

Now, Drawing...

by Dr Irene Barberis, artist, Director Global Centre for Drawing and Metasenta Publications, Co-Director Gallery Langford120 and Senior Lecturer RMIT University, Melbourne

Irene Barberis, *Now Drawing*, 2014, historiated illumination, carbonic sheet, posca paint pen, 25 x 25 cm.

The concept of Drawing is akin to a visionary process; it has an origin, a point of inception, and from here one's ideas travel and are, in most cases, open ended — there are no rules; drawing can be as minimal as a breath and as complex as the wave structures and recordings of the ocean. Drawing is a kinesthetic; a movement between points, a connection, a recognition and gesture of any idea, mark, trace, line, symbol, shape, medium, space or surface — everyone has their own 'language of the mark'.

Irene Barberis¹

Drawing

I often wonder about drawing breath. The point where it funnels into the mouth or nose — the great space around us full of invisible fluids, molecules, atoms, neutrinos, and on and on. If I draw breath I intentionally move air from one 'space' to another, my lungs — I could say — have made a 'breath drawing'. If I exhale onto the shower door and shake my head I have drawn with breath, or if I blow onto dust and film its movement from stasis to kinetic then it would be a dust and air drawing. Anything that moves between points can be a drawing, and its medium can be anything. Much has been written on drawing in the past twenty years expanding and clarifying what we mean — there is the series of Vitamin D publications, *The Primacy of Drawing*, and a recent publication, *The Drawn Word*, published by Studio International for two international universities — a conflation of art and academic text and image. Notably the emphasis is on writing as drawing, a departure from more traditional ideas of the role of 'drawing' in art practice. Now we have drawing as a transdisciplinary practice across all forms, where most outputs in relation to the mark are observed as drawing. As a curatorial premise for the 2012 *Contemporary Australian Drawing #2*² exhibition in London, 80 artists were asked to respond to two texts, two ideas by French philosophers Michel Butor and Serge Tisserone that 'All writing is drawing' and 'The space of writing, what is that?'³. All artists responded generously, seriously

considering the propositions.

A wonderful example of writing as drawing are the communications in postcard form that Sol Lewitt sent to his friends, a continual use of the format as a text and image drawing — a present continuum of the working drawing from him wherever he was. British artist Anne Lydiat lives on a boat on the Thames and amongst other works makes drawings from the sway of the tides, allowing the pendulum swing of the material generated by the waves' movements to be the instrument of mark-making — a drawing machine!

What is a good drawing?

One of the more interesting small publications on drawing, in my opinion, is the book *The Good Drawing*, coming out of the University of Arts London in their Bright Series. It asks the question 'what is a good drawing?' Stephen Farthing, a collaborator and the Rootstein Hopkins Professor of Drawing at the UAL, speaks of the sundial as an example of 'good drawing' — it has been around for about four thousand years and has been developed conceptually by multiple authors⁴, a shadow 'drawing machine'. My contribution endeavored to elucidate the difference between a 'good' drawing and a 'great' drawing:

The artist is witness to the selection of ... (idea, beauty, phenomenon, light, time, conviction, pathos etc), the drawing is a 'signifier', a residue of the artist's perceptions at that time, and the viewer, in a trans-

historical way, is witness to the drawing. In this sense a good drawing carries the artist's intentions and visual knowledge succinctly, allowing others to experience their insights. It is the poetry of the mark-making, the intuitive response to the visible, invisible and conceptual, which elevates the ordinary into the extraordinary.

A 'great drawing', or a 'great work of art', transforms you; it shifts your being, your thinking, emotions, and perceptions. You are transfigured by the interaction — you move away, knowing that you are altered, your perceptions changed and your thinking expanded — it is liberating or it can be most confronting — either way you have entered a meta-space.

Technical prowess, obsessive outworking of vision, inspired moments, deep perceptual insights, clarity of vision (to

name a few), translated into marks or movements, produce in the viewer a neurological shift, a 'psychochoreography'⁵ mirroring what the artist has experienced. The drawing is the conduit whereby the viewer is able to become a participator and sharer in the translation, response and outcome of the one who has drawn, be it on a cave wall, an altar, a sketchbook from the Renaissance period, a wall from the 12th century or 21st century, or a pattern of equations — this for me is good drawing; a 'great' drawing changes you.⁶

What makes a great drawing exhibition?

So many drawing shows, especially group exhibitions, tend to roll out anything on paper in lead — the urge to have a 'traditional' lexicon for drawing



Anne Lydiat, *Arctic Pebbles / 7, detail 7*, 2012, ink on paper, 21.0 x 29.5 cm.



Sol Lewitt, *Postcard, Sol Lewitt to Irene Barberis, 1984*, postcard, pen, stamp, 10.0 x 14.5 cm.

Dr Irene Barberis, as Director of the International Research Centre, Metasenta ©, commissioned the book *Contemporary Australian Drawing 1*, authored by Dr Janet McKenzie with essays by Dr Christopher Heathcote and Irene Barberis, published by Macmillan Art Publishing (2012).

is often at the root. While this is meritorious, it can by virtue fail, as a result perhaps of a subtle generalising of traditional means often found in contemporary education, arts education and by the very pace at which we now live. Traditional drawing, historical and representational, developed through thousands of hours of the artist's immersion, studying techniques and finding new ways of working with a lineage of traditional means. I think if one is going to focus on a more academic form of 'drawing' then one is required to climb out of quick fix contemporary mediocrity as it can suffocate direct perceptual skill.

On Line: Drawing through the Twentieth Century at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, which included William Forsythe, the contemporary American choreographer working out of Germany, was a fantastic group exhibition, perhaps even a 'great' drawing exhibition.⁷

Movement & text in drawing

Movement and kinesthetics have been represented in major drawing exhibitions recently, works which re-form ideas explored in the sixties and more specifically works by William Forsythe. He speaks of a vocabulary of *room writing* where the body is used as an instrument to 'write' the room, drawing geometries with the body in space and responding to these forms within the dancer's kinesphere. His *Universal writings* use the body in a systematic 'group of givens' to form 'letters' spatially in cursive script and block letters

that are 'split open and explode into the room'.⁸ Here the language and boundaries of both writing and drawing blur to incorporate movement as a form of 'writing as drawing'. We are in effect in 'a space of writing' or a 'space of drawing'.

He says: 'What we do differently from traditional ballet is to focus on the beginning of a movement rather than on the end.'

The drawing is firstly a 'thought' / 'response', the registering of a possibility which excites the kinetic motoring of the nervous system and articulates movement outworked in the body. It could be drawing, writing, dance... we choose the mode of expression — the internal mechanics organise themselves around our decisions for expression. What we possibly see in the mark/ movement/language is in fact the residue or outworking of the internal choreography, or the 'psychochoreography' as I have termed it, which we all mostly take for granted. In something such as 'drawing', both micro and macro movement are entwined.⁹

A global drawing dialogue

In 2012 Metasenta¹⁰ commissioned Janet McKenzie to author *Contemporary Australian Drawing 1*, an extension of her previous 1986 survey on Australian drawing. Its development was a reaction to the paucity of publications on drawing in Australia, and indeed a general lack of knowledge of Australian artists' works internationally.¹¹ It was envisioned that the publication would have an international distribution and be

a relatively in-depth exploration of a large number of Australian artists' 'drawing' practices. The 'CAD' set of drawing exhibitions, the latest of which represented 94 Australian artists in New York at the New York Studio School, addressed the same issue.

Exhibiting Australian artworks globally requires abundant finance, and thus the need for a strong commercial return, especially if there is not a great deal of philanthropy involved. New pathways are evolving however; for example, utilising the university systems and networks — a global pathway through the universities is a cost effective way of engendering dialogue. Another way of creating momentum and dialogue is through drawing centres — there are many around the globe, however three come to mind. The first and smallest is the Global Centre for Drawing¹², currently situated in Gallery Langford120 in Melbourne. Its development over the last four years has seen drawing exhibitions, dialogues/lab collaborations and conferences in the Middle East, USA and the UK with more envisioned in locations ranging from Tibet to Lima. Its newly developing international 'Affiliates' program creates new opportunities (actual and virtual) for Australian artists.

