## A Lazarus Taxon

The Lazarus Taxon is in this instance, a set of two collections juxtaposed for the purpose of exploring the traits between remains from nature and those of human artifact. The first collection is comprised of various large wheels and machines parts, dating from the late industrial revolution. The second is a collection of fossilized mammoth (as well as other animal) bones and tusks

The basis for the exhibition comes from the discovery of an interesting relationship between an object and an animal, made during an LSD trip in attendance of a world music festival in 1999. Whilst sitting on the grass in the early evening I stumbled upon a rusted wrench, - a tool of about a size 20, common for the assembly and maintenance of large machinery. As a man-made object, the wrench had all the qualities of an archeological find: - a dated and mysterious design, quite worse for the wear, and carrying a patina descriptive of some sort of fatality. It was as if the object was representative of a by-gone era, one of physical work, hardship and industry, a period that had been thrown back in time just to arise again that day as an equivalent Neolithic or Paleolithic artifact.

My association with the spanner was the *Coelacanth*, a fish first found alive off the coast of South Africa in 1938. Formerly known only from fossils, the fish was thought to have been extinct for 65 million years, its re-appearance sparked mild hysteria in the scientific community. The Coelacanth was later to become the most famous *Lazarus Taxon*, - (an organism thought to be extinct which then re-appears later), a sort of defiance of the natural order of succession in evolution, an animal refusing to back down into its period, and in effect becoming a bridge spanning a significant phase of time.

The Wrench and the Coelacanth:

In attempt to create a range of comparisons, evocative of the wrench and the coelacanth, the two aforementioned collections will be exploited. The first collection of wheels and other machine parts consist solely of wood, originating from Manchester and Lille respectively, in the later part of the 19th century. These were recently purchased at an antique dealer in Amsterdam. The second collection of mixed bones, ranging from mammoth tusks and scapula to a set of whale ribs, were mostly found in the basin of the North Sea, and are part of the collection of the Zeeusmuseum in Middelburg, of which replicas will be made.

The collections will always be paired, that is to say, always one wheel or machine part and one bone or family of bones will be together. The act of displaying these objects in combination sees the potential in entertaining humanity itself as a *taxon* or player in nature, in one way grand, and in another as a diminutive presence. Nature in this equation should reveal itself as an equal, although expressing more fluency.

These pairs will sit in large cabinets, as well as being out in the open as standing forms. Irrespective, the objects will always be accompanied by support structures, (horizontal and vertical shelves) a reference to the shelving of the original cabinets which house the pieces, and intend to mimic the stifling nature of a museum. Such a museuological display mechanism should with time prove itself dubious as the relationships of the subjects are shown to be quasi.