UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE
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Drawing in the Age of the Artist as Networker

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'Drawing makes you see things clearer, and clearer and clearer still, until your eyes ache' said David Hockney. So, drawing is a complex hand, eye, brain process requiring time and attention … No … drawing is an app?

This session will consider whether we should radically re-examine our framing of the activity of drawing, in the light of past approaches and present technologies. It aims to elicit discussion from differing perspectives (cultural, historical, gendered, disciplinary etc.) through the following questions, as prompts and as provocations:

- In the face of 21st-century technology, why do we still draw?
- How does drawing in the three dimensions and digitally challenge our traditional practices?
- Is drawing a self-conscious embodied practice that requires the drawer to be present in the making?
- Is drawing a skill or a pedagogy or can it be both?
- How has drawing enhanced and informed our learnt experience and tacit knowledge?
- Who collaborates and how in the making of drawings?

The papers for this session explore these tensions and are informed by:

- Historical and contemporary drawing practices and the relationship between drawing and technologies
- The role of drawing in the depiction and trace of lived experience
- Shifting ideas regarding the place of drawing in educational contexts including galleries, archives and museums.

Jennifer Walden (Portsmouth University)

A Random Search for the Artist as Networker Suggests 'a New Paradigm' and…

In the 'new paradigm' the …"artist [will] be more vagrant and less cumulative than under the previous models. No climactic 'masterwork' of deep maturity… but rather many shifting interests and directions" [in a] "society of curious minds…interested in the many places in the world where humans have spent their attention – and hungry to invest more."

If this is 'the networker' then do we think of drawing's place and pace as needing to wander rapidly and accelerate? If so, why slow it down with attention to looking and 'handed-ness' when an app will do…?

What is at stake for drawing in the 'physical' sense and in terms of the ethical/pedagogic, even 'political', sense and for the sake of perhaps another 'paradigm' for 'network' and 'drawing'?

Jacques Derrida's take on the act of drawing involves a certain 'blindness' of beginning on the part of s/he who draws, a 'rootedness' in memory and the act's necessary acknowledgment of the 'un-doing' and 'ruin' of the self, thus presenting a certain 'truth' of the eye and 'looking', as always already responsive to the 'other'. This is to be taken with Jean-Luc Nancy's 'pleasure in drawing' as formidably a force and a tension, where desire and pleasure arise in a propulsion of 'not completing' and 'not fulfilling' and a 'sharing' with all 'others' similarly in this incompleteness. In both Derrida and Nancy, but each differently, the

'networking' in drawing is a certain kind of sharing of 'un-networking' of self for the other, through the drawing – a passage of a certain humility we might say. Can we get this with the app? Perhaps our app will at least store the 'memory' or the 'metaphor' of it? There's a question.

Alec Shepley (Glyndwr University) Disclosing ambivalence and uncertainty: contouring, drawing and the paradox of escapology

This paper contextualises iterations of a performed and provisional drawing practice as a method for making art in the in the field of distribution. In this paper, I will discuss the motivation to escape and speculate on questions such as from what or where are these escape attempts being made, and what place am I imagining going to?

The paper will cite examples of the growing prevalence of 'unofficial works,' as artistic strategies for addressing issues relevant to the age of the Anthropocene including work by Beuys, Alÿs, Perray, Hanson, Orozco amongst others. Procedures that uncover spaces of potential will be examined and in addition artistic practices which critique institutions that define art as 'art and that have traditionally distributed it, allowing new voices to emerge through dispersed practices, will also be considered.

The paper will explore the circumstances in which artists engage, perform, discuss, perceive, and realise such works and what the benefits, effects, consequences and results are for them, the participants (or users) and society at large.

Adriana Ionascu (Ulster University)

Hi-Tech Craftsmanship: Digital Drawing as Form-Making (Drawing in the air: the loss of materiality and the finding of form)

The digitalisation of drawing in contemporary art, design, craft and architecture advanced major changes of practice. Since hand-skills in drawing and craft share performative acts of making, it is significant to evaluate the influence of emerging technologies on craft-making processes, which start with drawing as an approach to form-giving in object-production.

This study investigates the role of digital drawing in form-finding in the context of ceramic craft-making, as an interactive design tool for generating 3-dimensional physical form. It explores physical actions related to making with a focus on two aspects of drawing pertinent in craft practice: the relationship between the sensorial and the gestural. It is argued that through performative word-actions such as curving, spinning, splitting, trimming, rotating, slicing, etc., digital drawings translate on-screen the haptic, bodily movements of the maker. Such acts of forming reveal the kinetic, performative and experiential nature of drawing and clay-modelling.

The project, developed at EKWC and FabLab Made@EU Plymouth , shows that the making of form is embodied in the physicality of the act of drawing. It considers the slip-casting of form using 3D scanning and 'Sense' software by way of adopting digital drawing into craft-based processes of making. Following John Berger's and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writings, the paper explores performativity, gesture and body–space relationships as digital pre-forming enactments relevant to the semantics of current drawing and craft practice.

Jack Southern (University of Gloucestershire & City and Guilds of London Art School)

Are 'traditional' drawing approaches merely an antidote to the digital world, or are original and authentic drawn responses more important than ever?

This paper considers the relevance of drawing and drawing education today, through examining our complex relationship to notions of originality and authenticity, in the context of the volume and velocity by which we experience digital imagery in contemporary western culture. We increasingly record and communicate our lived experience through multiple digital means, disseminated with speed and ease through the global and virtual networks we participate in daily. It seems important to extend the critique introduced by Altermodernism (2009), of how artists operate within the numerous realities of this globalised culture, to look specifically at our relationship to images and image making, in order to contexualise and understand the currency of drawing today.

