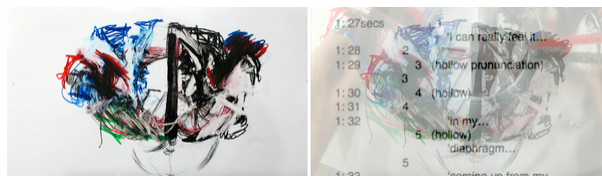


Abstracts of artistic projects by Michael Croft published in the Research Catalogue (2021 – 2025)

(2021)

'[...] Biology of One Body's Work': A video collage of seconds counted while drawing + 2-minutes' playback layered a number of times



Abstract

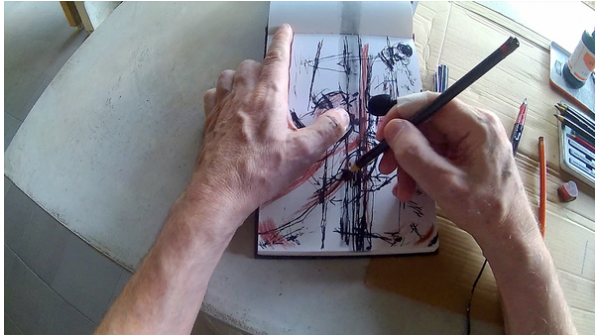
A three-minute video, including title and credits, concerns a second re-working, in effect layer three, of a drawing that references incidental observation of the inside of a glass jar and additional materiality, such as an action camera worn in front of the eyes and how the jar is attached to the drawing's surface to enable the process's video recording. The audio concerns the counting of seconds while drawing and the prolonged intonation of the word RAUM, German for space. Each of these vocal elements directs and impacts on the drawing procedures, the latter of which are implemented with pencils designed for marking on non-porous surfaces such as plastic and glass, and erasure of such pencils on laminated white cardboard. The video fades in and out of the drawing at each of its three stages, two of which were from times prior to making the video, the last of the stages of which was up to the time of beginning the video. The video is also interspersed with scrolling typed indication of the various correspondences between the counting of time and phrases of spoken monologue, the latter of which has been divided into two audio layers through having been recorded onto both the camera's microphone and an external voice recorder. At 1: 47mins of the video the content fades to a muted simple scroll-through animation of the completed drawing of the previous video content played back a number of times, which had been responded to through the layering of the drawing the same number of times across nine pieces of handmade paper, 51 x 36cm, in plastic-based pencils and acrylic paint. The video encapsulates the above-mentioned individual facets as a single entity that provides some comment on the diverse nature of time in the context of its experience in and as drawing.

Keywords: drawing; time; monologue; language; intonation

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1305336/1305337>

(2021)

Coded Perception: ‘Out of the Corner of One’s Eye’



Abstract

The exposition concerns how aspects of perception, mainly visual but not excluding other senses, are encoded within a drawing-based practice. Such coding is increased due to the use of speech and its recording to eventually produce textual transcripts, and video evidence of the process of drawing while drawing. More inclusively stated, the artist's practice oscillates between visual and linguistic means, and analogue and digital methods. As research, the exposition questions where and how coding is implicit in the artist's perception during his approach to his work. Such questioning is enabled by a split between the artist in his reflexive involvement presented as speech transcripts and supporting screenshots from the video recording, and his reflective observation on the content of the transcript as if made by another-person interlocutor. The exposition is presented as a textual introduction and conclusion, between which is access to the full audio-visual recording of the drawing process and a flip-book presentation of the transcript and interlocutor interventions. The exposition's main image is the finished drawing.

Keywords: code, perception, drawing, unconscious, transcription

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1306314/1306315>

(2022)

