

The Absent Presence



The starting point for this series of suspended artworks are pattern templates (found in the textiles industry) and their relationship to human anatomy. Collaborative discussions and research with Professor Bernard Moxham (Professor of Anatomy and Head of Teaching at the Cardiff School of Biosciences, Cardiff University), has stimulated a literary context for this body of work. It involves the political anatomy of the paralysed human body, taking as its starting point James Joyce's novel "Ulysses". As explained by Joyce: "My intention is to write a moral history and I choose Dublin for the scene because that city seems to represent a centre of paralysis". A diseased organ of the body symbolically represents each chapter of Ulysses and the intention was to produce artworks that will provide commentary on paralysis, as displayed physically/anatomically and in terms of the human condition.



Atkin became interested in how contemplation of dissection procedures (in the dissection room) can find sculptural equivalents through the implementation of mould making and casting methods, using enlarged cast garment template forms that relate to dissection procedures. In this way, Atkin hopes to penetrate psychological interpretations of the human condition (e.g. through physical suspension and analogies to paralyses) in relation to Ulysses.



In other ways, Atkin uses drawing and relation of grain lines on pattern templates to analogue with the incisions made by the surgeon on the cadaver.

The scale of the suspended template forms relates directly to the viewer. The position of each artwork, hanging slightly above the floor, heightens the sinister connotations of the installation. The political history of the late Twentieth Century and its emphasis on conflict, carried through into the Twenty First Century with terrorism relayed through the media on a daily basis, acts as a counterpoint to these works.



On another level, these sculptures explore the metaphor of the city as a human figure.

