

Movement and Expression

A Gestural Spatial Practice that Explores the Idiom of Drawing

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Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), no material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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This thesis comprises 80% practical work: 20% exegesis.

TABLE OF IMAGES

The photographic images that are positioned within this exegesis are there as a tool for performative documentation. They are cataloged by a system that is time coded on entry to my documentation process. These images are only documentation. This is because I would like my entire years' work to be seen as a continuance of one drawing. This is because the years' work is a continuation of materials that reflect my bodily actions in space.

I can only but show a sample of this year's movement and expression, just as the markings which are the consumption of drawing can only show a trace of the performance. The documentation is labelled Day – Month (chronological order) to help not only show a referencing order but by also multiplying the same system it applies indifference. Under this umbrella of indifference you the reader can visualise this documentation as a section of this whole years work.

ABSTRACT

The following work is concerned with the investigation of drawing as performance. This exegesis will raise, produce and investigate what processes are of interest when I, the artist, encounter the act of drawing. First and foremost what this exegesis does is layout grounds in which to interpret my productions.

I will introduce my definition of what drawing is, and how it develops its own idiom. Research into the act of the verb draw and its assorted connotations will permit me to reveal all my sources of drawing to show methods, inspiration and production that I have established. This writing will show how drawing and drawing processes have become an important structural idea.

We will see how through the performance of drawing my work is introduced into an investigation of the mold and the copy. The mold and the copy allows for a maneuvering correspondence between art work and originality. The trail that I have developed by using the mold and copy process has revealed a progression to warding off (not revealing all). This notion of warding off has deeper philosophical implications on my idiom that in turn reveals more about my artistic processes.

The work encounters the use of the readymade object and evolves to encounter an engagement with rag picking as an idiomatic drawing gesture.

Importantly, this document proposes there is potential for a way of translating the spatial environment where the performativity of my idiomatic drawings happen. Notably, this document will suggest there is potential to use this system for not only determining a system for this exegesis but also use of this as a tool for interplay between three specific gestures. The gestures that are in question here are so drawing, performance and space.

INTRODUCTION

This exegesis is a documentation merged into a system that exists to supply a way of objectifying material from the two distinct areas that are artistic practice and my articulation of practice. It is intended as a discussion of the context of my processes, thought production and re-production of work.

For this to happen I have chosen an amalgamation of methodologies. A mixture of Appropriation and Action Research will be intertwined to allow a pluralistic play of explorations.

The methodology of appropriation allows for the use of references and quotations as a tool of extraction and manufacture, in the sense that the readymade becomes a quote and multiple in my work. You will find the writing littered with these propositions to evoke a spatial awareness that includes the original manuscripts to locate the new.

An appropriation gesture, which inhabits both in this document and my art production, allows the format for this work to develop within its own “foundation”¹, whilst leaving space for the investigation of surface. This notion of surface is more thoroughly addressed in my copy mold section.

In his definitive text, *Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing*, institutionalized Russian theorist Boris Arvatov proclaims that modern materials like glass, steel and concrete should no longer be hidden with the “decorative”², but rather, should speak for themselves. His sentiment expressed dead is the materiality of waste. Everything should be understood with the pros of construction, with in the realms of constructivism. Although Arvatov specks of physical materials being revealed for their usefulness, for me this shows us that even the idea, the meta physical is enticed into an appropriation of use.

Interpreting Arvatov’s proclamations through appropriation, inflected with parody, we have on the one hand we have a theory that was influenced by Futurism with the intent to reveal all without us, and on the other it is also for us that this it done.

Appropriation helps to critically develop the making process that draws parallels with construction, relations and systems into which these can be interpreted. Space appropriation as a tool in relation to art practice to make experience the outcome, highlights the point that the space in which experience of the artwork is had is now more important than the artwork itself. In this sense the lines between art work and spatiality become blurred to a point where even the art term “installation” is not adequate enough anymore to fully articulate this

1 I’ve used quotation marks here to imply the inherent contradiction or irony when corresponding the terms appropriation and foundation.

2 Arvatov, Boris, (1997). *Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing (Toward the Formulation of the Question)* trans Christina Kiaer. October, Vol. 81, (Summer), pp. 119-128. The MIT Press.

undeterminable encounter or experience.

Action Research is used as a tool for reflection. This methodology allows me to use the component of time in constructing work. It allows for both time and space to be spent with the construction of an art piece, as well as allowing space for contemplation.

This relation between making and contemplation has activated a new dimension to my work, which I term here as warding off. This is a happening that has been discovered retrospectively. I have only been able to see that this development has happened through the methodology of action research.

