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Contents:

THEME

Drawing Matters was a one-day symposium, convened by Vanessa Corby, Lucy O'Donnell and Sally Taylor at York St John University in 2017. This editorial and volume of TRACEY sets out the circumstances and questions that led to this event and the drawing-led investigations that emerged from it. There are also an accompanying set of non-peer-reviewed publications, published to the Drawing Research Network site under the Drawing Matters event.

The title Drawing Matters was chosen not simply to affirm an a priori significance for the medium and its materials, but as a provocation that asked participants to consider the matters arising for and from drawing at a time of increasingly unstable socio-political circumstances: what practical purposes can drawing serve in these uncertain and divisive times? How enabling or disabling are the current theoretical frameworks at our disposal in this context?

These questions grew out of our collaboration as artists, writers, and The Prison Drawing Project (Scarborough, North Yorkshire, 2016) in which O'Donnell and Taylor both participated. We gathered people together in York to find out if they had any traction in the wider drawing community; to learn more about the creative strategies that artists, anthropologists, and curators had devised to explore the human potential of drawing. How had they circumvented the conventions of representation that govern popular perceptions of good drawing and the barriers that limited arts engagement. Three years later, we continue to ask how interventions in and through drawing can matter in positive ways for lives lived outside the academy, and what reciprocal impact they might have on the discourse written for the medium.

EDITORIAL

Vanessa Corby and Lucy O'Donnell

York St John University

This Drawing Matters Special Edition of TRACEY: Drawing, Visualisation, Research has been a long time coming. Its publication captures a selection of the proceedings of a one-day symposium held on 14th July 2017 at York St John University and what was also inspired by the spirit of that event. Convened by Vanessa Corby, Lucy O'Donnell, and Sally Taylor, Drawing Matters first began to emerge through fleeting, but nevertheless recurring, conversations shared in our office at YSJU. We were three colleagues, three women, for whom drawing inhabited a central place in our working lives because it had first offered each of us a means to make sense of the world. Our concerns as artists, writers, and thinkers were, and indeed still are, inflected by the ever-emergent 'interstitial differences' (Ingold 2016: 13) of gender and social class. At that time, however, drawing pulled us even closer together because it had been a vital agent in our material negotiation of parenthood.

Taylor started to teach Fine Art at YSJU in 2010; the same year that Corby, who had arrived in 2006, finished a somewhat weighty monograph on two drawings by American German Jewish artist, Eva Hesse (2010). Sensing that her colleague was not done with writing just yet, Taylor asked Corby to contribute a piece for an upcoming exhibition at the Ryedale Folk Museum, Sally Taylor: Drawings (2011), and they have been collaborating ever since. O'Donnell joined the Fine Art team at York St John in 2013. By the time we sat down to seriously think about Drawing Matters in 2016, we had all been working together for three years and had four children under five between us. In that context, Emma Dexter's famous assertion 'to draw is to be human' (2005) took on new meaning.

FIG.1. THE PRISON DRAWING PROJECT, OLD SCARBOROUGH BOROUGH JAIL, DEAN ROAD, SCARBOROUGH, 2016.

FIG. 2 LUCY O'DONNELL, THE PRISON DRAWING PROJECT, INSTALLATION SHOT, DEAN ROAD PRISON, SCARBOROUGH, 2016

In any given gap between teaching and tutorials, our conversations veered between children, drawing, and motherhood: from the dehumanising, disembodying experience of pumping breast milk to drawing's capacity to preserve our energy and sense of self as a framework for maternity, as an encounter with ignorance and uncertainty, and as a vehicle to open the sensory nature of being human for our children. Looking back, it is easy to see how this blend of academic and real-world application enabled drawing to become what Taylor calls the 'life blood' of our existence. Each of us felt that this blurring between our private and professional lives was a profound privilege. And it is from that critical space informed by history, theory, practice, and lived experience, that we began to ponder the practical applications for drawing as a non-verbal, material form of communication, and set about doing 'something' together.

In terms of drawing practice, these beginnings had been directly informed and invigorated by O'Donnell and Taylor's participation in the 2016 Arts Council England funded Prison Drawing Project, held in Scarborough, North Yorkshire (Figs. 1—6). This exhibition was led by artists, Tracy Himsworth and Kate Black, as part of the annual Coastival arts and culture weekend. Himsworth's drawing and curatorial practice interrogates the potential of architectural space to engage new audiences in drawing and contemporary art. The funding she secured mobilized the strategic potential of The Old Borough of Scarborough Jail, a building which had never been open to the public, to draw crowds curious about the interior, thus generating a far greater platform for the artist's practices than a standard pop-up exhibition. Taylor sat on the selection panel and featured in the show, as did O'Donnell who also wrote the introduction to the exhibition catalogue. In 'Reflections on the Prison Drawing Project' (2016), O'Donnell situated the artist's site-specific responses to the Old Borough of Scarborough Jail as an interrogation of becoming, boundaries, space, place, and the expansion of drawing's conventions and materials: concepts which have marked the discourse on contemporary drawing since the early 2000s.

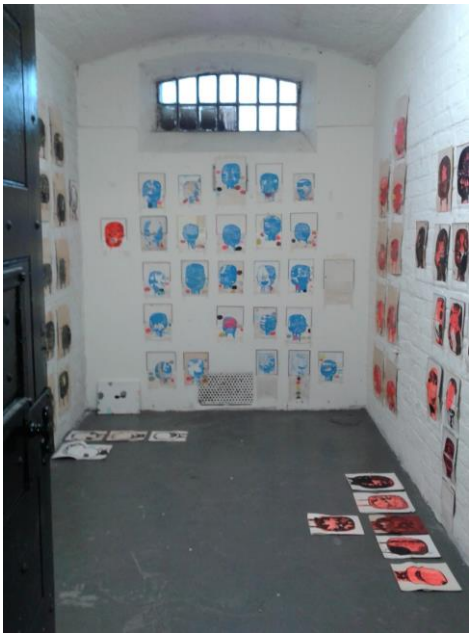

FIG. 3 SALLY TAYLOR, THAT HEAD, THAT HEAD, (2016) INSTALLATION SHOT, THE PRISON DRAWING PROJECT, DEAN ROAD PRISON, SCARBOROUGH, 2016

FIG. 4 TRACY HIMSWORTH, LINE AS FACT, THE PRISON DRAWING PROJECT, INSTALLATION SHOT, DEAN ROAD PRISON, SCARBOROUGH, 2016

Within this familiar framework, the most salient point of the 'Reflections' was the way in which the artist's practices were materially troubled by the constraints and possibilities of the building's architecture (Figs. 3, 4, & 5). O'Donnell took up Alain Badiou's thinking on drawing to articulate the impact of this spatial dynamic on the exhibition. The prison cells did not simply offer a 'platform' from which to share these drawings, she argued, but held 'tight to [their] function as the place for detention, confinement and duration' (O'Donnell, 2016). As such, she continued, the coupling of drawing and prison cell precipitated a sense of 'embodied displacement' that invited ontological reflections on the 'fragile' nature of being human and shifting 'reciprocity between existence and inexistence' (O'Donnell, 2016).

Over the Coastival weekend, The Prison Drawing Project, Scarborough, attracted 1,400 visitors, 'in February, in the snow!' as Taylor never fails to remind us. The exhibition's impressive footfall is testament to the success of Himsworth's strategic use of the site, which presented a rare opportunity for collaboration and mentoring in North Yorkshire for artists who normally worked in isolation. As such, it revealed the need for a greater infrastructure to support artists in North Yorkshire. What is perhaps still more striking, however, was that the richness and spatial dynamics of the aesthetic experience that Himsworth curated and O'Donnell theorised spoke to the bigger political and societal picture that was then unfolding across the UK.

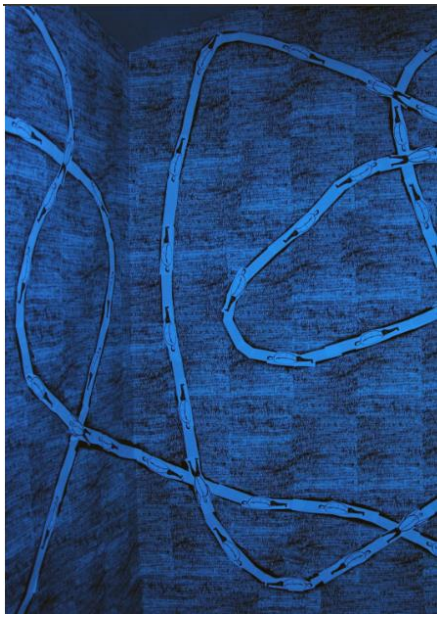

FIG. 5 KATE BLACK, TUNNELLING MEN, THE PRISON DRAWING PROJECT, INSTALLATION SHOT, DEAN ROAD PRISON, SCARBOROUGH, 2016

FIG. 6 GREIG BURGOYNE, BAD DRAWING/PAPER CELL, THE PRISON DRAWING PROJECT, INSTALLATION SHOT, DEAN ROAD PRISON, SCARBOROUGH, 2016

The sense of confinement that pervaded The Prison Drawing Project had been made all the more tangible by its location in a coastal area that was in the process of rapidly becoming an 'entrenched social mobility coldspot' (Social Mobility Commission 2017: 1). The tension between that confinement and the 'embodied displacement' made manifest by the installations' negotiation of 'boundaries', 'borders', and 'constraints' in Scarborough was given still greater poignancy by its timing on the cusp of the EU Referendum. The Vote Leave campaign capitalised on the acute cultural and economic

displacement that austerity and the negative effects of globalisation had brought about in areas like Scarborough. By seeking to severe the ties with the European Union, the Leave campaign promised a new phase of belonging for those communities: a fallacy made compelling by the fears and privations on which it preyed.

To situate The Prison Drawing Project in this grave context made for a bittersweet evaluation process, in which the exhibition's successes were dogged by a simple 'and?' In this sense, the unfinished business stemmed in great part from Corby and Taylor's working-class backgrounds, but it has also been compounded by the writings of American sculptor, Jimmie Durham, which Corby uses in her teaching every year. In 'Creativity and the Social Process' (1983), Durham asserted that 'our perception of the purpose of art, as we produce it, must be eminently practical' (1993: 69). He goes on,

> *The purpose of art is to help people interpret their world so that they may be better able to change it in positive ways. That must be the purpose of all human activity, except those activities which are oppressive to the good of humanity (1993: 71).*

Durham's advocacy of art for social change prompts a question about the practical steps needed to give audiences the tools that will create the conditions that can facilitate interpretation. The immediacy of drawing, as a shared, inherently human experience would seem to negate any need to instrumentalise it to generate dialogue with others. Outside the academy and the rich discourse we inhabit, however, it must be remembered that the conventions of 'good drawing' still hold sway in education and wider culture. If artists and curators want audiences to 'get' what they do and effect change if they can, then, contradictory as it may seem, strategies must be devised to enable audiences to reconnect with this immediate, inherently human non-verbal form of communication.

It is this consideration of Durham's imperatives that brings this editorial to the question of legacy, both in the case of The Prison Drawing Project and the dissemination of drawing more broadly. Durham's thinking is informed by his knowledge of Brazilian educationalist, Paulo Freire, and British anthropologist, Ashley Montagu, who each saw that 'cooperation', generated through 'social dialogue' was key to the being and evolution of humans (Durham, 1993: 71). 'The role of art and artists', Durham affirmed, must be seen,

> *As a part of human culture, which has the purpose of human liberation, art must have the purpose of critical social interpretation. It must be part of the social dialogue, and not separated by theories of aesthetics or by middle-class edification (Durham, 1993: 71).*

Durham argues that humanity is not an index of reason alone, as Descartes would have it, rather our capacity for 'social dialogue' informed by the 'rationality' of which human beings are capable (Durham, 1993: 71). Forty years after he made that argument, algorithms employed by social media platforms predetermine the circulation and content of information; entrench political positions, prejudice, protectionism, and individualism; close down our capacity for critical thinking and social dialogue; and strip culture of its humanity. Given the procession of quick photographic 'hits', to borrow from Tim Ingold (2013: 125), mobilised to support this asocial process we wondered how, or indeed if, the sensuous, tangible nature of drawing as a non-verbal mode of communication could matter in this seemingly overwhelming, unstoppable context? Could we do 'something' to facilitate reflections on self, place, and other to generate social dialogue between artists and their publics?

These are the questions that drove the formation of Drawing Matters. The event's title was chosen, therefore, not simply because it offered an affirmation of a priori significance for the medium and its materials. Rather, because it also sought to consider matters arising from drawing: its 'practical purpose as we produce it'. The purpose of gathering people together in York was quite simply to find out if our questions had any traction in the wider drawing community. We wanted to learn more about the creative strategies that artists, anthropologists, and curators had devised to explore this 'human' potential of drawing. How had they circumvented the conventions of representation that govern common perceptions of 'good drawing' and the barriers that limited arts engagement. And how did those interventions matter 'in positive ways' for lives lived outside the academy?

Given the dialogic and inclusive beginnings and imperatives of Drawing Matters, the last thing we wanted to do was host an event where people came to talk at one another. Rather than stage the usual kind of academic 'something', i.e., a straight conference, we framed it as a symposium, which shares the same etymological route as 'sympathy', in the hope of giving it a friendly foundation. Our second step was to ask Kate Black to curate an exhibition that would incorporate works by herself, Andy Black, Himsworth, O'Donnell, and Taylor, in order to underpin the significance of The Prison Drawing Project and firmly cement practice at the heart of the event and its dialogues.

Fig. 7 & 8 Andy Black, Kate Black, Tracy Himsworth, Lucy O'Donnell, Sally Taylor, Dialogue Drawing, and Interior Installation, Drawing Matters Exhibition, York St John University, 2017

The Drawing Matters exhibition, represented in visual documentation on the DRN webpages, was built upon a residency undertaken in the summer of 2016 by Andy Black, Kate Black, Tracy Himsworth, Lucy O'Donnell, and Sally Taylor at Drawing Projects UK, Trowbridge (DPUK). Following The Prison Drawing Project, the artists used this residency to create a space that was not exclusively focused upon predetermined or resolved outcomes, but to make, think, and talk about drawing. Working side-by-side in this way enabled common interests to cohere and depart from one another, which opened up new explorations of space, structure, edges, play, and lostness.

In 2017, the Drawing Matters exhibition (Figs. 7 & 8) created two physical spaces with differing symbolic functions. The interior space, in the form of a cube that could be entered via gaps on two sides, showed the work of each artist individually but contained and sustained the group's own internal dialogue. This was manifested through words, drawings, diagrammatic links, source material, and influences, both

visual and literary. The exterior space which wrapped around the interior, opened up the exhibition and its praxical underpinnings to practitioners beyond the group from all backgrounds and professions to catalyse conversations across disciplinary boundaries. Curated in this way, the structure of the exhibition aimed to embody the social dialogues that had been fundamental to the formation and function of the symposium.

This emphasis on the emergence of artistic practice through dialogue and cooperation, and the infrastructures necessary to its facility was then picked up by the Keynote, which was given by Professor Anita Taylor, Director of Drawing Projects UK and the Jerwood Drawing Prize. In that lecture, available on the DRN webpages, Taylor plots her journey through and ambitions for drawing, providing a model of what is possible for the medium as a vehicle with which to build communities and communication between artists and regional, national, and international publics, given enough determination, energy, and focus. Anita Taylor's generous and open approach to drawing set the tone for the day, which unfolded through a series of presentations, discussions, and a roundtable chaired by Elizabeth Hodson (Newcastle) that weaved between the interplay of body, gesture, space, place, and community.

Drawing Matters' second contribution comes from Leeds based artist, Garry Barker. In 'Is it to feel each limb grow stiffer, is it to feel the full potential of a life?', he navigates the transformation of the lived experience of the aging body through drawing. Barker poetically works through narratives drawn from the community where he lives and works in a way that underscores the power and potential of individuals, the impact of their dreams and disappointments. The imperative to this body of work is the complex landscape of migration, memory, belonging, and displacement that are inherent in the topographies and terrains of the past and the present, and which are inflected by an increasing cognisance of the body as it grows older. Barker's meditation on the shifting capabilities of the body, with running as a signifier of passing youth is taken up by Carali McCall in 'The artist as athlete'. McCall argues for the proximity of the performative gestures of running and drawing. It situates her practice as a negotiation of geographical displacement and its attention to the question of sexual difference. Through a hybrid of drawing and running, her paper traverses differing landscapes by paying attention to the performativity of practice and the body in the context of cooperation.

Through a close reading of the work of Raymond Pettibon, Tilo Reifenstein's essay critiques the division of the proximate gestures of drawing and writing, which haunts the privilege assigned to textual/verbal communication on one side of the argument and non-verbal forms on the other. He proposes that drawing's potential exceeds its sensuous qualities that, historically, have been distinct from the intelligibility of the graphic line. Neither advocating a comprehensive readability of drawing, nor a new graphology of written marks, he argues that the recognition of the illimitability of the graphic mark highlights the intervolution of the sensuous and cognitive work of both drawers and writers. Asmita Sakar follows this with a poetic and sensuous transformation of the lived experience of mining through the charcoal drawings of Indian artist, Prabhakar Pachpute. The synergy of the artist's materials and subject matter is playfully worked through the imagery he creates, which is situated in the context of India's social class and rapid industrialisation. The inflection of the body, class, materials, space, place, and time through drawing that underpin all of these contributions inflect our own contributions to this Special Edition, which grew out of the Drawing Matters Symposium to form three new strategies for three strands of activity.

Corby synthesised Anita Taylor's approach to regional, national, and international infrastructure for drawing communities, Garry Barker's embedded approach to practice in Chapeltown, and her interest in Ingold's writings on the 'hylomorphic' underpinnings of Western thought (2001) to devise From the Ground Up: a HEI, school, and third sector collaboration. Its purpose is to explore creative strategies that intervene in the cycle of transgenerational disadvantage that currently impacts the futures of children and young people in the post-industrial Borough of Barnsley. The first phase of that project, a pilot residency which took place in February 2020, is represented by a film of the same title, hosted on the DRN webpages made, by artist Karen Wallis, now Visiting Research Fellow at YSJU.

Taylor developed the ACE funded Mentoring for Professional Development project included in TRACEY in the form of the essay 'Going along together' (Corby). This project formalised the support she had been given by Anita Taylor and Kate Brindley, chief curator at Chatsworth, exploring the value of social dialogue for the production and curation of practice. Taylor then pooled this experience through her deepening collaboration with Andy Black and Kate Black, now Lecturer in Illustration at York St John, forming the Art Happens Here Collective together (Fig. 9 & 10). The purpose of the collective is to create an infrastructure to embed contemporary arts activity in remote rural and coastal north Yorkshire. Based in Malton, North Yorkshire, they secured and repurposed the Community House, an old Council office block, and transformed it into the first affordable studio complex in the region. Supported by in-kind funding from Ryedale District Council, it has developed a network of mentoring, exhibition collaboration, and PPD for artists in the region.

Fig. 9 and 10 Art Happens Here, Group Show, Community House, Malton, and North Yorkshire & Artist Forum Crescent Arts, Scarborough, February 2020

From this platform, Taylor has lobbied for investment in contemporary art in North Yorkshire, and has provided direct input into Ryedale District's new cultural policy and the Forestry Commission's Arts Strategy at Dalby Forest. Participants in the Community House have included Alan Eves (Managing Director Forestry Commission), Stuart Cameron (Crescent Arts), Petra Young (Development Manager Forestry Commission), and Ryedale District Council, as well as artists across Ryedale.

O'Donnell developed her Drawing Matters performance/presentation into Sitting with Uncertainty (2018–2019), a substantial body of work that draws the unseen trauma and grief of miscarriage into the realm of the visible. Represented in this volume through an essay and documentation, it was instigated

in collaboration and through discussions with the Birth Rites Collection and the Miscarriage Association. The publication that accompanies this body of work is now distributed by NHS miscarriage counselling service provides to support their clients' therapy (2019).

Through the collaboration that has organically evolved between us and those we now work with, our strategies for and through drawing are beginning to help us feel as if we have at least started to do 'something' meaningful in the UK's current social and political climate. Is this 'something' enough? Definitely not. Since 2017, social mobility has not only 'stagnated' across the country (Social Mobility Commission 2019) but the UK has entered a new open era of racism, compounding its more unspoken, systematic presence and further displacing the nation's BAME and domiciled EU citizens. We inhabit a political climate that struggles to suppress the open hate-speech of a US President and the falsehoods of a UK government; difference is hostage to derogatory representations that play on the fear of the unknown and the other. The last body blow in this bewildering series of political circumstances has been the handling of and social inequalities cemented by Covid-19. Given the utter disarray of this social political landscape, we feel it is time to reach out again to ask the only question that we can ask, 'how can drawing matter?'

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IS IT TO FEEL EACH LIMB GROW STIFFER, IS IT TO FEEL THE FULL POTENTIAL OF A LIFE?

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A drawing practice based on conversation with others is, by its very nature, a constantly evolving one and one that follows the changing nature of conversations as they unfold. At the time of the original 'Drawing Matters' symposium, conversations about migration, immigration, and related stories were central to the author's practice, these issues of course still continue and drawings completed by the author continue to reflect on these difficult global events. In fact, one of the artist's animations that responds to these issues was selected for the 2018 Trinity Buoy Wharf Drawing Prize.

However, as an individual, the artist is getting older and, as this very natural process becomes more noticeable — more aches and pains, a growing awareness of mortality and, of course, more conversations with people of a similar age — their drawings, artwork, and community engagements have reflected these things. In particular, their recent work has begun to embody issues that have emerged from their research into aging and memory, both as practice-based drawing research and as research undertaken as part of a community group that has been looking at how to manage the aging process.

As an artist, I have a drawing practice that embraces community activism as well as personal expression. At the core of this practice is a desire to discover images of relevance by using observational drawings produced alongside the conversations I have with people. For several years, I have been developing a body of work that has used drawing as a resource gathering tool to both help develop imaginative landscapes within which allegorical actions may take place and to support community activities using various visualisation techniques. These drawings have been used to support a growing awareness of community problems, such as poor street lighting or issues related to drug misuse or fly tipping, and as part of a 'design out crime' initiative. My visualisations have also been used to help plan and shape changes in my local street's appearance and to raise an awareness of how a street's visual grain can be related to social well-being. Alongside these community focused activities, I have developed allegories in my large-scale drawings and animations based on the situations and stories that I have come across as I talk to people. The details of how the various elements of this practice fit together have been documented in the book, 'Collective and Collaborative Drawing in Contemporary Practice' (Journeaux and Gorrill 2018: 192–215), and I have also written about how a 'community voice' can be found in a more text based, poetic conversation with local street graffiti (Barker 2018: 75–85). The skills related to this ongoing project have developed over the years; listening in particular has become increasingly important and I have recently become much more aware that I need to listen to my own body as well as the voices of others.

I am now over 65 and I am, as Arnold (2006) points out, growing stiffer and my every function is becoming less exact. Age becomes very important when having conversations. Younger people see you as old and they therefore suspect that you will not understand the world in the same way that they do, and so you are tempted to behave as if you are not as old as you are (Jones 2004). Older people begin to be more open in conversation because they can see an affinity with someone who, from an outward appearance, is more like themselves, as well as the fact that enjoying fellowship with other people always leads to an increased sense of well-being (Svensson and Mårtensson 2012).

