



# *STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS*





## A COSMOLOGY OF SELVES – DRAWING ACROSS TIME AND SPACE.

ARIANE KOEK

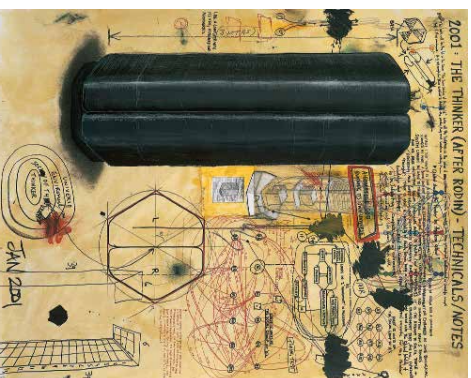
*"We walk the corridors, searching the shelves and rearranging them, looking for lines of meaning amid legions of cacophony and incoherence, reading the history of the past and our future, collecting our thoughts and collecting the thoughts of others, and every so often glimpsing mirrors, in which we may recognize creatures of the information."*

Jorge Luis Borges – *The Library of Babel* (1941)

The Studio Wall Drawings began as ephemera, jottings, Orders, Telephone numbers, Reminders, Calculations, Shopping lists. Ideas, All scribbled on a piece of paper that hung between the windows on a small wall in Tyson's first London studio. Doodles to be derided into art some later date. Then torn off the wall and piled up on the floor like Turkish carpets.

Today there are over 1,000 Studio Wall Drawings, all still in the same proportions as when he first began them – 117 x 126 cm – but so diverse in style and content that they might seem to be the work of different artists. On most days since 1997, Tyson has worked on a Studio Wall Drawing. It may be for just a few seconds and then it is complete, or it may be explored over several hours, days or months, building up layers of detail. What began as notes are now an essential part of his artistic practice: a space for fundamental research. He talks about the wall drawings as being his anchor and his meditation, a poetic space of refuge where he works things out – ideas, feelings, experiences and reactions to world events – with no expectation of an ending before he begins. The only expectation is that there is a process ahead, of indeterminate time, shape and form. Otherwise, it's just the white paper and him – full of potential.

There are four constant strands through this diverse body of work. First, there are drawings that focus on ideas and themes which he is currently preoccupied with, including lectures he has drawn out on paper while talking through a subject with a visitor to the studio. *An Improbability Lecture about Astrophysics with Glenn Brown* (1999) shows

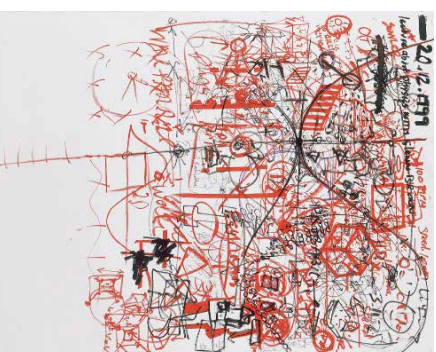


*The Thinker (After Rodin), 2001.* Mixed media on watercolour paper

[REVERENDS PAGE]  
"Turn Back Now: 20 Years of Studio Wall Drawings",  
exhibition at Hasting's Contemporary, UK, 2017

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*An Improbability Lecture about Astrophysics with Glenn Brown, 1999.* Mixed media on watercolour paper

*Drawing and Thinking, installation at the 2001 Venice Biennale, 2001*



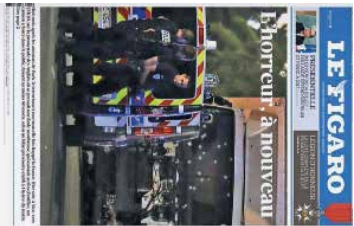
one of Tyson's key preoccupations with science. It is a densely layered piece, full of movement, with pencil scribbles and diagrams referring, for example, to the split-screen experiment of quantum mechanics and wave particle duality, all but hidden by the red and black painted lines, equations, diagrams and words. Nearly every mark in this drawing is touching or in contact with another – connected and entwined.

A second strand of drawings are direct technical plans for the structure of a new series or individual work Tyson has in progress. *Is Chess Exhausted?* (1999) shows variations on chess that could give more complexity to the game, which include adding extra squares to the edges of the chessboard, which would give the bishop more freedom. A cardboard version of this was made, which he used to play with the Swiss artist, Urs Fischer, with whom he shared a studio complex at the time. Meanwhile *Crno Pleno 2 NYC* (2004) is a drawing about the process of thinking through the physical act of painting. It led to the sculpture *Crno Pleno: A Deeper Mining of the Canal Veni* (2005), part of an exhibition which investigated causality.

Then there are the intensely emotional drawings which relate to his inner world, his feelings, state of health and personal circumstances. *The Passage of Time Is Perfumed with Your Presence* (2003, see p. 149) is obviously about an intimate relationship as the colours and title clearly indicate, although the central image of an industrial factory works against any simplistic romanticism,







Newspaper headlines relating to  
a) the 2016 Bastille Day Terror attack on the Promenade  
des Anglais, Nice  
by the death of singer Michael Jackson, June 2009, and  
c) the foot-and-mouth epidemic of 2001

while *Turn Back Now* (2001, see p. 137) shows a childhood fear and fascination with the concept of an infinite universe, with the warning 'Turn Back Now' written out like studs in the stars.

Finally, there is a strand which relates to current events happening outside the studio, whether they are sudden changes in the stock market, a scientific discovery, a disaster or some other newsworthy event.

A painting of a dilapidated Gothic house in the process of falling down, reminiscent of the Bates Motel in Hitchcock's film *Psycho*, is inscribed *Initiation to a Summer Ball at the Derivative Palace* (2008, see p. 147). It is an ironic comment on subprime mortgage securities and other financial derivatives, which did in fact eventually lead to the global financial crash in September of the same year.

*Chemical Hitchhiker About a Vehicle in Another World* (2002), depicting tracks in mud, is a reference to foot-and-mouth disease, which was ravaging the UK at the time, and the idea that the virus was dormant, waiting in the soil to be taken by foot or wheel into another field. Poetic and open-ended due to the framing by the carefully chosen words, this work, like the wall drawings as a whole, implicitly begs the question: why does history and the past have to be told only by journalists and through so-called facts? Isn't reality just as much formed by the unconscious, the mythical, the emotional and even psychotic, with the inner world and outer world informing existence and experience?

These four different strands are then eventually exhibited together, rescaled into large walls of drawings, shuffled, with no obvious chronological or thematic order. Seen together, these collections of texts and images represent a more complex, non-linear representation of what might constitute drawing in Tyson's practice: not simply preparatory sketches and initial ideas but a place where the inner and outer worlds can intertwine and may be given equal weight. Through such a network the artist seems to be implying that he himself may not be the most reliable narrator of his own artistic output, emerging as it does from something more interdependent, untraceable and potentially even deterministic.

What does unite all the studio drawings, however, apart from their uniform size and daily practice, is that they are each timed and dated in the artist's own hand, albeit using different calligraphy and typography every time. This practice of dating each piece indicates another important influence on Tyson – the Japanese conceptual artist, On Kawara (1932–2014). Known for works which dealt with the human experience of existing within a linear concept of time, his Date Paintings on monochromatic canvases of red, blue or grey, with white, systematically uniform inscriptions, were all painted in acrylic, simply depicting the date each painting was made. He made almost 3,000 of these paintings, using 8 different sizes, in 112 different cities over nearly 5 decades between 4 January 1966 and his death in 2014.

Tyson's Studio Wall Drawing, *Thinner / On Kawara* (2014, see p. 172), marks the artist's death and pays homage to him directly by painting it in two colours, mimicking On Kawara's own style, with its stark black background, and 29,771 days – the total number of days the artist had lived – painted in white. Like On Kawara's own,



*Immortalité des Angéles*, 2016. Emulsion on light prime on watercolour paper

Tyson's daily practice evokes the pathos of doing something every day because that activity will end one day, just like life itself. But Tyson's drawings are also meditations about time in a different way.

While On Kawara had a rigorous, mathematical way of looking at the self, as shown by the uniform, relentless non-changing and non-evolving format of his Date Paintings, Tyson's drawings are about the complexity and messiness of emotions of the self. It is a self which is constantly evolving and changing as expressed by the artist constantly changing formats, methods and styles. It is not rigorous in the On Kawara sense; instead, it is distributed, clumsy, broken and full of contradictions. At the same time, it is held inside a biological body and within the laws of physics. Equally, looking at the studio drawings chronologically defies any notion of observing the artist's linear progression in terms of style, content or form. They resist being viewed in a relational or developmental way, moving between myriad styles fluently and effortlessly – from abstraction to graphic cartoon, expressionist to impressionistic, to composite and diagrammatic, to naive but a few. Instead, the drawings are reflections on time as being multidimensional and replete with multiple experiences, like the self. But they link back to On Kawara in one important way: in the artist's own words, 'My work does not exist at the scale of a single drawing or painting. It exists like On Kawara's practice within the totality of it.'



*Man in the Looking Glass...*, 2009. Mixed media on watercolour paper

At around the same time as he was making Studio Wall Drawings, Tyson also worked by drawing directly on floorboards, abutments and chairs. These pieces disrupted the smoothness and neutrality of the prepared canvas or paper. They were drawn upon already existing and battered surfaces, replete with their own history, and embraced the entropy of each object on to which he made drawings and paintings – the knots, scratches and bumps contained in the wood itself. These marks of the passage of time became an integral part of the narrative imposed on them by the artist, and the pieces primarily focused on internal themes, such as exploring the Jungian world of myths, stories and archetypes. One of the floorboard drawings, *8 Dukes Meets The Centre of the Millennium* (1998, see p. 127), included a detailed complete map of the universe in time and space, showing how science is never far away in his work. This embracing of multiplicity and inconsistency of styles may be partly attributed to Tyson's own background and chaotic upbringing, so that his sense of self was always in flux, or it may be partly due to the artist's own relentless curiosity and his desire to explore which style of drawing, with its particular history, best acts as a provisional context for an idea. It may also be a deliberate and explicit rejection of the idea of the artist as a fixed brand, who can be easily identified and commodified, and valued by an art market.