This is, in spite of everything said, an essay devoted to the theories of spatial concerns. My consignment of work demonstrates an understanding and control over conventional boundaries that materialize in the 'world of drawing'. It has developed a further appreciation of the principle boundaries of what is significant when we encounter art (this includes all aspects from production through to criticism). We will see a continuation to a development of what relevance an aesthetic experience has when constructing knowledge and what relations develop between artwork and an audience.

DRAWING

My work sets about by initiating the verb of drawing. By doing this drawing has the ability to transform from an unendowed Art Image to an Art Object that is testifier of a gestural practice. The introduction of my bodily gesture into the knowledge of some space with action is the fundamental process that I start with.

I initiate the verb of drawing every time I draw by initiating a performance. A visual trace is the evidence of this performance; it is a trace because it is evident of the past.



15-9(26)



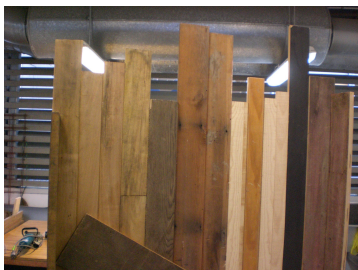
15-9(9)

SURFACE

To see a drawing is more than witnessing something, (predominantly a surface), which has been marked. To draw something is to construct something or to put something together. It is a performance that happens in space. The marking is the trace of a performance; the performance is the verb drawing. It will be my assignment here to hold up this idiom 'draw', and discuss it to a point that one can be aware of, and read a context into my processes, thought, production and re-production of work.

In this sense idiom infers to the composition of all the elements that produce my spatial gestural practice through a study or engagement here with the performative aspects of drawing. I refer to it as an idiom because these elements are part of the component that is my individual signature. No one can reproduce these actions in space onto a surface. In this sense these idioms cannot be 'rag picked'³.

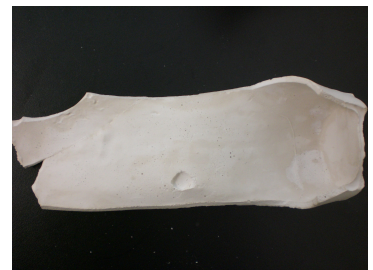
Further this is both an intimate encounter with action, making and thinking as well as an analysis of this process (as this exegesis testifies as). That is, the relation between analysis and action are productive of idiom.



17-4(4)



16-6(13)



16-4(1)

3 The application of this term Rag picking will be extracted and defined in some length in the chapter call Rag Picking

ACTION

The ingredients of action and space can be read as a conversation of two observers where neither one can step outside the world from which they subsist, whilst they both exist in a greater composition of materiality. Bernard Tschumi writes in *Architecture and Disjunction* that “Spaces are qualified by actions just as actions are qualified by spaces. One does not trigger the other; they exist independently.”⁴

Drawing should be read in the domain of movement, like a cowboy who draws his gun from his holster. It is the passage of something to somewhere, courteous of the hand. Drawing happens in, and because of space. Bruce Nauman’s wax sculpture, *Space under My Hand When I Write My Name*⁵, is evidence of this spatial action. The work shows both a mapping of space and a trace of the body.



15-5(2)



17-5(1)



15-9(1)

4 Tschumi, Bernard. (1994). “Architecture and Limits”, in *Architecture and Disjunction*. The MIT Press, London.

5 Nauman, Bruce. *Space under My Hand When I Write My Name*. Wax. 243.8 cm (L.). 1966 destroyed

TRACE

Drawing is performance under erasure. It is a trace of reminiscence. This is because the production of the drawing is read in the reflective state. It is read through the language of markings. It is a temporal encounter of past in the present.

An example of this can be shown if we look at the removal process called erasing. For me the meaning of erasure is the occurrence of wanting not to or preferring not to, yet it is the withdrawing that remains lasting and apparent.

Early in Robert Rauschenberg's career he approached, through mail, well known artist Willem De Kooning with the intent of receiving and then erasing one of his art works. Although initially De Kooning rejected this advance, he eventually decided to part with an etching. Knowing that it was his choice of which etching to gift, he decided on one that was heavily laden with crayon and pencil.

After three weeks of erasing the work, titled, *Erased De Kooning Drawing*,⁶ demonstrates his affliction with the capturing of marking. This example embodies a sense that to remove something is to draw something. It also illustrates for us a mapping of transitions on a surface, where exterior and interior context collapse on the two dimensional terrain of singular topography.

With this example (and using this formula), the analysis of the situation now shows that the marking of a performance is a force that happens unequivocally and universally. There is no escaping its presence. Even not addressing marking, forges the ground on which we attend notification of it.

Rauschenberg may have tried to produce a blank page where there are no readable engagements, it is only a blank page after all, but this does not mean that this blank page is empty. It contains a title 'blank page' as well as scratching and ink blobs. The page not only features colour, shape and size but also encloses texture (touch), taste, smell and time.

