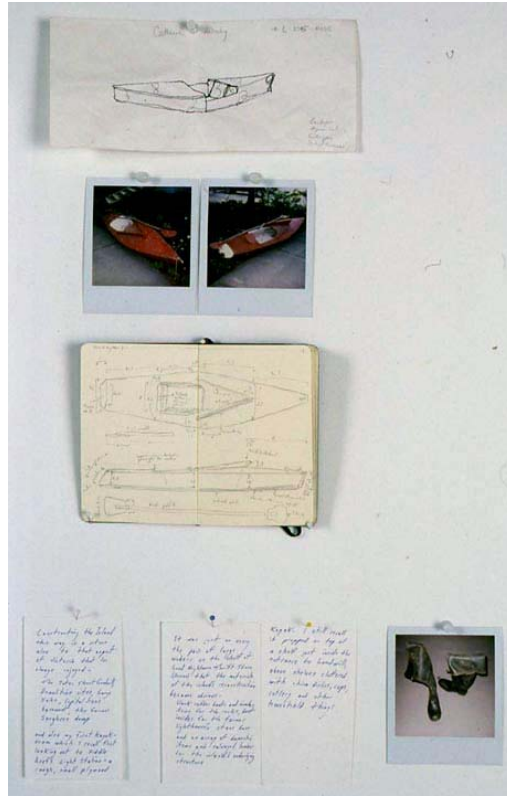


## Around Fiddle Reef, Donald Lawrence Sept. 2006

*Fiddle Reef, Remembered*: materials, processes, and related thoughts  
(except as noted, all measurements are in centimeters: height/width/depth)



Miscellaneous items, sketches, Polaroids, and notes  
(These items, together with two drawings (*Fiddle Reef, Remembered*  
and *Lighthouse Kit*) provide a basic context for the project as a whole)

### 1. Mapping Stage (basic process followed by description of maps/journals)

#### Introduction:

The “mapping” stage of this project (the first stage once in “The Lab”) involved a combination of fieldwork on and around Fiddle Reef and the creation of large-scale, hand-drawn maps (primarily) in The Lab. The maps show three states of the tide (as detailed in the individual map descriptions below): “near high tide,” “near low tide,” and “mid tide” (the stage represented in the sculpture). This was a process of personal mapping, essentially a vernacular manner of mapping derived from navigational practices common to kayaks and other small boats. Such mapping required a few basic principles that are evident in the various notebooks and maps:

- A number of readily identifiable reference points around the reef (rock high points, metal fittings set into the rocks, and toppled concrete piers) were selected. From these reference points compass bearings were taken to the outer corners of the tower base’s railings or to the central vertical axis of the present light tower or to one of the other reference points. In theory, any two such measurements would locate the reference point in relation to (the more easily measured) structure of the light tower’s base. As with locating a kayak’s location offshore however, a location is confirmed/inferred through a process of triangulating and averaging three or more such bearings.

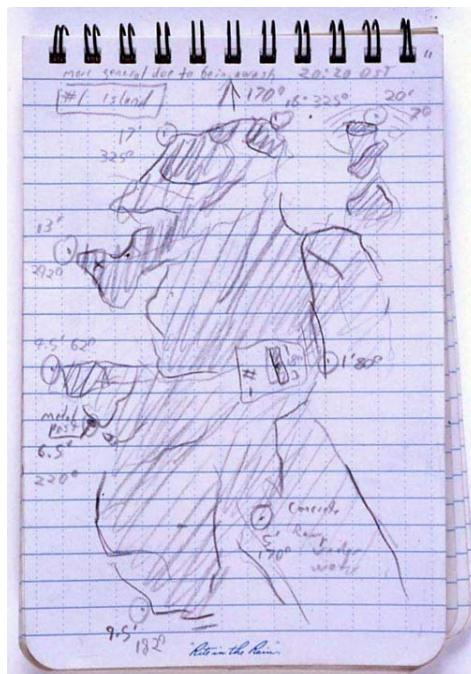
- Measurements of the tower base were taken as a means of establishing a basic set of known reference points (equivalent, in kayak navigation, to deriving some known measurement from a nautical chart)
- Measurements distances between two of the key reference points and to the tower base were taken to check against the triangulated mapping.
- Vertical measurements (elevations) were taken by using a paddle (its shaft and blades marked off to function as a ruler) in relation to a fixed elevation (one of the tower's stair landings) and the horizon. From any given reference point a vertical measurement of the paddle (ie. from where it rests on the rock to one of its measured markings) represents the distance below the stair landing when the landing and the horizon are viewed at the same level with respect one another. I don't know of any particular surveying principle/technique/instrument that this method corresponds to (but would guess that there is one); it simply seemed a good idea. In kayaking, some distances (ie. to the visible horizon) are approximated by knowing the height of the paddler's eye level above the water. While this is not quite the same procedure it is suggestive of the simplicity of the principals involved.

