TRACEY

Drawing and Loss 2022

Loughborough University

Contents:

Theme

THEME

Drawing is typically imagined as an additive, connective and creative process. Adding marks to paper sets up a mimetic lineage connecting object to hand to page to eye, creating a new and lasting image captured on the storage medium of the page.

Or does it? A strand of art historical thought from Pliny to Derrida emphasizes what is lost in drawing, exploring the drawing process as a phenomenon that begins from a point of blindness or looking away and proceeds from a perspective of extreme myopia. Implicit in the myopic movement of the stylus is loss of perspective, direction, intention or foresight, such that drawing can be imagined to proceed in a state of not knowing. This changed perspective can result in the conceptual loss or retreat of the thing being drawn, as it is objectified and even dissected—literally or metaphorically—by the person drawing, who might themselves feel alienated from their object by this process. The work of paper conservation shows us that the storage medium of the page is anything but stable, and far from storing an image, can suffer damage and loss of its own without monitoring and periodic intervention in the archive.

This special issue reflects upon the dynamic relationship between drawing and loss, taking a multidisciplinary approach to integrate otherwise heterogeneous connections to this often neglected aspect of drawing.

Contributors have arrived at this subject from diverse perspectives, including fine art, philosophy, architecture, the study and personal experience of bereavement and memorialization, the changing climate and political landscapes, and the restrictions of lockdown. Between them they explore a breadth of a theoretical, historical and practice-based approaches to such issues as the losses and gains brought about by the myopic quality of the drawing process; how drawings or drawing processes might mitigate against loss by memorializing, being with, or standing in for the deceased or departed; the haunting or spectral presence of event and line; and the dynamic between the life of the drawing—in process, and once completed—and the life of its object.

This issue was guest edited by Dr Tamarin Norwood, a research fellow at the Drawing Research Group, Loughborough University.

DRAWING THE LOSS OF MOVEMENT: EMBODIMENT AND REPRESENTATION OF A PARKINSON'S PATIENT

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This paper is a reflective review on the experience of drawing my father during his last years with Parkinson's disease, as a framework to address the role of embodiment in drawing. More than a record of the body, drawing someone with Parkinson's disease is primarily to report a paradox: making visible the loss of movement and expression, but also the erosion of language and the disappearance of the other person's world. It is argued that drawing allows us to intimate this loss as an affect and an event, an emotion and a process, as the drawing act defies telling and incites a memorialising function of the trace.

As a projection of a moving body representing another body, drawing a Parkinson's patient triggers the experience of empathy as a shared representation, which enables us to perceive the other's experience within our own corporality. Empathy is addressed as part of the perceptual experience of drawing, but also as apperception: a co-apprehension of the other's emotion through his movements and expressions over time, blending direct observations and recalled images. As the enactment of a relationship, drawing is a coming together with the world, an "as-if-body-loop".

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Introduction

Parkinson's disease is a neurological illness which progressively affects the ability to move and to speak. Although the progression happens in successive stages, symptoms may vary as the disease affects individuals differently. The deterioration of movement and speech has a direct impact on how the person's body constitutes space and the awareness of time, the sense of himself, but also his being-together-with others. Being a Parkinson's patient is an isolating experience, where the word 'loss' plays a vital role in a world that becomes narrower and narrower (Bruggen and Widdershoven, 2004).

The world of a Parkinson's patient is characterized by an existential paradox: life seems to be experienced as something motionless and, at the same time, unpredictable. This paradox is manifested in the person's corporality: the body may freeze and be unable to move, or it may function independently of the person's intentions in a sudden and uncontrollable movement. The feeling of being separated from the body, as something that can be presumed lost, defines the patient's awareness of himself: "to the Parkinson's patient the body is first something one is, then something one has, and finally something one no longer has" (ibid., p. 292). These somatic states also reflect the most intimate awareness of our own body. We experience the world as embodied, but we also conceive of ourselves and our bodies as separate entities, as if we are at one and the same time our bodies and not our bodies (Blocker, 2004, p.7).

How can drawing be used to enter the private perceptual world of a Parkinson's patient? What can it reveal of our awareness of that same world? I will address these questions through a series of drawings I made by observing my father during his last years with Parkinson's disease. These drawings were mainly made during my visits to him, over a period of eight years. They did not begin with a sense of a problem or as an aesthetic reconstruction of an intimate experience. Instead, they were led by the uneasiness of the situation, a way of passing the time in the absence of gestures and language. They belong to that category that Jacques Ranciére named "naked images," a notion to which I will return later. Other drawings, made as memory exercises and gestural reenactments, appeared afterwards as a reflective response to this first set of drawings. These last drawings were made as deferred actions, as when an experience is recoded retroactively by a subsequent event: hand performances reenacting my father's gestures and clinical tests for tremor diagnosis of Parkinson's patients, memory drawings of his bed and situated dialogues with my mother, who accompanied him throughout his illness.

In this paper, I intend to explore the empathic mechanisms that allow us to embody the loss of the other in perceptual drawing. Instead of suspending the difference between self-experience and other-experience, drawing my father's motionless body takes the asymmetry in this relationship as a fundamental factor of empathy (cf. Zahabi, 2014, p. 138). This embodied approach to perceptual drawing can be described as a way of being in the game, of being caught up in and by the game, where strategies are not pre-determined, but emerge from a recurrent sensorimotor pattern that enables gesture to react and re-enact the content of representation.

Drawing, Embodiment and Knowledge

Embodiment offers a new paradigm for considering the visual representation of bodies. When we draw, we trigger a unique form of intentionality directed at the experience of others, an embodied way of knowing them through their physicality and bodily expressions, even when their gestures and expressions stand in the threshold of stillness. Nonetheless, while many things unite us around the need of an embodied paradigm for drawing research, other things can divide us, depending on the angle by which we question the role of the body in the process of knowing through drawing. Like many other methodological lenses coming from cognitive sciences, embodiment can easily become a neuromyth in drawing research. What it means as a live performance act is very different from what it means in a memory drawing or in a situation of intimate observation, as if each type of drawing required a different awareness of the draughtsman's body, its sense of temporality, its possibilities and limitations. A fundamental aspect of the embodied approach to drawing is the recognition of the role of sensory-motor processes and emotions in the act of knowing. So, we could begin with an intertwined question which we, probably, have all asked at a given moment and for different reasons: How drawing shapes and is shaped by our emotions? How do we connect with the world of others through the act of drawing?

It is generally accepted that drawing is a physical and conceptual space where we can actually play with our thoughts outside our mind. The nature of this play – and of the thoughts being played – is nonetheless frequently bypassed for several reasons. One of those reasons can be explained by the

ubiquity of a referential fallacy in the way the word drawing is embedded in our language. This fallacy consists of confusing the object with its representations, assuming that the meaning of drawing has something to do with the object it depicts or the idea it stands for. The power of this fallacy is reflected in the emphasis we give to the content of representation or mark making, more than to the relational aspects surrounding drawing practice. Another reason is that when the process of knowledge is generally defined, people tend to associate it with the building of true descriptions and rational explanations, mostly in propositional forms, for how things work in the physical, social and cultural worlds (Johnson, 2011, p. 142). Knowing and feeling are different words in the dictionary, so they should stand for different acts of the mind. Knowledge is usually seen as a shared construction that allows us to distinguish something in the world – in Portuguese, the word for knowledge (conhecimento) literally means a common or shared understanding. Emotion, in contrast, seems to evoke an intimate and subjective response to an event, an individual experience that is circumstance-dependent and cannot directly become your experience.

FIGURE 2: HAND PERFORMANCE ("THE VISIT"), 2019. BLACK NYLON THREAD.

Each one of these two statements is, of course, a misconception. Reality is much more complex. It is true that, when we draw, we think in propositional (descriptive) and analogue (depictive) systems, using 'language-like' or 'picture-like' representational strategies (Fish, 2004, p. 165). We are constantly playing with mirror-images and maps, pictorial information and diagrams, to address the complexity of the world as drawing. Nevertheless, this interaction is just part of the equation. It is also true that knowing and feeling are different states. However, as has been widely demonstrated (Damasio, 2000), there are overlapping areas between the process of reasoning and feeling, as there are between propositions and analogies, maps and mirrors. These are the overlapping areas that I have tried to address with the drawings of my father's body. Bodies – and this is something that we all experience in our daily interactions – are not passive exhibitors of visual, auditory or tactile imagery. We see the content of representation as a re-enactment of our own experience as bodies. Every mark is in itself a projection of

the draughtsman's body, and this is particularly evident in the representation of other bodies (Rosand, 2000, p. 16). This implies that although drawing shares with images some of their properties, it is usually closest to dramaturgy than to the realm of pictures. Seeing a drawing is not the same as contemplating a picture. Drawing is an image-act that transforms the act of seeing into an embodied simulation of the gestures that produce it. Seeing a trace is re-inscribing it as an inner movement; we infer the deeper motivations of the trace from what our own motivations would be if we had done it ourselves.

FIGURE 3: THE ISLAND (MEMORY DRAWING), 2018. POWDER GRAPHITE, PENCIL AND WATERCOLOR ON PAPER, 52 X 65 CM.

When we draw, we are not just acting out an image, a perception or an idea. We are responding to the world. We are coming together with the world. This movement towards the world is, first of all, an emotional experience. But what is experienced cannot be transferred whole as such to someone else. There is something that is irretrievably lost. My experience cannot directly become your experience, as Paul Ricoeur (1976, p. 16) argued:

> *An event belonging to one stream of consciousness cannot be transferred as such into another stream of consciousness. Yet, nevertheless, something passes from me to you. Something is transferred from one sphere of life to another. This something is not the experience as experienced, but its meaning. Here is the miracle. The experience as experienced, as lived, remains private, but its sense, its meaning, becomes public.*

What are emotions in this process? They are responses in the body and in the mind to deliver a solution and make us act. That is why emotions can never be defined as a state of pure passivity. It is through them that we can transform the world, in the condition that they transform themselves in thoughts and actions (Didi-Huberman, 2013, p. 39).

Drawing as Relation

For eight years, I drew my father several times every month. He died in May 2016, sixteen years after the first symptoms of Parkinson's disease. The involuntary tremors gradually became a state of muscular stiffness. The shaking palsy of the beginning of the disease gave way to an almost absolute immobility in the last years, confining him to bed for long periods, dependent on the care that my mother and others provided. In February 2006 he went into respiratory failure, which led to a definitive tracheotomy. From this moment on, he lost the ability to speak. Language is a skin: we rub it against each other, as if we have words instead of fingers. With the loss of his voice, my father lost the fingertips of his words — the ability of language to touch and connect with other people.

I started to draw him in an increasingly systematic way two years after the tracheotomy, accompanying the effects that Parkinson's disease had in his body. I had never drawn him before that. I think it was the lack of language and the uneasiness provoked by its silence that triggered this urge. Each visit was marked by the duration of drawings and the stillness imposed on us by the impossibility of language. The absence of language shaped the mode of drawing: not a sketch or a detailed illustration, but an indirect voice, a substitute voice that welcomes the voice of others. In the representation of someone we love, drawing quickly becomes an act of presence, a way of coming together. Drawing became the enactment of a relation, the pleasure of a relation as Jean-Luc Nancy pointed out (2013, p. 67):

Relation is not exactly transitive – it is transitivity, transit, transport … it is the effect of one subject toward another, with its reciprocal necessity, and it thus involves the transport between them of some thing, force, or form that affects them both and modifies them both.

In the pleasure of relation, we gain consciousness of ourselves in the ability to affect and be affected through drawing. Relation suggests transformation, displacement or alteration of form. For Jean-Luc Nancy, the draughtsman experiences himself as other, an alterity or alteration. At the same time, when we draw, we create modes of interaction that humanise us in the eyes of those observed, as the illustrator and ethnographer Manuel João Ramos demonstrated (2004, p. 137). Both – observer and observed, draughtsman and portrayed – arrive at the image at the same time as it is made. We become suspended in a mirror relationship with one another. Sometimes, though, I was not sure if my father recognised me while I was drawing him. His eyes seemed detached from the outside images. Like other patients with Parkinson's disease, he suffered from violent hallucinations in the beginning, as a side effect of Parkinson's medication. Language was the only way we could access these images. But language failed. The states of absorption, even when he was awake, seemed deeper and deeper. "The gaze that cannot be returned is not only the most painful act of looking," as Deanna Petherbridge noticed, "but in many ways the most difficult to render as an affective exchange" (2010, p. 378).

There is an urgency in drawing motionless things that I had never realised before. Not the urgency we feel when images are moving and bodies run from one place to the other, but the urgency of things that can fade without warning, collapse without leaving their place, making our vision more intense and aware of small contingencies. Every representation is, in its most intimate reasons, the fear of a loss or the testimony of a disappearance. In drawing, a deep relationship seems to connect this mimetic impulse with memorialization. More than a play with appearances, mimesis – from the Greek mimeisthai – suggests that when we represent someone, we act like him, we call up his presence materially, in an indexical, rather than iconic, relation of similarity (Marks, 2000, p. 262). John Berger acknowledged just that when he described the urge of drawing as an attempt to save likeness, just like a lifesaver puts all his effort into saving a life, as if the intensity of seeing (and swimming) is triggered not by the object of desire, but by an imminent loss (2005, p. 68). As an embodied relationship, mimesis is a form of representation based on a material contact with the world and bound to a particular moment. Within that moment lies all the previous experience of seeing and being-with. This is how – Berger reinforced – the act of drawing contradicts the process of disappearance and loss: by replacing it with a simultaneity of moments (p. 71).

Coming together with the world is never a simple task and involves different ways of embodiment and disembodiment; of connecting or disconnecting the power of showing and signifying through drawing. In 'The Future of Images', the French philosopher Jacques Ranciére proposed that images can be understood as operations according to their relationship with the world: naked images, ostensive images and metamorphic images (2007, p. 22). Naked images are those that do not constitute art. What they show us rejects the ambiguity of appearances and the rhetoric of exegesis. They are traces of a brute encounter with history or testimonies of an event that cannot be presented in any other way. Like naked images, ostensive images also testify and witness reality in its brute appearance but reconfigure its sheer presence as art. Metamorphic images are rearrangements of existing images that play with the ambiguity of similarities and the instability of dissimilarities to disturb or join the economic and social flow of images. If the work of art is to play with the ambiguity of appearances, then these drawings are

naked in the sense of a testimony by which representation seeks to embody the reality of the encounter in its most raw state. Naked drawings are an attestation of presence, more than a metamorphic transformation of reality.

Drawing and the Memory of the Body

Each visit gradually became similar to the previous ones. Because I drew my father so many times, drawings were also repeating themselves months or years apart [Fig. 5]. The same strokes, the same outline to depict the mouth opened by the involuntary contraction of the muscles, the tubes that fed and breathed him, the same angles imposed by the position of the bed in the room, the same duration. Drawing became the arena for the inadequacy between the expectations created by previous drawings and the actual perception of my father's body in each visit. As an extension of seeing, drawing is related to hunting and dreaming; it is driven by the sense of possession; it responds to expectations and fears. Like seeing, drawing interferes with what is seen and alters the one seeing. It is as if the gesture of drawing could trigger a continuous circuit in which recalled images and current perceptions are mutually transformed, like a bicycle chain moving between two gears, allowing me to perceive the unnoticeable movements of my father's body. Such apperceptions, Shaun Gallagher argues (2017, p. 162) are involved in all perception:

> just as in the perception of physical objects we do not have a direct vision of all sides of the object but, as Husserl explains, we apperceive the sides of the object that are not visible so that in effect we perceive the object as a whole, so we may also visually perceive the bodily gestures and expressions of the other person and likewise apperceive the non-appearing aspects of emotion.

Most decisions that we make while drawing require an interaction between perception and apperception: what current images show as being now and what recalled images show as something that we have seen before. But drawing also requires the anticipation of what will follow, and the process of imagination necessary to anticipate consequences depends on the memories of the past, as the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio demonstrated (2018, p. 65). Recalled images are an essential piece in the construction of narratives, our way of making sense of an arbitrary chain of events [Fig. 3]. Mentally, the order by which we introduce objects and events into a narrative – and my father's body was for me a narrative – is decisive for how we store it in our memory. Many things that we memorise do not concern the past, but are a way of anticipating a future. The same happens in drawing. But drawing is not just about visual memory. There is a memory in our gestures when we draw which has nothing to do with the memory of images. It is closer to the capacity of a chess player to memorise the hand movements that connect the pieces in the board, more than the individual position of each piece, and use this memory to deal with new and unpredictable situations. Although the drawings made during my visits were mainly focused on my father's body lying in bed, I feel my gestures were not iconic or image-based responses, but were cohesive movements. Cohesive gestures are recurrent movements that connect different parts of a situation that are thematically related but temporally separated (McNeill, 1992, p. 16). Gesture was a way of connecting and remembering. The drawings were forgotten in the drawers and in the notebooks, without any purpose or order. Only recently were they recovered as a deferred action and testimonies connecting a scattered sum of moments, like a narrative of naked images, in their raw witnessing of a relationship.

Drawing and Empathy

From a philosophical perspective, embodiment approaches in drawing can be seen as the extreme of a continuum, the other extreme being symbolic systems such as words, numbers and charts. The relation between embodied and symbolic systems has been visualised in various ways throughout history and contemporary drawing theory: as a continuum, as taxonomy, as a complex adaptive system. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that cognitive sciences have occupied, in the last years, a central role in the definition of conceptual, sensorial and emotional processes, which favours an embodied approach to representation. Even mathematical systems or symbolic devices such as Venn diagrams need an image-schema to make sense. Image-schemas are dynamics of reasoning structured in the body. They structure what we see, how we move and how we conceptualise experience, and are independent of visual perception. Cognitive sciences are today a battlefield where a new founding narrative of drawing is being formed, not without risks: a narrative that has occupied the space left vacant by the myth of Kora, daughter of Butades, and the fear of loss that led to the contour of her lover's shadow. Embodiment is the new form of an old problem. However, embodiment cannot merely be an epistemological lens directed over our drawings or transformed into a curatorial category to frame performance-based drawings and create interesting possibilities for drawing-based collaborative practices. Embodiment is a state that is contingent upon the environment and the context of the body – an embodied drawing is a drawing that connects.

FIGURE 6A: UNTITLED (NOTEBOOK 17.03.2012), 2012. CHARCOAL AND RED CHALK ON PAPER | FIGURE 6B: UNTITLED (NOTEBOOK XX.XX.2012), 2012. INDIAN INK ON PAPER.

When we feel sympathy for a sick person, we recreate that person's pain to a certain degree internally (Damasio & Lenzen, 2005, p. 14). We connect. Not all feelings result from the body's reaction to external stimuli. Drawing my father was a mutual implication of my own body and his presence: a way of knowing him outside language; a way of connecting without language. His was not a quiet body waiting for some movement to imprint its mark; it was a body in motion, but in the threshold of what the eyes could perceive. Weight, flux, space and time are the perceived vectors that define the internal representation of the body. In my father's drawings, weight and space became the only vectors of what could be represented: no flux, no sense of time, just the duration of persistence. To a Parkinson's patient, the future shrinks to a here-and-now (Bruggen and Widdershoven, 2004, p. 293). Drawing became to me an act of being aware. It forced me to see, to search for patterns, to anticipate what would follow. But drawing was mostly an act of empathy – the sense of a body in loop. Empathy is like vision without distance: it is a metaphorical touch. If we bypass the fact that physiologically touch is a modality resulting from the combined information of haptic and nerve endings concerned with pressure, temperature, pain and movement, there is more to touch in drawing. It is a way to bring distant objects and people into proximity. When we touch or press something, our body assumes the shape of what is being touched or pressed. The Italian artist Giuseppe Penone used to describe this experience in his own drawing procedure as a notional reciprocity: "when the skin is touched, its surface adapts the shape of the contact point" (cit. in Tuma, 2004, p. 71). There is a sense of interaction and reciprocity in drawing a motionless body that is experienced as a metaphorical touch. The drawn marks are cultural indexes of individuality. Nonetheless, when my gesture seeks and reacts to the form of my father's body, like a mirror-touch, there is also a slight loss of identity, as the movement of my hand assumes the shape of his face, of his hands or the tubes that allow him to breathe.
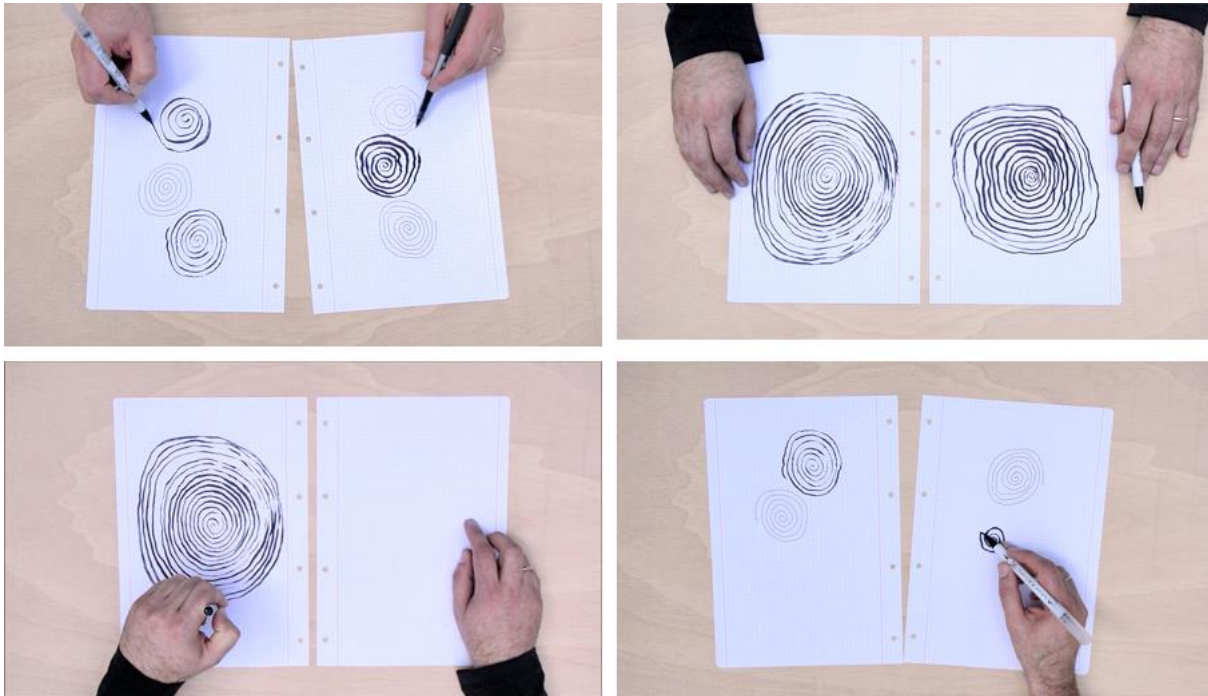
FIGURE 7: HAND PERFORMANCE ("THE VISIT"), 2019. PEN AND BRUSH ON SQUARED PAPER. DRAWINGS MADE AFTER THE ARCHIMEDES SPIRAL DIAGNOSIS TEST FOR TREMOR DISORDERS.

What is empathy in the act of drawing? We are all familiar with the mechanisms of internal imitation that occur in our personal relationships. They also happen in drawing processes. Observing, imagining or planning an action performed by someone else can generate, to some degree, the effort used to perform this same action (Blakemore & Frith, 2005, p. 261). This motor contagion is at the core of our internal imitation processes, of our capacity of anticipating, but also of the ability to perceive the underlying purposes and emotions on the basis of what our own intentions would be for that same action. When someone sees me pull back my arm as if I am going to throw a ball, she has in her brain a copy of what I am doing and that will help her understand my purpose, as an embodied simulation. Simulation is, generally, a negative word. To simulate is to try to become what one is not. But simulation is also a way of understanding beyond the limits of our own body and brain, a way of extending the body and the mind. In his research on the neuroscience of emotions, Antonio Damasio attempted to explain our corporeal involvement with pictures of things (not just bodies in motion) and to assess the emotional consequences of such involvement (2000). He emphasised the impossibility of feeling an emotion without a bodily involvement in what one observes: feelings like a rapid heartbeat can trigger an emotional response that makes us think and act in a different direction. His image of an "as-if-body-loop" refers to how the mind reacts in order to assume the same state it would have had if the observers of the actions and emotions of others were subject to the conditions they observed (Freedberg & Gallese, 2007, p. 201). Empathy is not just a way of bypassing the limits of our body. As a drawing experience, it is also a way of knowing, a process of intelligent inquiry and transformation of reality. While drawing, we transform observation into the imaginative knowledge of what it is like, which includes what is thought, felt, hoped for, willed, desired, encountered and done. Knowing through drawing is a matter of cultivating all these imaginative thoughts into a self-involving vision that allows us to transform perceptual experience into relational narratives. Documentarist Kutlug Ataman said it more clearly:

I look at people like buildings. Instead of walls and rooms, we have stories and experiences. As long as we can live these stories, express these stories, tell and retell these stories, then we can stand up the way a building stands (Honigman, 2004).

FIGURE 8: SITUATED DIALOGUE AROUND A DRAWING (UNTITLED, 2014. INDIAN INK AND RED MARKER ON NOTEBOOK), SEPTEMBER 2018

Aftermath

About 130 drawings portraying my father were made between 2008 and 2016 in notebooks. In 2018, I used some of them as triggers for a situated dialogue with my mother, to know her side of the experience of the disease, while taking care of my father [Fig. 8]. At the same time, the Portuguese Parliament was discussing the status of informal caregivers who, at the time, had no protection or recognition. Staging this dialogue around the drawings was a statement but mainly a speech-act of memorialisation. Drawing my father during those years was a way of making his affective state the intentional object of my awareness. Recovering those drawings was also an attempt to contradict and retrace the loss of movement of my father's body. As a consequence and an aftermath, several hand performances reenacting his gestures and the twisting contractions of his hands were staged for the Drawing Research Network Conference in 2019, on Embodied Drawing [Fig. 2 and Fig. 7]. In their constitutive differences, using a thread and a pen, the hand performances reenacted the Archimedes spiral drawing used as a clinical test to capture the frequency, amplitude and direction of a tremor in the diagnosis of Parkinson's disease. They were an attempt to embody the imperceptible movement behind the drawn marks. The awareness of gesture as a vulnerable movement that can be lost became evident: drawing the body "one no longer has" carries out the gesture of its own fragility. Drawing in this simulation mode was an eye-opener to my father's humanity within and beyond Parkinson's disease.

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WHY DRAW PICTURES THAT ALREADY EXIST? PHOTO-BASED DRAWINGS AND THE PRESENCE PHENOMENON

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It is widely held that, due to its causal nature, photography is the visual medium best suited for enabling individuals to form a sense of perceptual contact with distant or deceased subjects, and so to mitigate against the loss of the subject. Yet, a number of artists, who have meticulously recreated photographs by a slow, laborious process of drawing, have reported that this manual activity has afforded a richer sense of connectedness with the distant or lost subjects. In this article, I produce a phenomenological analysis of this experience, which I term the "presence phenomenon". To explain this phenomenon, I employ recent work from philosophy of perception and philosophy of mind to argue that the act of drawing, unlike looking at a photograph, presents affordances for bodily action that, in combination with the realism of the work, trigger sub-doxastic associative mechanisms that produce an enhanced sense of connection to the subject.

Introduction

It is widely held that, due to its causal nature, photography is the visual medium best suited for enabling individuals to form a sense of perceptual contact with distant or deceased subjects (Bazin, 1967; Walton, 1984; Currie 1999; Barthes, 2000; Sontag, 2000; Blood and Cacciatone, 2014). As Sontag specified, a photograph, while a token of absence, is also a pseudo-presence (2000, p. 16). Photographs help to mitigate against the loss of the subject by standing in for objects that are distant or no longer with us, and afford a sense of connection with them. But if photography is the means best suited to this end, then why have a number of artists, including this author and Christina Empedocles, copied photographs through a slow, laborious process of drawing and reported an enhanced sense of connectedness with their subjects? How can drawing enable 'the hand and the eye [to] reach beyond the camera' (Empedocles, 2013) and form a deeper relationship to distant or lost subjects?

My aim in this article is to explain which perceptual and cognitive mechanisms underpin this sense of connection, and why drawing in particular is a trigger of these mechanisms. In order to do so, first I examine my own experience and those reported by other artists, who carefully recreate photographs by drawing, to produce a phenomenological analysis of this experience, which I term the "presence phenomenon".[1] Following this, I employ recent work from philosophy of perception and philosophy of mind to argue that the act of drawing, unlike looking at a photograph, presents affordances for bodily action that, in combination with the realism of the work, triggers associative mechanisms that produce an enhanced sense of connection to the subject.

Drawing photographs

My practice largely revolves around meticulously recreating photographs by means of drawing. While this method can be employed to remove traces of authorship, I have used it to reassert an authorial presence. One of my earliest projects employing this process was prompted by seeing images in my grandfather's photograph album that documented his experiences of serving abroad across North Africa and South Asia, in the British Royal Air Force, during World War II. As my grandfather had died when I was young, I was unable to ask him about these experiences. To compensate for the oral history that would have provided a narrative for the contents of the photographs, I began to draw the contents of the album as a way of recovering and relating to the events contained in it.

Considering that photographic images are easy to create and reproduce, these labour-intensive drawings prompted some questions: why go to the trouble of recreating these images in the medium of drawing? And why were the photographs I was working from insufficient for my purposes? Upon reflection, as I had re-photographed the contents of the album, it became clear that this was not a preservative project, but a generative one. It was generative in several senses. First, I wanted to recontextualise these images, which depicted historic events, and reconstruct a narrative by drawing them as photographs in an album and juxtaposing them with extracts that I had copied from several letters, contemporaneous to the photographs, handwritten by my grandfather to his family in the UK. Second, and most pertinent to the

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[1] By "phenomenological analysis", I mean characterising and explaining what particular kinds of psychological states feel like, or 'what it is like, experientially, to undergo those states'. (Cavedon-Taylor, 2015, p. 75) There are a number of theorists who have linked drawing and the field of phenomenology. Surveying the range of approaches to this connection would take us too far afield from the present investigation, but for an informative overview see Harty (2012b).

present investigation, was that I found that the act of drawing itself enhanced my sense of connectedness with the events and scenes contained in the album: as I carefully recreated these, I felt as though I was really there observing the military exercises (Figure 1), the restful moments, and the landscapes punctuated by aeroplanes and explosions.
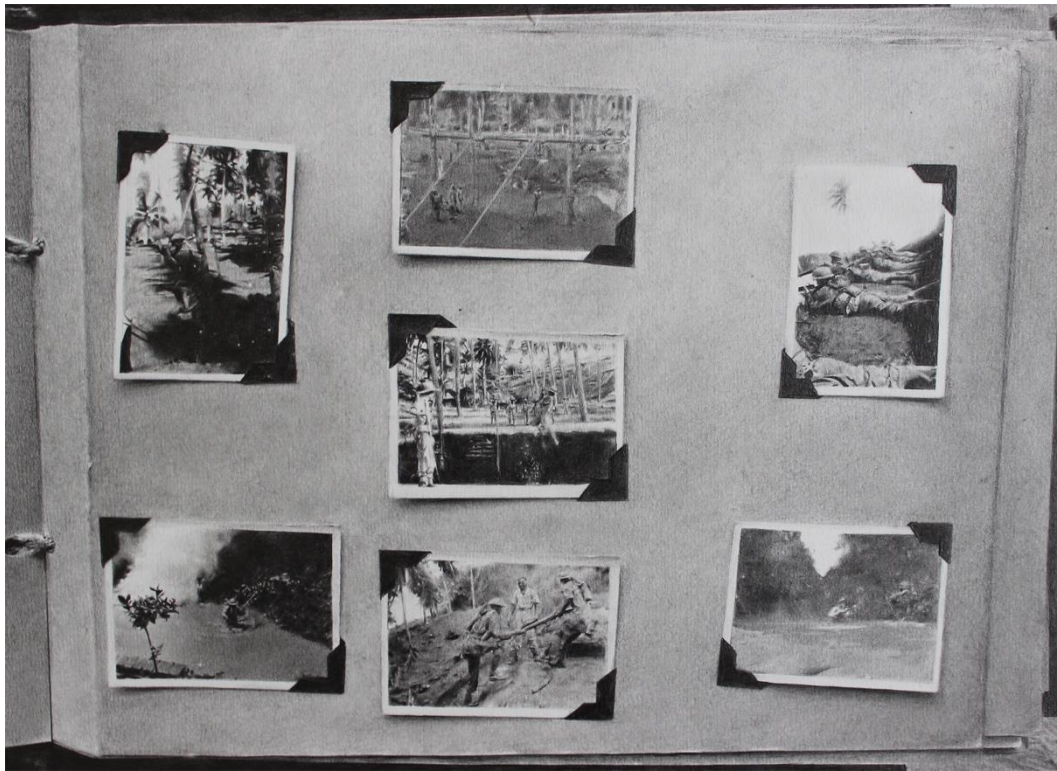

FIGURE 1: CLAIRE ANSCOMB, *ACTION*, 2013, GRAPHITE ON PAPER, 25X32.5CM

This phenomenon became manifest when, during an art school crit, a tutor provocatively pretended to rip one of my photo-based drawings. Curiously, I barely flinched at the sight of my drawing apparently being ripped in two. This was an unexpected response, considering the many hours that went into the work. However, at this moment it became clear that it was the process of translating the photograph through drawing that I valued most. That is, it became evident that it was not the product (the drawing) that was largely responsible for sustaining this enhanced sense of connectedness with the subjects of the photographs, but the act of drawing itself.

My experiences do not seem to be unique. Other artists who create photo-based drawings have offered similar reflections about the sense of connectedness created by the act of drawing photographs.[2] Take Christina Empedocles, who has said that the labour-intensive method of faithfully recreating the subject of a photograph by drawing results in a deeper and more profound understanding of the subject than making a straight photograph could ever offer (Empedocles, 2013). Empedocles was initially trained in geology and art, and was struck by the fact that drawing specimens under a microscope was valued more highly than photographing them (2013). That is, given that the drawing process is led by the selective

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[2] To be clear, this sense of connection is unlikely to be what solely motivates these artists to draw from photographs, but it does provide a rationale for some aspects of these artists' stated activities.

human eye, more pertinent information, relative to the epistemic purpose of the image, can be conveyed by this process. With this in mind, Empedocles later turned her hand to drawing for fine art purposes.

Two strands can be identified in Empedocles' practice: in one, Empedocles juxtaposes ephemera, such as tickets and polaroids, from her personal life, while in the other she draws photographs of nature, including flowers, birds, and other animals, that she has printed from the Internet. In doing so, Empedocles has explained that, 'Through a practice of realism I am trying to monumentalize or archive an event, or memory, or create a relationship to something or someone I've never encountered' (SF Art Enthusiast, 2013). But how does a practice of realism create a relationship to a subject that the artist has never encountered? This relationship is certainly a fragile one in any case – as we are reminded by Empedocles' compositional choice to depict the photographs upon which the images of nature are printed as crumpled, ephemeral objects.

Another artist who has reflected on the complicated relation to the subject, while drawing it from a photograph, is Vija Celmins. Celmins first began producing her meticulous drawings in the 1960s, when the quick, mass production of images proliferated. Against this tide, from 1966 Celmins began to draw, through a slow, painstaking process of realism, postcards and images from magazines. This was initially to fight the loneliness she felt after being away from her family – the images she created of war were, for Celmins, nostalgic images that reminded her of a turbulent early childhood in war-torn Europe (2014, pp. 125-6). Following this, Celmins began to produce drawings of the Moon from photographs that had been taken there and transmitted back to Earth. This approach continued to inform her work, as she produced expansive, yet carefully cropped drawings of celestial bodies, deserts, and oceans. As Celmins has outlined:

> 'The photo is an alternative subject, another layer that creates distance. And distance creates the opportunity to view the work more slowly and to explore your relationship to it […] I thought of it as putting the images that I found in books and magazines back into the real world – in real time. Because when you look at the work you confront the here and now. It's right there.' (Celmins et al., 2004, pp. 125-126)

While Celmins typically identifies the image itself as the subject, there are interviews where she hints at the complicated relationship that the act of drawing sustains with the real subjects of the photographs. In a recent video, Celmins was filmed carefully placing singular white strokes of paint on a canvas (Figure 2), and blending these with her finger (Figure 3), to produce an image of the night sky she had been working on for three years. As Celmins remarked: 'Tedious for some, for me, it's kind of like […] being there' (TateShots, 2014). Although this is evidently a complex topic for Celmins, her reflections provide another example where the process of meticulously recreating photographs by means of drawing is experienced as a way of sustaining a sense of connectedness with the subject.

The documentary of Celmins at work also raises an important point about the specificity of this phenomenon to drawing. Considering that, while remarking on this sense of connection, Celmins was making a painting and there are plenty of photorealists who meticulously recreate photographs to produce paintings, is the described experience unique to drawing?

Definitions of drawing tend to privilege a certain kind of action, rather than physical material. Take Dominic McIver Lopes' definition of drawing as 'richly embodied mark-making' that traces 'a path congruent with the resulting marks' (2016, p. 84). This notion of trace is one that pervades the literature on drawing (Harty, 2012b, p. 11). Given this, it is plausible to suggest that Celmins practices a form of drawing that involves paint, not pencil, when she produces works on canvas, particularly as Celmins herself has conjectured that 'It is impossible to paint without drawing.' (2014, p. 125).

This is also likely to be true of a number of photorealist painters. However, while photorealistic painting frequently involves this kind of 'richly embodied mark-making', it does not do so necessarily – there are a number of techniques painters can use to mark a surface without thereby tracing 'a path congruent with

the resulting marks'. By simultaneously applying paint, with an airbrush for example, to a large area of the support, photorealistic painters are able to quickly build up layers of pigment on this surface. For reasons that will become clear, this sort of activity, which is distinct from drawing, is much less likely to enable artists to form the rich connection, of the kind described here, to the subject. In what follows, I will provide further evidence to establish that the act of drawing, as 'richly embodied mark-making', triggers and sustains an enhanced sense of connection with the subjects of the photographs.

The Feeling of Presence

First, it is necessary to elaborate on the nature of the described sense of connectedness. As Celmins reflected, recreating the photographic scene by drawing is 'kind of like being there'. This reflection, taken together with the others in the previous Section, suggests that this experience is constituted in part by a sense of presence. Evidently, for the artists under discussion, this "presence phenomenon", as I shall refer to it, is not an 'actuality-committing' experience (Matthen, 2010, pp. 114-115), as feeling the presence of an actual object is (Dokic, 2012; Dokic and Martin, 2017; Barkasi, 2020). Notably, the real object is still experienced as absent from the artist's egocentric space, and evidence suggests that this is a crucial component of the 'feeling of presence', which Mohan Matthen has proposed is a cognitive feeling carried by 'real life' scene vision, or 'the vision that one enjoys in a normal everyday setting, looking out of the window or around a room, for instance' (2010, p. 114). Importantly, this kind of vision makes the real-life objects seem connected to you in space (Matthen, 2010, pp. 114-115).[3] Nevertheless, the perceptual and cognitive mechanisms that underpin this aspect of the felt presence of real objects, in addition to pictorial seeing, are relevant to explaining how a feeling of quasi-presence is sustained by the act of drawing from photographs. To demonstrate this, in what follows I will examine several leading philosophical accounts of presence and picture perception that complement and advance empirical findings on the mechanisms involved in these experiences.

Two visual subsystems are relevant to the present discussion, the dorsal and ventral streams. These visual subsystems work together in order to give agents both an 'agent-centred' and 'scene-centred' experience that enables them to both navigate and catalogue their way through the world (Matthen, 2005, p. 299). The dorsal stream helps us perform 'perceptually guided actions with perceived objects' (Nanay, 2014, p. 183). This 'motion-guiding vision' performs independently of the classificatory part of vision in a direct and unconscious manner (Matthen, 2005, p. 297). Meanwhile, the ventral stream is responsible for 'descriptive vision' (Matthen, 2005, p. 296) – it helps us identify and recognize perceived objects (Nanay, 2014, p. 183). Importantly, motion-guiding vision accounts for egocentric seeing and entails that as an agent moves, their spatial relationships change with the objects of the visual field. Motion-guiding vision, then, accounts for agent-centred representations whereby agents perceive objects in relation to their person, while descriptive vision accounts for scene-centred representations of the world which entail that an agent perceives objects in relation to one another (Matthen, 2005, pp. 299-300). According to Matthen, together, descriptive vision and motion-guiding vision account for the feeling of 'presence' (2005, p. 301).[4]

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[3] This notion of perceptual presence can also be linked back to Husserl's notion of bodily presence (O'Conaill, 2017, p. 145).

[4] It is worth noting that the experience of an object as located in egocentric space might be a necessary condition for the feeling of presence, but not a sufficient one (Dokic, 2012, p. 400; Barkasi, 2021, p. 18). As O'Conaill has additionally proposed, for instance, tense, or 'the subject's sense of something as occurring as *now*' (2017, p. 146) is also likely to be an important factor in accounting for perceptual presence. Meanwhile, Barkasi (2020) has contrasted Matthen's explanation with Windts', who argues that a feeling of presence is thanks to proprioception, to

Significantly, the feeling of presence distinguishes actual perception from pictorial seeing (Nanay, 2014, p. 189). This is due to the fact that, in normal cases of picture perception, the surface rather than the depicted scene is dorsally represented, while the ventral stream 'attributes properties to the depicted scene' (Nanay, 2014, p. 184). However, there are exceptions, including *trompes l'oeil* (Matthen, 2010; Nanay, 2015; Ferretti, 2021). *Trompes l'oeil* are pictures that, when viewed from a particular angle, appear to offer a real-life view of the objects in them. If a viewer is deceived by these pictures, or fails to perceive their boundaries, for instance, then their objects seem to be in the same space as the viewer (Matthen, 2010, p. 115). This effect is rarely lasting, however, as when the viewer's perspective makes it clear that this is not the case, they dorsally represent the surface of the picture, rather than its contents (Nanay, 2014, p. 193), and the feeling of spatial disconnection that characterizes pictorial seeing occurs.

Given that the act of drawing to meticulously recreate photographs may require the use of magnifying glasses or a very close proximity to the surface, so that the edges of large drawings recede to, or beyond, the peripheries of the artist's vision while they are working on it, one might conclude that, as in the case of *trompes l'oeil*, there are moments where the artist dorsally represents the contents of the photo-based drawing, rather than the surface. This would give rise to a feeling of the presence of the depicted contents and, by extension, the subject, until a different viewpoint makes it clear that the objects are not in the artist's egocentric space. This explanation runs into difficulties, however, because were it true then it would be very difficult to interact with, nevertheless produce accurate markings on, the surface of a support.[5] As with other kinds of pictorial seeing, then, in the act of drawing photographs, an agent's visual subsystems are segregated. Nevertheless, this need not entail that the experience of realistic pictures is entirely removed from a sense of seeing the actual subject. As Matthen has proposed, '…a picture can put you in visual states recognizably like those caused by the real thing' (2005, p. 307).

Notably, as a result of pictorial seeing, viewers are able to learn about the visual properties of objects by looking at pictures of them (Matthen, 2005, pp. 306-13) – images can, then, function as valuable sources of non-spatially committed visual information (Cohen and Meskin, 2004, p. 204). For example, the experience of looking at a photograph of an object can, in some respects, resemble the experience a viewer would have had if they experienced this directly.[6] Accordingly, an image, such as a photograph, that appears to have a high degree of visual similarity to the real subject is highly likely to trigger a feeling of what I have referred to as 'epistemic contact' (Anscomb, Forthcoming), or a non-spatially committed experience of seeing the visual properties of the subject of the image that is similar to the experience one would have seeing these directly. This experience can vary in degree: one is likely to experience a stronger sense of epistemic contact if the picture is more realistic. This becomes manifest when viewing an image with a high degree of realism next to one with a lower degree of realism, where

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highlight that Matthen has intertwined an immersive sense of presence and a feeling of 'motor presence', which are, in principle, phenomenally dissociable (Barkasi, 2020, pp. 23-24). Alternatively, Dokic and Martin have argued that 'the sense of reality is a specific metacognitive feeling based on various *reality-monitoring* processes' (2017, p. 304). As these various approaches show, there is more to the feeling of presence than the experience of an object as located in egocentric space. Nevertheless, this likely quite crucial aspect of the experience is missing in the described encounters with the photorealistic drawings under discussion – hence why it is my focus here.

[5] Indeed, evidence suggests that drawing is a challenging activity if the support is not dorsally represented (Guerin, Ska, and Bellenville, 1999).

[6] One might question the degree of perceptual similarity between a real subject and its depicted counterpart, considering that photographs often display grain or monochromatic tones for instance. However, as Walden has argued, grain and monochromatic tones are not dissimilar to the visual experiences we have in low-light settings (2016, p. 43).

the contents of the former image seem more immediate, or more like they would if viewed without the mediation of a picture (Walden, 2016, pp. 39-40).

Epistemic contact is highly relevant to the experience of the photorealistic drawings under discussion. But it is not only similar visual states that are germane to these works. Other experiences of pictures with a high degree of realism show that mental states are also important to consider. As Ferretti (2017) has demonstrated, there can be a similarity of emotional responses triggered by real objects and their depicted counterparts. For instance, despite the manifest absence of the subject in the image, we might feel very uncomfortable cutting into, and eating, a birthday cake onto which has been printed a photograph of the beloved recipient (Anscomb, Forthcoming). This behaviour is clearly at odds with the beliefs of an agent that affirm the subject's absence (and so safety). To account for emotional responses to images, Ferretti has argued (in keeping with the dorsal/ventral account) that some parts of the dorsal and ventro-dorsal stream are activated in picture perception, which entails that 'when we look at the depicted object the response of vision-for-action subserved by dorsal visuomotor processing can be related to the emotional response concerning the perception of (aversive or facilitated) action possibilities' (2017, p. 609). As a complement to this explanation, we can draw upon an account of a sub-doxastic, associative state that Tamar Gendler has termed 'alief' (2010), which can cause belief-discordant feelings and behaviours associated with the subject, thus triggering 'affective contact' (Anscomb, Forthcoming).

Alief has earned its name in light of its associative, automatic, arational, action-generating, and affect-laden nature (2010, p. 288). While some aliefs are formed by habit, many are innate, having been formed as a result of evolution (Gendler, 2010, p. 300). Essentially, given the visual-motor input associated with the apparent actual stimuli, slicing a knife through what appears to be a loved one, one may alieve the following all at once: 'harmful action directed at beloved, dangerous and ill-advised, don't cut and eat' (Anscomb, Forthcoming). Accordingly, there are three stages to the associative chains responsible for this mental state: Representation, Affect, and Behaviour (R-A-B). While paradigmatic instances of alief involve a four-place relation (i.e., an agent alieves R-A-B), in many instances 'the salient content falls primarily in only one or two of these domains' (Gendler, 2010, p. 290) so that an agent may primarily feel rather than behave in response to the representation.

The details of these mechanisms need not detain us too much here – what is important is the fact that, as the foregoing shows, visual and mental states can be generated that are associated with the subject, despite its manifest absence from the viewer's own environment. However, the described experiences of contact caused by these mechanisms arise in relation to viewing, not making realistic images. As the contrast with *trompes l'oeil* shows, the acts involved in drawing photographs must also be considered to provide a satisfactory explanation of how this activity can give rise to a rich sense of connectedness to the subject.

The Presence Phenomenon

Most philosophers have focused on pictorial experience, as an ocular-centric phenomenon, concerning completed works from the perspective of viewers.[7] This experience of seeing something as a picture, which entails representing both the surface and the content, is primarily the result of looking. However, artists have a relationship to pictures as they produce them, which entails that, in addition to the work affording certain kinds of ocular attention and interaction, pictures also afford a host of bodily interactions for the production of marks on the surface. As is typical of pictorial seeing, artists dorsally represent the surface of the support and ventrally represent the contents of the picture, but importantly and distinctively of those producing a given picture, the surface is perceived as a tactile one – a place where an artist can produce and manipulate marks, in the cases under discussion, to reproduce the visual properties of the subject. This tactile and ocular experience is highly significant in relation to the presence phenomenon because it helps to generate a sense of physical interaction with the contents of the drawn photograph, as I shall now explain.

In order to translate the contents of a photograph into a drawing, motion-guiding vision and descriptive vision is engaged so that an artist is able to make movements that trace, on the support, 'a path congruent with the resulting marks', and to check these visual properties. With regard to the former kind of vision, the dorsal system is specifically responsible for the 'encoding of categorical and coordinate relations and spatiotopic mapping' (Kosslyn and Koenig, 1992). As Guerin, Ska, and Bellenville have outlined: 'The encoding of categorical relations involves the spatial relations between two objects or parts of an object that remain stable despite their position (e.g., connected to, at the left, on the side)' (1999, pp. 468-9). Coordinate relations, meanwhile, allow one to estimate distance between objects or parts of objects, say between the eyes and ears, that guides movements and actions (Guerin, Ska, and Bellenville, 1999, pp. 468-9), while the spatiotopic mapping component's role is to 'locate objects in space and place their coordinates inside a unique reference frame' (Guerin, Ska, and Bellenville, 1999, pp. 468-9). Accordingly, when drawing the contents of the photograph, the artist relays the contents of the image in relation to each other and also themselves (i.e., "*I* need to move over *there* to make this mark next to the left of that object" or "*I* must draw a line *here* to represent this side of the object"). In doing so, an agent-centred representation is formed of the support and the materials manipulated on this to produce marks that, as the image is gradually built up, increasingly resemble the visual properties of the real subject.