Stories told by older people were always an important part of a community's empowerment and identity (Rappaport 1995); they operate as a shared sense-making resource (Stapleton and Wilson 2016) and often have mythic, healing, and poetic possibilities but, as Field and Fenton (2014) state, there may not be anybody there to record them, even though the issues that affect older people are powerful and pertinent to the picture that we all have of the world. I have recently joined a self-identified group of people who are also interested in preparing themselves for the final part of their lives: 'Life Hacks for a Limited Future'. On joining, each person was asked to contribute research that would help the group think through the problems that they would have to collectively and individually face as they became older. As part of my own research contribution, I decided that I would develop a new body of artwork that took my increasing awareness of growing older as its focus and that I would also embed this into wider research through the Leeds Aging Network and conversations with others about the main issues that people have to face when getting older. I was particularly interested in what it feels like to become more aware of a body's aging process; I wanted to learn how to articulate this and to find out whether the results were even communicable to others. An awareness of how memory becomes central to the developing identity of being older was also important to my research and this opportunity allowed me test out ideas in relation to this. Above all, the fact that the people that I know are also getting older and will continue to make up stories about their own life changes is very important. The conversations I have already had about aging, memory, and how life changes, both informally as part of everyday life and

formally as part of ‘Life Hacks for a Limited Future’, suggested that this was a vital project to undertake and one that would profitably build on experiences of previous working practices.

One conversation in particular caused me to reflect that it was time to make work on the theme of aging; it illustrates how personal histories and memories are essential to the wellbeing of those growing older and that the reality of world events will always have a direct impact on individuals.

Recently, one of our more elderly neighbours came over to sit with my wife and me in the garden and began to tell us of her latest dream. She is very religious and so she asked her local priest what these dreams might mean and what she should do about them. His response was to tell her to forget about them, as they are just dreams and do not mean anything. However, she is convinced that they are important and, because she knows that we have always leant a sympathetic ear to her stories, she has decided that she will tell us about her dreams in as much detail as she can remember.

She began by describing how she always finds herself in a large bleak office type space in her dreams. The office is busy and everyone has a job to do; she walks slowly around the office, but they are too busy to notice her. When she looks to see if she can spot any sympathetic faces, she realises that they are all white people and she is black. She is disorientated for a while but soon remembers what she is doing in this office. She has turned up to make a complaint to God; her life has been affected by tragic events and she wants to know, why her? In particular, she wants to know why her charisma was stolen and why she has not got any qualifications. She wants to see God and she believes that, if she can get someone to answer her question about his whereabouts, she will be able to confront him and demand an explanation because, she reasons in her dream, that it must be God who is behind all of the things that have happened to her.

Eventually someone notices her and she is directed to a huge desk that is so big she cannot see over it; it is like a high wall and, although she cannot see who is sitting behind it, she can feel a presence and she believes this presence is God. "Why" she demands, “did you steal my charisma?” “Because” replies the voice of God, “when you were a girl in Saint Kitts, you were as beautiful as an angel; you were so virtuous and had such a wonderful character that if you had charisma alongside all your other talents no boy on the island would have been safe from you, as you would have broken all their hearts and I could not allow that”. She now remembers the time when she was the fastest girl in the area: she would run everywhere and won all of her school races. One day she was picked to run in a regional race; this was a special occasion because she was the youngest person to be picked and the only one from her village. Because she was quietly reserved, beautiful, and could run quickly over short distances, as well as being able to achieve long distances and accelerate whenever she wanted to, she was called ‘three speed grey dove’ by everyone who knew her. At the time, she also had a special boyfriend, who loved to watch her run and who always expected her to win, and she prided herself on the fact that she would always win for him. However, on the morning of this special race, she began to feel unwell. She tried to hide this and lined up with all the other girls, determined to win as she always had done before. But she was feeling dizzy and, as soon as the race started, she fell over and cut her knee. It began to bleed heavily and she lost her nerve; she had no confidence in herself any more. The race was lost, and so was her boyfriend and her inner confidence. She still remembers the shame of that day: the shame of letting everyone down. And, above everything else, she remembers a feeling that she had for the first time in her life: she didn’t deserve to win and she was not worthy. It was the moment when God took away her charisma and she now knows why. She is angry with God, who still hides behind his huge desk, and she has not

finished with him yet. She now wants to know why she has not received any qualifications for her schoolwork. She remembers how hard she worked and the praise that she used to receive from her teachers. She had no proof of her worth and was demanding that God put this right, but God was no longer replying. His presence somehow was gone and, instead of the voice of God, there is another voice in her head, that of a very elegant white woman who is now standing directly in front of her and telling her that she must go. Our neighbour then tells us that she then walked out of a door that had suddenly appeared and, as she did, everywhere surrounding the office became a 'nothingness' and then she steps forward into a white mist, dropping into this nothingness. It is at this point that she wakes up frightened and distressed.

Windrush stories were in the news at this time, which told how the Home Office had destroyed the landing cards of people who had come over to England from the West Indies; this made it very difficult for them to prove that they were in the UK legally, even if they had lived here for most of their lives. I realised at this point that my neighbour's dream was based on the fact that she had no proof of citizenship. Times were hard again: her husband was very ill and her grandson had been finding it hard to get work. Her priest had been telling the congregation not to worry and that they should trust in the Lord's will but she did not really believe him. Her son eventually comes over to see us and, after apologising for his mother's dreams, tells us a long story of how difficult it has been over the years to get things done as a family because of the lack of certain proofs of identity.

Two days after she told us her story, her son told us that she had been taken into hospital as she had suffered a stroke.

There is a shape to all stories, and my neighbour's is the flight of a 'three speed grey dove'. Even though she is now an old white haired woman in her late 70s, she has a presence and a grace of movement that belies her age: her skin glows, she wears her carefully chosen clothes with grace, and carries herself with pride.

All communities are full of stories, but without someone to listen to them and to shape them into images, they fade away with people's lives.

If this story is to have any meaning beyond what it means to the person that told it, it needs to find a shape outside of the immediate community and this is also true for a community's collected stories. This story is one of many stories that I have heard over the years, and each one has helped shape a continually reformed practice. This story, however, has further convinced me that dreams enable the mythic form of individual experience to become part of a collective experience, and that what I need to do is to develop images that might feed into that collective experience and which can inhabit the dreamtime that everyone must touch at some point in their lives.

Visualising the aging mind and body

I am developing a body of work that responds to two aspects of getting older: how to accept and represent the aging body, and how to visualise the activities of a mind that has less work-related things to think about. This is a mind that will begin to reminisce or discover new areas of engagement, and which is driven by interests other than money.

However, during the evolution of the visualisation process, an unexpected area of practice was developed by chance, which can only be described as a rediscovery of the power of sympathetic magic.

Due to the fact that this area has evolved out of my work with ceramics, I think it needs to be reflected upon separately, even though it grew directly out of my research into representing an aging mind/body.

The first area of investigation was heavily influenced by my neighbour's story of running, which became a catalyst for several aspects of the work I was undertaking. When I had been a boy I also ran, but I had forgotten how important running had been to me, particularly the feeling of running as fast as you can go with arms outstretched like a bird or plane; how exciting it was to have the air rushing past my face and how in those moments nothing mattered but the thrill of movement (Fig. 1). At that time, the body was something totally accepted and the excitement of the experience was totally embodied, which is why my neighbour's story of losing that acceptance was so important. Running is also tightly related to location because it has to take place somewhere. There was a particular hill in the landscape that had grown around the map of my childhood. This landscape exists in my mind in a form that still moulds the landscapes I have been drawing ever since. The older 1950s landscape was in effect a mythic form: one that is still driving my visual interests 60 years into the future.

FIGURE 1: GARRY BARKER STUDY: BODY/HILL WITH RUNNING FIGURE (2018) WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

In listening to my neighbour's story about a dream, it was very apparent that the dream was also taking place in a landscape of the past, but the concerns arising were ones that were important to the present. The awareness that the present is in many ways being shaped by the past has been clearly articulated by Bergson. For Bergson, memory involves the co-existence of past and present, as it 'interweaves the past into the present, such that memory is practically inseparable from perception' (2011: 73). Bergson argues that memory orientates the present by using selected recollections to ground new experiences within already understood patterns of behaviour. His observations seem to be very relevant to a world where continuously changing technology means that older people have to constantly keep updating skills in order to remain in touch with an increasingly computer literate society. The audience for artworks attempting to deal with the past, although increasingly computer literate, is still connected to an analogue past; therefore, I reasoned that one aspect of it should be obviously handmade in order to effectively communicate with that demographic.

My practice over the preceding ten years had been centred on walks where I would collect initial visual information by observational drawing and further contextual information by speaking to the various people I met as I was making the drawings (Journeaux and Gorrill 2018). These visual and verbal encounters formed the core research, which led to a variety of further approaches to image making, including drawing as community visualisation, allegory, play, and image generation. The difference in this case was that the initial research would not be able to use observational drawing, but would have to rely on drawings that were centred on imaginative explorations of what it was like to inhabit a body. The initial responses were centred on the fact that I primarily thought about my body when there was something 'wrong' with it. For instance, as I have become older, I have become more prone to eczema. Eczema makes you much more aware of your skin and is accompanied by a constant need to scratch. Therefore, the first drawings were about this desire to scratch (Fig. 2).

FIGURE 2: GARRY BARKER STUDY: BODY ITCHING (2018) WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

I am also aware of other problems: arthritis that particularly affects my fingers, which often makes drawing a very painful activity; a frozen shoulder that for a while threatened to make it impossible to create the images that were needed; asthma that made me very aware of my own breathing; and toothache that often made it difficult to concentrate. This is not the place to list every malady that I may have had, and none of these issues are debilitating or causing constant discomfort, but each ailment had a way of redirecting the focus of my image making. The exploration of the two-dimensional surface was initially driven by thinking about eczema, which put the focus on paper as a metaphor for skin. A growing awareness of asthma and breathing issues eventually led to a three-dimensional exploration in clay because my shortness of breath created an awareness of volume.

FIGURE 3: GARRY BARKER SOLID BREATH (2018) CERAMIC

These 'feeling tones' represented information coming from a fractured body; there was no wholeness and, instead, simply a period of focused sensations that centred on toothache or itching skin. However, what could be seen as a representational problem became, as Dewey observed, a positive factor because the ‘objects of most of our ordinary perception lack completeness’ (2005: 184). The problem he saw was that as soon as an observer realised what an object was, the observer stopped looking and relied on language to complete the picture: i.e., once the amount of information perceived adds up to an awareness of ‘human body’ then all the stereotypical images stored in the mind’s memory banks come into operation. In order to go beyond this, he called for an ‘esthetic perception’ and this ‘full perception’ leads to the making of images that take their rhythm from life experience and which become alive in an almost animistic sense (Ibid.: 184). By not illustrating what we expect the body to look like, we can ‘evoke the energy appropriate to a realisation of the full energy of the object’ (Ibid.: 185). Working from the fragments of difficult to realise perceptions that rely on an internal feeling tone and a heightened haptic sensibility would hopefully avoid creating what Dewey called a ‘simulated esthetic experience' (Ibid.: 185)

Visualising the Body

The initial visual exploration of body images was mainly completed in sketchbooks and consisted of images of the body as a landscape. The fact that I was inside a body became a metaphor for a place I inhabited and this led to a more topological exploration of the body’s surfaces.

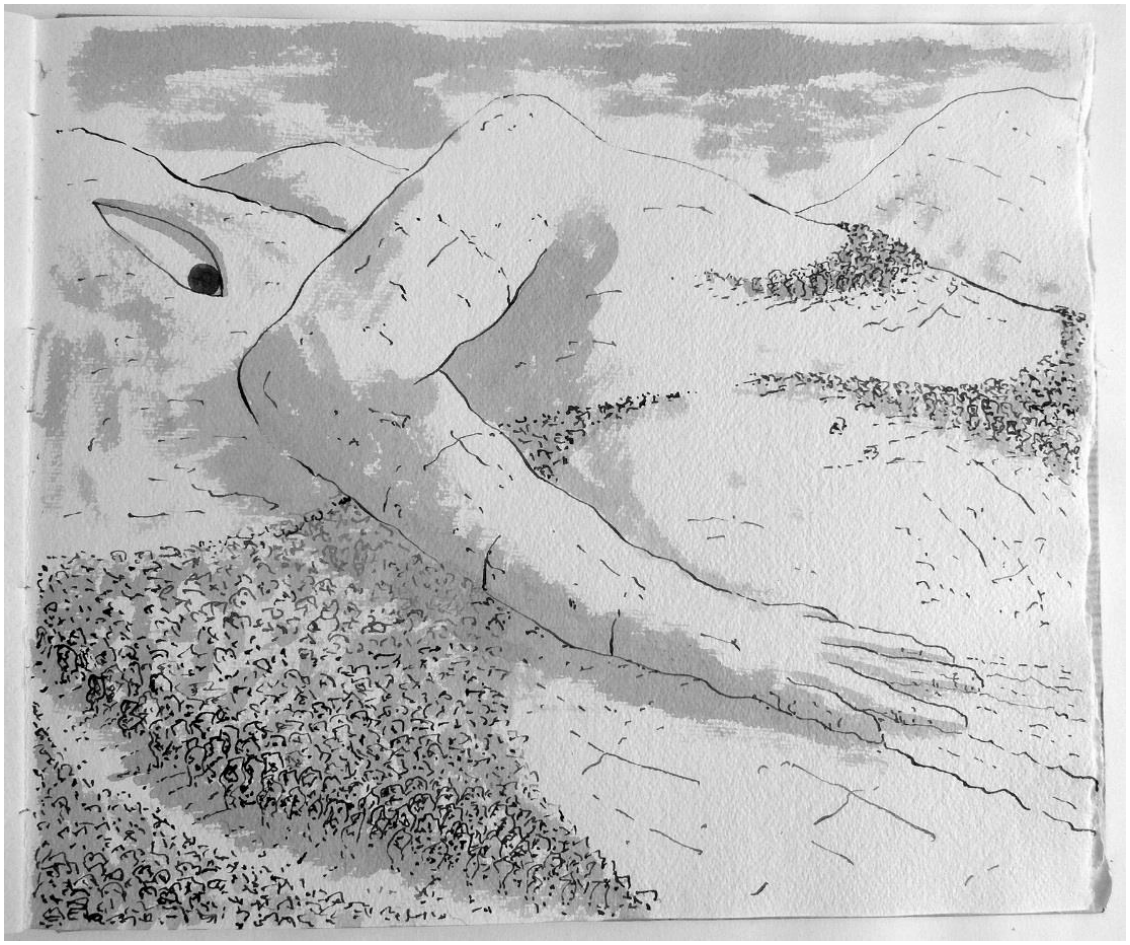

FIGURE 4: GARRY BARKER SKETCHBOOK PAGE (2018)

The implications of Simondon's thoughts on the body and topology (discussed in Lambert 2014) were of particular importance to my practice because they allowed me to articulate ideas in relation to the skin as a permeable surface that could allow other things into and out of the body. The ideas associated with Simondon's 1964 book, *The Individual and its Physical-Biological Genesis*, include the contrast between what he terms a hylomorphic scheme and an allagmatic body scheme. The hylomorphic scheme is problematic because it suggests that there is a distinction between form and matter, which is a distinction that, on a social level, could easily become similar to 'masters' and 'slaves'. However, Simondon's manifesto for the allagmatic scheme suggests that form should always be arrived at through a deep understanding of the intrinsic characteristics of matter. The body image that was emerging stemmed from the possibilities of several different liquids being moved around simultaneously over a large area of thick watercolour paper, which would expand as it became wet, and then fold and force the liquids to pool before they dried. This membrane of paper was now being regarded in my mind as skin and the solids dissolved in liquids, which would, as they settled, become both the rock strata of a new landscape and the worn skin of an old body. As the drawings developed, they had to capture what an itch might be like, what the weight of a body is like as you carry it and then rest it, what stiffness feels like, and how what was once a clearly defined shape has now become much less clear and more akin to a carcass than 'an incarnation of energy' (Clark 1993: 154). Watching materials flow and feeling how edges defined themselves was key to the development of these images. Dewey's observation that 'sensitivity to a medium as a medium is the very heart of all artistic creation and esthetic perception', (Dewey 2005: 207) was key, as I watched the inks and other water-carried substances deposit themselves in various ways. The more I pushed these inks, acrylics, and watercolours across the surface of wet paper and the more I added dustings of powdered pigment, the more the process became analogous to thinking about the various substance flows that consist of the bag of seawater that we are mostly formed from. The artist was also very aware that this surface, this series of forms, was being carried by a certain visual quality that was emerging from his various manipulations of media and that this would effectively be the 'go between of artist and perceiver' (ibid.).

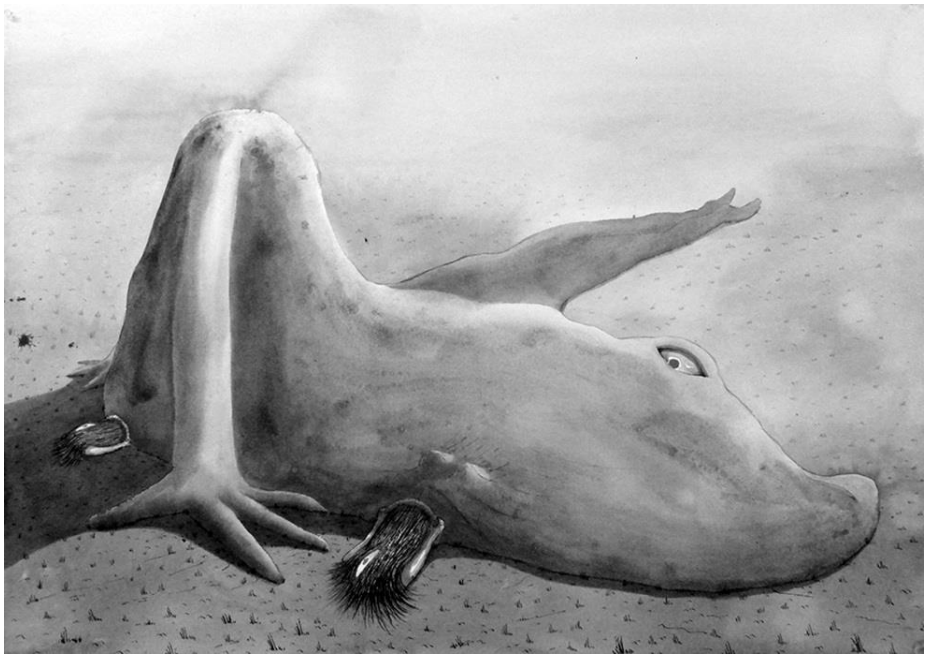

FIGURE 5: GARRY BARKER STUDY: *A BODY ENTERED BY OTHERS* (2018) WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

The landscape of childhood

Sebba argues that adults use the landscapes of childhood to develop their own concepts of growing up, landscapes that becomes inseparable from 'the physical features of the surroundings to which they were exposed in childhood' (1991: 405). She goes on to state that, 'children experience the natural environment in a deep and direct manner, not as a background for events, but, rather, as a factor and stimulator' (Ibid.: 406) and that sensory perceptions remain in adult memories because their relative importance reaches a peak in childhood. Sebba's observations encouraged me to make a series of drawings whereby I tried to visualise the place that had been most important to myself as a child: the place that I realised was still shaping my approach to landscape. I realised that there was one key moment: the day that I, at the age of nine, was to move from one house to another. On that day, just before my father had to lock up the house and leave it forever, I stood looking through the window of my bedroom and, as I realised that this would be the last time I would ever be able to do this, I decided to remember everything I could see from that window. I looked at each element of the rough urban landscape that lay before me and tried to recall all of the things I had done in this landscape of my childhood. Even now, sixty years on, I can relive that moment, can go back into that nine-year-old boy's head and see each element of that landscape as it was put into memory. Going back to those memories, I have made new drawings about the position of the house I lived in and its relationship to a post-industrial landscape of slag heaps and an overgrown wilderness that is now a housing estate. These drawings which emerged from my 'landscapes of childhood' are what needed to be fitted into the images of an aging body (Fig. 6). Two forms of visual research needed to find spaces for themselves within new image structures. One element of the drawing process was effectively becoming the ground on which the second element would be realised.

Because of my readings in object orientated ontology and material culture, I was becoming more and more concerned to move beyond maintaining the illusion that human beings are in some way independent, or in control, of Nature. Part of my coming to terms with this meant that I had to revisit my own understanding of Cézanne's work. Cézanne was the first artist that I had encountered as a youngster and it made me aware of the importance of perceptual struggle. Only three years after looking through a window and trying to remember a landscape, I was attempting to make transcriptions of Cézanne's paintings. No matter how bad these attempts were, they made me aware that looking was not the same as copying. As Martel states, Cézanne 'in the heat of creation omits the line between himself and the object he observes, the line between the mental and the physical, spirit and matter' (2015: 54). This 'dissolving back into Nature' (Ibid.) seemed to be very important and the more I researched basic things, such as how ink sticks to paper, and the more I began to see the chemistry of life as being just as important to the development of these drawings as any research into similar art forms. In making images that confronted bodily feelings and how I was myself establishing an identity of being older, as an artist I also acknowledged that I would also have to, as Deleuze and Guattari explained, deal with 'the consciousness or thought of the matter flow' (2004: 454). In this case, I was making a very conscious connection between an awareness of the 'matter flow' of the human body and the 'matter flow' of the art materials that I was using to visualise these concepts. As Ingold put it, 'As the artisan thinks from materials, so the dancer thinks from the body'; in this case, I am both thinking through my materials and through an awareness of my own body (2013: 94).