Responsibility towards the Void: Researched through drawing, language and theory



Abstract

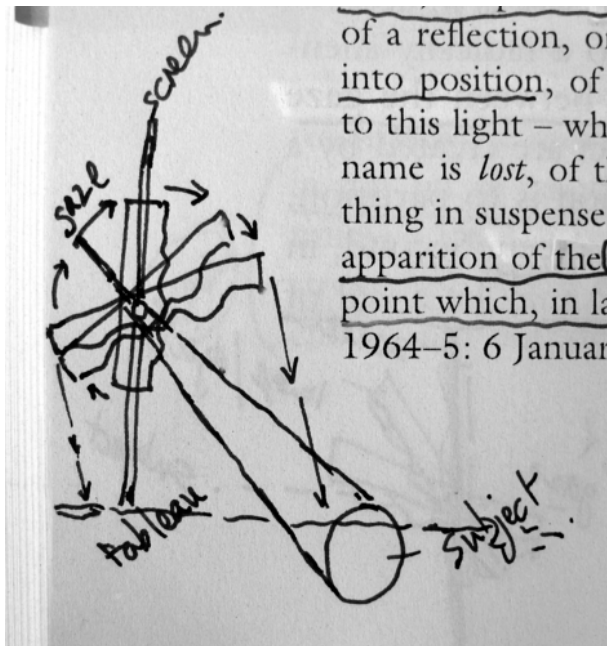
The question of responsibility is explored through drawing, specifically relating to a so-termed void space that ranges over a builder's yard and its immediate environment. The research is formatted as dated journal entries to show its chronological development, with the proviso that later stages may eclipse earlier stages, depending on their relevance. This looping, as it were, mimics the fact that the void space is best defined by the occasional circling of swifts, an observation that becomes a metaphor for how to try to articulate the space pictorially. Responsibility is referenced through theories of each of Levinas, Lacan and Foucault in relation to the Other, the latter of which is taken as the theoretical equivalent of void, but no less concerning responsibility. The artist has drawn the site in such terms as locate the void in both the space that the site defines and a gap in the drawing process. This artistic effort is analogous demonstration of responsibility to that which is suggested by the theory. Responsibility is considered from the perspective of the personal and individual, automatically present in artistic commitment, in this case finding some explanation in theoretical thinking of the abstract notion of Other. The formatting of the process of attending to this theme and motif as research leads to a situation where drawing, as such, is but the predominantly visual tool alongside art writing, academic research, and graphic layout that provides live links to video clips and two explanatory texts.

Keywords: responsibility, drawing, language, theory, void, space, mirror, glass, action camera, Otherness, portal

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1306562/1306563>

(2022)

Diagramming Perception



Abstract

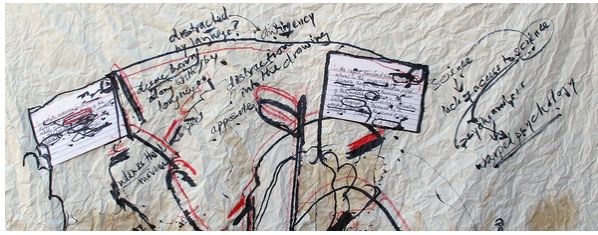
This artistic research is a contribution to a larger research project titled 'The Observation of Perception, considered through drawing', hosted by i2ADS. The research begins with the hypothesis that perception can be diagrammed, in this case through and as a form of drawing that indicates how perception is for this artist conceived and works in action. One of the two visual motifs of the work is also a meta-motif, in that as an action-camera placed over the eyes, it is the means by which the artist records himself at work on the second main motif, which is his image as viewed in a circular hand-held mirror. The artist approaches the initiative as a question of diagramming the self-same initiative, accepting whatever are its developed implications as the aesthetic of the work. Peirce's division of the diagram into elements of firstness and secondness, with the elusive recognition of diagram as an abstract entity before any communicative purpose, keys into a working practice that in any case veers towards the diagrammatic. The artist's tendency to audio-visually record his working process has led him to a position where the logistics of the purpose paradoxically reveal the subjectivity – if not absurdity – of the self-same process. In this case, little by little, a contingent factor of a wart takes centre-stage as blind spot; at-once a torn hole within the drawing's material surface, the action camera as an illusory obstruction, and a factor that oscillates with and as the circular self-portrait. The presentation takes the viewer/reader through the process, largely perceptual, that is diagrammed on and as the artifactual outcome, the drawing.

Keywords: perception, diagram, audio-visual media, perception and consciousness, diagramming

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1380190/1380191>

(2023)

Speech spoken: Two monologic transcripts and the return of conflated sections of them to speech that oscillates between sense and *non-sense*



Abstract

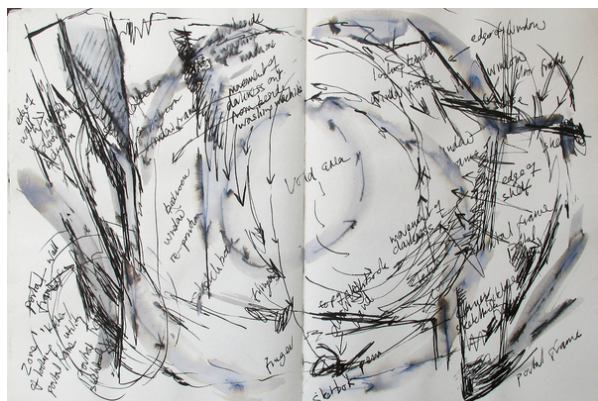
The exposition brings into and adapts a previous recent practice concerning speaking while simultaneously drawing, audio-visually recording two states of the process, transcribing the monologues, and alternately interspersing them line-by-line. Such a practice is taken up at the level of the interspersed monologues to show and reconsider their content as potentially readable. To Editing and enabling such readability, however, returns spoken content to written, while reading it maintains the role of voice. The read content as short audio-recordings, termed cameos, wavers between sense and non-sense, while being read as if it were making sense. The particularities of this are discussed, with some theoretical reference. The reader can, if they wish, also view the drawings that generated, and had in their turn been generated by, the speech – although this is not essential to the purpose of the exposition.