***“Rite in the Rain, ‘Hip Pocket,’ ‘All-Weather Notebook”***

Coil-bound, waterproof notebook with yellow Polyethylene covers  
15x10 (single page)

The notebook primarily includes pencil sketches and notes pertaining to:

- the upper of three tidal stages mapped during the first week of the project. Among these drawings/notes are: general notes/measurements/sketches related to reference points; detailed/rough sketches of some of the higher points that become small islands before the reef complex as a whole covers up (or almost covers up) at high tide; rough cardinal views from the tower base near high tide.
- the time of the summer's lowest tides, July 12<sup>th</sup> when some of the lowest features of the reef and remains of the former light station are evident (at this point there is just a foot or so of water over the shallow sandy area between the main reef and the smaller rock to the west).



*'All Weather Notebook,'* with study of intertidal islet

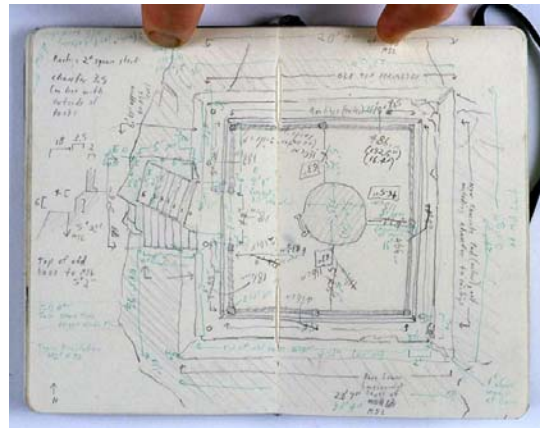
### **Black Moleskin Sketchbook**

Hardcover sketchbook

14x9 (single page)

The sketchbook includes pencil drawings and notes pertaining to:

- measured drawings of c. 1960s/1970s plywood kayak outside Sooke Harbour House Restaurant
- the lower of three tidal stages mapped during the first week of the project. Among these drawings/notes are: detailed cardinal views from the tower base at close to low tide; general notes/measurements; detailed plan view of the top of the tower base; notes pertaining to elevations at the various reference points.
- measured drawings (interior and exterior) of the lighthouse at Virago Point in Porlier Pass (north end of Galiano Island). This is a lighthouse similar to the former Fiddle Reef lighthouse.
- There are also four drawings in the journal that precede "The Lab" project: a sketch of Hudson Rocks (outside Departure Bay, Nanaimo) from BC Ferry Queen of Oak Bay; the grain elevator in Cudworth, Saskatchewan; some diagrammatic notes; sketches of 1962 film stills from the Sunshine Coast



Moleskin Sketchbook, with study of light tower base

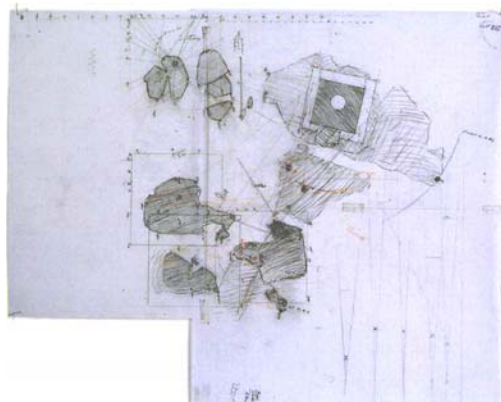
### ***Fiddle Reef Map, near high tide***

Pencil on vellum, three taped-together 11"x17" sheets

56x69

This is the first of two primary maps drawn from the notebooks' information. It represents the reef at a stage nearing high tide.

