a fictional history of drawing

I would like to present a fictional history of drawing: achronological and necessarily incomplete. Mine. I am using artworks as illustrations of themselves in this history. I begin with a drawing by James Elkins, writer and historian, *The history of art imagined as a field of stars*, 2002. (1). In this drawing, Elkins constructs his story in a constellation formed of meaningful links and leaps. Rather than taking a linear form, he suggests many possible histories and configurations as ways to investigate the making of meaning.

There is no single history of drawing. I feel that drawing is much like Zen – it cannot be defined, it is not a 'thing' to be surrounded or reflected by words. Cecilia Vicuna on Agnes Martin's drawing writes that talking about drawing, undraws it; 'To speak about drawing, displaces it, undrawing it. The discovery is in displacement, the beginning, the transformation.' [i] Drawing not only occupies, but constitutes this relational space.

Drawing is seen as an inherent condition of contemporary practice, an open-system that allows for openness and uncertainty. Traditional understandings of drawing in the west shifted in the 1960's and the new status of drawing was established in an International survey show: DRAWING NOW: 1955-1975 at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Forthcoming survey texts and exhibitions focussed on contemporary 'drawing the expanded field'. [ii] They posit drawing as the primary means of expression, and as something useful to get things started. They display a variety of mediums to show how drawing sits variously within other practices and traditions. Chapter headings include; measurement, nature, drafting and architecture, comics, mental maps, definition, exposition, ritual, exploration, metaphysics, city, dreams, body, anxiety… It seems drawing can be all of these things and still not be defined by them.

In one book I found a coda – '… the categories seem to be interchangeable. They have no relevance to the meaning of art. They have been established to structure the experience of those who may find art difficult.' [iii] I agree.

….

Bernice Rose writes that drawing may be 'understood as a language of its own and a language of origination.' [iv] A look at contemporary practice in works by Australian artists Agatha Gothe-Snape, Vin Ryan, Ricky Swallow, Mira Gojak, Laith McGregor and Gabrielle and Silvana Magnano confirms that no taxonomy of drawing conventions or singular definition of drawing is relevant. It seems that drawing is about relationship, mutuality and linkage rather than a sedimentary mode. (Images 2-7) I am interested in the way that drawing, or 'thinking-drawing' elucidates practice. Drawing as an approach to thinking about creativity and the encounter with art work, as methodology rather than medium, cultural artefact and social device.

Catherine De Zegher writes that drawing is relevant now because there is a 'correspondence between the intrinsic qualities of practice and its capacity to resonate with our perception of world.' [v] Drawing proposes an alternative way of looking at flux and instability in the world around us. In place of reacting against negative or coercive forces that seem to be out of our individual control, drawing offers a model that allows for engagement, for the formation of new conceptions of self and reality.

In *Paradox of Praxis 1, (Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing),* 1997, Francis Alys enacts a paseo (walk) in Mexico City. (Image 8). The film depicts a simple and seemingly pointless endeavour - a large block of ice being pushed through the city streets for 9 hours until it melts away to nothing. It's structure is entropic and makes me think about the nature of creative practice, the necessarily open and uncertain space of making in which there is no definitive movement towards a specific target.

For me, drawing-based practice is propositional.
Drawing leads to more drawing.

The agency of drawing is full of potential. It allows us to think about art making as nonteleological, without a known outcome or explicit motive. While on some level no justification is required, it is a rich space for ethical consideration. This is the generative space that drawing offers us to attend to.

….

So what are the intrinsic characteristics of drawing?
Incompleteness, not geared towards closure or completion, potential for diversity, it can deal with lack, lots of information… [vi] (Everyone pretty much agrees on these characteristics).

'Drawing seems prehistoric, coextensive with the human.' [vii] The earliest most durable drawings were scratched. They were linear and geometric, not animal. John Berger describes drawings as 'eddies in time' and says that looking at these cave drawings by our prehistoric ancestors somehow enacts their mysterious past. [viii] Earlier still were ephemeral drawings in earth, on the body. Drawing and ritual were ways to engage meaningfully with the world and link with language and story, dance and spirit.

….

What is the ontology of drawing? How a drawing happens is significant.

A child's drawing in Texta of a floating house that sits with a printed image, monkey and phone on the back of a storybook cover found in opportunity shop. What I like about this drawing is the way the two registers (printed and gestural) sit one with the other. (Image 9).

Like chalk drawings on the footpath… Arms splayed, a chalk outline traced around their bodies, children begin to colour themselves in – to inhabit the trace. Some are young enough not to have completely learned the conventions of pictorial representation. Watching them draw – a myriad of silent small creative decisions, one leading smoothly but necessarily to the next. In the river of drawing, their gestural markings are determined as much by constraint (limited dexterity and the chunky sticks of chalk) as by the looseness with which they think/create. Trying out ways of representing their emerging sense of themselves, they draw the inside and the outside, the visible and the felt and the imagined. Their interpretations shift, re-looking at their drawings from a newly discovered vantage.

Drawing is a kind of learning and reflection about feeling and being in the world. Activity and instrument. Drawing is a coded system within which we situate and understand self, and our place in the collective. (Is there such a thing as before the coded system. Do we think in pictures?)

