

STUDIO

RESEARCH

ISSUE #4

NOVEMBER 2016



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This issue of *Studio Research* has emerged from papers and drawings presented at the inaugural Drawing International Brisbane (DIB) Symposium, held at Griffith University (GU) in 2015. An initiative of Drawing International Griffith (DIG) and the Griffith Centre for Creative Arts Research, the Symposium brought together over one hundred international drawing researchers. DIG is an ongoing program aimed at recognising and advancing the quality of drawing research in Australia and abroad. As I write this editorial, I am sitting in a studio in Chiyoda, Tokyo, with twenty-two students and professors from GU, Tokyo University of the Arts, and Joshibi University of Art and Design. What brings us together is DIGTokyo2016—a workshop, seminar and exhibition program curated by Pat Hoffie (GU) and Linda Dennis (Touch Base Creative Network). DIGTokyo2016 builds upon the drawing research initiated in 2015 and points forward to the upcoming DIB2017.

Among the artefacts and artworks in the nearby Mori Art Museum's current exhibition, *The Universe and Art: Princess Kaguya*, *Leonardo da Vinci*, *teamLab*, hangs Galileo Galilei's famous little page of watercolour moons (1609). The sketches exemplify two of drawing's critical behaviours—expeditiousness and observation. In preparation for DIB2015, and in the twelve months since, I have been preoccupied with notions of drawing's behaviours—its modals, functions, and malfunctions. From Deanna Petherbridge's opening salvo at the Symposium to the final plenary (a somewhat raucous exchange of ideas about how and what drawing *ought* to...), it became quite clear that the researchers and students in attendance were more interested in contesting drawing's behaviours than its boundaries. Certainly, the little Galileo behaves as it ought, with immediacy, accuracy, and vitality. Within this framework, it is instructive to deploy a thought experiment in which the vitality of drawing informs an organic response to its behaviours.

Although function and malfunction cannot be directly apprehended, behaviours act as indicators and, in doing so, signal alternative productive possibilities. I am inclined to use the modal terms *ought* and *oughtn't* in relation to function and malfunction, but it is beyond the scope of this short essay to delve too deeply into the intricacies of modals. Suffice it to say that a perception of a behaviour that *oughtn't* be happening is indicative of a malfunction, and the presumption of *oughtn't* demands a theoretical structure in which things are occurring as they *ought*. In regards to modal statements and malfunction, philosopher Paul Bloomfield writes:

When something is functioning as it ought, then the possible world where it is properly functioning is the actual world . . . It may not be working in this way, however; it may actually be malfunctioning, and in this case the function of the item can be understood in terms of what it is doing in another possible world in which it is actually functioning properly. (2001, 144)

Subverting, extending, or even disqualifying conservative ought/proper/actual axes would seem to be cardinal motivations in contemporary practice—i.e., marginalising the properly functioning actual world in favour of alternative possibilities and worlds. Why so often, then, do such methods yield shoddy drawings, typically through cavalier interpenetrations of drawing, performance and the performing arts? Perhaps such drawings do not really signal structural malfunctions or pose alternative possibilities, but rather signal mis-functions: poor perceptions of the significance of performance and the judgment of drawing. A productive malfunction would only be possible in an environment in which the hybridisations are disturbing each form through structural revision. Philosopher Beth Preston describes malfunction as a disruption of the

underlying structure that defines the function, not of the function itself (Preston 2013, 138). It is tempting to adopt a reductive *laissez-faire* ethos in the discipline of drawing that denies an ‘actual-proper’ structure’s relevance and merit. This absence exempts drawing from the difficult dictates of the way a theoretical drawing *ought* to behave, and to account for its malfunctions when it behaves as it *oughtn’t*. To counter such a generic (and meaningless) tendency, behaviours are instigated and described here as antidotes to reductive modalities and anti-judgements—gateways to possible worlds—that maintain the integrity and alacrity of drawing.

Petherbridge’s provocative keynote address on the problematic hybridisations of drawing/social art and drawing/performance outlines a formidable critique of drawing practices that perhaps too casually espouse characteristics such as collaboration, immersion, and performativity. Her text provides an important point of reference for any studio practitioner working in the arenas of ‘performance drawing’ or ‘collaborative drawing’. One such artist is Kellie O’Dempsey, whose essay on the necessities of co-presence in the live drawing encounter shifts the emphasis of drawing almost entirely to the phenomenon of ‘witness’. Literature on ‘performance drawing’ is vague and emergent—although *Performance Art Journal* dedicated an entire issue to the topic in 2014. It is notable that DIB2015 featured fifteen papers and three exhibitions that explicitly engaged with the uneasy alliance of performance and drawing. Rochelle Haley’s essay contends with dance and drawing through a shrewd mechanism in which she deploys drawing as both the container for performance (invoking the inscribed cube) and as an element within the performance. Taking choreographer Trisha Brown’s 1975 work *Locus* as its foundation, Haley’s argument is that drawing can simultaneously provide the immaterial structure for performance and function as its documentation.

Carolyn McKenzie-Craig contributes another important argument in this dialogue. Dealing explicitly with kinesthetics, performativity, indexicality, and posture, McKenzie-Craig’s essay deftly entangles behaviour and drawing. She actively intensifies the malfunctions of drawing, gesture, and language, even acknowledging her

tendencies to ‘cheat’ or ‘rig’ her own systems. Piyali Ghosh (with Marnie Dean) also describes a productive theory of performance and drawing through the concept of the *rasa rekha*—the material mark informed by the immaterial force of presence and place. Veering from knee-deep-in-the-Arabian-Sea performance to the *Mahabharata* and German Expressionism, Ghosh argues for a universal synthesis of new *rasas*.

Turning from performance to the televisual and cinematic, Chris McAuliffe’s essay on William Dobell’s television drawings is an important contribution to the understanding of Dobell’s transitional works of the 1960s. McAuliffe conjures the solitary Dobell informed by Baudelairean concepts of modernity, although Huysmans’s enigmatic and hermitic decadent *Des Esseintes* also circulates in Dobell’s idiosyncratic methods (ballpoint) and melancholic observations of whatever-happens-to-be-on. In her paper, Dena Ashbolt discusses her practice, which is based on French artist Henri Michaux’s concept of ‘cinematic drawing’. Just as Dobell’s sketches often became unfocused linear ramblings of the spaces in-between the spectacular televisual images, so Ashbolt describes the ‘almost’ in the cinematic—the absent narratives, flickering stills, and temporal blurs that properly define the experience of drawing and its inextricable association with presence and knowledge.

This collection of essays from DIB2015 may emphasise a handful of contemporary drawing themes and concerns (performance, the screen, social practice), but it also evidences the potency of drawing research, the deep entanglement of studio practice and knowledge production, and the willingness of each researcher to open up possible worlds without disqualifying alternative productions. Finally, at the centre of this issue is a gallery of drawings exhibited during the symposium, which speak for themselves.

William Platz
Guest Editor

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SOME THOUGHTS ON THE SOCIAL CO-OPTION OF DRAWING

Deanna Petherbridge

I was fully aware while preparing this keynote address that my views might be considered challenging. Therefore, when I learned that there was going to be a second keynote address, I entertained myself with speculating that this constituted a conscious or unconscious 'good cop/bad cop' strategy on the part of the conference organisers. I would be the outsider with a very long view about drawing, who might ruffle feathers by a stern critique of some popular forms of contemporary practice, but my presentation would be balanced with that of a younger and more benign Australian practitioner who would be more acceptable to the audience.

I was therefore amused to come across an apt reference by Irit Rogoff to Michel Foucault's 1983 lecture, "Discourse and Truth: The Problematisation of Parrhesia" (2001).² Rogoff writes:

...in *parrhesia*, the speaker uses [her] freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, 'truth' instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy... (Rogoff 2008, 9)³

This reinforced my decision to tell it how I saw it, even at risk of unpopularity and outrage. Admittedly, most of the frank and fearless notions that I will be proposing are (deliberately) legitimised via quotes from authors Claire Bishop, Nato Thompson, Jed Perl, Hal Foster, and others. So this is a very academic version of parrhesia!

My views on drawing have been constructed out of my own graphic practice, teaching experience

in art schools, and, of course, from reading and research. I was appointed Professor of Drawing at the postgraduate Royal College of Art (RCA), London, in 1995, after years of teaching part-time in other art colleges. Drawing had ceased to be taught as an independent subject in most British art schools in the 1960s and 1970s as result of the repressive orthodoxies of late-Modernist Minimalism as well as government-implemented changes following the Coldstream Reports, which brought art and design into line with other subjects in tertiary education that embraced polytechnics (Hickman 2008). However, by the mid-1980s, despite the growing popularity of computer drawing capabilities, Fine Art students had started organising after-hours 'life classes' as a means of re-engaging with the bodies at the core of their performance, video, film, and installation projects, most of which were dealing with subjectivity. Such classes, by default, simply reinstated the centrist and authoritarian structure of traditional life drawing in a haphazard and non-reflexive mode and were eventually re-admitted into art and design school timetables in an equally untheorised manner.

Therefore, when I began my role at the RCA, the academic evaluation of drawing was at a low ebb, and models of teaching were nowhere. My intention was to reconstitute drawing for all the art, architecture, and design courses in the College as a non-hierarchical, infinitely adaptive, and empowering practice associated with invention and ideas, which had nothing whatsoever to do with traditional life classes. Assisted by a very small team, I instituted a huge range of participatory workshops in association with seminars and public lectures. These were lightly orchestrated by an individual (sometimes a 'celebrity' artist, such as Marlene Dumas or Alex Katz) or small groups, including participatory performers, and were built around ideas and themes that were alternately transgressive, philosophical, didactic, pertinent to the personal

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1 This paper is based on a keynote address I delivered on 1 October 2015 at the Drawing International Brisbane (DIB) conference. It has been slightly modified for this publication.

2 Six talks were delivered by Foucault at the University of California, Berkeley in 1983.

3 The context for Rogoff discussing fearless speech was The *Academy* project at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven in 2006, which dealt with the central issue "What can we learn from the museum?", which she part curated. This reference is an appropriate segue to my comments about drawing classes as archetypal relational and open-ended artistic projects.

practice of the artist/presenter, or simply about process and gesture as ends in themselves. In my final year at the RCA, the busy timetable culminated in evening drawing classes we called *cabarets*, which included music, that were extremely popular with students. Such workshops could be bizarrely dangerous; I recall one all-day session led by an anthropologist beating a traditional shaman's drum where one of the students fell into a trance and we didn't know how to wake him. On another occasion, when two performers were taping each other's bodies in a joint drawing and photography event, not a single image was produced by the students because they had assembled themselves as a breathless spectator-audience rather than interactive collaborators. However, the subsequent discussion about spectatorship was extremely intense.

This prelude is not intended as a personal memoir but as the contextual background to viewing educational projects as an important element of relational art—the term for socially conscious collaborative art promoted by Nicolas Bourriaud in his 1998 book *Relational Aesthetics*. His book was translated into English in 2002, but in the 1990s, every cultural theoretician-in-the-making, including myself, was reading Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari to establish a philosophical underpinning for changing art practice. Guattari's last book, translated in 1995, was *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* in which he rejected “the strictly aesthetic techniques of rupture and suture” and called for developments in innovation and creation through techniques of “agglomeration” (Guattari 1995, 132–33). He asked, “How do you make a class operate like a work of art?” (133), or in the translation that became more commonly bandied about, “How can you bring a classroom to life as though it were an artwork?”

The teaching of drawing in museum educational workshops, like more loosely constituted relational activities, aims for inclusivity by attracting a temporary group of participants on a short-term basis. As a second-tier activity enshrouded in a pious wrapping of public morality, it raises many issues, some of which I will briefly describe below. By contrast, pedagogical exercises rely on a committed community that has invested time in a purportedly beneficial program devoted

to the professional futures of its participants and the augmentation of the status of the host institution. As such, we had the advantage at the RCA that every postgraduate student was indeed a self-declared artist or designer, albeit they mostly did not know much or care about drawing. The courses that I organised in the early years were very closely calibrated with lectures and discussion seminars. However, after I had set up the Centre for Drawing with a group of MPhil and PhD students, my role became less and less ‘hands-on’, and more and more about being an *animateur* of participatory events. After five years, the plethora of devolved classes seemed sometimes to be populist crowd-pullers that were lacking in intellectual rigour. Issues of participation and novelty that were necessary to attract students away from their busy course timetables had overtaken the important aims of investing in drawing as intelligent and critical practice. So at the end, I was happy to walk away in order to finish research for my book *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* (Petherbridge 2010).

The critical monitoring of what I have written about elsewhere as “The Royal College Experiment” (Petherbridge, forthcoming) reflects some of the views expressed by Claire Bishop in her book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012). In one section, Bishop analyses the informal ‘art school’ organised by Cuban performance and installation artist Tania Bruguera from 2002 to 2009 as well as other global pedagogic projects undertaken by contemporary artists and curators in the 2000s. Bruguera declared the *Cátedra Arte de Conducta* to be

the first work of art and, at the same time, the first institution focusing in creating a curriculum of Behavior Art and of Political Art. ... It is a Long Term Intervention focused in the discussion and analysis of sociopolitical behavior and the understanding of art as an instrument for the transformation of ideology through the activation of civic action on its environment. (“Cátedra Arte de Conducta” n.d.)

Bishop, however, suggests that “The more common tendency for socially engaged artists

[is] to adopt a paradoxical position in which art as a category is both rejected and reclaimed: they object to their project being called art because it is also a real social process, while at the same time claiming that this whole process is art” (2012, 255). I certainly didn’t analyse my position in the 1990s in this way. But while my primary aim was teaching, the means of delivery and organisation of the activities of drawing classes were seen as collaborative and performative experiences (sometimes playful), whose ‘seductiveness’ was part of a promotional agenda.

Joseph Beuys, of course, had founded a ‘Free Academy of Art’ in Düsseldorf in 1971, and his exploration of direct democracy (The Organisation for Direct Democracy through Referendum) led to performance lectures usually constituted within the sacralised spaces of art galleries, academies, and museums rather than alternative venues. These immensely crowded events, such as *Information Action* at the Tate Gallery London on 26 February 1972 followed by a performance at the Whitechapel Art Gallery that I attended, involved blackboards for scrawling slogans and diagrammatic symbols of interconnectivity in white chalk. The resulting boards, which can be characterised as textual drawings, have been collected by major art collections. They function as fetishised objects, celebrating Beuys as prophet and shaman.

Beuys’s pedagogic activities are cited in all contemporary histories of social practice, although his pronouncement/slogan that “Every human being is an artist” was made more in the context of a social democratic political activism than twenty-first-century concepts of inclusivity as an unquestionable social good—or what Hal Foster has described as “a shaky analogy between an open work and an inclusive society” (Foster 2003, 21).

Beuys actively sought publicity and public interactions; however, I suspect that even he might have been perplexed if he had lived to see the Teacher’s Pack produced by the Tate Gallery London as a teaching aid in response to his installation *The Pack* (1969). This key work consisted of twenty-four brand new sledges onto which were loaded a roll of felt, a lump of animal fat, and a large torch tumbling out of the back of a Volkswagen Kombi van. The installation related

to Beuys’s mythical and mystical narrative of being saved from death in the Crimea during World War 2, when he was rescued from a plane crash by Tartars, who coated him with fat and wrapped him in felt, materials that subsequently dominated his oeuvre.

The completely risible Tate Gallery School Pack, still available online, sets up a twenty-five-minute activity for school children via a box containing a blanket, a chain, candles, some plasters, batteries, and a chocolate bar. The pack proclaims:

The battery, which is a source of potential energy, could be linked with the torches in the artwork or the chocolate, which is a modern nourishment, could connect with the fat in the artwork. Think about ‘energy’ in relation to Beuys’ work, in terms of group dynamics, personal energy and body rhythms as well as the force of energy in terms of electricity, or copper as a conductor. Ask each group member to choose a word or colour or type of drawn line to demonstrate their level of energy. Then lay these all out on the floor as a group display and think about how these words, colours or drawings could be developed back at your workplace in a more three-dimensional form, for example using wire that is stretched, wrapped or bent. (“Joseph Beuys Gallery Activity” n.d.)

I believe that the ridiculous nature of this project—purportedly educating young people about visual art by painstakingly translating the already openly referential *non*-symbols (or perhaps they could be characterised as indexical signifiers) of Beuys’s installation of found objects into even more banal second-tier replacement and trite exercises of identification—is self-evident and requires no elaboration. But I bring it up here in a discussion about the interconnections between pedagogy and notions of ‘art as a social good’, and note that museum educational projects worldwide—to the best of my knowledge—are not examined by those writing today with a critical intelligence, despite there being a dire need for a challenging debate on this topic.

Ai Weiwei too believes that everyone is an artist, and he recently set up a website in collaboration with Olafur Eliasson, called *Moon*, billed as a

public art ‘experiment’. A rotating digital orb or sphere simulating the Moon allows users to zoom in or out, leave their mark, or view ideas or sketches from other users.

The website’s opening words are taken from a blog published by MIT Press in 2011:

Turn nothing into something—make a drawing, make a mark. Connect with others through this space of imagination. Look at other people’s drawings and share them with the world. Be part of the growing community to celebrate how creative expression transcends external borders and internal constraints. We are in this world together.

American critic Jed Perl, who coined the phrase *laissez-faire aesthetics* in 2007 in response to the financially driven compromise of artistic standards among artists, collectors, galleries, and museums, reviewed a huge exhibition of Ai at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington in 2013. Perl wrote:

There is much that is blunt and programmatic about Ai’s ideas about the relationship between art and social action, which perhaps explains his appeal for the audience that only occasionally goes to museums and galleries and so admired his millions of sunflower seeds in the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern ... When Ai hangs an MRI on the wall or places thirty-eight tons of steel rebar on the floor, he fails to meet, much less to grapple with, the challenges of art. In this way, he creates his own kind of political kitsch. It is not the kind with muscular working men that Stalin and Mao preferred, but it is kitsch nonetheless—postmodern minimalist political kitsch, *albeit in the name of a just cause*. (Perl 2013, my italics)

Ai and Eliasson have been heavily promoted by Hans Ulrich Obrist, the international super curator, who is currently Artistic Director of the Serpentine Gallery London. Together with others, Obrist set up *Utopia Station*, a “conceptually flexible project” at the 50th Venice Biennale (2003), which contained the work of over 150 artists, preceded by seminars and exhibitions,

coordinated by Rirkrit Tiravanija and Liam Gillick, themselves celebrants of Bourriaud’s *Relational Aesthetics* ur-text. The closeness of this internationalist group claiming idealistic affiliations has not been lost on commentators, nor have those artists taken kindly to attempts to critique their work. Gillick, a writer, theorist, sometime actor, designer, as well as visual artist, published a long diatribe against Claire Bishop’s position on relational aesthetics (Bishop 2004) in support of his own propagandist works (Gillick 2006). Following his open-ended definitions of discursive practice as incomplete projects and partial contributions that are “perpetually reformed” in order to retain “semi-autonomy in relation to instrumentalizing ... insincere market rationalizations”, Gillick’s work has since moved into the commercially successful production of Minimalist-styled artefacts and architectural interventions (Gillick 2008). So too has Tiravanija, the Buenos Aires-born Thai artist famous for participatory cooking installations. The position that interactive relational art is at odds with the world of art objects or saleable artefacts seems itself to be an open-ended and fluid position. In fact, many art projects and their producers have been readily co-opted and tamed—as seen with Beuys and Ai Weiwei—by the very institutions of the capitalist art market that they initially set out to critique or even undermine. This is by no means a new phenomenon in the history of Western art modernity!

COLLABORATIVE ART-MAKING

Collaborative art-making, whether part of a ritualistic context pertaining to indigenous cultures or traditional workshop practices, has undergone a postmodern revival globally. For example, a group of students from Lahore, Pakistan, have become internationally successful on the back of finely made collaborative drawings on paper, passed between them, after training in traditional miniature techniques at the National Art School. Acts of collaboration fit all the desired social aims of relational art and they implicitly critique notions of individual authorship and ownership. However, interactive practices are by no means problem-free in relation to either the production or public assessment of such projects but resonate with the tension “between collective



Figure 1 Jeremy Deller *The Battle of Orgreave*, 2001, re-enactment of the 1984 strike of the National Union of Mineworkers at Orgreave Coking Plant, Yorkshire 18 June 1984. Commissioned by Artangel, filmed by Mike Figgis © Martin Jenkinson/pressphotos.co.uk.

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and individual authorship ... and the conflicting demands of individual agency and directorial control" (Bishop 2012, 78).

A very well-known and often-cited example of collaborative art is Jeremy Deller's re-enactment of *The Battle of Orgreave* (2001, figure 1), with the participation of many of the original miners from the 18 June 1984 strike of the National Union of Mineworkers at Orgreave Coking Plant, Yorkshire. The re-enactment, showing the brutal charge by mounted police, was filmed by Mike Figgis.⁴ It was reshowed in 2015 at Tate Britain in association with the relatively alienating museum installation of the archive *The Battle of Orgreave Archive: An Injury to One Is an Injury to All* (2004), comprising texts, documents, objects, videos and other archival material assembled by the commissioners, Artangel. According to Bishop,

The decision to restage one of the last major working-class industrial disputes in the UK by involving over twenty battle re-enactment societies ... impacted on both the process and outcome of the project, as well as its broader

cultural resonance. In terms of process, it brought the middle-class battle re-enactors into direct contact with working-class miners. (Bishop 2012, 32)

In a carefully balanced assessment, Bishop quotes the Marxist critic Dave Beech who suggests that the compromised mechanics of the strike's re-enactment became a 'picturing' of politics rather than political art (Bishop 2012, 35).

In an earlier article, Bishop (2006b) suggested that the openness of artists to 'true' collaboration in joint artistic projects is prioritised over other kinds of collaboration according to comforting ethical or moral criteria that deliberately reject aesthetic judgements. Moreover, the two conditions do not merge:

For one sector of artists, curators and critics, a good project appeases a superegoic injunction to ameliorate society; if social agencies have failed, then art is obliged to step in ... For another sector of artists, curators and critics, judgements are based on a ... response to the artist's work ... ethics

are nugatory, because art is understood continually to throw established systems. (Bishop 2012, 275–76)

She concludes: “social and artistic judgements do not easily merge; they seem to demand different criteria” (Bishop 2012, 275).

Along with this shared unease about the persistent dichotomies of relational practice, is the not-unreasonable criticism that assessment of these ephemeral projects depends on processed videos, photographs, and propagandist texts generated by the participants. In this sense, it could be claimed that collaborative art is just as exclusive as it professes to be inclusive: if one has missed out on the immersive but durational experience, then one is forever an excluded outsider, and in many ways denied the right to critique the work.

OPEN-ENDED PROJECTS AND COLLABORATIVE DRAWING

The many and varied practitioners producing social or participatory art (including pedagogical, curatorial, museological, etc.) often refer to the importance of open-endedness and work that is resistant to closure.⁵ Hal Foster has written that “installation is the default format, and exhibition the common medium, of much art today” (Foster quoted in Bishop 2006a, 192), and this significant claim allows me to return from a general discussion of relational art practice to the all-important issue of drawing, which is the subject of this paper. Drawing is historically the medium—the *ur* medium—that exercises open-endedness and unfinish as its most significant dynamic.⁶ It invites continuities or completions by its very linearity, and at the practical level of an individual artist or studio workshop, allows a return to sketches from long ago for new solutions or facilitates conversations between practitioners and clients around briefs in art and design commissions. Furthermore, because European drawing from earlier centuries, however collectable, has generally escaped the burden of

⁵ Claire Bishop, for example, quotes Eric Troncy’s open-ended exhibition project *No Man’s Time* (1991) that involved twenty-two artists as part of the Villa Arson in Nice. She writes: “The viewer was subject to an experience of incompleteness—of being put in the position, Troncy wrote—of piecing together the show like ‘fragments which enable the reconstructions of a crime’” (Bishop 2012, 211).