Despite some of these apparent commercial challenges of the work, it was the London art dealer Anthony Reynolds who first

[OVERLEAF]  
Immolation of Studio Wall Drawings, *Iran, Love and Lust*, 2016.  
Mixed media on watercolour paper, 57 x 378 cm









suggested presenting an exhibition entirely focused the Studio Wall Drawings. Tyson had not even thought of them as artworks before this point – referring to them as simply ‘fast order ideas’. However, the subsequent exhibition at Reynolds’s Dering Street gallery in 2000 was a surprising commercial and critical success, and one year later, at the invitation of the curator Harald Szeemann, who was directing his edition of the Venice Biennale, this time under the theme *Platanus / Humanité*, Tyson was invited to exhibit. He presented an installation of eighty of his drawings alongside a sculpture he had been working on. The sculpture was Tyson’s take on Rodin’s famous work *The Thinker* – a 12-foot-high black column of computers named after Rodin’s work (see p. 17). The processors were programmed to work on a problem that would take an estimated 30,000 years to complete. Surrounding the column, which emitted a low-level electronic hum, were the constellations of Studio Wall Drawings, which by their physical arrangement suggested the gap between human creativity and technology. The arrangement also suggested that the drawings might be the result of projections from the hive-like mind of the column in the centre, and that they in turn might be influencing it. One of the drawings was a detailed plan of the column itself. It depicted the hexagonal tower of monitors, and suggested it housed an artificial-life programme that drove its own artificial universe but was unable to communicate with the outside world. Or could it?

The whole installation was a meditation on drawing in the age of information technology, and what it could mean. It added another layer to the thinking behind his earlier *Armada* machine by questioning further where does the impulse to create and make reside? What is more

important – the human hand that draws or the systems which may, or may not, have influence on the process? This piece, with its intense reflection on creativity, authorship, man and machine, anticipates many of the current discussions about artificial intelligence, social media, posting platforms such as Instagram and their role in art today.

Since Venice, the Studio Wall Drawings have gone on to have an extensive international exhibition life of their own. Many different reconfigurations and numbers of them have been exhibited together or separately in different permutations and locations – from Tate, Louisiana Museum and Centre Pompidou to the twenty-year survey show of drawings at Hastings Contemporary in the UK.

At the 2018 exhibition, *Entangle / Physics* and the *Artistic Imagination* at Blåmuseet in Umeå, Sweden, Tyson brought together sixty-four wall drawings from 1999 to 2017. The individual drawings came from different time periods and were put together associatively by the artist, to reflect the theme of entanglement. A figurative painting of flowers in a vase was juxtaposed with a painting of Stephen Hawking. A painting of a Helix Angel biker dominates the top right-hand corner of the installation. Part Dennis Hopper obituary, part portrait of the artist’s father, his Harley Davidson seems to be heading off into the centre of the collection of wall drawings, which at its heart contains the Andromeda spiral galaxy made out of nine separate pieces of paper, all painted with a toothbrush: *Between an Endless Wall and an Infinite Sleep* (2017). The circumference of a miniscule dot above the star in the central panel is a representation of how far our radio signals have travelled since radio was invented – nothing and everything. Different styles, approaches, subject matters collide on this wall of



*Tabletop Title no. 2: An Optical Metamorphosis for the Low and Banned, 1998.*  
Ink and graphite on fused tabletop, 800 × 215 cm

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*Your Absent Heart, 2005.* Mixed media on watercolour paper

sixty-four studio drawings, showing how in the human experience of existence, everything is intra-connected, entangled, and part of an endless process of reconfiguring and free association for both the artist and the viewer across time and space.

Each wall drawing deals with several different manifestations of the world, which could be discrete things in rigorous analysis, but in terms of human experience they’re collated into one temporal experience in one space. New constellations form new histories, which form new memories and new associations which form new selves. This theme of endless reconfigurations and revisiting time and space in different permutations also provides a piece like *A Night in a Billion* (2001, see p. 146). This enormous twelve-part work of stars has 960,000,000 ways of reconfiguring the parts, with the chances of setting up the same configuration more than once being roughly a billion to one. As the physicist Albert Einstein famously said when talking about the theory of general relativity, there are no fixed points in spacetime.

What place does a beginning and end have in our understanding of the world, let alone in looking at Tyson’s drawings and their relationship to his entire body of work? Instead of inventing any connection is ‘rhizomic’, to use the term adopted by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari. It denotes an organic network of connections which defy linear logic and ontology, and which instead continue to generate further connections beyond the moment of making. They demonstrate the associative nature of the workings of the human brain, making and forming new rhizomes in a way which is not teleological, but which they describe as rhizomic and thus transdimensional: ‘The rhizome is reducible neither to the One nor the multiple...it is comprised not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion.’ Indeed, the concept of the rhizome, which Deleuze and Guattari introduced in their highly influential book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), may provide a crucial key to understanding and describing Tyson’s wall drawings: how they come into being and how they might be read and thought of as a body of work together and apart.

However, despite the rhizomic nature of the vast range of subject matters and techniques of the wall drawings, there is still always the relentless investigation into structures, systems and models to explain reality. This is a common theme in Tyson’s work as a whole. The most consistent place he searches for these structures and models is in the field of science.

Tyson studies science intensely, using the ideas he finds to initialize artistic investigations. Thus, his art becomes like visual thought experiments, delving into the philosophy behind the science and connecting the questions it raises with lived experience.

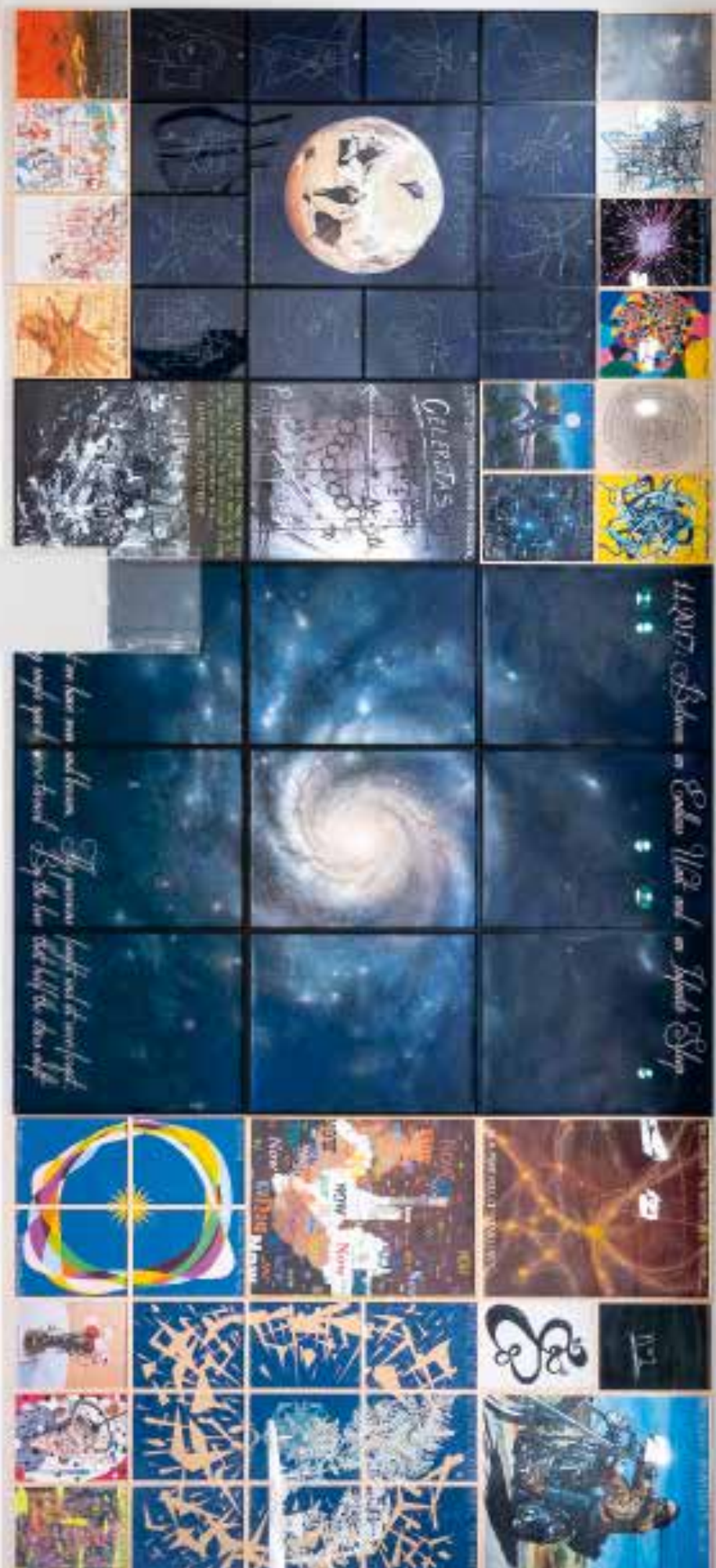
Take for example the wall drawing *We Are Destined to Collide* (2012, see pp. 132–3). This is obviously a reference to particle physics, the Large Hadron Collider at CERN (Conseil Européen pour la Recherche Nucléaire) outside Geneva, Switzerland, and the discovery there on that date of the Higgs boson – the particle which gives matter mass. The piece also, by its choice of words, which are a crucial and consistent element in all Tyson’s wall drawings, links the emotional with science – it is as much about particles as it hears. This piece has

[OVERLEAF]  
Installation of Studio Wall Drawings at ‘Entangle / Physics and the Artistic Imagination’, exhibition at the Blåmuseet, Umeå, Sweden, 2018, 479 × 1071 cm

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*Grand Pyram Sculpture: A Deeper Mining of the Grand Vain*, 2005.  
GCR: barter, rubber, plastic, large steel, WDK: ceramic tiles, video, straw, concrete, concrete, plastic  
bracket, 100 x 100 x 120 cm

been exhibited with the sculpture, *Field of Heaven* (2017, see p. 134), a polished stainless steel ball with real meteorites indented into its surface, thus indicating how both pieces are about the multitude of events. When Tyson talks about the sculpture he could just as easily be talking about the wall drawing:

What were the odds at some point in the distant past, when these chunks of matter were on their particular trajectories through outer space, that they would all end up together here in this piece of world? What were the attractive forces that brought them together? Initially it was gravity of course, but then it was art and ideas, in other words our creative will is also a force of sorts acting upon the universe as much as the laws of physics.

