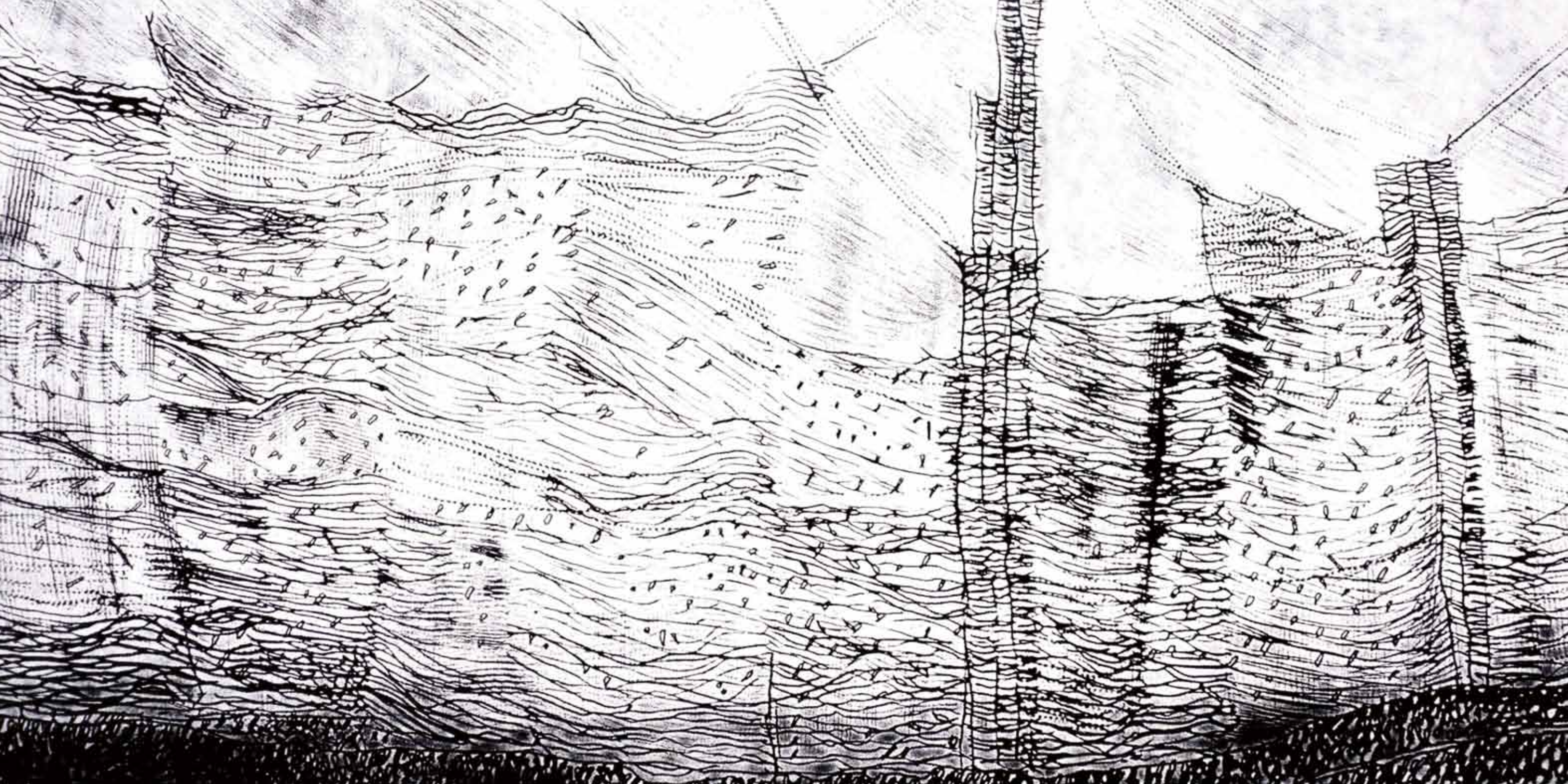


# DRAWING, PERMANENCE AND PLACE

Beate Gegenwart  
Dail Behennah  
Elizabeth Turrell  
Emma Moxey  
Helen Carnac  
Iain Biggs  
Jessica Turrell  
Jilly Morris  
Roger Conlon  
Susan Cross





## DRAWING, PERMANENCE AND PLACE

### Some introductory thoughts

It must have been easy to overlook the resonances of mundane enamel objects that, for example, signed the Passages couverts de Paris of Walter Benjamin's famous Passagenwerk or Arcades Project, just as it is easy to forget the power of the type of vernacular back-of-envelope drawing that Marlene Creates' exemplary 1988 project: The Distance Between Two Points Is Measured In Memories, Labrador provides to signify relationships between memory, place and belonging. This thematic exhibition provides a group of artists – linked only by a shared interest in drawing and enamel – with an opportunity to reflect on a topic central to the PLaCE Research Centre's concerns – namely the increasingly vexed understanding of relationships between notions of permanence (whether physical or in memory) and of place.

In this context drawing is taken as central – an activity that usually leads to a more or less permanent trace – an etching, a map, a topographical sketch, another, more elaborated, work of art. Like a whole category of vernacular enamel objects – street name signs, house numbers, commemorative public plaques, permanent notices and labels (everything from garden plant markers and industrial workshop safety labels to the small enamel signs designed to be hung on decanters and storage jars) – drawing too has implications for how we identify, differentiate and regulate our sense of place and the routes between places, this of belonging and understandings of regularity and permanence. Consequently to employ the practices of drawing and enamelling together is almost inevitably to raise questions

about the relationship of action and trace in relation to belonging, memory and identity – whether these are bound up with mundane, almost subliminal, information or with the more subtle discriminations present in drawing.

Both drawings and vernacular enamel objects may “speak” of how we are expected to perform in, and respond to, all types of spaces in use on a daily basis. Both can make a significant contribution to the conceptual “mapping” and “naming” (in the widest sense) of the various spaces and places in which our human identities are formed and reformed and in which we encounter, accept or resist complex networks of social expectation and control. Their relative permanence (and the signs of their passage through time) is central to their social function, a powerful reminder both of the inscription of power in cultural objects and, equally, of our desire for some degree of stability and permanence based on shared and consensual social or domestic authority, however compromised this may be in the living.

The idea for this exhibition initially arose from a shared interest in drawing and the enamelled object, but then became more specifically concerned with place and permanence. We accepted from the start that creative processes do not readily conform to pre-existing agendas, and that the intentions indicated here were only the starting-point for a visual conversation between bodies of work, one into which we hope to draw the viewer.



## PLACE RESEARCH CENTRE

by Dr Iain Biggs  
Director, PLaCE

PLaCE is a creative arts practice-led research centre addressing issues of place, location, context and environment at the intersection of a multiplicity of disciplines and practices. Based within the Department of Art and Design at the University of the West of England, Bristol, its research projects, creative programmes and national and international partnerships are committed to investigating, re-imagining, analyzing, re-invigorating and intervening in a number of areas of concern: commissioning and curating in and out of place; site-specificity and situated practices; creative intersections with urban and rural geographies; interdisciplinary approaches to renewal and the environment generally; and the intersections of memory, place, and identity - including issues of commemoration and conflict. PLaCE pursues this in the context of a continuous redrawing of boundaries between art, design and media practices, their theorization, and disciplines and practices in landscape architecture, ethnography and cultural and physical geography. It recognizes the centrality of ecological issues and sustainability to debates in art, media and design education - seen as a vital interface between individuals, society and the world - working with peers within and beyond the academy and by feeding its research back into the curriculum through interaction with academic staff and students.

[www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/place/](http://www.uwe.ac.uk/sca/research/place/)

## DRAWING , APPRECIATION & DISCOVERY

Roger Conlon

We live in a world of symbols and codes – quick fixes to take us to what we want as fast as possible. Computer icons, road signs, advertising slogans, company logos – our culture seeks to provide immediate information for immediate gratification. Symbols and signs help us get things fast. And we often think that the faster something happens, the better.

The visual arts, and drawing in particular, can involve us in appreciation and discovery. Finding rather than being given, making instead of taking. Appreciation and discovery take time, they are not products you can buy off the shelf. The works in this exhibition are the result of appreciation and discovery gathered through a delight in mark making and a quest for visual order that lies at the heart of drawing.

An incidental delight of these works is that they all involve the medium of enamel, a material and process too easily associated with consumer products and the signs and symbols designed for roads, advertising, and badges. Here drawing has allied with a sense of place to create a different type of object and image. These are far more than signs and symbols to get us somewhere or something fast. They are works that have taken time to create and will reward time spent with them.

If you teach drawing, as I have for many years, you use terms like negative shape, alignment, proportion, interval, contour, volume, tonal order and form. These words describe the formal relationships that need to be considered to create a 'pictorial order'. But in its broadest sense, drawing is about understanding and expressing 'relationship' – with all the complexity and emotional range that word implies.

A drawing mediates the sensory and cerebral worlds in a way that preserves their unique relationship for the viewer. I hold the view that the drawn mark, made or viewed, lies somewhere between a thought and a feeling, an amalgam well suited to express relationships and to communicate at an intimate and personal level. Drawings tell us what was thought and felt at a particular time and place. A relationship is proposed between artist and subject, viewer and viewed, maker and mark. That relationship is directly linked to the maker's identity and we recognise this individual and unique interpretation and often delight in being close to the authentic work to enjoy those personal marks. Marks that could have been made today, though the work may be centuries old.

What is seen, felt or understood about the world around us is filtered, refined and communicated through a sequence of markings. They are far more than a vestige or trace of something that has been and gone, they magically retain some of the life that created them. Marks can be fast, slow, angry, gentle, bold, funny, delicate, fine, nervous. The words used to describe them can also be used to capture our moods and feelings. We reenact these sensations when we look at the marked surface, almost as if the drawing is a sort of performance we can share with its creator. Like a performance, it happens as we see it, it is being made as we watch. We can sense the maker's enthusiasm and interest, the sequence of their attention, their emotional engagement with the activity. It is no surprise that artists have always collected the drawings of other artists. Where else are the thoughts and feelings, and the processes to order them, of an artist you admire and respect, so clearly displayed?

Appreciating and making drawings are closely related. The time taken to look and draw brings experience, meaning, understanding and consolation. When you draw you develop your understanding, relationship and responses to the world around you. This process, the act of drawing, is in many ways, more important than the end product, the drawing itself.

John Ruskin, often seen as a stickler for 'visual facts' and realism, knew that drawing leads to appreciation and he valued that above all else:

*'I would rather teach drawing that my pupils learn to love nature than teach the looking at nature that they learn to draw.'*

Ruskin knew that something comes alive through drawing, that drawing is not an end in itself. Considerations about drawing, permanence and place have animated the works you see in this exhibition. I hope you will experience them as not just a sort of trophy collection in a museum or gallery but a living way to relate to the world.

