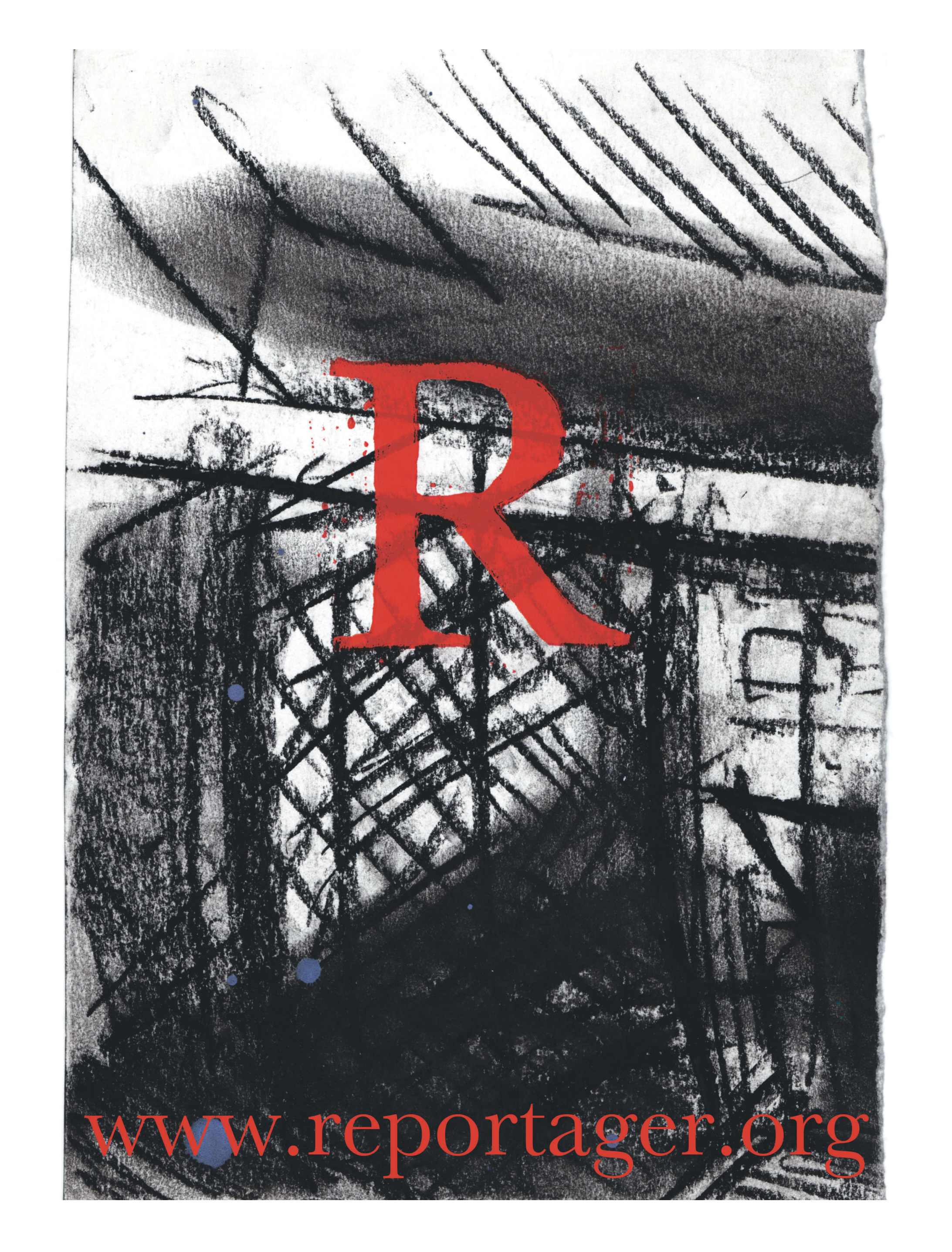




R

www.reportager.org

Reportager

The work contained in this print version of reportager represents sketchbook drawings of twenty artists who are either members of reportager or who have been associated in some way with the online journal. Reportager.org exists in order to support, initiate, and showcase projects involving drawing as reportage, visual journalism, documentary drawing and illustration as visual essay.

The brief for this publication was for artists to submit work, created on the spot, without correction, mediation or beautification. Many of the artists make work either for self-initiated projects or for commissioned work. All have one thing in common, they use the sketch as the basis for reference, investigation, interrogation or research. The following drawings demonstrate integrity and honesty, a warts and all approach often lacking in more mediated finished work which often hides behind the veneer of digitally cosmetized modifications, at times necessitated by art directed and commissioned work. The work as far as possible demonstrates what Bonnard called 'the state of first vision'

Reportager.org has been online for over a year. There is a drawing zeitgeist taking place and evidence of real interest in documentary drawing and reportage. As the editor, I have been both pleased and surprised by the huge amount of interest in the area of visual journalism and reportorial drawing.

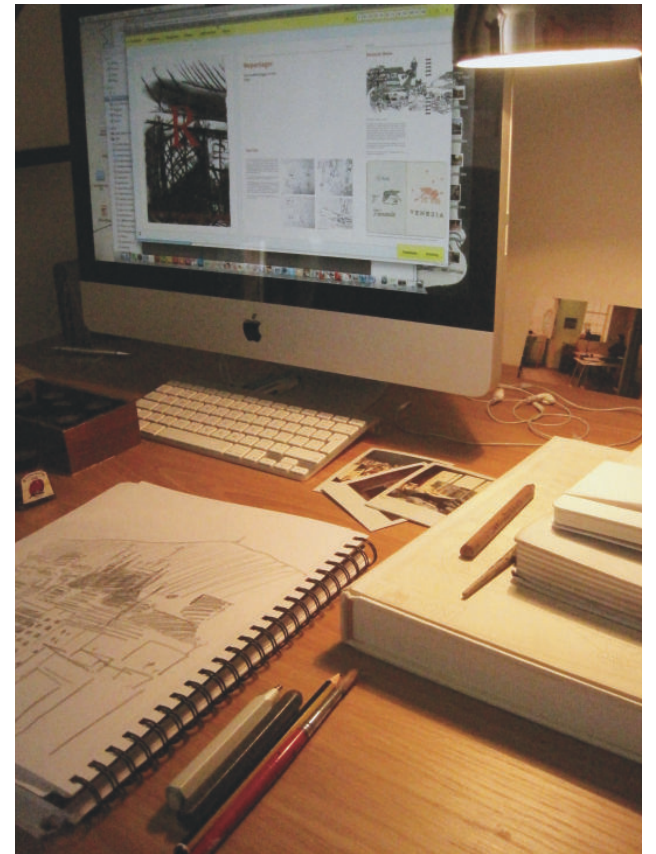
Steven Heller wrote in 1992 in a catalogue introduction for a retrospective of the work of Alan E Cober 'The artist as illustrator, The illustrator as journalist'

"Despite our current reliance on photographic, electronic and now digital media, for the transmission, and reception of objective information, the artist continues to be a valuable interpreter of critical events".

This seems even more relevant today. I was recently sent an article written for the Feb. 1984 edition of Designer Magazine titled 'New Illustration & Selective Blindness'. In the article, Clive Ashwin discusses "The Artist as Reporter" a conference run by the Royal College of Art as part of a series of three one day conferences, examining a number of issues relevant to the practice and use of illustration. In the article Ashwin comments on the work of several well known reportage illustrators of the day and how the drawings presented although notable for having much excitement and visual incident were strangely absent of the underlying issues inherent in their subjects or locations.

