

Migrant Drawing: Disrupted Spaces & Dispersive Notations

Drawing involves the movement of the body in relation to space and place; and it correlates with the movement of the eye scanning an object to be rendered or a plane to be traversed in coordination with a series of acts performed by the hand. Movement as process is paramount too in the making of a drawing: small thinking acts and decisions become material through connecting lines and the bringing together of nodes in a network of shifting trajectories. When the drawing is finished, it has become something else — a trace of the drawing.

Drawing can be done with the minimum of tools and materials: a finger in sand or dust; a small piece of charcoal and a scrap of paper; a stub of crayon and an airport wall. Thus it lends itself to situations in which people are transitory or even fugitive. Many examples of links between hastily and minimally made drawings and states of migration can be pointed out. But, more importantly perhaps, drawing is not only linked to the circumstances of migration, but is also akin to the process of migration through the movement involved in its making.

Bodies move in relation to space and place; while scanning of environments involve acts of perception aimed at the quick orientation within new situations on which survival is often predicated. Nothing is stable in migratory circumstances and thus process exceeds structure which always lags behind. Acts of familiarisation happen along lines of travel rather than in fixed environments. Like the person drawing, the migrant is always on her way and when she has arrived, she has already become something else — a resident — and her migratory experience is becoming a memory.

DRAWING PRACTICE

In the modern era, drawing has, amongst other things, been seen as an affirmative and reflective practice that represents the visible and experiential world. This expectation is clearly illustrated through, for example, Albrecht Dürer's famous sixteenth-century "viewing machines" (or perspectival aids) presented as motifs in engravings depicting observational acts within the artist's studio.¹

the wilfulness of drawing and of its *transformative* potential as it is a process that reaches out and puts us in active touch with the world.¹² Ralph Sykes writes that: "...when a drawing [and by extension a print] deals with a social injustice, it can have a quality of indignation...the sharp, thin line can sharpen the bite of a message, increasing the sting of an attack. It is no coincidence that the vocabulary of printmaking techniques – the 'acid' and 'bite' in an etching, the drawn 'cut' in a woodblock – is also the language of attack"¹³ and of *analytical* acts such as some medical procedures – as an investigation of early drawing tools such as the line pen with its structural similarity to the forceps suggests.¹⁴

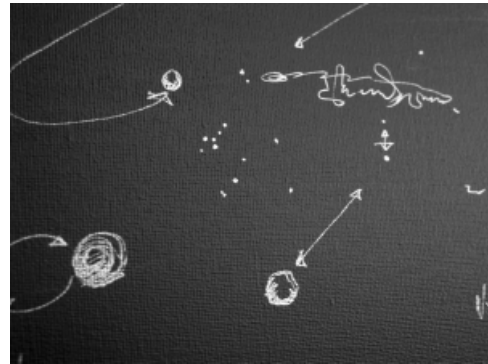
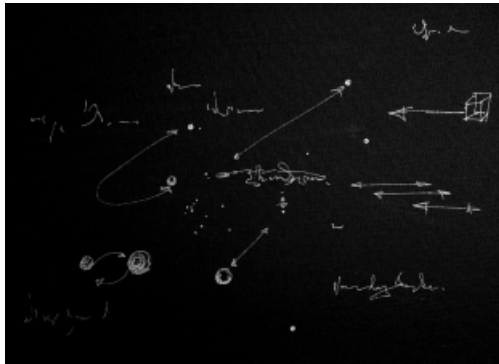
In line with recent ideas about drawing as mentioned briefly above, it has perhaps become impossible to define drawing other than by its functions. During a seminar in the School of Art where I work in Dunedin, New Zealand, students denied drawing a discrete status, saying: "drawing is not quite any *thing*, it is between points."¹⁵ (In this sense, drawing mimics all relationships as everything can be said to be between points.) Drawing's definition¹⁶ can today definitely not be based in materials either, as everything can be used for its processes of connecting through stitching, wiring, taping, suturing, threading, lighting, stringing, sanding, laying down, stapling, ripping, sowing, sticking, mind-mapping, imprinting, plotting, and so forth.

A few examples have to suffice here to make the variability of drawing processes and materials in contemporary practice clear: The stitching and threading work¹⁷ done by American artist Anne Wilson can be mentioned; and now internationally well-known Bruce Nauman draws with neon lighting¹⁸; Rwandan refugees draw the outlines of a new temporary habitat by laying down branches and twigs across a semi-desert floor¹⁹, Dunedin artist Kurt Adams staples paper together to create drawings that reference the points of contact made digitally when producing lines across a surface on a screen²⁰; visiting artist from England, Jim Searle, uses ripped material to produce spatial drawings across a room²¹; and – whilst acknowledging historical antecedents in this article – some decades ago, Cy Twombly already pointed the way to the current variability of material and process with his "drawings-as-writing-as-rhythmic-colourfields-as-registers-of-sound" across a surface.²²

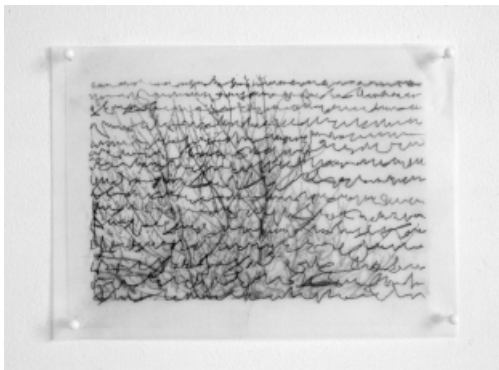
Engaging with Twombly's fragile surfaces, I remember that Wyatt makes the point that "drawing can carry a heavy political weight, while being so slight."²³ The recent work of Trinidadian artist Christopher Crozier is an example here of the political weight of drawing, as it does, in fact, carry a heavy political burden while being extremely friable.²⁴ Looking at one of his small sketches on paper one sees a prostrate body penetrated by a politically loaded image of a flag post. The word, "friable", has been used to discuss the crumbling and flaking of such drawings made on impermanent surfaces with non-lasting materials.²⁵ Images from Vincent van Gogh's sketchbooks also come to mind, especially where some of his drawings had rubbed off on opposite pages and then had become accepted as drawings in their own right in accordance with a growing sensibility regarding a sense of "absence"²⁶ in drawing practice.