⁶ This is one of the major issues I analyse in *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* (Petherbridge 2010).



Figure 2 *Reflective Interventions* 2005 workshop by John McNorton with twelve participants Abbaye de Beaulieu, France, re-animated 7 October–5 November 2006. Photograph courtesy of John McNorton.

grotesque market prices, it has also flourished as the throw-away sketch or the first thought notation (*primo pensiero*) that sets the artist in his or her path and reads as a signpost to later observers and interpreters.

Unlike animated social practices or installations, however, *drawing exists as a trace of process* and therefore is ontologically of another order. Drawing writes its own history because it resists erasure, unlike most other traditional and contemporary media. In this regard, digital drawing, at the moment it is presented for viewing (in whatever form, including a print-out) is the sum of its erasures, editings, and mutings: what we see is always partial and contingent. The reading of drawings in all their manifestations is either phenomenological—understanding the traces of gesture in relation to bodies, emotions, and material processes—or semiotic: a call to decode meaning in the work/drawing itself and the context and narratives of its production.



Figure 3 Intensive Drawing workshop led by John McNorton for Guild of St George and National Society for Education in Art and Design (NSEAD) at Bath Spa University, September, 2002. Photograph courtesy of John McNorton.

The balance that is struck in collaborative drawing events between the editorial control of the artist instigator/animateur and the participants as artistic ‘free agents’ or actors/followers of a predetermined authorial script becomes a key issue in the staging of collaborative performance works. This essential awareness, therefore, needs to be a factor in the assessment of these pieces—whether watched or participated in live, or through viewing archival memorials of the action.

British artist John McNorton, who now runs a highly successful residence program and drawing project in France, was one of the first students to register for a PhD in drawing at the RCA. His PhD project was titled “Choreography of Drawing: The Consciousness of the Body in the Space of a Drawing” (McNorton 2003). I remember vividly the first exhibition of John’s that I saw in Cardiff, which consisted of three enormous collaborative drawings. John was a hands-on teacher and performance artist, and he had encouraged the team of about eight people working with him to use their bodies in the freest possible manner in

making a participatory work based on a ‘writing of the body’. However—not without much debate from the participants—he assumed the burden of artistic responsibility for the final outcomes. The drawings, which undoubtedly recorded the marks of the bodily processes involved in their making, were also varied, poignant, and resonant as unique works on paper in terms of the installation.

It is instructive to compare the workshops organised by McNorton (such as events that he organised in the beautiful defunct Cistercian church of the Abbaye de Beaulieu-en-Rouergue, Tarn-et-Garonne, France, and elsewhere, figures 2 and 3) with two exemplars sourced at random from the Internet, where ‘drawing’ is apparently the benign social activity (‘moral good’) that serves a whole raft of activities and agendas.

When the Winter Is Winter and the Summer Is Winter (2011, figure 4) was a week-long collaborative drawing installation site at The Other Gallery, Banff Centre, Canada. According to the Gallery’s website, Matt Shane and Jim Holyoak have co-organised several public drawing installations, often involving hundreds



Figure 4 *When the Winter Is Winter and the Summer Is Winter* 2011, ink, paint, gesso, graphite on paper, dimensions variable. A week-long collaborative drawing installation produced on site at The Other Gallery, Banff Centre, Canada. Facilitated by Matt Shane and Jim Holyoak. Photograph courtesy of Matt Shane and Jim Holyoak.



Figure 5 Briony Barr with Rachel Jessie-Rae *Circles & Lines* 2011, The BIG DRAW Festival, ArtPlay. Photograph courtesy of Briony Barr.

of participants, in Canada and the USA. The published image depicts a number of adults participating in making marks and mixing paint, who could be parents of the many children messing around with great glee. Everyone appears to be having great fun and presumably the artists/animators are, appropriately, earning some subsidy. But to me, the image begs the question: What is it all about? Is it about art or simply art as an excuse for jolly social interaction—and does that distinction matter? It reminds me of a much-quoted comment from Obrist: “Collaboration is the answer, but what is the question?” He, as I mentioned above, is a great supporter of relational projects, so it’s an irony that this quotation should have been used so often in the literature on socially engaged practice.

Australian artist Briony Barr organises participatory workshops that she refers to on her website as “interactive installations (collaborative expanded drawings)”; “These participatory works are typically run in a drop-in format and involve the use of boundaries and very simple rules or themes” (Barr 2016). The selected image (figure 5) depicts adults and children working on the ground using chalks on carefully demarcated areas with clear and slightly geometrical images and indicates a nod towards traditional Aboriginal practices (if one can generalise about these). Control by the animator appears to be the significant consideration here, unlike the Canadian example above.

These examples lead me to pose some questions:

- Is an individual artwork more or less important than a collaborative project—and why?
- Is drawing more than a ‘moral good’?
- Should art have meaning beyond participatory activity and process?
- Why is anyone a better person for having taken part in a communal drawing exercise?

As I don’t know any of the answers to these rather simplistic questions, I will turn, for contrast, to some very private drawings that either imply the performative or happen within a public space, and that do or do not depend on propagandist statements of intent.

British artist Gail Henderson registered for a postgraduate degree at the RCA Centre for Drawing Research in the late 1990s. She was on



Figure 6 Gail Henderson *Snake Diva* 2000, mixed media on paper, 152.4 x 121.9cm. Photograph courtesy of Gail Henderson.



Figure 7 Gail Henderson *Alice Shadow* 2001, ink and pencil on paper, 152 x 121.9cm. Photograph courtesy of Gail Henderson.



Figure 8 Gail Henderson, *Performative Drawing* 2014, 152 x 1000cm. Constantine Corridor Gallery, University of Teesside, Middlesbrough, UK. Photograph courtesy of Gail Henderson.

very heavy medication at this time, and often found it impossible to interact in class or tutorial situations.⁷ Her drawings, which explore the psycho-narratives of her own subjectivities, are inflected by her feminist and psychoanalytical readings (figures 6 and 7). She also investigates issues of marginality and self-empowerment and shapes her drawings with what she refers to as ‘northern’ humour. Her very personal iconography revolves around alter-ego figures such as Alice and Troy, often represented wearing very high boots, and the surfaces of her complex linear drawings are enriched with breast shapes, eyes, mouths, skin, nerve endings, and synapses, and occasionally collage insertions, although she seldom incorporates text into the works.

Since her first MPhil at the RCA, Gail has gone on to complete a number of other degrees, and has published a book of her poetry. Recently, she undertook a performative residency that pushed her physical stamina to the limits. In an email to me, she described the ten-metre-long drawing (figure 8) she completed during her residency:

The drawing was completed at Teesside University in 2014 as part of Artists into Art Colleges ... I completed the drawing alone over about 8 days intermittently and I drew for about 3 hours at a time. I had an incidental audience in Constantine Corridor Gallery ... with screens where I mounted my paper. I had paper on the floor to catch the drips and trace of my presence. I have kept this paper for later use! ... [The drawing] is performative because it is a gestural-action drawing. I threw paint and ink, used charcoal on a stick and ran and walked with charcoal whilst completing the work. It was very much about moving around the large space to draw. Perhaps as I have limitations I wanted to push the boundaries of what I could do physically! *It is a performance of my inner world* and I call the inhabitant of the world Alice. (Henderson pers. comm., August 2015, my italics)

SELF-LEGITIMATING TEXTS OR ACADEMIC SELFIES

Although Gail has pushed herself mercilessly to confront very difficult public situations, she

⁷ Please note that Gail, proud of her struggles with illness, is in full agreement that I discuss her work openly and refer to her freely acknowledged personal history.



Figure 9 Barbara Bernstein *Patterns of Love and Beauty* 2007–10, travelling installation, Riverviews Arts Center, Lynchburg, VA, and elsewhere. Photograph courtesy of Barbara Bernstein.

remains reluctant to describe or ‘unravel’ her works aside from describing the conditions of their production. I contrast this with a recently published text by American artist Barbara Bernstein (2015) in connection with an artwork/installation *Patterns of Love and Beauty* (2007–10, figure 9). This text caught my attention because of the artist’s use of the term ‘immersive’, which, in Britain at least, refers to (or has been appropriated by) a form of participatory performance that disallows spectatorship by involving everyone in the space and activities of unscripted performances that generally happen in non-theatrical spaces. The literary theories underlying this form of interactivity are dense, but essentially these collaborative performances emerge from a belief that any form of communication is a form of interaction; theatre is not about the transmission of content but a way to invite recipients to design their own context and construct their own experiences and meaning (Kluszczyński 2009). Away from this theoretical gloss, the most

cited performance in the UK in recent years has been *You Me Bum Bum Train*, (conceived 2010 but re-enacted in subsequent years and modes), described by a performance critic as being “like falling into an oddly edited, disjointed movie, in which you are the main protagonist in a series of random life events: sometimes you are the glowing superstar and at others, you are passive and coerced” (Gardner 2010).

The fact that Bernstein has constructed a small traditional proscenium theatre, into which spectators cannot step makes this co-option of the language of participatory art all the more puzzling for me.⁸ In accordance with much contemporary academic and gallery practice, she tells us definitively what *she* believes the installation to be about in the context of Buddhist mystical thinking:

⁸ Since delivering my keynote address, I have been contacted by the artist, who has explained that the windows of the space in which the central room was installed were covered with drawings, causing changing shadows that spilled ‘immersively’ over walls and spectators alike.



Figure 10 William Kentridge *More Sweetly Play the Dance* 2015, installation photograph at Marian Goodman Gallery, London. Photograph courtesy of Marian Goodman Gallery.

The work seems to oscillate, and thereby, question visually the boundaries between objects. ... All surfaces not immediately visible ... were given attention with drawing, ensuring the saturation of the experience. My chosen palette of black and white reinforced the impact of dichotomy and paradox. The result is a consideration of familiarity immersed within the unexpected, examining a devotional, interior life, which has been made visible. (Bernstein 2015, 94–95)

As this is clearly a very beguiling work, I will leave it there. My reason for choosing work by this artist is to point out that, like most artworks installed in public places today, this work is dependent on a *controlling text*—in which our own interpretative interventions are held at a distance. This authoritative text operates in the same manner as it does in acclaimed relational works that have entered into art mythology, through texts written by curatorial collaborators.

As we live in a world where digital social networks allow everyone's voice to be heard, there are more people interested in the production of images and meanings than in their contemplation or critique. And in a society of spectacle where everyone is participating, we're left without spectators. As Boris Groys articulates: "How can the artist survive in a world in which everyone can, after all, become an artist? ... If contemporary society is, therefore, still a society of spectacle, then it seems to be a spectacle without spectators" (2010, 98–99).

In the most recent survey of socially engaged art, *Living as Form: Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2011*, the editor Nato Thompson (2012) raises "compelling questions" in his introduction. He reminds us that we can only appreciate the forms of resistance to power from artists and activists if we take on board that "the manipulation of symbols has become a method of production for the dominant powers in contemporary society" (Thompson 2012, 30). Short-lived relational

works in the 1990s revealed political limitations: “By being discreet and short-lived, the works often reflected a convenient tendency for quick consumption and exclusivity that garnered favor among museums and galleries” (Thompson 2012, 31). Thompson ends with a string of awkward questions, reminding us that “socially engaged art can easily be used as advertising for vast structure of power, from governments to corporations” (2012, 32).

I will conclude this discussion with a mention of William Kentridge’s 2015 exhibition at the Marian Goodman Gallery in New York and London, *More Sweetly Play the Dance* (figure 10), which partly related to a residency in Beijing.

Some works deal with the Cultural Revolution and the sayings and rituals of Mao and were drawn on sheets of Chinese newsprint. They form the basis of Kentridge’s trademark cut-out silhouettes on the gallery walls.

The gallery note for the *Small Studies of Eurasian Tree Sparrows* (which can be seen in figure 10) informed spectators that these were “reminders of Mao’s ill-fated insistence that peasants should kill all sparrows, leading to the worst famine in history that followed a plague of locusts whose larvae were left uneaten—creating yet more lines of starving, subjugated people marching across barren landscapes”. Kentridge has produced amazingly original and poignant drawings, animations, film, and installations about South Africa; but for me, this extension into a universal politics, plus the problematic issue of the gallery venue in which the protest works were displayed, invites a host of questions.

This paper has touched on a great many issues concerning ‘relational’ practices: the performative and collaborative aspects of art education; a critique of relational art practice, particularly its uneasy compromise between individual artistic authorship and the desirable if short-term socio-political aims venerated by an international liberal consensus; the gulf between social ideals and artistic careerism; the ‘drip down’ of relational ideas into drawing; the valorisation of drawing as a social good rather than an expressive or critical art practice; the contradictory aspect of authoritative propagandist texts justifying purportedly open contemporary practices; and questions whether relational and/or political practice can migrate

from one culture to another on the assumption that a liberal agenda is universal and unitary.

I have intentionally left this discussion open-ended: there have been opinions quoted and questions asked, but no firm answers supplied. The formal construction of this text has been my deliberate homage to the subtle practice of drawing—signifying ideas but not closing down debate.

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PERFORMANCE DRAWING: FRAMING THE ELEMENTS

Kellie O'Dempsey



Figure 1 Kellie O'Dempsey, *Art after Dark* 2012, performance at the 18th Biennale of Sydney, 2/3 Walsh Bay. Image courtesy of Grant McIntyre.

Through the examination and production of performance drawing, I have become aware of a gap in the research and knowledge associated with this field. This absence of information makes it difficult to analytically navigate and locate my work in the field. In positing elements for the development of a performance drawing framework to enable criticality and discussion, this paper proposes that performance drawing can be understood in terms of *the witness*.

Filtered through my observations of and participation in the event *Draw to Perform 2* (2015) held in London, I will outline strategies that consider the witness, the act of drawing, time, space, and collaboration as concurring and re-occurring elements in performance drawing. By proposing the witness as the key to these elements, this paper aims to identify the

components and conditions of what it means to engage in or with performance drawing.

LOCATING AND LOCATION

As the child of publicans, I grew up in a country hotel in Victoria, Australia, where I made drawings for friends and patrons as a method of what could be described as communication and response. Early in my career as an artist, I continued to find myself drawing in public places. Subsequently, I have identified live drawing to be central to my artistic practice. Over the past ten years, I have been producing large-scale installations of hand-drawn works, both on paper and as digital projections, in and on buildings, at galleries, theatres, and events (figure 1). In completing my Master's project, "The Spectacle of Performance Drawing" (2010), I concluded that

my performance drawing practice was an inclusive form of visual art that can potentially enable audience engagement as a form of cultural interaction. During this project, I became acutely aware of the lack of available research specifically associated with performance and live drawing practice.

In identifying the witness as a vital element in the development of an analytical framework of performance drawing, I will synthesise existing descriptions of performance drawing and participatory practice as presented by academic and artist Maryclare Foá and by curator and art historian Catherine de Zegher.

FRAMING PERFORMANCE DRAWING

My practice incorporates the process of drawing as an immediate and responsive form of mark making that is witnessed either as live event, as video, or as a remediated document. Using experimental and conventional artists' tools through public performance, I aspire to enable an inclusive experience for both the artist and the spectator. In describing my practice as performance drawing, I acknowledge that my work can be informed by situations where the environments are peopled with those who may either be invited or uninvited.

Here, I position my argument by suggesting a performance drawing work is only ever activated by a spectator or a witness. In naming a work such, the artwork is designed by the artist to be observed in production as performance, hence enabling the possibility of a collective occurrence. Bonnie Marranca, the editor of a special issue of *PAJ (A Journal of Performance Art)* devoted *performance drawing*, describes this public exchange as the “ephemerality of performance” and states that this “is what lends majesty to the condition of presence. And in this ecstatic state both performer and viewer experience a privacy that is paradoxically only fulfilled in public space” (Marranca 2014, 1).

Marranca describes the co-presence between the artist and the audience as both a collaborative and an inclusive encounter that is realised as a public and private act that, in turn, simultaneously invites a shared experience.

One of the few specific texts on the practice of performance drawing is Foá's PhD dissertation

“Sounding Out: Performance Drawing in Response to the Outside Environment” (2011). Here, Foá suggests that the term ‘performance drawing’ was coined by de Zegher. As the director of The Drawing Center in New York from 1999 to 2006, de Zegher was also editor of its publication *Drawing Papers*. Its twentieth issue was titled *Performance Drawings* and was published in 2001 in conjunction with an exhibition by the same name, curated by de Zegher. The limited information available on the exhibition (as the publication has been out of print since 2011) describes interdisciplinary methods of production that align closely to the Performance Art ‘happenings’ of Allan Kaprow in the 1970s, where, according to Kaprow, the ‘happening’ “replaces the traditional art object with a performative gesture” (Kaprow 1993, 15).

The 2001 *Performance Drawings* exhibition included work from Erwin Wurm, Milan Grygar, and Elena Del Rio. Wurm's humorous subversion of sculpture was activated by inviting the audience to follow drawn sketches that instructed them to use their bodies to interact with common objects; Grygar produced sound-driven sculptures that rhythmically and mechanically produced marks and scratches on paper; and Del Rio presented a series of marks on paper that documented a year's worth of her movements around her home.

Works in the 2001 *Performance Drawings* exhibition comprised many elements, including the act of performance and its relationship to the act of making marks as drawn gestures to instruct, record, or document action. This exhibition introduced the term *performance drawing*.

FRAMEWORK FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS

To apply criticality to performance drawing practice as research, I propose that the components of the practice consist of an evolving process of concurrent elements that flow together in differing degrees of strength and purpose.

I have distilled these elements down to the following: the witness, the act of drawing, time, space, and collaboration. Each of these elements coexists in an ever-changing confluence of performance and production, and consists of components that are propelled by both the artist and the environment. What is common to all these elements is the required presence of the witness or

observer to activate, be present, or experience the act of drawing as performance.

Contentiously, drawing as an act and artefact defies definition. Deanna Petherbrige suggests that searching for a definition "... invites frustration or obsession in attempting to clarify something which is slippery and irresolute in its fluid status as performative act and idea" (Petherbrige 2008, 27).

In light of this premise, rather than irresolutely define this practice where drawing intersects performance, I will instead focus on the persuasive evidence that performance drawing is to be witnessed in order to be described as such. In order to accomplish this, I will offer an interpretation of the practice.

THE ACT AND THE WITNESS

Drawing is a performed act: a surface is physically marked by an instrument, tool, or device that is guided by the artist and their informed knowledge of the practice. The result, a drawn action or the act itself, becomes an object, a drawing. The artist as conductor initiates the drawn mark and the act of drawing is performed whether in the studio or in public. However, I suggest that the act of drawing is not a performance drawing unless the act is specifically designed by the artist for an audience. In performance drawing, there is an emphasis on the artist as performer or conduit, displaying the act for observation.

I propose that witnessing the act of drawing is paramount when applying criticality to performance drawing. For example, a drawn work made in one's studio may not be considered a performance drawing without its production being observed by another person or recorded by or for lens-based media for the purpose of being seen. Foá also identifies the presence of witness as an essential component of performance drawing, suggesting,

[P]erformance drawing occurs as an action in front of, and conditioned by, the presence of another. Not all drawing is a performance drawing because not all drawing is made in front of a witness. (Foá 2011, 2)

Similarly, a performance art work requires the audience's conscious engagement with a concept

enacted by the artist through a series of actions. Correspondingly, performance drawing requires a witness to observe or experience the temporal nature of the drawing process.

Here the performance drawing environment is activated by the co-presence of the audience and the artist as shared witness. The role of the witness is to see the evolution of the drawing performance; hence, the audience can be both willing and unexpected contributors to the relationship. This elucidates a participatory shift in contemporary drawing production that involves the availability of a shared experience. In the exhibition and publication *Online: Drawing in the Twentieth Century*, de Zegher suggests that contemporary drawing artists

may work and live in different contexts, but they have tried to escape the confining orthodoxies of modernity and of our time and they imagine art as a reciprocity, as a compassionate witnessing of lives of others and a form of empathically shared presence. (de Zegher in Butler and de Zegher 2010, 89)

De Zegher suggests that contemporary drawing artists continue to break from the conventions of the historical art object, conceiving their approach to practice as one of exchange, of an inclusive form of collective experience. Performance drawing avails the possibility for shared experience, which is enabled by working in collaboration and through an ethos of collectivity, where the witness is a participant. In today's global socio-economic climate, practitioners hail from diverse circumstances and locations from across the world and the *Draw to Perform 2* London event is but one example of this, supporting a range of international practitioners presenting collaborative public performance.

DRAW TO PERFORM 2

In 2015, I was invited to participate in *Draw to Perform 2* (figure 2), a collective live drawing installation event in London, independently curated by artist Ram Samocha. International artists presented works using conventional drawing tools—pencils, charcoal, and markers—and unconventional digital prints, experimental mark making methods, and labouring tools,



Figure 2 *Draw to Perform 2, 2015*, promotional poster



Figure 3 Kevin Townsend at *Draw to Perform 2 2015*, performance in London, England. Images courtesy of Marco Berardi.

including Polyfilla and plumber's twine. The nature of these materials determined how the artist acted, moved, and performed in the space. Concurrently performing drawings for six continuous hours, the twelve artists (including me) used diverse strategies in accordance with their own practice, working within self-determined parameters in separate areas of a warehouse.

The space was open to the public as a live durational time-based performance. The audience could wander through or participate in (some) works according to their desire and interest. As witnesses, the audience activated the space, which made them participants in the event.

Drawing white chalk lines as he moved across a black brick wall, Kevin Townsend's (USA) performance consisted of methodical and systematic mark-making. Meditative and recursive, Townsend's practice is concerned with "creating works that occupy and encapsulate both space and time, where marks exist as signifier and stain, binding and boundary, act and action" (Townsend n.d.). At *Draw to Perform 2*, Townsend would count to three and then change the direction of his line ever so slightly. The result

was an illusory effect where the solid flat wall, appeared creased and crumpled (figure 3). The remediated video of the performance, which was sped up, presents a metaphysical veil that appears to fall down the wall. The metronomic performance of Townsend's body and the evolving lines as a slow intriguing reveal are captivating for viewers.

The space or site of a performance drawing can inform the work. The *Draw to Perform 2* venue was a warehouse in South London. It was a cold, hard, dark concrete building in an inner-city industrial area. Here, I would also like to introduce the notion that the action and the determined drawing process can be fashioned not only by duration, drawn materials, or being watched but also by responding to the location and/or environment. The location can also invariably affect and establish how the performance drawing is read.

In *Draw to Perform 2*, Bertrand Flachot (France) used markers and manipulated digital prints of his own work to present and layer in and on the warehouse wall (figure 4). The digital prints he installed were images of a country garden that he had in fact grown and photographed himself.



Figure 4 Bertrand Flachot at *Draw to Perform 2*, 2015, London, England. Image courtesy of Marco Berardi.



Figure 5 River Lin, *River Walk* (film stills) 2015, collaboration with Kellie O'Dempsey performed at *Draw to Perform 2*, London, England. Images courtesy of Marco Berardi.

He printed these large-format images and wallpapered his section of the warehouse with them. The garden images were of trees and shrubs he had planted over twenty-five years. He literally made them grow again over the six hours by drawing and extending gestural marks from paper to the wall, crossing and merging his garden in France into the industrial walls of the London warehouse.

Bertrand's drawing practice often involves the recreation of an external location into a gallery space. He develops an illusory, three-dimensional space on two-dimensional surfaces, making it appear as if he wants his drawings to relocate his physical self. His lines, both hand-drawn and digitally manipulated, are designed to deceive the spectator and make them question where the image starts and ends.