Celmins has described the lengthy process of carefully placing tiny marks on the surface of the support as 'tedious for some'. Yet, these aspects of time and realism, along with the physical interaction with the support and the materials deposited on it, are important factors that account for the presence phenomenon. Many layers of the material the artist is drawing with are required to achieve a photo-realistic level of detail. The initial layers, at least as I have experienced them, do not tend to produce such a strong feeling of connection with the subject, largely because they do not yet resemble their subjects to a high degree (Figure 4). However, once these layers are refined, the picture increasingly

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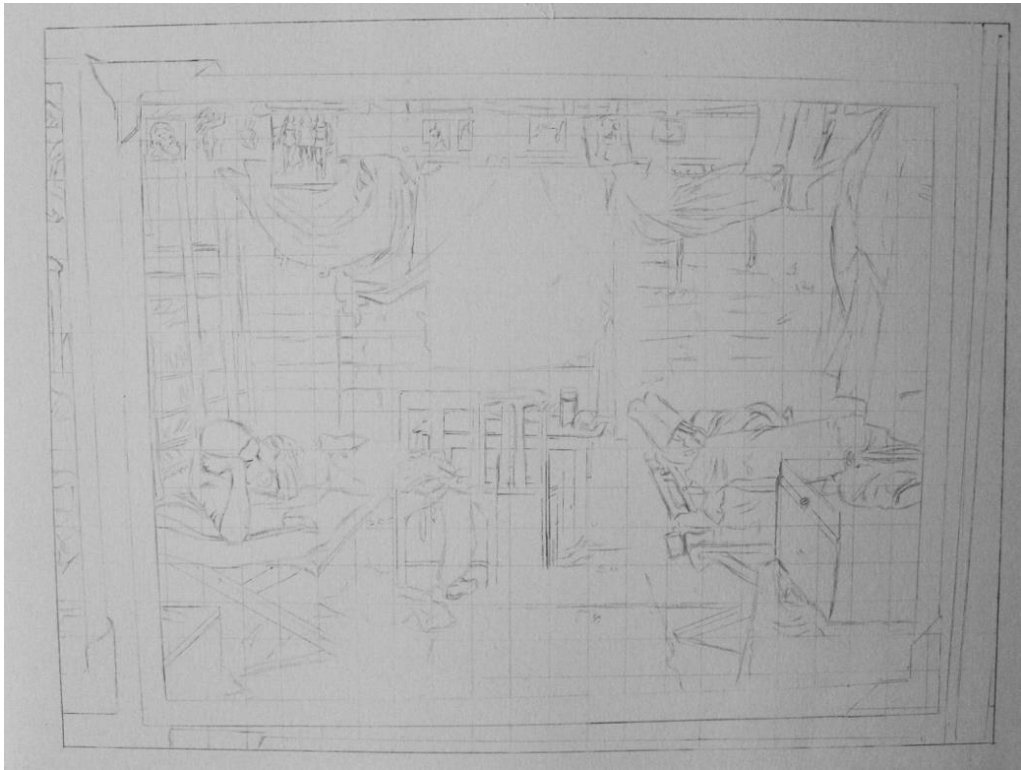[7] For an exception to this, see Lopes (2002).

FIGURE 4: CLAIRE ANSCOMB, *REFLECTION* (IN PROGRESS), 2013, GRAPHITE ON PAPER, 25x32.5CM

resembles the subject, and so, for the majority of the time when one is working on such a picture, one is confronted with a state of increasing epistemic contact, where the visual properties of the subject are experienced through the drawing as being similar to how they would have been had they been seen directly (Figure 5). Moreover, to the practised eye, these different layers are perceptible and offer affordances for different kinds of bodily actions – which continues to affirm a sense of physical interaction with, what appears to be, the contents of the picture.

One might object that, as a result of closely and carefully recreating the photograph with handmade marks on a surface, the facture that is visible to the artist during this process may fail to cast such similar patterns as those cast by the real subject and thus may not resemble the visual experience one would have if seeing the subject directly. However, there are several reasons why this objection does not go through. First, the process of drawing in the manner under discussion entails switching between an extremely close-up view of the work, to produce the marks, and a distanced view to see how the overall picture is looking. So, in the initial stages of developing the drawing, while attention to the marks in the former case can reduce the experienced resemblance to seeing the subject directly, this is somewhat mitigated by the experience in the latter case, which can quickly start to resemble the visual experience one would have if seeing the subject in real life.

More importantly, however, the kinds of drawings under consideration are those which are rendered in such a way that they do not betray any obvious signs of mark-making when completed. Accordingly, as the work develops, and the drawing media are carefully blended together, the marks that make up the image become more difficult to perceive, even when one is up-close to the surface of the work. Hence why the sense of "being there" becomes stronger as the drawing comes to increasingly resemble the visual experience one might have of encountering the subject directly. By contrast, many photorealistic paintings, such as *Accordi* (2015) by Luciano Ventrone, are made with 'surprisingly loose strokes of paint' (Fox, 2020) in order to meditate on the superficial or deceptive nature of appearances, so that the image ceases to have such a high degree of similarity to the subject when viewed close-up. Taken together, these factors reinforce the idea, as revealed in the earlier phenomenological analysis, that it is a slow, cumulative process of drawing, encompassing a range of experiences of the work in its different states, that produces the presence phenomenon.

Significantly, these experiences may differ in kind, but nonetheless overlap in content. For the most part, in addition to objects in their environment, the artist's scene-centred experience consists of the visual properties of the subject of the photograph, while their agent-centred experience is focused on the support and the materials they manipulate on this. Importantly, the content of both these experiences increasingly overlaps as the artist acts to produce marks with materials on the support that, as the image is gradually built up, increasingly resemble the visual properties of the content of the photograph – and, by extension, those of the real subject. As these experiences converge on the same content, it can appear to the artist that they are able to interact with the contents of the picture, as they carefully reach towards and touch different represented objects in the drawing, generating visual-motor inputs that resemble tactile interaction with the subject. Given this representation of the apparent actual stimuli, it

follows that associative mechanisms are triggered so that the artist experiences a sensation that is akin to an agent-centred experience of the real subject of the photo-based drawing.

This is distinct from the aforementioned affective contact because, importantly, it is a different set of associations that are triggered, which give rise to the presence phenomenon. In the earlier example, of an agent apprehensive to cut into a cake with a photograph of a loved one on it, the aliefs triggered pertained to that individual. Given their emotional connection to this individual, and the harm apparently about to be caused to them, the agent experiences the impulse to protect the apparent actual stimuli. The presence phenomenon, however, pertains to scenes and events that are far removed from the artist's own experience and, in many cases, personal connections. Notably, unknown subjects cannot cause feelings and behaviours that are specific to them and the individual artist, but certain responses can arise in relation to the appearance of interaction with the objects of the depicted scene. That is, aliefs are triggered by an agent orienting themselves towards the contents – that visually resemble the subject to a high degree – and coordinating actions based upon the visual interaction, so that in the moment when they are drawing, the objects feel as though they are visually locatable relative to the artist and the content of the drawing is experienced as if connected to the artist in space – despite their knowledge and proprioceptive feedback which reveals that this is not the case. Resultantly, in copying the contents of a photograph by drawing, one feels as though one is part of the real scene or event depicted in the photograph.

Conclusion

Looking at photographs can generate experiences of epistemic and affective contact. However, the foregoing demonstrates that it is the slow, laborious act of meticulously drawing photographs that triggers the perceptual and cognitive mechanisms that can sustain a sense of physical connectedness with the subject. Nevertheless, as Empedocles' work reminds us, this is a fragile relationship – it is not an experience of the real subject of the picture, but it is one that, as per my own experience and the experiences of the other artists discussed, produces feelings that are *like* those experienced when encountering the subject directly. Although it might be a feeling of quasi-presence, this experience helps to generate a deeper sense of connection with the subject of the image than simply looking at a photograph. Hence why artists might go to the trouble of recreating photographic images through the process of drawing – this process is a powerful tool that sustains the presence phenomenon to mitigate against the loss of the subject. Considering both the ocular and tactile aspects of drawing is key to understanding why this is the case. Accordingly, this account, among other phenomenological explorations, should serve as a further challenge to the ocular-centrism that has tended to pervade the literature on experiences involving pictures.[89].

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[8] For other examples of work that challenges this dominant way of thinking about images see Marks (2000), Harty (2012a), and Korsmeyer (2019).

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DRAWING (OUT) PLACE

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This paper discusses how drawing might mitigate 'loss' of place. By memorialising, recalling, reimagining and standing in for distant, inaccessible and/or missing places, drawing might bring together 'lost' and 'encountered' fragments in an attempt to retrieve places one had previously 'dwelled' in. The person engaged in the act of mark making is immersed and drawn into the process, as drawing makes and at the same time loses its own maker. An intensive drawing process often engulfs one's thoughts and general focus; it makes one look away from everything else to be able to focus attentively on lines and marks up to a point of blindness. The practice of drawing also entails complex decision-making; a good amount of energy is invested in the heightened hand, eye and mental coordination as gradually some things might be lost or encountered in the process. The following paper presents a place-oriented practice centred around four charcoal drawings emerging from an ancient valley (wied) in the Mediterranean island of Malta. Borrowing from a phenomenological tradition it is set to describe how place might be re-visited through drawing during an exceptional period of lockdown and deprivation of outdoor time.

Loughborough
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Place-Marking

Drawing is something I have been doing for as long as I can remember. Following graphite, coloured pencils, ink and pastels, I later started to explore charcoal, a much softer, bolder and pleasantly textured means of making a mark. Being considerably softer than graphite, it demands less hand pressure, but the downside is it depletes much quicker. A generous medium, very responsive and always disposed to renounce its material existence to leave a lasting mark. It is not uncommon to consume multiple charcoal pieces in the process of making even a small drawing. This is perhaps the first stage of 'loss' in a markedly delicate process.

Charcoal sticks are essentially heavily desiccated willow twigs and that perhaps marks the first level of loss in the drawing process. Bunches of thin, knotty, intricately gnarled willow shoots carefully selected, boiled, stripped, graded, and fired in a kiln. This age-old method, based on tried and tested techniques, is capable of producing fine little drawing tools. As the willow desiccates inside the kiln to reach an almost fossilised state, a new life is injected into it which is soon to be commemorated by expressive bold marks.

This unassuming craft, painstakingly yet passionately supporting the practice of drawing, reveals a highly altruistic cycle, whereby the curated destruction of harvested matter becomes a sustainable source for creative activity. The loss of one matter breathes new life into another. An expressive process celebrated by strong yet delicate lines, on smooth or textured surfaces, which shall serve as a repository for years to come. At the same time the gentlest of caresses on the surface of the said paper will smudge and completely disrupt the marks made by the fragile willow stick, irreversibly and irretrievably. There is a poetic sense of fragility, an almost spectral trace that is both present and absent, bold and pale, stuck and unfixed, all at once. By the end of the process one has to reach for the inevitable, almost dreaded spray can to carefully fix the image and prevent it from being accidentally smudged. The sense of loss and gain is ubiquitous throughout the entire ritual, as creative activity depends heavily on the annihilation of live matter. Bennett's (2010) notion of 'vibrant matter' finds strong resonance in the way matter lives on in different forms and guises; it continues to speak, to communicate and it can never really be discarded or muted.

Continuity and discontinuity are essential dichotomies that often keep the creative act in balance and drawing is not immune to that. This paper considers how the notion of 'loss' plays out on the various levels constituting the drawing process from ground to paper. The fact that we often draw on absence to bring back memories into the present is a constant reminder that the act of *drawing out* is intrinsic to the ancient creative practice of drawing. Ingold (2007: 153) tells us that for as long as people have been communicating, including with hand gestures, a proportion of them were leaving traces on various surfaces. To leave a mark is one of the principal aims and objectives of any drawing process and the resulting marks can be considered commemorative traces already consigned to the past or bound to fade in the next few hours and days. Drawing, in this context, is a means of 'restoring' a past happening by transposing it onto a piece of paper. The process is not merely one of *drawing out* but also an act of *drawing in* what is bound to recede into the mental 'distance' we call memory. The mark maker loses themselves in the 'present' act of recalling the 'past'. 'Sometimes being lost is the very condition of being found again' Trigg notes (2012: 215), furthermore pointing out that loss may become instructive and fading memories may become 'a guiding force'.

Drawing is generally considered an additive process, whereby marks are deposited on a blank or pre-treated surface. However, whether charcoal, graphite, ink, pastel or silverpoint, the tool used for drawing is gradually consumed in the act. That is how marks are transposed from one source to the other. We never tend to ponder the expended material as we generally focus on the layers accumulating on the drawing surface. Built-up, deposited, layered, are all terms that resonate with the practice of drawing. These terms also evoke place and landscape, while at the same time all suggest that something extra is being added on top of an existing surface. If we consider wall drawings, those etched on walls, we are faced with a similar ambivalent situation where *text* is added while surface material is subsequently being removed, hence the question – 'is drawing an additive or a subtractive process?'

Artist David Walker-Barker sees drawing in the context of place and landscape 'as an exercise in touching and scratching the surface' – drawing penetrates the topmost layers (2009: 46). Drawing is a form of searching and to further add to our understanding of things, surface layers may need to be removed both conceptually and in material terms. Drawing is part of an extended activity comprising 'a larger catalogue of material' which may include images, mental conceptualisations, memories and physical objects (2009: 46). Thus, what is being construed is that drawing may facilitate aspects of a much bigger 'excavation'; it can pave the way for further meaningful 'finds'. To borrow from Biggs (2009: 41), we may use drawing to explore hunches about place and landscape through combining different media of sign and mark making that contribute to a 'polyvocal' drawing approach.

Gain intensifies following loss, as much as sound feels more dramatic when it punctures silence. The creative accomplishment of fixing memories onto a piece of paper encapsulates *loss* and also longing for something that is no longer present at hand. We cannot really recall a thought or a situation that we have not already experienced. Thus, drawing from memory entails a degree of forgetting; a search for a pastness that needs to be retrieved and pushed to the foreground. The dimmer the memories the harder it generally gets to recall and draw out past experience(s). However, the spatiotemporal matter where memories are deposited seems to thrive on 'gaps' and it is exceptionally adept at fabricating 'realities'. This idea seems to resonate with Trigg's notion of 'unreal reality', whereby a new landscape is 'carved from the erasure of old memory' (2012: 215).

When it comes to remembering a place, as Trigg suggests, 'our memories pursue us as we pursue place' and this dialectic forms an 'ambiguous zone' which sits somewhere in between both polarities (2012: 9). This paper argues in favour of a drawing practice that serves as a means of recovering and reconstituting place around fissures (Derrida 1976). Banking on scant photographs and mental recollections, back in my studio I tap into the 'ambiguous zone' to retrieve (fragments of) place as I had experienced it. The process can be likened to an X-Ray image in which the 'tangible' aspects of place, that seem to linger on more vividly in memory, resurface as 'blank' white spaces that help accentuate the darker and 'blocked' areas around them.

This 'reversed-out' drawing approach might invoke 'further' mental images that remain dimly impressed in our memory. Furthermore, imagination appears to thrive on that which is 'void of definite content' (Trigg 2012: 284). Aesthetic considerations emerging from this method are rather ancillary. The primary intention is to bring back place by weaving together vivid details and memory gaps with the help of a few wide-angle photographs of the valley, taken years earlier. Such a drawing practice allows for the retrieval of place; relying on visually documented as well as recollected place specificities, the inevitable mental process of 'blocking' memory fissures is accentuated by means of charcoal marks. The overall generated image acquires a phantasmic yet solid appearance as it relies on 'contrast' to emphasise what has been 'lost' and 'found' in place (Fig. 1).
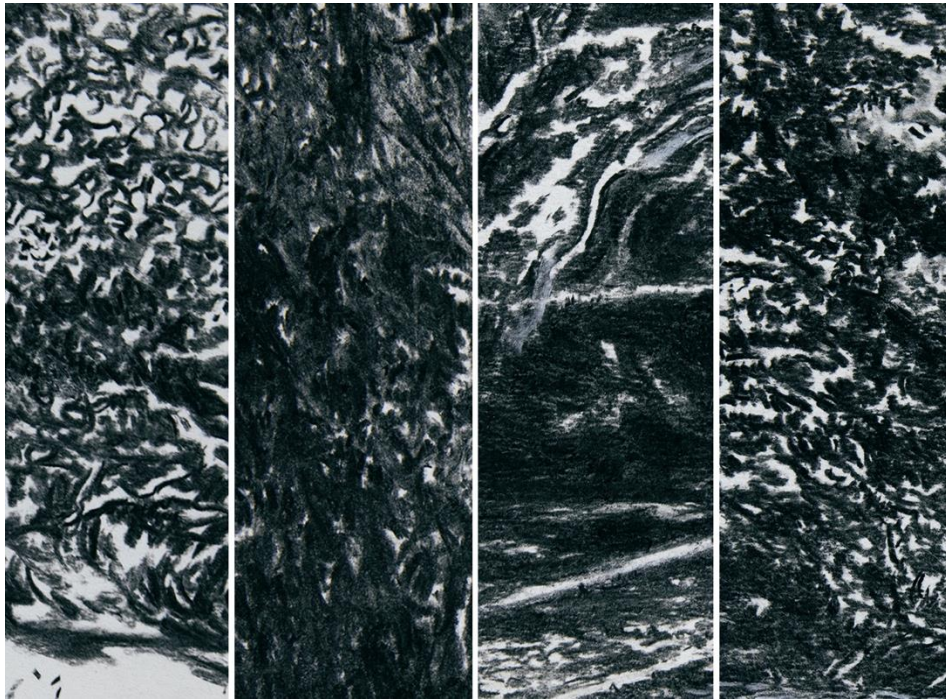
Here we may draw on Derrida for a deconstructive analysis of how an apparent lack of 'content' might add to the overall work. The explanation comes in the form of song, but it can be quite successfully applied to the processes of visual imagery, as Derrida himself assures us (1976: 203). Derrida speaks of the 'fissure', accompanied by the 'necessity of interval, the harsh law of spacing', which implies the 'removal' of something from the overall composition; something which could have never existed in the first place (1976: 200). As much as silence and intervals contribute to the song, so does lack of detail in terms of visual imagery. 'Spacing is not the accident of song', it is a necessity and without it the 'song would not have come into being' (1976: 200). Therefore, we can argue that 'blank' space may translate into an enhanced visual coherence; to contrast is to reveal further. 'Emptiness' brings the different components of the image together to form a meshwork which may be interpreted as 'complete'.

Drawn to Place

> 'The sounds of the storm corresponded gloriously with this wild exuberance of light and motion. The profound bass of the naked branches and boles booming like waterfalls; the quick, tense vibrations of the pine-needles, now rising to a shrill, whistling hiss, now falling to a silky murmur; the rustling of laurel groves in the dells, and the keen metallic click of leaf on leaf – all this was heard in easy analysis when the attention was calmly bent.' (Muir 2009: 323).

I initially experience place on foot, drifting slowly along unplanned routes. I follow a contoured map embedded in the ground generally favouring a phenomenological vein, whereby I experience the world through my body (Merleau-Ponty 2012: 330). I traipse and assimilate the landscape around me, documenting anything that captures my interest through various means. In the context of this paper I have resorted to scant photographic documentation and mental images in order to investigate how

drawing might impact, facilitate, expand and reconfigure place memory. Trigg deems place memory as a 'privileged' type of memory, as it tends to strengthen the connection between self and world (2012: XVII). This claim finds resonance in Heidegger's Dasein which also implies a tendency towards closeness to the world, establishing a connection, a relationship with the world or, as Heidegger explains, 'being-in-the-world', as in dwelling and residing alongside or 'being absorbed in the world' (2008: 79-80).

The necessity of 'being there', in the face of not being able to do so, may encourage us to draw on Derrida's 'fissure' to reconstitute a semblance of the 'whole'. Berger suggests that images can be used to invoke the appearance of something in its absence and that, furthermore, the image could outlast what it represents (2009: 10). Photographs were particularly useful in visually allowing me to recall bits of a distant valley. Bergson's comparison of recalling specific events from memory akin to the focusing of a camera (2004: 171) seems particularly appropriate in this context. Photographs, albeit scant, allowed me to recompose the place, landscape and environment, at a particular point in time when the entire population had been encouraged not to venture outside unnecessarily due to the pandemic. Lockdown has taught us that walking is indeed a privilege. In view of such restrictions, I could only rely on limited visual and mental documentation. The principal aim was to delve into specific areas pertaining to a place I had frequently visited in the past. However, the few photographs in my possession constituted a vague wide-angle vista: a landscape viewed from far away lacking essential specificities, detail and 'closeness'. I placed the limited photographs I had in front of me, put charcoal to paper, and allowed the fragile sticks to 'walk' slowly along the textured surface.

This symbolic 'walk' represents an attempt to engage in a process of mark-making that draws me closer to the valley. Photographs may act as memory triggers; they bring up and conjure mental images by allowing a glimpse into the past. Charcoal dust gently creeps in and piles up in fissures, counteracting loss of memory by topping up the void around the periphery of the still vivid detail. Following Trigg's idea concerning the absence of things (2012: 25), I am 'un-drawing' things, allowing the paper to show through, to become 'fissure', and to draw the 'attention to the facticity of those things in the first place'. Selected areas from the photographs were translated into relative close-up drawings. The lack of detail, owing to the vague wide-angled shots, presented various challenges; visual information had to be negotiated directly on the surface of the paper, as memory gaps, akin to Derrida's song intervals, were translated into essential components of the whole.

The process of drawing (out) place entails piecing an image, bit by bit, bringing together memories, joining dots, lines and attempting to retrieve and to recreate place around 'lost' fragments. This methodology is based on 'what is' and 'what is not', but to be able to withdraw from the 'lived' experiences, the two aspects have been transposed, resulting in a kind of reversed-out drawing. It is a discreetly experimental approach, which in Biggs' words can be described as 'informed playing around' (2009: 41), allowing different elements to talk to each other in a perhaps subtly different dialect. This is similar to the micro-intervals that connect the various components of a musical symphony. This might come across as marginal. However, as Bergson reminds us, to call up the past we must be able to *distanciate* ourselves from the moment and 'have the power to value the useless' (2004: 94), which may encourage us to dream. Similar to temporary silence in song, the distance from and longing for place appeared to intertwine and to encourage the still vivid mental images to emerge further.

Bergson explains that 'to *picture* is not to *remember*' (2004: 173; original italics). Drawing, for me, imbricates the two aspects – picturing/remembering – becoming a means to connect the spaces in

between. That 'something else' that emerges, as distant images infiltrate present consciousness (2004: 174). The process of drawing appears to decelerate the stream of memories; it allows for reflection on lost ones, in the same way that song fissures emphasise the interludes. The act of drawing may be perceived to encapsulate Bergson's 'sensorimotor' idea (2004: 177), whereby place (re-) emerges in the present through a creative multisensorial experience, combining sensation and movement (both in one's mind and on the surface of the paper).

Minor Falls

> *The leaves are falling, falling as from far,*
> *As though above were withering farthest gardens;*
> *They fall with a denying attitude.*
>
> *And night by night, down into solitude,*
> *The heavy earth falls far from every star.*
>
> *We are all falling. This hand's falling too –*
> *All have this falling-sickness none withstands.*
>
> *And yet there's One whose gently-holding hands,*
> *This universal falling can't fall through. – (Rilke 1996: 162)*

Living and working on a tiny, dry, Mediterranean island, inevitably affects my place-oriented drawing practice. No mountains or rivers are to be found on this island; only cliffs, streams and minor, discreet 'waterfalls' amidst garrigues, valleys and a handful of lush, wooded patches of land. With a population of just over half a million people, the island is one of the more densely populated countries worldwide. According to an interview published on the European Environment Agency website, Malta is one of the top ten water-scarce countries in the world and a huge amount of its water resource derives from desalination plants.[1] Being able to flee to the valleys is an essential need, given such a restricted spatial context, as it introduces tranquil intervals that help reinvigorate the body and the mind. Such breaks are aimed to introduce some distance between the self and the crowd(s).

My place-oriented practice often draws me to a particular valley, up north, where the island tends to be relatively untainted. Although rivers are totally absent, traces of ancient rivers are ubiquitously recorded in the island's soft coralline limestone in the form of *widien* (singular, *wied)* which are essentially dry riverbeds. The Mediterranean valley is literally a huge fissure created through soft ground erosion over long stretches of time.

The *wied* appears as a hybrid landform between the river valley of the humid north and the '*wadi*' of the arid south. It is a typical geological formation of the Mediterranean region (Anderson 1997: 112). The presence of rivers on the island can be discerned from their rock-solid absence; an aerial view of the valleys quickly reveals the eroded trails and the exact passage hewn and traversed by ancient waters across millennia. In winter, water still flows through the generous tributaries that keep nourishing the plentiful valleys etched into the island's arid crust.

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[1] https://www.eea.europa.eu/signals/signals-2018-content-list/articles/interview-2014-malta-water-scarcity [accessed 21 September 2020].

The title of this series of four charcoal drawings unfolds onto many different layers. Primarily referring to a reading by John Muir, the title also resonates with the few discreet temporary waterflows gushing through one of the longest valleys in the north-west of Malta. This body of work also evokes memory 'falls' (forgetting), alongside various triggers that enable us to relive previous place encounters (albeit in a non-embodied way), as our memories 'fall' back into place. Drawing functions as a locus in which re-cognition and reconfiguration of memories can be extracted, investigated and manifested (Gibbons 2007: 6).

Drawings are chronologically titled *Minor Falls 1* to *4*. All pieces derive from a particular patch of land, where multiple sources of rain water converge and accumulate speed. *Minor Falls* can be deceiving; although initially the drawings appear to exude quiet, one would soon realise that there might be things lurking in the background. The viewer is invited to draw closer, to explore and to discover further layers of material, encouraging the eyes to search and to find and not limit the gaze to a superficial level. The first drawing (Fig. 2) is characterised by a fairly central vanishing point, slightly verging towards the right. The top half brings together an intricate network of charcoal marks; a dense entanglement of foliage and branches almost impenetrable even to the eye. The drawing depicts a lush patch where white poplar, eucalyptus, needle-pines, buttercups and alisma plants compete for territory. Where memory fails, I fill in the image with charcoal marks to promote the 'vivid' content around the 'gaps'. The chosen methodology draws on dense, emboldened, charcoal hatching to camouflage the 'lost' detail, reminiscent of painting conservation techniques, whereby one may still be able to view the 'entire' (albeit partly lost) image from a relative distance. Here, distance is key as it serves to translate the gaps (fissures) into content.

FIGURE 2 - MINOR FALLS 1 (CHARCOAL ON PAPER)

All four drawings, separately and collectively, are intended to encourage multiple readings, as the viewer needs to untangle the knotted information ensconced between the leaves, branches, stones and watery undulations. The almost vertiginous, intricate non-arborescent juxtapositions of several components and the blurring of spatial boundaries may incite Deleuze and Guattari's 'movements of deterritorialization' and 'lines of flight' (1987: 178). In a similar vein, Bachelard argues that 'linear reading deprives us of countless daydreams' (1994: 162)and it is hoped that such an intense, tousled meshwork of charcoal strokes and meandering crevices encourage a rhizomic reading of place.

Along the water-eroded passage an opulent selection of flora thrives during the colder months (Fig. 3). Muddy deposits harbouring a sumptuous but fragile microecology emit a strong, rather unpleasant smell of decay, exacerbated by the presence of woodlice, termites and other rot-loving insects. I could effortlessly picture the water flowing along. I could also still hear the reverberating sound it makes as it comes crashing down the terraced banks. As I drew, multisensory layers comprising textures, echoes and unorthodox smells gradually kept coming back to me. I could almost breathe those smells again. I often find myself struggling to take in and to decipher the vast amount of information unearthed through the drawing process; information that appears much denser and more saturated than viewing the photographs and reminiscing about place alone. As visits to the valley were interrupted (due to the pandemic) fragmented place-memories appeared more lucid, evoking those intended intervals in music that contribute to the overall structure of the symphony – gaps became fillers. As can be discerned from all four drawings, the darker areas seem to harbour multiple nuances, imbricated with the intricacies of the whiter space achieved by allowing the paper to show through.

FIGURE 3 - MINOR FALLS 2 (CHARCOAL ON PAPER)

It feels as if I am being drawn in, ever more closer to place, as the space around me grows smaller, denser, and more saturated with meaning. In the process of drawing, the entire 'world' seems to contract into a nest, a confined space that incites meditation on the subject of one's own being. Bachelard reminds us that 'often it is from the very fact of concentration in the most restricted intimate

space that the dialectics of inside and outside draws its strength' (1994: 229). In the nearly chaotic act of mark making one is constantly being drawn into a confined yet incredibly vast, wide-open space. The fissure appears to exude creative possibilities that encourage the viewer to explore and to find, to ponder and to make meaning. Those obscure charcoaled areas conceal a forgotten placeness; information about the valley which I can no longer recover nor extract from the photographs.

The third drawing (Fig. 4) is more 'concealed', as in various areas the background is crypted, shrouded, by a complex veil of reversed-out canes. Water reeds and bamboo culms along the embankment conceal the fauna activity thriving undercover. I could clearly remember the stocky canes emerging authoritatively from the water and the crackling sound they make when they rub against one another. I drew around them, allowing the surface of the paper to show through while blocking the rest with charcoal. Dusky intervals allow for further details to come out; forgetfulness 'is a calculation that puts harmony in the place of melody' (Derrida 1976: 199).

FIGURE 4 - MINOR FALLS 3 (CHARCOAL ON PAPER)

Drawing slows down the process of absorption, once again evoking Derrida's song intervals. The slow, intensive practice of drawing seems to stimulate a deeper thinking about place; inevitably new layers will (re-) surface to mediate memory gaps and to recover place. I cannot really tell which encounters are real and which are not, as I strive to see through the juxtaposition of images that the imagination keeps giving. The surface of the paper serves as a repository of things recalled. Memory gaps loaded with charcoal indirectly alluding to (un-) discoverable, hidden or lost detail.

Memory, like place, is fluid, open and characterised by a constant state of evolution. Drawing is often deemed to evolve fluidly and therefore it might be considered an ideal practice to explore place as 'ongoing' (Tarlo and Tucker 2017: 48-49). Drawing is a formidable practice to investigate the world around us; an expedient exploratory tool that allows for conceptual and physical drifting along vast terrains, peaks, faults and crevices. Between the first three drawings and the fourth there is a temporal

gap; an extended intermezzo. It took me a while to go back to the drawings, as it seemed that all memory pertaining to the valley had been exhausted; there was not much else to remember and to recover. The limited choice of digital photographs did not appear to offer much scope for meandering and lockdown prevented me from going back to the valley. After some weeks I resolved to put charcoal to paper in the hope of re-igniting place memory. It was a rather long interval, which I hoped would encourage further creative possibilities.

To absorb the qualities and nuances of place one has to be physically in place: 'one's place is where one puts down one's feet' (Carlson 2009: 83) but the pandemic disrupted site visits. The drawing process is one of searching and re-searching, attempting to excavate and translate a jumble of thoughts, images and traces of place implanted in the mind into a series of lines. The act of digging necessitates a re-seeing: 'memory is complexified by a conflation of past and present, in which that which is retrieved is contingent on what is felt or experienced in the present and becomes as much a feature of the present as of the past' (Gibbons 2007: 16). The 'fissure' allows us to glimpse the hidden, what lies underneath, and that which has been consigned to the past.

FIGURE 5 - MINOR FALLS 4 (CHARCOAL ON PAPER)

The final drawing in the series (Fig. 5) follows a long interval. To search and create one 'has to enter into the realm of imagination, to take on the possible, as well as the plausible, and probable' (Sullivan 2005: 115). Faced with a palpable limitation of memories and photographic documentation of the valley, I borrowed from the three previous drawings; I had not thought about this added possibility prior to initiating this project – *drawing* on drawing. In this last piece, a modest stream occupies the lower part of the image; dotted with worn out stones and chippings, gently disrupting the flow of water by engaging into a rhythmic playful performance that generates endless ripples, very much like the pauses in song. The left hand side is relatively void of detail, feathery, hazy, while the other side appears more sentient. That is where the sun hits the fresh, younger, lightly coloured leaves. The temporal and physical distance from the valley seemed to further provoke the imagination and this helped bridge some of the memory

gaps. I began to draw more elaborate worm-like marks, introducing tiny fissures in between that appear to imbue the background with lots of detail. This methodology encouraged the 'original' place to morph into a significantly different one.

The drawing practice I am focusing on concerns a number of related yet distinct images. There is the photographed place followed by the drawing of place. These images are bound together by memory, which can be considered a third image that serves as a 'cosmos', where all images may extend and develop further into 'another' place; what I call an image-*inary* place. We often look at photographs to rekindle our deep seated memories; photographs might push memory back into the conscious part of our brain but as Barthes reminds us, such a resurfacing is not guaranteed. The 'fissure' might encourage or facilitate the resurfacing, but when looking at a photograph, consciousness and memory do not necessarily always cross paths (Barthes 1981: 85). Generally speaking, the photograph is 'an affirmation of the subject's thereness' (Sontag 1977: 77); it might take us 'there' again, but it might not. Through the practice of drawing I found myself in a more fluid position, whereby I could wander, re-explore and negotiate place-memory. The extent of the 'real' and the 'imaginary' is hard to interpret as, once imagination sets in, the margin that separates the two worlds becomes incredibly blurred. One would need to embrace this fluid 'reality' and the uncertainties it brings to the ability of recalling place through mark making. If we consider this as an opportune episode of place-making it does not really matter which place one is going 'back' to. Moreover, the dark areas representing memory 'falls' and the white space around them will inevitably conjure a plethora of different (personal) places in the viewer's mind. Following Winterson's claim that 'to evoke a place imaginatively is to find it through its many layers and strange incarnations' (2006), Trigg argues that 'imagination shows itself to be an act of place-making for the future' (2012: 172-173).

The image of a 'past' place reterritorialized and transposed into the present resonates with Casey's notion of 're-implacement', whereby the place of origin unfolds through a poetic 'representational transformation that modifies some of its aspects while keeping the place itself recognizable' (2002: 30). My own practice of negative-drawing, as described throughout this paper, embraces both the memories and the gaps, which akin to Derrida's song intervals are necessary to complete the piece. This approach to drawing (out) place is built around 'loss'; it acquires impetus through dislocation and 'distanciation' from a previously experienced place. The end result is a drawn 'radiographic' image that attempts to construct place around 'lost' detail. Following the willow sticks mentioned in the beginning, the original place has to renounce its existence to allow for something else to emerge.

Conclusion

Regularly, I draw on phenomenology to inform my practice. My drawings exist at the intersection of 'being' and 'not being' in place, and while it is necessary to experience place physically, directly, I am always searching for ways that enable me to 'dis-place' myself in the act of drawing. The drawing in/out approach is key to my work as it allows for a back and forth movement between a memorised and an imaginary place. The space that exists in between is where memories and imagination collide. Imagination, Trigg argues, is an 'active retriever' and in accord with this idea I often resolve to drawing to tap into my imagination (2012: 66). Drawing becomes a portal that allows for further place prospects to develop. Rosenberg refers to this special characteristic as 'ideational drawing', arguing that 'one thinks with and through drawing to make discoveries' (2008: 109). Throughout this paper I argued that drawing may be useful in negotiating memory 'gaps', since it draws the 'remembered' closer to the 'imagined'.

'[T]he work of imagination[…]forever points toward the restoration of memory's fallout' (Trigg 2012: 221-222). The practice of drawing instilled a hopeful sense of re-implacement during a period of lockdown when direct experience of a once familiar place had been impeded.

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THE PARALLAX GAP: DRAWING SPECTRES IN POST-CONFLICT NORTHERN IRELAND

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In post-conflict Northern Ireland, the artist Willie Doherty has been active in showing how the memory trace of the Troubles lingers on as a spectral presence. Doherty's work has been influential to a number of visual artists working in response to this context, whose work can be characterized by a heightened sense of in-betweenness and representational, spatial, or temporal instability (Long, 2019). Such work is concerned with an oscillation between the past and the present in order to convey the sense of an uncertain future. Although filmic, photographic, and sculptural works have been deployed by such artists to harness these conditions of uncertainty, it is the medium of drawing that remains relatively under-explored as a way of showing how the spectres of violent pasts remain in this fragile context.

This paper is an examination in the use of drawing to show the spectral presence that continues to haunt spaces marred by histories of violence in Northern Ireland's post-conflict context. The study is underpinned by theories that relate to haunting, but also to psychoanalysis, as read through Slavoj Žižek's theory of the Parallax Gap. Theoretical concerns are applied to the filmic techniques of the artist Willie Doherty (2007), and to Richard Hamilton's painting Trainsition IIII (1954). The resultant drawing and textual analysis responds to the spectral-turn in post-conflict art in Northern Ireland, making a case for drawing as a practice of haunting.

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Introduction

In January 2019, the dissident Republican group calling itself the New IRA planted and detonated a car bomb outside the Londonderry/Derry city courthouse. The harrowing images caught by CCTV cameras bore a striking resemblance to the atrocities that took place in Omagh (1998) and Claudy (1972) during the height of the Troubles period, with journalists linking the explosion to the ongoing Brexit negotiations and the possible return to a hard border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The anxiety stemming from these recent events signifies the collective trauma that continues to blight Northern Ireland even in the twenty-two years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement. In the contemporary post-conflict context, visual artists such as Willie Doherty have been showing how this trauma has continued into peacetime, adopting techniques that evoke a spectral presence in places that hold an historical legacy of violence. Doherty's work shows how the spectres of violence linger on, because they have not been reconciled or fully confronted and therefore have the capacity to inhibit notions of a progressive future.

One aspect of the trend in post-Troubles art has involved the speculative re-ordering or re-imagining of the relation between the past, the present and the future within this notionally settled contemporary period (Long, 2019). In this pursuit, such visual art depicts disturbances in the present that agitate the normative reconciliatory pathways to peace. The view proposed by Lawther (2020, p. 170) is that such an approach might be considered as a practice of haunting, where spectres can be used to understand the intersection between unresolved pasts and the transmission of trauma post-conflict. Gordon (1997) acknowledges the ghost as, "the principal form by which something lost or invisible or seemingly not there makes itself known or apparent to us". Furthermore, Gordon (1997) tells us that we should not think of ghosts as representations of missing or dead persons, but as haunting reminders of the violence and complex social relations in which we live. Jacques Derrida (1994) also held the view that we must "learn to live with ghosts…in the name of justice". In both of these conceptions, the excavation of ghosts creates an unravelling of the politics of memory, confronting us with the past in any conjectures about the future.

Although visual artists such as Willie Doherty, Duncan Campbell, Una Walker, Aisling O'Beirn, John Duncan, Ursula Burke and Daniel Jewesbury have been concerned with filmic, photographic, and sculptural techniques as a way of highlighting the struggle for memory in the post-conflict context, it is drawing that has been relatively under-utilized in the framing of these elisions between remembering and forgetting. This paper seeks to address this issue by making a case for haunting as a practice through drawing. The paper opens with a brief account on theories related to haunting in the post-conflict context and expands on these notions through the philosopher Slavoj Žižek's theory of the parallax gap. The following section presents an analysis of the parallax view in Willie Doherty's film Ghost Story (2007) and considers techniques that Doherty has adopted in order to evoke the sense of a spectral presence. This filmic analysis is then paralleled with a study on techniques adopted by the artist Richard Hamilton in his parallax painting Trainsition IIII (1954). The fourth section is a summary of the theory and artistic techniques analyzed; deployed in the form of a parallax drawing of the site where the author's cousin was killed by an IRA car bomb in 1992. The paper concludes by arguing that the practice of haunting through drawing can accentuate the importance of looking at the past in all its complexity in any consideration of the future.

Haunting as a psychoanalytical tool

The ongoing Brexit deliberations have induced thoughts of a possible return to a hard border between the North and the Republic of Ireland, with debates focused on how the 'line' that divides each country might be constituted. The debates sparked notions that old forms of division could yet appear, under new conditions, for unexpected reasons (Long, 2020). According to Lawther (2020, p. 157), the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 signaled a moment of transitional justice for Northern Ireland, but what the agreement lacked was a comprehensive approach to dealing with the past. This lack of a unified approach to peace making is registered by the art theorist Declan Long in his recent book Ghost Haunted Land (2019). In his survey of art produced in the post-conflict context, it is the notion of a haunting of the past resonating in the present that challenges the idea of the progressive future that was originally intended by the peace agreement. In psychic terms, the recent spate of violence might be classified as a return of the repressed, signaling that unresolved trauma has been triggered by the border issue. Haunting, then, is not something that causes a petrification of the subject, but rather disturbs it in a way that moves the psyche into action, enabling the acknowledgement of charged pasts and unresolved issues.

The academic Stephen Frosh has expanded on the relationships between haunting and psychoanalysis, stating that "psychoanalysis intentionally stirs up demons, it refuses to stay silent about trouble and pain, it insists on talking about the things that we would much rather hide or lay to rest" (Frosh, 2013). As Gordon (1997) argues, haunting and the appearance of spectres or ghosts is one way in which we are notified that what has been concealed, repressed or remains unanswered is very much alive and present with the potential for personal, social, and political disruption. Here, the exposure of the spectre enables a way of bringing the past into the present so that it permeates future thoughts and actions. This approach to haunting is strikingly evident in the film work of Irish artist Willie Doherty, where the approach has been to seek out and represent seemingly forgotten places in a circuitous loop. Doherty's layering of absent spaces evokes a disturbed presence in the way that scenes cut in and out of one another, performing an action that is symbolic of the traumatic discontinuity that continues to pervade the collective inner life of trauma victims in the post-conflict context.

Frosh's framing of the interrelationship between haunting and psychoanalysis reads as a tool to help take possession of the subject, rather than exorcise the ghost from it. In this holding space, it is the unconscious that is rendered visible by a process of reflecting on how the past infiltrates the present. Trauma has the power to evade time, manifesting as a frozen object that is paradoxically also in motion through its cyclic capacity to blot a subject's experience of external reality. One way that this paradox can be conceptualized is through Slavoj Žižek's theory of the Parallax Gap. According to Žižek (2006), parallax can be defined as "the apparent displacement of an object (the shift of position against a background), caused by a change in observational position that provides a new line of sight". Here, Žižek is interested in the psychic gap between the inner world of the subject and the external world of the object, likening parallax to the way that the unconscious operates. In Žižek's theory, when a shift in the observer occurs, there is no shift in the object being observed; i.e., there is no change in the observer's perspective of the object, it is the same object just looked at from a different position.

Žižek's formulation of the parallax gap might be applied to the peace agreement in Northern Ireland, where the shift in political position from 'trouble' to 'peace' did not fully account for the collective trauma caused by the Troubles. For trauma sufferers, the ontological position is one that is suspended in the gap between these two political states. One way to acknowledge this difficulty is to expose the trauma induced by the 'parallax gap' through a process of haunting, and this is particularly potent when thinking about sites that have had violent acts performed on them. According to Lawther (2020, p. 163) one of the primary ways in which landscape can be haunted is through the "freezing" of geographical space and suspension of the time-space-memory continuum. Feldman (1991) argues, "Ghost tales map the history of death in local space, disrupting the linearity of time". For Feldman, ghosts are spectral traces, whose reason for existing (or persisting) is to call attention to what happened in a particular place and to demand that that place does not pass from memory.

The process of selectively calling forth the dead and the past through place has inspired the author's re-visiting of a car park where his cousin was killed by an IRA car bomb in 1992. Spencer McGarry was an off-duty RUC officer who had been visiting his mother in the seaside town of Ballycastle when his car was installed with a mercury tilt-switch bomb (Figure 4A). Spencer's murder left a remarkable absence in Ballycastle, but also contributed to a wider anxiety around police murders that had occurred during the period. The carpark in Ballycastle is for many a space that is suspended in time because of the events that took place in it. In this revisiting of the site, and with the drawings that follow, the intention is to fill the absence left by Spence, and to represent his loss as a continued presence.

FIGURE 1: WILLIE DOHERTY, GHOST STORY (2007), HIGH-DEFINITION DIGITAL VIDEO, COLOR, SOUND, RUNNING TIME (LOOPED): 15 MIN. DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART. COURTESY OF THE ARTIST.

Taking possession of the ghost

Wille Doherty's film Ghost Story (2007) is a fifteen-minute video projection that centers on a journey in and around Londonderry/Derry in Northern Ireland. The video explores the idea of the past haunting the present, where the evocation of ghosts can be linked to the violence associated with the Troubles. In both the steadiness of the camera that gives the sensation of a body that is detached from its surroundings, and with a voiceover that refers to "restless creatures whose intentions are often beyond our comprehension" and figures who "inhabit a world somewhere between here and the next", there is a strong sense that spectral forces are at work (Long, 2019). The sites depicted in the film also link to this spectral quality, resonating with a common trope in Doherty's work that focusses on places that appear to be forgotten. This is most striking in the main location of the film, which centers on a long track in a woodland terrain; the spectral quality of the scene is evoked through its resemblance to a search party looking for a disappeared victim. The evocative setting, along with the disturbing slow passage of the camera's movement, denotes the petrification of a body that is being carried forward by a spectral force towards a terminus that is never reached (Figure 1).

In two points of the film, a parallax view is revealed as the camera's position shifts 90 degrees from the dominant perspectival shot of the woodland track. Motion parallax is a type of monocular depth perception cue that occurs when a subject is in motion, telling the observer which objects are closer as they appear to move faster than objects that are further away. To shoot these segments, a Steadicam operator was positioned on a balloon-wheeled dolly and pushed along the track, the resulting visual effect is similar to the view a passenger might have when looking out the side window of a moving car (Figure 2). The scene shows a barbed wire fence in the foreground, a dense wooded area in the middle, and a mountainous terrain in the background. If the observing eye attempts to fix on one of the trees in the middle distance, the fence and barbed wire in the foreground appear to shift quickly to the left, while the mountains in the background shift slowly to the right. It is the visual gap produced by this view that creates a blurring of the landscape around the fixed point of the tree. This phenomenon adds to the spectral qualities of the film because it holds the observing subject in suspension, strung out in a fixed position while the direction of travel appears to be moving in opposite directions. The turbulence of the scene rushing past the 'locked-in' eye functions as a visual metaphor for how trauma inhibits the capacity to form a sense of depth in meaning to places that harbor violent pasts.

Drawing the parallax gap

The parallax scene in Doherty's film provides a useful understanding on how filmic techniques can address the practice of haunting. For the purposes of this paper, the analysis of the film opens up a question on how other representational techniques have been used to study the visual phenomenon of motion parallax. One such artist concerned with this approach to depicting the reality of seeing was Richard Hamilton, who would later come to take on the Troubles as a subject in his work. It was the writing of the contemporary US scientist James J. Gibson that would influence the question of vision in motion for Hamilton, coming from a time when the artist was particularly concerned with techniques oppositional to linear perspective. Gibson's The Perception of the Visual World (1950) is an empirical account on the visual reading of the entire environment, often from an aerial viewpoint, scanning organic and manmade textures for depth and meaning. In Trainsition IIII (1954), Hamilton re-did for himself, on the King's Cross to Newcastle train, Gibson's experiments on the relative motion of objects in the visual field of a speeding spectator. The resultant painting shows objects moving in different directions with an ensued blurring of the external environment (Figure 3).

Hamilton's painting depicts the view from a train window as he looks out at 90 degrees to it. In the piece, the focus is on a tree – drawn towards the upper right of the painting. The visual apex is focused on this object while the landscape appears to be shifting in two opposite directions both in front of it and behind it. Each mark on the painting beyond the tree appears to be duplicated at a given distance along

a notional parallel, one example being the single telegraph pole of which the motion is apparent (it is seen three times in the short space of time represented, with particular clarity when it intersects the point of attention) (Tate, 1972). It is the representation of other phenomena entering the scene which creates further disruption: the accelerating car that blurs across the landscape leaves a disintegrating trace and, similarly, the fracturing of the foreground is a measure of how the objects that are closer to the eye appear to move faster due to the speed at which their image hits the retina. These smears and blurs in the painting are an attempt by Hamilton to 'make-real' the experience of viewing external reality that goes some way to challenging perspectival hegemonies.

Perspective is a model for a certain form of organized vision but constructed in a way that permits the depiction of illusion over reality. To apply this metaphor to the peace process in Northern Ireland, the lack of a unifying structure to harness the collective trauma of the period has resulted in a continued traumatic pulse in the post-conflict context. For trauma sufferers, although the political rhetoric is one of moving forward, there is an unconscious force that keeps the trouble of the past in the present, challenging the possibility of moving on. Hamilton's approach to depicting motion parallax registers the reality of seeing as ambiguous and full of gaps and blurs, showing this in relation to a visual fixation on one object (the tree). In this way, Hamilton's parallax can be utilized as a visual metaphor for trauma in the post-conflict context; while bodies are attempting to move forward in the present, it is the events of the past that are also pulling bodies in the opposite direction. This splitting of the body is how trauma acquires the subject, producing a psychic tug-of-war that makes the reality of seeing more difficult to access, and where the ambiguity of life is siphoned off in place of an illusion. In other words, trauma keeps a subject looking firmly at the tree.

Drawing out the ghost

The following drawings respond to the site where the author's cousin was killed by an IRA car bomb in 1991. Spencer McGarry, an off-duty RUC officer, was visiting his mother when his car was fitted with a mercury tilt-switch bomb under the wheel arch of his car. The bomb exploded as the car tilted on a small incline in the car park shortly after Spence drove away. In the minds of many in Ballycastle, and for those who lost RUC family members during the Troubles, this car park holds a spectral presence of the events that took place there. It is, for the author, a place that triggers a haunting, repeating image of Spence's short journey as his car started, exploded, and came to an eventual standstill.

Despite the triggering affect that driving through the car park has for the author, there is little by way of commemoration of the event on the site other than for a small memorial in overgrown bushes next to one of the parking bays. Although poignant in its quietness, confronting the memorial evokes a different experience to the sensation triggered by the fragments of memory that haunt the author when driving through the space. These memories aren't wholly focused on the explosion, but rather the aftershock of it; reminders of the somber discussions in my Grandparents' living room following the event, the newly heightened trepidation around vehicles, and the parental induction into how to check for car bombs. These memory fragments are bound up with the event and, for the author, made for a perception of the external environment as inherently unstable.

Although this article has drawn on both filmic and painterly techniques to substantiate the phenomenon of parallax as a visual metaphor for haunting, the desire to draw this experience, rather than to film or to paint it, is part of an intention to leave a physical impression on the surface of a page, as there is an impression of the disturbance in my mind. Through a desire to literally impress the visceral unease that is

triggered, there is a willingness to show the aftereffects of living in a troubled community. The drawing is then a channel to show this subjective haunting in a way that goes beyond the freezing of subjectivity that can arise from such traumatic events.

