Notes for talk

11.03.20

Hello

My name is Charlotte Hodes. I am professor in Fine Art at LCF. I am delighted to introduce this event today.

**1** As is usually the case with ideas, the moment that I thought of leading an event that reflected on **Drawing, the Performative Body and the Object,** what seemed like a simple idea became complex. Not least when I thought about what the object is in relation to the body – an accessory, an extension of the body, a costume, a prop, a sculpture, a symbol, a device, and it goes on…..

I therefore suspect and hope, that this event may raise more questions than provide answers. And in doing so may trigger further discussion and events.

The artists here this evening, Maya Finklestein Amrami, Alexis Teplin and Eileen Hogan, who have kindly agreed to present, each have very different approaches to objects represented in their practice. They are, as I am, artists rather than scenography or costume designers though I am sure that you will see slippage across these different fields of practice. This maybe something that we can pick up later, as I hope that there will be time for questions and discussion with the speakers at the end.

**2** As a way of an introduction, I would like briefly to show you 12 slides, firstly examples from my own practice, that I will follow by other artworks. I hope this may provide touchpoints for thinking about the interconnections between the **Drawing**, the **Performative Body** and the **Object**.

In my own practice, the dress motif becomes the object, as separate from the wearer and as a signifier for a woman’s body. It is of equal importance to the flat shape of the woman that accompanies it. They are made of the same ‘stuff’, of hand cut printed and painted papers - collaged fragments. In this papercut, there is a metamorphosis and blurring between what is dress, woman, and architectural fragment. Together they are part of, and activate, the patterned landscape through which they move.

**3** These simple line drawings in pencil have developed from multiple iterations of drawings and re-drawing originating from my photos and drawings from catalogues, Museum archives, the internet and films. I draw on site as well as from photographs of myself and others. From these, I evolve shape and silhouette.

**4** In this sequence, *Perpetual Night*, with the text of a poem by Deryn Rees-Jones integrated through the 10 images, the women make their way through and over furniture within an interior space.

**5** One reference for this sequence is Virginia Woolfe’s, 1929, *A Room of One’s Own*, an essay that speaks to the aspirations and conditions necessary for a women to become a writer - that is - a £500 annual income and a room of one’s own.

**6** The room is a space for enactment -the women take ownership of their environment which they occupy in a dynamic but unstable manner. This is emphasised not only by their momentary positioning in relation to each piece of furniture, but also by the collage, hand cut with a scalpel blade. All the small fragments are adhered together leaving evidence that there is potential for everything fall apart.

**7** The women and furniture, are inter-dependent.

**8** These women exist in a domestic interior, one traditionally associated with women, in which they do not necessarily follow the rules.

**9 William Kentridge** is a South African artist whose working methodology is grounded in drawing. His practice also takes the form of sculpture, film and performance. His highly charged and political work addresses South Africa’s dark history, and the devastation and impact of totalitarianism and war on people’s lives. Much of his work is played out in his studio that is both a real and metaphoric space for creative engagement. Here, his small bronze silhouette figures move in a procession. Each figure and object is interdependent. They both emerge and are subsumed to become one. The linear, ladder like trestle structure supporting the table, is itself, like a drawing, and they re-appear in other artworks.

**10**

Through his use charcoal and a loosely hand cut shapes, his figures and objects are precarious, they are in perpetual motion and change. This life affirming energy with which he imbues his scenarios enables him to tackle, and for us to face, challenging imagery about humanity.

**11**

**Paula Rego** is a Portuguese – British artist. She has a touring show currently at The Modern Art Museum in Edinburgh and will have a retrospective at Tate in 2022. In recent years, her studio has become a world in which she is protagonist. She acquires and makes objects, props, dolls and paraphernalia that she uses to construct her images. In this work, the interior, (referenced by the armchair) and exterior, are morphed. The triptych is based on the play *The Pillow Man* by Irish writer, Martin McDonagh. It is through this play that Rego tells her own stories. *The Pillow Man* is a brutal and surreal narrative within which fiction and fact, truth and untruth are blurred. The girl carrying the ladder, may or not be complicit. The ladder as crucifix, references Rego’s own catholic background. It is also bandaged as if it carries the wounds of past and current violence and pain.

**12**

Here is another a ladder, in an exterior public space. This craftsman, a tiler, is one of 48 bronze statues that surrounds the exquisite late nineteenth century Petit Sablon garden in Brussels. Each is a homage to the medieval 16th century craft professions. Each figure is poised as if going about their work. The role of the object is to define their function.

**13** Taking function a step further, in this early 18th century print by Larmessin, the tools of the trade form the structure of the worn garment, in order to define the wearer through their function.

For me, this is drawing through the medium of print – instead of lines being made with a pencil, they are made by a sharp tool directly into a metal surface. The fragments of saddle forms are the objects. Together they are transformed to form a whole, as the wearer’s costume. It defines the body shape and character of the wearer. The sequence of engravings - *Les Costumes Grotesques et les Metiers* - refers to people and work, whilst at the same time being flights of the imagination.