In an opposite room, movement-based dance (and non-dance) practitioner River Lin (Taiwan) used hypnotically slow, full-bodied gestures for his work *River Walk* (figure 5). Lin describes

his performance approach as initiating a point of "departure, transforming the conventional and ritualistic in everyday life into performance work" (Lin n.d.). In *River Walk*, Lin progressively disrobed over the duration of the performance. Before the event, Lin ritualistically prepared the ground by walking and shaking flour onto the prepared plastic sheet with a gentle action, almost like sowing seeds or feeding birds. During the performance, Lin's movements made lines and marks through the flour-covered surface, leaving traces of his path visible on the ground. Both Townsend and Lin produced works that developed and altered the original surface of the location over the duration of the performance. By witnessing the drawing of these marks through the action of the artist's body, the observer is physically implicated and a shared corporeality is experienced. The artist's body is part of the performance drawing as is that of the observer. As a spectatorial experience, the drawing's evolution is simultaneously shared and hence communal.



Figure 6 Shoshanah' Ciechanowski *MYNAMEIS #6*. Performed at *Draw to Perform 2*, London, England. Images courtesy of Marco Berardi.

Anthropologist Tim Ingold describes sharing a drawing experience as

... part metaphorical, but also part methodological. Metaphorically, it is about our understanding of persons and other things as drawing together or binding the trajectories of life. Each, we might say, is a togetherness. Methodologically, it is about the potential of drawing as a way of describing the lives we observe and with which we participate ... (Ingold 2011, 240)

Thus, Ingold describes the process of sharing drawing as a togetherness or as a familiar sharing of space that is potentially inclusive and participatory.

Literally bringing the audience into the making, Shoshanah' Ciechanowski's (Israel) work *MYNAMEIS #6* (figure 6) was participatory, physically compelling, and demanding for the six hours of *Draw to Perform 2*. After spending days constructing a purpose-built flexi-glass

wall-like structure that was situated between two columns in the middle of the warehouse, Ciechanowski positioned herself in a Christ-like pose. With arms extended horizontally on either side of her body, she anticipated her participant with her face at the end of a Perspex tube waiting to hear the audience's wishes. Upon hearing the wishes spoken through the tube, she then silently transcribed the message by writing text with a marker, with both hands simultaneously, mirror writing with her right hand what she wrote with her left. The writing of the audience's wishes built a web of text. Describing her process as "consistently centered upon the workings of the body, using her own body as a kind of machine-center for various communications with other types of bodies, among them the bodies of others and their emissions" (Ciechanowski n.d.), *MYNAMEIS #6* is propelled by a collaborative strategy. Not only is Ciechanowski's performance drawing one of endurance and participation, but it is also entirely audience-activated.



Figure 7 Kellie O'Dempsey at *Draw to Perform 2* 2015. Performance in London, England. Images courtesy of Marco Berardi.

My own performance drawings at the event were a direct response to the space and those who occupied it during the six hours. The installation or configuration of my setup was designed according to the architectural features of the corner I inhabited. Using materials gathered from the local hardware and art shop, digital projections, and black tape, the images traversed two walls and the floor.

I drew both the moving gestures of the audience and the other artists I could see from my space, constantly swapping materials from traditional means to live digital drawing and animation in an attempt to respond to the mechanics of the environment. I drew River Lin as he moved through his floured surface; I drew the viewers who passed by and those who stayed; I attempted to draw the ever changing now. As people moved, the drawing was altered, producing an evolving

observational tableau. As de Zegher articulates of contemporary drawing artists, during my drawing performances, I attempt "... to address the viewer's slowly growing understanding of the fact that the environment draws and shapes us as much as we draw and shape the environment" (in Butler and de Zegher 2010, 117).

Here de Zegher implies that contemporary drawn works not only reflect their immediate environment but they also have the possibility to shape the drawing's method as well as its form. In the case of my live public work, this reshaping relationship not only implicates the viewer, but also, through happenstance, as they may become the subject.

CONCLUSION

Through a first-hand account of a collaborative durational drawing event, I have identified a

series of elements for a framework to synthesise this practice as research. These elements, which are confluent and can exist in various levels of application, include the witness, the act of drawing, time, space, and collaboration. Of them, the witness has been proposed as the fundamental element because it is only through the act of witnessing that a performance drawing can occur.

As an enquiry into what it means to engage in or with the practice of performance drawing, this foundational paper has located performance drawing as participatory practice as per the discussion initiated by de Zegher's exhibition *On Line* in 2010, which suggested that the platform and dialogue of the contemporary drawing practice is one of collective exchange. Availing the possibility for shared experience, performance drawing is categorically aligned with collectivity, collaboration, and participation through the presence of the observer/witness.

I suggest that it is in witnessing the drawing through the action of the artist's body, or designed conduit, that a shared experience is enabled. And it is in the co-presence of the artist and the witnessed drawing that the work is made.

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DRAWING THE IMMATERIAL OBJECT OF DANCE

Rochelle Haley

INTRODUCTION

Drawing interfaces with dance-based movement within my performance titled *Spatial Forms*. This research is situated within a developing field of experimental drawing, the study of notational and diagrammatic visualisations of dance, and trans-disciplinary practice across the fields of dance and fine arts. I discuss Trisha Brown's 1975 choreographic work *Locus* to explore the complicated relation between drawings that illustrate volumetric space and an expression of space through actual performance. By contrasting Brown's work with my own experimental drawing practice, the paper highlights how drawing interfaces with an abstract geometric form, the animated bodies of dancers, and the two-dimensional pictorial plane (figure 1).

Like many practices in the expanding field of contemporary drawing, this research shares historical lineage with artists working in the 1960s and 1970s to explore how bodies enact and realise a line. Channa Horwitz, Bruce Nauman, Gordon Matta-Clark, Carolee Schneemann, Lygia Clark, Richard Long, and Trisha Brown, among others, took spaces of interior and industrial architecture and the natural environment to stage radical studies of scores and linear wakes of the body (Stout 2014, 118–22). In contemporary practice, this research is contextualised by an increasing number of trans-disciplinary projects involving dance and linear visualisation, including Trisha Brown's *It's a Draw* (2002) and William Forsythe's interactive web collaboration with The Ohio State University titled *Synchronous Objects – One Flat Thing, Reproduced* (2009). Context is also given by curatorial projects that trace intersections between visual art and movement or examine choreographic principles via other mediums. These include *On Line: Drawing through the Twentieth Century*, curated by Catherine de Zegher and Connie Butler, at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York (2010–11); *Framed Movements*, curated by Hannah Mathews, at Australian Centre for Contemporary

Art in Melbourne (2014); and *24 Frames per Second*, curated by Nina Miall and Beatrice Gralton, at Carriageworks in Sydney (2015).

While *Locus* and *Spatial Forms* both involve performing dancers and a drawn cube, they involve differences to do with the relationship between drawn lines, the abstract form of a cube, and dance movement, which will be discussed in this paper. Through this research, I suggest that drawing is a transformational medium of action that becomes an alternative document of dance. I discuss the 'object' of documentation as the 'immaterial object of dance'. This refers specifically to the abstract visualisation of a cube performed through transient dance movement. Referring to the structure of dance movement as an 'object' also recalls American choreographer William Forsythe's use of the term in his ongoing investigation of 'choreographic objects' in which physical objects are presented as architectural and performance installations. He describes the concept thus: "A choreographic object is not a substitute for the body, but rather an alternative site for the understanding of potential instigation and organization of action to reside" (Forsythe 2016). Audiences navigate the installations in movement patterns and interactions designed by Forsythe.

This research finds parameters in the volumetric figure of the cube. The cube focuses the discussion of drawn expressions of space in the development of human movement, addressing the research question: can a drawn annotation of the moving body diagram the 'immaterial object of dance'? The first part of the paper describes my performance *Spatial Forms*. The second part introduces Brown's work *Locus* via a description of the work and an analysis of the relation between the drawn cube and the dance performance. Finally, the paper compares the two works to develop a case for four primary aspects of drawing as it interfaces with movement: focus, translation, connection, and transformation.



Figure 1 *Spatial Forms 2014*, drawing performance, UNSW Art & Design Australia. Photographer: Alex Davies.



Figure 2 *Spatial Forms 2014*, drawing performance, UNSW Art & Design Australia. Video still: Dara Gill.

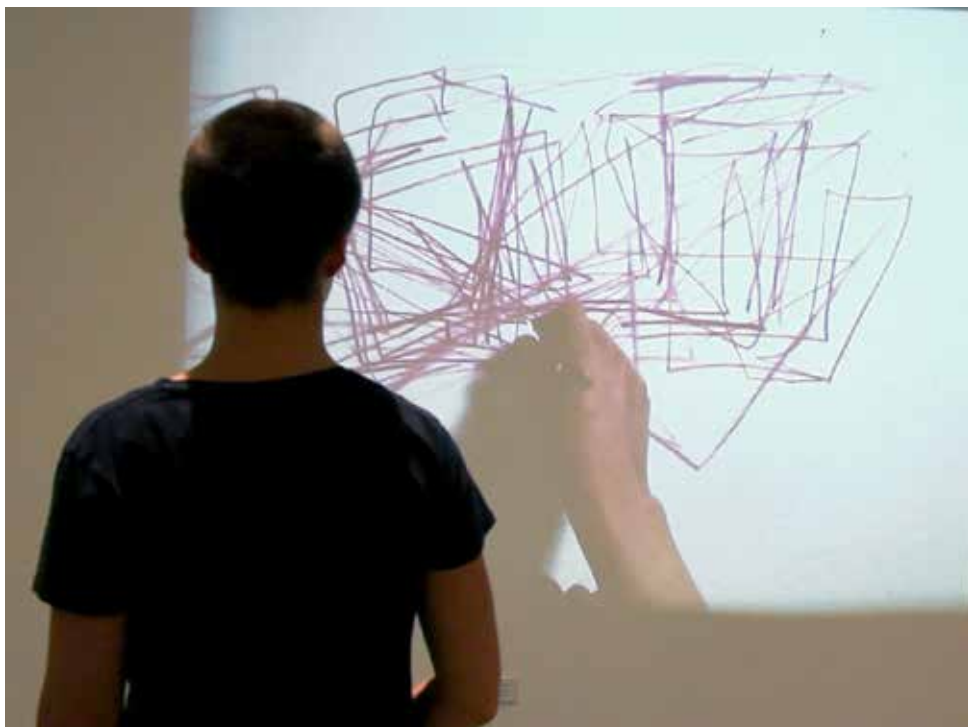


Figure 3 *Spatial Forms 2014*, drawing performance, UNSW Art & Design, Australia. Video still: Dara Gill.

ROCHELLE HALEY *SPATIAL FORMS 2014*

Spatial Forms is part of my experimental drawing practice that explores the relationship between bodies and the physical environments they move in. I worked with two dancers, Angela Goh and Ivey Wawn, and together we developed a set of exercises around the organising principle of a cube to diagram movement in volumetric space. Movement is mapped conceptually through an imagined cube of physical space and visually in drawings. These exercises extended from a discussion between the dancers and I about theories of space explored in Hungarian movement researcher Rudolf Laban's drawn 'kinesphere'. Laban developed this term to describe the action space within the outermost reach of the extended limbs of a stationary body (Laban 1966). While Laban's kinesphere provides a useful representational scaffold of a geometric solid to describe the action space of the body, this research does not adhere to the manner in which this shape contains the body. Instead, the participants move

freely within and without the imagined form of a cube of space that changes in scale and location.

An iteration of *Spatial Forms* was performed in 2014 at the University of New South Wales (UNSW) Art & Design Galleries in Sydney. The performance produced materials including drawings, video documentation, and movement. As the first dancer outlined the edge of an imagined cube with her limbs, I inscribed these lines of passage onto paper. At the same time, the line trailing the pencil in my right hand tracked the geometric path of the first dancer's left hand, moving in real time. The drawing was captured via a live feed from above the table and projected onto the back wall of the room. The second dancer (standing back to back with the first) followed the line with her right arm (figure 2). This action continued as the first dancer outlined the edges and diagonal planes of the imagined cube around her body, followed by my drawing, which was likewise followed by the second dancer mirroring the movement.

Using one imaginary corner of the cube as a pivoting point, the first dancer walked to another location in space with a small number of steps. My left hand drew a line from the original position of the first dancer's feet to the new position, which indicated the change of location. The second dancer followed this line by taking a number of small steps to a new location, while maintaining the connection between her hand and one corner of the cube. The change of location occurred a number of times and was traced by the drawn line connecting the 'anchor points' of foot locations along the path of the dancer's travel.

The first dancer made several choices about the orientation of the cube, the repetition of gesture to describe it, and the number of iterations of the cube at different scales and positions in space. These changes manifested as continuity in the drawing, with connected cubes of varying degrees of completion and scale tumbling across the surface (figure 3). Progression could also be seen in the performance as the dancers travelled slowly across the space. The duration of the exercise varied, with each iteration averaging approximately five minutes. Articulating the imagined cube began when the first dancer started to move and ended when she stopped. Stasis for more than a few seconds was a signal for me to stop drawing. The cessation of lines being drawn signalled to the second dancer to stop moving. The movements performed by all three of us were erratic, since we were negotiating a sense of anticipation, unpredictability, and a conscious effort to enact the imaginary cube form. Within *Spatial Forms*, the dancers were both 'drawing' with the action of their bodies and also the 'drawn line' in the sense that their movements became the object of the translation process that I engaged with. Drawing here is involved in a feedback loop where drawn lines both respond to and provoke movement.

TRISHA BROWN LOCUS 1975

American choreographer Trisha Brown's work demonstrates an interest in drawing as a site for composition and reflection on choreography. The systematic visual tendencies in her work have informed much contemporary discourse surrounding the intersection of dance and visual arts. Brown's interest in drawing shifted in the late 1970s, when she began to use video to record

and compose choreographic work. According to critic and curator Peter Eleey, video gave Brown the ability to see her body as an object and thereby broke the mould that had bound drawing as a technique to extract an internal abstract view of herself (Eleey 2012, 184). Drawing could now function as a conceptual springboard for organising abstract space and movement.

In the 1975 work *Locus*, improvisation was initiated via sets of points on a drawn cube on paper, which produced a particular conceptual space of autonomy and collective accountability for her dancers. Brown describes the method behind *Locus* as being:

organized around 27 points located on an imaginary cube of space slightly larger than the standing figure in a stride position. The points were correlated to the alphabet and a written statement. (Brown and Livet 1978, 54)

Mona Sulzman, a performer of the original *Locus*, writes that Brown broke the text into letters ascribed with a numerical value according to alphabetic order. The numbers were plotted out to specific location points on a drawn cube that correlated with points in space. The movement was then designed by following the order of all twenty-seven points on the cube figure with touch and gesture of different kinds in actual space (Sulzman 1978, 122).

The choreographic structure assigns different permutations of the score to the different sections. Across the three parts of the work, four dancers fall in and out of alignment in a grid of four by five adjacent imaginary cubes. Wendy Perron, a former dancer of the Trisha Brown Company, comments that *Locus* was an expression of Brown's "architectural" understanding of the body and its continuation into space (Perron 2011). A solo version of *Locus* was performed by Diane Madden as part of the *On Line/Performance* series at MoMA in 2011. Madden mapped out the coded coordinates using movement phrases, which art critic Claudia La Rocco (2011) described as "liquid geometry".

The phrase 'liquid geometry' is particularly evocative in the context of this research. It uncovers the formal structure of the performance space that Brown designates for the dancers to

move within, which is the cube of space around their standing figure. It also reveals the geometric nature of the collective space of several dancers, as each individual's imaginary cubicle is positioned adjacent to another in an abstract grid of space. However, the reference to liquid implies fluidity to the movement within this imagined geometric structure. *Locus* shifted the understanding of space towards an invisible structure already present before the dancers move, based on a drawing of a cube. This invisible structure of space set by the drawing prior to performance is like a score but more diagrammatic in nature. The performance does not progress according to a linear score over time like it might through music or dance notation. The relation between the drawn cube and the performance is spatial. The movement of the performance in *Locus* was guided by the dancers' imagined grid of cubes and prescribed points in space.

Dance and drawing relate differently in *Spatial Forms*. Firstly, drawn lines are visible in the projected drawing and appear only after and in response to the movement of the first dancer. The drawing, being drawn live, is reactive to dance and provisional in appearance, rather than Brown's static and defined drawn cube. Secondly, the drawing in *Spatial Forms* stimulates the movement of the second dancer in the sense that the lines describing a cube form are followed with her limbs. This differs again from Brown's cube, which structures space for the dancers to draw lines with their bodies freely so long as they touch the given points. In *Spatial Forms*, the dancers are the impetus for and the object of my drawing process. In order to further analyse the relation between dance and drawing in the two works *Locus* and *Spatial Forms*, the remainder of this paper is structured over four parts that each explore an aspect of drawing—focus, translation, connection, and transformation—revealed through a comparison of Brown's and my works.

FOCUS

Observation and attentiveness are elemental to the drawing discipline in its many forms. The connection between the eye and hand is a key component of drawing as a technique of perception and representation of the world. The relation of focus to drawing is a primary concern

for both *Spatial Forms* and *Locus*. Both works take into account visual, mental, and physical concentration on lines and points both drawn and danced by all participants.

As the visual artist in *Spatial Forms*, my attention was focused primarily on the first dancer's moving body. While drawing, I tracked the left hand of the dancer as though it was a point moving in space. I did not allow my eyes to glance at the paper to check for correct proportion, registration, and composition, as is common practice in observational drawing. The line produced on paper was continuous as the pencil rarely left the surface. I spent more mental effort maintaining the moving focal point than coordinating the eye and the drawing hand. Perception of movement in space is aided by the action of drawing in this performance. The physicality of my moving hand, somewhat mirroring the moving hand of the dancer, scaffolds the focal point of vision in movement and helps to maintain this connection.

Drawing practitioner and scholar Deanna Petherbridge writes about the hand-to-eye correlation when she states that "the moving hand of drawing registers the movement of the thinking eye" (2010, 90). Here Petherbridge emphasises the communicative flow from active vision to drawn record and mentions that the degree of coordination between the two depends on varying internal and external influences. Furthering an argument for registration between the visual focal point and the drawn line, Petherbridge quotes philosopher and critic Paul Valéry's description:

the shapes our sight reveals to us as contours are produced by our consciousness of the concerted movement of our eyes as they register precise vision. This *registering* movement constitutes line. (quoted in Petherbridge 2010, 90, original italics)

If recording a moving point constitutes line, then within *Spatial Forms*, drawing visualises the focal connection between the eye of the artist (me) and the body of the dancer. The drawing does not describe the shape of the dancer's body, but the contours of her movement. Similarly, Sulzman describes a form of "self-containment" in *Locus* that stems from a relation of her body to an imagined form of a cube. Since the cube has

no physical planes other than the floor, it is the contours of the dancer's presence, animation, and movement that contain her and focus the audience's attention on the form of a cube (Sulzman 1978, 128).

The second dancer in *Spatial Forms* maintains her focus on the drawn lines in the video projection. Her task is to reanimate the lines with her body as she sees them being drawn. In an argument that infers from American philosopher C. S. Peirce's distinction of the index being a transfer of the real, Petherbridge (2010) describes how the eye of the observer can reactivate the movement of lines by looking at a drawing through a causal relation. She states:

drawn lines, by the very associations that link vision to the object of the gaze by a 'sight line', encapsulate the trace of the moving hand as indexical signs that are reconstituted by the movement of the observing eye. (2010, 90)

In this understanding, lines are the movement of the hand transferring the visual focus of the artist to the viewer. In the case of this research, the visual focus is movement. Likewise, Roland Barthes, in a discussion of Cy Twombly's work, remarks:

the line, however supple, light, or uncertain it may be, always refers to a force, to a direction; it is an energon, a labor which reveals—which makes legible—the trace of its pulsion and its expenditure. The line is visible action. (1985, 170)

The gestural line is not an object of representation but something that Barthes refers to as a 'subject' of desire for action (1985, 170). In *Spatial Forms*, the line lends itself to the desire to enact the gestural force that laid it down. That is, the second dancer following the drawing focuses her visual and kinesthetic faculties in order to perceive and replicate movement with her body. The line is the focus for the second dancer in *Spatial Forms*, as she attends to the 'visible action' of the first dancer therein.

TRANSLATION

In both *Spatial Forms* and *Locus*, the relation of drawing to movement is non-illustrative. A productive difference exists between performance and score in which overflow, interpretation, and

error play their part. Critic Susan Rosenberg (2014) describes Brown's interest in this gap as an interest in the "problem of translation". Improvisation and permutation highlight the gap between choreographic instruction and the actual performance of movement in both works.

A systematic translation of drawing into movement is one technique that Brown uses to explore this gap. According to Eleey, Brown "mapped" text onto structures according to sets of rules "as if trying to establish or break some code" (2012, 184). Petherbridge points to the failure of coded systems to accommodate complex sensations of space, noting that:

Lines can be organised into coded systems to approximate the spatial and descriptive aspects of colour or to simulate textures, but unadorned line escapes the inherently sensory/evocative aspects of paint, *except in its apparent ability to suggest movement*. (2010, 88, original italics)

Petherbridge describes how painting is distinguished from drawing in its ability to translate sense information. According to Petherbridge, apart from kinesthetic information, approximating space and imitating texture are the reduced sensory values of coded drawings. She states "drawing systems that represent spatiality, volume, solidity and textural differentiation are different from denotational codes, although both prolong ideation, or thinking-looking, in a different way from painting" (Petherbridge 2010, 88). Petherbridge maintains an historical argument linking drawing (both coded and representational systems) with ideas and painting with sensation. By doing so, Petherbridge stresses the limitations of linear drawing to transfer experiential aspects of space except when it comes to movement. Lines are attributed with the ability to evoke the sensation of movement if not to communicate other observable aspects of space like painting can.

Drawing systems, like diagrams, are often credited with the effective translation of ideas from thoughts to communicable graphic information. *Spatial Forms*, however, does not intend to render the concept of space, but rather the experience of movement within it. The performance is predicated on kinesthetic

sensation and aims to translate live movement between two- and three-dimensional spaces. Line and its ability to induce a sense of movement are central, both in its graphic visual forms on paper and in the gestural paths of the dancers' movements.

Translation of the sensible qualities of movement is also found in Brown's practice. While *Locus* began with the drawn figure of a cube on paper, Brown's later work *It's a Draw* took the next step towards direct transcription, with Brown drawing with her feet that were coated with crushed charcoal, dancing on top of a large sheet of paper. With this work, Brown moved the paper—and therefore the picture plane—onto the floor and finally used her whole body as a stylus to describe dance movement in a direct way (Butler 2010, 193).

Spatial Forms does not start with a static drawing; it begins with the structural field of an imaginary cube given only through the animated presence of the first dancer. In order for the conceptual volume to be observable to the other participants, the first dancer must externalise the abstract 'object' using her body. She does this by exaggerating the linear nature of her limbs, extending her fingertips, and arranging her skeletal form towards symmetry and order. The expression of the cubic volume is also achieved by the repetition of movement lines between common points. This method is not unlike a repetitive sketch technique used when drawing forms that require straight lines or balanced symmetry.

The dancer's instinct to make several attempts to 'sketch' lines before increasing the energy of her gesture towards the final delineating line is significant. Petherbridge writes of the exploratory, generative, and open-ended nature of the sketch that lends lines their essential function in the "rehearsal of the act of making" or spurring on "radical changes of ideas and procedures in another medium or discipline" (2010, 28). Video documentation of the performance shows several examples of this sketching with the body; so too do the numerous drawings that visualise an overlapping repetitive line describing an imperfect cube formation. These materials show an attempt to relate form through gestures of trial and error. The performance produces drawings of volumetric

spaces of alteration where cubic dimensions are played out across a pictorial plane (figure 4).

The drawing presented in figure 4 displays noteworthy spatial dimensions through the predominant use of the contrasting colours red and blue. To make this drawing, I held both red and blue pencils in one hand, using them to track the motion of the dancer's arm repetitively 'sketching' the cube in the air. The doubled lines produce depth in the drawing; the red lines advance while the blue lines recede. The black line cuts through and across the drawing on a plane of its own as it tracks the spatial location of the foot of the dancer. The sketchy repetition of lines in the drawing 'copy' the forms described by the dancers' movements. They do not directly translate dance or represent the dancing body in all its complex movements.

