DRAWN ENCOUNTERS, COMPLEX IDENTITIES
THE BRITISH SCHOOL AT ROME, VIA GRAMSCI 61, ROME 00197

SCHEDULE WEDNESDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2008

9.00   Delegate Registration

9.20   Welcome: Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, Director, The British School at Rome

9.30   Introduction to the Conference Proceedings Day 1: Associate Professor Domenico de Clario, Head of Fine Arts, Monash University

9.40   Keynote address: Professor Andrew Benjamin, Professor of Critical Theory and Philosophical Aesthetics, School of Comparative Literature and Cultural Studies, Monash University

Drawing, Disegno: Derrida's Artaud

Artaud's extraordinary drawings provide the field in which Derrida allows for a philosophical encounter with drawing. What distinguishes Derrida's approach is that the measure for his analysis is set by the drawings themselves. Their singularity generates the concepts within which they are to be understood. The aim of this paper will be to investigate the complex relationship between drawing, the singularity of the object and philosophical writing.

10.15   Zara Stanhope, Deputy Director and Senior Curator, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Melbourne

Drawing on the archive: can art escape the hierarchies of knowledge?

Artists employ various media to learn about/explore the other, consequently remapping or rethinking the self. Drawing, mapping and the strategies of the archival repository have proved useful tools in such processes. Drawing on examples of several Australian and New Zealand artists, this paper will address how and/or whether art making in this mode can contribute to cross-cultural knowledge and understanding.

10.50   Morning Coffee, BSR

11.10   Nuala Gregory, Associate Dean, Department of Fine Arts, University of Auckland

Encountering Drawing

This paper explores tensions within the act of drawing – how it contains an immanent threat to the work of representation and identity formation, and promises to both differ and displace. Beginning with a colonial encounter in 19th century Ireland, and including recent theories of drawing, it asks what is specific to drawing when encountered on its own (im)proper terrain.

11.45   Geraint Evans, Artist & Pathway Leader in Painting at Wimbledon College of Art, University of The Arts London

The Big Country: from Thomas Cole to Uncle Walt. The role of drawing in shaping our understanding of landscape as a cultural signifier

In 1979 the 'Big Thunder Mountain Railroad' ride opened in Disneyland's Frontierland. This extraordinary simulated mountain landscape at the heart of the ride, one of several mountains that have been constructed by Disney in its parks throughout the world, formed a potent signifier of the American West. Nature, through landscaping, has been a crucial aspect of Frontierland since its opening in 1955. Disney propagated the idealised notion that the nation itself was defined by its historical connections to nature at a time when its role as a post-war world leader was assured. Evans' paper will explore how artists might have shaped this interpretation and understanding of landscape through the practice of drawing, and how this contributed to the development of particular cultural identities. Evans will draw comparisons between the Hudson River School and Disney and explore their roles in American colonial ambition, and will also discuss how these ideas have informed his own recent studio practice.

12.20 Lunch

2.00 Associate Professor David Thomas, MFA Program Coordinator (Australia and New Zealand), School of Art, RMIT, Melbourne

Locating the contemporary monochrome: The movement of meaning between East and West.

Most analyses of the monochrome have had a European and American focus. Thomas' paper will locate the practice and theory of the contemporary monochrome amid a broader global context that includes Northeast Asia and Australia-Pacific. The paper investigates how the contemporary monochrome is employed through a diversity of media that enables cultural interaction, difference and similarity to be considered.

2.35 Dr. Tom Nicholson, Lecturer in Drawing, Monash University

Posters and Meetings

Nicholson's paper will present examples of recent poster-based works that focus on encounters between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal figures from 19th-century Melbourne history. Nicholson will discuss these works in relation to historical images, contemporary Australian politics and principles of drawing.

3.10   Caroline Williams, Artist & Art Writer, Melbourne

Impropaganda 2008: Home to Home

Across the Pinccio Gardens from the British School at Rome, and via Clerisseau's Room of Ruins at the Trinita dei Monti, a colonial looks at time, maps, markings and why we go around in circles. This paper will address how drawing functions as an instrument of determination and desire, and how a person can live in a multiplicity of places while squatting in one outer suburb of Melbourne.

3.45 Afternoon Tea, BSR

4.15 Dr. Tony Birch, School of Culture & Communication, Melbourne University

The Barbarians Are At The Gates: landscapes of defacement and erasure

Birch's paper will draw on several sites of colonial/postcolonial contest in Australia: from the city to the picturesque and ornamental, from the abandoned to the secret-

sacred. These are sites marked by monuments, graffiti, demolition, and construction – intended to invent tradition, capture land, and, of course, banish the 'barbarian' indigenous community.