*GRR aboriginal Arts Dismant from Long Ago* (2008) is a four-panel piece which represents a supernova explosion, which occurred 7.5 billion years ago – the furthest human beings to date have been able to look back in time. The founding singularity of the drawing could arguably be the original date when this explosive emission of energy happened, which later in the more recent present led to the drawing itself.

Science as a cultural system of knowledge is food for Tyson's art and curiosity – the two go hand-in-hand. His interest in the structure

of things dates from his childhood, when aged ten he saw the film *Powers of Ten* (1998, released in 1977) by the designers Charles and Ray Eames, which transports the viewer from the everyday scale, lying on a picnic rug, to the outskirts of the known universe. He was also among the first generation of children who learnt how to build computers from scratch: it was the beginning of the popular information age. Before he was ten, his friend at junior school showed him a computer and how it worked, including programming it:

It was an instant love affair and it really altered my thinking about thinking. It really changed what I thought, thought, actually was and what an idea was. The concept that you could take things which were not instantly recognisable as mathematical in nature and you could reduce them down into computable bits in a digital format – that really blew my mind.

Thus, unsurprisingly, Tyson's interest in science centres also very strongly on numbers and mathematics, with some of his wall drawings being fully mathematical. *Pascal's Tower of Light* (2008, see p. 131) is dominated by one of the most famous patterns in mathematics – the 17th-century French mathematician Blaise Pascal's triangle, which is a physical representation of a continuum. It is a never-ending equilateral



*The Parable of the Shed and the Orchard...*, 2005. Mixed media on watercolorboard paper



*8 Ducks Meets, The Centre of the Multiverse*, 1998. Ink and marker on watercolorboard, 900 x 965 cm

triangle of numbers that follows a rule of adding the two numbers above to get the number. The drawing also shows other mathematical sequences hidden within the set, such as the Fibonacci sequence. This piece was a working drawing for a possible outdoor commission. Tyson wanted to build a pyramid which oscillated dependent on modular arithmetic. The piece is layered with equations, numbers, dimensions and forms, and is a direct homage to the orthography of mathematics.

*And So My River Flows* (2008, see p. 182) again crosses over the mathematical with the emotional. A fluid dynamics equation represents someone who has died. The symbols of the equations are transformed into ones which link directly with the human:  $Q$  = the vector of conserved emotion and  $V$  = the volume of the heart. It also shows Tyson's belief that mathematics can be emotional, subjectively speaking – that it is all part of the pattern of being human. *The Recursive Application of Infinity to Infinite Systems (The Halting Problem and Chaitin's Super Q)* (2001), a work in blacks and blues, is an intense series of workings out of an issue in computer theory: halting is a problem of determining from a description of an arbitrary computer program and an input, whether the program will finish running or continue to run forever. It includes overlaid depictions of planes and quantum fields, a dock symbolizing linear time engaging with the problem of infinity, and is replete with equations.

Tyson says:

Mathematics is like a hurdle but some things just need to be expressed mathematically to be understood, unfortunately, they just don't yield to simple visual analogies. However, when eventually you get over that hurdle, there is something so beautiful about it which makes you smile. Mathematics can bring one peace too. I have had various mental health challenges in my life, been hospitalized and given various diagnoses, etc., but despite the doctor's insistence have managed to stay drug free. I find mathematics to be very therapeutic – it has potential answers, unlike everything else in life. It has axioms, there are some rules of inference, and theorems – and sometimes you can solve things, albeit with great difficulty. Mathematics is the language of nature just as beautiful as any abstract painting, often more so. I seem to have an intuition, which on occasion can see these answers, although I am far from being a mathematician, I always naturally solved puzzles.

But as he makes clear, mathematics and the understanding of science do not necessarily come easily to him, even if he does naturally solve puzzles. He is an autodidact, having left school to make submarines in the shipyards of Barrow-in-Furness.

Because of his neediness and love of science and technology, Tyson has often been branded as the banyan one of the artists of his generation: the infamous Young British Artists, who were committed to the shock of the new – their work focusing on the power of sexuality, materialism and mortality to trigger emotions and responses from the viewer. Tyson's work did not quite fit in. He was more interested in the way that we make sense of the world as the observer and the observed, the viewer and the artist, and the ways in which we use logic, counterintuition and intuition to make these discoveries. In essence, we are all in this artistic experiment together, discovering

[OVERLEAF]  
Installation of Studio Wall Drawings, Turner Prize Exhibition, Tate Gallery, London, 2002. Freepound sculpture: *Tinkling Title: A Tinkling Cane from the Chemist's Menu*, 2001









who and what we are in the act of looking – the artist included – and science is part of understanding this field of perception. Due to this engagement with the science of his day, when he won the Turner Prize in 2003 the newspaper headlines were typically dismissive. The *Guardian*, for instance, read: the wacky boffin of art takes Turner prize; another. Artists wins the Turner Prize with dandy diagrams.

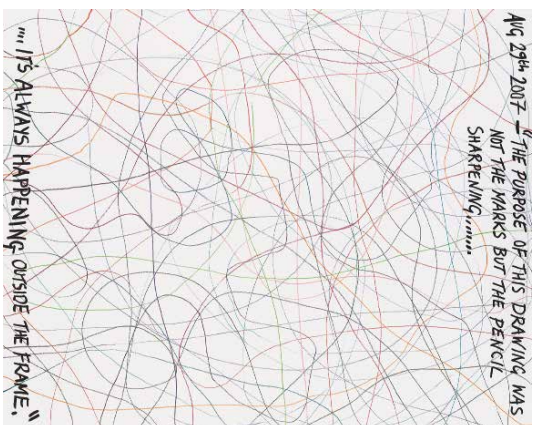
Contemporary art, including art history, has had a very uneasy relationship with science, which finally in the 21st century is beginning to change. This change is happening because contemporary artists referencing science in their work are now rising in popularity and are proliferating. This is partly due to the influence of art-world figures such as Olafur Eliasson, with his establishment of the interdisciplinary Institute for Experimental (Institute for Spatial Experiments) in Berlin and the popularity of works such as the spectacular *The Weather Project* shown at Tate Modern in 2003–4, which is openly engaged with physics in particular.

It is also partly due to the proliferation since the 2000s of arts/science institutions such as the Science Gallery International network and artist residency programmes being created inside science institutions, such as Arts at CERN, for contemporary art curators. The approach of Arts at CERN, for the first five years after the programme was initiated in 2010, used science as the jumping-off point for the imagination and was partly inspired by Tyson's own practice.

From the 2000s, the increased acceptance of and call for the very interdisciplinary which Tyson's Studio Wall Drawings and his work as a whole have always embraced, long before it became fashionable, have been driven by the urgent need in the 21st century to find inventive solutions to the immense global challenges the world faces, including climate change. Working across the arts and sciences is seen as a way of encouraging innovation and new thinking. All these factors together are leading finally to contemporary art beginning to welcome artists, including painters, who engage with and even directly reference science, whereas before they were frequently dismissed as geeks, too reductive, too scientific or simply uninspired.

This shows a common aspect in much of Tyson's artistic career and work. Some of his work uncannily often anticipates cultural shifts before they have happened quite by chance: whether it's Armadillo, which was effectively an algorithmic machine with a rudimentary search engine, and which predated how artificial intelligence is now actively participating in the art market, or the Studio Wall Drawings, which predate Instagram, in which individuals post on their 'wall' a picture and their narrative of what they personally feel when they see that sunset or what they think about Donald Trump.

The uncanniness could be put down to that extra dimension which becomes present in the very act of drawing, painting and creativity – the imagination. The imagination takes the artist beyond here and now, and takes the artist further across time and space. Tyson calls the imagination 'the greatest gift'. There is also a mystical side of Tyson's practice, too, in which he describes his love of drawing and painting happening in a mystical way which is often missed out in an appreciation and understanding of his work. There is an almost zen-like aspect to the way he describes this, combining the transcendental



*Pencil Shaking*, 2007. Mixed media on watercolour paper

quality of the practice of drawing and painting with the philosophical and scientific concept of emergence:

I would align myself more with the esoteric, mystic idea that art emerges. It is emergent. You completely submit to the idea that you cannot have any real control. You want to be always on the edge between control and chaos, where we're reading the image as we are making the image – that's where the creative edge is, where fluency begins and where everything comes into being.

Equally, what is often fatally missed by the dismissal of Tyson's exploration of science and technology is that, by including and combining them with the rough and tumble of emotions and experiences of the world, he is showing that there are simply no limits to what influences our lives or to where an artist can find influences. It is all part of the complexity and poetry of human experience.

*The Apex of Creation* (2016) shows some of the complex influences on any practice. Its inscription suggests that drawing is the ultimate creative act, as does the pyramid of painted rocks – its shape being symbolic of timelessness. Each rock with its own shadow is painted at the point of the separate triangles which together form the whole mathematical structure and each has a subject heading with poetry at the apex, showing the importance of words, and on the base of the triangle ontology, cosmology, geology and biology. Each builds on the other to form the whole. This piece hints at being another potential guide to understanding the Studio Wall Drawings, and the different influences which sustain and create them. However, the fact that the title, the headings and the structure are all written and drawn in pencil on a painted surface suggests that the headings

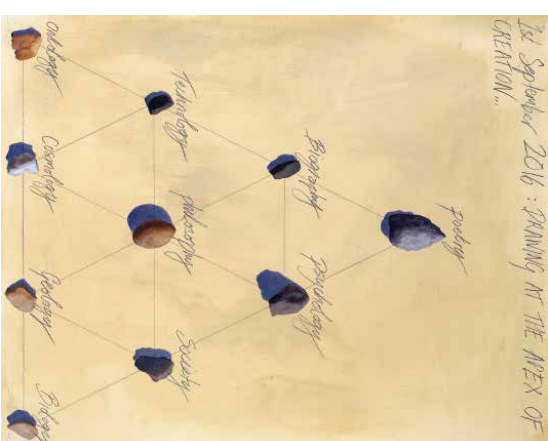


might be temporary – they are ready to be rubbed out at any time and replaced.

Another drawing, *Pencil Shaking* (2007), hints that there is much more to drawing than meets the eye. It cannot be taken on face value, and what is happening outside the frame is just as important, if not more so. Without the outside, the drawing inside the frame would not happen. The observable is a limited field of perception.

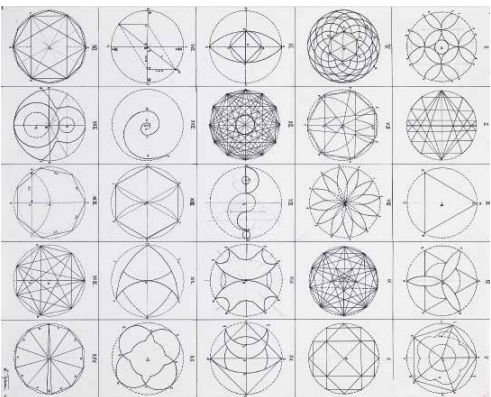
Thus, in subject matter and form, both these Studio Wall Drawings hint at the essential quality of drawing which gives it power: its liminality. It is on the edge of the fluid and the fixed, the formed and unformed, because it is an artistic method, which privileges the process over any necessarily predetermined, final result. A drawing always holds the promise of exceeding itself – that there are infinite possibilities beyond this drawing that it will transform or metamorphose, maybe even into something entirely different. It is a provisional stopping place – an artistic process which is in transit. In art historical terms, drawing was traditionally assigned a preliminary role in the production process: it was conceived of as both fundamental and subsidiary to an artist's major 'work', often withheld from public viewing in favour of the 'finished' painting or sculpture. Yet the preparatory, private aspects of drawing had also led to its fetishization – as supposedly the most direct, intimate and revelatory form of artistic expression.

But since the 1970s, drawing has become the forefront of international artistic practice, as the breakdown between disciplines has created what the influential art critic Rosalind Krauss calls an 'expanded field' or 'post medium condition'. Drawing has moved









Geometric Circle, 2020. Pencil and ink on watercolour paper



Field of Heaven, 2017. Mixed media on watercolour paper

away from its original status as something provisional and preparatory, to become a medium with its own status, with artists expanding the boundaries of its methods, and what it can mean and do. After all, for example, a painting, a sculpture and a photograph can never be a drawing, but a drawing can be a painting and even to a certain extent a sculpture and a photograph, so it always has the possibility of embracing other art forms by virtue of its exploratory process and provisional status. The exhibition 'Pushing Paper: Contemporary Drawing from 1970 to Now' at the British Museum in 2019 celebrated this development, dividing the exhibition into themes which different artists used: drawings to explore Systems and Process, Identity, Place and Space, Time and Memory, and Power and Process. Tyson's Studio Wall Drawings cover and explore all these themes, and the limitless questions they seem to raise about existence.

The combination of carefully chosen words with the visuals together create a poetic resonance which can go beyond the artist's intention and context. For example, *Your Absent Heart* (2009, see p. 123) is full of word and visual play. The fence depicted in the drawing has obviously been broken into at different points, with some of the chain links showing repairs. Is the heart abstracted by the owner of the heart or is it the observer who views it as abstract? The colours also suggest promise. *Down with Gravity...* (2018, see p. 193) is wordplay on gravity meaning seriousness as well as the fundamental force of the same name. The words form a joke around the nature of law itself, both political and natural laws. Or they may also hint that gravity, as a physical force, is the one which least deserves public recognition because it is the one about which in physics the least is actually known; it is the weakest of all the forces. Both drawings also display Tyson's humour, which runs like a thread throughout his work too.

What is key to all the drawings is that the reading of the words doesn't necessarily yield to rational interpretation, but they contextualize a drawing, limiting the infinite reasons for its execution. Then the viewer comes with their own experiences to interpret the piece, arguing for or against the correct(s) the words suggest. Thus, the drawings may be read and looked at as a visual poem – showing how the complexity of the human narrative can never be ultimately pinned down, but always exceeds its own notation and marks. Moreover, there is no defined order of when the words are put down in the drawings: sometimes the drawing comes first, and the text later – like in the case of *Section of an Infinite Dam Holding Back the Terrible Weight of the Abyss* (2000). The original top half of the painting was scribbled out with black, and then the artist responded to what he had done with the words. Sometimes the text is first, and the drawing later. What is consistent is that the drawings are open to manifold interpretations and possibilities, which the words accentuate due to a poetic intention and love of the possibilities of language.

Tyson's Studio Wall Drawings are about the possibilities of drawing from a thematic, stylistic and contextual perspective. No style or subject matter is out of bounds. The whole point is to challenge, explore and discover, and the work exposes and celebrates drawing as form and formlessness, start and completion. In fact, drawing's inherent liminality as an art form is perfect for an artist who enjoys the creative edge, and it is why the Studio Wall Drawings are also

such a key aspect of his artistic practice. They are the space where he experiments and visualizes, reflecting drawings' nimble ability to shift from the microcosm to the macrocosm, and to move from the particular to the bigger picture. Nevertheless, despite the prodigious accomplishment of the Studio Wall Drawings and their comprehensive exploration of inner and outer worlds, Tyson still feels he has more to achieve and is looking beyond the boundaries of his own current practice:

I can go for a walk, thinking about some of the extraordinary phenomena I have been reading about and I will suddenly find myself rearing up at the resolution of the world, looking at the individual blades of grass and the unimaginable causal network of forces that brought everything into being in this moment. And

I mean properly rearing up by the way. I would love to make a piece of work that managed to communicate even a little of that extraordinary sensation. I feel I have yet to achieve it.

This need to express the wonder of the world points clearly to what is at the heart of all his work: an intense sense of awe at the sheer complexity and mystery of life. As he says, it's why he gets up in the morning and does what he does. Makes art.



Take this Coat of Sunlight, 2015. Mixed media on watercolour paper







*Turn Back Now*, 2001. Acrylic on watercolour paper

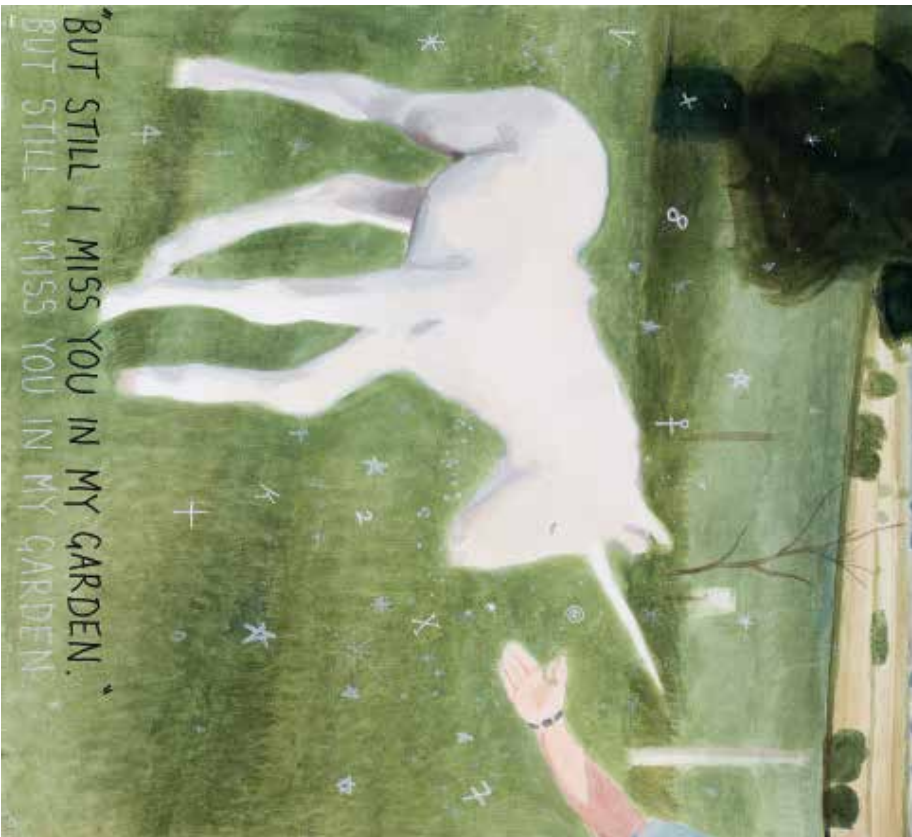
*Landed Out of Eden*, installed in the exhibition *Walking in My Mind*, Hayward Gallery, London, 2009. Mixed media on watercolour paper, 471 x 885 cm







18<sup>th</sup> SEPT 15 - 18<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2016 : "OF COURSE I  
KNOW/ THAT YOU DON'T EXIST..."



*Of Course I Know...*, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper

16<sup>th</sup> MAY 16 : THE SUN WAS SO BRIGHT...  
... THAT WE COULDN'T SEE THE STARS.



*The Sun Casts a Shadow*, 2016. Acrylic on watercolour paper

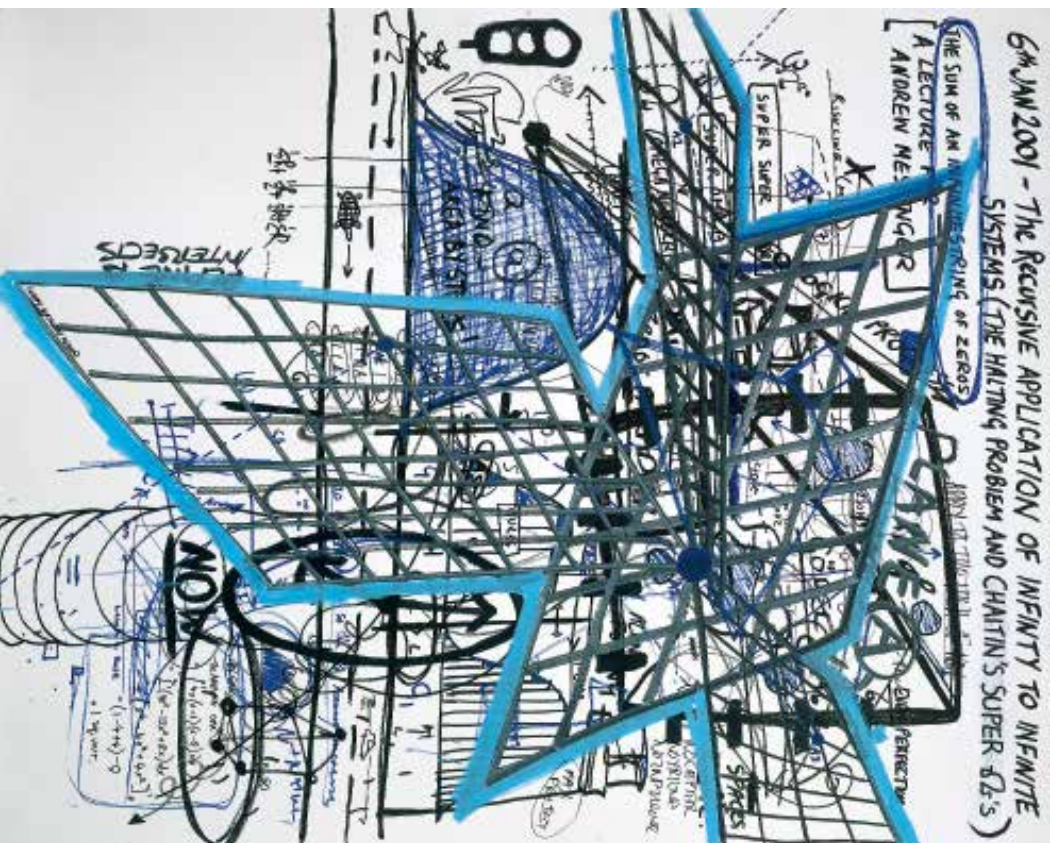
140

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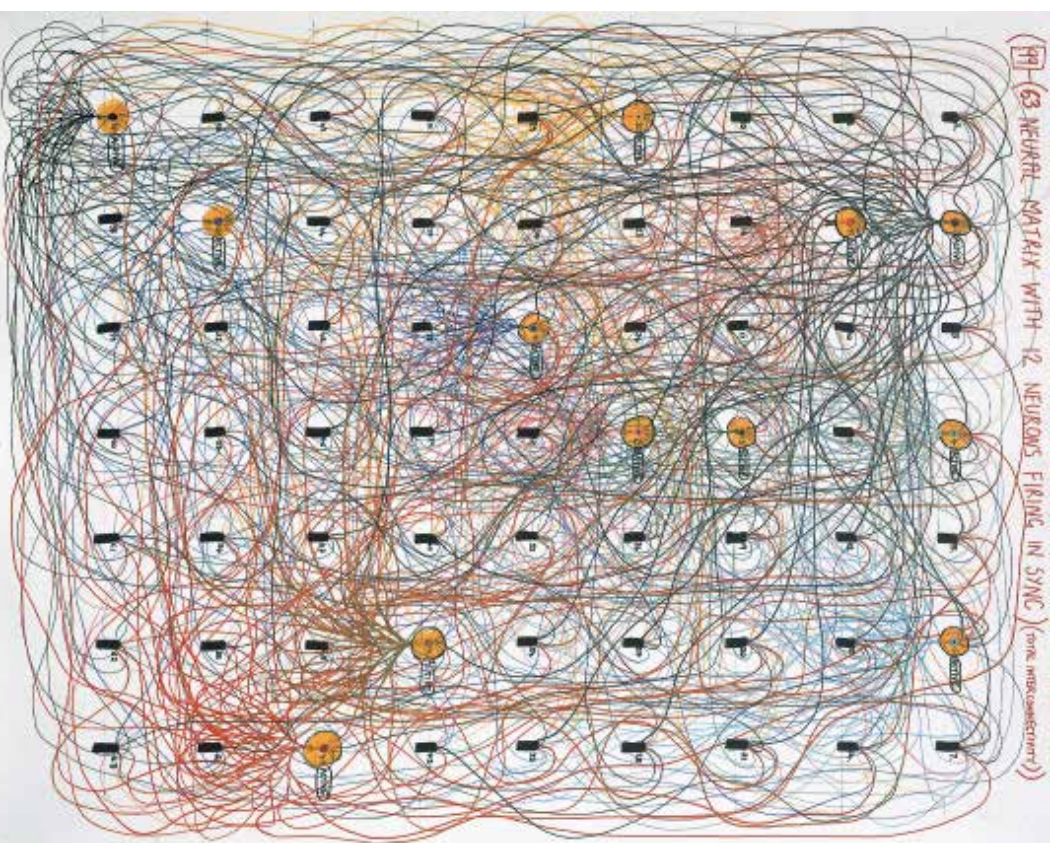




Super Omega, 2015. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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Neural Matrix, 1998. Mixed media on watercolour paper

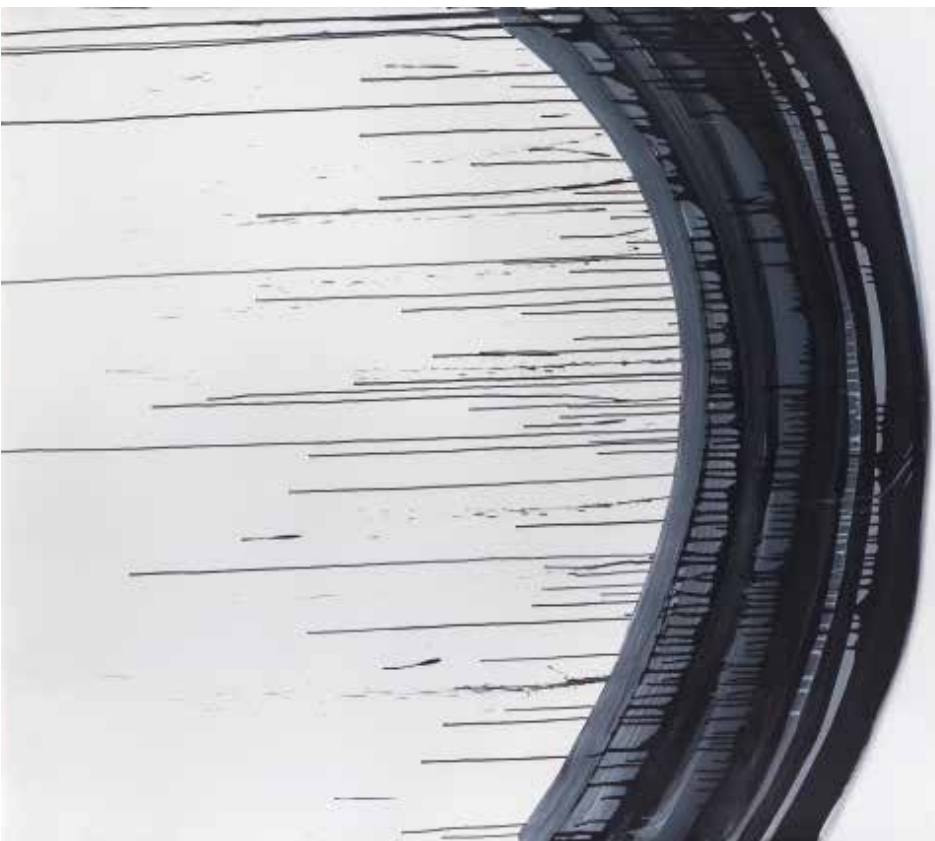
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STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS





13<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2013: BLACK RAINBOWS...



*Black Rainbows...*, 2013. Mixed media on watercolour paper

4<sup>th</sup> JULY 2008 – INVITED TO A SUMMER BALL AT THE...  
DERIVATIVES PALACE ...

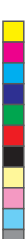


*Invitation to a Summer Ball*, 2008. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Globe of Shit*, 2005. Mixed media on watercolour paper

[OPPOSITE]  
*Geno Pryor Sculpture: Globe of Shit*, 2005.  
Illuminated globe, mouse, scavengers, glue and brown paint, 151 x 151 x 151 cm







*A Mind Full of Starlings*, 2008. Mixed media on watercolour paper



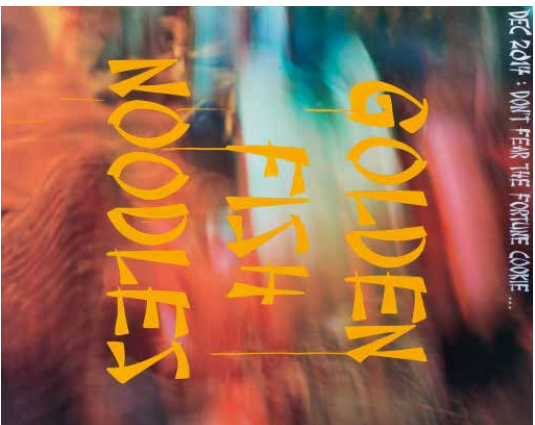
*The Banker's Draught*, 2008. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*The Steel Mosquito*, 2004. Acrylic on watercolour paper



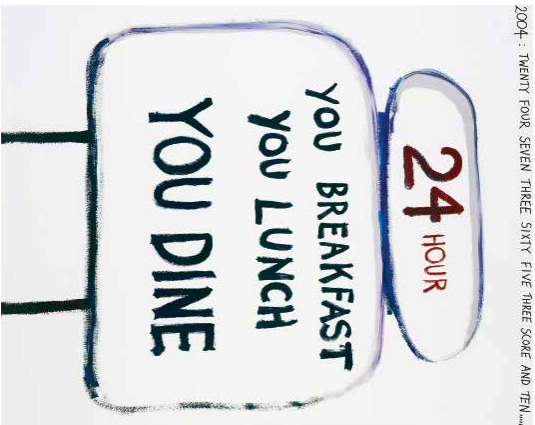
*Writing on an Infinite Cellular Blanket (Colour Version)*, 1999. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Golden Fish Noodles*, 2014. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*The Passage of Time Is Performed with Your Presence*, 2003. Mixed media on watercolour paper



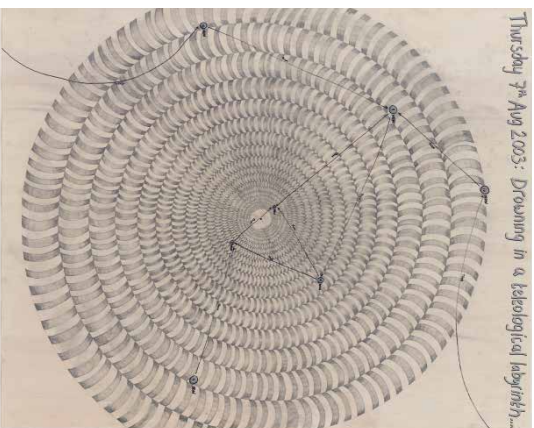
*A Day in the Life*, 2004. Acrylic on watercolour paper



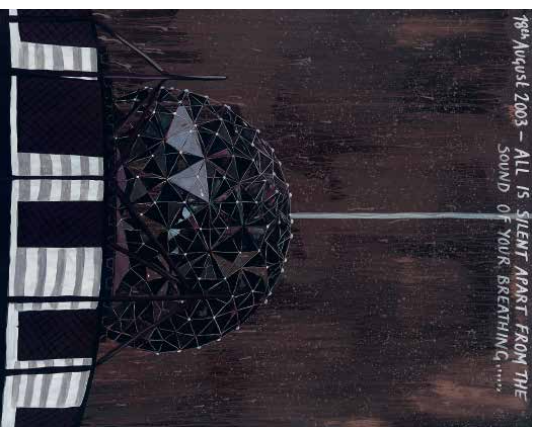
*The God of Orgasm*, 2007. Mixed media on watercolour paper







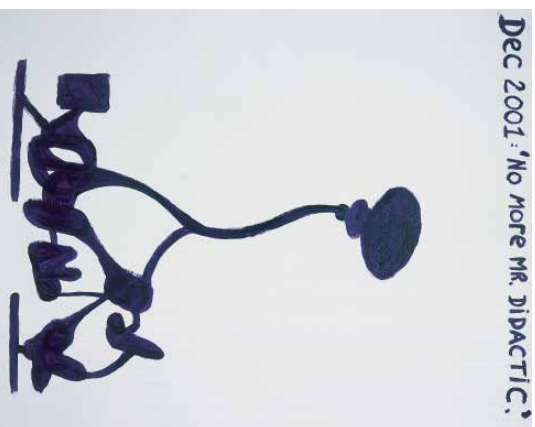
*Artistic Drawing*, 2003. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*All Is Silent... From The Breath-Sphere*, 2003. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*A Plinth for a Supermoon...*, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*No More Mr Didactic*, 2002. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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*The 41 Famous Flames...*, 2010. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Down with Gravity...*, 2018. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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*The Restaurant Just Closed for Good*, 2015. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Surfer (Indian Summer)*, 2009. Mixed media on watercolour paper







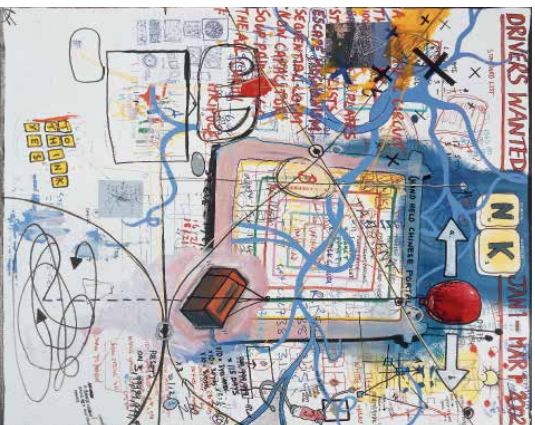
*Magnolia (Brighton)*, 2010. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Helge Fund Manager*, 2007. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*On a Train to Cardiff*, 2016. Acrylic and ink on watercolour paper



*Drivers Wanted*, 2002. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*An Infinite Plane*, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*All Aboard...*, 2005. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Contemporary Greetings... Lonely & Looking for Love*, 2007. Mixed media on watercolour paper



*Femine Greetings from the Ternites*, 2000. Mixed media on watercolour paper







Donald Dreaming about Being Real, 2015. Mixed media on watercolour paper



Contemporary Grotesque (Looking for Love in a Time of Self-Hate), 2007. Mixed media on watercolour paper



A New Sign Is Cracking, 2002. Mixed media on watercolour paper



Miracle at the Conservationists, 2002. Mixed media on watercolour paper



Flag in the Darkness, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper



Summoning the Inertia of Desire (Gross Photo), 2005. Mixed media on watercolour paper



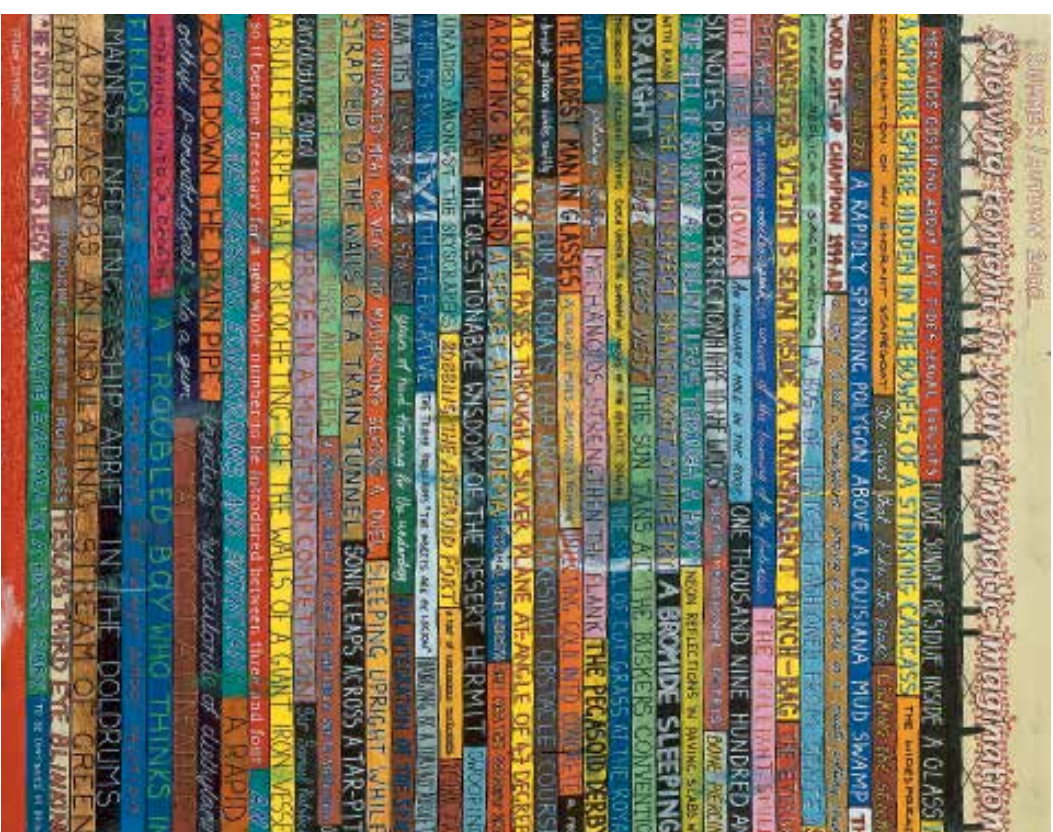
A TUB OF PAINT THAT WILL NEVER THAW Bitter Chocolate Sorbet, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper



Contemporary Grotesque - Looking for Love amongst the Crows, 2007. Mixed media on watercolour paper







Cinematic Imaginative, 2002. Mixed media on watercolor paper

Conceptual  
Cinematic Imaginative (If You Know What I Had to Do to Get Here, 2005,  
Acrylic and ink on a plywood panel and tree stump, 750 x 59 x 59 cm)





## 20.05.09 - A BLIND MAN ON THE BEACH .....

I do have visual memories of the sea. I remember the sparkle on its surface. I was so vision dominated back then. I believed the light, I hadn't yet learned to feel it, to even hear it. It Awakes me now how much the sighted fear blindness, as I once did.....  
So I sit here listening to the sea brush the shoreline. I used to see the waves coming in and out while now I hear the wave emerge in the far left field and travel across the shore to the right field before fading again. All things emerge and fade to me. There are no objects only events. Behind me people come and go along the promenade, joggers and roller-skaters but not many. More like the distribution of stars in space. Now the played plastic wheels of a push-chair, a milky gurgle and the bitty chatter of 2 mums... and now they are gone. Some rattling jewellery "How are you?" on a cell-phone, insincere (if I can hear it so can the person on the other end.) The sunshine on my face - my face upon the sun. Only since losing my sight did I realise it doesn't have an edge. It just weakens with distance... first matter, then heat and eventually light radiating out in an infinite sphere across the universe. The after-taste of my coffee lingers in a comfortable hollow between tongue and the roof of my mouth. This affects the smell of the salty pebbles below. I feel the upheat, I no longer rely on how it affects my vision of a distant horizon to tell me its there. I feel it directly. I feel it radiating up from the stones. I hear it. A Fluttering Flagpole, a screeching Seagull. The sound-waves arching around the relaxed form of my body-sat here in the sun. A Blind man indeed....

*A Blind Man on a Beach, 2009. Typiron pen and acrylic on watercolour paper*

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## FEB 2009 - THIS PERSISTENT LUMP IN YOUR SEA OF TEARS...



*The Persistent Lump, 2009. Acrylic on watercolour paper*

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STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS

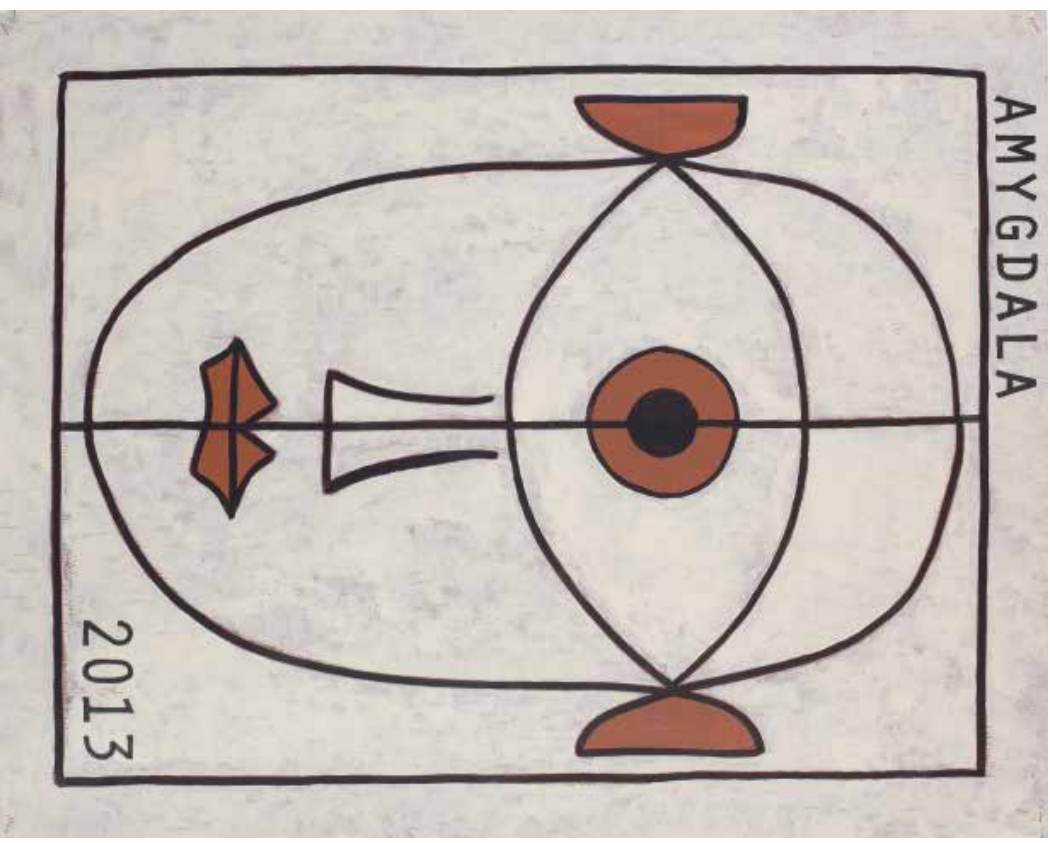




*Fist of Flowers*, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS

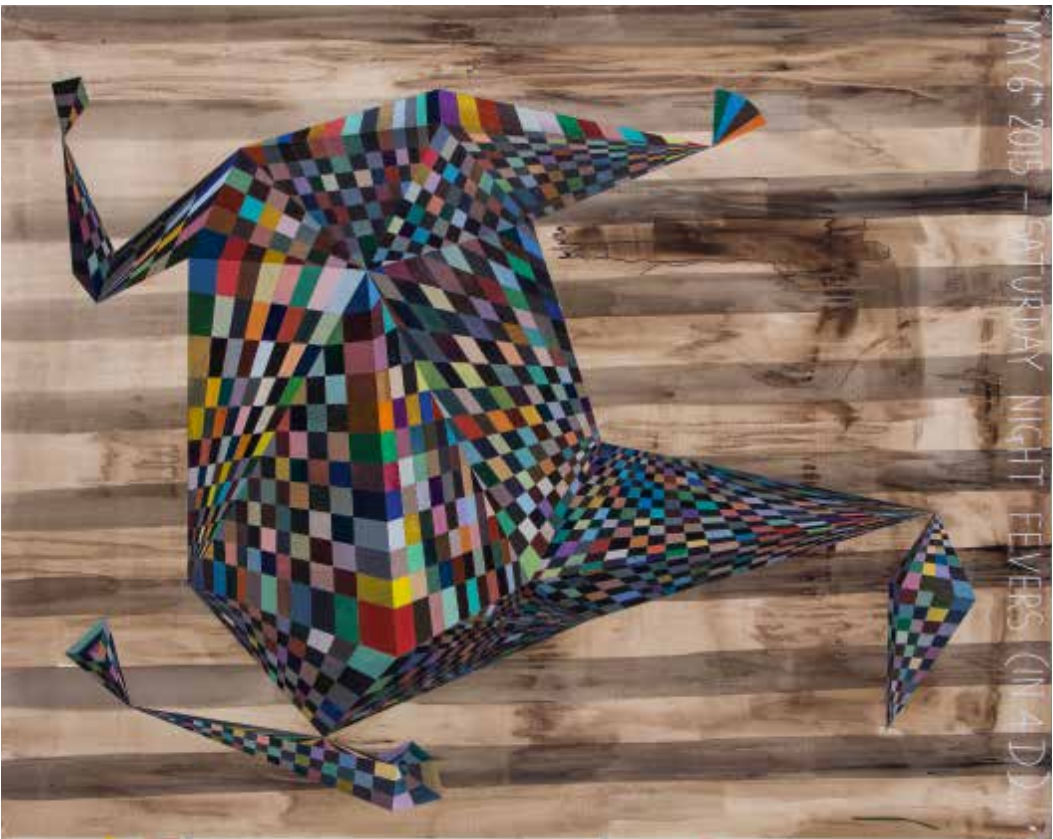


*Amygdala*, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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*Saturday Night Frenz, 2015. Mixed media on watercolor paper*

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*Twelve Stripes... 2016. Mixed media on watercolor paper*

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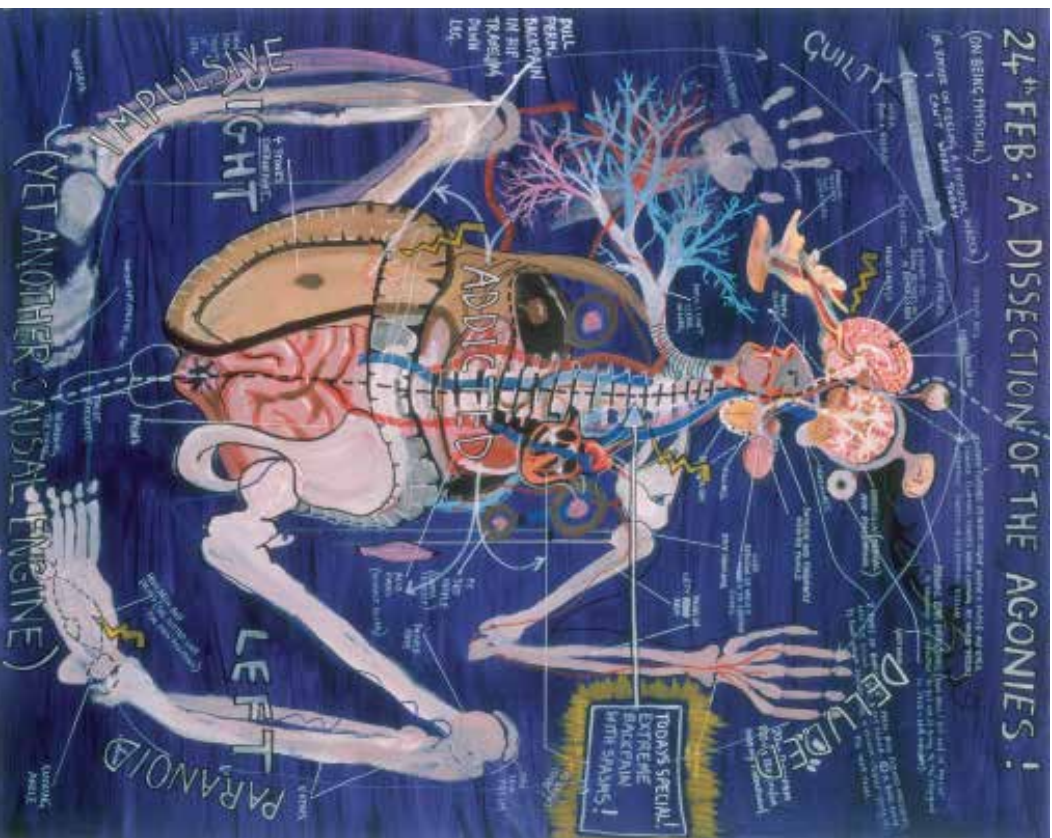
*Martinis, 2016. Pencil and ink on watercolor paper*



*The Devil Hunt Lady, 2013. Acrylic on watercolor paper*



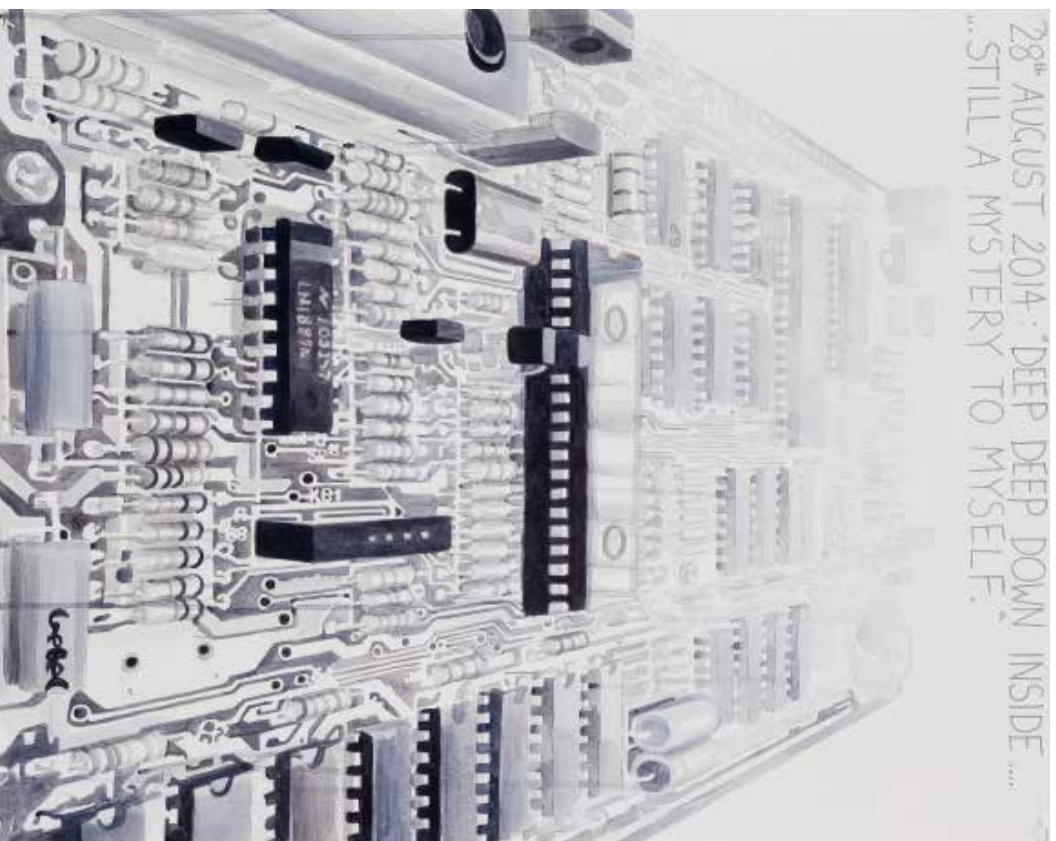
3 Heads... 2018. Acrylic and charcoal on window paper