…

The invention of drawing according to its creation myth from the end of the 18th Century in the west, tells of the daughter of a potter who marks the silhouette of the shadow of her lover cast on the wall in the light of a flickering candle as he prepares to leave. She draws to keep something of him in his absence. The drawing is an indexical trace much like the indentation left upon the pillow when we sleep or the trace of the sleeper in Warhol's film. (Image 10) It is also an action, marking present that which is absent. Like Anne Miron's work, *Falling In Paris,* 2011, created during a recent residency. The artist was collecting cardboard on the streets in Paris for a new work and discovered the imprint of a body on one piece. She had unwittingly taken someone's bed. (Image 11)

In the act of making visible or becoming, drawings are always abstractions. This abstraction allows the process of drawing to encode multiple ways of seeing.

In *I AM STILL ALIVE*, 1973, Japanese painter, draughtsman and conceptual artist, On Karawa wrote and sent a series of telegrams in the 1970s, which sent the message 'I am still alive' to his friends. (Image 12). Art as the verification of his own existence. Art that allows us to step out the line of history, chronology and abstracted time, and into a double consciousness that permits an understanding of death in life.

As they record the process of their own making, drawings have a paradoxical status that allows a 'potentially unfixed and fluent relation to process.' [ix]

….

An order cancelled in the process of being made. This is what I feel drawing to be. (It is both drawing and the machine).

…

Pictures drawn in chalk, like Tacita Dean's, *Roaring Forties: Seven Boards in Seven Days,* 1997, record the process of their own making. The erasures, drawing and redrawing create another kind of doubling, that conveys an unfixedness or flux. (Image 13).

Other drawings in chalk perhaps also speak of a kind of navigation. Joseph Beuys, *Directive Forces (Richtkräfte),* 1974-77, (Image 14) and Rudolf Steiner, *What is Thinking, 20 April 1923* (Image 15) were made as part of didactic demonstrations. The remaining boards are exhibited as 'drawings' and as records of those performances/communications. According to Steiner, an Austrian who devised a 'spiritual science' which sought to link western rationalism with what he perceived to be the inner and spiritual needs of a human being, 'Drawing is the trace of a process of materialization giving visible form to thinking processes.' [x] I am interested in this relationship of thought and drawing – 'drawing-thinking'.

……..

In Tacita Dean's film, *Still Life*, 2009, cryptic marks on paper made by painter Giorgio Morandi to record the configurations of his vessels for his own still life works were filmed as found in his studio. (Image 16). A document, these traces stream by slowly. Meaning is elusive, somewhere beyond the framing that presents them. Dean is interested in the qualities and limitations of a medium, both as a means to access art and as the systematic exploration of an art.

Drawings that let us see the internal world, make visible the beliefs that shape our physical and mental realms. In *Merce Cunningham Performs STILLNESS…*, 2008, one of a series of film portraits, Cunningham, the American dancer and choreographer sits in a chair in a room used for dance practice with a wall sized mirror behind him. (Image 17) In this stillness - shared with viewer in real time - an event happens, a choreography, the body in space as a drawing, its awareness forming in the mirror. Dean offers a double reading that renders both the utterance and conditions of enunciation perceptible.

…..

It is interesting to note that much of Dean's work concerns monastic life and it has been suggested that the monastery 'gave human enterprise the collective beat of the machine'. [xi] The cloisters were places of confinement, self-discipline and restraint, architectured for the creation of an order that eschews doubt, irregularity, surprise. Places for the re-making of the body for spiritual progress, and reminiscent of the mechanistic (rather than humanistic) body view that came with industrialisation and mass production.

In Dean's film, *The Friar's Doodle,* 2010, a drawing becomes a process that becomes a film. (Image 18) As a girl Tacita Dean found a photocopy of a drawing in a book give to her by a Franciscan friar at Canterbury. Her attempts to track the monk who drew the doodle were fruitless so she made this film. Installed low in a dark room of a monastery, the grain of the film plays against the stone, the doodle loops without end much like the film. With the whir and grind of the projector, something happens in the space between the screen and the observation of the conditions of projection to create an embodied experience. Looking is not just visual, but haptic, and involves memory.

Dean writes that 'The doodle has no exit. Its continuing cyclical journey reminds me of the Benedictine monk walking round the cloisters… defining a life by walking it like defining a life by drawing it.' [xii]

….

Drawing, like line, is constitutive. It creates space, relationships. A line can be defining and also fluid. Like a path, like a doodle, it can connect and separate.

In Richard Long's, *Line made by walking*, London, 1967, (Image 19) and Francis Alys, *Painting Retoque*, Paraiso, Panama, 2008, (Image 20) there is the creative body and the idea of time. Alys is repainting lines of demarcation and flow, lines already laid down. It seems a futile act, and not very creative, but in his coded act of iteration Aly's asks questions about the subjection of common space, and who draws the place of the individual on a map of inherited social and political understandings.

'The medium of drawing may be explored as a philosophical model of relationships and resistance.' [xiii] The idea of resistance being a folding of one into another, rather than a dichotomy of one in opposition to another is the space of drawing. It is also the space of eastern thought. Rather than western dualism either/or, the semiotic both/and of drawing is transitive. The way drawing operates, infiltrating other media is about connectivity, transposition and mediation.

