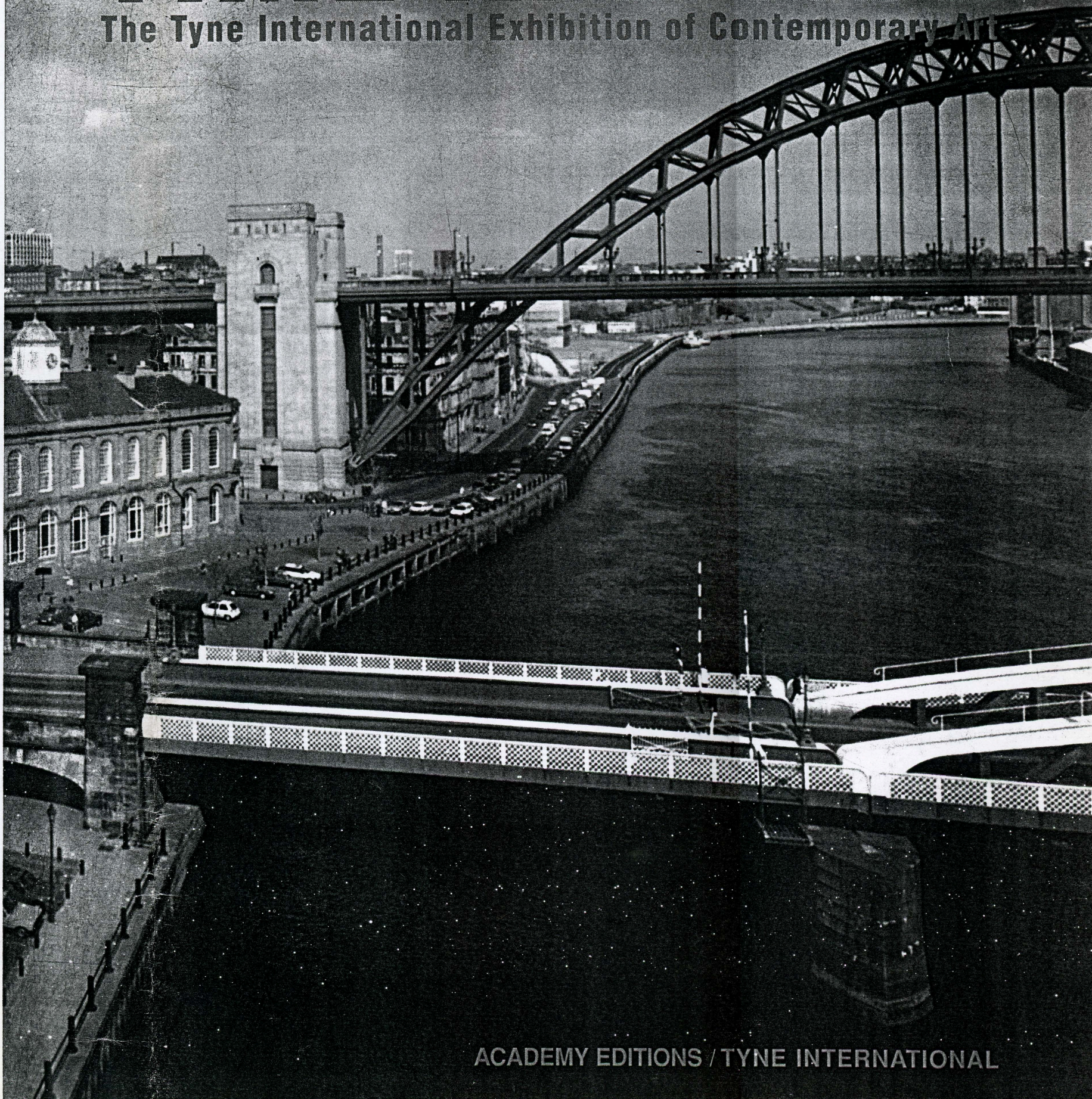


# TIME AND TIDE

The Tyne International Exhibition of Contemporary Art



ACADEMY EDITIONS / TYNE INTERNATIONAL

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FROM ABOVE, L TO R: CWS Warehouse, Sally Port Tower, Broad Chare, All Saints Church, Busways, Tyne Bridge, Outdoor Screen-Quayside, Quayside, Castle, Tyne Tees TV, Central Station, Tyneside Cinema

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continuum could exist between the two lands on either side of the ocean, as if both were unreal places, places made of dreams and misapprehensions that cross each other, but never meet. It might be a tactic designed to prevent an otherwise inevitable misunderstanding.

