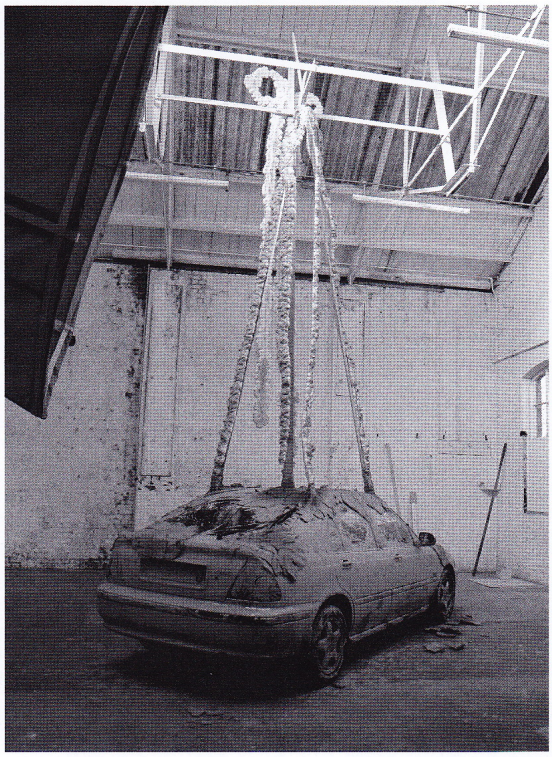
INTIMATES: large and small

Corinna Spencer visits two new artist-run galleries.

Aid & Abet, Cambridge



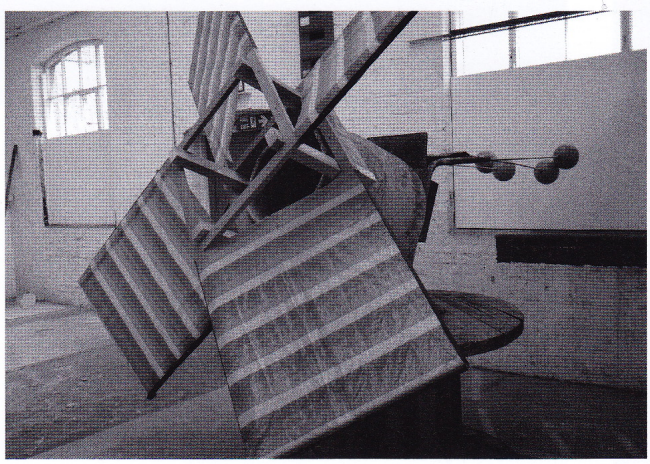
Aid & Abet is an artist-led space based in Cambridge interested in a cross-disciplinary approach and the self initiated DIY method of making art. Co-founded by artists Sarah Evans, David Kefford and CJ Mahony.

I visited Aid & Abet during its inaugural project *Small Scale Survival* with artists Will Cruickshank, Emily Speed, Kirsty Tinkler and Laura White, located in a cavernous, reclaimed railway building.

My first impressions were that the work exhibited a thoughtful approach to both space and viewer. Never feeling small or detached, the experimentation that has brought all of the works into being drew me in and held my attention.

From White's car, installed and transformed into a pod like habitat, to Speed's small slices of nearly livable architecture, I was never left out but placed firmly in the centre of these strange living spaces. I felt intimately integrated into the work and the space because the artists had been encouraged to take risks in the extremes of scale and material.

Because the project was initiated on site, there was a conversational jostling going on between the works that had their beginnings in the vision for the space. The roots were in the working process. Describing the space as a laboratory, it felt like the artists had been afforded the time to allow the works to simultaneously bubble up to the surface, pushing and pulling against each other along the way to settle together ready for the last component, me the viewer.



Aid & Abet seem to have a vision for a space where artists can work unselfconsciously but are always careful to include the viewer, engaging in conversation silently, physically and otherwise. The atmosphere of welcome and openness left me feeling that I had been discovering more than merely seeing.

'Full Time Hobby' is at Aid & Abet until 30 July 2011

Top to bottom: Laura White, 'Loving All My Life', 2011, mixed media; photograph Aid & Abet. Will Cruickshank, 'The Fan and the Funnel', 2011, mixed media; photograph C Spencer.