4.40 Professor Marcus Wood, Artist & Professor of Diaspora Studies, University of Sussex

Unbearable lightness, unspeakable darkness: the sketch as a tool for the representation of the slave body

The paper considers drawing as a method of responding to the trauma of Atlantic slavery. Pencil and water-colour drawings made on the spot and recording the life and suffering of slaves are very rare. Those that have survived suggest that drawing may offer aesthetic and formal solutions to the representation of extreme human suffering which other forms of visual representation do not. The analysis will be focused on a variety of works, from the refined sketchbooks of Jean Baptiste Debret, in Rio in the 1820s, to the untutored but infinitely powerful water-colours with which British sailors responded to the experience of witnessing the hold of a slave ship. Wood will end by looking at his own drawings in tar, and the work of other contemporary draftsmen and draftswomen who have drawn the slave body, and will speculate on the extent to which drawing may still offer a useful formal vocabulary for the continued exploration of the cultural memory of slavery.

5.15 Plenary discussion chaired by Dr. Tom Nicholson, Lecturer in Drawing, Monash University

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SCHEDULE THURSDAY 18th SEPTEMBER 2008

9.30   **Introduction to the Conference Proceedings Day 2: Professor Anita Taylor, Director, The Centre for Drawing UAL, University of the Arts London**

9.40   **Keynote Address: Professor John Welchman, Professor of Modern and Contemporary Art History/Theory, University of California**

Face, Media and the Drawing Out of Social Flatness: Tony Oursler and "the veiled clarity of the substances called for by the closed switch"

Welchman's paper contends that, for Tony Oursler, drawing is not a category reserved for mark-making on a two dimensional support. It is instead a particular mode of appearance of the seemingly flat.

Few artists have worked as insistently as Oursler across the spaces that define the technological moves from TV to monitor, low lines of resolution to hi-def, or tube to LCD. Mediated by a longstanding commitment to drawing, the shift from the sets and surfaces of his single channel pieces of the mid-1970s, to his projections of speech-bearing video onto dummies and objects of the 1990s, was successful in turning the old order dichotomy between two and three dimensions inside out. It bears witness to a dissolution of the genres of painting, drawing, sculpture and installation – all converging and separating according to a new performative logic distributed by an endless roster of virtual bodies, conjured up by combing speech and gesture as affective virtualities. Depth and reduction become allies in the project of recalibrating the surfaces and run-offs of bodies – whose 'skin,' real and imagined, operates as a media membrane to trap and filter the corporeal encounter. Furthermore, the central arena for the artist's ceaseless relay between flatness and depth, surface and overlay, metaphor and hallucination, projection and introversion, is the face itself. It is here, in the spaces between the superfices and depths of the face – between its drawings in (of breaths, diagrams and other tie-ups) and its drawing out (its strata of inferences) – that we encounter the central adjudication of Oursler's work to date.

10.15   **Professor Stephen Farthing, Rootstein Hopkins Chair of Drawing at the University of Arts London**

Drawing Australia, from Hughes to Eyre: recording and the question of accuracy

Until the birth of modern art there were just two types of drawing: those that came out of draftsman's desire to make "a picture", and the others that were the result of someone taking the shortest route to mapping out a set of facts or ideas on paper. The first group were usually made with an audience in mind; the second, very often, with no sense of rhetoric. Farthing will begin the paper with the gold prospector John Mills Hughes (b.1839) and the totally untutored drawings he made in his diaries between 1867- 1891, and end with John Eyre's finished drawings of Norfolk Island. Eyre (b.1771) was a convict who, prior to his transportation, had studied drawing in Coventry with the artist Joseph Barnes.

10.50 **Morning Coffee, BSR**

11.25 Paul Thomas, Artist & Jerwood Drawing Prize Coordinator, London

Myths Down Under, from Homer to Nicole Kidman…

Paul Thomas is an artist from the UK who spent ten years working with images and narratives from *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* to form a drawn interpretation of these classic European narratives. Following a Residency in Drawing (National Art School Sydney/ NSW National Parks & Wildlife Service) in 2004, he spends a substantial period of time each year visiting Australia developing new works which explore similarities across cultures and yet simultaneously celebrate the richness and diversity of experience.