The Centre for Drawing at the University of the Arts London, originally housed at Wimbledon College of Art, and The Drawing Centre, New York, the largest of the centres, have strong and lively presences in the hearts of London and New York; both nexuses for artists working with drawing and experimentation.

Drawing in this issue of IMPRINT

When asked to be guest editor of the drawing component of *IMPRINT* magazine, I reflected on my role as an artist, what drawing is to me and how I see this perspective in relation to the social contexts and shifts we are experiencing universally, in intercultural dialogues, universities, drawing centres and publications, and in the voices of artists on drawing. It was important to have each piece written by a committed artist; for the articles to be understood not only as pieces of informative text but also as texts coming from a genuine place of engagement with drawing. The aim was to give an expansive overview of many elements of drawing, local and international and to give information about some of the great drawing centres operating now.

Dr Janet McKenzie, Australian writer, painter and Deputy Editor of *Studio International*, living in Scotland, was invited to write on the intersection of drawing and printmaking, taking a small selection of artists from the UK and Australia to explore this movement.

Australian artist and academic Dr Domenico de Clario had the invitation to share his views on drawing in 2014. In 1976 Domenico curated *drawing: some definitions*, an important early Australian drawing exhibition at the Ewing and George Paton Gallery in the University of Melbourne¹³. As a student I was invited to be part of this pivotal

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show where handwritten catalogue and packaging took preference over glass and frame. He shares thoughts on his drawing and place in 'drawing and something about contemporaneous time in canning street'.

Godwin Bradbeer, multi Dobell Prize for Drawing winner and finalist at least ten times, artist and university colleague, was asked to share his perceptions of the image and its drawn counterpart over a time/life span, and has written an insightful piece titled 'Art and the Fugitive Image'.

Australian artist Jayne Dyer, based in China, writes on China, Sri Lanka and India, selecting an artist to represent each country. Brazilian artist and philosopher Dr Marcelo Guimarães Lima explores drawing in major Brazilian artist Flávio de Carvalho's work.

Professor Stephen Farthing RA, highly regarded British artist, has written on The Centre for Drawing based at the University of the Arts London, which he was instrumental in developing. Living in both New York and London, his works are widely exhibited and his numerous books on art also highly sought after.

The drawing segment concludes with a transcription from a recent interview I made with the Director of The Drawing Center in New York, Brett Littman. Brett was formerly the Deputy Director of P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center and has been the Executive Director of The Drawing Center since 2007. He is also an active art, craft, architecture and design critic, is a member of AICA/USA (International Art Critic Association) and has written numerous catalogue essays and articles for a wide variety of international publications and museums. •

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drawing and something about contemporaneous icon time down canning street

by **domenico de clario**, interdisciplinary artist, musician, writer and educator

i'm walking along canning street late afternoon early autumn and yes there is still a public telephone box on the corner of elgin for ten years i lived nearby in faraday street on the top floor of an old warehouse for many of those years i had no telephone and i used to walk around to this public box to make whatever calls i needed to i keep expecting that the box is going to go missing one day but every time i drive or walk past it's still there i have thought that throughout melbourne's metropolitan area and beyond that too (i can think of geelong and ballarat strangways and the dandenong ranges cape paterson all along the peninsula to frankston lorne too) there's a network of public telephones boxes that over the last forty years i've made calls from some on which my life and those of others around me depended others simply to organize practical affairs like where to pick up a child after school or where a particular cricket ground or squash court was located some were pleading calls some in which i heard good things told me tenderly occasionally ones in which i was the bearer of bad news i've at times thought that i'd like to get a map and pinpoint them all all of them every single one of them and then join them up in a drawing with lines variously coloured to represent the reasons they were made like red for anger and blue for love yellow for pragmatic reasons black for melancholy grey for tears and so on and then see what figure might emerge from that network of multi-coloured lines to try and understand whether the crisscrossing made any sense whether all those urgent reasons for suddenly stopping the car for jingling the change impatiently sometimes for desperately asking strangers if they had a particular coin missing from my hand had somehow constructed a figure that from the perspective the years afford (extravagantly generous isn't it that particular gift of hindsight that time freely bestows on us when it's least needed) might provide a kind of identikit drawing of one's life or rather one's reasons for living that life jorge luis borges inquires as to what might constitute a *divine mind* when he wonders whether the steps that we take from birth to death trace a figure in time a figure inconceivable to us but not he affirms not to a *divine mind* who immediately grasps this form in space and time (we might perceive this figure as a drawing of contemporaneous time in a dream) as we might a triangle or a



domenico de clario, gift (for m.d.d.c.), performance/drawing, lorne pier, lorne sculpture biennale 2014

drawing dreamed of in contemporaneous time this form borges further speculates might have a given function in the economy of the universe but putting aside the *divine mind* for a moment what about what might constitute our minds? i wonder whether as i suggested above arriving at a final drawing by tracing the pattern resulting from joining together the exact location of all the public telephones we've ever used according to the reasons why we have used them (the ones we can't remember clearly don't matter we must allow our selective memories to dictate the terms of the game) might shed some little light on how we might arrive at a form that in some way describes the self perhaps this resulting figure might at some point have a given function in the economy of our lives i prefer though after all to think of that figure as a kind of architectural drawing for a dwelling in time *not* in space i could then sleep in the cocoon defined by the locations of all the calls i made during the seventies (only for pragmatic reasons) eat within the eighties locations (melancholy calls) watch television within the nineties locations (crying calls) and dream within the non-chronological space created by all the calls that have yet to come this space is defined by the weaving together in time of only those phone boxes that i will stand outside of during the rest of my life while holding the required coins in my tightly closed hand folded inside my pocket not letting on to other potential users or even to any casual passer-by that i'm waiting to make the call i most want to make that i'm waiting there to make the only call i've ever wanted to make the call i will never make i am still walking along canning i suddenly get to fivefour eight this used to be a grocery store known through the ninetensixties as a 'mixed business' i lived a few doors away and would spend most days making drawings inside a small first floor studio i had no money apart from the little i earned through casual labouring jobs when i did have some i would walk in great hungry anticipation down to the 'mixed business' the owner was greek from the

peloponnese i think he had light coloured hair and blue eyes and spoke very quietly and slowly he kept many cheeses in a glass-topped counter my favourite was kassiri silently he would very deliberately wrap the small piece i could afford that particular day in beautifully opaque greaseproof paper i would walk home carrying the precious parcel with great tenderness once upstairs i would unwrap it and then break its contents into small irregular pieces eating it as i drew for some reason i ritually kept all the wrapping paper smoothing it out as soon as i had finished eating and placing it flat under a pile of books one evening years later i found the wrappings and suddenly began to use them as drawing paper building on the stains that the cheese had serendipitously left in certain places only yesterday i was going through my drawers and i unexpectedly found two of these drawings and immediately sat down and closed my eyes opening them again i find myself outside threefour eight with the same faded coloured chalk drawings on the pavement and the fireplace inside and the balcony above with shining snail trail tracery embossed all over the pale pink brickwork and of course she didn't remember any of it but she recalled seeing a little yellow fireplace at a certain point in the film inside ivan rublev's little falling-down house 'this fireplace burns the logs right at waist level' she told me 'and the monks warm their hands and backs as they stand near it and talk endlessly about drawing and painting icons.' i don't remember seeing that fireplace at all in the film or even monks talking about drawing of course i say to her haltingly of course you know i'm not in the least interested in art don't you? not in any art not in old masters' painting nor in any contemporary art and especially not in performance art whatever that might be and certainly least of all in clever art or even in upside-down bear art nor in-between art no im not now not ever have been interested in art but yes oh yes i am i am very very interested in drawing

Art and the Fugitive Image

by Godwin Bradbeer, Melbourne-based artist and occasional writer of poetry and essays

Sometime in 1972 I stood in the aisle of a city bookshop flicking through a contemporary art journal and I chanced upon an image that arrested me in the moment, more profoundly than I might have thought at that time. The image was being used to advertise a forthcoming art auction and it was a frontal-gazing face by an artist unfamiliar to me.

