



**Bruce Ingram**  
Arrangements



Forward by Sacha Craddock

Morphing back and forth between dimensions, mimicking a depth of illusion, while alluding to the shallowness of pretence, Bruce Ingram works with a permanent and consistent love of the act, fact, craft of presentation. For Ingram all matter and meaning merges in the bringing of actual and reproductive elements into another layer of understanding.

Think about the sense, the colour, the touch, of photographic cookery books, of flower arranging manuals, all manner of 'how to' books printed in the early days of mass publishing by Paul Hamlyn, for instance. Images of art, architecture, city, furniture, food, animals, planets and porcelain arrived, easily, cheaply for the first time.

From postgraduate to now, Ingram, remained true to this fascination for the generosity of the gathered and assembled image and how best to achieve a hybrid of illusory sense. In 2007/ 2008 the associative picture of something would be brought into the sculptural fray, like a flag for a flavour is planted onto a sandwich. African, Japanese, Baroque, information becomes so much more than that, as Ingram used to bring cultural and atmospheric reference and reflection to wall pieces and free standing sculpture.

But his current work is a clean, purer manifestation of a break from actual material to its representation. The picture, a collapse of such truth or true physical terms is an important constant here. Ingram's constructions do play a great game with the 'home' of meaning and actuality, with the picture a place or base invaded or enhanced by informative elements folded in. The cut out element from a magazine shining against the still plaster structure, for instance the relief, and depth shallow and still illustrated by the feeding in of two-dimensional space.

This, the second exhibition in Bermondsey, is a very real shift in sculptural terms between the shallow and depth. Ingram's first exhibition showed a sculptural life, a hive of activity, behind the glass of the vitrine. He allowed the pieces to remain in flux, in a state between raw material, movement, and re-alignment. Post war sculpture where the steel is manipulated and given depth by Caro, is reduced here in this case to a different context, use and scale. Ingram uses photocopy, the flimsy, simple, familiar, even tawdry, method for the physical relay of information. The marvellously perfunctory method of pinning unweilding strips of reproduced illusion brings the language of language to the fore, to exist in a state between collage and three dimensions. Here strips of copy curl and weave to set up a tempo as appropriate and legible as the cutout in earlier work.

The style and aesthetic of the Japanese arrangements seems to be ruled by notions more complicated and precious than rules on the hierarchy of the Classical column. The bringing in elements of life caught short, of flowers, plants, fauna and flora, shut

out, trussed up with as much manner and formality as a religious exercise. For Ingram a stagiest approach to an art that arrives all at once is, very important. The stages allude to the pretence of it all, the gestural short hand of cut-out.

Ingram's interest in Ikebana, is that of anyone who seeks the rhythm, reason and rule that exist in football, bread making and embroidery. This contained, consistent, series continues his fascination with the visual rules of time and mode, with knowing how it works in terms of visual form and counter movement with purist, minimal and domestic associative elements. The paper strips further the expression of rock, twig, leaves, baskets, shallow tin base and bowl, vase, leaf, blossom, moss and stone beneath in pictures that provide the base, ground, rationale for such displays of affection and understanding.

The craft is here for Ingram in the framing, containing and pinning, dealing with the end of the story as well as the beginning. The cut paper is pinned on to a cork background for the associative traditions of display. The reproduced painted line that gives the shallow dimensionality and tonal depth refers to a skill and pursuit active somewhere between the gods and mortals. Colour is drained out.

Current work is so complete. The other series, the small 'table' pieces owe as much to Oldenburg and Caro as they do to a more contemporary play on layered reproduction. Surfaces are painted for real onto unreal plaster and lend itself to a dolls house arrangement with plaster for food, graphite on surface, and wire for line. Ingram is making arrangements that allow the association of elements to merge with pretence at keeping up appearances. He pushes plaster casts of cauliflower, pomegranate, coconuts, mushrooms, and lichees into 'fancies' with wire or elastic band as if for competition. Moving backwards from the real, they are cast, after all, but the actual sculpture here is dependent on how it is also portrayed as photograph.

Here again the colour is drained out for a classical understanding of form and only allowed it in for a cross visual, textural play across the logic of the areas it inhabits. The two series give and take away at pretty much the same time in the same manner. The scalelessness of photography is here morphing between actual and image. Both freestanding sculpture and corkboard base contain a timely municipal sense of display and arrangement practical and impractical, decorative and descriptive.