'Thinking-drawing' allows the transfer of properties or attributes of one medium to another. Richard Tuttle's Wire Pieces, 1970-2010, show how gesture is equally informed by the thing it acts upon. (Image 21). The artist enters a meditative state to draw a single line directly on the wall. He traces the line's trajectory with a wire line that exists in three dimensions, making a third linear element with shadow. Tuttle transposes the methods, materials and liminality of drawing to sculpture. His insistence on formal transparency and condensed materiality allows a movement towards the immaterial and conveys the humble, unmediated nature of drawing.

Tuttle is also concerned with the way of seeing. The ground of meaning. He manipulates the space in which his objects exist to reconfigure viewer's relationship to the work in unexpected ways and 'liberate the eye and mind' and free the viewer from the 'blindness of intellectual habit.' [xiv]

…

Vija Celmins is a Latvian artist working in the Untied States who transposes photographs into monochromatic drawings made of charcoal, charcoal dust and eraser. (Image 22). The artist spends months on a single image to create 'a surface that has small facets that rigorously account for and record every intersection.' She describes drawing as 'a lived on surface.' [xv] Australian artist Matt Hinckley creates another kind of 'lived on' surface. Hinckley's hand-made pencil drawings and delicate carvings on existing graphics, reflect an interest in skilled traditional craft and design of everyday objects. The hand-made quality of his objects flips into a computer generated sensibility of regular, all-over patterning. (Image 23).

In Gabrielle Orozco's, *From Roof to Roof*, 1993, the indexicality of photographic image becomes the property of sculpture. (Image 24). In *My Hands are My Heart*, 1991, a sculpture becomes a filmic gesture. (Image 25). Orozco works where he can and makes with what is at hand. His work is contingent upon his observation the relationships between physical phenomena and thought processes. This 'work' is like the way we exist in the world. It disrupts categories. Folding one into another.

…..

Thinking about drawing and the path of thought and the spiritual path… The path is something created as you walk, it unfolds, unlike a road…

finding ways to give voice to uncertainty and doubt while at the same time pressing for meaning.

Drawing on ancient symbolism, Robert Rauchenberg uses the proliferation of everyday printed material to 'frame' the void in *Mother of God*, ca. 1950. (Image 26). The artist references the Eastern symbol of the void (Image 27) and a different way of thinking about the metaphysics of presence and absence. The space of not-knowing or can be conceived as a space of plenitude and possibility. Allowing for different kinds of knowing also allows space for intuition and constitutive doubt.

Hilma af Klint was a Swedish artist interested in Theosophy and Buddhism, whose work was discovered in the 1980's after a lifetime of self-imposed obscurity. Klint created abstract imagery using sacred geometry derived from early astronomical calculations. An early abstract art that is not reductive in approach and exhibits a curiosity about process and self-understanding, her work assumes that the world is an ordered and potentially understandable path toward the invisible, beyond. (Image 28).

Unlike the Shaker Gift Drawings, 1840-50, in which the artist/'instrument' as an interpreter of the divine translates messages from the spirit world to create drawings 'in the line of writing' as emblems of new heaven on earth, [xvi] the space Klint's work creates 'is not that of nature or spirit idea or transcendence but a relation to thinking – to subjectivity as it relates to the world.' [xvii]

Agnes Martin, wrote that 'Line doesn't have to describe anything. It focuses you, beyond it and beyond yourself.' [xviii] According to Martin the work exists 'in the mind as well as the hand'. [xix] Drawing points to the active process of making as well as the quiescent. Drawing is language of inquiry that permits the articulation of a flexible subjectivity. (image 29)

Understandings of subjectivity also address vantage. Tantric drawings (Image 30) used for mediative focus are a ritual art that arranges objects of awareness into a pattern of offering. Creating and viewing these drawings are 'right actions' and such activity and engagement brings 'a sense of equilibrium in a condition of change.' [xx] They offer a view of microcosm and macrocosm, self and world.

…..

The influence of eastern philosophy on the development of drawing-based practice in the west especially thinking on process, nature of self, social ethics and responsibility has allowed for understanding of drawing as a socially constructive space. For Marcel Duchamp, 'it is not what you see that is art, art is the gap'. [xxi] (Image 31) To be open to this gap, is to be in the space of not knowing, to experience something in the moment. It is a space to draw from, a space of transformation.

In *Passage with Backpack Hive*, 1985, U.S. artist Mark Thompson, created a meditative attentiveness interacting with honeybees. (Image 32). Wearing a hive as backpack, he walked extremely slowly in relation to the natural patterns of the honeybees, uniting practice and process by 'walking with another life form in an irregular way, creating a passage, something akin to Zazen.' [xxii]

Rirkrit Tiravanija, a Thai artist established 'The Land', 1988-ongoing to cultivate ideas of social engagement. (Image 33). He describes it as 'a place for mediation and as a relational structure that emanates from Buddhist concepts… A kind of formlessness, where there is no form to follow.' [xxiii]

The artist creates space for fear, uncertainty, and doubt and also for experiment, discovery, relationship, openness, trust, growth and change. 'The Land is about finding a structure outside the structure.' [xxiv]

…..