If the sketch is associated with an originating albeit tentative mark, then the concept of a copy implies a deferred version of the sketch lacking in critical uncertainty. However, Petherbridge argues for a more creative quality of the copy because it can "function as a tool of analysis in abstracting essential aspects of form and subject" and further, that a copy can also be a "vehicle of invention by transforming appropriated material into a new synthesis" (2010, 271). The many drawings produced through *Spatial Forms*, such as figure 4, synthesise the movement of the first dancer into forms for translation by the second dancer. Petherbridge's "transformative act" (2010, 272) that validates a creative copy extends from the notion of "translation" given by Walter Benjamin in his essay "The Task of the Translator". Benjamin writes:

no translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife—which could not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living—the original undergoes a change. (1996, 256)

Benjamin continues: "it is translation that catches fire from the eternal life of the works" (1996, 257). This is what Petherbridge calls a "dissimulative mode" which, "disguising the relation between copy and model, leads to effacement of resemblance" (Petherbridge 2010,

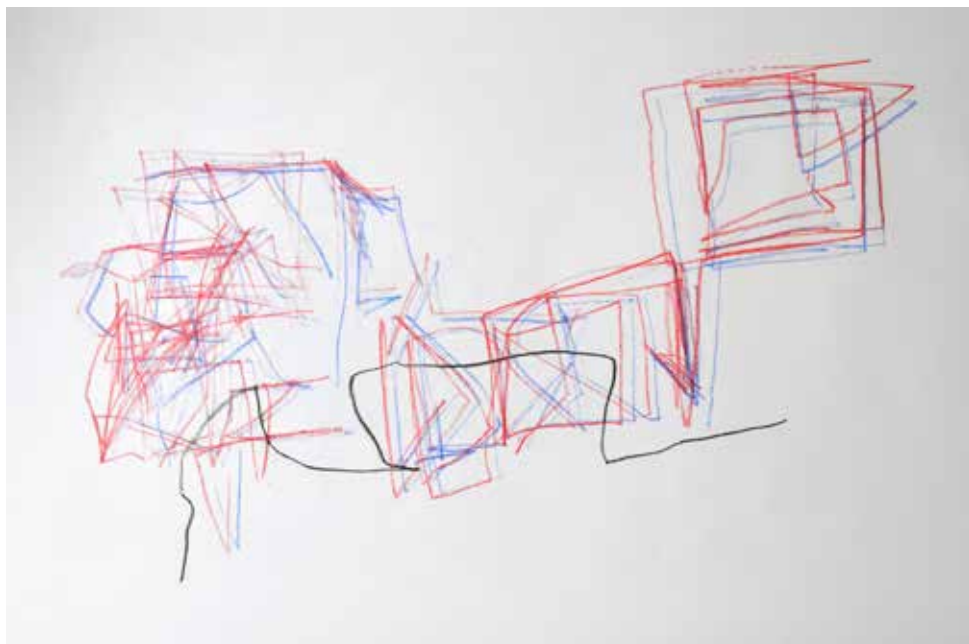


Figure 4 *Spatial Forms* (working drawing) 2014, pastel on paper, 60 x 100cm

272, original italics). By not appearing the same, something essential about the original is sustained in the copy through translation.

The drawn lines of *Spatial Forms* ‘copy’ the sketching movement of the dancer who attempts to describe the form of a cube. The drawing performs more iterative, open-ended, and generative sketches. As the drawing attempts to copy the sketching, it does not resemble the danced cube so much as translates it in a ‘dissimulative mode’. In other words, the ‘problem of translation’ is highlighted, not overcome. Drawing visualises—even highlights—the gap produced by translation. As such, the drawing in *Spatial Forms* translates more than the abstract schema of a cube via a coded system as it does in *Locus*: it transfers some of the experiential space of the dance as it unfolds.

CONNECTION

Connecting lines are characteristic of the drawing in *Spatial Forms* and are the site of association between the first dancer’s body, my eye and hand, the projected drawing, and the second dancer’s focal point when moving. Moments of individual

focus, however, do not prohibit connection within the whole practice. The exercise involves ambidextrous drawing that follows two mobile points on the body of the dancer. My focal point mainly lies on the trunk of the first dancer so that fast sweeping movements of the limbs can be registered in the peripheries of the visual field. My attention is also occasionally split between the moving dancer and my own gestures projected on screen. Finally, my attention shifts to the correlation between the projected line and the subsequent movement of the second dancer. Similarly, each participant shifts their attention between different elements of the performance.

Sulzman similarly describes a “peculiar state of split concentration” as a defining characteristic of the piece *Locus* in which awareness of one’s self-containment in the cube does not prohibit a “kinesthetic oneness” among the dancers (1978, 128). She articulates the necessity of relying on peripheral vision and aural perception to attend to the collective space when making split-second decisions about movement material. Sulzman describes how the awareness of ancillary

sensations encourages a “sense of design and our impulse for interaction” (1978, 126).

In *Spatial Forms*, there are moments of close correlation between the first dancer’s movements, the cube-like structure described by the drawn lines, and the cube reinterpreted by the second dancer’s movements. Much of the alignment is spontaneous and occurs by chance. Slight delays in reaction between participants are common. Reflecting on the view from inside *Locus*, Sulzman likewise describes moments of “tight” synchronicity that are complex and stimulating for the performers, including chance moments when fingertips touch on a shared point between dancers (1978, 126–27). She relates this experience to the sensation of synchronicity with a dancer positioned diagonally across the grid at a distance. The strength of connection between dancers is felt through the points of the cube, however spatially displaced. Essentially, Sulzman describes a networked relational movement that leaps between several individual dancers.

Spatial Forms communicates implicit movement connections between dancers, artist, and drawing. The drawings of *Spatial Forms* visualise temporal and spatial gaps between performers that movement is able to pass over. The immaterial connection between parts is a way of thinking through space and time beyond the platonic solid building block of a cube. It is precisely because of the invisible restriction of the danced cube that each participant is networked with all others in a similar way to what Sulzman describes as an “expanded structure” that “overflows with boundless and startling possibilities” (1978, 122).

Participation within the technique of *Spatial Forms* allows a vision of the whole from the part. It is the drawn line that connects the points in space and allows communication to be channelled between participants. The sense of participation is strong. Connection occurs via points, gestures, and lines of passage, both drawn and danced. Whereas the structure of *Locus* highlights the relationship of the cube to the grid, *Spatial Forms* opens the cube into a flexible multiplicity. Drawing networks movement across this space in action. The drawn line is both responsive and provocative to movement as it interfaces as another participant among the dancers and artist, connecting them all.

TRANSFORMATION

Transformational qualities are not ordinarily ascribed to drawing. Even in cases of experimental drawing in which tools and techniques are explored and simulated beyond conventions of the traditional discipline, Petherbridge maintains that “line asserts its abstract, directional and motile qualities” (2010, 88). How can a drawing practice transmute a sense of space, similar to the suggestible sensation of painted colour, beyond its ability to estimate an overall structure? How can spaces transform and change through drawing?

For the viewer of *Spatial Forms*, alignments and order appear spontaneously and momentarily in the performance (figure 5). The first dancer appears to move in and out of interaction with the second, who responds in and out of step with the drawing, while the drawing is simultaneously entangled with them both. Form and arrangement in space are suggested to the viewer at intervals and durations that are not easy to decode.

Sulzman also reflects on the visual complexity of *Locus* for a spectator, describing the structure as a somewhat “indecipherable, intricate ordering” (1978, 117). However, critic Marcia Siegel mentions the unexpected “harmonious sets of diagonals or folded and unfolded body parts” that occur, demonstrating the spectator’s ability to perceive an overarching choreographic form despite being unable to decode the movement of each individual dancer (quoted in Sulzman 1978, 117). Rosenberg considers the apparent cognitive effort required of the dancers when thinking through the body in Brown’s earlier work, including *Accumulations* (1971). She makes a case for the conceptual “object-like quality” of the dance by explaining that the composition appears to materialise “according to an indissoluble unity of intent and action: the body’s vocabulary as a movement language” (Rosenberg 2014). As an observer of Brown’s work, Rosenberg (2014) finds this inherent diagrammatic understanding of a compositional object highly satisfying and easily called to mind. Thinking again of the signals given to the audience in *Locus* of the form of a cube—the square on the floor, the geometric nature of body formations, the consistent points in space, their proximity to the limbs of the body,

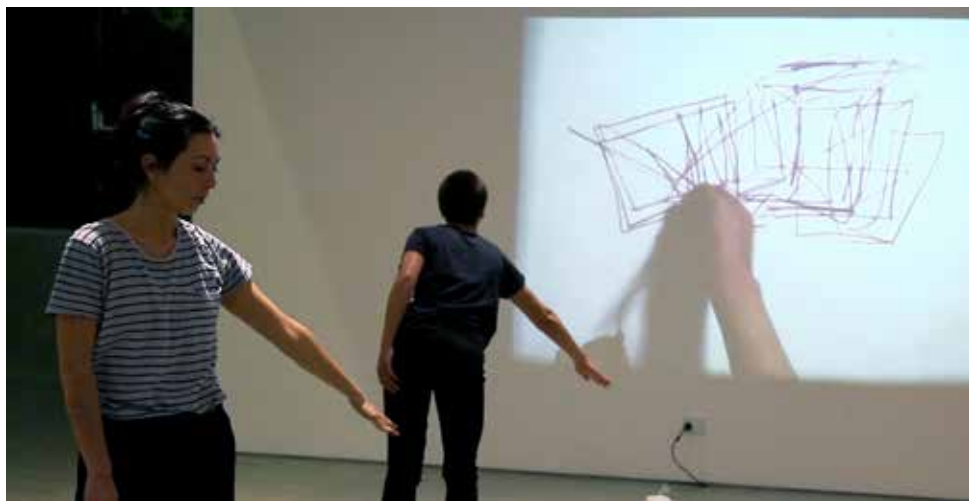


Figure 5 *Spatial Forms* 2014, drawing performance, UNSW Art & Design Australia. Video still: Dara Gill.

and the sense with which the cubes fit together—it is easy to comprehend the structural form as an ‘object’.

The ‘object’ in *Spatial Forms* is harder to comprehend. Although it is essentially non-material, it does not fully belong to the dance performance. Nor is it fully described representationally through the visual drawing. Unlike *Locus*, the ‘object’ is not given within a schematised understanding of space as a grid. The cube in *Spatial Forms* changes each time it is enacted by the body and the line. Therefore, the ‘object’ within *Spatial Forms* is not easily called to mind because it changes and transforms in every articulation.

Drawing in *Spatial Forms* supports the perception of the immaterial object of a cube beyond the dancing body and without the conceptual order of a grid. Drawing directs attention towards a formal shape with contours of abstracted movement. That is, movement that occupies and produces space on paper, in three dimensions, and in the imagination beyond the boundaries of individual bodies. In the act of drawing, I make visible cube-like forms that are danced by the dancers’ bodies. The focus shifts towards a form in the projected image that is not materially present in space. Rather than making dance movement concrete, drawing passes an immaterial cube onto another dancer who transforms this object into movement again.

CONCLUSION

Both *Spatial Forms* and *Locus* use the organising principle of a cube to signal to an audience a connection between the visual object of drawing and the spatial presentation of movement. By drawing an immaterial object of choreographic structure, movement overflows the containment of visual representation as it moves inside and outside of a drawn, danced, and imagined cube. Movement in both works is spatially coded as the bodies of dancers improvise with points and boundaries of geometric forms. However, there are important differences between Brown’s work and my processual drawing work that have been discussed throughout this paper.

Performers in Brown’s *Locus* take the drawing of a cube as a beginning point for movement, leaving the visual lines there on the page. The drawn cube binds the dancers spatially and their movement becomes a ‘drawing’ within this cube for the observers. Brown works with a specific notion of space, which is ordered by the geometric rules of volumetric form. Therefore, space is already determined according to a grid in Brown’s practice.

In *Spatial Forms*, drawing provides a language to be interacted with in real-time. The dancers actively draw with their bodies, producing gestures that result in visual lines, which become my object of translation. However, the dancers are also visually expressing a drawn line with their

gestural paths, essentially dancing the drawing. In *Spatial Forms*, drawing evolves as movements unravel, transforming dance into visual and performative spatial objects.

This paper has explored the ways in which both practices, despite their differences, reveal certain capacities of drawing, involving focus, translation, connection, and transformation. The relation of gesture to line and surface is complicated in both works. Points and lines remain in the works to focus attention and perception of movement despite not always being visible on paper. The works allow for focus on invisible points in space and on the body of the dancers, which connect with lines both gestural and visual. These immaterial motion points stand in for the fundamental connection between their graphic and stable counterparts that outline objects on planes of representation in traditional drawing.

Both *Spatial Forms* and *Locus* intend in different ways to translate the form of a cube into movement. However, this translation has been revealed as an imperfect reformation of drawing from a flat state to another more volumetric one. Both performances highlight a productive gap between an originating form and its translated equivalent. Drawing allows for interpretation and the overflow of information while still retaining some essence of form.

While fundamental elements of drawing are highlighted by both pieces in terms of points and lines of a drawing correlating with bodies in real space, both show how the connection between the eye and hand in drawing reveal greater connections between vision and gesture in performance spaces. Despite the spatial and temporal aspects of performance differing from those of traditional understandings of drawing, participants in both *Locus* and *Spatial Forms* describe feeling connected with each other through lines of sight and points of gestural alignment.

Finally, seeing the contours of movement as 'drawn lines' uncovers the capacity of the medium of drawing to transform object shapes across dimensions of surface and spaces of movement. Both *Locus* and *Spatial Forms* express linear gestural paths that convert drawn cubes into movement in real space, thus transforming the 'sense' of the object through different articulations.

Dance has traditionally been understood and theorised as an ephemeral art form. This research, however, communicates the trans-dimensional qualities of dance. That is, dance can be conceptualised as relating impermanent forms, described here as immaterial objects, into visual realms through drawing, which in turn can connect with spatial performance. The movement 'object' of dance can be passed along the chain, challenging the notion of the ungraspable nature of dance and the static nature of drawing. The live drawing method of this research demonstrates the transformability of movement through bodies, surfaces, and spaces. It also highlights essential capacities of drawing to focus, translate, connect, and transform the immaterial 'object' of dance.

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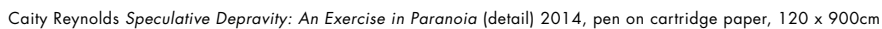
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HIGHLIGHTS FROM DRAWING INTERNATIONAL BRISBANE (DIB) SYMPOSIUM, 30 SEPTEMBER–2 OCTOBER 2015



Drawn to Experience V2, held at POP Gallery, Brisbane (and later touring to School of Art Gallery, Australian National University, Canberra), 22 September–3 October 2015, curated by Kellie O'Dempsey.

Featuring work by Gosia Wlodarczak (VIC/Poland), Entang Wiharso (Indonesia), Flatline (NSW), Hannah Quinlivan (ACT), Jaanika Peerna (Estonia/NY), Mar Serinya (Spain), Lugas Syllabus + M.A. Roziq (Indonesia), Robert Andrew (QCA), Nicci Haynes (ACT), William Platz (QLD), Kevin Townsend (USA), Jodi Woodward (NSW), Benjamin Sheppard (VIC), Piyali Ghosh (India), and Kellie O'Dempsey (QLD).



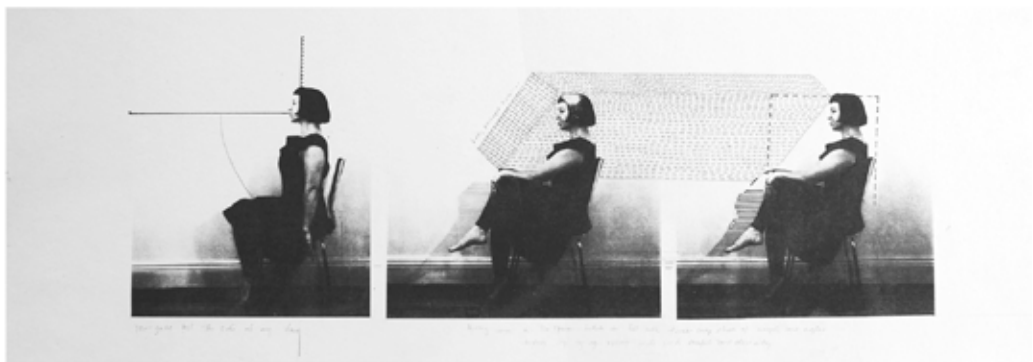
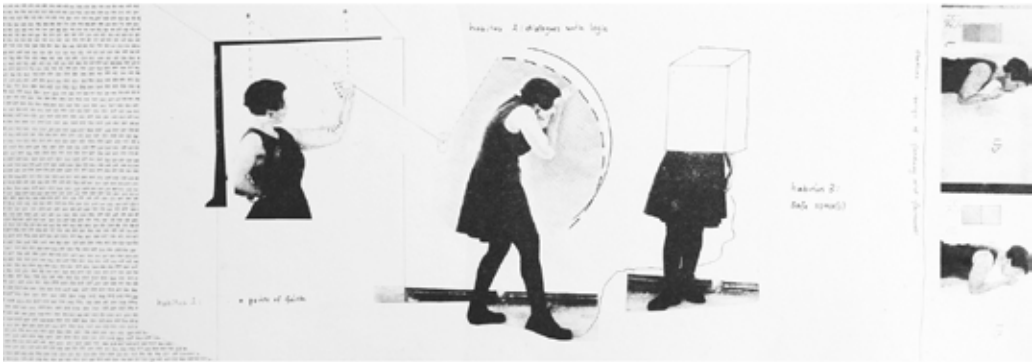
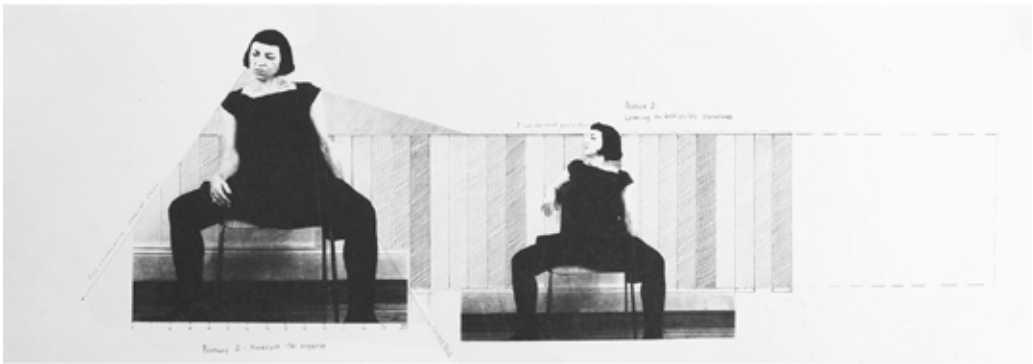
Caity Reynolds *Speculative Depravity: An Exercise in Paranoia* (detail) 2014, pen on cartridge paper, 120 x 900cm





Nicci Haynes, sequence of still images from the film *Etching performance at Mount Stromlo* 2013, each 10 x 15cm.
 Photographer: Simon McCarthy.

Left Vanghoua Anthony Vue *Paj Qhov Rais (Woolloongabba)* 2015, industrial tapes on window, 55 x 190cm



Carolyn McKenzie-Craig *Alphabet Lessons* (strips 1–4) 2016, toner release and ink and graphite drawing, 56 x 80cm



Todd Fuller and Carl Sciberras *Flatline* and Kellie O'Dempsey *Bomb the Wall #1* 2015, digital photograph documenting live performance at DIB (Drawing International Brisbane) Symposium, dimensions variable. Photographer: Emma Wright.



Robert Andrew *Transitional Text* – BURU 2015, ochres, oxides, chalk, canvas, water and electro-mechanical components, 240 x 210 x 180cm



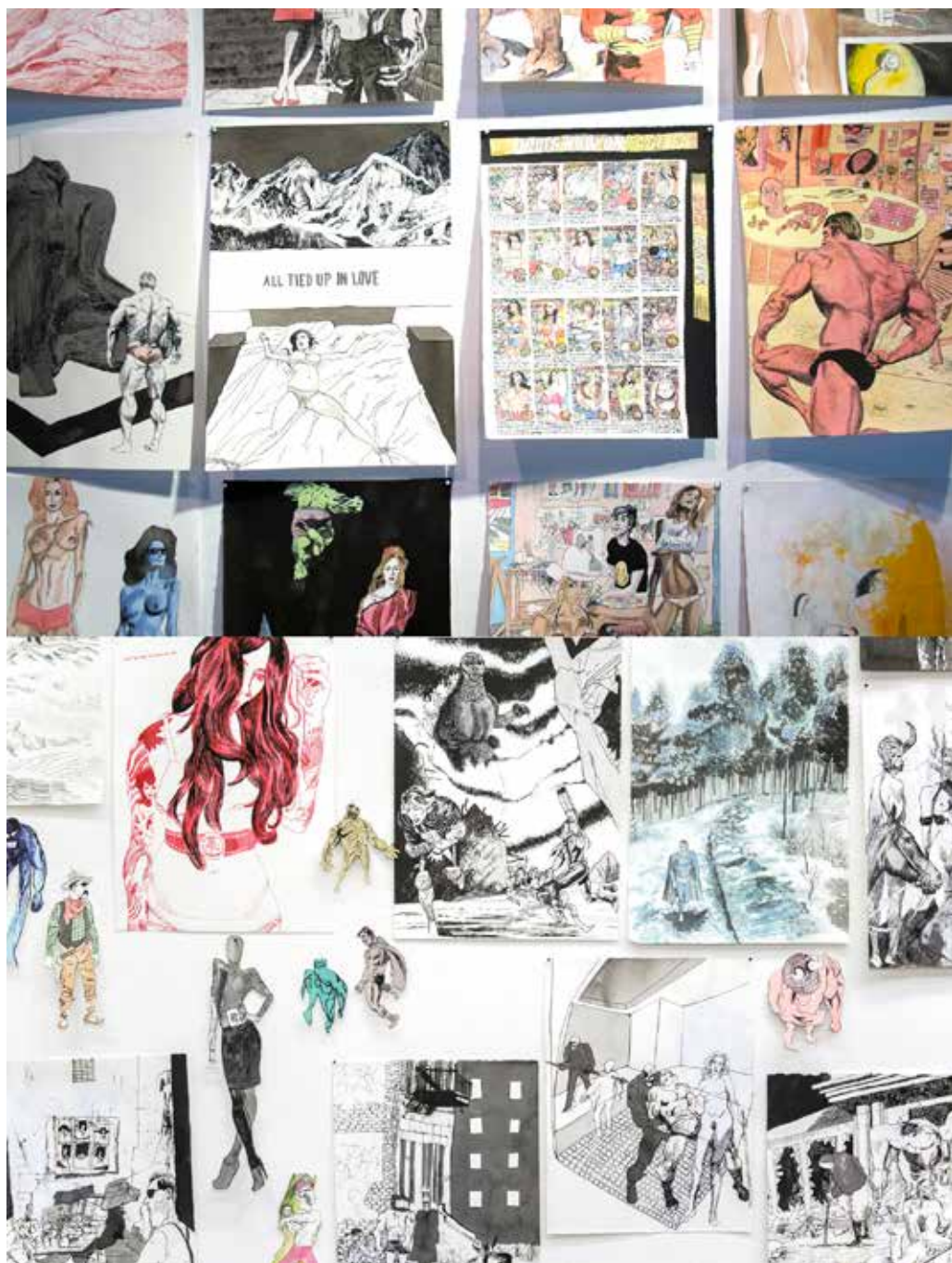
Hannah Quinlivan *State of Suspension* 2015, steel, PVC, nylon, salt and shadow, dimensions variable. Photograph courtesy of .M Contemporary.