\*see note below subsequent map



*Fiddle Reef Map, near high tide*

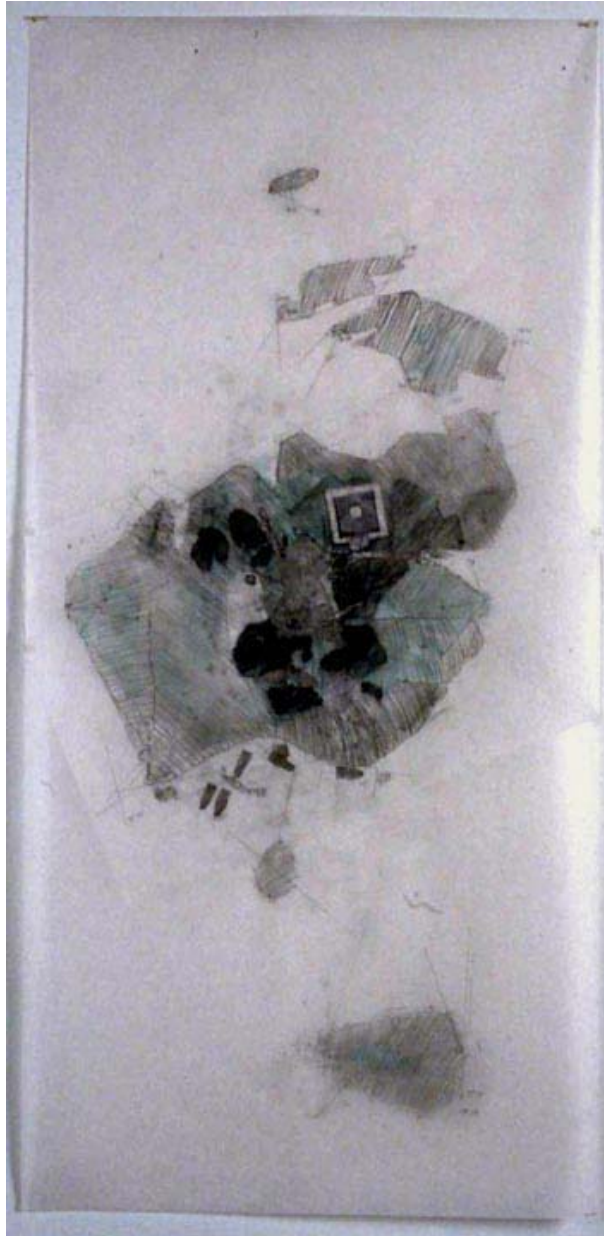
***Fiddle Reef Map, near low tide and with an indication of mid-tide***

Pencil on vellum, with photocopied underlay

192x91.5

The underlay is a photocopy of the previous, “near high tide,” map. Around/over that photocopy this larger map is drawn, showing all of the features of the reef that are above water close to low tide (which would be close to the charted mean tide level), including a large rock a hundred feet or so to the west of the main reef complex. Two kayaks are included in this drawing: the first (in the middle of the main reef complex) is a fiberglass “Baidarka Explorer,” that I took out to the reef during the first mapping stages; the second (at the west edge of the main reef complex (lower on the drawing)) is a Feathercraft “K-Light Plus” folding kayak that I took out to the reef at the time of the summer’s lowest tides. The sections shaded in green represent a mid-tide stage (that the configuration of the sculpture is based on) and were drawn onto the map on location at Fiddle Reef.