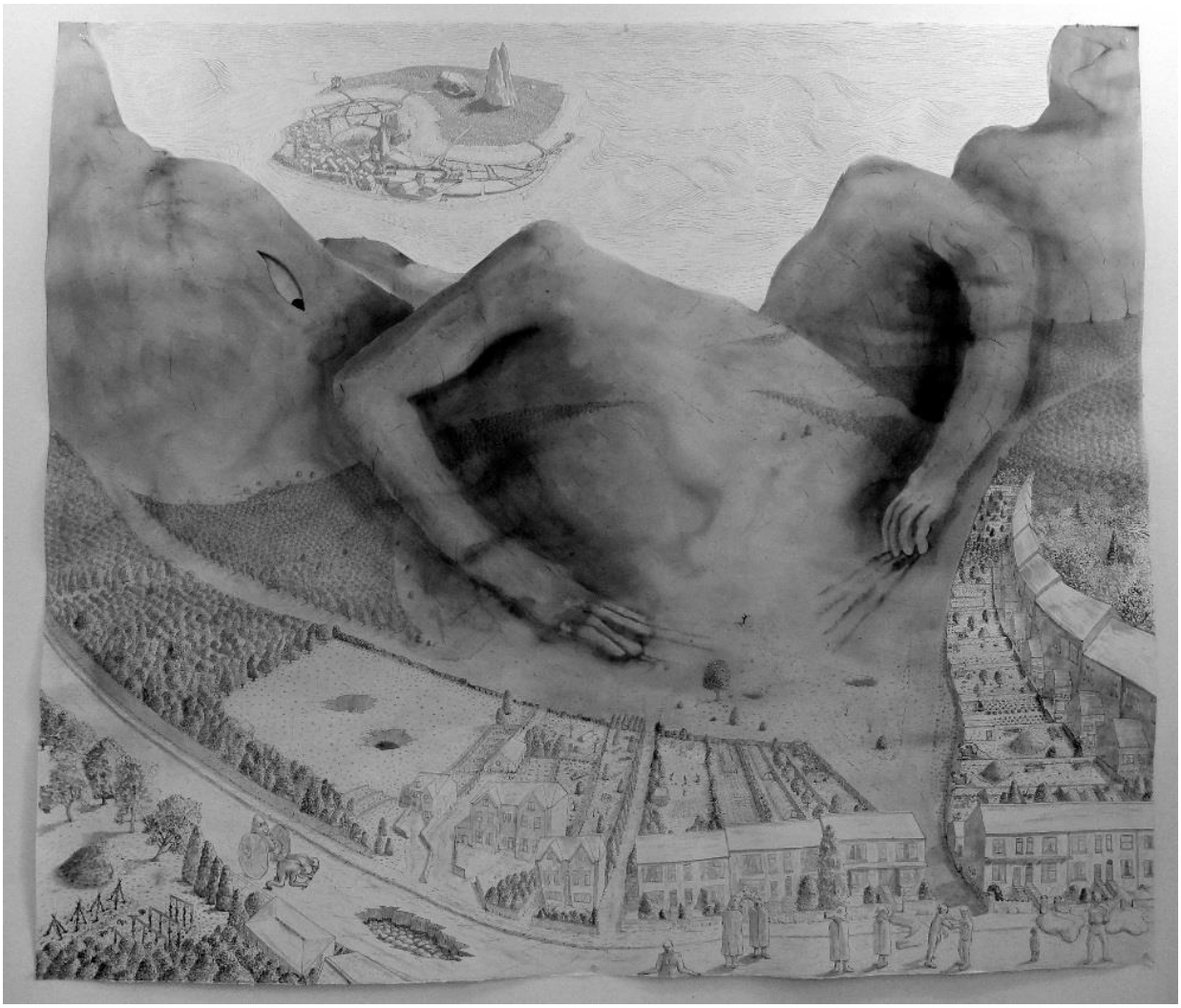

FIGURE 6: GARRY BARKER *BODY, LANDSCAPE, AND MEMORY* (2018) WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER

Trying to visualise the body from within is a process that depends on a particular type of inner awareness, what I have called an eye for touch; therefore, a much more haptic approach to image making needs to be foregrounded. In the opening scene of *The English Patient* (Anthony Minghella 1996), the camera moves lovingly over what you think is a close-up of human skin but, as it pulls away from the surface, it becomes apparent that this is watercolour paper. Marks uses this image to point to the 'tactile qualities' of film and video, particularly pointing to the choice to use 'haptic' close ups, like Minghella's, when they want to 'make viewers unsure of their relationship to the image and the knowledge it implies' (2000: 177). Several contemporary artists have looked at the aging body as something objectified. Sometimes, they have used photographic documentation, including close-ups of the aging skin, such as John Coplans' (2002) images of his own aging body and Anastasia Pottinger's photographs of centenarians (Smithson 2011), or they have painted it in to emphasise the surface appearance of aging, such as Joan Semmel's paintings of herself (2015) and Lucian Freud's paintings of his mother (Blau 2011). I was interested in finding a way to discover images that are less precise and more unsure of themselves that carry a knowledge of the interior body/mind and which were, therefore, acknowledged as subjective, but which might point towards a way of avoiding stereotypes. As Kampmann (2015) states, I was aware that, 'Pictures of age and aging are not only symptoms of general

ideas about age, but also play an important part in producing ideational images and models of age.' When looked at from the standpoint of art historical models, there are many gender specific clichés, which mostly no longer help us define what it is to be old. An ascetic lifetime perhaps represented by a bent and crocked body of an aging male hermit; however, a lifetime of depravity may well be portrayed as an image of a woman's body treated in almost exactly the same way. As Susan Sontag (1977) pointed out, there are different standards set out in society for the way that male and female aging is measured.

I was trying to use drawing to capture several things at once both as a memory and as an experiential body for memories to inhabit. Mingella's close up filming of watercolour paper reminds us of how similar to skin a paper's surface can be. Our skin can, of course, be stripped off, flayed, and stretched out as a flat sheet but, above all, it acts as a boundary for the body, a membrane that separates the inside from the outside. However, this membrane is also part of the world and things are constantly passing through it, back and forth, into and out of the world – food, sweat, inhaled particles, blood, mucus, germs – all passing backwards and forwards, prefiguring the slow dissolving of the body back, eventually, into the world from which it came. It is in perpetual interaction with the environment and the only thing that prevents it from dissolving into its surroundings is life itself (Lambert 2014). The fact that other things can pass into the body also leaves it open to contamination. Simondon's hylomorphic worries which, as he pointed out, could, on a social level, lead to a master/slave dichotomy becoming mirrored by how we think about the body as being either separate from or continuous with the rest of the world. As Simondon states, 'All the content of the interior space is topologically in contact with the content of the exterior space on the limits of the living being; there is no distance in topology' (in Lambert 2014).

It could be argued that this fear of contamination lies behind many of our social ostracisms. As Lambert puts it, I fear that your matter will deteriorate the membrane that is my body' (2014). This principle of abjection or 'matter out of place' (Douglas, 2002, p160.) became, at one point in the process of image development, very important and openings in the body form, as well as other bodies entering and exiting, became essential to the feeling tone, which included anthropomorphic visions of fears of contamination.

There is an interesting distinction between the way we use the words 'flesh' and 'skin'. 'Flesh' suggests thickness and substance which is better suggested by paint, and 'skin' the thinness and surface quality that has a much closer affinity to drawing. When looked at closely, handmade drawings are just a field of marks. But the nature of a mark field is essential to an understanding of the drawing as a whole. Not only does the mark quality and handling tell a story, but also the concept of a mark field as something that comes together as an identifiable entity when you see it from a distance is itself fascinating. You can think of this situation as being like what happens when you begin to examine something with various powers of magnification. This allows us to think about how things 'look' and how appearance is a relative concept that depends on moving our conceptual framework beyond our 'normal' sense of scale, which is based on a particular understanding of ourselves. Once that framework is questioned, such as when we see our skin under an electron microscope, we can begin to accept all manner of possibilities as to what might constitute the 'reality' of appearance. My research into what might stand for skin or become an equivalent metaphoric surface, therefore, went beyond the idea of mimesis and I began to search for more geologic qualities (Fig. 7).

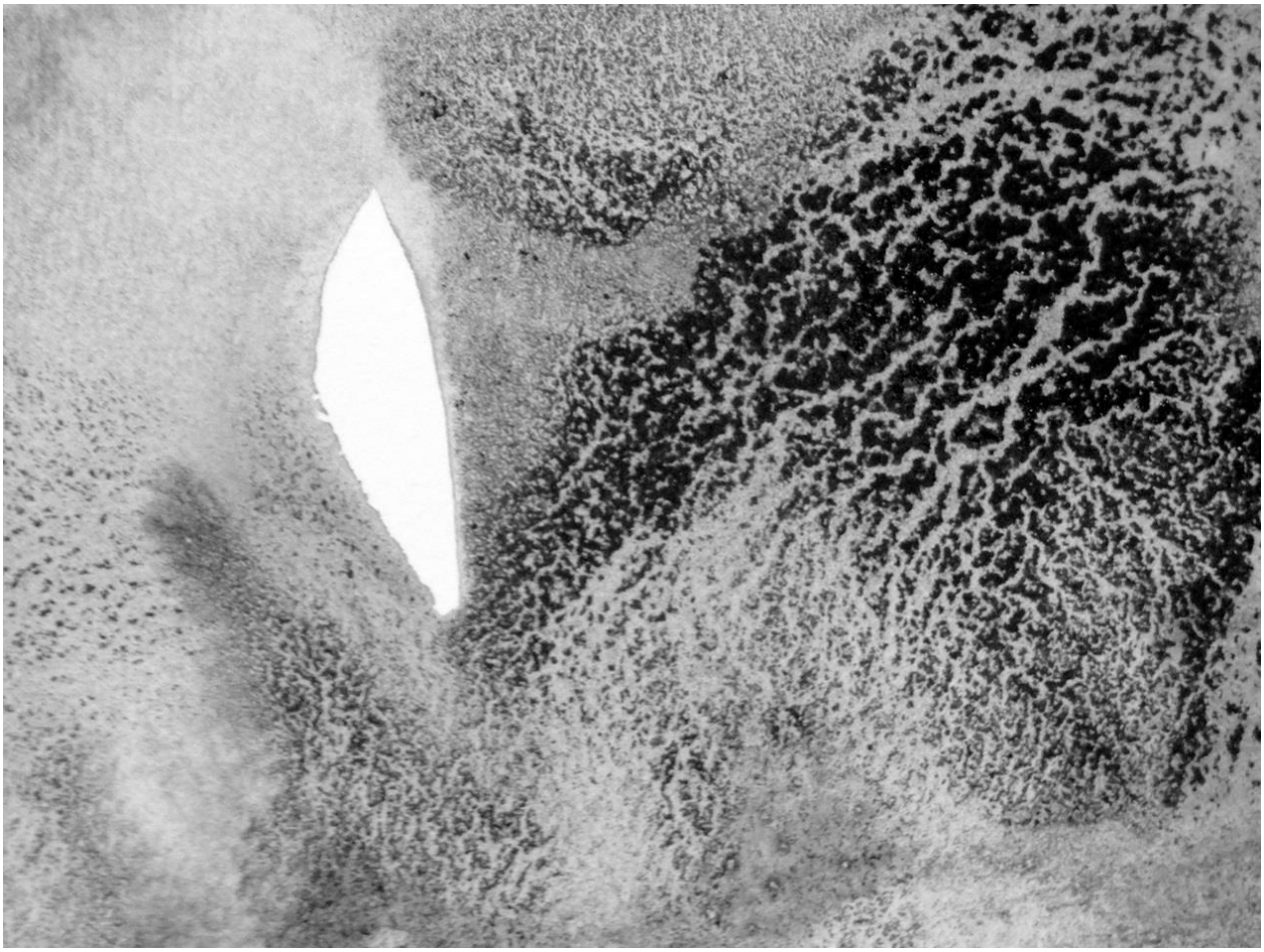

FIGURE 7: GARRY BARKER *SURFACE DETAIL OF METAPHORIC SURFACE* (2018)

Making votives for a non-religious community

The living body needs constant attention if it is to maintain itself and, as Ingold points out, 'left to themselves materials can run riot' (2013: 94). Constant attention is needed if we are to make sure things are held together in a proper manner. This maintaining of the body is something I have only tended to do when confronted by illness or accident, and so responses to these issues have been developed more by happenstance than design but, even so, they have been extremely important to the generation of this recent body of work.

Toothache has been an ongoing problem over this last year and so I decided to confront it. At the time, I was engaged in a ceramic project and, because there were small lumps of clay left around in the studio, I decided to make some model teeth and mouths. I decided to 'deposit' or transfer my tooth pain into these models and it seemed to work, if only as a distraction. After making several drawings of ideas, I decided on a medallion-like mouth form and made several out of clay. These were glazed and fired, and then used as votive-like objects, designed to carry the pain away. Strangely it seemed to work, or perhaps the making of these objects coincided with the dentist getting down to the root of the problem but, in the process of making them, other people became aware of their existence and a few asked to have one. They quickly came back and said that they thought these things had relieved their own pain. This made me think that perhaps other types of pain could be relieved or released in this way. Didi Huberman (2007) argues that the use of votives goes back to the Upper Palaeolithic era. One of the first

uses human beings found for images of the body were as effigies of bodily parts that needed to be cured or healed. They are regarded by Schlosser as 'Bildmagie' (Rampley 2013: 49) – magical objects that worked because the split between symbol and symbolic referent had not yet occurred. They were, in effect, not just substitutes for arms, legs, or whatever else needed fixing, as they acted in some way as if they were actual parts of a body, rather than representations. Because votives have been used for thousands of years and that people who were not particularly religious also seemed to find a use for them, I decided to make more, but this time focusing on other ailments, until a range had been produced, including both two and three dimensional versions. A frozen shoulder was followed by a nose bleed, a stiff neck, and then a sore leg. An operation was represented as a scar and, as these objects were made, associated rituals were developed as ways of transferring pain into the objects. Prints were burnt in a specially made ceramic vessel and the ashes kept in ceramic containers. Other votives were made to be broken or hung on walls; some were made to simply be held tightly in the hand. People seemed to be interested in what was going on, usually with a great sense of humour, because they believed they would not work and it was just a 'bit of fun'. People that discussed the votives were very aware of psychosomatic illnesses, and have suggested that they might function in a similar way to the placebo effect. This aspect of the project was totally unintentional and it emerged as an unexpected accident. Interestingly, as my awareness of votives has grown, I have found that their aesthetic mediocrity coupled with their formulaic and stereotypical character has meant that they have, to some extent, disappeared from the history of art.

Every year I open my studio and put on an exhibition of the work I am making. This allows me to get a feeling for how local people respond to it, as well as giving people with more of a fine art background to visit the studio and judge its success. I am very aware that I have two audiences and I value the feedback from both. This year I separated the votive work from the images that visualised the aging body and memory spaces. Although there was considerable conversation and dialogue about the latter, the thing that people wanted to buy was the toothache votive. If they bought one, people were asked to concentrate on their pain and then look intently and mentally make their pain enter the votive as they clasped the medallion shape tighter and tighter in their hand as the pain releases. They were to then hang the votive on their wall as a reminder of what had been done.

FIGURE 8: GARRY BARKER *TOOTH VOTIVE* (2018) CERAMIC

Reflection

Making images to allegorically visualise a future supportive community infrastructure also needs to involve an awareness of aging. The community of people that see themselves as needing to consider aging as a serious issue, as well as those coming to the end of their working lives and beginning to think about the next stage of life (the 'young old') are often identified as a primary audience for this work. The research I have done in relation to old age highlights many misconceptions about the nature of older people. In making images that confronted bodily feelings and how memories become essential to the establishment of an identity, I have begun to explore both a private inner awareness and, via working with older people, aspects of others' lives. This enables me to see if others going through a similar aging process can empathise and/or relate to the developed images. In this case, my decision to build images that fused landscape and body together in such a way that memories and other storylines could be drawn over the body/landscapes proved vital to the communication process. It explored how these

issues come together for older people and suggested that this is a constantly on-going situation applicable to everyone, no matter their time of life.

Eduardo Kohn in 'How Forests Think' states that, 'Lives and thoughts are not distinct kinds of things' (2013: 99). He describes a 'live' form of semiosis, one that is constantly being constructed and that is flowing between humans and non-human actants. The thoughts that have been generated by this project have included reflections on a neighbour's recent illness, others' illnesses, and a growing awareness of the fact that people do not plan for old age. The physical effort of making gets harder as you get older. Therefore, one of the most interesting issues that I explored was how the skills of making that take hours and hours of practice to build up, which has become recognised by a community of practitioners (Sennett 2009: 25), are eventually compromised or threatened by a body that can no longer do the things that it used to do. In particular, as an artist with a drawing led practice, I was aware of earlier precedents, such as that of Matisse who, in response to being confined to a wheelchair, worked with the limitations that his illness had placed on his mobility. As Matisse once explained, 'I have needed all that time to reach the stage where I can say what I want to say […] Only what I created after the illness constitutes my real self: free, liberated' (Carelli 2014).

Loss of kinaesthetic or sensory abilities can be assessed by looking at the various ways that an image has been made. Scale can be used to assess the degree of overall bodily movement needed to construct the work. For instance, long lines that demonstrate that control of mark making has to come from the shoulder or the waist, or the whole body has to be engaged in moving across the artwork. These indications can be coupled with a smoothness of execution that demonstrates levels of neural control over hand movements: how well blended are areas that need subtle control? how confident is the mark making? An image can suggest in many ways the extent of the artist's control of the materials. However, it is harder to assess what areas of real-world perception are embedded into art making. Sometimes, this is evidenced by an individual's ability to translate an experience into a visual idea that can be realised by art materials; for example, a map of an area that was experienced, or an ability to reproduce an aspect of the 'look' of something, such as its colour, its texture, or tone. However, perception levels can also be evidenced by how sensitive an individual is to the materials they are working with. It is interesting how these ways of assessing perceptual abilities mirror a realism/abstraction divide within art. Cognitive and symbolic applications can also be hard to assess but, by using self-reflection, it can be quickly established whether or not there is an intent to communicate emotive or intellectual ideas by assessing the narrative that will emerge from any dialogue. This could lead towards a model for evaluating the abilities of not just artists as they get older but any functioning human being.

One of the other key issues to emerge, which now requires further research, is the emergence of what I would call 'imaginative sympathy' as an aspect of metaphoric expression. How do the images made within this process begin to make sense within the community of people that are looking at them? The images made are not immediately accessible but, as connections are made and dialogues begun, imaginative and metaphoric reasoning does appear to have a role within a growing individual and community awareness of this particular time of life.

This project is only in its first year; I have yet to give my first presentation to the community group I am working with and so cannot report on their responses. Although, I am aware that the work helps to open out what Stephen Willats called 'the territory of art in society' (2000: 11). Willats' criticism that 'in

operating within the delineated territory of "art's social environment" […] art has largely restricted the area of function of art practice to its internal fabric of norms and conventions' still rings true (Ibid.).

I have deliberately not engaged with how art works with older people as a form of therapy, and I have also yet to practically explore how artwork can be used as a way to demonstrate a breakdown in functions. Instead, at the moment, I am much more interested in looking at how drawing can be a sophisticated tool that can realise the complexity of a situation. As Lusebrink (2010) observes, the focus on using drawing as therapy and as a diagnostic tool when working with older people could be seen as yet another example of not taking older people seriously.

As myself and the group of people that I am in daily contact with progress through the stages of 'middle old' and 'old old', hopefully I will be able to continue working and responding to changes in both my internal condition and external environment, as well as continuing our dialogues. As was stated in the short abstract at the beginning of this article, an art practice based on conversations with others is, by its very nature, a constantly evolving one as it follows the changing nature of people as they age.

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THE ARTIST AS ATHLETE: INTRODUCING RUN VERTICAL (RUNNING UP THE SIDE OF A BUILDING)

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Focusing on a practice-based approach – thinking about the relationships between drawing, performance and running, this paper is derived from a presentation aimed to introduce the artwork RUN VERTICAL (Running up the Side of a Building), an Arts Council England funded project.

Pointing to an increasing awareness of interconnected practices, necessity of collaboration and institutional critique, I highlight key aspects of my practice; and artworks by artists such as, Carolee Schneemann, Martin Creed and Trisha Brown help to inform an understanding of the 'line' and 'body'.

Introduction

As an artist engaged in representing and uncovering ways to understand the body, a means of working has been to look at the physical act of running and drawing. Beginning with an interest in seeing the body as an object and tool, then delving into the relationship between art and philosophy, and making live performance-based artworks that explore mark-making, the pairing of running and drawing can sit within a particular context of art and art history that focuses on physicality. Evident in many artists' works since 1945, particularly from the 1960s and 70s, artists have shifted their conceptual thinking about the role of the artist 'as' the work (such as Carolee Schneemann's Up to and Including Her Limits and Richard Long's A Line Made by Walking). More than just walking, running can alter and skilfully add to the conversation and scholarly debates of what it might mean to be an artist.

In considering a historical relationship, artworks have served to address issues and concerns that revolve almost entirely around the body: a physical presence acts as the source and site of the work. In addition to this, artists interested in the act of drawing look to the line as a trope. It enables a thread, cultivating concepts and ideas in one area of drawing, and links and attaches itself to another across disciplines and academic fields. Through practice and philosophical approaches, contemporary artists have been testing methods and demonstrating how 'running as drawing' can operate as a way to gain a new perspective, as well as attempt to articulate a development in thinking about notions of the body, duration, and performativity. Opening the question of what the body can do and what a line can be can reach far past the discipline of fine art, but point to science, geography, architecture, and politics – a multiplicity of disciplines.

In addressing the situations in which we currently live, in what can be considered to be socio-political difficult time, ideas of collaboration and cooperation within the fine art landscape can also invoke, inspire, and aim to question what the role of the artist has to contribute via methodologies and ways of working collectively. For an artist working today, trying to progress an inspired pursuit or translate a thought, idea, or object into action, the issue of questioning value and contribution to society can be seen tangibly at the forefront of their mind. However direct the message (a physical gesture, a text piece, or a visual expression), an intention can be linked to a larger socio-cultural context; nevertheless, an artwork's accomplishments can be rewarded and traced to a certain thought process that pulls away from institutional critique/activism or a productive comment. This article considers how research derived from practice and the artwork itself holds significance. And how, when positioning the work in context by tracing a lineage backwards to historical underpinnings, forwards to thinking about relationships, and extending laterally to critical topical debates anchored in a certain understanding of fine art, the work can then reach new ground

Art and Action

In the past, artworks have transformed what can be considered art and, even more, what a line, a drawing, or the role of the body is. Artworks have presented lasting ideas about how to represent underlying issues of our relationships to one another, without explicitly sending suggestive conclusions or opinions. The contemporary art world has made an impact in terms of how we learn and transform information, and somehow collaborate to make things happen. It can be expected that artists aim to provoke or alternatively allow a sense of escape through art making, but they must also always, while

exploring and questioning how particular types of practices can make an impression, cause disruption and suggest social change.

In some ways, the contemporary field has been successful yet overtly poised and shaped by the discipline itself – focusing 'in' rather than 'out' – thereby making the invisible visible (and vice versa) and representing the personal and the subjective. Although, to some extent, the most interesting artworks seem to position themselves between various modes of working and fields of inquiry, it is the compelling aspect of fine art that makes the work even more accessible and powerful. Artworks that address the outer layers of a body or political, cultural, or social systems can at best be recognised by looking to individual experiences and the thinking within; for example, suggesting that the themes of space and time and relationships between others and institutional collaborations can be obtainable and made materially by a simple collaborative/individual action.

An interesting example could be Zhang Huan's *To Raise the Water Level in a Fishpond* (1997) and many works made by Francis Alÿs, in particular, *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002). Both are referenced in Catherine Wood's book, *Performance in Contemporary Art* (2018), for their theme of situations that address collaborative acts with natural materials and reference the pursuit of making an ethical impact (Wood 2018: 146).

FIGURE 1: FRANCIS ALŸS IN COLLABORATION WITH CUAUHTÉMOC MEDINA AND RAFAEL ORTEGA
WHEN FAITH MOVES MOUNTAINS (*CUANDO LA FE MUEVE MONTAÑAS*) LIMA (2002)

Line and Running

Interested in these notions and, in particular, the forward movement of the body, such as running and leveraging what action can do, this approach takes the historical and cultural shifts of lines (Tim Ingold), running (Dan Liberman), and drawing (Catherine de Zegher). It is narrowly based on the context and

trajectory of fine art practice. The line and the movement of 'the body in a line' have been a way to explore the landscape and make performance-based works that begin to shape ways of collaborating across disciplines. It is through description and bridging language that a line has agency. Demonstrating a sense of empathy and responsiveness to terms, as well as considering an alternative use for a simple definition, the arts provide a way to borrow, tilt, re-shape, and broaden understandings from other disciplines, perhaps as an indirect way of collaboration.

FIGURE 2: *RUNNING ROAD: PHOTOGRAPHIC NOTES*, HURON COUNTY, CANADA

Growing up in a rural area of Canada, the lines I ran on divided the ownership of land. In an area where the terrain is flat and roads appear to emerge from the ground and stretch far beyond the horizon, this backdrop brought an initial awareness and understanding of how far a mile is. With no particular agenda, I ran. By running within the environment and using parts of the landscape as markers, I have started to make meaning out of the visual importance of mark making. The habits and methods of learning about the body as an instrument, and to use visual tools for considering distance continues to inform my thinking.