During the conference, Rob Mason (who kindly sent me the article) challenged the rationale of a purely visual descriptive approach to drawn reportage. Mason made a good point arguing that work not necessarily done on the spot or spontaneously may be better at showing and exposing underlying social and moral issues. He went on to say work might require reflection, adaptation and invention. Several questions were raised during the day regarding illustrative reportage, most of which remained unanswered. Hopefully some of these issues will have, and will be resurrected, debated and to a certain extent resolved over the subsequent years. Unfortunately I think many of the issues still very much persist.

Gary Embury
Editor of reportager
editor@reportager.org



All text and images © of the individual artists.

Sue Coe

Sue Coe was born in Liverpool and grew up next to a slaughterhouse. She studied at the royal College of Art and moved to New York in 1972. She has been featured regularly in the ground breaking magazine Raw, and has contributed illustrations to the New York Times, The New Yorker, Newsweek, and Rolling Stone amongst many other publications. Her paintings have been exhibited around the world including The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

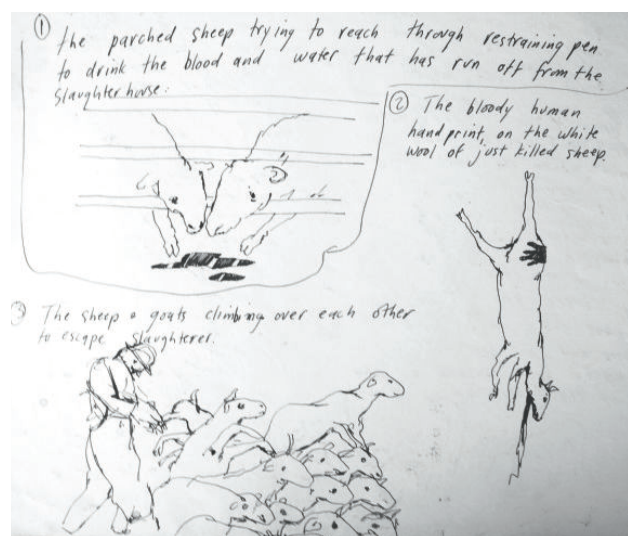
In an interview for Reportager Sue was asked about the work she makes on locations such as the slaughterhouse.

'The guys are looking at me drawing them and they are seeing I'm not making it derogatory about them and I'm asking them if I'm doing anything wrong then please tell me, ... I show it to the person, ... before it's published it's their life, its not my life. And I say is there anything inaccurate, anything you object to and it will never see the light of day. It's their story'.

The full text can be viewed at:

<http://reportager.uwe.ac.uk/projects12/coe/topsy.htm>

<http://graphicwitness.org/coe/enter.htm>



Trying to escape



Sketchbook

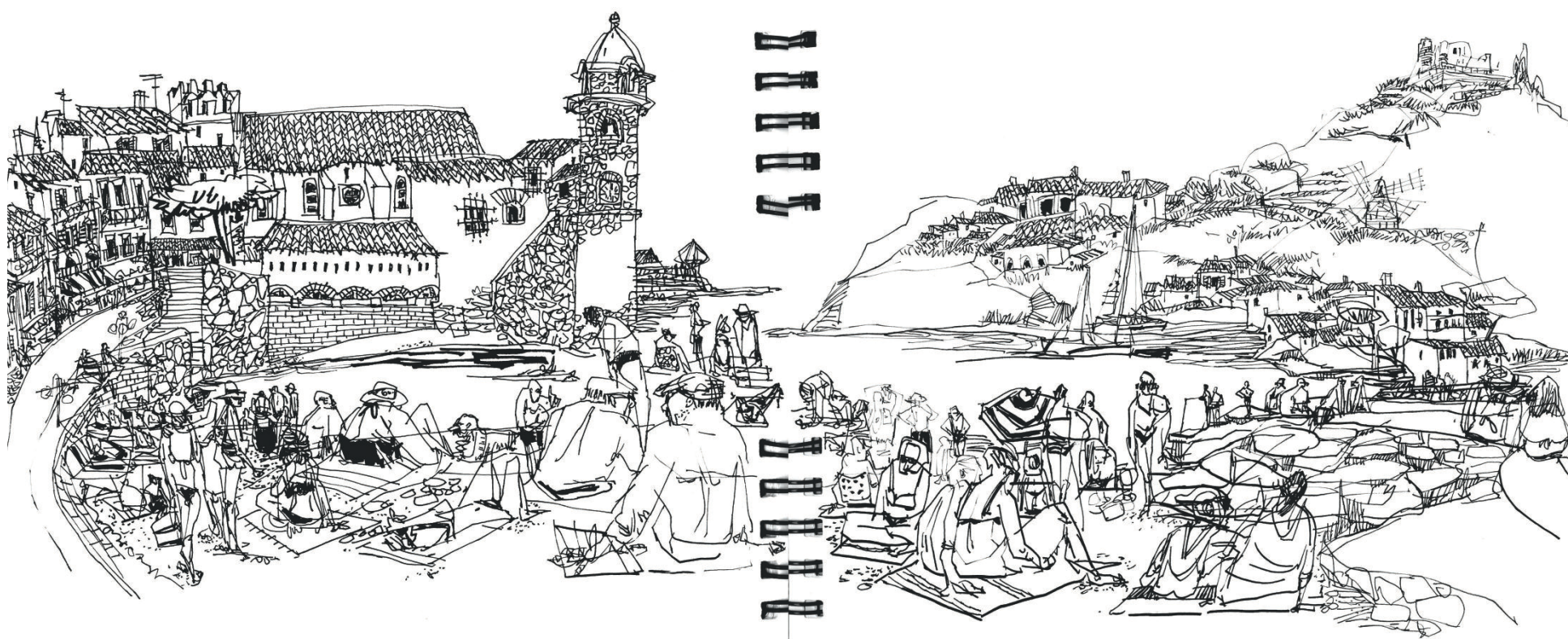


Man can't rule no more



Dragged in chains

Melanie Reim



Collioure, France

The sight, smell, sound and feel of the sea has brought Melanie Reim to document beaches and bodies of water around the world. Most recently in the South of France, Melanie's depiction of the beach in Collioure, France epitomizes what she loves about capturing beach scenes. A pile-up of bodies and beach blankets, enveloped by a sweet medieval village with cobble stone streets were enhanced by a fairy tale castle and Pyrénées mountains in the background.

Collioure's beach scene will be featured in Melanie's soon to be self-published book, 'Beached', a collection of beach drawings from Melanie's world travels.

You can see more of Melanie Reim's reportage work at:

sketchbookseduction.blogspot.com.



Roderick Mills

I use sketchbooks whilst traveling to gain an impression of a place, whether these be drawings, or writing down thoughts for myself, a means of documenting my experience of a place. I'm very much a wanderer, a flâneur you could say, I usually take out my Moleskine sketchbook whilst sat in a café, restaurant or bar. Since I constantly photograph the sketchbooks are a means to take down notes for self-reflection later. Rather than simply drawing what I see before me to create some sort of pictorial representation, I mostly draw graphical elements such as typography, printed ephemera or architectural spaces. A methodology derived of summing up a location rather than simply depicting it.

In the case of my books for Venice, it is an ongoing exploration of the city through various media including film and field recordings. The sketchbooks themselves are not the final outcome of the project, but a means of trying to understand my obsession with this strange city of water and to collect my thoughts and memories whilst there. The paper is relatively lightweight in the sketchbooks, therefore transparent when using assorted pens, so that previous drawings appear through the pages, remembrances of other days and events affecting the new drawings. If possible I use pens purchased from the place itself, mostly from dusty stationery shops and often not professional in quality to remove the 'Art' from the process.