I considered buying the journal in order to take possession of this haunting image but my economies were modest so I made no purchase and left with the intent of researching the artist and locating the picture wherever else I might find it reproduced. I suppose the picture of that pallid somewhat exotic face was a portrait, but it seemed to me to be enigmatic beyond the expectations of the usual convention of the portrait.

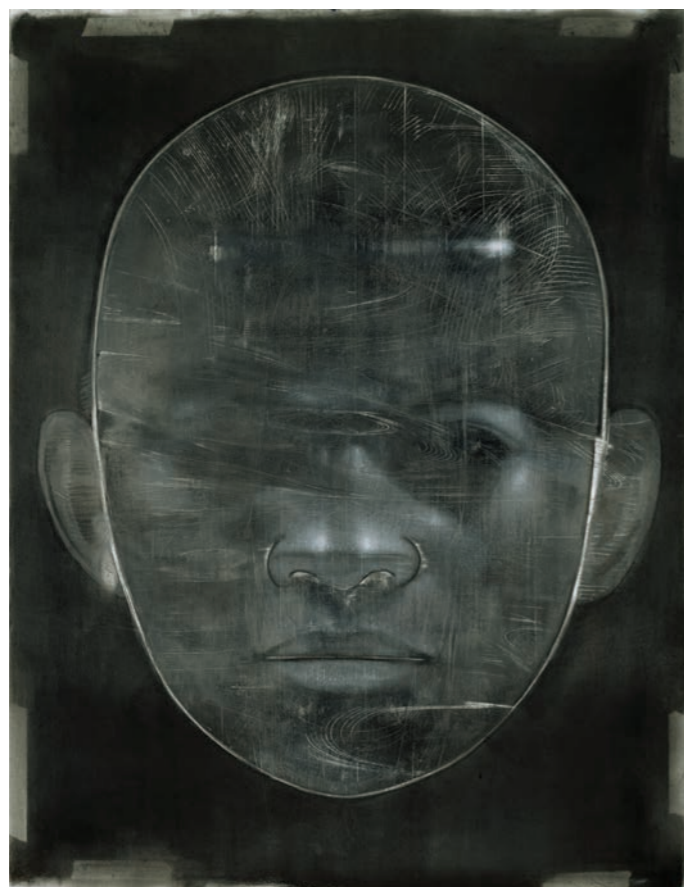
I found out a little about the artist. He could reasonably and conveniently be placed within the broader circumference of the fin de siècle circle generally referred to as symbolists.

In the more than forty years since that encounter I have only once held a book on the artist in my hands and this was a rare and irregular publication, and it did not include that remembered image.

That portrait, I have not seen since.

The mild anxiety that remained in the void of that image subsided in time as my own work, particularly my photographs of that early decade, acquired aspects of not only that chiaroscuro and the smoky sfumato but a sense that the subject was profoundly elsewhere; caught in aspic, caught under glass, caught in emulsion, caught on the retina, caught in the moment, caught in the mind somewhere else, secure from time.

In the early 1980s I shifted away from photography to an imagery pursued principally through drawing. The reason for this was, and remains, critically important for me and for my art. In its



Godwin Bradbeer, *Imago Ex Nihilo*, 2005, chinagraph, pastel dust and silver oxide, 170 x 133 cm.

conception and in its execution the subject must be accessible to a total interrogation of its raison d'être. This can invite a purposeful severity and an analytical brutality that requires distance, even anonymity. The freedom to do this was for me disallowed by empathy, intimacy and the identity of the subject. The responsibility for the emergent image demanded absolute authorship and not the paparazzic kleptomania of the photographer/artist, whether that be of high or low culture or worthy or unworthy intent.

Personality, personhood, gender, ethnicity might be collateral victim to such an artistic quest. The neutrality, even the sterility of the immaculate and multiple image — of photography and digital imagery — is oppositional for me to the unique and flawed nature of

each individual, artist or model. As a man and as an artist I am anything but immaculate and additional to this, despite the high value I place upon self-knowledge, I remain still essentially fugitive to myself.

Longing, yearning is at the heart of art making. Frustration is a significant part of the powerhouse of artistic urgency.

As a figurative artist in an era of abstraction and conceptual art my figurative subject was like contraband. In my experience modernism was not distinguished by its freedoms as it may have been at the start of the twentieth century but by its restrictions and its exclusivity. Modernism was an elite, and security was tight. (On the other hand post modernism is open house and security is slack.) The obscure object of my desiring was not only fugitive, it

was blackballed by modernist orthodoxy.

Nevertheless I was, and remain, actually very conditioned by the intellectual architecture of my era and my artistic circumstances. Something of minimalism and certainly something of the existentialists got through to me.

I was terrified of a seepage of romance into my work and in a flight from sentimentality I avoided the human visage for almost fifteen years; my compromise was the profile with its non engagement of emotional exchange. Toward the turn of the century — my own fin de siècle — my subject was upon me like a seduction.

In 1998 I made a large drawing of a frontal gazing face, somewhat suspended within a void, the image sufficiently large that the experience for the viewer would seem immersive. I took the word 'Imago' as the title for this work. The 'imago' refers to an idealised image of self or other, formed early in life and retained into adulthood. It might also be the most definitive and distinctive phase of the physical life of person or creature.

This drawing and the subsequent forty plus versions became a composite of many intentions and many influences, not least the millions of faces encountered in my life. But I was aware of a slight reorientation to my figurative practice and purpose.

In studio exile circa the turn into this century I struggled with a fourth or a fifth version of the elusive gazing face and recognised that a lineage of images had been dormant in my mind for thirty years and owed not only their existence but their clarity to that distant and obscure memory.

The need to ever see the source — the image of origin — had passed. •

Godwin Bradbeer will be represented by James Makin Gallery at Melbourne Art Fair 2014 (13 – 17 August at Royal Exhibition Buildings, Carlton).

Contemporary Australian Drawing

by Dr Janet McKenzie

Janet McKenzie is an Australian artist and writer, living in Scotland. She was co-editor of *Studio International* (2000-2013) and her books include: *Drawing in Australia: Contemporary Images and Ideas* (1986), *Arthur Boyd: Art and Life* (2000) and *Contemporary Australian Drawing* (2012).



The book *Contemporary Australian Drawing* (Metasenta/Macmillan Australia, 2012) included the work of key printmakers, such as Bea Maddock's *Terra Spiritus*, 'a semiotic tour de force', and Jörg Schmeisser's delicate abstracted images of Antarctica, indicating the proliferation of new techniques and the blurring of boundaries where traditional printmaking techniques are concerned. Many times over I found that some of the most exquisite drawings I looked at back in 2008 – 2009 were the works of those artists trained in printmaking. I was curious to explore the relationship between the focussed processes of printmaking and the immediacy of the drawn line.

When printmakers draw directly onto plates their interaction with the plate at state proof stage and with manifold processes engenders sophisticated imagery that does not always maintain the immediacy of the drawn line. Lithography captures the grainy drawing on to stone or metal plate, as does the intaglio technique of drypoint. Arthur Boyd, who made thousands of drawings in the 1940s when painting materials were scarce due to the war, in the 1960s turned to etching and lithography and drew very little on paper, channelling that same impulse for mark-making into printmaking. He had expert assistance for

editioning, but drypoints were among his most important works in terms of invention and imagination. Drypoint, he explained, was a drawing in which he 'tried harder'.¹ By that he was referring to a sense of occasion that he experienced faced with a fresh copper plate — each mark, he explained, assumed greater significance.