Keywords: monologue, speech, transcription, audio recording, drawing

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2001650/2001651>

(2023)

Seminar – Of Artistic Research: considered through hybrid writing and visual practice



Abstract

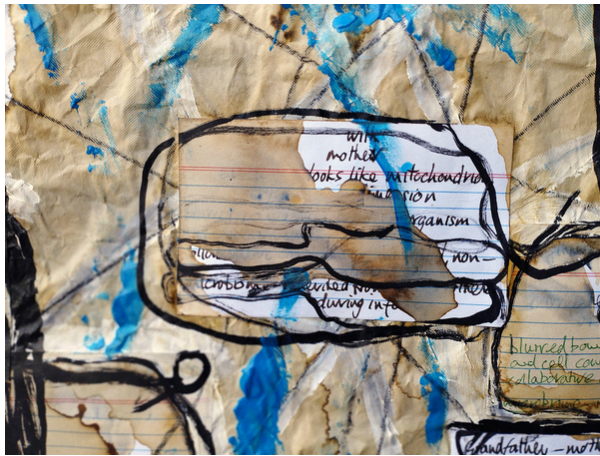
The exposition involves the adaptation of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's logical square, to convey an idea of artistic research practice considered from the perspective of the human subject's position in its midst. As part of the discussion the artist has used some evidence of a previous lecture presentation, integrating such material with that of a newer project concerning the visualization of a nightmare image of a phantom in a portal. The tools of the research are a hybrid form of writing that embroils fictional and academic modes as a language-based practice, and visual artistic practice. The artist takes Lacan's idea of the confounding of any logical argument by automatic obfuscation of it by unconscious process, and imagines that he has an other to him as a subjective second voice. The question of voices is central to the research; the suggestion that one does speak to oneself in various ways simultaneously that may be fashioned as distinct and separate. It is argued that the research aspect of artistic practice involves just a section of Lacan's logical square, particularly concerning contingency. This orientation may call to question one's tendency to reason and find meaning from the necessary locus of inquiry from the vantage-point of the language-based Symbolic – of Lacan's three psychic structuring registers Imaginary, Symbolic, Real. The element of fiction provides a literary inclination whereby, while the artistic research speaks about itself as research and references a visual practice, the exposition could also be considered a language-based practice in its own right.

Keywords: artistic research practice, language, visualization, drawing, hybrid writing, fiction, subject, unconscious, Lacan, autofiction

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2048802/2048803>

(2023)

Distanciation and *other*: implications of distance in an ancestry DNA project



Abstract

The exposition focuses on the question of ‘distanciation’ that at-once both distances and furthers one’s understanding of the self through being drawn into a work of text – here taken in a broader sense to include also the visual-material – and geographical and temporal distance. The latter interpretation of distance relates to the artistic research project that contextualises the article, which is in response to a call for drawings on the question of genetics and identity, hosted by i3S (Institute of Investigation and Innovation in Health, Porto University). As part of this artist’s response, and as an example that may, through its reading, cause some expansion of one’s notion of self, the novel ‘The Inheritors’ by William Golding is discussed. From the point of view of genetic ancestry, Golding’s novel involves incongruous recognition between a family of Neanderthals and a larger group of Homo sapiens, and a more psychological use of the term ‘other’ for foreignness and one’s negotiation of such initial reaction by oneself. The conjoined question of distanciation and other is considered through reference to a large drawing in progress as part of the ancestry project at the time of writing, and through theoretical reference to the work of Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Lacan and Bracha Ettinger that helps elaborate on distanciation, the psychically interpreted other, and a maternal matrixial idea of pre- and post-natal I and non-I of the self in contiguous relationship not only with psychoanalytical theory, but also with global ancestral mitochondrial DNA.

