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## **Why Drawing, now?**

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### **Abstract**

This article takes the question ‘why drawing, now?’ as a speculative way to enter the debate on the relationship of art to different understandings of community. Drawing offers a paradox around the place of art in society. Drawing can be thought about as a traditional medium that yields an individually focused interior exploration. It has also performed a social or ritual role historically, in different times and places. Imagine a public event to which participants are invited to draw. There is a large, single sheet of paper or drawing surface and the offer of different drawing implements. Participants respond by drawing with their own style and understanding of what drawing is. The accumulation of individual marks and imaginations make up a whole, in as far as the surface drawn upon is singular and brings these individual productions into one space. Imagine the same shared drawing surface, held up around the edges by a group of participants. A drawing emerges through the marks of an inked ball rolling across the flexible moving surface. In this scenario, the drawing traces – literally marks – the emergent relationship of one individual to another through the shared activity. Both scenarios are possibly very familiar activities in participatory art practices and each offers a different way of imagining community. In both, the act of drawing is pivotal to shared activity. The first assumes that community can be constructed by bringing a

group of individuals into the same space and activity. Many of us are enculturated to think that it is individuals – singular units – that make up society. The second, however, suggests that community *as already present* can be made visible through the drawing activity. Our exploration draws on a period of a collaborative practice-led experimentation, in particular a three-day research workshop involving drawing and writing. The aim was not to focus on what the results ‘looked like’ as art products, an approach that arguably fails to reveal the knowledge underpinning art’s appearances. Instead we set out to create the conditions for experiencing community through drawing. We found that drawing, in its most intimate relationship between maker/viewer, surface and mark, evokes a world to come, a world in formation rather than pre-formed. This revealed the need for careful scrutiny of the ways in which community itself is imagined. Our offer to the practice of participatory arts is to question deeply held assumptions about what community *is* rather than to propose new forms of access or techniques that can be transferred from one situation to another.

### **Keywords**

drawing

collaboration

community

experimental research

participatory arts

artistic knowledge

## **Introduction**

This article explores a scenario in which drawing is imagined as inherently collaborative, between individuals, between an individual and an emergent world that is always in formation. It does not set out to offer techniques for participatory practice. Rather we explore the consequences of certain ways of working and how they make present specific understandings of community.

Our argument has three points of reference. First, there are a number of projects that in different ways work with drawing and participation as their primary medium. They range from ‘Big Draw’ (The Campaign for Drawing), ‘Drawn to the Beat’ (Naomi Kendrick), ‘Drawing Sessions’ (The Drawing Paper), ‘The Drawing Shed’ (Sally Labern and Bobby Lloyd) to Gormley’s ‘Domain Field’ (2003) and Jen Southern’s ‘Walking to Work no. 3’ (2014). All exploit one of drawing’s most important qualities, that of connecting discrete points, whether of individuals within a community, or points in space through human movement and physicality.

Second, we acknowledge the importance of histories of participatory art. Suzanne Lacy’s coining of the term ‘new genre public art’ set out to create a distinct identity and a discourse around social art practice (1995). Such a naming was a self confessed effort to go beyond the orthodoxies of production and related values of the time, through an important politically focused questioning of why we make art and for whom, of who is excluded from artistic experiences and why? (Lacy 1995, 2010; Kester 2004, 2012.) Lacy and her teacher Allan Kaprow were working in these ways to counter the commodification of art and prevailing assumptions of what it could be; they sought to open up the possibility of art becoming co-produced, active and

community-forming. The emergence of social engagement in art provides a very important frame of reference for our own concerns. Nonetheless what informs our research is the danger that participatory forms of art-making are being reduced to merely another style or commodity, emphasizing the skills and techniques of a practice at the expense of understanding the indivisibility of the social and the aesthetic.

The thinking of the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy provides our third point of reference. In his book *The Inoperative Community* (1991) Nancy observes that there has been no renewal of notions of community in the post-war era, despite the emergence of post-colonial awareness and new technologies of communication, both of which clearly necessitate a rethinking. He suggests we should not be trying to define an essence of community in the sense of a model, however. It is a matter of *thinking* community, rather than of modeling or remodeling community. What Nancy is alluding to is his belief that community *is* our human condition i.e. not a thing to be constructed (1991: 22). In later writing on drawing, Nancy (2013), offers what we might take as a nuancing of this thinking on community, although he does not explicitly make this link. He emphasizes that to draw is to find a form to come; it is a generative power to make present what has not yet existed. We might read this back into his understanding of community and the necessity that this understanding be constantly challenged; something that drawing in being open ended and unfixed, makes possible.

