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Nathan Walker

Brooch Score: Drawing with the Mouth by Hand

Carbon: I found an envelope containing a ream of old carbon paper that had not perished (or been opened) in many years. Some of the carbon paper had previously been used with a typewriter, this was evident from the indentations of letters which were visible on both sides of the carbon paper. The paper was thin, possibly 60gsm, not more than 80gsm, and the matte side was so dark and heavy that it moved fluidly; somewhere between silk and magnetic cassette tape.

Tape: I had already recorded vocal explorations of sounds and occasional words in my studio onto cassette tape. I decided to make a visual record of these sounds using the carbon paper as a suitable conductor. I wanted to translate from the mouth to the cassette tape, and then from the cassette to my ear, and my ear to my hand, and my hand to the paper. I placed the black carbon paper on top of sheets of white paper around me on the ground so that I could reach them all in turns without moving from my seat. Five carbon sheets were around my body as I sat on the floor. With my eyes closed I used my hands to translate what I heard into marks.

Marks: Carbon paper smudges and leaves traces and marks of pressure and movement. It keeps a record of whatever it comes into contact with. What emerged on the paper were black lines, slippery shapes, and fingery prints of little mouths. I discovered, to my surprise, that I had been drawing: This drawn sound. Sounds drawn from the mouth by the hand. The marks needed a structure in order to be understood and so I cut them out with scissors and arranged them on the flat-bed scanner in an intuitive way. The scans emerged as the score.

Score: A brooch or pin, button or patch. This score attaches itself to the body. I ask the body to give it air.