The intense uneasiness felt by looking out at the environment while being in the car recalls Sigmund Freud's analogy of the mystic writing pad as a model for how perception works. A mystic writing pad is a child's toy consisting of a thin sheet of clear plastic covering a thick wax board. It works by pressing a stylus onto a plastic sheet which leaves an impression on a wax block below. When the plastic is lifted up, the dark traces on the film disappear, but the wax block retains an impression of the information it has received. Freud used this analogy to show how the psyche takes in information from the outside world that is then recorded in the wax as stored layers of unconscious memory. The appearance and disappearance of the writing in the toy is similar to "the flickering-up and passing-away of consciousness in the process of perception" (Freud et al., 2001). These base layers of the unconscious work to construct subjective perception, and it is the author's feeling of instability as a cause of the flickering up of memory that is registered in the drawings (Figures 5A, 5B, 5C).

The drawing process started using the author's car to retrace the passage of Spence's car. In following the same route, it became apparent that being in the car forced a way of looking at the site that was unidirectional, with both eyes locked firmly in front. The sensation of being locked-in to a linear view of the site provoked mental imagery of what Spence might have seen moments prior to the car's explosion. The thought seemed to intensify, in a subjective way, the author's already objective frozen state of having to keep looking forward while driving.

Knowing that the drawing could not be conducted while driving seemed to resonate with this petrified position, and contributed to the author's desire to find another way of looking at the site so as to destabilize the linearity of the view and attain another perspective on it. To achieve this, a notional third eye was deployed taking the form of a small camera installed on the driver's side window. The use of the camera set up a paradoxical embodied/disembodied dialogue with the car park, because although the author was present, a decision had been made to use a secondary device to help capture the dislocated sensation stemming from the memory of the atrocity. In this way, the author's hand is denied from making a drawing in the here and now, severed in favor of the mechanical third eye to try and gain another perspective. The parallax is at work here because although the author's hand is displaced in favor of the camera, the camera's use is paradoxically an embodied act because it registers the subjective distance that the author has with the site. The camera then becomes symbolic of a desire to maintain some subjective distance from the memory, that is, at times, too uncomfortable to bear (Figure 5C).

The pervading discomfort actualized through the memory extends to the author's decision to make the drawing away from the site. Although the author has visited the car park many times, it is not an environment that felt comfortable for lingering in for an extended period of time, this trepidation stemming from a fear over who might see the author and the questions that might ensue. This uneasiness meant for a hasty survey using the camera and a swift return home to look at the images gathered. In the studio, the images were extracted from the camera and digitally stitched together, the resulting image then projected onto the surface of the author's drawing board where a tracing using pencil on cartridge paper was conducted.

Although influenced by the analysis of parallax in both Doherty's and Hamilton's work, the author's tracing over the image is an attempt to capture the sensation of being petrified as experienced when driving through the site. This is channeled through an attempt to accurately map the visual discordance that comes from the parallax view obtained by the camera. The tracing picks out the apparent doubling of particular features – such as the cars in the foreground which appear to be moving to the left, while the pitched roofs on the houses in the background seem to duplicate and travel in the opposite direction (Figure 5A). By picking out and tracing these doublings and disturbances, there is a sense of remembering the explosion of the car as if looking out of the driver's side window at the moment of detonation.

Despite the original intention of the drawing to materialize the tremors of memory, there is an intensity of the event that is largely absent in the drawing. Rather than creating deep impressions on the page that might more accurately link to the severity of the event, the actual impressions made maintain a degree of lightness. Furthermore, although an adult's eye and hand is engaged in the making of the drawing, the drawing's qualities maintain a child-like crudity in execution, indeed the author was 7 years old when Spencer was murdered. The regressive, sometimes lacking observational rigor of the drawing may well be a product of the disturbance incurred by the event, and the crude play demonstrated in the drawing revealing an awareness of the difficulties in trying to form a sense of depth in meaning to a place when the past and the future (going backwards and forwards) seem to create a freezing effect on the observing subject; as if keeping an observer in a child-like state.

This difficulty in forming a coherent sense of the environment as expressed through the drawing links back to Žižek's formulation of the parallax gap as the psychic space between a subject and an object that can't be mediated, even if there is a shift in perspective from the observing subject. This creates a futile quality in the drawing because, although in peacetime there has been an objective movement away from violence, for trauma victims the position is one of petrification caused by the perpetual psychic revisiting of violent pasts that live in the present. This denotes an impossible situation where although the observer has changed position to an objective space of peace, the trauma as induced by the memory of violence remains. In this situation, a subject can move all it wants, but ultimately it is frozen because the unconscious keeps it firmly in place. Paradoxically, by attempting to show this frozen position from a subjective point of view, its expression is perhaps a way of unfreezing this petrified position, because it tells us something about what it is to be a product of such a volatile environment (Figures 4A, 4B). In this way, Spence's loss is treated as a reminder, through drawing, of the aftereffects that past atrocities continue to have.

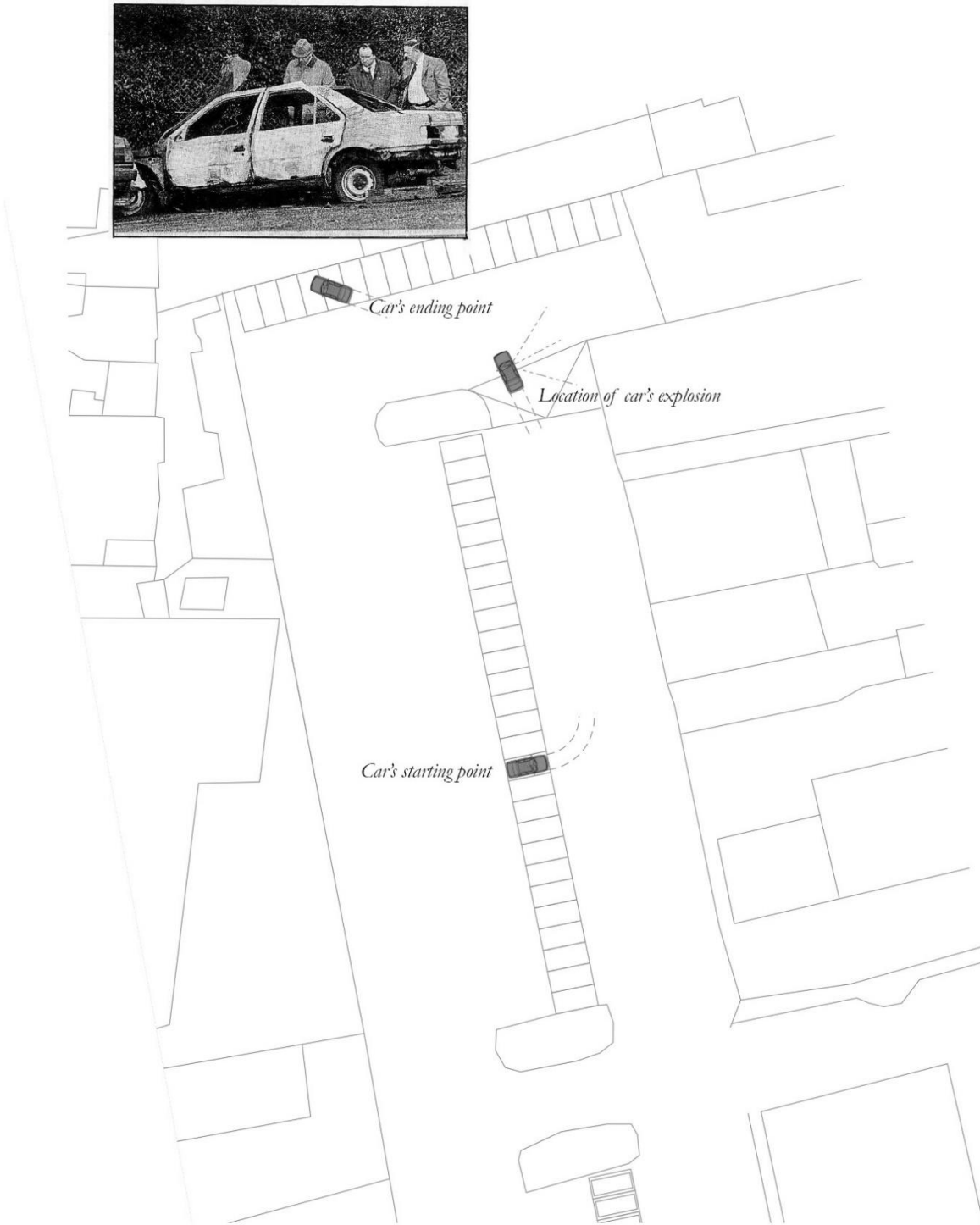FIGURE 4A: PARALLAX VIEW FROM POINT OF EXPLOSION, DIGITAL MONTAGE, 21x83CM, 2020

FIGURE 4B: MAPPING OF SPENCER MCGARRY'S CAR, CAD DRAWING 50x50CM 2019.

FIGURE 5A: CARPARK PARALLAX. PENCIL ON PAPER, 21x83CM, 2020.

FIGURE 5B: CARPARK PARALLAX DETAIL. PENCIL ON PAPER, 2020.

FIGURE 5C: CARPARK PARALLAX DETAIL. PENCIL ON PAPER, 2020.

Conclusion

This paper has presented drawing as a method for haunting through its representation of the continued transmission of trauma in Northern Ireland's post-conflict context. This approach to haunting through the use of parallax is inspired by the artists Willie Doherty and Richard Hamilton, and in the application of Slavoj Žižek's theory on the parallax gap. In response to this analysis, a parallax drawing of a site imbued with historical violence has been made as a way of demonstrating this method in action. The drawing, in both theory and practice, establishes a way of giving form to the trauma that punctures the present through a depiction of the gaps in vision that occur when the world appears to be moving backwards and forwards at the same time, "In a period of apparent 'aftermath' (time) always seems to flow in more than one direction" (Long, 2020). The result of this oscillation between past and present renders a petrification of the subject and a symbolic suspension of the psyche that is symptomatic of a traumatic environment.

This article contributes to scholarly and artistic practice in the context of post-conflict Northern Ireland by situating drawing as another way of communicating the trauma incurred by historical violence. Recent disturbances in Northern Ireland have called attention to related creative practices as warning signals to the impact that a return to violence might have. Visual artists such as Willie Doherty are providing reminders that much of the past still lives vehemently in the present for many people in the country. As a way of reminding, one conception of the parallax drawing is that it functions like a psychoanalytic

diagram, exposing the origins of the traumatic event. In this way it is a form of visual 'talking', similar to the dialogue between a psychoanalyst and analysand. Due to its process of excavating the past, this approach to drawing might be conceived as a form of transitional justice, communicating how places marked by a legacy of violence continue to impact on the collective psyche in Northern Ireland. Through this act of haunting through drawing, Spencer McGarry and the legacy of violence is not forgotten.

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DO NOT SCALE: A LAMENT FOR DESIGN DRAWING

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Producing scaled artefacts — models, maps, and especially drawings — is crucial to design fields that anticipate and mobilise projects beyond the scope of a single human body to perceive, encompass, or enact. To consider intermediary drawings is to confront the remoteness and loss of immediacy produced by displacing the human body. But if physical presence and warm human bodies are sacrificed in the abstraction and distancing of schematic drawings, they return in displaced and peripheral ways through scaling. That is, scale becomes a means to recuperate loss. In this article, I consider the losses of scaled drawing and confront a large unscaled work, Monique Jansen's Overcast (2017), using it to prompt a reconsideration of scale. I suggest that although Overcast does not have a scale (in that it is not referential), Jansen's Overcast can be considered to scale, because it participates in circuits that take us beyond the scope of an individual human body.

A Path Around Objects

Producing scaled artefacts — models, maps, and especially drawings — is crucial to design fields that anticipate and mobilise projects beyond the scope of a single human body to perceive, encompass, or enact. When something is too big (or too small, or too complicated) to work on directly, scaled intermediaries become necessary.[1] Such intermediaries prefigure, anticipating something that hasn't arrived yet (and won't be able to arrive unless the drawings can mediate effectively). To consider intermediary drawings is thus to confront the remoteness and loss of immediacy produced by displacing the human body: physically, through abstraction and standardisation, and imaginatively. In this article, I will consider the losses of scaled drawing and confront a large unscaled work, using it to prompt a reconsideration of scale. Central to this reconsideration is the compulsion to return repeatedly to a scene of trauma.

According to architectural theorist Catherine Ingraham, "the sense of an object-loss or object-lament runs long and deep in architectural history" (1988, p. 126) because, for all their obsession with anticipating the substantial and immediate, architects typically work obliquely, indirectly, and from a distance by means of drawing. To the extent that it intricately converses with and defers to something that eludes its grasp, architectural drawing has "a divided loyalty: it is linguistic but it is also object-crazed" (p. 115). Rather than being felt as sadness, however, this mourning or obsession with elusive objects may manifest as frustration, rumination, or endless circling. Like a lament, architectural drawing according to Ingraham is "a form of discourse that describes quite specifically a path around objects as a recapitulation of their loss" (p. 114). Although particularly plangent in architectural theory, we might reasonably listen for this lament in any design practice that approaches its object indirectly.

One of the symptoms of this loss is the elimination (or at least abstraction) of the drawer's body by the standardised notational form of design schematics. In contemporary construction drawings, the hand of the drawer is suppressed (Fig. 1). The material thickness of a line scored across paper or the blunt smearing of a finger across a trackpad are abstracted into pure geometry, annotated with crisp formulaic specifications, apparently "rinsed clean of all matter" (Hedges, 2010, p. 79). Computer-aided drafting is only a recent stage in the progressive mechanisation of the drafter by a tightly constrained repertoire of practical techniques, conventions and geometrical theory (Pérez-Gómez and Pelletier, 1997). The drawer herself is "repressed through numerical relationships or reduced to an eye/mind mechanism", diminished to a set of initials in a title block (Agrest, 2000, p. 169).[2]

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[1] Much has been written about the reliance of some kinds of design on representative drawing. Robin Evans wrote, "Bringing with me the conviction that architecture and the visual arts were closely allied, I was soon struck by what seemed at the time the peculiar disadvantage under which architects labour, never working directly with the object of their thought, always working at it through some intervening medium, almost always the drawing" (Evans, 1997, p. 156). Drawings have been often analysed as imperfect or hybrid translations or mediations. Less has been written specifically on the scaled nature of these representative drawings (Emmons, 2007; Hedges, 2010).

[2] Zeynep Çelik and John May argue that architectural drawing has dissolved into a more complex practice of imaging, writing that "in a technical sense, we have not used a drawing to build anything in decades. Everything is now built from simulated orthography (images), with its attendant forms of transmission, duplication, repetition, and instantaneous modification—all of which have coalesced into a form of telematic managerialism unknown to orthography." (Çelik Alexander and May, 2020, p. 232). In my reading, the endless circulation of this telematic managerialism is another symptom of the anxiety of object-loss.
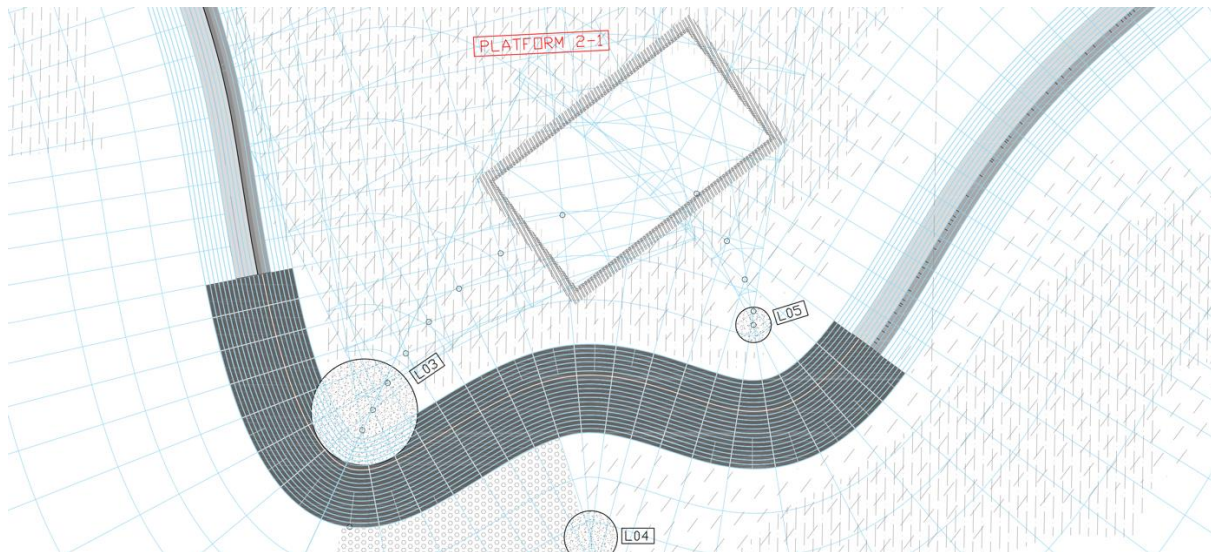
The loss of the object and the drawer's body, however, can be traced back to a more primordial trauma of drawing. Hélène Cixous described drawing as a progress into the unknown, in which we "advance error by error, with erring steps" (1993, p. 93). As we venture forth, the drawing escapes us at every turn, not quite what we bargained for and yet somehow more. Playing on the homophony of *le décollage* (to take off, like a plane would) and *la decollation* (beheading, executing), Cixous suggested that each mark both escapes and drops dead in the same moment, launches something into motion and curtails its flight. The drawing gets away from us and our relationship to it becomes like a response to trauma. A sheet of paper, she writes, is "a field of battle on which we, writing, drawing, have killed each other ourselves… all is disputed, and sacrificed" (p. 101). Like Ingraham, Cixous sees the drawing as a place we can't pry ourselves free from but keep returning to, laden with responsibility and discomfort.
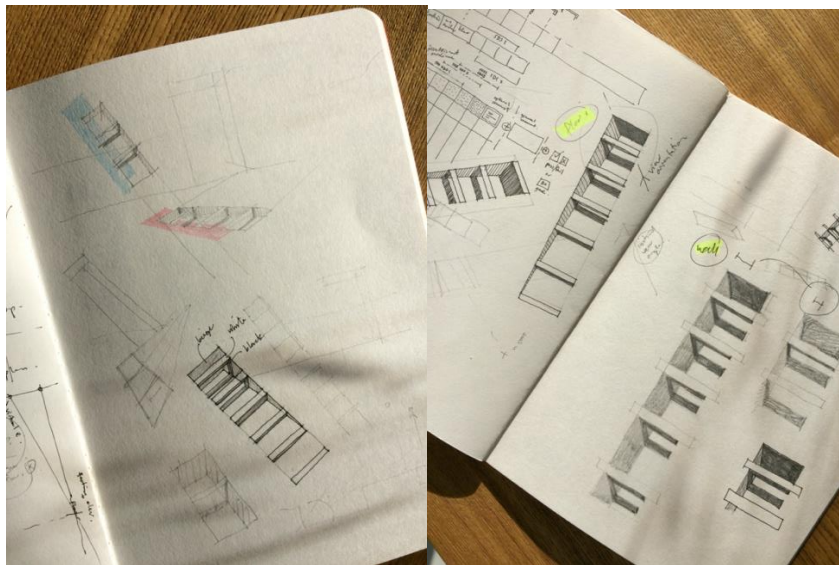

FIGURE 2. SKETCHBOOK REPETITIONS. SKETCHES FOR [MUTED] (2020, CARL DOUGLAS).

A designer's sketchbook is often a repetitive place (Fig. 2). In my books, I find similar configurations drawn over and over as I circle an idea, wander off, and return to things long abandoned. There is an obsessive quality to design drawing: by multiplying intermediary drawings, sketches, diagrams, notations, and specifications, it advances towards something that continually eludes it. The price of this obsession with an absent object is to be haunted by the loss of an (imagined and idealised) immediacy and the displacement of the drawer's body. For the drawing to take flight, mediating effectively to coordinate and control a production process (the construction of a building, the implementing of a set of plans in a workshop), sacrifices must be made.

Scale as Recuperation

But if physical presence and warm human bodies are sacrificed in the abstraction and distance of schematic drawings, they return in displaced and peripheral ways through scaling. That is, scale becomes a means to recuperate loss. This is what Ingraham refers to as recapitulation, the obsessive path around objects that is more like reconstruction, re-enactment, or substitution motivated by the impossibility of simply undoing or reversing loss.

In an abstract sense, scaling is a mathematical function applied as a technical procedure (Emmons, 2005). It uses a geometric ratio to make large or small things a more convenient size to work with. For drawings to mediate, communicate, and mobilise successfully, they must fit onto sheets of paper or screens, be portable and physically manageable, and carry information at a density that can be read reliably in whatever context they are to be used (perhaps a building site, a workshop, or a conference room). The use of conventional scales (architectural plans for example are commonly drawn at a ratio of 1:50 or 1:100) allows regular drawing users to develop an intuition for the intended size of represented things. In other words, scale pertains to human bodies and their capacity to carry, comprehend, perceive, and communicate.

Scale also induces bodily imagination. It "invites the inhabitation of a drawing, the anticipation of occupation and is a means to imagining measure through projecting oneself into the drawing" (Hedges, 2010, p. 73). The reader of the drawing walks it and grasps its objects. The drawing may not communicate touch directly, but its lines and contour imply tactility. This might happen according to convention: hatching patterns could invite us to recall the feeling of sanded timber grain or the granularity of concrete. But it might equally communicate through the materiality of the drawing, suggesting tension, mass, or sharpness through the thickness, tone, or variation of lines. A scaled drawing is felt by a surrogate body, not merely read by the eyes. Scale is a means to project, to cast the body of the viewer elsewhere.

In her fieldwork studying designers at the offices of Dutch architecture firm OMA, ethnographer Albena Yaneva observed this projection in practice. She noticed designers would frequently jump or shuttle between scales by physically placing their eyes close to a model, or drawing back for an overview. The design didn't progress linearly from overview to detail. Instead, she observed that designers maintained more and less detailed versions of the design concurrently. Scaling, she concluded, is an "experimental situation" that "relies on procedures for partial seeing: scoping, rescaling, extending and reducing" (Yaneva, 2005, pp. 868-9). Scaling practices do not respond only to the need to manage size or anticipate inhabitation; they are also ways to abstract, frame, manipulate, edit, filter, and omit.

Scaled drawing is a restless occupation. Yaneva's designers jump in and out, looking over and over again, but never settling into a single view. They know that each drawing or model is a provisional and partial abstraction of an absent future object, and therefore that it cannot be relied on completely. Documentation sets are typically riddled with injunctions that limit how they are to be read. 'DO NOT SCALE' is one such common marking, warning the user not to measure directly from the drawing, but to only trust specified dimensions. A complex system of cross-references point to other drawings, or require that certain conditions be confirmed on site. According to this prescribed manner of reading, the projection Hedges refers to may be illicit, a matter of reading too far. At the same time, however, it is essential for the designer to cast herself into the drawing and take others with her if the drawing is to take flight and mobilise some new reality. In getting carried away by an absent future object, the restless designer cannot escape circulation, partiality, indirectness. The drawing's gain and loss manifest through deferral and denial.

Studies of grief and perhaps our own experiences tell us loss can manifest in unexpected and displaced ways. Psychoanalytic philosopher Julia Kristeva refers to this as "transposition", moving "always further beyond or more to the side" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 42). Transposition, the move sideways or beyond, "retroactively gives form and meaning to the mirage of the primal Thing" (p. 41). The object is a void we circle. Like the designer's object it is "something quasi-unreachable and at the same time ever-present in all models and states: a multiple, cumulative object" (Yaneva, 2005, p. 888). This is not just a metaphor. Kristeva argues that we become embroiled in sign-systems like writing or notational drawing because we are mourning a loss: "language is, from the start, a translation, but on a level that is heterogeneous to the one where affective loss, renunciation, or the break takes place" (p. 41). If we take Kristeva seriously, we see scale as not simply a matter of technique, and the lost object as more than merely a practical problem for designers to solve. The very step into reference is itself a recapitulation of loss.

To explore this, I turn now to a particular drawing: *Overcast*, by New Zealand artist and printmaker Monique Jansen, a work that gestures towards the inaccessible spaces of global carbon cycles. It is a non-representational work, so the question I ask in the following section — what scale is it? — may seem distinctly inappropriate. In asking it nonetheless, and reflecting on why it doesn't apply, I suggest that we might ultimately find alternative ways to see scale.

Escaping Scale with Jansen's *Overcast*.

Overcast was a large charcoal drawing made by Jansen for the exhibition *Heat: Solar Revolutions* at Auckland's Te Uru Gallery in 2017 (Fig. 3). The show, curated by Amanda Yates and Janine Randerson, responded to the problems and possibilities of decarbonisation. Its central tension was between spaces of individual or group activity and global spaces (Yates and Randerson, 2017). A number of works in the show confronted the inaccessibility and yet immanence of global spaces, manifesting as probes, programmes, mediations, and samples that gestured across the gulf between the local and the remote, the comparatively small and the inaccessibly large. The future was indicated as a space of both loss and transformation, and the present a moment of catalysis.
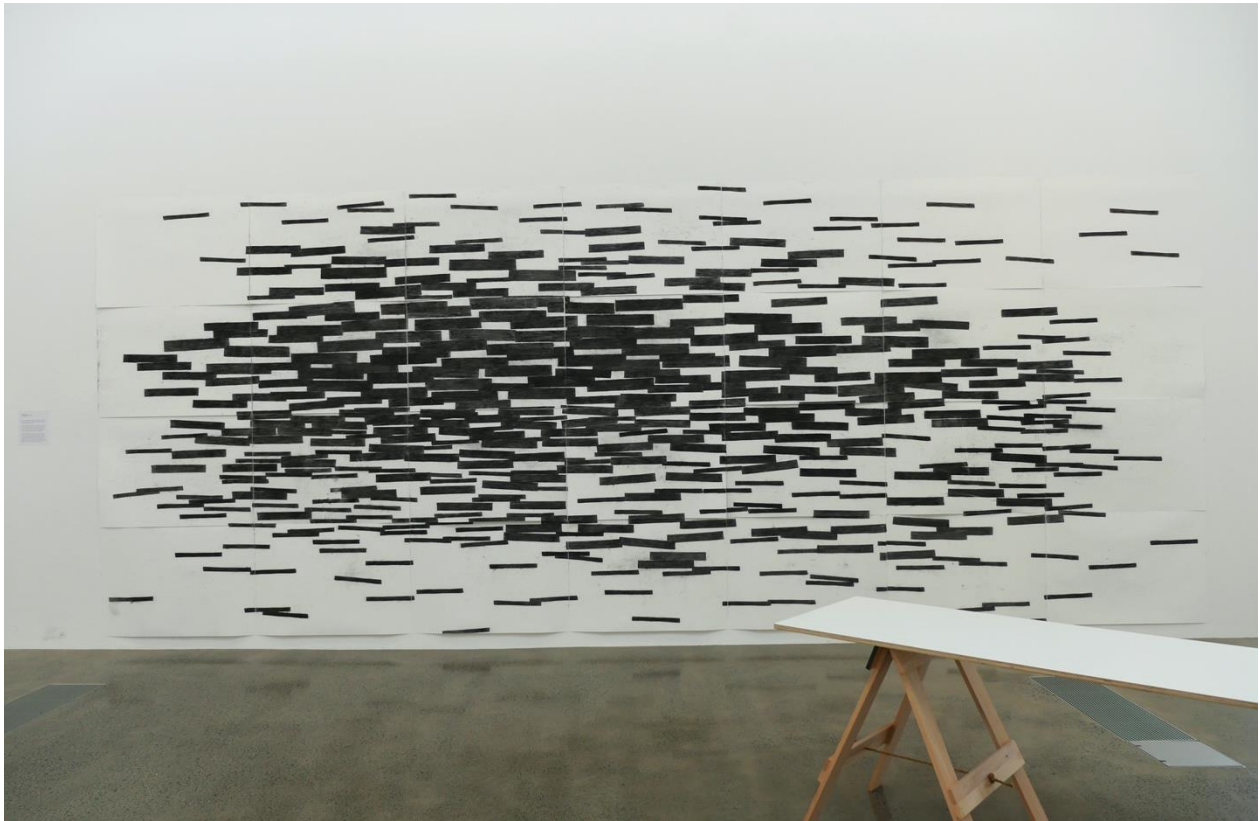
By titling her work *Overcast*, Jansen invokes the weight of the future and the problem of its scale. She refers to the gathering of clouds before rain, and the diffused, neutralised atmospheric condition of a uniformly cloudy sky. The overcast sky runs past the horizon, enveloping us, a paradigm of the ungraspable. The drawing itself suggests a cloud, although it isn't explicitly an image of one. It is large, over two metres tall and almost six metres wide, consisting of a conglomeration of short black bars drawn in charcoal onto sheets of white A1 paper butted together to form a single drawing surface (Fig. 4). The bars, thick and thin, are packed closely, overlapping at the centre but diffusing towards the edge. While they all run in roughly the same direction, they are not aligned, and their irregular angles create the sense of jostling, vibration, or turbulence. Unframed against the white wall the black figure seems to float.

Overcast is not a design drawing in the sense of being preliminary to another work. It does not anticipate another process of production, or specify a forthcoming realisation. For precisely this reason though, it provides an opportunity to trace the boundaries of such referential drawing, and invites questions about scale and temporality. I have suggested that the obsessive forwardness of design drawing is reconfigured as circularity conditioned by the indirect grasping, rumination, and transpositions of object-lament, and offer Jansen's drawing as a means of examining this circularity.
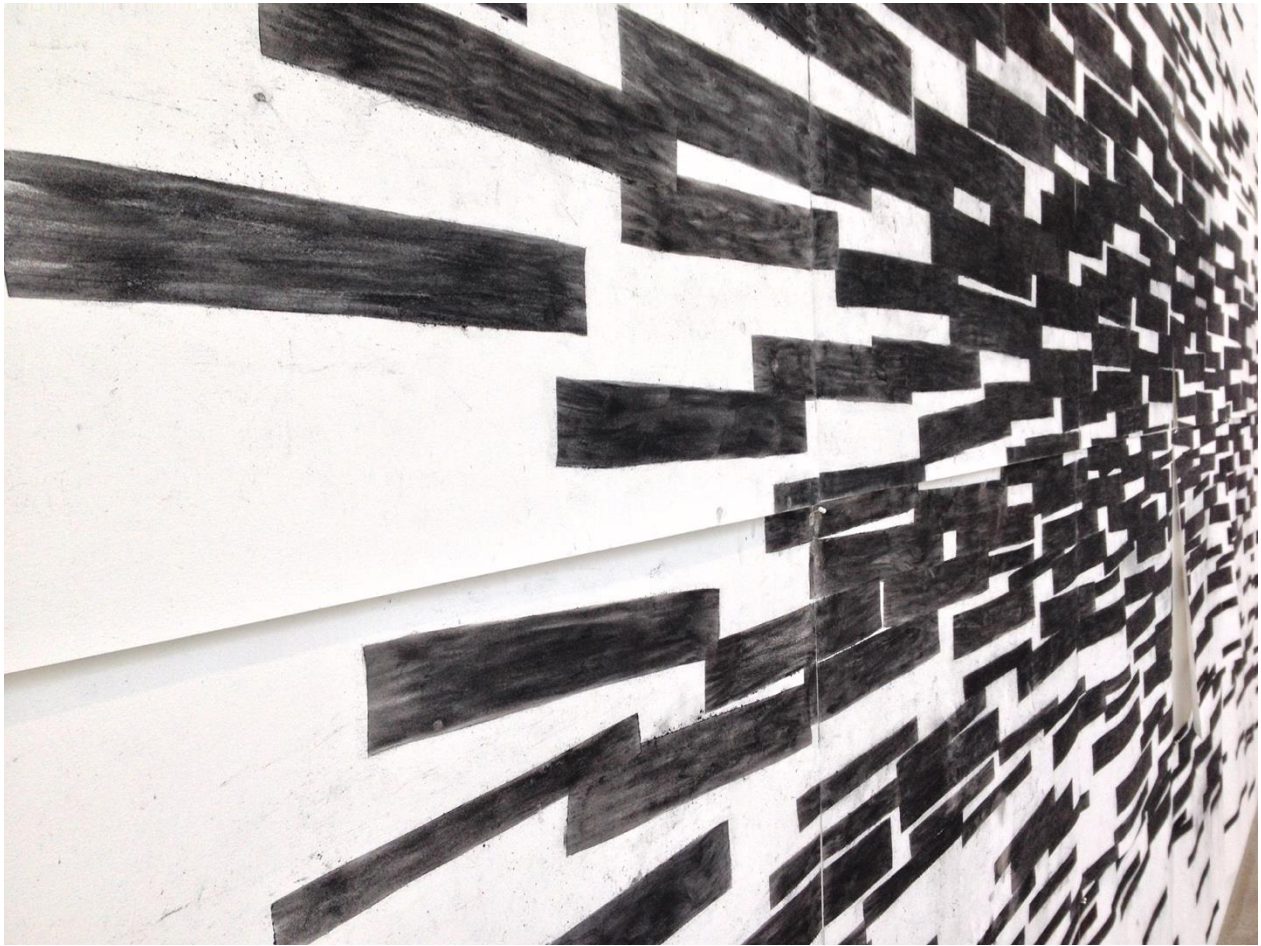
FIGURE 4. DETAIL OF OVERCAST (COURTESY M. JANSEN, 2017)

Here is a problematic, perhaps even foolish question: what is the scale of Jansen's drawing? The question is obviously ridiculous because *Overcast* is not a measured schematic or even a representation at all. Why would we expect it to have a scale? Even if we said the drawing was intended to be a representation of a cloud (which Jansen explicitly denies; personal communication, 25 July 2019), we couldn't establish a proportional relationship because clouds come in all sizes and don't typically stick around for long enough to measure. We could say in this case that the drawing is *not to scale*. This would put it in the class of sketches and diagrams that represent without having a measured relationship.

But *not to scale* leaves open the possibility that a scale could be applied, even if it is currently unknown, variable or approximate. A drawing with an *unknown* scale has lost its proportional relationship, but it might be re-established by comparing measurements. A drawing with a *variable* scale would be more difficult to recover because different parts of the drawing could have different proportional relationships. An *approximately*-scaled drawing might only have a rough relationship to what it figures. In each case, though, we would still be concerned with the distance between something and its referent. A sense of imprecision or uncertainty would only be heightened by the feeling that a scalar relationship was just out of reach. None of these options take us outside the paradigm of reference, however. To designate a drawing as being of an unknown, variable, or approximate scale we need to assume the existence of a relationship to a referent, even if it is lost, broken, or unreliable.

FIGURE 5. JANSEN WORKING ON OVERCAST (COURTESY M. JANSEN, 2017).

If the drawing is not to scale, it still has a particular size. It corresponds with the size of Jansen's body: her height, the length of her arm, the distance she could reach (with a step-stool or some other prosthetic, perhaps; Fig. 5), the amount of charcoal she was physically able to apply in the time allocated to the work. It also corresponds with the bodies of viewers, who might move in for a close examination, or step back to where they can take it all in at once. In this sense, the drawing acts as a kind of interface between Jansen and her viewers. Architect Marian Macken points to the peculiar qualities of full-scale drawing, in which a drawer "enters and makes the drawing" (Macken et al., 2019, p. 3). As a kind of motion-capture it is an index of movement and gesture, not only a sign of it. The oddly self-effacing term *full-scale* is commonly applied to mock-ups, trials, or prototypes (for example the clay models still used when designing cars).[3] The relationship between drawing, the referent, and the viewer overlay one another in the same space, and yet remain remote from one another. The more strenuously the drawer tries to close the gap between drawing and object, the more strongly it is reasserted.

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[3] For a discussion of the scale and the full-scale ("a form of approximation… maintaining a critical distance") in terms of models, see Lee and Johnston (2020, p. 55).

All these scalar possibilities would force an inappropriate framework onto Jansen's drawing (although as a heuristic model they might be of value for examining other drawings). But another question arises: can scale have a meaning outside a referential paradigm? Is reference to an object the only kind of scalar correspondence a drawing might enter into? And how might the obsessive path around objects, the object-lament of design drawing, be shifted by moving outside representation?

FIGURE 6. DRAWING EQUIPMENT FOR OVERCAST (COURTESY M. JANSEN, 2017).

Circuitous Times and Scale

The temporality of Overcast provides a way to broach this other kind of scaling. Jansen drew it in the gallery over the course of five days, and the performance of the drawing is as significant as its finished condition. In fact, she weighs lightly the idea of a finished or final state. Her physical presence, her drawing paraphernalia, and interactions with gallery visitors are all aspects of the work. She describes it as "semi-process work"; no strict plan guided its exact organisation (personal communication, 25 July 2019). In a stricter form of process art the final state may be explicitly unanticipated, or even rendered unanticipatable, but Jansen has a loose configuration in mind.[4] This configuration, however, doesn't act

[4] In process art, according to Robert Morris, "considerations of ordering are necessarily casual and imprecise and unemphasized", with the indiscriminate taking priority over a gestalt or form (Butler, 1999, p. 26).

as an imagined object towards which her activity is directed. Plans, writes ethnographer of human-computer interaction Lucy Suchman, are "resources for situated action but do not in any strong sense determine its course" (2006, p. 72). The time of the drawing is oriented as a vector, rather than being defined by a particular goal.

For this reason, it would be better to see Overcast (and indeed many of Jansen's works) as *procedures*. Each bar of the drawing was produced by rubbing charcoal through a paper cut-out (Fig. 6). Stencilled sheet after sheet was stuck to the wall and the drawing slowly accumulated from the bottom up. On the first row of sheets the black bars are sparse, and a narrower stencil is used. As the drawing rises it densifies and a wider stencil takes over, until at about eye-level charcoal covers most of each sheet. From this point it begins to dissolve again, following Jansen's intuition that it should fade away. The forward movement of the drawing is not set with reference to a destination, but by defining how to take a single step and setting out. There is a kind of standardisation (even mechanisation) at work, but instead of the standardisation of reference in the manner of notations it is the standardisation of becoming-routine, of deliberate self-constraint and repetition.

Other works by Jansen have employed a similar approach. For Metric Conversations (2007), she took a used school maths book and meticulously cut out each gridded square, leaving the existing lines of the page visible and rendering the entire book a filigree. The Parkin-prize winning A0 Folded Moiré Drawing (2013) was similarly intricate: tens of thousands of regular hand-drawn lines were layered to create the sense of a folded sheet. In each work the procedure is open-ended and the endpoint is arbitrary. The work is done when the exercise book is finished, the edge of the page reached, or the allotted time runs out. It is, in a sense, myopic, feeling its way ahead. Jansen certainly spends a long time staring closely at her works (*Metric Conversations* took nearly a year to complete). Routine patterned action takes us from small to large by steps rather than jumps.

Operating procedurally, Jansen moves in tight circles. Kristeva writes that mourning leads us not only into transpositions, but into repetition. That repetition, however, is not simply a recurrence, but becomes a reduplication that carries the full weight of all the preceding iterations:

> *Reduplication is a jammed repetition. While what is repeated is rippled out in time, reduplication lies outside time. It is a reverberation in space, a play of mirrors lacking perspective or duration. A double may hold, for a while, the instability of the same, giving it a temporary identity, but it mainly explores the same in depth, opening up an unsuspected, unfathomable substance (Kristeva, 1989, p. 246).*

Routine procedures could thus be seen as a different mode of scaling, one that opens a reverberant space of depth rather than distance. This space is "a no man's land of aching affects and devalued words", unmoored from the plane of reference (Kristeva, 1989, p. 246).

Overcast also opens to a wider world from which it coalesces and into which it dissolves. The charcoal used is locally-sourced biochar, made by burning tree trimmings at a specific temperature and under low-oxygen conditions (Fig. 7). Jansen is an avid permaculturist. In her Titirangi garden, she has cultivated a flourishing garden on the principle of taking as little as possible from outside, and reusing as much waste as possible. Biochar is prized in permaculture because it improves and remediates soil, creating habitat for micro-organisms, retaining and stabilising nutrients, and pulling heavy metals out of the ground. When the show had finished, Overcast was composted back into the garden, closing the

loop (and feeding the tomatoes). If, as Jansen hopes, there can be an "ecology of drawing" it requires coming to terms with before and after the work, with times of decomposition and reincorporation (personal communication, 25 July 2019). Embedded in wider ecological circuits, and manifesting a procedural logic, *Overcast* corresponds with a wider world.

FIGURE 7. BIOCHAR USED TO DRAW OVERCAST (COURTESY M. JANSEN, 2017)

Scaling as Worlding

The temporality of the design drawing described by Ingraham is oriented by reference to an elusive object. Design methodologies are haunted by the illusory possibility of a single linear path to this object. According to this illusion, the object can be anticipated rigorously, with scaling techniques facilitating a smooth translation between the preliminary matter of the drawings and the conclusive matter of the final production. But in use scaling is more complex. As a technical practice, a means of imaginative projection, and a mode of abstraction, it produces an irregular pattern. Rather than a linear path, the time of design drawing is a "rhythm with fine undertones of variation and distance, acceleration and slowing down" (Yaneva, 2005, p. 888).

Ingraham's architects compulsively repeat, driven by awareness that no single drawing will ever be adequate. She invites us to see this repetition as obsessive, a form of transposed grief over the loss of immediacy. All drawing may participate in this obsession to some degree, but design drawing, with its

underlying paradigm of conventionalised reference, cannot escape it. As a result, the designer is carried by the object: "the obsessive is transported, compelled by his/her object, and is less authoring of it than authored by it" (Dorrian and Hawker, 2003, p. 188). To be carried by the object, crazed by it, always aiming at it and missing, and surrounding ourselves with substitutes for it, could be a source of frustration.

Perhaps being carried, however, might also be a way to become entangled with things beyond ourselves. I have suggested that although it does not *have* a scale (in that it is not referential), Jansen's Overcast can be considered to *scale*, because it participates in circuits that take us beyond the scope of an individual human body. This more general sense of the term 'scale' prompts us to consider a broader range of human practices. As historian of climate science Deborah Coen writes:

> *scaling is also something we all do every day. It is how we think, for instance, about how one individual's vote might influence a national election, or whether buying a hybrid car might slow global warming. It can also be a way of situating the known world in relation to times or places that are distant or otherwise inaccessible to direct experience. Scaling makes it possible to weigh the consequences of human actions at multiple removes and coordinate action at multiple levels of governance. (Coen, 2018, p. 16)*

In Coen's sense, scaling is an everyday activity of understanding and negotiating our relationships to the distant or removed. Scale would thus be bound up with the question of agency: how do scaling practices enable us to access, affect, or be affected by large, small, or remote things?

Such a scalar imaginary might form in various ways in addition to the geometric ratio of the scaled design drawing, as our brief encounter with Jansen's drawing here indicates. Scaling might occur as a performative relation to the space and place of drawing. *Overcast* unfolds in time and at a specific location (a gallery of particular dimensions, open at particular times, for a specified duration). In this specificity, present place may come to take the place of the absent object, and the temporalities of that place condition its relations to other bodies.

Scaling might also occur through the abstraction of procedural constraint and repetition. In the sense that Jansen automates herself she replaces the closure of representation with open-endedness. Instead of being oriented by the lost object (as is Ingraham's architect) the drawing is oriented by objects-yet-to-come. The myopic drawing has a situated "epigenesis" rather than a genesis (Miller et al., 2021, p. 118).

Finally, scaling might occur when a drawing participates in cycles that implicate transitions of size. *Overcast's* boundaries are explicitly provisional. Its procedure could continue to operate and spread outward, and true again because the start and end of the work are hard to determine. What appears in the gallery is only one temporal slice through a carbon trajectory: plants become biochar, which is used to draw, and composted back into the ground.

By looking at *Overcast*, I have attempted to develop a provisional taxonomy of the unscaled and give meaning to the concept of scale beyond that of the calculated ratio. Scaling, I suggest, can be what Donna Haraway refers to as a "worlding practice" (Haraway, 2016, p. 127). To scale as *Overcast* does may be "to make possible partial and robust biological-cultural-political-technological recuperation and recomposition, which must include mourning irreversible losses" (Haraway, 2016, p. 101). To scale might not only be to take a path towards to an absent object, but by circulating to recuperate and recompose worlds.

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IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE: DRAWING AS AN ACT OF LOSS

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The following analysis examines my drawing practice in creating the work Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait (2020), focusing specifically on a particular emotive state I reached in the process of embodied mark-making. This condition, recognised as the 'gap', illuminates the underlying concept of the 'act' of drawing as a process of 'loss'. According to the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), the artist experiences loss in the instant between the thought or image in the 'mind's eye' and the split second the pencil or stylus touches the piece of paper or screen. 'The genesis of the present' (Newman 1994, 219) – that is the instant act of drawing as the origin of thinking – takes place within this Augenblick or blink-of-an-eye (Derrida 1993, 48); that momentary space or gap spawning interconnections between 'the now and the non-now, of perception and non-perception' (Derrida 2010, 73). Derrida deemed drawing to be an act of memory; that is, at the point of contact the image is already lost into the past (Derrida 1993, 68). The un-drawn space has no present but is simultaneously the future and the past; in other words, is a trait or trace. However, I build upon Derrida's argument and propose that it is at this moment of blindness/loss there also exists the site of possibility, invention and originality, of wonder and astonishment. The Augenblick becomes an ecstatic temporal moment (Pasanen 2006, 221) . It is within this un-filled space that the potential of creating a cosmopoietic worlding is found. In the work, Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait, the door (half open or half closed?) becomes an analogy for Derrida's Augenblick, which, like the door ajar, is a threshold between a serendipitous moment and the sense of the irreclaimable – of loss.

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Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait

In September 2020, I completed a six panelled drawing, Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait. The drawing is 152 x 171cm and is executed in black pen, coloured/white inks, printed script and musical score on watercolour paper. It is autobiographical in its content: an on-going diarised 'graphic novel'. The panels can be reordered or interchanged at whim; here, chronological narrative and linear meaning are irrelevant (Figure 1).

The drawings combined create a multi-perspectival, scenographic mind's eye view into the imagination and objects of memory. There is no beginning or end; it is an eternally looping, revolving entity which is a manifestation of the artist's interior monologue or 'stream of consciousness'. I am trapped in my living room of multiple bevelled-edged glass doors, semi-submerged with a respirator, attempting unsuccessfully to find an exit. The script of Jean Paul Sartre's play Huis Clos (No Exit) and the musical score of Arnold Schönberg's Verklärte Nacht (Transfigured Night) blow through the mise-en-scène cascading into my space. I have referenced Cindy Sherman's, Untitled Film Still #46 (1979). Sherman's 'guise' has a look of trepidation and fear of the unknown – of an intangible future and of a loss of moments past. This resonates with my current state of mind. This drawing as a self-portrait encapsulates 2020. I don't understand the full meaning of what I have drawn until long after I have drawn it. The drawing also exemplifies Derrida's argument which is the self-portrait as a 'ruinous simulacrum', simulacra ruineux (Derrida 1993, 65), in which the death or loss of the original truth (the object or the subject of the self-portrait) becomes objectified – a spectre (trace) of the real.

FIGURE 1: -. DROWNING IN MY LIVING ROOM. A SELF-PORTRAIT: MIXED MEDIA ON WATERCOLOUR PAPER, 152 X 171CM. 2020.

The 'knowledge of the moment'

Critical to my drawing practice is the ability to generate fluid, agile and malleable cognitive processes between the eye, mind and hand. I begin with a spirit of adventure and discovery, unfettered by the constraints and practicalities of realism, linear narrative or meaning. This is where an embodied cognition is at its most critical. However, I discovered early in my art practice that achieving this state is determined by a very particular emotional condition: a sense of frustration – marked by hesitancy, apprehension and anticipation – which overwhelms me when initially confronted by the blank page. It is at this moment that I am desperate to grasp that elusive thought as an image or, as the neuroscientist Antonio Damasio suggests, the 'knowledge of the moment' (Damasio 1999, 125). He argues there is:

> a gap between our knowledge of neural events, at molecular, cellular, and system levels, on the one hand, and the mental image whose mechanisms of appearance we wish to understand. There is a gap to be filled by not yet identified but presumably identifiable physical phenomena. (Damasio 1999, 323)

As he further maintains, it is in the 'knowledge of the moment' (Damasio 1999, 125) that the gap is made real. These gaps are seized by the desperate grasping gaze, only to disappear in a blink-of-an-eye. The drawing becomes the means of capturing visually those fleeting, fragmented moments which are a 'state of feeling made conscious' (Damasio 1999, 125).

The 'door'

There manifests right at the beginning of my drawing process an initial fear of loss. Fear of the empty page. Fear of losing that pivotal image which could spark that tenuous moment of retention and representation. Figure 2 is a preliminary sketch from direct observation sitting on my living room sofa in the Australian 'Pandemic Lockdown' March 2020. I did multiple sketches of the bevelled-edged glass doors. The 'door' is a portal into my memories. It is the entry into the artist's 'mind's eye'. The closed door of the consciousness is mysterious – concealing secrets. The open door conjures up images of the yawning abyss of 'disappearance', of loss. This sketch is executed in charcoal and white conte on layers of printed script and sheet music. As a means of erasure, I paste another piece of paper overlaying the abandoned drawing underneath; an autobiographical monologue becomes embedded into the layered fabric of the palimpsest, where the dramatic text/musical score is transformed into a trace, the scenographic script. This technique also reveals my ambivalence and uncertainty mixed with a sense of frustration. I am haunted by this indefinable gap between visual perception and the actual gestural mark where the vague intangible idea can suddenly disappear without warning into an abyss (Derrida 1993, 68).

FIGURE 2: -. OBSERVATIONAL DRAWING OF MY LIVING ROOM DOOR: CHARCOAL AND WHITE CONTE, MIXED MEDIA ON WATERCOLOUR PAPER, 148 X 210MM. 2020.

The gap

GARCIN: That's why there's something so beastly, so damn bad mannered, in the way you stare at me. They're paralysed.

VALET: What are you talking about?