Working within the parameters of ambiguity and fluidity, artists formulate strategies to discover their methods of realization. Seeking to open up and create a space, rather than restore … artists choose to 'let things happen' in an effort to acknowledge the contingency and complexity of human experience. Artists like Yves Klein, *Cosmonogie pluie (COS22) Rain Cosmogony* 1961, (Image 34) and Lindy Lee, *The Universal Record of the Flame*, 2011 (Image 35) choose to collaborate with materials, environment, time…

Andy Goldsworthy is a British artist who constructs sculptures of raw materials in their environment and photographs them. (Image 36). His parameters are stringent – he will only use materials at hand, no additions, and leaves the work to the elements. For Goldsworthy, 'The energy and space around a material are as important as the energy and space within.' [xxv]

…

So, what to draw?

In Gabriel Orozco's work on graph paper, *Spitting Grid*, 1993, stains made by toothpaste and saliva are encircled as if the wayward elements dictate the shape of drawing. (Image 37). In some parts the artist has redrawn the grid, interlocking the forms. Works like *Puddle 74*, 1996, foreground shifting relationships between organic growth and inorganic geometry, the hand-made and mechanical, concentration and distraction.

There are many ways artists incorporate unwilled elements. Framing a chance event by choosing to set up philosophical, physical conditions for making is different from creating a frame for a chance event to happen. Susan Jacob's work for the Adelaide Biennial, 2012, *Snake Drawing* is a film of the artist holding a snake as it writhes across a table of sand. (Image 38). The silicon in the sand will harden and act as a mould for casting in bronze. Jacob's 'thinks about the act of making as being an embodied philosophy of drawing'. [xxvi] From the press release; 'Snake drawing allows for considerations of fear to be given material form… investigating the potential between certain levels of control and unpredictability. Mark-making is likely to depend on numerous factors, including temperature, animal temperament, texture, human and animal interaction, fear and patience.' [xxvii]

.....

Some drawings become important with time. In time all drawings become records. It's a kind of entropy. Document and project, archive and blueprint… drawing has a temporal sense not unlike that of the museum. John Cage's notational drawing, *Music for Carillon #4,* Page 3. 1961, is a notation for the creation (or imagination) of a layered silence. Jack Kerouac's, typescript scroll, *Dharma Bums 'Greek reject, November'*, 1957, shows the erroneous and discarded information that is so much a part of the work of an artist. (Image 39). Things are contiguous, in relationship, as ideas unfold, work to work they leave a track, threads of thought interweave. Yoko Ono's *Painting to be constructed in your head (1) (from the series, Instructions for Paintings)* Spring, 1962, (score version). (Image 40)

…..

Drawing also mediates. It is responsive to movement. Gesture observes the energy of things.
In Joseph Beuys' drawing *From the Life of the Bees*, 1956, mark-making registers the way in which bees live and work together. (Image 41). Lines that appear to bee the trailing passage of bees explode into form – hives, honeycomb, wings – only to become submerged in activity.

In Leonardo Da Vinci's, *Study of Water Falling into Still Water*, 1508-9, there is a rounding through reiterated elements. (Image 42). Gesture creates itself as an object to generate like forms in a

systemic patterning. This drawing of intensities, frequencies, and traces of invisible events is an abstract writing. The force of wind can only be seen by its traces on things and beings.

In *Letter Of Resignation, The Thirty-Eight Drawings, VII,* 1991, (Image 43.) Cy Twombly works in two registers - notation and gesture; 'the artist's intrinsic rhythm and a kind of automatism, and the register of a sign system like writing'. [xxviii] Opposed to the idea that a work constitutes something complete, Twombly produces a 'text' that creates nothing, has no definitive or finished version and consist only of its own genesis.

In *A Vacant Bazaar (provisional legend),* 1999-2010, Christian Cappurro exhibits work as part of an ongoing conceptual project involving language and meaning. (Image 44). Nine popular lifestyle-fashion magazines were almost completely rubbed out by the artist over the last decade except page numbering, covers and a particular advertisement common to all of them. The homogenous mass of erasings is also exhibited, some as numbered page-piles. Endlessly expanding and dissipating, the work dissolves into itself becoming a kind of negation that enhances its meaning.

The declarative simplicity Tom Freidman's work; *1,000 Hours of Staring, 'a piece of paper the artist has stared at for one thousand hours*', 1992-7, literally describes process, limit and material. (Image 45). It is however a meditative work in which the connection between things is so slight that they are not read as a whole. In this space both the artist and viewer question the shape of their own thoughts.

Anna Barriball's work practice explores and depicts the accretion of time. In *Bag drawing*, 2000, the artist has covered a carrier bag with fluoresecent red marker pen, inside and out. (Image 46). Her interventions produce objects that combine a minimalistic rigour and the seemingly endless endeavour to make sense of the world of objects.

Mona Hatoum's fragile grids formed of human hair, *Untitled (hair grid with knots 3)* 2002, human hair, hair spray, paper, 33.7 x 27.3cm & *Untitled (grey hair grid with knots 3)* 2002, (Image 47) suggest the impossibility of encoding experience and gently intimate mortality.