An acknowledgement of slightness and friability in drawings is also demonstrated in William Anastasi's conceptual works²⁷ which extend our experience of contemporary drawing as inherently fragmentary and inconclusive by nature. Anastasi's drawings are extremely friable

in material terms and it seems as if the lines are so slight and incomplete that they could vanish before our eyes. Lloyd Jones says that: “One of the things you learn when you are drawing is [that] you can never comprehend the whole thing”²⁸; while one of my colleagues who teaches drawing maintains that “it typically cannot close on any part, it resists closure, it is fleeting and fugitive, it travels away from us”²⁹, as so poignantly suggested in Jenny Rogers’s recent image of a landscape drawn with graphite dissolving across the liquid surface of a wet sheet of glass.³⁰ Blair Cunningham – visiting artist from Glasgow to Dunedin in New Zealand – states that he is often travelling and has not had a studio for quite some time. In accordance with this state of affairs, his works are small, sketchy and indicative of how his thinking processes find material form (see following two images); and of how his perception of a motif can be overlaid with lines which create movement across the surface, a movement which obliterates clarity while creating its own connective surface (see single image after the following pair).



Blair Cunningham, 2004, *Drawing: Untitled* (and detail), silver pen on midnight blue paint on canvas, 40 x 20 cm (courtesy: the artist)



Blair Cunningham, 2002, *Trees with Lines*, from the *In-between Series*, black and white photograph and pencil on tracing paper, 13 x 9 cm (courtesy: the artist)

As artist Crozier suggests in his installed drawing across space entitled *Cross Currents*³¹, the last century has been one of accelerated travel and migrancy and the displacement of large numbers of people around the world. In “The Uninvited”, published in the *London Review of Books* in 2000, Jeremy Harding writes that: “In the early 1990s, about 80 million people – roughly 1.5 per cent of the world’s population – were living outside the country of their birth. The figure is now closer to 120 million. Migration across international borders is not a simple phenomenon and migrants themselves are as diverse as people who stay put.”³² At this point, it seems necessary to say something about my own position as one migrant amongst millions today: I am not a refugee, an exile or a deportee. I chose to migrate and in line with the reflections of Irit Rogoff, I suspect that as the “lessons of poststructuralism have taken hold”,

it seems imperative to shift from a moralizing discourse of geography and location, in which we are told what ought to be, who has the right to be where and how it ought to be so, to a contingent ethics of geographical emplacement in which we might jointly puzzle out the perils of the phantasms of belonging as well as the tragedies of not belonging... It is the effort of arriving at a positionality, rather than the clarity of having a position, that should be focused on.³³

Migrating seems to be, in fact, a constant relinquishing of clear positions – voluntarily or involuntarily – akin to the methodology of drawing as manifest in South African/New Zealand migrant Marie Strauss’ painted drawing entitled *Man Walking: In the Far Distance*³⁴ (see following image).



Marie Strauss, 2000, *Man Walking: In the Far Distance*, oil drawing on canvas, 50 x 50 cm. (courtesy: the artist)

As mentioned earlier, drawing can still happen in situations of disruption and displacement, in any space and on any surface and made with simple tools, and thus it seems to be the visual practice most suited to the life of the displaced. This has recently been highlighted through a drawing project undertaken by ex-South African President Rohihlahla Nelson Mandela with a number of displaced children who had become migrants

due to the devastations wrought by HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.³⁵ At the same time, drawing's friable, slight, erasable, partial and fragmentary qualities perform, enact and critique the very conditions that give rise to it. My research project with its four areas of investigation (of which this article is an outcome) explores recent drawing practices that offer small acts of defiance and often poignantly contrast tectonic and ephemeral qualities. Like the fragile physical and philosophical abodes often inhabited by the traveller, dispersive drawings are notations in the act of becoming and unbecoming.

With Marcel Broodthaers, my project argues that the drawn line “(/)”³⁶ can hold two exclusive and excluding territories together in an uneasy circulation. He argues that the use of line between opposites or binaries can indicate their dependence on each other as well as the tension between them. An example of such an uneasy relationship can be found in a segment from *Drawing the Passing*³⁷, a 2001 video documentary on the studio practice of internationally acclaimed South African artist William Kentridge, who has always seemed to insist that his work is political in the face of disingenuous efforts to divorce aesthetic and political concerns in my first country, South Africa. Everything is political; the political is everywhere, for example in the acts of eating a meal or visiting the doctor. Kentridge shows how drawing can connect radically opposed experiences in such encounters, nay, radically *disparate worlds of existence* even. A part of the documentary focuses on his work with the “Handspring Puppet Company” in Johannesburg, my first city: a city with a history of transience — a city housing migrants from colonising and colonised countries; a city constantly absorbing migrant labourers moving into its urban spaces from rural areas; a city constantly housing ever-growing numbers of nomads ranging from illegal workers to homeless children to refugees trying to escape from famine, disease and genocide beyond the Limpopo River; a city that plays host to so many bodies wandering around the city's precincts in search of a viable life.