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'This was Venice, the flattering and suspect beauty - this city, half fairy tale and half tourist trap...' Thomas Mann

Veronica Lawlor



Strike, NYC

What I enjoy most about reportage illustration is the spontaneity of it. These drawings were made one day in the summer of 2012 - I was working in my NYC studio and heard a commotion outside my window. The union workers for Con Edison, our utility company, were striking, and making quite a racket about it! I grabbed my sketchbook and a few tools and ran out to draw the scene, following the strikers to Union Square park where there was a rally. The sounds of the horns and yelling were an important part of the event, so I included them in my reportage, using loud colors.

I love the way the high energy and body language of the strikers contrasts with the stoicism of the police at the scene: my hand followed their respective energies while drawing. I used the happy accident of marker bleed-through on my sketchbook paper to indicate distance, as the last 99% picketer follows the crowd, and the line-up of the police watch with a disinterested air. Capturing the energy of life as it happens, unplanned and unrehearsed, that's the joy of reportage for me!

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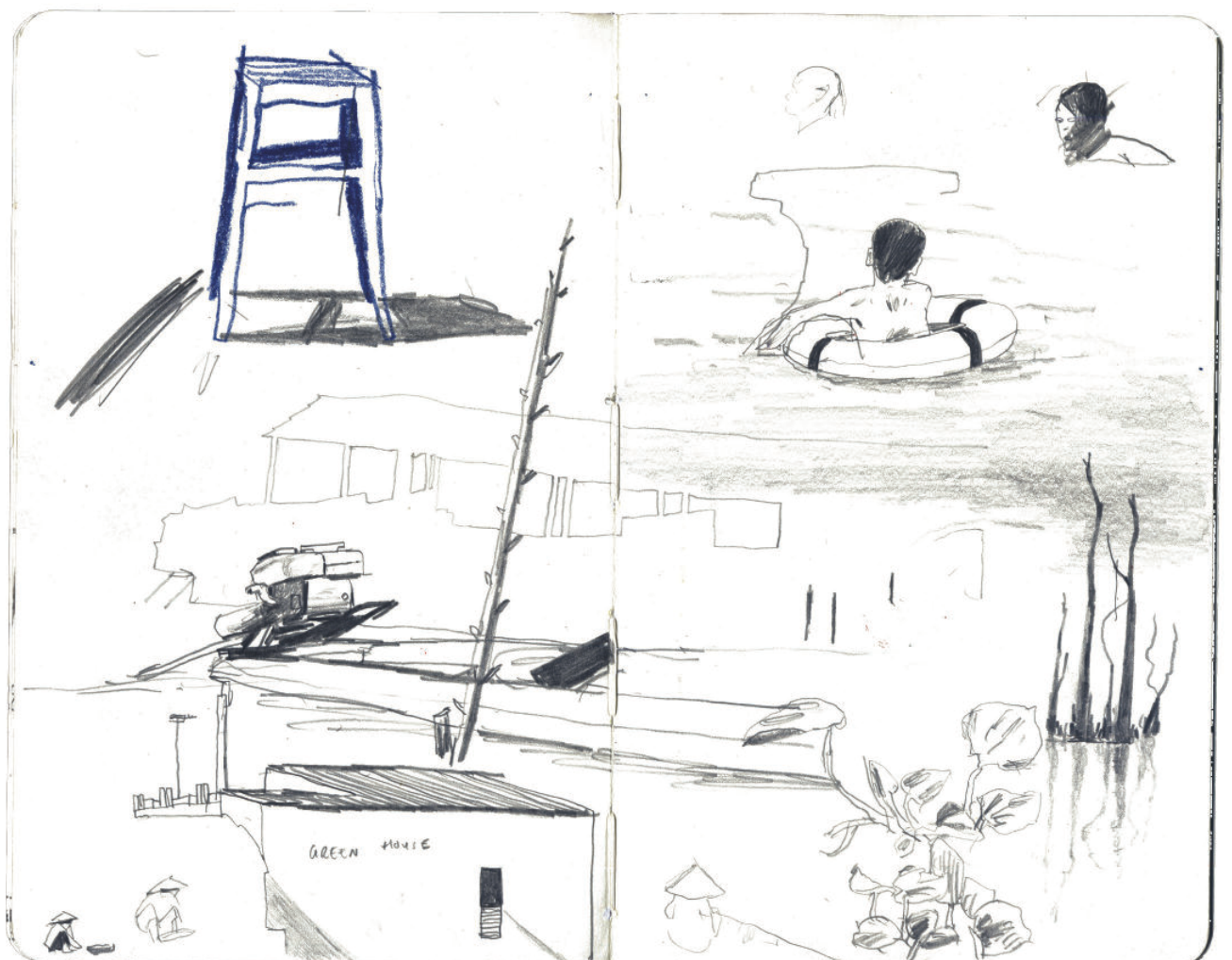
www.veronicalawlor.com

Dave Sparshot

"These are a couple of pages from a sketchbook that I took on a two month trip around South East Asia in 2011. These are two of just a handful of full page drawings. As the trip progressed I began writing long diary entries with small sketches dotted in between. It has been great rediscovering these entries again. A trip at the end of 2013 has been planned where I intend on producing a drawn travel journal. The drawings are made using HB and 2B pencils in a moleskin sketchbook

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Mario Minichiello



Fig 1: Minichiello, M., 2007. worried people on the bus. (Drawing) (6'Wx12'H)

Drawing, like writing, enables the viewer to internalise the experience contained in the visual narrative. But it is not only through drawing's formal grammar of replicating or remaking reality through observation, and the use of formal systems, such as perspective, mark making, tone and texture, etc, that narratives are developed and communication occurs, this is the aim of my reportage sketchbooks.

The narrative, or implied story-telling construction, in an empathetic, and memory-based design of characters, composition and viewpoints is the most significant part of the work. Whereas this is a given element of the mechanics of photography, in drawing it has to be constructed as part of the idea of visual authorship, and in the acknowledgment of the relationship with a viewing spectator.