Keywords: drawing, ancestry, distanciation, other, text, psychoanalytical theory

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2255193/2255194>

(2023)

Observations of: The Observation of Perception, considered through Drawing

An exhibition at **LUGAR DO DESENHO - JÚLIO RESENDE FOUNDATION**, Porto
(23 September - 28 October, 2023)



Abstract

The exposition provides some indication of the content of an exhibition at Lugar do Desenho – Júlio Resende Foundation between 23 September and 28 October, 2023. Several artistic research projects have been explored by the artist through drawing and writing between 2021 and 2023 while resident in Porto, Portugal. The projects have each been hosted by i2ADS (Institute of Art and Design Society) as part of a larger collaborative research project called 'The Observation of Perception', considered through Drawing. Two of the projects, or one project divided into two parts, are specifically a contribution to a genetic ancestry project – 'Call for drawing – Genetics and Identity' – hosted by i3S (Institute of Investigation and Innovation of Health), Porto University. The main formatting of all of the projects has been the Research Catalogue, in which the visual works that now comprise the exhibition have previously been placed in a multiple media context as artistic research.

Keywords: drawing, perception, process, artistic research, ancestry, exhibition, monologue

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2343141/2343142>

(2024)

Ancestry – before DNA test – considered through drawing



Abstract

The exposition is deliberately incomplete not only because, arguably, this is the nature of research, but due to the artist's working with a sense of in-the-meantime, while waiting for the results of a DNA Ancestry test. The research is therefore a preemptive response to a genetics and identity project to be explored through drawing, hosted by i3S, Institute of Investigation and Innovation in Health, University of Porto, Portugal. The exposition presents a degree of drift from a starting-point of family photos processed through drawing by a fictional artist, to a more conceptual idea of microbiological cells of which their content is increasingly fragmented text. As the drawing process develops, the use of coffee-staining is a key medium, its geographical origin conferring roughly with that of the human species. Such drift of content between creative writing, visualisation, and academic writing, is possible on the basis that the artist does not as yet have a clear idea of what the DNA Ancestry findings will disclose or how they will look. An after-the-test exposition will follow the present exposition – which is interesting in terms of how such future knowledge will be in the wake of, and responsive to, a stage of indetermination.

Keywords: genetic DNA, ancestry, drawing, coffee, academic writing, fiction

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2143958/2143959>

(2024)

Ancestry – after DNA test – considered through Drawing



Abstract

To the extent that this research is artistic, it involves the mediums of drawing, drawing towards painting, academic research, academic writing, fiction, and occasional use of video. If artistic research could be an entity with the opacity, so to speak, of such mediums, then it would not be necessary to mention its constituents. However, this is worth stating at the outset because in the artist's view the Research Catalogue does have its own mediumistic basis: take the research off the platform and its form and concept alters. The topic of the research is a response to the artist's genetic ancestral DNA test provided by i3S (Institute of Investigation and innovation in Health, Porto University). The artist is one among a group of participants conducting individual research on the theme of 'Call for Drawing – Genetics and Identity'. This activity follows an exposition called 'Ancestry – before DNA test – considered through Drawing', published on the Research Catalogue. The activity concerns the charting of progress of thinking, doing and making up to and including two main pieces of visual-material work, with the expectation that the research will continue to develop.

Keywords: genetic DNA, ancestry, drawing, coffee, academic writing, fiction

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2235923/2235924>

(2025)