\*note: the above “near high tide” map can be exhibited independently or as the underlay to this map (in place of the photocopy underlay)

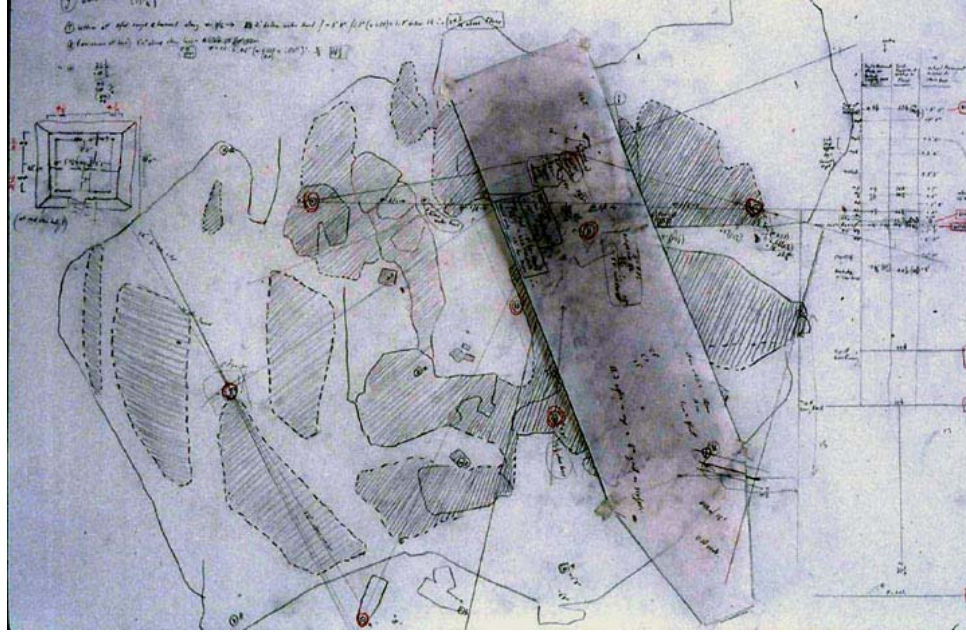


*Fiddle Reef Map, near low tide*

***Fiddle Reef Remembered, preparatory map***

Pencil on vellum, with cut-out vellum layover,  
164x91.5

This is essentially an intermediary drawing between the mapping and the sculpture stages. It is a tracing of the large “near low tide” map. A cut-out lay-over represents the ironing board that is incorporated into the sculpture as a support and represents the decision to create the reef in a 1:30 scale and the reef/sculpture’s relative positioning in relation to the ironing board. Various notes on the map represent calculations made during the early stages of the sculpture’s construction (primarily related to elevations and a two-inch exaggeration worked into the overall height of the rocks).



*Fiddle Reef Remembered, preparatory map (detail)*

## **2. Sculptural Work: *Fiddle Reef, Remembered***

### **Introduction/Data:**

mixed media construction with items from Victoria area thrift shops and garage sales

190x195x140 (size overall)

individual components:

- 29x148x195 (main wood/rubber component)
- 10x36x140 (ironing board, collapsed)
- 70x39x37 (chair)
- 35x19x19 (lighthouses component)

Through a combination of found/scavenged items – furniture, moldings/casings, rubber boots, a rain cape, a decanter top and a small toy boat – as well as a few new materials/items – plumbing fittings, bronzed plexiglass, an emergency strobe, red and white silk, light brass and aluminum stock, a glass bead, carpet tacks, two miniature pulley blocks, orange whipping twine and a spool of waxed thread – the sculpture represents Fiddle Reef in the present day, with its cylindrical light