**Roger Conlon**

*Associate Dean*

*Faculty of Arts, Creative Industries and Education  
University of the West of England*

## A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO VITREOUS ENAMEL

### Elizabeth Turrell

#### Glass Fired onto Metal

In essence vitreous enamel is glass bonded to a metal base by firing at a temperature of 760°-900°Celsius. It is also known as porcelain enamel or glass on metal.

There is evidence that glass has been made for at least 10,000 years. No one knows where or when glass was first melted onto metal, but it was at least 3,000 years ago. This was an unlikely bonding of glass, a brittle and fragile material, and metal, a ductile and strong material. The discovery was probably accidental. It was noticed that with sufficient heat, glass would soften, “wet”, and then bond to the metal. This beginning could have been a lump of glaze or a flake of glass laying on a piece of very hot metal. The key to this discovery was that someone saw the potential of glass on metal as a permanent decorative and jewel-like surface. So began the process of enamel.

Vitreous enamel, like glass, has many extraordinary properties. Varying combinations of metal /ceramic / glass allow the end product to share the best properties of these materials. It enables the possibility

of metal combined with a glassy, corrosion resistant skin that is permanent, fire and heat proof, and with exceptional colour stability.

The raw materials for both metal and enamel come from the earth’s crust, and are fire formed. Put simply, enamel, is powdered glass fused onto metal. Enamel is composed of materials such as flint, sand, potash, soda and lead, with the addition of various metal oxides for colour. The firing transforms the enamel and gives the whole process a feeling of alchemy, producing surfaces that can be vibrant and richly coloured or subtle and sombre.

#### Drawing in Vitreous Enamel

Until recently drawing in vitreous enamel has been limited. Now artists are beginning to explore the wide range of mark-making and layering that are impossible to achieve on paper. Drawing on enamel is permanent and can be a tactile as well as a visual experience for the viewer. The process gives artists the opportunity to interpret the familiar mark making approaches of contemporary practices of printmaking, painting, drawing, textile and ceramics into enamel.

‘Enamel’ has a narrow definition anchored by associations with craft. Its interpretation is shifted in relation to contemporary use; enamel on metal is no longer dictated by the boundaries of traditional techniques or limited by preciousness or by scale. That said, enamel is still on the margins of the applied arts, largely because of its exclusion from most areas of study in higher education.

My experience of working in enamel with postgraduate and established artists, who work in other media with no knowledge of the enamelling process, is inspirational. These artists already have sophisticated and a strongly developed personal visual language and once they understand the sequence of the process are able to develop work that emphasizes the unique qualities of enamel, often using drawing as the framework for the work while exploring the many possible variations and subtleties of line. In fact enamel work produced by artists from other disciplines encourages re-assessments and risk-taking with this versatile medium. It offers the challenge of passing ideas and images from the understanding of the artist’s familiar process of one medium to the understanding and the materiality of a new process.

There are many ways of making a mark or line on the enamel surface, both physical and visual. Lines can be in the form of direct screen-printing, transfers, graphite drawing and relief stamping. Physical lines can be etched, engraved and incised by hand or by mechanical methods such as using water-jet or laser cutting. Thin wires can also fused into the enamel surface.

Direct drawing/mark making by incising, engraving or inscribing through the unfired enamel is referred to as sgraffito (meaning ‘scratched’ in Italian). Sgraffito is particularly appropriate for enamel creating fluid and spontaneous forms of drawing. Sensitive and delicate lines may also be achieved as well as bold and strong marks. The line or mark is cut through a fine layer of unfired enamel to reveal the underlying surface.

There are many ways of developing the enamel surface, once the initial firing is complete; subsequent layers of enamel can be added and fired until the required surface is achieved. So much of the enamel process is about layering. As subsequent layers are added a correlation between the order of this process of making and the artist’s layers of creative experience may emerge.

These processes of addition of layers of enamel can be further enhanced by subtraction. The great advantage of abrading\* or stoning the surface once it is fired is that the true state of the enamel becomes obvious. Stoning allows a slow revealing of the underlying line, colour and texture - a form of ‘mining’ or palimpsest. It is possible to cut through the enamel to hidden levels, revealing subtle line, visual texture and the thinnest layers of enamel while creating a sensuous and tactile surface that could be described as resembling eggshell, sea-washed pebbles or unglazed porcelain. The subtraction of the thin layers of fired enamel surface is endlessly fascinating and rewarding and can be achieved only by this slowly revealing rhythm.

The artists in this exhibition can be described as makers, designers and artists rather than enamellers. Their work is not constrained by tradition but more often led by concepts and ideas rather materials and techniques.

I hope their work will inspire and encourage the broader use of enamel as a medium for creative practice.

## MAKING AND MARKING: A GEOGRAPHICAL IMAGINARY

By Dr Harriet Hawkins

AHRC/NSF Research Fellow, University of Aberystwyth Wales.

In 1874 Thomas Jefferson stood over a map of the US and, seizing a pencil and sketching in the lines of some 14 rectangles, he brought into being the states of the 'North West Ordinance'. This was a creative-geopolitical performance extraordinaire, a demarcation of territory and a circumscribing of space willed by the plays of powerful men. Such is the power of drawing. The works collected together in this exhibition strike an altogether different register of relations between these ideas of marking, making and place. But yet, Jefferson's actions have value here, for they direct us toward a set of ontological questions around the status of these 'drawn' entities, and, the materialities and practices - the taking of pencil (or other implement) in hand and making of a mark- that led to their production.

What propagates from this literal drawing of things in geographical space, is the drawing *out* of a particular geographical imaginary, in which making and marking, as material practices, bisect our understandings of space and place. And, as I want to explore in this essay, the productive force of such creative practices can be understood to lie less in interpreting them as mimetic renderings of a 'real', the drawing-up of location say, but rather in a recognition of these practices of making and marking as constitutive of place, as themselves creative of spacings, timings and worldings.

The four meditations on making which follow, fashioned as a response to the richness of the works and texts in *Drawing, Permanence and Place*, think through the connections posed between making, marking and place, and do so with the intent to

explore the geographical imaginary that precipitates from these works. This is, I think, a geographical imaginary that is very different in spirit and feel from the transcendental global logics, the god's-eye trick, of Jefferson's territorial demarcations. Rather, the works in the exhibition share a marking that is a texturing of place, a feeling-out, a playing through and a turning over, via material practice, of the affective materialities and temporalities of our intensive localized environments.

### Meditations on Making 1: Fieldwork

"Field-work" conjours up many images, not least the tension between the intrepid explorer and her/his arm-chair bound colleague, but yet remade in contemporary terms "field-work" offers, I believe, a useful key into some of the ways of knowing and engaging place that we find collected here.<sup>1</sup> Centuries of debates have muddied our ontological and epistemic waters such that the evidence of immediate empirical experience is no longer valued over and against theoretical abstractions, but rather such ways of knowing are folded together. Moreover, the terrains across which we explore are less often those spatially far distant, rather our attention has turned, I would suggest, to those more intimate territories of our everyday lives, landscapes and practices. Perhaps more than anything though, our own bodies, those spaces closest in, have become not only the subject of study, but are valued once more as the means through which we know, and make, our worlds.

Drawn across the works collected here are different modes of engaging with place, but more than this what I find in the exhibition's assemblage of works is an acute sensitivity to these different modes and registers of knowing the world. Simply put, these works proffer visual and material responses to the experience of places, across a range of spaces, scales and durations, some through travelling, some through long drawn out engagements of homes and haunts, alone or with family and friends. Whether it is Beate Gegenwart responding to a particular place, a location, through the assembly of a collection of found and unexpected elements, working, under the influence of Benjamin, to produce layer upon layer of drawn imagery, subsequently marked out by laser or water cutting. Or Jilly Morris who, quoting land artist Hamish Fulton, suggests, and to paraphrase here, walking the land was to be woven into nature, enfolding in this phrase the senses, subjectivities and the materiality of bodies with those of the landscape. Across the interplays of maps, photographs and landscape details and personal accounts, I find such imbrications of the scales and senses as to suggest nothing so simple however, as the replacement of the point of view over the world, with one from within it; but rather a series of relations to the world that invite us to consider, and to celebrate our 'view' from a whole series of angles.

Whether invited to consider the world from the smallest and most intimate detail, the unconventional form (Jessica Turrell), the pace of change playing out over time only recognized by the attentive eye, or simply through the new lens offered by cultural difference (Susan Cross), what seems to run like

a thread throughout is the sense of ‘creating in the fabric of the world’. What is privileged by my borrowing of this phrase from the phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty are fusional world-bodies, that here extend to those metal and paper bodies of the works themselves.<sup>ii</sup> In other words, and to connect this back to field-work, the ‘being there’ of the artist is a key factor in shaping these works, but also for enabling us, as audiences, to experience these places. This is more though than a sense of rendering what is there, but rather a coming into being of person and place through that rendering.

But of course, these works are not just the actions of expressive bodies engaged with place, but practices that, as the accounts that surround the work suggest, require that we think through the braiding together of mind and body, sculpting and sculpted along with other worldly matters. For example, for Dail Behennah, drawing forms a means to engage, and an act of editing. Sketching the space between the ‘pencil and the page as one full of questions and possibilities’ she intimately connects the material practices of drawing with the cognitive processes of knowing place. She offers a further hint of these intersections, when in meditation on her processes of describing and handling of materials, she notes that whilst this demands total concentration it is also meditative, setting her mind free, allowing her to think. Iain Biggs develops this through another route, observing how the long-term engagements of place result in artifacts that are photographed and assembled, edited and reassembled in a range of ways. The deep mapping of the resulting work is a rich, compulsive field of connections, that offer us a

thoroughly immersive engagement with places made palpable, and held so close and dear.

Such accounts sensitize us to the ‘thought of drawing’, offering up drawing as a productive force, and folding firmly together enquiry and practice. As geographer Phil Crang writes in another context, ‘drawing ...is research, and research is drawing’.<sup>iii</sup> Figured as such we are offered an account of drawing as both perception but also conception, cognition, and as audiences we are in some sense, I think, made witnesses to these forms of research, as through drawing the artist becomes drawn into place and thing.

### **Meditations on Making 2: Routes and Roots- Material Worldings**

The familiar but useful pairing of “roots and routes” offers us another means to navigate through this exhibition. Perhaps all the more so because for me the journeying and still-points that mark these texts are not only physical and emotional ones but are also the conceptual and material journeys of making, either proffered in text or through the materiality of the work itself. Perhaps this is not so surprising for enamelling and drawing bring our attention to the variety, form and modes of mark making that we find, from smudges and sharps, to layers, nets and knots of pencil, paper, fabric and metal. And, of course, the many-layered marks of the processes of enamelling itself, from the scoring through of the enamel base, to the stoning back of the fired form. To invite us to focus on such making practices, both in the texts and the works, is to draw out making as a process of engaging a set of nuanced socio-material relations,

shaped and shaping, bodies, brain and matter. There is a braiding here of thought, feeling, perception and technique in the production of what I think is a thoroughly materialist account of the relation between human bodies of artists and others, and the non-human bodies of both artwork and place.

