 I gave a public talk at Mummery & Schnelle Gallery, London about the works in 'Harness' and my practice in general.

2 reviews of the exhibition 'Harness'

JJ Charlesworth review in Art Review Magazine

Rebecca Geldard review in Saatchi Online Top 10

'Harness' exhibition visited by Tony Godfrey (writer and curator and then Director of Research at Sotheby's Institute) who had written an essay about my work 'White Music; The Floral as Viral' in 1996 for a Tramway publication to accompany a one-person exhibition in Glasgow and London. From my 'Harness' exhibition he selected the painting '16 Cabinets' for inclusion in his major survey publication of contemporary painting for Phaidon called 'Painting Today' which came out in 2009. In his essay Godfrey, contextualises my painting on found surfaces as 'one response to this bombardment by images of commodities is to take them over and subvert them as...British artist Louise Hopkins does, here literally painting over the mail order catalogue page'. Godfrey says 'a different aesthetic order replaces that of the advertisers: the commodities become more thing-like and the image far less personal.' (This has subsequently led to an invitation to make work for a group exhibition that Tony Godfrey is curating for a gallery in Manilla, due to open in January 2014)

DISSEMINATION

'Harness' was seen by Merlin James and Carol Rhodes, who invited me to include a work the exhibition they curated at 42 Carlton Place as part of Glasgow International in 2012. The exhibition was called 'Since I put your picture in a frame' and 'Brown Enclosure' from the 'Harness' exhibition was the piece that was selected for the exhibition of work by over 20 artists including Walter Sickert, Alfred Wallis, Julie Roberts, Andre Derain.

'Harness' was visited by curator Sean McGlashan and as a result of seeing the exhibition and discussions and studio visits that followed, he invited me to include work in the group exhibition 'A Picture Show', at The Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow in 2013. 'Red Rings' which was in the exhibition 'Harness' was included in the exhibition at GOMA along with three new works. The exhibition is accompanied by an online publication with an essay by Dr Dominic Patterson of Glasgow University.

'Harness' was seen by Helen Baker (artist and then Director of Gallery North and Principal Lecturer at University of Northumbria). This led to visit to my studio and a recorded conversation between myself, Helen Baker, artist Michael Mulvihill and artist Joe Woodhouse. I was invited to include 4 works in an exhibition 'Graphite' at Gallery North in 2011. 'Grey Holes' from the exhibition 'Harness' was included in the exhibition 'Graphite'. An image of the work was reproduced in the publication, as well as a transcript of the studio interview and images of several other works.

'Harness' was visited by Cove Park curator Alexia Holt. As a result of seeing the exhibition and subsequent discussions in my studio Alexia responded to some of the ideas presented in my work in 'Harness', in particular my paintings on world maps and the idea of using paint as a means of travel, and this led to an invitation to be part of 'Below Another Sky' (ongoing until Spring 2014).

