

跨界素描

简·戴尔 澳大利亚艺术家和作家，目前居住在北京

now, drawing...

Drawing across borders

by Jayne Dyer, Australian artist and writer living in Beijing



Rita Haas (Brazil), *Lost impact*, 2013, past, architectural details, performance, dimensions variable. Photograph by Irving Hsu.

China: 21st-century introspection?

Today's generation of young artists face a very different China from the post-Mao halcyon days. Emerging artist Ren Han's *Is It 1954*, Taiwan participation in *Consciousness at Taichung Art Museum*, Taiwan, 2013, indicates a drawing prone with a visual intensity and a quiet intellectual material contradiction that simultaneously mirrors and relates expected thematic and spatial relationships, referring as much to absence (what is lost? denied? unthought of) as to presence.

Simply executed with graphite pencil or pigment, site-specific installations and discrete drawings side between objective and non-representational form, that owe as much to his postgraduate training in France as to systems of cartography and classical Chinese calligraphy: ink painting about what constitutes drawing. *Soft Impact* (2013) exists only in documentation. Constructed in an abandoned factory site, the artist drew a perfect circle on a wall, filled the circle with black pigment and proceeded to erase it: the wall with detritus – fragments from the site, such as machine parts, building materials. Resulting in accidental, white marks

penetrating the black void. Ren Han created what he describes as a landscape. His massive wall drawing *Little Labyrinth* (2011) appears simultaneously as a fractured landscape viewed through a wide-angled lens and as undefined microscopic fragments from a demolition site. China in transition, Ren Han identifies the speed of change, boom-time uncertainty, an environment compromised, prevented from a distance, silently.

Sri Lanka: war / post-war

The Sri Lanka's civil war (1983–2009) between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in the north and east and the Sri Lankan Government affected a generation of artists who lived a social and personal reality of conflict and displacement.

The collaborative *The One War Drawing Project*, between four pioneering Sri Lankan artists, Jagath Weerasinghe (b. 1954, Moratuwa), Chandraguptha Theraswara (b. 1940, Dabell), Thanetharanigalla Shaneshan (b. 1949, Jaffna) and Muhamed Odeh (b. 1964, Colombo), tracks a 25-month drawing exchange to 2007. Drawings were swapped by post, between Jaffna in the north and Colombo in the southwest, centres that have been, and

continue to be, ideologically and ethnically polarised. This seminal visual archive offers an acute lens to the civil war and is considered one of the most innovative contemporary art projects that has taken place in Sri Lanka. Commissioned as a *Rakery Leaves* publication, the project was launched at Art Dubai 2008 and exhibited in *The 4th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art*, Gallery of Modern Art, Brisbane, 2009.

Dr Virginia Whiles describes the activity as 'no parlor game'.¹ She suggests: 'The works were daily performances undertaken in the spirit of direct documentation, 200 pages of 52 sketches by each artist manifesting his reaction to the war-mongering factors which have tormented Sri Lanka for the last decade.'²

While post-war, next generation artists' interests have diversified, the legacy of Weerasinghe, et al., is evident in *Jaffna Map* (2010) by Pala Pothupillay (b. 1972, Deraigal). Awarded the 2010 Sovereign Asian Art Prize, the work, drawn in ink and pencil on an antique map of the northernmost tip of the country, is a powerful pointer to Sri Lanka's geopolitical landscape during the height of the war between the Tamils and the Sinhalese. We are familiar with mapping as a scaled portrait of geographical

features and political borders. Pothupillay makes metaphorical extensions to these conventions, revealing evasive ethnic territories and identities and raising questions about the problematic construct of what is and what may constitute a rational identity. Jaffna Map was included in *Making History*, the 1st Colombo Art Biennale this year.

India: heritage and identity

Chitra Ganesh's background (b. 1975, New York, Indian-American) offers an army-length relationship with India, possibly permitting her license to probe attitudes to female identity and behaviour that expand to South Asian history, imperialism and queer politics.