Zoe Porter (in collaboration with Mayu Moto (dance), Marianna Joslin (circus), and Ben Ely (sound)) *Subteranean (Under Arena)* 2015, performance, drawing, and video, dimensions variable.



Entang Wiharso *Eating Identity* 2008, performance, dimensions variable. Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA.
Photographer: Charles Quigg.



Jonathan McBurnie *Moses / Amn't* (detail) 2015, ink and watercolour on paper, dimensions variable.

GRAPHESIS: INSTRUMENT AND LI(N)E

Carolyn McKenzie-Craig

This paper will discuss studio research that investigates the nature of visual representations that sustain typologies of normalcy. I interrogate and disrupt these typologies through a series of graphic investigations that utilise the kinesthetic potential of drawing (as action and as viewed action) to unravel the fixity of visual tropes that exclude and 'Other' (Bhabha 1994). Gestural routines of the body are isolated for this purpose of unravelling because they are indicative of specifically codified acts that define and exclude the subjective arena of the body based upon gender. I consider that subjectivity itself is formed through and by the repetition of such acts that incorporate scopic knowledge (watched behaviours) within the body through proprioceptive feedback loops¹ to form the subject's habitus (Bourdieu 1977).

TYPOLOGIES AND GRAPHESIS

I examine social typologies that sustain this restricted female habitus from a historical perspective in order to consider their function as instrumentalities of power systems. Of particular interest are photo archives that categorise gender and its bodily protocols, since they provide cultural scaffolding that sustains and validates social positions of power. These social typologies are defined as homogenised 'types' that represent diverse groupings of subjects as simplified representations; they reflect social divisions of prejudice and privilege based upon notions of normalcy. Such typologies extend from advertising tropes of 'feminine' to visual devices that justify fields of knowledge and fix borders of fluidity, such as statistical diagrams (e.g., the bell curve and the pie chart), physiognomic illustrations (e.g., aligned being unattractive with being sinful, evil, bad), and the composite photos and diagrams of those such as Francis Galton that attempt to substantiate an extreme manifestation of social typologies, eugenics. These codes function within

a closed system of visual representation and classification that entrenches narrow perspectives as fixed truths. I refer to these visual devices as forms of *graphesis*, a term that Johanna Drucker (2010, 3) defines as "the field of knowledge products embodied in visual expressions". Drucker's discussion focuses on expressions of information such as calendars, tables and grids; however, within the term *graphesis* is the potential to critique historical and contemporary imagery such as physiognomic illustrations, 'selfies', and mainstream media representations as emblems or distilled notations (tropes) of knowledge production. Typological representations of gender, especially those relating to bodily gesture, can thus be understood as visual tables of disciplinary protocols. Such representations are analogous to the pie charts that map mean distributions of weight and health (often a euphemism for socially acquired habits) and the 'like' button on Facebook that measures social acceptance rates for the raw production of these visual artefacts of normalcy.

The historical construction of visual typologies gained ground in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, particularly through the medium of photography. The early stylistic convergence of social photography and medical/scientific photography constructed a visual heritage that continues to play out within the scopic arena of contemporary society, as this historical lineage justifies the photographic archive as an instrument of truth. The detritus of *graphesis* such as physiognomy continues to circulate as visual classification devices that divide subjects through the taxonomies established by a white male colonial enterprise. Combined with the historical staging of the female body, these typologies continue to function as emblematic codes (*graphesis*) within the broader mechanisms of statistical surveillance and ongoing processes of objectification theory (Fredrickson and Roberts 1997). Objectification theory suggests that the viewed female body becomes self-objectified as

¹ Proprioceptive refers to stimuli that are produced and perceived by an organism, especially those connected with the position and movement of the body.

the subject interiorises the observed object state. Rebecca Schneider discusses this objectification in relation to visual production in *The Explicit Body in Performance* (1977), noting how historically constructed perspectival views of the woman as prostituted, primitivised, and commodified fixed the female body as an object surveilled and coerced within broader masculinised cultural hegemonies.

My practice appropriates these visual typologies to invert gender fixity through the use of parody, repetition, and reprographic processes that invade the trope with white noise, chance, and error. This pursuit of a non-fixed state relates to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's discussion of the *detrterritorialised zone* (1987). Within the scope of this research, I consider the detrterritorialised zone as an arena of undefined potential which operates within ideas of expansive space over restricted space, existing outside of static truths and knowledges. It enters grey zones of potential where new meanings or actions can exist. Both an active space and a limbo, it is an arena not yet cultured or demarcated by fixity. In *Six Drawing Lessons*, William Kentridge (2014) describes a diorama of a Bushman family that was displayed at the Cape Town Natural History Museum as a racial typology for many years and was recently removed in order to reclassify it more appropriately. Finding a new classification outside of a racial typecast has proven difficult and the exhibit continues to exist in a space of review. This classificatory interzone could be viewed as a space of detrterritorialised potential. Kentridge considers that this "limbo, a space of indeterminacy, is vital. A space where you know understanding is limited, contested and inadequate. Where a failure of understanding is a correct understanding" (2014, 60). My research draws upon Kentridge's ideas to shift fixed tropes into a contested space where subjectivity, language, and visual representations come into query. Re-presenting typological knowledges from a fluid perspective can open spaces between codified meanings, where culture has not yet colonised the visual with a trope to sustain prejudice.

THE ACT OF THROWING

Judith Butler's article "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (1988) has been a key text in this research. Butler considers gestural

articulations of gendered difference as part of a socially acquired suite of performative schedules that are interiorised, repeated, and reintegrated into the social fabric through surveillance and coercion. Her paper suggests that "the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style" (Butler 1988, 520). Butler's ideas of how to use the arbitrary relation between gendered acts suggested studio methodologies to perform and re-perform (to kinesthetically inscribe and unscribed with drawing and photography) gendered tropes, while inverting the socially integrated script attached to these actions.

Everyday actions and tropes, such as throwing, making a fist, and sitting and standing, offer possible sites for examination. These actions are chosen for their potential to demonstrate the gender/power of specifically acquired habits. That is, the performed actions reflect the social position of the subject and their relative privilege within the larger system. I decided to examine the action of throwing after a close reading of Iris Marion Young's article "Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality" (1980) in which Young discusses and contextualises the results of a number of sociological and behavioural science studies that analyse gender differences in the throwing action. She observes that the female body appears to be more interior in the conception of social and metaphoric space and that males are more exterior focused in their mental schematics. This is based on a gap that emerges in throwing velocity, strength, and aim from around the ages of two to four (Thomas and French 1985) that increases until it stabilises around the teenage years. The action of throwing, when examined from a gendered perspective, demonstrates how particular historical forces that enact upon the body produce a habitus that is confined or limited within the procedures that maintain its own social praxis. This habitus is a "system of dispositions" (Bourdieu 1977, 82) that are enacted from the past and present, and performed according to ongoing relations with external stimuli and internal schemas (which are themselves constituted through the same processual actions).



Figure 1 Studio Performance 2014 digital photograph

These external necessities comprise interwoven relations to both social and biological needs as the habitus “continuously inculcates and reinforces the taxonomic principles underlying all the arbitrary provisions of this culture” (Bourdieu 1977, 89). My reading of Bourdieu’s theory of habitus is grounded within a feminist perspective where subjective agency is constituted in these social spaces of struggle. These social spaces can be made manifest through considering the daily processural routines that constitute the visible manifestations of its protocols and boundaries.

The act of throwing has become a metaphor for my obsession to describe my repetitive inertia within the gendered paradox, and to describe my attempt to re-draft the existential boundaries of my own self-perpetuating inscriptions of the power regimes that I examine. In the act of throwing, we draw the circumference of our social space; and through the act of throwing, my bodily gestures articulate lines of movement that draw my subjective position. While I considered drawing as providing a performative (kinesthetic) arena to enter the deterritorialized spaces

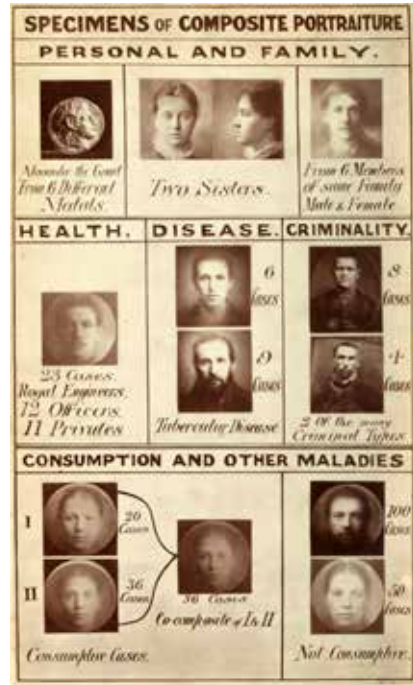


Figure 2 Francis Galton *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* 1883 (illustration plate 7). Source: Wikimedia.

within the codified movements of throwing, I chose photography as the starting point of studio investigations (figure 1). This is because photography has held a pivotal position in visual quasi-scientific regimes of control and is closely related to the notion of graphesis.

HISTORICAL LEGACIES OF THE PHOTO INDEX

In *The Body and the Archive* (1989), Alan Sekula discusses the implication of the photographic archive in the construction of normalcy. He traces the historical lineage of typological body images of normalcy to early developments between social practices (such as data modelling) and photography. These typologies were created in tandem with cataloguing systems in sociology and medicine where the human body was regimented into striated layers of normalcy and deviancy that became entrenched systems to justify privilege. Photography functioned as an instrument to “establish and delimit the terrain of the other, to define both the generalized look—the typology—and the contingent instance of deviance and social pathology” (Sekula



Figure 3 Working images from studio performance, photographs, photocopies 2014

1989, 7). For example, Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904) and Francis Galton (1822–1911) combined and ranked behaviour within their images to construct photographic typologies. Muybridge used sequential “objective” imaging, while Galton (figure 2) attempted to archive race, disability, and social position into visual composites which in “their method and format meet a comfortable match, with outliers removed, effaced, eliminated, and the argument made into a hygienic and consumable form” (Drucker 2014, 92). The validation of prejudice and desire in these distorted forms of cataloguing (statistics and photographic visual devices) remains endemic in our current colonial gaze. It continues as a current model of difference and exclusion that is constructed on the cultural bias that each of these males established, and is disseminated through repetition via means such as print media, the Internet, and other reproductive data. This repetition of fixed and privileged perspectives saturates the scopic arena of culture and justifies positions of privilege and exclusion.

The historical legacy of these works, in both the image construction itself and the manner of distribution within culture (through photography and printmaking), informs my material research, where I alter, malform, or distort the photographic image through reprographic technology, drawing, and chance. Photographs are printed out to scale, with the final drawing as photocopies, and then re-copied. The losses and gains in this enlarging process introduce errors and perspective shifts that allow chance to disrupt subjective control (figure 3). The lowbrow process corrupts the direct trace of the photograph as an evidence of truth. I select photographic frames that reflect social notions of ‘unattractive’ in preference to others in order to dislodge the historical legacy of physiognomic typologies. Such typologies retain currency as social determinants, as reflected in studies such as “Gender and the Returns to Attractiveness” (Wong and Penner 2016), which report higher pay rates for those determined to be better looking or correctly groomed on gender grounds.



Figure 4 *Throwing like a Girl Part 2* 2015, charcoal drawing and acrylic text, 100 x 160cm

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GRAPHESIS: INSTRUMENT AND LINIE
Carolyn McKenzie-Craig



Figure 5 *Throwing like a Girl: Part 1* 2015, drawing, screenprinted text, 100 x 140cm

The scale of the *Throwing like a Girl* works, with each figure being around 85cm in height, engages the body directly as a mirror of its own trace (see figure 4). This process of tracing and re-tracing “the gesture of the body is, in essence, a projection of the body” (Rosand 2002, 16). Charcoal is a messy drawing material—it spreads and leaks and is never fully erased. This residual history of the material trace arouses multiple readings of past potentials and present dualities. Charcoal’s material presence is expansive and open, soft and pliable, and allows a direct engagement with the viewer and the lived subject by engaging with “the body as mediator between the world and self” (Harty 2015, 62). This kinesthetic process produces potential pathways into deterritorialised arenas that rational Cartesian control of the process would enclose and opens into a form of haptic viewing and production that is not tethered to “pictorial illusionism, but with infinite space as mental possibility” (Newman and de Zegher 2003, 10).

THE ACT OF DRAWING

Through drawing, I can enter the spaces between things. Through the re-performance of my own socially inscriptive bodily gestures, I inspect the methodology of systems theory within its active presence—that is, in the daily rituals of the body. By avoiding finished edges and leaving the substrate visible, my artwork remains a “process” that reveals its layers of making and unmaking. This lack of framing “encourages an experience of our bodily selves as existing in a process of articulation between interior and exterior” (Newman and de Zegher 2003, 10). Through the act of drawing, I enter a space that exists both external to and within the action. The viewer enters this deterritorialised zone through the photographic and graphic trace of the action, so that there is not just the “agency in making, but the possible agency in seeing” (Kentrige 2014, 31).

I then print text into and over the charcoal imagery to construct a dialogue between the drawn self and the linguistic utterance of social systems (figure 5). These text elements are screenprinted so that the material intervention is flat, concise, and iterative, to evoke the voice of dissent and confusion, as well as the layered presence of the Greek chorus. I consider the Greek chorus as society’s narration device:

the background hum of social instruction and coercion. This chorus extends from dramaturgical dialogue to the chants of children, to the chorus of pop songs, schoolyard bullies, and gossip. Through an internalised singsong of exclusionary lyrics that play over and over in the head of the socially integrated citizen, the chorus inscribes the punitive gaze of the average moral majority. My strategies for designing the text elements are drawn from theories of Julia Kristeva (1980) and her discussions of the poetic as an agent of active potential against the enclosures of dogma and direct signifying processes in language. Kristeva considers that the poetic offers a fluid state of flux that circumvents fixed meanings. Poetry can invert grammatical hierarchies and explore new zones of potential that exist in the spaces between symbol and referent meaning. Converging drawing with reprographically produced text allows language to move over, under, and through the flesh of the gendered body.

Reproduction and repetition are also critical studio tools. Through the repetition of actions, I am re-performing tropes, as Judith Butler suggests, to weaken and subvert stereotypes. By examining actions in minutiae, I am able to find spaces within the action that can move into as yet unscripted dialogues, which can momentarily float above the typologies. Studio strategies also involve parody, chance, and disruption. Parody is within the context of ‘Parafeminism’, as described by Amelia Jones (2006), and I draw on the work of Australian artists such as Elvis Richardson, who references earlier forms of feminism within a contemporary context that avoids moral authority and fixity to engage in a process of querying irony and referential quotation.

PARODY AND CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

In the works *Housed* and *Purchasing Power* (figure 6), Richardson subverts visual typologies of class and gender by recontextualising material agents of cultural collateral. Richardson places a public-housing flat carpet in the gallery space with large-scale screenprinted *Monopoly* currency laid out in the classic playing format.

Richardson’s installation destabilises the fixed graphesis of currency by reworking the images with subversive hand-drawn content that reflects



Figure 6 Elvis Richardson *Housed and Purchasing Power* 2009, dimensions variable. Installation image from VCA Margaret Laurence Gallery, University of Melbourne. Photographer: Kay Abade.



Figure 7 *Upright like a Lady #1* 2015, multi-plate photopolymer on Fabriano, 46 x 46cm

upon the political exclusions within our privileged economies of culture and power. Currency also provides a useful matrix as it distributes both the privileged artefacts of capital and also the visualities of state-endorsed propaganda. These areas of privilege are blind to the currency of domestic space, a feminised and disembodied arena that Richardson makes visible. Richardson re-draws the money that domestic space depends

upon, with the erased subjects and histories of Australian history. She then offers her new capital in direct exchange for legitimised money (in the show, Richardson proposes that the currency can be exchanged on a 1:1 value with Australian bank notes). The hand-drawn nature of Richardson's *Monopoly* money is a careful strategy that signifies individual opinion and perspective, unfixed to authority. This trace of individuality is a powerful contradiction to the erasure of Othered subjects within society.

Subjective capital within the domestic arena is alternatively investigated in my series of photopolymer and machine drawn works, *Upright like a Lady* (figure 7), which explore through parody how posture constructs social position (through proprioceptive feedback loops that reinforce the subject's relation to power systems via the gestural routines of the body). The series responds to a study that found females felt more in control when slumped than when sitting upright in the context of completing some tests (Roberts and Arefi-Afshar 2007).

The study, written up in "Not All Who Stand Tall Are Proud: Gender Differences in the Proprioceptive Effects of Upright Posture" (Roberts and Arefi-Afshar 2007), found that when women were instructed to sit upright, they felt less in control and performed slightly lower in a series of simple math tests and self esteem questionnaires, while males did not. This article highlights how processes of observation, viewing, and reviewing are internalised by female bodies to enact subservient positions of shame. In order to unravel my own internalised script of self-shame, I performed a series of choreographed postural actions using strategies of repetition, exaggeration, and absurdity. The photographs from this performance were then taken through a second reprographic process to disrupt the direct indexical nature of the photo archive and to introduce alternative potentials. These losses and gains in information via the reproductive process (marks, erasures, distortions) are a form of drawing with technology. The postural images were then combined with a software-generated drawing. This line has a clear and obvious machine aesthetic. I have used non-vector lines to amplify this quality in order to explore how such a line interfaces with a photographic index and if



Figure 8 *Actions against Inertia* 2014–15, toner-release photocopies of graphite drawing, each strip 175 x 20cm

the machine aesthetic can potentially fracture the postural trope and push the visual into a less typological meaning. Studio research had demonstrated the inadequacy of a hand-drawn mark to achieve this goal, as it appeared fetishistic and trope-ridden in itself. This machine line also explicates the background hum of technology now enclosing my everyday space. This reference is neither a negative or positive judgment against technology, merely an acknowledgement of its pervading presence over subjectivity, much as the background hum of language operates.

This consideration of postural action is continued in works such as *Actions against Inertia* (figure 8) that extend my investigation into the lowbrow technology of the photocopy machine. I have had a lifelong obsession with xerography, having at one time (aged nine) three photocopiers in my bedroom. This discarded

technology of the enterprises of men, worked by the labour of women, gave me a sense of freedom and admittance to the instruments of cultural power. The material's democratic accessibility resonated with me, as well as the manner in which it alters information. By flattening and curving perspectives, it expands potentials. It erases and inscribes as a drawing machine through its very reproductive process.

The simple technology of disturbing and repeating information is accentuated by using chance and error with the machine itself; I sometimes operate the machine while blindfolded or ask others to make copies for me. These copies are then assembled in filmic length strips and toner released through a press. They are then drawn over with a mechanical pencil, the kind that seems incipiently associated with math classes and diagrams. *Actions against Inertia* references

these visual cataloguing devices, as well as the work of Paul Klee in *Pedagogical Sketchbook* of 1953, which provided a framework for the drawn interventions. I followed his drawing exercises and then responded to the same explicit ideas with parodic text. The marks in these works are highly controlled, almost notation like, and offer a stark contrast to the charcoal gestural engagements in the *Throwing like a Girl* works. *Actions against Inertia* explores the ineptitude of logical informatics (as coda or graphesis) to summon or trace the lived experience.

THE VOICE PROJECT

A final point of convergence in my current research involves an attempt to isolate the voice as an intertextual articulation of body and gestural presence. The voice manifests as a felt and measurable quantity—as a soundwave. It has a biological bias to be lower for men and higher for females, but much of its presence remains socially constituted. The subjective presence of gender as articulated through the voice remains a contested arena where the masculine trope retains power and dominance. Despite the fact that biology determines this vocal range difference, there is no logical reason that the socially prescribed

script deciphers the higher register as weak and emotional. This trope retains huge cultural capital to disenfranchise those within the feminised register in society. Margaret Thatcher provides a useful case study. Prior to the 1979 election, she was advised by a Saatchi and Saatchi marketing team that the British public were unlikely to vote for a highly feminised candidate, as the symbolic inference of the feminised body routines and protocols was one of weakness or lack of power. As a result, Thatcher invested in theatrical training and effectively lowered her voice a full 46 Hertz, “almost half the average difference in pitch between male and female voices” (Atkinson 1984, 113).

In *The Voice Project* (figure 9), the audience is asked to consider the voice as a physical gesture and a presence of social class and power. Does the range of your voice alter your subjective presence in the world, high or low, feminine or masculine?

The software programme takes a voice sample from the participant reading a text piece aloud and then determines the gender spectrum of the participant. It is important that this determination is done by the machine code. Once the voice is sampled, it is then played back in an alternate frequency range. This alternate subjective presence can then be printed out onto an eftpos



Figure 9 *The Voice Project* 2015, interactive computer software, printer, headphones/microphone unit, software, intermedia, and printer, dimensions variable



Figure 10 *The Voice Project 2015*, stop-animation still and voice data spectrogram image, dimensions variable

docket printer as a scientific trace of voice, a spectrogram (figure 10). The unfixed nature of the subject is then fixed in a direct drawing of the body as trace. In the voice spectrogram, sound becomes drawing and scientific diagrammatic truth becomes a subjective drawing again. The spectrogram operates as an unhinged trace of potential movements in gender specificity. The typological fixity of the voice as a gendered eminence is emancipated through interface with the software programme that produces a trace artefact of this temporary modality that exists outside of the bodies' gendered protocols. This work reflects a growing interest in my research to converge software drawing tools with residual traces of the body as a methodology of disruption.

CONCLUSION

The title of this paper uses the word 'li(n)e' in a very purposeful manner. It refers both to the line we may fetishise as artists and to the lie that is the falsity of all divisions that the word line implies. By this, I mean the line of the surveyor defining ownership and theft or the line of the map, colonising the land of the metaphor. In my research, the body uses line to kinesthetically unravel the dilemmas of social

systems of enclosure. These lies and lines are incorporated within my research and disrupted in my studio practice with the instruments of cultural production, such as the printing press, the photocopier, and the computer. The indexical truth of the photographic archive is subjected to alteration and distortion to anamorphically alter fixed Cartesian perspective. Drawing is utilised to engage the "line as a trace, an index of authorial presence" (Rosand 2002, 17) so that the drawn surface becomes an active site of agency for both the artist and the viewer, as well as a record of process. In this way, it acts as a diagram of engagement through line and erasure. Each remnant mark remains within the substrate as both unfinished archive and exposed inadequacy. The convergence of material elements across and between works draws upon the instrumentality of cultural production while emancipating these processes for the production of an unfixed archive of gendered subject presence, while attempting to liberate some sense of agency.

In my research, the drawing arena is an active site for the transmission of embodied knowledge. Through the kinesthetic relationship between the viewer, my drawing process, and the final drawing, the habitus of female subjects and its subsequent

disruption are communicated. This relationship is established through the material residual traces that mimetically allow the viewer to re-trace the memory of my bodily process within the drawing act itself. This rediscovery of the drawing act distorts and expands the restricted habitus of female subjects to allow new potential comprehensions of how female subjects can position themselves in space.

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DRAWING, EGO, SELF: THE PRACTICE OF RASA REKHA IN THE WORK OF INDIAN CONTEMPORARY ARTIST PIYALI GHOSH

Piyali Ghosh (with Marnie Dean)

INTRODUCTION

"In colonial India the drawn line was traditionally used as a means of defining social and physical space" (Watson and Campbell 2000, 1); however, the direction of contemporary Indian drawing has shifted significantly. Through my studio drawing practice, I investigate how a contemporary postcolonial approach to drawing can be combined with an ancient Indian semiotic system known as *rasa* theory. Through arts-based research, I aim to contribute new knowledge of a contemporary Indian artist's experiences of *rasas*, or 'moods', and demonstrate how these experiences can be expressed, specifically through line drawing. I also strive to demonstrate the connection or relationship of this drawing practice with Western notions of Expressionism. Indeed, my integration of *Rasa* theory and studio drawing practice has become an innovative studio methodology, which, after a studio visit, contemporary Indian theorist and author Amrit Gangar named *rasa rekha* (pers. comm., 2015). This term combines the word *rasa* with the Sanskrit word for line: *rekha*.