These works, even in the pictures in this catalogue, have a fulsome material presence. There is an insistent materiality in the smudges of lines, and oily hues and bubbles of the enamel that is carried through in the accounts we are offered of their making. For example Helen Carnac’s account is infused with her material engagement, and the need to negotiate material agencies. Roger Conlon adds to this expanded sense of socio-material relations when his account of the enamelling process proffers the affective materialities of powdery ground and fired form. There is a tension strung between this and the subsequent transition that as we also find elucidated in Elizabeth Turrell’s work, is made from spontaneous to permanent, an alchemy that paradoxically preserves fragile and ephemeral form. These works give a sense of a thoroughly material world, whose qualities and textures are not so much being captured and represented in these studies, but rather that the works are themselves being thoroughly fashioned through and by worldly animate matters.

### **Meditations on Making 3: Marked Forms**

For me as a geographer the meditations on making of art and of place that are collected together in this exhibition offer the chance, indeed the luxury perhaps, of the permission provided by another angle. And, as such, we get to look again at our geographical imaginaries, to think through once more how it is we understand the entwined making of worlds and of selves.

Such tropes of making and marking are not necessarily as new to the discipline as some contemporary geographers might suggest, and can be traced in geography’s history of disciplinary dispositions to the material and artistic as a means of knowing place. Such a history is made most clearly present here in Biggs’ unearthing of a chorography, of a form, through deep mapping. For Ptolemy chorography required the skills of an artist to combine topography and historical description with landscape images in forming the complex knowledge of region and locale. Tracking this forward into contemporary humanistic geographies we find this tradition being rendered appropriately material by Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels who describe a tension between a deeply layered landscape ‘text’ as palimpsest, the wax tablet bearing layer upon layer of marks, and landscape as the flickering transitory text of a contemporary word processor screen.<sup>iv</sup>



In the layered, collaged, cut and textured surfaces of this exhibition, what I find is akin to the accumulatory layers of such palimpsests, represented for example in Emma Moxey’s material and conceptual accumulations. But, as an exploration of the forms of these layers suggests, there is something else going on here too. For, as Daniels describes, the contemporary attentiveness to materiality and making processes can be linked into older cultural geography traditions that flag up for us the making and shaping of the world. But yet, our perspectives must also be refashioned in the light of the animate materialities and agencies acknowledged in our post-humanist perspectives.<sup>v</sup> In other words, a focus here on creative process becomes a focus on the making and shaping of place in practice, rather than a representational rendering. If this is the case, the question becomes what then is it that we can comprehend? How can we link the forms of marking, and the materialities of making, to our imaginaries of our places? And, what sorts of imaginaries do we end up with?

Layers, whether this is the building up, the stoning back or the cutting through, are found across these works, such an accumulatory aesthetics adds up to a feeling for the materiality and temporality of place that is long in the acquisition. But yet, this is not about the sort of surficiality, wherein, the surfaces of our worlds come to stand for ‘mere’ form, description, or decoration (whether referring to geo-physical surfaces, gentrified city spaces or the surfaces of animal or human bodies). Understood as such surfaces become perceived as conceptually moribund, or even, in Marxist Humanist traditions,

dangerously duplicitous. Such an understanding depends on ‘spacings’ of the world that find its surfaces as sensual excessive and reactive, distanced from the interiority of the subject, and set against the ‘deeper’ cognitive analysis of critique. What we find in these works though is a challenging of such understandings of surficiality, but not through a turn to the corollary of depth. But rather what I think we are offered here is a layering that happens through many modes and dimensions. To pick up that Benjaminian figure that haunts both texts and works here, I think we could recognize in these works a layering together of “inner lived” and “outer sensory” experiences; the felt knowledge, accrued from embodied sensory data, lived through but also layered with memory, semiotics and prior experiences.<sup>vi</sup>

Further, in their layering and material transitions these works set in play a series of oscillations between the permanent and the fleeting, but they also draw out the implications and iterations of the large and the small, the observational details and the transcendental logics. Key, however, to my understanding of the layerings of these works, is their cut-throughs and their materially made connections. ‘Life is lived’, as Carnac notes ‘along paths, not just in places’, and indeed it is this spirit of connections and cognitive that for me also infuse these works. These material and cognitive collages, if you will, ensure that the local, textured and marked are, at once the connected, and as such are less victims of global transcendentalism, but rather are the site of practices, politics and creative processes that can be personally empowering. And further, whilst appreciative of times past these works also feel

incredibly contemporary. In other words, what I find here, in the relationship between the material strata of the individual works, and across the exhibition as a whole, is the importance of interactions, such that this assemblage of works escapes any over-easy alignment with those well-worn imaginaries of the layered and accumulatory as standing for nostalgic and timeworn locals.

#### Mediations on Making 4: Shaping an Ethics?

Jefferson’s drawing of those state lines, that gods-eye marking of territory, was an avowedly political act. What we find in the works in *Drawing Permanence and Place* is, I would suggest, a politics of a different register. A politics, or perhaps better, an ethics, that finds its locus in these works’ hailing of a set of socio-material relations that is richly thick with sensibilities shared with those increasingly common lay knowledges, small stories and tactile, folk and vernacular geographies of place. Perhaps, more politically apposite, is a linked set of ‘embodied’ and ‘crafted’ skills and practices of the quotidian, sometimes instinctive – and sometimes long in the acquisition- that are celebrated by the likes Michel De Certeau and Henri Lefebvre - and, from whence propagate a welter of literatures on the tactics, techniques and micro-politics of the self. Indeed, Biggs touches upon this when he explores our need to find an ecological ethics to come to terms with the complexities of contemporary life.

In the exhibition’s mediations on the making and marking of works and of places, what strikes me

perhaps most powerfully is the sense in which it engages an emerging zeitgeist around these very ideas of making. That is, there is a spirit, perhaps long known by artists and crafts people, which is only now being recognized by those of us for whom such practices, materialities and affects of making are outside of our normal ken. One wherein a powerful sort of ethics lies in the communities of persons and things that such attitudes develop. This is a disposition towards place and people, given form in these works, that proffers a powerful way of doing and being in the world. A common register is struck in a crafting of place, art-work and self, that offers a welcome respite from what can seem like a long romance with transcendental explanatory mappings and powers.

<sup>i</sup> On the histories of fieldwork see, **Driver F** (2001) *Geography Militant: Cultures of Exploration and Empire*. Oxford

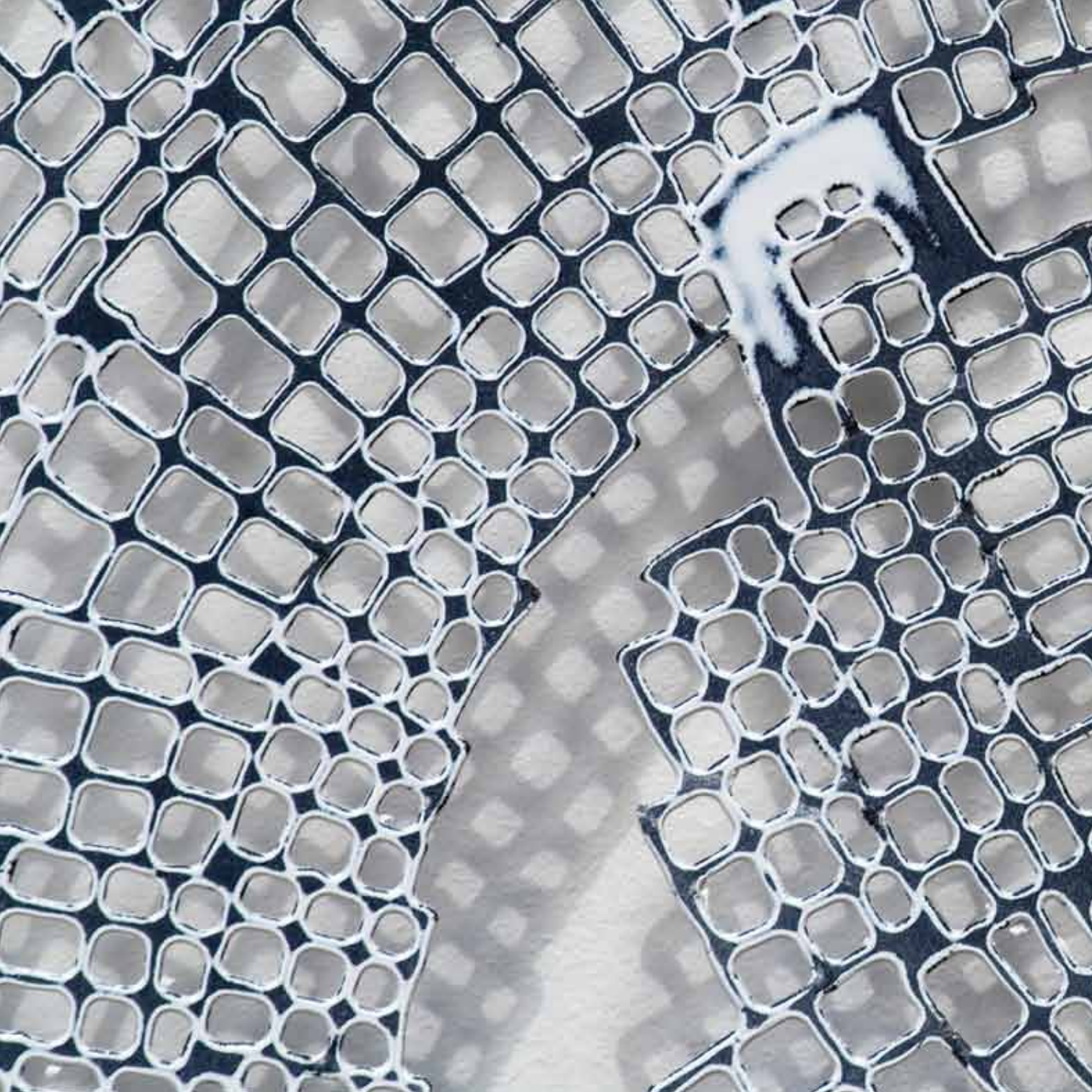
<sup>ii</sup> **Merleau-Ponty M** (1968) *The Visible and the Invisible, Followed by Working Notes* Evanston, Northwestern University Press.

