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## AROUSING WONDER: DRAWING/WRITING AS VOCATIVE REITERATIONS

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This paper presents a practice-led investigation Ballycastle Vignettes inspired by Cy Twombly's Poems to the sea to revisit drawing/writing, asking how it communicates subject. The investigation employs wonder to review conventions by utilising drawing/writing as a poetic method to impinge and extend interpretative devices. Ballycastle Vignettes questions the bearing of wonder upon the construction of subject matter(s), which are proposed by the paper as multifaceted arising through a type of dialogue that talks to, and of the phenomenological experience of making. This looks to Hélène Cixous avocation of drawing as a living subject questioning the mark as an indexical shifter, a term coined by Michael Newman that unites circumstance to action, and it's reading. The drawing/writing practice is argued as talking of (and back to) a variety of contexts, frameworks and conventions privileging Nicolas Davey's *theoria* (2006) as uniting theory and practice in dialogue.

## Introduction

This paper is a reflective review of a practice-led investigation titled *Ballycastle Vignettes*, shared in TRACEY'S project space. This project was undertaken as a returning fellow of the Balingen Arts Foundation, Ballycastle Ireland. The investigations title employed the noun 'vignette' as it had a range of descriptive meanings defining a brief evocative account or episode, an illustration or photograph which fades into the background without a definitive border and it was also used as an architectural term denoting a carved representation of a vine, from French, diminutive of *vigne* 'vine'. The title was significant to the project as it aimed to unite these descriptive characteristics of the word vignette, associating them with the experiences and subjects of a place.

The *Ballycastle Vignettes* project questioned wonder as a philosophical and participatory strategy to reinterpret experiences, subjects and outputs and was utilized as a strategy to negate obligations of closure in practice-led research. The practice outputs made in response to the *Ballycastle Vignettes* project were entitled *Poems to the Sea*.<sup>1</sup> This title was borrowed from Cy Twombly who interwove drawing and writing as poetic gestures that addressed a subject both visually and textually.<sup>2</sup>

The title *Poems to the Sea* became an objective for the *Ballycastle Vignettes* project. It intended to use drawing and writing techniques to form drawing/writing hybrids working from/with the sea (as subject) to arouse wonder and create poems in response to the experience. Wonder was distinguished as a type of device that was jointly dialogic and poetic. This position drew upon Philip Fisher's (1998) view of wonder as a poetics of thought relocated and reactivated throughout its (wondering) process.<sup>3</sup> The experience of wondering at both the work and the subject (the sea) created a particular exchange that was contradictory in nature as it pivoted between familiarity and strangeness. Nicolas Davey's *theoria* (2006) draws upon Hans George Gadamer, whereby in *Truth and Method* Gadamer argues for dialogue as beginning through this paradoxical occurrence.<sup>4</sup> This notion of dialogue provides a willing admittance into unknown territories, which arguably circumnavigates preconceptions in a bid to allow the familiar to become strange. To further extend the discussion of the interchange between the familiar and strange, Chad England composes a compelling argument that reviews Martin Heidegger's reflections of authentic wonder, its problematic nature or demise and its re-ignition. This critically reviews Heidegger's thirteen points of exposition of wonder populated through wonder as a *fundamental disposition* of thoughtful questioning.<sup>5</sup> The first six points wonder is presented phenomenally, where the usual is no longer

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<sup>1</sup> The sound files are inserted into this PDF, however they can also be found at: <https://soundcloud.com/lucy-odonnell>

<sup>2</sup> The notion of addressing is examined further in this paper to question any differences between depicting and addressing. Twombly's *Poems to the Sea* challenges the distinctions of visual and textual communication methods by interweaving of drawing and writing; see Cy Twombly *Poems to the Sea*. 1959 Collection Dia Art Foundation, New York. Oil, crayon, pastel and coloured pencil on paper. One of 24 sheets, each approximately 31 x 31cm. <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue13/cytwombly.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Marsha Meskimmon (2013) looks to wonder as a tool to review the making of art practice. Here Meskimmon adopts Philip Fisher's position of wonder as being able to break open the fabric of everyday life and change it forever. This potential of wonder is posed and applied to art making as world making, and described as *possibilising*. These activities are described as inhabiting both past and present worlds.

<sup>4</sup> *Truth and Method*: 295; 279.

<sup>5</sup> Heidegger directs attention to two texts to elaborate upon the fundamental disposition, *Being and Time* and his winter semester 1934-35 on German Poet Friedrich Hölderlin. The fundamental disposition is not merely a feeling or lived experience, nor does it arise from anthropology. The fundamental disposition transports Dasein (being-in-the-world) as an awakened *grounding* inhabited by human beings, which unfastens the world.

discernible but becomes unusual, initiating a 'between' domain. The seventh point of wonder fundamentally places human beings in the domain it opens up. This is argued as heightening the *presencing* of being and its fundamental disposition (*Grundstimmung*) of philosophy's thoughtful questioning.

The project *Ballycastle Vignettes* looked to a drawing/writing hybrid seeking it to express the sensitivities of lived experience and embrace wonder to empower a willing uncertainty where the discernible becomes unusual. Wonder endorses an interplay of understanding(s) and the drawing/writing hybrid outputs can be thought of as a kind of phenomenological text where experiences and sensitivities of Being are transcribed and voiced.<sup>6</sup> Wonder was considered as significant to *Ballycastle Vignettes* as a practice-led investigation as an open-ended disposition. The thoughtful questioning wonder provides is used here to unite theory and practice in/as serial reinterpretations of experiences, subjects and outputs. Drawing/writing activities were significant to the project offering alternative communicative devices that reframed the poetics of experience through new vernaculars. This vocative potential of drawing/writing was considered as inherently poetic as it embodies a vigilant awareness of experiences to foster expressive yet authentic verbalisations.

The project expanded upon a position held by Hélène Cixous (1998), which advocated drawing as a *living subject* with no end, instead characterizing it as *breaking off*. The project supposed this as equally valid when considering the parallels of drawing/writing. By looking to the phenomenological sensitivities of lived experience the premise of *living subject* was believed as pertinent to drawing/writing and became a useful premise to rethink *theory* and *practice* relationships as interwoven with wonder and dialogue.