The underpinning research described here emerged through two distinctive programmes. First an AHRC funded Connected Communities project investigating the legacy of artists within ‘Connected Communities’ research (P.I. Pahl, 2014-5) and

second the ERC-funded *Knowing from the Inside* advanced grant (P.I. Ingold, 2013-18) that investigates ways of knowing across Art, Anthropology, Architecture and Design. The authors engaged in a period of experimentation to inform the distinctive aims of both programmes. The experimentation occurred predominantly between April 2014 and January 2015. The first phase took the form of a three-day workshop between Ravetz, Genever and Douglas to explore drawing as a shared process. Reflection in the form of discussion and writing triggered a written response in the form of footnotes from the philosopher, Johan Siebers, an imaginative critical counterpoint to our initial documentation. In the following section ‘What did we do?’ we present this documentation as a faithful account of our experimental process, with one difference. Siebers’ commentary appears here as part of the body of the text (albeit in a similar form to footnotes).

The learning that resulted from this first phase was opened up further with a larger group of twenty participants through a one-day drawing workshop, led by Kate Genever in January 2015.

The aim of the research was not to focus singularly on what the results ‘looked like’ as art products, an approach that arguably fails to reveal the knowledge underpinning art’s appearances (Grimshaw and Ravetz forthcoming). Instead we set out to create the conditions through drawing for re-orientating ourselves towards what community might be. We were interested in re-routing artistic experience into the ground of material processes, of bodily movement and sensory experience while grasping the social qualities of shared spaces of production, a process that we describe as *being in the line*.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Below the line: the footnote occupies a space on the page that is created by a line, sometimes visible, sometimes invisible. It addresses the flow of the text without interrupting it. The superscript that indicates a footnote is to be found elsewhere on the plane that the text occupies stands off from the line of the text, it is between the lines. In handwriting it is all much clearer: the tip of the pen draws a line, and writing emerges, the traces left by the present moment in which the tip moves. The line that emerges behind the writer, in her wake as it were, in writing, is a record of a movement. Wake: forbearing sleep, forbearing dreams; the period between death and burial; the path of turbulence left by a ship or plane in the medium in which they are propelled. In digital text production, even in typewriting, this dimension is less clear. Being in the line: It makes me think of Truman Capote, who said, when he read Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957), a novel written on a scroll fed through a typewriter: "this is not writing, this is typing". Connections: writings; memory traces. Script, from *scribere*, from Proto-Indo-European *skreybh* – to scratch. The phenomenology of scratching: an interruption of the surface of the body that makes you feel you have a surface. Sounding Drawing: scratching is also a sound. A kinesthetic sensation, being scratched. All animals love it. What has the drawing of lines become that Kafka's *In the Penal Colony* uses scratching as being tattooed to death by words? Maybe it is the absence of the space in between the lines. The footnote exists almost only today in its alienated form, the scholarly footnote, giving information or a balancing, counterbalancing remark: the death of truth. I would like to find a way of writing footnotes that leave the text for what it is and make its silence readable, a contrapuntal voice that allows us to experience text not as a weaving but as fugue, the living tensions of dialectic acting themselves out in the space the writing opens up. This footnote scratches a text behind the ears, into a purring happiness in which it says what it cannot say on its own, and becomes music: foot-notes. Benjamin says the critic shows the truth value of a text: in this way the critic is a writer of my kind of footnotes. And crisis, what else is crisis than the drawing of lines?

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**What did we do?**

## *Phase 1*

Take an empty studio, a roll of paper 1.5 metres wide, a selection of materials including acrylic paint, charcoal, pencil and crayon, string. Introduce three quite different perspectives on drawing and its place in society, revealing the current thinking of three artist-researchers. One emphasizes the improvisatory, another the intimacy of drawing and the third the ubiquity of drawing in the world:

How might we approach drawing as a generative, improvisational process, an opening up of creativity from individual to individual?

How can we sustain the experience of ‘being inside’ drawing rather than self-consciously undertaking drawing as a ‘form of action’?

Why drawing? How can we explore the invisibility of line, drawing as encountered in life (Ingold, 2007), as a social practice?