Viewers of the relevant part of the documentary become privy to two theatre scenes. The first shows suited men laying a table as if in a restaurant. A puppet-person arrives and seems ravenous for the meal being offered. Before eating can commence, however, this dishevelled figure is shown how to use Western-style eating utensils and the correct protocols for choosing, pouring and tasting good wine. Kentridge's filmic³⁸ drawing is integrated into the scene. His drawn utensils move around on the table; they refuse to stay still; and in the specific manner of their movements they speak of two different experiences of the situation: of power and powerlessness; of control and loss of dignity. The second shows a white-coated doctor in turn examining himself and a patient with a stethoscope. When he is being examined we hear a Western melody; and when his patient is being examined we hear the sound of an African song. The two pieces of music are discordant in relation to one another; the one sounds against the grain of the other. Two very disparate experiential worlds are suggested. However, it is through Kentridge's drawing that they are connected. Again, the filmic drawing is integrated into the enacted scene, this time through the device of the backdrop on which the drawings mutate in rhythm with *both* soundtracks, despite their disparate nature. A dialogue takes place in the drawn tableaux which connects *both* figures within the mounting tension carried visually and aurally through the accelerating pace with which the motifs appear and disappear while emitting their own sounds as well (e.g. of a kettle boiling over or a cat screeching with

hair standing on end). Thus, the drawing in this work brings together two disparate worlds through linking them and manifesting what Broodthaers claims as the connective function of the line.

Currently, I am living in a part of the world that is deeply implicated in and interested in issues of migrancy, as are many other places in the world. This interest was made clear by a television programme aired in my new country, Aotearoa/New Zealand, to provide a forum for discussion on these issues in 2004.³⁹ Very strong views were put forward concerning the desirability or undesirability of new migrants to the country. Heated arguments were also elicited when — in the face of a fixed quota and system for the acceptance of refugees — Algerian-born Ahmed Zaoui entered the country to seek asylum in 2002. He was immediately arrested at Auckland Airport and was at the time of the airing of the programme already incarcerated for almost two years. The Zaoui Music Concert on 2 August 2004 in the Wellington State Opera House marked the first anniversary of the Refugee Status Appeals Authority decision declaring him a *bona fide* refugee. Many artists in New Zealand aligned themselves with his cause, examples being the event arranged for him in a Wellington art studio on his release from prison; the article and photographs posted in online *Scoop: Independent News* by Kevin List; and the related drawing strips by Bonus Joules.⁴⁰ Zaoui is now free, but intense discussion concerning the issues was raised by his sojourn in the country.⁴¹

Across the Tasman Sea, the detainment of refugees in camps such as at Woomera and on Nauru has bolstered the conservative Howard regime, while leading to protests and artist-run initiatives. Examples are the recent “Isle of Refuge Exhibition” in Melbourne;⁴² Santiago-born migrant artist Juan Davila’s⁴³ protest against the passivity of the art world in relation to refugee issues in 2003; Deborah Kelly and collaborators’ 2002 project called “Boat People” which distributed thousands of origami boats and projected boats and ships on public buildings to remind Australians that they all came to that country as migrants.⁴⁴ Aboriginal artist Gordon Bennett is one of the Australians who have been participating in such projects, adding his indigenous voice to a drawn outrage.⁴⁵

Below, I present four thumbnail sketches of processes involved where recent migratory activity and drawing practice have come together. Each of these processes foreground the connection between the disrupted space of migration and the nature of drawing as dispersive notation: the space of the migrant is unstable and the ontology of the drawing under investigation is unfixed as it involves a double act of notating (rather than of being an object) and of dispersal (rather than of coagulation). The four processes are entitled: “evacuate; inhabitate; collaborate; and transmutate.”

All four of these processes tend towards drawing in its friable, fragmentary registers; rather than fulfilling the affirmative, reflective and preparatory functions ascribed to it in other contexts. The drawings I am discussing below are connective and transformative in their dispersive response to disruption, rather than being end products or completed outcomes; and it is in this sense that they align closely with migrant life.

CONVERGENCE OF DRAWING AND MIGRATORY PRACTICE

1. Evacuate

Many charcoal and chalk drawings were used by Kentridge for his short film entitled *Felix in Exile*,⁴⁶ produced in 1993-4 during a time of potential civil war, gunshots in the streets, and bombing threats issued by the far right in a South Africa readying itself for its first democratic elections. In one of them the figure of the artist is shown with a traveller's suitcase in a lonely hotel room; and in a companion piece he is peering through a telescope in an attempt to connect to what is going on in his temporarily estranged country. For the soundtrack of the film, Sibongile Kumalo sings a lament in her Tswana language with the words: "our country is dying but what can we do but go on?" The film as a whole emits a sombre, melancholy tone, a sense of evacuation. The artist's very method of drawing and then filming small changes to it by rubbing out and adding in charcoal and chalk creates a sense of constant erasure.

In other drawings Kentridge, in collaboration with Doris Bloom, has used materials that can only last for a very short time, again suggesting temporary habitation, leaving, being cut off, exiting, evacuation, being amputated or drawing a gate closed behind one. Examples are a 150 x 70 meter chalk drawing on the land and a fire drawing measuring 45 x 30 meters on a contested site in downtown Johannesburg. The first of these is called *Heart* and an aerial view of the site on which it was drawn shows a farmhouse in a typical South African high veldt region.⁴⁷ The house and heart motifs echo each other and are connected with veins and arteries, all of which were washed away and severed in the first rain storm. The second piece is called *S 3E; Gate*, about which the artist has been carefully quoted⁴⁸ concerning its genesis in an earlier time when such a garden fixture could easily swing open to allow access and neighbourly gossip, in contrast with the high walls and electric fences which now separate the homebound and the homeless in Johannesburg.