<sup>iii</sup> **Crang P** (2010) “Cultural geography: after a fashion.” *Cultural Geographies* 17 191-201

<sup>iv</sup> **Cosgrove D, and Daniels S** (1988) *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design and Use of Past Environments* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press

<sup>v</sup> **Daniels S** (2010) “Maps of making.” *Cultural Geographies* 17 181-184

<sup>vi</sup> **Benjamin, W** (1999) “The Story-Teller: Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov,” *Illuminations*, Pimlico: London



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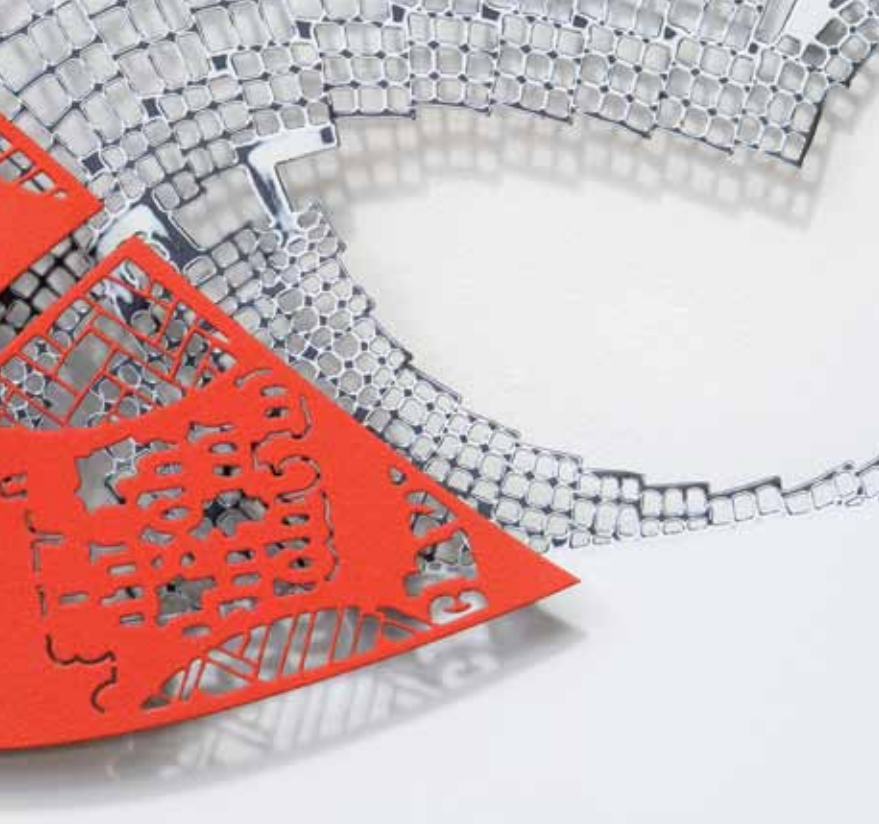
## BEATE GEGENWART

Drawing, Permanence & Place

Questions relating to place, location and by extension dislocation and movement, are a continuous focus in my work. I am interested in the space 'in-between', speaking of distance, borderland and a positioning of identity. Language occupies an important part in this inquiry, the idea of the 'translator' and the use of the 'mother tongue' as orientation, home and dwelling rather than physical location.

It is the fragmentary nature of a nomadic existence that underlies much of my work, the fragile theoretical armature by which all kinds of personal narratives and pictorial elements are joined together from many sources, written and visual as well as from direct observations. Many drawings are based on architectural space and the specifics of floors, stairs and ceilings, broken apart and re-assembled in the field of the panel or in other pieces, small multiples, which grow out of solids.





This particular project for 'Drawing, Permanence and Place' has its starting point in Walter Benjamin's writing and, in particular, the 'Arcades Project'. For Benjamin the Paris arcades represented one of the fundamental early examples of the continuous interpenetration of inner and outer space. He regarded arcades and private interiors as corresponding spatial formations. It is this simultaneity of outside and inside, past and present, found elements and texts that inspired my wish to research his writing and to spend some time in Paris. For several days I walked, observed, photographed, sketched and gathered visual imagery. This allowed me to respond to a particular location (Paris), to the strange idea of an outside space on the inside (the arcades) and to assemble a collection of found and unexpected elements.

**Homeless thoughts**

*A notebook is a temporary resting place for thoughts; he would have to call 'printings' houses.*  
(Walter Benjamin's Archive, p. 152)

**The charm of the line in and of itself**  
*- the line in space as well as the line drawn on a surface, and the nothing between the lines and the sparkling when they cross, when they are interrupted, when they are of different colours or different types. I discovered that sometimes 'the in-between lines' is as important as the line by itself.*  
(Gego, On Line, Catherine de Zegher, p. 118)

Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project is a vast and meticulous collection of notes, images, quotes and citations, capable of being ordered and re-ordered in endlessly differing configurations. His notebooks fulfil a critical function in his practice. His writings crisscross the page with entries beginning in different parts and following diverse directions with texts interrupted and continued several pages later. Benjamin was a painstaking and obsessive 'archivist', always using several notebooks in parallel: the booklets for his thoughts and drafted texts, his diary, descriptions of his travels, letters, toy collection, recording every text/book he read, items he intended to read and so on. He appears to have been compulsively taking precautions with his texts, strategically placing and depositing manuscripts in the care of friends, trying to save them long before he actually had reason to do so.

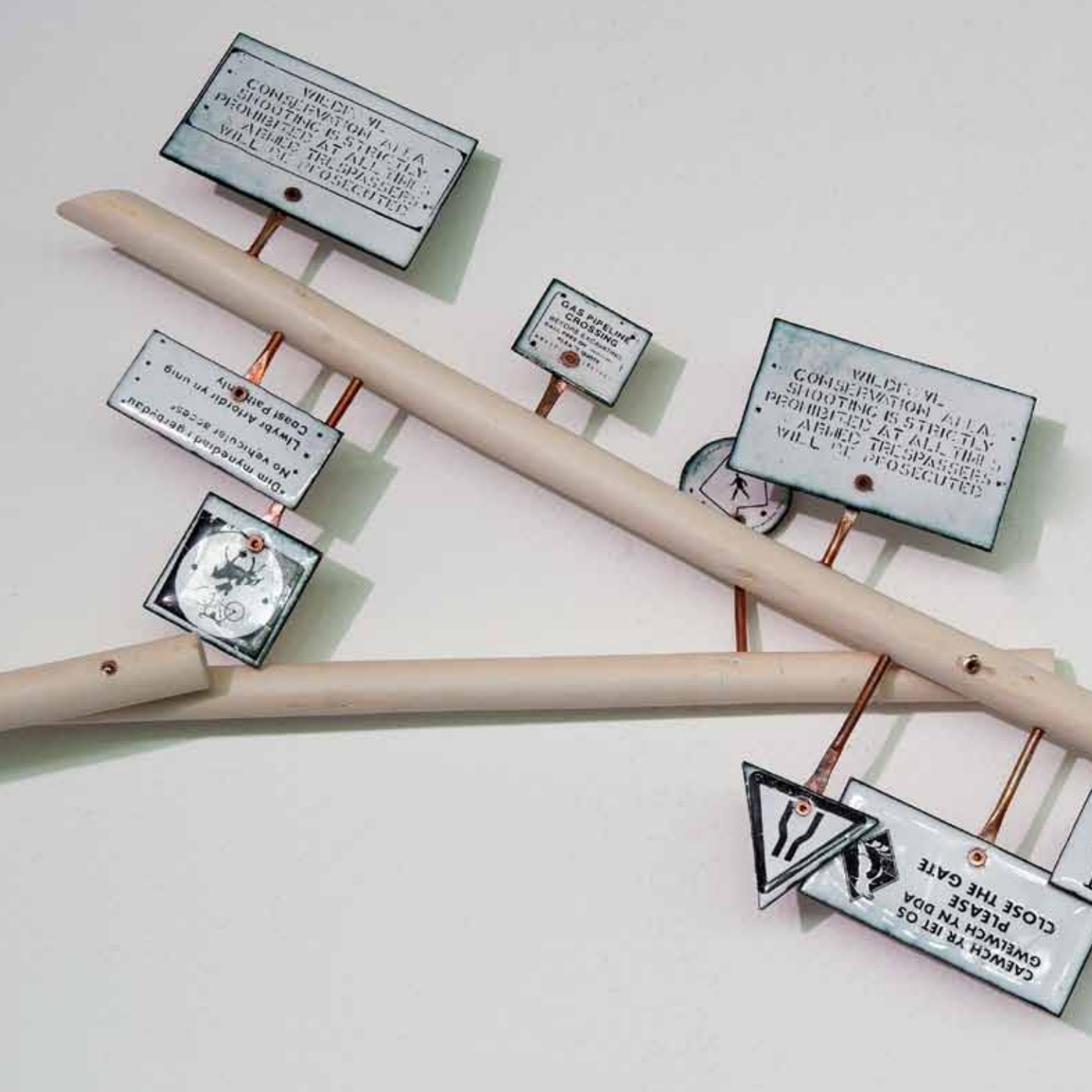
The small and smallest detail: Benjamin employed the tiniest of handwriting, almost unreadable to the naked eye, believing in the 'aesthetic of the written sheet' (Walter Benjamin's Archive) and that a manuscript should show beauty as a graphic image, bringing words and groups of words into textual compositions.

My investigation brought much new thinking, requiring me to adapt my drawing practice to allow new influences to shape the work. Each piece is built layer upon layer of drawn imagery, beginning on paper: drawings of lines, net structures with empty spaces, holes; the lines becoming the space itself, conveying a sense of dynamic movement.

These drawings are water jet or laser cut in stainless steel. The initial drawing process can be seen as a 'rehearsal' for the permanent marks to be cut; areas are removed by the heat of the laser, describing space, lines creating shadows on the wall behind forming the 'double': connecting artwork, wall and panel. I feel close to the laser cut drawings; they are translations of my own mark making, finer and smaller than I would ever be able to accomplish in steel by hand. Subsequently, layers of enamel, fragile, yet hard and permanent, interrupt the juxtaposition of the cut spaces, each meticulously drawn, scratched, abraded and engraved. Here is the element of 'chance', the artwork being fired and re-fired several times, the handmade mark unpredictable and intimate.

Each metal panel has its 'companion' in paper, whether it is shown in the exhibition or not, cut in the smallest detail, echoing Benjamin's tiniest notebooks and frenzied archiving of thoughts and collections of objects.





## DAIL BEHENNAH

Drawing, Permanence & Place

My interest in geography and mapping predates my life as a maker. Studies of landscape history chart the transitory nature of the effects that man has on the land. Settlements grow and are abandoned, climatic and economic conditions fluctuate, rivers and communications shift. What appears to be the immovable stamp of humanity is in the long term the merest touch.