In April 2014, the authors met for three days to develop drawing as a shared process. Our plan was to begin with the questions and a shared drawing exercise, then to see what would happen – as Kate Genever put it, to let, ‘stuff come out of stuff’. We agreed to keep a diary of the significant points of discussion.<sup>2</sup>

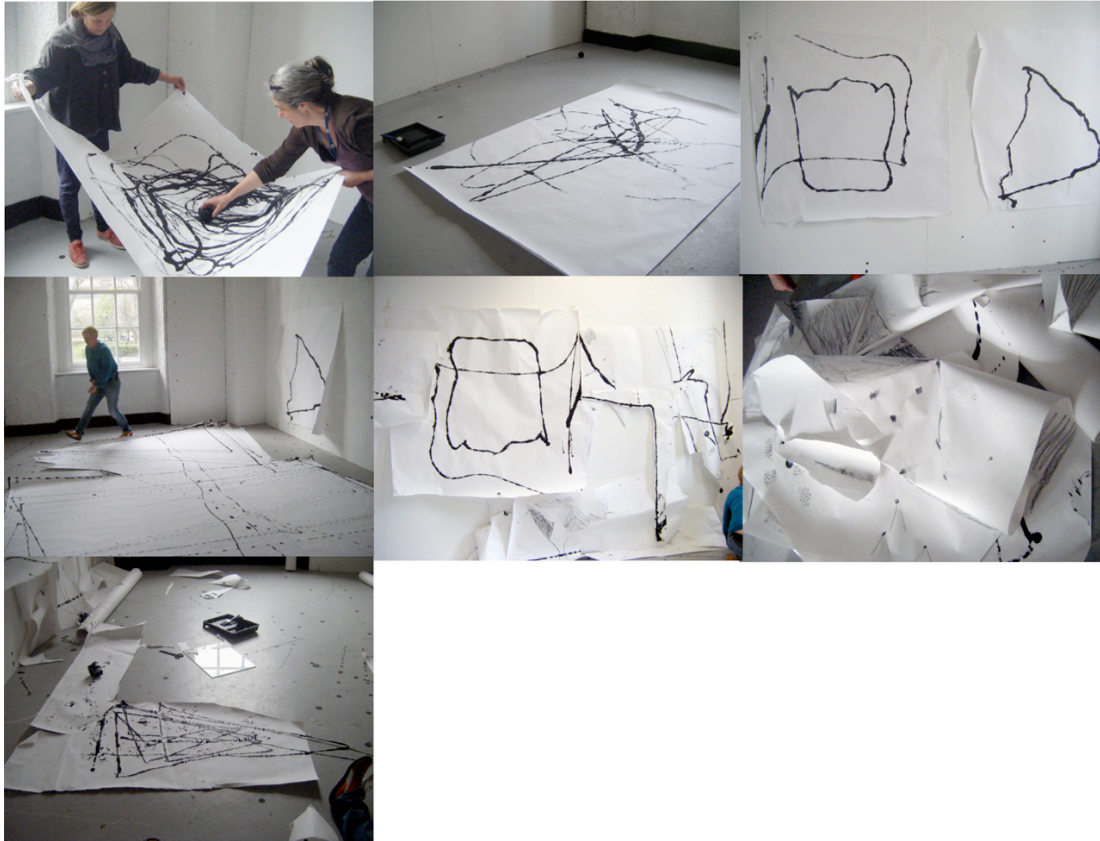
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<sup>2</sup> AD, AR and KG all speak of the line as some sort of limit. They draw a line between two things, one thing on this side of the line, the other on the other side. When we focus on the drawing of the line itself, the perspective is less that of ‘this side’ and ‘the other side’, but on how a plane opens up by being traversed. The line becomes a



way. But this is, again, a limit-notion of line and one that, once expressed, we have already moved beyond as well. That is moving-beyond is the goal-less goal, the teleology without telos, we are looking for.

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**Figure 1:** Day 1, April 2014.

*Day 1*

We started by ‘borrowing a technique’ from Gabriel Orozco. We cut a length of drawing paper, ‘inked’ a ball in black acrylic paint slightly watered down. Clutching the paper, we rolled the ball across the surface marking the paper with the different densities of mark moving in multiple directions.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ballpoint: in handwriting lessons, young children are first taught to use a pencil, then a fountain pen, then a ballpoint pen. Why? The pencil allows for differences of pressure. The hand learns what the right pressure is. The fountain pen gives an understanding of the fluidity of ink and, like the pencil, it moves only in the direction in which the hand moves: the hand learns to fuse with the instrument. Many writers say that when they write the place they occupy is the tip of the pen, not the body or even the hand. The ballpoint pen is not suitable for learning how to write, because the ball that is held in the tip of the pen can move in all directions equally easily. It is like learning how to ride a bicycle by being made to balance on a circus ball. During the workshop the invention of the tube and wire method was contrasted with the rolling of a ball. What was the learning process here? As I keep thinking about the materiality of *how to write*, I develop a stronger and stronger preference for the pencil. But I am no luddite. The mechanical pencil is the best writing instrument. That, or – when I dream an ab-original dream, the writing technique recommended by an early Soviet pedagogue: children should stand up when they write, so they can breathe freely in and out and do not crouch, and they should write with a nib pen. The movement away from the paper to dip the pen into the ink bottle creates a breathing space that aids the flow of writing. I do not do that myself – although I like to stand up when I write – but I am very aware of the bad posture and process I usually end up in, in front of a laptop screen on a kitchen table. The question of opening up creativity to a group of participants has a political dimension.