Her subversive, popular *Tales of Annesia* (2002–07) was included in *The Empire Strides Back*, *Index Art Today at Saatchi Gallery* in 2010, with a related series recently exhibited at the *Gallery Espace* booth in the 2014 *India Art Fair*. *Tales of Annesia* appropriates the trope of the comic book, referencing the Indian comic books of Amar Chitra Katha (ACK) that relate stories from the great epics. Ganesh adapts the stylisation and direct storyline where good triumphs over evil, but subverts expected content.

Pala Pothupillay (Sri Lanka), *Jaffna Map*, 2010, pen and colour pencil on printed map, 40 x 91.5 cm. Courtesy Imperial War Museum, London, Sri Lanka.



Chitra Ganesh (India), *India, 2013*, ink and oil on paper, edition 1 of 5, 125 x 125 cm. Courtesy Gallery Espace, New Delhi.

The traditional hero (Hanuman, monkey god) is supplanted with heroine Annesia (a pubescent, adolescent Indian girl) who expresses social and cultural attitudes that delve headlong into themes of female sexuality and aggression in ways that are equally playful and provocative, using imagery derived from Hindu mythology, Bollywood, comics and science fiction.³

While Ganesh incorporates traditional drawing media such as charcoal and ink, which to produce large-scale wall and paper works, *Tales of Annesia* evolved as a seamless union of techniques. Produced as digital C-prints that are part hand, part computer generated, Ganesh starts with brush and

ink drawings, then scans, manipulates, collages, at ease with both physical and virtual languages.

Since 2004 Ganesh has been working collaboratively with Marian Oshen (b. 1970, New York, Afghan-American) on *Index of the Disappeared*. This on-going archive tracks censorship and data ensure post 9/11 in America. *Index of the Disappeared*. *Secrets Told* opened in February 2014, a site-specific installation presented as part of an artist in residency at Asian/Pacific/American Institute at New York University.⁴

References:

1. Dr Virginia Whiles is an art historian, critic and curator. She is Associate Lecturer at Chelsea School of Art, London, research fellow of National College of Art, Boston (Mass) University, Lahore, Pakistan. *The One War Drawing Project*, May 2008 – October 2007, Art Dubai, T. Shaneshan, C. Theraswara & J. Weerasinghe (2008). <http://www.theonewarproject.com/>
2. Ibid.
3. Jaff Longhills, interview, *ArtNet*, Chitra Ganesh Online, 'Visual Effect' or *Visual Games* (2009), *ArtNet*, New York, NY, 14.02.2012. <http://www.artnetmag.com/magazine/showroom/ChitraGaneshOnline>
4. Ibid.

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now, drawing...

Drawing in the limit: notes towards a (brief) sketch

by Marcelo Guimarães Lima

Marcelo Guimarães Lima, PhD, MFA, is currently a Post-Doctoral Fellow in the Philosophy Department of the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and director of the Núcleo de Artes e Cultura (arts and culture division) of the CEPADIS Research Center in São Paulo.

In 1947 Brazilian artist Flávio de Carvalho (1899–1973) stood by his sick mother's bedside and recorded in a series of drawings the final agony of an aged woman dying of cancer. The series, with the descriptive title, *Mother's death* – *My mother dying* (also known as *Série Trágica* – *Tragic Series*), was exhibited in 1948.

This series of portraits – for they are indeed unique portraits, a compounded death mask – were done with an economy of means and a clarity of touch that translated the motions of extreme human suffering into clear and urgent graphic forms. They presented the pathos of death with urgency and yet with relative sobriety. From a close point of view and, at the same time, with the kind of detachment proper to the type of vision, the way in which it is, in fact, that of the artist in the process of observing and recording the inherently unstable, movable forms of reality.

For, indeed, a kind of displaced identification with the figures of reality is for the artist what brings close to the mind (and to the mind-hand connection, the thinking as making that characterises drawing) the realises of things and processes or their true configurations. Displaced, that is, in the object of vision, as another object, in the act of seeing, as another vision, in the time of vision (and as another time, a time prolonged or suspended in and by the powers and the constraints and limitations of aesthetic form).

