



Hidehiko Ishibashi, Drawing Between, 2005

## **Drawing Today**

### **New definitions and possibilities**

William Kentridge employs **traditional techniques mixed with new technology** and exhibits in a contemporary way i.e. multi screen video installation.

Rita Duffy uses a form of **Objective drawing** rooted in traditions from 19<sup>th</sup> Century realism and the political art of Courbet or Goya. Her work is an interesting counterpoint to many photographic and filmic representations of the same themes.

Their work has a level of skill and technical virtuosity and interestingly is popular with both the public and a large part of the art community.

Many Artists are now producing highly finished drawings on a large scale, using a great deal of detail similar to the **Presentation drawings** that became popular in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Presentation drawings were highly finished drawing used to present ideas about large scale projects, but became works in their own right.

Artists have used the idea of **drawing with objects** in different ways, artists such as Jessica Stockholder create giant collaged drawings made from objects which appear to have been rescued from skips. Tomoko Takahashi has developed a language where scattered objects and ephemera from the real world create environments, which are like the torrents and maelstroms of Da Vinci's drawings.

Durer's The Great piece of Turf, 1503, can be put next to a contemporary drawing by Jennifer Pastor and the language is remarkably similar. Artists such as Laura Owens are using **botanical studies and images of nature** for their beauty and decorative possibilities

Paul Noble, Matthew Ritchie and Franz Ackermann are all interested in **mapping** and real and **imaginary worlds**. In their scale and handling they are often similar to works from the Renaissance or to 19th century drawings by Pre Raphaelites such as Millais.

Paul Nobles work is the creation of an imaginary world 'Nobson', but the dry language with which he meticulously maps out this world refers to **architects plans** and to the kind of Utopian grand planning that gave rise to many troubled estates in inner cities around the world in the 1960s/70. The work ties together a number of themes, the finished presentation drawing the uses of languages from outside the traditional scope of drawing and the idea of artists creating imaginary worlds for themselves - albeit ones that implicitly satirize much of 20th century architectural and socio political thinking.

**Quotation** John Currin mixes languages as diverse as the drawing style of Rubens with 1970s magazine illustrations. Takeshi Murakami and Raymond Pettibon use the language of comics and cartoons - so called low culture- and play around with ideas of taste and **high and low** art. Pettibon also plays with the conventions of reading and looking at art by presenting multiple drawings in a way that looks a bit like a story board or comic but does not necessarily have the same story telling function. His work is chaotic and meaning and interpretation are very fluid.

Artists such as Chris Ofili explore the possibilities of **decoration and adornment**, often with wry humour and deeper and more controversial themes beneath their seductive surfaces.

The themes of **Fashion and the surface** of things and the idea of glamour are explored by artists such as Elizabeth Peyton. Her pencil drawings and watercolours have the same ambiguity about celebrity culture you find in Warhol's pictures of film stars etc.; you are never sure if you are being invited to criticize or relish the imagery you are presented with.

Kara Walker in her work exploring Post colonial themes uses quotations from popular literature from the past and projects it onto gallery walls using Overhead projectors, Jeremy Deller also uses technology from the business or classroom to present information in the form of **mindmaps**

Many artists have taken inspiration from Andy Warhol's approach to drawing and followed it to its logical conclusion by creating **Machines for drawing**. An example of this would be Keith Tyson with his drawing machines and Sigmar Polke who in his recent show claimed to be making paintings drawings that were made entirely by machine. In the current exhibition "The secret theory of drawing" the same theme is picked up by Olafur Eliasson with his drawings created by a machine on a fishing boat which records the pitch of the sea.

The process and action based work of Serra or Pollock is being replaced by works that are pre-planned and have a high level of finish. A recent exhibition in Dublin was entitled '**Drawing is a verb drawing is a noun**'<sup>1</sup>. At the moment a lot of the work attracting critical acclaim could be said to be more about drawing as a noun than as a verb.

What can be defined as drawing is constantly shifting and open to interpretation. Artists have more freedom to draw in space and time than before and Karsten Hollers recent installation in Tate Modern is a perfect example of this idea with the normally passive **spectator becoming part of the piece of work** by creating swoops and turns with their own bodies as they go down the slides.

Signs of the health of drawing are everywhere. In the UK the Jerwood Drawing Prize, books such as "Vitamin D New perspectives in drawing", the drawing centre in NY and Fellowships and new courses in drawing at a number of leading Universities.

\*1 Stone Gallery Dublin

A lecture by Andy Parsons, 2007.