The unique woodblock painting methods of Cressida Campbell produce not an edition of prints but a single image. In this she is not a printmaker but an artist who employs printmaking techniques. Drawing occupies a pivotal role in her image making where her exemplary skills are used to capture a range of subjects; it is for Campbell

the skeleton or bones of a picture and although colour can completely alter a composition's balance, the drawing and design have to be right or usually the painting, or in my case the woodblock, does not work. It is the structure or scaffolding for a picture. I have always drawn in a linear way, never tonally and always from life. I feel the essence of a subject from life and look for the detail one sees which you don't get from a photograph. You can take what you want from real life.²

Cressida Campbell makes perceptual drawings initially in

a sketchy form, directly onto plywood. The sketch forms the basis of a more detailed drawing, which is then carved.

I always draw directly on to wood with a rough composition before deciding on the right one. Then it goes through a process of endless editing until I think the design is right. I often put in too much detail and get rid of objects to simplify the composition.³

We Refuse to Become Victims (2006) is the product of a collaborative drawing and printmaking project between three countries which sought to address the urgent issues of global politics. Instigated in Canberra at the print collective Culture Kitchen, the project came about in response to the acute political instability in East Timor in 2006. *We Refuse to Become Victims* is an innovative example of collaboration. The immediacy of mark-making through print techniques and sewn lines, between three geographically separate places, enabled a more successful dialogue to be established between individuals who might not normally find a cultural or political voice. Mark-making in societies in transition is thus a form of empowerment.

Remarkable energy and dedication characterise the art practice of Gosia Włodarczak in which drawing is used to index

her performative art, the events and processes of experience. Since she settled in Australia from Poland in 1996, she has made an innovative contribution to drawing in Australia and to contemporary art practice. Trained as a printmaker, Gosia has devised a number of ambitious performance-inspired projects. Visually, works such as *Safety Zone Szczecin*, were part of and an outcome of Performers' Night in her native Poland in 2008. A spectacular work, it shares with many of her projects a formidable energy and is executed on a large scale (160 x 510 cm). Although they are not primarily formal art objects in themselves, Gosia values the process over the finished product, a central characteristic of printmaking. •

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2. Cressida Campbell, email to Janet McKenzie, 28 July 2009.
3. Ibid.

image:

Gosia Włodarczak, *Safety Zone Szczecin*, an outcome of the performance with public participation during the 43rd Performance Festival KONTRAPUNKT: 'Performers' Night' at OFFicyna place for art, Szczecin, Poland, 11pm-1am, 18-19 April 2008. Participatory performance drawing, pigment marker, acrylic on canvas; diptych, overall dimensions: 160 x 510 cm (left: 160 x 170, right: 160 x 340 cm). Photo: Longin Sarnecki; image courtesy the artist and Fehily Contemporary.

From Thought to Action: Drawing as the Catalyst for Contemporary Printmaking in the UK

by Dr Janet McKenzie

Janet McKenzie is an Australian artist and writer, living in Scotland. She was co-editor of *Studio International* (2000-2013) and her books include: *Drawing in Australia: Contemporary Images and Ideas* (1986), *Arthur Boyd: Art and Life* (2000) and *Contemporary Australian Drawing* (2012).

The London exhibition *Kupferstichkabinett: Between Thought and Action*,¹ made reference to the German term 'Kupferstichkabinett', used to describe print and drawing collections within a museum and referring to the closeness of the two forms historically. The word 'kabinett' originally came from the small space within a castle where personal collections were kept before the advent of public museums. In the 20th century prints assumed a more public role, the graphic impulse employing affordable processes such as linocut and embracing the dedication and fervour of expressionism in Germany, in particular.

Today, in the 21st century, the tone of political engagement and individual self-determinism in art is strongly informed by

the Germanic tradition: Joseph Beuys's alchemical approach imbued his prolific output of woodcuts and etchings. For Beuys:

Thinking is form: Drawing is the first visible form in my works... the first visible thing of the form of the thought, the changing point from the invisible powers to the visible thing... It's really a special kind of thought, brought down onto a surface, be it flat or be it rounded, be it a solid support like a blackboard or be it a flexible thing like paper or leather or parchment, or whatever kind of surface.²

Georg Baselitz's chainsaw woodcuts and large linocuts amplify the traditional scale of the medium. Thomas Klipper's woodcuts are made by chiseling into a parquet floor, inking up

using house paint and laying fabric onto the floor before hanging the works like banners. Franz Ackermann, ostensibly a painter, cuts into surfaces with the sureness of a master etcher and combines a range of disciplines in his collaged, painted installation works. As a student of Sigmar Polke, his work is multilayered in meaning, method and ambitious in conceptual terms. These artists can all be seen to have inherited the first expressionist artists' passion for socially engaged art in which drawing achieved a new level of urgency. Like contemporary art practice, their work was based on experimentation and collectivity. Subsequently the work of Joseph Beuys, for whom drawing was pivotal, and for whom the distinctions between traditional print techniques and mark making became less and less important, continues to exert a strong influence on artists working in the present.

Prior to the advent of photomechanical or photographic processes, drawing was the essence of printmaking. Artists drew (and many still do) directly onto stone, metal plate or block. There was in addition a high level of drawing skill displayed by specialised artisans from the wood blocks cut by the *formeschneiders* of 15th-century Germany to the chromatists in 19th-century France who translated the work of the Impressionists through extended series of hand-drawn lithographic stones. Throughout the history of print, artists have appropriated or adapted print processes to meet their personal vision. Woodblocks may now be drawn with a chainsaw and intaglio plates with an angle-grinder. Arthur Watson, current President of the Royal Scottish Academy, who set up the Peacock Print Workshop in Aberdeen in 1974, observes:

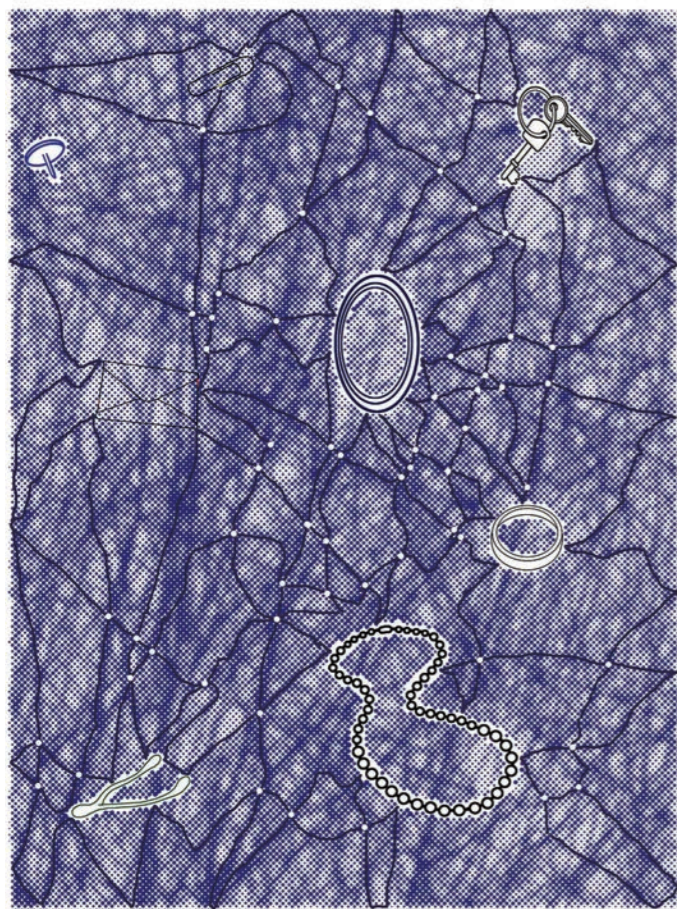
Computer-aided printmaking has evolved at an extraordinary pace over the past 15 years, although the application of computers to fine art began in the 1950s. At the London Institute in 1995 a research program into the application of computer technology to printmaking was established, headed by Paul Coldwell. By layering and combining imagery and method, the final product comes to resemble a lithograph or screenprint. Coldwell clarifies the relationship between drawing and his multifarious printmaking processes:

While printmaking can successfully fuse the autographic with the photographic or digital, for many it is primarily a drawn medium. It would be hard to appraise the drawings of Honoré Daumier without his lithographs or those of Tracey Emin without her signature monotypes.³

Collaboration is central to Watson's works — he finds it a most natural way to work. This has its roots in village life, fishing communities and traveller communities — individual achievement is dependent upon other peoples' skills and contribution just as much as the talent of one. Particular superstitions and traditions relate an individual's action to the existence of the whole. Printmaking studios and foundries are examples in contemporary art practice of a collaborative spirit, born of necessity, and dictated by traditional methods. For Watson the making of art and artefacts is a natural extension of the need to understand one's heritage, whereas in the 20th and 21st centuries a global culture overpowers and destroys indigenous ways. He addresses the issues that relate to cultural identity and survival in a personal and unique manner, through collaborative methods and organisational means that capture the very spirit of a peripheral culture in the twenty-first century.