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We repeated the exercise refining it through the aim to create a circle, a square, a triangle.

We stopped at intervals to reflect on where our activity had taken us in relation to the questions and to adjust our direction. We talked about the activity being inherently social, performed as a community ‘act’. It could be understood to be drawing but fundamentally it was making invisible connections visible.

At lunchtime we talked about tailoring practices in India and Africa that use a whole sheet of fabric to make a single garment without waste. On reflection this became pertinent to the later part of the afternoon’s activity.

Kate and Amanda covered the floor with paper and invented a new implement by attaching lengths of string to the ball.<sup>4</sup>

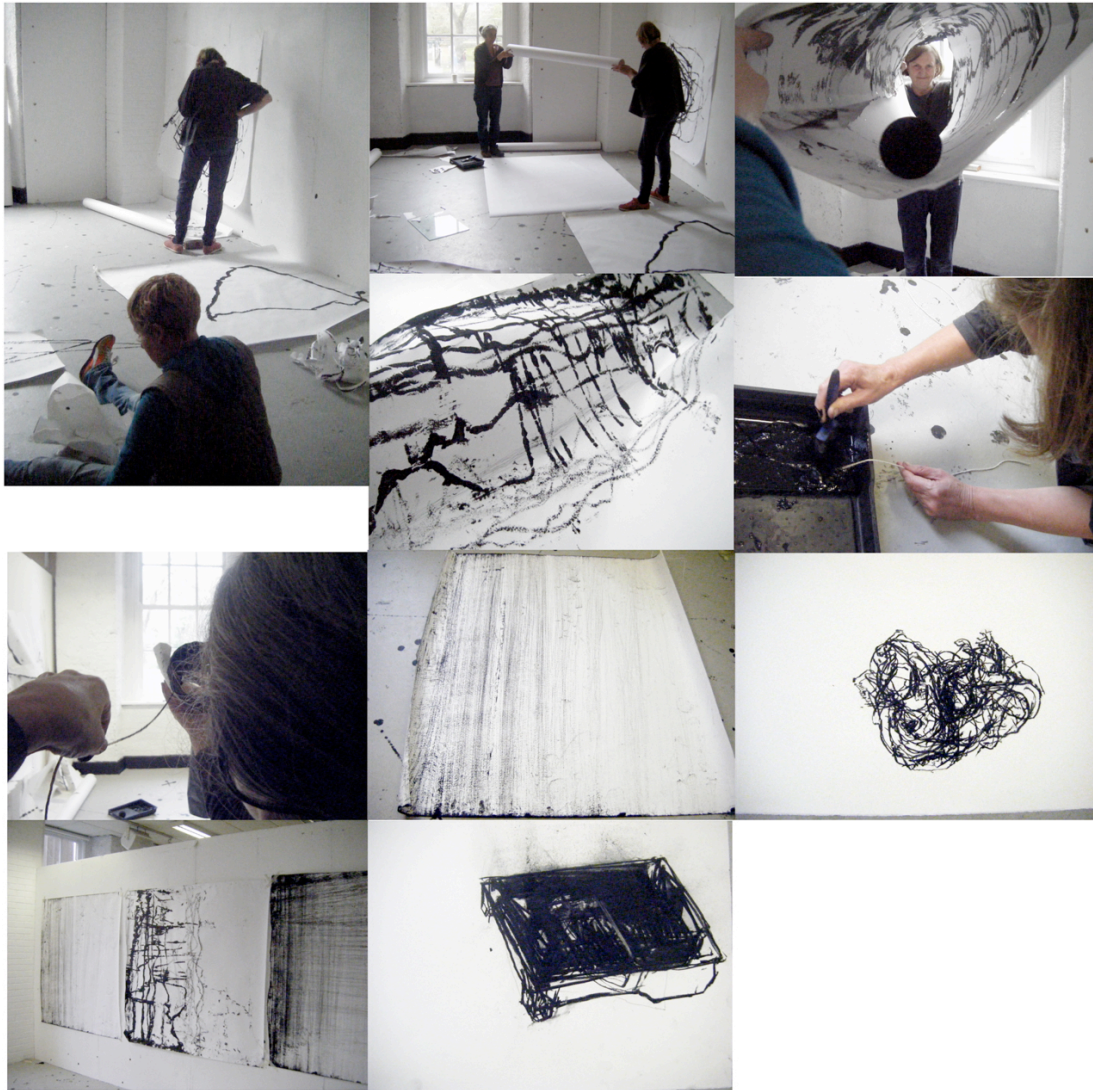
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<sup>4</sup>The ball no longer freely rolls. It is pegged on an axis, itself perhaps flexible (a piece of string), but like the globe itself. Here the line becomes more a traversing, making the plane visible, a wayfaring – this ‘being in the line’ – that, here, runs up against the walls of the room, the limits of the space. Did you feel you were aware of the walls and how they related to the drawing that was going on?