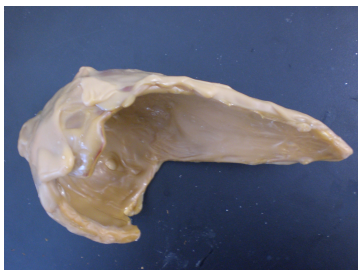
6 Rauschenberg, Robert. *Erased de Kooning Drawing*. (1953). 64.14 cm x 55.25 cm x 1.27 cm. This story is courtesy of a Paul Ben-Itzak article that can be found at http://www.danceinsider.com/f2006/f1129_3.html

HISTORY (MARKS)

History is an initiation of drawing. It affirms the question of time in the order for the surprise encounter with the new. Elizabeth Grosz asserts that “all fields of knowledge are open to the augmentation of their objects, fields, methods, and questions through an acknowledgement of their necessary limits, their perspectival emergence in specific rather than universal interests.”⁷ In these terms, Grosz’s assertion makes the subjective encounter between art object, viewer and maker, in terms of my gestural practice; augment the field of drawing (away from a static image or drawing as a noun).

I feel that today drawing carries different meanings than has been assigned to it in the past and because of this drawings development has shifted. Through banality people commonly assume that the existence of drawing is such that its expression envelopes only a few of its full meaning such as it primarily exists from a pen on a piece of paper. To put it another way it can be said that it’s meaning has solidified through its reduction of terms.

These limits and their perspectival emergence are dictated to us by ‘experience’. Experience is the body of history and this body requires a mode of address, an audience, a commutative event that is an intrinsic moment in which function and malfunction subside. In experience, meanings can only come through the process of doing and feeling, drawing aesthetic movements of production and exchange between environment, object and self.



28-3(1)



13-8(2)



8.4

⁷ Grosz, Elizabeth. (2004). “The Force of Sexual Difference” in *Time Travels*. Feminism, Nature, Power. Allen and Unwin, Sydney.

EXPERIENCE

My gestural spatial practice drawing should be read as movement. As cited earlier, I commonly think of it like a cowboy who draws a gun from their holster. There is both a gestural action and gestural purpose. This practice questions what it is that constitutes drawing through an examination of the actions involved within space, resulting in the trace residue of performance. Here drawing is a temporal event that puts under erasure in full present (what I have termed as warding off) as the gesture to reveal the impossibility for full knowledge that is, revealing all (or its impossibilities), is the motivating force or encounter to come out of this spatial practice. For example, my work is produced in a 1:1 scale.

This is the scale that is dictated to by the body. Working in this scale allows my work to be a full illustration of the spatial elements within the 'specific' interests, it also shows that relations of scale draw my presence as an artist, but never completely only intimating (or gesturing) presence. This implies a notion of Mimicry that I explore later in this document through notions of copy and mold.

As mentioned already I research the act of drawing this has been beneficial to the project due to its spatial connotations. Drawing is formed within and through environmental concerns. Coming from a spatial arts background, interest occurs within the spatial environment yet I see my practice blurs increasingly into a visual art contexts. This blurring refers back to the proposition Grosz makes, stated earlier, around specific interests in relation to the augmentation of field of knowledge.

CHALLENGING DRAWING

Another example here, in terms of a specific interest that challenges the limitations to the field of drawing, would be Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* films. The work that Barney is most commonly known for is a series of work entitled 'Drawing Restraint'. Through film Barney draws out his ideas and authorizes the audience to purchase selected theatrical moments.

Although Barney's *Cremaster* films are burdened with the realm of performance documentation, it would appear that they exist because of and for their theatrical⁸ documentation, what this drawing technique shows us is that Barney works within space and he creates experiences. This is a unique adaptation of drawing.

For Barney a scripted relationship is played out. For me this implies that he is primarily a transfer drawer.⁹ He stages his Drawing Restraint installation predominantly for the camera. The camera is the agent of the transfer economy where drawing goes from one encounter to another.

It is here that I would like to introduce John Dewey's understanding of aesthetic relationship in his 1934 book '*Art as Experience*'. Dewey theorizes a shift to the awareness of what are the essential characteristics of the art environment and art processes. He considers all aspects of art (including the idea), from its material appearance as an 'expressive object'¹⁰, to a product in its entirety. This later state is where art is no longer seen as an object of materiality but rather as the occurrence of an 'experience'.

Furthermore, Dewey directs attention away from aesthetics being a straight exchange of emotions distanced from practical applications in regards to artwork, to a realm where it maps the circumstances of being that give argument to aesthetic experiences.