*Fiddle Reef, Remembered* installation view

tower, and an imagined reconstruction of the Reef's former lighthouse. The whole construction is a 1:30 scale model of the Island (with some vertical exaggeration in the rocks) that is in equal measure a reasonable represents the topography of the Reef and a somewhat free-form utilization of the materials at hand. In a structural sense the sculptural primarily consists of a shallow wooden skeletal construction that is cobbled and lashed together from disassembled furniture and other domestic items; this construction rests upon a collapsible wooden ironing board and a small wooden chair. The rubber items are stitched and/or tacked onto the skeletal framework to represent the above and below water topography of the Reef as well as the stone base of both the present and former lights. The light tower, model sham construction and associated strobe mechanism are affixed to the top level of the stone base and that whole assembly is removable. The chromed plexiglass is shaped to represent the Reef's water at a mid-tide state and on that sits the small wooden toy boat. Below are various notes pertaining to the selection and incorporation of some of these materials.

### **Furniture, Hip-waders, Folding Kayaks, Thrift Shops and Garage Sales**

Supporting the island/construction on the two furniture items stemmed from an initial decision (made during my drive from Kamloops to Victoria) that the Island should, on the one hand, have a floating quality but, on the other hand, should not be obviously suspended from above. From this I thought that a table's pedestal legs might allow for something of a floating look at the same time as offering a domestic/urban reference (ie. the "Close to Home" counterpoint to the "Exotic" nature of the island/reef). I came upon the ironing board at the Willow Antique Mall in Chemainus while searching through thrift/used shops for an appropriate table. In addition to having a light, potentially floating appearance the ironing board also has the characteristic of folding up in a manner somewhat akin to my folding kayaks. It was, in fact, at a garage sale in View Royal (in 1990) that I bought my first sea kayak, an older East German folding "Pouch" (see end note\*)



Pouch Kayak, Wallace Island, 1990



Plywood kayak, Sooke Harbour House Restaurant, 2006

Much earlier, in 1975 or 1976 I had purchased a small kayak-like boat at the Goodwill then on the 500 block of Yates (something that had slipped my mind until a couple of years ago when I saw one something like it outside the Sooke Harbour House restaurant). On the same excursion as that in which I found the ironing board I came across a pair of hip waders in the Good Neighbours Thrift Store in Duncan; the hip-waders' rough rubber surface suggested the wet rocks of such intertidal outcroppings as Fiddle Reef. A thinking-together of these various instances suggested the relevance of acquiring and bringing together items from thrift shops and garage sales as a means of recalling a searching activity that was always important to me while living in Victoria and through which this current project would ensure that I moved throughout the city and not only back and forth to the islands.



Hip Waders, Good Neighbours Thrift Store, Duncan

### **The Rocks and Beaches**

Most of the rocks are covered with the rain cape, or the flatter parts of the hip-waders and other rubber boots (a few of which arrived in a box sent down as a contribution from Prince Rupert). The toe sections of a couple of the boots are fitted in to represent small promontory-like rocks around the perimeter of the sculpture. The soles of the boots have been inverted to form the bottom of two surge channels that cut across (north to south) or into (from the east) the island. The shallow sub-tidal beaches of the island are lighter in colour, a mixture of sandy patches and bull kelp. They are represented with a mixture of the inside fabric of the rain cape and the fabric seat from a folding stool (the green frame of which is incorporated into the framework below). The kelp beds that surround the Reef are echoed also in the numerous thread-ends that drape underneath the sculpture (each of which represents one of the frame lashings or the point at which a part of the coverings is stitched to the frame).



