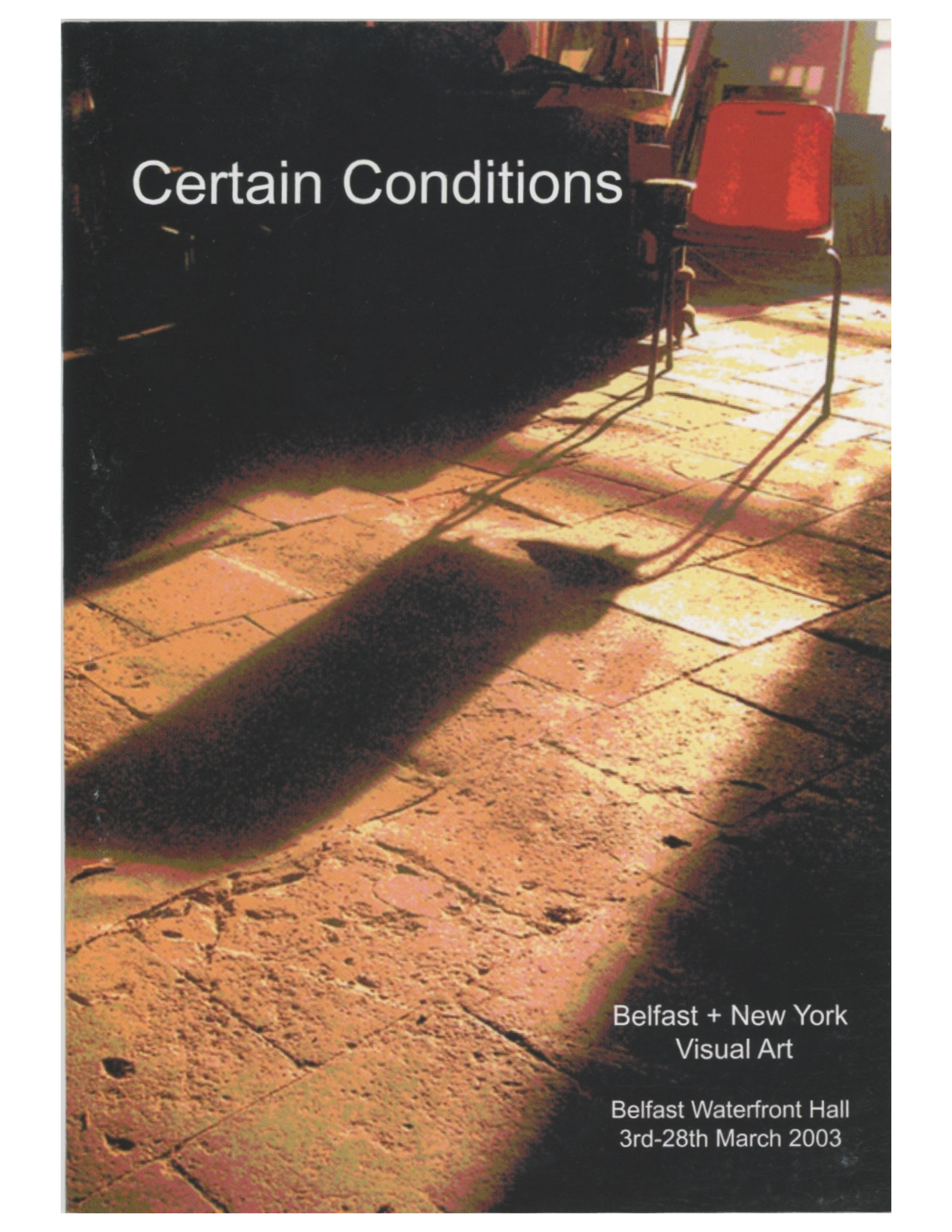


A photograph of a red chair on a stone floor. Long, dark shadows are cast across the floor from the left, suggesting a low sun position. The floor is made of large, irregular stone tiles. The chair is a simple, modern design with a red backrest and seat. The overall mood is contemplative and artistic.

Certain Conditions

Belfast + New York
Visual Art

Belfast Waterfront Hall
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In a different twist on the subject of male virility and heritage, former New Yorker Matt Garrison's work flirts with the Romantic as it pokes playful self deprecating fun at those expectations of manly virtue and physical prowess little boys of his youth grew up with. Originally from Chicago, city of rugged American machismo, his work utilizes computer graphics and newspaper mache to create a humorous contemporary interpretation of the

Arthurian legend. In a reference to the stonewalls of old, and the idea of walls in general and what they divide or uphold, we encounter an outcropping of bright pink cocktail swords looking very much like early spring posies emerging from the impenetrable soil of division. Close inspection of the surface they are embedded in, reveals buried bits of news from places here or there, covered by the camouflage hues of the silent stones. Garrison's boy hero might find his weapons more useful in the local pub or hotel lounge than at a round table, and given the numbers of options springing up waiting for his hand, his role as savior of the realm seems more confused than inspired. Although it faces the challenge mirthfully, this work is a poignant reminder of the state of moral ambivalence pondered by contemporary men from developed countries, who's encounters with tests of virtue and strength are usually found amidst the dangers of the boardroom, the bar stool, and the evening news.

– Linda Dennis

Matthew Garrison



'Rock after Excalibur'.
paper mache, foam, plastic cocktail swords. 42" x 72" x 48" 2003



Matthew Garrison

My work stems from the transformation of colloquial myths through personal and collective viewpoints. Facts and ideas are often fused with the imagination leading to an inversion of expectations and meaning. In my work I've reorganized the heroic components in the Arthurian Legend, The Sword in the Stone. Rather than insert a single sword into a rock, hundreds of multi-colored cocktail swords are inserted into both real and fabricated rocks. The uniqueness of the single sword thrust into a single rock is transformed into a colorful accumulation. This simple modification replaces the magical and heroic implications with humor and humanity.