Drawing a map helps me to understand a place. The space between the pencil and the page is full of questions and possibilities as I make decisions about what to include and what to leave out. I am led to think deeply about my responses to a place and consider things that I haven't analysed in a logical or conscious way.



My drawings tend to be diagrams rather than expressive mark making. Although I make initial sketches I am happier drawing with materials than with pencil and paper. I handle material, flex it and turn it, saw, drill, hammer and rivet, sift and fire. The repetition of these actions demands total concentration and yet is also meditative, setting my mind free, allowing me to think. In this state of focussed attentiveness there is plenty of time to see connections and patterns and make sense of something.

My initial drawings on paper, and later with enamelled copper foil, were concerned with the shapes of the fields and housing plots which bear testimony to both physical features and human intervention, disappearing altogether in the littoral zone where the land comes and goes with the tides.

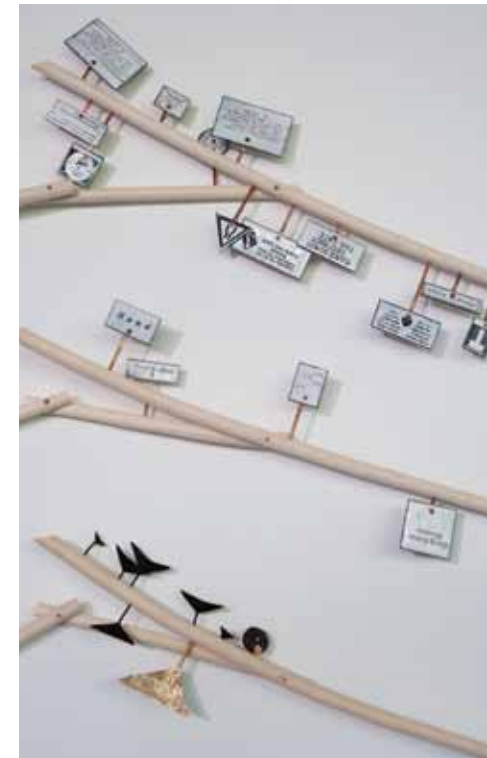
The three lines which I have constructed for this exhibition all relate to the same circular walk. It is in Newport in Pembrokeshire, West Wales. It starts at our house, goes down the hill towards the sea, along the bank of a river, to the middle of the bridge and back, and then up another hill and through a small town before returning home again. Each time the path changes direction there is a rivet, enabling the line to be folded and displayed in a different way.

For years I have been making this short walk of 1 ½ miles and have overlooked the enamel, wood and plastic signs along the way. I photographed, and then made in enamel, all the permissive and restrictive signs en route and they appear on the first line. The footpath along the estuary bears notices put up by 6 different public bodies, all of which have an interest in regulating the behaviour of the pedestrian. When the path becomes a road a thicket of signs springs up to prescribe correct use of the highway.



***“Sometimes a map speaks in terms of physical geography, but just as often it muses on the jagged terrain of the heart, the distant vistas of memory, or the fantastic landscapes of dreams”***

*Arthur H Robinson & Barbara Bartz Petchenik, The Nature of Maps, 1976, University of Chicago Press*



The second line shows natural features taken from the 1888 OS map. The beautifully drawn symbols are eloquent, describing the landscape faster than words. Most of them appear along the estuary where the vegetation is a result of the marginal habitat and the land is not cultivated, although it is managed. Hardly any natural features are shown in the town which is built up and still retains the regular grid pattern of a planned settlement laid out in the thirteenth century. Only the rivers are shown and they are now mostly hidden in culverts.

The final line shows the things that I notice and know about the walk. There is no key. It is a personal map, a memory device which encompasses sounds, sights, history and emotions.

It is obvious that there is a high degree of correlation between the natural features of the second line, and places where my interest is high, and that I have not put anything in the town at all.

A dialogue is set up between the three lines, patterns emerge and connections are made.

Mapping is an imaginative act. Things must be omitted and included, and as a result maps tell a tale directed by the mapmaker, or by the mapmaker’s employers. They are an argument, a work of fiction, not a system of facts.

By drawing and making these three lines, three sets of information can be seen together. They encompass ecology, history, politics, national identity and social control. They are also a narrative of my life in this place and my relationship with the environment.

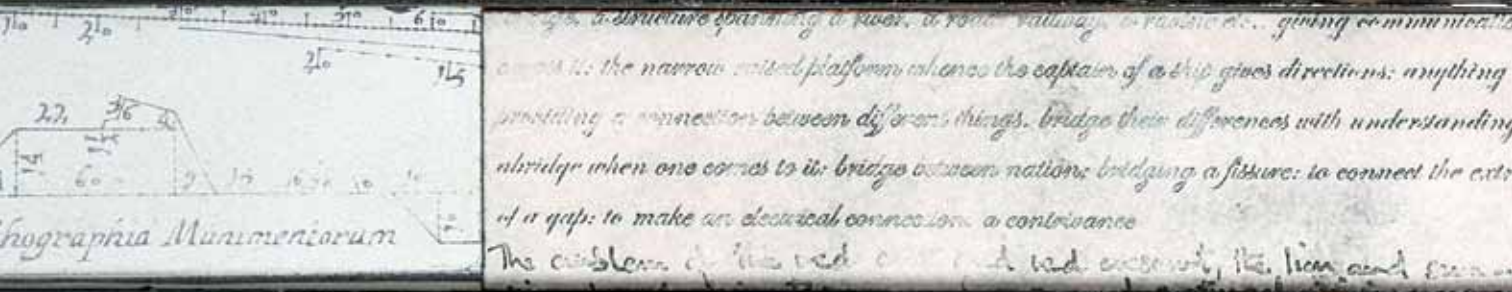


## ELIZABETH TURRELL

Drawing, Permanence & Place

Drawing has been a continuous activity from the moment I was first given pencil and paper.

Small children draw before they can write, on walls, in sand, in mud, on frosted or steamed-up windows. To a child drawing is a physical and instinctive way of exploring and understanding their world and is as natural as learning to speak. For artists this process continues. For me, drawing is the most fundamental way of recording a sense of places and experiences. I like to merge drawing, text and symbols; maps are an influence: visually beautiful, layered with information and imbued with all the possibilities of a journey.





Like many artists I am interested in boundaries, edges, crossings and connections - both physical and metaphorical. I find vitreous enamel the appropriate medium for my work; it gives me a range of surface and line that I can't achieve in any other media. I enjoy the process of drawing through the soft unfired enamel to the hard metal surface below. This process of making marks and line is often known as sgraffito, a pleasurable and engaging process that can produce a hypnotic and rhythmic sound that varies depending on the tool used. It becomes addictive.



*\*From Barbara Hepworth - A Pictorial Autobiography, Adams & Dart, Bath 1970*

**Barbara Hepworth**  
**Retrospective Exhibition**  
*Whitechapel Gallery, London 1954*

I have lived in Bristol since 1964; it is a city of many bridges and water with two major waterways passing through the city. My work in this exhibition includes several panels inspired by a regular journey over the River Avon, spanned by the great Victorian engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge. Most days I cross or go under this bridge. I suspect its structure has subliminally become part of my visual vocabulary. I like the rhythms and movements created by travelling across a bridge and am fascinated by the linear structure and the connection over a void.

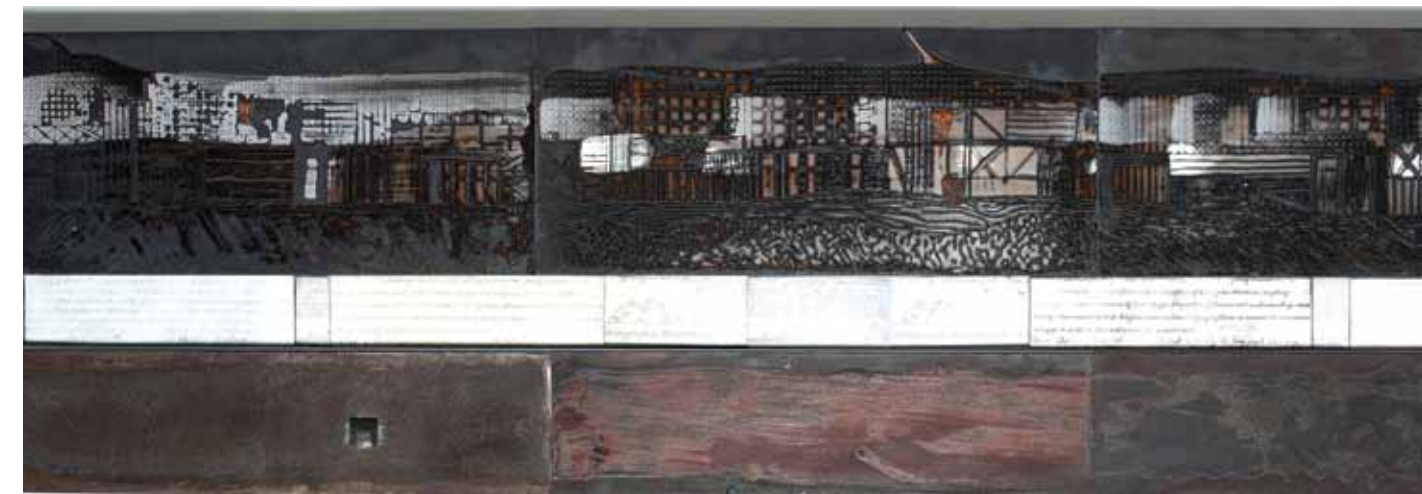
Other work is based on drawings and photographs of the shoreline - where land meets sea, especially the gun-grey north sea of Dunwich and Aldeburgh where I grew up. Dominated by a wide sky, the landscape of my childhood was the countryside, farmland and coastline of East Suffolk. And more recently, the North Sea coastline of Holland in winter has lead to a series of drawings on enamel.

All the materials of enamel and the metal come from the earth's crust. I find this direct link with the earth, a sense of place and the land, a satisfying reference. Recently, I have been making tactile surfaces by fusing sands and other glass making minerals to the enamel.

As I grow older, observations on the visual power of the earliest experience of place become more deeply and permanently etched into the vocabulary of work. Barbara Hepworth says: *\*All my memories are of forms and shapes and textures. She continues: Perhaps what one wants to say is formed in childhood and the rest of one's life is spent in trying to say it.*

My hope is that the work shows the creative potential inherent in vitreous enamel as an expressive medium beyond the usual associations of enamel - the traditional and decorative.

The process of making a work is more important to me than the finished piece: it is either a beginning or a continuous exploration of a theme or idea, each piece of work links to the next.