3 Stereotypes are – inevitably – misunderstandings. On either side of the ocean they help people to economise effort and thought, while depriving them of the possibility of being baffled by immediate experiences. In an extreme effort to avoid them, both lands are, in the installation, turned to unknown quantities. The effect of strangeness, of remoteness, coming like a strange breath across the ocean from another, un-

be a space as yet insufficiently defined in the imagination; not really included in the imperial project; shifting its position, as power shifts in the larger whole of which it is not really a part. Across the centuries, this installation would be a comment on the fate of debatable lands, a name once used for this part of the north of England, but whose scope is extended to include a contemporary land in the South America.

**Lands Not Shown: The Names, The Angels**

1 Ten names of lands are included in the installation: Murton, Seaham, Easington, Dawdon, Horden, Sacriston, Blackwall, Whittle, Ashington, Vane Tempest. They would be familiar to the viewer at

Central Station in Newcastle upon Tyne, from newspapers, from public opinion surveys, from politics. Yet the

known land, pollutes the immediate land, the familiar north of England as experienced by the viewer. Both lands, on one side of the ocean and on the other, are on equal terms with unuality, with desires, with ghosts. Both become equally uncanny.

4 The ocean as a zone of shifting meanings, of vacillation. 'Art has meaning, but not a meaning'. The bright sea, the blue and sunny sea as seen by someone lacking a foothold? Lacking a foothold, because on debatable lands?

5 Debatable lands, those on the borders of ancient empires. A debatable land would

mention of those names is made in such a way as to both remind the viewer of such information and to neutralise its usual connotations. Besides knowing they are the names of coal mines which have been closed, they are perceived as included in an improbable series: in the hierarchy of angels, as established in the Middle Ages: Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones; Dominations, Virtues, Powers; Principalities, Archangels and

Angels. The inhabitants of the realms of heaven. With an intriguing addition, of which more later: Man.

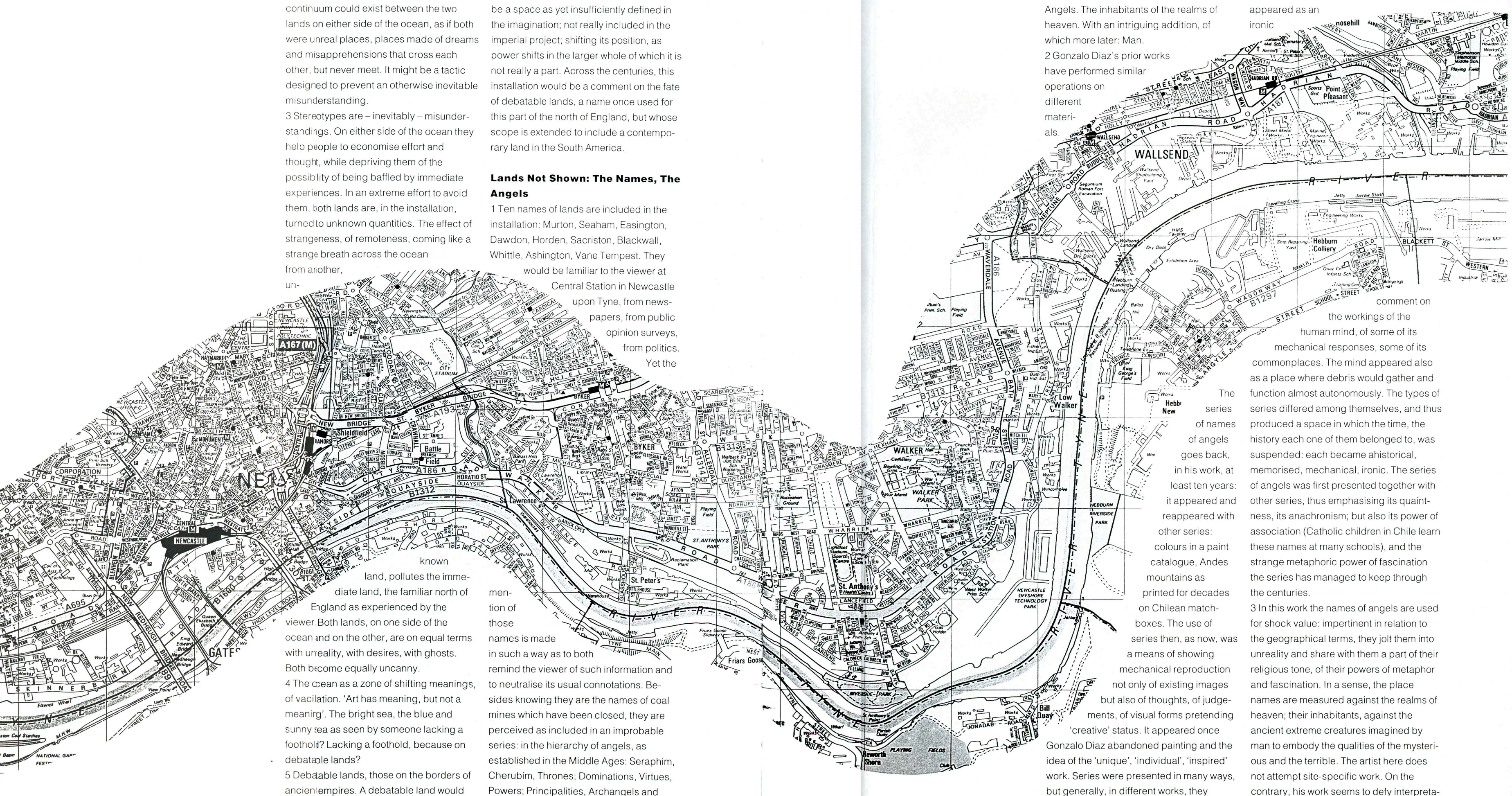
2 Gonzalo Diaz's prior works have performed similar operations on different materials.