These relationships are discussed as dialogic by drawing upon Nicolas Davey's *theoria* (2006). Davey's *theoria* offers a hermeneutic review of how *artworks speak*. Within *theoria* a union is formed between theory and practice through a dialogic exchange. Both art-works and art theory are recognised as discussing subject matters and *sache* or subject field is always more than any individual expression of it. *Theoria* acknowledges the notion of subject matters as providing the conceptual and dialogical relationship between art theory and practice. A term *Die Sachen* offered by Gadamer is discussed in *theoria* as an occurrence that inherently unites theory and practice. Described as matters arising *die Sachen* is positioned within philosophical hermeneutics and valuing viewpoints of communication. Central to the hermeneutic notion of language is the concept of *subject matter*. *Die Sachen* is a union of subject matter/concept, it is a term that denotes *matters arise* in the dialogues between art-works and art-theory. For *Ballycastle Vignettes* *theoria* created an accessible *space* for wonder as a philosophical and participatory strategy to reinterpret subjects embedded within experiences, outputs and their communicative expressions. This was utilized as a strategy for wonder to negate obligations of closure in practice led research.

## Ballycastle Vignettes: Poems to the Sea

The project began by wondering, and thoughtful questions were directed to Cy Twombly's title *Poems to the Sea*. The ambiguous nature of the title raised questions if the *Poems to the Sea* function to depict or address the subject. Depiction implies representation, where addressing suggests the *poems* talk to the subject, which was considered as offering a more open-ended conversation. This offered the *Ballycastle*

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<sup>6</sup> For a good resource for phenomenological writing see Van Manen, *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. New York: State University of New York Press. (1990)

*Vignettes* project opportunities to revise how the subject (the sea) could be mutually articulated and addressed and this prospect became a proposal for the *Ballycastle Vignettes*.<sup>7</sup> A drawing/writing activity was considered as appropriate to fuse speaking *of* and *to* a subject, and became a tool to trace experiences. These inscriptions were considered as gestures of observation that jointly addressed and articulated it's subject.

The initial outputs made in response to this project were a series of 10 works, printed on A4 printer paper that used Microsoft Word as a drawing/writing tool. (Figure number 2) These works employed certain conventions of writing by using the keyboard as a resource to *draw*. The *Poems to the Sea* made references to the significance of the horizon, the seas changing depths and waves by layered letters, punctuations and words to create marked textures.<sup>8</sup> Other formats available in Microsoft Word were also utilised such as the *table* device, which was used to create compositional divisions by building and dividing the space of the page.

The *Ballycastle Vignettes* project in its bid to generate drawing/writing hybrids wanted to rethink the nature of communication performed by drawing and writing. This objective, by no means underestimated, was a sizeable expectation for *Ballycastle Vignettes*, however the preliminary analysis of how this possibility could be achieved was to consider the functions of drawings' formal elements. John Ruskin presented drawing's core methods in *The Elements of Drawing* (1883). This publication is a type of resource/manual for learning systems and *rules* of drawing. These rules are often referred to as *elements*, and seemingly are indicated as drawings fundamental components. It is not uncommon for these elements to be known as *formal elements* and arguably denote a widely recognized collection of *tools*. When the draftsman employs these tools the *matter* of the world is translated and an illusion of space and form is drawn onto a two-dimensional surface. Ruskin's classifications of drawings *formal elements* were identified as a means to review conventions or expectations of drawing practices.

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<sup>7</sup> Certain other works that specifically looked towards the sea for its subject were called to mind, but not specifically drawn upon during the process of *Ballycastle Vignettes*. These included. Paul Nobles numerous sea drawings, for example the work *The Sea Drawing V The Carnival Between*, 2005 Pencil on paper 2 panels: 59 x 78-3/4 inches whose somewhat pared down naive marks traced the repetitive rhythms of the ocean and its pivotal meeting with the horizon. Vija Celmins *Ocean: 7 Steps # 2*, 1973, whose drawings meticulously tracked the surface of the sea and the interplay between light and movement. William Mulready *study of waves 30<sup>th</sup> January 1845*, who's pen and brown ink builds waves and written texts in a bid to note, observe and record the sea, and because of the composition and consistency of the use of pen in both the written and drawn elements the text and marks become interwoven all working together in a bid to articulate. William Kentridge's film *Tide Table* from *Drawings for projection* opens with an animated sea tide table which turns into the sea. Kentridge's talks of seeking to find the grammar of breaking waves in an interview, available on <https://www.sfmoma.org/watch/beach-life-william-kentridge-and-tide-table/>

And Henry Holiday's *Ocean Map* 1876, an illustration from Lewis Carroll's nonsense poem *The Hunting of the Snark (An Agony in 8 Fits)*. Both poem and map can be thought of as a commentary on the problems of maps and map interpretation. The drawn map, consists of a rectangle that plots a enclosed area of nothing. The map is blank. Maps rely upon the need for accuracy and sustained interpretations, and this poem and accompanying map arguably begins to question the regularity of how we can get caught up in conventions, where other, possibly more appropriate alternatives could be deployed.

<sup>8</sup> This project knew of Husserl's phenomenological application of the horizon as a central *motive* to a philosophical enquiry to expose intentionality as meaningful to how one's consciousness of the world manifests through impending interactions and discoveries. This research adopted a specific stance to retain the horizon as a phenomenon inherent to viewing the sea rather than utilise it within philosophical debates. For this project the emphasis of the philosophical enquiry was placed upon an arousal and application of wonder.