GARCIN: Your eyelids. We move ours up and down. Blinking, we call it. It's like a small black shutter that clicks down and makes a break. Everything goes black; one's eyes are moistened. You can't imagine how restful, refreshing, it is. Four thousand little rests per hour. Four thousand little respites – just think! ... So that's the idea. I'm to live without eyelids. Don't act the fool. You know what I mean. No eyelids no sleep; it follows, doesn't it? I shall never sleep again. (Extract from Huis Clos) (Sartre 1989, 5)

The above is an extract from the existentialist play Huis Clos (No Exit), (1944), written by Sartre as a theatrical manifestation of his seminal text Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology (1943). Three damned souls or, as they are described, 'absentees' (Sartre 1989, 12), find themselves trapped altogether in the same room for eternity. This is hell according to Sartre. Sartre argued 'hell is other people', or l'enfer, c'est les autres (Sartre 1989, 45). Each cannot escape the unblinking gaze of the other two but all are mercilessly cognizant of their death, their irretrievable loss. This is the moment the character Garcin confronts the mysteriously elusive Valet (the Devil?) about his inability to blink. According to Derrida, the 'blink of the eye' creates a gap or moment of loss in our visual perception:

the time of the (clin d'oeil) that buries the gaze in the batting of an eyelid, the instant called the Augenblick, the wink or blink, and what drops out of sight in the twinkling of an eye. (Derrida 1993, 48)

This gap is where a memory or an image can disappear in an instant – in that moment when 'the small black shutter that clicks down and makes a break' (Sartre 1989, 5). Re-drawing, re-seeing and not seeing – disappearing into a black void – begins a transformative drawing practice exploring disappearance and loss as agency. Captivation and anticipation can lead to fear and loss, where 'the draughtsman is prey to a devouring proliferation of the invisible' (Derrida 1993, 45). As Derrida comments:

My hypothesis…is that the draughtsman always sees himself prey to that which is each time universal and singular and would thus have to be called 'unbeseen', as one speaks of the unbeknownst. He recalls it, is called, fascinated, or recalled by it. Memory or not, and forgetting as memory, in memory and without memory. (Derrida 1993, 45)

Confronted by the vacant page, I begin frantically to draw those first marks, only to find those fleeting images disappearing into the gap – disappearing in the blink-of-an-eye. I find myself in a panic trying to prevent the spectre of thought escaping; where the image transfigures into something intangible, the ambiguous, the indiscernible and 'unbeseen'. The American artist Terry Rosenberg also alludes to this 'unbeseen' space. He suggests that for the artist there is:

the impulsion…to form and transform. In this notion of blankness, drawing is thinking and acting between the not-yet-formed and the formed, in the space between form and form at the threshold between form and anti-form. (Garner 2008, 114)

The South African artist and scenographer William Kentridge also identifies drawing as 'gaps' to be filled:

It is in the gap between the object and its representation that this energy emerges, the gap we fill in, in the shift from the monochromatic shadow to the colour of the object, from its flatness to its depth and heft. (Kentridge 2012, 31)

The French poet and art critic Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) suggests that for the artist there is this increasing anxiety predicting the loss of that intangible image:

a fire, an intoxication of the pencil or the brush, amounting almost to a frenzy. It is a fear of not going fast enough, of letting the phantom escape before the synthesis has been extracted and pinned down. (Baudelaire 1964, 17)

Unlike Baudelaire, Derrida did not like to draw. The intangible image as a 'ghostly thing', a 'withdrawal (retrait) of the trait' (Derrida 1993, 53) is anthropomorphised; as it exits, it jeers at Derrida for his inability to draw:

For it immediately flees, drops out of sight, and almost nothing of it remains; it disappears before my eyes, which, in truth, no longer perceive anything but the mocking arrogance of this disappearing apparition. (Derrida 1993, 36)

The mind's eye

Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait engages a cinematic, multi-perspectival mind's eye view of the pictorial space. Each panel or drawing is a 'complete work' in itself – an encapsulation of a fleeting temporal moment (Figure 3).

This is a glimpse into a fuller embodied vision, drawn from my imagination. The mind's eye is one's visual memory. William Shakespeare coined this phrase in his most famous play, Hamlet (1603). Hamlet recalls the apparition of his father as an ephemeral, ghostly image in his 'mind's eye' (Shakespeare 2015, 18). My drawing is dream-like or, perhaps, a nightmarish vision – the notion of 'real space' is distorted to encompass a vast space, teeming with the spectres from one's own past, a space drawn from the intimate realms of the mind's eye. It is a phantasmagorial collision between reality and fantasy. Clive Ashwin identifies the imaginative essence of drawing as:

the process of making material an otherwise immaterial form or idea that existed only as an idea or concept in the designer's mind until its commitment to paper. The iconic (image-like) nature of such drawing is interestingly reflected in the etymological link between image and imagine. (Ashwin 1984, 201)

The desperate seizing of visual data in the mind's eye is also an act of pure imagination. Derrida reflects on the genesis of drawing as dream-like: a contemplative encounter between the image and the imagination.

The thought of drawing, a certain pensive pose, a memory of the trait that speculates, as in a dream, about its own possibility. Its potency always develops on the brink of blindness. (Derrida 1993, 3)

However, the drawing at its conception is also a ruin (Derrida 1993, 68). According to Derrida the drawing is already dead – a ghostly, barely visible representation of the original object.

The self-portrait as a ruin

> GARCIN: …Sorry I fear I'm not good company among the dead.
>
> ESTELLE: Please, please don't use that word. It's so – so crude. In terribly bad taste, really. It doesn't mean much, anyhow. Somehow, I feel we've never been so much alive as now. If we've absolutely got to mention this – this state of things, I suggest we call ourselves – wait! – absentees. Have you been – been absent long? (Extract from Huis Clos) (Sartre 1989, 12)

The artist draws herself blindly, contending with a loss of visual perception from that first moment the implement touches the empty page. This void necessitates memory to recall the image. 'As soon as the draughtsman considers himself fascinated, fixed on an image, yet disappearing before his own eyes into

the abyss, the moment by which he tries desperately to recapture himself is already, in its very present, an act of memory' (Derrida 1993, 68). As Derrida further argues, this is particularly pertinent to the self-portrait because the artists drawing themselves do not see themselves; even if the artist is drawing from a mirror – the split-second they look away – the image drops out as a memory. The image is also the artist's chiral twin – an asymmetrical reverse representation of the subject seen by the spectator. The artist's 'alter-ego' inhabiting the mirror becomes an absent presence, an 'absentee' or 'ruin' (Derrida 1993, 68). As the French philosopher Éliane Escoubas suggests in Derrida and the Truth of Drawing: Another Copernican Revolution?:

> The self-portrait is the very paradigm of this moment at which the artist is blind. And since the blind-being involves the "drawn" (the object of the representation) or the drawer/self-portraitist (the subject representing), there is a loss involved (losing sight, being lost from sight), a lacking or a privation. The self-portrait and/or the drawing are related, obviously, to the notion of ruin. (Escoubas 2006, 201)

The drawing at its origin is a spectre of the real, a 'ruinous simulacrum', simulacra ruineux (Derrida 1993, 65). As Derrida posits:

> In the beginning there is ruin. Ruin is that which happens to the image from the moment of the first gaze. Ruin is the self-portrait, this face looked at in the face as the memory of itself, what remains or returns as a spectre from the moment one first looks at oneself and a figuration is eclipsed. The figure, the face, then sees its visibility being eaten away; it loses its integrity without disintegrating. (Derrida 1993, 68)

The work, Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait was a last-minute, sudden inspiration to represent myself as one of Cindy Sherman's multiple personas. I chose Untitled Film Still #46 (1979) as a trigger because all that is visible are her eyes through the blurry mask of the swimming goggles. There is the un-nerving sense she is being watched. I have never before figuratively inhabited an artwork – only metaphorically through objects as an absent presence, an 'absentee'. Like Sherman, all that is characterised are my eyes (Figure 4).

I looked into a mirror and copied my eyes. It was this process that made me aware that each time I looked down to the paper I had to remember what I had just seen – my eyes with my own eyes. In this drawing the spectator is fixed in the imploring gaze of the artist, haunted by memories. Drawing or the drawing as an object is an act of memory.

This drawing developed over several months. The music of Schönberg's Verklärte Nacht, along with a few glasses of Australian sparkling, prompted a spectatorial scenographic encounter in my 1920s heritage apartment full of bevelled-edged glass doors. Within this space, dramatic noir shadows were cast across the walls, heightening the theatricality and performativity of this initial 'happening' (Figure 5).

Ink is the preferred medium, whether on a pen or a sharpened end of a paintbrush dipped in ink. Both allow my thoughts to be put down quickly before they disappear. Ink, a rapid fluid medium, renders indelible, irreversible and permanent marks; a scarification. Derrida's blind draughtswoman is haunted by the 'spectre of the instant (stigme) and of the stylus, whose very point would like to touch the blind point of a gaze' (Derrida 1993, 64). Derrida again questions:

> does he not also try in vain, up to the point of exhausting a ductus or stylus, to capture this withdrawal (retrait) of the trait, to remark it, to sign it finally – in an endless scarification?. (Derrida 1993, 56)

There is no means of erasure, except to paste yet another piece of paper overlaying the abandoned drawing underneath. The palimpsest becomes layers of trace and memory. The drawing blends history and memories with contemporary experience and visual perception. Visual links echo memories and experiences. There is no linear form to these memories. They are disparate, often contradictory and chaotic in construction. This inner state of anarchy, merged with a paralytic anxiety, is where I begin. 'Found' images stimulate the memory and unearth memories hidden in the dark spaces of the

consciousness. Memories become interwoven with the present; recurring metaphors emerge as a trace, a 'ruin' in the drawing; as an autobiographical monologue.

FIGURE 5: -. DETAIL OF DROWNING IN MY LIVING ROOM. A SELF-PORTRAIT: MIXED MEDIA ON WATERCOLOUR PAPER, 152 X 171CM. 2020.

The 'unfurling' wave

In 'Spectres Of Marx' (1993) Derrida employs the French verb déferler to mean to 'unfurl', to spread out, or to unfurl like the movement of waves folding over each other (Pasanen 2006, 227). In the work Drowning in my Living Room. A Self Portrait, the body of water crashing and tumbling into the interiority of the 'in-between' drawn spaces unfurls as a complex, convoluted space of temporal folds. Derrida's waves become an analogy of the artist's internal consciousness of time. Also Gilles Deleuze in 'The Fold' (1993), writes of the consciousness as a 'monad' (Deleuze 1993, 27), which 'endlessly produces folds…twists and turns… the fold, unfurls all the way to infinity' (Deleuze 1993, 3). I extend Deleuze's argument to the multiplicity of fine black drawn lines in my drawing. The monad begins and ends at the

same metaphysical point: 'folding and unfolding, wrapping and unwrapping' (Deleuze 1993, 123). The interweaving, unfurling unfolding, folding lines have no visible beginning or end and therefore as a monad is 'a fixed point that infinite partition never attains, and that closes infinitely divided space' (Deleuze 1993, 28). The line embarks on a metaphysical journey, entering into: 'a labyrinth dividing endlessly, [where] the parts of matter form little vortices in a maelstrom, and in these are found even more vortices, even smaller, and even more are spinning in the concave intervals of the whirls that touch one another'. (Deleuze 1993, 57) An apt quote written by Escoubas resonates with the theme of water as a wave of memory unfurling through the pictorial space in my drawing (Figure 6):

> *Downstream, there is the void, that which is not yet drawn, the "not yet"; upstream, there is the past, the time that is over, the "no longer" – drawing or writing resides therefore in a continual disappearing of the point's point: the point's point always escapes…The line is the "après-coup" (the flash-back) of an act – the act of marking - that was never seen, that was never seen in its very presence… One sees therefore only in the past, in memory. One does not see, one sees again. (Escoubas 2006, 205)*

FIGURE 6: -. DETAIL OF DROWNING IN MY LIVING ROOM. A SELF-PORTRAIT: MIXED MEDIA ON WATERCOLOUR PAPER, 152 X 171CM. 2020.

Escoubas describes a void that is a liminal space between downstream (the future) and upstream (the past). The British anthropologist, Victor Turner, also views the limen or threshold as 'a noman's-land betwixt-and-between the structural past and the structural future' (Turner 1990, 11). In a similar vein, Stephen Scrivener identifies the potential for cognitive surprise at the liminal sight of perception where:

> *the extent that they are surprising, then we encounter something new…they facilitate the cognitive readjustment necessary to expand our understanding to encompass the*

surprising and the new. In this sense, they project a future whilst reflecting the past.
(Scrivener 2010, NPF)

The in-between space is the thin space or limen between the thought or image in the mind's eye and the 'act of marking' (Escoubas 2006, 205). Unformed spaces constantly in flux; ambivalent, unpredictable gaps and go-between doors and passages of binary constructs; visible/invisible, true/false, dark/light, reality/illusion, presence/absence, known/unknown, past/future, discovery/loss. Derrida applies this delineation to drawing:

> *This limit is never presently reached, but drawing always signals toward this inaccessibility, toward the threshold where only the surroundings of the trait appear that which the trait spaces by delimiting and which thus does not belong to the trait. (Derrida 1993, 53)*

The theatre director and theorist Richard Schechner also wrote:

> *A limen is a threshold or sill, a thin strip neither inside nor outside a building or room linking one space to another, a passageway between places rather than a place in itself. What usually is just a "go between" becomes the site of action… It is enlarged in time and space yet retains its peculiar quality of passageway or temporariness… (Schechner 2002, 58)*

The 'door' on stage, or as a representation of a door in a drawing, embodies this 'go between' threshold as 'the condition of presence, of presentation, and therefore of Vorstellung [idea]…' (Derrida 2010, 73).

The door as an 'in-between' space

> *GARCIN: Open the door! Open, blast you! I'll endure anything, your red-hot tongs and molten lead, your racks and prongs and garrottes—all your fiendish gadgets, everything that burns and flays and tears—I'll put up with any torture you impose. Anything, anything would be better than this agony of mind, this creeping pain that gnaws and fumbles and caresses one and never hurts quite enough. Now will you open?*
>
> *THE DOOR FLIES OPEN: a long silence.*
>
> *(Extract from Huis Clos) (Sartre 1989, 41)*

In Drowning in My Living Room. A Self-Portrait, the representation of the 'door' as a meta-theatrical trope becomes an analogy for Derrida's Augenblick which, like the opening and closing of the eyelids, is a threshold between the flash of 'cognitive surprise' (Scrivener 2010, NPF) and the risk of the thought falling over a yawning precipice – of disappearing into a void. The three doors, revealing passages leading to more doors, create an air of expectation and suspense, of things hidden. Who or what is going to appear through the door?

Doors as a scenographic device are an on-going preoccupation in both my art and scenographic design practice. The source of this reappearing image stems from a very early memory of mine as a four-year-old child growing up in the Welsh countryside. My memory is of a rambling, derelict Georgian mansion, Cottrell Manor (Figure 7), across the fields from our home.

FIGURE 7: COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHIC SLIDE OF A DERELICT GEORGIAN MANSION, COTTRELL MANOR, WALES (-).

In my dreams there are endless passageways and doors, a sprawling architectural space spawning spaces within spaces, a labyrinth of dark mysterious space somehow waiting to be illuminated. Long dusty corridors, winding endlessly through space; walls slashed with doors, leading into more corridors; leading through eternal space. Figure 8 is a close-up detail cropped from the original colour photographic slide, (taken by my father) of my mother, sister, and me standing outside this extraordinarily beautiful but totally abandoned building.

The enormous, empty ruin was filled with bales of hay. I remember entering through the neo-classical portal and unlocked, majestic front door to be confronted by the most amazing staircase which spiralled endlessly upwards. My recollection was of me wandering from room to room – or was that just in my childhood dreams? The building was demolished in the 1970s to accommodate the Cottrell Park Golf Resort. I look upon this ghostly image with a sense of disappearance, discombobulation and loss. I am also haunted by the thought that the Manor never actually existed, other than as a ghostly illusion conceived in my mind's eye. The Polish artist, director, scenographer and writer, Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990), wrote an apt description of the door which resonates with my own memories and art practice:

> *There is also a place "BEHIND THE DOORS",*
> *a place that is somewhere at the back of the ROOM;*
> *a DIFFERENT space;*
> *an open interior of our imagination*
> *that exists in a different dimension.*
> *This is where the threads of our memory are woven…*

We are standing at the door giving a long farewell to our childhood;
we are standing helpless
at the threshold of eternity and death.
In front of us,
in this poor dusky room,
behind the doors…
it is enough to open them. (Kantor 1993, 143)

For Kantor, the door is an analogy for human consciousness – a site concealing secrets and memories. The single door jamb alone on the stage, or as a symbolic motif in his drawings and paintings, becomes an object of memory, abandonment, and death. The American theatre theorist, Arnold Aronson, posits: 'On the stage, a door is a sign of the liminal, the unknown, the potential, the terrifying, the endless' (Aronson 2004, 340). The single lone door in performance establishes this boundary by delineating 'two separate spaces: the world seen and the world unseen; the world known and the unknown; the tangible and implied' (Aronson 2004, 332). For Aronson, the closed door becomes a 'memorial device', resonant of death and loss. He proposes:

> *on some level … the doors [entrances] on stage … echo this opening onto the inner world*
> *of the soul. Every time a door opens on the stage, a cosmos of infinite possibility is*
> *momentarily made manifest; every time a door closes certain possibilities are*
> *extinguished and we experience a form of death. (Aronson 2004, 332).*

The art works of the American Surrealist painter Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012) reveal an obsession with the 'door' as a liminal space between alternate states of reality. She produced a body of drawings and paintings between Birthday, (1942), and The Guest Room, (1950-1952), which evidences this persistent leitmotif in her art and literary practice. The images are from deep within her sub-conscious interiority; dreamscapes fragmented by walls, corridors and doors exposing her inner psychodrama. As Tanning commented;

> *endless stairs, the unscalable walls, even the doors I had painted, half open like Venus's*
> *flytraps, irresistible snares inviting me in … From there it was an easy leap to leap to a*
> *dream of countless doors. Oh, there was perspective, trapped in my own room. (Tanning*
> *2001, 62-63)*

The French philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1884-1962) in The Poetics of Space argues:

> *The door is an entire cosmos of the half-open. In fact, it is one of its primal images, the*
> *very origin of a daydream that accumulates desires and temptations: the temptation to*
> *open up the ultimate depths of being, and the desire to conquer all reticent beings.*
> *(Bachelard 1964, 222)*

Doors also appear in the dreams of the American architect, sculptor and scenographer George Tsypin. Their hidden mystery stimulates ideas within the mind's eye, creating worlds within worlds:

> *The mystery doesn't get cracked open. You touch it – you encounter it. Or at least you*
> *discover a little door. You never enter that door, but at least you identify the door. My*
> *role is to identify the door... there is a world inside your head. And I see if I can bring that*
> *world to a live installation, but essentially you only have your own world in your mind.*

There is only that, and you just have to have the courage to make it happen. (Ebrahimian 2006, 147)

My argument is that Tsypin's 'little door' into the artist's imagination can either slam shut on creativity in a blink-of-an-eye, giving rise to an inexplicable sense of loss – or open and embody a worlding.

Worlding

VALET: Outside?

GARCIN: Damn it, you know what I mean. Beyond that wall.

VALET: There's a passage.

GARCIN: And at the end of the passage?

VALET: There's more rooms, more passages, and stairs.

GARCIN: And what lies beyond them?

VALET: That's all.

(Extract from Huis Clos) (Sartre 1989, 6)

In Drowning in My Livingroom. A Self Portrait, there is created a meta-theatrical mise-en-scène as an assemblage or 'worlding'. The term worlding identifies an active, ongoing process with no end; there are only infinite possibilities and embodied encounters. The anthropologist, Kathleen Stewart, in Tactile Composition claims:

An atmospheric world or thing is mobile and generative; it produces multiple potentialities for coherence and shift. An emergent world, always almost there, is itself always leaning into a mobilization. (Stewart 2014, 120)

This philosophical stance is pivotal to my argument, which speculates how drawings have the quality of cosmopoiesis, of world creating (Thea Brejzek 2018). Drawing encapsulates the potential to visualise multiple alternate and heterogeneous realities. The act of drawing can transform the immaterial – the manifold of images in the mind's eye – into a material 'force as some kind of real, a world.' (Stewart 2014, 119). These worlds, or rooms within the interiority of the artist's imagination, first materialise as memories in Drowning in My Living Room. A Self Portrait. The drawing can potentially engender a spectatorial encounter at Derrida's 'brink of blindness' (Derrida 1993, 3). At the threshold where that elusive image can be lost for ever, I claim, is also the site of invention and originality; of wonder and astonishment. Like the waves crashing through the world of my living room, my intention is to immerse the spectator in the existentialist condition of worlding, where the accumulation of seemingly incongruent objects and meanings (doors, water, exit-sign, typewriter, violin etc.) can generate a scenographic ecology, a worlding. As Stewart also maintains:

Here, compositional theory takes the form of a sharply impassive attunement to the ways in which an assemblage of elements come to hang together as a thing that has qualities, sensory aesthetics and lines of force and how such things come into sense, already composed and generative and pulling matter and mind into a making: a worlding. (Stewart 2014, 119)

Conclusion

What is beyond the door? A precipice in which the image or thought 'drops out of sight in the twinkling of an eye'? (Derrida 1993, 48). Or is there 'a gap to be filled but not yet identified but presumably identifiable physical phenomena?' (Damasio 1999, 323). For a split-second, thoughts hover in the realm of possibility; that imagined 'knowledge of the moment' (Damasio 1999, 125). The Augenblick as ecstatic temporality, becomes a 'moment in vision' (Pasanen 2006, 221). The blank sheet of paper or empty screen stages the potential of a micro-world – worlds within the artist/scenographer's room of imagination and memory, revealing the slippage between an illusion and reality, an absence and presence, the imagined and the corporeal, innovation and an unfathomable loss. I seek in my drawing practice the creation of a cosmopoietic worlding: a visualisation of an emergent scenographic assemblage of forces. Distant echoes unite into a single sensory experience which, as Bachelard suggests, is 'an inner state that is so unlike any other, … transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity' (Bachelard 1964, 83).

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DRAWING PROCESS AND LOSS AND LOST TIME

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Drawing as an action and exploration requires behavioural losses. A separation, an imposed distance, sometimes an abandonment, a feeling of incompleteness, of something missing, of lack or a need for fulfilment are all situations reflected in and related to drawing. In this article, loss in drawing is described during the action, from the process point of view, and more precisely as the process of losing attitude and attributes through different points of view. Loss during drawing can be found in represented objects which are configured differently, with less accuracy in the representation, in losing senses such as vision, by trying to configurate invisible or inexpressible content, such as loss. In this case, loss in drawing is presented and investigated from the process point of view. During drawing as action, an inner experience and behaviour often require loss of one's certainties, control, habitus, bias, references or final scope. While alive, the loss of "the world around" or that of (first) references to poetical theories becomes the loss of the self, of the artist's identity during the poetic process. Finally, drawing is presented as a loss and a separation of the represented object from the action of its birth and, therefore, its time-contemporaneity; How loss is experienced when "you are present". Drawing becomes a transformation, while, after the action (once it is completed), the "loss of time" becomes memory and embodied experience.

'Never such incompleteness remains in a human heart
to hear its dilation situate this heart' (March 2000, p.46).

Introduction - The losses

Drawing and loss can be approached in many ways. Loss, as an expression of a feeling, memory of a loss or literally the loss of a member that is missing, can be a configurational issue or object to configurate. Loss of vision can also be part of an antiocularcentric approach and critique (Jay, 1993). Derrida's writing on the 'blind' introduces drawing and gestures untied from the represented object: 'One should in fact not see it (let's not say however: "one must not see it") insofar as all the colored thickness that it retains tends to wear itself out so as to mark the single edge of a contour: between the inside and the outside of a figure. Once this limit is reached, there is nothing more to see, not even black and white, not even figure/form, and this is the trait, this is the line itself' (Derrida, 1993). In these cases, loss is perceived more as an unfinished image or as an image of the invisible. Lack of detail in representation, in comparison with a photographic or realistic approach, has lost something of the referential object. Or, when loss itself is the referential object, then loss is the formative force to present what cannot be presented. In this article, we investigate drawing and loss from the process point of view. During drawing as action, an inner experience (Dewey, 2005 and Bataille, 2014) and behavior often require loss of one's certainties, control, bias and final scopes. While drawing is alive, loss becomes also the loss of 'the world around', the loss of referential works, but also, and most important, the loss of oneself (Agamben, 1999, Csikszentmihalyi, 2013, Blanchot, 2015, Barthes, 1977 and Valery, 2010). During the poetical process, in the procedure "to give birth to form – to give birth in letting be born" (Nancy, 2014), the artist is missing or needs to lose his or her own identity. The disappearance of the image of oneself and the uncertainty that this causes is often, in the field of art, a prerequisite for the opening of the form. Whether form refers to an artwork or the self, by losing the image of form/the identity of oneself, more unpredictable images and ways of making/creating may arise. Loss of control, of scope or of ways of drawing, leads more to what François Jullien calls "the great image has no form". In the opening of the form, identity is unclear, diffuse, almost unknown, of course, if we let it arise.

The losses

The loss of identity of the artist, as many authors put it, is a state necessary for the creation of an artwork. "The Man Without Content" by Giorgio Agamben (1999), "Flow" by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (2013), "The Space of Literature" by Maurice Blanchot (2015) and "Writing Degree Zero" by Roland Barthes (1977), to cite some, are books about literary and poetical consciousness, loss of certainties, control, expectations and the author's identity. For Agamben, the process of artistic creation and the artist dissociate themselves from conceptions that relate process to control, consciousness, fixed or predetermined ideas. On the contrary, the process is presented as an opening to an unknown world to explore and the artist as an agent lacking identity and known content.

> *'He has really penetrated a region where no other man would want to follow him, in proximity to a risk that threatens him more deeply than any other mortal being, still the artist remains on this side of his essence, since he has now definitively lost his content and is condemned forever to dwell, so to speak, beside his reality. The artist is the man without content, who has no other identity than a perpetual emerging out of the nothingness of expression and no other ground than this incomprehensible station on this side of himself.'(Agamben, 1999, p. 34)*

In order to produce and reach to an authentic artwork, loss as an opening to the unknown, to chaos and uncertainty, a separation from security, is a condition. Because of their similarity as a consecutive way to mark over a surface, many descriptions from literature are borrowed to describe the process of drawing. In this sense, when Blanchot (2015) refers to the void – empty place – during writing, we can easily think that the description also applies to drawing. Emptiness is seen as a way of facing writing and drawing as a loss of objectives, as the loneliness that the author faces in an impersonal place.

> 'The work requires of the writer that he lose everything he might construe as his own
> 'nature', that he lose all character and that, ceasing to be linked to others and to himself
> by the decision which makes him an 'I', he becomes the empty place where the
> impersonal affirmation emerges. This is a requirement which is no requirement at all, for
> it demands [...] Whoever digs at verse must renounce all idols; he has to break with
> everything. He cannot have truth for his horizon, or the future as his element, for he has
> no right to hope. He has, on the contrary, to despair. Whoever delves into verse dies; he
> encounters his death as an abyss.' (Blanchot, 2015, pp. 38, 55)

Drawing does not work only with descriptive limits that can in a certain sense break down formal discriminations, differences and divisions between real and non-existent or imaginary places. It also breaks down the preconceived image of it, its bias and abilities. And often when something is missing and closes, something new comes to substitute and open. Such experience is something we may achieve, it 'is grounded in availability and access' (Noë, 2012, p. 33). When breaking with old ways, new arrangements, limits and different ways of communicating, and being with others and oneself, arise.

> 'For, contrary to what one might think at first sight, the breaking of tradition does not at
> all mean the loss or devaluation of the past: it is, rather, likely that only now the past can
> reveal itself with a weight and an influence it never had before. Loss of tradition means
> that the past has lost its transmissibility, and so long as no new way has been found to
> enter into a relation with it, [...], to found the present as the relationship between past
> and future.' (Agamben, 1999, p. 66)

For Nancy, drawing is 'the opening of the form' (Nancy, 2013) because it is gesture, power, possibility, force (dynamis) that is realized, exerted (energy) on a surface. However, form in this case is not only the form presented, traced on a surface, but also the form of a subject who moves in such a way that s/he traces, modifies, makes his/her movements and leaves signs on the surfaces s/he touches. Before the opening of the forms as figures drawn on a two-dimensional surface (the formation of exterior forms), there is another opening, opening of the form, of the body of the subject who draws and interacts with his/her environment through the trace. In other words, the form that opens by tracing is not the traced form, the one that presents an existing or forming object, but the form of the body that, when tracing and writing, extends, writes, presents itself, externalizes itself and its transformations. The form of this foreign body, with unknown limits, is the first shape that, by tracing, opens up the exchange between tracing and that which is traced.

Figures 1 and 4 belong to a series of drawing experimentations where traces become cuts and the represented objects were approached from their disappearance. What happens when drawing lines, the division of the surface, the trait that marks as Derrida comments is so strong that it modifies the limits and properties of the surface of drawing (Derrida, 1993, p. 27). A planar surface loses its planarity, just as Lucio Fontana suggested in his classical work, it can have depth, it becomes tridimensional and can be

folded. This "borderline" drawing of cutting traces reveals, among other things, the direct relationship between traces and surface. Whether lines are made with a cutter or laser, cuttings may break the surface into small independent parts or modify its borders in ways that it can sustain itself, be it in a folded or unfolded form. Cutting lines don't permit "trial and error". The surface is no longer a "white" background, neutral or in second plan in order to reveal figures. With cutting traces, the surface is suffering a loss and at the same time it becomes activated. As figure and background are merged and become unseparated, the drawing's limits expand and, in a way, break.

FIGURE 1: ´CUTTING LINES´, ALBA GONZALEZ GIMENEZ, WORKSHOP IMPROGRAFIKA-´PAPER SHOW´, MADRID JULY 2015. PHOTO: ANTHI KOSMA

FIGURE 2: DRAWING OF NATALIA VIME, WORKSHOP IMPROGRAFIKA, MADRID JUNE 2016. PHOTO: ANTHI KOSMA

Loss of references, usefulness and scope

Another kind of loss which takes place during drawing and more specifically during drawing as a process of exploration, when it comes to a project, is the necessity for a loss of references, bias, habitus and preconceived images (Bourdieu, 1996). In this case the loss-abandonment, negation of the known, the initial images and references are a prerequisite for the appearance of new configurations. You always need a first exposure, a negation, a first going out into the unknown and a first break, a break with the known, the familiar, the habitual and the routines. 'You never project [design] for oneself, always against someone or something. It projects against something so that it changes' (Argan, 1969, p. 50).

Such an example is well described in Deleuze's book "The Logic of Sensation", where diagram is described as a 'catastrophe' (Deleuze, 2003). Based on the work of Francis Bacon, loss of reference and representational image is presented in the painter's gesture of destroying his/her configurations, the figures of his/her paintings. The loss of control in the gestural movement intentionally leads to the loss of reference and the painted image. Catastrophe in this case is proposed and forced with the aim to avoid clichés, repetitions and common imitations. Francis Bacon is making zones of "cleaning", he destroys the painted figure, arbitrarily traces cleaned areas that reveal a world of possibilities. In this case diagram represents the catastrophe of the picture, erasing previous clichés. It is chaos through which new forms begin, a matrix for configurations. Catastrophe is the seed/core but you have to provoke one.

Paintings remain referential but, in a way, they present a loss of configuration's literacy, and of brush and gesture control. For Deleuze, diagram describes this situation. 'The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastrophe, but it is also a seed of order or rhythm. It is a germ of rhythm in relation to the new order of the painting. As Bacon says, it "unlocks areas of sensation". The diagram ends the preparatory work and begins the act of painting' (Deleuze, 2003, p. 102). When the diagram becomes a gesture-destruction, the body, we could say, is placed out of rational control. The movements are not controlled, the eye can no longer follow and control the hand that is being 'blind' and activated by internal forces. The act then is a 'total catastrophe'; the 'destruction' of the familiar, stereotypical images and clichés, disconnecting the creative process from the instrumentalist logic that stifles it. Simultaneously, it exonerates, releases and also invites to a game of emergence of new images.

In his book "Being Drawing [Ser dibujo]", Javier Seguí de la Riva, Professor Emeritus at the Department of Graphic Expression in the School of Architecture in Madrid, explores the state of being drawing and live-in drawings as a radical imaginary way, experience and loss. He describes drawing making dark comments, that it starts with the 'loss of contours, of the appearance of backgrounds, contexts' (Seguí, 2010, p. 45) and when he analyses the act of erasing as a configurative way, he relates erasure to destruction, from traces to identity, as prerequisites to attention, alteration and freedom. 'The loss or removal of the limits or conditions of something (of the entity, for example) leads to alienation, loss of identity. Anything that causes that loss is a metaphor for erasure. Get alienated, get drunk, persist. The suppression of certain characteristics of things would also be an erasure. The suppression by fixation of attention (endeavor, compromise ...). And the suppression by alteration (transformation, liberation ...)' (Seguí, 2010, p. 31).

When drawing is not considered as a movement that looks outwards, outside, refers to, restores and reproduces an external aspect, and tries to place itself far from the useful, controlled, purely operational, measured and known, it is presented as a radical imaginary technique, [it becomes] a configurational

'therapy' with the capacity to experiment with oneself (Sloterdijk, 2003). 'No drawing is known; we draw to know' (Moraza, 2006, p. 114). It is a state of exploration, of limits and the unknown, a loss of certainties that is not necessarily directed at a specific result, or a final object, but rather consists of openings, of ways of opening possibilities.

> *'The question, however, is whether the time is ripe for such a destruction, or whether instead the consequence of such an act would not be the loss of any possible horizon for the understanding of the work of art and the creation of an abyss in front of it that could only be crossed with a radical leap. But perhaps just such a loss and such an abyss are what we most need if we want the work of art to reacquire its original stature.'*
> *(Agamben, 1995, p. 6)*

In graphic exploration, search is not driven by the 'value of the useful'. In this production, along with certainties, a disposition to lose energy and efforts is also common. Changes and transformations in the production process are found more in the attitude related to 'unproductive spending', the 'exhaustion' of 'useful behaviors that have no value in themselves' (Bataille, 2005, p. 34), which revolves around the 'perfectly useless' proposed by Bataille in 'The limits of the useful'.

> *'But in the attempt, he ends up with nothing in his hands but signs – signs that, although they have traversed the limbo of non-meaning, are no less extraneous to the meaning he was pursuing.' (Agamben, 1995, p. 8)*

The image of Natalia Vime's drawing (Figure 2) belongs to this kind of drawing: useless, made for and with pleasure. Made in a workshop of graphic improvisation, on a day of continuous production of images occurring unexpectedly, it reflects and helps us understand how flow between gestures, colors, water, people's energies, personal feelings and loss of scope, references and usefulness is the condition for the openness to the unknown and to new images. Figure 3 is a collective drawing. It is there that the loss of the author's control and identity arises and is required inevitably by the collaborative technique.

FIGURE 3: COLLECTIVE DRAWING, WORKSHOP IMPROGRAFIKA, MADRID JUNE 2016. PHOTO: ANTHI KOSMA

Loss of control

It is true that we can never really know what we're doing (Arendt, 2006, p. 106). Hannah Arendt and the principle she vindicates according to which one does first and then thinks is also significant in the case of drawing, which is perceived as an action and a process related to the loss of control. This article describes here how during the action of drawing and loss of control of gesture and body enter – especially in abstract painting – in a new state, a series of movements, a gestural dance which is unpredictable, without knowing, without following any representational rules, where the hand is not looking for a particular similarity.

The center of the action of drawing as a technique not based on prefabricated and imposed rules moves towards a technique that considers the drawing's surface an open field for exploration, where the subject draws freely. In this sense, drawing as a graphic exploration serves both the generation of non-existent configurations and as an encounter with oneself and autobiographical writing.

> 'Drawing is a constant rectifying / superimposing […] open and "blind" groping that can only be developed by successive approximations, stimulated by what the drawing itself presents at each reflective (perceptual) moment as a configured trial.' (Seguí, 2003, p. 9)

The movement of the gesture as an activity in itself is the search to take the situation to its limits, turning the body into a medium that transmits states, emotions, tracing ultrasound of an unknown body. 'In this sense the artist is no longer the subject who performs the action but the medium through whom the drawing is able to manifest itself' (Alphen, 2008, p. 64). The gestures and traces of drawing, gestures that are not classified, hierarchical, articulated or verbal, seem to be capable in many cases of breaking national, cultural, social, gender, religious limits and, in general, any limit of identification. The drawing body, always open to new appearances, configures its own identity documents, its 'papers' that give it permission to communicate through a writing of affection, the spellings of feeling, its fears and its deepest dreams. This state of the body is also called a state of flow that:

> 'involves new procedures or requires an unexpected variation. [...] The flow state tends to occur when a person's skills are fully involved in overcoming a challenge that he [or she] may face.' (Csikszentmihalyi, 2013, p. 58)

In the residues of the different, diverse, and unrepeatable graphic explorations, not only the form of the trajectory and the path of the movements are recorded, but also the effort, the struggle of the author. The traces show the movements, the vibrations of a body that suffers-feels tracing. In graphic exploration operations, the body transmits, externalizes, draws out. The disposition, degree of openness, ease, decision to participate in the action, manner, type, and manner of 'attacking' of the drawer is reflected in this strange choreography.

The body that moves and vibrates, transmits using the traces as means, as links between the body (interior) and the surface and the traces (exterior) (Nancy, 2010). The traces traced on the surfaces are observed as a product of this constant reciprocal exchange between interior and exterior. Traces are seen as residues, 'ashes' of that action, but also as witnesses related to an unknown interior. When drawing, the body is a silent body, which nevertheless vibrates and sounds.

'To sound is to vibrate in itself or by itself: it is not only, for the sonorous body, to emit a sound, but it is also to stretch out, to carry itself and be resolved into vibrations that both return it to itself and place it outside itself.' (Nancy, 2009, p. 8)
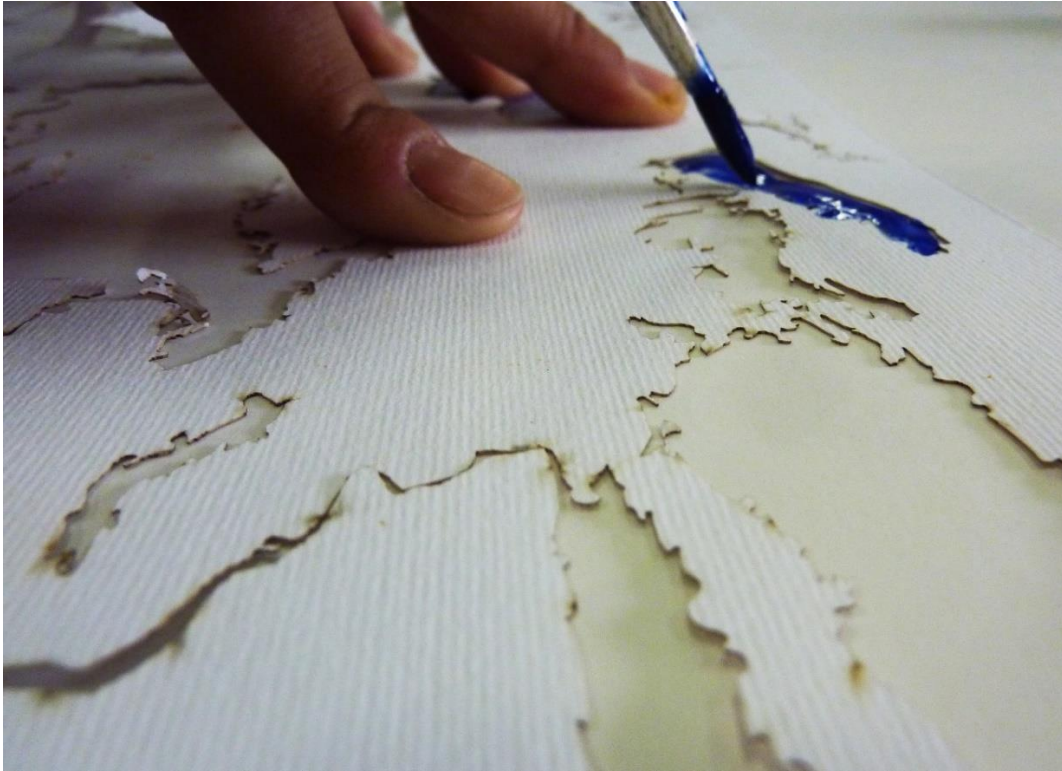

FIGURE 4: DRAWING THE LIMITS, WORKSHOP IMPROGRAFIKA, MADRID JUNE 2017. PHOTO: ANTHI KOSMA

Loss of the world around

The work as an opening is the exploration of an unknown territory that artists themselves often ignore; becoming under this point of view in the opening, an entity that draws, while it unites with its environment by doing, by drawing. Dewey (2005) and, later, others like Maturana (2004) start from the integration of the subject with his/her environment and also the integration of the subject with his/her environment by doing. The subject transmits by expressing his/her subconscious, converting the field of footprints into derived signals.

There are moments during the experience of drawing, moments of deep concentration, when imagination is completely merged, "circulating" in the imaginary world of the miniature of the drawing, where the designer/drawer has lost any scope, "global" vision, direction and is simply moving from one line to another, fabricating traced worlds. This moment of dreaming during the action of drawing, as in dreaming during writing, is a moment of loss. Immersed in 'knitting' a 'text' of traces, drawing is losing the image of oneself, losing corporal control and the scope of each/the drawing. Remaining in or looking forward to reaching this state of drawing where tracing is an experience of dreaming in/into a miniature is an enjoyable state. In this case, the loss of the "world" around and the loss of the image of oneself are the prerequisites for the pleasure of being into drawing miniature. Drawing in its appearing, birth, the 'opening of form', as Nancy says, shows the essential incomplete, non-closed or non-totalized form of the figure (the figure's essential incompleteness, a non-closure or non-totalizing of form) (Nancy, 2013, p. 28).

'Imagination is always considered to be the faculty of forming images. But it is rather the faculty of deforming the images offered by perception, of freeing ourselves from the immediate images; it is especially the faculty of changing images.' (Bachelard, 1964, p. 19)

To capture and communicate the experience of dreaming and "the loss of the world around" during action is quite difficult if not impossible. In Figure 5 a group of people are dreaming in front of a window full of drawings posted on its glass. By finding their place on a window, a series of drawings made in white A4 paper without tools result in a day-dreaming experience. Lightening the reverse of papers transformed these minimal drawings, revealing them as different territories. Papers' edges, folding, shadows, holes or wet parts appeared completely different. Papers' edges and folds appeared as traced lines, and wet parts were converted into luminous sources provoking estrangement, letting all participants imagine new traced universes in front of a "window".

Loss of all the non-expressed

Abstract and non-configural painting and drawing are visual expressions more related to corporal forces and moving with an internal rhythm. Loss, consciously or not, often becomes the expression and the theme of non-expressed feelings and situations. In this case, loss is that of control as mentioned above, but also an exteriorization, expression and 'retch' of inner feelings, preoccupations and unconscious states of mind.

'It [Rhythm] is the original ecstasy that opens for man the space of his world, and only by starting from it can he experience freedom and alienation, historical consciousness and loss in time, truth and error.' (Agamben, 1995, p. 62)

'Letting yourself be carried away by the hands without trying to control your gestures, only spying on your vicissitudes,' says Javier Seguí (2010, p. 10). While the hands move freely, without mediators, "judges" and rules, without trying to recognize or be recognized, it seems they are closer to that body

that escapes the limits of the skin. While they 'dance' freely, they are closer to the body that feels, sweats from agony, cries because they left it, smiles because they looked at it and forgets the 'outside' and the 'how it looks like/it can be seen'. It is something more about that body that somehow always eludes us; something that we feel everywhere, but never see as a whole. That we carry with us, with so much patience and whose limits, colors, hormones or inherited desires torture us, forms of knowing/unknowing, haptic memory, muscle memory and others.

There are those moments where the body somehow loses control. As long as the movements of the hands are not defined by the grammar, the syntax, the positions of the letters on the keyboard, the requirements and the objectives they must meet, they begin to draw more freely. As it happens when the hands are carried away caressing and sliding over the body of the other. Similarly, they are left, somewhat sloppy, to draw lines and colored spots. Over there, in the non-intermediary, in the flow, but also, listening to the need and desire for the body to manage to go out. As the hands transmit, they act, according to Aby Warburg, like 'seismographs of the human body' and its emotions (Didi-Huberman, 2009). Emotionographers whose traces are psychographies, small inexplicable signs linked to that body that feels and is overwhelmed with emotions it does not know how to describe. Also, the loss of the image of oneself and outer environment during drawing is seen as an inner experience. The loss of identity, the loss of the image of oneself, the loss of control, the loss of the preconceived images, but also drawing as the loss of all the non-expressed. The feeling of loss and lost expression reflected in the traced lines, traces revealing drawing as the writing of the lost expression.

FIGURE 6: UNCONTROLLED, 2018. PHOTO: Anthi Kosma

Drawing in Figure 6 was made in an attempt to describe a forced and almost violent personal loss of the author. Initially, it was called "topologies of violence" after the title of the book by Byung-Chul Han who

writes about violence that is not physical and that is rarely talked about. This violence that we often feel and quietly incorporate in our times, times of competition, so-called justice, of the free and global market. However, later, with the help of a friend, the drawing was named "hematomas" [μελανιές-melanies], which in Greek also means black ink spots (the signs of the ink were identified with those of the accumulation of blood on human skin). Bruises that in this case were internal and "from within", with the help of the ink were "transported" "out" to "paper". The words came later to interpret and reveal: "Hematomas" were many, in different layers, some were covered with "dense color", others took the "form of letters" and others of "cuts". The truth is that all these signs have a relationship with the violence of loss and all the feelings that the body has suffered and could not express. It was as if the drawing said "Don't forget that I'm touching you", my "ink" fills in and heals from the loss.

Epilogue

The lost times

Loss is a separation, an imposed distance, sometimes abandonment, a feeling of incompleteness, of something/someone missing, of lack or a need for fulfillment. For some authors drawing is often a separation, at least a division of a surface into many pieces, a fragmentation.

The act of drawing is related to separation, as drawing requires an amount of time or at the same time configures the state of an object at a certain time, while drawing as an image presents the time the drawing was made at. Furthermore, drawing is first of all the loss of time, the time of its configuration, the duration of this experience and also the lost times.

Drawing traces over a surface, at first, represents a loss, that of the moment of their generation. In that sense traces mark a loss, loss of time where traces are the remaining of the movements and the gestures that formed them. Testimonies of another time, of a vivid experience, of a body in a moment of exteriorization, expressing itself, its moment, its emotional state. In this sense, drawing is the image of the loss of its appearing, always related to the absence of that moment, that body, those 'cries' over the 'paper'.

The image of loss

Drawing as the action of forming the unformed, the invisible, the unknown, requires at first a loss of one's certainties, preconceived images, habitus, bias, loss of oneself. The action of drawing as a loss has been described as the loss of attitude and attributes, the end of certain situations and, as a consequence, the beginning of others, less known, controlled and predictable. The image of the body while it is tracing is not the image of the drawings traced over a surface or a configured body, but the image of this body in action, during the practice of tracing. The image of drawing as loss cannot be separated from the aspect of the body while it exteriorizes itself, changes its attitude and performances. It is a mnemonic image of the body experiencing its limits. During the movement of drawing, the changing 'loss' images are the configured forms but also the forms of the body while it is moving, changing and challenging. Drawing loss as images of the body is neither a fixed image nor that of a descriptive figure. Loss is an inner drawing, a living experience.

> 'from self toward self [...] Manifesting itself in this way the subject comes to distance itself from itself and can experience pleasure or pain, in other words, the expansion or retraction of its being.' (Nancy, 2013, p. 28).

FIGURE 7: UNCONTROLLED, 2020. PHOTO: ANTHI KOSMA

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I CAN'T DRAW: REFLECTIONS ON DRAWING AND THE ROLE OF UNCERTAINTY AND LOSS AS DELIBERATE METHODOLOGIES TO FOSTER CREATIVE THINKING SKILLS

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In examining the relationship between drawing as mark making and creative thinking, 'I can't draw' is often cited by students in the Foundation Studies drawing classes we conduct at the University of South Australia. This is perceived as a lack of confidence in undertaking what is seen as a talent activity, the domain of only a privileged few. The same is often said for creativity, thus creating a challenge for academics in how they can assist students to overcome their lack of ability. In building a creative dimension into the drawing experience of students, this lack of confidence and uncertainty reflects a narrow view of drawing as a skill in realistic representation, rather than as a process of thinking and idea generation that utilises speculative exploratory processes that rely on uncertainty and what can be described as a lost state.

In examining the relationship between drawing as mark making and creative thinking, 'I can't draw' is often cited by students in the Foundation Studies drawing classes we conduct at the University of South Australia. This is perceived as a lack of confidence in undertaking what is seen as a talent activity, the domain of only a privileged few. The same is often said for creativity, thus creating a challenge for academics in how they can assist students to overcome their lack of ability. In building a creative dimension into the drawing experience of students, this lack of confidence and uncertainty reflects a narrow view of drawing as a skill in realistic representation, rather than as a process of thinking and idea generation that utilises speculative exploratory processes that rely on uncertainty and what can be described as a lost state.

In our teaching work we explore the relationship between designing, drawing and the idea of loss, where loss is interpreted as uncertainty, surrendering control and ambiguity. We consider feeling lost to be a necessary condition for students to challenge themselves through approaches that promote discovery from uncertain starting points. We approach and teach drawing as a process of exploration, whereby learning is not 'instructional' but rather is an uncontrolled pedagogical process, attempting to make sense of visual material.

In particular, we attempt to address the question, 'what constitutes interesting visual material'? This process examines drawing through the lens of how one 'looks and sees' the world in new ways, learning through the experience of uncertainty and how discovery leads to imaginative ideas being explored, articulated and presented.

> *'Drawings challenged my perception of the world.' (Student reflection, course evaluation instrument)*

Dineen and Collins (2005) describe art and design students as explorers finding their way through territory which is at least partly unchartered and rich in uncertainty. This defines the nature of the creativity required from our students and ways that drawing can contribute.

Drawing as Thinking

Teachers often find it difficult to understand and articulate drawing as a process for investigation, experimentation and reflection, where unexpected outcomes and aspects of the learning activity are not always under the teacher's control (Adams 2017, Fava 2020).

However, its role as part of the creative process and its relationship to thinking has come to be recognised as a powerful medium, translating known knowledge in expected, predictable media and rendering techniques to drawing as creative thinking (Cain 2006). The pedagogy of drawing to facilitate metacognitive skills associated with creative practice, is a growing trend where drawing, through augmenting thought processes, is being recognised as an integral skill that enhances and enables innovation (Hetland 2013). This pedagogical approach implies perceptual and conceptual skills and notions of absent-mindedness in creative decision making, allowing one to express through the messiness of a way of working that Carabine (2011) calls 'negative capability'. This process of tolerating and working through the uncertainties and anxieties of one's practice is akin to being in a 'lost state' where exploration and speculative thinking are key. Drawing, seen as a medium for learning, enables several transferable skills in an adaptive process that is linked to visual thinking, research from analysis, speculation, adaption and communication (Tormey 2011).