The migrant with suitcase (as in *Felix in Exile*) has become a familiar trope in contemporary visual art. In *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture*, Irit Rogoff includes a chapter called "luggage; that which has been left behind". She writes:

the suitcase^[49] has become the signifier of mobility, displacement, duality and the overwrought emotional climates in which these circulate...luggage suspended between an unrecoverable past and an unimaginable future and bearing the entire weight of those longings, to a point that it will not allow for any form of reflection on the textures of life in the present, on the new cultural artifacts that are being constituted out of life among other peoples and other languages and objects.⁵⁰

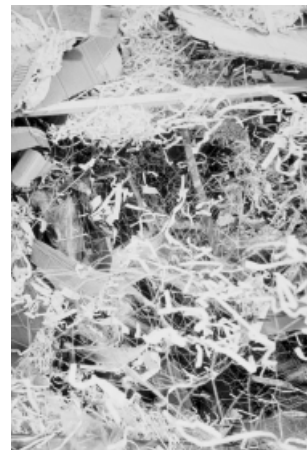
From such a suspension in a constant state of evacuation, there seems to be little escape, but only the possibility of reiteration. Migrant artist Marlene Dumas remembers the "untranslatable other"⁵¹ in South Africa through sombre, nostalgic portraits⁵² in ink wash on small fragments of paper; while seemingly effacing her own identity in another work in which her own head is enshrouded in cloth.⁵³ She writes alongside a small smudge of a chalk

drawing with Table Mountain on the horizon called *Homesick*⁵⁴: “My fatherland is South Africa; my mother tongue is Afrikaans, my surname is French. I don’t speak French. I live in Amsterdam and have a Dutch passport. Sometimes I think I’m not a real artist, because I’m so half-hearted, and I never quite know where I am.” [In Afrikaans: “My vaderland is Suid-Afrika; my moedertaal is Afrikaans; my van is Frans. Ek praat nie Frans nie. Ek bly in Amsterdam en het ‘n Nederlandse paspoort. Soms dink ek ek is nie ‘n regte kunstenaar nie want ek is so halfhartig en ek weet nooit heeltemal waar ek is nie.”]

2. Inhabitate

Other migrant drawing practices focus on a process of engagement with a new habitat. Cornwall-born Dunedin artist Jim Searle found it difficult to work in a new situation. What does one make or do in a new and strange place that seems closed to one’s arrival from somewhere else? There is a clue offered where Joan Borsa writes that “home is also an imaginary space – a projection, a desire, a fiction” and she asks: “What does it mean to ‘come home’ to my practice?”⁵⁵

Searle turned his attention to drawing and found a point of departure in his work as a ranger where an earth worm moved along soil and left a trace of its movement behind,⁵⁶ offering the artist a clue as to how to “come home to his practice” – a practice which had always (back in Cornwall) worked with the methodologies of duration and addition. Simple drawings with plastic bags were suspended from a curtain rail and secured along a floor.⁵⁷ More complex drawings with ripped rags bearing memories of their previous existences followed.⁵⁸ (See following two drawings.) At some point, Searle inhabited a large warehouse space.⁵⁹ The work then started to insert itself within the very body of the architecture defining the space⁶⁰ (see third drawing) and doing so step by step; through process; “one thing after another,” as artist Donald Judd put it so succinctly some decades ago.⁶¹



Jim Searle, *Drawings in Space*, mixed media, 2002-04 (courtesy: the artist)

Humberto Mariotti writes about the concept of “autopoiesis” and how it has long surpassed the realm of biology. He writes: “Autopoiesis means autoproduction...living beings are seen as systems that produce themselves in ceaseless ways...self-producing [inhabiting] machines.”⁶² Mariotti comes to the conclusion that many societies fail autopoiesis because they tend to exclude the autopoiesis of the stranger, the other, regarding it as competition rather than as competence. Searle’s architectural inhabitations reference the history of drawing on an architectural scale – back to Le Witt and further back in time to the large sinopia and cartoons deployed for fresco paintings⁶³. In his work, however, it is the constant self-production and reinvention of the ever-growing and shredded piece which speak of a migratory spirit at work.

At the Australian Center for Contemporary Art in Melbourne, a desktop drawing⁶⁴ of about 30 meters long by Australian artist Greg Creek was on exhibition in 2003, in fragile and poignant contrast with the solid mass of the rusted corten steel-clad building in which it was housed. Its self-producing methodology struck me as each drawing seemed to generate the next. Notations from an everyday existence are the stuff of this piece: shopping lists; ideas scribbled down; telephone numbers; times for appointments; things to remember; notes on books read; arguments about political events; handprints; documentation of places visited during a long journey that Creek calls a “slow homecoming”. Rather than an excessive inhabitation of a space, it is an excessive incorporation or ‘drawing in’; a ‘swallowing of’; and thus its divorce from the space in which it was exhibited started to make sense to me. The places drawn *inside* this giant drawing are what Creek inhabits – he is drawing a travelogue around the world (Pakistan, Bali, Afghanistan, Manila) and revisiting places colonised and drawn by his own migrant ancestors in Australia, such as Louis Buvelot, often seen as the “first European artist to really grasp [that] landscape.”⁶⁵ But, one is also aware that erasures and occlusions and messes occur *within* the drawing’s linear sequencing, hinting at the impossibility of inhabiting fully.