The process of *rasa rekha* and its relevance to the subject theme 'Drawing, Ego, Self' will be described via a brief historical introduction to *rasa* theory. My studio methodology, *rasa rekha*, is presented as a conceptual application of drawing that bridges the spaces between material and immaterial representation, in which the process of mark-making becomes an act of reclamation of selfhood. The potential of *rasa rekha* to become a new visual language within contemporary Indian art will be explored through a discussion of my studio outcomes.

Drawing has a long history in India, from the ancient *Ajanta* caves to colonial times, where drawing reconstructed social space. Because the

rulers of Victorian England believed that "European drawing would ease the entry of the artisan into the twentieth century" (Mitte 1994, 34), they set about introducing European drawing into all syllabi in colonial India. With the rise of nationalism, which gave birth to both the Bengal and Madras Schools of Art, drawing became a political tool for the Indian artist and developed analogously with modernism and India's contemporary art scene. The history of drawing in India is political; it encompasses the heterotrophic, the observed, the reconstructed, the deconstructed, and all the complexity and layers of meaning attributed to any mark made as a language. As a female contemporary artist who grew up in Kolkata, India, I acknowledge that my drawing practice and recent interpretation of *Rasa* theory are impacted by the influence of the Bengal and other schools, with their reclamation of Indian culture and expression of subjective realities.

RASA THEORY

The *rasas* comprise an ancient and formal system of Indian aesthetics. *Rasa* theory, founded by the sage *Bharata*, comes from classical Indian aesthetics and is a semiotic system that describes artistic exaltations. Gangar explains,

... *rasa* means juice, or what is being tasted or enjoyed, and hence the word *rasika* denoting a connoisseur. It is said that *sringara* (eros), *roudra* (rage), *veera* (heroic), and *bibhatsa* (disgust) are the main *rasas* and the remaining *hasya* (comic), *karuna* (grief), *adbhuta* (wonder) and *bhaya* (fear) are derived from them respectively, i.e. from *sringara* is derived *hasya*; from *roudra*, *karuna*; from *veera*, *adbhuta*; and from *bibhatsa* is derived *bhaya* or the *rasa* of fear. The *Natyasastra* recognizes only eight *rasas* but later the *shanta* (serene) *rasa* was added to make the theory of *navarasa* or nine *rasas*. (Gangar 2002)

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1 Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Australian contemporary artist Marnie Dean for her lingual support in contextualising my raw writing and my all explanations of the connection between *Rasa* theory and my kinetic drawing line practice; particularly, how the natural elements and vibration of energy transfer into lines. I would like to thank Francisca Vanderwoude for her support in editing this paper.



Figure 1 My understanding of Rasa Rekha using a single line: 1) *sringara* (eros); 2) *raudra* (rage), 3) *veera* (heroic); 4) *bibhatsa* (disgust); 5) *hasya* (comic); 6) *karuna* (grief); 7) *adbhuta* (wonder); 8) *bhaya* (fear); and 9) *shanta* (serene).

Initially, the *rasas* were developed as a system of gestures for ancient Indian performance; however, rasa theory has evolved into a sophisticated system of interpretation (Chari 2004, 251), based on the emotional conditions of the mind, or ‘moods,’ known in rasa theory as *bhavas*. All *rasas* are derived from *bhavas* and are given visual representation through the physical embodiment of an artist or performer. In the practice of *rasa rekha*, the embodiment of various *rasas* and emotional states through an artist’s placement in nature is transformed into line through the physical act of drawing.

RASA REHKA

As a location of transfer between nature, the self, and material and immaterial representation, the practice of *rasa rekha* is both a record and an interface, where line represents existence. Each stroke made is a registration of time and the passing of mortal life. Within this methodology, mark-making and gesticulation are signs of all the force, longing, and emotions of the self-as-artist. In the process of *rasa rekha*, emotions are

signifiers demonstrated through the flow and rendering of kinetic lines that create new forms and signs. In *rasa rekha*, the *rasa* is gesticulated, becoming the drawn ‘line’ or *rekha*. The *rekha* is matter in material form, demarcated by the open space around it. In Indian philosophy, *ākāśa* (space or ‘ether’) is one of the five great elements constituting the nature of our body—the *panchamahabhuta*. The *ākāśa* ensconces the phenomenon of ‘ego’ and its emanation, while the ‘self’ is known as the *ātman* and is transformed into energy, leading to animation, movement, velocity, and direction. Essential to this process of transformation is the act of ‘drawing’, where to ‘draw’ as the verb, becomes the signifier in the act of ‘reclaiming’ (Gangar, pers. comm., 2015). Evoking the freedom derived from embodiment (i.e., my embodiment and felt experience of the *rasas*), the drawn line becomes a bridge between material and immaterial realities, allowing myself as artist to portray nature and subjective experience. In this way, the process of mark-making represents the reclamation of selfhood as an act of engagement with the experience of self and of belonging in accordance with nature.

Since all lines are kinetic and imbued with the force of *rasas* in the practice of *rasa rekha*, I am able to communicate to a viewer my experience of speed, *gati*, or motion and all manner of immaterial existence, while assigning this a new visual and material form. Each of the nine *rasas* moods, or *bhavas*, is captured and expressed through the movement, speed, and gestures made through drawn lines. These lines become a registration of time and a record of my existence.

In *rasa rekha*, each line communicates emotion. I am interested in articulating the *rasas* through simple lines, without the physical forms normally associated with this visual medium. Drawn lines carry my embodiment and experience of *rasas*. I believe the existence of all living and non-living things may be expressed through the use of *rasas*. The singular appearances of lines are not only divisions from which to create form, but also innately embody and transmit *rasas*.

THE ARABIAN SEA PROJECT

An example relating the process of *rasa rekha* is a recent site-specific work titled *Arabian Sea, My Rasa Rekha* (2015, figures 2 and 3) that



Figure 2 Video still from documentation of *The Arabian Sea Project, My Rasa Rekha* 2015, 2134 x 110cm.
Video can be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/hbUQOT50Pcc>.

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Figure 3 Video still from documentation of *The Arabian Sea Project, My Rasa Rekha* 2015, 2134 x 110cm.
Video can be viewed on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/hbUQOT50Pcc>.

encompasses drawing performance and video documentation completed at various remote beaches of the Arabian Sea, in Kerala, India. This work of art is a large-scale installation on transparent silk material. The fabric used in the installation is a representation of space (*ākāśa*). The work is site-specific in the sense that it was created, physically, in the water. As a narration of *rasa rekha*, the following statement relates my experience during the creation of this work:

As I step into the water, my awareness and senses are concentrated at my feet, the skin on my feet sensing, my nerves responding to the water and I become lost. I am lost into the world of water, where energy, movement, speed, and velocity overwhelm my senses. I experience an irresistible pleasure, and words are rendered with insufficiency for me to express anything. The experience evokes feelings similar to catharsis, a catharsis as a single point and confluence of emotion, intimately connected to the expression of *rasa*. At this moment, I transfer my existence with the water into lines—all my feelings and my senses connecting with the force of the sea waves, giving expression and form through my act of drawing. Each mark on the silk material that is made becomes a representation of the vibration of my body as it encounters the current and velocity of the ocean. The whole process is directed by my pleasure and joy.

This narration of *rasa rekha* practice provides a small account of the intricacy of expression that my drawing captures. The limbic system and brain are complex neuro-structures capable of processing many emotional responses; as respected psychiatrist Dr George Mark and his colleagues explain, “It’s because happiness and sadness involve separate brain areas that we can have bittersweet moments, like when a child is leaving home for college and you’re sad, but happy, too” (George et al. 1995, 344). In this way, the *rasa rekha* practice is analogous to a complex biological process, since I am transferring and transmuting the multitude of feelings I experience through my interaction with the environment and through the neural pathways of my brain, where they

are ordered into emotions, that I then transfer into lines. In *rasa rekha*, drawing becomes an extension of the order of the natural world, where a sense of the ego as self connects to the larger macrocosm of ecology and the bionetwork. This process is similar to an observation that academic James Boaden made of art critic Annette Michelson’s (1966) ideas on expressionist filmmaker Stan Brakhage’s work, stating that she “recognized in Brakhage’s writing [and work] the rhetoric of Abstract Expressionist painting, in which the body, the mind, and the work are intrinsically tied together into an organic whole” (Boaden 2013). Brakhage felt that the camera was an extension of his body (Boaden 2013). Similarly, in *rasa rekha*, drawing becomes an extension of nature through my embodied experience of the *rasas*.

RASA REHKA AND EXPRESSIONISM

Outside of biology, taking cue from Brakhage, I cannot ignore the annals of Western modernism and art history. To define *rasa rekha* as a global arts practice, I must make reference to the history of art and Expressionism. Like my practice of *rasa rekha*, the larger movement of Expressionism described works of art that portrayed a subjective reality in order to induce and capture emotional states (Williams 2004). Some works by Expressionist artists evoke visceral emotional responses from the viewer, whereas others rely solely on an artist’s introspective revelations (Murphy 1999, 49). Given the strong tradition of *rasa* theory in Indian art and its influence through my placement as a contemporary Indian artist, makes positioning *rasa rekha* within this framework a more difficult task. However, outside of the political and social evolution of *rasa* theory (which is fundamentally Indian), *rasa rekha* may be described as a form of innovative expressionism. I believe this practice is innovative because it connects the spaces in-between traditional Indian theory, contemporary Indian art, and global contemporary art as a reflection of both *rasa* theory and contemporary drawing practice. *rasa rekha* may be viewed as a cross-cultural contemporary drawing practice where emotions are given critical expression through the exaggeration and energy of strokes, releasing the energy of inner visions and emotional



Figure 4 *The Bed of Arrows* 2014, distemper colour on wall, linear mural on Cabral Yard wall, a collateral work at the Kochi Muziris Biennale, 1127 x 274cm

states. In this way, an interrelation between *rasa rekha* and the aesthetic categories belonging to Expressionism may be made.

THE BED OF ARROWS: A LINEAR MURAL AT THE KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE

An example of *rasa rekha* that demonstrates a relationship with expressionism is my recent linear mural work on Cabral Yard wall titled *The Bed of Arrows* (2014, figure 4), a collateral project at the second edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale. The composition of the linear mural work was not premeditated; rather, by allowing the process of *rasa rekha* to guide me, I created it as an expression of my enthusiasm, as well as other emotions. Filling the wall, *The Bed of Arrows* is a large drawing that depicts a scene from the Indian epic the *Mahabharata*. The protagonist, *Bhishma*, lies on a bed of arrows, thirsty and in a state of sleeplessness, surrounded by warriors, family, friends, etc. The work is an explosion of many *rasas*. Physically challenging and taking three days to complete, the drawing process involved mixed and sometimes conflicting emotions. Within this work, all manner of *rasas*

are expressed in several ways. The physical process of making the work generates an expression of *rasa*, my mood or *bhava* (enthusiasm); the subject is *Bhishma*'s eternal anguish and expresses the *rasa* of pain (*karuna*) and rage; arrows are being thrown and the body of *Bhishma* is receiving them with *veera*, the *rasa* of heroism. Many strident straight lines pierce *Bhishma*'s body, expressing *karuna*, while the elongated form of the warrior in the composition waits for the end of the fratricidal war. The theme of death lingers in the work, where emotions are experienced and transformed in a liminal space from which *Rasa rekha* can be used to adapt all manner of visual cultures. The work draws attention to a similarity between the present and the time of epic or myth, through the metaphor of *Bhishma*'s sleeplessness or insomnia, which is a common mental affliction in contemporary culture.

THE TRANSLATION OF EMOTIONS: THE INSOMNIA SERIES

Like the reclining, elongated figure of *Bhishma* in *The Bed of Arrows*, the coconut tree from the *Insomnia* series (2015, figures 5 to 10) has



Figure 5 [untitled] from the *Insomnia* series 2015, ink on silk and acrylic sheet, 244 x 97cm

been cut down and is lying down on the earth. The work depicts death but it also depicts the transformation of form. When the tree was alive, it was standing up with the potential to grow; now that it is dead or dying, like the figure of *Bhishma*, it is resting or lying down in the horizontal plane. In the movement between liveliness to lying down, the movement between the vertical and horizontal axis, the body of the tree changes gesture and changes *rasa*. Thus, the work depicts the movement between two *rasas*, analogous to the transition between waking life and sleep.

For me, insomnia is not merely a disease of sleeplessness; rather, it is a state between levels of consciousness where deep thoughts arise from my subconscious and take on new metaphoric form. As a collection of works, the *Insomnia* series expresses my experience of this elusive state of mind, one that drives me to imagine unusual imagery. In the insomniac space, all realistic forms appear in desirable, yet unfamiliar and surreal, forms; realism and abstraction merge and become interchangeable as I translate the experience of *rasas* into line and drawing.

Another work from the *Insomnia* series similarly portrays the transition of form between life, death, and rebirth. I collected a coconut leaf and took it to my studio, where I observed the process of the leaf's decomposition—losing fluids and changing colour from green to brown. The observation of this process became part of the work, providing the impetus for different *rasas* to be experienced and expressed. As the leaf decomposed, it took on a skeletal form, like a large mammalian ribcage; this is apparent in the finished work. In the rendering of a dead leaf through the process of *rasa rehka*, the movement of the leaf's form is captured through the transition between *rasas*, occupying the space with a new and elegant form. Though a form of death is depicted, the subject of the work is not lying down; it is transformed into a concave, sculptural drawing form.

The skeletal remains of a shrub or bush appear to take on another character in the next work of the *Insomnia* series. Its stems become lines in the drawing that record emotions of melancholy and nostalgia or *karuna*; they are like a memory of place and time. The connections between the lines in the drawing form a larger network that takes on a visual form similar to the neural pathways and synapses of the brain. The multifarious and interconnected network of memory also expresses the *rasa* of *adbhuta* or wonder. I was amazed at the similarity between the organic armature of the shrub to that of the architectural infrastructure used to build houses. Like the other works in the *Insomnia* series, this drawing portrays a transformation of form and captures a transition between biological states: through the process of *rasa rehka*, a study of botanical matter becomes a rhizomic display of neural forms. The transparent and translucent surfaces of the drawing's armature and white material reinforce the feelings of intangibility that the work attempts to portray. Like memory, like moments in time, the embodiment of *rasas* (however subtle or fleeting) persists.

The *Insomnia* series is also influenced by the natural form of trees. Trees have strong linear forms that are able to occupy space, but move within that space. The movement of the natural linear forms through space is an ideal subject for the *rasa rehka* drawing method. In another



Figure 6 [untitled] from the *Insomnia* series 2015, ink on silk and acrylic sheet, 244 x 76 x 76cm



Figure 7 [untitled] from the *Insomnia* series 2015, ink on silk and acrylic sheet, 97.5 x 137cm



Figure 8 [untitled] from the *Insomnia* series (detail) 2015, ink on silk and acrylic sheet, 97.5 x 137cm

work from the series, the transformation of form achieved in *rasa rehka* is done through the manipulation of scale. The work depicts the small section of the coconut tree on which the coconuts grow. While in reality this size on the tree is only around 60 x 30cm, the drawing created through the study of the tree is much larger (approximately 230 x 100cm) and therefore takes on a different appearance. By observing the tree and embodying the *rasas* in a sleepless state, I imagine all manner of unusual forms, scales, and juxtapositions. This is one of the emotional pleasures of the insomniac state. My experience of insomnia is like being in a liminal space in between sleep and wakefulness. The elongated form of the drawing stands tall, with a convex curve that invites the viewer in. A positive expression of the *rasas* is portrayed in the work.

The final work in the *Insomnia* series is a larger-scale installation of seven coconut trees. The silk drawings depict segmented and life-size coconut tree trunks. This drawing installation is juxtaposed with the natural environment, representing a distinct reality. Though all the forms are influenced by coconut trees, the different and newly transferred forms occupy two realities that co-exist in the site-specific space of the work. The coconut trees represent elongated, unknown forms that occupy the void space, creating an environment reflecting the *rasa* of *adbhuta* (wonder).

VISUAL LANGUAGE AND RASA REHKA: THE UPROOTED SERIES

Through the evolution of my drawing practice, the process of *rasa rehka* has developed into a conscious effort and from it has emerged a visual language made up of the reconfiguration of forms. Through the use of line, observation, gesticulation, and repetition, a visual transformation of nature through *rasa* is made. The visual syntax is created through the signification of lines that deconstruct the limitations of two-dimensional surfaces, playing with dimension and scale. New signs are composed that deconstruct the privilege of both the horizontal and vertical axis in drawing in favour of multifarious and layered planes of representation, playing with translucency and volume. What emerges through the process of *rasa rehka* is a kind of sculptural drawing.



Figure 9 [untitled] from the *Insomnia* series (detail) 2015, ink on silk and acrylic sheet, 244 x 76 x 60cm

In this work of art (see figure 11), which is derived from the study of coconut fibre (*resha*) made into rope, the representation of a simple form has been converted through *rasa rehka* into a more complex and multi-dimensional rendering. Drawn lines are layered atop each other, creating a curvilinear form on the flat surface of silk. Each stroke of line and each gesture made reflect the microscopic detail of the coconut fibre, which has been fashioned into a new form—the rope. As a subject, the rope reiterates the transformative process of *rasa rehka*, which is again reinterpreted and given new life in my work through the process of drawing. What is signified through the transformation of form is the awe and admiration



Figure 10 *Insomnia* series 2015, a site-specific drawing installation featuring seven pieces of silk cloth drawn on with ink, dimensions variable

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for the newly fashioned form; the work is an allegory of rope. I may also interpret fibre as *resha* and therefore *rasa resha*, where *resha* is also a line. Cumulatively, they form a certain philosophy, the *rekha darshan*, which extends beyond the linear perspective as it is usually understood.

The most prominent aspect of the works from the series titled *Uprooted* (2014, figures 12 and 13) is a sense of disconnection or sorrow, as the series explores feelings around displacement and dislocation. The subject matter interfaces with the *rasa* of grief and melancholy, transforming these emotions into new representations. In figure 12, a dead root has been observed and translated through *rasa rehka*, with a new multi-dimensional form emerging. The material on which the drawing is made has been manipulated and given volume, reinforcing the new form, giving the dead root a new life and material existence. Each gesticulation and mark I make through drawn line breathes new life into a dead form, transitioning the observed object from a state of decomposition. Drawing and the embodiment of *rasa* combine to give a new life to the dead form through the energy of emotion

released through line, speed, and motion. My transferred lines coagulate and separate in this process.

STUDIO PRACTICE

Understanding the materials used to make a work is vital in the application of *rasa rehka*. Whether observing an object through the guise of *rasa* or interpreting the immaterial elements of nature, the understanding of materials from their molecular existence to their surface construction is essential, in order to interpret and make a translation into another form. As exemplified through the coconut leaf in the *Insomnia* series, I often collect found objects from nature and take them to my studio to observe all the changes they undergo. I like to observe the impact that temperature, the weather, and all manner of natural phenomena has on the objects I collect. I recently shifted my studio from Baroda to Cochin in Southern India. This is a temporary shift, but the move represents a change in climate to a tropical environment, which has undoubtedly influenced my work. In order to create new forms



Figure 11 Resha 2015, drawing on transparent silk material with acrylic sheet and thread, 56 x 70cm

in my studio practice, I need an object from which to translate: this is the basic building block of *rasa rehka*. As nature is explicitly boundless, deliberate boundaries around materials need to be made. The consideration of boundaries around materials is like a meditation that evokes both an emotional state and the impetus for my visual language, which depicts the transformation of what is familiar to that which is unfamiliar. As an artist, I find this journey comparable to the conversion between material and immaterial reality.

THE POTENTIAL OF RASA REHKA AS A CONTEMPORARY DRAWING PRACTICE

Drawing is the tool and skill providing the subtlety through which my visual language emerges, communicating new gestures and new *rasas*. Signified in the visual language derived from *rasa rehka* are new *rasas* and the immaterial spaces in which emotions and atmospheres reside. I recognise many divisions between the nine *rasas*, many layers of emotions in between each *rasa*. In my visual language, I use nature to portray the liminality of *rasas*. In liminal space, the existence of the unspoken, unclaimed, discarded, and forgotten aspects of cultures, together with the longings and priorities of any given society, is found. From this position, the potential of *rasa rehka* as a drawing methodology of reclamation is unlimited; new culture, knowledge, and *rasas* may emerge, engaging with both artist and viewer. This is reinforced by Marshall and Gosden's statement:



Figure 12 Uprooted-1 2014, enamel colours and other chemicals on transparent acrylic sheet, 82 x 66 x 46cm

People have realized that objects do not just provide a stage setting to human action; they are integral to it. Certainly, if we consider material culture in its different moments of production, exchange and consumption, then little is left out, especially once each of these is set within its social contexts and consequences. This new focus directs attention to the ways human and object histories inform each other. (Gosden and Marshall 1999, 169)

Therefore, the process of *rasa rehka* permits a recontextualisation of material objects. The potential of this process has many applications for heritage and cultural restoration; however, my focus is related to a reappropriation of *rasa* theory, one that explores *rasas* in a contemporary schema and one that is specific to visual art and the medium of drawing. In particular, I am interested



Figure 13 *Uprooted-2* 2014, enamel colours and other chemicals on transparent acrylic sheet, 3 pieces, two 122 x 46cm, one 122 x 23cm

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in the dialectic exchange that occurs when I recontextualise objects (through the process of drawing) between material and immaterial states, the dynamic play between these two positions, and the energy this produces. It inspires my practice and challenges me to keep exploring *rasa* theory. Not only am I interested in the existence of new *rasas* and new objects, but I also believe the reappropriation of *rasa* theory, through drawing, can produce a multiplication of visual conditions and variations for the way a viewer consumes a work of art. Through the process of *rasa rehka*, visual transactions between cognitive and symbolic, and aesthetic values may produce a visual culture different from what has come before. This has certainly been the motivating factor in my development of a visual language using drawing and the *rasa rehka* methodology.

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ELECTRIC DRAMA: RESIDUAL AND EMERGENT MODERNISM IN WILLIAM DOBELL'S TELEVISION DRAWINGS

Chris McAuliffe

While William Dobell (1899–1970) is remembered as one of the foremost Australian portrait painters of the twentieth century, it was drawing that he regarded as the essence of his art. Dobell's advice to aspiring artists was simple: "Draw and draw" (Bevan 2014, 315). He practised what he preached; a visitor to his studio recalled that in it "There were just drawings, drawings, drawings" (Bevan 2014, 315). The National Gallery of Australia (NGA) holds twenty-five of Dobell's many sketchbooks, spanning four decades from the 1930s to 1960s. Overflowing with drawings, often several to the page, these are further evidence of this commitment.

Dobell's sketches—many of them executed in public places such as streets and cafés—are testimony to his alertness to and constant engagement with his surrounds. But the NGA sketchbooks also reveal an attachment to classical studio procedures. Dobell would survey a motif *in toto*, establishing the overall physical, compositional, and tonal structure before exploring more precise details and options in adjunct notations of gesture and expression. Three drawings for a 1948 portrait of fellow artist Margaret Olley, clustered on one sketchbook page, present a faceless seated figure, a highly detailed representation of the sitter's visage, and fragmentary variations on the disposition of her right arm (figure 1). In a since-separated page from the same sketchbook,¹ Dobell formalised Olley's pose and features with an elegant linear precision reminiscent of Ingres.