A Dissection of the Agonies, 2012. Mixed media on window paper

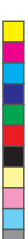


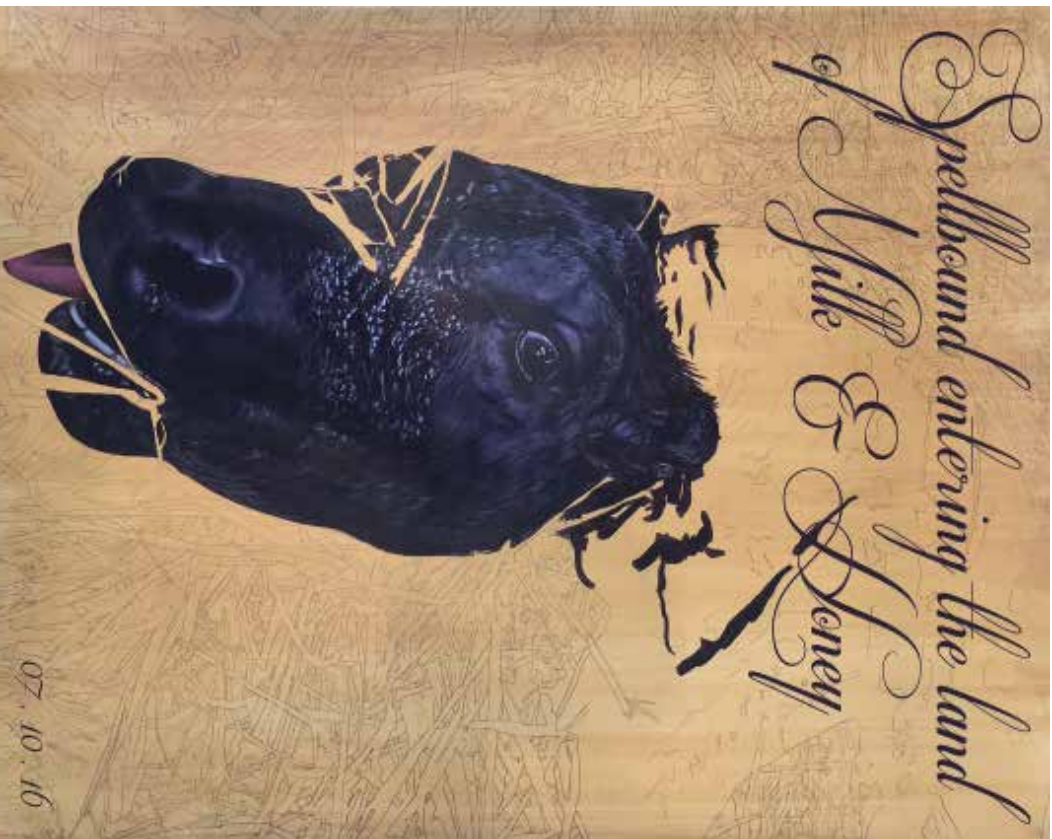




*Deep Deep Down Inside... 2014. Mixed media on watercolor paper*

*A Mystery to Myself (Motherboard), 2009, installed at David Raley Gallery, Copenhagen, in 2014. Mixed media sculpture, 10 x 101.5 x 186.5 cm* [horizontal]





Spillbound, 2016. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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Roast Dinners, 2014. Acrylic on watercolour paper

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STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS

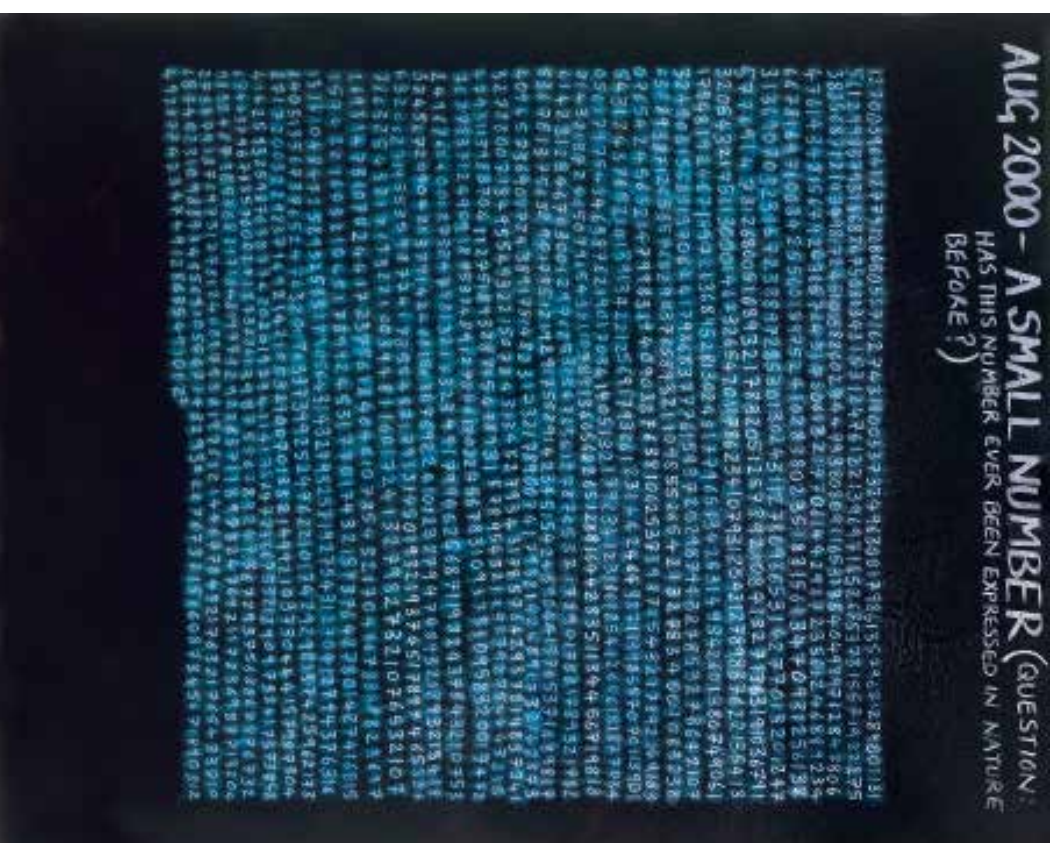




KT\_JAV, 2015. *Last Days on Mount Olympus...*, 2015. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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KT\_JAV, 2000. *Small Numbers*, 2000. Mixed media on watercolour paper

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STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS

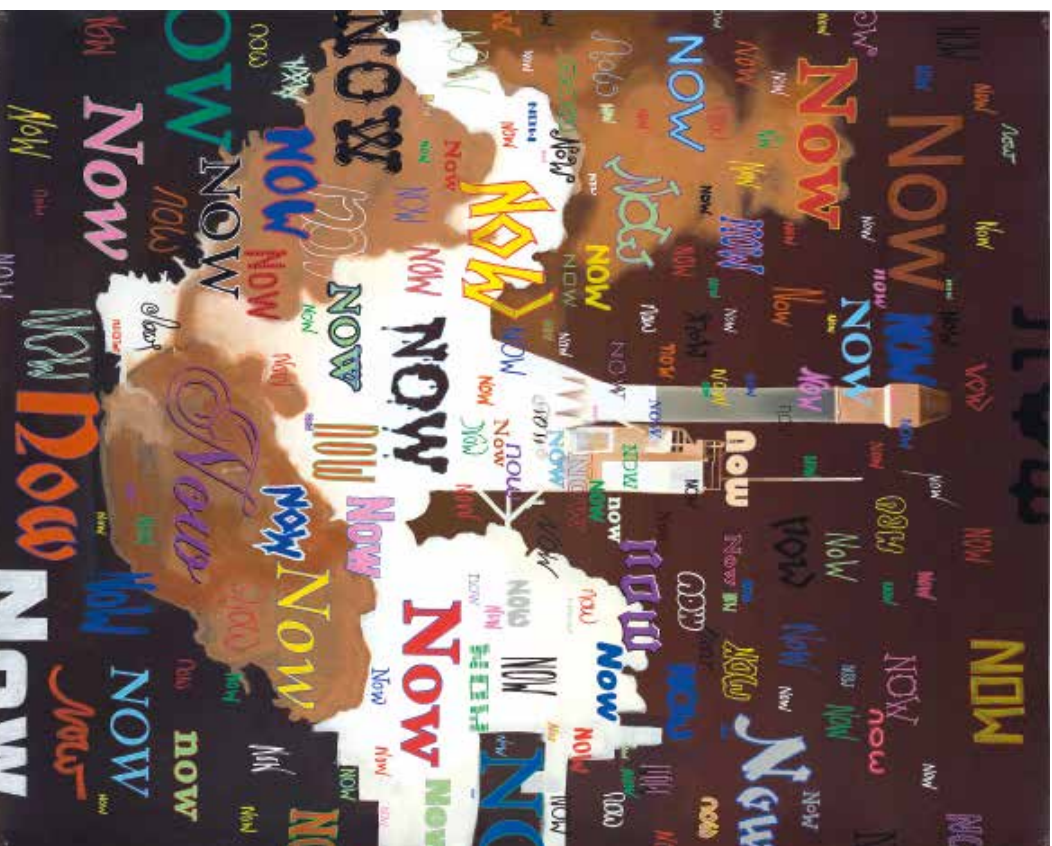


*Just Wingin' It (With a Little Gravity) ... 2009. Mixed media on watercolor paper*



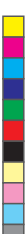
*Entropy Painting ... 2011. Mixed media on watercolor paper*





*Grant Osborn is Now*, 2002. Mixed media on watercolor paper

[opposite]  
*Now Caption*, installed at Tate Britain, London, 2002.  
Framed mirror, digital source, microprocessors and videoised drawing, 144 x 24 x 6 cm

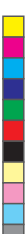




*Tribune / Sol LeWitt, 2007. Graphite and acrylic on watercolor paper*

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*Tribune / Oh Kwanin, 2004. Graphite and acrylic on watercolor paper*

[OVERLAP]  
*A New York Thing, 2005.*

Mixed media on three watercolor papers, 17 x 17 cm

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STUDIO WALL DRAWINGS





16 NOV 2015 : NEW YORK STORM WARNING 5...

### Late Edition

Today, plenty of sunshines, breezy, not measurably mild day, high of 61. Tonight, partly cloudy, chilly, low of 42. Tomorrow, sunny, cooler, high of 51. Weather map, Page A18.

\$2.50

# MYRIA ON PARIS

HOLLANDE'S VOW





And So My River Flows, 2008. Acrylic, ink, and charcoal on watercolor paper



And They Fell About, 2009. Acrylic on watercolor paper