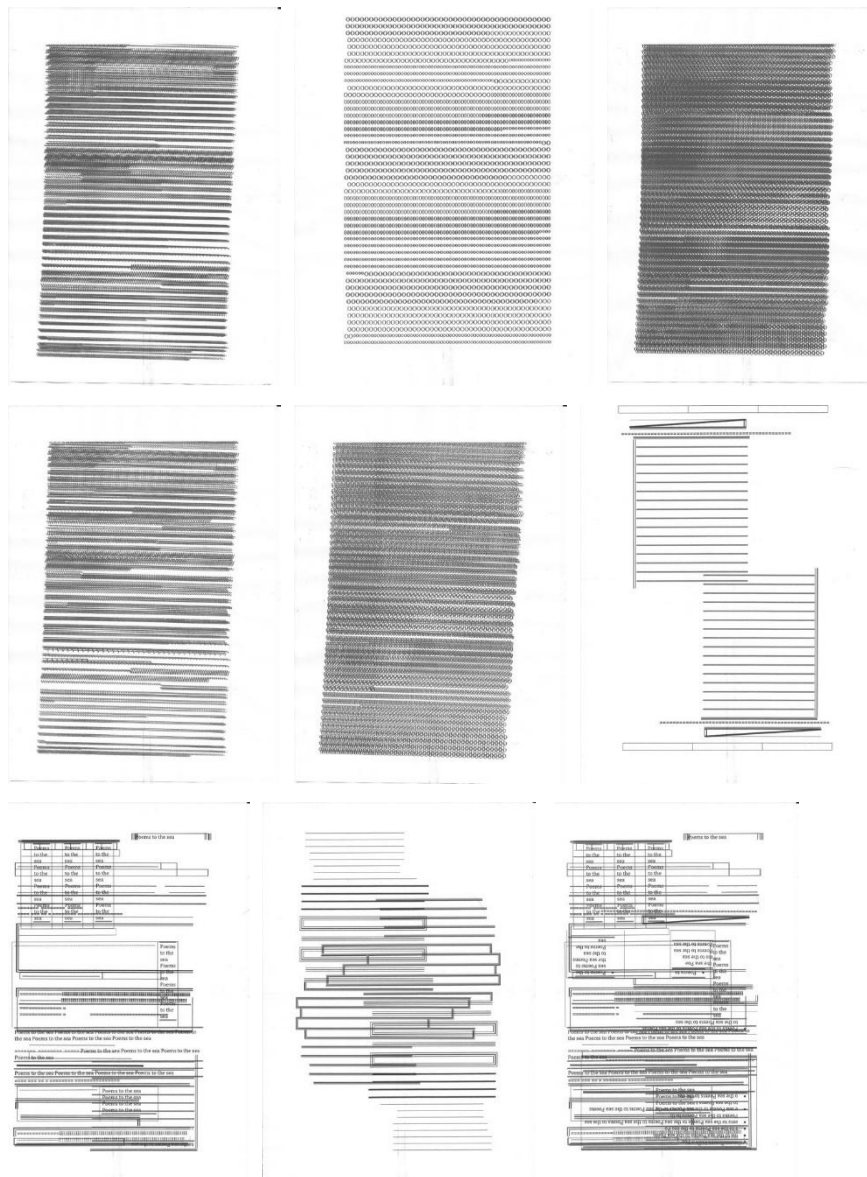


FIGURE 2. LUCY O'DONNELL. POEMS TO THE SEA. 2012. A4, SERIES OF 9 LAYERED PHOTOCOPIED LETTERS AND NUMBERS, USING MICROSOFT WORD, PRINTED ONTO A4 80G/M PAPER.



The *Ballycastle Vignettes* project looked towards line, tone, texture, form/mass, colour and perspective as its tools to reshape and articulate the sea.<sup>9</sup> The project wondered if the formal elements could become principles to bridge both drawing and writing. As a result Ballycastle Vignette slackened their conventional parameters. This enabled a more interpretative method to review the use of materials and

<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy to comment here the formal elements can vary in their worded descriptions. Alternative terms to those described in this paper may be used elsewhere. For example I choose to describe form/mass as I perceive the terms as mutual and complementary descriptions that jointly point towards the description of three-dimensional volume, however they can sometimes be termed separately.

communicative strategies and initial revisions of the formal elements focused upon the use of line. In western conventions line guides the reading of texts and prose from left to right. This posed possibilities for the *Poems to the Sea* to direct systems of reading to be more akin to written structures.<sup>10</sup> Tone became linked to sounds, atmospheres and narratives. Textures were considered as both physical and visual, which for the project increased an exploration of different materials, such as sound and the use of two-dimensional pattern making increased as a means to describe the depth and rhythms of the sea. Form/mass became the means to revisit the conventions of the drawing support. The necessity of a drawing support was questioned which prompted further wonder of how this convention stabilizes drawing as an activity. Could drawing be understood as a series of performed gestures rather than a record that stabilizes them on a support? This altered an emphasis of drawing from a noun to a verb. The environment was considered as an expanded location for drawing and rather than the subject being directed towards a support, the drawing was perceived as being lived out in a series of performed temporary gestures. Importantly for the *Ballycastle Vignettes* project bodily gesture became performed drawing/writing activities.<sup>11</sup> Perspective and colour were both recognised as tools to create narrative and mood. This led to a particular close attention to how all the elements once brought together could act to address/depict the subject matter. This review of the formal elements offered a range of variables that broke from two-dimensional conventions to direct to a broad range of understandings.<sup>12</sup>

The re-evaluation of the formal elements was one of the strategies used in the project to blend drawing and writing practices to address/depict the subject. Jean-Gérard Lapacherie (1994) determined reading a text and looking at it are mutually exclusive, however the *Poems to the Sea* sought to fuse these methods of interpretation to materialize poetics. This prompted an approach where the title was inserted into the work. This use was strategic to initiate a direct challenge in the interpretative devices of reading and looking, where the words inhabited the composition in such a way that breached expected written conventions. The table device available in Microsoft Word was used to divide the page, composing various lined boundaries that denoted spaces for the words *Poems to the Sea* to occupy. Fundamentally the project sought to examine how interpretations of a drawing/writing hybrid may be undertaken by adopting wonder as a device to rethink and reform.

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<sup>10</sup> A particular analysis of line was recalled here where Walter Benjamin in *Painting and The Graphic Arts* 1917 subdivides The Line into four, The Graphic Line, The Geometric Line, The Written Line and what he determines The Line of The Absolute Sign. This last definition is considered as 'magical', this characteristic as it is not determined by what it represents but by its nature. What was significant to the project with recalling these distinctions of lines were the behaviour of the line could be revised in favour of its action rather than what it depicts. Benjamin considered the Graphic Line in specific context to its ground, which for *Ballycastle Vignettes* was beginning to widen.

<sup>11</sup> This term *expanded* is used to point the reader towards debates developed by Rosalind Krauss in *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*. This argues practice as not defined within a particular medium and environment and rejects the conditions of a particular medium, adopting an outlook that employs alternatives and challenges cultural conditions adhered to the norms. It is also noteworthy to state here Sawdon and Marshal (2012) in *Hyperdrawing* make a review of drawings form and material as *expanded*, critiquing its inability of being pinned down and offering potential to challenge conventions of the practice and its likely materials.

<sup>12</sup> A review that analyses the denotation systems of drawing and coined *picture primitives* is made by Willats (1997). This material developed a vocabulary for describing the representational systems in pictures. Marks are highlighted as visible; things that are actually seen. The *picture primitives*, are the abstract units of information that the marks represent. Willats uses picture primitives to represent *scene primitives*, so a line in a drawing can be used to represent many things from edges, contours, or a line in space like a telephone wire or fence post. The *picture primitives* build the interpretative meaning of the parts of the picture so we are able to read the whole.