However, a remarkable episode of experimental practice emerges in the later NGA sketchbooks. Around 1958, Dobell—described as a "traditionalist" by his biographer (Gleeson 1981, 13)—adopted a new medium, new subjects, and new modes of looking. From the late 1950s through the late 1960s, Dobell began to draw with a ballpoint pen, in what was among the first sustained engagements by an artist with the



Figure 1 William Dobell *Study for Margaret Olley* 1948, pencil on ivory wove paper, 25.4 x 20.4cm. Collection of the Art Gallery of New South Wales, acc. no. 465.1995.

now-ubiquitous writing tool. Dobell made these drawings while watching television in his Wangi Wangi lounge room in regional New South Wales. Shifting between attentive representation of the broadcast image and disinterested, non-objective improvisations, Dobell explored the properties of the ballpoint, the content of television broadcasts, and televisual spectatorship itself.

Although Gleeson has suggested that Dobell's preference for portraiture in an age of abstraction meant that he had "failed to meet the challenge of his time" (1981, 10), the television drawings embraced what Marshall McLuhan dubbed "the electric drama" of the mass media (McLuhan and Fiore 1987, 9). By doing so, Dobell positioned drawing in an uncertain territory between what remained of modernist observational drawing and an emerging postmodern culture. It was a curious place for an artist for whom "most modern

¹ This untitled work is attributed as "Study for Portrait of Margaret Olley", 1948, NGA, acc. no. 76.105.

developments were contrary to his very nature” (Freeman 1970, x) to find himself.

What lay behind Dobell’s migration from “good, solid sculptural” drawing (Freeman 1970, 78) to works that he admitted verged on doodling? Dobell himself answered this anecdotally. In January 1958, he was diagnosed with bowel cancer and underwent immediate, successful surgery. During his long post-operative recovery, Dobell found that his “nerves were all to pieces” (Adams 1983, 276) but he refused to take drugs to alleviate the pain. Instead, “to keep occupied”, he sketched incessantly (Adams 1983, 276).

There is no record of what prompted Dobell to adopt the ballpoint pen as his preferred tool but there are two simple possibilities. The first is sheer convenience. Dobell was sketching in his hospital bed and lounge room armchair; the ballpoint pen was a pocketable tool, always primed and at the ready. The second relates to Dobell’s habits. He had never made a fetish of fine art materials; many of his sketch books are run-of-the-mill stationery store and newsagent purchases. Later, I think, Dobell came to appreciate the material properties of the ballpoint pen, especially the fluidity of its line, but only after this initial, incidental embrace.

Like many of television’s early viewers, Dobell appears to have readily absorbed whatever was offered, drawn to the sheer novelty of an electronic medium introduced to Australia only in 1956. His sketches from television focused on two dominant elements in the early years of broadcasting: variety shows and current affairs programming. The former delivered entertainers such as Shirley Bassey; the latter, opinion leaders and politicians such as Bertrand Russell and John Gorton.

While Dobell’s sketchbooks are undated,² drawings can be linked to specific shows, such as the series *Bertrand Russell Speaks His Mind* that commenced in 1959. A sequence of nine pages of sketches of Shirley Bassey was probably made from a broadcast of *The Shirley Bassey Hour*. A caption (unusual in Dobell’s practice) on one sketch reads “Hey Big Spender” (figure 2), a reference to a song written for the 1966 musical *Sweet Charity* and recorded by Bassey in 1967; this indicates that Dobell drew from the television screen for at least a decade.



Figure 2 William Dobell *Hey Big Spender (Shirley Bassey in Concert)* 1959–60, ballpoint pen on paper, sheet 22.6 x 17.6cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, acc. no. 76.185.23.9–17.

Within the technological and aesthetic limitations of the day, black-and-white television broadcasts delivered relatively static medium shots of speakers and, in the case of entertainers, a mix of establishing shots (encompassing a stage set) and close ups of performers’ faces. As a televisual cousin to Dobell’s existing pattern of coupling a full figure with breakout details, the broadcast-based drawings sat comfortably into his sketchbooks (and indeed aren’t always immediately recognisable as relating to a television broadcast). The later drawings, such as those of Bassey, are loose and rapid, as if Dobell were eagerly pursuing the faster pace of a variety programme.

While Dobell’s anecdotal account of his adoption of the ballpoint pen suggests no self-conscious research motivation, it is clear that forms of sustained inquiry developed over the course of his work in this medium. I will consider three here: the rapidity of the sketch, the status of modernist observational drawing, and the fate of attentiveness in the televisual age. These mark a transition from manual activity and its functions (the sketch as an initial stage in representation)

² Only one of Dobell’s television drawings in the NGA collection is dated; an abstract work, inscribed 11 September 1959, NGA, acc. No. 185.24.8.

to a mode of drawing immersed in the visual rhythms of television itself (the hand mobilised by a television broadcast but detached from the task of representation). But before pursuing Dobell's practice and its implications, I will provide a brief background to the ballpoint in order to free any reading of this medium from later, exaggerated attributions of an abject status.

Variants of the ballpoint pen had been on offer since the late-nineteenth century but it was only after World War 2 that it became a mass market item. It was a consumer item of the kind that fascinated commentators such as McLuhan, Roland Barthes, and later Jean Baudrillard. As a pocket-sized gadget, the ballpoint condensed all the allure of new technology into an everyday experience. While underpinned by the procedures of a classical manufacturing economy, such novelties participated in the burgeoning symbolic economy of a post-industrial society. As commodities, they were as much symbols as material objects; signs of participation in a culture of convenience, miniaturisation, domesticated technology, and myriad other registers of a new modernity (Baudrillard 1981, 146–47).

In the late 1950s, ballpoint pens were relatively expensive and were still being advertised as gift items. Dobell liked to buy distinctive, high-end items. The first car that he purchased was a Jaguar and he acquired a television set soon after the commencement of broadcasts. The NGA holds one loose sketchbook page upon which Dobell practiced writing with a ballpoint by repeatedly inscribing the words, "Tiffany Sterling Silver for Xmas".³

When Dobell took up the ballpoint, its value as an art medium was untested, and it was both lauded and demonised in popular discourse. In fact, the ballpoint's status as a conspicuous consumer item of ambivalent reputation has shaped art historical interpretations of artists' use of it. In a lengthy analysis of Sigmar Polke's 1963 ballpoint drawings, Margit Rowell repeatedly equated the consumerist and mass market connotations of the medium with a degradation of aesthetic convention and value. Polke ignored "accepted conventions" and "academic precedents", wrote Rowell, and so "invented an expressive idiom that was crude and humorous, its

images outrageous, its content seemingly trivial" (Rowell 1999, 8). According to Rowell (Rowell 1999, 9–10), Polke's drawings are "technically crude", "unsettling and disconcerting", and, in the *coup de grâce*, "The medium of these rudimentary markings serves to reinforce the impression of artless banality. For what is more commonplace than a ballpoint pen?"

Intent on linking Polke's "stratagems for subversion" to his adoption of ballpoint, Rowell marshalled a litany of negatives attributed to ballpoint in the early decades of its mass adoption by consumers:

Designed for the most expeditious and ordinary usage, a ballpoint pen was not considered a "fine-art" tool in the 1960s. In the practice of handwriting, it renders the notion of penmanship extinct (and, for several years, it was proscribed in elementary schools); as an artist's implement, it precludes expression through the impossibility of variety or inflection. Indeed, it allows for no intensification or dilution of a given line, no broadening or narrowing of a stroke. The line is always hopelessly spare and inevitably the same. (1999, 9–10)

But each of these attributed sins can be challenged. Far from being designed for expeditious and ordinary usage, the ballpoint was initially developed to perform tasks *beyond* the capacity of ordinary pens (such as writing on leather) and was adopted by the military in the extraordinary circumstances of World War 2 as a more effective tool than the fountain pen. While it is true that schools were reluctant to adopt the ballpoint, a 1970 review of research literature on handwriting cited only one study that linked deterioration of handwriting to the ballpoint (Askov, Otto, and Askov 1970, 108). A 1960 study of the status of handwriting in the USA made passing note of the ballpoint's impact on legibility (blaming this on imperfect ink and rollerball) but readily accepted its growing popularity (Templin 1960, 163–64). In fact, the commonplace status of the ballpoint was not contentious; the real threat to handwriting was in fact mechanical—the typewriter was feared as spelling the end of handwriting in any medium (Templin 1960, 158).



Figure 3 William Dobell, untitled [*Studies from Television of Sir Robert Menzies*] 1959–60, ballpoint pen on paper, sheet 20.2 x 12.6cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, acc. no. 76.185.21.40.

The claim that the ballpoint precluded expression and promoted sameness has more to do with the rote distinctions between high and mass culture inherited from mid-century art criticism than it does with what artists were actually doing: the work of Australian artists (outside of the Euro-American canon) adopting the ballpoint from the 1950s—Richard Larter, Dušan Marek, Eric Thake, and John Peart, among them—quells any claims for lack of nuance in its mark. Dobell’s investigation of the ballpoint as an artist’s medium was not driven by such rhetorics of transgression and abjection. In the first instance, I think that the ballpoint prompted Dobell to reflect on the rapid pace of contemporary image culture, an aspect of contemporary drawing practice that had begun to trouble him.

The increasing momentum of the mass media age was forcing Dobell out of his comfort zone, as evidenced by his commission to paint a portrait

of Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies for *Time* magazine in early 1960. Dobell habitually measured the preliminaries of a portrait in weeks; he liked to get to know his subjects, to develop an intimacy with them over dinner or a few drinks, to execute multiple sketches and preliminary painted studies (De Berg and Dobell 1961; Adams 1983, 273). However, *Time* required a finished art work for its 4 April issue and, in his Parliament House office, Menzies reportedly gave Dobell only forty minutes for a sitting (De Berg and Dobell 1961).⁴ (Dobell’s accounts of the sitting, along with Menzies’ static pose and contacts details jotted on adjacent pages suggest that, contrary to the title attributed by the NGA, the sketches were not made from television.) Dobell grasped hurriedly at a hieratic pose befitting a prime minister. The sketches established a sculptural, pyramidal architecture accompanied by quick notations of the contours of Menzies’ patrician, headmaster-like expression (figure 3). The result was, in Dobell’s own words, “a fairly good job done in the time allowed” (De Berg and Dobell 1961): a lukewarm self-assessment, at best.

Occurring early in Dobell’s engagement with ballpoint, this experience perhaps encouraged him to see it as a means of developing the accelerated picturing skills now being demanded of him. The sketches of Menzies were executed in ballpoint, making them the first dateable instance of Dobell using the medium outside of his home, in the professional circumstances for which he was best known. Dobell’s ballpoint drawings are certainly more loose, open, and mobile in their forms than those made in pencil. A pencil sketch of performing musicians—*Skillapooing*, *Duke Ellington* (figure 4)—is briskly executed, but contours remain disciplined and contained, and facial features are denoted with decisive lines. The televisual image forced Dobell to chase hurriedly after the essentials of the motif. His later sequence of ballpoint drawings of Bassey discussed above, made from a television broadcast, feature broad, looping, free-flowing contours and minimal detail, as if Dobell were trying to keep pace with the moving image, using the rolling line of the ballpoint pen as an aid (figure 2).

Television’s mobilisation of the subject—its exaggeration of gesture, its intercutting of multiple

⁴ Another source has this as two sittings totalling fifty-five minutes (Anon 1960, 3).



Figure 4 William Dobell *Skillapooing, Duke Ellington* c. 1950s, pencil on paper, 17.8 x 22.6cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, acc. no. 76.185.11.14.

camera angles—made Dobell draw faster. This acceleration of notation—prompted by both the flow of the television broadcast and the rollerball—demanded reflection on the status of modernist observational drawing. Dobell's earlier street sketches of the 1930s and 1940s embody the Baudelairean imperative that the artist must engage with the heroism of modern life; they capture latter-day versions of the urchin, the street vendor, the café sitter, and the busker. They are shaped by a wry, occasionally acerbic, curiosity inherited from the Baudelairean *flâneur* of the nineteenth century. And in their manner, especially in that loose, circulating line that seems to accompany (in the musical sense) rather than contain form, they echo the street sketches of Constantin Guys, Baudelaire's exemplar of the observer of modern life. However, could this historical foundation, and the modes of drawing it privileged, be sustained in the 1960s?

The dynamic line that Dobell favoured, particularly in his pre-World War 2 drawings, spoke of the life and energy of the street, while the unfinished subject evoked a mobile, mutable world and the exigencies of representing it. Dobell's ballpoint drawings were an attempt to reconfigure this earlier Baudelairean spectatorship for the televisual age. The television set delivered public figures such as Gorton, Russell, and Bassey, but

in a mobile, informal sense. It allowed Dobell to treat them as he had figures glimpsed in the street. It heightened the spectatorial frisson, too. Not only was the televisual image novel, but it was also populated almost entirely by performers, as if the Baudelairean consciousness of public display had become all-pervasive.

Dobell also appears to have adopted, especially in ballpoint sketches of performers, another powerful modernist precedent. Fascinated by Cambodian dancers performing at an international exposition in 1906, Rodin had produced dozens of rapid-fire sketches, some made without taking his eyes off the motif. Drawing practice was dictated by the performers' mobility, leaving the artist to 'channel' their movements onto the page with a corollary mobility of hand (which took precedence over formal representation). In the television sketches, Dobell's line loosens considerably, forms become unbounded and incomplete, proportion (especially in relation to gesture) becomes semantic rather than empirical. The properties of the ballpoint pen contributed greatly to this effect. Increasingly, Dobell was caught up in the characteristics of the ballpoint itself. The rollerball glided fluidly across the page. The circulating line, previously suggestive of a hovering hand intermittently touching upon the page, was now a continuous web.



Figure 5 William Dobell, untitled [*Abstract Form*] 1959–60, ballpoint on paper, sheet 20.2 x 12.6cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, acc. no. 76.185.24.31.

But even as Dobell appeared to secure a certain validity for modernist traditions in the televisual age, so he acted out a significant threat to them. While television fascinated Dobell, it did not always deliver figures of interest. The earlier sketchbooks are episodic; a drawing emerged only when the street offered a meaty subject. The television sketchbooks are continuous; the majority of the ballpoint drawings are swirling, quasi-automatic works emerging out of the dynamically looping line of the flowing rollerball (figures 5–7). Dobell perhaps unwittingly identified the risk of working this way: “When there was nobody on the television screen I found interesting,” he said, “I would doodle away and began to find interesting patterns” (Adams 1983, 276). Whereas previously the absence of a motif meant no drawing, in front of the television, Dobell kept going. This may well have registered the hypnotic novelty of the television image, but a continuous attention was a diminished one. Dobell began to follow the dictates



Figure 6 William Dobell, untitled [*Abstract Form*] 1959–60, ballpoint on paper, sheet 20.2 x 12.6cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, acc. no. 76.185.24.5.

of the ballpoint, allowing the pen to roll and loop across the notebook page. Such unmotivated drawing was detached from modernism’s observational tradition.

It is in this moment that the ballpoint and television come together in Dobell’s practice as properly complex and ambiguous symptom: the decline mooted by Rowell. The common complaint directed against television in high cultural Jeremiads was that the shallowness and emptiness of mass culture made it the antithesis of art. Dobell declared that such emptiness prompted his doodles and in claiming them as abstractions he built his art on very weak foundations. Dobell admitted as much when he wryly recalled that at his first-ever exhibition of abstract paintings in 1960, “A well-known abstractionist came up and informed me most politely that my work wasn’t an abstract at all, it was just doodling” (Adams 1983, 276).

Therefore, there are two cultures, two subjects, two orders of spectatorship at work in Dobell’s



Figure 7 William Dobell, untitled [*Abstract Forms*] 1959–60, ballpoint on paper, sheet 20.2 x 12.6cm. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, acc. no. 76.185.24.28.

sketchbooks of the late 1950s and 1960s. Following Raymond Williams, I would identify these as residual and emergent cultural modes (Williams 1977, 122–23). The residual element is Dobell’s tacit allegiance to a Baudelairean conception of modernity. To articulate this in sketches of street life, as Dobell often did, was, as Williams would have it, to deploy something that “has been effectively formed in the past, but [which] is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present” (Williams 1977, 122). The residual is not a redundant remnant but remains a way of speaking in and of the present, even as it embodies a past. To turn the pages of Dobell’s sketchbooks, to move from pencil sketches of café sitters into ballpoint drawings of variety show performers, is to see what Williams means.

The emergent element is necessarily harder to identify. It rests in the creation of “new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships”

(Williams 1977, 123). The emergent is not merely novel (say, television), nor is it automatically “alternative or oppositional” (say, Polke’s so-called strategies of subversion). It can appear within, or in complex dialogue with, the residual. It’s especially likely to become apparent, I think, when an artist seeks to articulate a new subjectivity from within a residual language, or better, tries to work out what of the residual can remain meaningful within the procedures of the emergent. This is where Rowell’s rhetoric of oppositional reversal misses the complexity of residual and emergent cultures. It is too simplistic to suggest that there was once a conventional high culture and that the mere deployment of some emblem of mass cultural decrepitude (in this case, a ballpoint) within its field will herald its collapse. What needs to be considered is what happens when the terms of one culture (one valuing engagement, attention, craft, diligent practice) are destabilised by those of another (one encouraging lack of interest, ambient or background experience, deskilling, passive consumption).

Dobell’s dilemma might be cast in simpler terms: in the thrall of television, an artist whose sketchbooks had been propelled by a constant alertness to the world found himself inverting what had been his guiding principle—drawing now emerged in moments of inattention. It might be said that Dobell’s experiments with ballpoint initially promised a fruitful engagement with emergent mass media cultures. The ballpoint was itself part of this new historical landscape and was a medium that appeared to keep pace with televisual culture. But Dobell seems to have been led astray by the ambiguous co-presence of the residual and emergent. Like many art historians, he seems to have been thinking in terms of succession, thinking that his engagement with a new territory meant declaring the redundancy of the old. And so Dobell pictured an emergent televisual culture in terms of a mid-century modernist narrative; abstraction as the new, figuration as the old, and never the twain shall meet.

In the late 1950s, Dobell, like other Australians, was learning to watch television. He clustered figurative sketches in a way that suggested that he was becoming aware of the similarities between variety performers, professional commentators, and newly media-savvy politicians.

The substitution of performance and televisual persuasion for political policy was to become one of the truisms of media commentary in the 1960s. But Dobell more deliberately tried to grasp television's distinctive visuality. He set about picturing its mode of picturing, and paying attention to its orders of attention, even if this emerged more out of habit ("Draw and draw") than reflection. His sketchbooks reveal him choosing the tool, the working method, and the visual idiom best suited to the visual experience of mobile and performative screen imagery in a domestic setting. Writing in 1975, Williams referred to the centrality of flow in the televisual text. Image flowed into image, as it had done in the movies. But program flowed into program, genre into genre, entertainment into news, drama into advertisement, inviting a pure scopic drive, a condition of incessant, unmodulated watching.

Dobell's ballpoint television drawings, both figurative and abstract, emulated the new spectatorial arena of television broadcasts. The motif itself was less important than its mobility, its flow. Dobell hinted at this when he referred to the doodles as abstracts. They did not represent what is on the screen, as the sketches of performers and talking heads did, but evoked the condition of televisuality. Dobell's doodles evoked television's steady state, speaking of the constant availability of stimuli, punctuated only occasionally by moments of interest sufficient to demand figure and representation. The doodle—propelled by the flowing rollerball and emerging from a state approaching uninterested automatism—is an embodiment of television's hallmark, what Williams called "the continuity of the signal" (Heath and Scarrow 1995, 374).

What is instructive in Dobell's television sketchbooks is the way in which so many of the images fail. There's no getting around the weakness of the majority of the abstract drawings, weaknesses made all the more apparent when Dobell tried to knock some sense into sketches by appending titles such as "Sharks thrashing"⁵ and "Shaggy poodle".⁶ To assume that the "continuity of the signal" was best expressed in continuity of line was a simplistic response to a profound challenge to picture-making. Other Australian artists were pursuing more convincing solutions.

For example, Richard Larter's figurative works of the late 1950s used multi-coloured ballpoints to imbue domestic genre scenes with a lurid naiveté, as if the Douanier Rousseau had been resurrected in a suburban lounge room, while John Peart used the naked line of the ballpoint as a kind of scaffolding to hold otherwise nebulous fields of painted colour in place in an extensive series of painted abstract studies begun in late 1965. These and other local artists were beginning to discover specific and purposeful resonances for the "nasty ballpoint pen" (Haxthausen 1999, 491). Dobell had initiated these investigations and, in ballpoint drawings of performers, pundits, and politicians, had come closest to picturing the simultaneity of residual and emergent in televisual culture. Here, where Baudelaire met McLuhan, Dobell attended to television as a latter-day Guys.

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5 NGA, acc. no. 76.185.21.A
6 NGA, acc. no. 76.185.21.18

CINEMATIC DRAWING: WHAT MIGHT THAT BE?

Dena Ashbolt

This paper, framed by my studio-based research, investigates what cinematic drawing might be. It considers how methods of making, bodily perception, and gesture/response are embedded in drawings and may operate to encourage a poetic dimension. Reflecting on the material outcomes of the studio, I uncover a relationship between the “poetry of the almost” (Manning 2009, 92) and the cinematic.

The photographs of scientist Étienne-Jules Marey (1830–1904), framed by the writing of Erin Manning, and the invention of cinematography by the Lumière Brothers construct an understanding of cinematography as the technique used in film and video to create photographic images that move. I believe that cinematic drawing questions the possibilities of drawing in response to the flow of time.

I first came across the concept of cinematic drawing in Ed Krčma's paper (Krčma 2010) “On Drawing, Cinematic Drawing in a Digital Age”. I was intrigued. What could this be? What would a cinematic drawing look like? How would you make one? With a background in filmmaking, I was familiar with storyboards and narrative drawings, so I wondered what aspect of cinema cinematic drawing might engage with.

I discovered that the term may be traced to the writings of French artist Henri Michaux (1899–1984), in particular his essay “To Draw the Flow of Time” (1957), which is the opening text of the book edited by Catherine de Zegher, *Untitled Passages* by Henri Michaux (Michaux et al. 2000). Michaux writes,

Instead of one vision to the exclusion of others, I wanted to draw the moments that end to end make life, to show the inner phrase, the wordless phrase, the sinuous strand that unwinds indefinitely and is intimately present in each inner and outer event. I wanted to draw the consciousness

of existing and the flow of time. As one takes one's pulse. Or again, more modestly, that which appears when, in the evening, the film that has been exposed to the day's images, but shorter and muted is rerun. . . . Cinematic drawing. (Michaux et al. 2000, 7)

I was surprised to see that Michaux's drawings appeared to be like film strips, with each frame/action laid out randomly on the static paper where there seemed to be lots of people, bodies, and movement, resulting in multiple ideas playing out on a single page.

David Sylvester offers insight into Michaux's work when writing about Jackson Pollock's *Black Drip Painting, Number 32* (1950):

It seems to me that, seeing this work as it deserves to be seen means that, any time an image appears as one looks, it needs to be pushed away, out of sight, leaving the mind free to focus on the calligraphy. That is what makes this work the antithesis of a Michaux, where the marks are most telling when seen as traces of figures in movement. With Pollock the marks are most telling when seen as traces of their making. (Sylvester 1997, 488)

What creates this point of difference between Michaux's and Pollock's work? Both artists embody movement and the gesture of making in their works, yet the work of Michaux resonates with “traces of figures in movement” (Sylvester 1997, 488). While neither Pollock nor Michaux worked from observation, I believe their intent with respect to how their gesture of making would be received by an audience is highly influential with regard to the point of difference that Sylvester highlights. Michaux's intent was cinematic drawing—his works investigate ways in which to capture time with drawing. As Catherine de Zegher discusses in her essay, “Adventures of Ink”,



Figure 1 *green car on the freeway* (video still) 2009

... even if in the oeuvres both of Michaux and Pollock the practice of ‘action painting’ and ‘action drawing’ seems to emerge more or less simultaneously around 1950 and connect them on a formal level, their ‘performance’ reveals a very different investigation and attempt to dissolve the object of art. Pollock’s first drip painting, in 1947–48 was made in oil and bordered on the spectacular; Michaux’s first ‘drippings’ were made in ink around 1950 and bordered on the spontaneous writing of an inner message. (de Zegher in Michaux et al. 2000, 169)

I recognise Michaux’s inner message as being about movement itself. He writes:

When, as a child, I had engaged in daydreaming, never, so far as I remember, was I a prince and not very often a conqueror, but I was extraordinary in movements. A veritable prodigy in movements. (Michaux et al. 2000, 7–8)

In the studio, I have found that many of my drawings operate in the space between the positions held by Michaux and Pollock. I make marks in response to movement, which resonates with Michaux’s “traces of figures in movement”. Yet, because they respond to the passing of time like those of Pollock, my marks “are most telling when [they are] seen as traces of their making” (Sylvester 1997, 488).