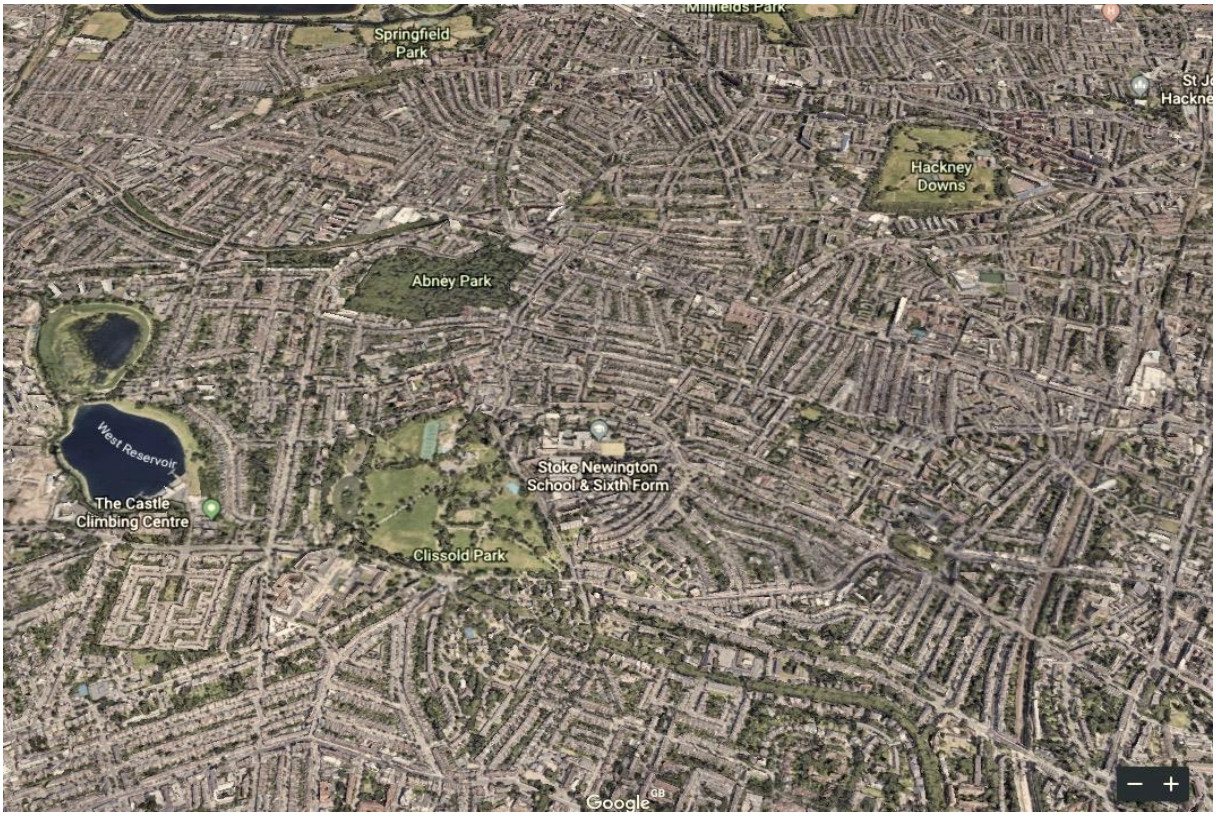

FIGURE 3: GOOGLE EARTH IMAGE: STOKE NEWINGTON, LONDON, UK.

Today, as an artist based in London, UK, a Google Earth image demonstrates a different set of lines. Relocating to a city and training for long-distance events mean that a runner becomes an urban runner, who uses the roads, canal paths, and old railroad routes that link city parks and any green spaces to accumulate mileage. Testing and experimenting with the body's physical limits have been consistent parts of my lifestyle, from running the long straight roads in Canada to now training and pursuing the artwork, *RUN VERTICAL*, by aiming to run up the side of a building.

Artwork, *RUN VERTICAL*

For the artwork, *RUN VERTICAL (Running up the Side of a Building)*, I will run towards the building then transition to the vertical and run up the multi-storey building. In front a live audience and filmed for video documentation purposes, the work will contribute to a live performance art platform and challenge the naturalised movement of running as a method of making.

To achieve this, the trained artist will be raised/lowered using a manual 'performer flying' system by an operating team. The performance will be approximately 30 minutes in duration. Although each run will approximately only take 2 minutes, for documentation and filming purposes the performance will be repeated. As it looks to the artist as athlete and brings together the skills and practice of various disciplines and generations of art making, this artwork has been in the forefront of my research for many years.

FIGURE 4: PROPOSED LOCATION PATH, WORK NO. 5, *RUN VERTICAL (RUNNING UP THE SIDE OF A BUILDING)*, 2018 BARBICAN CENTRE, LONDON UK.

Interested in movement that defies gravity, *RUN VERTICAL* alters an artists' practice by moving outside of the studio and onto the facades of public architectural surfaces. By addressing access and mobility in terms of the physical, it challenges the perspective of our relationship to the body in space – and what that can do to our imagination. It poses questions of aesthetics, materials, and modes of collaboration. Dependent on collaborative processes, as it involves team efforts and professional assistance, it requires a working relationship with institutions and authorities of communal and private/public spaces.

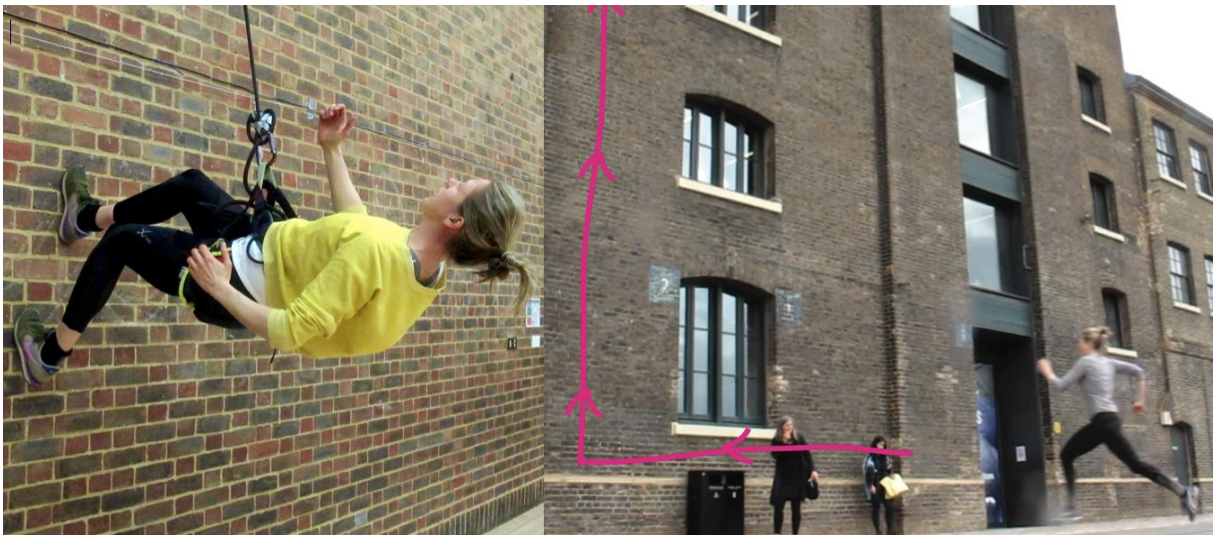

FIGURE 5: PROPOSED LOCATION PATH, WORK NO. 5, *RUN VERTICAL (RUNNING UP THE SIDE OF A BUILDING)*, 2017 GRANARY BUILDING, KING'S CROSS, LONDON UK.

Although, rather than an act of running, it may be considered to be the process of 'running up the side of a building', as it is, instead, a collaborative achievement of hoisting and scaling; the runner's form and position perpendicular to the ground will be important and the effect of a seamless transition from running horizontal to vertical will be attempted. It is a different kind of testing limitation, one of many. The work is loaded with fallibility, support structures, and professional, tailored equipment, as well as

the inclusion of others in terms of institutional provision and permission, alliance and partnership. Technically, running is a natural movement but, against gravity, it is a real impossibility, especially depending on the site-specificity and the level of collaboration warranted. Perhaps, it could be understood that this is where the creative element in the work is introduced: when an artist makes their own rules, retrieves and learns new skills, and those of others, another aspect of this journey begins.

Previous Artworks

Since 2004, I have been making 'performance drawings' by drawing circles with my extended arm for as long as possible or, rather, until the graphite falls out of my hand. Folding a 4 metre section of paper on itself, attaching the top of the fold to the wall, I then use a stick of graphite to draw. Testing the limits of the body and allowing the front section of the paper to react to my upwards and downwards circular and continuous movement, the work is a result of the performative element and tenuous relationship with materials. It also places an emphasis on my own conviction and response to an audience (either camera or live).

FIGURE 6: *WORK NO. 1 (CIRCLE DRAWING)* 2HOURS 03MINUTES, 2019. LONDON UK.

After hours of continuous drawing (usually between two to three hours), my arm eventually becomes fatigued. What starts as a large continuous line, becomes a smaller and smaller circle and, through the mark-making process, the bounds of my ability are revealed. First, the shoulder and back muscles

become worn then the legs and forearms start to give way, and eventually my hand cramps and the graphite drops.

FIGURE 7: *WORK NO. 1 (CIRCLE DRAWING)* 2HOURS 03MINUTES, 2019. LONDON UK.

Due to the effort and pressure of drawing, sometimes the paper stretches and rips, and the skin on my knuckles tear and traces of blood appear. Each work is titled by its duration; yet, the evidence of the time endured and the energy expended remains as a trace in the graphite and paper.

Like going for a long run, the first stages of the drawing are aimed to stimulate a repetitive, bodily, 'active' activity; the aim is to keep moving, expend energy, and make a single continuous line. The line is used to determine time and distance – and end when the body is exhausted.

In both activities, running and drawing, the notion of the line has been a way to strive for some type of understanding (or perhaps distraction). From the many hours spent running the same roads and performing circle drawings over and over again, the line fundamentally has helped connect me to the vast landscape and bring focus to the work. And, in particular whilst drawing, the obsessiveness of mark-making and the purpose of making art stirs an excitement inside.

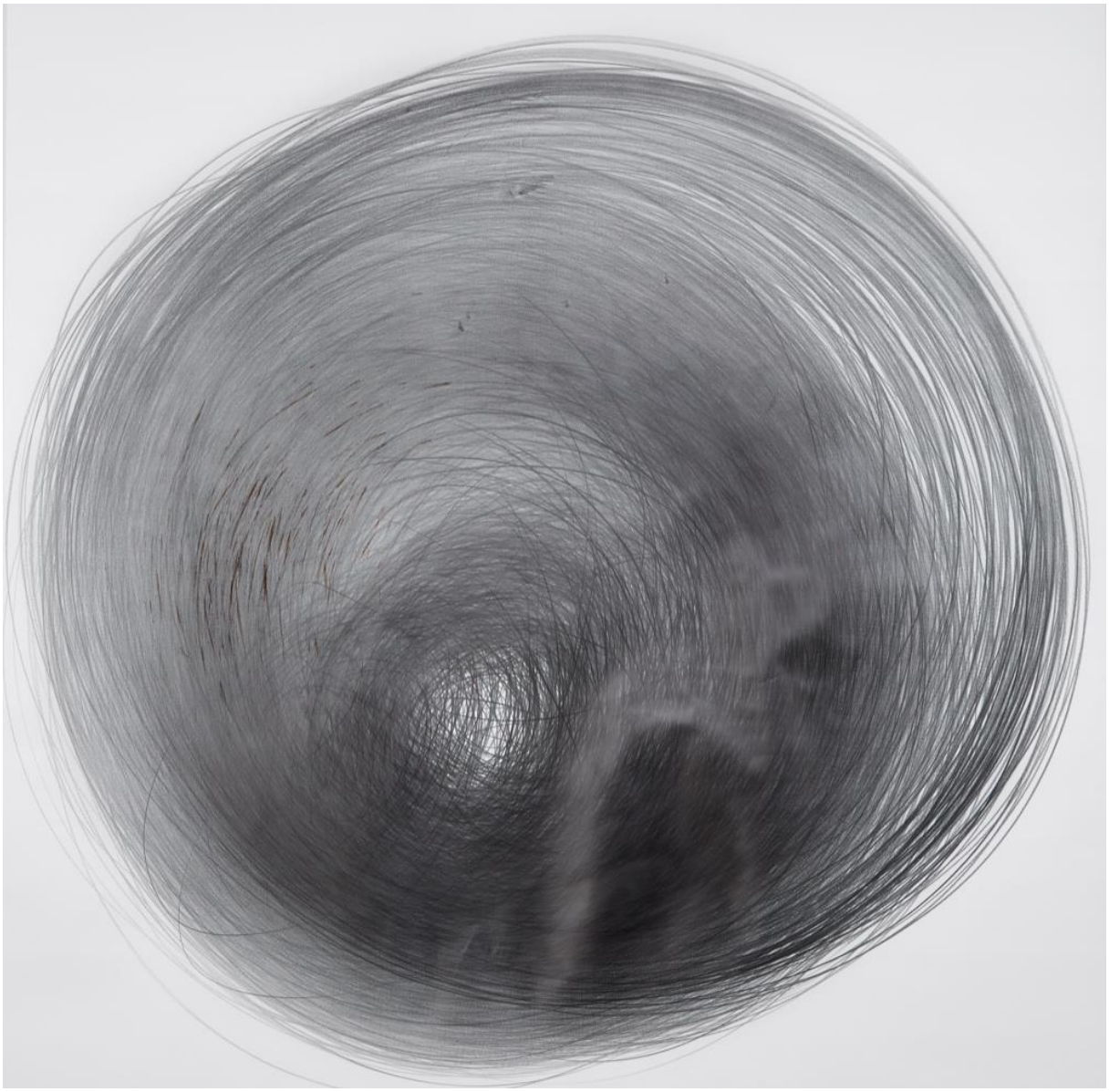

FIGURE 8: *WORK NO. 1 (CIRCLE DRAWING)* 2HOURS 10MINUTES, 2016. GALLERY 46 WHITECHAPEL, LONDON UK.

These indulgences of drawing large human-scale circles on paper and running in the Canadian landscape are what drives and casts a shadow on the fixation with the line and physical mode of working to promote drawing and empower the role of the artist. Deeply passionate about linking these two forms, which are rooted and connected to movement, this practice can be located in a larger inquiry into the performative nature of human activity. Running and drawing are both strategies and methods of working to denote a sense of being, question what makes us human, and provide a way of contributing to an important discussion that embraces the poetic history of the line, evolution, and art.

Back to the Line

Occupying the role of geometry, the Greek mathematician, Euclid of Alexandria of 300 B.C. in his book, *Elements*, was the first to record the definition of the line; part of this iteration is the 'line is a brea(d)thless length' (Heath 1956: 153; McCall 2014). This definition, which identifies its fundamental properties and description, is also a philosophical one – a conceptual depiction that has contributed to an understanding of how a line operates beyond mathematical definition and marks a key reference in drawing and art practices. In Tim Ingold's book, *Lines: A Brief History* (2007), he offers an analogy between drawing the line and map making and describes the line to have a phenomenal presence in the environment. He describes Euclid's line as more visionary and metaphysical and describes the nature of the line as intangible and infinitely thin and an abstract and conceptual construct (Ibid.).

Through this conceptual construction and key examples in art history such as Richard Long's *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), Gordon Matta-Clark's *Splitting* (1974), and Francis Alÿs's *The Green Line* (2004), artists have continued the dialogue surrounding its conceptual meaning to further unfold what the line can be. By pursuing its lineage, in this linking between artworks and opening up of new areas of fine art practices, drawing has become a line made by walking/running and cutting through a house, and is considered a process of 'thought' (Rose 2011: 310). The line is used as a collective term to orchestrate a particular way of thinking that helps to cross boundaries, disciplines, and generations of artworks. To quote, Francis Alÿs, in reference to his work titled *The Green Line,* 'sometimes doing something poetic can become political, and sometimes doing something political can become poetic' (Alÿs 2018) – immersing the fact, the context and the simple act of doing can provoke a physical and cerebral dual meaning.

While introducing these key artworks, discussing the term and some understandings of performance and 'performance drawing' adds a certain richness to the visuals and on-going questions. Performance art became the medium that challenged and violated borders between disciplines and genders, between private and public, and between everyday life and art that follows no rules (Goldberg 1988: 20). Arguably, traced to Catherine de Zegher's publication in 2001 titled, *Drawing Papers 20*, the term 'performance drawing' was used to create a new classification and alter the understanding of what drawing on paper represented (2001). Alluding to how drawing is a cognitive process that links to movement through performative qualities, she adds that any movement and action or image made by movement is a 'kind of drawing in space' (de Zegher 2001: 104). Perhaps not as reactionary as when artists first started making performances, performance drawing has a tie to being temporal, outside any conventional suggestions and between disciplines.

Noticeably demonstrating this is Tom Marioni's *One Second Sculpture* 1969, an artwork made by the artist releasing a tightly coiled metal tape measure into the air. Documented in a single photograph, this artwork reinforces how an event can unfold to make a drawing in space. He states, 'my instrument was a rolled-up tape measure. I threw it into the air, and in one-second it opened like a spring, making a loud sound, it left my hand as a circle, made a drawing in space, and fell to the ground as a straight line' (Marioni 2003: 93). Thus, influencing the implications of what drawing can be and how a line can exist.

Through the implementation of elements, such as duration and sound, that move drawing beyond the visual form of perception, an approach can be established as to how even activities without leaving a mark can operate as a viable method of drawing by, again, representing a line through movement. From writers, such as, Wassily Kandisnky, Paul Klee, Tim Ingold, and Rebecca Solnit, and the numerous artists

and authors across different disciplines, the performative line offers an analogy and a bridge between drawing, movement, and the body. The line is a visual and conceptual paradigm – moving us closer to running as drawing – and strongly linking human consciousness and physicality.

Other works, such as Bruce Nauman's *Performance Corridor* series (1969) and Carolee Schneemann *Up to Including Her Limits* (1973–76), provide a historical context, which contributes in particular to an extension of the physical body and line.

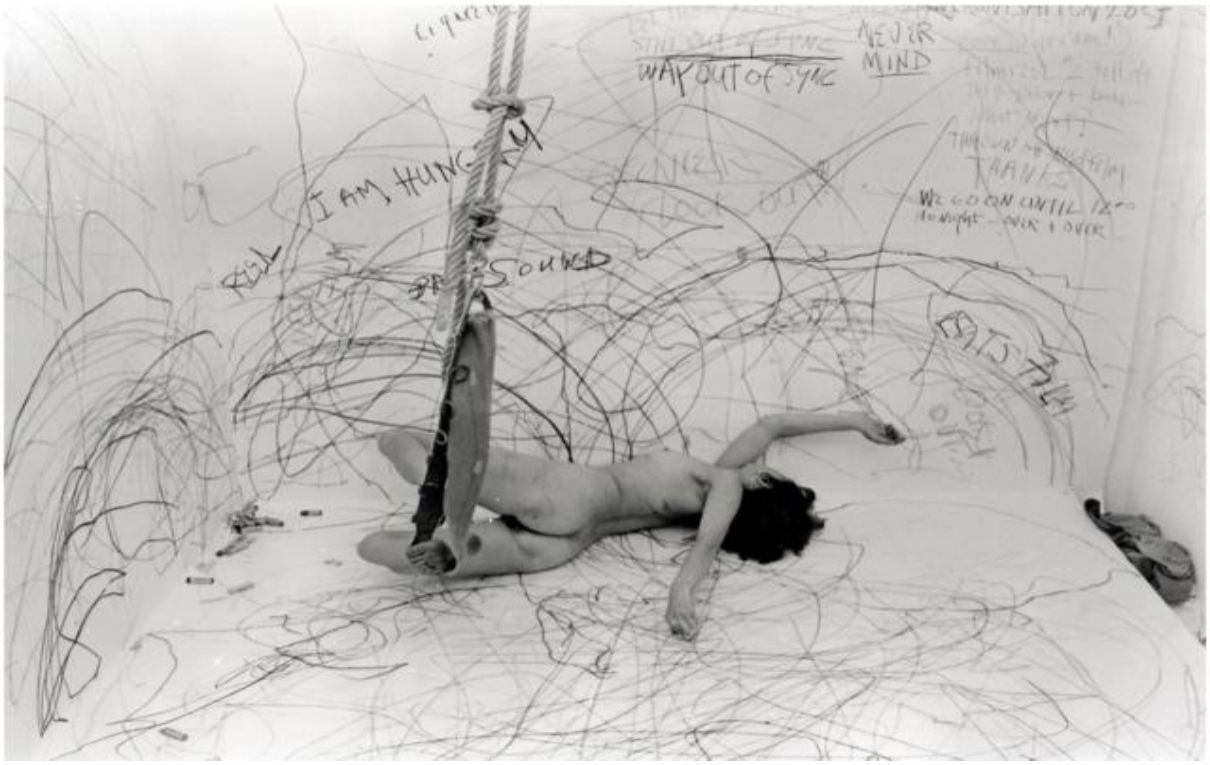

FIGURE 9: CAROLEE SCHNEEMANN *UP TO AND INCLUDING HER LIMITS* (1973) PHOTO: HENRIK GAAD.

In Martin Creed's *Work No. 850* (2008), in the Duveen Hall Gallery at the Tate Britain, London, every thirty seconds an individual ran, according to Creed's instructions 'as if their life depended on it' (Higgins, 2017: 1) through the eighty-six metre corridor. The sound and rhythm of the runner's footsteps reverberated, presenting a live presence of the runner as the 'object of art' (Stout, 2008: 3). Each sprinter operated as a drawing tool, activating different speeds and rhythms, while audiences had the option to walk along, run beside, or stand still, watching and tracking the runner.

Illustrated in the on-going series, *Work no. 2 (Line Dialogue)* with artist, Jane Grisewood, the above listed historical artworks and ideas have seeped into my own practice in many ways – shifting and guiding my interests and triggering particular developments in a collaborative process.

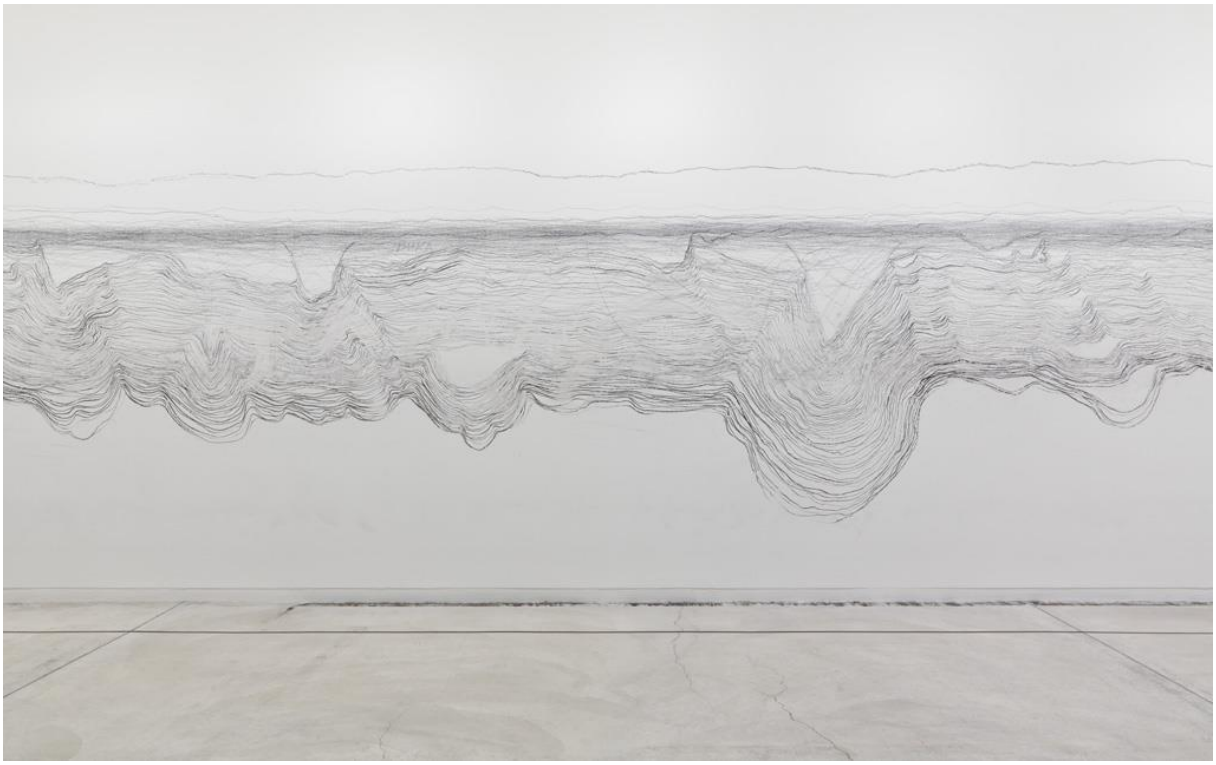

FIGURE 10: *WORK NO. 2 (LINE DIALOGUE) V*, 2012, TWO-HOUR PERFORMANCE WITH JANE GRISEWOOD IN FRONT OF A LIVE AUDIENCE, CHARCOAL AND GRAPHITE, OVERALL 1200 X 200 CM. 'AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN' EXHIBITION AT VANCOUVER ART GALLERY, VANCOUVER, CANADA. PHOTO: RACHEL TOPHAM.