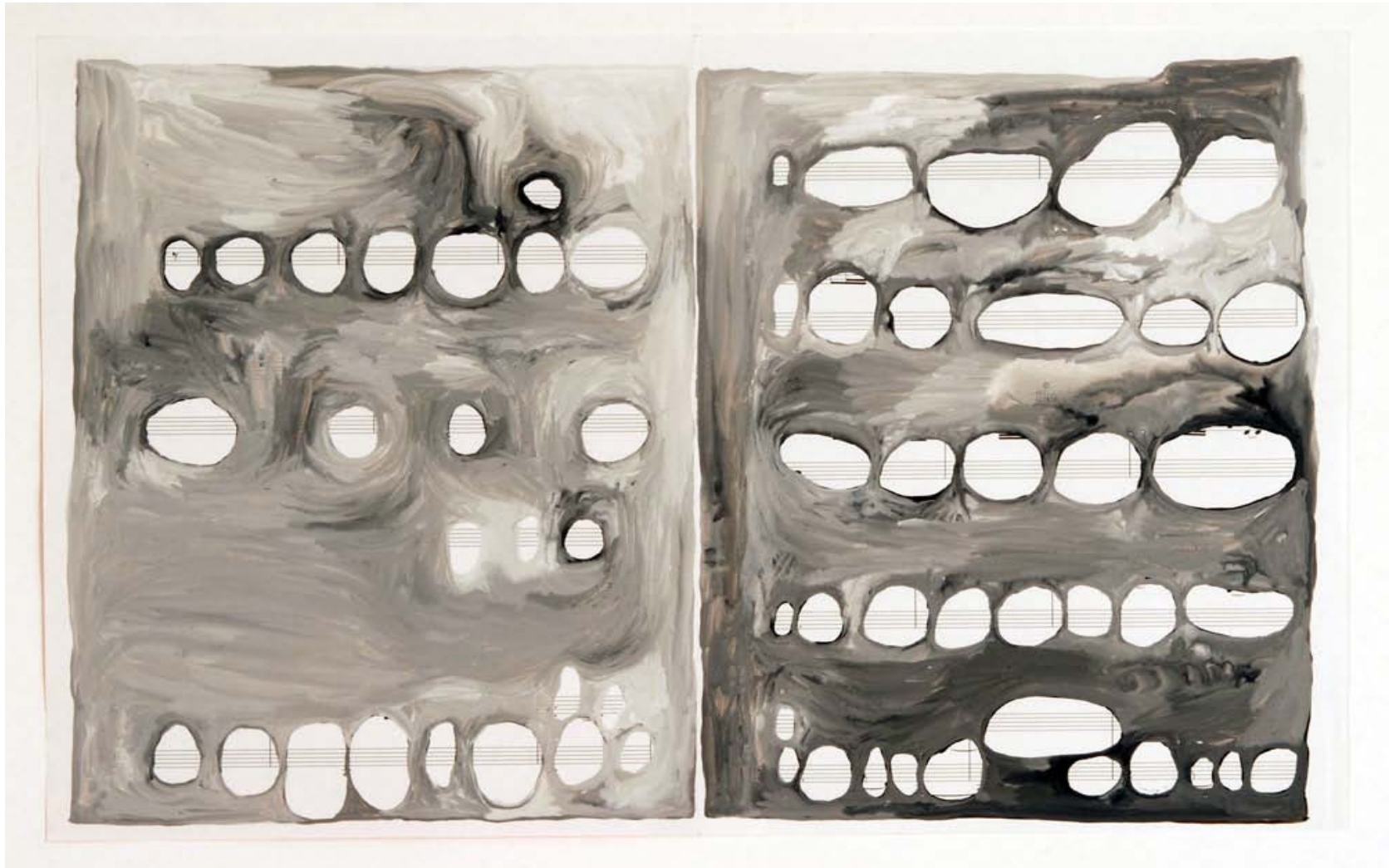
'Below Another Sky' is an International Residency programme to support new work in print by artists from Scotland and Commonwealth countries, commissioned by the Scottish Print Network and funded by Creative Scotland. <http://belowanothersky.org/> 20 artists are involved including Christine Borland, David Shrigley and Jim Lambie.