Thomas will examine how visual artists have dealt with the reinterpretation of classical texts. He will discuss the ways in which we can reinvigorate classical European mythologies via contemporary issues. Developing visual languages that are capable of both embracing continuity and tradition whilst also accommodating changing values.

12.00 Jordan Baseman, Artist & Reader in Time-Based Media at Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts London

Michael Jackson Approximately

Baseman's paper will explore fan relationships with Michael Jackson: focusing specifically on Michael Jackson impersonators in Melbourne. Baseman will refer to some of his research projects (his films, *THRILLER*, and *don't stop 'til you get enough*; and a two day conference at Yale University *Regarding Michael Jackson: Performing Racial, Gender and Sexual Difference Center Stage*) to discuss ideas of complex identity; para-social relationships and celebrity culture.

12.35 Morgan O' Hara, Artist, based in New York and Italy

LIVE TRANSMISSION: attention and drawing as time-based performance.

Morgan O'Hara will show a drawing and performance process she has developed called *Live Transmission* which renders visible normally invisible or fleeting movement patterns through seismograph-like drawing done in real time. The pursuit of vitality carefully observed through human activity is drawn simultaneously with both hands and transmitted to paper. Following closely the intensity of each segment of activity, the direction of the line as well as the quality of its intensity is transmitted. If a person makes a gentle movement a delicate line is drawn. If the action followed is forceful or violent, a correspondingly vigorous line is made. This is done simultaneously and as much as possible without *thinking.* The dialectic between observer and participant, control versus relaxed participation, coalesces to form the conceptual base for *Live Transmission*. Scale and physical limitations are determined by real-life expediency. In 2008 there exist approximately 3000 *Live Transmissions* drawings done both privately and publicly on five continents. *Live Transmission* communicate beyond the specificity of language.

1.10   Lunch

2.30   Professor Jan Svenungsson, Professor for Artistic Research, Finnish Academy of Fine Arts

Tracking A Place on Earth

In my Psycho-Mapping drawing projects I set up a controlled process for producing virtual geopolitical reality through failure. As my point of departure I use a map of an area I know well. The resulting new reality will always be surprising, but it can easily be traced back to its familiar origin over gradual steps. For a project in Melbourne last year, my aim was to visit, in person, a major site in the development of Australian painting. When this attempt failed I happened to take a look at the destination from above — and found that it already was an image. Whether virtual or not, I have not yet been able to establish. I made a huge painting of this place I could not touch or visit and performed a tracking ceremony in the reality that was mine. In my talk I will try to make sense of it all.

3.05 Melanie Jackson, Head of Undergraduate Sculpture, Slade School of Fine Art, London

From Field to FedEx

Jackson's paper will discuss the strategies in her practice of engaging with international issues, whether through first hand experience, media publications, network technologies or by seeking collaborators to document the places she cannot visit. Recent works include *A Global Positioning System, The Undesirables* and *From The Bank Of Hell*. She utilises a combination of drawing, animation and paper structures to explore issues of work and movement in relation to industry and technological innovation, with a focus on the networks emanating from industrial growth in China. She is particularly interested in the notion of using drawing as reportage and exploring the dynamic between the graphic and photographic.

She is embarking on a new body of work based on Goethe's theory of *The Urpflanze,* extending her research into the politics and aesthetics of technological innovation. Beginning with the two trees that have taken his name (*Goethe's Palm* in the Botanical Gardens of Padova, and *Goethe's Oak* in the grounds of the former Prison Camp at Buchenwald), she will explore technologies of looking to understand the contextual links between the two sites.

3.40 Catherine Elwes, Professor of Moving Image Art, Camberwell College of Art

Real Time Travel

Where artists once took a line for a walk, travelling with pencil and sketchbook, they are as likely now to journey with a moving image camera – some to gather data to be used in the creation of paintings or sculptures, but increasingly to form the basis of video projects, both single-screen and installed works, for the gallery. The time-base of 'raw' video footage is co-extensive with the 'real time' of travel and offers a third eye onto a parallel universe of digital representation – linked to, but not reducible to, the experience of motion through the landscape. The resulting encounters with the landscapes of Australia and the UK form the basis of the international screening project *Figuring Landscapes*, currently in production at UAL.

Catherine Elwes will discuss key works to be shown in the exhibition and air some of the issues that have been raised with collaborators and colleagues in the UK and Australia during the process of selecting and writing about the work for the catalogue.

4.15 Afternoon Tea, BSR

5.00 Plenary discussion chaired by Professor Anita Taylor, Director of The Centre for Drawing, University of the Arts London

5.40 Conclusion of proceedings