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/33853312@N07/>

mario.minichiello@newcastle.edu.au

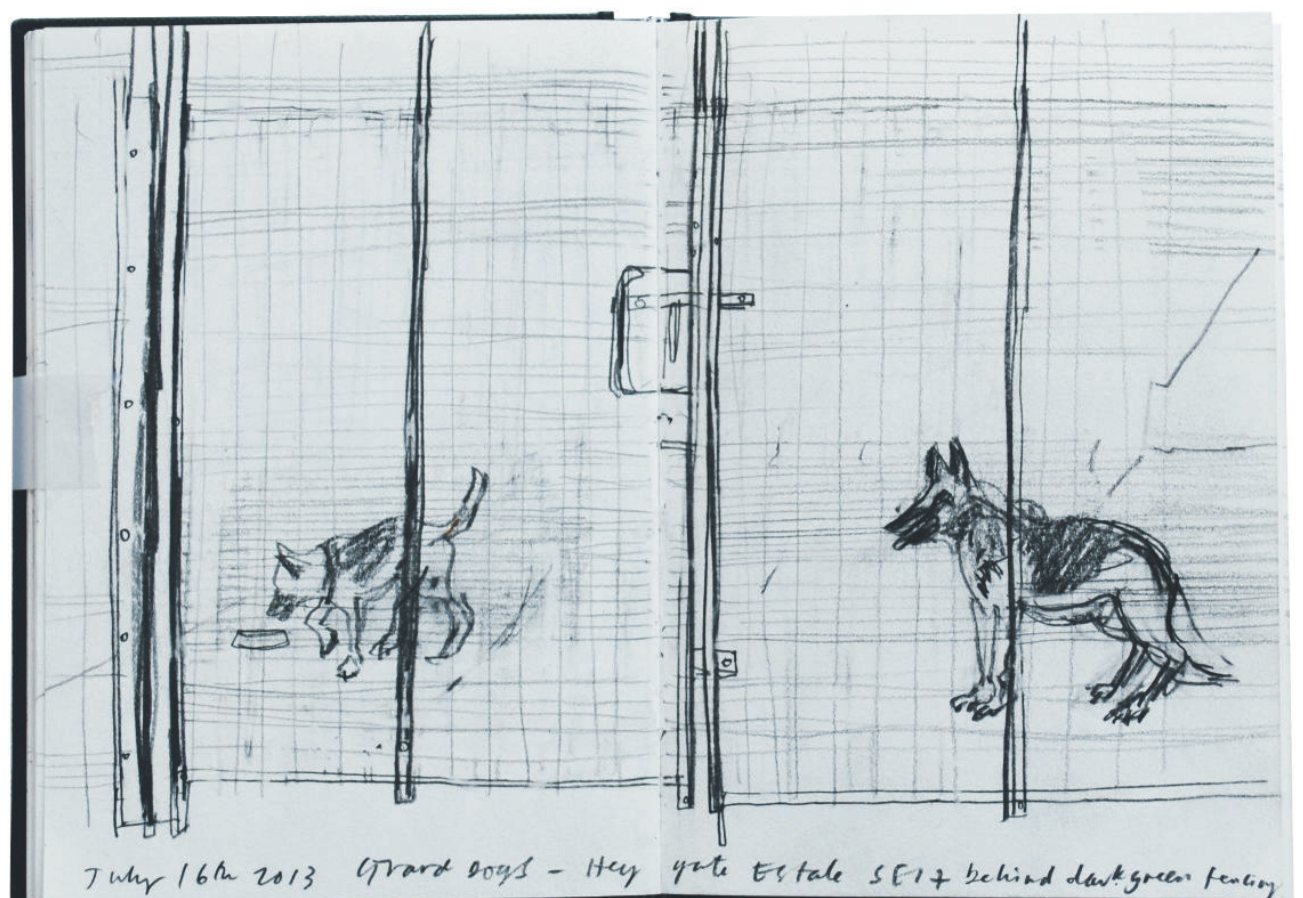
Howard Read

The A6 Sketchbook page shows the guard dogs used to patrol the deserted and 'tinned-up' Heygate Estate - Elephant and Castle, South East London - before it is demolished later this year. The Alsatian dogs and guards are on the site 24/7. The dogs when not on patrol have a high meshed pen to roam in. The majority of the Heygate is now bounded by the same high perimeter fencing. The estate used to be owned by Southwark Council and provide social housing for a thousand families. The 10 hectares of land has now been sold to global developer Lend-Lease.

This work is part of my practice-led PhD research using drawing to visually analyse and investigate the process of urban regeneration. I have been recording the changes taking place over the last year. The corporate idealised visualisations of regeneration are never countered and do not deal with the rupture and change (from demolition to newness) that occurs in the local environment, the transformation is largely ignored and unrecorded. By Drawing, observing and recording on site in sketchbooks and talking to local people I aim to create a body of work that critically questions the process of urban regeneration. Below is a blog documenting this drawn visual research:

h.read@csm.arts.ac.uk

<http://howardreadsketchbooks.wordpress.com>



Julia Midgley



Stonehenge sketchbook – annotated spread from day 1 during guided tour by lead archaeologists



Australia sketchbook During travels to Australia a rugby match took place in the Olympic stadium:

As a documentary artist I record activities as they take place, becoming a fly on the wall. From 2007 - 2009 as a member of Artists+Archaeology <http://www.artistsinarchaeology.org> I was embedded within The Stonehenge Riverside Project.

Drawing is the bedrock of my professional activity. Whilst it aims to describe with accuracy and economy my subject matter, it also generates archives and tells stories of contemporary society. Sketchbooks produced on location become a resource and a record. The challenge with reportage is to marry a visual aesthetic with what can at times be challenging subject matter, for example access to surgical procedures.

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Daniel Zalkus



Cooperage drawing: Glenfiddich: Charcoal

As a 2012 Glenfiddich Artist in Resident Daniel Zalkus lived on the distillery grounds in Dufftown, Scotland and directly drew the workers as they repaired the casks, bottled the spirits and gave tours of the distillery. During that time he created over 70 drawings that became the basis of his first book, "Charcoal & Whisky".

The book was produced in full color and is a visual documentation of the whisky-making process.

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Steve Wilkin

I draw fellow passengers whilst on my rail commute and I have been doing so for about ten years.

If my commissioned drawing practice is about the process of refinement, reworking and compromise, then these sketchbook drawings, which were not intended for commercial or public consumption, are not edited, corrected or changed at all. I never erase anything when drawing in my sketchbooks. I never rework them once I complete a drawing.

I do not consciously choose a subject to draw, I sit down and draw whoever is beside me. I draw in an A5 hardback sketchbook with a propelling pencil and a soft lead; it is a convenient medium. I find I like to start by following the contour or profile of my subject. I try and consider form and tone but often due to time constraints I feel like I am straining to capture the whole figure and their posture. I work quickly because you never know when your model might just get up and leave. Often these half finished drawings look better than more realised ones.