Sacha Craddock  
October 2012





Sculpture





















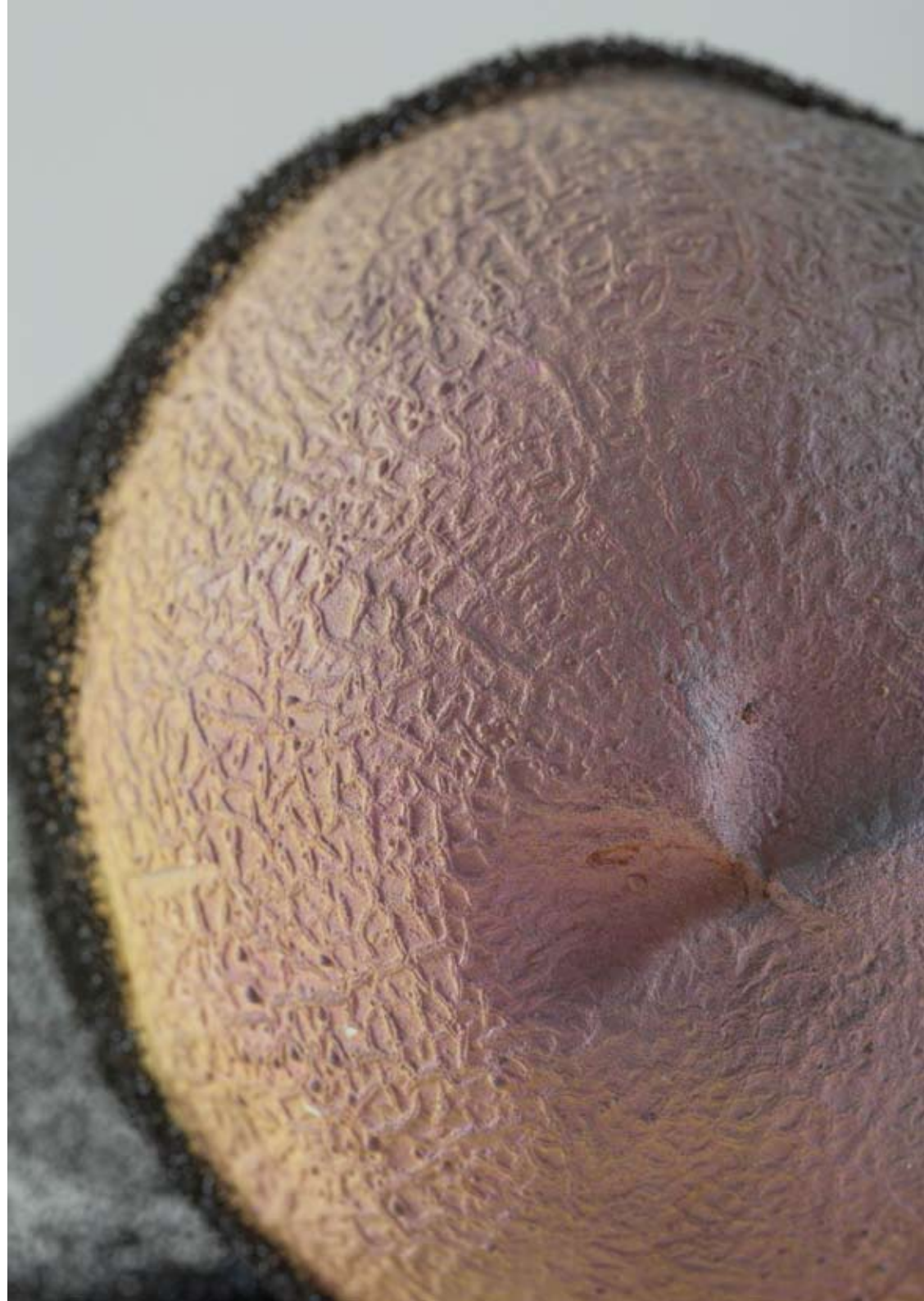












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# List of Works

- 1 **Home and Away**  
Plaster casts of coconuts, three plaster discs, armature wire, wooden ball, kebab sticks, cleaning cloth, graphite and paper  
(h) 55cm (w) 32cm (d) 22cm
- 2 **Double Unfold**  
Plaster casts of pomegranates, two plaster discs, twigs, foam, lead sheet, canvas, cleaning cloth, cable ties and safety pin  
(h) 57cm (w) 35cm (d) 26cm
- 3 **Fall**  
Plaster cast of a pomegranate and Sharon fruit, two plaster discs, armature wire, twig, wooden ball, canvas, t - shirt, kebab sticks, graphite, string, spray paint and safety pin  
(h) 70cm (w) 32cm (d) 25cm
- 4 **Arc**  
Plaster cast of a fennel, four plaster discs, armature wire, twig, wooden ball, canvas, graphite, yarn, electrical tape and spray paint  
(h) 75cm (w) 40cm (d) 21cm
- 5 **Forward Step**  
Plaster casts of mushrooms, three plaster discs, armature wire and rope  
(h) 80cm (w) 36cm (d) 36cm
- 6 **Crystanthium**  
Plaster cast of a pomegranate and lychees, three plaster discs, armature wire, canvas, wooden doweling, rope, ball of string, kebab stick, polystyrene packaging, and spray paint  
(h) 50cm (w) 22cm (d) 25cm
- 7 **Seven Stars**  
Plaster casts of star fruits, four plaster discs, armature wire, canvas, sponge balls and spray paint  
(h) 40cm (w) 45cm (d) 25cm
- 8 **Column**  
Plaster casts of pineapple, plaster disc, armature wire, branch, card, cleaning cloth and spray paint  
(h) 43cm (w) 22 cm (d) 22cm
- 9 **Eclipse**  
Plaster cast of melon, three plaster discs, graphite, sponge and spray paint  
(h) 32cm (w) 21cm (d) 21cm
- 10 **Upturn**  
Plaster casts of a mushroom, three plaster discs, branch, canvas, wire, sponge ball, spray paint and safety pin  
(h) 40cm (w) 45cm (d) 25cm
- 11 **Fresh Balance**  
Plaster casts of broccoli stem and Asian pear, plaster base, armature wire, ball of string, polystyrene packaging, kebab stick and cable ties  
(h) 32cm (w) 22cm (d) 22cm
- 12 **Unit**  
Plaster casts of papaya and Asian pear, plaster base, cleaning cloth, t- shirt, ball of string, canvas and spraypaint.  
(h) 30cm (w) 11cm (d) 26cm.
- 13 **Black Form**  
Plaster cast of cauliflower, two plaster discs, graphite, Indian ink and spray paint  
(h) 26cm (w) 17cm (d) 15cm
- 14 **Shadow Above**  
Plaster casts of a squash, plaster base and graphite  
(h) 30cm (w) 21cm (d) 21cm
- 15 **Touch**  
Three plaster discs, twig, air drying clay, graphite and thread  
(h) 25cm (w) 15cm (d) 15cm
- 16 **Sleeping / Still**  
Plaster casts of cougettes, two plaster discs, sponge, spray paint and elastic band  
(h) 15cm (w) 21cm (d) 21cm



