


Visual
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Draw to Perform² symposium, NUM³ER London, 16–17 May 2015

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When the image is new, the world is new.

– Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

The *Draw to Perform 2* symposium curated by artist Ram Samocha was a live Drawing Performance festival from 16–17 May 2015, enlightening the action of the drawing medium as an exploding tool for contemporary art performers.

Set in the new trendy Deptford area of London, Creekside is an unavoidable art hub. Right there at NUM³ER in the rectangular courtyard ran a long, beautiful white wall by the entrance. At the end of the wall the curator left thick pieces of coloured chalk, for the use of passers-by, thereby creating an ongoing participatory piece in the public domain and an invitation to the up-coming symposium. Naïve drawings of amateurs and children start to be appear in chalk as graffiti but deeply meaningful in their essence.

Through centuries, drawing excelled at being an ultimate tool of ‘representation’, to embody reality and the realm. From the astonishing remaining traces of the first caveman to today’s discipline, ‘the gesture’ and its meaningful resonance on our vision of the world has always been the subject of critical discourse.

Drawing, as a language in its own right, has been the conductor for many twentieth-century art movements, challenging the notion of art’s concept and role, form, support material, space, cultural languages, activism, and most of all reflecting on our own physicality and mortality.

This two-day symposium brought on board international artists that use drawing as part of their versatile body of work. The artists arrived to a point where creating a line across a plane becomes a form and an object, an extension of their bodies thus transformed into a living sculpture. Most of the artists present at *Draw to Perform* were interacting with real space, which reflected and reinforced their performance as a fundamental mapping process.

Just as you entered, a video projection presented all the artists with some of their past performances. Once inside, you were submerged into a studious atmosphere where silence was covered by gentle, eerie scratching noises and the sound of the art videos playing.

Diving into the frenzied space, artists were doing their durational pieces in unison. Some of the viewers might have felt overwhelmed by the simultaneity of the actions and thought more of a small art happenings fair, but quickly realized the subtly behind each work and the global visual impact of such a structured continuum event.



Figure 1: Holly Victoria Mattheos and Bertrand Flachot, *Draw to Perform 2* (2015). Photograph: Marco Berardi.



Figure 2: River Lin, *Draw to Perform 2* (2015). Photograph: Marco Berardi.

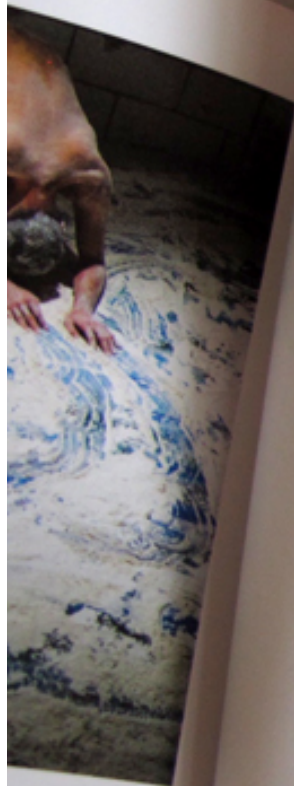
This one-day durational process actually showed metaphorically how time is embedded in the production of most improvised structured visual art forms. The second day brought the most vivid part of the symposium discussions, a time for a proper exchange to give value to our experience and discover the artists behind the works.

In summary, a well-balanced show with its strongest moments and its uncertainty too: a map of ongoing experimentations and collaborations where drawings became much more than a few lines on a plane. *Draw to Perform* prioritized how the performing art pieces had resonated and responded to each other. The artists are encapsulating a new vision, a new movement of forms, a new history of 'traces' in the archeological sense; known as both the core of what drawings are and a blossoming branch of performing arts.

Contributor details

Geraldine Gallavardin is a conceptual French artist, curator, musician and actress based in London. She holds two MA in Fine Art, one from Les Beaux-Arts de Grenoble, France (1997) and one from Chelsea College of Fine Art & Design, London (1999). She is the founder of the platform Lab451London – www.lab451london.com. She has exhibited internationally in art centres, galleries, art biennales and in the UK at the ICA, the South London Gallery, in-situ by the Tate Modern/Serpentine Gallery. Geraldine was part of a broadcast on Resonance FM for the *The News Agents* on 4 April 2015, curated by artist Jude Cowan Montague.

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Photograph: