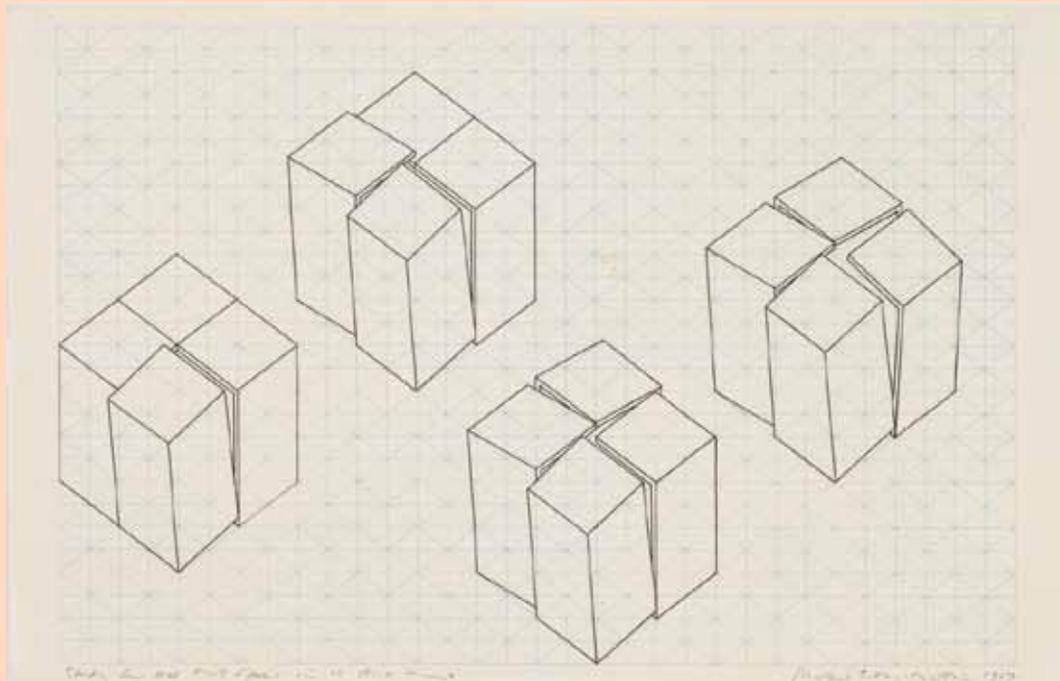


# **WHAT IS**          Drawing **?**





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**image:**  
 michael craig-martin, study for  
 box that opens in 4 directions, 1967

# WHAT IS \_\_\_?

## materials and methodologies

there is a growing interest in contemporary art, yet the ideas, methodologies and the theoretical frameworks which inform its practice can be complex and difficult to access. the what is\_? information programme is intended to provide a broad overview of some of the central themes and directions in modern and contemporary art and also to provide information about the materials and methodologies employed by artists in the creation of their work.

### 03

Drawing on the expertise and experience of lecturers, artists, curators and critical writers, this programme offers a range of perspectives and is neither definitive nor exhaustive.

The programme addresses aspects of modern and contemporary art theory and practice and comprises talks, booklets and web-based resources:

- Series 1* 1970 to the present
- Series 2* 1900 to 1970
- Series 3* materials and methodologies
- Series 4* theory

The intention of this programme is to provide background and contextual information about the art and artists featured in IMMA's exhibitions and collections in particular and about contemporary art in general; to promote information sharing and encourage critical thinking, debate and discussion about art and artists.

For further information see [www.imma.ie](http://www.imma.ie)

# WHAT IS          Drawing ?



Image:  
gary coyle, forest path, 2006

## Introduction

The Irish Museum of Modern Art is the national cultural institution responsible for the collection and presentation of modern and contemporary art in Ireland. IMMA collects and exhibits modern and contemporary art by established and emerging Irish and International artists ranging from painting, drawing, sculpture, installation, photography, video and performance. IMMA initiates many of its exhibitions but also works closely with a network of international museums and galleries. IMMA's Collection includes artworks across a range of media and genres, acquired through purchase, donations, loans and commissions. Many artworks have also been acquired through IMMA's Temporary Exhibitions programme and, on occasion, through IMMA's Artists' Residency Programme.

## 05

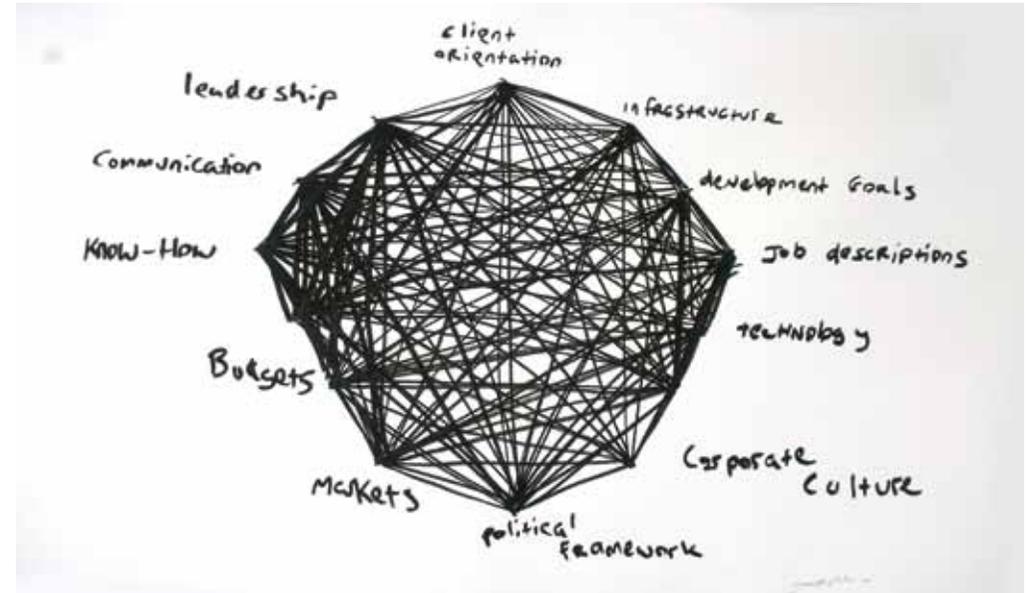
This introductory text provides a brief overview of drawing. Terms associated with drawing are indicated in CAPITALS and are elaborated on in the glossary on p. 25. Artist and lecturer Brian Fay identifies some of the challenges in attempting to define drawing in his essay, *A continuous incompleteness*. The essay includes examples of artists and artworks, some of which are included in IMMA's Collection. By focusing on IMMA's Collection we hope to draw attention to the range of drawings and artworks on paper by artists such as Kathy Prendergast, Tom Molloy, Alice Maher, Michael Craig Martin, Sol LeWitt, André Masson and Brian O'Doherty. We also aim to highlight the potential of IMMA's exhibitions and collection as resources for further enquiry into the subject of drawing.

## what is drawing?

Drawing is a difficult term to define. Many contemporary organisations concerned with drawing resist a definition, preferring to acknowledge drawing as a fluid and evolving MEDIUM and subject. Some suggest that drawing is 'mark making', 'works on paper' or marks that express visual ideas.

At an early age most children spontaneously engage in mark making using whatever material comes to hand: pencils, crayons or even found materials, such as food, dirt or sand. This mark-making process prefigures writing and is a natural process by which infants attempt to understand their environment and their experience of it. Before learning to write, most people engage spontaneously in mark making and drawing. The outcome and evolution of this early mark-making process is dependent on external factors such as the provision of materials, encouragement and opportunity. For many people, the process of mark making as drawing is not carried over into adult life except in the form of doodling and scribbling. Traditional associations of drawing with skill, technique and naturalistic rendering contribute to the perception that drawing is a specialist rather than a universal activity, which should only be undertaken by those with evident skill and ability. Yet drawing is evident in many aspects of modern life such as map making, GRAPHIC design, advertising, architecture, engineering, planning, medicine and science. A common means of communicating directions is to 'draw' a map. Instructions to assemble furniture or equipment usually comprise diagrams.

Drawing is a fundamental form of human expression. PREHISTORIC drawings depicting aspects of early societies, such as hunting scenes, have been found in caves in southern Europe. The techniques of drawing and writing have common origins in the desire of humans to express themselves and to communicate with others. In early civilisations, such as China, drawing and writing developed simultaneously in the form of CALLIGRAPHY. However, in western civilisations, these techniques eventually became separated. During the MEDIEVAL period, drawing played a role in the development of TAPESTRIES, FRESCOES and STAINED GLASS windows and also in the illustration of religious texts such as THE BOOK OF KELLS. During the RENAISSANCE, the discovery of ancient Greek and Roman ARTEFACTS prompted a renewed interest in CLASSICAL ART. Drawing was increasingly used for design and experimentation and to DOCUMENT the natural world. New drawing techniques, involving the manipulation of line and shading to create PERSPECTIVE and FORESHORTENING, were developed to create illusions of naturalistic, three-dimensional space. Artists used drawing to generate ideas and solve problems, such as composition and layout, in preparation for the creation of a painting or sculpture which was considered to be the significant artwork. A full-sized drawing called a CARTOON was used as the basis for the final work. The emphasis on the development of techniques to generate naturalistic representation dominated drawing up until the early twentieth century, and prescriptive drawing techniques were taught in the ART ACADEMIES. Developments in the production of paper



and a growing interest in the techniques and methodologies of the artist contributed to the increased circulation of drawing among the public. Prior to this, drawing was considered to be a tool or technique, and drawings were merely preparatory material for the final work. Patrons did not commission or collect drawings as they considered them of no artistic value or interest.

During the eighteenth century, artists such as William Hogarth and Francisco de Goya engaged in a form of drawing called CARICATURE, as a means of commenting on the changing social and political conditions arising from industrialisation and urbanisation. This was also as a consequence of developments in printmaking which enabled the circulation of such work in newspapers and leaflets.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, during the period associated with MODERNISM, new developments in technology, in particular PHOTOGRAPHY and FILM, meant that traditional concerns with naturalistic representation in drawing and painting could be discarded in favour of more innovative and experimental approaches reflecting the artist's own interests and concerns. Artists began to experiment with different types of media and techniques and to draw attention to the material conditions of the artwork resulting in a shift towards ABSTRACTION.

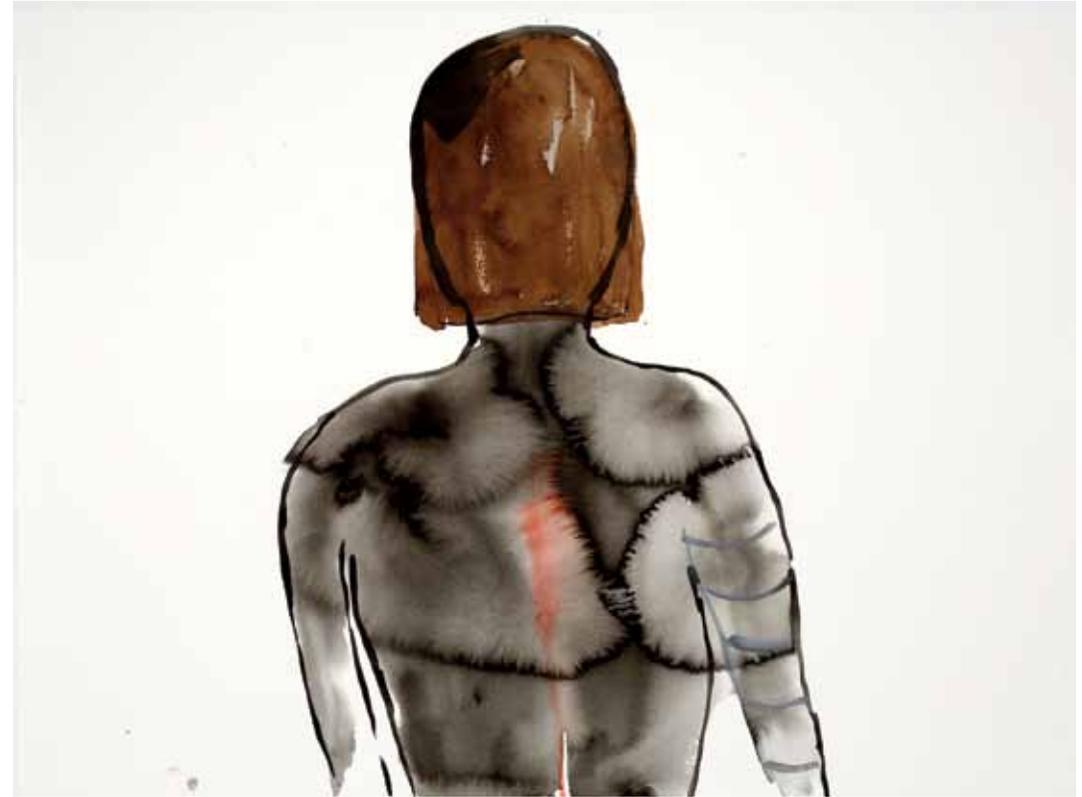
Drawing's complex relationship to PAINTING and SCULPTURE meant that it played an important role in the AVANT-GARDE movements of the early twentieth century such as CUBISM, DADA, SUPREMATISM and CONSTRUCTIVISM, which were concerned with challenging established

artistic orthodoxies and traditions. AUTOMATISM and EXQUISITE CORPSE are examples of experiments in drawing by artists associated with SURREALISM to engage in collective art making and to access the unconscious. A renewed interest in REALISM in the inter-war era reinforced drawing's association with representation and NARRATIVE. This inhibited drawing from being considered a medium in its own right in the context of these emerging trends towards abstraction.

The POSTMODERN era was characterised by INTERDISCIPLINARITY, where artists employed a range of media and worked across a number of disciplines in the achievement of their artistic objectives. This opened up new possibilities for drawing as an experimental medium. Emphasis was placed on the idea or concept rather than the production of an art object. Attention was given to the SITE in which the artwork was situated. Artists experimented with new forms of practice, such as temporary, textual, performative, SITE-SPECIFIC and DIDACTIC work blurring the boundaries between drawing, painting and sculpture. Developments in LAND ART, PERFORMANCE ART and CONCEPTUAL ART moved the artwork beyond the confines of the gallery space resulting in a shift from object-based to conceptually-based practice. These developments generated new possibilities for the consideration of drawing as mark making – a path worn in a field, a spiral of stones, a body choreographed in a space – or even as a conceptual process manifest in a set of instructions or a diagram.

The pace of technological development has accelerated considerably in the second half of the twentieth century with the development of DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY, the COMPUTER and the INTERNET. Developments in film and VIDEO and the emergence of NEW MEDIA ART have expanded the possibilities for drawing using these new technologies.

More recently, there has been a renewed interest in drawing as a medium rather than as a technique in the service of painting and sculpture. There are no limits to the materials used to create an artwork, and drawing is now displayed, valued and collected as a legitimate medium in its own right. Some artists use drawing as their primary or sole medium, and a drawing may be the end result of an artist's work. For many artists, drawing is an essential component of their practice, which may result in a conceptual, performative or TEXT-BASED WORK. There are venues such as The Drawing Room in London and The Drawing Center in New York dedicated solely to the display and promotion of drawing.



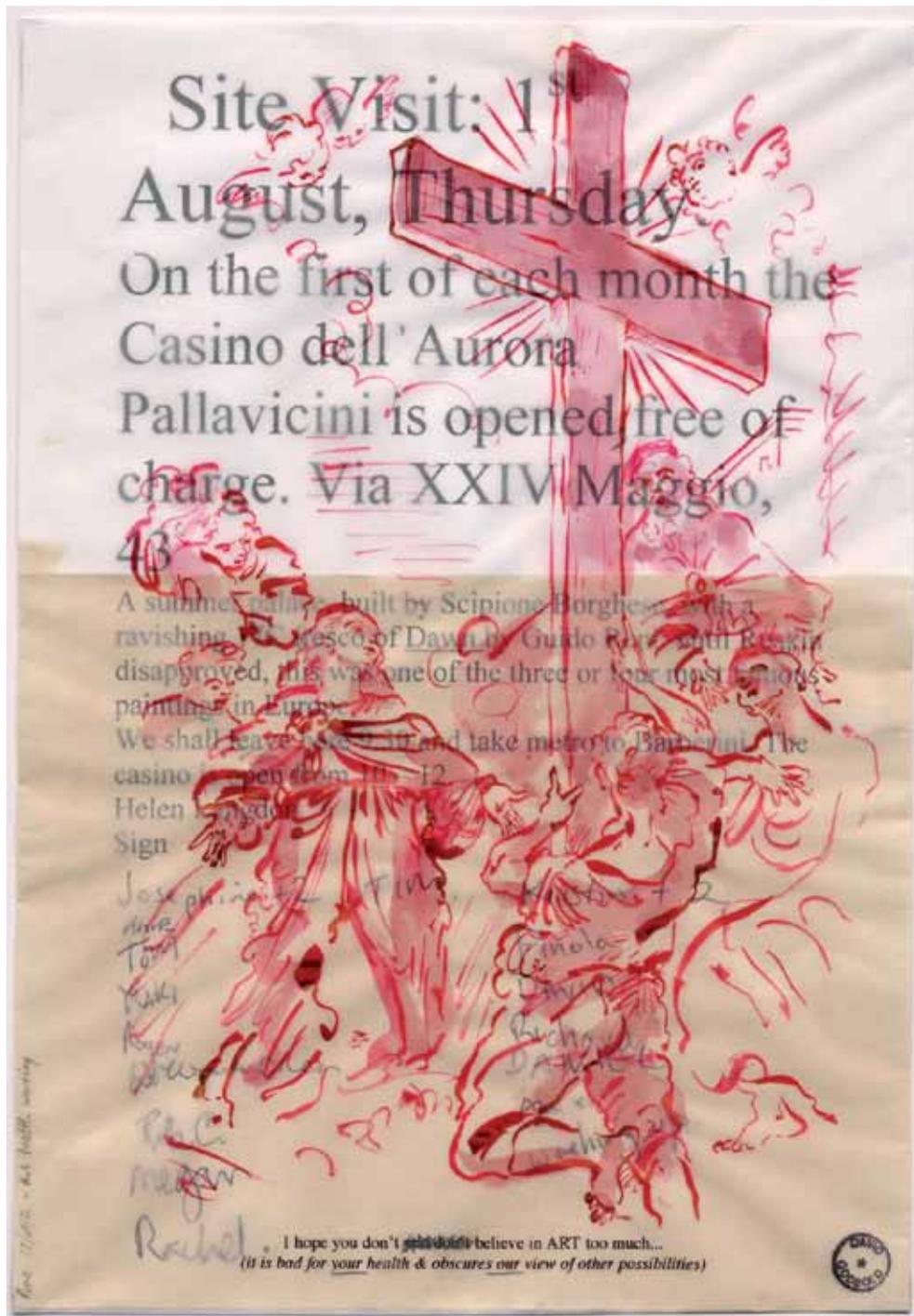


image:  
David Godbold, I hope you  
don't believe in Art too  
much, 2002

## A continuous incompleteness [Brian Fay](#)

what is  
drawing?

In attempting to address *What is Drawing?* I believe it is necessary to reframe and break down this loaded and problematic question. Due to the diverse range of materials and processes employed, *What is Drawing?* prompts a contested, circular and frequently vexing debate ranging across numerous positions and views. It is pencil on paper, a walk, a conversation, the contrails of jet planes, or anything in between and beyond. So let's agree that all these views are correct.

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Reframing the question *What is Drawing?* sidesteps the guessing game of what physically constitutes a drawing. This allows us instead to look at content and at what is being said through the decision to produce a work as a drawing. It is important to acknowledge three key points:

- Drawing is not a single defined entity that has remained unchanged. It is an activity that is continuously mutable, constantly adapting to new forms, emerging technologies and conceptual attitudes.
- In this essay, drawing is considered mainly within a Western art context. This excludes the many uses and applications of drawing within a variety of other cultures, for example Maori ancestral tattooing or Chinese calligraphic scroll drawing, and other disciplines from Archaeology, Engineering, Anthropology to Physics, Geology and many more. However, this is not to suggest that elements of these or any other discipline do not encroach upon art drawing, as they certainly do, or indeed that drawings created in an art context have no scope or influence outside of their own original remit. However, for the purpose of this essay it is necessary to place some parameters on an activity that is multifaceted and insistently boundary blind.
- Drawing does not solely belong to visual art.

There are many questions that can be extrapolated from *What is Drawing?* What I have chosen to answer here are two issues that pertain initially to drawing's past: *Are there specific traits that apply to drawing and why?*, and to its present with a view towards the future: *What is being done in drawing now and why?* Viewing drawing through this temporal framework allows us to consider it as both an act that takes place in the present as in the time of the drawing's creation, while also being a trace of this action, the record of a past event or gesture. A further temporal distinction is implied through the word 'drawing' itself. In English its root is both a noun and a verb. The former implying a completed object – that which has occurred; the latter an act or process – an ongoing state of present-ness. The temporal context of drawing will be discussed in answer to both these questions.

1.  
are there specific  
traits that apply to  
drawing and why?

A dominant view of drawing is that, since Modernism, drawing, which had previously been considered a more traditional medium and not a discipline in and of itself, began to re-examine and investigate its essential nature and uses. Prior to this, as writer Jean Fisher suggests, drawing's historical position was that of a secondary, preparatory form to other disciplines:

From medieval to modern art, drawing mostly constituted a propaedeutic moment, a passage for the realization of the major work of painting, sculpture, or architecture. It was an exercise, the testing field that prepared for the final work.<sup>1</sup>

In this way, drawing can be seen as a way of solving formal issues in a later work. It functions as an anticipatory, in-between stage that is solution-orientated, not for itself but for a future artwork. What is also implied here is that our understanding of drawing is received from a set of specific pre-existing historical techniques, processes, materials and conventions that have traditionally been employed to address the concerns of other disciplines, re-emphasising drawing's secondary and intermediary nature.

Historically, through their teaching methods and value systems, art academies and colleges reiterated drawing's less privileged position. Increasingly drawing was identified as a vehicle that displayed the artist's acquisition of skills with a view to employing them to create work in other artforms. The relative merits of an artist's ability were frequently based on their facility to accurately depict the natural world.<sup>2</sup> In this pursuit, emphasis was placed chiefly on technique and observation. So called *objective* schools of thought and method were continually devised to generate and continue what was considered to be *good drawing*. Perhaps most noteworthy and influential were John Ruskin's *The Elements of Drawing* (1857)<sup>3</sup> and the Slade School's twelve- point definition of drawing technique as propounded by Henry Tonks in *Elementary Propositions in Drawing and Painting* (1910).<sup>4</sup> Arguably these influences are best exemplified by exercises such as the observational copying of nature and plaster cast figures to the rigorous





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image:  
patrick hall,  
approaching the yellow, 2007

finishing school of the Life Drawing room. What this grounding in technique meant was that drawing gathered a conservative reputation and a defined secondary role usually rooted in a representational function. Today this could be seen as only of historical interest, yet it is important to note that, until quite recently, it was problematic in a college to only submit drawing as a final body of work. As Irish artist Alice Maher remarked on her own educational experience:

When I was a student, drawing was still considered a secondary practice, a study-thing, something you used to hone a composition for the 'real' artwork to come, i.e. a painting. This was the eighties and colleges were strictly divided into departments. One was not allowed to present for a degree with drawings alone.<sup>5</sup>

This ongoing positioning of drawing by the Academy established an objective value system as to what constituted a *good drawing*. This so-called *good drawing* in turn looked to and valued the conventions, protocols, techniques and materials of pre-existing historical drawings.

Of course, like any accepted historical narrative, it is more complicated than the construct that before Modernism drawing was all technique and, from that point on, it shifted to conceptual concerns, where all skills are lost. In his catalogue essay for the 1995 exhibition *Drawing the Line: Reappraising Drawing Past and Present*, artist Michael Craig-Martin argued that

There are two principle misconceptions about drawing. The first is that there is a single form of 'good drawing', a way of making drawings that is somehow basic and 'common sensical' (naturalistic representation), against which those drawings taking other forms are deviant. The second is that all drawing in the past conformed to the rules of 'good drawing', deviant drawings being exclusive to our own century.<sup>6</sup>

In this frequently-cited show, Craig-Martin supported his curatorial claims by focusing on the use of line in drawing by contemporary and historical artists. He invited anachronistic relationships and corollaries to be read in works that were in some cases separated by many centuries and from diverse cultural origins.

Similarly, curator and writer Barbara Rose in her earlier 1976 landmark survey exhibition and catalogue essay *Drawing Now* noted that while drawing, as a result of Modernism 'moved from one context, that of a "minor" support medium ... to another, that of a major and independent medium with distinctive expressive possibilities altogether its own', it also crucially maintained a relationship between idea and execution which was always present in the history of drawing.<sup>7</sup> Rose argues that, as far back as the fifteenth century, 'drawing has been equated with "invention", with the engendering of the "idea". Quoting the Renaissance biographer and artist Giorgio Vasari's description of drawing as 'originating in the intellect of the

artist, its first concrete realisation being the sketch', she claims a preceding history for drawing that is not solely rooted in technique and observation.<sup>8</sup>

If Modernism produced a break with previous thinking and orthodoxies, drawing remained present in some of the key moments in this paradigm shift, substantiating Rose's claim for the role of the intellect in drawing. Examples include Marcel Duchamp's 1919 *L.H.O.O.Q.* work where he drew a moustache and goatee beard with handwritten text on a reproduction of da Vinci's *Mona Lisa*. Robert Rauschenberg's *Erased De Kooning Drawing*, 1953, a work that physically rubbed out a drawing on paper given to Rauschenberg by the Abstract Expressionist painter William De Kooning.<sup>9</sup> Similarly the influential exhibition *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art* curated by artist Mel Bochner<sup>10</sup> and, in IMMA's Collection, Brian O'Doherty's *Drawing for Marcel Duchamp Study for Duchamp portrait first lead (after cardiogram taken as physician)*, 1967, illustrate Rose's assertion that drawing 'presides over a restoration of the contemplative function to art.'<sup>11</sup>

Importantly, while contextualising the works of process-based artists such as Richard Serra, Sol LeWitt and Dorothea Rockburne, Rose, in her exhibition, extended her emphasis on concept to include what she terms the 'autographic' drawing – the drawing that is confessional and biographical, based on an experience, a form of self-revelatory mark, an unmediated form of direct communication. This role was subsequently addressed by curator Laura Hoptman's *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* show in 2002. Taking its impetus and title from Rose's earlier exhibition, Hoptman identified an interest in drawing that was not solely based in a process-led enquiry as exemplified by Richard Serra's frequently cited claim '*Drawing is a Verb*'. Hoptman argued that much work being produced was *projective*; that it depicts something that was already present in the mind of the artist before its execution and not as a bi-product of a drawing activity where the result is by and large unknown. For Hoptman, *projective* drawing was a finished, tangible product corresponding to the initial speculative idea; in other words, drawing as a noun. The influence of her exhibition and other similar drawing shows, coupled with developments in contemporary practice, created the space for drawing to function non-oppositionally as both noun and verb.

If drawing did indeed move to an *independent medium* with an increased capacity for both process-led and subjective responses, it seemed to prize the more provisional attributes that were present in its previous secondary role. As Craig-Martin suggests, it is the attributes of directness and incompleteness that contribute to our understanding of drawing:

Spontaneity, creative speculation, experimentation, directness, simplicity, abbreviation, expressiveness, immediacy, personal vision, technical diversity, modesty of means, rawness, fragmentation, discontinuity, unfinishedness, and open-endedness. These have always been the characteristics of drawing.<sup>12</sup>



**Image:**  
Brian O'Doherty, *Drawing for Marcel Duchamp*, 1967



2.  
what is being  
done in drawing  
now and why?

Since the 1990s, the status and profile of drawing have grown significantly. There has been a marked increase in the range of activities in drawing at both a national and international level.<sup>13</sup> But the simple question is why? What does this tell us? It is necessary to briefly establish the conditions for the high profile of drawing.

Much recent discourse on drawing has revolved around ideas of its rediscovery, its anachronistic qualities, its potential as a form for using and critiquing graphic notations and concerns from other disciplines such as Music, Choreography, Science and Architecture. There is also the response to the ubiquity and potential of the digital, as artist and writer Tania Kovats suggests 'contemporary drawing celebrates the artist's touch, as the process of "crafting" an object is once again valorised.'<sup>14</sup> Allied to this statement is the perception of drawing as a manual slow stance against the speed of digital reproducibility. There is value placed on drawing's realigning to analogue technologies, its autographic uniqueness and its inherent potential as an unmediated carrier for direct forms of emotional or subjective enquiry.

Perhaps two key concepts underlie these and many other assumptions as to the current status of drawing. Firstly, that it never strictly belonged to any one discipline, occupying an in-between space that can therefore be easily employed by disciplines both inside and outside of fine art practice. As its representational function was no longer a central aim, drawing could, through its non-discipline specific status, provide a more democratic usage albeit one that still relied on a set of received conventions. Secondly, that the history of drawing ran parallel and not central to major shifts and narratives in art history. While it was constantly present, drawing was not subject to a critical questioning of its own demise, as for example painting had been for much of the 1980s. However as writer and critic Neil Mulholland remarked in his review of Emma Dexter's influential book *Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing*, there was never a consensus as to the *rediscovery* of drawing.<sup>15</sup> He argues that the notion of rediscovery is problematic in that post-conceptualism, and to some degree conceptualism, were engaged with how artists could employ existing artforms alongside emerging media and technologies.

Inevitably, there are market factors contributing to this awakened interest in drawing. Even allowing for its supposed value as a so called *authentic* and *unique* medium, drawing is relatively inexpensive when compared to other artforms making it attractive to new and existing collectors. With, for example, the rise of the international Art Fair in the 1990s, drawing (in its low-tech works on paper format) has proven itself popular in adapting to the format of the stereotypical small modular display booths, which can inhibit the presentation of larger more elaborate artworks. Drawings are, in general, straight forward to insure, transport and display. In his catalogue essay *Drawing A Medium*, writer and curator Clemens Krümmel suggests that this market interest might be seen as what he refers to as 'A stopgap art, for when there are insufficient resources to fund sophisticated multimedia installations'. When trends and economic conditions change 'the heavyweights are ushered back on to the stage in a celebration of weightier objects and themes.'<sup>16</sup>

Contemporary drawing is no different to other visual art practices operating within an open field of themes, subjects and enquiries. IMMA's own collection contains many examinations of pre-existing forms and operations in drawing. Kathy Prendergast's ongoing *City Drawing* series employs some cartographic conventions to depict the capital cities of the world yet withholds other more empirical notation necessary to interpret a map such as text, measurement, colour and orientation. Similarly Nick Miller's *Corban*, 1996, explores the conventions of figure drawing, specifically the relationship and physical distance of the artist to the subject. In this case, the model lies on a sheet of paper on the floor, and Miller literally sits astride the subject. The outcome of the drawing is then influenced by both this heightened intimate proximity and its somewhat skewed perspective.

If drawing has a projective condition, always ancillary, anticipatory and pointing to a future outcome, what then is the future for drawing? While drawing continues to have a high profile, there are questions that are still relevant to the interrogation of its current status. Has drawing become part of a medium fetish? If drawing, as a diverse form, is the only thematic link in a lot of drawing shows, what then of the content? Is there a content that is specific to drawing? What makes questions like these matter is that there is still a vibrant range of possibilities to test these propositions.

In conclusion it is perhaps drawing's properties of contingency, intermediacy, in-betweenness and becoming that can go towards addressing these questions. Art historian Norman Bryson proposes that drawing has a distinction in that it 'always exists in the present tense, in the time of unfolding ... a continuous incompleteness.' In describing the temporal act of drawing as a state of becoming Bryson suggests a future orientated status for drawing,

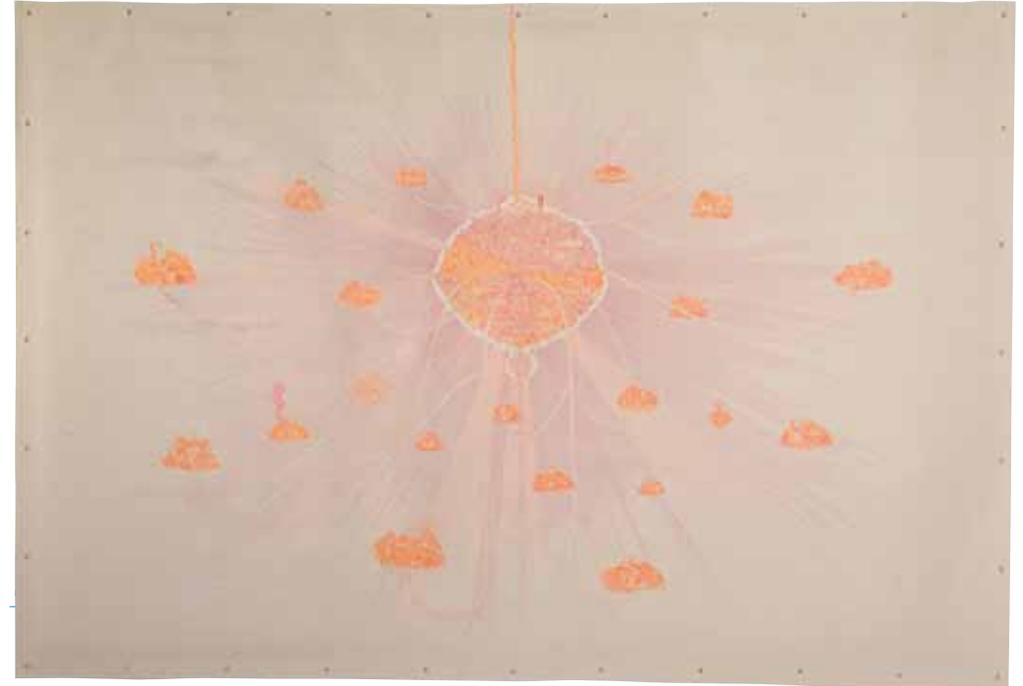
A hand that is about to make its first trace on the surface ... the present of viewing and the present of the drawn line hook on to each other, mesh together like interlocking temporal gears; they co-inhabit an irreversible, permanently open and exposed field of becoming, whose moment of closure will never arrive.<sup>17</sup>

Perhaps the strength of drawing and its durability is that its moment of closure will also never arrive.



Image:  
NICK MILLER, *corban*, 1996

- 1 Jean Fisher, 'On Drawing' in Catherine de Zegher, *The Stage of Drawing: Gesture and Act: Selected from the Tate Collection*, London & New York: Tate Publishing and the Drawing Center, 2003, pp. 217-230.
- 2 For a compelling historical account of drawing in art education see Ann Bermingham, *Learning to Draw: Studies in the Cultural History of a Polite and Useful Art*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- 3 John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, 2nd edition, New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1991.
- 4 The full list of points on drawing are reprinted in Lynda Morris, *Henry Tonks and the Art of Pure Drawing*, Norwich: Norwich School of Art and Design, 1985, pp. 30-32.
- 5 Alice Maher, 'Drawing is Thinking' reprinted in Jim Savage (ed.), *Drawing Texts*, 1st edition, Cork: Occasional Press, 2001, pp. 19-21.
- 6 Michael Craig-Martin, *Drawing the Line, Reappraising Drawing Past and Present*, [exhibition catalogue of touring show], London: The South Bank Centre, 1995 reprinted in Jim Savage (ed.), *Drawing Texts*, Cork: Occasional Press, 2001, pp. 9-12.
- 7 Barbara Rose, *Drawing Now*, 1st edition, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1976, p. 9. This catalogue accompanied the exhibition *Drawing Now* held at the Museum of Modern Art.
- 8 Ibid p. 9.
- 9 For a good discussion on this piece including an interview with Robert Rauschenberg see <http://artforum.com/video/mode=large&id=19778>
- 10 *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art* was shown at New York's School of Visual Arts Gallery. The show comprised four white plinths each with a single A4 clip folder presenting 100 Xerox copies of artists' studio notes, their working drawings, diagrams, illustrations and fabrication receipts. Collated, Xeroxed and exhibited by Bochner.
- 11 Barbara Rose, 1976, op cit, p. 91.
- 12 Michael Craig-Martin, catalogue essay for 'Drawing the Line' reprinted in *Drawing*, Cork: Occasional Press, 1995, p. 11.
- 13 See the *Resources* section on p. 29 for information on some national and international initiatives.
- 14 Tania Kovats, *The Drawing Book: a Survey of the Primary Means of Expression*, London: Black Dog Publishing, 2008, p. 16.
- 15 Neil Mulholland, review of 'Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing' in *Modern Painters*, April issue 2006, p. 122.
- 16 Clemens Krümmel, 'Drawing - A Medium Art', essay in *Linie Line Linea*, Stuttgart: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen, 2010, pp. 21-25.
- 17 Norman Bryson, 'A Walk for a Walk's Sake', in Catherine de Zegher (ed.), *The Stage of Drawing*, New York: Tate Publishing and The Drawing Centre, 2003, pp.149-158.



#### Brian Fay

brian fay is an artist and lecturer in fine art at the dublin institute of technology. his practice, rooted in drawing, examines the materiality of pre-existing artworks and objects, and their complex relation to time. recent shows include motion capture, glucksman gallery, cork; broken images or when does posterity begin?, royal hibernian academy, dublin; projet gutenber, galerie jeanroch dard, paris; and the 43 uses of drawing, rugby art museum, england. he is currently pursuing a practice based phd at northumbria university, newcastle entitled states of transience in drawing practices and the conservation of museum artworks.

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### **ABSTRACT ART**

Artwork that is non-figurative, non-representational and which is concerned with the formal elements of the artwork rather than the representation of subject matter.

### **ABSTRACTION**

The process of making abstract through elimination or avoidance of any representational elements and by emphasising the formal elements of an artwork.

### **ART ACADEMY**

A model of arts education originating in the 17th century which provided a disciplined and prescriptive arts training with a heavy emphasis on the acquisition of drawing techniques.

### **ARTEFACT**

A man-made object which gives information about the society in which it was produced and used.

### **AUTOMATISM**

A term appropriated from psychiatry by the Surrealist artists to describe a technique to access the unconscious. Automatism involves automatic actions and involuntary gestures to produce spontaneous drawings, writings and paintings.

### **AVANT-GARDE**

French for advance guard or 'vanguard', a military term to describe an advance army group. The term is used to describe innovative, experimental

or cutting-edge artists and movements.

### **BOOK OF KELLS**

An illuminated manuscript of the four gospels of the New Testament created by Irish monks during the 9th century.

### **CALLIGRAPHY**

The graphic art of writing usually with a pen or brush.

### **CARICATURE**

A form of portraiture which involves distortion and exaggeration often in the service of political satire.

### **CARTOON**

A larger preliminary drawing mapping out the design and layout in preparation for a painting. The term is also used to refer to the animations in comic strips.

### **COMPUTER**

A mechanism for storing data and executing instructions called programmes in relation to that data. Software applications for personal computers include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, Web browsers, e-mail clients, games, and specialist software.

### **CONCEPTUAL ART**

Originating in the 1960s, Conceptual Art emphasises the idea or concept rather than the production of a tangible art object. The ideas and methodologies of Conceptual Art continue to inform Contemporary Art practice.

### **CONSTRUCTIVISM**

An abstract art movement founded by Vladimir Tatlin and Alexander Rodchenko in Russia around 1915, which embraced developments in modern technology and industrialisation.

### **CUBISM**

An early twentieth-century movement led by Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque which focused on the physical qualities of painting rather than the subject matter. It is characterised by the breaking up of the picture plane, merging of figure and ground, the adoption of multiple viewpoints, and simplification of form into geometric shapes. Cubism greatly influenced subsequent art movements and artists and is considered to be the forerunner of Abstract Art.

### **DADA**

An international, avant-garde art movement founded in 1916 which used a variety of media including collage, sound, nonsense texts and absurd performances to protest against the social, cultural and political conditions prevailing in Europe during World War I. Originating in Zurich, the movement spread to Paris, Berlin, Cologne, Hanover and New York.

### **DIDACTIC**

To adopt an approach which conveys a message, knowledge or information.

**DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

Electronic data storage and transmission technology that enables immense amounts of information to be compressed on small storage devices such as computers and telephones. It can easily be preserved, retrieved and transported.

**DOCUMENTATION**

The process of making records using drawing, photography, film, video, audio or text to identify or report factual details.

**DRAWING**

The process of mark making, often using implements such as pencil, charcoal or pastels, on a two-dimensional surface.

**EXQUISITE CORPSE**

A collaborative technique associated with Surrealist artists which involves the creation of an artwork by the sequential contribution of words and/or images by several people.

**FILM**

The medium used for the creation of still or moving images. The term is also used to describe a motion picture which is a sequence of images projected onto a screen, collectively referred to as cinema. In Contemporary Art, film is referred to as an art form.

**FORESHORTENING**

An aspect of visual perspective where an object or part of an object may appear shorter than it actually is due to the angle at which it is seen.

**FRESCOS**

A form of mural painting prevalent during the Renaissance, which involved painting in pigment mixed with water on a thin layer of wet lime mortar or plaster.

**GRAPHIC**

A visual representation on a two-dimensional surface such as a drawing, photograph, diagram, pattern or design.

**INTERDISCIPLINARY**

The combining of two or more artform specialisms, such as music, visual arts or dance.

**INTERNET**

A globalised system of computer networks linked by copper wire, fibre-optic cables and wireless connections, which provides services, resources and information, such as the hypertext of the World Wide Web, electronic mail, file sharing, online gaming and social networking sites.

**LAND ART**

A form of arts practice which emerged in the 1960s where artworks were created out of, or situated in, the landscape. It was a reaction against the growing commodification of art and was also informed by emerging concerns about the environment.

**MEDIEVAL**

Refers to all aspects of life during the Middle Ages from approximately the fifth to the fifteenth century.

**MEDIUM/MEDIA**

In general usage, media refers to forms of communication such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the Internet. In the arts, media – the plural of medium – refers to the materials, methodologies, mechanisms, technologies or devices by which an artwork is realised. Traditional media include painting, sculpture and drawing, and the specific materials used such as paint, charcoal or marble can also be referred to as media. In Contemporary Art practice media artists use a wide range of media such as technology, found materials, the body, sound, etc.

**MODERN**

Generally referring to the present or the contemporary, it is associated with the period of Modernism from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. Modern can also be used to describe the period since the Enlightenment in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or the Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

**MODERNISM/  
MODERN ART**

Refers to art theory and practice from the 1860s to the late 1960s and is defined in terms of a linear progression of styles, periods and schools such as Impressionism, Cubism and Abstract Expressionism.

**NARRATIVE**

A linear and sequential format to convey information, associated with storytelling.

**NEW MEDIA ART**

Artwork created using new media such as film, video, lens-based media, digital technology, hypertext, cyberspace, audio technology, CD-ROMs, webcams, surveillance technology, wireless telephones, GPS systems, computer and video games and biotechnology.

**PAINTING**

The application of a pigment or colour to a surface such as canvas, paper or plaster. It was the dominant artistic medium for pictorial representation until the twentieth century.

**PERFORMANCE ART**

Involves an artist undertaking an action or actions in which the artist's body is the medium. The practice may also incorporate other bodies, performers and audience members. Performance Art is a time-based practice, and durational performance takes place over an extended period of time and involves elements of endurance. Performance art evolved in the late 1950s and early 1960s in the context of a period of social, cultural and political upheaval. It is closely associated with Video Art which was the primary means of recording this ephemeral art form.

**PERSPECTIVE**

The technique of representing three-dimensional objects on a two-dimensional surface such as paper or canvas, where the relationship between objects is determined by their distance from the viewer.

**PHOTOGRAPHY**

The process of recording an image – a photograph – on light-sensitive film or, in the case of digital photography, via a digital electronic or magnetic memory.

**POSTMODERNISM**

A social, cultural and intellectual movement characterised by a rejection of notions of linear progression, grand totalising narratives and critical consensus associated with Modernism. It is characterised by an interdisciplinary approach, multiple narratives, fragmentation, relativity, contingency and irony.

**PREHISTORIC**

Literally means 'before history' and refers to the period before recorded history.

**PRINTMAKING**

The process of creating an artwork by transferring an impression from one surface to another. Printmaking processes use metal, stone, linoleum, fabric, etc. While printmaking enables multiple copies to be produced, each print is considered unique.

**REALISM**

A broad term relating to the representation of reality associated with classical art and movements such as social realism, socialist realism and hyperrealism.

**RENAISSANCE**

A French word for rebirth, the Renaissance was a cultural movement originating in Italy in the late fourteenth century, prompted by the revival of ancient classical sources. Extending to the sixteenth century, the movement spread throughout Italy and Europe affecting all aspects of social, political and cultural life. Characterised by the adoption of a humanist approach, Renaissance artists placed an emphasis on naturalism and the use of linear perspective.

**SCULPTURE**

A three-dimensional art object which is either created or constructed by an artist. Includes constructions, assemblages, installations, sound, new media, etc.

**SITE**

The space in which an artwork is located either temporarily or permanently, such as a gallery space, a space in an art fair or biennial, a public space or a site-specific space where the artwork is created in response to the conditions of the space.

**SITE-SPECIFIC ART**

Artwork that is created in response to a specific site with the intention of being located in the site and where removal from the site would change the meaning of the artwork. Often associated with Installation Art, Land Art and Public Art.

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**STAINED GLASS**

Small pieces of coloured glass assembled to create a large window typically in a church. Prevalent during the Middle Ages, they are often painted with imagery depicting historical or biblical stories.

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**SUPREMATISM**

Russian abstract art movement founded by Kasimir Malevich and Alexander Rodchenko around 1915 which emphasised the supremacy of form expressed through the use of a limited range of colours and geometric shapes.

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**SURREALISM**

An anti-establishment, literary and visual art movement founded in 1924 by André Breton and influenced by Dada, Psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud's theories of the unconscious.

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**TAPESTRY**

A form of woven textile prevalent during the Middle Ages which was usually hung on a wall for insulation and decoration.

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**TEXT/TEXT BASED**

Artwork created using written or printed words as the material and/or subject matter.

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## drawing general resources

The following is a select list of resources. A more detailed list of resources can be found on IMMA's website [www.imma.ie](http://www.imma.ie)

### Websites / Organisations / Projects

**Drawing****Centre for Recent Drawing**

London  
[www.c4rd.org.uk](http://www.c4rd.org.uk)

**The Diepenheim**

**Drawing Centre**  
Netherlands  
[www.kunstvereniging.nl](http://www.kunstvereniging.nl)

**Drawing Australia**

[www.aces.mq.edu.au/drawingaustralia](http://www.aces.mq.edu.au/drawingaustralia)

**The Drawing Center**

New York  
[www.drawingcenter.org](http://www.drawingcenter.org)

**Drawing Lab**

School of Art, Design and Printing, Dublin Institute of Technology.  
[www.dit.ie](http://www.dit.ie)

**The Drawing Project**

Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology  
[www.iadt.ie](http://www.iadt.ie)

**Drawing Power**

The Campaign for Drawing  
[www.campaignfordrawing.org](http://www.campaignfordrawing.org)

**Drawing Research Network**

[www.drawing-research-network.org.uk](http://www.drawing-research-network.org.uk)

**The Drawing Room**

[www.drawingroom.org.uk](http://www.drawingroom.org.uk)

**Jerwood Drawing Prize**

[www.jerwoodvisualarts.org](http://www.jerwoodvisualarts.org)

**The National Collection of Contemporary Drawing**

Limerick City Gallery  
<http://gallery.limerick.ie>

**Tracey**

Contemporary Drawing Research  
[www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ac/tracey](http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ac/tracey)

**Online Resources**

**Drawings and Notes**  
<http://drawingsandnotes.blogspot.com>

**The Secret of Drawing**

[www.bbc.co.uk/arts/secretofdrawing](http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/secretofdrawing)

**General****Access Art**

Resource for teachers and students.  
[www.accessart.org.uk](http://www.accessart.org.uk)

**Artcyclopedia**

Internet Encyclopedia on Art and Artists.  
[www.artcyclopedia.com](http://www.artcyclopedia.com)

**Artworld Salon**

An experimental discussion platform focused on issues concerning the globalised artworld.  
[www.artworldsalon.com](http://www.artworldsalon.com)

**Art:21 Art in the Twenty-First Century**

A television series and website focusing exclusively on contemporary visual art.  
[www.pbs.org/art21](http://www.pbs.org/art21)

**Axis**

Online resource for Contemporary Art.  
[www.axisweb.org](http://www.axisweb.org)

**Collabarts**

An information resource for collaborative art practice for artists, theorists and art students.  
[www.collabarts.org](http://www.collabarts.org)

**Curating degree zero**

A discussion platform to research the practice of freelance curators, artist-curators, new-media curators and curatorial collaboration.  
[www.curatingdegreezero.org](http://www.curatingdegreezero.org)

**Database of Virtual Art**

Documents the field of digital Installation Art.  
[www.virtualart.at](http://www.virtualart.at)

**Digital Art Source**

Resource site for digital art and culture information.  
[www.digitalartsource.com](http://www.digitalartsource.com)

**Intute**

Online service providing information about web resources for education and research.  
[www.intute.ac.uk](http://www.intute.ac.uk)

**LabforCulture.org**

The networking platform for information on European arts and culture.  
[www.labforculture.org](http://www.labforculture.org)

**STOT**

Platform providing online links relating to Contemporary Art.  
[www.stot.org](http://www.stot.org)

**The Artists**

Database of modern and contemporary artists.  
[www.the-artists.org](http://www.the-artists.org)

## Journals / Magazines / Reports

### Drawing

#### Drawing Papers

Journal of The Drawing  
Centre  
[www.drawingcentre.org](http://www.drawingcentre.org)

**Fukt Magazine for  
Contemporary Drawing**  
[www.fukt.de](http://www.fukt.de)

### General

#### Afterimage

Journal of Media Art and  
Cultural Criticism  
[www.vsw.org/afterimage](http://www.vsw.org/afterimage)

#### Art and Research

[www.artandresearch.org.uk](http://www.artandresearch.org.uk)

#### Art Forum Magazine

[www.artforum.com](http://www.artforum.com)

#### Art Monthly

[www.artmonthly.co.uk](http://www.artmonthly.co.uk)

#### Art Newspaper

[www.theartnewspaper.com](http://www.theartnewspaper.com)

#### Art Papers

[www.artpapers.org](http://www.artpapers.org)

#### Art Review

[www.artreview.com](http://www.artreview.com)

#### Cabinet Cultural Magazine

[www.cabinetmagazine.org](http://www.cabinetmagazine.org)

#### Circa Art Magazine

[www.recirca.com](http://www.recirca.com)

#### Contemporary

[www.contemporary-magazines.com](http://www.contemporary-magazines.com)

#### Contexts

[www.create-ireland.ie](http://www.create-ireland.ie)

#### Critical Inquiry

[www.criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu](http://www.criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu)

#### Curator: The Museum

[www.altamirapress.com](http://www.altamirapress.com)

#### E-flux

[www.e-flux.com/journal](http://www.e-flux.com/journal)

#### Flash Art

[www.flashartonline.com](http://www.flashartonline.com)

#### Frieze Art Journal

[www.frieze.com/magazine](http://www.frieze.com/magazine)

#### Irish Arts Review

[www.irishartsreview.com](http://www.irishartsreview.com)

#### Journal of Visual Culture

[www.sagepub.com/journals](http://www.sagepub.com/journals)

#### On-Curating

[www.on-curating.org](http://www.on-curating.org)

#### Modern Painters

[www.modernpainters.co.uk](http://www.modernpainters.co.uk)

#### Parkett

[www.parkettart.com](http://www.parkettart.com)

#### Printed Project

[www.visualartists.ie](http://www.visualartists.ie)

#### Springerin

[www.springerin.at](http://www.springerin.at)

#### The International Journal of Cultural Policy

[www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10286632.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/10286632.asp)

#### Third Text

[www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09528822.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/09528822.asp)

#### The Vacuum

[www.thevacuum.org.uk](http://www.thevacuum.org.uk)

#### The Visual Artists New Sheet

[www.visualartists.ie](http://www.visualartists.ie)

#### Variant

[www.variant.randomstate.org](http://www.variant.randomstate.org)

## Some exhibitions featuring drawing

### Motion Capture: Drawing and the Moving Image

Glucksman, Limerick, 2012.

### Other Drawing

Ormston House Gallery,  
Limerick, 2012

### On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century

Museum of Modern Art,  
New York, 2011

### The More I Draw - Drawing as a Concept for the World

Museum of Contemporary  
Art, Siegen, 2010

### The End of the Line - Attitudes in Drawing

Middlesbrough Institute  
of Modern Art, 2009

### Into Irish Drawing

Limerick City Gallery, 2009  
(touring show)

### How Artists Draw: Toward the Menil Drawing Institute and Study Center

Kimbell Art Center, Texas,  
2008

### Exploration: An Exhibition of Drawings Exploring Some Worlds

Highlanes Gallery, 2008

### Order Desire Light: an Exhibition of Contemporary Drawing

Irish Museum of Modern  
Art, 2008

### What is a Line?

Drawings from the  
Collection, Yale University,  
2007

## The Secret Theory of Drawing

Drawing Room, London and  
the Model Arts Centre and  
Niland Gallery, 2007

### Drawing Topologies

Museum of Modern Art,  
New York, 2007

### (C)Artography: Mapmaking as Artform

Crawford Art Gallery, Cork,  
2007

### Pleasures and Days

The LAB, 2007

### The Square Root of Drawing

Temple Bar Gallery and  
Studios, Dublin, 2006

### Drawing is a Verb; Drawing is a Noun

The Stone Gallery, 2006

### Getting on Mother's Nerves

Mother's Tankstation, 2006

### Lines of Enquiry: Thinking through Drawing

Kettles Yard, Cambridge,  
2006

### 3 X Abstraction - New Methods in Drawing

The Drawing Center, New  
York and the Irish Museum  
of Modern Art, 2006

### Drawing from The Modern

Museum of Modern Art,  
New York, 2005

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what is\_  
materials and methodologies

*'Perhaps the strength of drawing and its durability is that its moment of closure will also never arrive.'*

Brian Fay

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**What is Drawing?** is part of an information programme which aims to provide a general introduction to the materials and methodologies of contemporary art. What is Drawing? provides an overview of drawing and its role as medium and mode of documentation in contemporary arts practice. This is accompanied by an essay by **Brian Fay** titled *A continuous incompleteness*.

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