Computer-aided printmaking has evolved at an extraordinary pace over the past 15 years, although the application of computers to fine art began in the 1950s. At the London Institute in 1995 a research program into the application of computer technology to printmaking was established, headed by Paul Coldwell. By layering and combining imagery and method, the final product comes to resemble a lithograph or screenprint. Coldwell clarifies the relationship between drawing and his multifarious printmaking processes:

Paul Coldwell, *A Mapping in Blue*, 2013, screenprint, edition of 20, image size: 76.5 x 57.0 cm. Printed at Edinburgh Printmakers.



Beth Fisher RSA, *Dark Vigil*, Vigil Series I, 1999, etching, collagraph, relief, unique print, 121 x 61 cm.

work he draws upon the literary imagery of Keats, Blake, Malory and Bunyan. Burne-Jones is a seminal figure for Le Brun, whom he considers as a proto-Surrealist. In his own painting Le Brun's imagery hovers between the figurative and abstraction. His enigmatic archetypal forms (horse, branch, shield, tree, tower) carry equal weight to the formal language employed. There is a constant interrogation of painting itself, yet the works can be seen to occupy an awkward position in relation to the contemporary. Two ambitious etching projects seem simultaneously anachronistic and completely natural for Le Brun. *50 etchings* made in 1991 is a distillation of the painter's oeuvre in a systematic and elegiac form, showing surface pattern, pleasure in the creation of cross-hatched surfaces, glorious abstraction, the emergence of figures from a Whistlerian fog, figures that dance and push against the picture plane. It is one of the finest bodies of graphic work produced using a full range of methods: thick velvety soft ground lines, open bite, aquatint underpinned by the immediacy and sureness of drawing. Drawing and printmaking for Christopher Le Brun can be seen as one and the same activity.

Techniques for the transference of engraved designs onto china were perfected in the 18th century by Josiah Spode. Following a residency at the Spode factory, Charlotte Hodes, who trained in printmaking at the Slade in the 1970s, applies the printmaking/transfer methods in 3D, using a combination of collage ('drawing with a knife') to create elaborate pottery works that seek to interrogate design principles from an irreverent feminist standpoint.⁵

Grayson Perry also uses transfer methods for his unique pottery urns, combining the drawn line, which he applies directly to the surface of the pot, with traditional methods of transferring design from engraving to china surface. He also makes iconic etchings, not by drawing directly on to the plate but with a rapidograph pen on to acetate that is then (using photo etching methods) transferred to the metal plate. Drawing in ink on acetate is practical for Perry and more portable and fluid than using an etching tool on metal.⁶

American-born Beth Fisher has lived in Aberdeen for over

30 years and worked at Peacock Visual Arts as a printer. Her own figurative drawing is devoted to the nude; she makes intaglio prints using multiple plates. *Vigil I* (1999-2000), 'a suite of unique colour prints using the same four plates, inking them differently and altering their sequence of printing and overprinting', addressed the ramifications of serious illness in her husband Nick and the desperate uncertainty and fear she experienced: 'Reprinting the same image again and again confirms and prolongs the body's existence'.⁷ She explains:

If drawing involves a sequence of making line, tone and texture, erasing and adding to build a surface, then intaglio extends that whole process. The type of line-making tool (engraving or etching), the type of metal (or other matrix), the type of acid, the type of resist, the repeat stopping out, exposure to acid or abrasion, the scraping, the grinding back and re-working the surface for emphasis: structure and composition is built on drawing decisions and intuitions and techniques both visual, tactile and intellectual. Each print is different, but in each the importance of what the hand chose to do, or felt its way to do step-by-step, was cumulative experience of the acts of drawing. My hand was drawing and printing the love of the body, the fear for that body. In multi-plate intaglio you have many chances to 'draw' the image because you can re-do without sacrificing what you already have. There are no fixed single end results as in a 'Drawing'. But it is all drawing.⁸

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Drawing across borders

by Jayne Dyer, Australian artist and writer living in Beijing



Ren Han (China), *Soft Impact*, 2013, paint, architectural debris, performance, dimensions variable. Photograph by Geng Han.

China: 21st-century introspection?

Today's generation of young artists face a very different China from the post Mao halcyon days. Emerging artist Ren Han's (b. 1984, Tianjin) participation in *Consciousness* at Tianjin Art Museum, Tianjin, 2013, indicates a drawing praxis with a visual interiority and a quiet intellectual/material contradiction that simultaneously mirrors and refutes expected thematic and spatial relationships, referring as much to absence (what is lost? denied? unattainable?) as to presence.

Simply executed with graphite pencil or pigment, site-specific installations and discrete drawings slide between objective and non-representational form, that owe as much to his postgraduate training in France as to systems of cartography and classical Chinese calligraphic ink painting. Ren Han challenges assumptions about what constitutes drawing. *Soft Impact* (2013) exists only in documentation. Constructed in an abandoned factory site, the artist drew a perfect circle on a wall, filled the circle with black pigment and proceeded to assault the wall with detritus — fragments from the site, such as machine parts, building materials. Resulting in accidental, white marks

penetrating the black void, Ren Han created what he describes as a 'landscape'. His massive wall drawing *Little Labyrinth* (2011) appears simultaneously as a fractured landscape viewed through a wide-angled lens and as unidentified microcosmic fragments from a demolition site. China in transition. Ren Han identifies the speed of change, boom-time uncontained, an environment compromised; presented from a distance, silently...

Sri Lanka: war / post-war

The Sri Lankan civil war (1983-2009) between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the north and east and the Sri Lankan Government affected a generation of artists who lived a social and personal reality of conflict and displacement.

The collaborative *The One Year Drawing Project*, between four pioneering Sri Lankan artists, Jagath Weerasinghe (b. 1954, Moratuwa), Chandraguptha Thenuwara (b. 1960, Galle), Thamotheerampillai Shanaathanan (b. 1969, Jaffna) and Muhanned Cader (b. 1966, Colombo), tracks a 29-month drawing exchange to 2007. Drawings were swapped by post, between Jaffna in the north and Colombo in the southwest; centres that have been, and

continue to be, ideologically and ethnically polarised. This seminal visual archive offers an acute lens to the civil war and is considered one of the most innovative contemporary art projects that has taken place in Sri Lanka. Commissioned as a Raking Leaves publication, the project was launched at Art Dubai 2008 and exhibited in *The 6th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2009.

Dr. Virginia Whiles describes the activity as 'no parlour game'.¹ She suggests: 'The works were daily performances undertaken in the spirit of diarist documentation: 208 pages of 52 sketches by each artist manifesting his reaction to the war-mongering factions which have tormented Sri Lanka for the last decade.'²

While post-war, next generation artists' interests have diversified, the legacy of Weerasinghe, et al. is evident in *Jaffna Map* (2010) by Pala Pothupitiye (b. 1972, Deniyaha). Awarded the 2010 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, the work, drawn in ink and pencil on an antique map of the northernmost tip of the country, is a powerful pointer to Sri Lanka's geopolitical landscape during the height of the war between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. We are familiar with mapping as a scaled portrayal of geographical

features and political borders. Pothupitiye makes metaphorical extensions to these conventions, revealing evasive ethnic territories and identities and raising questions about the problematic construct of what is and what may constitute a national identity. *Jaffna Map* was included in *Making History*, the 3rd Colombo Art Biennale this year.