The project identified an examination of interpretative devices was necessary to create a study that looked to analyse how a meaningful engagement with drawing/writing hybrids takes place. Modes of reading were considered as methods that fostered understanding of the form and its language. These questions were aroused (and sustained) by wonder and the project sought to further interrogate how the reading(s) of a drawing/writing hybrid may take place by looking towards an analysis of the sign. The sign was wondered as performing as a type of systematic device and *Poems to the Sea* desired to question if its interpretations were fixed or flexible. Could the sign be assessed as a type of analytical device that operates within a system of interpretation where meaning is read within certain fixed conventions? Could it be feasible these conventions are drawn from a broader framework that work to uphold established rules? Charles Sanders Peirce's sign theory or semiotic plays an important role within this debate as his analysis of signification looks to the importance of interpretation. Peirce's analysis recognizes three inter-related parts: a sign, an object, and an interpretant.<sup>13</sup>

By repositioning *the sign* in the *Poems to the Sea*, which in this case was typed letters, numbers and punctuation symbols, allowed its reference to remain pointing towards *the object* (the sea) and the *interpretant* was challenged to read one convention within another. *Poems to the Sea* arguably used the text-based *marks* within a convention of drawing by employing the formal elements to describe the subject (the sea) where the *marks* could not necessarily be read in either drawings or writings contexts. In this scenario the substance, value and meaning of the perceived sign rely upon the interpretants outlook(s), where the formal elements work to narrate the sea as subject. It is through the flexibility and varying outlook(s) that work to draw out/upon knowledge and understanding of the syntactical codes of drawing and writing that determine an understanding of the works content.

The project employed wonder as a strategic device to revisit, reform and rearticulate the *Poems to the Sea*. Drawing and writing were seen as particular communicative devices that arguably carry expectations and conventions. These in turn oblige particular outputs, and these beliefs were revisited by the *Ballycastle Vignettes* project so that any fixed *rules* bound to the practices could become flexible. The *Ballycastle Vignette* project looked to the phonic communicative devices of writing where the syntactical rules enabled sounded articulations, and asked what affect this could have if verbalising a drawing/writing hybrid. If the *Poems to the Sea* were understood as drawing/writing hybrids then by forsaking conventions of both drawing and writing could the works become freed from any obligation to exist in two-dimensions? It was this line of reasoning that directed the *Poems to the Sea* to once again revise how the formal elements could be interpreted, read and sounded.

Two sound works or *reticulations* were made in response to this series of 10 poems. The first reticulation was made mostly using my voice to create sounded textures and rhythms to communicate the pictorial description of the sea. The use of voice was considered as a tool that wanted to follow conventions of speech to utilise phonic rules of translation to communicate word or text. It was important that the reticulations of *Poems to the Sea* were intuitive, rather than forming alternative rules to replace existing ones. Whilst reading the works line, tone, texture, form/mass and perspective were all considered in the interpretations. It was important that the sounded works interpreted the layers created by the printed

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<sup>13</sup> The activity of drawing and its connection to Peirce was also investigated within a project undertaken as part of a program in 2007 at the Centre for Drawing Project Space, Wimbledon. This project invited an opportunity to encourage discourse between MA and PhD students. It was here Paul Ryan used his 5-week residency to put together an exhibition *What Are Feelings For?* Where he invited artists to engage in debates that questioned the work of C.S Peirce and his sign theory.

letters and punctuations in the two-dimensional works into new sounded textures to portray alternative accounts of the sea. The work consisted by making many recordings these were layered over one another to impart a sense of the sea's texture and mass. It was important to make vocative interpretations that did not necessarily rely upon worded translations. The *Poems to the Sea* were compositions that reflected the visual information but with spoken nonrepresentational sounds rather than words.

By making the *Poems to the Sea* the parallels between drawing and writing were comprehended as embodied, vocative and poetic. The vocative and poetic nature of drawing/writing was in part thought of as reviewing/redrafting the conventions and verbalizations embedded within the methods. The successful accomplishment of reforming expressive verbalisations was considered as a vigilant awareness of experiences, motivated by wonder. This locates wonder as an affective state that is induced by an openness to the phenomenological sensitivities of lived experience that speak through all the sensations of ones body. By using drawing/writing methods the *Ballycastle Vignettes project* analysed parallels between drawing and writing as inscriptions that could track experiences as gestures of observation that spoke of and to a place. *Poems to the Sea* could be thought of as reforming the thoughts and acts of lived, and arguably irreplaceable experiences. This premise fundamentally acknowledges the complexities of inscribing, perceiving them as interconnected to the place and its experiences. An insight offered by Michael Newman's indexical 'shifter' (2003: 101) enabled the project a reliable analytical link between the nature of the inscriptive mark and the circumstance in which it was performed. The indexical shifter recognises the mark as a certain kind of linguistic expression that derives its sense from the context in which it is performed. The indexical shifter became a useful tool for the project qualifying the practices of drawing/writing and the analysis of the *Poems to the Sea* as inherently positioning the *experienced* within the inscriptive as a vocative mode of expression.

The second sounded reticulation also worked from the 10 poems. It reshaped the compositions by using percussions and spoken word. Deliberating the sea's mass and movements were pertinent to my experience of wonder aroused in its presence. This sense of wonder was translated into the second recording by using spoken word to express the difficulties of communicating this multidimensional subject. On occasion when making the work my reflective thoughts, which processed ideas as words were not always effective means for communicating. Instead the words acted as a barrier to the successful expression of the phenomenological experience of viewing. It was for this reason additional sounds were added to reshape the memories of watching the sea. Sounds that occurred during this recording, such as a mobile phone text alert or the passing of a car outside the studio were not edited out but kept as references to the significance of the fused experience re-viewing and re-making.<sup>14</sup>

The *Poems to the Sea* wanted to acknowledge the various changing qualities of its subject, which was directly influenced by the quality of the light, the time of day and weather conditions. The sea had many appearances and the experiences of viewing it changed dramatically if the shore was windy, cold, bright or wet. The sea seemed to possess ever-changing complexities, where the water's mass and rhythm became *textures* that corresponded to the difference conditions delineated by its relationship with the horizon, sky and shore.

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<sup>14</sup> Influential to this method was John Cages work 4'33". This work created a scenario for the audience to pause and listen for the duration of 4 minutes and 33 seconds. The orchestra did not play from any manuscripts instead the work offered a period for both the orchestra and audience to engage with the ambient sounds of the environment.