DISSEMINATION

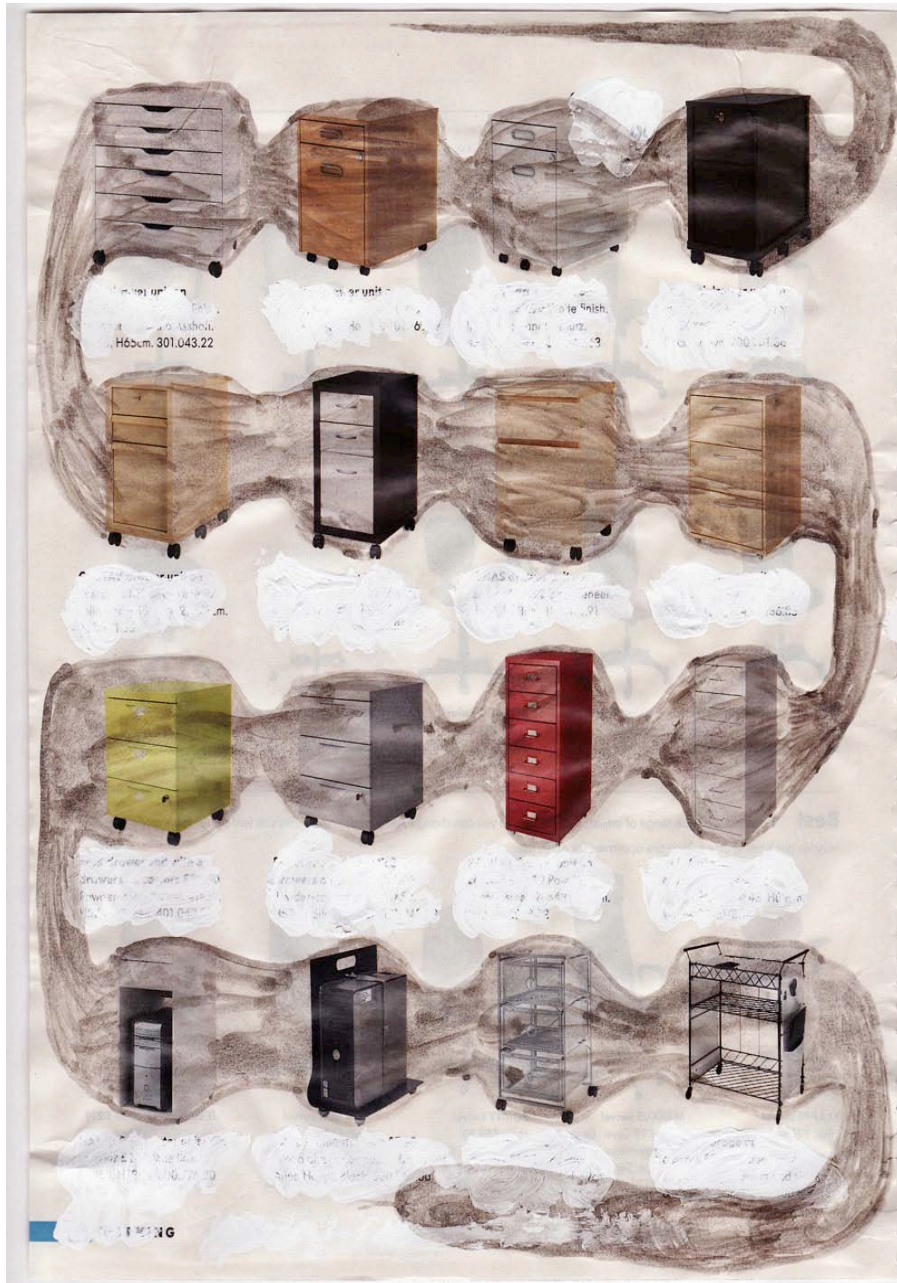
The exhibition 'Harness' brought together several different series of works. I was invited to develop my ideas further in a smaller exhibition in the Project Room at Mummery&Schnelle in Autumn 2010. I used this opportunity to show 2 new paintings on catalogue pages, which were a development of the works made for my 'Harness' exhibition in 2008. In the 2010 Project Room exhibition I experimented by showing for the first time, catalogue page works with 2 paintings on furnishing fabric, and for the first time, 2 drawings made on site in the gallery during the installation of the exhibition. Also shown within this combination was a new painting on a map. This exhibition was crucial in bringing together new developments explored in 'Harness' and earlier work, and in this sense encapsulated the range of my whole practice within 7 works. This exhibition ran concurrently with a one-person exhibition by Merlin James in the main gallery. The 2 exhibitions were reviewed together by John Yau for Brooklyn Rail, and in response to the specific selection of works I made for the exhibition, he discusses my practice as a whole and how it has developed over the last 20 years. In one part of his text he says 'Drawing has become in Hopkins's work, redrawing, bringing to mind graffiti and doodling. If this were all the artist did, it would come across as purely obsessive, which wouldn't be enough to sustain the viewer's interest and anticipation. The strength of Hopkins's work materializes in the varied responses she makes to her chosen surfaces even when they are of the same family, such as maps...'

'Drawing to Learn/Learning to Draw' group exhibition in 2013 at The Fleming Collection, London included 2 works that were part of my 'Harness' exhibition-'Mums-gold and black' and 'Small torn map'.