3. Collaborate

Recently, many refugees have collaborated within diasporic communities and with curators to make their own work public. Working with the map as a metaphor for travelling as well as a device for orientating oneself in a new place is prevalent in much of this work. Architect Yung Ho Chang’s map-floor drawing sculptures were shown in collaboration with curators Hou Hanru and Evelynne Jouanno in New York.⁶⁶ An effort to map a community of diasporic artists in their new “country” was evident in an exhibition called the “Sanctuary Project” in Glasgow, which included work by many refugees and asylum seekers.⁶⁷

Collaboration also played a large role in the “Women at Work Group” active in Sarajevo in 1999.⁶⁸ This project was curated by Mária Hlavajová and was entitled “Under Construction” and coordinated by Maja Bajević. Hlavajová writes that:

Maja invited women from refugee camps to show their handicraft through drawing with thread embroidering through the outer curtain that surrounded the National Gallery of Bosnia-Herzegovina while it was being reconstructed...It’s

a powerful social statement...in terms of relational aesthetics among these women; as an intelligent remark on the political and financial post-war situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina; and as a subtle critique of institutions⁶⁹

that failed to provide homes for refugees in camps.⁷⁰

Irit Rogoff discusses mapping in *Terra Infirma*: “In our postcolonial, post-slavery, post-migratory world only conditions of double or triple consciousness prevail and the task of fragmenting the signs and the languages of representation, so that we can make manifest the endless cultural disputes of our heritage, remains to both the writers and the readers of these sign systems.”⁷¹ When looking at drawn maps in recent practice, one can identify many registers of placement, displacement and occlusion made manifest. A map drawn around a refugee family in Rwanda acts as a desperate form of protection.⁷² A map of Nauru as drawn by a recent refugee in a camp on that island shows the camp as filling all the space in the artist’s experience of a place also inhabited by (unacknowledged) islanders.⁷³ A map of Australia by an inmate of Woomera — a place named long ago by the indigenous population of that country — asks for freedom with a drawn cry that inhabits the whole geographical area of that continent to the exclusion of everybody and everything else.⁷⁴

Alex Rotas asks “Is ‘Refugee Art’ Possible?” in a 2004 issue of *Third Text*. and she identifies at least four critical issues: She worries that the term ‘refugee’ “smoothes over difference...at the same time as reifying the boundary that defines its otherness; that the refugee artist” has the awesome responsibility of representing the displacement of someone in a community to which he/she does not belong; that this responsibility is equally the limited responsibility of representing that displacement *and nothing else*; and she concludes with a warning: “ ‘Refugee artists’ could be a new movement but I am struck with a sense of *déjà vu*: these are old arguments, familiar issues. ‘Women artists’, ‘black artists’, they have been there before.”⁷⁵

4. Transmutate

The history of drawing as a practice in Western art has mostly been one characterised by a focus on what it can do, rather than on what it is. It has largely been seen as a facilitating practice, as something leading to something else more important and more permanent, as in the case of preparatory drawings leading to a final painting. Drawings have often been confined to sketchbooks, left in drawers, or torn up and thrown away when they had served their purpose.⁷⁶ Ben Jonson writes about the authenticity of the drawing conferred by its handmade character; but also about its lack of authority due to its hastily made and sketchy nature.⁷⁷ This “sketchy” nature has, of course, been assimilated into non-“drawing” language to signal any practice which is incomplete, fragmentary or in a preparatory stage. One could trace a history of “sketchiness” and its attendant powerlessness in the archaeology of drawing (and potentially in that of many other “sketchy” practices): it can carry a heavy political weight while its slight nature endangers it and takes it to the brink of disappearance.⁷⁸ For example, very slight drawings were used for Kentridge’s film on heavy political guilt, entitled *The Main Complaint*.

In recent years, exhibitions have been held by various organisations in which children's drawings from refugee camps have been shown to the public and then circulated on various websites. Examples are the "Innocent Victims" exhibition in Sydney;⁷⁹ and the "Children out of Detention"⁸⁰ project from Woomera. Flickering on a computer screen, drawings from such projects show houses burning down; dead bodies on a road; refugee camp detentions and violence, some even brightly coloured in the way often associated with children's drawings.

This brightness is at odds with the subject matter; but another "at odds-ness" strikes me: the transposition through and circulation of such drawings on the net reminds me of Marcel Duchamp's remarks on translation, where he stresses transmutation, "the sense of translation as a semiotic gear-switch, a break from one system of signs and images to another"⁸¹, as Sarat Maharaj interprets it. In relation to this gear-switch, Maharaj writes about "what gets lost in translation, what happens to be left over, the remains and leftovers of the translation process...the very transparency that blocks off and shutters, occludes...something slips out of our grip, we grapple..."⁸²

Ben Jonson contrasts the authenticity of the drawing and its lack of authority with the authority and lack of authenticity carried by the digital image.⁸³ It seems to me to be precisely in this doubleness that these drawings are doubly demoted: the historical lack of authority carried by the drawing is coupled with a digitally circulated lack of authenticity. Thus, the medium of circulation becomes methodologically complicit in a lack of voice already represented through subject matter and the slightness of the drawing itself. Olu Oguibe talks about "the vulnerability of the unconnected...who do not possess the privilege of agency because they can neither speak on their own behalf nor exercise control over the dynamics and dialectics of the network."⁸⁴

It is the drawing's misfortune to be fugitive, to crumple, to be erased, to be stored away in a drawer, to be divorced from its body, from its very authenticity, to be overlooked and to be under-represented, seen as a mere facilitator or reduced to a flicker. Conversely, it is the drawing's fortune to be sparse and impermanent, on the move to somewhere else and thus able to speak for states of migrancy – some particular registers and examples of which I have only been able to touch on slightly in this article.

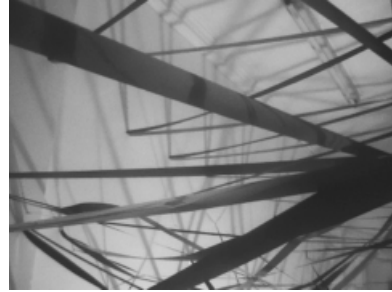
CONCLUSION

I would like to conclude with mention of three drawing practices at work in my immediate environment here in Dunedin, New Zealand at the moment. One of these is the continuous process of exploration in the digital drawing practice of artist Kurt Adams. He shows us the possibilities of drawing beyond any static position; a drawing practice revelling in fluidity, enjoying its movement, its constant migration between fixed points. This seems jointly achieved through a tension between 2- and 3-dimensions; between the analog and digital; between the historical conventions of drawing and the affects facilitated through new media. The work seems to embody migratory experience through the use of graphic/graphite line that constantly refuses a resting place in plane for the sake of corporeal movement across many planes.⁸⁵ (See following image.)