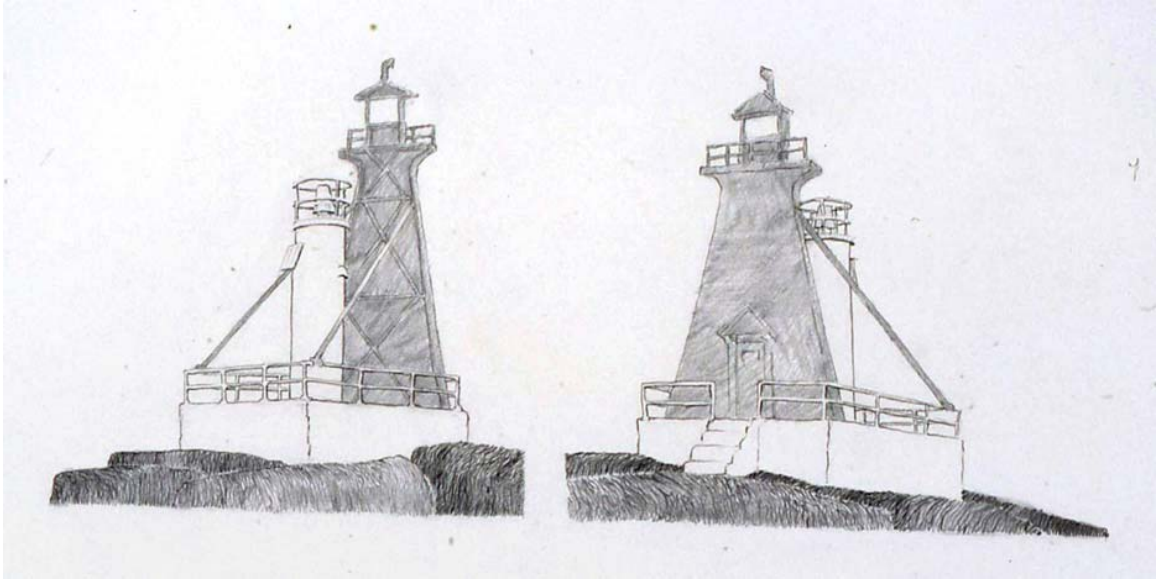
*fiddle Reef, Remembered* (detail of light tower and former light house construction)

## The Lighthouses

The stone base of the lighthouse, as it exists today and dating from 1897, is of stone construction, with a couple of flights of concrete steps on the west side, and a non-original railing around its perimeter. The worn stonework is represented here with the inside of the hip-waders from Duncan. The rough, tattered appearance of that fabric is complemented by the more closely woven inside canvas of the rain cape that covers the steps. Likewise, the top surface of the base, which has at some time been surfaced with concrete, is covered in the cape canvas. This top surface lifts off and has affixed to it a model of the present light tower. The core of this is formed primarily of abs plumbing pipe as a holder for a “C-Light” marine strobe (presently battery powered but to be adapted for either battery or AC power). The white surface of the tower is covered in pieces of a Mogahide seat cover from The Boater’s Exchange in Sydney. I used light brass stock from a hobby shop to shape and solder the various railings, ladders, solar fittings, etc. around the stone base and on the tower. Over time the brass will assume a patina suggestive of (but not the same as) such fittings around the Fiddle Reef light tower. The decanter top, from the Great Finds Thrift Store on Quadra Street, forms the lens of the light tower and is illuminated by the strobe light that is housed below. In the model, the imagined, theatre-prop-like, construction that is roughly scaled to the original lighthouse is set up in front of the present light tower as it would be seen from Willow’s Beach. Its silk coverings are sewn around a framework of light aluminum stock. Though representing the older lighthouse this construction should seem to be of newer materials (in contrast to all of the other materials (except the plexiglass)) as though recently set-up on the island. Orange whipping twine, a couple of miniature pulleys and a glass bead suggest the manner in which the imagined structure was raised, lashed to the existing railings, and completed with the hoisting of a lantern to recall the lighthouse’s original Fresnel lens.