The *Poems to the Sea* were reformed in a further two additional ways, by making records of the sea over a period of days to recall and observe its changing behavior. Secondly by considering drawn and written conventions, the collections of marks were extended to offer broader possibilities of describing the subject. This approach employed the tools available in Microsoft word, however it broadened the gestures, qualities and aesthetics of the marks by using pens, pencils, ink and stencils to widen their hybrid vocabulary.

The following series of *Poems to the Sea* took the form of small movable papers (10.5cm x 3.5 cm) that were arranged to reference the sea in sets of 9 squares. (Figure number's 3 &4) This particular configuration presented a consistent format intended to suggest the mass and horizon of the sea whilst offering the flexibility to play with a variety of marks to make a range of interpretations. Many of these small (162 rectangles 10.5cm x 3.5 cm) drawings were made at the shore and taken back to the studio to arrange into sets to depict the activities and appearance of the sea.

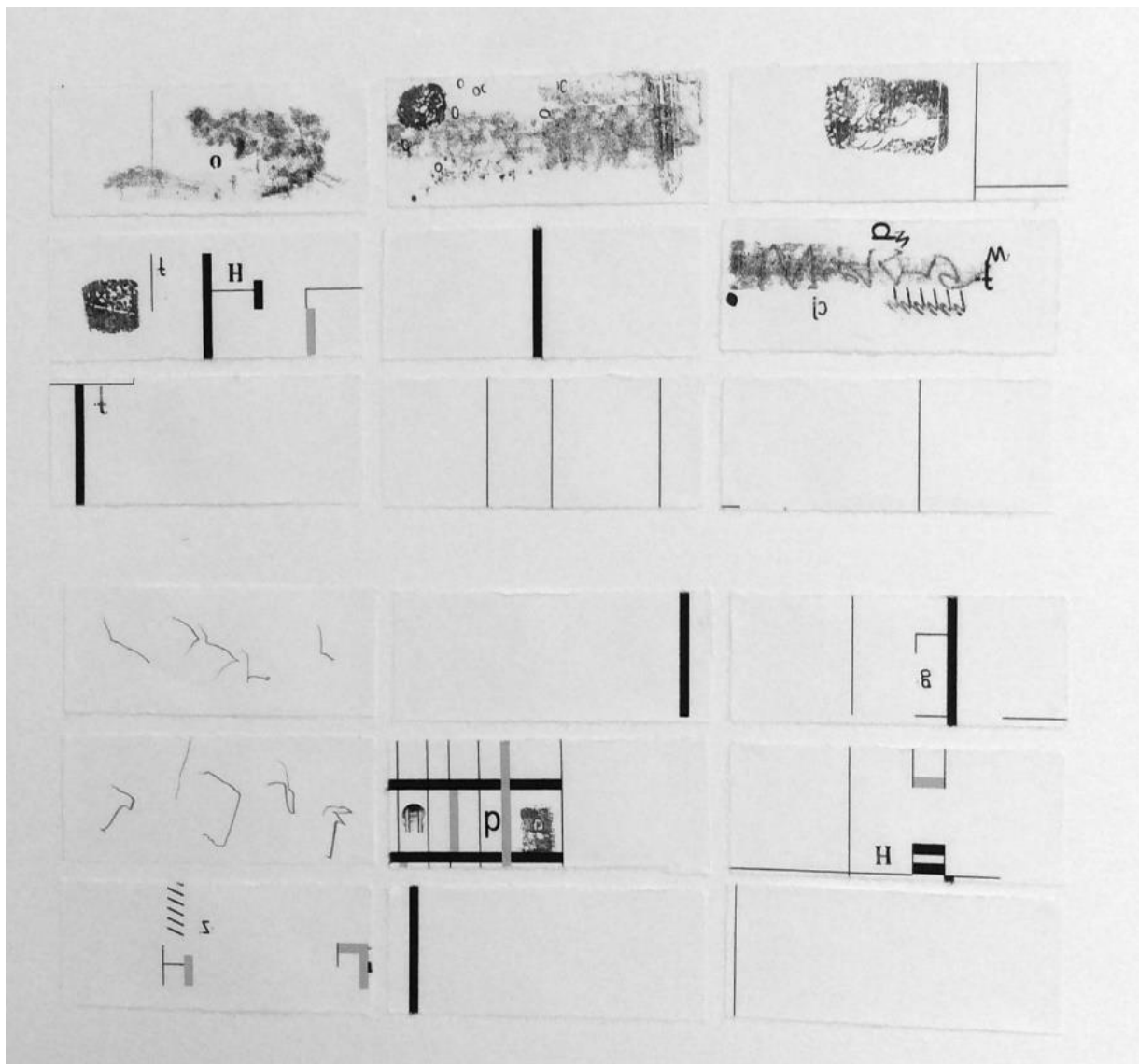


FIGURE 3: LUCY O'DONNELL. POEMS TO THE SEA. 2012. PEN, PENCIL, INK, TRANSFERS AND STENCIL. SERIES OF 18 RECTANGLES 10.5CM X 3.5 CM, ON 80G/M PAPER MOUNTED ONTO 200GSM FABRIANO PAPER. 40CM X 60CM.



