

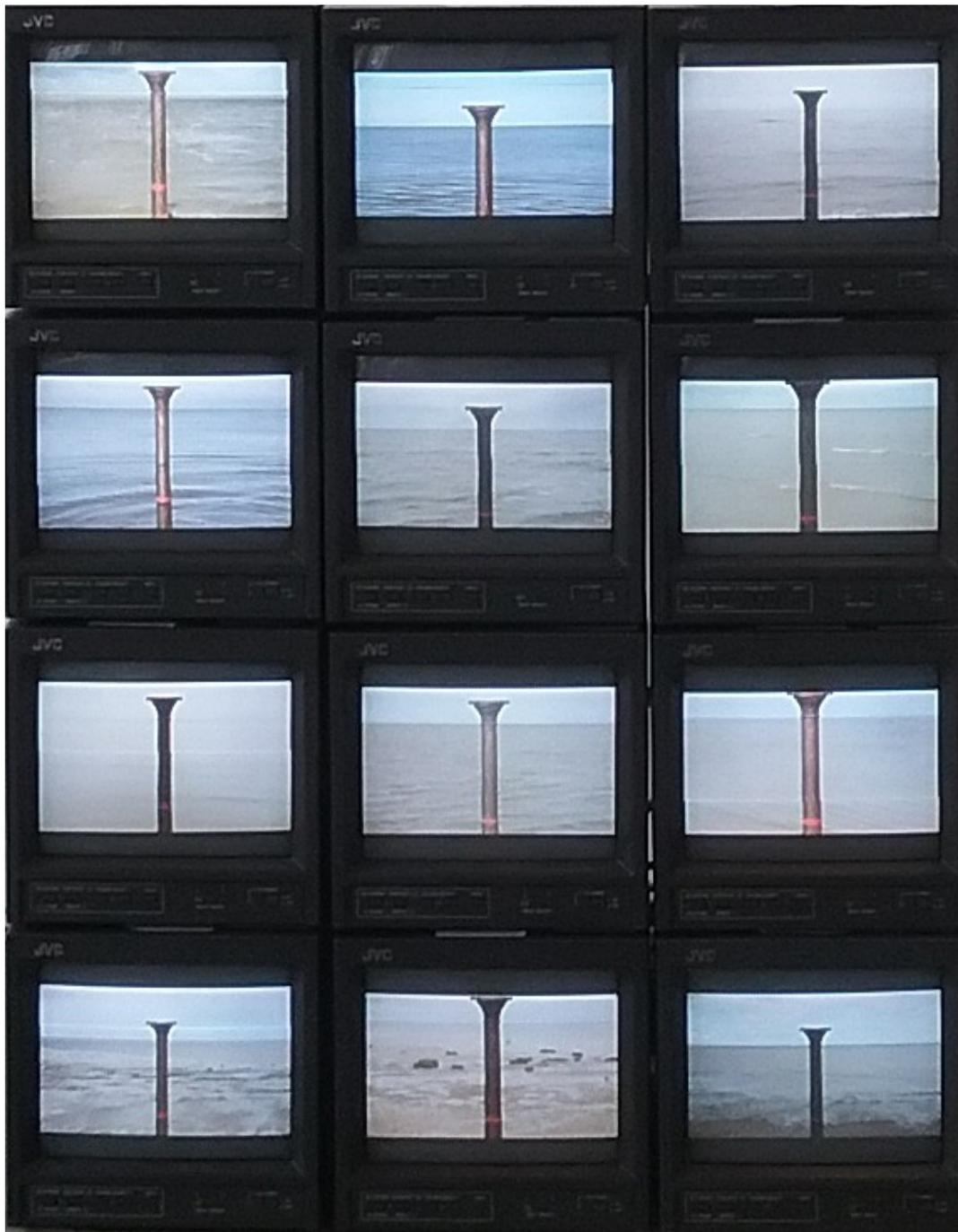
M. B. O'Toole: Degree Show 1996

In 1993 I entered Wirral Metropolitan College, then at the Withens Lane site, Wallasey, to study for a BA (Hons) Fine Art Degree. I was one of fourteen students, the first cohort to graduate from the degree course set-up by Joe McGillivray. The inaugural Degree Show was held at the Williamson Art Gallery in 1996, establishing a partnership which continues to this day.

My encounter with the extraordinary women and men making up the student group, and the inspirational tutors and examiners contributing to the programme at Wirral Met was transformational. We were a diverse group; fiercely individual in our thinking and our ways. If there was a singular gesture that unified us, this was drawing, and drawing at Wirral Met in 1993 was synonymous with the figure of Mike Knowles, Emeritus Professor and advisor to the course.

Line, whether continuous or fragmented, figurative or abstract brought us together. In the 'life room' Mike Knowles was the arbiter of line, inspiring and galvanising us into action. These wonderfully intense days are among my happiest. At the end of the day we would flop into paint-splattered armchairs with mugs of tea, laughing, happy and exhausted from the sheer effort of our task.

My ongoing preoccupation with the formal and conceptual possibilities of line is rooted in the 'life room' at Wirral Met, in the contours of every individual line traced, in the multiple voices brought together and unified across space and time. Today this pre-occupation extends to my doctoral research project, through a re-evaluation of the relation between the space of painting and poetry underpin spatial and temporal readings of the text. The metaphoric potential of line is manifest in my practice, operating across painting, sculpture, video, digital media, and conceptual poetics. A recent solo exhibition of my work, *NOTHING WILL HAVE TAKEN PLACE OTHER THAN THE PLACE*, includes a video installation recording high-tide on a full moon over the course of twelve consecutive months. (*Resurrecting I*).



Resurrecting I, 12 videos, 12 mins duration, exhibited at Sheffield Institute of Art in collaboration with Yorkshire Art Space, 2018.