Drawing as Loss

In our drawing courses students experience the creative process of building understandings in basic design. According to Akoury (2020) one of the main aims of design education is to foster and enable creative thinking abilities, whereby drawing is the medium for critical conceptualisation as a research process that goes beyond projection of thoughts to a study of correlations. The notion of feeling lost enhances the production of meaning by demanding of the student the overcoming of uncertainty by the exploration of speculative scenarios or a loss of control in experiencing the creative act. This process develops ways of working and thinking that foster creative thinking, not merely solving problems, but uncovering issues around problem finding and the development of knowledge that comes from doing and experiential learning. Schaeverbeke, Heylighen (2012) and Adams (2017) utilise terms such as 'extended drawing' and 'power drawing'. They describe how drawing is connected to design activity and learning in a creative process that moves from perception, communication and manipulation to invention. Riley (2017) argues that drawing nurtures an 'intelligence of seeing' and contributes to the creation of meaning through mark making.

Loss Through Ambiguity

Ambiguity or a state of 'not clearly knowing' is acknowledged as a basic mechanism underlying creative tasks and is the driver of truly innovative thought (Root-Bernstein 1999). This notion of not knowing, along with uncertainty, is an important element in the creative process (Goe 1997) and can be enhanced through an open approach to drawing. However, one must be free from culturally conditioned perceptions of reality that are often associated with traditional drawing instruction in order to construct the variety of meanings that a creative approach facilitates. The ability to tolerate ambiguity by linking complexity and novelty enhances creative potential and creative problem solving, but necessitates an ambiguous period in which the problem is clarified and solutions are considered (Harding and Hale 2007, Balgiu 2014). From a teaching perspective, awareness of this presence of ambiguity from product to evaluation contingency must be complimented by an awareness of one's own uncertainty about them and the skills to productively utilise this uncertain state in the creative process (Breaugh and Colihan 1994). Individuals who display the ability to tolerate ambiguity are more likely to engage in problem finding, problem solving and evaluation by avoiding premature decision making. They create their own meanings for situations free from externally imposed rules and conventions (Rubin, Fein and Vandenberg 1983).

Students and academics face competing tensions when rigid accountability driven levels of clarity and structure compete with the need for open-ended creative ways of working. To overcome this, approaches are needed that embrace ambiguity (Harding and Hale 2007). This 'sticky curriculum' is based on uncertainty and often full of unknowns (Orr and Shreeve 2018).

Creativity relies on the novel associations that can be made from known situations in a disorderly process of invention that challenges existing procedures (Wanng, Zhang and Martocchio 2011). In the visual realm, as in all creative acts, one does not know beforehand what the outcome will be. Ideas become apparent through the process of exploring and prototyping possibilities. This 'not knowing' or 'feeling lost' is a state of mind that one needs to be comfortable with in order to avoid the preconceptions that can hinder original thought. Cain (2006) sees it as knowledge-constituting, which

involves a dialectic process between 'knowing and not knowing'; a fluidity of thought based on enquiry and not specifically knowing what one is making until it materialises.

Loss Through Uncertainty

Uncertainty or a state of doubt is another way of experiencing this concept of loss that, according to Beghetto (2019), is necessary for creativity, opening new possibilities for thought and action. Embracing uncertainty involves experiences in speculative thinking or sitting with a problem or challenge in a 'problem exploring' situation. This encourages deeper thought in identifying what the real problem is and time for interrogation to determine the true nature of the situation. Moving too quickly to resolve a state of uncertainty or loss may create options that are not viable and early resolution may be problematic, as it does not allow the time frame to ask the right questions (Beghetto 2019, Reisman 2016).

Routines and habits need disrupting if new ways of thinking and acting are to be embraced, rather than avoided or hastily and prematurely resolved (Comstock 2018). Creativity occurs or is needed when one comes to an impasse, challenge or disruption in the order of things and it is this state of affairs that creates uncertainty and a feeling of loss. It can be argued that the role of education is to prepare students for the future, albeit one that is uncertain (Mishra and Henriksen 2018). Jobs that rely on creativity have traditionally lacked specific role descriptions (Kazanjian, Drazin and Glyn 2000) and the role of ambiguity is deemed an inherent feature for future jobs requiring creative skills in organisations facing uncertain environments (Kaur Majithia, 2017). Individuals with a high tolerance for uncertainty are confident and self-determined in their capacities to be creative, whereas individuals intolerant of ambiguity perceive this uncertainty and being in a state of loss as threatening and intimidating (Wanng, S, Zhang, X and Martocchio, J 2011). Creativity and uncertainty are therefore seen as important areas of learning to cope with change and the preparation of students for twenty-first century learning (Henriksen et al. 2016).

Imagination

Imagination is that unique quality and attribute that sets humans apart from all other living creatures. It allows us in an evolutionary means to move from adapting to our environment for basic survival to actively adapting the environment to suit our needs. However, according to Wellerstein (1998), if the future were certain and predictable there would be no compulsion to do anything new or different. The essence of human creativity is based on the desire and ability to cognitively model future states of change. This involves embracing a state of feeling lost, as one moves through uncertainty as the precondition necessary to engage in speculative thinking. The use of drawing in this creative act provides a powerful thinking tool to facilitate this process.

If drawing is to progress from its narrow-skilling, discipline-based tradition and have a place in the curriculum, design-based learning will be required to facilitate democratic and student-centered pedagogy that acknowledges the diverse nature of students and of learning styles (Gardener 1993). This involves a design-thinking approach, working with imperfect information from uncertain starting points and without absolute right or wrong answers, in other words, a feeling of being lost that comes from feelings of uncertainty. This process incorporates the interrogation of values and contested issues (Keirl

2004, Maisuria 2005), a dialectic and dialogic enquiry method through modelling that, according to Spendlove (2017), facilitates critical thinking, opposing conventions and proposing new ones.

Making drawings enhances this process by avoiding interpretations and allowing an 'emptiness' or a 'lost state' in which to operate. Frank (1993) describes drawing as meld between seeing and mark making in what he called 'seeing/drawing' as a process of heightened awareness. This is influenced, not by looking at things from preconditioned mindsets, but by seeing from the 'belly' where one comes to know from a lost state of not knowing or emptiness.

> *'This memory-based method we are accustomed to was shattered in an instant.' (Student reflection course evaluation instrument)*

Structured Uncertainty

Teachers may have predetermined expectations of lesson outcomes and student responses. However, despite the best planning, unexpected results may occur (Akoury 2020). When they do, teachers' willingness to go with an unexpected response is vital and, although some of this can occur within the context of the lesson, there is certainly no guarantee or consistency. Presenting students with opportunities to work through their drawing and to experience uncertainty through a structured approach has become an aspect of our pedagogy, a process that acknowledges the impediments to students' creativity and an aversion to uncertainty and a feeling of loss. This avoids the idea that creativity is unstructured and only reliant on free expression from some mystic source. Removing these impediments assists in building confidence to discover new opportunities within existing drawing curriculum frameworks by adding a creative dimension to activity outcomes. Beghetto (2019) refers to this process as 'lesson unplanning' or unlearning, where opportunities for uncertainty are presented by removing certain predetermined components or structures of planned lessons, such as strict problem identification, process, product outcome or set criteria. From our experience this can be difficult to achieve in the imposed prescriptive order of mainstream pedagogical theory in higher education.

We have introduced a creative, design thinking foundation through drawing that can be instructive while encouraging creativity by applying knowledge other than in a 'tried and tested' traditional way. This challenges the often highly structured approach of educators designed to eliminate uncertainty in the student experience (Beghetto 2019). Student feedback from our courses confirms acceptance to challenging this structured approach and teaching staff are also aware that this creative aspect of drawing needs to employ effective strategies to be taught in a more meaningful way (McWilliam 2007, Gluth and Corso 2017).

Projects are presented that allowed for multiple interpretations, such as the visual expression of words, phrases and even music, where students deliberately move from familiar meanings to novel ones and where responding in time is essential. The use of spontaneous emotions and reactions in the form of marks to these stimuli provides a provocation that unhooks the 'known,' allowing visual outcomes not previously experienced or articulated to emerge.

> *'I gained more insight into the plethora of "inside information" that is present within every figure, object and composition we were asked to translate on to our page'.*
> *(Student reflection course evaluation instrument)*

We encourage students to embrace uncertainty by approaching problems from many perspectives by asking questions and exploring not what is true but what could be true. By imaginatively framing questions we aim to produce graduates who can think about the relationship between all the parts and the whole, by envisaging the big picture and not be limited to the expertise of their discipline (often certain), but imagining its relationship with everything else. We have established a process that provides students with opportunities to work, deal and engage with a feeling of being lost and uncertainty in what Bednar and Welch (2006) describe as 'structured uncertainty'. Original expression is generated by reframing questions and deliberately transforming from certainty to uncertainty, such that ambiguity provides new insights and understandings.

In our Foundation studies we have introduced an aspect of design and creative idea generation underpinned by drawing, incorporating a range of specific creative thinking approaches such as challenging assumptions, analogous and metaphorical scenarios, and random input to speculate on new ideas. In the challenging assumptions process, for example, students move from known validated data about a topic – let's say a chair – to deliberately challenging that validity through a provocative statement that provides a new entry point for exploration. Can we challenge the assumption that a chair is ideally meant to be comfortable to a statement that specifies the notion that a chair can be uncomfortable and yet useful? The result might be a chair that you can exercise in to keep fit while you are at a workstation. The idea is then expressed through a series of concept drawings.

Teaching Approaches Encompassing Loss

Our teaching for creativity and innovative thinking through drawing involves high levels of improvisation by getting students to respond to what happens, rather than sticking to a planned procedure and outcome. We allow students to co-construct their knowledge in a design thinking, learner-centred, problem-based learning (PBL) approach. Learners are provided with opportunities to explore, collaborate, research and respond to real-world problem scenarios and challenges, which by their nature are uncertain. For example, a drawing exercise in the local shopping centre evolved into a visual study of shopping habits and processes which were subsequently challenged through a design process. This unearthed new shopping scenarios factoring in new technologies, lifestyle and work changes, to provide alternatives to the traditional shopping experience. Drawing thus led to insights and speculative alternatives from observations elaborating on that initial traditional drawing task.

> 'I am no longer afraid to begin a drawing or make mistakes.' (Student reflection course evaluation instrument)

We guide learning towards a series of outcomes building knowledge together in ways that are not always predetermined: a design drawing process that relies on observation and mark making to question and redefine scenarios, speculating change and ideas that are prototyped into new meanings, resulting in systematic loss or evolution from original intentions or preconceptions. For example, a transformation drawing exercise might take an object from one category through an evolutionary change into another, for instance from a manufactured object to a natural one, with drawings of the intermediary steps that are convincing.

We encourage letting go or not being precious about one's work through approaches such as 'blind' contour drawing. Students are urged not to be preoccupied with traditional memorised drawing symbols, image and mark making through a loss of control evolving new and unexpected configurations

where eye and hand work as a team. Students are also encouraged to lose or break convention of sole ownership of a drawing by utilizing a collaborative drawing design thinking approach. This forces new ways of interpreting and decision-making using marks on paper that rely on collaboration and negotiation for new meanings.

Facilitating the creation of new knowledge is achieved through ways of working based on prototyping, technical innovation, exploration of new procedures utilizing design thinking and drawing that are supported by Jean Piaget's thoughts that learning and creating are fundamentally intertwined (Sawyer 2006). We emphasise the ability to think reflectively and externalise skills and in so doing understand what we determine as the *thinking behind the thinking.* From this, students learn the art of structuring an argument and to elaborate on their thinking through the iterative process present when designing, drawing and making.

Creating new understandings occurs when transforming feelings of loss into structured uncertainty through a sense making visualising processes (Weick 1995), developed in an environment where students are challenged to work and extend themselves just within or just beyond their reach (Kimbell 2009). Many drawing exercises challenge students to solve problem tasks using visualising as a way of thinking. For instance, drawings that allude, through a chosen medium, to the complete opposite of the existing function and nature of the objects being drawn.

Overcoming Preconceptions

We place emphasis on the examination and identification of the things that inhibit creativity and visual communication, particularly things like a fear of making mistakes. There is a need to accept loss as a condition to spark speculative thought, eliminating the need to be right, and to have an expected answer that follows a predetermined process. Students are encouraged to challenge the expectation that a process needs to lead to a solution in a set way or set routine. We question that ideas only come at certain times in certain places, using only logical, analytical, routine or judgmental thinking. Challenging their assumptions or preconceived ideas through the proposition of 'alternative hypothesis' is paramount (Spendlove 2017). Students are asked not to take things for granted by defining and recognising that the assumptions we carry are often based on certainty. In order to challenge them, we encourage students to accept that any assumption or preconception can be disputed or reversed, leading to new possibilities. It is acknowledged that many external factors which relate to habit, expectation, rules, standards, traditions, conformity bias, etc., inhibit creative ability (Adam 1999, Davis 2011).

To overcome students' feelings of loss and uncertainty we have developed some of the following approaches:

- We aim for *fluency* by encouraging students to draw utilising a range of applications, but primarily to express and display many ideas, without critique, by withholding judgment no matter how crazy, seemingly silly or inappropriate the initial imaging of ideas may seem. Students are challenged to rapidly interpret through marks, words expressing various emotions like fear, happiness, etc. This does not allow for detailed thought on expected outcomes, the rapid nature creating a lost state from which to work. Generating a large volume of visual ideas without judging allows all ideas an opportunity to be considered, no matter how irrelevant they may initially appear (Runco and Jaeger 2012).

- *Flexibility* was developed as a strategy for students to explore a variety of different ideas, reinterpreting, experimenting and restructuring them into new visual configurations. Students have to take an object and substitute different textures, patterns, etc. to change the physical appearance (for instance, hard textures being made to look soft and fluffy, etc.). This 'opposite' approach involves comparing or substituting things with similar or comparable qualities, taking an existing idea/image from one situation, discipline or application and visually applying it to another (Osborn 2001), thus enhancing and challenging the loss of preconceived identity.
- *Originality* in students' work is encouraged as a means of promoting personal interpretations, such as playfulness, risk taking, embracing error and using humour and absurdity. We aim to heighten perception and encourage creative thought by using other stimuli, such as smell, music, touch, movement or dreams. Examples include where students 'feel' an unseen object and describe it for someone else to draw and creating self-portraits based on feeling/touching their faces without utilizing vision. This loss or removal of convention to the process encourages examination of the uncertainty to stimulate originality.

'Knowledge I have embodied to create more unique and diverse designs.' (Student reflection course evaluation instrument)

We are aware that time must be allowed for creative ideas to emerge and to think things through on conscious and unconscious levels. Students acknowledge the role of intuition, putting ideas into the mind, stirring them and allowing plenty of time for responses from the uncertainty of the unconscious. Bedside, sketchbooks are encouraged so that thoughts and ideas emerging from dreams can be immediately recorded before forgotten. Feeling lost or states of uncertainty are the spur for creative insights, often resulting from processes that are unconscious and that lie below the level of awareness in a state of loss (Saeb, McCammon and O'Farrell 2007).

Drawing projects are structured so that the above examples of creative process can be applied in ways that allow students time for production as well as meaningful reflection as a means of deepening understandings. Students are expected to keep a sketchbook journal that articulates their processes and thoughts aligned to their mark making. Comprehensive notes are provided on 'What is a Reflection?' so that deep questioning and learning can take place. This is a requirement for all their work and is factored into formal assessment where self and peer evaluation are encouraged, not relying on expectations of how society will assess the ideas, but by considering the tasks and processes that participants have determined for themselves.

Confidence in one's ability to think and work creatively is necessary in moving from creative potential to creative action (Beghetto and Karwowski 2019) and we recognize the importance of confidence in the overall drawing/creativity experience. We encourage students to identify and conceptualize new ideas by providing positive experiences of the process and modelling effective ways of working before slowly adding complexity as participants' capabilities and self-assurance in dealing with uncertainty develop to an appropriate level.

Students are challenged to visually transfer information from familiar, existing categories and apply them to uncertain situations in the construction of new unique patterns and diverse configurations as a way of generating novel ideas. An example is where students through drawing have to invent a fantasy creature that conforms to anatomical conventions identified in preliminary studies of existing creatures which are then gradually evolved into a visually imaginative but convincing image that relies on a gradual loss or evolution from the original identity.

Conclusion

Our work has enabled us to help students develop the confidence that they can draw and participate in the dynamic relationship between designing, drawing and the loss of certainty. We argue for the importance of embracing uncertainty and ambiguity in our design and drawing programs and by association the notion of loss in the creative process as a necessary precondition to the design-thinking skill set our students as future designers require. In a rapidly changing future world, defined by uncertainty and the subsequent feeling of loss in not being able to always rely on familiar or predictable routine processes, the ability to embrace these conditions will create the flexible and agile mindset to deal with future challenges. We have attempted to reposition drawing from a perception as a talent-based reproductive process – the domain of only a few – to drawing as a medium for conceptualisation as a research process. We argue that the production of meaning requires students to explore speculative scenarios and discovery from ill-defined situations and this process will often involve dealing with a feeling of loss as determined by ambiguity and uncertainty. This lost state is to be encouraged and welcomed in a positive way as a necessary condition for creative thought and action.

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WITNESSING LOSS: DRAWING AND URBAN REGENERATION

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This paper is a practice-led account of the relationship between lost city spaces, post-war redevelopment in London and drawing as a method of witnessing. The motivation and purpose of this paper is to critically analyse and reflect on the connection between selective British post-war drawing of the destroyed and regenerated urban environment and my own practice as an artist. I have used as a case study my on-site drawings of Elephant and Castle in south-east London, an area I have lived in for the last twenty years. Recording and making visible what is destroyed, forgotten and lost in the repeated rupture and transformation of the area, during the latest cycle of regeneration. I have combined my practice as a research method with urban theory, cultural geography and writing on drawing.

Introduction

The structure of this paper is formed of two equal parts, using historical context and selected examples of artists drawing urban development. The expansion of the industrial Victorian city and all its inequalities, followed by the destruction and rebuilding in the post-war period, are used to give background. British artists Muirhead Bone, John Piper and David Bomberg are referenced to show the differing aesthetic approaches in recording and documenting the destroyed city and what they tell us about reconstruction. The expressive location-based drawings of building sites by Frank Auerbach are cited to align by practice with a tradition that rejects the neo-romantic and picturesque in documenting reconstruction. The 'spectral turn' of the 1990s and the ideological discourse it engendered are discussed in relation to the work of Rachel Whiteread and Laura Grace Ford. My drawings of regeneration form the later section and focus on of the contested demolition of the brutalist Heygate social housing estate (Figure 1).

The synergy between my practice and urban history seeks to ask questions about remembering and forgetting as a means of addressing erasure and absence in the urban environment. Inequality and the suppression of urban memory are linked; buildings and streets represent much more than the materials they are constructed from, they embody lived experience. The erasure of social and cultural memory is a recurrent theme in contemporary market-driven city development initiatives. I will argue the activity of drawing is a method of not only witnessing what has been lost but also an act of resistance, challenging the motivation and flow of visual communication used to initiate and sell urban regeneration by developers, planners and local and national government. This paper presents my ongoing research into drawing and the loss of local places in London's global city spaces.
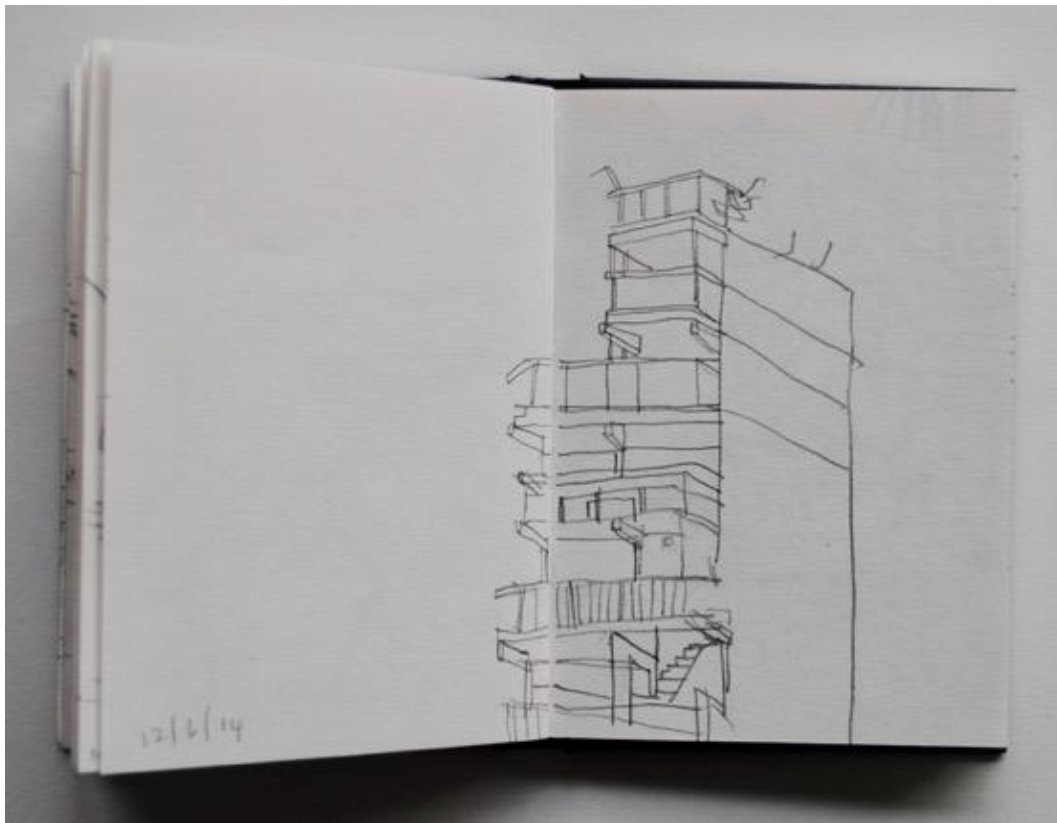

FIGURE 1. KINGSHILL HOUSING BLOCK DEMOLITION, HEYGATE ESTATE, LONDON. JUNE 2014.

Historical and visual context

The history of London includes many episodes of destruction and ruination caused by fire, plague, civil and world war, industrialisation and its social-economic consequences. This repeated cycle of rupture has led to new planning, demolition and rebuilding and more recently the privatisation of publicly owned land. At each stage of these traumatic events, those who live and work in the city are immersed in the changes and often exiled and excluded.

In Victorian Britain it was by looking backwards to the nature of Gothic architecture that the leading architect and Catholic convert Pugin and his socialist rival, the critic John Ruskin, hoped to rethink the form of the modern industrial city and what had been lost in its rapid expansion. Their damning critique of industrialisation was communicated largely by drawing. A. W. N. Pugin's book Contrasts (1841) combined thirty-six images that juxtaposed the modern industrial city with examples of medieval England. Ruskin's exploration of Venice carried out through intensive observational drawing in notebooks resulted in The Stones of Venice (1851-53). The notebooks represent a form of intuitive visual and textual reportage, resulting in a subjective architectural hypothesis and moral critique on the nature of work and the development of British cities (Dannatt & Richardson, 2010:13).

Paul Hogarth emphasises the role of intuition for what became known as 'Special Artists' and drawing became closely aligned with journalism. The London weekly Graphic founded in 1869 'pontificated on the social evils of the day and demanded reforms' (Hogarth, 1986:57). The impact of these journals and their visual and textual criticism of Victorian society had huge reach. The rapid industrialisation of the city and rise in population shocked the middle class. The drawings commissioned often had a moral force and campaigning zeal in their depiction of social injustice. The publication in 1872 of Doré's London a Pilgrimage, perhaps more than any other sequence of drawings of the time, evokes the contrasting experience of the crowded Victorian city. The use of light and shade is used to express the conditions of the poor and renders them almost as an apparitional presence in the city, often barely vertical, worn out and in need of food and shelter. Pugin and Ruskin's social concerns for the industrial city meant looking to the past to create a more progressive urban future, while Doré focused on the present to bear witness to the parlous state of the Victorian city and the densely packed streets to visualise social injustice.

Drawing Destruction: Muirhead Bone, John Piper and David Bomberg

The career and drawings of Muirhead Bone (1876-1953) encompassed both First and Second World Wars as a war artist and his methodology of searching for urban subject matter by walking at night in London after moving from Scotland are communicated in letters written to his wife. Bone describes how he 'trudged' all night in London '…haunting, seeing, considering…', and walking allowed him to see imaginatively (Bone, 2009:47). The dramatic viewpoints and composition of his drawings are fundamental aspects of Bone's practice; he finds locations that allow him to get up close and peer into city spaces under construction. The detailed linear quality of the work sits at a nexus between the Victorian aesthetic of Doré and emerging Modernism without borrowing from either. Bone witnesses directly the changing construction of the early twentieth-century city and its infrastructure.

The drawing practice of John Piper (1903-1992) forms a very different tradition of recording the urban environment to the observational methods of Bone. Piper's drawing and paintings of the bomb-damaged ruins across Britain won widespread appeal when they were exhibited in the National Gallery from the 1940s onwards. The synthesis of modernist styles, most notably Cubism and Surrealism, and the

aesthetic appeal of ruins helped forge a neo-Romantic revival amongst many of the war artists commissioned by the Ministry of Information's War Artists Advisory Committee. There is a very different set of value systems at work in the post-war period with the nostalgic neo-Romantic revival competing with harder edged modernist ideals for the future shape of the urban landscape and rebuilding of British cities. This is evidenced in the Architectural Review's visual style which changed in 1949 when Gordon Cullen became art director replacing the longstanding illustrative work of John Piper, who had been there since 1936. The 1951 Festival of Britain in its architectural form and housing displays presented the modern over the neo-Romantic as the preferred route for reconstruction.

In the context of my own practice it is the direct, situated and expressive drawings of David Bomberg (1890-1957) that had most impact. His recording of the blitz damage near St Paul's Cathedral in the Second World War in the immediate aftermath of bombing are observed, stark and powerful. Bomberg's drawings are visual manifestations of his belief and intense physical immersion in the bomb scarred landscape. The expressive nature of the drawings Bomberg was producing at this time show no extraneous detail. Cork has suggested that 'Bomberg sees the cityscape as a sequence of eerily deserted containers, no more than a skeleton of the metropolis that he knew before Hitler's raids pummelled the area so grievously' (Cork, 1987:255). The drawings of St Paul's Cathedral contrast with those of the official war artist Muirhead Bone. Bone's approach is highly detailed and linear, Bomberg's is an essential outline of the architectural form made boldly in charcoal with the grey, smudged background showing the constant revisions. The drawings, through their making, evoke the smouldering ruined landscape that convey Bomberg's intentions to grasp the 'tactile values' of drawing and 'to disengage from ordinary perception and discover a more intuitive way of grasping reality' (Cork, 1987:266). The drawings are balanced between an expressive abstraction and figurative observation and have more in common with later American artists in the mid 1950s than anything in British art at the time (Cork, 1987:260).

Bomberg's classes at the Borough Polytechnic provided a radical and independent voice to traditional art school teaching at the time: he encouraged his students to observe the world rigorously and create work that was intuitive and rooted in physical engagement with their subject matter (Hallman, 2014:33). Chorpening has argued that Bomberg's drawings of the London cityscape at this time were intensely phenomenological in their expressive use of charcoal. Bomberg's drawings of the destroyed landscape around St Paul's Cathedral are arguably his most effective because of their materiality and physical engagement with the urban landscape, Chorpening has written:

> *Those drawings of the area surrounding St Paul's Cathedral after the Blitz – using burnt wood to depict destroyed buildings – will always be powerful for the way the visible hand of the artist lends proof to the event that took place and the artist was there to record it (Chorpening, 2015:10).*

Frank Auerbach was heavily influenced by the teaching and art of David Bomberg. The recurring themes of Auerbach's work and creative drive have been to 'show us what it feels like to live in the city, a terra firma in constant flux '(Hallman, 2014). Auerbach was not interested in recording the ruins of post-war London and has spoken about his fascination with construction sites as subject matter: 'This was territory that had not been resolved into a neo-romantic idiom and did not lend itself readily to past idealisations as an aesthetic of ruins' (Wright, 2009: 17). For both Bomberg and Auerbach, personal histories and collective memory are assimilated into the experience of witnessing ruin and reconstruction.

The End of History and the Spectral Turn

The ideological debates between left and right in the 1990s and the cultural and artistic impact they engendered are evidenced by the publication of Francis Fukuyama's The End of History and the Last Man in 1992 and Jacques Derrida's riposte, The Specters of Marx (1993). Both Fukuyama and Derrida were responding to the demise of the Soviet Union and the perceived loss of communism as a political model to counter capitalism as the only viable economic model. Derrida's use of the term hauntology was as much a puncept as concept, Fisher has argued, 'the pun was on the philosophical concept of ontology, the philosophical study of what can be said to exist' (Fisher, 2014:17).

The idea that American neo-liberalism had triumphed and brought about the end of socialist ideals and the welfare state ethos found expression in the debates about artworks focused on housing and the urban landscape in Britain. Crinson has suggested Rachel Whiteread's cast of an entire East End house in 1993 focused debate on housing in London and the role of art, memory and 'mute mourning'. Although not a council dwelling, Crinson suggests House provoked varied interpretations with its spectral presence: 'evoking the Blitz and post-war planning, House attracted Freudian and political interpretations' (Crinson, 2005:196). The pivotal role of drawing in Whiteread's visual process has emerged more recently, with exhibitions of works on paper at Tate Britain (2010-11). The drawings are smaller in scale, exploratory and show the intimate textures and surfaces of everyday dwelling. The sense of human absence is reflected in all artworks, both monumental and on paper, but this ghostly presence is not overtly political or ideological.

Artist Laura Grace Ford's Savage Messiah zine, independently published between 2005 and 2009, reclaims drawing as a political tool and personal confessional and makes use of hauntology as theoretical method. The work combines drawing and fragmented textual extracts with photography. Memory and diary elements fuse with critical reflections on the urban environment. The zine format is used in the radical tradition of the pamphlet as a form of activism and protest. The drawn biro pen images and text 'are anti-nostalgic' and reflect on the lost urban projects of the last four decades as a 'timely reminder of a spirit of optimism which has long since been subverted' (Coverley, 2020:250). The sites and places visited evoke the upheavals of recent history. The work triggers past and present associations of place to merge and flow with the repetition of dates. Above all, it is an account of the present condition of regenerated London. Ford has spoken about 'layers of memories colliding, splintering and reconfiguring' in the sequence of eleven zines. Fisher has argued that Ford's work is a hauntological quest to reclaim the past but not as a form of nostalgia. It is not the spectre of communism and its ideals that haunt the work 'but its disappearance' (Fisher, 2014:19). It is the legacy of the political right that has not been laid to rest, Coverely has suggested: 'the prevailing spirit of the last 30 years in the UK… has been conjured from an altogether different point on the political spectrum: that of Thatcherism' (Coverley, 2020:269).

The sequence of drawings that follow this section are informed by the context and artists mentioned above. My drawings are about witnessing the cycle of regeneration as a process from demolition to reconstruction and newness. We are blinded by the slick promotional images of renewal and by drawing the stages of urban erasure on site I feel this can be debated and recorded, if never stopped or restored. In housing, consumer-and-culture-led regeneration the economic drivers at work are evident in the process far more than the social considerations because 'the city as an economic entity holds far more weight than the city as a social entity' (Miles and Miles, 2004:172). I see my drawing practice forming

part of the visual tradition that attempts to present an alternative record of urban redevelopment, encompassing a sense of social justice with personal memory and an understanding of the local context.

My Practice: Elephant and Castle regeneration 2014-2021 – selected drawings

A critical evaluation of my methods

I wanted to capture episodes of neglected and overlooked acts of the regeneration process and to achieve this by an observed location-based account that focused on the demolition of the Heygate social housing estate and the land it occupied with the emerging new construction. Additionally, I wanted to record the reconfiguring of the Elephant and Castle shopping centre and the erasure of the post-war planning legacy as a way of witnessing the loss of public land and social spaces in London. In an exhibition at the Drawing Room, London, exploring the theme of Graphic Witness, curator Kate Macfarlane has suggested:

> To witness is to have observed, either as a participant, as a bystander or remotely, to create a graphic response to this act of witnessing is to reconstruct this experience in the immediate aftermath [….] Drawing is particularly suited to representing evidence as it is a legible medium; to look closely at a drawing is to trace the history of its making and in this sense, each drawing acts as its own witness (Macfarlane, 2017).

I drew on location as an eyewitness, not remotely, as I wanted to be present to record the destruction as it happened and create a visual testimony through a series of drawings made over time. I was of course a powerless witness in preventing the loss of social housing, but by drawing I became an informed witness deeply troubled by the disruption caused by the regeneration and loss of publicly owned land. The panoramic studio drawings are in part created from the drawings made in my sketchbook and the recalled memory. The experience is a new calibrated one at a remove from being on site. The drawings act as a mnemonic to the cycle of erasure and as a form of resistance against the official images of urban renewal.

My participation has been through watching, listening and drawing what I have seen and making it visible on the pages of my sketchbook, often in a series of quick, hurried marks without looking down at the paper as I tried to record what I was seeing and capture the movement of clamshell diggers and the collapse of walls and ceilings – sketching became a form of frenetic retrieval and imprecision by overdrawing and overlaying marks (Figure 2). Derrida cites Baudelaire and his description of sketching as an act of memory and speed in trying to capture what can vanish so quickly, in the brevity and transience of the moment:

> For Baudelaire, it is the order of memory that precipitates, beyond present perception, the absolute speed of the instant (the time of the chin d'oeil that buries the gaze in the batting of an eyelid, the instant (the time of the Augenblick, the wink or blink, and what drops out of sight in the twinkling of an eye)…'(Derrida, 1993:48).

FIGURE 2. FRENETIC LINES OF THE TURBULENT AND RELENTLESS DEMOLITION PROCESS. JULY 2014.

The drawing timeline: demolition

The Heygate estate housed a thousand people in high- and low-rise units with green space and mature trees between each block. An example of a late modernist planning-in-the-park estate it was completed in 1974. In a highly contested process, residents had been removed – some forcibly – before I started drawing and the estate had a calm eeriness before the demolition process started. Perimeter fencing was erected, and access and views of the estate became more difficult. The removal of toxic and salvageable building material formed the first 'soft-strip' demolition phase followed by the physical destruction of the housing with clamshell diggers. Interior spaces were left exposed to the elements and the individual decoration of each room was highly evocative and a reminder of the individual lives that had been displaced by the regeneration (Figure 3 a, b, c). The small maisonette blocks were often seen as the most successful housing on the Heygate estate due to their low density and the green spaces and mature trees that surrounded them. In writing about hauntology Fisher has suggested popular music impacts on our memory and the Specials' Ghost Town (1981) lyrics repeatedly came to mind, evoking the legacy of Thatcherism as a dominant ethos on British life.

I was drawing by focusing on architectural details such as the shapes of the walkways and the concrete structures (Figure 4). The columns had many associations with the post-war modernist infrastructure built in Britain, from new towns to motorway bridges. The columns were built with a spirit of optimism and a progressive vision of the future. Hatherley has argued that 'Instruments brought in after 1945 in order to bypass the interests of slum landlords and landowners legally – were now used to the opposite end' (Hatherely, 2010:xvii). The small details and the human scale of the maisonettes provided a real sense of the homes that had been lost. Pallasmaa has written, 'there is a vivid unconscious identification, resonance and correspondence between images of the house and our own body' (Pallsamaa, 2011:124). Pallasmaa cites Bachelard's writing about the home and its fundamental importance to human existence.

Bachelard writes, 'man is laid in the cradle of the house […] life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected…' (Bachelard, [1964] 1994:7). There was a poignancy in drawing the exposed interior spaces and individual choices of decoration. The buildings were no longer homes but now unprotected, isolated and empty containers about to be destroyed.

FIGURE 3 (A). GHOST TOWN - DO YOU REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS BEFORE THE GHOST TOWN? EXPOSED WALLS OF A LOW-RISE HOUSING BLOCK, WITH SALVAGED METAL WIRE. AUGUST 2014.

FIGURE 3 (B). A PAUSE IN THE PROCESS EXPOSING THE INTERIOR INNER WALLS AND DECORATION. AUGUST 2014.
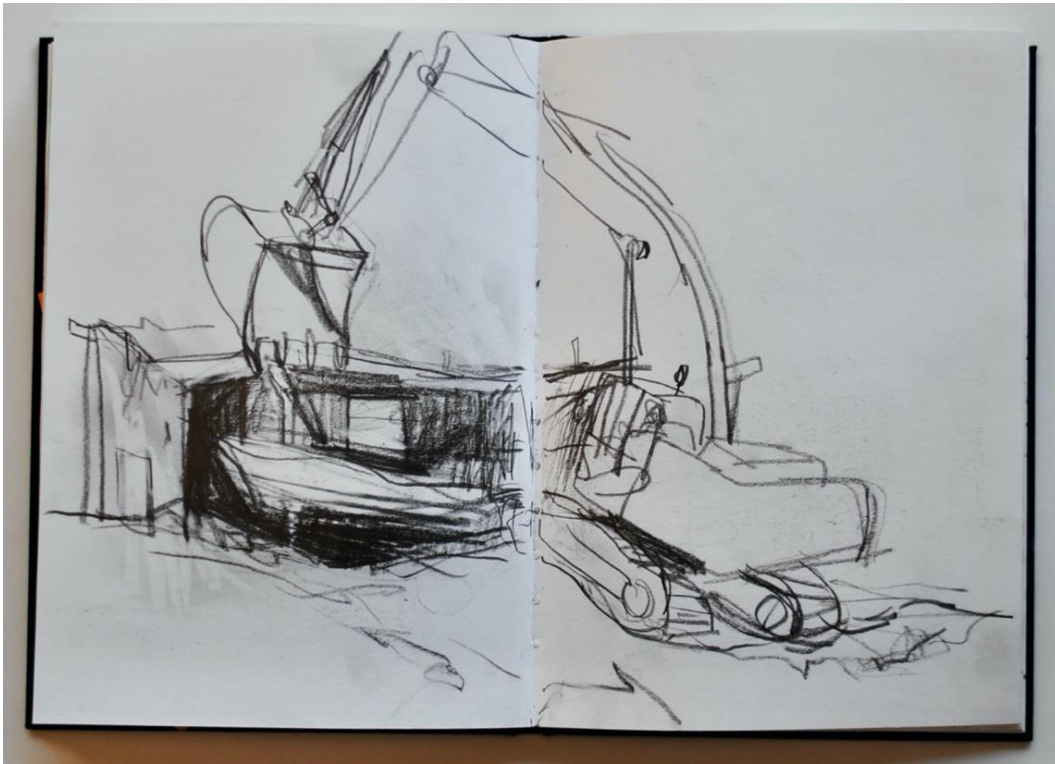
Figure 4. Isolated stairs, walkway and pillars reminiscent of larger infrastructure projects.

Studio-based work: contrasting viewpoints

The larger scale studio drawings made with charcoal are from higher viewpoints and depict the proximity of the cleared land of the former housing estate to the financial centre of London, those force felt like an omnipresent sensor in the ideological expunging of the estate. The rooftop of a nearby building provided a unique view of the site in its totality. My focus was on the cleared earth and the open spaces emerging from the demolition of the estate. Using charcoal allowed me to erase and redraw – building up textures and marks that represented the new landscape. The drawings were created by standing and working quickly, blocking in shapes in the same manner I had drawn when sketching. My memory became important in assessing what I had seen from different locations on the roof. It would not have been possible to create these drawings without physically being on the roof and experiencing the site from this height. Over the course of the first phase of the regeneration I made four large drawings from the rooftop. I stopped when the new buildings blocked out the view entirely. There is an atmosphere of abandonment and forlornness in the drawings in the depiction of the obliterated estate (Figure 5). The rubble of the former homes form shapes like burial mounds on the left of the drawing. The drawing was intended to emphasise the 'scorched earth or tabula rasa approach that is a dominant form of development in many contexts globally' (Campkin and Duijzings, 2016:7).

FIGURE 5. THE LOST ESTATE (CHARCOAL DRAWING). AERIAL VIEW FROM THE ROOF OF DASHWOOD STUDIOS. WALWORTH ROAD. 2016.

The view of the cleared land at ground level provided a contrast with the aerial view and greater definition. The concrete imprint of the rectangles of the former housing blocks was visible. From the rooftop it was not possible to see the elongated shapes of the housing blocks, as the colours merged with the earth. The vertical luxury of the new buildings being erected was also more evident. The traces of the Heygate blocks lay on the ground, like unmarked sepulchres before the new construction obliterated them forever (Figure 6). The properties of charcoal as a medium felt particularly pertinent in depicting the landscape at this phase of the regeneration process, with marks made by blurring and smudging suggesting ghost markings and lost traces.

Petherbridge, when discussing material traces, drawing and the materiality of charcoal alludes to the varied properties of the medium and its connection with building and construction, noting that its dust is traditionally used 'for snapping strings fixed on nails as guides, plumb lines or grids...' (Petherbridge,

2010:136). Charcoal is an 'archaic' drawing material with expressive, gestural and speculative qualities; this connects it to the provisional qualities of the sketch. Charcoal's inherent materiality, its 'simplicity and friability' when combined with erasing and revising marks on a paper 'reveals the history of its own processes of making'. Petherbridge goes on to suggest that rubbing out when drawing with charcoal, using an eraser, is 'a battle of accretion and disavowal'. The connotations with excavation and the early stages of the construction process link with the French term for rubbing-out, 'arrachage', implying 'uprooting' and could equally imply digging out or extracting (Petherbridge, 2011:138). The contested erasure of other London council estates has provoked national significance and debate: an eight-tonne section of the Smithsons' designed Robin Hood Gardens in Tower Hamlets was purchased by the V&A museum and later a fragment of the façade was exhibited at the Venice Architecture biennale in 2018. The last remaining architectural fragments of the Heygate estate disappeared without such exulted display or memorialisation. The uprooting and extraction was complete.

FIGURE 6. THE LAST TRACES OF THE HEYGATE ESTATE WITH THE NEW BUILDINGS RISING ABOVE THEM. CHARCOAL ON PAPER. 2016.

Reconstruction and newness

Building and construction work is messy and physical, carried out all year round under all weather conditions and Pallasmaa has argued that the 'traces, stains and dirt' should all be shown in drawn images to reflect the human labour taking place on site (Pallasmaa, 2009:109). Construction sites are temporary settlements in the urban landscape and usually concealed by hoardings around their perimeter. The imagery used on the hoardings has no connection with the physical nature of the work carried out within the sites. The visual styling of the images around the site showed a twilight setting with incorporeal figures appearing to float in the spaces rather than inhabiting them.

Construction work is physically demanding and the skills used are rarely made visible in the regeneration process. Drawing as an emotionally embodied activity is an engaged method by which to document these events and make visible what is hidden and placed out of view. I focused on a series of drawings of workers and their immersive tasks, such as pouring cement and disgorging earth from piling drills, to record the movement and exertion needed at each stage of the building process (Figure 7, 8). At all times, human skill was required to control and complete the task which was repeated many times over during the course of the day; often the figures seemed to merge with the earth. The collective tasks required equally skilled judgements and moments of force to prepare the earth for construction (Figure 9).
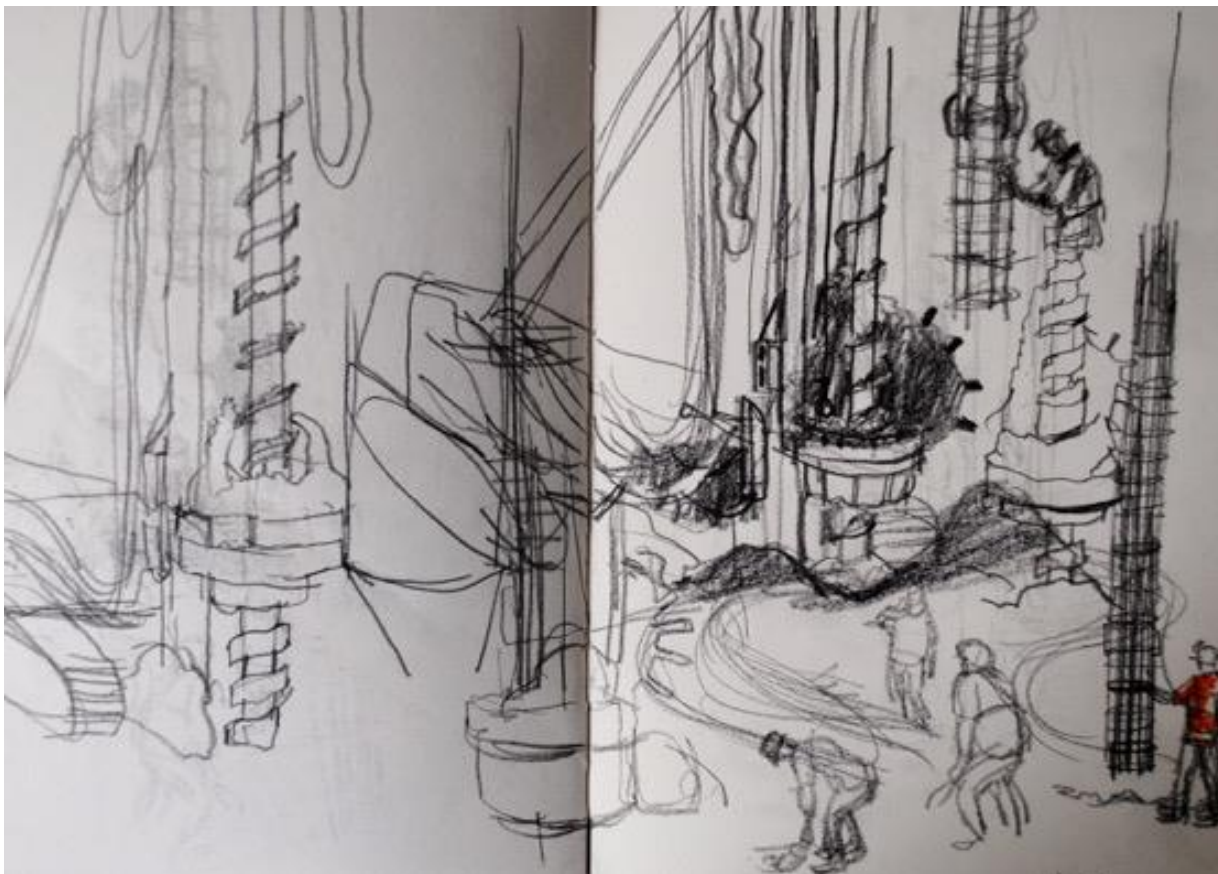

FIGURE 7. WORKERS, PILING DRILL AND MOULDS. APRIL 2016.

FIGURE 8. POURING WET CEMENT INTO A PILING MOULD ON SITE.

FIGURE 9. LOOKING DOWN ON THE CONSTRUCTION SITE WITH WORKERS IN HIGH VISIBILITY JACKETS. APRIL 2016.

The gated buildings and street plans that emerged from this vast amount of human labour referenced the market gardens and semi-rural spaces of the early nineteenth century (Figure 10). Names such as South Gardens or Orchard Gardens sat oddly with the reality of the increased density and height of the

new development, with no fruit trees in sight. The use of language to subvert meaning was evident throughout the regeneration area.

The control of reputational image and accessibility adds another hidden outer layer of complexity to the management of the regeneration. This outer layer is vital to the official narrative of the development, in pursuit of the official vision, as vital as the on-site construction schedule and labour.

With the completion of South Gardens the first phase of the regeneration had been achieved by the developers (Figure 11). The new owners had moved into their apartments with polychrome brick facades, balconies and concierge facilities (Figure 12). Architecturally, they had no resemblance to the Heygate, and some of the features seem to reference the previous tenements the Heygate replaced, such as the window bays. Overall, they give a sense of newness and a generic conformity that could locate them in any new development in London. The landscaped gardens had dense planting and were gated and monitored with security cameras to secure the enclosed spaces. There was a stark contrast with the images of the gardens on hoardings and in marketing publicity – they are open and shown without any barrier or fencing and it is perpetually mid-summer – with no sign of the heavy railings that now secure them.

Watt and Minton calculate that 'during the New Labour period 1997/98-2009/10, a derisory 340 new council homes were built in London'. Watt and Minton argue this has marked a real shift in public attitudes since the 1960s and the impact of television dramas like Cathy Come Home, directed by Ken Loach in 1966 for the BBC, which resulted in the founding of the homeless charity Shelter. Fifty years later there has been no defining drama or artwork to galvanise collective memory and impact on national consciousness in the same way. In the aftermath of the 2017 Grenfell Tower fire, the need for more safe high-quality social homes has become more urgent than ever.

FIGURE 10. SOUTH GARDENS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. CHARCOAL ON A1 CARTRIDGE PAPER.