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They loaded the implement with paint and began to drag/bounce it up the length of the room. This was followed by spinning the string and making a mark in the same way – until the ball flew out. Slightly deflated, they began to roll the ball to one another across the full length of the floor, creating stitch-like marks on the paper, first in the shape of a rectangle and then, overlapping it slightly, the shape of a triangle. They cut the piece/shape out. The cut away paper was piled up at the side of the studio and used as a surface to draw on without knowing how it would appear when opened up. They placed the cut out paper ‘waste’ back on the floor around the other shape.

The next action involved collaging various pieces of the cut away ‘scrap’ paper onto the wall and floor. The rule was that the elements could be moved by someone else if they wished. We were working with all the materials, not discarding any, in the way we had talked about at lunchtime. This activity was free flowing and responsive.



**Figure 2:** Day 2, April 2014.

### *Day 2*

The next day began with a struggle about how to step back into the experience of the previous day. Various ideas were put forward and acted upon. Anne liked the texture of the studio space, so used texture as a way back into the creative process. She became dissatisfied as the materials would not comply with the vision. Amanda made a small ball-rolling device out of glass and a ball, and made a tennis ball drawing with

it, but did not like the scale. Kate made a shape with paper and masking tape and said it was a sensory way of keeping going at that moment, a 'thinking through making'. Kate observed we were trying to create/find a certain level of feeling, and also that we were all interested in/looking for different things. She observed that sometimes you have to build your way out of the boredom and struggle.<sup>5</sup> She then remembered the idea from the day before of building a drawing device.

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<sup>5</sup>The language of your text brings the reader back time and time again to a level of awareness of the present moment and of how I maintain myself in it: this is the darkness that is referred to below; a space of meaning and emotion as potential for movement. The point zero of it is perhaps boredom. The emergence of a struggle, out of boredom, a line to follow or draw, something is being borne out. This is a fragile moment and one that requires the suspension of goals even more than the suspension of disbelief. Again a political point: how little space there is for this vitalizing moment, especially in our institutions of learning and research.

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We made tubes of paper and ran the ball down the inside, opening up the rolls once the white was covered or the ball fell out from the end of the tube. We did this in different ways. We rolled paper in one direction then another and so made right angles. We opened up the paper and found different types of line. We enjoyed the sound of the ball rolling – a slinky inky sound. Anne liked the quality of the resulting line. Amanda was not sure what she thought of what it looked like. Kate questioned what it did beyond being an outcome of chance – she missed the intellectual involvement in the construction of an image.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Chance and the construction of an image: non-linearity and linearity?

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Again the question arose of it being enough, or not. There was a discussion about the relationship between experience of making together – working to get an angle etc. right, collaborating – and the ‘result’.

Anne suggested drawing down the tube with string. We tied two pieces of string onto scissors, as a weight, threw them down tube and then held the string taut and thwacked it on the inside of the tube. When the mark reached the edge of paper we opened up the tube a little more, until the string had discharged all its paint. This line was much more refined than that made with the ball. We all found it more interesting and surprising.<sup>7</sup> We worked with this string technique in different ways, rolling the paper in the other direction. The sound was strong and rhythmic.

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<sup>7</sup>The image reveals the chance operation of a line that leaves its full-length in a paint trace on the paper. The line itself became movement and could become that only because the plane on which it moved folded back in on itself into an inner space. But the image requires the externalization of that interiority, and the unfolded scroll is now an image of a chance operation, a non-linear line, chaos and order are no longer in opposition but one has become the plane for the other. There is a moment of redemption about this drawing (and if I am correct about his book, it would send Tim Ingold back to the drawing board).