India: heritage and identity

Chitra Ganesh's background (b. 1975, New York, Indian-American) offers an arms-length relationship with India, possibly permitting her license to probe attitudes to female identity and behaviours that expand to South Asian history, imperialism and queer politics.

Her subversive, popular *Tales of Amnesia* (2002-07) was included in *The Empire Strikes Back: Indian Art Today* at Saatchi Gallery in 2010, with a related series recently exhibited at the Gallery Espace booth in the 2014 India Art Fair. *Tales of Amnesia* appropriates the trope of the comic book, referencing the Indian comic books of Amar Chitra Katha (ACK) that retell stories from the great epics. Ganesh adopts the stylisation and direct storyline where good triumphs over evil, but subverts expected content.

Pala Pothupitiye (Sri Lanka), *Jaffna Map*, 2010, pen and colour pencil on printed map, 66.0 x 91.5 cm. Courtesy Hempel Galleries, Colombo, Sri Lanka.



Chitra Ganesh (India), *Atlas*, 2013, archival lightjet print, edition 1 of 3, 175.3 x 127.0 cm. Courtesy Gallery Espace, New Delhi.

The traditional hero (Hanuman, monkey god) is supplanted with heroine Amnesia (a pubescent, adolescent Indian girl) who expresses social and cultural attitudes that 'delve headlong into themes of female sexuality and aggression in ways that are equally playful and provocative, using imagery derived from Hindu mythology, Bollywood, comics and science fiction'.³

While Ganesh incorporates traditional drawing media such as charcoal and ink wash to produce large-scale wall and paper works, *Tales of Amnesia* evolved as a seamless union of technologies. Produced as digital C-prints that are part hand, part computer generated, Ganesh starts with brush and

ink drawings, then scans, manipulates, collages; at ease with both physical and virtual languages.

Since 2004 Ganesh has been working collaboratively with Mariam Ghani (b. 1978, New York, Afghan-American) on *Index of the Disappeared*. This on-going archive tracks censorship and data erasure post 9/11 in America. *Index of the Disappeared: Secrets Told* opened in February 2014, a site-specific installation presented as part of an artist in residency at Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University. •

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In early 2014 Jane Dyer attended the Colombo Art Biennale in Sri Lanka and participated in the India Art Fair held in New Delhi, where she met Chitra Ganesh.

www.jaynedyer.com

Drawing in the limit: notes towards a (brief) sketch

by Marcelo Guimarães Lima

Marcelo Guimarães Lima, PhD, MFA, is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Philosophy Department of the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and director of the Núcleo de Artes e Cultura (arts and culture division) of the CEPAOS Research Center in São Paulo.

In 1947 Brazilian artist Flávio de Carvalho (1899-1973) stood by his sick mother's bedside and recorded in a series of drawings the final agony of an aged woman dying of cancer. The series, with the descriptive title: *Minha mãe morrendo — My mother dying* (later also known as *Série Trágica — Tragic Series*), was exhibited in 1948.

This series of portraits — for they are indeed unique portraits, a compounded *death mask* — were done with an economy of means and a clarity of touch that translated the motions of extreme human suffering into clear and urgent graphic forms. They presented the pathos of death with urgency and yet with relative sobriety: from a close point of view and, at the same time, with the kind of detachment proper to the type of vision, the *seeing* which is, in fact, that of the artist in the process of observing and recording the inherently unstable, movable forms of reality.

For, indeed, a kind of displaced identification with the figures of reality is for the artist what brings close to the mind (and to the mind-hand connection, the *thinking as making* that characterises drawing) the realities of things and processes or their true configurations. Displaced, that is, in the *object* of vision, as another object, in the *act* of seeing, as another vision, in the *time of vision* itself as another time. A time prolonged or suspended in and by the powers and the constraints and limitations of aesthetic form.

All funerary related art wants to preserve the 'likeness' of the deceased person against death itself: in the graphic (drawn, painted, incised, sculpted) representation of different times and places, what once was is made present again here, now and for the future, as representation appeals to memory countering the destructive powers of time. In Flávio de Carvalho's series, the focus is the event itself: the final event in which the subject is disclosed in all its frailty, in the last universal event of life. The subject, that is, ourselves, in the very particularity and universality of our condition as creatures of flesh (universally sons or daughters), attached by the flesh and the spirit to others and living through, thereby, each other's fortunes and misfortunes, in all of life's joys and miseries.

The portrait, any portrait, is always already a 'death mask', the record of what was and is no longer, gone with time. All funerary art is a *memento mori*, the remembrance of the departed that serves also to remind the living of their own mortal condition. An artistic or art-historical 'ancestry' to Flávio de Carvalho's series can perhaps be located in Late Medieval funerary sculpture: the *transit* tombs. The *transit* tomb portrayed the king, or the nobleman or high church dignitary, in the process of physical transformation by death, symbolically with a cadaverous counterpart figure or partially transformed into a cadaver.¹ The modern artwork is, of course, informed by a somewhat different experience and concept of human time and of human transience, and a different perspective on the ideological dimension, the functions or 'uses' of art, conscious or otherwise.

When first exhibited in São Paulo the *Série Trágica* drawings were met with public shock and disorientation.² It contributed to establish the artist's reputation as a kind of 'artiste maudit' of Brazilian Modernism.

Flávio de Carvalho was one of the most important and innovative artists in modern art in Brazil, and yet, for a long time, a relatively marginal figure in the narrative of the history of Brazilian art.³ He was a de facto pioneer, in the first part of the 20th century, of artistic initiatives that only in the second half of century would be recognised as belonging to varieties of conceptual art and performance art (for instance: *Experiência no. 2*, from 1931, and *Experiência no. 3*, in 1956.)

continued over



Flávio de Carvalho (1899-1973), *Minha mãe morrendo — My mother dying 1 & 7* (Série Trágica — Tragic Series), 1947, charcoal on paper, 69.9 x 51 cm. Collection: Museu de Arte Contemporânea da Universidade de São Paulo (Brazil).

Flávio de Carvalho was a kind of polymath, an engineer by education and early professional practice, turned architect and artist: painter, sculptor, drawer and printmaker. We can observe that the unity of his diversified artworks is given by the underlying forms and concepts of drawing. The immediacy and spontaneity of drawing as a result and effect of the artist's mastery of his mental and physical means, and as a result of the exploratory, form-searching nature of the act of drawing (which includes hesitations, new departures, the accumulation of layers of marks and ideas, incompleteness, etc.), are qualities present in Flávio de Carvalho's diverse creations: in the characteristic gestural element and informed graphic gesture, in the clarity of line and in the searched vitality of forms, in the experimental spirit, that is, in the conscious immanence of the

work to its time and place, or the mortality of art itself, whether in architectural, painted, drawn or sculpted works. The concept of the artwork as experiment, as an open form (dynamic, movable, necessarily incomplete, etc.), as exploration, is a central idea in modern art. Experimentation and exploration have been central concepts in the practice of drawing in the history of Western art since the Renaissance, or, in its more conscious forms, at least since the Baroque age. In a sense, it was from the 'laboratory' of drawing practice that emerged some of the forms, attitudes, directions and ideas of the movements of modern art (taking 'drawing' here to encompass not only the traditionally defined group of materials and techniques but also all the possible hybrid cases, superimpositions, borderline cases, the mingling



and mixing between drawing, painting and other graphic arts, etc.; 'drawing', that is, as the affirmed and disclosed identity of process and product.) We need just to have in mind the great number of sketches, preparatory drawings, watercolours, preparatory or complementary paintings and painted sketches made by Picasso in the process of creating the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), the inaugural work of the history of modern painting and in itself a large sketch, an 'incomplete', open-ended work. In its most basic element or ground, drawing is the experience of the becoming of form in time, or of form itself as a mode of time. •

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The Centre for Drawing: University of the Arts London

by Stephen Farthing, Rootstein Hopkins Professor of Drawing, University of the Arts London (UAL)

Since 2000 The Centre for Drawing has championed drawing by publishing books, providing residencies for artists, organising and partnering with institutions to convene conferences in London, New York, Prato, Pittsburgh, Melbourne, Rome and Sydney, and as a matter of course supported research students and organised exhibitions. The exhibition *The Whiteness of Paper* was built on drawn images, taken from the Royal Academy's collections. Its aim was to highlight the importance across time of a broad range of drawing conventions, and the importance of the paper left untouched in a drawing at the point of conclusion.