John Gerrard's, *Oil Stick Work Angelo Martinez*, Richfield, Kansas, 2008-2038, (Image 48) is a programmatic work. A filmic record of the daily work of a Mexican labourer employed by the artist to blacken a square of the exterior of a disused silo each day for thirty years – half a lifetime's work – in the final rendering, the building in the landscape will appear to have disappeared into blackness.

…

Drawing is about the idea and act of drawing itself.

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[i] Cecilia Vicuna, The Melody of Structures, in Catherine De Zeger & Hendel Teicher (Eds.), 3 X Abstraction, New Methods Of Drawing Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, the Drawing Center, New York, 2005.

[ii] Recent survey publications and exhibitions include: Emma Dexter, Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing, Phaidon Press, London, 2005; Laura Hoptman, Drawing NOW: Eight Propositions, exhibition catalogue, MOMA, New York, 2003; Tania Kovats, ed., The Drawing Book, a survey of drawing: the primary means of expression, Black Dog Publishing, London, 2005; Christine morrow, I Walk The Line: New Australian Drawing, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2009; Jus' Drawn: The ProppaNOW Collective; Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, 2010 & touring; Drawing Folio 1 & 2, Block Projects, Melbourne, 2011 & 2012.
(note on terminology 'expanded field',:Krauss's 1979 essay identified sculpture's placement within an 'expanded field' as a condition of postmodernism.)

[iii] R.H.Fuchs, Funkties van Tekenen, Functions of Drawing, Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, exhibition catalogue, 1975.

[iv] Bernice Rose, Allegories of Modernism, Contemporary Drawing, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1976? p18.

[v] Catherine De Zegher, 'Drawn to you', Whitney Biennial 2004, exhibition catalogue, 2004.

[vi] Catherine De Zegher, 'Drawn to you', Whitney Biennial 2004, exhibition catalogue, 2004.

[vii] Stephen Farthing, Keynote Speaker, RMIT Drawing Symposium, Melbourne, 2011.

[viii] John Berger, Berger on Drawing, Occasional Press Cork, Ireland, September 2002

[ix] Catherine De Zegher, 'Drawn to you', Whitney Biennial 2004, exhibition catalogue, 2004.

[x] Allison Holland, ed., Joseph Beuys and Rudolph Steiner: Imagination, Inspiration, Intuition, exhibition catalogue, NGV International, Melbourne, 2007.

[xi] Miguel Sobrino González, 'Etched in Stone', in Tacita Dean, The Friar's Doodle 2010, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Abadía de Santo Domingo de Silos, 2010. Exhibition catalogue.

[xii] Tacita Dean in Tacita Dean, The Friar's Doodle 2010, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Abadía de Santo Domingo de Silos, 2010. Exhibition catalogue.

[xiii] Catherine De Zegher, 'Drawn to you', Whitney Biennial 2004, exhibition catalogue, 2004.

[xiv] Grynsztejn, Madeleine, ed. The Art of Richard Tuttle, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 2007. Exhibition catalogue, November 11, 2006 - February 4, 2007

[xv] Vija Celmins quoted in 'Interview' by Robert Gober in Lane Relyea et al, Vija Celmins, Phaidon, 2010.

[xvi] France Morin, ed. Heavenly Visions : Shaker Gift Drawings and Gift Songs, The Drawing Center, New York, 2001.

[xvii] Elizabeth Finch, 'Making Pictures Belong : Hilma af Klint's Order of Transcendence', in Catherine De Zegher & Hendel Teicher (Eds.), 3 X Abstraction, New Methods Of Drawing Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, the Drawing Center, New York, 2005.

[xviii] Agnes Martin in Catherine De Zeger & Hendel Teicher (Eds.), 3 X Abstraction, New Methods Of Drawing Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, the Drawing Center, New York, 2005, p. 58

[xix] ib.id.

[xx] Franck André Jamme, Tantra Song, siglio press, Los Angeles, 2011.

[xxi] Marcel Duchamp quoted in Catherine De Zegher & Hendel Teicher (Eds.), 3 X Abstraction, New Methods Of Drawing Hilma Af Klint, Emma Kunz, Agnes Martin, the Drawing Center, New York, 2005.

[xxii] Mark Thompson quoted in 'Performance and the experiential present', in Alexandra Munroe, The Third Mind, American Artists Contemplate Asia, 1860-1989, Guggenheim, New York, 2009.

[xxiii] Rirkrit Tiravanija in Baas, Jacquelyn & Jacob, Mary Jane, eds., Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004

[xxiv] Rirkrit Tiravanija in Baas, Jacquelyn & Jacob, Mary Jane, eds., Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art, University of California Press, Berkeley, 2004

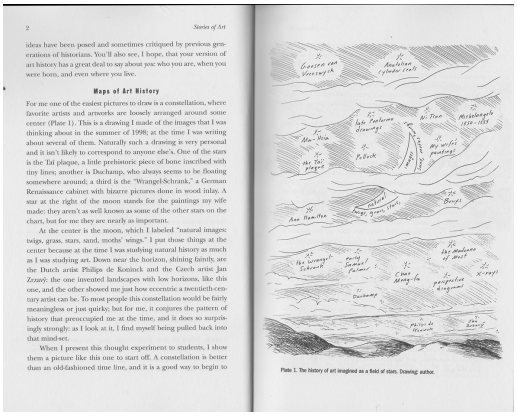
[xxv] Andy Goldsworthy quoted in 'Rivers and Tides: Andy Goldsworthy working with time', a documentary film, Director - Thomas Riedelsheimer.