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While we were doing this Kate made two drawings, one of the paint tray and one of a pile of paper. This seemed like the place from where the activity had emanated – the black source.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The rescue of the image makes the drawing of the pile of paper stand out: its standing-out literally a protruding from the processual space of the workshop; art once more as result, proudly affirming the split from the process that generated it. That too is an aspect of generation. Kate drew on the entire process that came before to produce this image. Not forgetting the image is not a balancing act between process and product as you suggest. I do not believe in balances, they are, if you will permit me for a moment, the English way out of the reality of dialectic, the *mélange of thought*. There is a swinging motion perhaps, or a voracious to-ing and fro-ing, a constant hovering on the edge of peril. But the image is borne out of the wayfaring of the line, of – walking:

Actually, for some time now I have given some thought to opening a film school. But if I did start one up you would only be allowed to fill out an application form after you have walked alone on foot, let's say from Madrid to Kiev, a distance of about five thousand kilometers.

While walking, write. Write about your experiences and give me your notebooks. I would be able to tell who had really walked the distance and who had not. While you are walking you would learn much more about filmmaking and what it truly involves than you ever would sitting in a classroom. During your voyage you will learn more about what your future holds than in five years at film school. Your experiences would be the very opposite of academic knowledge, for academia is the death of cinema. It is the very opposite of passion (Werner Herzog).

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Amanda and Anne made a drawing on the floor using the string to create a different quality of line. The sound was also rhythmic and part of being inside the experience, another dimension of the quality of being ‘inside the line’.

At the end of the day we reflected on three things: we had discovered for ourselves a new drawing technique i.e. moved beyond simply appropriating one (that of Orozco). We had made a line drawing from a line (of string).<sup>9</sup> We had created a procedure where the sound of the drawing was foregrounded over its visual appearance.

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<sup>9</sup> See note 7. It is the image of a line. Its silent truth is non-linearity. The footnote’s scratch.

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### *Day 3*

We set about connecting our experimental processes to the challenges of social art practice, more specifically to the way in which artists had worked within AHRC funded ‘Connected Communities’ projects. We wrote these reflections as a set of hunches (H1 – H8), outlined below.

Through the collaboration, we had rediscovered the power of drawing to open up a particular quality of time and space. We described this as suspending disbelief. Borrowing from theatre, we felt that we had knowingly entered an ‘unreal’ world that



opened up new perspectives, an immersion into the moment of an experience that could act generatively on experiences to follow (H1). We understood that such creativity depended upon respecting the groundedness, struggling with the constraints and freedoms of our immediate situation and working with these as fertile, rich in potential (H2). In so doing we needed to be highly attuned and attentive to what was around us and also to what was emerging, exercising judgement between two modalities: extreme focus and a wide perspective, a process of self-questioning (H3). We recognized the knowledge and skill that is wrapped up in judgement, the iterative process of moving beyond a comfort zone, reaching beyond first assumptions and default responses. We needed to reflect to maintain balance and to recognize which lines of endeavour to pursue or abandon. We described this as maintaining an awareness of quality (H4). In this sense art becomes a tension between two elements, made well and well experienced. If one overwhelms the other, the balance is tipped and brings about a separation (H5). We needed to be inside the experience, of following the line of experience by following a momentum of doing/acting. By being in the experience, unknown things, opportunities, new ideas can occur - responsiveness, intuition, haptic feel comes to the fore (H6). Chance occurrences needed to be built upon, to allow for deep change (H7). We needed to abandon possession and retain authorship<sup>10</sup> across multiple contributors. Abandoning authorship risks abandoning responsibility, relinquishing that specific quality when art creates a point of entry into the experiences of another individual, of conveying experience one to another (H8).

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<sup>10</sup> Authorship is not possession: if it is, the separation of author and authored does not arise, but the author becomes the possession of what she authored and thus becomes externalized, alienated. Authorship that separates from what is authored, and thus may seemingly be seen to externalize or alienate, in reality opens up the common generative space and helps to keep it open. The principles all work with the distinction between something and that which surrounds it and to which it is directed. That relation is not a simple one of geometrical location, but a bilaterally enabling one. Again: the line needs the paper, but the paper becomes the ground it is only when the line traverses it. ‘When I now saw the towers from a long way off and the blue smoke of Nuremberg, I almost thought I was not looking at a single city but at a whole world’ ((Johannes Butzbach’s *Hodoeporicon*, or *Little Book of Wandering* (1505), quoted in Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope*, p. 369).

