

MA Fine Art: MA Project Proposal

(Working) Title:

How the process of drawing can explore the shapes, forms, and passages relating to the human body

The aims and objectives of my project for the duration of my MA will be to continue to accumulate my position and practice in relation to drawing as a mobile and versatile agency. There are always two overarching themes to my practice. Firstly, the activity of drawing within the act itself, and secondly, towards the line, which stems to and from drawing as practice.

The act of drawing itself is bound up in the physical engagement of the senses. How you (I) become involved in a drawing is a spatial and haptic thing. This engagement is critical to note because if the way drawing is attended to, its very process, is continued as a matter of extension, then this position could make anything a drawing because you (I) approached it as one. And, in terms of the line, it is borne of self-propulsion. I am always interested in the space it is opening into, and its curious look of intent. I am especially interested when the line itself can become the object, thickening its presence and activity in space.

I expect this exploration to last the duration of my MA.

When I began Unit 1, I anticipated that my inquiry would be based upon the subject of breathing and the breath. That was to be my referent. However, by the end of Unit 1, it became clear that the breath was not what my work was about.

Unit 2's project proposal has me asking 'what is my work about?'

In removing breath as a referent, at the same time, I found that it kept cropping up as a relation, barely tangible, but ever-present. In trying to remove it, it stayed important. It is in the movements and nuances that I want to draw parallels to and echo. This will be a subtle but palpable aesthetic that I intended to imbue in the overall look of my works. It happens in small moments, when things come together.

The things that interested me most about the breath were,

- Process of moving in and out
- Facilitates an exchange from external to internal environment
- Unconscious and automatic, but also conscious, can be altered and controlled up to a point
- Signal sending (brain + body, adjustments)
- A system made up of many parts to make this bigger whole, the synergy, coordination, and combined efforts
- The movements, of muscles, alterations and changing shapes to allow for pressure changes to draw in/out

These things are all exactly what my work still does, but it is not about air or the literal aspect of breathing. Instead, I think it is about a relation to our (my) physical self, an attempt to understand the body. It is a sensitive and embodied inquiry, trying to understand the terrain, how to plot and depict it through sensing/senses. It is an attempt to heighten our awareness of the landscape of our bodies.

This inquiry will take place through material exchanges. A system of lines and objects and interactions between digital, 2d, and 3d elements to create an environment that facilitates an exchange of reciprocity. Thinking through notions of inside and outside, of being and matter and how one connects and affects the other, how do we give priority to the senses to reiterate our connections and bring us back into the body. This will be an embodied take on drawing the inside out.

'When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe'

(*My First Summer in the Sierra*, John Muir, a quote taken from Raynor, W. (2021), *The Wild Silence* Penguin Books p. 137)

For me, this quote summed up that these things are more interconnected than we realise. So, while my subject matter isn't specifically the breath as subject, it still plays a part. It is not a fixed standpoint. I think it is still important to note that this whole enquiry came about because I had a line (probe) inserted both physically and metaphorically into my head in order to look at a system relating to breathing to try to better understand it. I think this probing line, trying to understand a system, is still happening.

My practice is process led and my methodology is often based upon thinking through doing/thinking through drawing. I am particularly interested in the curious and ambiguous spaces you can enter, spaces of becoming, when you shift and slip across different mediums. I like to be able to occupy these liminal spaces, the in between not as an indication of place but an actual position.

I expect to make work that will require the following resources, materials, and support,

- Ceramics
- Metal work
- Woodwork
- Video/digital work

Through the combination of these processes, individual parts and pieces made up of these different mediums will be brought together to make a whole. The whole will take the form of an interchangeable installation of sorts that can traverse wall and floor space. Something that a viewer/audience must enter into and move within, something of a lived experience, a habitable drawing. The forms and objects that I make will flip back and forth between 2 dimensions and 3 dimensions, reoccurring and reappearing across different mediums. It is important to me that there is a material dialogue and exchange apparent in the work.

Ceramics especially will be a new medium to me, and I want to explore the effect that working with ceramics will alter my work – particularly the processual nature of working with clay and the various potential clay has in what it can become. There is something particularly interesting about the fact that ceramics often form a vessel, and the most important thing about a vessel is its capacity of empty space, because that is the space which 'holds' something, does something more. This is very interesting in relation to the space of the airways.

I am also very interested in the ways I can add a digital capacity to my work. I like the idea that it can add a sense of kinetic energy. Moving image, stop motions and the sense of being animated (alive, active, an ability to concern real life movement and characteristics). It is also the juncture at which something can go from an object in real space, can be flattened, transported, and moved through a digital realm and, in turn, the idea of that spatiality. This idea of spatiality and new visions of something extends into the fact that one of the only ways to make visible internal spaces of the body is via cameras and probes which then provide video footage and recordings, and I find these parallels very intriguing.

Something that interests me is the idea of giving the viewer a heightened awareness, not directly as such but a subtlety to. We live in vessels we hardly pay attention to. I don't wish to give bodily facts and figures, but I would like to bring about a sense of mindfulness, to turn your gaze inward and draw attention to small sensitivities.