The starting point of my charcoal drawings is my ‘video drawings.’¹ For my video drawings, I use the video camera as a perceptual drawing tool, grounding my feet as if at a drawing board. I then film the space in front of me from my feet up and/or across. My subjects are the everyday: the train journey, standing under the pier, the car drive. These individual frames of moving footage are then stitched together. Each frame refers to a different moment in time. When assembled, these multiple temporal views of space combine to give one moving image, presenting the viewer with a unique moment (figure 1).

Surrounded by the paraphernalia of the studio, and attempting to understand cinematic drawing and to draw the flow of time, I started my works on paper by placing my video drawings onto a loop and drawing directly from these, thus migrating my perceptual experiences from the screen to paper. Using charcoal, I drew onto large pieces of paper placed on the wall (figures 2 and 3).

In my video drawings, time is suspended and repeated in a loop. This repeated action can be mesmerising and the intimacy of looking at this action was often activated by the rhythm and repetition of movement. The migration from screen to paper enhanced my awareness of the interconnected nature of time and movement, and often resulted in a hesitation to make a mark due to the knowledge of what was to come and the implications for the mark (i.e., its irrelevance). I found my body moving with and responding to the actions in the video works, often mirroring the movements depicted. Yet, something was interrupting my experience of the flow of time; namely, the loop and the narrative.

To find a means of being truly responsive to the flow of time, I decided to move away from the narrative element so embedded in our understanding of cinema and evident in the video drawings. I find narrative and personal histories often relate more to the ear and throat than the eye, as we hear the personal stories of others and speak our own (Allen in Jones, Campbell, and Wylie 2007, 1–2). I felt that to look at the flow of time framed by narrative would lead towards the chronological aspect of time passing, to works locating time in the sequencing of events.

1 Please refer to my website to view some of my video drawings: <http://denaashbolt.com.au/works/#lightbox/7/>



Figure 2 *5.47pm Train Home* 2011, charcoal on paper, 72 x 21 cm

Movement, however, struck me as something that cinema and the flow of time have in common and which could potentially be observed without imposing narrative content. That's not to say that narrative readings are not made from the resulting works, but that the intent in making is to observe and respond to movement as evincing the flow of time.

In the context of this paper, 'drawing' is positioned as an experiential act made permanent. The act of experiencing an observation is drawn into my body and a response made with a mark, which makes permanent my observational experience. The drawings featured in this essay here are neither rehearsal nor preparation for painting, sculpture, or installation. It is not my intention to engage with drawing as a means to investigate memory or the autobiographical. For this body of work, the act of drawing is restricted to an act that responds directly to a perceptual experience, as I work directly from observation. My perceptual intent is driven by the belief that there is a real world out there, one that I am able to perceive and to which I can respond creatively and graphically in the creation of artworks.

My drawings, being grounded in perception, sit within a tradition of visual art practice that endeavours to embrace the ideals of reality and truth. These ideals are however not the focus of my work. Within a perceptual methodology of 'making', I look for ways of conveying to the viewer my visual experience of the world. I find the methodology of sketching and planning towards a final artwork somewhat stifling. The spontaneity of marks that result from a direct observational response appears to be key in my process, and I am

constantly striving to strategically engage this in my practice and encourage an intimacy of looking.

The 'poetic' in the context of this paper refers to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908–61) writing on Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–98), where he cites Mallarmé's distinction between the poetic use of language and that of everyday chatter:

The poet . . . according to Mallarmé, replaces the usual way of referring to things, which presents them as 'well known', with a mode of expression that describes the essential structure of the thing and accordingly forces us to enter into that thing. (Merleau-Ponty [1948] 2004, 100)

Therefore, the poetic dimension is considered to operate such that when looked at, drawings of the familiar 'force us to enter into that thing'; in the context of my drawing practice, 'that thing' refers to the 'experience' of looking at time passing.

As I considered the roles played by trace, erasure, the interval, gesture and the blur in mark making (which will be discussed in this paper), my understanding of what might encourage an intimacy of looking and permit a poetic dimension to flourish in a work gained clarity. The residual visual ambiguity became important in shrinking the gap between the viewer and the work. In further reading Manning's work on Marey's gaseous images, I came across the following, "[Marey's] movement experiments with gaseous fluids are perhaps the best evocation of the poetry of the almost" (Manning 2009, 92). In my drawing

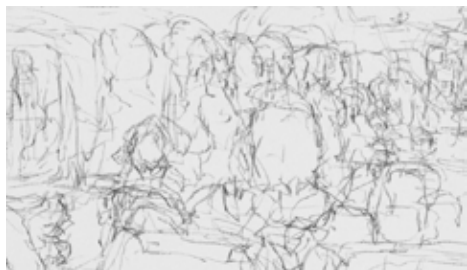


Figure 3 5.47pm Train Home (detail)

responses (figures 4–13),² marks that have been made and erased become almost visible and therefore ‘the poetry of the almost’ resonates as it relates directly to the interval and to those marks that are almost but not quite made. This results in a power that has the potential to drive ambiguity further, fostering the poetic.

THE LIFE DRAWING STUDIO

Putting my video drawings to one side, I recommenced my journey of drawing the flow of time as witnessed by movement in the life studio with a moving life model. Drawing directly from the moving model proved to be immensely frustrating. It compelled me to review the materials and methodologies I was employing; in doing so, two main methods became apparent.

In the first, I am much more conscious of and privilege the marks I make on the support and how these marks relate to the moving subject before me. This results from what I’m looking at and the memory of what I have just seen, and like the subjects of Dana Ballard’s eye, memory, and block experiment (Ings 2007),³ there is much looking backwards and forwards. The brain prefers the eyes as search engines rather than relying on memory. (While it is understood that

the eye itself is a sack of gelatinous fluid and it is the optic nerves in the brain that see, in this paper ‘the eye’ is referred to as the gatherer of visual information.) Each time I turn from the drawing paper to look back at the subject before me, I experienced an immediate jolt/jump as I register the extensive change that has occurred while I was immersed in the action of drawing rather than the action of looking at the subject.

In the second mode, I resist the temptation to look at the paper while drawing. In responding to the moving model, I privilege the subject with my eyes by looking only at it, while my hand responds to the information received on the paper. As the model moves, so does my hand, the model and hand becoming choreographed to move as one. Through ‘the looking’ with charcoal, pencil, brush, or iPad in hand, I find my entire body becomes involved in tracing a response onto the paper. I become increasingly aware that my observations are made not only through my eyes but through my whole body, I find myself in and conscious of a more bodily perceptual experience described by Merleau-Ponty, and expanded below by Taylor Carman, as body schema:

The body schema thus constitutes our precognitive familiarity with ourselves and with the world we inhabit: “I am aware of my body via the world,” Merleau-Ponty says, just as “I am aware of the world through the medium of my body”. (Carman 2008, 106–7)

This second method of making occurs with no regard for how the marks are forming or relating to the subject’s movement before me and, in a strange twist, one could almost say that I am ‘drawing blind’. I have come to think of this second mode of drawing as blind contour drawing, which could be considered as parallel to touch typing, since, in both, the operator performs the movement (drawing/typing) without looking at the result as it develops. However, unlike touch typing, *blind contour drawing* and its result are not predetermined. It is the by-product of an interaction between the hand, the eye, and the observed subject.

With touch typing, *muscle memory* plays an essential role as the typist creates words by their muscles knowing exactly which key to hit with the

2 To capture the fact that I’m responding to the scene in front of me, my drawings are titled *Response* and numbered.

3 Ings reports on how Dana Ballard, one of a new generation of robot builders, undertook many experiments when working on the needs for a robot’s eye. In the eye, memory, and block experiment, “He asked a group of volunteers to copy a geometrical pattern, using a set of coloured blocks. Looking closely, this is what he saw: First, his volunteers glanced from the pattern in front of them to the tray of loose blocks. Next they picked up a block of a certain colour. Then, they glanced at the pattern again. Finally, they fitted the block they had selected into the position required to make a copy of the pattern. This seems just a bit complicated: if the eyes see a block of a certain colour in a certain position, why can’t both pieces of information be retained in one go? Why does the eye make one set of movements to choose a block of a particular colour, and another, virtually identical set, to establish where it should go? The answer seems to be that it is easier for the eye to move than it is for the mind to remember. ... The eyes are our search engines, cheaper and faster than memory” (Ings 2007, 136–37).

predetermined pattern of the keyboard. Because a drawing is made without a predetermined 'text', other than to respond to the subject in front of the eyes, there is a question as to what directs the hand. During the making of the drawings, I am aware that the more repetitious the figure's movements are, the more easily the hand responds. The longer I engage in blind drawing, the closer the motif responds to the figure. I believe that as much of the resulting blind drawing is driven by muscle and visual memory as is informed by visual experience. Once the 'image' enters the mind, the drawing hand responds automatically. My muscle memory was developed in the repetitive practice of drawing blind and accessing the results; in this way, each drawing became a rehearsal for the next. My body/hand/eyes, while looking in the present moment, were also informed by a visual and muscular memory of what had gone before.

WORK THE SPACE

In the life studio, I noticed how vocal I had become about the model's movements, as I instructed, "faster, slower, could you use your arms more—work the high and low space". The nature of the movement itself and the impact it had on the resulting drawing had become apparent, as had my desire to direct the action and consequently shape the drawing. Choreographing the movement to create the shape/content of the work was taking the drawings towards the linear, and the sequential nature of time passing. I decided to silence myself, and to step back from choreographing the movement and controlling the potential outcome of the drawings. My intent was to remain open and receptive to the experiential effects of the flow of time. I wanted to explore whether my drawings might uncover the operation of a poetic dimension arrived at from my bodily response, my gesture of making, as opposed to the playing out of a predetermined concept. This significantly expanded my understanding of drawing as a performance—being in and of the moment—even if, for my practice, the performance is a private one.

Simon Ings's book *The Eye* (2007) raised questions with regard to the functioning of the eye and the issue of time. Ings introduced me to Michael Land's research at the University of Sussex

in the area of eye behaviour and eye movement. In his research, Land has discovered that when a bowler bowls a ball in a game, the batsman momentarily takes his eye from the ball to look to where the ball is about to bounce.

It seems, from Land's studies, that half a second of visual information is held in a 'buffer' of some kind. The eyes stay one step ahead of the body, dealing with the next view, the next task, the next set of predictions and calculations, while the body relies on the 'buffer'. (Ings 2007, 139)

As Ings points out,

This raises the odd but compelling idea that the 'present moment', as we experience it, has a measurable duration. We operate in the world, not as it is, but as it existed half a second ago. (Ings 2007, 139)

I wondered if it was possible for my eye to operate ahead of me in response to the flow of time. How would my eye know what to look at when I am drawing? In blind drawing or, as Ings has made me aware, in any other drawing activity, my eye is responding before I have become aware of the movement being looked at. I (my bodily consciousness) am still half a second behind in the 'buffer'.

The immersed state I have felt in making many of these works is likely due to being in the buffer, with my eye directing the drawing response rather than my mind directing the eye. That is, receptively reacting with a mark to what my eyes were showing me, in contrast to directing them with my mind on the topic of what to see. In the buffer, the perceptual experience of the eye drives my bodily response.

With a strategy for making in place, I started to look at the drawing responses and to consider how they might engage with the cinematic. On 11 June 1895, the Lumière Brothers presented their new invention, *Cinematographe*, to photographers (Campany 2008). They did this by filming the arrival of the photographers to the presentation and then playing the film back to them.⁴ The way

⁴ Campany writes, "The subject matter was ideal: endlessly different figures passing through a fixed frame express so much so simply, about photographs in motion" (2008, 7).



Figure 4 *Response 4629 2013*, ink, acrylic, and watercolour on paper, 60 x 48cm

in which the photographers walk through the fixed frame results in a layering of photographic frames, one on top of the other, creating movement on the cinema screen. With a fixed camera frame, the operator directs the camera in a particular way of looking that I believe is similar to, and connects with, the fixed nature of the drawing support.

The method by which screen movement is created hints at the layering experienced in my drawings, as the marks responding to the figure's movement accumulate on the paper's fixed surface. In a number of these drawings, the accumulation of many marks and layers built upon the drawing's surface obstructs and obscures the reading and the intent of the drawing. The noise of these marks presents a certain aesthetic, and relates to the entropy associated in physics with the arrow of time, the inevitable flow from order to disorder, and the breaking down of matter. In response to this density of mark, I introduced a strategy of both making and erasing marks while looking at and responding to the movement.

As I engaged with erasure as a method of working, my curiosity was aroused by the trace left from an erased line, the residue of touch resonant on the page. I have found that this captivation with



Figure 5 *Response 4670 2012*, ink, and watercolour on paper, 33 x 44cm

erasure and the trace of making is symptomatic of the digital age, where all marks may be erased without trace (Krčma 2010).⁵

Duration and embodiment, the trace of erasure as the evidence of thought and time in drawing, are essential to my understanding of what drawing is. When drawing, the sheet of paper is like a single frame onto which a sense of time passing and movement is created through the act of drawing.

The singularity of this frame with the static nature of a drawing as outcome constantly confronts me. This is perhaps appropriate, for as John Berger writes, "You can't really look at movement without evoking the static in the same way as the minute you consider presence you evoke absence" (Berger 1993, 207).

⁵ Krčma (2010) argues that the impact of the digital on drawing has resulted in an increased interest in duration and embodiment, due to digital's ability to remove any mark without trace: "a richer and more precise conception of drawing's specific capacities can be arrived at by exploring its alignments with, and differences from, other forms of practice... moving away from issues of medium to those of duration and embodiment".



Figure 6 *Response 3079 2011*, charcoal on paper, 54 x 35cm



Figure 7 *Response 2663* 2014, ink and watercolour on paper, 30 x 37cm



Figure 8 *The Fall* 2012, ink and acrylic on paper, 221 x 130cm



Figure 9 *Response 7003* 2013, ink on paper, 49.5 x 28cm



Figure 10 *Response 2700* 2014, ink and watercolour on paper, 25 x 20cm

MARK MAKING

I explored ways of layering my mark-making to simultaneously evoke presence and absence. Using erasure and repetition of marks to imply presence through absence, the erased mark refers to the body that has moved on. In my readings on the eye and perception, I have been interested to find that the way we perceive motion is through the difference between one retinal image and the next. As in cinema, the man running across the screen ‘runs’, or rather his motion is perceived by the eye, as a result of the brain linking the difference between one frame and the next and creating movement.

In both the studio and the drawings, the appearance disappearing became key: the temporal suspension between being and not being, transience. The almost—a state that is not concrete and constructed, but rather one that is transient and incomplete and certainly not static—began to take hold. As a state of movement, the almost is not directional but more vibrational; it swells with the potential of becoming. Potential is an incredibly seductive feeling to engage with; consider the sense of potential experienced when going into an art

supply shop, a hardware store, or even the fruit and vegetable market. The potential of these elements to become something, their appeal to the future, is palpable. The almost, for me, is a particular sensibility or feeling of the mind and has much to do with anticipation.

In my drawing responses, a reciprocal relationship develops between the layers of erased marks that unfold a sense of time. Something other than my drawing response begins to emerge on the page, which allows the flow of time, if not its precise direction, to become evident. The trace of the erased line resonates with new marks that track the movement, resulting in a registration of ‘time passing.’ This reciprocal relationship makes evident the temporal space between one set of marks and the next, such that a dialogue emerges on the paper as the eye travels through the gap between these sets of temporal marks. Erin Manning elegantly describes this gap as ‘the interval’ in *Relationscapes* (Manning 2009, 114).⁶ In my drawings, these intervals become increasingly evident as multiple traces are condensed onto the page in response to the life model’s movement. If one considers the interval to be a spatial representation of time in a drawing, then an important question within the methodology of making these drawings is how to work in and with this temporal interval.

In relation to the interval, the work of Marey, specifically his chronophotographic photographs and late smoke photographs, needs mention. Marey undertook many visual experiments while working in France from the late 1880s to the early 1900s in his quest to learn more about movement. Like Eadweard Muybridge (1830–1904), who was working mainly in America at the same time, Marey was keen to understand the locomotion of humans and animals. While Muybridge’s methodology employed several photographic plates and several cameras, Marey’s experiments involved overlaying multiple exposures on a single plate.

As a result, many painters contemporary to Marey’s time explored the concept of motion revealed through the interval, with Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1911)

⁶ She writes: “Thanks to the persistence of vision, the interval between frames remains imperceptible as such, the moving image apparently a seamless unity across the cuts of the frames. Yet the interval is nonetheless active in the watching: it is a virtual event in which the spectator unwittingly participates. We do not actually see the interval, but we do feel its force as it infolds into the perception of movement moving” (Manning 2009, 114).



Figure 11 iPad Response 0694 2014

and Giacomo Balla's *The Dynamism of a Dog on a Leash* (1912) being obvious examples. Whichever strategy an artist employed, the interval is present and creates a dynamic that speaks to what the eye can and cannot see when looking at a moving subject.

Marey's late smoke images call to attention the embodiment of movement in making. In the photographs, the moving air streams are disturbed when they push up against the stationary object. In drawing, it is my bodily movements and gestures with media that push up against the stationary paper, the gesture of mark making that disturbs the static surface of the paper. Manning writes, "Marey creates an uncanny dance of appearance disappearing. We feel the palpability of the imperceptible. Body, movement, and environment have become one" (2009, 88). In my drawings, Marey's 'dance of appearance disappearing' is reflected in the weight and the hesitation of marks made in response to what is seen and felt. I have increasingly reduced the pigment in the medium by adding greater volumes of water to permit a layering through transparency of mark.

As mentioned above, what became apparent to me in the studio was the performative nature

of drawing. I use the word 'performative' to refer to the physical and gestural manner of creating the works, not to imply an audience at the point of production. Both my gesture involved in the making and the movement I observed made their mark and presence felt on the paper.

The *blur* was an inevitable result of trying to draw movement. From the first drawing in the life studio, the blur was evident as a mark made and then rubbed back. Occasionally, the blur would indicate the direction that the model had travelled over time. The blur was also implicated in the continual impression of appearance disappearing and often arose as a result of media blurring when being erased, as opposed to media blurring while being employed as a deliberate device to imply time/movement.

As I questioned the materiality of the drawings, speed of response was of the essence and I found the iPad to be the most remarkably fast drawing tool (figure 11). Another aspect of iPad drawing that I found suited working within the buffer is its connection to finger painting. I used my fingers to work the surface of the iPad, which I found increased immediacy between my eye and hand.

THE ALMOST

With a moving subject, the visual reciprocity of appearance disappearing evokes a sense of incompleteness in the drawings that engages simultaneously with a state of remembering and anticipation, the past and future. The drawings, through the frame of the almost, exhibit an element of ambiguity and remain transient. This state of transience is found to foster an intimacy in the act of looking or, in Mallarmé's words, 'forces us to enter into that thing'—to embark on a journey that is the cinema, the flow of time 'being looked at', experienced in the drawing.

The almost is an important proposition when drawing as a response to the flow of time. It is seen to operate in the drawings, as the trace and erasure of marks respond to the appearance disappearing of the figure in motion. In the context of my drawings, the word 'almost' evokes a sense of movement and time, whereby being almost defies arrival and completion: there is no end. By maintaining an aspect of almost in relation to time, one is able to keep the journey alive as we are only ever almost there.



Figure 12 Response 2612 2014, watercolour and ink on paper, 41 x 30cm

Thus, almost is the word that for me most clarifies what cinematic drawing might be, and offers insight into drawing the flow of time. Almost is about being on the path and experiencing the journey of time passing as opposed to having arrived at a point of accumulated chronological happenings. Death, the allure of the end, is implied and contained in the almost. It happens when the almost expires.

As time collapses into the drawing's marks, an intensity of looking allows the *flow of experience* to be felt over the object. It evokes the experience of looking at transience over object presence. The works do not tell a story or narrate the passing of time, yet through the marks and their erasure, they evoke the experience of time passing. The drawing responses unavoidably speak to that moment when time runs out, through the frame of the almost, holding the future in the present moment. In looking at the work, then, the viewer is able to feel a sense of mastering the flow of time.

Questioning Michaux's term 'cinematic drawing' has underpinned and informed my extensive body of drawings. In the life-drawing studio, I have and continue to develop methods



Figure 13 Response 2594 2014, ink and watercolour on rice paper, 46 x 46cm

to question how drawing might respond to the flow of time. Drawing directly from the moving life model and trusting my body/hand/eyes to be in the present moment, looking and responding to movement, I have discovered how my eyes tend to operate ahead of my hand. I uncovered through the drawings that when 'blind drawing', my eyes respond and direct my hand before I become conscious of the movement being looked at. I believe the immersed state I feel in making these works is due to my being in what Michael Land (Ings 2007, 139) describes as the buffer—responding to my eyes as opposed to guiding them. That is, reacting with a mark to what my eyes show me in contrast to directing them with my mind on the topic of what to see. The perceptual experience of the eye drives the bodily response.

In attempting to *collapse time* through the process of making works to render the experience of what is felt when looking at the flow of time often seemed to be a futile and impossible activity. I have to come to realise that what maintains my working towards a deeper understanding of cinematic drawing are those moments when I almost glimpse a sensation of the flow of time in

a work. When working fast, with my eyes chasing the moving figure, I experience an intensity of process that has forced me to make marks from within the buffer.

Reflecting on my drawings, I have become aware of the various methodologies of working that framed the ambiguous, the imprecise, and the transient in each work. Through the gesture embodied in the mark, the blur, the trace, and the erasure of marks created when drawing movement, I was alerted to the interval, a spatial representation of time as duration and embodiment. Each temporal interval generated an ambiguity between presence and absence, the works balancing in a state of the almost. Drawing movement, the reciprocity of appearance disappearing produced a sense of incompleteness in the drawings that engaged simultaneously with a state of remembering and anticipating, with the past and future, and created openness in the works as a response to the passing of time.

The drawn result permits both viewer and the artist (in retrospect) a sense of mastering the flow of time, as each mark informed by movement holds in its gesture the awareness of appearance disappearing, a past moment contained in anticipation of a future moment.

By existing in a state of the almost, a work is able to continue living and breathing and remain transient. I consider that visual poetry is cultivated in this state. When a viewer enters the intimate space of the work and engages with the almost, they enter or embark on a journey that is the cinema of the work: a cinematic experience that is the time and movement of the work and that is not bound by narrative. The *almost* evident in the marks of the drawings encourage the viewers *to enter into that thing*, the intimate space of an artwork. The artwork is personalised by the viewer—not in a defining sense of meaning, object, or narrative. Rather, by immersing themselves in the time and space of the work, the viewer allows a work to exist, move, travel, and be in and over time with them. The artwork finds its almost expression in the viewer's act of perception and it is through being viewed that the cinema of an artwork may exist.

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STUDIO RESEARCH ISSUE #4

Published by

Octivium Press
Queensland College of Art
Griffith University
Brisbane, Queensland
ISSN 1839-6429

Executive Editor

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Design by Liveworm

Creative Director: David Sargent
www.liveworm.com.au

Production Details

Set in Futura and Newzald
Cover on Ecostar 250gsm
Text on Ecostar Silk 150gsm
Page size (240 x 168mm) selected
to minimise waste during the
offset printing process

For submission guidelines see
www.studioresearch.com.au

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