[xxvi] Susan Jacobs quoted in Pip Wallis, 'The Serpent's Story; Susan Jacobs Interview', das SUPER PAPER, 22, March 2012, p33-36.

[xxvii] Susan Jacobs, Adelaide biennial, 2012, Art Gallery of South Australia, online. *http://www.artgallery.sa.gov.au/agsa/home/Exhibitions/Adelaide_Biennial_2012/Susan_Jacobs.html*

[xxviii] Richard Leeman, Cy Twombly: A Monograph, Thames and Hudson, London, 2005.

Images



2 *Stories of Art*

ideas have been posed and sometimes critiqued by previous generations of historians. You'll also see, I hope, that your version of art history has a great deal to say about you who you are, when you were born, and even where you live.

Maps of Art History

For me one of the easiest pictures to draw is a constellation, where favorite artists and artworks are loosely arranged around some center (Plate 1). This is a drawing I made of the images that I was thinking about in the summer of 1998; at the time I was writing about several of them. Naturally such a drawing is very personal and it isn't likely to correspond to anyone else's. One of the stars is the Tai plaque, a little prehistoric piece of bone inscribed with tiny lines; another is Duchamp, who always seems to be floating somewhere around; a third is the "Wrangel-Schrank," a German Renaissance cabinet with bizarre pictures done in wood inlay. A star at the right of the moon stands for the paintings my wife made; they aren't as well known as some of the other stars on the chart, but for me they are nearly as important.

At the center is the moon, which I labeled "natural images: twigs, grass, stars, sand, moths' wings." I put those things at the center because at the time I was studying natural history as much as I was studying art. Down near the horizon, shining faintly, are the Dutch artist Philips de Koninck and the Czech artist Jan Zrzavý: the one invented landscapes with low horizons, like this one, and the other showed me just how eccentric a twentieth-century artist can be. To most people this constellation would be fairly meaningless or just quirky; but for me, it conjures the pattern of history that preoccupied me at the time, and it does so surprisingly strongly: as I look at it, I find myself being pulled back into that mind-set.

When I present this thought experiment to students, I show them a picture like this one to start off. A constellation is better than an old-fashioned time line, and it is a good way to begin to

Plate 1. The history of art imagined as a field of stars. Drawing: author.

James Elkins The history of art imagined as a field of stars 2002

1



Vin Ryan, Eleven Transactions 2008, detail

2



Laith McGregor, Untitled (table top drawing) 2011, West Space.

3



Ricky Swallow,The Days Aren't Different Enough #4, unique bronze 2009, 54.6 x 35.6 x 2.5cm.

4



Mira Gojak, From the Outside to the Outside, 2009, epoxy paint on wire, steel, copper and wool, dimensions variable.

5



Gabriella and Silvana Mangano, if... so... then, 2006, video still, digital video, sound, 7.36 mins

6



Agatha Gothe- Snape, Every Artist Remembered, performance stills

7



Paradox of Praxis 1, (Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing), Mexico City 1997, 4:59 min.

8



Found child's drawing (monkey, phone and floating house)

9



Andy Warhol, Sleep, 1963, film, installation view, MOMA, New York.

10



Annee Miron, Falling In Paris, 2011,Trocadero Art Space, view, detail.

11



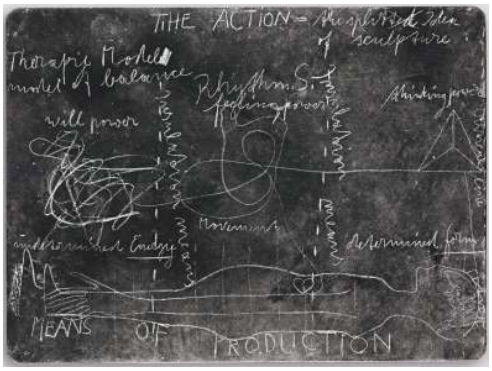
On Karawa, I AM STILL ALIVE, 1973. Ballpoint pen on four telegrams, each 5 14.9 x 21cm.

12



Tacita Dean, Roaring Forties: Seven Boards in Seven Days, 1997.

13



Joseph Beuys, Directive Forces (Richtkräfte), 1974-77, blackboard no.52

14



Rudolf Steiner, What is Thinking 20 April 1923
'Thinking means: to do something inwardly just as one does it outwardly... give yourself another little jolt in order to make the transition from feeling your arm or leg movements to feeling your inner forces of thinking then... you feel... your etheric human being, your being of formative forces. And you experience that being as something woven entirely of thoughts.'

15



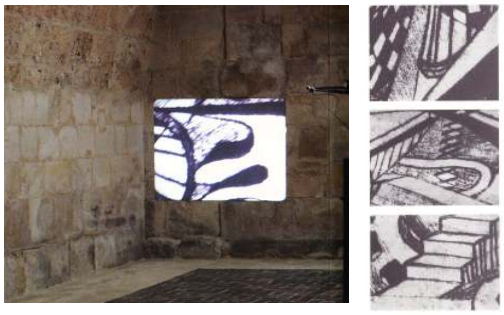
Tacita Dean Still Life, 2009. Location shot.

