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Performance Drawing: New Practices since the 1960s

Foreword

by Anna Furse

This book curates and articulates a richly diverse panoply of practices where the act of drawing is comprehended as a performative undertaking. Written from the perspective of articulate practitioners, the authors explain the term 'Performance Drawing', first coined by Catherine de Zegher in 1962, as cross-disciplinary, variable and evolving. Each of the five chapters discuss, by example, strategies by which the artist is leaving – as well as stimulating in others – marks and traces that operate in space and time, invisibly and materially, aurally and visually, instructively and reflectively, conceptually and physically, permanently and ephemerally. The field is quintessentially playful. Conjuring, instruction, animation, theatrics, even spiritualism, are included.

The body is a *leit motif*; as is motion: dance as well as motion picture. The material agency of the corporeal comes into play, literally. The entire body might be involved, becoming a total instrument; or the artist's bodily intervention might be alluded to in traces made visible, imprinted residues left behind as evidence of previous action. The artist might be running, or walking (perpendicular, up a building even, as in Trisha Brown's iconic post-modern choreography *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* (1970)). She might be making her mark on film footage as it projects. She might be allographically instructing others in drawing actions. Vitally, the artist, is *present*, in the sense of rendering the action of mark-making manifest, as a live process, whether analogue and digital.

Classification of the genre is inevitably elusive. No sooner does one read one definition than another emerges to offer yet another boundary pushed, another flavour, dislodging traditional assumptions about drawing signifying two-dimensional mark-making on a flat surface. What arises throughout, as a transverse line running across the authors' eclectic definitions, is a consistent democratising motive at work, unsettling traditional modes of consumption to promote methodologies of process, and a consensus that the examples chosen share a collective intention to disrupt spectator consumerism. The performance-drawn piece is only completed in its symbiotic encounter with its public. In participatory

culture, accomplishment gives way to concept, technique to process. Art, by definition, becomes the action of making art itself, over and above the artefact, a recurring post-20th century zeitgeist conversation to which the authors are uniquely contributing. If this book defines a common ground of artistic tendencies and their distinctions, it also expresses the very different perspectives of its Drawn Together authors. It is their respective approaches in gathering and comparing artists and their work that makes this such a useful compendium for student and scholar alike.

The pieces cited are simple and complex, solo and interactive, urban and rural, analogue and digital. They belong in their chapters, and yet there is slippage, as the confines of one topic infiltrates another. This is to be expected. This is a bold volume about unbounded, often interdisciplinary, practices. United by a common thread of liveness and performativity, the sundry experiments discussed and contextualised are positioned to foreground each chapter's focus, unpacked to reveal the ways in which drawing, as performative action, continues to inscribe meaning in space and time. What lingers, once one has put this book down, is a vivid impression (sic) of an expansive field of innovative and boundary-pushing art practices, persuasively held together by this elastic, yet consistently logical term: Performance Drawing.