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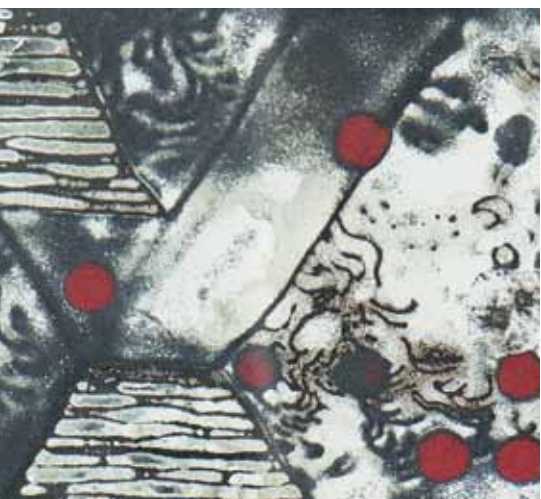
## EMMA MOXEY

Drawing, Permanence & Place

Emma describes her work as a lingering in the soft-verged concepts of the visible and the invisible, the place and the pre-place, the emerged and the emergent. As such, her work cannot be tied down. It neither represents an actual landscape, nor draws on abstraction alone. Instead it causes us to question the very notion of permanence and place through the representation of the quasi-landscape, a place of resonance rather than resemblance, a place of intuition rather than concrete substance, a place that cannot be located, yet locates itself as familiar in our memory. Herein, many of landscape's themes are represented: the layering of geologic time and man's civilization, of personal histories and cultural narratives, the sense of place and its sensory nature, its spirit, and its physical forms. Accumulated and collected, earthed and unearthed, these identities adhere and coalesce to form the landscapes of place in which we inhabit, landscapes of an intellectualised and personalised place.

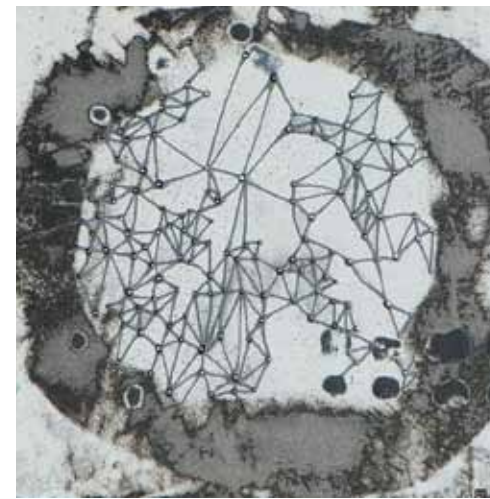






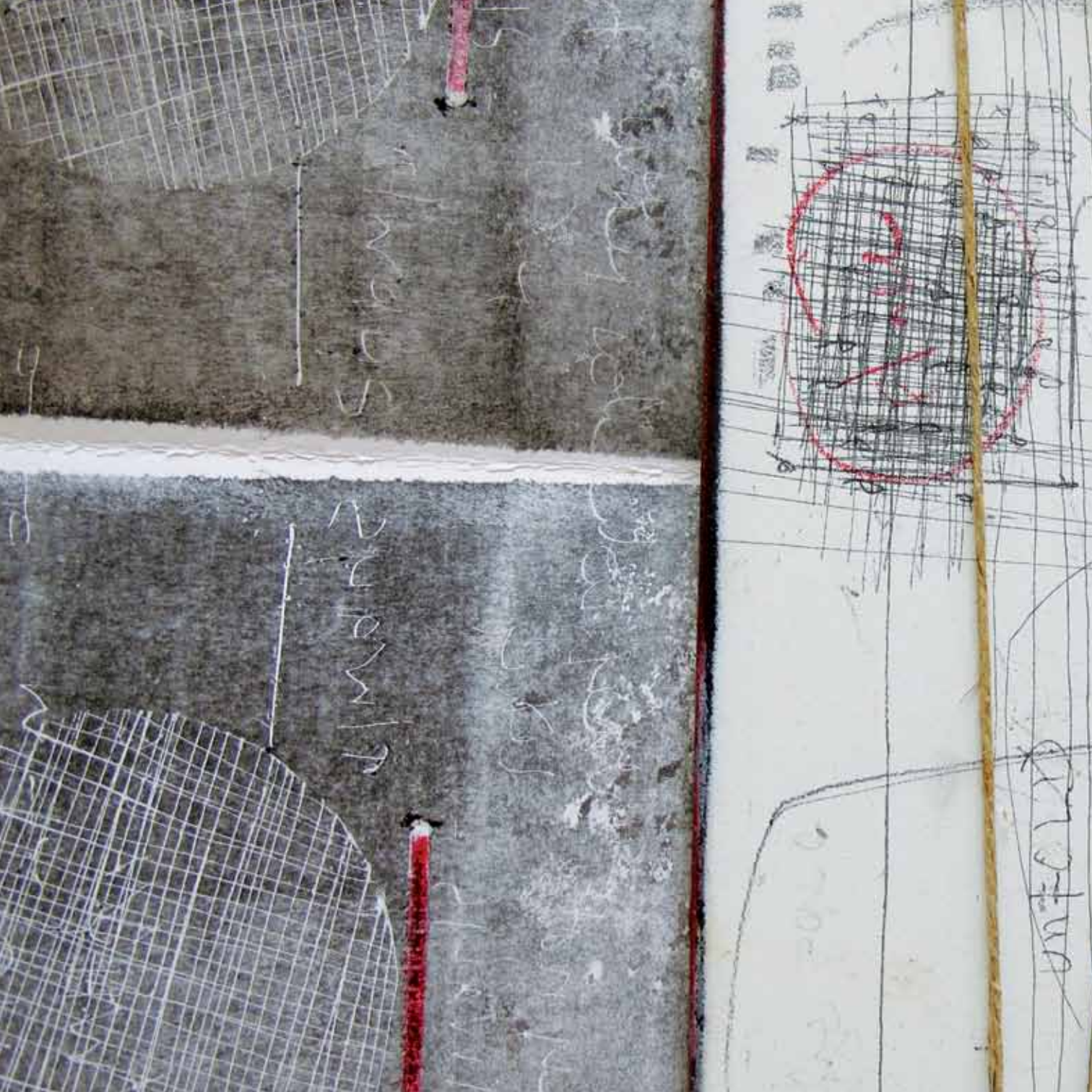
These landscapes seep into us, taking their shape in the space between our conscious and subconscious minds. Positioned in front of them, our perspective is twisted. We float, un-tethered and ungrounded, unsure of our distance or scale. This lack of logic and ensuing visual ambiguity affords the work a fluidity of meaning, so enabling the viewers' shift, or lift, between the topographic and the cosmic. Through this, the micro and macrocosmic worlds are unified, brought together in the consideration of place as an evolving structure in space. Creatively, chaos and order, perfection and imperfection, harmony and discord spur graphic and painterly reactions, setting in motion an intricate response that in turn dictates the works' eventual aesthetic outcome.

Layered and multi-faceted in concept, Emma heavily relies upon serial developments in her creative process, each state being systematically infected by different ideas and approaches. For this exhibition, a current set of paintings has been used as catalyst, each providing the underlying framework of composition and concept. These works originate in a chaotic and haphazard painted surface, loosely drawn from a located place, while also being influenced by the chance events that befall a painted surface: distortions, liquid movement, and media interactions are all used to serendipitous effect. From here, Emma takes on the role of adventurer, exploring the paint's markings and striations, and encountering its surface wilderness. As adventurer, Emma enacts a geomorphic voyage through which she discovers the work's topography. This she then intricately defines through the drawn application of cohesive structures, markings and mapping processes, some universally recognizable, others derived from personal narratives and notations.



For this exhibition, *Drawing, Permanence and Place* the paintings are explored as a reworking in vitreous enamel on steel. Glazed, framed, and presented in carry cases, set against a background material synonymous with the construction industry, Emma uses the work's presentation and media as a metaphor in the consideration of the landscape of Place. In this the work's frame becomes a statement of finalisation, its glazed encasement reflects themes of accumulation and collection, its portability represents the quasi nature of the work as 'the place that cannot be located', and its use of building material refers to place as a construction of personal and subjective narratives. As regards the themes *Drawing* and *Permanence*, Emma uses techniques in vitreous enamel on steel to represent a permanent conclusion in hard material, so effecting the concrete actualisation of the poetic place and its bringing forth into the world of palpable substance. However, we cannot rely on this permanence as Emma illustrates through her use of erosive enamelling techniques. In fact, graffiti, stoning and sand blasting are often used to such devastating effect that we cannot avoid Emma's reference to the works' conceptual beginnings: the visible and the invisible, the place and the pre-place, the emerged and the emergent. In this, both permanence and place are transient and fragile notions.





## HELEN CARNAC

Drawing, (im) permanence and place: small change.

In his book *Lines: A Brief History* Tim Ingold describes something that fascinates me:

*'Alterity, we are told, is non linear. The other side of the coin, however is to assume that life is lived authentically on the spot, in places rather than along paths. Yet how could there be places, I wondered if people did not come and go? Life on the spot surely cannot yield an experience of place, of being somewhere. To be a place every somewhere must lie on one or several paths of movement to and from places elsewhere. Life is lived, I reasoned, along paths, not just in places, and paths are lines of a sort'<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Ingold, T. (2007) *Lines: A Brief History*, Routledge, p. 2

My work considers and is consumed by paths, lines, marks and time...in no particular order they run alongside and across each other. My practice is grounded in the environment and I develop projects using design methodologies that are rooted in an acute awareness of physical location, place and working practices. The populated environment is of key importance to me. Through my practice and projects I aim to bring people together, creating social and creative engagement and collaboration in an open-ended design process.

I am concerned with relationships between humans and nature through observing short term day-to-day impacts and longer term temporally evolved traces of co-existence. In practice this may involve watching for and identifying small change. I make observations through walking known routes over and over again, by understanding unknown place through journeying and collecting, or by observing material change through using empirical and experimental methodologies in developing my work. I seek to track traces and patterns and to develop more metaphorical understandings.

My approach to material comes from a background in making and the use of my primary material, metal. I believe I have an acutely developed tacit or embodied understanding in the handling of it. In order to develop work materially, I have to have the ability to accommodate change and to take measured risk. In this process there is the knowledge at the outset that I do not know emphatically what will happen, but through an innate understanding of this material I can push it knowledgeably into new directions. It may be called a material-based scientific view.

When developing projects I find approaches through which I can look for likely or unlikely connections to people and the environments that we live in. I seek to look below the surface, to dig deeper and to pose questions, even when they may not be answered. I usually develop a brief from a site-specific perspective and most recently have explored the environs of Seattle, Antwerp and Berlin, from which I have drawn material for this body of work.