Of course value is subjective and differs individually but it also varies between social groups. The Deweyian theory is concerned with two aspects that construct aesthetic experience. Firstly there is something that introduces the experience that he calls a special "movement"¹¹ and subsequent there is the ending which he calls "consummations".¹²

By directing the former in terms that correspond to an action, Dewey has rightly (I believe) formed the experience in a realm of movement, that action belonging to the environment of human consciousness and not the lifeless, pre-experienced item. It is after all, a human that places associations onto and into the realm of the object so we are able to abuse and manipulate them. The use of "movement" as a verb creates a spatial location where the act of a 'clicking into place' can occur.

8 Auslander, Philip. (2006). *The Performativity of Performance Documentation*. in The Performance Art Journal, Issue 84. . Pp 1- 10.

9 Personal definition which means to conveyed from one place to another of the action.

10 Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books. 1980.

11 Ibid, pp 15.

12 Ibid, pp 16.

WARDING OFF

I have intimated already that warding off came about through an encounter with my action research methods. I have also suggested it forms the question around impossibility for full certainty or knowledge, thereby placing emphasis on an experience that suspends full comprehension. This is an ecstatic (time out of time) temporal experience.¹³

There is a big presence of warding off (not revealing all) in my work because I feel that art is restricted by representational meaning. I define warding off as a process of keeping distance in the process as to control independence on originality as well as a tool for removal of reproduction. When reproduction is removed I feel that the trace has more room to develop. I should say here that the term originality here aligns with idiom and is to be located within an appropriation context.

From an early stage in my spatial arts career I have been under the impression that you cannot control an audience. The difficulty in this warding off process is that producing this work for an academic institution means that I have to supply documentation for research assessment, this written exegesis being a prime example. In this sense bringing analysis to this notion appears to contradict the context of not revealing all. However, I have stated earlier that action and analysis are now productive of idiom. This exegesis is now part of the work as an examiner encounters my work through its drawing of conclusions.

Philip Auslander quotes Richard Bauman's definition on this performance and audience relationship in his text *The Performativity of Performance Documentation*, he states:

Briefly stated, I understand performance as a mode of communicative display, in which the performer signals to an audience, in effect, "hey, look at me! I'm on! Watch how skillfully and effectively I express myself." That is to say, performance rests on an assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative virtuosity. [. . .] In this sense of performance, then, the act of expression itself is framed as display: objectified, lifted out to a degree from its contextual surroundings, and opened up to interpretive and evaluative scrutiny by an audience both in terms of its intrinsic qualities and its associational resonances. [. . .] The specific semiotic means by which the performer may key the performance frame—that is, send the metacommunicative message "I'm on"—will vary from place to place and historical period to historical period. [. . .] The collaborative participation of an audience, it is important to emphasize, is an integral component of performance as an interactional accomplishment.¹⁴

13 I use this notion of time out of joint, taking from the work of Jacques Derrida who is indebted to Martin Heidegger's notion of ecstatic temporality. Time out of joint coincides with Derrida's *différance*, where there is an idea of a stable "present" and defers certainty. *Différance* is a made up term that contains the idea difference (spatial) and deferral (temporal). Time here is in construct with the sequence of now moments. For a further reading see Jacques Derrida's *Différance* in *Writing and Difference*. trans by Alan Bass. London, Routledge 2001.

14 Auslander, Philip. *The Performativity of Performance Documentation*. in *The Performance Art Journal*, Issue 84. 2006. Pp 1- 10.

Here the writing exists for an examiner as a communicative display of my gestural spatial practice. “I express myself”. But do the viewers who are not privy to this writing experience the practice in the same way? No. Rather in as much as this writing expresses certain contexts, it also conceals the practice in the sense that an audience who has not read this document would have another performative encounter with my work. “I’m on will vary from place to place etc”. Warding off is an act of concealing as much as revealing. This display in a collaborative space is always existent within performative art. In saying this I have adopted an application of warding off. It is a device (instinctual to an extent) for analysing this relational experience.

The space between the audience and an object is a contradiction that as intimated is built around relations between absences and presences; this allows words and things to coexist side by side.

There are multiple applications that I use to supply this warding off space. One is the copying procedure, another is to engender time. Another is engendering time. After I had constructed the work (pictured above) I spent 3 months drawing a horizontal line through the work. This allowed for intimacy and generation of self-determination. For me time is a tool for removal of the validation of representational meaning.

The drawing was performed with a found piece of broken pottery, engendering a text about Walter Benjamin by Esther Leslie¹⁵. In it Benjamin is quoted as using pottery “as model and metaphor” for handwerk. For Benjamin, the hand marks out true experience and pottery is the vessel for translating language.

In this text Leslie states Benjamin’s early understanding of the hand as a tool for true experience. Using this has allowed me to remove associations imbued with representational meaning. Although I choose this object because of its representational meaning, it has been used in a way that the audience will most probably never know the true purpose and meaning. It is a poetic conceit; an obscure personal yet inter-textual gesture that contributes to my idiom of drawing.