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### **Why drawing?**

Johan Siebers in his footnotes sustains the structure and contour of our original narrative intact and introduces new thoughts as reflective elements that at times create resonance and at others, counter the insights that we had arrived at. If a fugue is the most complex kind of counterpoint, then these footnotes combined with the original narrative, is ‘fugue like’ in both structure and content. In this way Siebers’ response acts simultaneously as a continuity of our experimentation and an experiment in its own right. It highlights the silent, unspoken and invisible aspects of our endeavour. His approach is self-conscious in seeking to open up more fully the implications of drawing as a material and bodily process, grasping what is contradictory and inconsistent in drawing. He exposes through this imaginative tactic, those very places from which new insights could be forthcoming into the political aspects of drawing and its resonance with participation and engagement. It is important to note that the focus of his remarks is not the ‘look’ of the drawings, nor indeed the ‘look’ of the experimental process itself, one that might easily be dismissed as a naïve limbering up

of the creative process internal to the three participating artists. Siebers joins the drift, probing gaps, implications and possible developments opening up our experimentation to new horizons of possibilities.

Writing, Siebers tells us, is a form of drawing. The physical properties of materials, surfaces and bodily pressure act in relation to each other and produce quite different qualities of experience and, as a result, of thought. Wielding a ballpoint pen for a young writer is like learning to ride a bicycle on a circus ball – the ball moves in all directions. It is much less controllable than the pressure that the hand might exercise using a pencil. In each case the body becomes one with the material world. By taking us in this way deeply into the minutia of what drawing involves, how it has evolved from the idea of scratching to leave a trace/mark, we become aware that choices of materials implicate forms of control. These, in turn, have a political dimension.

Siebers reads our activity as political in a second sense of exercising the choice to focus and engage with the ‘vitalizing moment’ of an experience, to start from a zero point of darkness or boredom, to struggle with the implications, treating this starting point as rich in potential and meaning. This quality, he observes, is increasingly rare, particularly in institutions of learning and research, which are more and more concerned with the instrumental. To him this is more a suspension of goals than of disbelief, a quality that drawing, specifically, affords.

What of the line? Siebers observes how all three of us speak of lines in our initial questions as some sort of limit, as defining one side from another. An alternative perspective on line is an opening up of a plane by the way the surface is traversed,

becoming a (path)way. Siebers suggests the way is without a goal. Echoing Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (1972: 6-17), it is simultaneously a quality of open-ended movement and of freedom of thought. Open-endedness, however, emerges out of an awareness of limits. Drawing traverses space back and forth, in a form of wayfaring, a 'being in the line' that runs up against limits.

Siebers is critical of our tendency to seek to balance difference within a dialectic - product and process, the linear and the non-linear, author and no author. He suggests instead that each side of a dialectic, if left to be distinctive and unstable, is 'bilaterally enabling'. Authorship, for example, is a necessary and vital separation from what is authored to enable a birth to occur. He finds this splitting into two, echoed again and again in the practical actions of the experiment. We draw with string along a surface wound into itself. It is only when the paper is unrolled that the image of the work can be accessed. The image is an image of chance and a trace of the chance processes that created it. The one acts as the plane for the other.

Drawing, Nancy argues, is an identifiable quality to be found in all forms of artistic production, a quality of holding in tension a potential and its realisation in concrete form (Nancy 2013). Drawing hovers between determined and indeterminate states of being and becoming – as Siebers also notes within our own experimentation:

your text brings the reader back time and time again to a level of awareness of the present moment and of how I maintain myself in it: this is the darkness that is referred to below [in the text he has annotated] ; a space of meaning and emotion as potential for movement (see note 4).

Holding that space in this particular way *is* the potential for movement.

### **Why drawing, *now*?**

How does this inform the idea of community differently? We began with two ideas: one in which community is made by individuals congregating and drawing onto one surface, the other where drawing traces our existing relational positions, the idea that we are already born into a set of relationships: as Nancy writes ‘Community is given to us – or we are given and abandoned to community: a gift to be renewed and communicated, it is not a work to be done or produced...’(2013: 35).

Nancy offers a different construction from the idea that community can ever be produced or designed (2013: 4). Community is what happens to us (2013: 11) not what has been lost, and might later be found or remade. Viewed in this way, inner experience cannot be dissociated from the experiences that have created such experience. Consciousness itself is dependent upon communication i.e. consciousness is an attribute of community (Nancy 2013: 19-20). Communication is not added to human reality, but constitutes it (Nancy 2013: 20).

How do these insights help in understanding our experiment? And can we argue that the experience of three, now four, individuals acting in collaboration, *is* a social practice?

Our experiment shows us that drawing and experience mirror each other in this sense of immanence. We are with other beings and our sense of freedom does not end

where that of another starts, just as in drawing, a line might simultaneously encircle and disclose an object in relation to another or its surroundings.

What we discovered, and then rediscovered through Siebers' annotations, was a conception of community that is not dependent upon quantitative measures (e.g. how many people come together to do something) but a *quality* of experience, a quality of relating in the world. We have tended to imagine the public and private, the individual and social, as separate categories of being and as mutually exclusive, rather than sensitising ourselves to how these apparently incommensurable qualities work together in experience.