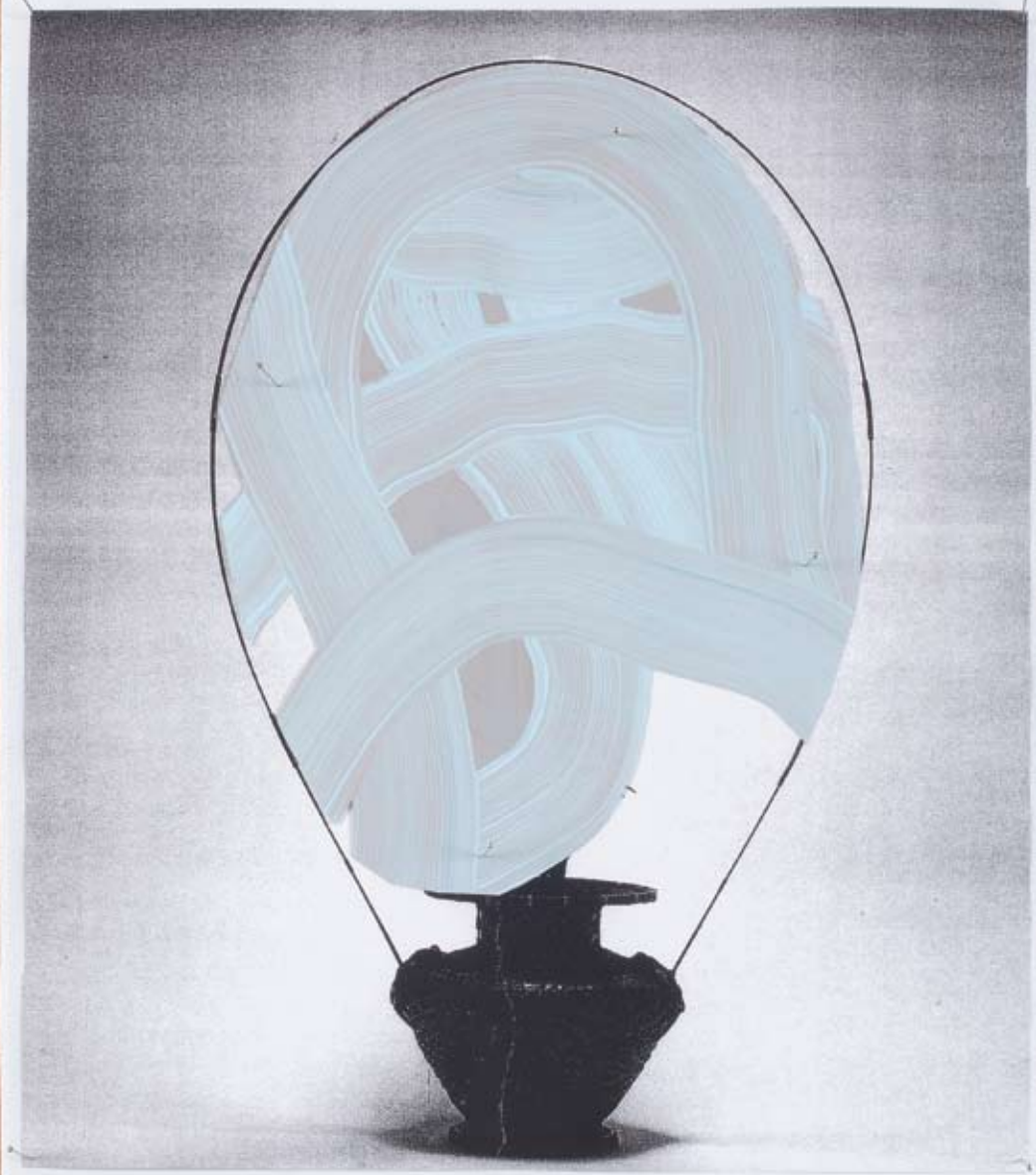
Arrangements  
Works 1–20  
Collage, pins and photocopy, mounted on cork backboard.  
(h) 29.7cm (w) 42cm.

