

ly exciting experiments. Both Jimi Hendrix and the esoteric band Soft Machine were fans and invited the Boyle Family and their work to tour with them.

As performance artists it is their event called Street that displays the Boyle's interest in reality as theatre. In 1964 one Sunday afternoon a group of people were instructed to arrive at the rear entrance of a house marked Theatre, located in a narrow lane. They travelled through a corridor eventually reaching a space with many chairs facing a plush curtain that was drawn. Once all guests were seated, the curtain lifted and revealed an ordinary shop window exposing the street. The performance on offer was whatever occurred beyond this shop window.

*"The most complete change an individual can effect is his environment, short of destroying it is to change his attitude to it. This is my objective... From the beginning we are taught to choose, to select, to separate good from bad, best from better: our entire upbringing and education are directed towards planting snobberies, the right preferences. I believe it is important to accept everything and beyond that to 'dig' everything with the same concentrated attention that we devote to what we consider to be a good painting or a good film...I am certain that, as a result we will go about so alert that we will discover the excitement of continuously 'digging' our environment as an object/experience/drama from which we can extract an aesthetic impulse so brilliant and strong that the environment itself is transformed."*

When something becomes public property it is then open to interpretation. Although Boyle Family emphasise their pre-occupation with objectivity, as viewer our experience is undoubtedly subjective. The work may well be freed from references and stories, but as the onlooker our subconscious releases our own conjured up or provoked memories, affiliations and touched senses. Indeed for something that appears so concrete and matter-of-fact, the earthprobes transcend their cosmetic appearance. One does not require time to acquaint oneself with a piece, as immediately you are drawn by their familiarity and are compelled by the universal quality that you are confronted with in an alien context. Discovery is not so much in the painting but within one self through acknowledging our own samples of time, places, atmospheres, climates,

smells and sounds that are prompted once transfixed by these innocent looking art works. They become the postcards you wrote in your mind but never took the time to physically send.

These sensual studies are indeed visually arresting, but it is the family's motive that fascinates. They do not represent an era or a political climate. Without a date present by the piece, one could mistake a 1969 exploit for a 1999 one. It is this timeless quality that transgresses categories.

*"In a condition of adamant doubt you are asked for explanations when all you want is for someone to explain anything. And you are asked for purposes when you are learning to accept that a purpose is not going to emerge ever. And you asked for a statement of intent when the head seethes with all your fluctuating statements of the past, instantly and meticulously taken down, and which you use constantly, with increasing derision, in evidence against yourself. And you remember, years ago, deciding that art, if the word had any meaning, should be waged like war and how, according to all the strategies, you had to locate the enemy and evaluate your own forces and assess the terrain and clarify your objectives and work out your strategy and your tactics and, whatever you do, do not forget your logistics, and how after months of thinking you succeeded with point one and it's not the dealers or the critics or the intellectuals or the government or the rich or the bourgeoisie or "them" and it's not even like Father Xmas your father all the time, but the only enemy is yourself and maybe it doesn't matter too much whether you win or lose. Everything you have undertaken has been so far from perfect, so seriously marred, that to exhibit it with no matter how many disclaimers must remain an unexpungeable arrogance. You don't think that what you do is art but just the most exciting thing you can manage, and how inadequate in a world of magnificence."*

Mark Boyle

The beginnings of a Boyle Family archive can be found at [www.boylefamily.co.uk](http://www.boylefamily.co.uk)

Information on shows can be found at [www.constructionarts.co.uk](http://www.constructionarts.co.uk)