For *Work no. 2 (Line Dialogue) V*, at the Vancouver Art Gallery, Grisewood and I worked together merging our practices and drawing alongside one another. For the two-hour performance, Grisewood started at one side of the room – drawing and tracing the last line – while I began at the other, reaching and extending as far as possible – drawing and repeating the same line with my outstretched arm; both drawing, back and forth. Like the *Circle Drawing* performances, *Line Dialogues* continues to examine durational events, explore ways to mark time by focusing on the task at hand, and use the entire body to create a wall drawing.

FIGURE 11: *WORK NO. 3 (HORIZON/DISTANCE) SNOW FIELD*, 2010, PERFORMANCE WITH CAMERA, VIDEO STILL, HURON COUNTY, CANADA.

Returning to Canada on visits, I began running with a camera strapped to my chest, and recorded the direction of movement towards the horizon line and the edges of the flat and open landscape. Whilst beginning to increasingly think about how the body traverses and carves through space – engaged in the temporal, and in this case the invisible line – the body and camera became the agency of the work. This moves the discussion into the complexity of documentation and performance, and questions about where the work sits.

Most performance elements of a work are live with an audience and later mediated through photographs or video documentation. Often performance drawings are created the same way, while also leaving evidence in visual markings or tracings as objects or drawings that remain as archive material. The connection between performance and documentation can usefully be exploited and, therefore, a controversial issue for many as it can also become an entangled conversation between what is required for a performance to have taken place, who/where the audience is, and what are the various forms of media that enable the work to take shape.

Hence, from a practitioner's point of view, I am increasingly interested in how the documentation can become another extension of the work. Although the means and intension of medium is based in performance and performative drawing, video and other means of documentation have started to become the work.

FIGURE 12: WORK NO. 4 (RESTRAINT/RUNNING) BACK HILL, VIDEO STILL, 2014.

For example, in *Work no. 4 (Restraint/Running) Back Hill* (2014) in a small street in central London using a long 20 metre elastic band – a particular material that athletes use to strengthen and build muscle in sprint training – I tied myself to one end of the band whilst the other end was bound to a cast-iron bollard (part of the public infrastructure). I ran to stretch the material, running back and forth, until the band broke.

The aim of this work was to make a line drawing using the effort of running and elastic band to draw a line through the street, with the recorded material and the frame of the camera, as well as a live performance. As a performance, the only audience was the camera and the people who happened to be passing by.

Back to RUN VERTICAL

Leading back to the artwork, *RUN VERTICAL (Running up the Side of a Building)*, it was while I made the performance *Work no. 4*, running at ground level, squeezed between the facades of the buildings, that I began to think about how I could change these conditions. It seemed the building I was running alongside lent itself formidably to the next project. Could I run up those brick walls at elevation?

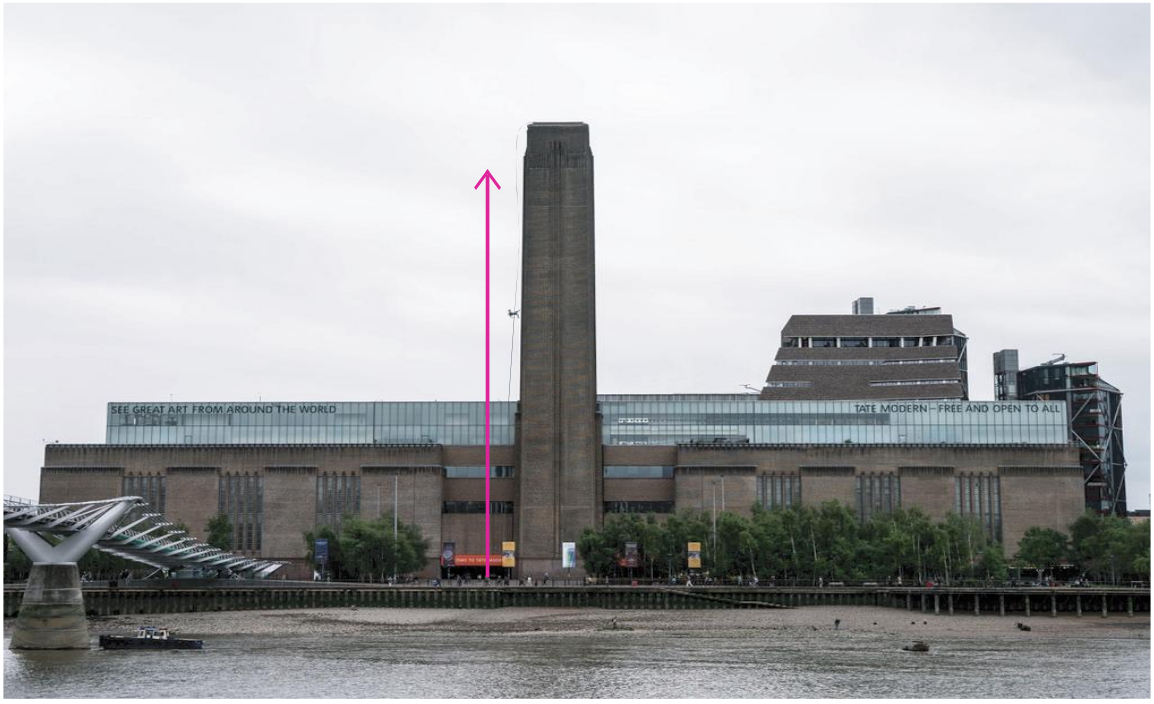

FIGURE 13: PROPOSED LOCATION PATH, RUN VERTICAL (RUNNING UP THE SIDE OF A BUILDING), 2019, TATE MODERN'S CHIMNEY – EAST FACING, LONDON, UK.

The discussion will now focus on the current research and proposal stage of the next artwork, *RUN VERTICAL*. From the initial practice of grabbing a stick of graphite and paper and drawing for as long as possible, it has now developed into assembling a truss structure at roof level, attaching myself (the runner) to a harness with ropes and via a manual pulley system to run towards the proposed building (the Tate Modern) and then seamlessly transition to the vertical, running up the entire 99 metre high elevation of the east-facing chimney.

The work indirectly becomes a broader more complicated practice, which involves other systems of operations and partnerships needed by larger institutions. Embarking on this project, my practice has since become a source of connecting the disciplines of proposal and funding writing, networking, and curatorial inquires, and championing how different forms of site-specificity and explorations of public places can bring together notions of impossible movement and suspension. Beyond the work as a spectacle, it makes a comment about employing the city and landscape in which we live – the approval and authorial systems of decision-making and how the persistence and drive is demanded as another means.

Importantly, this artwork references past artworks, such as Trisha Brown's *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970), which was first performed (in the arena of dance) in New York city but which made architecture the basis for a choreographic score and live public performance. The work featured her then husband, Joseph Schlichter, poised perpendicular to the ground descending the facade of a six-storey building using a line of a rope (the body and breath). Anchored by the water tank structure on the roof, this enabled him to be both lowered down evenly and pulled back so that his feet were engaged on the side surface of the building of 80 Wooster St. in Manhattan (Goodden 2019). To quote Susan Rosenberg, 'altering the ordinary act of walking – [the work] became an achievement of athleticism and form of physical expression' (2017).

FIGURE 14: TRISHA BROWN, MAN WALKING DOWN THE SIDE OF A BUILDING (1970) 80 WOOSTER ST., MANHATTAN, NEW YORK, US. PHOTO: CAROL GOODDEN.

The iconic, well-documented performance of an artist at height and parallel to the ground attached to ropes has resonated in my mind – prompting and giving purpose to *RUN VERTICAL*. With the lens through which we view feminism and the strength or spectacle of the body, I aim to be the woman running up. More importantly, I aim for this iteration and trajectory of performance to highlight and underpin how artists engage and are interested in building and utilising unconventional and archetypal materials and are inflected by art history and the positioning and understanding of the body.

The artwork, *RUN VERTICAL (Running up the side of a Building)* will similarly address the facade and architecture as a surface, like a painter's canvas, the building and city's landscape will become a platform. Instead of walking, running is revealed to be an empowering and artistic activity and, like many of Trisha Brown's re-enacted performances, will be institutionally sanctioned. This poses a contextual shift: an example of the new arenas (and adaptations since the 1960s) governed by attempts to form collaborations between institutions and artists.

To date, this work consists of a 52-page proposal document of different versions; with site visits from various different rigging companies and a long list of emails, phone conversations and artist materials, such as 20 metres of prolyte aluminium scaffolding tubes and clamps, rubber and plywood planks for matting, a ballast weight, performing harness, min. 200 metres of rope, an elevated work platform, 5–10 rigging crew personnel, marshals and security, and film crew and, most importantly, as mentioned, acquiring the health and safety assessments, method statements, insurances, licenses, and permissions. Because the most difficult part of performing on a listed English Heritage building, and performing at great heights, is, of course, gaining that institution's permission. Quoting Christo and Jean-Claude, 'every

part of this world is ‘owned’ by somebody or belongs to somebody' (2018). And it is this part of the process, this challenge and testing of limitation, which I aim to embrace.

Conclusion

In the expansion of my practice, and describing the artworks, *Circle Drawings*, *Line Dialogues*, and *RUN VERTICAL*, it has become apparent that there is a growing necessity for collaboration and negotiation; and, through the working relationships between artist and practice, materials and situations, the individual and collaboration, the importance of learning about various disciplines, terms, and understandings becomes essential. The un-concluding question might be, is the 'line' something beyond measure, beyond the body, and beyond grasp?

While introducing the artwork, *Run Vertical (Running up the Side of a Building)* and providing key developments in my practice; this paper has aimed to present the critical framework that situates an understanding of the line and the body and some relationships to drawing, performance, and running. Describing the lineage of and trajectory of my own practice, I have aimed to demonstrate thinking about the importance of a performative drawing practice and articulate a way of pulling from key historical artworks.

Through Francis Alÿs’ *When Faith Moves Mountains*, Carolee Schneemann’s *Up to and Including Her Limits*, and Trisha Brown’s *Man Walking down the side of a Building,* this article has brought together works that involve an activation and intention to perform and, while building and expanding on concepts first emerged in 1960s and 70s artworks, I have looked to the fabric of movement and notions of running to expand the artist as athlete.

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ALL THE THOUGHTS I EVER HAD

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This paper is a reflective document that reviews a presentation/performance titled: all the thoughts I ever had, given at the Drawing Matters Symposium. The term 'presentation/performance' fuses conventional academic research presentations, highlighting the performativity of the process. The presentation/performance used drawings, writings, and drawing/writings from 'The magnified glass of liberation: A review of fictional drawings' published in Drawing: Research, Theory, Practice (2018). This article uses an inactive creative period to consider drawing as a type of fiction. It chronicled the preparation of fictional drawings for a Fictional Museum of Drawing created by Phil Sawdon. Reworking this site of fictional drawing, the research advocated drawings' fictions as rooted in foresight where predisposed thinking is navigated and anticipation reigns. This work placed certain recognitions of fiction by considering the material illusions of thought and, importantly for Drawing Matters, the materiality of the text was revisited and performed to disrupt certainty, favouring a presentation of a corporal subject as well as negotiating a process of understanding that played out 'failures' rather than resolves. The title all the thoughts I ever had was a way to introduce the performance/presentation as absurd and inherently situated to 'fail'. This desire to confront failure emerged through the repeated experience of miscarriage. This paper is followed by a selection of the drawings and writings that I went on to make after the Drawing Matters presentation/performance, which became a publication called Sitting with Uncertainty (2019).

This paper is a reflective document that reviews a presentation/performance titled: all the thoughts I ever had, given at the Drawing Matters Symposium, by noting its methods, acts, and frameworks. The term 'presentation/performance' fuses conventional academic research presentations, highlighting the performativity of the process. The presentation/performance used drawings, writings, and drawing/writings from 'The magnified glass of liberation: A review of fictional drawings' published in Drawing: Research, Theory, Practice (2018). This article uses an inactive creative period to consider drawing as a type of fiction. It chronicled the preparation of fictional drawings for a Fictional Museum of Drawing created by Phil Sawdon. Reworking this site of fictional drawing, the research advocated drawings' fictions as rooted in foresight where predisposed thinking is navigated and anticipation reigns. This work placed certain recognitions of fiction by considering the material illusions of thought and, importantly for Drawing Matters, the materiality of the text was revisited and performed to disrupt certainty, favouring a presentation of a corporal subject as well as negotiating a process of understanding that played out 'failures' rather than resolves. The title: all the thoughts I ever had was a way to introduce the performance/presentation as absurd and inherently situated to 'fail'.

The reflexive space of thinking/making was played out as jointly philosophical and physical; the performance/presentation rippled between sounded and pondered thoughts, showing works on paper and moving image, whilst interweaving speech acts that voiced live questions to the work or the audience to purposefully expose the ponderings of the making and thinking process as ongoing. The desire for resolve, to ultimately determine a 'position', is a tentative issue for thinking/making, as studio activities, prior knowledge, contexts, and frameworks shift as understanding develops. However, suppositions pave the way for tests and developments, and failings and contingences divert hypotheses exposing new ground, ideas, and possibilities.

The presentation/performance wanted to expose the inability to consolidate thoughts to highlight failure. Contemporary fine art drawing practices make links between drawing and becoming (Bryson 2003; Berger 2005; Fisher 2003; Naginski 2000; Sawdon & Marshall 2012) and, previously, I have argued for Drawing Vignettes as a method of becoming using wonder as a critical and practical underpinning for the drawing/writing hybrid to perform as a mode of enquiry. This mode of enquiry was discussed in the thesis as an affective state that compels a 'pensive and reflective' discourse, which becomes participatory as it is enacted by means of practice. This position appreciated the ambiguity brought about by wonder (Fisher 1998; Greenblatt 1991; Benedict 2001) and created an opportunity for the drawing/writing hybrid practice to adopt an interpretative openness. The work discussed in the performance/presentation from 'The magnified glass of liberation: a review of fictional drawings' acted as tools and prompts to share methods of working that united strategies of looking and reading. However, the presentation/performance wanted to consider and expose failure, as they filtered from my experiences of miscarried pregnancies into the work I was making in the studio and the philosophical frameworks I was utilising. What is key to this performance/presentation given at Drawing Matters is that events external to my academic research were so big they could not but impact upon how I thought, made, and wrote.

FIGURE 1: FRIDA KAHLO (1907–1954), HENRY FORD HOSPITAL (1932) DOLORES OLMEDO FOUNDATION, MEXICO CITY

A series of miscarried pregnancies had created significant changes to the way I worked and functioned. Grief, shame, and failure were overwhelming and these experiences were shaping the work I made as an academic, and within the studio the practice strategies were concealing and breaking expectations. To share miscarriage is uncommon; cultural structures instigate secrecy. Limited verbal or visual cultural materials exist; poetry, film, paintings, and other cultural cues, such as occasional gift cards, are in short supply. Additionally, policies to support these occurrences in the workplace are equally uncommon and widespread understanding of the possible causes of miscarriage is shamefully misunderstood (San Lazaro Campillo et al. 2018). The physical and physiological pain and grief of miscarriage are uncomfortable for our culture and a term known as the 'Secret Club', coined by Laura Seftel (2006), positions women like me. With limited exposure to miscarriage, we become silent, blind, and unequipped, thereby perpetuating a culture that is unsure around miscarriage, and subsequently insensitive. Membership to the Secret Club comes through this isolation, and its perpetuation undermines women's health and wellbeing. To acknowledge miscarriage as circumnavigated in western culture is important, especially if we are to extend our understanding of those experiencing it. This point is duly raised by Roseanne Cecil in The Anthropology of Miscarriage, who describes how '*the lives of ordinary women have been largely hidden from history'* (1996: 179). And, as Laura Seftel points out in Grief Unseen, '*how does one depict an invisible loss? Infertility and miscarriage are essentially about something that is not there*' (2006: 70). This silence has manifested through western culture and disconnects the visibility and voices of women's experience of childbirth and its loss. This prompts us to hold back discussions around miscarriage and

regularly leads to self-blame. Judy Chicago's book The Birth Project (1985) highlighted the lack of birth imagery in western art. During a significant project working with hundreds of other women to make a large fabric mural that depicts women's reproductive experiences, Chicago gleaned from interviews discussing reproductive experiences with mothers the surprising reoccurring pattern of blame: '*Although it was obvious that all these occurrences were outside their control, I had sat with them and heard each of these intelligent, educated women say the same thing: I felt it was somehow my fault*' (Chicago 1985: 78). Pregnancy and its loss occupy a quiet presence in arts history, with the most pronounced presence coming from pre-industrialised cultures (Tobey 1991). Pivotal works by Frida Kahlo, such as Henry Ford Hospital, or Frida and the miscarriage (1932, Fig. 1), bring attention to miscarriage with direct and courageous representations of her experiences. Along with Judy Chicago in the 1980s, artist Joan Snyder made a profoundly autobiographical work Mourning/Oh, Morning (1983, Fig. 2) with a painting that narrates a personal history of miscarriage, abortion, and a failed marriage. Other artists, like Tracey Emin and Louise Bourgeois, share visceral female experiences related to pregnancy and loss (Fig. 3). Indeed, the discussions and visibility around fertility and miscarriage are without doubt building momentum. Projects, like Laura Seftel's The Secret Club bring together artists who make work about miscarriage; there are also curatorial projects, such as the Birth Rites Collection housed at King's College Hospital, London.

FIGURE 2: JOAN SNYDER, MOURNING/ OH MORNING (1983), ACRYLIC, PAPIER–MÂCHÉ, CLOTH, PLASTIC GRAPES, WOOD ON LINEN, PRIVATE COLLECTION

The Artist Parent Index is an online catalogue of artists who use parenting in their practice that brings voices and experiences together. Exciting festivals, such as Fertility Fest, take place in London and Manchester; the Miscarriage Association has given space and support to artists in residence, such as Marjolaine Ryley and her publication thin red lie, deep blue sea. Channel 5 advertises its 2020 schedule with a documentary on miscarriage where public figures and celebrities talk about miscarriage and pregnancy loss and The Independent had a supplement, Understanding Fertility, focusing upon miscarriage on 12th March 2020. Nevertheless, to acknowledge miscarriage by working with it in my

studio and research it felt somewhat improper; however, to interrogate cultures and modes of thinking felt essential as questions arose from my isolating experiences, and looking to the autobiographic strategies of feminist practices/theories and their ability to express sexed corporeality felt like a reassuring strategy to pursue these goals. So, all the thoughts I ever had became a way to share uncertainty and perform failures to better understand our experiences.

To steer text towards its sensuousness is in conflict with western dualism; yet, it plays a significant role when we reconsider it as a material rather than a mouldable vessel for disembodied rational words. For the presentation/performance, the material needed to perform in a sensuous way, connecting bodily understandings that arise from experiences. Elizabeth Grosz offers a significant stance for the sensuous base of knowledge, where speech is embodied felt and performed: '*The self-images of knowledge's have always been and remain today, bereft of an understanding of their own (textual) corporeality. They misrecognize themselves as interior, merely ideas, thoughts and concepts, forgetting or repressing their own corporeal genealogies and process of production. Knowledge is an activity; it is a practice and not contemplative reflection. It does things*' (1993: 203). I was curious to question how textual corporeality might speak a body's tacit knowledge. Here, in the performance/presentation it could do things: voicing experiences of loss and grief as they were lived, interweaving and moving through them. Bereavement after miscarriage quietly carries grief, but all the thoughts I ever had wanted to perform confusion and difficulties to place a sense of failure or confusion at its forefront, and the mattering of the text at the performance/presentation was motivated by the co-emergence of the pregnancies, shadowed by their failures.

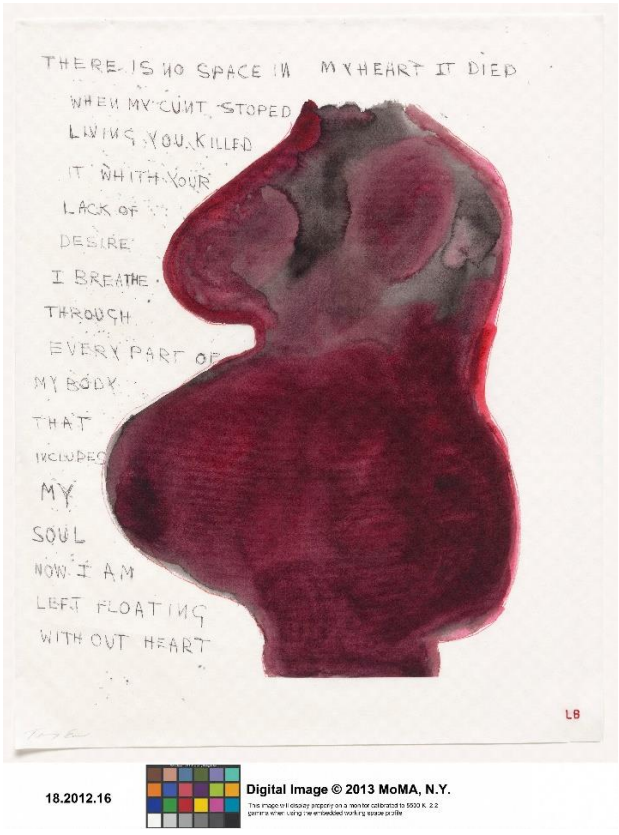

FIGURE 3: LOUISE BOURGEOIS (1911–2010) AND TRACEY EMIN (1963–), WHEN MY CUNT STOPPED LIVING NO. 16 OF 16 (2009–2010), 76.2 CM X 61 CM, MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, NEW YORK.

Questions of matter and the maternal looked towards the matrix and its functionality. Coming from Latin word 'womb' and its roots corresponding to matter and I was interested in Bracha Ettinger's Matrixial (1995) where the co-emergence and co-becoming of subjects were beginning. The opening essay by Alison Reilheld in a special addition of the Journal of Social Philosophy acknowledges miscarriage as a 'liminal event' a state of being that is betwixt and between (2015). This ontological and social ambiguity is offered as a reason why miscarriage is not spoken of, as falling between a series of binaries asserts its displacement. She asserts miscarriage as falling between 'having procreated' and 'not having procreated', between 'parent and not being a parent', between life and death and abortion and pregnancy (Reilheld 2015). Miscarriage becomes imperilled to laws seeking to control pregnancy and abortion where there are expectations to prove or disprove voluntary or involuntary terminations. We do not have the same level of language to talk through miscarriage as we do pregnancy: '*without a clear notion of what miscarriage is, I fear we will re-peat again and again the negative ethical fallout of failure to understand miscarriages liminality. The result? Women who miscarry will again and again be isolated, their troubles sequestered, their experiences and fates enrolled in debates which hardly bear on miscarriage at all'* (Ibid.; for more resources built around this idea of in-between, see Browne 2018 and Bueno 2019). For those experiencing miscarriage it is intrinsically linked to failure; the language you encounter will describe your pregnancy as 'non-viable' and, for many, a lack of answers or investigations follow. If we are conditioned to function within goal-orientated doctrines, pregnancy without birth is gargantuan, parting the fertile bodies from non-viable pregnancies.

