

Spatial traces and skeletal projections

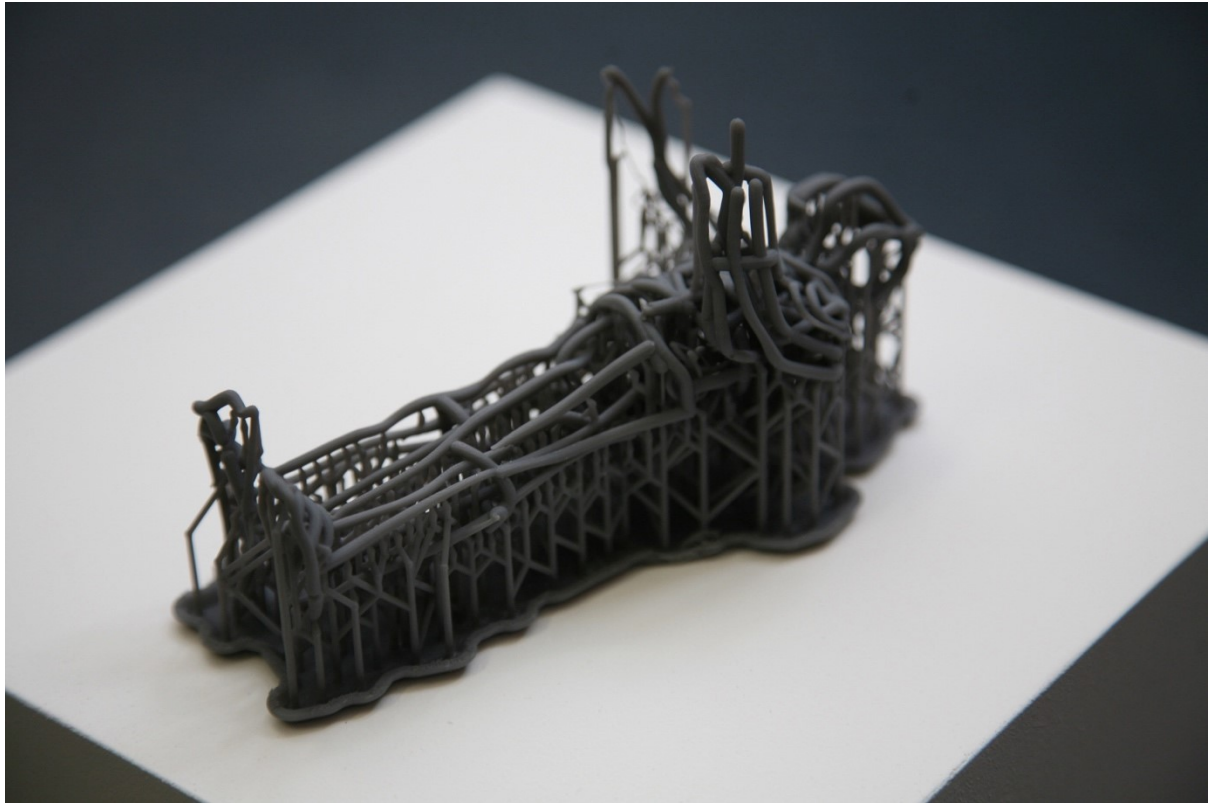
Keywords:

Graphic, line, trace, translation, projection, maquette, printmaking and remake.

The article discusses how sketching is utilised as a durational state within my practice and as a means to cultivate the creative potential that is afforded by the rough draft. The proceeding development of the sketch is also considered in relation to the maquette - as an equivalent three dimensional form for drafting ideas and exhibiting agency. The relationship between two and three dimensions is an ongoing area of inquiry within my practice, and is primarily explored through technological translation processes. The possibility to create a coalescence for these spaces (and the technologies that describe them) is presented through two graphic artworks that explore the role of trace and physical projection within volumetric space.

An idea that is provisionally brought to bear as a sketch holds a significant amount of agency to evoke a space between conception and realisation. More than a mere visual aid to illustrate the sequential unravelling of an idea (as a rough draft or work in progress) the sketch also has the potential to operate independently as a work in stasis. Uncoupled from conventional iterative formula's the work in stasis is able to embrace its durational significance. Associations with aesthetic infancy, openness to mutation and freedom from commitment afford alternative aims for the sketch as 'a means to an end'. Paradoxically this approach is still very much dependent on these established sequential relationships. For example, to preconceive the sketch as an 'end' would be to create a situation where one is preoccupied with 'finish' – thus reducing the legitimacy of intent. In this context one could say that the work would function as an illustration of potential, rather than being realised through, or constructed from potential.