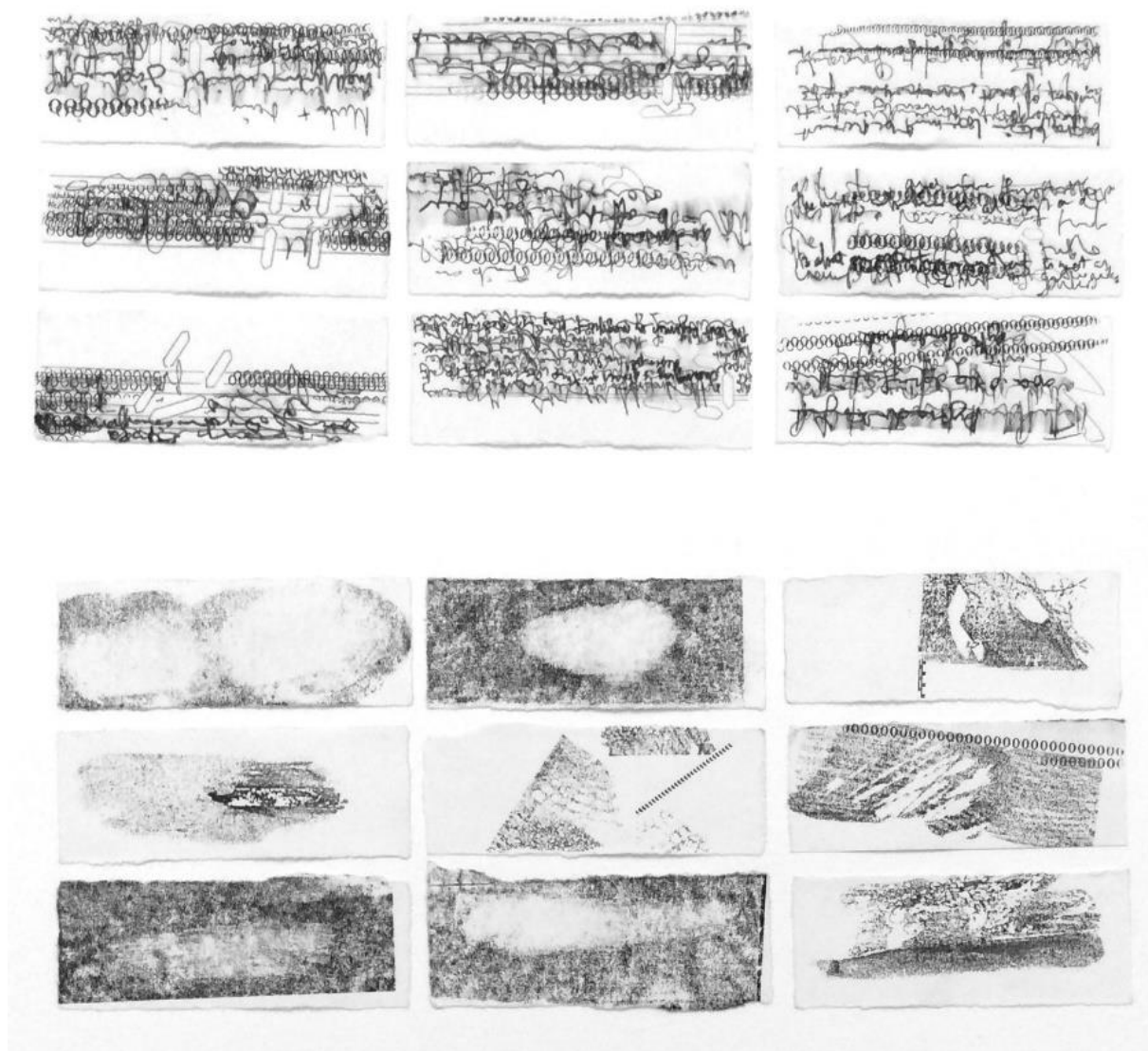
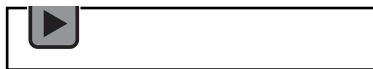


FIGURE 4. LUCY O'DONNELL. POEMS TO THE SEA. 2012. PEN, PENCIL, INK, TRANSFERS AND STENCIL. SERIES OF 18 RECTANGLES 10.5CM X 3.5 CM, ON 80G/M PAPER MOUNTED ONTO 200GSM FABRIANO PAPER. 40CM X 60CM.



The drawings made at the shore observed the sea and responded to it by making marks to reference the movements and formations of the waves. By using a combination of drawing/writing the *Ballycastle Vignettes* project questioned the processes of marking and inscribing, asking how the wonder can be jointly lived and articulated through the process. The nature of the gesture became a point of wonder for the project. Working within a drawing/writing hybrid the potential of its vocative interpretations was identified as including sounded gestures. *Poems to the Sea* revisited expectations of gesture for a drawing/writing hybrid. The gesture for both drawing and writing arguably manifests the marked inscription. With drawing it is arguably the marked inscriptions that delineates its content/subject by its characteristics, divisions and occupancy of space. Serge Tisseron (1994) argues it is not always possible to distinguish the written line from the drawn instead perceiving the *activity* as 'spatial play' which the hand stages'. The notion of *spatial play* was always significant to *Ballycastle Vignettes*, as the inscribed

poems were understood as creating textual and/or pictorial narratives. However the project set to revise the 'spatial play' motored by the hand, to make use of its action or gesture in an arguably more unconventional manor. *Poems to the Sea* were further reconstructed by dividing the works on paper (see figure number 5) and used a scanner to record and recompose them.