FIGURE 11. THE NEW PRIVATE AND GATED BUILDINGS OF SOUTH GARDENS WITH POLYCHROME BRICKWORK. A4 SKETCHBOOK. PENCIL ON PAPER. JANUARY 2017.
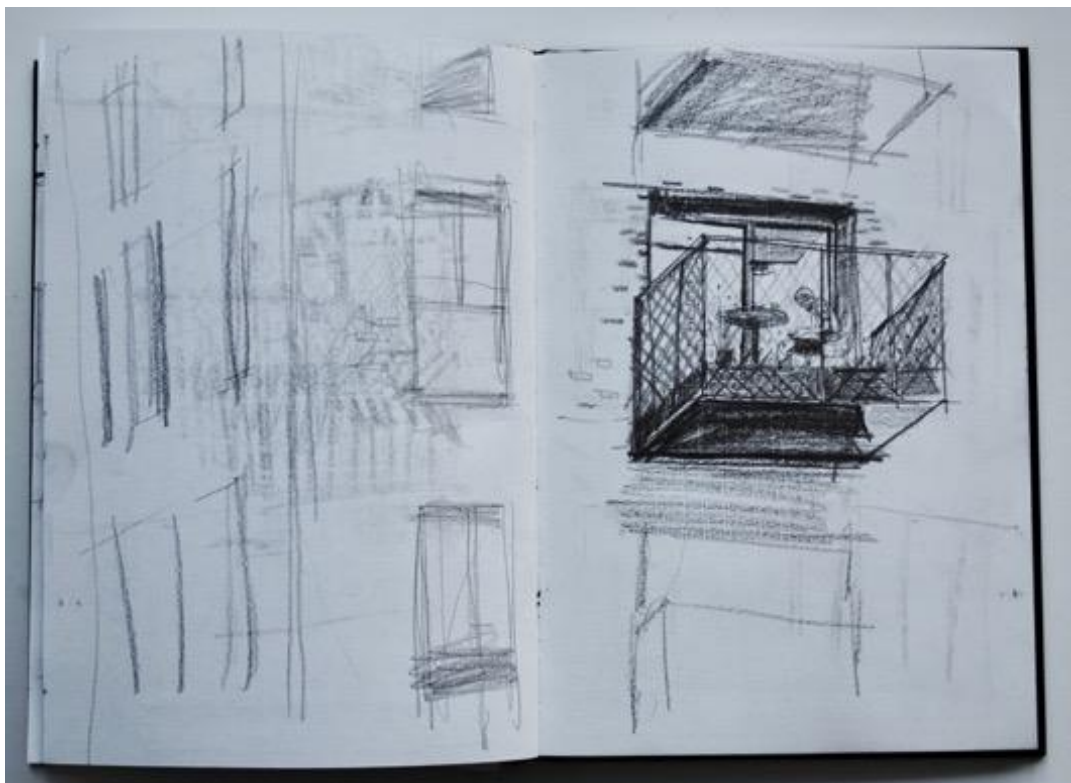

FIGURE 11. SOUTH GARDENS - BALCONY WITH FIGURE. A4 SKETCHBOOK. PENCIL ON PAPER. JUNE 2017.

Conclusion

My aim has been to capture observations of urban regeneration as a witnessing artist and engaged citizen, using a process which emphasises my individual opposition to the loss of social housing and public land in the regeneration of Elephant and Castle as a representative case study of urban policy throughout much of the UK. I feel that drawing has the necessary capacity to witness and document these changes, to make us look at and examine what has been lost. Drawing is 'seeing for the last time' (Berger, 2005) and it prevents us forgetting. In the contested urban landscape of Elephant and Castle my drawing has been used as a prescient mnemonic of personal and collective history. The effectiveness of drawing over other media is its legibility and simplicity to use in a situated first-hand account. Allen and Pearson have suggested that drawing acts as a subjective tool in recording urban loss and creating an authentic record:

> …drawing can become a site for deviating and challenging the historical… drawing can serve as an analytical tool to reveal the real history of spaces, its inherent subjectivity offering a different means of inquiry to the photograph and text (Allen and Pearson, 2016:68).

My drawing method was influenced by Bomberg's war-time drawings in capturing the landscape using high viewpoints with little extraneous detail and an expressive use of charcoal. Moorhouse has suggested Bomberg's 'response to structure is, at a profound level, felt – and it is this that must also be expressed' and 'Drawing is the visual evidence of looking, an encounter that… at a profound level, drawing deepens the experience of seeing…' (Moorhouse, 2020:200).

I did not want to create a neo-Romantic vision of ruins and the observational and felt drawings. Auerbach's use of the building site provided possibilities to view the landscape in a way that showed its impermanence and constant flux. I wanted to capture the raw energy of the process and both Bomberg and Auerbach have a visceral energy that corresponded to what I witnessed on site.

The local context and contested nature of the site was navigated via the hauntological method of Ford's experience in the gentrifying neoliberal city. I chose not to use textual elements in my drawings, but to present them as a record of the process of regeneration from demolition to renewal as an alternative version of what happened and to counter the official imagery and language of the hoardings and promotional material. Coverley has argued that, in making visible specific areas of the regenerated city, Ford shows 'ways in which hauntology can resist the ongoing attempts of those who seek to misrepresent or overwrite the past and the futures it once promised' (Coverley, 2020:258).

My drawings show the removal and enclosure of public land and social housing, followed by the new gated communities. The language and names of the new buildings are used to refer back to the semi-rural nature of the area in the nineteenth century – a time beyond living memory. There is no memorial or legacy of what has been lost and overwritten on the post-war years.

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DRAWING THE EXTINCTION CRISIS

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'Precarious Birds' is an ongoing collaboration through which the authors 'stay with the trouble' of the extinction crisis; engaging in creative practice to process our grief in response to critically endangered and extinct bird species. The project uses birds as an index – markers that point to the ecological, cultural and ethical dimensions of the extinction crisis more broadly. The collaborative aspect of the project involves thinking through deliberately slow processes of drawing, cross-stich and writing, as well as contextualising this creative practice with shared texts and conversations: with each other, as well as ecologists, historians, artists and nature writers. This paper frames the collaboration as an 'expanded conversation' and uses the unfolding creative processes in response to two birds – Passenger Pigeon and Laysan Duck — to demonstrate how processes of drawing and tracing open opportunities for us to understand the 'entangled significance' of individual species within the extinction crisis, and argue that through documenting and sharing our expanded conversations, processes and artworks, we contribute to cultural 'archives of loss', which foster collective cultural memory about precarious bird species.

> *"Birds are indicator species, serving as acutely sensitive barometers of environmental health, and their mass declines signal that the earth's biological systems are in trouble."*
> *John W. Fitzpatrick and Peter P. Marra (2019)*

'Shifting baseline syndrome' and 'ecological amnesia' are terms which describe a shift in the perception of what is normal within a local ecosystem from one generation to the next, due to a lack of "experience, memory and/or knowledge of its past condition." (Soga & Gaston 2018) A commonly cited example is that, a generation ago, a long car trip would require several stops to clear masses of dead insects from the windshield, but few of today's children have witnessed this phenomenon. This generational amnesia results in dramatic under-estimation of the extent and seriousness of cascading biodiversity loss. Ecologist and historian Ingrid M. Parker describes the impact shifting baseline syndrome has for conservation and restoration projects:

> *"Our society's ecological amnesia is profound, and it limits us for understanding our current and past impacts on the species and ecosystems around us. [...] We are hampered when we set conservation or restoration goals based on our knowledge of recent times alone, without an understanding of the structure and composition of plant and animal communities even a hundred years ago, nor of the practices of the peoples who interacted with the land before European colonization." (2017: p M161)*

This points to the historical and cultural dimensions of the extinction crisis; there is a recognised need to bear witness to and record more than scientific data in relation to biodiversity loss. For example: the emergent interdisciplinary field of Environmental Humanities applies questions of meaning, value and ethics to the environmental challenges of our time (Rose et al. 2012; O'Gorman et al. 2019); large-scale public exhibitions such as Cooper Hewitt's 'Nature' Triennial (2019) and the V&A's 'Fashioned from Nature' (2019) critique the role design plays in anthropogenic environmental degradation; and a proliferation of platforms are archiving art and design projects which respond to the climate crisis and associated extinction crisis, such as Climarte and Carbon Arts.

Sitting within this zone of activity, 'Precarious Birds' is an ongoing project through which the authors create narrative-based artworks in response to critically endangered and extinct bird species. The collaborative aspect of the project involves *thinking through* deliberately slow processes of drawing, cross-stitch, collage and writing, as well as contextualising our creative practices with shared texts and conversations: with each other, as well as ecologists, historians, artists and nature writers. Although we produce publicly exhibitable artworks from the project, this paper focuses on our more private collaborative processes, particularly the way drawing and tracing open opportunities for understanding the 'entangled significance' (Rose et al. 2017, p. 3) of individual species within the extinction crisis. Within the project, birds are an index – markers that point to the ecological, cultural and ethical dimensions of the extinction crisis more broadly.

In the first part of this paper, we frame the Precarious Birds collaboration as an 'expanded conversation' about avian extinction. This conversation is played out between humans, nonhumans, texts and material processes, and has two primary objectives. First, we individually engage in deliberately slow creative practices – with a focus here on drawing and cross-stitch – as a way to 'stay with the trouble' of avian extinction. Second, in conversation with each other and the artefacts from our individual creative practices, we work through ways to articulate the complexity of human-avian entanglements and process the grief – and opportunities for hope – resulting from this work. We show how the

methodology of The Phenomenology and Imagination Research Group (PIRG), particularly their 'table method', has informed the framing of Precarious Birds as an expanded conversation, and briefly discuss our Research Through Design approach, which frames the creative practice as research.

The second section of the paper describes our ongoing creative processes in response to two birds – Passenger Pigeon (*extinct*) and Laysan Duck (*critically endangered*) in order to demonstrate how our expanded conversation unfolds through visual, material and verbal interactions. Here, we attempt to translate our collaborative conversation onto the page by writing in first person and interrupting each other as we would while working in tandem. We also include images of our workspaces and creative output, with captions that include the readings and podcasts we discussed while crafting alongside each other, to point to the fact that these texts inform our thinking *while* making. The conversations presented in this section of the paper were either scribed, or transcribed from audio recordings, while we worked. As such, this documentation of our expanded conversation captures reflections *in* action that we later use to inform reflections *on* action – as demonstrated in the Discussion section that follows. (Schön 1983; Sadokierski 2020)

The Discussion and Conclusion sections argue that our deliberately slow processes of drawing and tracing open opportunities for us to understand the 'entangled significance' of individual species within the extinction crisis, and that through documenting and sharing our expanded conversations, processes and artworks, we contribute to cultural 'archives of loss', which foster collective cultural memory about precarious bird species.

Expanded Conversations: Drawing ourselves into the trouble
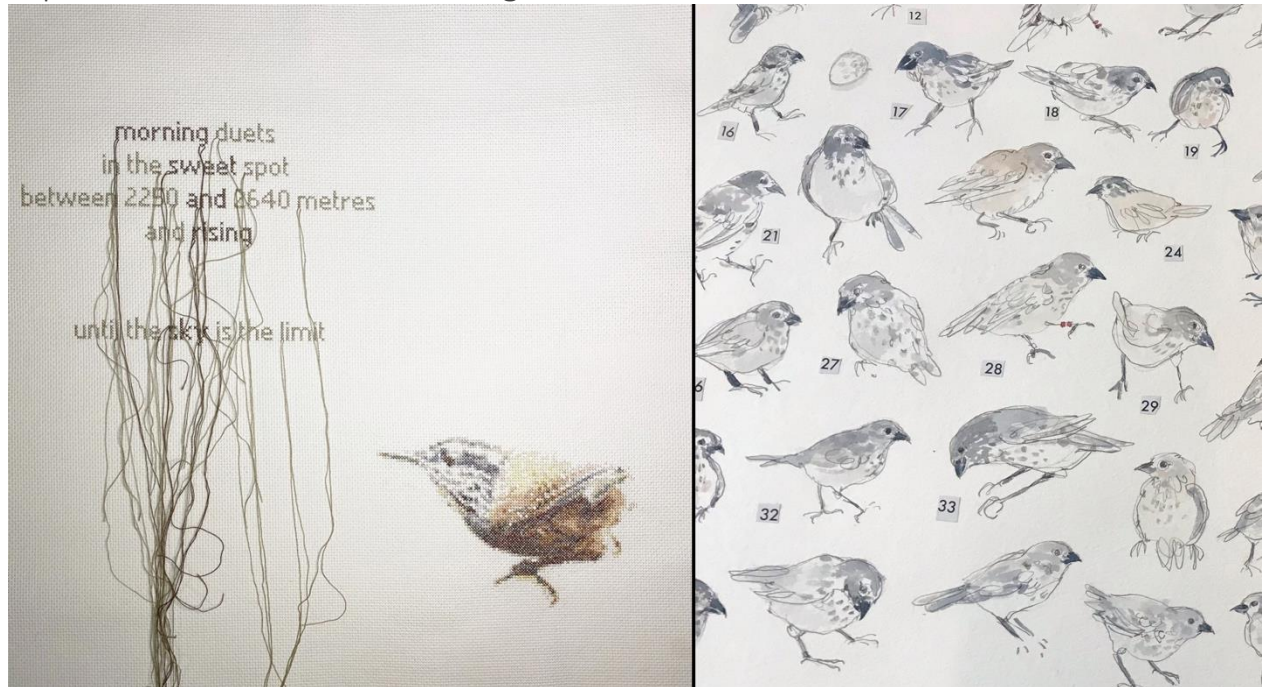
FIGURE 1: (LEFT) CROSS-STITCH POEM MUNCHIQUE WOOD-WREN, AUTHOR 2. (RIGHT) DETAIL DRAWING EXERCISE – AS FEW AS 40 MANGROVE FINCHES REMAIN IN THE WILD, THIS DRAWING VISUALIZES HOW FEW 40 BIRDS IS, AUTHOR 1.

Throughout a fifteen-year friendship, we frequently discuss our shared love of birds, and increasing feelings of hopelessness and grief related to cascading species extinctions. In 2018, while living on different continents, we began a 'conversation through making' to bear witness to and/or memorialise

precarious bird species. Each month, we assigned each other a bird from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List categories 'Critically Endangered' to 'Extinct' and posted/emailed our creative responses to each other: writing, drawings, cross-stitch poems, even a message delivered by carrier pigeon.

In focusing on one species at a time, we create manageable opportunities to process the overwhelming and almost inconceivably large phenomenon of the Sixth Extinction (Kolbert 2014). In addition, paying close attention to individual species is also a way to recognise the profound loss of each unique bird as it slips from the world. Writer and critic James Bradley (2017) states: "Extinction is a rupture in the world. Each time a species is lost it takes with it not just its genetics, but its nature, its way of being in the world. And as it does the universe is lessened."

Focusing on individual species in order to tell complex 'extinction stories' is an approach championed within Extinction Studies, an interdisciplinary field which generates "detailed case studies of complex processes of loss, exploring the 'entangled significance' of extinction" in relation to particular extinct species, and situates those case studies within "a larger, multispecies world." (Rose et al. 2017, pp. 2-5) When establishing the Precarious Birds project, we discussed examining the 'entangled significance' of each bird species (although we had not discovered that term or Extinction Studies at the time) – examining entanglement not only with other species affected by the loss of a bird within an ecosystem, but also how human and nonhuman actors are entangled within the story of each bird.

The collaboration was initially inspired by John Berger and John Christie's book *I Send You This Cadmium Red*, a conversation via post in which the authors' personal lives are threaded through provocations about art. Similarly, we began sending each other drawings and cross-stitch poems as prompts to think through and respond to, unapologetically entangled with narratives about our personal lives, to recognise the importance of facing the emotional and cultural aspects of the extinction crisis. Pinned in each other's studios, these handmade things remind us that we are not grieving alone and provide a way to be present in each other's workspaces, even when physically distant.

The approach of integrating personal with professional in our slow collaboration also mirrors the way Anne Douglas frames her work as capturing "a moment in time of a more extended, reciprocal process", a collaborative process which questions the "tendency to separate the private and public into different spheres and instead seek the private within the public, acknowledging the one as co-constituting the other." (2019, p. 4)

In 2019 we spent two weeks focused on the project at an artist residency in upstate New York, and since mid-2020, when we have been both based in Sydney, we have dedicated two hours a fortnight to working in tandem and supporting each other in this emotionally taxing project. This ongoing exchange is an enactment of Donna Haraway's provocation that we need to "stay with the trouble of living and dying together on a damaged earth." (2016) Our motivation aligns with many other artists, writers and designers responding to the extinction crisis through creative practice, stepping out of disciplinary silos to generate narratives that seek to reconnect people with the living world and open thresholds for transformative learning experiences. For example, in his film *Albatross*, Chris Jordan (2017) articulates a key motivation for responding to ecological despair through creative practice:

"I believe in facing the dark realities of our time, summoning the courage to not turn away. Not as an exercise in pain, or punishment, or to make us feel bad about ourselves. But because in this act of witnessing a doorway opens."

Method: Expanding the expanded conversation

As the project develops, we increasingly draw on more than our own lived experience and creative practice, bringing in knowledge from scientific reports, scholarly articles and books and interviews with experts from interdisciplinary fields. Investigating ways other researchers frame the integration of scholarly texts with creative practice and subjective experience, we were inspired by the 'expanded conversation' methodology of the Phenomenology and Imagination Research Group (PIRG), which aims to link theory and creative practice more closely through collaborative material engagement. (Nitzan-Greenac et al. 2019) Informed by phenomenological understanding of texts in relation to lived bodies,[1] PIRG developed their table method (*tm)* as a hybrid reading group/creative workshop in which participants gather around a table covered in black paper and tools, in order to collaboratively respond to a scholarly text through performance (reading parts or the whole text) and material thinking (sketching and crafting in response to the text). This process of critiquing texts through embodied, material engagement demonstrates unique ways practitioners can conduct scholarly research: "As artists/practitioners we tacitly understood that the unpicking of complex ideas can be enriched through doing, through embodied action." (ibid pp. 2-3)

PIRG frames their *tm* as a deliberately slow method which draws researchers and their material practices into the centre of the enquiry: "an invitation to sit with, listen to, digest, allow time to experience, draw out, to collaborate and engage in a material conversation. Through doing this we build a phenomenological conversation of care and attention to ourselves and others, both human and material participants." (ibid p. 8)

Similarly, Precarious Birds is slow by design. An ongoing project with no fixed endpoint, our deliberately meandering process affords space for processing grief, fostering care and opening up 'pauses' (Nitzan-Greenac et al. 2019) and 'arts of noticing' (Tsing 2015). We read parts of text aloud, and listen to relevant scholarly audio books and podcasts while engaged in our creative practice, allowing ourselves to work through complex and unsettling ideas as well as 'conversing' with our individual material practices.

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[1] In particular Gaston Bachelard's notion of 'material imagination', Susan Kozel's 'A Phenomenological Enquiry in Five Acts' and Karen Barad's 'diffractive methodology'.

FIGURE 2: STUDIO SPACE AT ARTS LETTERS AND NUMBERS RESIDENCY, AVERILL PARK, NEW YORK, 2019. LISTENING TO PODCASTS BY TONY BIRCH AND DEBORAH BIRD ROSE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM'S HUMANNATURE SERIES, AND 'SITTING IN A CIRCLE' FROM THE AUDIO BOOK OF ROBIN WALL KIMMERER'S BRAIDING SWEETGRASS. ON THE RIGHT, A MINI EXHIBITION SPACE WE SET UP IN ORDER TO BE ABLE TO HOST A SERIES OF CONVERSATIONS WITH LOCAL ARTISTS AND INTERESTED CITIZENS THROUGHOUT THE RESIDENCY.

Although we describe our project as an expanded conversation, we do not formulaically follow PIRG's *tm* (our tables are not covered in black paper and our material thinking is conducted through particular practices – cross stitch and drawing – rather than an array of 'mismatched' tools). Nevertheless, our processes align with theirs by valuing space and time for embodied, conversational collaboration, what PIRG describe as: "a 'field of possibilities', a space where the materials of text, paper, words, written and spoken, each body and the many bodies around the table, act as matter to create a material conversation." (Nitzan-Greenac et al. 2019 p. 11) It matters that we perform our individual practices alongside each other, or tangibly share our material experiments by posting them to each other. It matters that we make time and space to be in physical proximity to each other, to open 'fields of possibility' in which to both process grief and find hope (or at least motivation for action) through making and sharing.

Another key difference between PIRG's and our approach is that where their practice engages specifically with interpreting phenomenological texts, ours engages with writing from a range of fields including the environmental humanities, extinction studies, ecological science, design and sustainability studies. Rather than responding to a singular text or theorist, we start each iteration of our collaboration with a subject – an endangered or extinct bird – bringing interdisciplinary texts and design precedents to the table around this shared subject matter (see Fig. 3). As such, this paper extends PIRG's 'expanded conversation' methodology by pointing to how their phenomenological approach might be used to interpret texts beyond phenomenological theory.
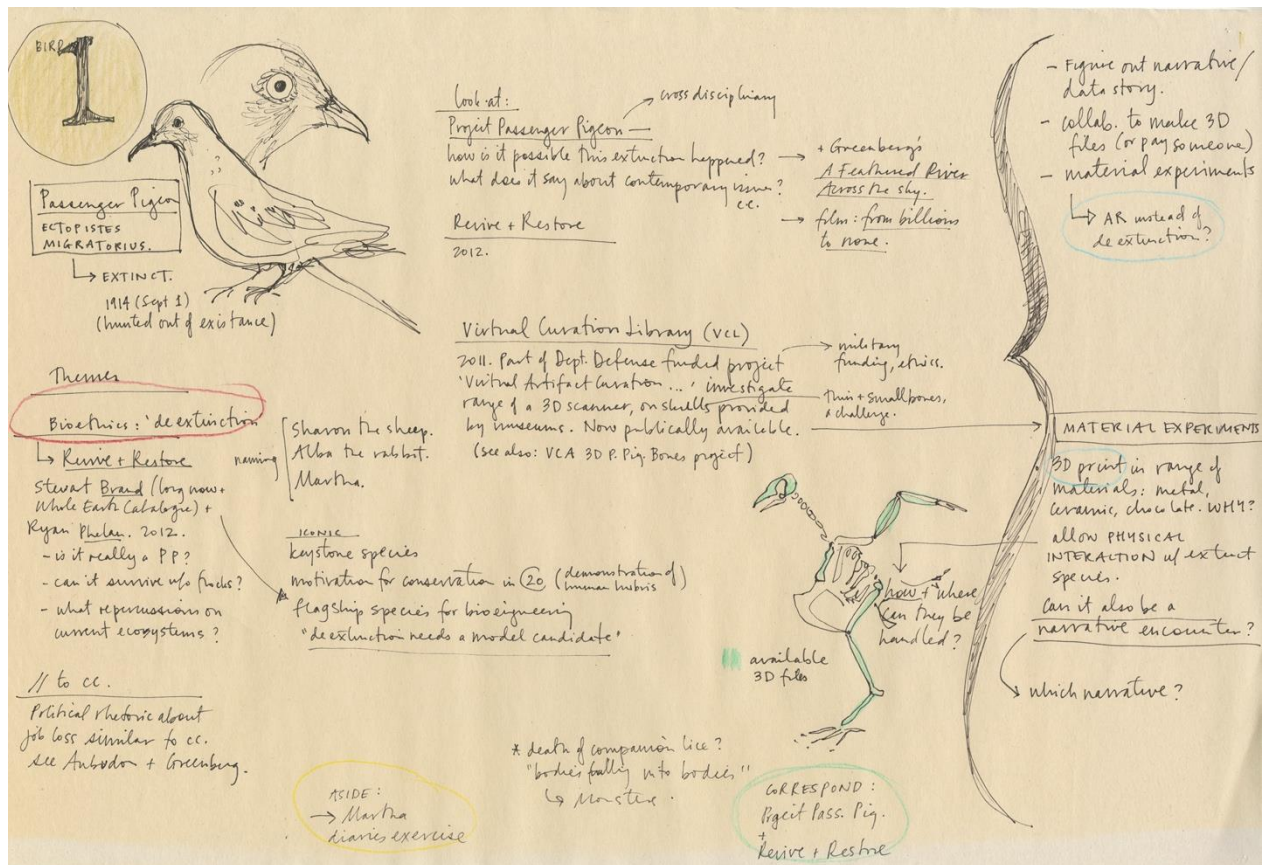
FIGURE 3: AN OVERVIEW MAP OF TEXTS, PRECEDENTS AND COLLABORATORS BROUGHT 'TO THE TABLE' AROUND THE PASSENGER PIGEON, AS WELL AS EARLY DESIGN CONCEPTS.

Our process also follows a Research through Design (RtD) methodology (Frayling 1993; Durrant et al. 2017) in which research aims and questions emerge through critical documentation of iterative, creative practice. (Lambert & Speed 2017; Sadokierski 2020) An aspect of the collaboration not reported here is Critical Documentation of the ongoing process through overview mapping, audio recording and critique sessions with interdisciplinary experts, which will ultimately inform a substantial scholarly report of the project as an exhibition and book of extinction (and hopefully recovery) stories.

In the following section, we describe our evolving creative processes in relation to two species – Passenger Pigeon and Laysan Duck – in order to demonstrate how our expanded conversation about avian extinctions meanders through visual, material and verbal interactions. This part of the paper is an assemblage of conversations from our journals, emails and letters to each other, and transcripts of audio recordings made during our working sessions. We present it here as a dialogue, in an attempt to translate the expanded conversation onto the page rather than trying to rein it in to a more conventional scholarly argument. Alongside imploring us to stay with the trouble, Haraway also reminds us that it matters what and whose stories we use to tell stories, and gifts us the idea of 'compost writing': "writing-with in layered composing and decomposing in order to write at all, living-and-dying with to be at all, as mortal earthlings." (2015) Following this section is a discussion section, drawing together some of the key themes and ideas that emerge from this 'compost writing'.
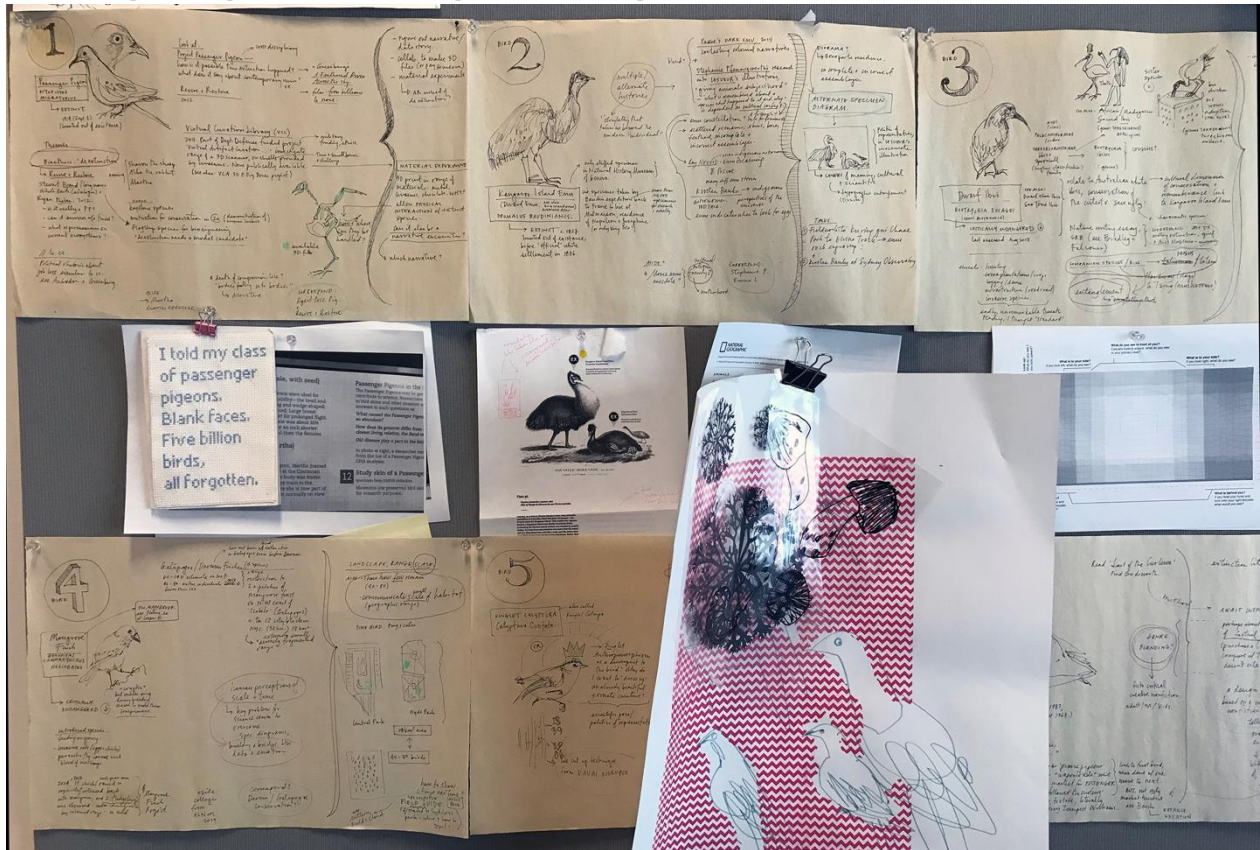
Passenger Pigeon: Drawing into being

FIGURE 4: 'BLANK FACES' CROSS-STITCH, NESTED AMONG OVERVIEW MAPS OF VARIOUS BIRDS IN AUTHOR 1'S OFFICE. SURROUNDING WORK INCLUDES OVERVIEW MAPS FOR SIX SPECIES, A SCREEN PRINTING EXPERIMENT MENTIONED IN THE TEXT AND ANNOTATED SCHOLARLY ARTICLES THAT INFORM THE PRACTICE.

Z: Before we started this project, you posted me a cross-stitch poem which reads: "I told my class of passenger pigeons. Blank faces. Five billion birds, all forgotten." When you assigned me the passenger pigeon (*Ectopistes migratorius*), I was a blank face. I didn't know that over 50 years – two human generations – billions of passenger pigeons were hunted to extinction. Our blank faces are an example of 'shifting baseline syndrome': forgetting past species, cultures, landscapes as the planet mutates before our eyes. (Svenning 2017, p. G68)

The first time I drew Martha, she was a chalk outline. I emailed you a photograph of the drawing, which also includes my shadow and R, then 2 years old. His presence is significant. My email to you included:

When you posted an article about the confirmed extinction of Spix's Macaw, my first thought was 'this bird vanished as R entered the world'. A bird that may have existed when R was born is now gone, with him still in nappies. A bird my son will never meet. This is a new lens through which to filter loss.

In the small park opposite our house, I showed R the eclectic company of Crested pigeons (Ocyphaps lophotes), Australian white ibis (Threskiornis molucca) and Noisy miners (Manorina melanocephala). I named and drew the birds in chalk. I thought of Martha, who I'd been researching for this project, and I told him the

story of flocks of passenger pigeons so dense they blocked the sun for three straight days. I couldn't tell him that Martha, the last passenger pigeon, died 1 September 1914 and that Martha's family numbered in the billions just two generations before her death. I couldn't tell him this part of the story because I'm not ready to tell him about death, or how, in the words of Yuval Noah Harari, he is born into a species of ecological serial killers.

In 2019, almost exactly a year after drawing chalk-Martha, I titled a blank book 'Martha' and drew her, referencing the first photograph that appears in a Google search (Fig. 5). Since then, I have drawn Martha more than ninety times. It matters that I draw from photographs of Martha, not just any passenger pigeon. She's the endling, the last of her species; it's her story I want to preserve.
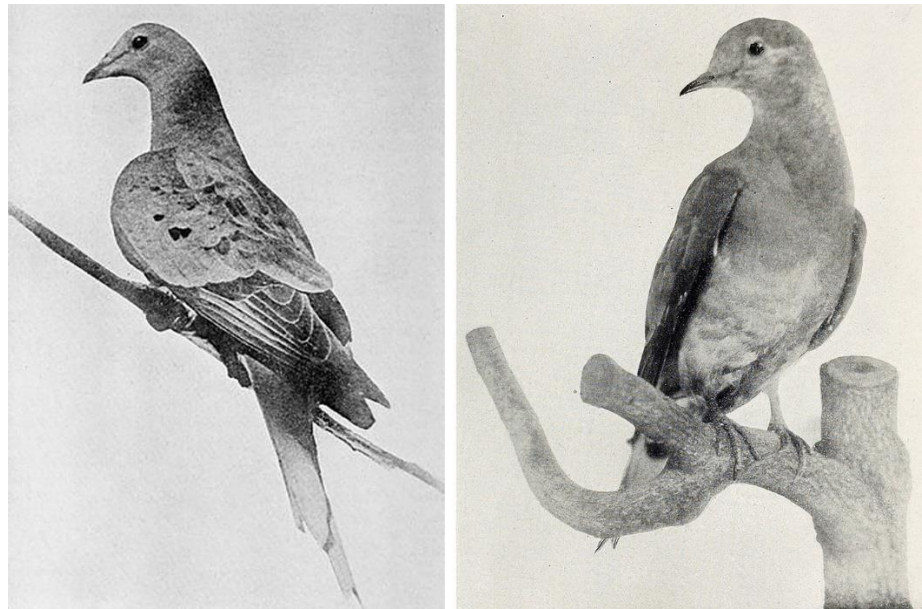

FIGURE 5: (LEFT) MARTHA THE LAST PASSENGER PIGEON, ENNO MEYER, 1912, PUBLISHED 1921. PUBLIC DOMAIN. (RIGHT) 'STUFFED SKIN OF MARTHA', 1921, ROBERT W. SHUFELDT, PUBLIC DOMAIN.

T: Drawing Martha, is it an exercise of breathing life into her? Because the original is a dead, mounted pigeon, a kind of a self-mausoleum to a species. And yet the drawings for me have more life than the original; you could imagine her taking flight any second, cooing to her partner, picking up an acorn and eating it.

Z: I didn't intend to resurrect Martha through drawing. At first, I just wanted to claim time –even 60 seconds a day – to tend to my practice at a time I was feeling lost and overwhelmed. Doing a daily drawing harks back to our early working relationship. Most afternoons in 2009, I drew a bird on a post-it note. At the time I was going slightly mad trying to finish my doctoral thesis. You were the same kind of mad and also an avid twitcher. To avoid discussing our ontological positions, we started talking about ornithology. At 3pm I'd stop what I was doing, draw a bird on a post-it and stick it on your office door. This '3pm Project' was inspired by Lauren Nassef's 'drawing a day' project (2007–11) and designed to keep my drawing hand active during a period of heavy typing and 'drowning-not-waving' theoretical reading. Drawing Martha started as a similar escape, this time from the domestic and administrative load that pulls me away from my creative work.

Drawing is a mindful activity, a design version of guided meditation. Drawing Martha was a way to resurrect my own creative practice.

T: Drawing as a trace of the arm/hand movement, trace of life, in something that in reality is doubly dead: dead as an individual, dead as a species. The busyness of the linework captures the feathers, but there is also frustration and a quickness.

Z: I have stared at those dull photographs of Martha for hours, but I have no sense of how she would have moved, sounded, or smelled. I find taxidermy visually fascinating but never emotionally engaging. Glass eyes are no way into a soul. Then, at the American Museum of Natural History, we turned a corner and happened upon the passenger pigeons display – a flock of stuffed birds arranged on a model tree – and I wept. Martha was not among them, yet for me, she was present. I see the frustration in the sketches, but I can't easily separate the frustration of my personal circumstances and the ecological crises I'm thinking through.

FIGURE 6: A SELECTION OF MARTHA DRAWINGS, 2019-2020, AUTHOR 1.

T: Flipping through the Martha book made me think of when a scratched record gets stuck, you can only keep drawing this last picture of Martha, stuck where she is in time. A live bird would have more angles. Extinction is a rupture in the DNA of all life.

Z: While trying to find Timothy Morton's definition of 'hyperobjects' as you made that comment about scratched records, I opened his book to this: "The needle skipped the groove of the present. Into this dark forest you have already turned. I take present to mean for the last twelve thousand years. A butterfly kiss of geological time." (Morton 2018, p. 2).

Coincidences like this emerge frequently in our conversations. Tracing and retracing lines between each other's work, and encounters with other work, that loop and trace endlessly.

Flicking through the Martha book, traces of my mood and dedication to the task are visible in the drawings; days I have time and patience to render a thoughtful image versus days I only manage a quick scribble. Alongside the drawings are traces of public and private life.

I intended to annotate each sketch with the drawing implement and duration. But by day 3, R creeps in: '4 Oct / elegant writer + copic / drawn alongside R, time uncertain'. An acknowledgement that parenting and maintaining creative constraints (annotating an accurate duration of a drawing) wasn't going to work. Accuracy aside, stories can be drawn out from the annotations: the longest stretch of continuous drawings is 16 days; after a 10-day break, I draw from a different photograph, explained by the caption *time for a new perspective*; more than once, scribbled edits reveal that I don't appear to know which month it is; a reflection on the elasticity of time during the Covid-19 lockdown. The longest gap is the month of November 2019, because I didn't take the book overseas to the artist residency. On 4 December 2019, the day I arrived home, I drew Martha, followed by a note:

> *"On Haphazard Perseverance:*
>
> *I felt a little like I'd failed – I wanted to draw Martha every day – I'm not sure how long, ambitiously a year, but only made 4 days straight. Rather than a failure, this exercise is an accurate reflection of my capacity to care for/about the natural world. My professional and domestic life pull my focus and discipline away. But I return, and try again. Which counts for something."*

Feelings of guilt about my lack of commitment to the task are frequent in 2020. 16 Feb: *I'm sorry Martha, for my neglect.* 17 April: *First drawing since 6 March. You'd think that covid-19 lockdown would provide plenty of time to draw. But I've never worked harder and got less done. Drawing has always calmed me, why am I avoiding it?* 15th June. *When I draw regularly I know her form instinctively. I've lost it. I'm exhausted. Bushfires, Covid, BLM. Facing my privilege.*

In mid-2020, A [my partner] is in a redundancy meeting, using my laptop to video call and my phone to record it. Standing uselessly in the kitchen, I reach for the Martha book and draw her from memory (I usually use my phone to draw from a photo). Martha looks anxious – traces of my emotional state in her drawn form. Martha has become a totem; I conjure her through drawing when I need comfort.

Also in 2020, R became fascinated by Martha's death and my process. I begin writing his questions onto the page. 4 Jan: *Mum, why did they shoot Martha? Why did they kill her family?* 22 April: *Why did people kill all Martha's family? How did they kill them? Why?* On this last page, a blue striped square is captioned 'R drew the egg.' After months of passive observation, R started to paint or draw on top of my drawings. At first, I was conflicted; I try not to art direct him but found myself possessive over the Martha book. One day when he messily painted over my drawing in red acrylic, I had to walk out of the room to hide my frustration. I gave him his own book, in which he chose to draw dragons instead of birds, but for a while drew together at breakfast, resulting in my longest continuous drawing spree. Months later when I suggest we draw, he still asks "Will you draw Martha?" When you assigned me the passenger pigeon, I was a blank face. Now, Martha is part of my family story.

My slow turning to face the ecological crisis is directly related to my son, and the generations that follow. In Rebecca Huntley's book *How To Talk About Climate Change in a Way That Makes A Difference* (2020) she describes a transformative moment, watching news coverage of high school students' climate protests; how would she answer her daughters when they ask what she was doing to help? Huntley describes her transition from being concerned to alarmed about climate change as a jolt. Mine was slower but no less uncomfortable. Returning to work from maternity leave I experienced a seeping unease; if I'm not using my privilege (access to day care, financial and domestic security, access to information and influence over people's education) to address some small part of the crisis, how would I look my child in the eye and say 'I did what I could'? I bear witness to Martha, R bears witness to my response. When he asks me, what did you do, I can remind him he was present in my action.

14 July: *Almost a month since my last sketch and it's like I don't know her form at all. 2020 is a mess.*

That's it, the last drawing in the book. But yesterday, 21 August 2020, I ran a screen-printing workshop for my Honours students. I drew her in pencil on a large page and overprinted a zigzag pattern. As I was drawing, the shape was familiar, but it was no longer Martha. It was a line that I know. After almost two years of regularly drawing Martha, I worry I have flattened her, reduced her to a line that my muscle memory can reproduce without emotional engagement. Or instead, by committing her form to memory, in my head and my hand, have I somehow consumed her, incorporated her into my being? When you thumbed through the book for the first time, you chuckled and said: *you don't need to worry that you've flattened her, she's very much alive in here*. I hope you are right. I may need a new book, or a new approach, to breathe life into her again.

Laysan Duck: tracing with words and thread
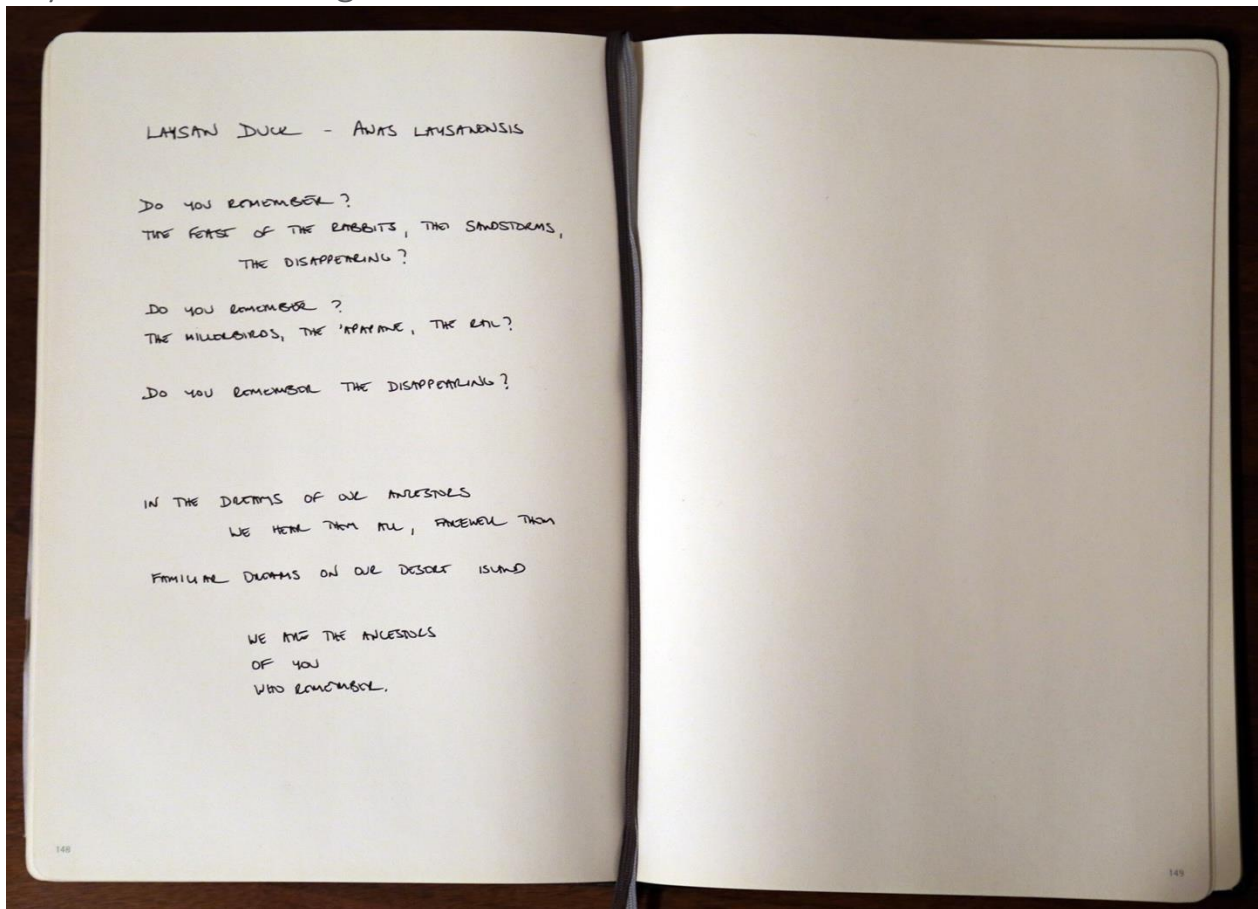
FIGURE 8: LAYSAN DUCK BY TIMO RISSANEN, 2018.

T: The short poem about the Laysan Duck (*Anas laysanensis*) is a tracing of the species' precarious existence during the past century; 1912 marked a nadir of 12 individuals [see Fig. 8]. The poem memorializes the other species and subspecies lost forever: the Laysan Rail, the Laysan Millerbird, and the Laysan 'apapane, first made vulnerable after introduced rabbits denuded the island of most vegetation. The image traces what for a long time was one of the few photographs available of a Laysan duck brood, taken by Dr Michelle Reynolds of the U.S. Geological Survey (see Fig. 9). The poem speaks of us (humans and non-humans) being those

who remember the Great Disappearing, but also the ancestors of those (humans and non-humans) who will remember what was lost on Laysan. The poem records the memory of the already lost species of Laysan Island for future generations of humans and, perhaps, for Laysan Ducks. Given the threat of rising sea levels due to climate change, the work may in time become a memorialisation of the island itself.

The photograph of the Laysan Duck brood is hopeful. The mother and five ducklings calmly walk away from the photographer; nothing about the ducks' appearance suggests concern. The image conveys a sense that the species may be, for now, secure, with more than 600 individuals in three locations.

Before generating a cross stitch pattern of the photograph, I increased the transparency of the image to communicate a sense of precarity. The aida cloth in its grid weave is like a canvas of blank pixels and some 'pixels' are left bare.

> Z: Textile artist Cecilia Heffer describes walking up and down Wamberal Beach while making the lacework 'Drawn Threads' as a way to 'physically think' through ideas. For Heffer, walking is a meditative practice that parallels the way she 'draws' with a sewing machine to make lace:

"Through my walking I have become a physical bobbin in a landscape, creating lace tracks (threads) back and forwards on its ephemeral shore." (Heffer 2015, p. 76) Her walking and sewing are necessarily separate activities (I've picked up her sewing machine: it is heavy), but you are able to perform your practice in different locations. When you are stitching, does it matter where you are? Do you feel you 'draw in' the physical location to your stitching process? The traces of where you perform your practice would not be visible to others, but are they visible to you – what memory resides in your cross-stitch pieces of their creation?

T: Extinction is inseparable from place, yet it is often discussed in an abstract, placeless manner. The place/s of stitching in the project become/s embedded in the memory I have of each piece, and the piece becomes a trace of those places. I began the Laysan Duck piece at the residency in upstate New York, and have since stitched it in Queens, New York, and my office at UTS, all the while thinking of a small island in the Pacific Ocean. These experiences ground the project in place, on land, and they embed a resonance of these places into the piece. While the experience of the places is not available to a viewer, by virtue of being available to me, the maker and storyteller, the piece becomes significant. Pajaczkowska (2010, p. 147) writes: "The stitch, like the hand-drawn line … is the trace of a movement that refers us to a time in which experience was tangible and available through the senses as guarantor of presence."

I use words and imagery in compositions that I cross stitch. I write poems about the species and compose these on the cloth with an image of the bird. Why is it important to cross stitch them? In the investment of time and care in a physical object through a slow repetition of hand movements with a threaded needle, there is a transference of care: the object becomes sacred. In discussing the significance of the hand in making, Pajaczkowska (2010, p.136) suggests that "the trace of the hand within representation is capable of signifying memories of profoundly affective states." This resonates in reflecting on the work for Precarious Birds: viewing the stitched work elicits memories of the emotional responses to reading about the extinction crisis.

Throughout human history textiles have been sacred, spiritual, magical, as well as utterly ubiquitous and banal. The textile works in Precarious Birds dance between the two: the sacred is imbued in pieces of cloth that could easily be on a scatter cushion in a pile of many. Perhaps the same could be said of the extinction crisis: the grief of the losses is profound and spiritually shattering, and yet easily rationalized (profaned?) as collateral damage of "progress".

Z: In a performance spanning a year for the 2020 Sydney Biennale, Lucienne Rickard drew an extinct species, erased it and drew another on the same surface, building layers of traces of loss into the paper. Her drawings disappear like the species. Why should we be precious about the fragility of our work when species are going extinct because we haven't cared about the fragility of our shared environment? When is fragility valued?

T: There is tension in the work in that it is created by countless hours of touching through stitch, and the tactility of the cloth is increased through that work. Yet the end result is one that, in a conventional gallery or museum setting, cannot be touched by an audience because it would wear out quickly. But perhaps touching the work should be welcomed and the inevitable destruction of the work through touch is accepted to be a part of the work, since it is about loss anyway?

Discussion: Creating archives of loss, for those who follow

The previous section presented an edited selection of thinking *in* action, scribed or transcribed from recordings while we worked, as well as some dialogue taken from emails and journal entries about our reflections on action. In this section, we reflect further *on* that documentation of practice, in order to draw further insights for the larger project.

Through our expanded conversations around the Passenger Pigeon and the Laysan Duck, 'tracing' emerges as a theme: traces of the hand in both cross stitch and drawing; traces of our personal lives and the places in which we generate the work; traces of histories in the sourced images of lost and precarious birds we work from; tracing the shapes of extinct and critically endangered birds in line and thread. Leaving traces creates pathways for others to follow; opening new thresholds for interpreting both our work and the complex ecological, cultural and ethical issues it addresses. We return to Chris Jordan's proposition that "in this act of witnessing a doorway opens", and recall Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013):

> *"Weep! Weep! calls a toad from the water's edge. And I do. If grief can be a doorway to love, then let us all weep for the world we are breaking apart so we can love it back to wholeness again."*

Reflecting on his grief at the demise of deep-sea kelp forests John Charles Ryan (2020) writes, "What does it mean to mourn the loss of something not encountered in situ but which, nevertheless, saturates the imagination?" (2020, p. 187) Unable to visit the kelp in person, Ryan turns to written accounts and visual depictions of kelp forests, which he calls 'archives of loss'. Similarly, unable to visit extinct birds and unwilling to tramp into vulnerable landscapes to spot critically endangered birds in person, we too turn to archives of loss to bear witness to these birds' existence, examining archival photographs and natural history illustrations, reading observations written by people who witnessed both previous abundance and systematic killing of species, and wading through scientific reports that quantify the decline of birds and other species, mostly due to human interference in the natural world.

In addition to examining archives of loss, our project contributes new material to these cultural archives – the artworks, and documentation of work in process, produced through our expanded conversations. Our extinction stories contain traces of the attention, care and grief we paid to each species, but also traces of the various human and nonhuman actors who contributed to our expanded conversations. According to the editors of the book *Extinction Studies*, such 'extinction stories' allow us to explore the 'entangled significance' of extinction, providing "narrative-based engagement that explores what an extinction means, why it matters, and to whom." (Rose et al. 2017, p. 3)

The performance of our practice is important to both how we collaborate, and how the work is perceived by others. In our visual and material representations of critically endangered and extinct birds, we leave traces of our process for viewers to encounter; 'guarantors of presence.' For example, the pixels, and therefore stitches, left blank in the Laysan Duck cross-stitch poems, as well as the threads left hanging from the front of final work, are material cues for future viewers to consider the presence of the maker. Drawing attention to the act of making invites reflection on the time and care that is stitched into this artwork. It invites the future viewer into the work, to empathise not only with the precarious circumstances of the bird (and other species on Laysan Island) but also the dedication of the maker in performing this slow process of representation. These material cues invite viewers to consider the

personal and the public, the objective factual with the subjective emotional, to bridge the gap between scientific fact and lived experience.