## Arrangement Series

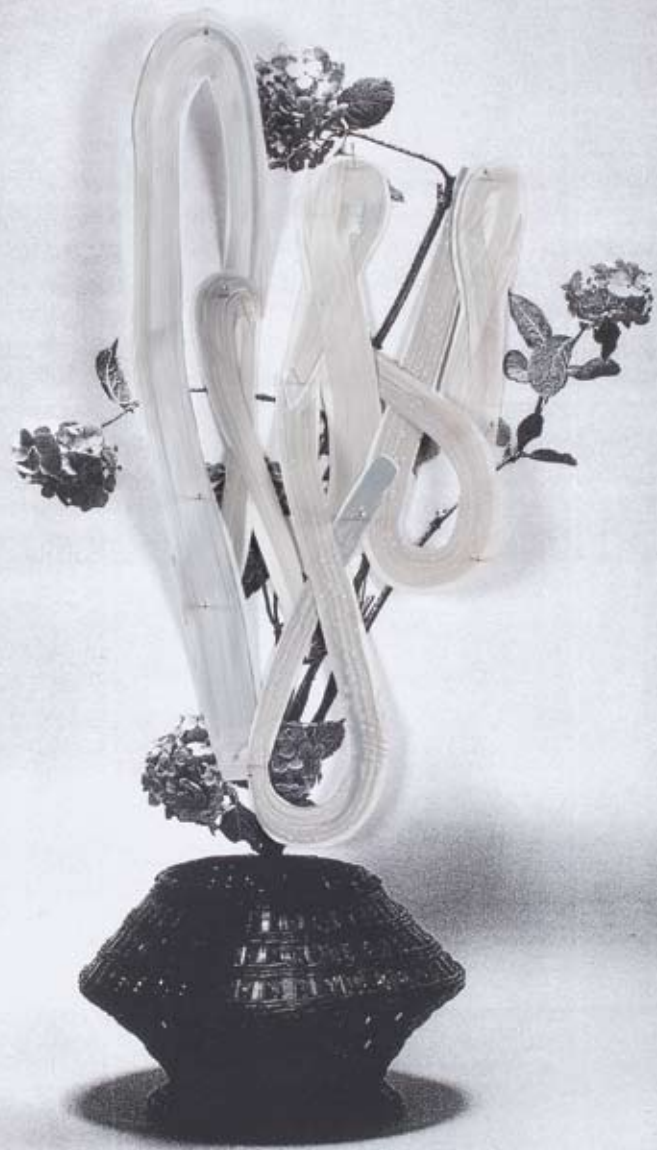




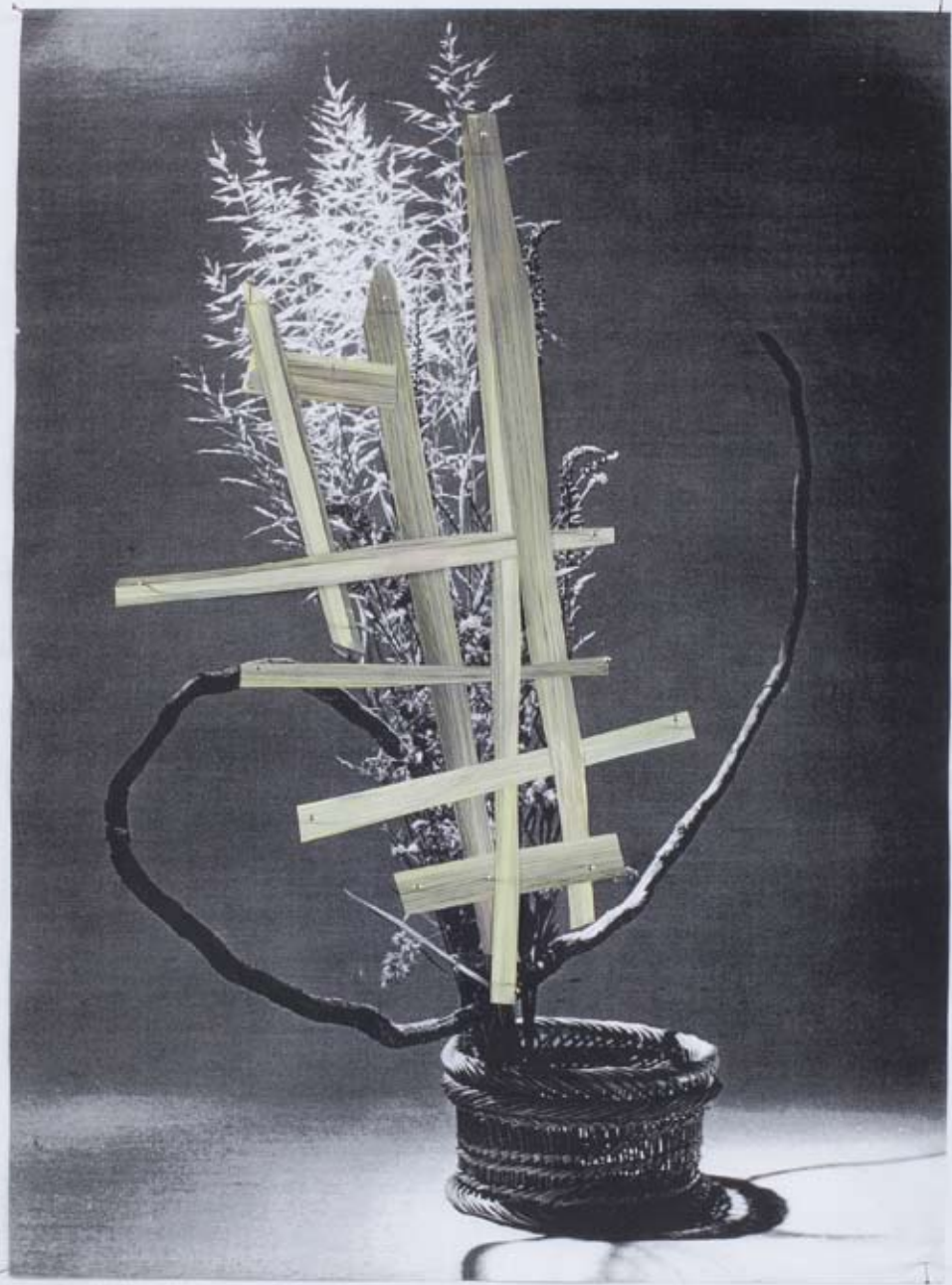




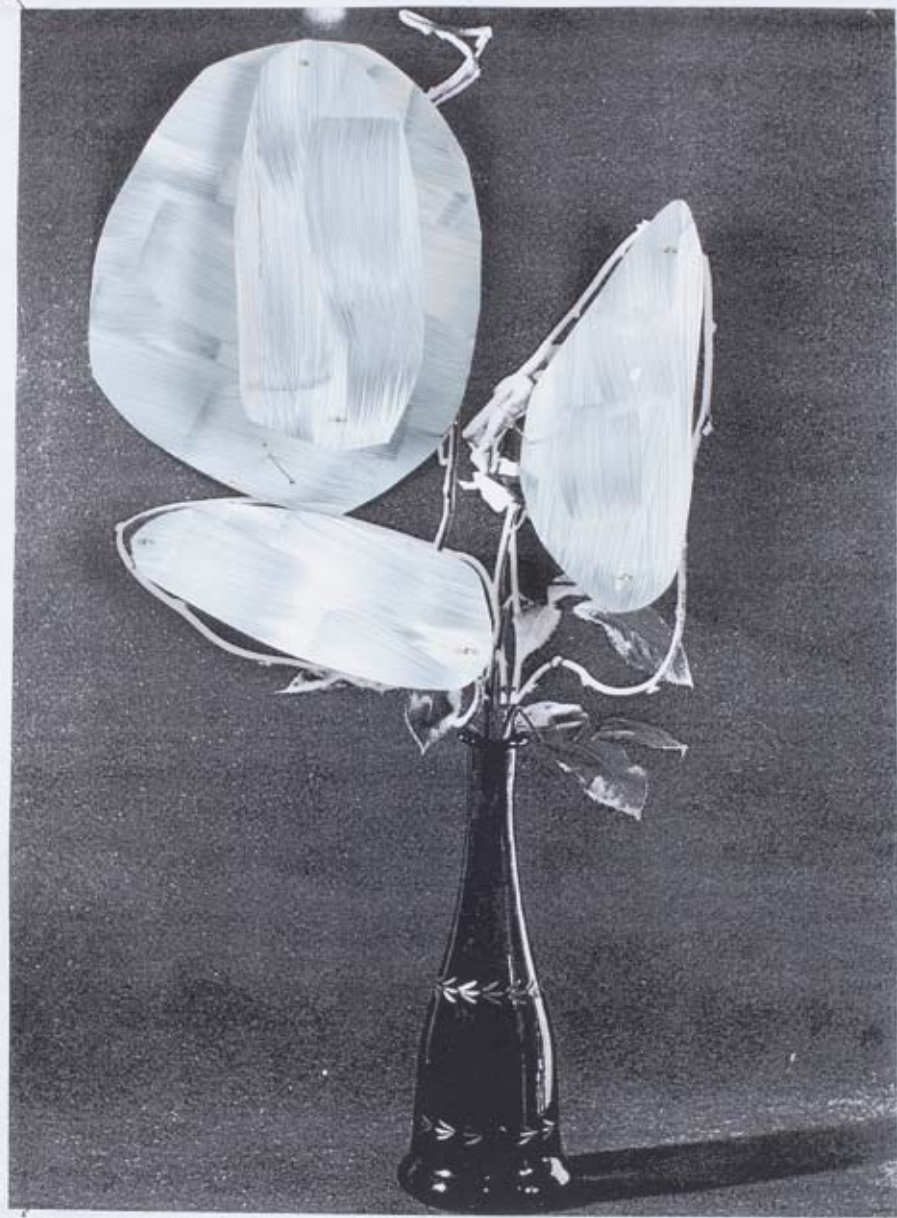




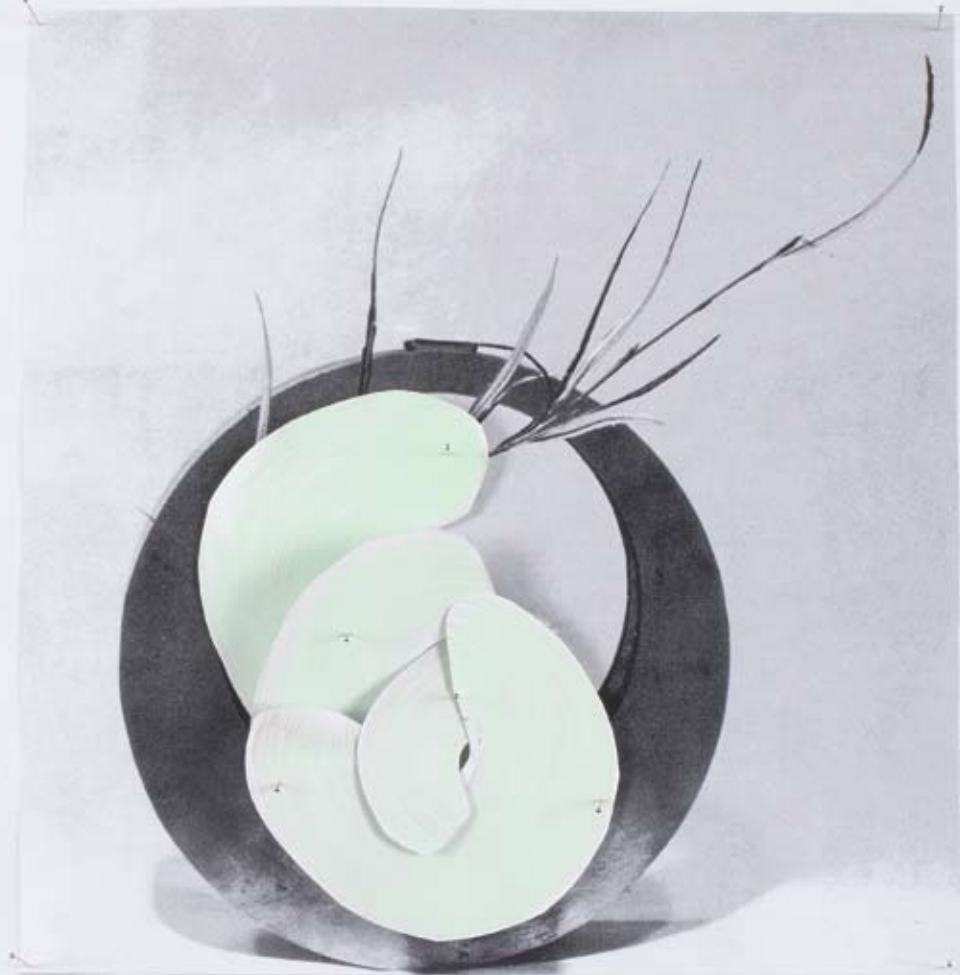
















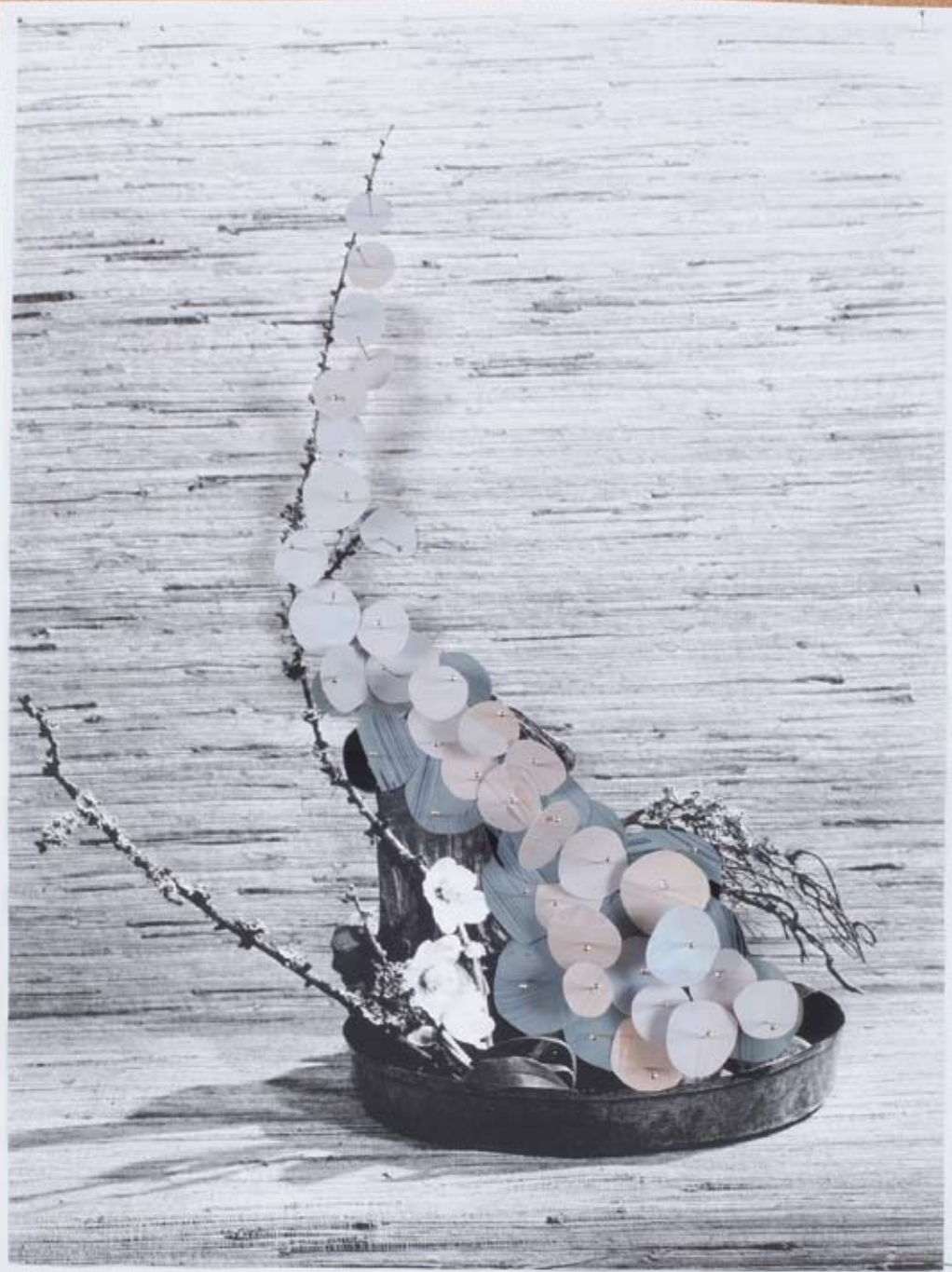
















Interview by Tessa Perutz



Tessa Perutz visited Bruce Ingram's studio in Hackney, London. Summer 2012.

**TP: The title for this body of work, "Arrangements," seems very fitting to me. The pieces seem to all be arranged very purposefully, in a playfully calculating sort of way. Can you discuss how you go about creating these assembled forms?**

BI: The sculptures have arisen through a personal desire to organise the materials and objects that circulate the studio, I wanted to find a way that these disparate items could somehow sit together in a harmonic and balanced manner. The inclusion of plaster casts of fruit and vegetables, also make a direct reference to classical themes of the still life.

Exploring this notion of arranging and placing, I wanted to collect these individual elements within a series of artworks; the end results are a personal response to dealing with these objects that I am interested in. I wanted the sculptures to have a natural balance and order, the finished sculptures becoming a space that all these elements, somehow find a natural place to fit in.