AFTER-THE-FLOOD: AN ORANGE-BROWN STAIN



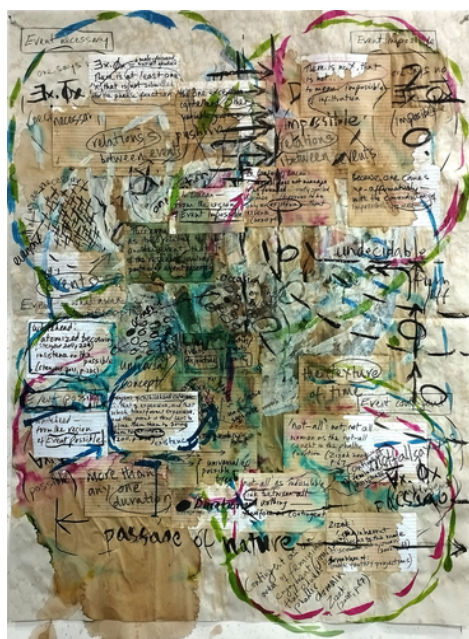
Abstract

The exposition is a self-published reconsideration of an exposition titled Flood's Tidal-turn on Relevance, 2025 - 2002, after its return from two submissions, one inferring its insufficient potential for development in terms of un-resolve and the other for its lack of clarity. Go for midway, in that sense: aspects of the text of the first iteration of the exposition have been overlaid with orange-brown stain and typed summaries of the text's content. The conflation of textual layers may suggest continual modification of one's thoughts about the task of formatting artistic research, while trying to maintain one's concept. The exposition was initially prompted by a natural flood in the artist's house and studio, which curtailed a drawing-based installation project in an unfinished state. The curtailed project, now seen in remnants only, was an attempt to adapt the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's Logical Square as a motif of drawing and writing. The exposition continued, therefore, in its first iteration as an exploration of the consequences of the flood on the previous project. While Lacan's Logical Square was still the issue, it became subsumed by how the flood caused the artist to revisit some of his earlier work. The flood was, in a sense, an impactful contingency with which the artist had to deal, which confers with his contention that the descriptor CONTINGENT, of the Logical Square, is the corner of it most pertinent to the question of artistic research as a practice. The textual overlays of the present iteration at-once clarify aspects of the previous iteration's content and confound it, depending on the extent to which the exposition is approached from a reading or viewing perspective. Meanwhile, a link is provided to where the project can be accessed and read as more conventionally formatted.

Keywords: Logical Square, theory, fiction/fictioning, artistic research, drawing, painting, subjectivity

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2655275/2655276>

(2025) **Thirty Artwork Iterations** (Daily through February and into March, 2025)



Abstract

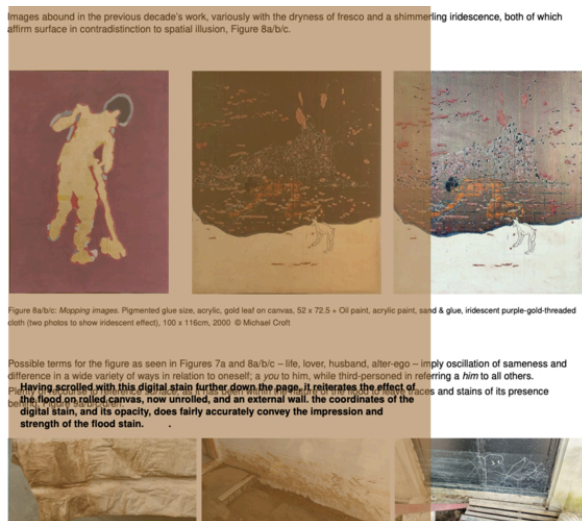
The project began as a commitment to 30/30, an initiative offered by Artquest, where subscribing artists were required to upload a new artwork to a 30/30 dedicated platform on a daily basis though the month of February and into March, 2025. The response formatted as this exposition is variations of text, image, and video animation, archived as still-image iterations mostly sized at 21 x 29.5cm and hyperlinked videos of up to two-minutes' running time. The works' content wavers between anecdotal and academic/theoretical. (Artquest issued non-obligatory collective prompts at the start of each day, which is in this case sometimes either used.) Any texts from each iteration have been copied to a companion page and corrected, rephrased or explained. The iterations play with oscillation between text and image, where the look of text under these circumstances becomes more noticeable while retaining much of its readability. Theoretical reading during the project had been Isabelle Stengers's book on the philosopher A. N. Whitehead, which is variously referenced in the iterations. At the same time, the artist's recent interest in a question of adaptability of the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan's Logical Square to the question of the artistic research process is referenced. Given that the theories of these two authors do not in any obvious sense relate, their conflation in a sense holds their function in the iterations open to question, analogous to how one reflects on interests in and through one's visual practice. While the 30/30 structure required daily decision-making and action, any one iteration tended to be of consequence to the next, which afforded continuity of duration to the project.

Keywords: visual art, language, drawing, video, theory and practice, autofiction, art writing

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/3390281/3390282>

(2025)

Screenshot Cameos of 'After-the-Flood': a project archived



Abstract

The project comprises text, location photos, photos of artworks, and video animations that record the experiences of a natural flood that affected house and studio. The project's content is a consideration of the consequences of the flood towards an existing project in progress at the time and on existing finished artwork. The finished exposition had two unsuccessful reviews; the first due to insufficiently proposing a workable consideration of failure, the second for insufficient clarity of purpose. As this self-published iteration, screenshots taken from the original iteration as formatted on the RC are overlaid with short summaries of aspects of the project's content, in terms pertaining to both the staining of the flood water and the often unacknowledged writing, re-writing, and over-writing of whatever is the language basis of one's practice. The screenshots, as simulated text-and-image cameos, have the summaries ranged next to them as legible text. The original submitted project is archived though accessible as a PDF only, along with its supplementary papers and video clips.

keywords: painting, drawing, language-based, theory and practice, Lacanian theory, subjectivity, Subject

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/3688697/3688698>