*Small Change. Can these marks communicate something about place-ness and of time?*

**549 days between.**

*Grosse Hamburger Str, Berlin*

*Left 21-11-09*

*Right 24-05-11*



I collect visual material using photography, within and alongside my drawing and enamel work. Sifting through my recent images of Berlin, I am struck by a lack of permanence, of a layering of marks that gradually define change: that, even if a building seems permanent in its structure, its surrounding or surface may be changing, sometimes seemingly before us. Any surface is a potential canvas, no surface escapes being graffitied, marked, tagged or stuck onto or indeed being influenced by natural changes in the atmosphere.

Changing language is a primary issue when moving about and I am interested in how, for example, we may use the same words differently in different locations; that we don't always have the right words, so need to borrow from other language(s) and that we may not assume to have a universal understanding of words, both in cultural and historical terms.

Can language be permanent? Can it stick? Or does it fade and change as we change and how is drawing or marking part of this language?

Drawing is a physical and embodied process that can convey something of a place. Marking is a human activity that embodies something of the physical act of drawing. The marks that are left behind in the cityscape, whether knowingly or not, seem to act as a language. Can these marks communicate something about place-ness and of time, perhaps about how they were left or subsequently captured, that quietly reveals something more about our need to make or leave a mark?





## TERRA INCOGNITA (ALL GRASS IS FLESH)

with (and for) Anna Boulton Biggs

Since 1999 I have increasingly been involved in various forms of deep mapping – that is in “a blurred genre ... or a science/fiction, a mixture of narration and scientific practices, an integrated approach” (Pearson & Shanks 2001) – that, in my case, engages with the intersection of memory, place and identity. These ‘slow art’ projects usually take a number of years and result in artist’s bookworks, often in series, or in time-based work. However I was originally educated as a painter and printmaker and periodically feel a need to return to making simpler, wall and/or floor-based work. Returning to my roots in the crafts of making allows me to ground my thinking in the down-to-earth alchemy of directly manipulating physical materials. (The basic processes involved, walking, gathering, sorting, cutting, sticking, coating, cooking, constructing and so on are, after all, also part of the store of common skills that still underpin our lives – no matter how digitally inflected these may now be – and the material culture that sustains them).



**Terra Incognita (all grass is flesh)** is an extended five-part 'drawing', the first half of a projected deep mapping of my daughter's life-world and made with her help. Her physical environment is restricted to two small but intensely known places, since she has suffered from the seriously debilitating physical illness *Myalgic Encephalitis* for over twenty years. However her restricted sense of physical place is constantly extended by a deep curiosity, often pursued through her interests in family history, photography and ornithology. These, together with my own reflections and the places to which they relate, formed the starting-point for this work.

It happens that the place with which the work is concerned is one that I "married into", home territory to my wife's maternal ancestors over many generations and a place we have returned regularly throughout our life together - but one which my daughter will shortly no longer be able to visit due to her illness. This situation provoked reflection on notions of place, permanence and what those terms might mean now that we must find an ecological ethics "after monotheism". (My reversal of the Biblical phrase 'all flesh is grass' can be taken in this context).

It may seem odd to refer to this work as a 'drawing'. However the term is accurate enough if taken as a verb. The act of drawing can imply a 'drawing up or down' of material into the peripheries of space or vision, a 'drawing out' of meanings or resonances otherwise too compressed to register, a 'drawing together' of apparently disparate elements into a particular constellation, a 'drawing through' as of a thread in weaving, and so on.

Drawing as act in these senses is the basis of my larger practice as a teacher/artist/researcher. One particularly appropriate to anyone interested in the methodologies of deep mapping as these can imaginatively serve to give us a better understanding of the complex reciprocities that, ecologically and socially, govern our lives. Reciprocities that, when properly recognized, require that we cultivate a rigorous disciplinary agnosticism if we wish to remain open to the multiple networks of connectivity of which we are a part.

This work reflects a long process through which an engagement with a place results in my making particular physical artefacts that are then taken back into that place and photographed in various forms.

The whole conglomeration of resulting material is then assembled, edited and reassembled in various ways. I like to use a wide variety of processes as much for their various resonances as part of the material life of our day-to-day vernacular culture as for their particularities as craft practices.

I use the process of enamelling for a variety of reasons. Primarily because it involves the chance happenstances of firing, can be applied to everyday objects, and allows for a degree of erasure through the process of stoning back. Also because I like to sidestep demarcations between the "visual" and "applied" arts, frequently used to reinforce forms of exclusivity that have far more to do with reinforcing the cult of possessive individualism than with conceptual or aesthetic value. Finally, because I have been very fortunate in being able to work under the tutorage of Elizabeth Turrell, an internationally renowned enamel artist, who has been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration in suggesting ways in which this process might feed into my wider practice and concerns.



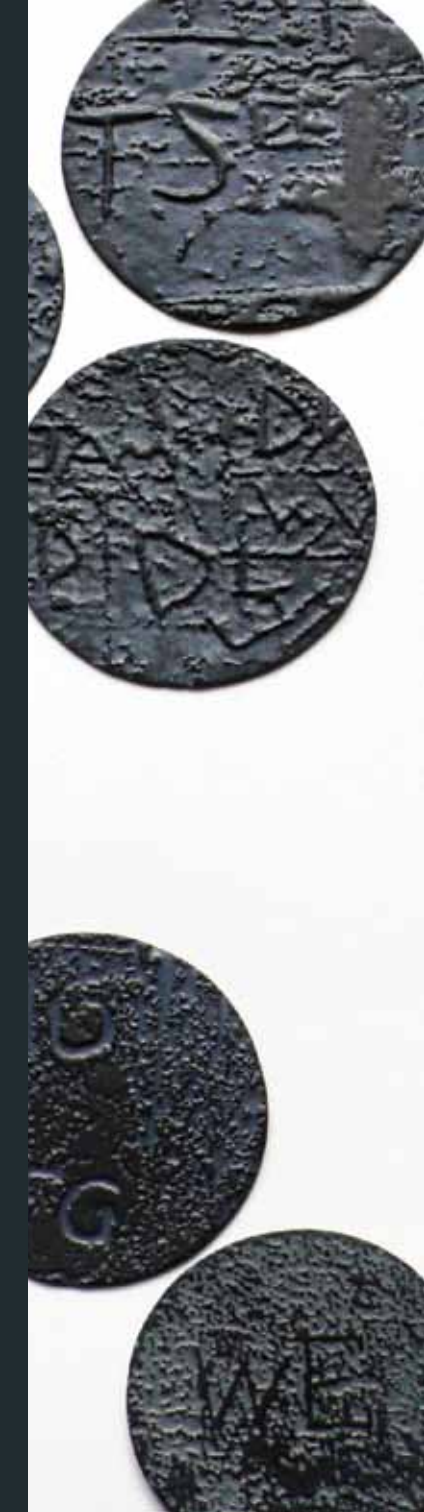


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## JESSICA TURRELL

*Drawing, Permanence & Place*

For many years I have been photographing examples of carved and incised graffiti, recording these small acts of vandalism wherever I see them; lettering carved into tree bark; on the fallen stones of ancient ruins; on church and cathedral walls and on the rocks and stones that form part of monumental and iconic landscapes. Examples of this type of self-memorialisation date back over many thousands of years. The practice was particularly prevalent during the 17th and 18th centuries when well educated young men undertaking the Grand Tour of European antiquities routinely defaced the objects they had come to admire by carving upon them their initials and the date of their visit.





*'Wildsigns' is a term used by Tim Neal and Jeffrey Oliver of the University of Sheffield to describe – "the inscription of symbols, signs, writing or design onto "inappropriate" surfaces or in "irregular" locations".*

I have images of some particularly beautiful examples of carved graffiti from the walls of a prison in a French seaport where generations of interned sailors with time on their hands have carved not only their names and the dates of their incarceration but had also executed highly detailed drawings of sailing ships. These historical examples have an aesthetic appeal that would make them an obvious subject to work with but for the purposes of this project I wanted to explore the more mundane carvings, the incised initials, names, dates, and initials linked within hearts, cut into stone and brickwork and carved into trees (arborglyphs) which form a ubiquitous part of the urban landscape.



Although not drawings in a conventional sense these marks, which have been described as 'wildsigns', can be regarded as an important form of mark making. Graffiti of this kind is often a symbolic or romantic gesture or simply stands as a record of a person's presence, an 'I was here' gesture. It seems that these carvings represent a fundamental if subconscious need to make a permanent mark on the landscape in an act that acknowledges the ephemeracy of human life.

An already marked surface is easier to deface than one that is pristine; one person's mark seems to give permission for the next. The action of carving an inscription is deliberate and painstaking, thus a carved inscription implies a desire to leave a more permanent trace of self in a way that graffiti written with pen or paint does not. It also shows faith in the permanence of the fabric of the building or monument upon which the carving is made, a certainty that the trace of the presence will outlive the writer. Over time these individual pieces of graffiti change, they weather and deepen or are eroded, moss grows in their grooves; they are covered by newer inscriptions. With time some of these carvings come to resemble the lettering on a weathered grave marker.



It is with some ambivalence that I celebrate these small acts of defacement, they often demonstrate a shocking disrespect for the historical significance of the underlying object, but I find something appealing in the juxtaposition of text and stone and in the motivation that underpins their creation. Clearly the way we regard this sort of graffiti relates directly to how long ago it was created with older, dated carvings being valued as historically significant and protected while new graffiti is actively discouraged.

In the development of a body of work for 'Drawing Permanence and Place' I wanted to address the intimacy of scale that is central to my practice and to this end I have chosen to create an installation of numerous small enamelled elements where each represents one individual piece of carved graffiti.

The imagery is taken directly from photographic source material. I have used etching techniques to create a relief surface upon which layers of enamel have been built up and then selectively removed to re-expose underlying marks and concealed colour. My aim is that the work should have a tactile delicacy and should reward the wearers close attention with an intricate and detailed surface. Rather than exploiting enamel's traditional attributes of colour and shine I have developed ways of working with the material that allow me to achieve a more ambiguous and expressive surface quality.

By recording and reinterpreting these particular inscriptions I am re-memorizing the original creator of the graffiti in a way that individual could never have envisaged. By using enamel to create the work I am adding a further layer of permanence to the original gesture, a gesture that, though important at the time, may have been long forgotten by its author.