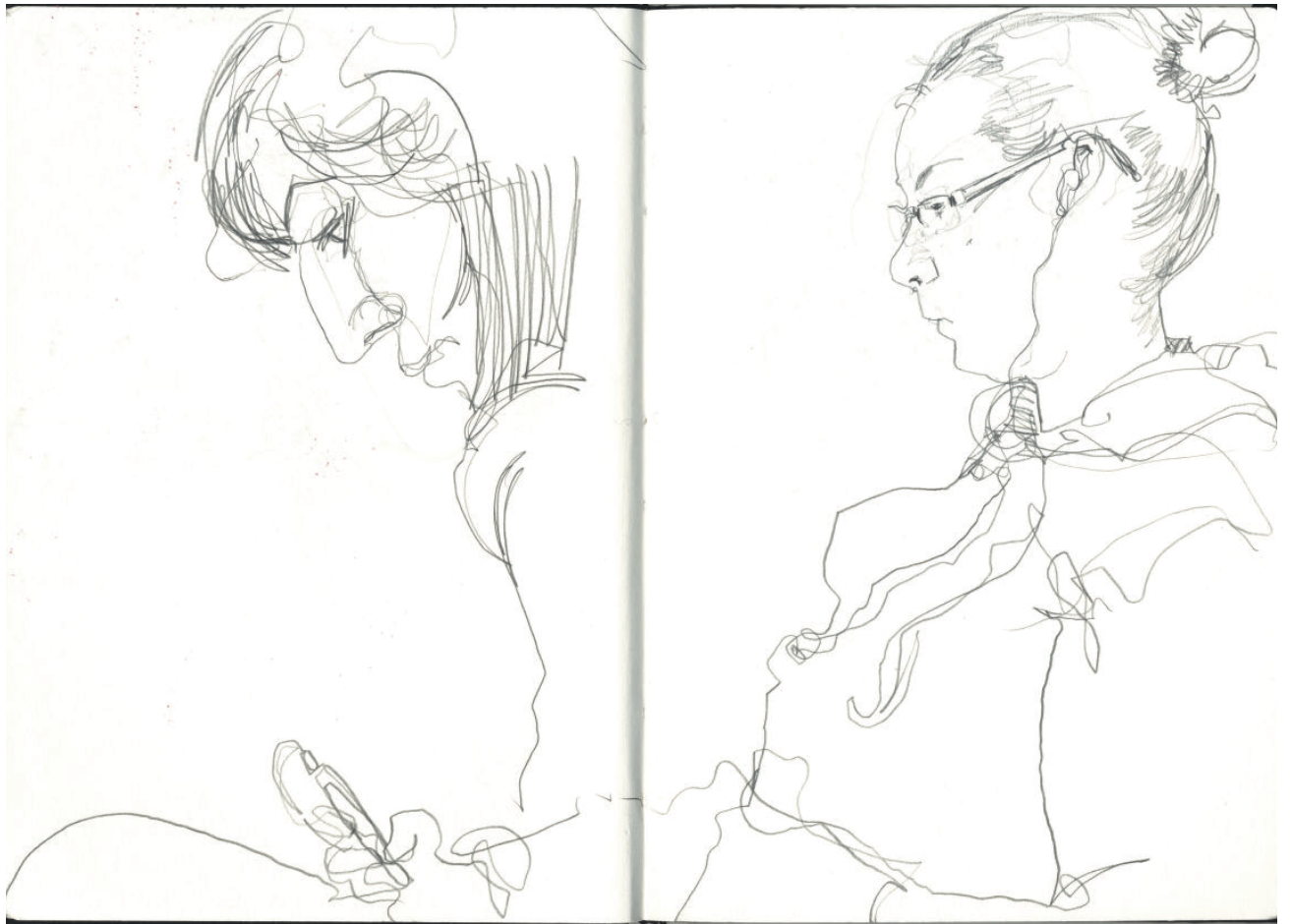
In February 2012 I published a selection of my drawings in a self-published newspaper called "738" and handed them out to my fellow commuters on the train. It was a sort of performance to offer them up for public scrutiny to the strangers and colleagues I had drawn. I had a mixed and enlightening response from my fellow passengers.

Since handing out the newspaper I thought it might draw a line under the project, instead I continue to draw my fellow commuters, and they don't seem to notice or mind me drawing them.

I have discovered that these drawings do feed my professional drawing practice because they are a continuous rehearsal for a performance I am expected to do at any moment and at short notice.

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<http://seventhyeight.blogspot.co.uk/>



A5 Sketchbook 2012-13 Propelling pencil

Rachel Gannon

These drawings were made in situ during a month long residency at London Luton Airport. Working almost exclusively in sketchbooks, they document and record the travellers (and airport staff) that pass through this space every day.

"I seemed to need a new place," she said. "Not necessarily an interesting place. Just a strange place. Without associations. A place where I would be very much alone. Like a hotel." (*Lady in the Lake*, Raymond Chandler)

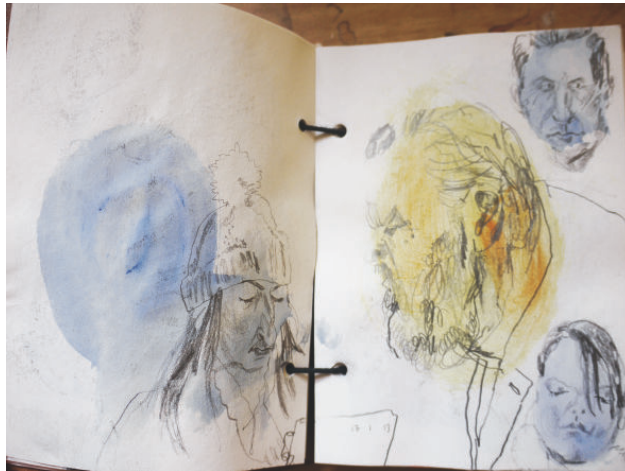
The work exhibited here addresses this very paradox, an airport is a place that is both strange and familiar like hotels, stations and shopping malls. This provides an interesting dichotomy as the drawings address a highly personal narrative; seen, imagined and remembered. The stories of these journeys, both dreamt and recorded, emerge from the drawings, creating a palimpsest of both rumour and fact. It is the experience of these transient moments that is documented and displayed in this exhibition.

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Jake Abrams



I had always drawn. Drawn instinctively, drawn obsessively. My primary school exercise books were densely embellished with drawing, my playtime and home time pre-occupied with pencil and crayon on paper. Secondary school, Polytechnic, drawing.

As an Illustrator it then became the day job, busy all the time. I started teaching and I exhorted drawing as fundamental to the conveyance of ideas, to looking, to observation and hence to an originality of expression. I inculcated, I preached its power and pertinence.

But somewhere, despite this (despite myself), I stopped doing it. I carried on drawing for a living, I carried on promulgating but the everyday study dried up. I no longer sketched for me, too busy, Too little time.

Then years later, I was approached to be an Artist in Residence at a London Orchestra and this almost instantaneously made me re-evaluate and re-engage. Sat amongst the orchestra, I started to draw. Draw them, draw what I could observe around me, draw enthused, enraptured by cacophonous sound. Synesthetic transposition.

And here I am, still drawing. I have learnt that the practise really does feed my practice. Practice maintains dexterity, keeps me thinking, and keeps me rapt on a long journey home. My A5 sketchbook purposefully is small and discreet. I am now in the habit of prepare the pages with anticipatory watercolour daubs. When I find a subject I wish to draw I quickly scour its pages to find the appropriate preemptive shape and colour. The process works well for me, I enjoy the game of fitting and finding. The preparatory painted marks do a lot of the work for me and help keep the drawings fresh and sparse.

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www.jakeabrams.co.uk

Marshall Arisman

On a somewhat erratic schedule I book models to come to my studio so that I can re-engage in the direct process of drawing. Sincere there are no other people around I feel free enough to not be concerned with the finished drawing.

When Michelangelo died they found a note in his scribbly hand to his assistant. The note read