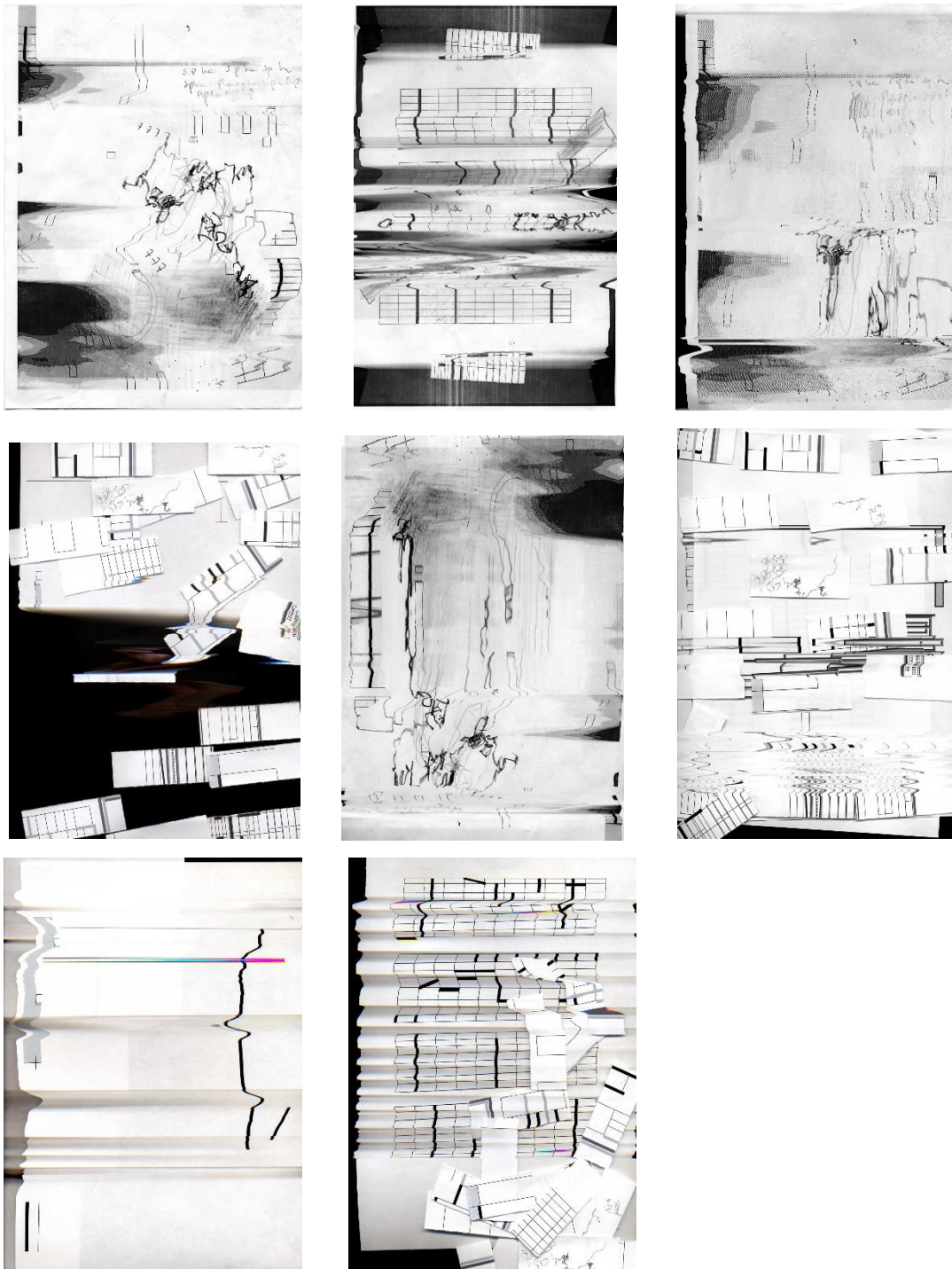


FIGURE 5. LUCY O'DONNELL. *POEMS TO THE SEA*. 2012. 8 SCANS TAKEN FROM A4, SERIES OF 9 LAYERED PHOTOCOPIED LETTERS AND NUMBERS, USING MICROSOFT WORD, PRINTED ONTO A4 80G/M PAPER- CUT, DIVIDED AND MOVED IN SCANNING PROCESS.

These *Poems to the Sea* were comprehended as creating an alternative *gestural syntax*. This method altered the mode of verbalisation creating new marked spaces that talked of the sea. The desire to reform these new marked spaces were motivated by the wonder experienced when watching the sea. The scanner was thought of as a tool to *draw* with. By opening the cover of the scanner whilst it was operational the light exposure was altered and a new composition was made. In addition to this another method was also employed where *Poems to the Sea* were moved during the scanning process. This method also redirected the hand's gesture and the action was redrafted into the content where distortions occurred and new shapes and tones were introduced by these smudges.

Although these gestures relied upon the hand to generate these additional marks it was not considered as a particularly conventional drawing method. It negated the material narratives of the hand held tool in favour of seeking alternative methods to mark gestures. In a bid to re-examine the possibilities of the drawing/writing hybrid and the potential of Tisseron's 'spatial play staged by the hand' the space of the work was extended. This expansion was achieved by the variable light conditions offered by the scanning device, where the new tonal configurations portrayed the sea. The project looked to the function of the mark as both a device that presents possibilities or information and as a compositional device that delineates or creates space.<sup>15</sup> In the instance of the scanned works the hybrid mark became an alternative space-making device that spoke of the sea and its various conditions however its *manner* did not point towards an autobiographical gesture.<sup>16</sup>

The project's serial nature perpetuated wonder and questions reoccurred asking how the *Poems to the Sea* addressed and presented their subject. The project identified two key concerns to address both the qualities of the *subject* (the sea) and the *language* in which the subject was addressed (drawing/writing hybrid). Earlier in this review of *Ballycastle Vignettes* the indexical shifter has been offered as a useful tool for *Poems to the Sea* as it inherently positions the *experienced* within the inscriptive mode of expression as a vocative projection. The activity(s) of creating the *Poems to the Sea* were distinguished as ontological reflections tracking and reflecting a *living subject* (Cixous 1998). The project saw the *Poems to the Sea* as modes that jointly recorded experience(s) and created new ones. The hybrid outputs redirected wonder from the experiences at the seashore sea to those harvested by making and interpreting the possibilities within drawing/writing transcriptions. The *Poems to the Sea* were vocative projections that spoke of and to its subject.

The scanned works (figure number 6) were printed, taken to the shore and *read* to the sea. During this process thoughts wondered to the reading of shipping forecasts. These forecasts speak of 'blocks' of sea where activities and behaviors are announced. Within this process the reader tends to employ a specific speech manor that adopts a constant monotone. As a result this type of spoken word builds and breaks rhythms almost like the sea itself. The project questioned the potential of widening interpretations by using numerous voices, and I asked Eddy Kennedy and Rachelle Puryear, other artists working at the residency, and the proprietor of *Polkes* Mr. Brian Polke to read *Poems to the Sea*. (See Figure 6)

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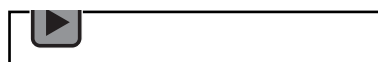
<sup>15</sup> Space making as a term is often associated discussions of wandering, Jose Rabassa (1993) and Yves Bonnefoy (1994) identify opportunities to build space in the blank paper of drawing.

<sup>16</sup> Drawing is often discussed or referred to as *mannered*. This reading of a mark is considered as a demonstration of the a artist's *signature*. Van Alphen (2008) Lovatt (2004) and Barthes (1985) all review the work of Cy Twombly as a type of gestured hybrid autobiographical calligraphy.



Poems to the sea,  
Poems to the sea,  
Poems to the sea,  
Poems to the sea,  
Poems to the sea,  
Poems to the sea,  
POEMS,  
to the sea,  
Poems to the,  
SEA,  
POEMS,  
to the sea,  
Poems to the  
SEA,  
POEMS.  
TO.  
THE,  
SEA...

FIGURE 6: LUCY O'DONNELL. *POEMS TO THE SEA*. 2012. BLACK PEN ON A5 LINED WRITING PAPER.