In 2009 we moved on from a preoccupation with the metaphysical space contained in every sheet of blank paper, to exhibit and publish that strange mix of private / public spaces offered by designers and artists' sketchbooks — first an architect, Nicholas Grimshaw, then the modernist theatre designer Jocelyn Herbert. Although much of our work went on in London, we travelled and travels came to us.

These days, however, The Centre for Drawing is more about people and ideas than bricks, mortar and air travel; everything has become lighter! The network is now an informal group of interested people who are eager to encourage creative thinking, cross-disciplinary discovery and invention within the frame of what we think of as 'the bigger picture of drawing'.

In its early days The Centre was more formally constituted, more actively engaged in programmed research and very much more expensive to run. By the start of 2011 we had developed a secondary school curriculum and a secondary education award in drawing, launched a cross-disciplinary MA in drawing, and built a focused group of members who regularly shared ideas. By Spring 2011 the core University of the Arts membership (Simon Betts, Kelly Chorpene, Charlotte Hodes, Stephen Farthing and Michael Pavelka) realised it had

achieved many of its founding goals and decided that the development of a specialist international knowledge-sharing forum should become its priority. With this objective in mind, in September 2011 we launched a blog that now works to service communication between network members and act as a means of promoting and supporting the events we organise.

Between 2010 and 2013 the primary focus of The Centre became The Drawn Out Network, which was funded by an AHRC Network Grant that initiated exploration into cross-disciplinary approaches to drawing and facilitated information sharing between our Centre and RMIT, Melbourne. This network's focus has been the exploration of drawing's relationship with writing, notation and general literacy. In 2012 our second conference published, through the CCW Graduate School at UAL, *The Good Drawing*, edited by Stephen Farthing, Kelly Chorpene and Colin Wiggins (ISBN 978-1-908339-01-0). Designed as a first stepping stone in a journey towards understanding drawing in terms of general literacy, *The Good Drawing* presented the

views of: Irene Barberis, Michael Craig-Martin, David Hockney, Michael Landy, Grayson Perry, Katherine Stout and Anita Taylor, amongst others, on where quality might reside in a drawing. In February 2014, in collaboration with Dr Janet McKenzie, the outcome of the Network's three years' collaboration with RMIT was *The Drawn Word: even if I write my name I am drawing*, published by Studio International Trust (ISBN 978-0-9832599-5-4).

As for the future, we of course plan to continue our exploration of the bigger picture of drawing and supporting our existing network. That said, we sense it is time to move out of what has become five years of reflection and get back into growth mode. When I asked Simon Betts, the Dean of Wimbledon College of Arts* and the person now responsible for 'The Centre for Drawing: Wimbledon', for his take on the future of The Centre, this was his reply:

The notion of a *centre* implies that a thing or idea is at the heart of other things and ideas. At Wimbledon College of Arts we are exploring a new 'centre' for drawing that may well be

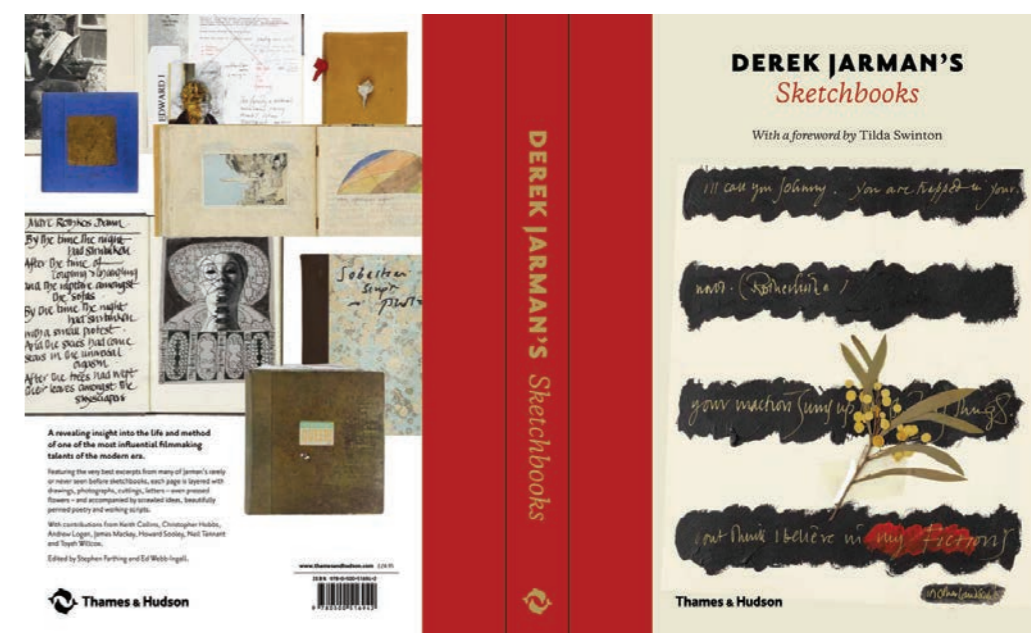
the College itself; that is to say drawing situated at the heart of what we do. The last five years have seen debates around what *is* drawing, and what is a good drawing inform practice, research and pedagogy. I want to see a 'Centre for Drawing: Wimbledon' that develops those ideas, instigates research and shapes pedagogy. How we do that may well be on the basis of a more 'viral centre' that shapes itself dependent on shifting discourses. However, while this more fluid notion of a centre for drawing should remain responsive and generative, it is because we believe that drawing remains at the centre of what we do as makers. •

<http://thecentrefordrawingual.com>

* Wimbledon College of Arts is a constituent college of University of the Arts London.

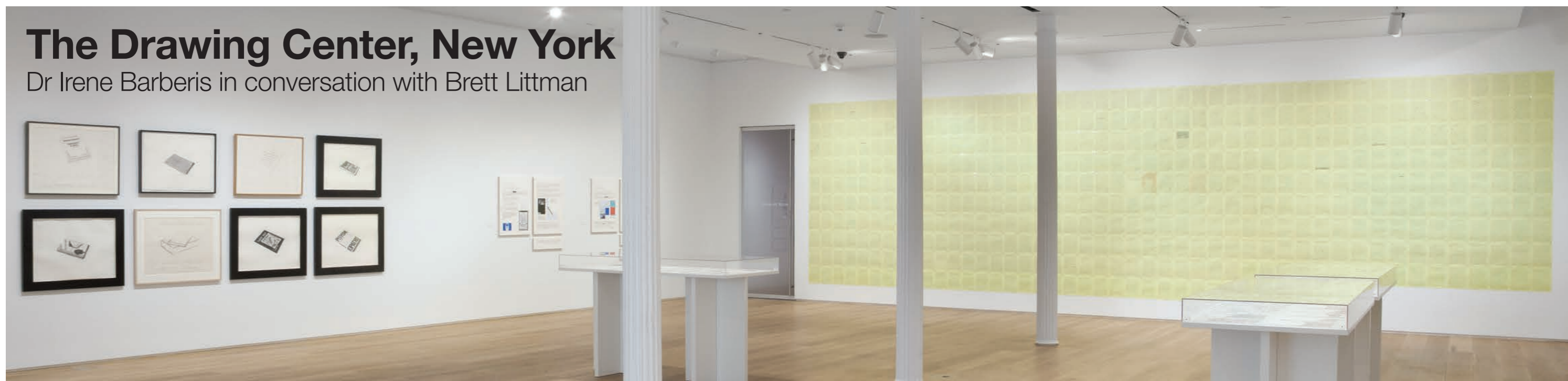
Derek Jarman's Sketchbooks

3rd in the series on sketchbooks, originated by The Centre for Drawing, published by Thames & Hudson, 2013.