Kurt Adams, 2005, still from *Adding Noise To* (duration 7'32") digital drawing/animation (courtesy: the artist)

Also in Dunedin, Ryan Cockburn's drawing with audiotape in space references the elusive, airborne life of sound, while creating its own shadow on walls and then retracting away from itself in a reversing process during a performative event that culminates in its own destruction as a drawing through the rewinding of the tape.⁸⁶ (See following images.)



Ryan Cockburn, 2005, *Drawing in Space*, Segue Gallery, audiotape (courtesy: the artist)

Born not necessarily from actual, physical migratory experiences, but rather from a migratory inclination of the spirit, Adams' and Cockburn's work stretch the limits of contemporary drawing practice, as does the work of Jim Searle discussed earlier. They do this in divergent ways, but their work has in common the disruption of space and the notational character of dispersive drawing connected earlier in this article to migratory experiences. Also — their work takes drawing as a practice beyond itself, vaulting it (once again) beyond stable parameters, much as the migrant functions outside the borders of a known and safe homeland. All three of these young artists push against the boundaries of conventionally accepted drawing practice and, in doing so, they reference the travelling culture of the migrant in the very materiality of their work. This culture excludes them from a “home” within any specific discipline of the visual arts as they always negotiate their ways between such disciplines, finding drawing — the “preparatory” discipline — constantly useful in their explorations.

Such connections as those made above, remind one of Theodor Adorno's famous injunction: “it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home” in order to lead a political, public life and to be vigilantly critical of systems;⁸⁷ or of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's argument for a continuous nomadism of the spirit as antithetical to systems of power.⁸⁸ For a 2003 exhibition entitled “Cities without Citizens: Statelessness and Intimacy in Contemporary Art and Architecture” — organised by the Slought Foundation in Philadelphia — Aaron Levy's curatorial statement expounds that: “‘Genuinely political phenomena and paradigms’, the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben writes, ‘are sought out and experienced in places which are not normally considered political, or only marginally so.’ And it is the refugee, he asserts, ‘formally regarded as a marginal figure, who has become now the decisive factor of the modern nation-states by breaking the nexus between the human being and the citizen...the works [including drawings on this exhibition]...unsettle us in our homes and they unsettle our conception of art...they return to us an image of instability...’”⁸⁹ This article contends that drawing as a practice can *par excellence* make the nomadism and marginality of the migrant materially manifest in its subtle ways of unsettling our conceptions of borders and their concomitant states of stability.

- 1 Albrecht Dürer, "Drawing Teaching in the Studio with Perspectival Frame and Body" (1525, engraving) in Jean Leymarie et al, *History of an Art: Drawing* (Geneva: Skira, 1979), 22. Where possible, examples of drawing prior to the 1980s have been chosen from those reproduced in this source as it is available in many libraries as a standard text on the history of drawing prior to that time and should afford readers with the opportunity to access the images in one publication.
- 2 See Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Skira, 1971).
- 3 Claude Lorrain, "View of the Tiber from Monte Carlo, Rome" (17th century, brush and dark brown wash) in Leymarie, xvi.
- 4 Jean-Jacques Lequeu, "The Draughtsman's Instruments and Techniques" (1782, pen and brown ink and watercolour) in Leymarie, 122.
- 5 Jackson Pollock, "Untitled" (1951, coloured inks on rice paper) in Leymarie, 239.
- 6 Walter de Maria, "Half Mile Long Drawing: Two Parallel Lines 12 Feet Apart" (1968, chalk on the Mohave Desert Floor) in Leymarie, 250.
- 7 Sol Le Witt, "All Possibilities of Two Lines Crossing within Modular Squares of 36 x 36 inches" (1972, pencil on white wall) in Leymarie, 251.
- 8 Julia Kristeva, "Institutional Interdisciplinarity in Theory and Practice" in Coles, Alex and Alexia Defert (eds), *The Anxiety of Interdisciplinarity* (London: Black Dog, de, dis, ex, vol.2, 1998), 21.
- 9 Joseph Beuys, "Untitled: Sun States" (1974, chalk on blackboard), in Leymarie, 249.
- 10 Lynn Taylor, *Mind-Mapping: Brainstorms* (see 3 images included in the text).
- 11 Robert Wyatt, a statement made during an MFA Research Seminar at Otago Polytechnic School of Art, Dunedin, New Zealand, 23 July 2004. Wyatt teaches at the Glasgow School of Art and participates in its International Drawing Research Institute with the College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales in Sydney and the China Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing. See <http://www.cofa.unsw.edu.au/research/idri/default.html> last sighted on 5 November 2005.
- 12 David Rosand, *Drawing Acts: Studies in Graphic Expression and Representation* (London & New York: Cambridge, 1999), 23 and last sighted at www.thenewrepublic.com/doc on 29 January 2003.
- 13 Ralph Sykes, *The Indignant Eye: The Artist as Social Critic in Prints and Drawings from the 15th Century to Picasso* (Boston: Beacon, 1969), xxiv.
- 14 For forceps and line pen, see www.daube.ch/docu/glossary/drawingtools.html last sighted on 4 August 2004.
- 15 Student discussion during an MFA workshop on 20 August 2004 at Otago Polytechnic School of Art, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- 16 See Wyatt as in endnote 11 above. Also see TRACEY: drawing across boundaries at <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ac/tracey/dab/wyatt.html> last sighted on 29 January 2005.
- 17 See for example, Anne Wilson, "Feast" (tabletop drawing with human hair on damask, 2000) and "Lost" (drawing with human hair on cloth with leather cord, 1998) in Hattie Gordon, "Anne Wilson's 'Feast'", *Art Journal*, Fall 2002.
- 18 Concerning Bruce Nauman's neon drawings, see "Artfacts.Net: Bruce Nauman – Neon Sculptures Drawings at <http://www.artfacts.net/index.php/pageType/exhibitionInfo/exhibition/10113>, last sighted on 10 April 2005,
- 19 See *The State of the World's Refugees: In Search of Solutions* (Oxford & New York: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Oxford University Press, 1995).
- 20 Kurt Adams, "Stapled Digital Drawing" (photocopy with ink on paper, March 2005) exhibited at the Blue Oyster Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- 21 Jim Searle, "Drawings in Space with Ripped Rags" (2003-04) exhibited at the Otago Polytechnic School of Art, Dunedin, New Zealand.

