

The Drawing Alive screening is not making a claim that drawing is necessarily any more *alive* today than it ever was. Of course new technologies harness new mediums for capture and communication, but drawing with an iPad or a GPS tracker is still an extension of ourselves as individuals, an acknowledgement of "Here I am". Drawing brings people together. Draw Something, the social drawing application launched in February this year, was an immediate success. You can play simultaneous games of virtual Pictionary with several partners around the globe. At the same time there is a revival in drawing outside the life room. These events often combining music and costume are happening in theatres, stately homes and even in the street.

However it happens, drawing continues to be an expression of who we are, a way to understand what we can see and a means to picture what we can only imagine. The aim, is that the films in the screening will reveal fresh perspectives on this intrinsic human activity; the hope, is that people will go and explore the possibilities drawing can offer, to re-imagine and re-experience the world and our place within it.

Jevan Watkins Jones and Angela Rogers

Drawing Alive: Films with Drawing

Curated by Jevan Watkins Jones

Image: Andrew Vass (Jerwood Drawing Prize nominee 2012). Still from film by Alex Pearl

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Extracts of conversation with some of the artists:

Ryan Gander

JWJ: On page 74 of your book, Catalogue Raisonné Vol. I you write about drawing a room plan from imagination based on a fictional space and a known space. I wonder if the synthesis of these two spaces as a drawing (pictured on p.75) ever communicates the whole 'picture' for you. For me the use of drawing in your work is irreducible because it never sets out to be the whole story but the root of a thought, a seed of an idea or a step in the transfiguration of knowledge - am I anywhere close?

Ps. I remember trying to draw a 'moulin d'eau' for a young lady in a French service station, in order that she may be able to give me directions to it. She did not recognize my drawing. I was never any good at Pictionary!

RG: You're right, the Sherlock drawing never communicates the whole picture, only other peoples... I think of drawings like letters, we simply know what the shape represents, and like typefaces, the way the letter is executed carries emotion or other information about its execution. Do you know the drawing of mine in Olive's [RG's daughter] bedroom, about her birth?... it's basically a series of visual clichés in relation to what I was feeling that day..

JWJ: I do know the drawing in Olive's room, not well but basically and spatially. I like the letter analogy. Are you saying that Olive's drawing represents this preceding statement, that any 'shape' drawn is known to us, and that this is somehow inconsequential to the truth underlying its execution? There are definite layers to drawing, the info carried in the top layer, in a sense its image, being distinctly different to its layer of 'execution' that is changeable according to emotion and caprice?

RG: clichés = just a very well known signifier, universal language, like a sunset, pretty much means the same everywhere. In regards to the abstract... the human brain makes sense of everything I think. I think it finds logic or the recognizable in everything. [with regard to the last question] I think that depends on whether you are controlling your output or letting go, everyone has motives, it's impossible to let go.

JWJ: Does your definition of drawing in any way fit alongside this film?

RG: ...

Andrew Gwilt

JWJ: Tell us about your drawing Andrew.

AG: Since I was 5 my dad used to go through the family atlas with me and after college I began to draw technical plan drawings and maps, using the atlas and Google Earth as reference. I can draw my maps accurately from memory and do so every week, as well as producing digital work with Google Maps and Microsoft Paint, to indicate routes people can travel.

Andrew Vass

JWJ: I took in your 'secreted' drawing in the car park you mentioned. Interesting how agreeably the creep and crawl of this drawing [in Indian Ink on weathered plywood] is subsumed by its 'ground' and location. Less an effect than say it would be if using a raw canvas in the studio. Does keeping hold of the line matter?

AV: Glad you took a look. The wood grain and defined square format invited a pictorial response for me. The inky marks bleeding into and blending with the parched surface. A bit like a ground level view simulation. In other cases line pulls away from the surface.

JWJ: That's interesting – so it appears that in both cases letting go of the line, whether as a result of charcoal pulling away from a whitepaper surface as a distinct quality in your work or the other that gets under the skin of the ground (tattooing another living surface) is more about holding the space in between – I think I need a pencil and paper to better articulate what I am saying. Another interesting thing is that in your search for spaces to work in you still find a defined format – how does the edge figure?

AV: Yes, I think it is always about 'holding' the place in between otherwise you get viral knitting or super-imposed tags, to over simplify. In both areas there is a kind of switching off. And I look for containment as well as surface qualities.

JWJ: Containment, yes, I wondered about that, as although I have never seen you at work (hence the request for a film) one can imagine a Vass covering the entire globe quite happily except for the fact that the viewer could not see it at once, even from outer space, and therefore we always need to come back to a definitive site and sight because otherwise we stand to lose the 'place in between'. Don't feel you have to reply.

AV: Fine Jev, I'm enjoying it although you'll get ruminative pauses!