15 Leslie, Esther. (1998). “Walter Benjamin: *Traces of Craft*.” *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 11, No. 1, *Craft, Modernism and Modernity* (1998), pp. 5-13 . Oxford University Press.



16-5(8)



16-5(3)



16-5(10)

This is significant because of this feeling that I have that art production is restricted by representational meaning and it therefore obstructs the status of the ‘work’. What this does not mean is that there is somehow nothing to be said about a work if we cannot talk about representation. Perhaps instead, we need to think in terms of ‘take effect’. That is the form of speaking transforms into an effect where other utterances potentially occur. This is not predetermined or expected.

For me all artwork must have a meaning that is beyond itself, beyond a relationship between the signifier and the signified. The idea of providing an experiential performative ‘substrate’ seems to be a good way of exploring this. Whereas Dewey formulizes that art work has a process of Clicking into Place, I propose a position where we let the work ‘Take Effect’. To allow the work to Take Effect is to allow the space of freedom not the control of representation, although this space needs to be something more than the totality of freedom. Space now becomes a venue for performance that is controlled not by the artist, but by the audience.

I am not suggesting that all artwork be design where its only relation is one to the art work itself so that its meaning is replaced to read without the experience of natural sense, a place where the work of art is expressive only in the sense that it expresses something that belongs exclusively to art.

If we were to do this we would produce a place where the theme of the artwork is irrelevant and hence pointless. If the consideration is the development of a moment or moment that ‘take effect’ the drawing becomes a vessel for experience, a container for memory. In this sense this is the specific boundary within art practice that my practice seeks to push.

CREATING A BASE

After seeing Andy Warhol's Brillo Boxes in 1964, Arthur Danto writes in his introduction to the book *'The Transfiguration of the Commonplace'*, about differences between everyday objects and artwork. He states that the boxes, 'so totally resemble what by common consent are not art works' that they make the question of definition urgent'.¹⁶

If the producer of art can compose the union of ideas to produce art work, then they should also attend notification that they are also supplying experience. These experiences that the artist supplies are the gift of freedom. It is a space for play. Here I communicate freedom and play to suggest that experience engendered through art practice opens up a realm of undeterminable and incomplete meaning that falls outside the agency of an authority (like the artist, critic, etc.). That is this emphasis on play and freedom contests modernist attitudes on authorial intent and embraces a postmodern sentiment.

Developing intervening distance between Art objects and representational parameters gives conditions for reading internal and external paradigms, taking part in formations of meaning-subjectivity, and allowing individual and collective relations for coexistence.

Thus space becomes something that is more than just a mere void in which the viewer is free to stray. It becomes an all-inclusive and enclosed landscape within which the traces of performativity can be deployed.

The audience will always bring history and value that is their archive -memory past to an art experience. Accordingly they are not concerned with these past experiences. They are new practitioners with their idiosyncratic systems for reading and understanding informational structures. That is not to say their idiosyncratic readings do not share collective codes that for instance have been produced by art discourse. Rather the point here is that their unique encounter will also trace what is not fully representational.

Variables lay the foundation on which informational structures are deployed. It is not necessary here to deploy each and every kind of variable sequence that dictate to a manipulation of signifiers (texture, size, smell, colour etc). It is more important to understand that the art object is the container in which this process happens. The audience/viewer/participant may all differ in definition in the end but the object is the fulcrum in which analyzed (as a verb) is dispersed.

Once the action in space has been acknowledged it is no longer existent under the definition of 'voidness'. From now on it is framed in a context and has numerous connotations or permutations. It can be interpreted in a way that John Paul Rico (2005) identifies, "[drawing] is just as much a matter of legibility as it is of visibility – of reading what has yet to be written

16 Danto, A. *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art*. London: Harvard University Press, pp vii. 1981

and visualising what remains unforeseen.”¹⁷

With appropriation as a methodology to analyse relationships of indetermination and weakness of productivity, I have allowed myself a freedom that permits placing aesthetic relations within the realm of assemblage. The problematic structure of exploration and choreography (as in the planned movement of the unplanned act), is no longer a hindrance but can now be used as a regenerative structure, a tool for remodeling and reorganizing artistic endeavors.

There is a beautiful statement by Alain Robbe-Grillet where he declares that “if art is going to be anything then it has got to be everything”.¹⁸ This quote is appealing because it shows that with the transformation from ‘anything’ to ‘everything’ we can see that even the idea of an artwork is just as important as the artwork. It shows that everything has to be encountered, and for me this is the same position that should be applied for drawing.