The text used in the performance/presentation wanted to translate the sensuous by transcending its printed matrix of syntactical structures and reforming its potential to reverberate growth and its collapse. How could the format of the performance/presentation with its emphasis and reliance on the spoken word become alternative methods where failure could publicly occur? I was interested in how the audience would perceive me, if I wavered between the expectations of conventional academic settings by reading a research paper but then adding irrelevant noises and cries that occupied another disconnected thought. For example, shouting out 'chicken' whilst organising my papers, and then throwing them on the floor. The performance/presentation played though expectations and less conventional behaviours of a symposium where departures from proposed goals to share knowledge or reach speculative probabilities publicly failed, whereby the organisation and delivery of the text were disorganised. The performance/presentation provided a suitable arena to apply methods of confusion, such as playing video work and sound work simultaneously, and making multiple places and ideas of reference or focal points, all of which brought a disunited collective of material. The performance/presentation was a work where its delivery signalled its agency and where its textuality was performed through its acts.

By acknowledging and sharing the miscarriages, the performance/presentation applied the failures of pregnancy loss as paths not realised by reanimating their failings. Our bodies do not always perform as intended; they can and do miscarry a pregnancy: they 'lose it'. This language implies clumsiness, irresponsibility, like losing a bunch of keys or till receipt. How can we process this experience of miscarriage, when we first we have to navigate the language offered to us, which is used by medical professionals and society alike? When miscarriage is confirmed, the medical staff that previously used the word 'baby' when describing your pregnancy replace it with 'material of conception' and, in doing so, our relationship with our emerging infant is renamed and changed forever (for a discussion of the appropriateness and impact of the language to use during pregnancy, see Davis-Floyd & Dumit 1998). Our bodies undergo descriptive differences; the language used reaffirms the corporeal change of direction from the viable 'baby' to a 'failure'. The performance/presentation wanted to reanimate

failings to play over and over to become meaningful and it, therefore, relied on this reworking or overworking within its construction process. The text from the fictional museum of drawing could perform its claims that drawings' fictions are rooted in foresight where predisposed thinking is navigated and anticipation reigns. By returning to reworking the text from this paper, its content and arguments were used as material to draw on. The arrangement of words and ideas were material to test again, to overwork, and reapply by using the gaps, slips, and modifications of meanings and possibilities.

It is worth a pause at this point to confirm the term drawing; this paper places drawing as a specific propositional activity: a space for exploration and discovery. To use text as a drawing material returns to the notion of the essay as speculative positioned in line with drawings' propositions (Farthing 2005; de Zegher 2003; Petherbridge 1991). By using the published essay, fictional museum of drawing publication, as material to make live drawings, the performance/presentation animated these propositions by speculating the commutable passages of exploration and inquiry, as well as considering how the social-political aspects' sexed difference could find avenues of reflective dissemination. Encounters with failure inevitably accompany this process and, by using text to redraw the presentation/performance, all the thoughts I ever had exposed failures which attempted to navigate a flood of possibilities where possibility is multifaceted and bewildering. In the presentation/performance, this was presented as an overworking of ideas, recorded texts, and multiple voices working through a variety of pathways attempting to reason. Here, the process of drawing could mirror the task of processing the miscarriages as both daunting and demanding of contingency.

This inclusion of failure acknowledged Samuel Beckett's 1983 story Worstward Ho where he writes, '*Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better*' (1983: 8). The presentation/performance performed its failings; however, did it fail better? The propositions drawn out of all the thoughts I ever had were questions of the maternal, of the potential of textual materiality, of how corporeal lived experiences could interrogate a particular state of being, and of how to manage contingencies. Looking towards Bracha Ettinger's matrixical as a place of co-emergence began to unravel some of these issues; here, being and absence are interwoven. Acknowledging the fusion of m/Other, '*Matrixial theory addresses partial elements or multiple and partial relations between unknown elements*' (Pollock 2009: 5). This fusion of co-emerging beings offers some reflective analysis for the grief of miscarriage. It is difficult to work through miscarriage without widely understood support structures, and our position of hosting life and losing it brings not only shame but also confusion. Pollock describes, '*One of the great paradoxes we inherit from the very sphere of theory and practice that promises us tools, ideas and concepts for feminist thinking about subjectivity and sexual difference – psychoanalysis – is the linking of that which gives life (the maternal-feminine) with death*' (2009: 6). Contingencies are poised within the maternal and, when the status of my miscarried infants shifted from its state of growth and potential to 'non-viable' or 'material of conception', the loss reverberates through the bodies of m/Other. To question how we understand ourselves in the process beyond failure is an isolating place to be, and it was this that the performance/presentation exposed, the point where the becomings spoke back from a body that was jointly experiencing failures and challenging maternal expectations.

Interested in the union and possibilities of drawing/writing and performance/presentation, sounded formats were used to extend the form and material of the work. Often spoken and recorded using methods from the paper work to overlay sound and distort information, thereby reclaiming the inscriptions away from organised syntax structures to expose the polyvocal events of thinking/making. What was significant about the work was that the autobiographies arising through it were

acknowledging phenomenological experiences that vocalised uncertainties. What was at play here was the difference of the expected delivery of information, findings, and hypotheses that a symposium expects through a continuation of using text as a material that remained contemplative of the possibilities of exposure and failure. The performance used the symposium to restage its possibilities rather than to organise and present articulate concluded thought. Instead, it offered up the difficulties of drafting and presenting as an unruly place fraught with disarray via the performance of all the thoughts I ever had. Building these links of anticipation and becoming to drawing and writing, the practices grew in confidence to expose the failures. The studio practice was looking back to look forward to re-examine, draw out, and talk through its progression and aims. It drew on the communicable passages of thought argued for in 'The magnified glass of liberation: a review of fictional drawing' by focusing on the threads that distorted clarity and replayed thought. All of these research threads acknowledged restrictions, rules, and systems, and it was at this point they needed to build and break. To fail. To expose that failure, accept, and work with it. All the thoughts I ever had wanted to draw out the duality of the practice where the experiential and the intellectual meet. The practice and its connection to failure was to become the subject of the work by reconnecting to failure and performing it. The mattering of the work wanted to join the affect and event, aiming to restage the experience of failure as sensual with its material, acknowledging the sensual nature of text word and its possibilities. To move the text away from its printed letter matrix allowed questions of the maternal to join the deliberations of failure and the emergence of self and other: the borderlines between being and absence.

FIGURE 4: LUCY O'DONNELL, SITTING WITH UNCERTAINTY (2016)

Sitting with uncertainty

The drawings and writings included here aim to create a platform that enables conversations around miscarriage and pregnancy loss. Here, four large drawings are documented bequeathing the four pregnancies I lost. This text gives an overview of the work which emerged through a dialogue with Ruth

Bender-Atik, the Director of the Miscarriage Association. We reflected on how miscarriage has been shared and documented, as well as the difficulties of its early phases, a time when assurances cannot be given and when doubt and uncertainty become all consuming. This led our dialogue to use the phrase, 'sitting with uncertainty', and this expression became the title for the exploration of my drawings and motivated this initial poetic work that reiterates the pace and sensation of uncertainties:

The it of the clock
As the what of the tock

The what of the it
The me and the this
The wanting the waiting
The void and the aching
The peeing and looking
The calls and the booking
The blaming and longing
The feelings of wronging
The wronging and righting
The writing the fighting
The tit and the tat
The this and the that
The in and the out
The tap and the spout
The entrance the exit
The exit the next bit
The what's and the whys
The naps and the cries
The silence and aching
The sleep and the waking
The patterns keep going
Speeding and slowing
All in the clock of its ticks and its tocks

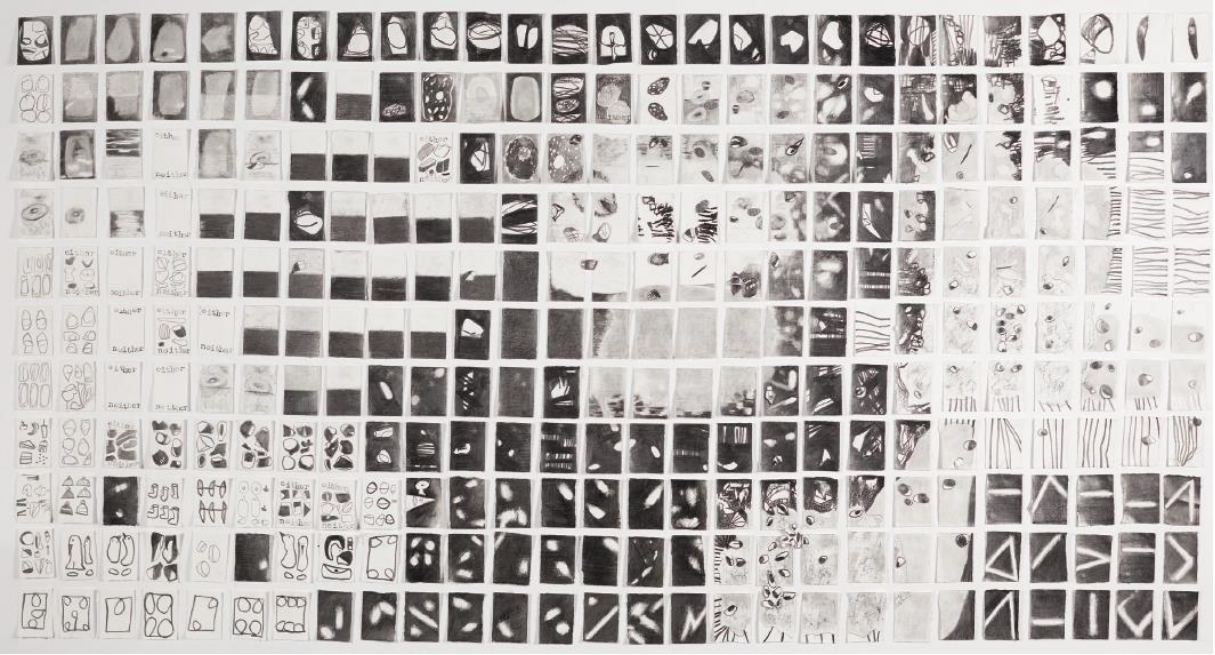

FIGURE 5: LUCY O'DONNELL, SITTING WITH UNCERTAINTY (2016)

I had my first miscarriage the day after my PhD viva. I passed the process yet, despite this successful result, I felt a great sense of failure. I spent days in hospital with various complications from miscarrying this pregnancy. Things were never going to be the same again; I had persistent encounters with uncertainty throughout the four pregnancies I 'lost'. The drawings in this catalogue are the first significant body of work since my PhD. They connect to and process my miscarried pregnancies. They speak to the taboos of negotiating miscarriage in silence, thereby interrupting the repetition of repressed voices and aspiring to open up conversations around this difficult and complex experience. Each drawing in this catalogue is made up from multiple smaller drawings organised within a grid format. The intention for the drawings is for them to use their individual parts and appear to propagate within the grid structure by making an image that references a range of things, thereby creating a bigger picture of colliding forms and shapes. These drawings refer to each miscarriage I had: four works depicting one body that endured four failed pregnancies. It was my intention that these drawings appear to grow and break, with unexpected forms, activities, and narratives.

FIGURE 6: LUCY O'DONNELL, SITTING WITH UNCERTAINTY (2016)

Miscarriage is scary, sad, uncertain; physically and mentally painful; filled with loss, grief, and distress. It is hard. I wanted to make these drawings to work through/with/in this place of uncertainty and failure. Drawings are often perceived as places where potential arises by thinking through something and allowing the unknown to be untangled: they inherently possibilise. These drawings worked through failure by narrating the in-between of pregnancy without birth. I was interested in shifting my previous application of drawing as a site of potential to perform failings. The repetitive rhythms inherent within a grid set a systematic structure that delineated certainty and inevitability. I liked the way the grid could offer this rigidity whilst the smaller units that made up the work could accommodate difference, alternatives of form, pattern, and nuanced associations with cells, bodies, spaces, and landscapes. It appeared that this format could offer a place for the unexpected to disentangle and enact failure. The smaller units of drawings acted like little chapters of time that make up a bigger picture, a wider narrative. A place where activities are both micro and macro. The process began with my reflections on both landscape and the sonogram, where the ultrasound waves provide a monochromatic image of an unrecognisable place and a strange relationship between image and self-perception, where the unseen and unknown collaborate. This place is like a landscape, an unearthly one, and it offered me a reference point to think about the body's terrains, activities, and cycles. The politics of the body in representational terms was negated through the monochromatic suggestions of the sonographic image.

The sonographer's image gives access to the private domain of your body, to the place your baby dwells. It is this image that can quickly resituate the language used for your pregnancy. The status your body once possessed changes within the language gleaned from this image and where, for me, my baby changed and became material of conception. In this shift expected events ceased and biological growth became a vessel that had fucked up.

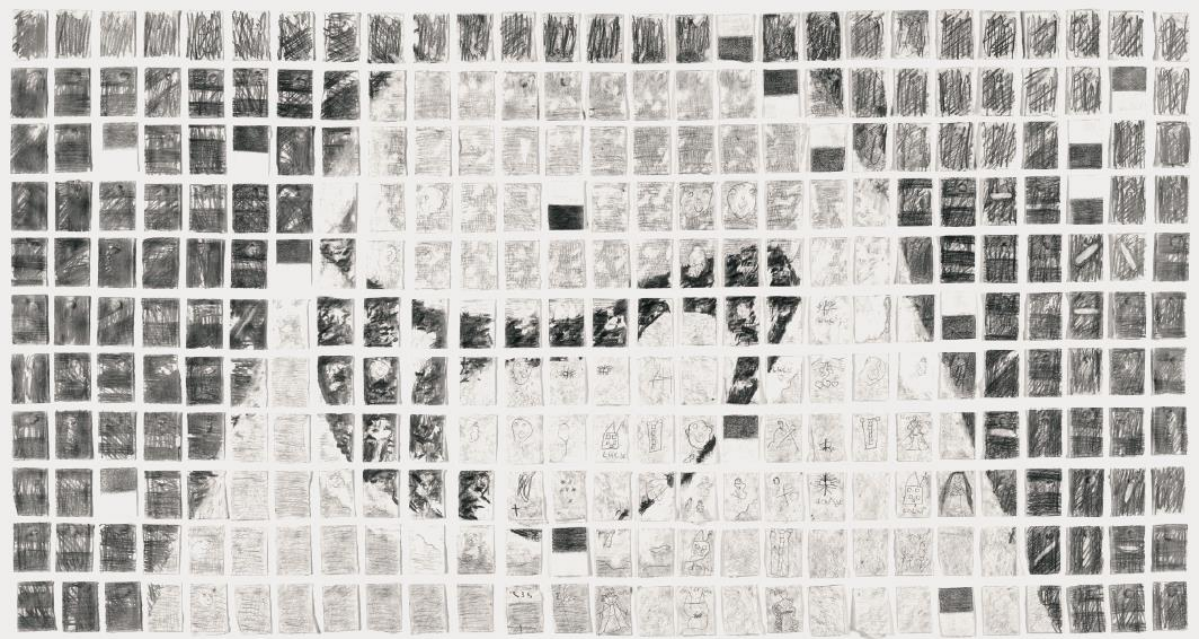

FIGURE 7: LUCY O'DONNELL, SITTING WITH UNCERTAINTY (2016)

My GP and midwife had been telling me about my baby, about their due date, and gleaning information from me to fill in forms and make plans. But a miscarriage deletes this and, on the same day when medical professionals talked about my 'baby', others named it the 'material of conception'. Both my infants and my own status had changed. You and your body did not do its job and your baby has been let down … by you. Blame and shame take over and, with limited answers as to why such a catastrophic occurrence has happened, a pragmatic you is asked for: Please change your idea of baby, its care and safety, its successful development, your nurturing, and place as mother in order to sort out this 'material'; alter the importance of baby as baby does not exist its matter now and its coming out unfinished. The professionals need to make sure you know what options you have, and you are given choices for 'miscarriage management'. You do not want to take any of these choices; you don't want the material to exit; you want your baby back.

These experiences of loss filtered through into the drawings, sometimes with words, sometimes with ambiguous shapes that appear as like blobs or splats, whilst other times more recognisable forms came forward, such as nappies or bottles: the things that have also been taken away. The drawings were worked in small detail, like stars in the night sky, tiny dots inhabiting dark vast spaces. The process of making these drawings was about the physical activity of labouring marks and surfaces as a time bound suspension of mercurial forms. Pregnancy propels you into a future: medical staff plan, explain, and prepare, as do you, both physically and mentally. What do you need, what do you have, what do you need to arrange? All of this disappears and takes a tangent, where the choices are not wanted and all lead to the same outcome: the 'material' must leave you. The newness, the expectations, the potential of growth all go … but the desire does not … the love does not … the connection does not … These, however, get replaced with failure. The rich potential of growth is replaced with loss, and what do you do with loss? The drawings are interwoven with the narratives and experiences of miscarriage, so to talk about the drawings is to talk about the miscarriages. The drawings connect to the expelling; they ponder the tentative time between the viable and non-viable, between baby and material, between maternity and expulsion.

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THE SENSE OF THE LINE BETWEEN DRAWING AND WRITING

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Whilst categorical distinctions between writing and drawing practices often separate cerebral sense-making from the sensuous encounter of bodies and materials, they also rehearse hierarchical, if not straightforward class-based, values. 'The sense of the line' develops what Jean-François Lyotard calls the 'energetics' of the line, its capacity to touch us, by *reading* and *looking* at two drawings by Raymond Pettibon. Insisting on the inseparability of the line in writing and drawing, this essay not only explores the deep intervolution of *both* lines on a material and bodily level but also traces the drawing-writing distinction to a desire to *see-as*, rather than to see, thus imposing categories to limit an otherwise complex and irreducible encounter. As the line's graphic and plastic qualities cannot be neatly separated into distinct writerly and drawerly practices, looking at art and the reading of words are already intervolved with one another.

Rather than reduce writing to its verbal content and drawing to its material instantiation, this essay pursues the line that draws both the letter and the picture as an indivisible constituent of both practices. In doing so, it aims to disturb the common assignation of intelligibility and sensoriality to writing and the picture, respectively. This division carries forth into the presumed binary of theory and practice, which, despite the elegant articulations of drawing research, persists, not least in the phrase *practice*-led/based research or in the reluctance or hesitance of drawing artists or drawing writers to commit to their written lines in the manner they do to their drawn ones (cf. e.g., Adams 2014; Quinn 2020; Robson, Brady and Hopkins 2010; Taylor 2014). The purpose of the undertaking is thus twofold, not only does it embed the drawn mark in writing, but it also shows the verbal in the drawing. Any social potential of either mark is therefore illimitable to an exclusive understanding of its sensuous and intelligible or sensory and cognitive appeal. Though this essay proceeds along a theoretical trajectory, it explores the drawing-writing of Raymond Pettibon and draws on my own linework that continuously engages with the written and the drawn mark.

If any categorical distinction between drawing and handwriting can be drawn, Tim Ingold has repeatedly argued that it may be difficult to locate exactly where such a line of division would separate one practice from the other (2007: 3; 2011: 181; 2013: 125, 129–131: 2015a). In fact, he has frequently emphasised the need to consider linework as coextensive between the word and the picture, and even as the thread running between a whole host of practices, from walking to weaving and from observing to storytelling (Ingold 2011: 177–226; 2013: 125–141; 2015b: 53–59). To invoke a distinction between drawing and writing on the basis of pictures and the verbal would be merely diversionary by averting the entire attraction of the problematic through the displacement of two complex practices with two others. Moreover, the snap connections made between drawing and pictures, and writing and language, respectively, simply rehearse counterparts – or worse, umbrella concepts – that can only arrive at (pre)determined categories. The expanding field of *Medienphilosophie* that explores the intervolution of writing and the picture (Driesen et al. 2012; Krämer, Cancik-Kirschbaum, and Totzke 2012; Mersmann 2015), as well as recent ekphrastic scholarship about the non-antagonistic relations between the picture and the verbal (Louvel 2011; Kennedy 2012; Kennedy and Meek 2018), are testament to the limitations of ontological categories that can only contain themselves. Tellingly, a procedure that separates writing from its graphic instantiation or drawing from its verbal image distances the debate from the very line that constitutes and animates both practices. Rather than following the tortuous bends of a shared line, the picture-writing distinction insists, from the start, on two straight lines, via arrows that indicate two sides of a split that replicates only itself.

The flow of one line between alphabetic characters and their unique pictures of themselves is publicly and testimonially exercised in every signature. It draws together the seeming divergence of allographic characters, whose precise formation only requires that one letter is distinct enough from another, and their specific autographic inscription evidencing the particularity of every push and pull that gives form to and differentiates this letter from any other form of itself. In the stroke of the signature we can trace the lineage of writing and drawing through their common graphic gesture, as the Latin transmission (*graphicus*) of the Greek root suggests (OED 2016, s.v. *graphic* adj./n.; cf. Derrida 1993: 30; Elkins 2001: 83; Harris 1986: 125; Heidegger 1994: 125; Ingold 2007: 136; Lerm Hayes 2004: 63; Miller 1992: 75). Furthermore, though not unconnected from the aspect of the letter's form, the signature also only inscribes itself on this sheet, yet its reproducibility is caught up in an economy of administration that both insists on the authenticity of unique strokes and the possibility that they may be duplicated. The

philosophical interest that the signature generates lies precisely in its demonstrative and demonstrable insistence that writing in general contradicts any assumption of unique and absolute referral to one context because its functioning relies on the possibility of repetition. Jacques Derrida thus summarises that signatures must be repeatable in order to function in their pure singularity:

> *Effects of signature are the most common thing in the world. But the condition of possibility of those effects is simultaneously […] the condition of their impossibility, of the impossibility of their rigorous purity. In order to function, that is, to be readable, a signature must have a repeatable, iterable, imitable form; it must be able to be detached from the present and singular intention of its production. It is its sameness which, by corrupting its identity and its singularity, divides its seal (1988: 20).*

The overall effect that Derrida traces, however, is much broader and illimitable to notions of the graphic line as a necessary confluence of writing and drawing. Underpinning all writing is iterability, that is, the repeatability of a mark that cites itself and thus its sameness in its difference. The line of drawing and writing is therefore a line that is altered in the repetition between them. It is different in the sameness between them. Pettibon's signature in *Untitled (To whom it …)* (2001) (Fig. 1) presents itself as drawing and writing, not only because writing is the drawer's practice here, but, as the artist rarely ever signs the recto of a work, his performative signature thus not only elaborates itself as a conventional mark of ownership and debt but also the flow of lines is inseparable from what constitutes the work itself.