The Drawing Center, New York

Dr Irene Barberis in conversation with Brett Littman



Drawing Time Reading, Time installation, The Drawing Center, New York. (This exhibition was organised simultaneously with Marking Language at Drawing Room, London, 10 October – 14 December 2013.)

Dr Irene Barberis is an artist, Director Global Centre for Drawing and Metasenta Publications, Co-Director Gallery Langford 120 and Senior Lecturer RMIT University

Brett Littman is the current Director of The Drawing Center, New York.

I: Brett, what is the underlying premise and vision of The Drawing Center, New York: its vision for artists and vision for the public because often they are two separate things?

B: I'm going to go back a bit in our history. The vision has changed I think with each of the four directors. I'm the fourth director now since the founding of The Drawing Center by Martha Beck in 1977. When Martha founded the institution she had a lot of frustration with the Museum of Modern Art where she was curator — every time she proposed a drawing show, the director at the time said, 'Well that's great, we'll put it in a closet on the second floor.' Drawing wasn't given a lot of importance in terms of art history; there was very little commercial importance placed on artists who primarily drew. We were still living in an age where drawing was secondary to painting and sculpture. Martha was quite instinctive and saw the future, because in the late sixties of course there were many artists who were working both in land art and earth art and in conceptual ways, trying to develop new technologies, like neon or sound

waves, and were drawing invisible things. So I think she saw through the artists' practices that drawing was going to take on a kind of new importance, and when she founded the institution, it was more out of a defensive stance for drawing:

Drawing is important and we are going to plant the flag and we are going to make sure there's an institution for artists who draw and maybe that's the only thing they do in terms of their artistic output.

She did found the institution with several other core principles: that it was going to be historical and contemporary. Her first show was the drawings of visionary Barcelonan architect Gaudi, followed by a Selections show curated from our Viewing Program of Terry Winters and several other artists that are well known to us and first showed their work in New York. She moved very fluently between 14th, 15th and 16th-century drawing to contemporary drawing. The second thing that Martha was interested in was the vision of artists; if you had gone to MOMA with your portfolio you would

probably have been escorted by a guard out the door — if you asked to see a curator, it was impossible at the time. Martha founded an institution where the wall between curatorial work and curators and artists was broken down. She also started the Viewing Program — a very important core program for us for the past 37 years, although now it is shifting to a new program called Open Sessions.

In the 1990s, Kara Walker held her first exhibition of paper cut-outs at The Drawing Center when Ann Philbin was the director. Ann moved the institutional dialogue towards a much broader exploration of drawing in relation to pop culture, Ed Hardy's *Tattoo Show*, and explorations of drawing in other kinds of cultures: not necessarily as rendering or as skill, but as 'markers' for other kinds of things like dreams and economics. Ann also did a lot of shows with contemporary artists that highlighted current trends and ideas in drawing.

Catherine De Zegher, the third director, was interested in the idea of how line can move off the page and maybe even away from the idea of medium itself. For her the apex of drawing practice might be someone like Gego, the Venezuelan artist who made wire constructions and projected lights through those constructions and then showed the shadows on the wall as drawings. There were a lot of exhibitions during Catherine's time exploring the sculptural

aspect of drawing: what does line mean when it's freed from the edge, freed from the rectangle, freed from the white page? Line that actually exists in space in the gallery. Also, there were some performances that she hosted at The Drawing Center during that period that addressed the idea of durational drawing.

I've been director of The Drawing Center now for seven years and the thing that has been interesting to me is the idea that drawing is an analogue for thinking (I'm not an art historian, I don't have a PhD in art history and I come at the art world from philosophy and poetry). So I'm interested in how drawing actually intersects with many disciplines including architecture, food, engineering, science, mathematics and music. I have not abandoned visual arts, of course that's the core of what we do, but I am very interested in what drawing means to many different kinds of practitioners in the 21st century, particularly as we move more and more to a digital age, and what that actually might mean for the future of the medium.

Part 2

I: Brett, another artist, Godwin Bradbeer, has asked: 'Does the vision that you have now bear with the cultural responsibility to future generations and to past generations, and is there an artistic body of knowledge which will be inherited by the public?'

B: It's a pretty big question.

I: It is.

B: Well I surely feel responsible as the director and chief curator of this institution in terms of setting the vision. My vision, however, is not absolute in the way I approach things. I try to run The Drawing Center with my other curators as a 'think tank'. It should be an institution that is constantly dynamic and I think we are asking more questions than we are providing answers for. Our responsibility to the future and past generations of artists is that when you come to The Drawing Center you're most likely going to see an exhibition of maybe someone you have never heard of before or work that you have never seen. So I think that the key words for me for The Drawing Center are curiosity, intelligence, surprise, challenge; we're not an institution that is easily digestible. If you're looking for the kind of simple blue chip show that follows the galleries or collectors, we're probably not a good institution to visit. I hope for our visitors and general audience that The Drawing Center is a place where people are learning, and that includes myself and my staff.

I: Your new Lab Gallery is an innovative way of precipitating experimental dialogue around transdisciplinary drawing. Has this been a successful program?

B: I think so. We built the Lab Gallery because it takes about

two years, maybe three years, to put a big show together. So, going to a lot of studios and visiting all kinds of people who draw, including architects, urban planners, industrial designers, it's very sad when you say to the artist, 'Well, the earliest spot that we have is in 2017.' The Lab Gallery was really built for much smaller budget shows with faster turnover, with the goal of being a little more responsive to the present. The Lab Gallery is now coupled with Open Sessions, a curated group of 54 artists who have submitted projects related to drawing that they would like to explore under the canopy of The Drawing Center's investigations. The artists are age, race, discipline and skill diverse. It is made up of not only visual artists but also includes architects, urban planners, and dancers who are all interested in the idea of what drawing might mean in their own work. We are viewing these artists like a class and they will 'graduate' in two years. During that time there will be six small shows in the Lab Gallery and one large show in the Main Gallery to bring together all the ideas that happened during open sessions. The program is being led by Lisa Sigal, an artist who is the Open Sessions curator, and Nova Benway, our curatorial assistant. Open Sessions is an international group; not everyone is living in New York. People are Skyping in and participating by email or by

conference. It's probably about 30% New York based, maybe 60% US based and then 40% out of country.

I: So The Drawing Center has an international type of program. Does the DCNY have a wide international and intercultural vision and program, and in this is it interested in Australian artists' perspectives?

B: I think we are interested in all artists' perspectives. To be honest we have not shown Australian work in a while but Catherine De Zegher (our previous director) had good relationships with Australia and I have been to Melbourne and Sydney in the past. We only show work if a curator can visit or have access to that artist in the US. My curator and I have been spending more time in South America in Brazil, Argentina, Columbia, Peru and Venezuela and right now we're finding that in Latin America artists are thinking philosophically about what drawing is, its social impact in terms of their own economies and how they use drawing as a kind of dialogue with the world around them. So we have found those countries to be very fruitful places to explore.

I: Yes, the Global Centre for Drawing is also liaising specifically with Brazil — very interesting works and understandings are coming from this part of the globe. In this set of articles there are three centres

for drawing being discussed: The Centre for Drawing in London, The Drawing Center, New York and the Australian-based Global Centre for Drawing. Could you see an intercultural project, which could involve all these centres simultaneously in some way?

B: Absolutely. We just collaborated with the Drawing Room in London on dual exhibitions and a joint catalogue. You kind of flip the catalogue on one side and it's The Drawing Center's book and you flip it the other side and it's the Drawing Room's book, and it shared one essay about both shows. Each show dealt with its own particular issue of drawn language but it was totally fascinating. I really respect what the directors of the Drawing Room have been doing over the years, and it's the first time we've collaborated with them and I was very happy with the result. There's also the Drawing Centre in The Netherlands and a few drawing centres in South Korea that are pretty much modelled on The Drawing Center in New York. I'm very optimistic about the kinds of cross-cultural, cross-platform collaborations we could all do together if we begin a dialogue.

I: Then I'll get to work!

B: Perfect. I'll talk to you soon.

I: See you Brett. Bye. •