In terms of research, I intend on utilising my background as a Pilates instructor, teachings which include the breath as a principle, so I can incorporate, where possible or relevant, this feeling of working-through, postures and the way muscles are held, as a way of capturing the felt relationship to the body, a mode of self-knowledge in navigating a lived experience of movement.

I am very interested in the relationship which could be built between my creative practice and science/medical research and the opportunity of multidisciplinary working in this way. I want the science to impact what I communicate and how it can be understood, especially in terms of giving visibility to the invisible, how our sense perception and proprioception can be heightened. I am unfamiliar with any artists who work specifically with/on the breath, but I can draw on artists who refer to the body. I am very keen to not be too literal. My work will not be so direct that it is like an anatomy drawing or science illustration, this precision and accuracy is not an aesthetic I am interested in. It isn't about replicating; it will be about referencing.

My research into artists will also continue to be informed by those I feel akin to in terms of physical aesthetics, material dispositions, or the heightened awareness they bring about.

I am especially interested in works or artists that,

- use material presence suspended on the border between disciplines
- the conceptual space of drawing where sculpture, assemblages and interchangeable elements are prevalent
- where form is given to negative spaces
- where there aren't any kinetic elements but there is a feeling of transition or movement
- a sense of embodiment, in materials, objects or things that give capacity to the senses of more than just sight/seeing

Including examples such as,

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| - Avis Newman | - Esther Klas |
| - Roni Horn | - Richard Tuttle |
| - John Cage | - Sandra Lane |
| - Holly Hendry | - Clare Burnett |
| - Nairy Baghramian | - Olivia Bax |
| - Julia Crabtree & William Evans | - Claire Bailly |
| - Thea Djordjadze | - Lilah Fowler |
| - Shirazeh Houshiary | - Eva Hesse |
| - Katrina Cowling | - Mona Hatoum |
| - Takesada Matsutani | - Natasha Macvoy |
| - Hayley Newman | |

Over time, I expect this to include more artists, including those who are working in digital and ceramic work to reflect the material response of working in these new mediums.

Also suggested looking at the work of:

Nina Canell

Marla Hlady (copper tubing)

Salvatore Arancio

French & Mottershead: <https://www.whitechapelgallery.org/london-open-2018-french-mottershead/>

Phyllida Barlow (drawings)

Jenny Baines

Takis: https://www.whitecube.com/exhibitions/exhibition/takis_bermondsey_2021

Ettore Spalletti (pink)

Visit:

The Wellcome Collection

Hunterian Museum, Royal College of Surgeons – not currently open

Holly Hendry: *Fatty Acids*

Julia Crabtree & William Evans: *Slip*

Drawing Room Research Forum

(Current) Bibliography

- Bennet, J. (2010) *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. Duke University Press BookGross, J. (2015) *Drawing Redefined: Roni Horn, Esther Kläs, Joëlle Tuerlinckx, Richard Tuttle, Jorinde Voigt*. Lincoln, Massachusetts: DeCordova Sculpture Park and Museum
- Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and Time*. London, SCM Press
- Lakoff, G. (1999) *Philosophy in the flesh: the embodied mind and its challenge to Western thought*. New York, Basic Books.
- Manning, E. & Massumi, B. (2014) *Thought in the act: passages in the ecology of experience*. University Of Minnesota Press
- Massumi, B. (2002) *Parables for the virtual: movement, affect, sensation*. Durham, NC; Duke University Press
- Massumi, B. (2011) *Semblance and event: activist philosophy and the occurrent arts*. Cambridge, Mass. MIT Press
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2002) *Phenomenology of perception* [E-book + book]. London: Routledge Classics.
- Pallasmaa, J. (2009) *The thinking hand: existential and embodied wisdom in architecture*. Hoboken, N.J.; Chichester: Wiley; John Wiley [distributor].
- Taussig, M. (1993) *Mimesis and alterity: a particular history of the senses*. London, Routledge
- Turkle, S. (2011) *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*. MIT Press

Suggested Reading:

- <https://socks-studio.com/2012/07/12/lectures-on-ventilation-1869/>
- A Philosophy of Emptiness, Gay Watson, 2014
- Seeing is forgetting the name of the thing one sees: A Life of Contemporary Artist Robert Irwin, 1992
- Heidegger, M. (2019) *Being and Time*. Martino Fine Books
- Schwenger, P. (2005) *The Tears of Things*. University of Minnesota Press
- Turkle, S. (2011) *Evocative Objects: Things We Think With*. MIT Press
- Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture, Tim Ingold, 2013
- Affect theory

Timetable

I will shift my timetable to maximise the amount of time I can commit towards being in university in order to use the workshop facilities and my studio and depending upon any contact time teaching that is scheduled. This is an indicator of what I intend my weekly timetable will look like.

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
STUDIO/ WORKSHOP	STUDIO RESEARCH LECTURES	WFH RESEARCH LECTURES	STUDIO/ WORKSHOP	STUDIO/ WORKSHOP	RESEARCH/ STUDIO (as required)	