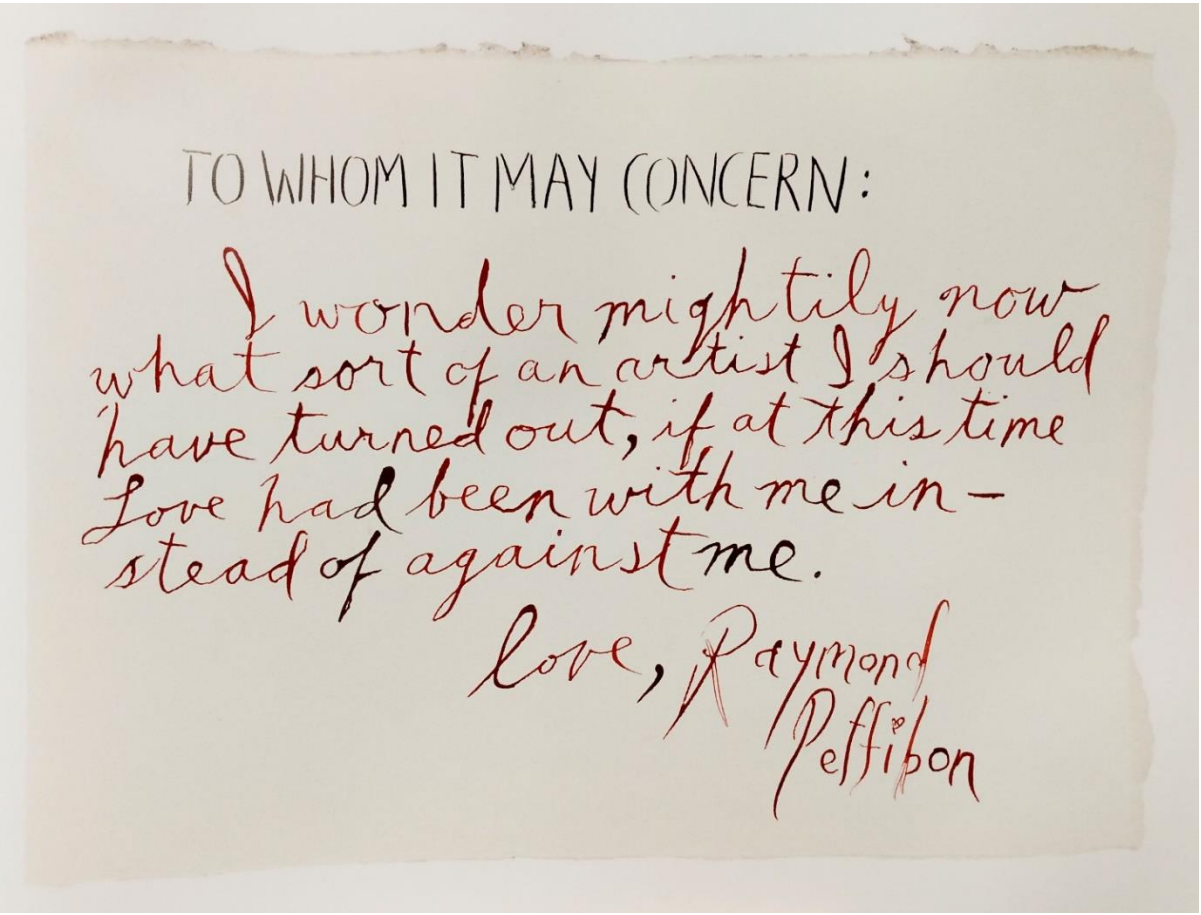

FIGURE 1: RAYMOND PETTIBON *UNTITLED (TO WHOM IT …)* (2001), PEN AND INK ON PAPER, 29.2 X 38.7CM

This is not to suggest that other artists' signatures are ever isolable from their works, rather, that inscribing 'Raymond Pettibon' in this work demonstrably broaches any neat boundary between its inside and outside by playing with the convention and boundary. Like the title of a self-portrait that appears to affirm the status of the work in relation to a viewer, artist and mirror, the signature, as the 'parergonal border' of the work, belongs neither to the work nor sits outside it (Derrida 1993: 64; cf. 1987: 1–147). Pettibon's drawing signs the work, but he also signs it to show the signing of the work, and he signs it to show Raymond Pettibon, the artist who seldomly signs the work, signing the work, and thus he signs it to show another, an artist who signs the work, as signing the work, both his work and that of the other, and so on in an iteration of deferral and difference that repeats in alteration. And yet, signature and drawing are inseparable in and out of the work.

Every stroke in drawing – whether brush, pencil, charcoal or else – already bestows the singular, and nevertheless repeatable, sign of its maker and material onto the work. Each mark, as autograph, signs the work 'before even the undersigning of the proper name' (Derrida 1987: 193). In adopting the character of 'Raymond Pettibon', the artist with the signature that makes the work, Pettibon signs the work with his 'good little' patronym (Kimmelman 2005) where he had previously signed it through every line and flick of the nib. And thus, the signature itself is signed multiply, repeatedly, over and over inscribing the mark of its author in order to inscribe the name of its author. While every autographic mark must repeat itself in order to be autographic to Pettibon's work, it also differs and therefore splits any absolute referral, pointing at once to its forebears and heirs. The possibility of its repetition allows it to be read in its singularity. However, as the signature constituted by many signatures indicates, the autograph is not whole, not one, not replete. It must be repeated to function, and no flick of the brush is lacking or complete. In the leg of the signature's R, as in the downstrokes of d and b, Pettibon's line railroads — one line showing itself to be already two — as pressure on the nib forces the tines apart and the swift spread in line's width starves the reservoir of ink. The pen-form of the signature therefore also reminds us of the inseparability of the stroke's material and gesture, and thus, moreover, of the indivisibility of alphabetic legibility and drawerly idiosyncrasy. Each letter rehearses no absolute, ideal form but a differential iterability (see, Reifenstein 2018a). The jots, skits, minims, and lobes of the artist's signature may be identifiable calligraphic or drawerly elements but signing needs no name to sign in another's and its own. The stroke is neither complete nor broken as its signing does not have a metric.

Besides, the inky line on paper is only part of a stroke that precedes and succeeds this mark. Its uninterrupted beginning belongs to a material gesture that traces a stroke in space and briefly touches the paper. The line shows the dynamics of a stroke lead around and on paper, a manuduction that momentarily draws out the remainder of an autographic ductus of writing bodies or, differently, inscribed in the signature in the artist's hand are its past and future drawings. While we may call the process manual, its bodies are not divisible (Reifenstein 2019: 114–15). Neither anatomical nor medial categories limit its trace. Hence, the line carries forth a stroke that never began in any originary sense but has been ongoing and continues into every signature — whether in drawing or writing. In this ongoing familiarity of drawing and writing in the signature and in Pettibon's drawing-writings, the sensuous intelligibility and intelligible sensuousness of the line shows itself as what *matters*. As the inky deposit in and on paper, the line is illimitable to medial or sensory ascriptions; it belongs and energises drawing and writing: the affective and the cerebral, the sensuous and the rational. It opens up drawing to the possibility of reading and the written word to sensuous movement. Any paradigm for the

conception of knowledge therefore needs to encompass the illimitability of the line across the sensory, the sense-making, and the sensuous.

Though writing's marks have 'a dimension of visibility, of sensory spatiality', for Jean-François Lyotard they facilitate the eyes' scanning of the page in the recognition of particular signals: for example, letters, syllables, and words (2011: 63). Writing is here an expediency of communication where '[r]eading is hearing, not seeing' (2011: 211). In as far as writing possesses a sensory and spatial dimension, it is as a signifier and not (its) signified, designated, or reference. However, Lyotard swiftly interjects that this conventional usage does not prevent artists and poets from providing testaments that the sensible of language and writing may include the sensory. As in Pettibon's drawn writing, the division of writing's content and its form can be shaken when words are themselves dispersed on the page to 'make […] visible, […] thereby smuggling the […] emblem of contingency […] into the sign' (Lyotard 2011: 57; cf. Reifenstein 2018b). However, for Lyotard, the intrusion of the sensory rests on the disposition of words and not their printed or written form:

> *Where does it [the sensory] dwell? Not directly in the 'matter' of words (what would this be, exactly? their written, printed figure? their sound? the 'color' of letters?), but in their disposition. One will counter that the sensible too — signification — depends entirely on the disposition of units. But our understanding of disposition—the poetic dispersal across the page — is a disturbance of the disposition that ensures signification; it upsets communication (2011: 68).*

Lyotard detects how written words may act as their own visible reference, yet, significantly at this point, he limits their power to dispersal across the page, keeping the closed integrity of the signifying unit. Importantly though, this observation marks the interdependence of writing as signifier and writing as plastic space. It is worth noting the exact phrasing Lyotard employs, on one single page of the translation of his *Discourse, Figure*, to show the extent to which he emphasizes the separation and intercutting of ordinary use and artistic licence. Lyotard restricts such usage of writing to artistic practices, because art speaks differently from 'everyday language', in which the 'linguistic signifier' can 'become completely transparent in favor of the signified' (2011: 78). Conversely, art seeks 'to highlight the signifier', with the consequence that 'linguistic matter' may be 'burdened with sensory value.' Poetry may thus affect 'that the term's natural transparency be clouded […] thanks to the ordering the poet has imposed on verbal matter' (2011: 78).

The tense pursuit to uphold both, the transparency and unity of the signifier for the sake of communication, and the burdensome umbrage imposed on it by art, 'is answered', as Kiff Bamford writes, 'by the inevitable recognition of the figural at the heart of discourse' (2013: 887). For Lyotard, the *figure* works to produce excess or a transgression of signification, thereby provoking a thickness or opacity in discourse or art that hints at the limitation of signification, designation, and their combination to constrain the play of meaning. The figural partakes in discourse and perception but it is ontologically different from the figurative and the textual, though not in opposition to them. For linguists, the figure in (poetic and artistic) discourse effects 'violations of the system's order [that] produce […] meaning-effects that cannot be the result of the normal interplay of semantic and/or syntactic givens' (Lyotard 2011: 283). The violations may occur within linguistic space but cannot be explained by it as they disturb the arbitrariness of language in discourse to impact the body sensorially. Pettibon's own use of writing as illimitable to referential meaning exceeds Lyotard's initial emphasis on the disposition of words on the

sheet of paper. Though he is a voracious reader, Pettibon is, of course, no writer in any conventional use of the term. And yet, writing is his drawing practice in many works. And it is in his drawerly approach to writing that the convergence of Lyotard's figure in discourse and art may be glimpsed. Despite its scrawly script, Pettibon's alter ego's signature fulfils the requirements of transparently recognisable letters, and yet — as the foregoing account has shown — its interpretive opacity and irreducibility to limitable meanings emerges in the artistic practice as writing and writerly practice as art.

FIGURE 2: RAYMOND PETTIBON *UNTITLED (WHATEVER IT IS …)* (1991), PEN AND INK ON PAPER, 45.5 X 30.3CM

In *Untitled (Whatever it is …)* (1991) (Fig. 2), Pettibon confronts the viewer with a large-scale letter that refuses to only be read as such. At first glance, especially when the work is approached from a distance, the alphabetic letter X is perhaps most noticeable, while the smaller text above it frames it to be read in the manner of the ideographic marker (*here*) on a treasure map. Thus, X also merely becomes a(n algebraic) variable (x) for the 'whatever it is you're looking for'. Moreover, X still crosses off further readings that do not exclusively belong to discursive conventions in its appeal to a wide contextual, material, and bodily reading and looking in- and outside of drawing practice. Multiplying the readings and viewings in this way, X's linework is encountered repeatedly, but at once, between careful scans and saccadic skits. X does not merely show itself full frontal with absolute attention: an isolated object in front of a detached observer. It is seen and read marginally, obliquely, intently by bodies whose eyes adjust for themselves and trace not just lines, but an abundance of space around an X-shaped void. Linework is here not a noticeable exception in but part of the world. It is insolable from the ecru ground that bears it, not because it obscures the paper's colour but because paper and ink require another to be read and seen.

That artistic practice already instantiates writing's inherent capacity to violate the supposed systematization of language and its grammar points not at the failure of art but rather at the shortcomings of the supposed system. As Derrida frequently states, the necessity to marginalise and exclude occurrences on the basis of their non-ordinariness indicates, on the contrary, that they carry structural significance (Derrida 1988: 1–23, 29–110.). If they are prevalent enough to have to be excluded, they already structure the phenomenon. Derrida keenly turns the usage of these terms around and, in particular, recycles the use of 'parasitic' in a reversal and displacement of the term (Derrida 1988: 16; cf. Austin 1962: 22, 104; Searle 1977: 205). The point is not to illegitimise the possible distinction of artistic use from an ordinary one but to show that concepts of distinction not only carry an 'axiology, in all of its systematic and dogmatic insistence, [which] determines an object' generally but also necessarily induces 'value-judgements' (Derrida 1988: 92). Concepts in and of themselves impose structures, often binaries, because by necessity they seek to limit and legitimise: they decide what is inside and outside, what belongs and does not. The limits and distinctions may be necessary and legitimate because they belong to the notion of 'concept'. The differentiation by degree still works within the same framework, oscillating between clearly delimited margins.

Thus, to focus in again on the line, why does Lyotard limit the sensory space of writing to that of the dispersal of words on the page, strongly opposing other registers and in particular greater magnification? Looking at the lines that constitute writing, whether handwritten or printed, Lyotard detects a bodily difference in contrast to some (not all) lines in art. The lines of writing are recognised, and their decipherment does not engage the reader bodily, because the reader is looking for predetermined differences of signification in a closed system. 'Whatever it is you're looking for' turns out to be exactly 'whatever it is you're looking for'. As a reader, Lyotard recognises the lines of writing without seeing them; he approaches the sheet of paper as a reader not a viewer.

The graphic value of the written word is for Lyotard the descriptor for a signifier that can '*induce directly the recognition of what it represents*' (Lyotard 2011: 169; italics in original). A plastic signifier, on the other hand, requires to be seen, slowing the process of looking. The plastic form of a letter is without value. Tracing the shapes of a plastic signifier induces a bodily resonance, whereas the shapes of letters

are entirely meaningless beside referring to their verbal values which have the acute capacity to oppose one letter to another. *Untitled (Whatever it is …)* recognises the illimitability of looking at, not reading of, art and the X that marks the spot, with its precision and bounty, negotiates the shared difference of the verbal and the plastic.

As the verbal sign is arbitrary in relation to the body of the reader, writing is an '*informational* space', in so far as 'the letters' "rhythm," "position," and "sequence" refer to a position occupied by the reader, which serves as reference-point, this calibration owes nothing to the body's aesthetic power' (Lyotard 2011: 208, 207; italics in original). The body only faces the text to identify the differences, or oppositions, between a limited number of letters in a system. Lyotard's appeal to the 'aesthetic' and 'bodily resonance' is critical in describing the sensory as open to information and form. His distinction verges on an opposition between the two and a difference that requires displacement and reversal (cf. Dews 1984: 43; Bennington 1988: 68–70; Lydon 2001: 17; Hudek 2011: 11; Bamford 2012: 62, 2013: 887; Helms 2013: 129). Bamford proposes that Lyotard upholds the categorical distinction between the letter's line and drawing's line

> *in order that the figural aspect of the line is not enclosed by the letter—that the visible aspect of the line is not written out when it is written about: this is the paradox that is at the heart of Lyotard's writings on art. (Bamford 2012: 62)*

Lines themselves are not limited to the status of graphic signifier, in Lyotard's sense, but rather torn 'between the highest degree of legibility' and 'the potential energy accumulated and expressed in graphic form as such' (Lyotard 2011: 210). The line of writing oscillates between 'plastic meaning' and 'articulated signification', between 'touch[ing] upon an energetics [and touching] upon writing' (Lyotard 2011: 210), between being seen and saying. Pettibon's line, in its vacillation between alphanumeric character, ideogram, pictogram, and drawerly marks, highlights this intervolution of sensuous, material, bodily, discursive, and so on touch. For Lyotard, the potential energy of the line provides an ambiguous state to resonate with the body gazing at it. But this resonance arrives at the detriment of reading, because legibility 'does not impede the eye's racing', whilst 'with the energetics of the plastic line one must stop at the figure' (Lyotard 2011: 210). Reading only touches upon each line lightly, running across it swiftly, without intending to take in its graphic energetics as plastic. Considering the linework of writing as plastic space requires time, and Lyotard suggests that the slowness that the figural requires is difficult to accept and give when the line is so easily reducible to verbal language. Despite its initial simplicity, Pettibon's X slows the racing of the eye — and thus its reading — showing the simple glyph to have a body and a space. A low set horizon line shows the alphabetic character as a character on a stage, towering proudly on sturdy legs. Inseparable from the off-white and space of the sheet, the character is seen lit almost equally from all sides, casting only a minimal shadow of itself through its miniature offspring on the ground. As if by ironic wink at the viewer, Pettibon's cross hatches a short shadow at its own feet. The crosshatch as conventionalised spatial form of drawing practice meets itself and its other in the conventional space of the alphabetic X. In this way, the X of the alphabet and drawing's cross occupy a graphic and plastic stage that belongs to neither and both.

As the convention of the crosshatch indicates, even the line of drawing may lose itself easily in the rationalism of signification or designation, especially in a culture that 'has rooted out sensitivity to plastic space' (Lyotard 2011: 212). Such a drawn line is, for Lyotard, a scripted line that can be read as signifier and thus verbally, or a line that is ruled by geometric optics and the orthogonal space of perspective which results in representation. Like Derrida's trait, Lyotard draws the line, as though strained by

multiple hands, on and through itself, though not linearly between poles but curvilinearly, undulating itself. In the desire of the line to connote, to become a signifying language or to make visible, 'the figure submits to language' it becomes open to recognition and writing. (The possibility for perspective to institute a kind of language is also variously problematised by Derrida; for a succinct discussion, see Brunette and Wills 1994: 4; Lyotard 2011: 213).

The other figural line, however, which does not translate the sensory into the intelligible, is the line that works on its own accord. This line may be seen as Lyotard wants us to see it, laterally and not focused; its figure never in the centre, never in our vision, and yet able to be seen, with eyes and without. Lyotard's line, as exemplified in Pettibon's work here, struggles and meanders between its own plasticity and its verbal exigency, between seeing and articulated vision. The line describes the necessary overlap of the discursive and the figural, 'suggesting that a (discursive) principle of readability and a (figural) principle of unreadability shared one in the other' (Lyotard and van den Abbeele 1984: 17). As Bamford puts it, Lyotard's concern for the line is also a 'desire for unity where there can be none' (Bamford 2012: 49). And thus, Lyotard's line sinuates without unity or centre through an impossible opposition. The line that is integral to the letter is also its end, going beyond the letter, somewhere: 'The line is the letter's life, its rhythm, and at the same time its death, its obliteration, as in a signature' (Lyotard 1988: 463).

The line of the signature, like that of calligraphy, is not exceptional to handwriting or even writing at large, rather it is merely a marginalised line that nevertheless already structures ordinary use. And it is not just the ordinary use of the line of writing, but also itself as the line of drawing. How can the line of drawing not be the same line as the one that writes? Or differently, for there are not two, how can the line of drawing not be its other in writing? Stretching the tinglish line of the blind sketch continuously along, honing in on itself, finding the line in the space between lines, to inscribe it with a note that barely signifies but does, and which enacts the missing link of lines, the line becomes its own extension in words or pictures.

> *The ambiguity of writing, object of reading and of sight, is present in the initial ambiguity of drawing. An open line, a line closed on itself. The letter is an unvarying closed line; the line is the open moment of a letter that perhaps closes again elsewhere, on the other side. Open the letter, you have the image, the scene, and magic. Close the image, you have the emblem, the symbol, and the letter (Lyotard 2011: 264).*

The drawn line is the parasitic disturbance of writing, smuggling its visible figure into the one of discourse whose verbal signs become clouded by their own plasticity, burdened by their own weight.

The line has no originary status to drawing or writing: it does not create, though its inscribed trace runs in both. And the recognisability of letters is a seeing-as not seeing. The knowledge of letterforms is also the knowledge of seeing again and again, and of not wanting to see differently. It is recognition despite seeing. Learning a new script, we reread our writing as drawing. Every skit, every stroke, every curve, every loop is skit and stroke and curve and loop again, before, eventually, they become the minims, lobes, and bows of something legible. Until then they move the body with the force of lines that move themselves. And, right at that point, they work together, insolable, the illegible legible telling us not to see but read. They perform as Lyotard's plastic signifiers unrecognised for their verbality. Here, seeing is at the point of inarticulate vision. In order to make sense of the line then – both the line in the alphabet and the one in the picture – we need to read and look, to draw and write, to sense the energetics of the line without wanting to classify before our eyes.

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DARK MATERIAL AND THE INDEXICAL IN THE DRAWINGS OF PRABHAKAR PACHPUTE

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In the following essay, I propose to write about charcoal as it is employed by contemporary Indian artist Prabhakar Pachpute in his drawing. In his charcoal drawings, he depicts the daily life of the workers in the coal-mining town of Sasti, India. As a material, charcoal has layers of meaning deserving of theorisation and analysis. There is an existing debate in art history and theory on how to analyze the material aspect of an art object (Ingold 2007; Elkins 2008). In this article, I have contextualised Pachpute's charcoal drawings against the sociologically and politically charged charcoal works of William Kentridge and Kara Walker in order to bring out the similarities and differences between these three artists' drawings. I have shown that in Pachpute's work charcoal as a material has a direct and causal relation to the subject matter of his drawing. This connection is explored further in light of philosophy of indexicality (Peirce 1982; Leja 2000; Iversen 2012). Pachpute's drawings depicting miners and mining towns are drawn using charcoal, which is burnt wood and, sometimes, powdered coal bound in adhesive. In India, coal mining operations are one of the most important causes of deforestation and pollution. Furthermore, the fact that Pachpute's family comes from the coal-mining towns of Sasti and that he was born and brought up there adds to the poignancy of his drawings. His hand drawn works that capture his bodily presence make the lived experience of working-class people more visceral and direct.

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Introduction: Matter and materiality of drawing

Drawing practice can encompass many materials but, when it comes to theorising drawing, the unique sensory aspects of these materials take a back seat. This is true of most academic disciplines related to art and visual culture. Tim Ingold, in his article 'Materials against Materiality', critiques the current trend in fields related to material culture that posits the idea of the materiality of objects as an abstraction. This is done at the expense of looking at the uniqueness of each material. An anxiety exists among scholars about theorising the sensory properties of materials. They would rather theorise the idea of materiality as another concept that exists to exemplify the flip side of the world of immaterial ideas. The same binary mode of thinking around materiality exists in contemporary art discourses. When it comes to drawing, materiality occupies an interesting place. As drawings are diagrammatic, they can oscillate between the realm of sensuous materiality and the conceptual void. Literature on drawing theorises different types of drawings (encompassing conceptual, virtual, and mathematical drawing) demonstrating its capacity to occupy spaces linking the real and imaginary. In this context, it is interesting to look at how, sometimes, the specific material used to draw can become integral to its meaning.

Prabhakar Pachpute's charcoal drawings and the lived experience of class in India

Drawing has laid at the heart of many artists' practices throughout the ages. However, some contemporary artists have made large-scale drawings central to their practice. The same trend can be seen in the works by contemporary Indian artists. Modern and contemporary art in India is as diverse as its population. Indian artists whose practice incorporates drawings take inspiration from elements as diverse as indigenous scrolls to geometric lines of modernist architectures. Examples of this pluralism include the geometric minimalist lines of Nasreen Mohamedi (1937–1990), the delicate miniature paintings and Urdu calligraphy inspired drawings of Zarina Hasmi (1937–), and the expressive drawings of performance artist Nikhil Chopra (1974–), which are also performance residue. Many young artists in India continue to break new ground in their drawing practice through their experiments with innovative material. Drawing can be one of the simplest acts of art-making that needs almost no technology (for example, it can be the marks and traces of the artist's moving body), thereby becoming one of the most intimate and idiosyncratic artistic practices. Gestural and performative drawings and mark-making are embodied because they carry the trace of artist's bodily gesture. The gesture inherent and visible in hand drawn patterns can carry a unique presence. Subtle deviations of overwhelming complexity can be carried out in handmade patterns. As drawing is a unique site of embodiment, it reveals lived experience in a way that few other mediums can achieve. In the young artist Prabhakar Pachupte's (1986) drawing, aspects, such as intimacy and idiosyncrasy, come together in his use of charcoal. Pachupte currently lives and works in Pune, India. He grew up in a small coal-mining village named Sasti in the Chandrapur district in Maharashtra, India. He comes from a family of coal miners but left his hometown to do his BFA, in Khairaharh University, and then MFA in Baroda. He has subsequently gained wide recognition for his portrayal of the bleak lives and extreme struggles of the miners from his hometown. Curators from India and beyond have been captivated by the emotive quality of his work. For example, critic Uma Nair writes that Pachpute's work grapples with 'suffering and the poetics of catastrophe, and calamity in coal mines anywhere in the world' (Nair 2017). Pachpute has achieved a reasonable level of success. He is the youngest artist to hold a solo show in the National Museum of Modern Art, Mumbai.