*Fiddle Reef Remembered* (detail of light house construction and toy boat)



*Fiddle Reef Remembered*, first drawing, pencil on paper (detail)

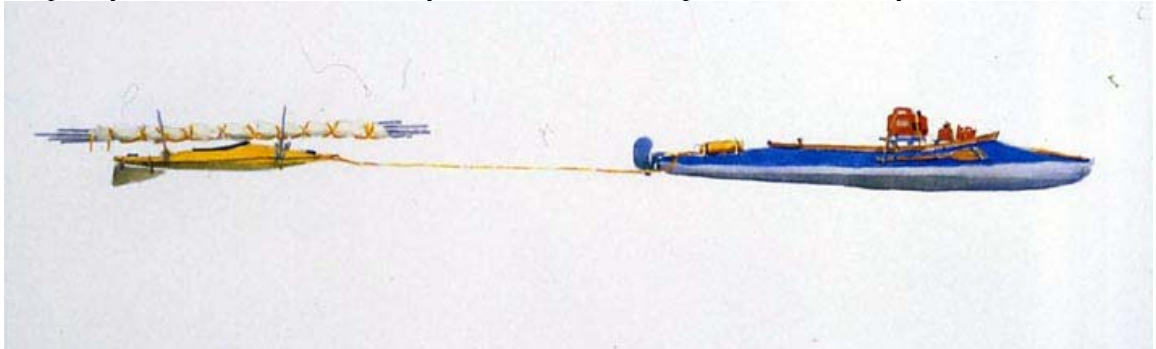
### **The Wooden Boat, Kayaks and the *Lighthouse Kit***

two drawings:

pencil on paper, 39x46 (first drawing: *Fiddle Reef, Remembered*)

watercolour on paper, 35x57.5 (*Lighthouse Kit*)

My interest in the Fiddle Reef site revolved around the imaginary re-creation of the original lighthouse that I recall being on the island. The first drawing, done a few months before beginning the project in The Lab, shows this. As the project progressed I planned to complete the work by adding on a couple of other model components: two kayaks carrying what would seem to be the components of a “Lighthouse Kit”; a small generator with accompanying theatrical lights to be situated around the rocks; an orange bivy shelter on the lighthouse base with a few other camping/kayaking items here and there (my earlier *Romantic Commodities* (1993) provides some context for such elements). As the project’s completion drew near I became wary of the time left to complete such components (and was also wary that such components might present a too literal element); never-the-less, into the final week of the project I still planned to complete a rudimentary version of that diorama-like scene. A couple of days earlier I came upon the wooden toy boat in an antique store on Fort Street; in a shop full of otherwise refined antiques the boat seemed the most attractive and lowest-priced item. I initially placed the boat on the plexi as a temporary stand-in for the model kayaks to come. Over a period of a few days I came to like it, to



*Lighthouse Kit*, watercolour on paper (detail)

even prefer it to the idea of the model kayaks in some senses: placing particular emphasis on the idea of the “found object” as a means of concluding the work; as a less literal idea of coming to the island in small boats; as a curious representation of my brother Iain’s Sea Snark, a small sail boat that he had sailed around Oak Bay in 1975 or 1976 (the subject of a hand-drawn map that he contributed to the project); and for the ambiguous relationship presented by the boat being, on the one hand, a small toy but on the other hand, a boat the size of the Sea Snark in relation to the scale of the whole construction. My interest in the “Lighthouse Kit” diorama may prompt a further work, but in this present work it came to be represented through a small diagram-like watercolour drawing done on the project’s final day (prior to the talk later that evening).

### **3. Video Work: *Around Fiddle Reef***

#### ***Around Fiddle Reef***

video, approx 6.5 minutes (looped)

In addition to the various notes, Polaroid photos, collected items and such that accumulated around the construction of the *Fiddle Reef* construction in The Lab there is one other work that was created during the residency and that was on display for a time. This is a looped video of approximately six and a half minutes duration. Simple in nature, it was created while paddling around the Reef on July 15<sup>th</sup>, at the time of the summer’s lowest tides, with the video camera fixed to the deck of my Feathercraft K-Light Plus kayak. During the few minutes the kayak circles around the island, with the camera’s lens variously tilted up towards the light tower or downwards, closer to the water, to show the beds of bull kelp that surround the reef.

\*

As chance would have it, just this morning I came upon another old Pouch kayak at a kayak at a garage sale this morning (the garage sale at the home of Mike Youds (Rob Youd’s Brother))