Annotations in the Martha book reveal how the drawing practice unintentionally drew another participant into the conversation – R. His unexpected participation, which evolved simply through being in proximity to the activity and wanting to understand what his mother is doing, drawing the same bird over and over, expands not only the conversation about Martha's extinction, but later our shared conversation about the relevance of this project more broadly, for those who follow. R bears witness to his mother bearing witness to a single, dead bird, through repetitive drawing. Rather than a story narrated orally or through a picture book, it is a story performed through making. Bearing witness to the creative act opens a door to memorialising an extinct species for a generation too young to remember.

Although it's too late for Martha, and other extinct birds, it is not too late to preserve the memory of their species. Each year on September 14, the anniversary of her death, we share some of the Martha drawings on social media. Initially, drawing Martha was a personal processing of grief. Now, the collection of drawings forms a new addition to Martha's archive of loss, a tool to help embed Martha into the memory of those of who can never encounter her kind.

There is hope embedded in this act of passing the memory of Martha to another generation, because the thought of us no longer remembering Martha or her species at some point is overwhelmingly sad. David Haskell (2018) anticipates the future value of ecological remembering:

> *In coming years, our children, students, and friends will need our stories. In our listening to birds, we might gain something worth telling the future, tales whose meanings are now unforeseen: That ravens fell silent in the late summer heat, sandhill cranes passed in March but did not linger, orioles and flycatchers wove their summer songs into the tops of cottonwood trees, and warblers departed suburban fir boughs in December. These will be stories of continuity, of extinction, of blossoming, of changed tempo and texture. Coming generations depend on us to convey these living memories. We start in the present, by listening."*

While maintaining hope is important, it is also dangerous; hope can lure us away from the action that is urgently needed at a time of overlapping environmental crises. Donna Haraway (2016) instructs us to stay with the trouble; to own our part in what's been done. Deborah Bird Rose (2017) extends Haraway's much-quoted phrase to: "staying with the *human* trouble" [our emphasis], calling for us to expand our narratives beyond human exceptionalism – beyond accounts which "stress our wondrous superiority" that we are the only animal with language, tools, mindfulness – to include more truthful accounts of the exceptional cruelty and damage humankind reaps. Rose insists we linger with this: "it is terrible stuff to have to stay with for too long, but those who suffer, whether human or more-than human, don't have a choice. They have to stay with it, because they are experiencing it [...] we are called to bear witness and to offer care." (G55-56)

Underpinning our collaboration is a proposition: in a time of crisis, it is not possible or useful to separate the professional and the private. Extinction events are part of Earth's history, but this is the first one known to be caused by the activities of a single species, *Homo sapiens*: a Great Erasing. As artists, and as citizens, we are entangled in the extinction crisis (and the interconnected climate crisis). However, extinction, the loss of biodiversity, is the domain of conservation biology – a 'hard' science from which

we expect an objective distance. Thierfelder (2019) notes how the process of producing scientific visualisations – translating handwritten notes taken in field journals into data spreadsheets, then digitally rendered charts or graphs – erases the traces of the human researcher. The 'thick description' of the environment in which the data was collected and the "emotions the work triggers in the biologists" are lost:

> *"The handwriting of the researchers, the visibility of their diverse notation skills, the conditions of the field work and their motives that were visible within the field notes are erased by digital devices and computers. Only then do the visual representations count as a scientifically valid result. During this process the researchers have to make themselves invisible from their own work in favour of the representation of an objective research collective and the unification and simplification of their data set." (Thierfelder 2019)*

Yet extinction is not limited to scientists; the losses of this crisis belong to all of us who remain, human and non-human. In this project, we claim our share of the loss by making ourselves visible – through written, drawn and stitched traces – in the work, and the way we present it as an expanded conversation. Through our creative practice we say, *this is our business*, because in recognising the interdependencies of earth systems, it becomes impossible to remain uninvolved: doing something becomes an imperative.

Conclusion

In this paper we demonstrate how our Precarious Birds project is a creative collaboration through which we bear witness to avian extinctions, by tracing on page or cloth the shadow of a bird that once was. We frame the collaboration as an expanded conversation with two primary objectives. First, engaging in deliberately slow processes of drawing and stitching the stories of the 'entangled significance' of individual birds is a way to open spaces for care, attention and grief; to stay with the trouble of the extinction crisis. Second, through embodied conversations – with each other, with artefacts from our individual creative practices, and through shared scholarly research – we work through ways to articulate and share the complexity of human-avian entanglements, one bird at a time.

We draw on PIRG's methodology to frame our project as an expanded conversation, but also extend their work by pointing to how this approach might be used to interpret texts beyond phenomenological theory.

Through our collaboration we are evoking, or at least searching for, hope in order to do something productive; to preserve ecological memory for future generations. Through accounts of two ongoing expanded conversations about the Passenger Pigeon and the Laysan Duck, we show how our work and documentation of our creative process is deliberately embedded with traces of the culture of care at the time of their creation; the works produced in this collaboration demonstrate care, guilt, shame, meditation, reflection. Where stuffed specimens presented in glass cabinets project a Man Conquers Nature narrative, our softer traces are an attempt to think with, to make kin, to record with respect and humility. In this way, the output from our project contributes to existing 'archives of loss' about bird species in different ways to written records, photographs, natural history illustrations, and scientific reports and specimens.

In performing this expanded conversation over a long – perhaps indefinite – duration, we keep these birds alive, by conjuring them in line and thread, and by sharing our work to mitigate against ecological amnesia about these lost and fading species. We have so far presented work from this project in NYC and Averill Park (USA), Sydney, Melbourne and Perth (Australia) and Brighton (UK). It was also presented on our behalf as part of a vigil on the steps of the American Museum of Natural History to commemorate Lost Species Day in 2019. Our commitment to bearing witness to avian, and other, extinctions will not end for either of us with this project: we will stay with the trouble in yet to be seen ways for our working lives, because we are unavoidably entangled in the crisis throughout our biological lives.

Acknowledgements

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BETWEEN INSTRUMENT AND ART FORM – CONCEPTS OF LOSS IN ARCHITECTURAL DRAWING

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The somewhat self-evident idea of drawing as an active medium is, in many ways, foreign to its historical application in architecture. Architectural drawing maintains a uniquely precarious position between its instrumentality in the process of building and its perception as a minor art form. The result is an uncomfortable double negative whereby the creative potential of architectural drawing is absent from both of these descriptions as an instrument or an art form. This loss, as a form of absence in architectural drawing's creative potential, is examined in this essay. It traces the arguments for architectural drawing in the two seminal essays: 'Translations from drawing to building' (1986) by the architectural historian Robin Evans, and 'Lines of work: On diagrams and drawings' (2000) by the architectural philosopher Andrew Benjamin. Comparing Evans's and Benjamin's analyses of Pliny the Elder's account of the origin of painting, it is revealed that loss is a requirement to free architectural drawing from its seconded position to realisable buildings. Embracing loss enables architectural drawing to be perceived as an incomplete, insoluble medium capable of perpetual change. And, rather than operating as a medium that falsely claims to define the spatial experience of buildings, architectural drawing is argued to instead contribute as an active element to an economy of creative mediums exploring expanded ideas of spatial practice.

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Double negative of architectural drawing

The relationship between drawing and loss has a particularly significant, yet somewhat under-recognised, influence on drawing in the field of architecture. One reason for its limited recognition is the very well-established presumption concerning the role of architectural drawing within the practised means of production of realisable architecture. In these means, architectural drawing is presumed to be an instrument that has been cultivated to assist the tasks of spatial design. Like all tools, architectural drawing is legitimised by and limited to the effectivity of its adherence to these qualities of utility. In practice, architectural drawing's instrumentality is used for multiple functions of the process of design. It enables the collection of visual information about form from the mind of the architect; it supports the reformation of this information into depictions of space within visual languages of extreme acuity; and it comprehensively communicates this information to realisable buildings.

Foundational to what is essentially a descriptive process of moving information from the mind of the architect through the drawing to the building, is the concept of *orthographic projection.* As recognised by the architectural theorist Robin Evans in his essay 'Translations from drawing to building' in 1986, the mimetic duplication of an orthographic description of space in the imagination of the architect, on the flat surface of the drawing page, and in construction, enabled architects to maximise claims for the ideological impact of their architectural ideas on the material worlds (Evans 1986, pp. 167, 181). What one saw in the mind could be made into form by moving it through this uniform space of orthographic projection in drawing.[1] Yet, this process of aligning spatial characteristics in the imagination with those of construction required the relegation of architectural drawing to a kind of metaphysical state of transparency between the two. As described by Evans, the descriptive goal of drawing within orthographic projection has been to facilitate 'maximum preservation in which both meaning and likeness are transported from the idea through drawing to building with minimum loss' (Evans 1986, p. 181). Ironically, the greatest effectivity of architectural drawing in the design process requires its undisputed withdrawal from impacting the discourse of architecture. When invisible, architectural drawing's surface enacts a crucial instrumentality that enables the production of buildings, yet reduces drawing itself to what Evans described as a 'truck for pushing ideas from place to place' (Evans 1986, p. 186). A process of minimising the loss of architectural ideas by maximising the loss of the agency of architectural drawing.

If we turn our attention to an art of architectural drawing without a basis in instrumentality, the drawing appears to suffer a more unfortunate fate than its limited recognition in architectural practice. In many recent considerations of architectural aesthetics in expanded spatial practices, emphases on the experimental exploration of material processes, experiences, embodiment, performativity, and atmospheres, have relegated architectural drawing to a sub-genre of *affect,* if it is considered at all. One can too easily imagine how, for example, the drawings of the wrapped fabric installations of Christo and Jeanne-Claude are indeed very beautiful, comprehensive depictions of their projects, yet speak very poorly to the immense sensation of the experiences of *Running Fence*, *Wrapped Reichstag* or any of their other realised projects. Yet it is within this diminutive state as a poor-art that Evans recognises a potentiality that is uniquely attributable to architectural drawing, based on the recognition of what it *cannot* do.

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[1] Evans appears to also refer to orthographic projection as a technique used in architectural drawing to 'counteract the rampant instrumentality of essentialism' (Evans 1986, p. 181). Yet, it is the noticeability of the line's distortion from the rigid uniformity of orthographic projection to which he refers this agency. None of which disputes the claims made in this essay about the generative capacity of architectural drawing.

Reflecting on his experience of a lighting installation by the installation artist James Turrell, Evans appears to identify the curious contradiction whereby the more accurate the attempts to describe the spatial properties of Turrell's lighting designs with drawings, the less successful the drawings are at representing the qualities of the experience of the installations. Speaking specifically to drawings made by Turrell of his early light installation *Afrum*, Evans notes that these drawings only characterise the properties of the shapes that the lighting installation projects, and as Turrell's works tend towards the spatial applications of his investigations of light, the drawings are less able to reflect the properties of his enquiry (Evans 1986, pp. 157-9).

In a footnote to this observation, Evans cites several major land art, minimalist and interventionist artists as operating with the same modality to the drawings seen in Turrell's work.[2] In spite of the necessarily spatial characteristics of their projects, which are 'geometric and apparently reducible to drawing,' Evans argues that they are in fact not (1986, p. 189). He suggests that 'they possess properties of substance and luminosity which, though they may be mimicked in drawing, cannot be developed in investigative drawing' (Evans 1986, p. 189). A point which leads him to determine that, '[n]ot all things architectural (and Turrell's rooms are surely architectural) can be arrived at through drawing' (Evans 1986, p. 159). Evans's conclusion insightfully introduces the idea that the secondment of architectural drawing to a means of producing realisable architecture—or architectonic like forms—results in drawing's loss of a relationship with qualities of spatial experience. This in turn limits drawing's contribution to discourse on the nature of architecture. Recognising these 'intrinsic limitations' of working with drawings as descriptive instruments, Evans suggests they may leave relevant qualities of spatial experience to 'only be seen darkly and with great difficulty' (1986, p. 159).

Unlike the diminishment of drawing to a transparent instrument through its mimetic duplication of the spatial logics of orthographic projection, the type of loss seen in architectural drawings as an aesthetic medium results from its inability to fulfil the experience it claims to represent. The difference between these two types of loss in each case appears to derive from the different means by which drawing is recognised to relate to the properties of the imagination and the physical built environment. As an instrument of practice, architectural drawing loses its potential through the recognition of its *similarity* to the imagination and to building; yet as an aesthetic medium, architectural drawing loses its agency through the recognition of its *dissimilarity* to sensation and to experience.

This uncomfortable double negative of architectural drawing evidences a deeper theoretical dissonance concerning its common perception and use. Indeed, the recognition of the presence of loss in architectural drawing appears to have driven Evans to call for the exploration of what unique contribution architectural drawing can make to the conceptualisation of architecture. Referring to the qualities of spatial experience seen darkly by the descriptive instrumentality of architectural drawing, Evans attests that '[i]f judgment is that these qualities in and around the shadow line are more interesting than those laid forth clearly in drawing, then such drawing should be abandoned, and another way of working instituted' (1986, p. 159). Loss underpins Evans's call to address these unseen potentialities in the current modalities of architectural drawing. And further, loss instigates the opportunity to explore architectural drawing in a new mode.

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[2] See footnote number 8 (Evans 1986, pp. 157, 189).

Representation and absence

The relationship between loss and opportunity for exploration in architectural drawing is a topic to which Evans and few others have devoted significant attention. Yet, another significant contribution is the work of the architectural philosopher, Andrew Benjamin. A contemporary of Evans in respect to his theorisation of architectural drawing, Benjamin addresses the theoretical dissonance concerning the common perception and use of architectural drawing most acutely in the chapter, 'Lines of work: On diagrams and drawings,' from his book *Architectural Philosophy* in 2000. In this chapter, Benjamin argues—like Evans—that our poorly resolved understanding of the potential of architectural drawing results from its common relegation to the role of an instrument within the production of realisable architecture. Importantly, though, Benjamin discusses the instrumentality of architectural drawing specifically as a result of its relationship with the 'field of representation' in architectural design (2000, p. 143).

Suggesting that representation—as a conceptual entity—encompasses the properties of architectural drawing in a manner unchallenged in conventional processes of design, Benjamin argues that what results is a limited capacity of architectural drawing to act in a mode that reflects its potentiality. Focusing specifically on the line and diagram as central elements that constitute the architectural drawing, Benjamin argues that their 'specificity' or their potential is precluded from contributing to architectural discourse by a 'pervasive sameness enjoined by representation' (2000, p. 143). This idea of *sameness* appears to operate in a similar manner to the mimetic duplication of orthographic projection in the imagination, page, and construction, as identified by Evans in 1986. Paraphrasing Catherine Ingraham, Benjamin suggests that this assumption of sameness is a necessary condition for the concept of representation to be instrumental within established means of production of realisable architecture, by facilitating a 'relatively unproblematic move from "modes of representation to the actual building"' (2000, p. 143).

This subduction of the line and diagram into the conceptual framework of representation is indeed problematic to architectural drawing, as it appears to demonstrate a significant instance by which loss impacts its potentiality. Benjamin examines this impact of loss by considering representation's potentiality itself, and its effect on the line and diagram, rather than considering the effect of loss on architectural drawing directly. He does this by returning, like many have, to the ancient Roman scholar Pliny the Elder's account of the origin of painting.

Drawing on Pliny's account that the mythologised origin of painting began with the tracing of a line of a figure's shadow, Benjamin infers that '[t]he drawing of the line as the origin of painting links the line to the work of representation' (2000, p. 145). He expands on this by suggesting the formulation of representation as a conceptual entity that pervades architectural practice appears to originate from the *situation* of the scene of Pliny's account, rather than from the allegory of the account itself. The relationships between various elements in the scene appear to establish representation as the result of the opening or separation of the various elements that make up the visual identity of a thing. In this case, it is the separation of the figure in Pliny's account into a figure itself as the visible presence of a thing and the shadow of the figure as the visual presence of that thing's absence. The line is introduced and subsumed within this formulation of representation as that which turns the visual ephemerality of the thing's absence—the shadow—into an ossified, static image, the drawing (Benjamin 2000, p. 145).

This relatively straightforward observation of Pliny's account is complexified by focusing on the significance of the space between the various elements in the scene. In order to characterise the

formulation of representation and its effect on architectural drawing, Benjamin cites how the idea of 'immediacy' is a dominant presumption that overrides common perceptions of the space between the figure and shadow (2000, p. 145). Immediacy is understood as a kind of negation of an acknowledgement of this in-between space itself. It appears to be based on the presumption of sameness between the figure and shadow that would make-believe they are one and the same thing, and hence collapse the perception of the space between them.

Benjamin describes this kind of immediacy as a 'fantasy within representation,' a 'desire' of representation that is one of the most pervasive characteristics dominating its common perception and, by extension, that of the line, diagram and indeed architectural drawing, which it subsumes (2000, p. 145). Importantly, this characterisation of representation by immediacy appears to contradict the very quality that Benjamin establishes as the foundation *for* representation's formulation. From Pliny's account, Benjamin infers that representation arises from the space in-between the separate elements within the scene, yet he suggests that it is also representation that desires to collapse the perception of this in-between space, with the idea of an immediate sameness between the elements that make it.

The presence of this contradiction is not lost on Benjamin, and it leads him to his summation of representation's potentialities. This contradiction is addressed by introducing the term 'interdependence' to alternatively describe the relationship between the figure and shadow (Benjamin 2000, p. 146). Interdependence appears to describe a required *connectedness* between the oppositional elements of figure and shadow. Yet significantly, this connectedness is not the same idea as the collapsing of the space between these elements into sameness, as described by immediacy. Close examination of a note made by Benjamin on this point reveals that the difference between immediacy and interdependence is driven by the idea of difference itself (2000, pp. 145-6). Immediacy requires a recognition of the sameness of these elements, yet interdependence appears to require a recognition of their differences. Although both the figure and the shadow depend on each other to define each other, they are very much not the same thing. In spite of their inter-relationship, one is made from the absence of light, the other is made from flesh and blood. Hence, one cannot be substituted for the other.

Benjamin's introduction of the concept of difference within Pliny's account addresses the contradiction of the formulation of representation. By implying that the space between the figure and shadow exists as a requirement of their difference rather than a contradiction to their sameness, representation is characterised as a means to traverse and negotiate the differences of the elements that constitute the oppositional visual relationship of figure and shadow. Rather than being the instantaneous result of sameness, the space between the figure and the shadow is necessitated by the mediation of their differences. The presence of difference reframes representation as an active agent required to participate as a generative actor in the translation of visual knowledge between the properties of the presence of a thing, and the characteristics of the visual recognition of its absence.

Evans himself writes about Pliny's account and the space of translation of visual knowledge between drawing and building, yet it is Benjamin's account of representation that speaks directly to the concept of loss in architectural drawing (Evans 1986). The formulation of representation by Benjamin as the opening or separation of the visual presence of a thing speaks to the idea of absence, or loss, as foundational to representation's instrumentality. Like the shadow and the figure, representation is characterised by things that it is not. Without these other elements—in this case the properties of the figure and the shadow—representation cannot be described, yet when described with these other elements, representation cannot be described as a thing in itself. This 'ineliminable interdependence

within representation' demonstrates its own requisite incompleteness and necessity *to refer* in order to achieve some kind of 'closure' of purpose (Benjamin 2000, p. 146). Similar to the theoretical dissonance that underpins the instrumentality of architectural drawing introduced from Evans's analysis, it can be inferred from Benjamin's formulation that loss in the form of incompleteness is a requisite condition to enable representation to be useful.

Returning to the relationship between drawing and loss, it is the incompleteness of representation that appears to cause the loss of architectural drawing's potentiality. As drawing is subducted into the field of representation, Benjamin implies that drawing, in the form of its elements as the line and diagram, is subjected to the same characterisation of incompleteness as representation is in Pliny's account (2000, pp. 146-7). The result is that the line and diagram, as traces of the visual presence of something that is absent, the shadow, are themselves seconded to refer to something they are not.

> In this context therefore closure refers to the demands made by the incorporation of the line, diagram, etc., into the structure of representation. Within that structure a line marks both itself and what it is not. A diagram envisages a realization in which the envisaged object is what the diagram is taken to represent. (Benjamin, 2000, p. 146)

Benjamin's argument establishes the idea that within the structure of representation, as an incomplete conceptual entity, the line and diagram are themselves made incomplete. Their loss is the loss of the potentiality of their own condition in order to enable the utility of representation to convey. In architectural drawing, made from such incomplete lines and diagrams, this condition of loss is experienced to a high degree of acuity. The drawing requires its interdependence with the building in order to be perceived as valuable. The drawing refers to itself as a drawing, and yet is also required to refer to that which it is not, the building. The result is a perception of an incompleteness of architectural drawing when considered as an independent entity, what Benjamin refers to as a 'closure tinged with loss' (2000, p. 146).

The only closure of architectural drawing is as the perception of a thing that no-longer maintains a self-possessed condition of its own potentiality. The aesthetic condition of architectural drawing, its potential for interpretation, and its material qualities amongst many of its other properties, are diminished in order to maximise its conveyance of abstract meaning and signs that refer to the properties of things it is not. The result is that the architectural drawing operates in a state of, and is defined by, a condition of perpetual otherness. And hence, as recognised by Benjamin, the potentiality of architectural drawing is not only subducted under the influence of representation, but also under the validity of the realisation of the buildings to which it refers (2000, p. 147). Benjamin describes this as a great *melancholia* of architectural drawing, as the 'line, drawing and diagram' are linked to a perpetual sense of loss in the form of a 'pervading sense of absence' (2000, p. 149).

Opportunity and loss

This perception of the melancholic loss of architectural drawing speaks to the resignation of drawing's potential from the point of view of established processes for the realisation of built architecture. Yet, when turning to consider architectural drawing itself, there is something within the acceptance of the pervasiveness of loss that leads Benjamin, like Evans, to find opportunity for the exploration of drawings' potentiality. Significantly, this opportunity for exploration is not led by attempts to reject loss or negate drawings' otherness to building. These conditions of rejection and negation are in fact quite common practices within architecture, and are evident, for example, in instances of architectural drawing that

depict utopian visions of buildings of impossible or unrealisable geometry. In spite of such drawings' rejection and negation of presumed relationships to buildable architecture, as noted by Benjamin, their 'fantastic possibilities or utopian projections' are themselves still only 'explained within the structure of representation' (2000, p. 148). As such, unbuildable depictions of architecture do not challenge the subduction of the line and diagram to representation. These drawings still *represent* things that they are not, even if those things have no possibility of being realised.

The approach to finding the opportunity for exploration in architectural drawing is far more complex, and is based on the rejection of the *relationship between* loss and negation. Accepting architectural drawing as an incomplete condition and loss as somewhat intrinsic to its common perception, Benjamin rejects the idea that this is in fact grounds for lament (2000, p. 150).

> *Loss loses its melancholic hold to become an original loss and thus a sustained founding state of the incomplete. And, as has already been intimated, what this entails is a conception of the incomplete understood not just as always already incomplete but as necessarily given within its own economy. (Benjamin 2000, p. 150)*

Importantly, this acceptance of loss by Benjamin does not simply appear to result from being resigned to accepting the common use of architectural drawing in practice. Rather, acceptance of loss and incompleteness appears to result from Benjamin's position that the opportunity of drawing is to explore its potentiality within an economy of design methods and practices. The architectural drawing that does not contribute to design is limited in the contribution it can make to architectural discourse, and indeed, realisable architecture. Benjamin infers that rather than reject or lament architectural drawing's loss and incompleteness, it is in fact these properties that somewhat underpin drawing's capacity to subvert its perceived subduction to representation and to realisable architecture. As Benjamin states, '[o]nce the incomplete is viewed as a mark of production then the incomplete brings with it its own generative capacity' (2000, p. 150).

Based on this subversion, the generative capacity of loss—in the form of incompleteness—in architectural drawing appears to derive from the same property responsible for the subjugation of the elements of the line and diagram introduced earlier. That is, the formulation of representation as the *opening up* of a space between the visual properties of a thing. This property of opening up is based on the recognition of difference in the visual knowledge of things and appears to be a central driving force of representation that impacts the capacity of drawing to operate as a generative medium. Benjamin suggests that the alignment of this property of representation with the incompleteness of the line and diagram introduces a kind of perpetual opening up within lines and diagrams. By extension, this perpetual opening up can be applied to architectural drawing itself. The result is a new conception of architectural drawing as a perpetually incomplete entity in architectural design.

Through acknowledging the absence and loss of its potential brought on by its subjugation to the incompleteness of representation, architectural drawing can be conceived of by the same characteristic of incomplete open-endedness that confined it. This conception subverts the instrumentality of architectural drawing to convey pre-determined visual knowledge. Instead, this incompleteness enables architectural drawing to open up as a medium for the exploration of opportunity and possibility in the visual field. Loss of the concept of completion in architectural drawing, within the field of representation, is the same driver that enables it to be reframed as a site of incomplete experimentation for the production, rather than the conveyance, of visual knowledge in architectural design.

What this means is that rather than open out by trying to stand for what they are not, the line and diagram open up within themselves. Allowing for the continuity of this opening, allowing for the continuity of an opening resisting absolute finality and thus an enforcing completion. (Benjamin 2000, p. 152)

Loss in architecture

A reclamation of sorts to address the impact of this incomplete nature of architectural drawing is re-introduced by both Evans and Benjamin to processes of architectural design. In spite of the fact that both attempts are limited, they frame how one could approach the difficult challenge of addressing the potential implications of this knowledge of architectural drawing's incompleteness on architectural discourse. The limitations of both Evans's and Benjamin's attempts to examine the incompleteness of architectural drawing within established means of producing architecture appear to result from the fact that neither essay focuses on the re-introduction of this new understanding of architectural drawing as the core subject of their texts. Both essays quite brilliantly articulate re-imagined conceptions of architectural drawing. Yet it appears that the impacts of such discoveries have yet be charted in theories of architecture.

Evans's account reflects the carefully speculative approach of his training as an architectural historian. To address the potential impact of the incomplete nature of drawing on architectural discourse, he evidences what he understands as an actual instance of its occurrence in the history of architectural design. On recounting commentaries on the design process for the 'dome of the Royal Chapel at Anet,' by the architect Philibert de l'Orme in 1547, Evans notes that drawing's 'virtual absence from our account of the making of architecture' leaves unexplained how the design was able to be conceived (1986, pp. 173, 175). The design described by de l'Orme and what was built differ in a manner that Evans deduces must have required the drawing to operate as an active, opaque medium between the mind of the architect and the building. He uses this example to challenge the perception of architectural drawing as a transparent intermediary and to demonstrate its dynamic participation in the generation of spatial knowledge.

Examining the relationship between the geometry of the tessellated floor pattern of the Royal Chapel at Anet and the curved ribs of the dome above it, Evans evidences the generative characteristics of architectural drawing. By recognising that the link between the geometry of the floor and the dome required a kind of morphological change to the shapes of the compositional elements of each in order for one to reflect the other, Evans demonstrates that the potential for such change is only possible through the graphic extrapolation of projective geometry (1986, pp. 175-8)—a process that requires architectural drawing to situate and enhance the imaginative exercise of exploring new geometric possibilities of form. From this example, architectural drawing can be recognised as a necessarily generative medium that has the potential to 'engender [...] more potent forms from less,' and—borrowing Benjamin's terminology—change that state of ideas via their interaction with the unceasing possibilities of the perpetual incompleteness of lines and diagrams (Evans 1986, p. 178).[3]

This example introduces what Evans describes as 'architectural drawing in a new mode,' where, through staging the experimentation between lines and projective geometry, 'the imagination and the technique worked well together, the one enlarging the other' (1986, p. 180). Yet, it is the broader implications of

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[3] Original quote from Evans reads, 'engendered more potent forms from less.'

this generative capacity that speaks to the greater potential impact of architectural drawing on architectural discourse. Evans suggests that what results from engaging with drawing's new capacity is 'a perverse epistemology in which ideas are not put in things by art, but released from them' (1986, p. 180). Here, architectural drawing is opened to the possibility of being the site for the generative production of visual knowledge in architecture through an inversion of the instrumentalist concept of conveyance. Freed from the type of relationship with orthographic projection whereby the drawing mimics the mind into the building, now the material agency of drawing is recognised as an independent participant in the production of spatial knowledge. Through embracing drawing's potential as a generative entity of architectural design, Evans suggests it may be used in a manner that engages complexity in architectural discourse by introducing its own unceasing intentionality towards unpredictability that ensures, '[w]hat comes out is not always the same as what goes in' (1986, p. 181).

Like Evans's perverse epistemology, a similar condition of inversion is introduced by Benjamin to speculate on drawing's effect on architectural discourse. Benjamin suggests that 'freeing the diagram from the hold of representation, though allowing representation to be present as a possible effect, opens up […] a theoretical question as well as an architectural one' (2000, p. 154).[4] This diminishment of representation to a possible effect *of* the diagram shifts the agency of architectural drawing's contribution to design processes from an instrument for mimicry within representation to a site for creative exploration offered by the perpetual incompleteness of drawing itself. Benjamin deploys this recognition of the generative potentiality of drawing's incompleteness into other troublesome spaces in-between the other types of architectural drawings used in design processes: the plan and the section. Previously smoothed over by assumptions of representational sameness, Benjamin opens up the moments of difference between these types of drawings, stating, '[o]nce the diagram is attributed a different status then areas of inquiry and indeed areas of experimentation emerge as given within the gap between diagram and plan and section' (2000, p. 154).

The impact of the incomplete nature of architectural drawing on architectural discourse can be read from Benjamin's final suggestion, that it is important *not* to consider the incompleteness of architectural drawing as an end in itself. Rather, through an engaged *working-with* incompleteness within gaps in design processes, the generative, explorative impact of incompleteness can be more deeply realised within our spatial experience of architectural form. When we lose the presumption that architecture can be a complete thing, we are opened to the possibility of its potential. Or, as Benjamin puts it:

> *Once taken as internal to the object—the object as already complete and thus completed with the possible internal inscription of the incomplete—the incomplete can be understood as part of the building's actual structuration and thus as integral to the building's economy. Once located within the object the incomplete maintains itself as work. (Benjamin 2000, p. 148)*

The loss of loss

Like the double negative recognised in Evans's examination of architectural drawing, it is recognised from Benjamin's examination that accepting the loss of architectural drawing's incompleteness in the confines of representation enables it to be conceived of uniquely as a discrete—albeit insoluble—

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[4] Original quote from Benjamin reads, 'freeing the diagram from the hold of representation, though allowing representation to be present as a possible effect, opens up as both as a theoretical question as well as an architectural one'.

element in architectural design. The theoretical dissonance concerning its common perception and use, that Evans's account introduces, now appears to result from the appropriation of drawing as a transitory medium in an economy of architectural design. Yet, this appropriation appears to have had little consideration for the perpetual open-endedness of the medium of drawing itself. The loss of loss that is required to recognise the distinctive incompleteness of architectural drawing speaks less to the qualities of drawing directly and more to the absence of a form of reason within the principles and practices of architectural design. Specifically, it implies the absence of a preparedness to engage with the conception of incompleteness in a productive manner. Or, perhaps better articulated with a term not defined in opposition to the negation of another, the absence of a preparedness to productively engage with the conception of perpetual change.

Recognising this, architectural drawing can more clearly be described as a mercurial entity. Far from operating as the static, ossified incantation of the visual ephemerality of the shadow, as in Pliny's account, architectural drawing appears to maintain an equivalent form of ephemerality itself. It is perhaps more advantageous to consider architectural plans and sections more like the momentary making of castles from the moving shapes of clouds than to realistically suggest they reflect a meaning and likeness of the spatial experiences that architects claim they depict. A question that arises from this recognition is: how and why did architectural drawing shift from a medium of visual *opinion* within an economy of spatial knowledge dispersed over a community of spatial practices, to a medium that fictitiously claims to define that which is spatial only by that which is visible? The breadth of this question cannot be addressed here, albeit to say that such a history is a history of a reductive force that displaces a preparedness to address the complex nature of spatial experience with a conflated conception of visual perception. And, that a child's drawing that requires words and toys to describe its imaginative events may be more native to architectural drawing than any plan or section can be.

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BEARING WITNESS TO DYING

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'Bearing witness to dying' is a personal account of how a drawing project, based in sketchbook drawing, which began as a simple exercise in maintaining my drawing practice, shifted in emphasis to become the observation of my husband's final fight with cancer. As the months passed, it developed into a support system for living with the threat of impending loss, and finally helped me to survive the subsequent bereavement. Unconsciously, I was simultaneously creating a lasting record of precious and painful memories. The drawing practice is juxtaposed against a relationship with social media, which also became important as a support, and contrary to the usual manner of publishing intimate information, managed to reveal the events that were unfolding without ever revealing anything explicit.

Bearing witness to dying

This is an account of how a drawing project, which began as a simple exercise in maintaining my drawing practice, became the observation of my husband's final fight with cancer. As the months passed, it developed into a support system for living with the threat of impending loss, and finally helped me survive the subsequent bereavement, simultaneously creating a lasting record of precious and painful memories. The drawing practice is juxtaposed against a relationship with social media, which also acted as a support without ever explicitly revealing the events that were unfolding.

Sketchbook drawing from direct observation occurred as a shift in my practice about five years before the events in this article. Previously, my work had been studio based to fit in with domestic life, often working from photographs. The chance of following a major building development at the Holburne Museum in Bath began as a private drawing project and instantly altered my method of work. Not only did I abandon all use of the camera, but I also realised that the people engaged in the development were my key interest, rather than the actual building work. As part of the phenomenological experience of being there it became apparent that my presence had some influence – usually taking the form of conversation or comment from the people around me. I often liken this situation to being a Shakespearean fool, who is accepted but not part of the community, and who 'speaks' through drawing, although these comments have no particularly significance.

The Holburne project became the first of several artist's residencies, bearing witness to the world around me, focusing on human activity. The constant practice of drawing has improved my hand-eye coordination immeasurably and provided a confidence to take risks. After a lifetime of artistic practice that was never quite sure where it was going, I have found an excitement and absorption that sustains me and is never onerous.

The diary of events

At the end of 2012 I realised that it was necessary to take a break from time consuming art projects to concentrate on looking after my husband, Bill, who had a long term cancer – multiple myeloma. The recent artist residencies had taken me away from my studio, so now I was keen to keep up my drawing practice while remaining at home. Therefore, on 1 January 2013, I decided to do a drawing every day for a year and post them on Facebook and Twitter. Initially, this public engagement was to ensure against giving the project up. However, I did not realise at the time how significant the use of social media would become.

The sketchbook was to be a journal of my everyday life, recording the people and objects around me. The first drawing happened to be Bill watching television [Fig.1]. Although I drew many different subjects, my preference for people and the fact that he was always there meant he featured quite frequently. His reaction was interesting. Having been a reluctant sitter for any formal portrait in the past, he accepted my quick sketches – possibly regarding them as unimportant, or perhaps he had other things on his mind. The result is that I was able to make over 40 drawings of him during what would be the eight months up to his death.

Drawing Bill so often meant that I was acutely aware of his changes in mood and energy. For the first three months he was his usual busy self, constantly reading, doing domestic chores, and working [Fig.2]. But during April tiredness began to show and by May the effort to do things was all too evident [Fig.3] – although he still enjoyed a good television programme or time spent with our children [Fig.4].

FIGURE 1: JANUARY 1 – WATCHING TELEVISION

FIGURE 2: MARCH 3 – WORKING ON A SCRIPT

FIGURE 3: MAY 2 - GARDENING

FIGURE 4: MAY 17 - WATCHING JOOLS HOLLAND

In June there was a significant event, which triggered further exhaustion. We paid a visit to Cornwall to help scatter the ashes of a very old and much loved friend. The walk from our hotel to the cliff top was arduous and with many wrong turnings that upset Bill. After we returned home there was a marked difference: television had lost its charm [Fig.5] and his appetite was fading noticeably [Fig.6]. His medication became worse than the disease, and it was apparent that the end was approaching [Fig.7].

FIGURE 5: JULY 6 - WATCHING TELEVISION

FIGURE 6: AUGUST 21 - NOT MUCH APPETITE

FIGURE 7: AUGUST 28 - SLEEPING

My reactions to the impending event took different forms. Early on I had said openly that I did not want to think about his actual death, supposedly because there was so much going on in the present moment. On reflection, the idea of him dying was too big to encompass. It seemed to be a disaster which, in Maurice Blanchot's terms, is a threat that never comes, because when the feared event actually arrives

one copes with the practicality of the situation, and it therefore no longer appears to be disastrous (Blanchot 1995). I could not envisage the moment of his death because it seemed too awful, nor could I imagine what life would be like without Bill. Rather than speculate on the future, although it was always in the back of my mind, it seemed best to concentrate on enjoying the time we still had together.

The question arose as to what I would draw 'on the day' when it finally came - and whether I could post it on social media. My children, who were both immensely supportive, said firmly that I should maintain and post the daily drawing no matter what. When the day did come in early September 2013, I drew Bill shortly after he died, an essential but ultimately private moment of saying goodbye, and therefore impossible to publish on social media. Instead I posted a second sketch of his uneaten breakfast, which he had rejected [Fig.8]. I had made him his favourite porridge but he only wanted a beer.

FIGURE 8: SEPTEMBER 6 - UNEATEN BREAKFAST, HE REALLY WANTED A BEER

The drawing journal as lifeline

Before Bill died, the drawing journal kept me grounded in the continual process of domesticity and caring. Throughout the daily ritual, it seamlessly and gradually shifted from being an exercise in drawing practice to being documentation of a person's final months of life, and a support device for expressing difficulties encountered along the way. It was a habit that satisfied on a daily basis, because the act of drawing made me feel better no matter what the day had been like. Although I did not want to think about his death, bearing witness in the months before the event was in some way preparing for it.

For me drawing has always been a way of 'touching' the world, in an attempt to understand its otherness. This is particularly pertinent when drawing people. I loved my husband deeply but even when his suffering was most obvious, I could never know his thoughts. This, in Levinas' words, is the 'pathos of love' where love and desire cannot be united in one being (Levinas 1987).

> The other as other is not here an object that becomes ours or becomes us; to the contrary it withdraws into its mystery.

So when drawing Bill, my hand made marks that groped towards expressing how he was feeling in a sort of caress – again as Levinas conceived it:

> ....the caress does not know what it seeks. This 'not knowing', this fundamental disorder, is the essential. It is like a game with something slipping away, a game absolutely without project or plan, not with what can become ours or us, but with something other, always other, always inaccessible and always still to come.

I have used the analogy of a drawing as caress before, where despite the inevitable failure to reach the other, the drawing itself remains after the 'caress' – as a manifestation of the attempt. But here, in drawing Bill, it had greater significance because it was immersed in affection.

The need to cling on to Bill meant that my drawings of him during his final two months became more frequent. Previously, I had included our hospital visits in the drawing journal [Fig.9], but towards the end I also began to express the impact of the situation on my feelings [Fig.10].
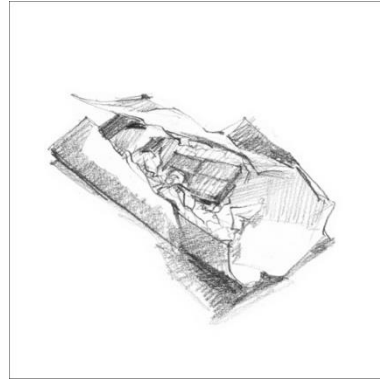

FIGURE 9: JUNE 18 – HAEMATOLOGY CLINIC

FIGURE 10: SEPTEMBER 5 - MUCH CHOCOLATE NEEDED TODAY

I was in the room when he died and moments afterwards I felt all the energy run down my back into the floor, as if effort was no longer needed. However, there was still much to do and it was not until the next day that is was possible to allow myself to relax by spending the whole day on the sofa [Fig.11]. It was clear that drawings about my life without Bill would be an important part of the drawing journal, helping me come to terms with my new existence.

FIGURE 11: SEPTEMBER 7 - TODAY I STAYED IN AND DID NOTHING

Social media as a discreet aid

Every drawing in my journal, with the aforementioned exception on the day he died, was posted on Facebook and Twitter; this had always been part of the project, to incentivise its continuation. However, I have an intense dislike – even a horror – of any public display of personal troubles and grief on social media, and actively resented any mention of Bill or his loss by no doubt well meaning friends and family. So it may seem odd that I had been using social media to publish my drawings of him. But it is possible to choose a way of communicating discreetly while maintaining privacy – and this was especially necessary to me in the circumstances surrounding Bill's illness and death. I never mentioned him by name, nor

gave any indication of his situation. Indeed, this article is the first time I have published the personal aspects associated with my drawing journal, and it is only possible now because it is eight years later and in the context of an academic interest in drawing and loss.

The act of publishing drawings with non-specific or indirect captions allowed me to tell friends who knew the situation what was going on, while avoiding any announcement to the general public. The fact that those close to me were being informed in this discreet manner precluded the need to keep them up to date through personal contact, which would have been quite painful and may have seemed like a cry for help. This may appear to be cowardice but is more complex than a mere desire for privacy. The use of social media began as a strategy for keeping the drawing journal going as a project. Like the drawings themselves, the act of publishing them developed into another support system.

Artists have a basic need to put things out into the world. Sigmund Freud made a comparison between the artist and the neurotic, outlined succinctly by Richard Wollheim in Art and its Objects (1980):

> *…both the artist and the neurotic… lead a large part of their lives in the world of phantasy. But the artist differs from the neurotic in that he succeeds in finding a 'path back to reality'… For the artist, unlike the neurotic, the phantasy is a starting point, not the culmination, of his activity.*

Given that in my case the phantasy is a desire to make sense of the world through drawing, by expressing what troubles me in a drawing I get some respite from the emotional stress of difficult circumstances. The further act of putting the drawing into the public domain prevents it from returning to an internal anxiety, hidden in my sketchbook.

The dual nature of my use of social media, in which the general public cannot know the situation but my friends can read the coded messages, is something I relish. Having acknowledged my enjoyment, I must admit to being at a loss to comprehend the reason. It is not a liking for secrecy, because the need to tell my friends is a strong motive. Privacy is certainly important, in particular because Bill never used social media, but mainly because of my unwillingness to tell the world about my vulnerability, and I definitely do not want to expose my innermost feelings. Perhaps it is a wish to remain in control and deal with bereavement on my own terms. However kindly meant, advice on how to cope is usually unwanted, and having observed how other people deal with death, it is clearly a matter of individual choice. Mourning takes many forms and my strategy is to be instinctive. So, while getting on with life after Bill, I have allowed myself to howl in private, to wear his clothes, to stay close to where he had been, and above all to draw things that resonated with him. I do not regard numerous drawings that remind me of Bill as a morbid fascination, but rather as a method, following Freud, of letting out my feelings.

In the weeks immediately after his death, I made several drawings of the family around me [Fig.12], and drew many things around the house that rekindled his presence, and helped me through necessary chores [Figs.13-17].

FIGURE 12: SEPTEMBER 16 - I LOVE
GUESTS WHO WASH UP – SUPPORTIVE
FAMILY

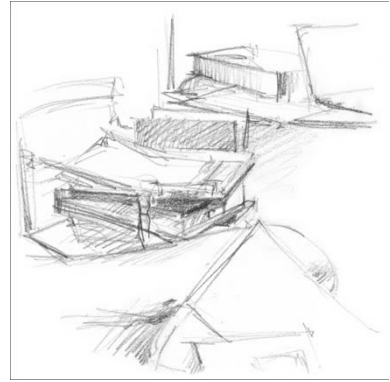FIGURE 13: OCTOBER 5 - HIS HAT AND
SCARF

FIGURE 14: OCTOBER 7 - PAPER
WORK, HARD WORK - DEATH AND
TAXES

FIGURE 15: OCTOBER 11 - SHADOWS.
THE SUN IS OUT, THE SKY IS BLUE…
- BUDDY HOLLY

FIGURE 16: OCTOBER 12 - BOWL OF BITS
FOR SORTING – MEMORIES
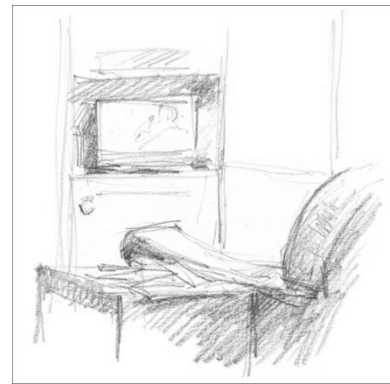
FIGURE 17: NOVEMBER 29 - EMPTY
CHAIR & BLUES ON BBC4 - FEELING
BLUE

The loss of a partner is unlike any other death. It is monumental. It is impossible to get over it, so one can only get used to it. Occasionally I am again ambushed by memories and therefore I still make drawings that relieve my feelings [Fig.18].

FIGURE 18: SEPTEMBER 6, 2020 - SOUVENIRS AND MEMORIES

There is no doubt that drawing sustained me throughout a very difficult year of caring and loss. What began as a simple exercise in maintaining my drawing practice took on a pivotal role in helping me to

cope during my husband's final months of illness, to be able to honour his death (albeit privately), and to survive the long bereavement that followed. Drawing provided an outlet for my worries and emotions on a daily basis. Naturally, the journal of 2013 contains many more drawings of my day to day existence that are not directly concerned with Bill, but that discipline of drawing each day in a sketchbook always gave me a time to pause and reflect. By spending those few minutes letting my hand take thoughts from my head and put them on paper, I kept myself grounded in a very simple and practical way.

In the same way that the drawing journal developed, the reason behind sharing the drawings each day on social media also shifted over time. From a basic strategy to keep the project going, it became an outlet for confiding unobtrusively with friends and family. Whether any members of the general public ever guessed at the story behind the drawings does not really concern me. Discretion was preserved by the lack of direct information given, while the constant practice in drawing did, I hope, show what daily drawing can achieve.

My drawing journal continued after 2013 and eight years later I have not missed a day. It has seen me through good times and bad, including further loss. It is a habit that I cannot imagine giving up – but why persist? It is not a mere discipline to keep my drawing muscles in tune. I am no longer a carer and therefore free to engage in more significant projects that would stretch my practice further. There is no doubt an emotional investment in this daily ritual, although I never overtly express my innermost thoughts, but may refer to feelings like being tired, or missing Bill, or pleasure in my cat or garden or the weather. When making a drawing I am taken out of myself and connecting to something other in the world. There is no continuity or concept of finishing, it is simply a basic need to 'touch' the world – that elusive caress Levinas speaks of, that does not know what it seeks.

What would happen if I gave up my drawing journal? The implications are far greater than losing face on social media. Blanchot speaks about writers who keep a journal having a need to maintain a relationship to themselves when engaged in a search for art. Here I have substituted the male writer with the perspective of the female artist.

> *The journal is not essentially confessional; it is not one's own story. It is a memorial. What must the [artist] remember? [Herself]: who [s]he is when [s]he isn't [drawing], when [s]he lives daily life, when [s]he is alive and true, not dying and bereft of truth. …the truth of the journal lies … in the insignificant details which attach it to daily reality.*

Perhaps giving up my drawing journal would mean losing the affirmation that I am alive…

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WHY DRAW WHEN YOU ARE TOO SAD TO SPEAK

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In these times of a pandemic, we are experiencing loss in ways that is bringing it to the foreground of our collective attention, and generating interesting conversations concerning living with the death of a loved one. Given this, discussions about the relationship between loss and drawing are timely, and in response to TRACEY's provocations on this theme, I have a particular perspective to offer that combines lived experience of grief with drawing practice and previous research into the interactions of memory and the body in drawing. I suggest that drawing interacts with loss in ways that make meaning, when that is dissolved by the bereavement, and, as a response to death events, meets a neurological need for stories with which to understand the shape of the world and how to be in it. Additionally, drawing affords a way to communicate about grief when a barrage of sensations renders us inarticulate, a state captured in the title and inspired by someone else that experienced a traumatic, untimely death, who described her bereavement as 'the place where there are no words'. I find it hard to discuss my experience of loss but I can draw it; drawing in grief can sometimes do the work that words cannot.

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WHOSE CHAIR? KATRINKA WILSON, 2000. SHADOW, LINE, PAPER, IN SITU.

Introduction

Building/withdrawing/finding/leaving

> *'the activity of drawing is a way of trying to understand who we are or how we operate in the world.' (Kentridge in Kantowitz, 2012: 1)*

For the purpose of this paper, I refer to versions of brain as a processing organism; I appreciate this is a reductive view and that the ways the brain/mind interacts with the body and environment are more complex, integrated and mysterious. However, this idea of converting perceptions into concepts offers a solid basis for some of my ideas. Further to this, I work outwards from thinking in death studies and take my drawings as an example of drawing in response to bereavement, going on to interlace research in the fields of cognition and narratology with drawing theory and other examples of creative practice. These approaches converge to position drawing as contributing to the ordering that is helpful in times of loss and as dialogically manifesting situations and feelings.

This paper begins by looking at the role of drawing in cognitive meaning-making, arguing that this reflects the cognitive processes that rework experience to find continuity, sequencing and interpretation with which to understand how to be in the world. I propose that drawing as a 'denotative act of creating an illusion of a truth' (Shrigley, 1998: 17) coalesces 'perception, brain structures, sensory reasoning and evaluation' (Solso, 2000: 75) that co-produces constructs to account for the disorientated perceptions that the shock of loss brings.

Following on from this and using examples of practice, I consider that this neurological (re)configuring of perceptions happens though the operations of metaphor, narrative concepts and imaginative restructuring. Here, I situate drawing as mapping experience with a particular graphic faculty for extraction, delineation and commonality of language, describing how it enables us to project ourselves into pictorial planes, making sense of our loss and reflexively transcribing our new existence.

Finally, I look at the kinaesthetic effects of drawing in grief, referencing Deborah Harty's account of the repetitive gestures of drawing (Harty, 2012) together with the work of two other artists to explore how drawing movements give the subconscious a space to emerge and interact with the mind's need to resolve what it is to be (in the world). Tangentially to this, I suggest that the drawing helps displace the drawer from the immediate sensations of grief through a merging of consciousness with movement. This is also, in the words of Robert Morris, 'a refusal of communication, a secure refuge and defence against the outside world' (Grant, 2008) and positions drawing as a space in which to lose oneself and have some release from the turmoil of grieving.

In conclusion, I consider that there is enough evidence for these ideas about the role of drawing in times of grief to raise some particular questions that would benefit from further research.