16



Tacita Dean, with Trevor Carlson, Merce Cunningham performs STILLNESS 2008, 16mm film, installation.

17



Tacita Dean, The Friar's Doodle 2010, 16mm film loop,MuseoNacionalCentrodeArteReinaSofia, AbadíadeSantoDomingo deSilos.

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Richard Long, Line made by walking, London, 1967.

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Francis Alys, Painting Retoque, Paraiso, Panama, 2008, video 8.31min.

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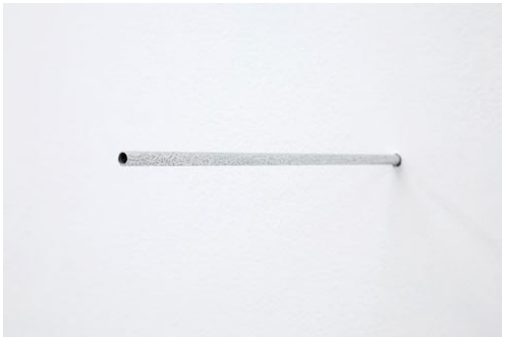


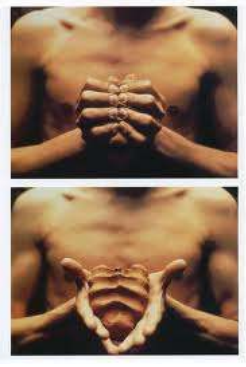
Image - Matt Hinckley, *Untitled (MH10-32) detail,* 2010, Modified found object, 14.5 x 45.5 x 3.5cm

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Gabrielle Orozco, From Roof to Roof, 1993, silver dye bleach print, 40.6 x 50.8cm, ed.5.

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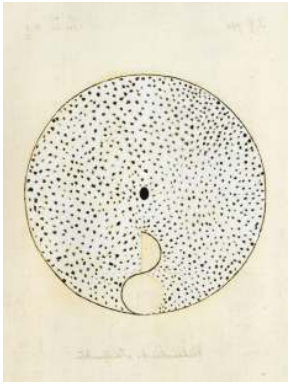
Pure consciousness, metaphysical void, Rajasthan, India, 1700

26



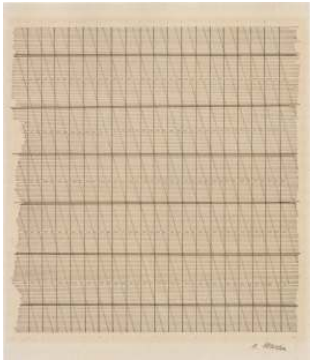
Robert Rauschenberg, Mother of God, ca. 1950,
oil, enamel, printed maps, newspaper, copper & metallic paint on Masonite, 121.9 x 81.6cm.

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Hilma af Klint, series II, no. 3d, The teaching system of Buddhism, January 1920.

28



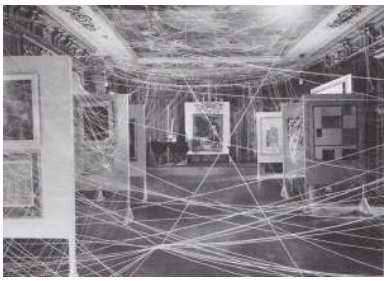
Agnes Martin, Orchards of Lightning, 1966.

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Tantrika 1999, near Udaipur, India.

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Marcel Duchamp, Sixteen Miles of String, 1942

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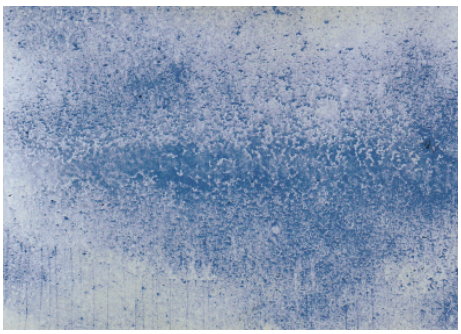
Mark Thompson, Passage with Backpack Hive, Point Arena, California, 1985.

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Rirkrit Tiravanija, The Land, 1998-ongoing, Sanpatong, Thailand.

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Lindy Lee, The Universal Record of the Flame, 2011, inkjet print and fire on paper, 221 x 114 x 10cm.

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Andy Goldsworthy, Snowball Drawing Burrowdale, 1991-92, snow and slate on watercolour paper, 151.7 x 121.3cm.

36



Gabriel Orozco, Primero fue la Escupida 3, First was the Spitting 3, 1993.

37



Susan Jacobs, Snake Drawing, Adelaide Biennial, 2012

38



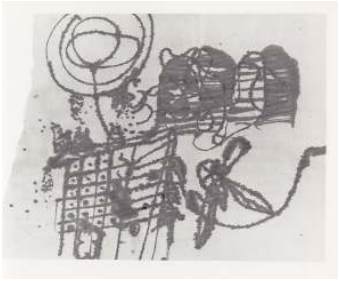
Jack Kerouac, Dharma Bums 'Greek' reject, November" 1957 (from verso), typescript scroll, 101.6 x 21.6cm.