## JILLY MORRIS

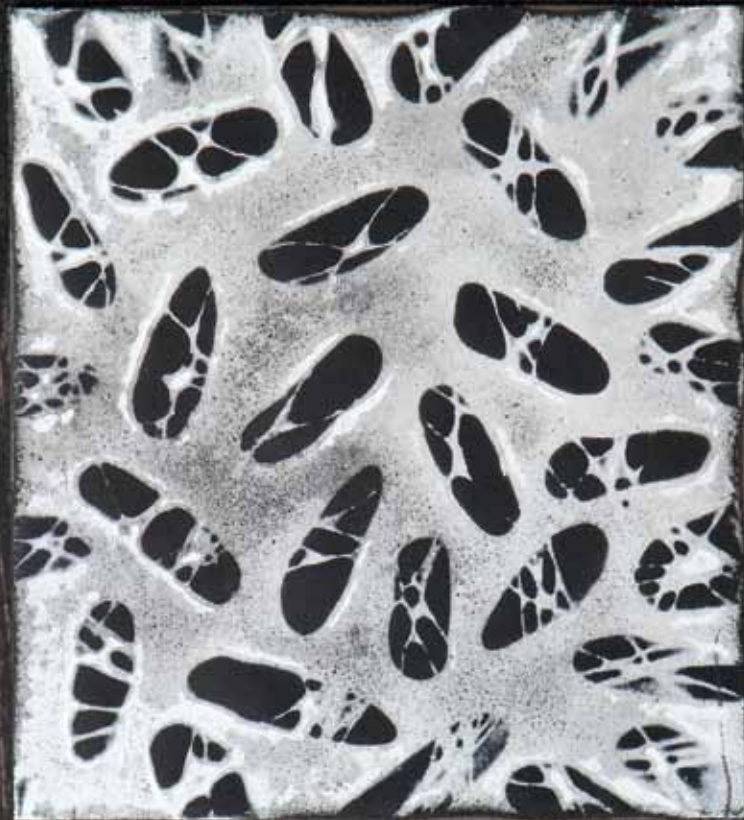
Drawing, Permanence & Place

*"Our perception of land is no more stable than our perception of landscape. At first sight, it seems that land is solid sand over which the mirage of landscape plays, yet it turns out that land too has own evanescence... 'Place' is a restlessly changeable phenomenon"*

**Fraser Harrison**

For forty-six years I lived in cities, then, at the tender age of forty-seven, I had the pleasure of spending a year as an artist in residence in a remote and isolated part of Northumberland. I would walk for hours and discover no one; just curious sheep and strange wooden or corrugated iron sheds that would appear to me like megalithic structures from another time. These often abandoned premises became a real curiosity of place and I delighted in their odd appearances. Lucy Lippard describes place as: "a interweaving series of pasts. Geology, biology, chemistry, combined with cultural social histories that form the poetics of a place". The Northumberland landscape, with its vast expanse of stark peat moorland, gargantuan skies, dramatic weather and the local hill farming community, had a profound effect on me; its poetics, its cellular structure, seeped into my very bone and touched the core of my soul.





*"Drawing is the primal means of symbolic communication. It predates and embraces writing, and functions as a tool of conceptualisation parallel with language."*

**TRACEY**  
Loughborough University

During my peripatetic investigations in the Northumbrian landscape, I became fascinated by the complexities that make up the ingredients or 'essence' of a place. Walking the wild landscape let me retrace paths set by ancient geographical contingencies, following marks on the surface of the land laid upon thousands of other marks, defining layers of human and geographic portraits. I took Hamish Fulton's advice and "walked the land to be woven into nature" and, as I meandered along ancient droving routes or barely discernable craggy paths, my mind reflected on the personal histories or moments of encounter of those gone before me. If landscape is inherently unfixed and ever-changing, it seems strange that any permanence of presence remains. One could argue that this is an imaginary reflection, yet the signs were visible. Whether shepherds sat on the same rock for years to eat, and so smoothed the stone, or generations of sheep trod the same path during gathering, they shaped and moulded the land, signing their presence. In the beautiful wilds of Northumberland, these traces of past lives are markers, like genetic codes, denoting prior existence. The place seemed heavy with presence; one could almost feel the layers of DNA, laid down like strange cellular strata over time. Was it the remoteness and barrenness of the landscape that heightened my perception to a sense of other-life rhythms and other perspectives gone before? Can 'place' be a vessel of life, both permanent and impermanent? These are the questions I asked myself as I roamed the isolated moorland. Place has a different resonance for everyone; and it's many facets change one's perception. For me, the unique remoteness generated a sense of awe and a deep appreciation that even the inaccessibility did not deter the generations of people who worked and lived the land. Perhaps their traces mingled with mine as I walked in their very same footsteps.

*"Bone under the flesh of soil in the body of the earth... the earth lives as we do, elastic, plastic, vulnerable... stone is self... all places are marked on us and we have a map of that place engraved on our soul".*

**Michelle Stuart**

'Twelve Markers' is my response to the landscape in Northumberland that stole my heart, a place that I will return to whenever I can. I have to, as part of me still remains there. Using modern day planks of wood as a skeletal structure, reference and support, I have embedded enamelled forms that echo archaic, prehistoric shapes - dome, circle, standing stone - since these hold deeply moving resonances of a past. I have also incorporated enamelled rectangles and squares to continue with the sense of flow of time layered in landscape; a sense of modernity mixed with the past. Inside all these markers I have drawn my own imaginary microscopic histories and genetic codes; creating my own language in homage to layers of history that make that place so beautiful. In ancient China, natural stones were placed on ornate pedestals to honour the work of nature as an artist. I wish to pay my respects in my own way.





## ROGER CONLON

Drawing, Permanence & Place

These enamel pieces are a continuation of some paintings I made recently. They are developed from drawings of figures from a sketchbook I used in a park on the two or three days of snow last year, when ordinary life was on temporary hold.

I enjoy the relation of people to the transient settings they create and experience in a city. Urban environments can be quickly created and changed by passing events and actions. Places can be altered by graffiti and grime, signs and shop fronts, snow and rain, shadows and sunshine. Within these short lived settings and fleeting figures there are often striking and memorable images.





My approach is fairly traditional and, I suppose, a form of 'realism' - I usually paint and draw directly from observation on a small scale and plan larger pictures from these works. Recently, I have developed an interest in drawing from memory and these works are as much the product of a remembered experience as an observed one.



So memory is my link to the word 'permanence' in this exhibition title. It is how we retain what we have thought and felt about something. In this digital age, where images can be recorded, recalled and reproduced easily and endlessly we could be forgiven for not valuing our memory for images as much as artists in the past did. We can find practically any image at the touch of a button while space and time can be pixelated and frozen, preserved or discarded, in a box smaller than our hand.

But through our memories we are able to filter and refine our thinking to get to the essence of an experience. Memory can mysteriously steer a drawing and lead the hand to leave a mark behind. When integrated into artistic practice it can offer us a way of establishing the essentials of an image. If we are lucky it creates a route to the memorable.



I will certainly remember making these works as a pleasure, though I found drawing into the enamel ground on the large panel a little daunting at first. It is impossible to erase a mistake and the line can break a little unpredictably. Here the link of the white, powdery enamel ground to snow, perhaps a too-obvious association, encouraged me to take a fairly fast and spontaneous approach to the marks I made. It seemed important to keep some of that freshness and immediacy that we feel when we step in to freshly fallen snow. When fired, the enamel makes spontaneous and delicate marks permanent while somehow preserving their fragile nature. The addition of glazes, in what is essentially a transparent process similar to watercolour, made it a fitting medium for transient and ephemeral images.





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## SUSAN CROSS

*Drawing, Permanence & Place*

In 2008 I visited South Korea as part of a new staff/student exchange programme between the Jewellery & Silversmithing Department at Edinburgh College of Art and the Department of Metalwork & Jewellery at Kookmin University, Seoul.

Over the years I have been invited to visit many fascinating countries to teach, give lectures and exhibit. Particularly memorable are Finland, India, Japan and New Zealand. The notion of 'Place' therefore and the experience of being in some other place continues to inform and enrich not only my teaching and jewellery practice but also my own personal development.





I am naturally drawn to travel eastwards, conjuring up as it does that sense of far off lands and the exotic; the cultures of people, places and ways of life that are very different to my own here in the West. In 2000 two Korean jewellers visited the department and organised 'Korean Week' as it was to become known. The week was a fascinating introduction to a country of which I had little previous knowledge. Since that I have always been intrigued and fascinated to learn more about the culture and its people. It was therefore fortuitous to be given the opportunity to travel to Korea through my work.

The invitation to participate in *Drawing, Permanence and Place* has given me an exciting opportunity to explore gathered research material from Korea in new directions and engage in ways of translating visual imagery through enamelling.



As I am learning, there are many different ways of working with enamel. For example, the interesting and immediate effects one can achieve by a photographic transfer image - as in the Korean text taken from a Buddhist newspaper picked up one evening at the *Jogyesa* temple in *Seoul* that is then overlaid onto an enamelled coloured ground and fired. This is a very direct way of applying surface pattern and visual texture, that is then overlaid onto an enamelled coloured ground and fired, this is a very direct way of applying surface pattern and visual texture. Similarly inscribing /drawing through a layer of dried white vitreous enamel slip poured over a black pre-enamelled sheet provides an immensely enjoyable and satisfying way of mark-making using various sharp points, brushes etc. Following the firing in the kiln the next stage of stoning back to reveal the hidden layers is yet another interesting stage of the 'drawing' process; blurring and blending marks and surfaces together to become unified, rather like smudging soft graphite or half erasing out a mark to leave but a suggestion.

Memorable experiences of my time in Korea include a visit to the Chinese Medicine Market, the weird and wonderful array of often dried plants and animals threaded artfully together, piled into huge sacks or packed neatly into chests of wooden drawers. The smell that was either perfumed or overpoweringly musty and repulsive! Studying at first hand the fascinating collections of textiles and traditional costume, richly coloured silks with exquisite details of embroidery and fastening details. The finely woven horsehair and bamboo hats worn traditionally by male scholars called *Hangul* were particularly interesting in their form and semi-transparent structure, designed to accommodate their top-knots.

An interest in Buddhism drew me towards temples both in Seoul and further south way up in the wilds of the mountains. The traditional structure of the wooden temple is in itself a marvel of construction and detailing, often very old and made from indigenous Korean Fir. Worn steps and floors polished naturally by many shoeless feet. The soft dun colouring of the wood illuminated by bright jewel like rows of strung lanterns. Sound became an aspect of Korean culture that I found myself drawn to often by default, listening to the meditational chanting of the monks and bell ringing within the temples. Twice daily - at 4am and 6pm - four symbolic instruments sound at the Bell Pavilion of *Jogyesa*: the bell, large drum, wooden fish and the cloud shaped gong are struck to call all beings to hear the words of the Buddha. Similarly the traditional music of the *Kayagum*, a twelve stringed Korean instrument that is plucked creates a unique quality of sound that I find so three-dimensional in its audio structure.

In working with these particular enamelling techniques for the first time it struck me how much of the process is about layering. As one layer is fired on top of another layer there is an analogy one can draw between the order of this process of making and the collected layers of experience gathered from travel and experience of a place; each reflected upon, selected and distilled over time.

DRAWING,  
PERMANENCE  
AND PLACE