Background

Topologies of mourning

It is useful here to have an overview of mourning and grieving as positioned in the literature of Mourning and Post-Mortem Relations, where it is cited as enacted in the 'embodied-psychological spaces of the interdependent and co-producing body-mind' (Maddrell, 2016: 166).

This is loss as transactional, with the grieving person moving through spaces, where the absence of their loved one weighs heavily, to a shifting understanding of the irrefutability of the bereavement. As Maddrell puts it, mourning is an 'individual and dynamic blend of leave-taking and way-finding' (Maddrell, 2016: 172), with a flow from the crisis of death and grief to mourning with performative rites and rituals that materialise the transition of the departed. This is travelling through the liminal space and on the other side is a kind of arrival, an awakening to new reality and the beginning of memorial (Mathijssen, 2017).

Mourning, positioned as habituated bodily engagements that address the separation of the conscious understanding and unconscious knowledge, resonates with drawing as a psychosomatic engagement of interior and exterior worlds. To paraphrase the artist Emma Talbot, drawing simultaneously (references) inner and outer worlds of lived experience (Talbot, 2020). Drawing, in working through situations, has a contingency with the acts of mourning. It is autographic: 'confessional and biographical, based on an experience, a form of self-revelatory mark, an unmediated form of direct communication' (Fay, 2013: 16); projective: in that it expresses an idea already formed in the mind; and exploratory: representing an attempt to give shape and meaning to that idea in the light of experience.

Drawing/ grieving / drawing

> The act of drawing can be understood as the creation of a physical space to play with our thoughts outside the confines of our minds, to see and manipulate our ideas and perceptions in visible form. (Kantrowitz, 2012: 3)

These rubrics of drawing are evident in my charting of bereavement and mourning, with the body shock of the death of my child infiltrating my drawing practice as I try to find my way from reality to expectation and back again.

Early on and overwhelmed by grief at the loss of my son, my drawings had a gestural equivalence with a silent scream (Fig. 1). Later, I tried to describe what had happened with multiple versions of visual

analogies involving a small chair annotated with its dimensions (Fig. 2). The chair was his and drawing expressed my sorrow through the pathos of the object, while the text was an attempt to communicate a bereavement that for many reasons is very isolating. Subsequently, embracing the gap I feel between what is and what should have been, I looked to the unnoticed and unused around us, exploring the detritus of nature in its skeletal, broken and spent forms, particularly abandoned nests (Fig. 3). These works are granular, finding worth in the notion of something gone and, as I lose myself in the details, the act of drawing anaesthetizes sensations of grief. These drawings are an effective displacement activity, wherein I can move from a psychological place awash with painful and perplexing stimuli into the drawing space with its routines of rhythm and repetition. More recently, my drawings explore the rhizomes of hidden histories through the shapes made by plant roots (Fig. 4), now consciously incorporating a narrative of my losses in the forms, with the long piercing gestural marks and murky masses.

The works, from those that are a frazzled expression of distress to those attempting a story, trace my experience of bereavement, illustrating how drawing and its processes speak to how we grieve, integrate loss and remember. They underpin my instinct that drawing has an important role in resolving loss.
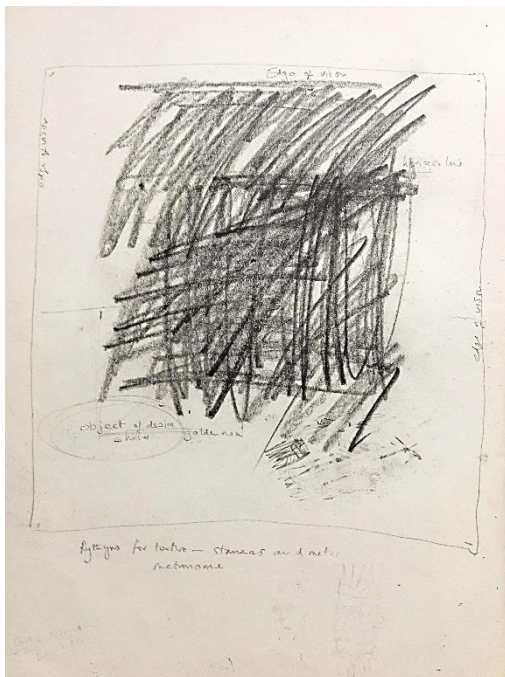

FIGURE 1. UNTITLED, 1995.
PENCIL ON PAPER.

chair - 32 cm, 58cm, 30cm.

FIGURE 2. WHOSE CHAIR? 1998.
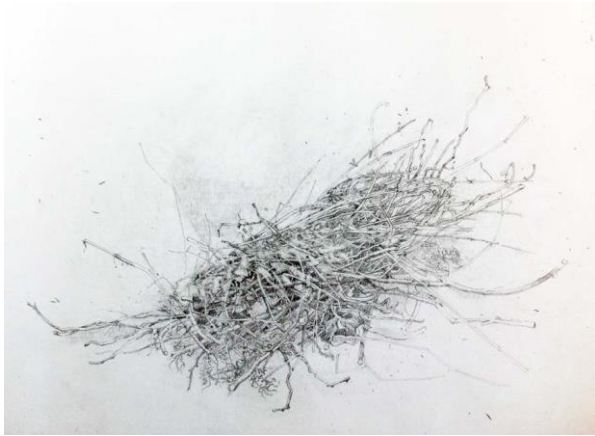PENCIL AND TYPE ON PAPER.

FIGURE 3. UNTITLED, 2015. PENCIL ON PAPER.   FIGURE 4. UNTITLED, 2018. PENCIL AND INKS ON PAPER.

The story of the mind in bereavement and drawing

> *'The mind in order to cope with the world must fulfil two functions: it must gather information and it must process it.' (Arnheim, 1970: 1)*

> *'New ideas are generated by [r]egrouping elements, by changing reference frame, and by altering perspective.' (Suwa & Tversky in Brew, 2013: 8)*

To be in the world is to understand it: to make representations in our brain of what our perceptions mean, connecting experience with knowledge in the choreography between stimuli, neural activity and cognition that gives us the guiding concepts in our mind, and synthesizing memory with the 'endless spectacle of ever new particulars' (Arnheim, 1970: 13). However, this way of accommodating sense impressions trips up when our perceptions are confused, the essential shape of things elusive, and conceptions, like untethered balloons, tumble off into the air. They need re-anchoring; the strategies of the mind must find ways to cross the gap between the known and unknown, reshaping reality to conceive a new viable version of existence.

Bereavement delivers circumstances where there is a wealth of confounding perceptual input. So much changes and so much is contradictory, there is pressing need to re-construct the disorder. Death upsets the bereaved person's ability to comprehend, assimilate and formulate; it is unbalancing on a fundamental level and here, the act of drawing, through its ambulant, motoric and visual capacity to harmonise and reconfigure knowledge with perceptions, can bring realignment between what should be and what is.

This striving for and arriving at constructs is the subject of research in the realm of cognitive science and neuropsychology that looks at it as an abstracting, concept-building version of the brain. This theorizes that by grasping essential details or the 'whatness of given entities' (Zunshine, 2008: 10) we are able to find abstract concepts from which we can generalise an idea that unifies existing knowledge, perceptions of the environment and experience of the environment.

Semir Zeki writes about this in his thesis about the brain's desire for a creativity as the quest for happiness (Zeki, 2009). He puts forward a model of the brain as gathering details from perceptions of the environment to enable generalization and derive new(ish) abstract concepts by comparing these with the grasp of details or features acquired a priori. These are partly derived from 'inherited concepts', which organize the mechanism of perception to recognize form (we see green as green, we cannot override our optical grasp of the interplay between pigment and light), and from 'acquired or synthetic concepts' that we build from all of our experience from birth. The new abstract concepts then inform behaviour and our operations in the immediate environment/situation, which delivers adapted/new experience and thus we return to the start with a new set of perceptions gleaned from the adapted behaviour.

Kantrowitz expands on the notion of generalisation in saying, 'Our cognitive abilities did not evolve to provide a full and complete representation of the world around us at each moment of our lives' (Kantrowitz, 2012: 4). Rather, our brains have a capacity to select enough basic information that approximates to its inherited and acquired concepts (things in the memory) to hazard a good enough guess about what it is dealing with. For example, registering the two parallel horizontal lines suspended above us as telephone wires, to identify them as a known concept and allow us to make sense of why they are unusually, and maybe threateningly, dissecting the air above us and to decide what – if anything – to do about it. Zeki calls this perceptual constancy, a wide phenomenon including situational constancy (the ability to categorise an event) and – importantly for the purposes of my argument – narrative constancy (the ability to recognise a story). He summarizes perceptual constancy as, 'seizing constantly changing information' from an ever-changing world to distil from it the essential character of situations and objects' (Zeki, 1999: 80). This is that ability to ignore inconsistencies in favour of generalities in order to understand simply, making knowledge by applying memory to perception.

Another way to understand perceptual constancy is as bundles of information that give us working analogies by which to understand new stimuli. These are the 'neural loci… that are the basis for metaphor' (Lakoff and Johnson in Brew, 2013), metaphors which are, for example, the shapes that we associate with things, people and places, as in the crescent that denotes the moon, the sunlight that means summer or two lines equating to telephone wires (above) or tracks (below). They lend structure to phenomena and events, and service the brain's need for connections when an encounter is unusual. Lying in the back of our minds, they map the world for us as the innate knowledge that tells us the thing we're experiencing has enough resemblance to a thing previously known for us to model and unify new experience with existing constructs. However, perceptual constancy is not infallible and experience can be paradoxical when, for instance, the parallel lines in the air are not after all telephone wires

A person taken away from our landscape leaves an almost inexplicable and material absence that hijacks our subconscious and poses serious challenges to our 'perceptual constancy', collapsing our grasp of associations on a fundamental level – lines in the sky are dark and unattached – and we need to find and manipulate metaphors to extrapolate some kind of analogy and reconstitute connections. Drawing as interpretation of perception can re-assemble those constancies to reach new figurations of experience. Kantrowitz eloquently describes this phenomenon in her example of an artist magically forming his image on scraps of torn and sellotaped-back-together paper: he has 'pulled his own image out of thin air… he has satisfied our deep desire to see something broken made whole' (Kantrowitz, 2012: 1).

Some of my drawing approximates to this conceptual, narrative world building, where I searched for metaphor to fix the nature of the experience of loss and found my 'neural loci' in many drawn iterations of my son's empty chair, variously annotated or incorporated into other images. This was a craving for ordering with which to formulate meaning from situations, in this case looking for narrative constancy with my previous knowledge. In these drawings I was using a metaphoric shape to stand in for the absence, locate and construct my experience: putting something together and materialising a story.

Drawing manifests this meaning-making by its rendering of and participation in the brain's imaginative faculty to harvest new possibilities from previous concepts and to find new ways to achieve constancy. As bereavement is to face a crisis of meaning, drawing plays its part through the apprehending and reordering of precepts and perceptions to build new concepts.

This rough account of the brain's need for constancies gives some insight to the idea that where loss disorders relations to the world, drawing can reassemble what we previously knew, with what we know now, and, if not change reality, at least to translate it through engaging the mind and body in meaning-making.ᵐ

What we want, we can't really have

> *'Concept formation is one of the great triumphs of the brain, but it also extracts a heavy toll.' (Zeki, 2009: 47)*

For Zeki, our internal versions of the world are a kind of brain-reality. Shaped by our synthetic concepts, with which it seeks confirmation from the interaction of perceptions and knowledge, pursuing constancy to confirm conceptual ideals that reality cannot always meet.

Accordingly, this gives us a predisposition to discontent 'because of a failure to satisfy the synthetic concepts the brain develops in its quest for knowledge' (Zeki, 2009: 212). This rather damning account of the human condition is saved by the way he counters it by saying that it is this very 'knowledge acquiring system of the brain that creates works of art that introduce new concepts' (loc. cit.). This happens, for example, when experience is portrayed in a way that leaves gaps (literal and metaphysical) for viewers to fill in with the brain's reality, thereby imaging a new idea and thus offering reworked constructs that supplement the distance between cognitive ideals and experience, and stimulates those 'new concepts'.

It is the art that is the search for constancies (Zeki, 1999: 80) and found in art forms which capture the collective imagination and come to inspire/represent the societal beliefs that bridge the space between (the brain's) knowledge and (lived) reality with understanding. These are the culturally situated structures and stories of life that are so deeply embedded in our neurology they are not only part of the situational and narrative constancy that confirms synthetic concepts, but simultaneously reflect that our need for stories is a necessary part of cognitive processing and integral to our capacity to manage life and its defining events.

When life mimics art mimicking life

> *'Turn to any realm of ordinary human experience (social, emotional, ethical)… and there is a story waiting for you.' (Zunshine, 2008: 58)*

For Deborah Ripley writing on cognitive narratology, this is the 'ordering of stimuli into the schema within the *cultural structures* that inform the way we interpret the world' (Ripley, 2005). Absorbed

through architecture of culture, these are the narratives, rites, rituals and doctrines embedded in our psyche through the iterations of motifs, symbols and emblems that codify the archetypes that epitomise them, providing scripts for how we (mimetically) manage events such as bereavement. They enable the temporality (beginning/middle/end), characteristics (shape of things) and taxonomy (naming of parts) that satisfy the situational and narrative constancy that earths the disordered sensations surrounding loss, and give form to the perceptions that the brain-reality needs for finding sense in the profoundly altered environment that is a death crisis.

My reworkings of the chair motif go some way to demonstrate how, in some way, I called to those images implanted in my mind to explain an event and give it a kind reassuring and recognisable rhythm. These drawings began to include the image of a bird above the seat as though in flight and suspended by barely-there lines of gold threads describing something otherworldly, which, in the context of my cultural background, seems like a reaching for an idea of the soul (title image). I was picturing my desires for what had happened.

Show me the story

> 'New ideas are generated by [r]egrouping elements, by changing reference frame, and by altering perspective.' (Suwa & Tversky in Brew, 2013: 8)

These ideas attempt a version of the brain looking for correspondence of perceptions with received understanding of situations, shared worldviews and collectively understood models of meaning, that is, a brain with a need for stories. They suggest that, in encountering a crisis, the mind's strategy for redirecting behavior is to look for connections in an 'interpretive narrativising process' (Ripley, 2005: 7). These connections are the narrative's structures or shapes, which enable us to construe meaning with which to navigate the terrain of loss.

Neural pathways and the functions of memory take time to establish new schematics. The project of mourning is to keep revisiting experience, readjusting knowledge and improvising responses, reaching for constructs that incorporate the irrevocability of loss with its challenge to assumptions that your world order is predicated on the presence of what is lost. The mind needs viable narrative versions of the lived experience to restore those broken constancies, to find a way to see ourselves in this new reality. This means 'the renunciation of trying to find in daily life the counterpart of inherited and acquired concepts working together… is transferred into the realm of… creativity'. (Zeki, 2009: 210)

Drawing, with its particular conventions and grammar – such as Klee's 'dot and line' (Klee, 1972), Shrigley's 'Line Practices' (Shrigley, 1998: 9) and Stafford's 'linear emptiness' (Stafford, 1997: 131) – has a particular lexicon with a profound reach here, able as it is to render experiences that would be antithetical to materials and forms more unavailable. It has a cultural universality that spans histories, geographies and societies and, critically, a capacity to leave pictorial and psychological 'space' that the brain needs to accommodate its concepts and find new narrative possibilities.

These narratives flip backward and forwards, merging third and first person, as viewing of drawings about grief answers a person's need to find meaning, while the making of them unfolds stories and connections for the creator and, in a magical mirroring of cognition, the drawer, as also viewer, is in the centre of the reciprocating effects of this process. Drawing, in considering death, loss and mourning, with its additional autoethnographic restructuring of situations and reflecting back of being in the world, offers a grieving person narrative locus for what is happening to them and a window by which to enter

an empathic dialogue with other people about what it is to mourn: 'These traces of awareness,… even in the finished drawing, allow viewers to intuit this process and follow along the drawer's journey' (Brew, 2013: 4).

Emma Talbot gives us an example of this in her drawings of her loss. These offer both an autobiographical account of her experience and a transcription of the complexity of emotion involved in bereavement. 'We come to understand the (her) world through imaginatively projecting ourselves onto what we see' (Kantrowitz, 2012: 7). Using abstract forms and figures with blank faces that allow us to project ourselves into the picture plane and twisting plaits of hair that seem to move across the surface, her work has a sense of dream-time, capturing the colliding worlds of the internal and external lives and evoking an interplay of memory and wishes (Fig. 5). Her work makes a narrative of the world of loss, it voices how it feels for her and, by entering into her experience, we can take something for ourselves.

FIGURE 5. THE FUTURE EXPLODED, 2019. WATERCOLOUR AND GOUACHE ON KHADI PAPER.

Like every area of life, deaths are categorized. We hope for 'good' deaths following a natural order and those that do not, are taboo, contested, dramatized and mythologized: when drawing interrogates mortality, it offers narratives for the experience of a death crisis that sometimes betray the accounts we grew up with about the order of things. Any bereaved person is in the grips of cognitive dissonance, particularly where the death is untimely and traumatic, and may struggle to grasp stories from this new truth. Such minds need illusions to feed the imagination in that 'reworking of realities' (Zeki, 2009: 210). Drawing with all its immediacy, universal, transferable, graspable characteristics, and recognizable ciphers, can penetrate the miasma, simultaneously inform(ing) and reform(ing) the world' (Stafford, 1997: 131).

Drawing moves

> 'even the simplest scribble… is, as a manifestation of expressive gestures, the bearer of psychic components, and the whole of psychic life lies as if in perspective behind even the most insignificant form-element.' (Prinzhorn in Maclagan, n.d.: 2)

In bereavement, the collapse of internal certainty calls for reconstructing identities in a circular and synergistic process of reconciliation. It is a multi-sensory experience happening across a number of spatialities, fundamentally felt and expressed in and by the body. It is an image of loss as an embodied perceptual experience expressing itself in adaptive behaviours and echoes descriptions of drawing such as one given by Leon Cooley. In considering something analogous to this in his paper on drawing cognition, he argues for drawing as an 'autopoietic, closed/open system of adaption and renewal' (Cooley, 2012: 8), describing drawing as 'a modality of "embodied cognition", wherein experimental gestures of such modes reveal the temporal, mobile and heterogeneous conditions of the life-world structures' (ibid: 1).

Cooley's drawing as a closed/open system echoes the idea that drawing traces the reflexive nature of cognitive processes, that is, the cyclical apprehending of detail – interpretation – recalibration (make a mark/consider the mark/adapt the mark). However, drawing is not simply to render perception, if perceptions are the index of situations registered through the sensory, perceiving mechanisms of the body. Drawing goes further as a form of expanded perception where the somatic action of exploring the world generates new knowledge that affects perception (Noe, 2000). To draw expresses experience by physically entering into experience. It synthesizes perception with those internally embedded cultural constructs: the pressures of opinions, preferences and tendencies, the contexts and received understandings that are influences so embedded they lie in the subconscious, directing us like the Wizard of Oz behind his curtain.

Drawing's integration of what we remember with what we sense, externalises thought processes as the drawer invents ways to express a complexity of impulses, information and ideas, imagining what relationships with the world might look like. This is a conjuring of the mind's capacity to make new working versions through drawing's motoric actions, as it engages the encountered world with the world behind the curtain that is the evasive concept of the unconscious described by Deborah Harty as 'unthought but known experiences' (Harty, 2012: 5).

In her investigation of the phenomenology of drawing, Deborah Harty accounts for the unification of the internal and external with an emphasis on the repetitive actions putting the drawer temporarily into a space where there is 'a fusion of the self (internal) with the environment (external) to a point of loss of self' (Harty, 2012: 3). She goes on to say that 'Underneath the rhythm of every act and of every work of art there lies, as a substratum in the depths of sub-consciousness, the basic pattern of the relations of the live creature to his environment" (Dewey in Harty, 2012:11).

Dan Miller, an autistic man largely non-verbal since childhood, reportedly organises and processes the world by making obsessive, repetitious images of household objects (MoMA, 2008). These are piled on top of one another to the point of abstraction, obliterating drawing's ground and seem to reveal a releasing of raw feeling through and over the white noise of consciousness (Fig. 6).
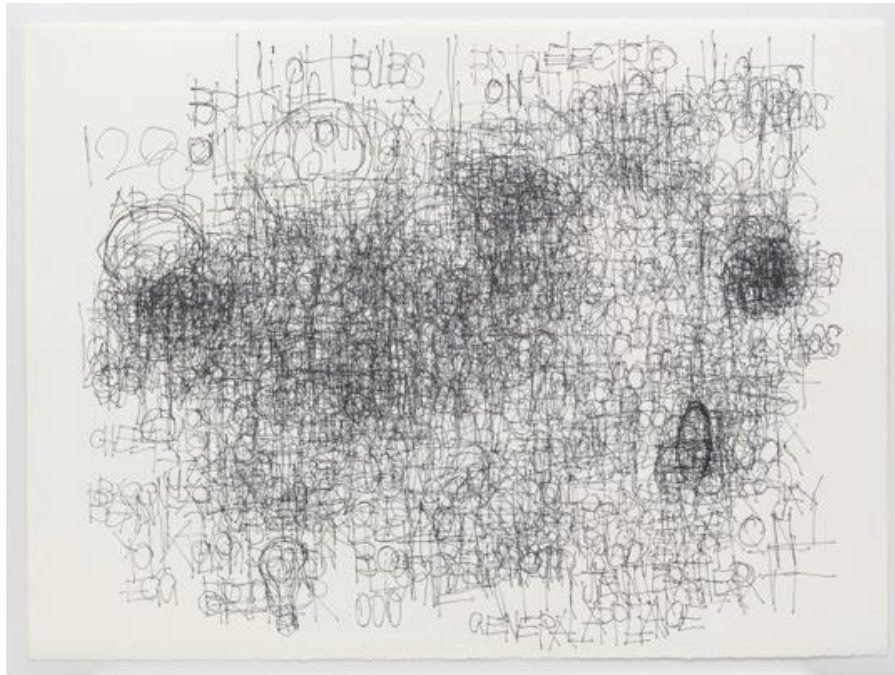
FIGURE 6. UNTITLED, 2006. FELT TIP ON PAPER.

Robert Morris's work brings us closer to drawing as a conduit for submerged ideas and feelings that manifest through gesture and movement. In 'Blind Time Drawings' made over a 30-year period that, in various ways, omitted visual input, he explores what it is to record bodily engagement with the environment in mark making (Fig. 7). These drawings demonstrate that within the parameters of the initialising intents for the work, the *acts* of drawing allow a freedom of expression that makes 'feeling concrete' (Halsall, 2013: 232).

FIGURE 7. FROM 'THE "GRIEF" SERIES, 2009.

Through their gestures, both artists are able to explore and communicate something about being in the world when either (for Miller) another form of communication is unavailable or (for Morris) a conduit of perception is denied. Both these states are compounded in bereavement when at different times perceptions are distorted, for how can we trust what we 'see' when what we are continually seeing is an absence, and most ways of articulating the confusion are so inadequate?

On a final note, and in an aside from the focus on the perceptual processes of drawing, it is worth adding that to be subsumed in a repetitive act that takes one to a place of fusion and a 'loss of self' can be comforting. Here I find drawing as offering something additional to resolving self/other where it achieves relief from an internal/external conversation reduced to tragedy. This resonates with my experience of making the nest drawings. These drawings are very absorbing, pulling me into a state of hyper focus, where the small gestures of placing, erasing and replacing lines and smudges create a closed private world where everything in that moment is simply a mindless/mindful mark making (Fig. 3).

Conclusion

Finding futures

> 'The act of drawing makes possible the magical identity between thought and action because to draw is the quickest medium and can therefore protect the intensity of thought'. (Fisher in Harty, 2012: 12)

Thus, the activities of drawing model elements of cognition involved in the search for order and create meaning/narrative/world views in drawing's distillation and interpretation of the perceptual field, merging 'internal phenomena – somatic and psychic external phenomena – the drawing and environment within which they are present' (Harty, 2012: 3). Drawing produces material which records traces of thinking and of being, that feed back into the drawer's perception of the world and their place in it. Drawings are the product of what we sense, experience and remember and they embrace an outside world that is mutable and changing, giving us the stories we need to make sense of things.

I came to this question regarding the role of drawing in bereavement with an intuitive sense that following loss, drawing activates a neurologically necessary reconstruction of our relationship with the world. I speculated that the processes of drawing lend themselves to bereavement in the way they mirror cognition, complimenting the narrative constancy that helps to order thought and the need to make meaning. Where grieving (trauma, disassociation or shock) disassembles prior-concepts, displacing things from normative contexts so they become less recognizable, my proposal is that drawing can make stories, reorganizing and reinventing parts into a new whole.

Overarching these ideas I think are the haptic nature of drawing, commonality of it as language, ready availability of it as medium and the strength of it as a style of communication. These lend it extremely well to expressing difficult and/or complicated feeling and situations.

There is a kind of opportunism in drawing in the capacity to scratch a fierce line or wipe away condensation in a heartfelt movement and an assemblage of marks made in any medium on any ground within reach can convey raw sensations. Conversely, acts of drawing also offer a place to hold grief still; by enveloping us so we can resuscitate ourselves without denying, explaining or elaborating on our experience.

In mourning, drawing is simultaneously autobiographical and biographical, as it tells of lives, and it is dialogic, as conversation between the living and the deceased, holding memory and making memory. It is a poignant gesture of remembrance and reconciliation.

Drawing has something special to offer when confronted by bereavement, particularly where that is untimely and traumatic. So, I propose there is enough evidence to prompt further research which would ask about the relationship between cognitive (re)structuring and drawing, and also look at any rolling benefits from drawing in building resilience to the effects of loss, with the outcomes of such study potentially advocating for drawing's restorative capacities as well as its ability to offer a voice when there are no words..

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DRAWING AND MEMORY LOSS: MAPPING AND RECORDING THE JOURNEY THROUGH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

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While drawing has become a more common tool in art therapies for patients suffering debilitating diseases, it is not commonly seen as a means of tracing cognitive and memory deterioration in dementia patients. In this paper I examine the role of drawing documenting the experiences of two artists with Alzheimer's disease. Although the patients have different proficiencies, the act of drawing allows them to express their thoughts and emotions, recording their physical and mental decline and inexorable memory loss. Discussing ethical issues around the use of artworks made by people suffering from dementia, I note the importance of giving individuals opportunities to document their life with Alzheimer's disease. In the act of making images they are able to communicate and share something of their world and be comforted that they continue to share experiences with those around them, even as their faculties falter and fail.

Drawing in many forms continues to be an expedient tool for artists to use in communicating their personal experiences of ill health and mortality. It has also been an important tool for patients, carers and medical professionals as means of communication and explanation for those experiencing trauma and sickness. While there are many images that record processes of aging, illness and death it is not common to examine works as a measure of the decline of a human being in terms of their loss of memory or follow a journey into advanced dementia. For those living with Alzheimer's disease or other forms of dementia, drawing by hand has an immediacy and power to record and encode memories and emotions that are distressing, fleeting or fantastical, especially when spoken language is failing and memories are fading. Drawing supports and enhances dialogue between patient and carer, particularly reinforcing a feeling of respect and self-worth to a person undergoing mental or physical deterioration. Artworks produced by a patient can also provide a tangible example of the impact of disease, as images can over time track and trace the decline of memory, personality and physical ability. [1]

In choosing to look at the work of two artists who have used drawings to explain their experiences of living with different forms of Alzheimer's disease I explore common themes where drawing has been used as a means of communication and interaction with the world. While William Utermohlen (1933 – 2007) sadly succumbed to early onset dementia, Mary P continues to live with Alzheimer's in old age. Utermohlen's rapid deterioration over a period of five years meant that much of his later work has of necessity become interpreted by his family and supporters, while Mary's decline has been much slower and she remains able to explain her work to carers. Utermohlen's wife believed that he made self-portraits in order to understand how the disease was affecting him, while Mary uses drawings to clarify her thoughts and reinterpret memories of place.

The word dementia is applied to many neurodegenerative diseases relating to the loss of memory, communication skills, problem-solving and organisation difficulties that are severe enough to interfere with daily life. The most common forms are Alzheimer's disease and vascular dementia. In all cases dementia is progressive, as areas of the brain become permanently damaged either through small bleeds, as in vascular dementia, or high levels of proteins damaging brain cells, as in Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease erodes and distorts autobiographical memory, perception of space, perception of time and place becoming warped. Personality changes and mood swings are also not uncommon, with many patients experiencing visual and aural hallucinations. The degree and speed of the disease may vary from person to person; one person may exhibit a rapid decline necessitating palliative care in hospital, while another person may be able to live with support in their own home for many years. [2]

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[1] While focusing on the work of Utermohlen and Mary P, in this paper, I have been careful to respect the many ethical dilemmas involved in examining the work of individuals living with a life-limiting neurological disease. In the case of the Utermohlen I have been guided by written statements and observations of family members, friends and medical professionals who encouraged him to pursue his artistic endeavours and were able to report on his personal journey throughout his illness. In the case of Mary P I have sought and enthusiastically received approval from her, for her work to be examined and discussed in this paper and elsewhere. Her family members and carers are also in agreement and have been supportive of her work and my research. It was felt that it validated her creative work. While Mary P shows advancing deleterious symptoms of Alzheimer's disease, to date she remains able to make decisions and express opinions about her work. As she continues to undergo medical support and treatment I have chosen to anonymize her name.

[2] Further information about the progress of Alzheimer's disease and implications for home care can be found at https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/factsheet_the_progression_of_alzheimers_disease_and_other_dementias.pdf

Studying artworks made by artists living with forms of dementia poses particular ethical questions. When can a person give consent to the use and viewing of their work and how far can discussions go about the subject and remit of a drawing or painting with an artist with the advanced disease? The views of people with dementia about their arts practices are habitually mediated by carers and support workers. Renée Beard explores the historical difficulties for those living with Alzheimer's disease in her article from 2004.

> *Despite intentions, attempts to give voice to the perspectives of people with AD (Alzheimer's disease) have encountered considerable obstacles. As with other marginalized groups, such as children, the learning disabled or the mentally ill, proxy interviews with carers have historically been seen as the best way to investigate issues of AD; thus, reinforcing the unfortunate notion that people with dementia are deficient. (Beard R L 2004 p 798)*

In their work on co-creativity with patients with Alzheimer's, Hannah Zeilig, Victoria Tischler, Millie van der Byl Williams, Julian West and Sarah Strohmaier are particularly concerned with enabling patients to experience creative activities, thereby giving them a 'voice' to encourage participation and exhibit independence, challenging views of the deficiency of individuals.

> *The capacity to act and to effect change in the external world is a fundamental part of personhood. The standard association of agency with the capacity to act intentionally and the entrenched belief that the progress of dementia leaves people largely incapable of intentional, meaningful action has resulted in the assumption that dementia necessarily involves a loss of agency. (Zeilig et al 2019 p 17)*

As spoken language becomes lost to the patient, very often it is only close family members or carers that interpret or decipher work. Even these explanations or inferences may be coloured by past relationships and experiences with the patient. At certain stages of dementia patients may become very disoriented and delusional, and their work contain meanings understood only to themselves. A person with Alzheimer's disease can express fluctuating contradictory opinions, especially in terms of time and space. Home may for a period of time become an unfamiliar and threatening place, long dead friends and family more real than those alive and present. It can be difficult to adequately respond to work made by a person whose memory can be centred in an alternate reality, coloured by recollections that are fragmenting and existing in a shifting temporal reality.

Marks made by a patient may carry a variety of meanings, conveying a record of emotion, form or space that can be open to a variety of interpretations. The patients' choice of media, use of colour, gestural or mark making energy may be affected by the substantial damage to particular areas of the brain. Lines made on paper can reflect simultaneously frustrations in communication or personality changes that the patient has undergone. Katherine Rankin, Anli Liu, Sara Howard, Hilary Slama, Craig Hou, Karen Schuster and Bruce Miller investigated dementia-induced changes in visual art production, looking at patients with Alzheimer's disease and different forms of dementia, comparing outcomes with a control group of 15 healthy older individuals.

The Alzheimer's disease (AD) subjects in our study also chose to use significantly fewer colours than controls, particularly in their representational drawings of the still life and the self-portraits, and a large proportion of the group's drawings were characterized by very light mark making and decreased saturation of colour, such that the details of the drawings were difficult to see from just a few feet away. Their more limited, subdued colour palette is difficult to explain, as both this study and previous research suggest AD patients show no differences in colour perception or preference. Perhaps the use of more muted mark making relates to previously documented deficits in visual association, particularly in their ability to recognize common objects and make figure-ground distinctions. Another possible explanation for the decreased intensity of our AD patients' drawings is based on evidence that individuals with AD undergo personality changes consistent with loss of assertiveness and increased insecurity. This more self-conscious attitude may have produced a more cautious, hesitant approach to the novel and challenging artistic tasks in this study. (Rankin K et al 2007 p15)

The effects of neurodegenerative diseases on a patient's creative work may be influenced by their previous experience and can vary depending on the type and phase of the disease as it affects motor skills and cognition. For those who are in the grips of early and middle stages of dementia, making drawings as a means of communication supports dialogue with family members and carers. The activity of making a mark on paper can help a patient to move forward with a thought or memory and for a period of time can relieve some unnamable disquiet caught in a continuous loop of worry.[3] As language skills decline what a patient seeks to communicate may not always be easily comprehended. While images may become more abstract and marks less well-defined, emotions can be expressed through physical gestures scored and smeared onto a surface. By comparing the drawings of amateur artist Mary P and professional portrait painter William Utermohlen we can see commonalities in the use and choice of materials to express thoughts and emotions as they experience the symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

William Utermohlen: creative work in response to Alzheimer's disease

There can be a more confident interpretation of work where an artist has been able to give consent or makes a record of discussions about their work before dementia overwhelms all reason or physical mobility. Utermohlen was able to continue his practice and made many works journaling his experiences with Alzheimer's disease for several years. In 1996 at the relatively young age of 61 he received a presumptive diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. Over the course of five years he was able to produce a series of self-portraits recording his deterioration and frustration as the disease began to control his life. While the fast decline of Utermohlen's visuo-spatial and motor skills would not be unexpected with cases of so called 'early onset' Alzheimer's disease, he nevertheless was able to draw on his painterly skills to produce many powerful pieces recording the gradual diminishing of his memory and abilities to recognize and record three-dimensional space. Sebastian Crutch, Ron Issacs and Martin Rosser detail some of the symptoms and treatment of Utermohlen in their piece in the 2001 edition of The Lancet. They worked with Utermohlen and his wife to produce a case study that examines changes in his self-

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[3] Patients with Alzheimer's disease may exhibit high degrees of anxiety during an episode of so called 'sundowning' where a patient may become increasingly agitated, aggressive or confused in the late afternoon or early evening. https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-dementia/symptoms-and-diagnosis/symptoms/sundowning

portraits as Alzheimer's disease affected his visuo-spatial memory and his verbal abilities. They noted that Utermohlen was able to produce new works even though his spatial perception and organizational skills were significantly impaired, indicating that he retained a great deal of motivation and drive to express himself through his work. This contrasted with amateur artists they observed, who usually relied on copying their previous work.

> This discrepancy may reflect a premorbid difference in visual motor skills and technical expertise. Such a highly developed artistic talent may have left Utermohlen, a professional artist and portrait painter, better equipped than his amateur counterpart to tackle the challenges of new work in the face of neurological impairment… the abstract style may provide an outlet for expression unhindered by the restrictions imposed by realism and the unattainable accurate replication of colours, forms, angles, proportion, and perspective. (Crutch SJ et al 2001 p 2133)

Patricia Utermohlen and gallerist friend Chris Boïcos identify signs of his illness apparent in the work of the early 1990s, before his diagnosis. In works entitled Conversation Pieces, Utermohlen paints interiors full of colour and warmth, with his wife and friends enjoying each other's company, while he appears in several images as a more isolated, lonely figure. Juliet King, associate professor of art therapy at George Washington University, cites Boïcos in her online gallery notes:

> Signs of the disease are made apparent in the shifting perceptions of space, objects, and people. They are premonitions of a new world of silence and sensory deprivation about to close in on the artist. (King J 2018)

Utermohlen's rapid physical and mental deterioration led to drastic stylistic changes, as can be seen in his later self-portraits: the former palette of rich, vibrant colours of his earlier work replaced by muddy monochrome tones; closely observed patterns from natural objects and interiors completely lost in his last works. He used the words "angry," "broken," "caged," and "falling" in the titles of his post Alzheimer's diagnosis work, expressing his fears and frustrations, all the while his self-portraits became more and more abstract. His extraordinary later works, as in the sketch entitled Head 1 made in 2000, became like the mescaline heads of Henri Michaux.

> Unhappy heads, heads in extreme distress, …fragments of heads, desolations of being, bearing their misery, rejoining me, in a clutter, in shreds. (Michaux H 2000 p 28)

In Head 1, Utermohlen draws himself with a distorted mask-like face, devoid of eyes - portraying a human losing personality and individuality, exposed and isolated. Patricia Utermohlen wrote of the post diagnosis works.

> In these pictures we see with heart-breaking intensity William's efforts to explain his altered self, his fears and his sadness. (Montpetit 2015 p5)

Examination of the work of Mary P.
In 2016 at the age of 85, Mary P received the diagnosis of late onset Alzheimer's disease. Her problems with short term memory loss were attributed to mild cognitive impairment (MCI) in 2015. However, subtle symptoms of Alzheimer's disease had been slowly affecting her physical and mental capabilities for some time before the formal diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease. Over the next few years, the disease

became more marked and Mary began to exhibit signs of serious cognitive impairment, and she became subject to pronounced memory loss, personality changes, auditory and visual hallucinations.

Before her diagnosis Mary was an active member of her local art society, exhibiting work and occasionally selling some of her watercolours. When not out with groups doing life classes, she would roam across fields on the family farm taking photographs and sketching. One room of the large farm house where she currently lives was her dedicated studio. This is still filled with art materials and plants, a favourite topic of her work, but now largely neglected and unused. Evidence of her artistic endeavours, the late blossoming of her creative career is slowly fading, with the tangible traces of that passion gathering dust in many abandoned rooms of her home. Stacks of sketchbooks, drawings, notebooks and boxes of photographs, textiles and ceramics, a witness to her former passion and interests, Mary no longer recognizes these or acknowledges them as being an important part of her life.

Mary came to develop her artwork late in life. She joined in art classes in a nearby market town where she found companionship and intellectual stimulation. She flourished within the creative environment, excited by practical work as she experimented with materials and discovered artists and art works from around the world. She enjoyed the companionship of like-minded people travelling to Barcelona and New York to visit galleries, all the while continuing to draw scenes of her rural life. While she continued to enjoy growing flowers – a source of inspiration for many of her drawings – she no longer made sketches of them. The former confident lines and vivid colours found in her work began to falter and fail. Figures 1, 2 and 3.

FIGURE 1. MARY P, CIRCA 2010, FLOWERS FROM THE GARDEN, WATERCOLOUR, 30 X 15 CM

FIGURE 2. MARY P, CIRCA 2010, DAISY HEADS, PENCIL DRAWING 30 X 15 CM

FIGURE 3. MARY P, CIRCA 2014, LEAF SKETCH PENCIL DRAWING 30 X 15 CM

The combination of deteriorating eyesight and her cognitive decline had a marked impact on Mary's drawings, both in terms of quality and output. For example, a leaf drawing found in the last sketchbook that Mary used independently shows evidence of retina damage caused by untreated Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD), where a dark spot clouds the central area in the image (Figure 3). This sketchbook also contained few 'finished' drawings, whereas most sketchbooks had previously been filled with images that were either well worked up or had a direct reference to completed paintings. Faces in her rare later figure drawings also became more distorted and crooked. While Mary did enjoy going to life classes, she was much more interested in making works of natural objects, which is reflected in her earlier ceramic and photographic work as well as her drawings and paintings.

Making a direct comparison with Mary's earlier drawings and her later work is difficult, as most of her work pre-diagnosis was made either from life or less often from photographs. Now, even when presented with the opportunity to make drawings of flowers from her garden or in the house Mary becomes upset and refuses to even attempt making a simple sketch. Previously working in the seclusion of her studio, Mary is now unable to work independently and makes drawings only with the encouragement and support of a carer as part of a conversation. Being faced with selecting and recording shapes, textures and colours, as for example in making a sketch of a flower, appears to be a daunting activity for Mary. Even though this has been a familiar and often repeated subject, and while she continues to spend many hours tending plants in her home and garden, she resists making a drawing of them.

Neurophysiological studies reveal that when imaging in the mind's eye there are not one but many internal representations present simultaneously in the brain. The person drawing then has to make decisions about the size, colour and texture of the object he or she is representing, in addition to its distance from them and the angle they are viewing it from. So, they have firstly to select the image and then remember it and define where the representation of the image ends. (Rankin Q et al 2005 p66).

Drawing is a complex activity, involving different areas of the brain. Each area has to function efficiently and effectively in order to produce an outcome that is satisfactory to the person drawing. For a person with short term memory difficulties manipulating and organising information poses significant problems. Elizabeth Glisky describes some of these difficulties in her paper examining changes in cognitive function in human aging.

Older adults exhibit significant deficits in tasks that involve active manipulation, reorganization, or integration of the contents of working memory. Although the mechanisms underlying these age-related deficits are as yet poorly understood, the effects of such deficits are very likely far-reaching. Many complex everyday tasks such as decision-making, problem-solving, and the planning of goal-directed behaviours require the integration and reorganization of information from a variety of sources. It seems likely that attention, speed of information processing, and the ability to inhibit irrelevant information are all important functions for effective performance of these higher-level cognitive tasks. (Glisky E 2007)

Drawing a map as part of a conversation relieves Mary of much of the decision-making and planning needed to draw an object from observation. A drawing is now a collaborative effort between artist and carer. Ideas and explanations are verbalised and occasionally annotated during the process of making. These map drawings are helpful for Mary as a both an aid to her memory and a means of sharing and explaining details of her former and her present imagined life. The sketches Figure 4 and 4(a) were made as part of a conversation that Mary and I had about her home town. The images record journeys over fields and along roads and streets based on childhood memories or imagined journeys. While I am familiar with the topography of the town as it exists in the present, I could see that many of these places that Mary describes no longer exist in the form that she had drawn. Many once familiar areas have been 'redeveloped' over the years, but they survive untouched in Mary's present world. She is convinced of the veracity of the images she has made, and feels that she could take you by the hand and walk you into this familiar place, and is bemused if an attempt is made to question the truth of the image or suggest that the places she has illustrated may have changed over time. The memory is real, so the drawing is real, so the place is real.

FIGURE 4. MARY P, MAP, 2020, PEN ON PAPER
20 X 15CM

FIGURE 4(A). MARY P, MAP 1, 2020, DETAIL

Glisky observes that older people appear to retain good language skills, finding that they usually have extensive vocabularies and are able to develop explanations when unable to remember individual words. Mary's map-making practice would appear to fit in with this observation, as the images appear to function now more as an extension of a conversation. During her cognitive function tests, Mary had very high scores for her use and understanding of language and is still able to give plausible descriptions of objects and people from her past, and while she is increasingly having difficulty finding some descriptive words, she provides circumlocutions to support her explanations.

There is evidence that Mary continues to use her past drawing and painting skills in her present map drawings. At art college and in subsequent work she was interested in recording the surface structures of natural objects. She often drew and replicated varying textures and patterns in sketches, paintings, photographs and other forms of artwork, including ceramics and textiles. Attempts to capture physical properties of plants using a variety of rapid marks can be seen in both the sketch of memories of her childhood environment (Figure 4) and in the small watercolour image made on a field trip (Figure 5). The parkland area with trees and bushes is indicated by squiggles and dashes in the bottom left-hand corner of her map drawing detailed in 4a. These marks become lighter and fainter as her energy levels declined.

It was interesting to observe that while making her simple map drawings she continued to move her pen or pencil above the paper surface indicating the three-dimensional structure of a tree or plant, making invisible pattern forms recalling their outlines and textures. The facility for capturing the solidity or spatial properties of an object seems to be deeply ingrained in Mary's memory, while she now lacks the wherewithal to reproduce this on paper, she remains keen to express shape and form through actions above the drawing surface.

Barbara Tversky explains the importance of all forms of gesture and graphic communication in her book Mind in Motion where she explains that drawing can

> *Externalize thought and thereby promote thought. Taking ideas that are in the mind out of the mind and putting them into the world in front of our eyes helps our own thinking and that of others. Putting thoughts into the world is key to collaboration, to working together, to the joint action that is core to human society, and to survival. Both gesture and graphics abstract. They abbreviate, truncate, schematize, generalize. Gestures don't capture entire actions, only thumbnails of them. (Tversky 2019 p 284)*

Two artists, two experiences

Both Utermohlen and Mary P have been able to use their creative skills to make work that records the devastating impact that Alzheimer's disease has on their lives. The differences in approach to their work and their output reflect in part both their individual circumstances, personalities and the character of the disease they suffered. Both Mary and Utermohlen spent time recording their home environments. Utermohlen's urban social scenes contrast with Mary's rural images. Their pre-Alzheimer's work shares bold colours and an interest in observing patterns in natural objects (Figure 1). Although Mary enjoyed going to life classes, she only occasionally produced figurative work, while as a professional portrait painter, Utermohlen's work often included friends and family in a social setting.

Utermohlen exhibited symptoms of memory loss and some lack of coordination in his 60s, a relatively early age for Alzheimer's disease to be diagnosed. Mary P's diagnosis was at a more typical age in her mid 80s, when she had problems with her memory in terms of organising tasks and remembering names. Her verbal abilities have diminished slightly with the advance of the disease but her coordination and gross motor skills have not been too badly affected. While Utermohlen's work showed the deep levels of anger and despair about the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, Mary's acute frustrations are born of delusions and hallucinations. From an early stage of the disease Mary was unable to understand or perceive the realities of the diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease (anosognosia)[4] and as a result does not have the fear or anxiety that Utermohlen expressed. While this means that Mary does not exhibit the angry personal turmoil of Utermohlen in her work, she nevertheless does experience extreme frustration and irritation when unable to match her delusions with reality.

Both Utermohlen and Mary appear to have substantial disruption to their comprehension of place and location. Utermohlen's increasingly abstract works record his experience of a gradual deteriorating of memory of his body and space, where he portrays himself as isolated or trapped. In Utermohlen's Conversation Pieces pictures, increasingly the images of his domestic world become disorientated, with interiors and exteriors existing in a single flattened plane. Some paintings contain figures foreshortened from above with objects that appear to defy gravity floating between seated individuals, adding to the feeling of confusion and unease in what should have been for Utermohlen a familiar, comfortable and intimate scene.

Mary's descriptions of the place where she currently lives matches some of the flattened and tilted elevations seen in Utermohlen's paintings. This has been particularly noticeable with Mary as her disease progresses and affects her spatial and temporal orientation. At times she has become unable to recognize her home, especially when moving from one part of the garden or from one room to another. She describes rooms as looking familiar but different, becoming unsure of the orientation of places, objects or people. Often at night she will turn on all the lights to check where she is because she is uncertain if she is awake or in a dream as things 'do not look right'. Occasionally she describes seeing her

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[4] Anosognosia is a medically recognized symptom of dementia and severe mental ill health. It concerns a patient's inability to acknowledge the existence or effects of their illness or realize how a disease may progress or limit life. Acharya AB and Sánchez-Manso JC (2020) Anosognosia. [Updated 24 Jun 2020]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; Jan 2021. Available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK513361/

late sister enter a house, simultaneously viewing the scene as she stands next to her and from across a road. The waking dreams that she describes in some detail confuse and disorientate her. Making the map drawings, however, seems to reassure and calm her.

Utermohlen's anger and distress at losing himself is matched by Mary's yearning to find herself in an imagined familiar safe time and space. Both artists' drawings contain strong expressive marks, reflecting their passion to communicate their feelings on paper. For Utermohlen his drawing techniques mirror his anguish, while Mary's work records her frustrations and frailty. At an early stage of a drawing activity Mary is able to build images that respond to her memories and emotions with dynamic action. This can be seen in Figures 4 and 4(a) where darker areas with thicker lines represent boundaries and edges of space. The repeated scratchy lines seem crude and rough when compared with those in the earlier flower and leaf drawings, but they carry a vivid energy reflecting Mary's emotional state. Mary is able to configure the curved 'roadways' with some proficiency while maintaining enthusiastic descriptive dialogue. Marks are reinforced as part of explanation in order to clarify and emphasize key points and particular memories. In some maps words are added to support understanding of orientation. The writing has a particular temporal meaning for Mary, as in naming an object or place she becomes satisfied that it has a present existence in her memory. However, an image that took some minutes to make, while appearing to fulfill her wish to explain her thoughts, also exhausts her. This is particularly noticeable in marks representing trees and bushes in Figure 4(a) that fade and disappear near the bottom of the page. The conversation together with the drawing appeared to give Mary some emotional release. Towards the end of the session, she is calmer as if she had been able to make some order in her memories.

Katherine Rankin's findings from the 2007 case study on the impact of Alzheimer's disease on the artwork of patients is appropriate to both Utermohlen and Mary. Mary has had some personality changes common in those with Alzheimer's disease noted by Rankin et al, which is reflected in the tentative qualities of her mark making. The limited colour palette that the researchers observed in those with dementia when making artwork is also obvious in both Utermohlen and Mary's work. Although the additional difficulty that Mary has with her vision may also have an impact on her perception and use of colour. When given a choice of using coloured pencils or graphite or pen, Mary will always choose the latter. This reluctance to select colourful materials or make decisions about elements contained within a drawing could also be explained by research into changes in cognitive functioning with aging. Utermohlen's 'muddy' colours may be the result of continually reassessing his work and erasing sections. His wife attributed his blurred, disjointed portraits to a decline in his skills in painting rather than to artistic device (Crutch et al 2001).

Research into Alzheimer's disease is ongoing and it is good to note that there are many papers examining the use of drawing and other creative activities to support those with the disease. Drawing is a primal form of expression and for those losing physical and mental capabilities it can be an important tool of communication and dialogue. For family, friends and carers of those with Alzheimer's disease it is distressing to watch as a person loses their independence, their character and their voice. Making a drawing to express a memory or an emotion can be comforting as it is a tangible artefact capturing, if only fleetingly, the person trapped by an atrophying and dying brain.

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