He does not stop at depicting the oppressive environment that miners have to work in, as his charcoal drawings are a commentary on both the region and India's ecology and political scenario. Densely populated and fast developing, India heavily relies on coal for its energy needs. Two hundred and forty-six coal-fired power plants account for sixty percent of the electricity generated in India. However, most of these power plants fail to comply with the emission standards set by the authorities. Currently, India is the most polluted country in the world, and the poor infrastructure of the coal mines is one of the major causes for this pollution (Bernard and Kazmin 2018.) Many coal mines in India use outdated technology, which results in high emissions of dangerous particulate matter—sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxide—which directly affect the local population. An article in *The Economic Times: India Times*, titled 'India's coal power plants "unhealthiest" in world: Study (2019)', corroborates this claim by quoting researchers from ETH Zurich.

All over India, the rapid industrialization and expansion of coal mines have started to encroach on nearby farms and forests, sometimes illegally. The most recent story of such a conflict is that the big industrial group, Adani, was granted approval from the Center to mine in India's most ancient and dense forest: the Hasdeo Arand forest, which is situated in the Chattishgar region. It has been claimed that a huge chunk of the forest has been completely cleared to make way for a coal mine. This could potentially cause an ecological disaster and wipe out indigenous tribes who have inhabited the land for tens of thousands of years (Halarnkar 2019).

Sasti is a small mining town in a different part of India but it has the distinction of producing a promising young visual artist who has made the miners' everyday struggles more visible through his art. Pollution generated from coal mines threatens everyone living in and around Sasti, including miners, whose lives are perpetually at risk. Negligent mining authorities and political elites have not done much to improve their working conditions in the last few decades. Pachpute's work encompasses resin sculptures and installations, but his striking and innovative charcoal drawings will be the focus of this article. His use of charcoal deserves special attention. His works are a testimony to the fact that the simple gesture of drawing can sometimes make multi-layered and nuanced statements. His drawings are conventionally representational through their depictions of surrealist landscapes and men. The inhabitants of his landscapes appear as faceless men: half-human; half-machine. Pachpupte depicts the miners going about their daily pursuits, the mining landscape, and the small settlements surrounding the mines. His works are sometimes surrealist, which is perhaps a defensive response to the dismal conditions of daily life in his hometown. It seems that only someone who is brought up within that community could respond to this hardship through detached unsentimental satire. Any empathetic outside observer coming from a more privileged background would respond with shock and pity when witnessing the miners' lives. However, for Pachpute, this is the reality that he grew up with and this experience has shaped his artistic approach. Like others in his town, he feels desperation and pain but shows no excess of emotion.

FIGURE 1: P. PACHPUTE *EARTHWORK OF HADSATI* (2013), CHARCOAL ON PAPER (DRAWING FROM STOP-MOTION ANIMATION): © COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND EXPERIMENTER

The materiality and politics of charcoal

As a medium, charcoal captures the primal nature of drawing. Charcoal drawing involves a process that is reflexive: an exposition of the traces of a person's momentary gestures laid bare on a surface. As Emma Dexter states, drawing is one of the 'earliest and most immediate' forms of image making, and charcoal is one of its earliest materials (Dexter 2005). Dexter proposes that drawing has a vernacular characteristic (Dexter 2005: 7). She offers examples of different mark-making practices that exist outside of art-institutions, such as drawings on a cave wall, children's drawings, and drawings by people from cultures that have not been exposed to western draughtsmanship. Words, such as primitive and vernacular, are often used to describe the process of drawing. Nothing captures this immediacy more than the roughness of drawings executed with charcoal. Charcoal's history stretches back thousands of years: our ancestors drew on cave walls using charcoal. It is one of the oldest known, versatile, and persistent materials used to make art. The visceral and primal nature of charcoal drawing makes a strong statement that can be political, social, or economical. In recent art history, charcoal has often been used to indicate social and political conflicts. For example, we can look at both William Kenbridge and Kara Walker's use of charcoal. It is not a coincidence that William Kentidge's charcoal drawings are messy, dirty, immediate, visceral, and depict stories of conflict. For Kentridge, drawing is a compulsion. In an interview with Dale Berning, he recounts his need to make marks on paper by manipulating charcoal to draw: 'I have a need to be making marks on paper. Drawing isn't a decision, it is a need' (Kentridge 2009).

Images of visceral immediateness characterize Kara Walker's charcoal drawings, troubling the representation of black experience and the signifiers of animality, irrationality, and darkness. Critics mention that her charcoal drawing resembles the shadows of history (Newman 2017). Walker's drawing style is a statement as, through representation, she subverts social and political symbols. When reviewing Walker's art, Murray Whyte (2016) uses the term 'incendiary'. Art historian and critic, Vania

Géré states that Walker's use of charcoal is a commentary on the fact that for a long period of history minority artists did not have access to more sophisticated materials (Géré 2016). Walker's charcoal drawings are used in a blatant gesture that is fitting to the troubling issue of race relations. Kentridge's charcoal drawings deal with the equally thorny problem of post-apartheid in South-Africa. However, he sometimes makes use of more contemporary technology. His charcoal drawings are often transferred to animation and projected onto the screen. Film and photography, coupled with his drawing process, become an altogether nuanced practice and serve as a commentary on the multifaceted political, social, and economic problems of apartheid. Rosalind Krauss states that the 'smudges, smears, and erasures' of Kentridge's charcoal drawing turned into stop-motion films, such as *History of the Main Complaint* (1996), is a manifestation of the tension between formal and sociological poles (Krauss 2000). Both Walker and Kentridge's works are formal drawings and social commentary enveloped together.

Pachpute's drawings share many similarities with both Kentridge and Walker's work. They are subversive social messages conveyed though the marks and strokes of charcoal. There is common ground and there is uniqueness. Walker's work is deliberately provocative, as she exaggerates negroid features as a social satire and depicts scenes of extreme violence; her drawing gestures match this frenzied tone.

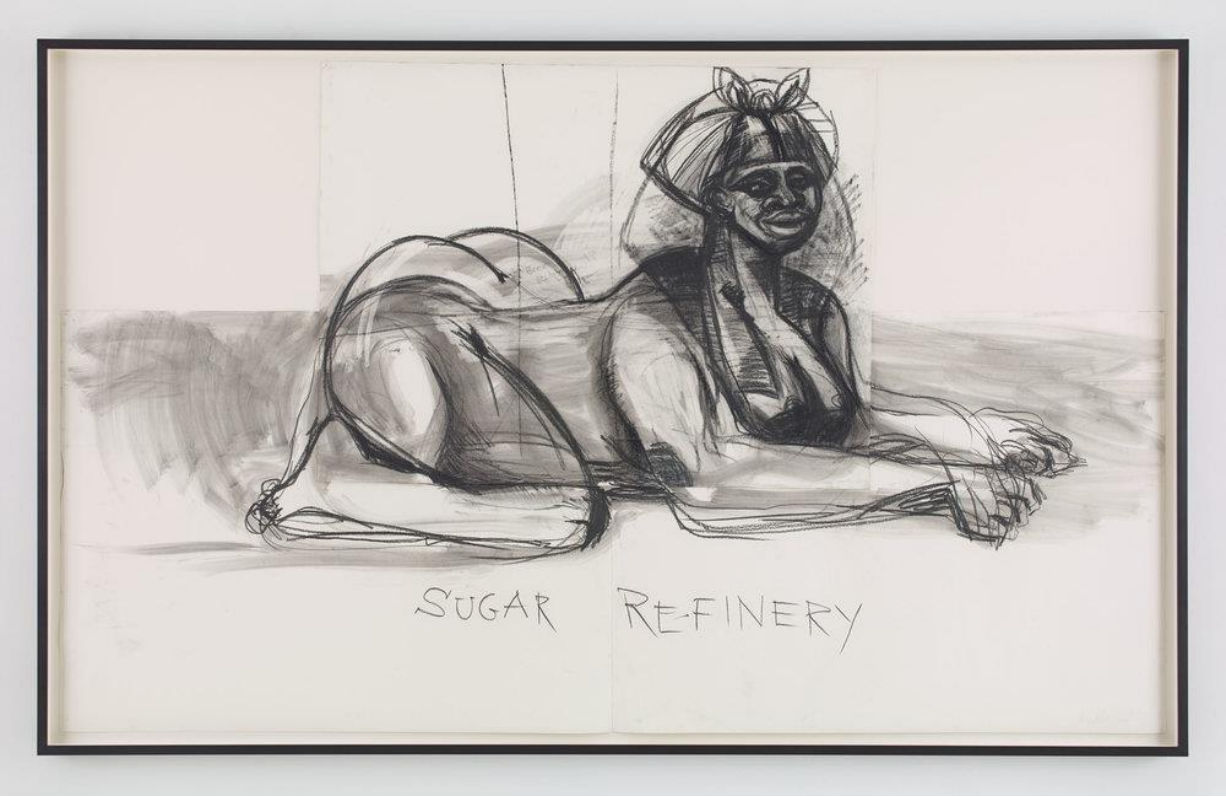

FIGURE 2: K. WALKER. *UNTITLED* (2013–14), CHARCOAL ON PAPER ©KARA WALKER, COURTESY OF SIKKEMA JENKINS & CO., NEW YORK.

These drawings are aimed to confront viewers with the historical injustices of slavery and make them feel uncomfortable. Human facial and body gestures also dominate Kentridge's charcoal drawings. Tragedy, either personal or political, inspires his drawing and, for him, drawing is an act of compassion. (see the video, *History of the Main Complaint* (1996) as described in Art21's web portal or the depiction of a riot in Johannesburg in the *Other Faces* (2011).

FIGURE 3: W. KENTRIDGE *DRAWING FOR OTHER FACES* (2011) (PROTESTORS CLOSE UP), CHARCOAL AND COLOURED PENCIL ON PAPER 62 X 121 CM. COURTESY OF WILLIAM KENTRIDGE AND THE GOODMAN GALLERY.

These drawings depict conflict and throb with an emotive quality, which asks for compassion from the viewers. Pachpute's drawing gesture is restrained; they are comprised of stokes of dry charcoal subtly rubbed on paper or the smooth white wall of a gallery. They are melancholic and sombre, unlike the confrontational nature of Walker's depictions of slavery or the pitiful character in Kentridge's work on race relations. For example, the following image is from a series of drawings called *Canary in a Coalmine*.

FIGURE 4: P. PACHPUTE IMAGE FROM THE SERIES, *CANARY IN A COALMINE* (2012), DETAIL, CHARCOAL ON PAPER © COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CLARK HOUSE, BOMBAY, INDIA.

This particular drawing is representational but there are many symbolic aspects of the miner's life and experience that are portrayed by the artist. For example, the depiction of electrical plugs in place of their

head indicates their status as mere tools or machinery. His interpretation is reminiscent of Michel de Certeau's proposition in his landmark book *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984). This is what the powerful ruling class does to 'ordinary men', as it takes away their individuality and shapes them into a homogenous mass that can be moulded within their ideological frameworks. Historically, the ruling class is also the culture producing class. Pachpute, who comes from the 'ordinary men' class, subverts the narrative by creating works of art based on the ruling class' mistreatment of the common people. His works are testimony to the creative spirit of the oppressed. He has the opportunity to present his art to the world. Ironically, his phenomenal success has set him apart from the miners and he has been celebrated by the ruling class. These contradictions exist in the art world, and a satisfactory conclusion cannot be reached in this article. However, we can at least see one artist's work speaking out against the dehumanising mechanisation of the working classes. Hopefully more visual artists and working-class performers will come to reinterpret their lived experience and find sympathetic audiences. Pachpute's men are faceless and docile as they go about their duties apparently passively accepting their fate. While Kentridge's drawing of cities are embodied and indicate human presence, Pachputhe's mining towns resemble lunar landscapes seemingly hostile to human life. In Pachpute's drawing, viewers are unable to see the workers' facial expressions, and their suffering and desperation are not apparent in their posture. In these unsentimental drawings, charcoal traces ultimately become the bodies of the miners and the environment in which they live. When looking at the drawings, one can smell the dust of the close spaces inside the earth's cavity. The darkness depicted in the landscape reflects the psychological stress of working in the dark-belly of the earth; the half-machine and half-human miners are metaphorical of the dehumanising conditions of their workplace.

FIGURE 3: P. PACHPUTE *CANARY IN A COALMINE* (2012), DETAIL, CHARCOAL ON PAPER © COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND CLARK HOUSE, BOMBAY, INDIA.

This drawing satirises the common perception of home as a place of comfort. At the end of a working day, miners are supposed to be able to get away from the daily grind and rest. However, the reality of the village of Sasti is that they are never fully away from the claustrophobia of the mines' treacherous tunnels.

Pachpute's drawings are skilfully conventional. They appear in galleries as works in progress, retaining the dusty presence of dry charcoal and thus capturing the atmospheric quality of the coal mine. Pachpute mentions that he grew up with a 'lot of darkness' (Saldanha 2017). Indeed, darkness envelops his charcoal drawing. There are many other materials and pigments available to depict darkness. Also, other mediums can be employed to bring attention to the fate of a small mining town on the verge of ecological and economic disaster, such as photography, film, and journalism; Pachupte chose charcoal drawing. His material and process capitalise on the primal nature of both drawing and charcoal because, while any medium can be used to express darkness, charcoal embodies its referent.

Charcoal and artistic labour

Pachpute's work is simultaneously comprised of formal drawings and social commentary. His drawing makes a commentary on labour: the labour of the underpaid coalminers and his own artistic labour. Most curatorial writings on his works theorise the miners' labour as it is it represented in his drawing. For example, media coverage of his recent exhibition, *Rumination on Labour*, in the Experimenter Art Gallery mainly focused on the economic and social context of the laborers depicted in Pachpute's work (Ghosh 2018). It is easy to forget that his artistic expression is also the result of intensive physical labour by the artist. The materiality of an art-object can be an embodiment and manifestation of artistic labour. This aspect is clearly captured by noted art historian, James Elkins. When writing about the painter's labour in minute detail, he states that an artist's studio is perceived either as a space of sombre underpaid work or a space where magical self-expression happens: depending on the success of the artist (Elkins 1999). Artists who are engaged in material exploration do have long and tedious and periods of making and unmaking. However, the unique nature of artistic labour in the studio has not received much scholarly attention. Instead, case studies often reflect the social and economic condition of artistic labour as it exists in the context of an artist's communities, residencies, and curatorial and museum work. Within this network, an artist's labour is sometimes commoditised and sometimes it is utilised in social transformation (see, for example, Pierre Bal-Blanc 2010; Alberto López Cuenca 2012).

Pachpute's artistic labour of manipulating charcoal is not similar to that of the miners. But, nonetheless, his toils commemorate theirs in an empathetic homage. Coal has a special status in the Indian economy and is called black gold. Pachpute has turned his charcoal drawing of coal mines into metaphorical gold. The economic aspect of Pachpute's work opens up new vistas of analysis. But, in this article, I want to focus on Pachpute's labour as he perfected his expression through the medium of charcoal. Traces of dusty, granular charcoal, by virtue of being applied in strokes and lines become the phenomenon or reality of a dark existence. The laborious processes of skilled drawing fully utilise the sensuous properties of charcoal. The sensuous relationship between artists and their materials has been highly problematic for the writing of art's histories. Elkins acknowledges this problem in his essay, 'On some limits of materiality in art history' (2008: 25–30) where he proposes that art historical writing which concentrates on describing the sensory nature of the material detached from its historical context can become problematic. Elkins claims that, if the historian comes too close to the sensual texture of the art-object, it is sometimes difficult to contextualise it according to historical timeline or genre. He also mentions the

fact that historians and theorists tend not to dwell on the slow-paced process of material exploration that goes on inside the studio. For Elkins, materiality is 'meaning the sense of matter and substance experienced by artists' (Elkins 2008: 30). It seems that Elkins is following the trend of turning away from the uniqueness of each material used in the art object. The same trend has been critiqued by Ingold. In the same essay, Elkin admits that the fear of material might be just an outcome of art historians and theorists' art training; he also argues that theorising material sensuality is better left to philosophers. The black colour of charcoal, as well as its dry and rough texture, as it has been experienced and exploited by Pachpute, would not come under any specific art-historical theorisation. However, the concepts emerging from the philosophy of indexicality could provide meaning to the sensuous materiality of his drawing.

The material and indexical in Pachpute's charcoal works

This essay borrows ideas from philosophy to add to the historical and social context of Pachpute's drawing practice. In his drawings, traces of charcoal can also be conceptualised as an indexical trace. Since Pachpute is using charcoal to depict a coalmine and its miners, the materiality of the drawing is locked in an indexical relation. An indexical allusion to labour is revealed in the causal connection made between charcoal and the coal mine. Technically, charcoal is chemically dissimilar to coal as it is found in mines. The former is slow-burnt wood and the latter is a mineral resulting from millions of years of geological processes. Coal and charcoal are quite similar in texture and both are carbon-based elements that are by-products of the chemical transformation of plants. Coal is rougher in texture and definitely cheaper. In India, the compressed or powdered charcoal used in large quantities for drawing is seldom pure wood-burnt charcoal. Powdered coal, which is cheaper, is frequently used in compressed charcoal blocks. However, the indexical relation goes deeper than this. Currently, in India, the expansion of the coal mines and rapid industrialization continues to cause havoc in the environment, with the destruction of forests being one of the most immediate results. Therefore, the material of the wood-burnt charcoal is causally linked to the condition of mining and rapid industrialization.

The concept of the index is borrowed from American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce's system of signs. As philosopher Clive Cazeaux points out, 'In the case of indexical drawing, interest lies not in the pliability of the material in the service of representation but in its capacity to have an effect on the materials or conditions that surround it, where the effect is any mark or form or display left as the trace of the causal interaction between materials' (2017: 139). When it comes to representation, Peirce proposed there are three categories of visual signs: the icon, the symbol, and the index. In short, an icon represents through resemblance, a symbol through convention, and an index through causality. Charcoal is a conventional media frequently used to achieve representational drawing. Pachpute's drawings are conventionally symbolic as they represent landscapes and human figures through charcoal but they are also uniquely indexical in their material meaning. Traces of coal and burnt wood indexically point to the coal mines' grim environment and the dire destruction of the forest as a result of rapid industrialisation. Art historian, Michael Leja in 'Peirce, Visuality, and Art' (2000) writes that Peirce's system of visual signs has attracted huge appeal within scholars of art and visual culture. Indeed, it is easy to see why the icon and the index are useful tools to analyse images. Peirce's original system is heavily dependent on visual and diagrammatic cues (Leja 2000: 97). Peirce developed his system in the early part of the twentieth century, but the concept of indexicality gained popularity amongst visual art scholars during the 1960s. Krauss in her essay, 'Notes on an Index' (1977), drew attention to the fact that the index replaces the

conventional resemblance of form or mimicry with the physical presence of something causally related to the object represented. The execution of resemblance follows art historical and aesthetic convention; in contrast, indexical traces can signify complicated concepts and occurrence through minimalist forms. For example, layers of dust on an object can act as an index of time. Leja states that Krauss's interpretation of an indexical sign served the anti-form, literalist, and minimalist art of the 1970s. Leja goes on to propose that Krauss's analysis attempted to separate fine art from aesthetics and art-historical convention. Minimalist representations of causality through indexical traces hardly require conventional artistic skills, such as depicting resemblance and manipulating materials towards a formal aim. Pachpute's work is neither minimalist nor anti-form: they look like conventional aesthetic representational drawings. For example, had Pachpute taken chunks of coal that bear the slash marks of the miners' axes directly out of the mine and put them in a gallery, it would have been an indexical sign in its literal sense. However, Pachpute used charcoal sticks and chunks and layered them on paper or a wall to make marks. Rough granules of charcoal are blended in a delicate but deliberate modulation. It is hard to ignore the fact that these marks carry his hand gesture. Pachpute's hand gestures, which are evident in his drawings, showcase the much celebrated and embodied nature of drawing whereas, in Krauss's writing, indexicality and mimetic art practices seem to have an antagonistic relation.

Drawing is an intimate process not only because it is ancient and familiar, but also because hand drawn marks carry some traces of the artist's hands and are therefore indexical of the artist's gesture. Thus, Pachpute's drawing (like most other hand drawn drawings) carries some indexical trace of his hand movement and the contextual detail that he comes from a mining community makes the traces of his hand gesture doubly poignant. His wistful and imaginative transformation of the images of industrial workers though meticulous charcoal strokes displays the similarity between an artist's labour and the labourers in an industrial setting. But the traces of his gesture are not the only evocative feature of his work: the causal indexicality of depicting a coal mine and miners with charcoal ultimately creates a unity of meaning and form in his drawing. As Leja points out, indexical traces can co-exist with conventional art forms to give it greater complexity. Causal indexicality is subtly layered in Pachpute's formalist drawings. Patches of charcoal that give shape to delicate representational drawing are indexical traces: they are conceptual signs as well as poignant expressions. These drawings are conceptual because of the connections they make and they are expressive because viewers experience the phenomenon or the reality of the coal mine through the sensory perception of the colour and texture of charcoal. Margaret Iversen, in her paper 'Index, Diagram, Graphic Trace' (2012), writes that even when utilised within different frameworks of meaning and convention, an indexical sign has a visceral impact on the viewer and that it is used extensively by contemporary artists. The emotive effect of these drawings persists because 'the index has a close, causal or tactile connection with the object it signifies' (Iversen 2012: 1). If we follow Peirce's interpretation, the indexical sign is said to carry a shock value. It points directly towards an aspect of reality, thereby bringing it into focus. Indexical connections can be unexpected and revelatory. An index that takes the form of a trace has a very intimate relation with the referent, since the referent has come into direct physical or causal connection to its reference. The 'shock value' indicated by Peirce can be observed in the sensory nature of Pachpute's drawings. Coal mining and the destruction of trees are causally linked, and so is the subject matter and the material (burnt wood and coal dust) basis of his work. The loose grey granules of charcoal that cover his dark landscape are very close to the lived reality of the coal miners and the inhabitants of the mining town, where the dark and polluting air, which is heavy with noxious particles, chokes them on a daily basis.

Pachpute's more recent work has expanded to consider farmers and laborers from other industries in India. For example, his project in Kochi Muziris Biennale, India, 2018, was an exhibit named 'Resilient Bodies in the Era of Resistance.' It was set up in an abandoned industrial warehouse to represent the farmers' protests against mining corporations. His works still incorporate charcoal marks. Since his charcoal drawings incorporate a tactile and sensuous connection to the grim reality of the mining towns depicted (dusty air, smoke, and the destruction of forests), Pachpute's drawing gestures do not need to convey any heightened theatricality. His stokes are restrained; they exude a melancholic aura and portray the narrative in an impactful way. The material used in Pachpute's drawings has layers of meaning: economic, political, art-historical, and philosophical. And the sensuous quality of the material (charcoal: pure and impure) used in his work keeps the visceral connection with his subject matter alive. The works he has created in the last ten years bear a tender testament to the fact that creative art can challenge and seek respite from the brutality of technocratic society. Ultimately, these multiple layers of meaning make his work relevant to our contemporary art-world, thereby adding a dimension of timelessness.

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