22 For example, Cy Twombly, "Untitled" (chalk, oil and gouache, 1971), in Leymarie, 247.
23 See Wyatt as under endnote 11 above.
24 For example, Christopher Crozier, "Bend Down" (from the series "Migrate or Meddle", mixed media on paper, 1997), in Annie Paul, "The Enigma of Survival: Traveling beyond the Expat Gaze", *Art Journal*, Spring 2003: 49-65 (image on 53).
25 See www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/sargentatharvard/drawingglossary.html last visited on 25 August 2004 concerning the use of the word "friable" in relation to drawing.
26 See examples in *The Seven Sketchbooks of Vincent van Gogh* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1987).
27 For examples of Anastasi's conceptualist sketches related to sound (he worked with John Cage in the 1960's) see http://www.artnet.com/artist/1477/William_Anastasi.html last visited on 10 April 2005.
28 Lloyd Jones quoted in the *Otago Daily Times* (on 22/23 May 2004, Magazine: 4) in an interview concerning his book entitled *Paint Your Wife*, in relation to drawing as a social tool.
29 Artist Clive Humphreys quoted from a discussion during a Drawing Research Workshop at Otago Polytechnic School of Art in Dunedin, New Zealand on 2 May 2003.
30 See Jenny Rogers on her "drawlings" at Penn State University Online Research at <http://www.rps.psu.edu/0301/drawlings.html> last visited on 1 April 2005.
31 See Crozier as in endnote 24, "Cross Currents" (wood and paper, installation drawing, 2001).
32 Jeremy Harding, "The Uninvited", *London Review of Books*, 3,2, 2000, 3-15.
33 Irit Rogoff, *Terra Infirma: Geography's Visual Culture* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), 3.
34 Marie Strauss, *Man Walking: In the Far Distance* (drawing with oil on canvas, 2004).
35 Nelson Rohihlahla Mandela, "Aids Community" (lithographic drawing, 2004). See <http://www.vgallery.co.za/2004article18/vzine.htm> last visited on 10 April 2005.
36 Marcel Broodthaers quoted from an interview in Alex Karg et al, *Process: A Tomato Project* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1996), no pagination. Broodthaers argues that line can identify the process of process but that it does not limit the process. This book is a map of process performed in that the form and condition of the book sets out the procedures of the process, as discussed by Karg et al.
37 *Drawing the Passing* (58 minute video documentary, Johannesburg: David Krut Publishers, 2001).
38 William Kentridge has become well known internationally for his distinctive drawing practice. Drawings are created, photographed, changed, photographed again, changed, photographed again and so forth until a short film is compiled. For more information about this process, see Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *William Kentridge* (London: Phaidon, 1999).
39 New Zealand TV1 programme: forum on immigration, on 2 August 2004.
40 See <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/HL0504/500123.htm> last sighted on 9 May 2005.
41 See an editorial published in the *Otago Daily Times* entitled "Border Protection" (2 May 2005), 12.
42 "Isle of Refuge" Exhibition in Australia, see http://www.dcdsca.nt.gov.au/dcdsca.anet.nsf/Pages/AralueenIsle_Refuge last visited on 10 April 2005.
43 Juan Davila's artist protest against apathy concerning the plight of refugees in Australia, see <http://www.abc.net.au/arts/visual/stories/s534433.htm> last visited on 10 April 2005.
44 Deborah Kelly et al, "Boat People" (collaborative exhibitions/events in response to Australian reactions to the refugee influx, 2003), see <http://boat-people.org/> last visited on 10 April 2005.
45 Gordon Bennett, see website supplied under endnote 44 concerning his protest against apathy concerning refugees in Australia, 2003.
46 William Kentridge, *Felix in Exile*, film, see <http://medienkunstnet.de/works/felix-in-exile/> last visited on 10 April 2005.
47 William Kentridge, "Heart" (chalk drawing with Doris Bloom on the landscape near Johannesburg, South Africa, 2000), see Christov-Bakargiev (endnote 38).