The art object has to emerge a continuum of thingness. In his definitive text, *Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing*, Boris Arvatov states that the “material culture of a society is the universal system of things”, he continues, “material culture is both the production and consumption of material values”.¹⁹ For me, Arvatov application of the term ‘thing’ as a substitute for ‘object’ advances the notion of ‘thingness’ and its different relations. It does this because it breaks down the dichotomy of the subject/object binary and in doing so a new non-hierarchical relation between all things (including human being) activates a free (form) and play of meanings. As suggested earlier this is an encounter that moves beyond representational modes of “for” and “against” economies for knowing.



19-8(3)



15-9(34)

17 Rico, John Paul. (2005). *Name No One Man*. Parallax, vol 11, no2. pp 93 – 103.

18 A 1969 Robert Barry Interview sourced http://www.ubu.com/papers/barry_interview.html

19 Arvatov, Boris, (1997). *Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing (Toward the Formulation of the Question)* trans Christina Kiaer. October, Vol. 81, (Summer), pp. 119-128. The MIT Press.

CONTINUUM TO THINGNESS

As previously suggested, this project explores the relation of presence and absence with an investigation into the hand which activates this happening. The trace of the performance in my work is read through the apparatus that is produced from my hand.

The trace of the performance is also replicated within my work by the use of the mold and copy technique. The originality of the thing is duplicated to produce both an object imbued with reminiscence and an object without reminiscence (an object in its own right— “present” to itself). This ability to produce an object in its own right is an important ingredient in my work.

However, by playing within the hidden as stated already in terms of warding off, I feel my work restricts depth of meaning and allows for a greater surface/appearance meaning to be deployed. This relation between surface and depth is a postmodern ploy—a contestation to a saturation of full in-depth or ‘true’ meaning.

Postmodernism reveals questions around the possibility that essence is a constructed idea from classicism. This further suggests that the truth is not essential but a play of difference from the different perspectives that make up being in the world. Here surface is depth and hidden activates this surface effect.

Distance from the originality of the start process allows me to defend my work from making a fixed sense. I want to supply only what is present not the trace of representation, not the action of representation. That is moving away from the ideal that the work has a fixed intention.

For this to happen the beginning must always start with a ‘natural object’²⁰. In this reading of the ‘natural’, one must take pleasure in the journey, allowing for moments of experience. The object then, read within this raw/natural dualism, produces moments where experience can occur. This spatial surrounding is the canvas where forces activate creative moments for ongoing experience to occur. But realizing this still leaves the question of what are the forces that generate aesthetic experience?

Whether it is body in space or paint on a canvas, the viewer corresponds with the surface when reading art work. And this is also why I have chosen the environment of the copy to work in.

20 The term ‘natural’ is used here to show that we always need to view the elements of the ‘thing’ as a result of its inherent qualities. It is nude, naked, it hides nothing. My process always tries to see the natural beginning, even after someone else might consider the work finished. This way the work reads back to the performative body. It is in this translation (of an idea) from a metaphysical page through to a physical environment that leads to marks being simultaneously projected equally to surfaces of the physical and the symbolic. It is the place where the abstract and the figurative developed.

A copy produces a visual self-governed and self-produced transposition into thingness and contextualizes a reality. This is a lever, whereby one reads historical conditions and on the other hand one reads possibilities of developmental capability. It is the zone where the visual attends and testifies the result of what happens.

Impressively, when Arvatov proclaims that modern materials like glass, steel and concrete should no longer be hidden with the “decorative” , but rather, they speak for themselves he is implying that, dead is the materiality of waste, everything should be understood with the pros of construction, with in the realms of constructualism. *Endlessly Repeating Twentieth Century Modernism*²¹ is a work in Josiah McElheny’s series of sculptures. This work illustrates the capitalist concept that all objects are reproduced and that everything can be remanufactured endlessly without regard to geography, era, or culture.

Shifting the understanding of the object interpretation to thingness that break from the subject/object binary is a playground where revealing and hiding can cooperate. When Arvatov formulates his ideas on the low-fi everyday object, he proclaims,

“the ability to pick up a cigarette-case, to smoke a cigarette, to put on an overcoat, to wear a cap, to open a door, all these “trivialities” acquire their qualification, they’re not unimportant “culture,” which finds its meaning in the maximization of economy and precision, in maximum cohesion with the thing and its purpose.”²²

This for me relates to my concerns with the performativity of drawing. All the little actions that are concealed to produce the complete piece are not “trivialities” that can lay unacknowledged; they are the trace-effects of the piece. This “fundamental” nature of the piece acknowledges all things exist in the “trivialities” of everyday encounter. My project celebrates this condition.