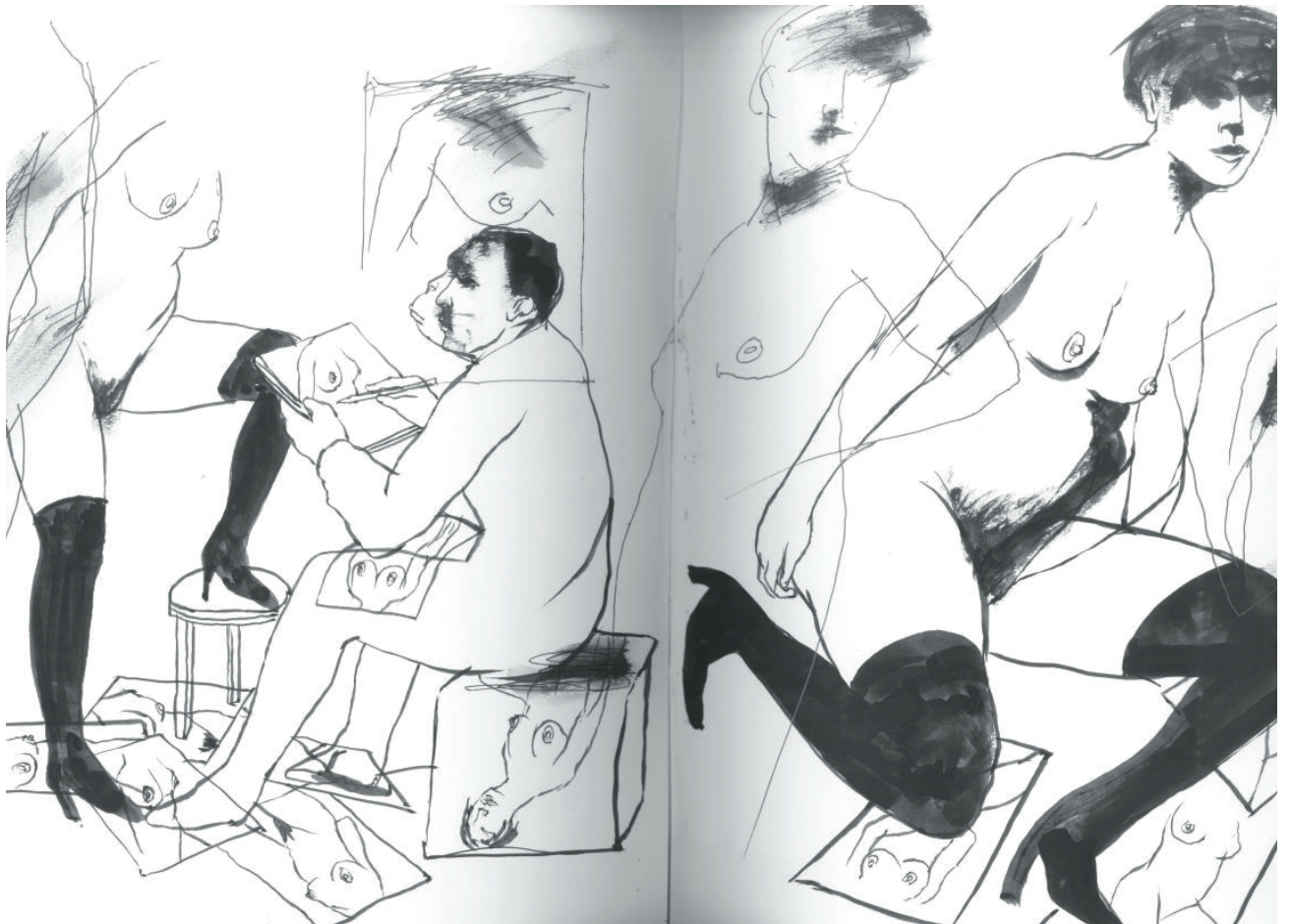
"Draw Antonio draw."

Amen.

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George Sander-Jackson

The images are charcoal sketches, in which separate components are created to be put into a composition in a way that will enable the characters to be animated. By keeping the layers separate, it is possible to use frame by frame character animation alongside the abstracted and expressive background environments. In this scene, a woman is describing the memory of her mother reading the telegram to inform her of her husband's death in the Great War. The project is a pitch for an animated section to be used in a documentary about life at home during World War One, and employs a technique similar to William Kentridge,

In approaching projects I always try and identify a creative process that most fits the format and subject matter and in this case the object is to give a feel of archive and memory, but to bring this to life with a contemporary twist. Charcoal lends itself to evocative imagery, the expressive marks and flowing imagery are an adaptation of the technique of oil on glass I used for the Graham Chapman animated Biopic "A Liar's Autobiography".

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Chloé Regan



'London Fields Circus' from 'London Fields Sketchbook,' biro, 28 x 19 cm, 2013

My drawing takes the form of reportage by documenting in and around a subject. I sketch continuously from life and these drawings form my stories. I use modest materials, working with pencils and coloured pencils in sketchbooks.

My work explores the sketch. It is a style of drawing which is incomplete and less than perfect. The openness of the sketch appeals to me. It avoids finality and is extreme in its experimentation and reactionary attitude. The sketch allows me to work instinctively and spontaneously in exploring that which excites me: real people and places.

'Chloé's working method is explorative and there is a sense of discovery, drawing through three-dimensional space. The line possesses an autonomous quality, partly unfinished and incomplete, a palimpsest of half heard, half seen narratives and incidents merging to form new possibilities.'

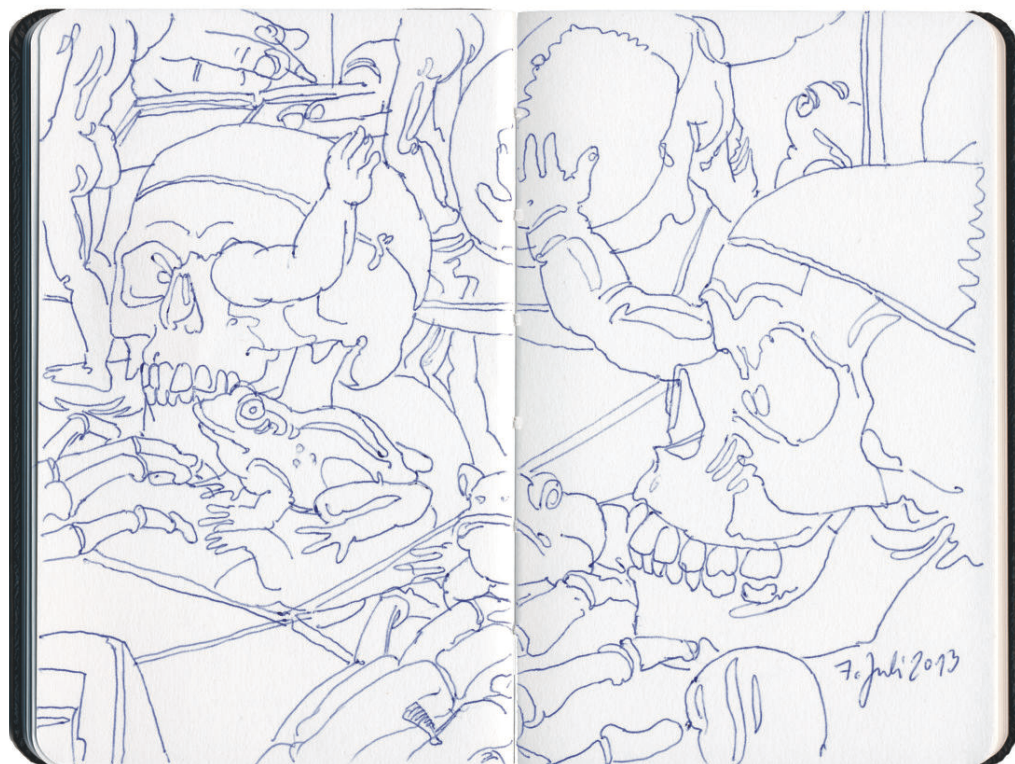
Gary Embury, (2011) 'The Wondering Line' Catalogue, INK Illustration, London.

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Matthias Beckmann



Sketchbook 2013 ballpen on paper book size: 14 x 8,7 cm

Drawing is a nice job

Drawing is at the centre of my artistic work and is my main interest. The single drawing generally is part of a series dealing with a specific space, an institution or a theme. This could be for instance, a museum like the Kunstmuseum Bonn, or the S.M.A.K. in Ghent. A cabinet of curiosities in Germany or Austria, the laboratories of the Fraunhofer Institute (IPA) in Stuttgart, the technology of car production, the romanesque churches in Cologne or simply, the professional situation of nude drawing.

The drawings, based on the power of the pure line, play with the techniques of film and photography – changes of perspectives, zooming between the complete scene and extreme details, the camera surrounding the object of interest. The drawings of a series are like mosaic stones building a complex portrait of a certain place or situation.