- 48 William Kentridge, "S 3E; Gate" (fire-drawing with Doris Bloom near the Electric Workshop in downtown Newtown, Johannesburg, 1994). Kentridge has been paraphrased by Sue Williamson & Ashraf Jamal in *Art in South Africa: The Future Present* (Claremont: David Philip Publishers, 1996), 48: "For Kentridge the mutating suburban gate embodied 'an archaeology of fear'. By way of contrast, Kentridge and Bloom's gate, replete with an archetypal heart, served conversely as 'symbolic barrier between people rather than an absolute wall, a thing that can be easily opened, talked across'."
- 49 An example of many contemporary arts practices in which the suitcase plays a pivotal role is Gavin Young's "Port Out, Starboard Home (POSH)" (vellum-covered leather suitcases and Shangaan sticks, installation piece, 1996), see Williamson & Jamal, 140.
- 50 Rogoff, 39.
- 51 See Sarat Maharaj, *Perfidious Fidelity: The Untranslatability of the Other* (London: Kala Press, 1994), 1.
- 52 Marlene Dumas: *Du concept à l' image: Art Pays-Bas du xx' siècle* (Paris: Musée d' Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1994: "Black Drawings" (ink wash on paper, 1990's).
- 53 Ibid: "Selfportrait" (ink wash on paper, 1990's).
- 54 Ibid, 82: "Homesick" and text from "Sweet Nothings".
- 55 Joan Borsa, "Nomadic Locations, Travelling Subjects: Affirmation of Autobiographical Acts", in Peter White (ed.), *Naming a Practice: Curatorial Strategies for the Future* (Banff: Walter Phillips Editions, 1996), 68-69.
- 56 Searle looked at the paths created by earth worms in the soil and actually brought a sample into his studio in the form of a tray of soil on a tabletop in which the worms created a network of lines as they went about their daily movements through the soil.
- 57 The plastic bags were ripped into shreds to form interconnecting lines across the space.
- 58 Ripped rags were tied together across the space to create a network of trajectories and interconnections. Where they were tied together, nodes of communication were formed within the space. See Searle's work as imaged in this article text.
- 59 This space was very large and provided as a studio for Searle to explore the spatial dimensions of his drawing project further in Minerva Street, Dunedin, New Zealand.
- 60 Searle partly dismantled the space at Minerva Street as he started to slowly insert his drawing into the walls, ceiling and floor of the space.
- 61 See Lynne Cooke, "Donald Judd" at http://www.diacenter.org/exhibs_b/judd/essay.html last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 62 Humberto Mariotti, "Autopoiesis, Culture, and Society" at www.oikos.org/mariotti , 1-8, last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 63 "Sinopia" and "cartoons" indicate different stages of the preparatory drawing for frescoes on walls. See Leymarie, 88, 94 and 99.
- 64 This exhibition was entitled "The Allegorical Imperative: Greg Creek's Slow Homecoming" and the drawing in question here was laid out as continuous sheets of paper on a long table of about 30 meters long. The viewer could see that the piece was made up of separate sheets, but they were obviously intended to be part of one work.
- 65 See Juliana Engberg, "History, Heresy and Hearsay: Greg Creek's Melbourne Desktop Drawing" in *The Allegorical Imperative: Greg Creek's Slow Homecoming*, exhibition catalogue (Melbourne: ACCA, 2003), 36.
- 66 See the work of architect Yung Ho Chang in relation to drawn maps at <http://www.apexart.org/exhibitions/hanru/htm> last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 67 See <http://www.glasgowmuseums.com/sanctuary/exhibition.cfm> last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 68 See <http://www.unhcr.cz/vystava/len.html> last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 69 See Mária Hlavajová as documented in Carolee Thea, *foci: interviews with ten international curators* (New York: Apexart, 2001), 71.

- 70 See the website provided under endnote 67 again. Such conditions were also subtly critiqued by many of the children's drawing relevant to section "4. transmutate" in this article.
- 71 Rogoff, 110.
- 72 See map of refugee camp in Rwanda <http://www.tiscali.co.uk/reference/clopedia/huthinson/lm0019846.html> last sighted on 10 April 2005; and laid out map in the soil around a family in the source provided under endnote 19: *The State of the World's Refugees: In Search of Solutions*.
- 73 See image of this map at http://www.nauruwire_org/images/handmap.htm last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 74 See www.smh.co.au concerning the redrawing of maps of home in relation to refugee situations, last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 75 Alex Rotas, "Is 'Refugee Art' Possible?" *Third Text*, 18 (1), 2004, 51-60.
- 76 Drawings are also often kept in drawers to protect works on paper from damage by too much exposure to light. It is ironic that the very fragility of drawing on paper has contributed to its status as less of a "high" medium than, say, oil paint or bronze. In this sense it seems that the relative permanence of certain materials have directly contributed to their position within a hierarchy of value.
- 77 Ben Jonson, "Sketching Now", *The International Journal of Art & Design Education*, (Special Drawing Issue) 21,3, October 2002, 246-253.
- 78 See Wyatt, endnote 11.
- 79 See images at "Innocent Victims: Children's Drawings from the Woomera Detention centre 2004" at http://www.uniya.org/talks/fawkner_13aug04.html last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 80 See images at http://www.chilout.org/gallery/children_art2.html ; at <http://www.v-i-s-a-s.com.au> ; at <http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9904/14/refugee.children/story.oconnor.kids.jpg> ; and at <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9905/22/kosovo.children.art/link.house.fire.jpg> all last sighted on 10 April 2005.
- 81 See Sarat Maharaj, *Perfidious Fidelity*, 5.
- 82 Ibid, 6.
- 83 Ben Jonson (see endnote 76).
- 84 Olu Oguibe, *The Culture Game* (London & Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 173.
- 85 Kurt Adams is currently working as a digital drawer in the Master of Fine Arts Programme at Otago Polytechnic School of Art in Dunedin, New Zealand. The image included of his work shows a still from a digital moving drawing entitled "Adding Noise To", created in 2005.
- 86 Ryan Cockburn's April 2005 exhibition entitled "Trash Spitacular Music" incorporated this untitled work, which was installed within a narrow passageway in Segue Gallery, Dunedin, New Zealand. During a performance event, it was rewound and thus became "a drawing in reverse" as it were. The images included in this article show the work from various angles before this event.
- 87 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 1997), 38-39.
- 88 Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaux* (New York: Continuum, 1987/1992), 394-494.
- 89 See Aaron Levy at <http://www.inliquid.com/gallery/slought/archives/0103slought.shtml> last visited on 10 April 2005. Also see Giorgio Agamben, *Means without Ends: Notes on Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), x.

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