appeared as an ironic

comment on the workings of the human mind, of some of its mechanical responses, some of its commonplaces. The mind appeared also as a place where debris would gather and function almost autonomously. The types of series differed among themselves, and thus produced a space in which the time, the history each one of them belonged to, was suspended: each became ahistorical, memorised, mechanical, ironic. The series of angels was first presented together with other series, thus emphasising its quaintness, its anachronism; but also its power of association (Catholic children in Chile learn these names at many schools), and the strange metaphoric power of fascination the series has managed to keep through the centuries.

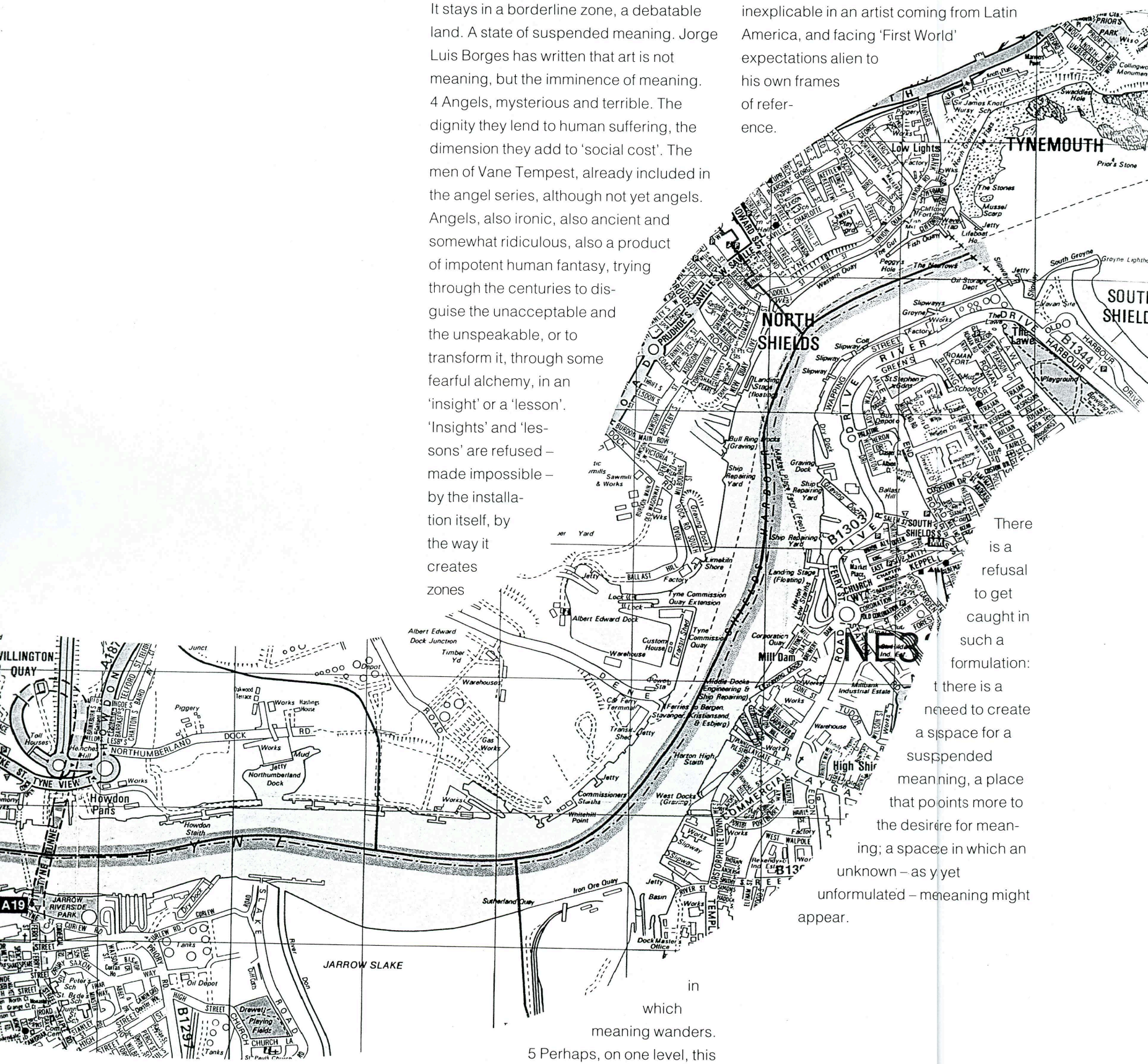
The series of names of angels goes back, in his work, at least ten years: it appeared and reappeared with other series: colours in a paint catalogue, Andes mountains as printed for decades on Chilean matchboxes. The use of series then, as now, was a means of showing mechanical reproduction not only of existing images but also of thoughts, of judgements, of visual forms pretending 'creative' status. It appeared once Gonzalo Diaz abandoned painting and the idea of the 'unique', 'individual', 'inspired' work. Series were presented in many ways, but generally, in different works, they

appeared once Gonzalo Diaz abandoned painting and the idea of the 'unique', 'individual', 'inspired' work. Series were presented in many ways, but generally, in different works, they



tion in such terms; it does not attempt to diagnose, to know, to convince, to mobilise. It stays in a borderline zone, a debatable land. A state of suspended meaning. Jorge Luis Borges has written that art is not meaning, but the imminence of meaning. 4 Angels, mysterious and terrible. The dignity they lend to human suffering, the dimension they add to 'social cost'. The men of Vane Tempest, already included in the angel series, although not yet angels. Angels, also ironic, also ancient and somewhat ridiculous, also a product of impotent human fantasy, trying through the centuries to disguise the unacceptable and the unspeakable, or to transform it, through some fearful alchemy, in an 'insight' or a 'lesson'. 'Insights' and 'lessons' are refused – made impossible – by the installation itself, by the way it creates zones