These readings were recorded and as the participants processed the words, their configurations and possible meanings the various accents, intonations and interpretations offered a range of tones and textures, timbres and rhythms. The recordings were then reorganised so the voices spoke back to each other. The sea as subject was quite literally introduced into the sound work by using a recording of the waves, this layer acted as a forth participant speaking of and for itself. By reflecting upon these processes and making comparisons to the characteristics of shipping forecasts the project began to adopt a position to differentiate *depicting* from *addressing*. The shipping forecasts announce the expectations of the sea over the following 12 hours. They seem curious and poetic by their repetitive austere mode of delivery, however they are speculative and their conjecture assumes behaviors. The differentiation between depicting and addressing became more determined; depicting considered inherited expectations gleaned from prior knowledge, where as addressing was perceived as an event that performed within a dialogue like the poems to the sea made with Eddy Kennedy, Rachelle Puryear and Mr. Brian Polke. This assertion enabled the *Ballycastle Vignettes* project to determine that by bringing drawing and writing together to become drawing/writing the hybrid can jointly address and depict its subject. This process relied upon an assured application of ambiguity to encourage unresolved interpretations rather than requiring definitive explanations. For *Ballycastle Vignettes* the drawing/writing hybrid willingly assumes ambiguity as a strategic device to rework any distinct interpretative devices of drawing and writing to encourage the reader/viewer employ reading and looking simultaneously.

Previously in this paper Charles Sanders Peirce's sign theory was examined to question if the sign performs as a fixed or flexible device within a process of interpretation. It felt appropriate for *Poems to the sea* to be considered as asemic writing; a wordless open semantic form of writing, where the interpretations called upon innovative methods of recitation. Newman's (2003) critique of *graphisms* as expression of thought in material symbols makes connections between illegible writing and regression as a refusal of substitutability, the possibility of a 'pre-sign' is offered. This is presented as a sort of imminent signal, pending in its value to bestow descriptive communication. Although Newman's analysis of the sign signals consistent and robust meaning(s), the *mark* is reasoned as more *ambiguous*. This indefinite reading of the *mark* places pressure upon the suitability of the sign to analyse the activity(s) and reading(s) of drawing. Instead, Newman argues the *mark* as better positioned within a discussion of the 'pre-sign', as its reading carries imminent or forthcoming possibilities. The *poems to the sea* assumed the sign as indexical and the interpretive role of the viewer was utilized to foster a reappraisal of drawing and writing conventions to become drawing/writing.<sup>17</sup> *Poems to the sea* employed drawing/writing techniques to address matters arising by requiring a simultaneous process of reading and looking. These works were comprehended as modes of address, aligning themselves to speech acts and performing in a dialogue with the sea.

This significance of addressing being a performed act prompted the scanned works to be taken to the shore and performed. The compositions of the scanned works were re-verbalised by addressing the sea, and using a Dictaphone the event was recorded. The performance used strategies previously mentioned

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<sup>17</sup> This view was in part compatible with Ferdinand de Saussure's belief of the sign as arbitrary, subject to individual will and contingent to upon ones discretion, a position that stems from a review of the signifier as *form* which the sign takes and *the signified*, the concept it represents.



where the works formal elements were interpreted into sounds using my voice, alternating its pitch and rhythm. The Dictaphone recordings captured the performance and documented ambient sounds from the environment, the sea, birds, subtle shuffles of the audience and the sounds of the pencil marks being made onto the paper. An equivalent record of these ambient sounds made during the performance were also interpreted with a pencil, and redrawn on the paper-based works to replace the environments sounds that took place during my performance onto the paper support.



FIGURE 7: LUCY O'DONNELL. BALLYCASTLE VIGNETTES. 2011. PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTATION FROM 8 SCANS TAKEN FROM A4, SERIES OF 9 LAYERED PHOTOCOPIED LETTERS AND NUMBERS, USING MICROSOFT WORD, PRINTED ONTO A4 80G/M PAPER-CUT, DIVIDED AND MOVED IN SCANNING PROCESS AND TAKEN TO THE SEA SHORE AND PERFORMED.



This interwoven scenario of performing/documenting created a dialogue with the environment and was believed to demonstrate Newman's indexical shifter, where the works manifest, arising through the performance of sounded and inscribed gestures. The *poems to the sea* were motivated to make interpretations of the sea and the phenomenological experience of viewing it, these works are determined as phenomenological, realised via various dimensions of lived experiences and documented through the drawing/writing hybrid practice.

## Summary

The project *Ballycastle Vignettes* applied wonder to revisit relationships between theory and practice, by questioning how subjects can be pondered and actualised. Wonder became a valuable tool for the practice led research as it enabled opportunity to retain open-ended analytical reflections upon its subject(s). The interpretative invitations made by a drawing/writing hybrid practices asks its reader to engage in more unconventional methods that call for a somewhat contradictory combination of reading and looking. However by calling upon wonder as a tool to interrogate and ponder upon what is presented rather than position it within fixed conventions or established expectations, the difficulty of combining reading and looking is overcome. The project *Ballycastle Vignettes* endorses the acquisition of knowledge through wonder. It can be considered as a practice-led study of interpretation, arousing wonder to review what we know and making reassessments of it. This process examines how *conventions* shape comprehension and whether these expectations can be reviewed and remolded through alternative analytical investigation(s) whose philosophical analyses of wonder is *tested* through practice-led outputs that unite drawing and writing as methods of poetic communication.

The wonder aroused in the project *Ballycastle Vignettes* is perhaps best understood as being underpinned by concepts gleaned from *hermeneutic phenomenology*. This asserts that when forming meaningful questions, something about the subject matter is already comprehended, and it is this knowing that enables the proposition of further questions. I am suggesting this to be a type of experiential knowledge, which is both accumulative and accumulating. The *poems to the sea* jointly address and depict its subject as it looks to identify more fixed conventions to create further dialogues in a bid to extend them.

The subject matter is multifaceted within the project *Ballycastle Vignettes* and *poems to the sea* gleaned these subjects from various sources including; lived experiences of the observing sea, philosophical texts and Cy Twombly's paintings *Poems to the Sea* (1959). These undoubtedly affected the subject matter(s) addressed by the project and primed possibilities for the outputs. The experience of making the drawing/writing outputs was equally the subject matter for the project. As the vocative inscriptions unfolded in the works wonder was aroused, by a preoccupied sense of dwelling upon (and in) the experience of making. It is here where the subject being addressed (the sea) the manner in which the subject is being addressed (the drawing/writing) and the phenomenological experience of this become interwoven.

The project *Ballycastle Vignettes* theoretical and practically employed *die sachen*. These *matters arising* provoke and provide a breath of possibilities to review *subject* endorsed by wonder to question subject and its conventions which arguably construct a framework to maintain past dialogues between subjects and their articulations, and empowers an analysis that initiates possibilities to create future or new dialogues. These dialogues were lived out in *poems to the sea* through a vocative practice that draws out and upon ontological reflections.

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