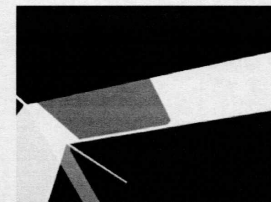
Jamie Gledhill

JWJ: Do you consider your animation in terms of drawing?

JG: At school it was clear that I couldn't draw well in the traditional sense. But I did enjoy doodling, creating large patterns by repeating small shapes with slight variations. Some decades later, I have learned to create digital art works using motion graphics programming platforms such as Processing, but I'm still essentially doodling using the devices of repetition and variation.

JWJ: And how to you see the relationship between drawing and sound?

JG: When I developed the Noisescapes piece I thought of the characteristics of the (drawn) visual element as existing on an axis between structure and deformation of structure. Similarly, for the characteristics of the audio element, I plotted an axis between tonality and disruption of tonality. By thinking of these two axes to be in parallel, I found a way to create a dynamic relationship between the audio and visual elements which made sense to me.



Sean Edwards, Looking at a Cardboard Box 2007

List of films:

1. Dryden Goodwin

Flight/2005/6:55

'Flight' is a fugitive escape path across five interlinked spaces. The artist's pen and ink-drawn interventions into live action journey are ambiguous gestures that suggest an evolving relationship between an unseen protagonist and their surroundings.

2. Jamie Gledhill

Noisescapes/2012/5:00

Courtesy of the artist

An audio-visual study that explores relationships between sound synthesis and geometric form created by mathematical noise.

3. Angela Rogers

Drawing encounters with strangers on a train/2011/3:00

Courtesy of the artist

The film follows Angela Rogers with a stranger on a train travelling along the South Coast from Lewes to Ashford International in April

4. Sean Edwards

Looking at a Cardboard Box/2007/2:11

Courtesy of the artist and Limoncello Gallery

5. John Berger

On Drawing Maria Munoz/2009/7:48

6. Plan B

Narrating Our lines/2010/4:49

Courtesy of the artist

Single channel video preview of two-channel video installation. Sophia and Dan (plan B) play back an animation of their GPS traces from 2007 and attempt unrehearsed, to narrate what was happening.

7. Whitworth Art Gallery

The Big Draw: Molecular Drawing/2011/3:22

8. Andrew Gwilt

137 Drawing by Andrew Gwilt: Volume 1/2012/6:14

Andrew Gwilt's maps, drawn from memory, are chiefly concerned with routes, either motorways, railways or simple pathways including such details as roundabouts, road signs and pylons.

9. Stephen Walter

London Subterranea (documentary film by Dominic Holland)/

2012/11:19

10. Ryan Gander

Things that mean things and things that look like they mean things/2008/26:48

Courtesy of the artist

A commissioned fictional documentary made to explore the subject of the production of the making of an artwork that doesn't exist entitled The magic and the meaning. The imaginary film, The magic and the meaning, within the documentary takes the form of a 16mm black and white film study of students drawing from a Francis Bacon exhibition.

11. Steven Roper and Jamie O'Connor

Hadouken/2011/0:06

Courtesy of the artists

12. Anna Teresa De Keersmaeker

On Line (MoMA Performance Feature)/2011/3:28

13. Andrew Vass & Alex Pearl

Drawing/2012/8:46

Courtesy of the Artists

Alex Pearl tracks Andrew Vass making a wall drawing on a derelict site by his studio. The film reflects the darting eye of the drawer and the discontinuous surface he and the drawing inhabits.

14. Eileen Adams

The Campaign for Drawing - ABC Australia Radio Interview/

2010/8:10

15. Kiki Smith

Sewing and Drawing/2009/2:38

16. Townley and Bradby

Water Drawing/2012/5:28

Courtesy of the artists

Standing in one location, beside a shop front, Townley and Bradby poured a steady trickle of water onto the pavement. A line of water flowed from this spot across the pavement, nosing its way towards the road, picking out the tiny variations in topography that are normally imperceptible.

17. Charles Tweed and Lawrence Bradby

The Line of Travel/2012/3:11

Courtesy of C.T and L.B

This film shows the passage of a pen across the paper as the equivalent of a cycle ride through North Essex. The description that is given to accompany the movement of the pen narrates both the journey and the process of drawing. Made as part of Experimental Communities, firstsite's long term project to bring people together through art for social purpose.

18. Andrew Gwilt

137 Drawings by Andrew Gwilt: Volume 2/2012/6:22

19. William Kentridge

What Will Come Has Already Come (Part of Art:21 'Compassion' series)/2009/1:04

20. William Kentridge

Anything Is Possible (Art:21 feature)/2010/1:35

21. Grasshopper Group

Short Spell/1956/2:32

Courtesy of the East Anglian Film Archive

Unless otherwise stated all films are sourced from YouTube.

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