In a 2010, ICA debate, Mark Lecky suggests that artists no longer need to generate new and original imagery. Instead they can 'be led to' visualise and communicate their ideas through appropriating from multiple sources at the touch of a button, attributed to notion of 'letting culture use you as an instrument'. Do these values seek to simply provide a creative antidote to the cognitive and behavioural conditioning of the multi-faceted contemporary world which Lecky refers to? Or is drawing central to an idea that the artists' role in generating original imagery is now more important than ever, within the increasing stream of appropriated and homogenised imagery we experience digitally?

Clive Ashwin (Middlesex University)

The Phenomenology of Depictive Drawing

For some 50 years, Anglophone theories of pictorial representation, including drawing, have been dominated by variants of analytic philosophy (Goodman, Schier, Kulvicki, et al). This tradition assumes that the problems of representation can be solved by close attention to language, with little or no sustained direct engagement with representational objects.

In parallel with this development, the continental equivalent has been built upon the tradition of phenomenology (Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, et al). Although evolving from Husserl's pioneering attention to phenomena, most contemporary phenomenology is as remote from engagement with examples as the analytic tradition, couched in a private language which is impenetrable to anyone other than the initiated, even those with a philosophical background, and consisting largely of exegetical lucubrations.

This paper proposes a radical return to the foundations of phenomenology in the study of how we experience the material world and how we attempt to convert that experience into drawings. It will challenge some long-standing assumptions about how the world looks, and how it is conventionally represented, with examples of drawings from historic and contemporary sources.

Marion Arnold (Loughborough University) Contemporary Collaborative Drawing for Print

In the 21st century, the developed world displays strong signs of becoming the age of human homogenisation. Increasingly sophisticated technology categorises and anonymises people, reducing them to data subsequently used to manipulate social groups and limit choice. In the visual arts, drawing apps enable the rapid production of images, but the software fails to replicate embodied human experiences of being-in-the-world. Drawing respects and collaborates with technology, and in this paper I argue that the paradox inherent in the handmade 'original' print not only affirms drawing and technology but also challenges the Western concept of artists as competitive practitioners, rather than social beings expressing personal phenomenological experience, mediated by cultural knowledge. Much Western drawing theory assumes that drawings are singular, not multiple and that 'unique' drawings are superior to limited editions of handmade prints created through collaboration between artists and masterprinters.

This paper examines cross-cultural interaction and collaboration at The Caversham Press in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Founded in 1985 by Malcolm Christian, the Caversham Press archive is a rich repository of handmade, printed drawings created by black, white and mixed race, female and male artists, formally and informally trained. Cross-cultural dialogues established in the studio promote collaboration as cultural exchange and creative dialogue between artists and masterprinter. The human hand, creating drawings and using technology to make prints, delivers evidence of drawing as a relationship between embodied consciousness, acquired skills and technological processes. Together, they empower South African artists to draw images redolent with aesthetic resonance and cultural critique.

Jill Gibbon (Leeds Beckett University)

Drawing the Panopticon; Representation, resistance and surveillance

What value is the most basic drawing technology – a notebook and pen, in the face of 21st-century surveillance? The development of watching and listening technologies combined with the diversification of the arms industry into security, and the privatisation of public spaces has led to a society of the Panopticon (Foucault, 1991). New systems of 'behaviour analysis' identify unusual behaviour in a crowd, including loitering, running and, even, drawing. Meanwhile, the ubiquity of phone cameras and online social media encourage us to take part in our own surveillance.

This paper suggests that drawing might offer a way to look back at, document and subvert the surveillance state, while reclaiming public space. Examples include John Berger's drawings in response to surveillance in the UK and Palestine (Berger, 2015, 2016), and my experience drawing in Docklands. The paper challenges apolitical connotations of representational drawing by returning to mid-20th-century debates about aesthetics and politics (Bloch et al, 2008). I argue that Walter Benjamin's discussion of Brecht's epic theatre offers an alternative approach to representation, particularly in the use of gesture and interruption, and that this might be a starting point for a radical method of reportage drawing.

Rebecca Birrell (Bridget Riley Foundation)

'On not knowing': Perspectives on a collaboration between Central Saint Martins and the British Museum

Drawing from Old Masters was formerly the cornerstone of an artistic education; however, in the contemporary classroom it has fallen out of fashion, a result of the ascendency of the digital image and a diversification of student art practices that has left the role or usefulness of drawing less explicit.

The Bridget Riley Art Foundation began delivering workshops at The British Museum in 2013, with the aim of encouraging art students to copy from the extraordinary graphic resources in The Department of Prints and Drawings. Driving the project was the belief that drawing from drawings could develop skills of draughtsmanship applicable across genres and mediums, dissolve traditional hierarchies of practice and stimulate a keener critical understanding of the work under scrutiny.

Through analysis of work by Central Saint Martins' students, drawn in response to works from the collection at The British Museum, this paper will consider copying not as a strictly mimetic process, but as a dialogue that reveals moments of historic continuity, recovery and reinvention, articulating conflicts and confluences with traditional representational codes. Where one might imagine the copy to aspire to a single, unified denotation – the original work, faithfully traced – these drawings defy periodisation and canonical divisions, amalgamating styles to achieve diverse and fractured meanings. These works thereby map a reorientation of contemporary practices within a historical continuum of drawing tradition. In making these claims, this paper will contest the 'narrative of rupture' that dominates contemporary art

history, illustrating a more subtle interplay of inheritance and adaptation closer allied to Bloom's notion of 'misprision' (Petheridge, 2009; Bloom, 1973).