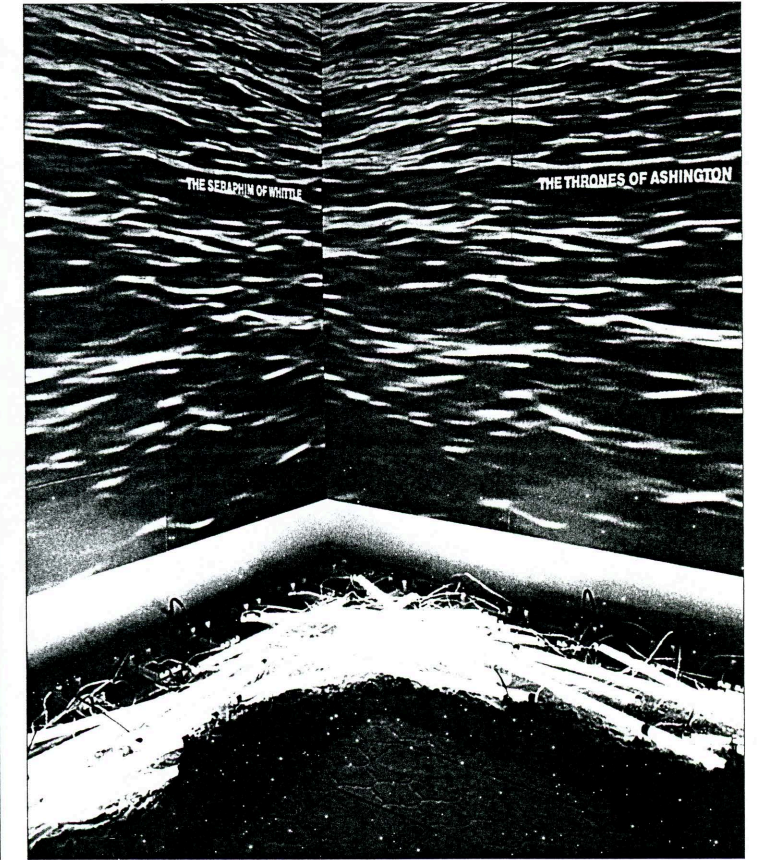
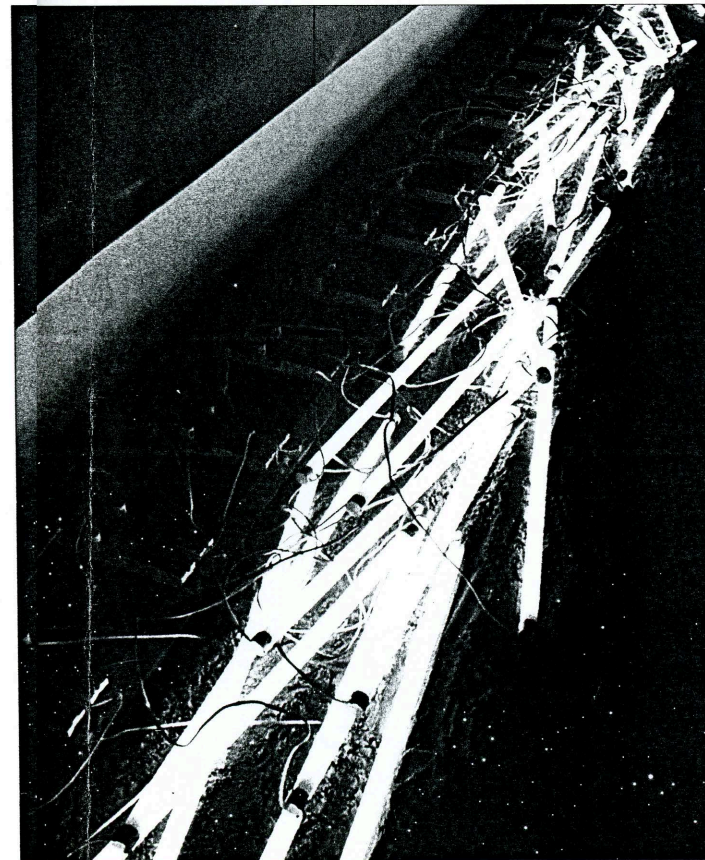
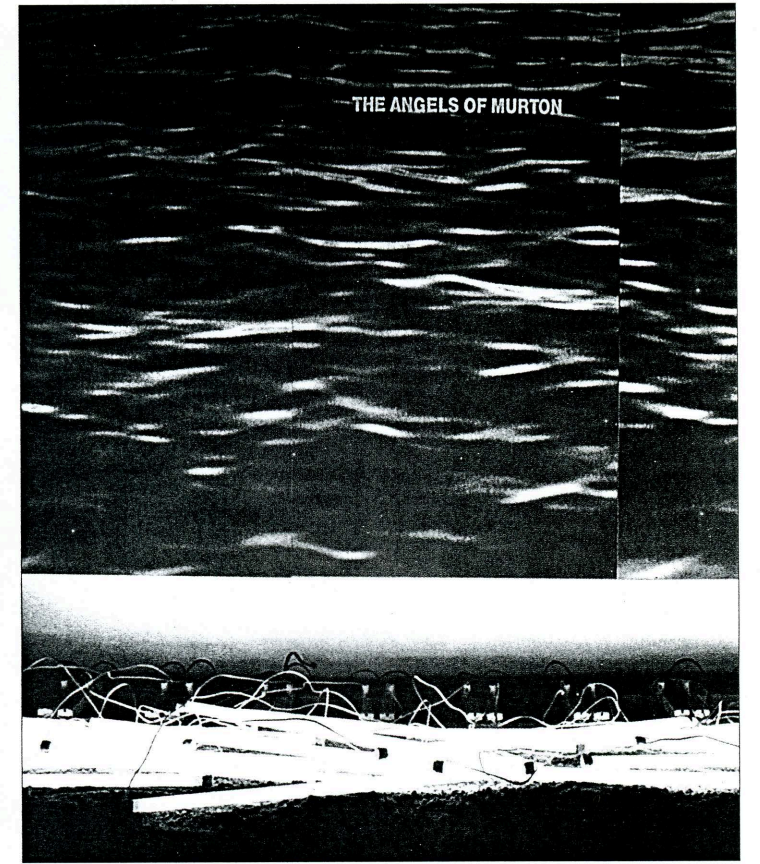
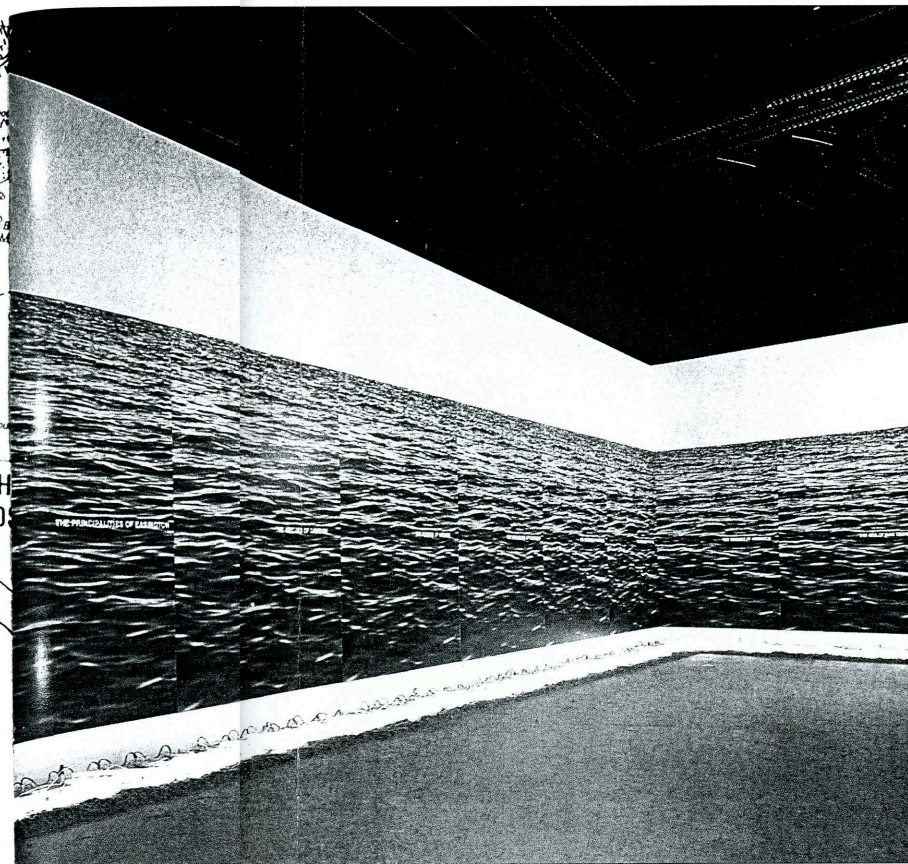
of 'Third World' stereotyping. Perhaps a refusal of provided meanings might not be inexplicable in an artist coming from Latin America, and facing 'First World' expectations alien to his own frames of reference.



There is a refusal to get caught in such a formulation: it there is a need to create a space for a suspended meaning, a place that points more to the desire for meaning; a space in which an unknown – as yet unformulated – meaning might appear.

in which meaning wanders.  
5 Perhaps, on one level, this installation might be considered a space produced for the particular purpose of inducing a wandering, wondering form of apprehension, incompatible with any form

OPPOSITE: The Debatable Lands, silk screen print, sand and fluorescent tubeses, 1993 installed at the Centurion Buffet, at Central Station



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