21 McElheny, Josiah. *Endlessly Repeating Twentieth Century Modernism*. Hand-blown mirrored glass, low-iron and transparent mirror, metal, wood, electric lighting; 2007

22 Arvatov, Boris, (1997). *Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing (Toward the Formulation of the Question)* trans Christina Kiaer. October, Vol. 81, (Summer), pp. 119-128. The MIT Press.

In this sense, the function of art always has a human action assigned to it. The one purpose in the last ninety years of abstract art has been to present art as art and as nothing else. Jacques Derrida writes on the history of art, that;

“The history of the art work is not only its past, the eve or the sleep in which it precedes itself in the author’s intention, but is also the impossibility of its ever being present, of its ever being summarized by some absolute simultaneity or instantaneousness.”²³

In this way art for art sake can never be fully achievable as the trace of the past will always dislocate its existence (as pure) for purely its own sake. Derrida’s quote undermines this modernist mantra.

23 Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. trans by Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978.

RAG PICKING (dētraquē)

Rag Picking is a term that I have applied to my construction process. It is the construction of things through found objects.

Marcel Duchamp could be attributed as the originator of this art practice. Duchamp himself however, was most certainly influenced by Italian Futurist especially Umberto Boccioni and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti between 1908, through to the 1912 publication of Boccioni's 'technical manifesto of futurist sculpture'.

The term rag picking - more commonly found object (French: objet trouvé) or readymade- describes art created from the undisguised, but often modified, use of objects that are not normally considered art, often because they already have a mundane, utilitarian function.

This term 'Rag Picking' allows my work to exist in a state that can be always be referred as a continuum of 'new'. It permits me to follow a path of copy and mold because, for me, a copy is an original work. There are always differences, whether that is an extra gram of weight or a scratch where there was not one before, what is produced is never an exact replica.



10-5(29)



23-9(4)

With Duchamp and within the context of Dada²⁴ the role of the artist changed dramatically. By inserting the mass-produced into the art context, Duchamp set about undermining the bourgeois concept of the genius. In all previous art movements, the artist was the nuclei, the one whose creative powers made art and art culture what it is and controlled how it was interpreted.

Historically art production was a tool (a counterweight) intended to organize and pronounce the future. Dada, Surrealism and the Situationist fought the 18th century concepts of modest

and rational formation forcing society to question all and everything.

Rag picking is the act of drawing. It is the performance of interaction and shows a shift the drawing technique. From the scavenging of Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven to the Chance Theory of Tristan Tzara, we, the viewer are asked to talk of formations rather than forms.

In my work the manipulation of the found object is a dominate theme. It has allowed for a shift into the mass-produced. Although my work might not show the found object for the final exhibition, it has allowed me to find a starting point for the process to develop.

Amelia Jones in her 1994 book, *Appropriation and the En-Gendering of Duchamp* states that,

“this shift in the relationship to the mass-produced is marked also in American texts on postmodernism, which begin at this time to focus more and more on the readymades and the Duchampian attitude that produced them to define appropriation as radically new.”²⁵

In her book, Jones tries to state that American postmodernist theorists have developed the concept of a feminized –contradiction custom which reproduces theoretical inadequacies fastened by the ‘masculinism’ endorsement of Greenberg style modernism²⁶. This is her strategy for emphasising a default thinking reliant on subject/object and other hierarchical binaries.

Here I think it is important not to forget that Duchamp did in fact have a female, other half, Rose Sélavy. Although Sélavy didn’t emerge until 1921 in a series of photographs by Man Ray, and his primary assemblage work, *Bicycle Wheel*²⁷, was made in 1913 we cannot exclude the convention that Rose was already “present”. Duchamp’s gesture seen from today’s perspective is very much a postmodern gesture toward the complexities of multiple identities located in the chance of everyday life.

This persona allows Duchamp a hidden context. If we are to read between the lines of one of his more famous citations, a’ little game between I and me’, we are able to consider a new grounding for perspectival analysis. This may now be read as a bi-gendering opening, on not only the conscious level (in the conventional sense), but in this instant, on an unconscious level, which is an engrossed substrate of chance and relationships.

We cannot be sure which one of her/his personas were present when they embarked on this object assemblage process; after all, it has no consequence to the outcome, but it is of interest

25 Jones, Amelia. 1994. *Appropriation and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

26 Greenberg, Clement. (Jan 16, 1909 - May 7, 1994) argued that modernist art excludes “anything outside itself”.

27 Duchamp, Marcel. *Bicycle Wheel*. 1913. Metal wheel mounted on wood stool, 129.5 x 63.5 x 41.9 cm. Lost original.

here because of what this opening reveals to us now.