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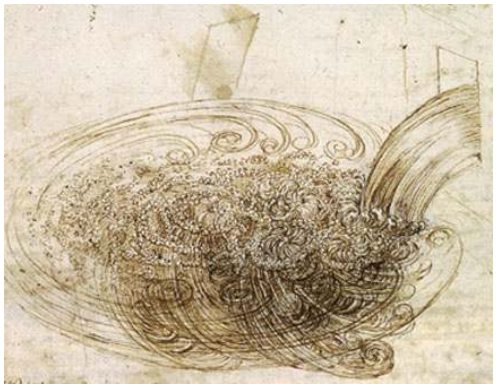
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Joseph Beuys, From the Life of the Bees, aus dem Leben der Bienen, oxide on paper, 1956

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Leonardo Da Vinci, Study of Water Falling into Still Water, 1508-9

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Cy Twombly, Letter Of Resignation, The Thirty-Eight Drawings, VII, 1991

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Christian Capurro, A Vacant Bazaar (provisional legend) 1999-2010.

44

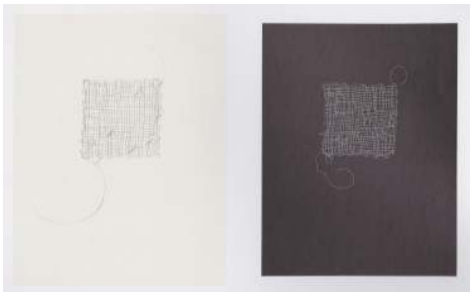
Tom Freidman, *1,000 Hours of Staring, 'a piece of paper the artist has stared at for one thousand hours'* (1992-7).

45



Anna Barriball, *Bag drawing*, 2000, Marker pen on carrier bag, 46 x 37 x 21cm.

46



Mona Hatoum, Untitled (hair grid with knots 3), human hair, hair spray, paper, 33.7 x 27.3cm

& Untitled (grey hair grid with knots 3) 2002

47



John Gerrard, Oil Stick Work Angelo Martinez, Richfield, Kansas, 2008-2038.

48

Image List

1 - James Elkins, *The history of art imagined as a field of stars*, 2002, in James Elkins, Stories of Art, Routledge, New York and London, 2002, plate 1. p.3.

2 - Vin Ryan, *Eleven Transactions*, 2008, (installation detail), Trocadero, Melbourne, 2008.
The artist has an archive of found notes which he has classified into themes and according to place found and date. In this work notes 'purchased at a agreed price' from homeless people asking for money on the streets in Melbourne is about place, negotiating relationships, 'real' people, the value of the art object and the medium of collection.

3 - Laith McGregor, *Untitled (table top drawing)* 2011, West Space.
Executed over the duration of one year, the work-bench covered with paper was used in McGregor's studio to record his thoughts while making. It is transformed into a table tennis table to be played on in the space through the duration of the show. There was also a blackboard wall for visitors' drawings.

4 - Ricky Swallow, *The Days Aren't Different Enough #4*, unique bronze 2009, 54.6 x 35.6 x 2.5cm.

5 – Mira Gojak, *From the Outside to the Outside*, 2009, epoxy paint on wire, steel, copper and wool, dimensions variable.

6 – Gabriella and Silvana Mangano, *if… so… then*, 2006, video still, digital video, sound, 7.36 mins.

7 - Agatha Gothe-Snape, *Every Artist Remembered*, 2011, performance still and poster.
Instanced several times, most recently at ACCA, Gothe-Snape invites artists to sit with her it the exhibition space and collaborate to draw a list or kind of map of the conversation. Drawing from memory, one nominates an artist, and this triggers an association, and so on. The audience/visitor is invited to watch but not participate in the 'performance'. The works remain as records of the drawing and as 'drawings' in the conventional sense which are reproduced as postcards for sale.

8 – Francis Alys, *Paradox of Praxis 1, (Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing),* Mexico City 1997, 4:59 min.

9 – Found child's drawing (monkey, phone and floating house). Photograph – the author, 2010.

10 - Andy Warhol, *Sleep*, 1963, film, installation view, MOMA, New York.

11 – Annee Miron, *Falling in Paris,* 2011, cardboard, seven panels, approx, 170 x 60cm, Installation view, Trocadero, 2011.

12 - On Karawa, *I AM STILL ALIVE,* 1973. Ballpoint pen on four telegrams, each 5 14.9 x 21cm.

13 - Tacita Dean, *Roaring Forties: Seven Boards in Seven Days, 1997*, Sea Inventory Drawings, 1998; Chere petite soeur, 2002.

14 - Joseph Beuys, *Directive Forces (Richtkräfte),* 1974-77, blackboard no.52

15 - Rudolf Steiner, *What is Thinking 20 April 1923.*
'Thinking means: to do something inwardly just as one does it outwardly… give yourself another little jolt in order to make the transition from feeling your arm or leg movements to feeling your inner forces of thinking then… you feel… your etheric human being, your being of formative forces. And you experience that being as something woven entirely of thoughts.'

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17 - Tacita Dean – *Merce Cunningham Performs STILLNESS…*, 2008, 16mm film.

18 – Tacita Dean, *The Friar's Doodle*, 2010, 16mm film loop, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Abadía de Santo Domingo de Silos, 2010.

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