**TP: What influences you to use the materials that you do?**

BI: I collect many objects from the daily world we live in, once brought into the studio these objects become part of the 'spin cycle' of my process. I am interested in processes and objects that we use every day, I like to include humble materials within the works, for example an object such as a cleaning cloth, is utilised in a work for the inclusion of a repetitive surface pattern or a simple process such as a cable tie is often the most direct and immediate way of fastening a sculpture. These processes and objects have a universal value, everyone understands what they are and how they are used. I like the viewer to have an immediate relation to the work. I also like the power of found objects in translating another experience or place; I often select materials for their 'warmth', making the artwork have a human and sensitive element.

**TP: How did you start working with casting fruit and vegetables within the sculptural pieces?**

BI: The daily activity of visiting the local shop has provided a reference to begin this body of work. I have always been interested in the changing array of exotic and colourful displays of fruits and vegetables that are stocked in the grocery shop near my studio in Hackney. Varieties are selected for their visual qualities of shape, texture and form.

I always wanted to work with fruit, making plaster casts is a very simple and somehow spontaneous way of bringing these real references in to my work. By setting armature wire into the plaster, also gave me a flexibility of fastening the fruits into other objects. By grouping and arranging, new formations of objects started to form in a very natural way.

**TP: By transforming these fruits and vegetables into plaster versions, you are denying the organic pleasures of touch, smell and taste. You have taken away this idea of a living and rotting material, replacing it with something that is permanent and set.**

BI: By casting in plaster, I like the simple transformation of producing an impression of the appearance of the original form. The plaster version is solid, cold and colourless. The plaster cast becomes a blank version to add my own colours and textures. The casting also takes a form of preservation; these specimens are caught at a moment of perfection, freezing nature at the height of its visual beauty.

The idea of preservation is furthered explored through the process of wrapping and padding, this echoes the polystyrene packaging that sometimes wraps individual fruit to prevent bruising during transportation, the brightly pattern mesh, has a stretchy and repetitive pattern. A lot of the fruits in the work, are also wrapped, taking on a protective and preserved status, I am aiming to convey a sense of preciousness and stillness within the work.





**TP: What inspires you to create the forms that you do? Are you taking specific subjects from reality and recreating them? Or is it more about chance and intuition?**

Bl: In previous sculptures, I have started working along the themes of chance, about finding things on the studio floor and building up a form. I was not setting out with a preconceived notion of what an outcome should be. I always work on a number of works simultaneously and drift between pieces throughout the day, editing and reconfiguring. I find this working process appealing, and more surprising. You loosen up and go with the outcome and make decisions along the way.

**TP: You have mentioned to me in the past how Ikebana, or the ancient art of flower arranging, has influenced you. Can you explain what you find inspiring in this art form?**

Bl: I have been looking at Ikebana for a while; this body of work has taken the art form as a starting point. The form of flower arranging is very sculptural, exploring concerns of composition, form, colour and texture. I am interested in the rules and styles within Ikebana, the acknowledgement of seasons and geographical locations. Ikebana has become a visual reference as a framework for creating something abstracted from the everyday. I am also interested in the marriage of synthetic materials mixed with organic forms. Ikebana is a very elegant and considered art form, an aesthetic I want to also convey in the sculptural pieces. I love the sense of precision and control demonstrated in different types of Ikebana. I also find the emphasis and weight centered on connections and placement, very inspiring.