How might drawing provoke alternative experiences of community? To draw, Nancy argues, is to designate (Nancy, 2013: 10). To designate is to find a form to come. It is not to demonstrate something that already exists, not to reveal a form that is already received. Drawing is a way of seeing form, of grasping the poetic idea at the core of a work of art. This generative power of drawing, of making present what has not yet existed, of configuring a point or an idea within itself, moves us away from an encounter with the generic and with the real, the recognizable and measurable. It moves us towards the production of dynamic thought, new perspectives, the not-yet known. Drawing is a compulsion, not a technique of engagement, an 'overwhelming compulsion to scribble, draft, sketch out or outline' (Nancy 2013: 15), a disposition that Nancy points out, is not specific to artists, but found among very young children as well as early humanity (Nancy 2013: 16). Drawing is a, or perhaps the, formative force, a means 'to renew and multiply without end the sketch that man is' (2013: 16).

Participation is integral to drawing. Drawing is integral to all kinds of art practices. Social art practice is attempting to link art and participation. This creates an illusion that these are not already linked. By working inside the social practice of drawing, we became able to recognize that illusion for what it is.

### **Acknowledgments**

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### **Contributor details**

Anne Douglas' research re-examines the role of the professional artist as a catalyst for social change, including environmental and economic. A key feature of this research practice is that it is anchored in the knowledge and skills of arts practice (a practice-



led approach), with a particular focus on the role of the arts in public life. In 2014 Anne was the MacGeorge Fellow, University of Melbourne's Centre for Cultural Partnerships. Since 2001 she has also been the founding Director of 'On the Edge Research', a programme of art-research that focuses a range of investigations on 'developing the role of the artist in society' ([www.ontheedgeresearch.org](http://www.ontheedgeresearch.org)). She has authored a number of publications including *The Artistic Turn: A Manifesto* (Leuven: University of Leuven Press, 2009 with Kathleen Coessens and Darla Crispin), and more recently *Drawing and the Score* in *Sound and Score* (eds Kathleen Coessens and Paulo De Assis, Leuven: University of Leuven Press, 2013).

Amanda Ravetz is a visual anthropologist with research interests and expertise in the interdisciplinary connections between anthropology and art/design; the theories and practices of observational cinema; and artist's development. In 2012 Amanda was SAR Fellow at the National Film and Sound Archive, Australia. In 2014 she was Visiting Fellow at the School of Art and the Humanities Research Centre, Australia National University. Her most recent book *Collaboration Through Craft* (2013), an edited volume with Alice Kettle and Helen Felcey, offers a challenging new argument for the collaborative power of craft, analysing the philosophies, politics and practicalities of collaborative craft work. *Observational Cinema: Anthropology, Film, and the Exploration of Social Life* (with Anna Grimshaw), was published by Indiana University Press in 2009. Her edited volume with Anna Grimshaw, *Visualizing Anthropology* was published by Intellect Books in 2005 and investigates new collaborative possibilities between anthropology and other fields, linked to image-

based work. Amanda's films have been screened in the United Kingdom, Finland, Latvia, Portugal, Germany, Majorca, United States and India.

Kate Genever completed her M.A. at the Royal College of art in 2008 – specializing in drawing and printmaking. Her work is concerned with creativity, beauty, line and the extended idea of drawing. Kate collaborates with Steve Pool as The Poly-Technic. Its aims are to bring people together to think around the intersection between art, places, research and in doing so build generative spaces.

Johan Siebers is Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies, Middlesex University, London and an Associate Fellow of the Modern Languages Research Institute, School of Advanced Study, University of London. His main research interests are in metaphysics and critical theory. Metaphysics concerns the nature of being; theory is critical when it aims 'to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them' (Horkheimer). In his work Dr Siebers develops a critical theoretical praxis that contributes to this aim. It is based on three pillars: the ontology of the not-yet, the unconscious and the critique of ideology. Critical theory needs to be infused with a utopian and metaphysical perspective to be able to address contemporary modes of enslavement. Recent publications include *Bloch's Dialectical Anthropology* (2013, Duke University Press [ed.]); 'Aufenthalt im unerhoerten: Bloch's reading of Hebel (1926–1965)' (in *Oxford German Studies*, 40:1, pp. 62–71); and 'The utopian horizon of communication: Ernst Bloch's traces and Johann-Peter Hebel's treasure chest' (in *The Ethics of Communication*, 2013, John Benjamins, Amsterdam, pp. 189–212).

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