I am interested in the traces of banality, in situations generally considered as solemn or of highstanding social or cultural importance. Consequently I make no difference between the objects I draw. There is no hierarchy as in the drawings everything has the same value. Light systems or furniture in a museum are depicted with the same accuracy as the works of art and in my series about the German Parliament Deutscher Bundestag the reporter's low-slung jeans are as interesting to me as the face of the politician being interviewed. The fun of drawing is perfect when the line of the pencil seems to be fluid and a sense of humour derives from the conjuncture of aura and daily routine. I would be glad if the people contemplating my drawings feel a little bit of this delight.

It is all about observation. Drawing is a nice job.

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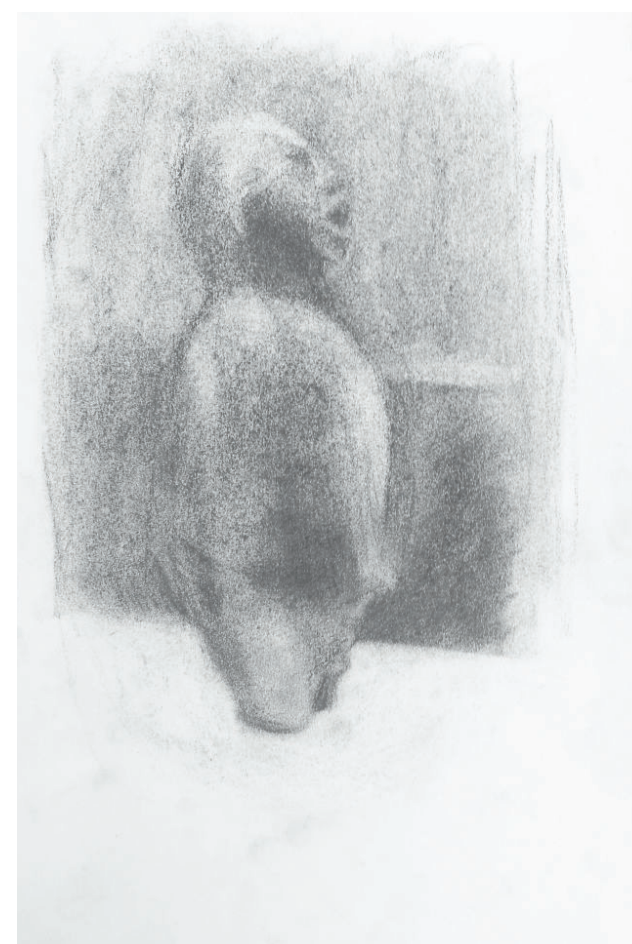
Michelle Cioccoloni

'Breath' is part of an ongoing series of drawings that is a response to artifacts on display at The British Museum, most of which are hundreds if not thousands of years old. In the presence of these objects there is an overwhelming sense that they are beyond our comprehension. Our understanding of the cultures that made them is reliant on varied sources and is often speculation. So much of what we think we know about them is seen from the perspective of the times we live in. Walking around the museum I chose to spend some time just looking at each object that caught my interest and, by drawing it, to focus solely on the object itself, rather than on preconceived ideas about the society that made it. I slowly found that the act of drawing allowed for a new way of thinking about these objects.

Drawing is the most direct way to cross the great distance that separates our time from theirs and access the mystery they contain. The feeling of not knowing is the starting point and, by giving a form to these sensations, the drawing evolves as the result of an enquiry that seeks to find meaning through an engagement with the object itself and is the outcome of intense looking and great empathy for what is in front of me.

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"Breath" : charcoal and pastel on paper: 32.5 x 40 cm

Mitch Miller

When drawing the large documentary illustrations I call “dialectograms”, I tend to use actual sketchbooks in a tangential way, to get things out or in my system, or for notes. The reason for this is I think, because in its early phases, the drawing – such as this one of the Free Hetherington, a 212 day student occupation at Glasgow University- is itself something of a sketchbook. Each drawing is based on a long period of field research and engagement with inhabitants or users of a given space, my aim being to try and capture a range of different layers of using and imaging the surroundings. I then try and distil these visits, hours and hours of interviews with the participants, small sketches and on site photographs into a single piece.

When it finally came time to draw, I start with a blank A0 mountboard and a pencil, and begin the difficult process of reconstructing the shape and size of the space. With no ground-plan to work from this is reliant on memory, photographs and occasional visits to scout out the outside of the building (getting inside was no longer an option). I listen to interviews and think about how to fill the shell of the building – what objects were important to the people here? What happenings are worth capturing – and how? How should this jug be labelled? During this process I make a lot of notes directly onto the surface – some are just scrawled reminders to myself, others more carefully drawn or written in. Some will be discarded, others will be shaped into an image, or comic strip or piece of writing that will form the structure of the ‘dialectogram’. I bring in my collaborators at various stages of the drawing, to discuss how it’s shaping up. Is it accurate? How do they feel about it? Any suggestions? These get recorded straight into the drawing and if agreed, on tape.

I am now drawing ink lines over the pencil and writing in quotes and narratives from the participants. The early sketch marks I make get rubbed out but given the quality of the mountboard, tend to survive as grooves and pencil artefacts beyond the reach of an eraser. It makes for a messier, dirtier image, which I prefer – drawing is a way of working out, thinking it through, recording the messy and complex processes necessary to make sense of our world(s). Audiences don't just get the 'finished' item – they can find, if they want to really look, the sketchbook lurking underneath.

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Website: www.dialectograms.co.uk