**TP: The practice of Ikebana is revered as being a Buddhist expression of the beauty of nature, having calming and contemplative effects for the practitioner. Is creating these often delicate works a form of meditation for you?**

Bl: Making artwork generally is a calm and reflective experience for me. Making the sculptural works has been a very intimate process. All the materials are hand sized and small in scale, through balancing, stacking and piling these objects, I am constantly re-organising and trying to find out what works. This can be very spontaneous or might take many studio visits. I often end up breaking up works or sometimes joining different elements together.

**TP: Ikebana stresses the idea of using different styles of arranging, such as cascading, upright, and slanting styles. Do you start works with these different fluid movements in mind?**

Bl: The sculptures lead in their own directions, I do however think about these styles as they progress, certain images come to mind from the series of collaged works in particular, I made the set of 'Arrangement' collages before the sculptures, giving me the time to study the forms and styles of Ikebana. The collages were made by initially photocopying images from textbooks. Here the black and white image became a canvas to explore a new abstracted form.

**TP: I find the harmony of muted colours very striking, not only within the individual pieces, but even more so within the greater, overall body of work. How have you chosen this specific colour palette?**

Bl: Over the last couple of years, I have been working within a limited colour palette, mainly monochrome. I have been exploring these mid tones between black and white. The occasional hints of colour are always very muted, making a soft contrast to the black and whites. I am also attracted to the photocopied image. I enjoy the harshness of the black and white reproduction. I wanted the whole body of work to have a lightness and delicacy, so brighter colours might have been too heavy. This body of work has a washed out and faded feel.

**TP: Do you have a favorite fruit or vegetable? Those that are particularly nice to work with?**

Bl: The coconut is a joy to cast! The husky hairs get caught in the mould and stick to the plaster, so my versions have a little bit of the original organic matter trapped on the surface, which makes the sculpture look really real.







b. 1981, Falmouth, Cornwall.  
Lives and works in London.

#### Education

2008 **Royal College of Art** London, MA Sculpture.  
2003 **Brighton University** Sussex, BA Sculpture.

#### Selected Exhibitions

2012 **Arrangements** (Solo) Vitrine Gallery, London. UK.  
**In Forward – Reverse** Shwartz Gallery, London. UK.  
**No Beginning/ No End** Two-person exhibition with John Summers, Copenhagen Place, London. UK.

2011 **Converse/Dazed Emerging Artist Award** with the Whitechapel Gallery, London. UK.  
**New Constellation** (Solo) Vitrine Gallery, London. UK.  
**Virtually Real** The Stanley and Audrey Gallery, Leeds and Blythe Gallery, Imperial College, London. UK.

2010 **Hybird** Vitrine Gallery, London. UK.  
**This Is Still Life** Monument 2 Gallery, Chicago. USA.

2009 **Bermuda Triangle** Spring Projects, London. UK.  
**Creekside Open** (selected by Mark Wallinger) APT Gallery, London. UK.  
**Antigone** Vulpes Vulpes, London. UK.

2008 **L'apres Moderne** Project Midi, Brussels.  
**Storage** (Solo) The Agency, London. UK.  
**Nature Show** Contemporary Art Projects, London. UK.  
**Past Times** (solo) Hockney Gallery, Royal College of Art, London. UK.  
**Gilchrist Fisher Painting Prize** Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London. UK.

2007 **International Residency Exhibition** Kyoto Arts Centre, Kyoto, Japan.  
**New Build** Terrace Gallery, London. UK.  
**Paper Cuts** Hove Museum, Brighton. UK.  
Touring to Oriel Davis Gallery, Wales and Rugby Art Gallery, Warwickshire. UK.

2006 **Paper Cuts** Bury St Edmunds Art Gallery, Bury St Edmunds. UK.  
**Paperwork's: Paper Art in the 21st Century** Bury Art Gallery, Manchester. UK.

2005 **Take – Away Expired** (solo) Brighton Media Centre, Friese Greene Gallery, Brighton. UK.

2004 **The Jerwood Drawing Prize** Jerwood Space, London and national tour.

#### Awards

2011 **Converse/Dazed Emerging Artist Award.**  
(Finalist) Whitechapel Gallery, London. UK.

2009 **Arts Council England Individual artist's award.**

2008 **Allen and Overy Sculpture Prize** Royal College of Art, London. UK.  
**Merlin Studio Sculpture Award** Royal College of Art, London. UK.  
**Winner of the Gilchrist Fisher Painting Prize** Rebecca Hassock Gallery, London. UK.

2007 **Villier Davis Bursary Award** Royal College of Art, London. UK.

2004 **Arts Council England Individual artist's award.**

#### Residencies

2012 **Kurt Schwitter's Merz Barn** Cumbria. UK.  
2008 **Loughborough University** Loughborough, Leicestershire. UK.  
2007 **Kyoto University of the Arts** Kyoto, Japan. UK



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