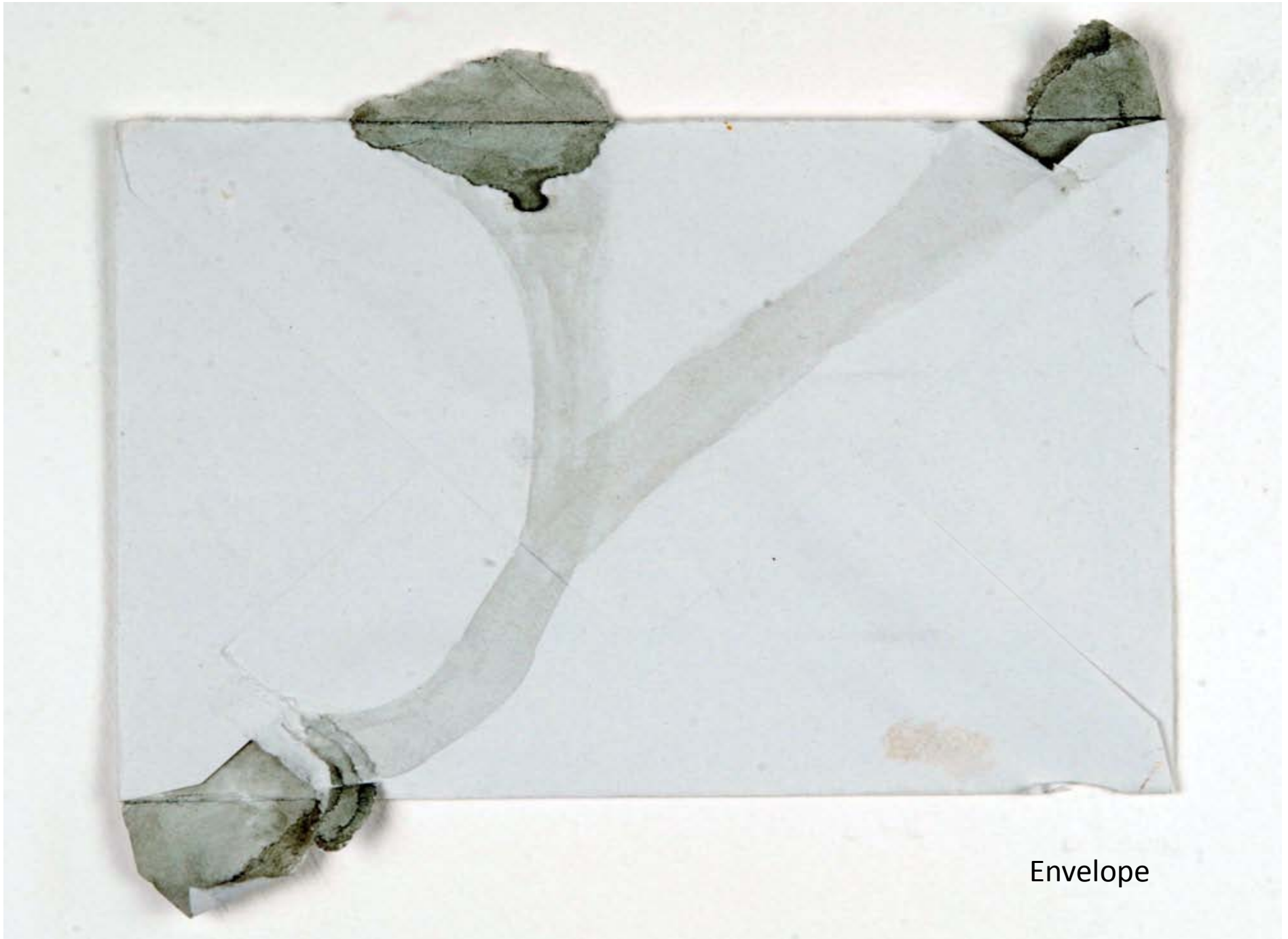
In 2009 I was invited to include several works in the exhibition 'Between The Lines' curated by Jeremy Cooper and taking place at Trinity Contemporary, London. In the catalogue that accompanied the exhibition, Jeremy Cooper and Luce Garrigues give an overview of my practice, and refer to the works in the 'Harness' exhibition.



Grey Holes



16 Cabinets



Envelope



Brown Enclosure



Red Rings