Equally the notion of the 'rough draft' or 'unfinished' also hold true for the maquette, as an object that functions to test ideas and forms. Moreover, the formal relationship with the sketch and its two-dimensional surface become pronounced through the volumetric space, material support and subsequent tactile extensions of an idea. Interestingly, dictionary definitions refer to the graphic arts as, 'the visual arts that are based on the use of line and tone rather than three-dimensional work' (*OUP Online* 2019). The definition has by no means hindered the historical production of three-dimensional graphic works, although technological advancement has extended the possibilities for such pictorial statements through virtual and physical spaces. For instances, additive and subtractive digital fabrication technologies such as rapid prototyping and CNC milling have enabled the graphic mark to become projected into material, and as material. The use of the noun 'projection' as a specific image translation process is an attempt to retain a protrusion of the graphic form within volumetric space – rather than a work being conceived as three dimensional or prior to any three-dimensional languages taking hold.



Paul Laidler, *Untitled*, 2018. 3D Print using plastic polymer. L 14cm x W 5cm x H 7cm

Figure 1 is a 3D printed model of a sketch generated in virtual reality. Using projected vision, all the drawn marks are created as protrusions in space prior to being rendered as a physical space. The resulting model of the sketch depicts a skeletal structure from a series of 'hand' drawn lines that primitively trace the surface of my body using a sophisticated and highly mediated technological process. To perform a rudimentary drawing process in this context was partly an act of restraint (from the lure of new visual process) and as a means to physically situate marks on a surface prior to any further projection. How the technology and process translate this linear construction is central to considering a two-dimensional intent within three dimensions?

Translation between two and three dimensions is common practice across a range of visual art disciplines. However, the process of translation from one visual language to another remains a sensitive territory. Many years of making printed artworks has allowed me to experience the technical nuances (and expectations of artists) when translating between media. In this context, sensitivity is often accountable to comparative associations of difference, where anything that is lost in translation (or untranslatable) becomes prominent through absence. Conversely, there is also another variation that can occur when translating imagery from one space to another. The difference is perhaps best aligned with enhancement. Here a previously unseen or inconspicuous quality in the original work can become activated through a synergy of image and process. In both translation cases the relationship with the former image draws one's attention to a trace, or lack thereof in the latter. Presence of the trace or where an imprint is enhanced in some way indicates that the translation can be disassociated with reproductive endeavour and instead embrace strategies associated with remake.



Paul Laidler, *After Clement Valla*, 2018. Plywood construction and three panel inkjet print on proofing paper.

After Clement Valla (2018) is a remake of the artist Clement Valla's ongoing series *Postcards from Google Earth* (2010 -). Valla's work brought my attention to the process of Photogrammetry and the construction of multiple single points of perspective that wrap and fold flat images into hollow volumetric representations of landscape. Despite the complexity of the process traces of the linear and monocular vision remain visible within what Valla describes as a, 'God's eye view' for the collaged vision of machines (Valla 2015). Much of Valla's work emphasize the confusion between three dimensional images and objects, and the ongoing series present anomalies within systems that digitally record the surface of planet Earth. The opportunity to look through the eyes of machines and identify technological frailty or experience a self-consciousness moment when making is emblematic of my desire to create in technological terms. *After Clement Valla* (2018) is in part, an attempt to compress technologically projected vision with a view to considering a post-digital environment for relocating a human presence. Similarly, the work is conceived and presented as a maquette, in that no conclusions have been made or visual refinements explored – although it is perhaps inevitable that a refinement of method will occur over time. Nevertheless the durational affiliation with the sketch remains intact and by the same route so does the potential to re-appraise the enhancement of graphic conventions.

Reference

'Graphic Arts' (2019), Oxford University Press, Oxford, Second Edition,
https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/graphic_arts. Accessed 9 January 2019

Suggested citation

Valla, Clement (2015), *Surface Proxy*, Published by XPO Gallery, Paris
http://clementvalla.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/clement_valla_surface_proxy_web.pdf. p.86, Accessed 5 January 2018