Gary Embury

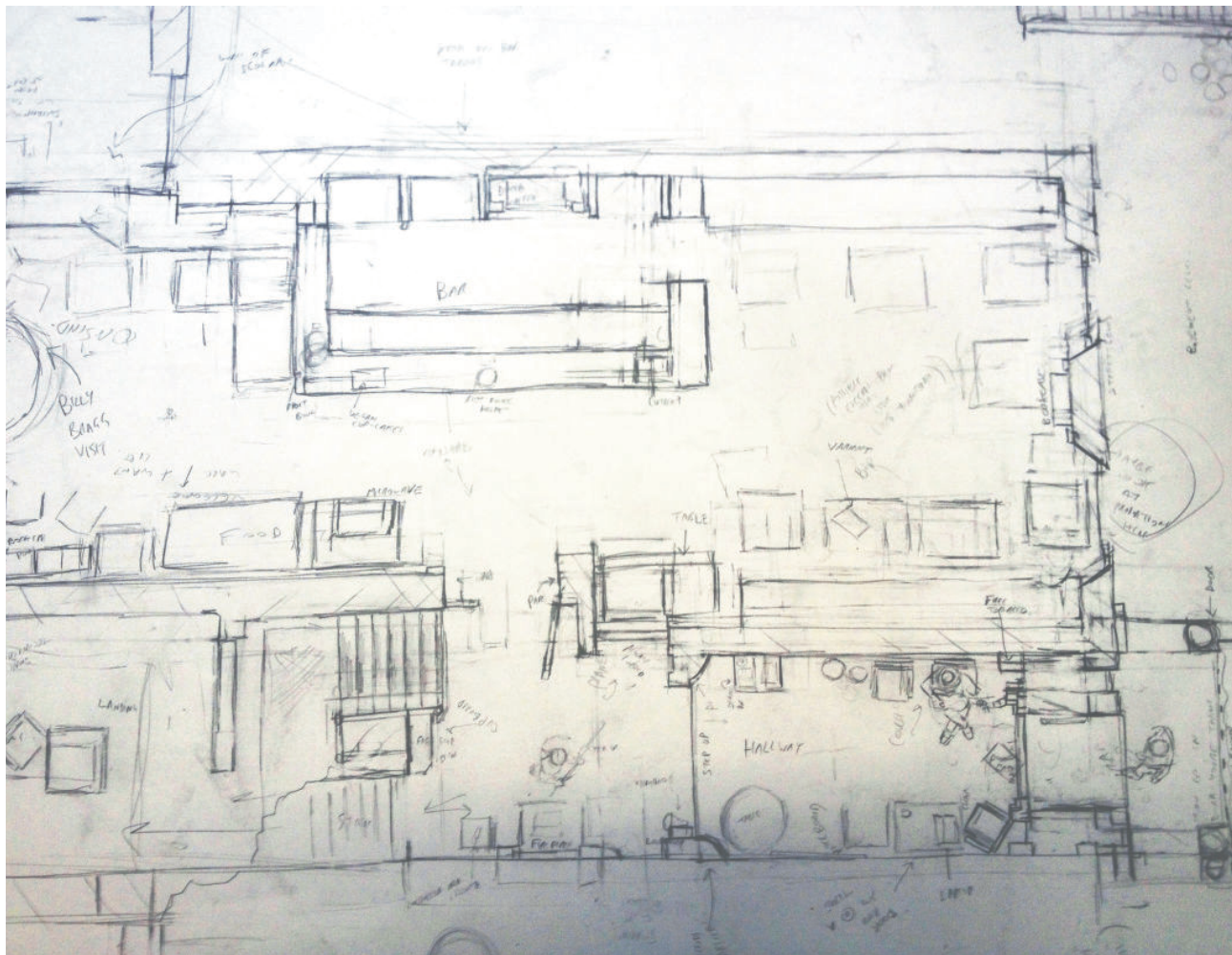
Drawing on the spot, is something I increasingly find to be more about the editing process. When confronted by a mass of information it's more about editing on the fly, what you choose to leave out or emphasise, where is, or what is the area of focus? How much depth of field should I employ?

Increasingly I find myself drawing wherever and whenever I am. If not on a specific assignment, I draw sometimes for practice, other times out of boredom or other times to investigate or interrogate an area of interest, subject, location or personality. Invariably conversations arise and narratives revealed. This is where the role of the journalist and artist merges, this is reportorial drawing. There is always a story to tell it's just a matter of drawing it out.

Drawing on site, the integrity and freshness of the original sketch is retained, there is a heightened sense of exploration and discovery in the mark making. Drawing through three-dimensional space the line possesses an autonomous quality, at times unfinished and incomplete. Re-draws or an attempt to mediate or beautify the image only ends up developing into a mannered, contrived, or over worked style. The spontaneity of the original mark however rough or incomplete retains a first vision integrity and quality.

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In Progress: The Free Hetherington Medium: Pencils, (eventually) ink. Dimensions: 1189mm x 841mm



Carrer de Joaquim Costa and De Ferlandina: Barcelona

Feliks Topolski

Feliks Topolski and WW2

The Police station drawing, wartime, 1950s London.

At the outbreak of the WWII in 1939, Topolski was in London and Witnessed the Blitz first hand. He was still a reserved officer in the Polish cavalry and wanted to return to Poland to fight against the German invasion, but the rapid Soviet and German occupation of the country prevented him. Many of his polish friends were refugees in Britain - as he commented, "Warsaw, left behind five years earlier, had followed me to London."

During the Blitz, Topolski was driven around London, by his first wife Marian Everall, to draw the destruction of the bombing. In May 1941 he was himself injured by a bomb while sketching in Soho. He was appointed an official war artist for both Britain and Polish Government - in - exile in Britain in 1940, led by the General Wladystaw Sikorski.

The picture shows evidence of charring following a fire at the studio.



Topolski STUDIO

Chronicle Residency Programme

From 1953-1982, Feliks Topolski hand-printed over 2,300 of his on the spot drawings as his broadsheet Chronicles. Covering events from the Queen's Coronation and the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Churches to war refugees and London street scenes, the Chronicles bristle with comment and observation about the people, politics and events of the time. It was distributed to over 2,000 subscribers around the world including museums, universities, libraries and private collections.

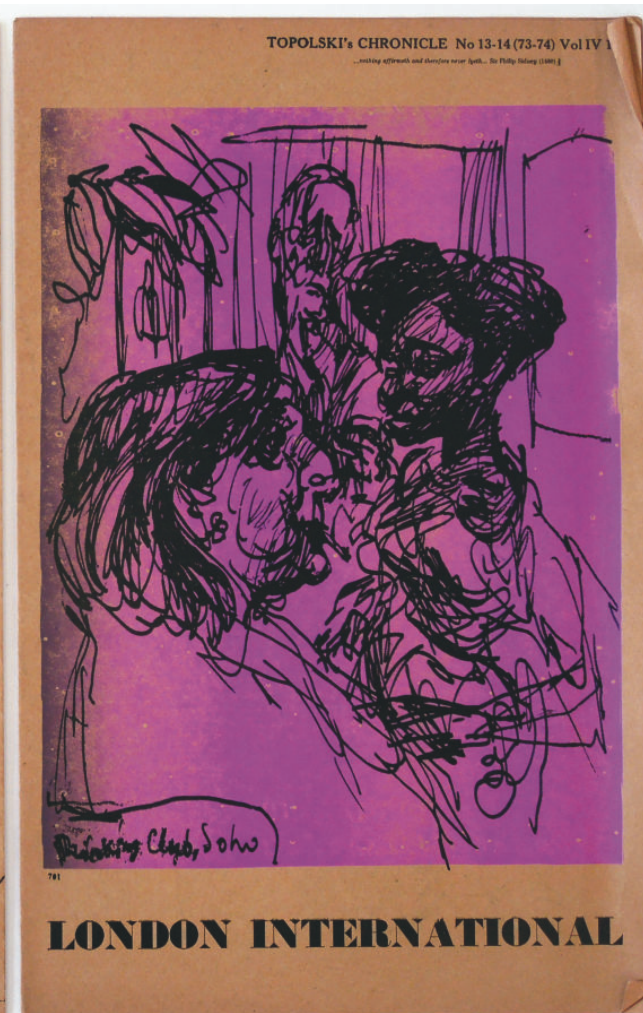
Topolski Studio, in partnership with Reportager, University of the West of England, will train young people not in education, employment or training for a three month residency, with master classes from internationally acclaimed reportage artists and print professionals.

The Residency will offer them the opportunity to work together to produce, handprint and distribute a Chronicle, a broadsheet of reportage drawing chronicling contemporary issues of the twenty-first century, just as artist Feliks Topolski did of the twentieth.

Topolski Studio's Chronicle for the twenty-first century will report local issues and events through drawing. Its content will be generated by the local community through their interactions with the Residents. By drawing street scenes to community events, they will record what matters to local people and raise the profile of issues and experiences close to the community that are not always treated as relevant by other forms of media. The Residents will be supported to draw on location in community settings and to design and deliver a workshop to those people sharing the skills they have learnt producing the Chronicle.

The residents will work together to plan, edit and handprint the Chronicle on Topolski Studio's printing press. They will be encouraged to be artistically innovative by using the Chronicle as an intervention in current drawing practices, using print as a strategy for social and political engagement.

The first Residency starts on 23rd Sept 2013. For more information contact Andrea at Topolski studio.



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<http://www.topolskicentury.org.uk/>



University of the
West of England