

'Beyond Drawing'

Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre
23 July to 8 September

DRAWING IS AN innate, shared visual language of expression and remains an essential medium for addressing and interacting with the world today. In 'Beyond Drawing', six contemporary artists – three Irish and three Dutch – disrupt and reconfigure its position. Curator Arno Kramer has created a framework for contextualising drawing's physical and immaterial elements, testing new possibilities. The concept of the line manifests itself on paper, in steel, wood, and in light and shadow. On entrance, one is met by a sense of expansive minimalism, as each work configures its meaning – in places overlapping or echoing certain themes, methods, and modes of production.

Felicity Clear and Marleen Kappe's artworks present an experimentation with lines that dance between the *gestalt* of geometric sculpture and modern architecture. Clear's large-scale, site-specific drawing, *Hodograph* (2022), is made from elastic and paper tape, reflecting in physical form, how the wind changes direction. Three-dimensional elements of this spatial drawing synchronise with the gallery walls. Kappe also pushes boundaries, creating a type of incidental architecture. Her mixed-media work, *Drifting Fragments* (2020), references urban landscapes which incorporate two-dimensional marks with three-dimensional compositions.

Both Clear and Kappe's work reference a common language – an abstract, non-objective aesthetic that perhaps owes something to the "energy, movement, economy, and material sensations [that] were interwoven into an organic whole" in the art of Suprematism.¹ There is a definite architectural sensibility here and a correlation with the process of Zaha Hadid, who once said: "I wanted to capture a line and the way a line changes and distorts when you try to follow it through a building, as it passes through regions of light and shadow."² Both artists have constructed artworks specific to the space, generating subtle, perceptual, even bodily responses, that affect our perceptual world.

Marisa Rappard's large-scale mixed-media drawing on paper flows down the opposing wall and onto the floor, providing subtle colour in a monochrome expanse. Recalling the omnipresence of images in contemporary culture, she makes physical a network to interrogate the human/post-human, and the concept of information dispersion. There is a fluidity of different perspectives as connections shift upon our changing vantage point.

In the first-floor gallery, Mary-Ruth Walsh presents four architecturally themed drawings coupled with installations. They convey a curious mood, and the use of light and dark, as well as the texture of the represented subjects, reveals almost hyper-realistic detail. Playing with the idea of scale and perspective, concepts of the permanent and disposable are obscured, introducing a sense of material and human vulnerability.

Romy Muijers, through delineation of form in pencil, composes sculptural three-dimensionality on paper. Recalling pages from comic-strip publications, drawings are underlined by singular texts from the literary group, Oulipo.³ Muijers

merges sources in art history and literature with subjective, phenomenological experience and touches on many temporalities and varying registers, generating abundant worlds that ask to be explored.

On the main wall of this same room hangs Kiera O'Toole's monumental *Weaved Drawing from reworked drawings* (2022). Made from hand-cut strips of layered graphite, varnish, and acrylic on woven paper, this piece has a totemic presence. The use of weaving, an ancient and traditional practice, can perhaps be seen as symbolic of our position within the universe, as opposing forces combine to make one whole.

Several thematic threads run through this group exhibition, from the movement of air and urban landscapes to the exploration of temporalities and ubiquitous networks. Priority is given to materiality and evidence of labour. In every instance, the core of drawing practice is advanced, whether by exploring new surfaces, materials, presentation devices or subject matter. Some works overlap with one another, while others gently hold their own space, but each contributes to the conversation and offers a chance to recalibrate the role of drawing today.

Mieke Vanmechelen is a film artist from Kenmare, currently based between Kerry and Dublin.

miekevanmechelen.com

Notes:

¹ Christina Lodder (ed.) *Celebrating Suprematism: New Approaches to the Art of Kazimir Malevich* (Boston: Brill, 2018) p118.

² John Michaud, 'Zaha Hadid: The Lady Gaga of Architecture', *The New Yorker*, 15 July 2011.

³ 'Oulipo' refers to a loose gathering of (mainly) French-speaking writers who utilised creative and contrasting writing techniques to experiment with the possibilities of literature.



'Beyond Drawing', installation view, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre [L-R]: Kiera O'Toole, *Weaved Drawing from reworked drawings*, 2022, ink, acrylic, graphite on paper; Romy Muijers, *intervals*, 2019, pencil and coloured pencil on paper; photograph by Jed Niezgoda, courtesy the artists and Uillinn.



'Beyond Drawing', installation view, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre [L-R]: Marisa Rappard, *Waves of Whispers, Traces, Tidings*, 2015-2022, mixed media, drawings, wooden sticks; Felicity Clear, *Hodograph Drawing*, 2022, elastic and paper tape; Marleen Kappe, *Echoes in time*, 2022, mixed media; photograph by Jed Niezgoda, courtesy the artists and Uillinn.



'Beyond Drawing', installation view, Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, Mary-Ruth Walsh, [L-R]: *Drawing for E.1021*, 2022, pencil and watercolour on paper, *Model for E.1021*, 2022, plaster, *Still Life*, 2019, pencil and watercolour on paper; *A Silent Space in the Turning World*, 2019, pencil, watercolour, pure pigment, and oil on prepared paper; photograph by Jed Niezgoda, courtesy the artist and Uillinn.