American philosopher John Dewey asks for the abandonment of considering that experience happens exclusively 'within us' towards the conception of understanding what is 'being experience'. So how can we say that aesthetics envelopes the objects, or put differently, the objects production within the art world or even the objects existence in the everyday world. In Peter Bürger's, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* he writes about the avant-garde movement and purpose;

The avant-gardistes' proposed the sublation of art – sublation in the Hegelian sense of the term: art was not simply to be destroyed, but transferred into the praxis of life where it could be preserved, albeit in a changed form. The avant-gardistes' thus adopted an essential element of Aestheticism.²⁸

It is here we see how the construction of relational ideals influenced the avant-gardistes' movements, which one can say the object and Duchampian initiatives were infused with. It is not their place to obliterate art, but rather, place art and art processes in a state of sealed morphism. To create relations within the world (that is to experience life) is not to remove substance but it is the adding of something to every situation. Duchamp produces for this 'sub-art' culture not with the physical ability to destroy quality as someone like Amelia Jones would have us believe, (although if that is the point, so be it), but with the sense that we can all make 'raw-art'. Therefore if we can all make 'raw-art', we can all own it, interpret it, and destroy it.



15-9(8)

28 Bürger, Peter. (1984). *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. trans Michael Shaw, University of Minnesota Press., pp 49.

To this extent Peter Bürger continues to state;

If the twofold character of art in the bourgeois society consist in the fact that the distance from the social production and reproduction process contains an element of freedom and an element of the noncommittal and an absence of any consequences, it can be seen that the attempt to reintegrate art into the life process is itself a profound contradictory endeavor.²⁹

The body performs the act of drawing with totalities that are unattainable. It is simply impossible to capture all the body's' thoughts and movements and because of these restrictions we can only view the trace. Art work encounters this restrictive nature of the body and makes the trace of drawing accessible to all who choose to partake. This is why I would assert that my work exists in a state of 'raw-artness'. It is with this dialogue that we can now see how my work can read as a idiomatic drawing gesture.

No matter what the art piece there is an aspect where relations of the drawing experience are at stake. As soon as we associate art references and art practices to an object the construction of a drawing system unfolds and reveals an artist's conditioned activity.

CONCLUSION

Performative drawings are not only laid out in monogenesis formation³⁰, where the drawing is existent in a definition of marking, (that is what functions are assigned from it), but in the grounds of dualism, that is the condition where it enjoys interactions with body and space.

The tools in which we construct ways of interpreting movement and understanding expression can be varied; Judith Butler for instance, uses the concept of performativity in an attempt to find a more embodied way of rethinking the relationships between determining social structures and personal agency.

But I would take it a step further by suggesting performativity draws on not just tensions and contradictions between cultural and social ideas of modernity, tradition, the personal and the communal, the natural and the intentional but embodies the action involved in everything, both the dissipation and the non-dissipation of being.

For Nicolas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics is an “aesthetic theory consisting of judging artworks on the basis of the inter-human relations they represent, produce or prompt”³¹. But for me it is not just the consideration of internal interaction, as the real is a category for transgressive juxtaposition, just as drawing cannot exist on an internal stage, laid out for only the artist to see. In this sense ideas of interiority and exteriority relations between real and imagined (or unconscious) worlds are transgressed in how I’ve positioned my approach.

Internal ingredients are only but one component that is needed when we are considering drawing. American philosopher John Dewey isolates six distinctive ingredients when considering experience. These are anticipation, tension, conservation, cumulation, continuity and fulfillment³². These terms refer to both internal and external happening but are by no means the only ones that can be applied. What is of important here is not the definition of each of these six components, but what Dewey gives us (unlike Nicolas Bourriaud’s aesthetic theory and the means of it being based on internal relations), is the proposition to consider external ramifications as well.

It is possible to now see what the materials are that constitute drawing. The pluralisation of drawing (self and action), is contextualised in this project as a system for performative interpretation or activations beyond comprehension. The creation of relationships of drawing and self is a force that happens universally and unequivocally. It is an action, a process. There is no escaping its presence. Interior expressions and exteriors movements are mapped under the sign of drawing relationships. Both are in existence within the function of interactivity between drawer and performance. These aspects exist structurally but they are plausibly read as a whole, existing to produce the contents of communication.

30 This is a personal term implying that perception of all performative drawings do not generated from single cell that is a representational two dimensional copy.

31 Bourriaud, Nicolas.1998. *Relational Aesthetics*. Trans Simon Pleasance & Fronza Woods. Les presses du reel.

32 Dewey, John. *Art as Experience*. New York: Perigee Books. 1980. pp 143.

As I have stated earlier, I would like my entire years' work to be seen as one drawing, this is because the years work is a continuation of materials that reflect my bodily actions in space. My consignment of work, embraces this idiom 'draw', and discusses it to the point that the audience can read movements of the body and expressions of the mind. My work shows that drawing is an experience. It is the consequence of interaction. The interaction of drawing is a performance and the consequence of the drawing is the trace.



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