All funerary related art wants to preserve the 'likeness' of the deceased person against death itself: in the graphic (drawn, painted, etched, sculpted) representation of different times and places, what once was is made present again here, now and for the future, as representation appeals to memory countering the destructive powers of time. In Flávio de Carvalho's series, the focus is the event itself: the final event in which the subject is disclosed in all its frailty, in the last universal event of life. The subject, that is, ourselves, in the very particularity and universality of our condition as creatures of flesh (universally ours or daughter), attached by the flesh and the spirit to others and living through, thereby, each other's fortunes and misfortunes, in all of life's joys and miseries.

The portrait, any portrait, is always already a 'death mask', the record of what was and is no longer, gone with time. All funerary art is a memento mori: the remembrance of the departed that serves also to remind the living of their own mortal condition. An artistic or art-historical ancestry to Flávio de Carvalho's series can perhaps be located in Late Medieval funerary sculpture: the *transi* tomb. The *transi* tomb portrayed the king, or the nobleman or high-church dignitary, in the process of physical transformation by death, symbolically with a cadaverous counterpart figure or partially transformed into a cadaver.¹ The modern artwork is, of course, informed by a somewhat different experience and concept of human time and of human transience, and a different perspective on the ideological dimension, the functions or uses of art, conscious or otherwise.

When first exhibited in São Paulo the *Série Trágica* drawings were met with public shock and disorientation.² It contributed to establish the artist's reputation as a kind of 'artiste maudit' of Brazilian Modernism.

Flávio de Carvalho was one of the most important and innovative artists in modern art in Brazil, and yet, for a long time, a relatively marginal figure in the narrative of the history of Brazilian art. He was a de facto pioneer, in the first part of the 20th century, of artistic initiatives that only in the second half of century would be recognised as belonging to varieties of conceptual art and performance art (for instance, *Experiência* no. 2, from 1931, and *Experiência* no. 3, in 1956.)

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16 | DISSENT volume 6 number 2

print | cultural | 15

21 世纪的反思？

今天的年轻一代艺术家正面对一个与后毛泽东太平时期截然不同的中国。2013 年在天津美术馆的群展《觉悟》中，参展的新兴艺术家任瀚（1984 年生于天津）的素描具有一种视觉内在和安静理智/物质的矛盾存在，同时反射和驳斥了观者对主题和空间关系的预想，用虚无（抑或是失去？拒绝？难以企及？）表达存在。



单纯地使用石墨铅笔或颜料进行创作，特定场域装置和碎片式的素描，介于具象与非具象的形状，归功于他在法国读研究生的经历，将制图法与中国古典的书法式水墨画相结合。任瀚对“是什么得以构成素描”的问题进行挑战。《温柔的撞击》（2013 年）仅仅以文献记录的方式存在。创作于一座荒废的工厂中，艺术家在墙面上用黑色颜料绘制了一个完美的圆形，然后将一些碎片砸向墙壁，碎片来自现场，包含机械零件、建筑碎块。由此造成一种意外的效果：白色的痕迹透过黑色墙面，从空洞中显露出来，任瀚将这件创作描述为“风景画”。他的巨型壁画《小迷宫》（2011 年）同时呈现了一幅透过广角镜头看到的破裂的风景画，以及破坏现场中无法识别的微小碎片。中国正在转型，任瀚审视着变化的速度，无节制的繁荣时代，被迫妥协的环境；安静地站在远处……

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[英文原文]

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21st-century introspection?

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Simply executed with graphite pencil or pigment, site-specific installations and discrete drawings slide between objective and non-representational form, that owe as much to his postgraduate training in France as to systems of cartography and classical Chinese calligraphic ink painting. Ren Han challenges assumptions about what constitutes drawing. *Soft Impact* (2013) exists only in documentation. Constructed in an abandoned factory site, the artist drew a perfect circle on a wall, filled the circle with black pigment and proceeded to assault the wall with detritus – fragments from the site, such as machine parts, building materials. Resulting in accidental, white marks penetrating the black void, Ren Han created what he describes as a 'landscape'. His massive wall drawing *Little Labyrinth* (2011) appears simultaneously as a fractured landscape viewed through a wide-angled lens and as unidentified microcosmic fragments from a demolition site. China in transition. Ren Han identifies the speed of change, boom-time uncontained, an environment compromised; presented from a distance, silently...

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