

Article

Passing Though: A drawing-score project

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Abstract: *Passing Through* is a drawing-score project that took place over 2020 and 2021. A score was developed for drawing-walks in urban environments during lockdown. It was shared with 14 artists, from 7 countries, who interpreted the score 12 times each. 144 of these drawings were brought together in exhibition at Backlit Gallery, Nottingham, UK in April 2021.

Passing Through is a drawing-score project developed from a daily walk made during lockdown. The repeated walk took place in an area that is neither suburb nor city, neither city nor county. It is an in-between terrain devoid of singular character - part residential, part commuter-belt and part arterial.

As weeks turned to months, the experience of repetitive walking changed. It became a space for thinking. As it did, the awareness of the surroundings trees, walls, gardens and passing cars gave way to a more internal, temporal and kinaesthetic awareness. With this shift, visual attention changed away from the horizon ahead and towards the ground below. Looking down, it appeared as if I was

static and the landscape was moving. I was reminded of Charlie Kaufman's film *I'm Thinking of Ending Things* (2020), where time appears to pass through the characters, rather than them passing through time.

How could drawing document this way of being and seeing?

I started drawing as I walked, maintaining a close viewing frame over my feet. For every landscape line that came into this viewing frame, a corresponding mark was made. The length and speed of the mark was dictated by the time for which a line appeared in the constantly renewing frame(s) as I journeyed forward.

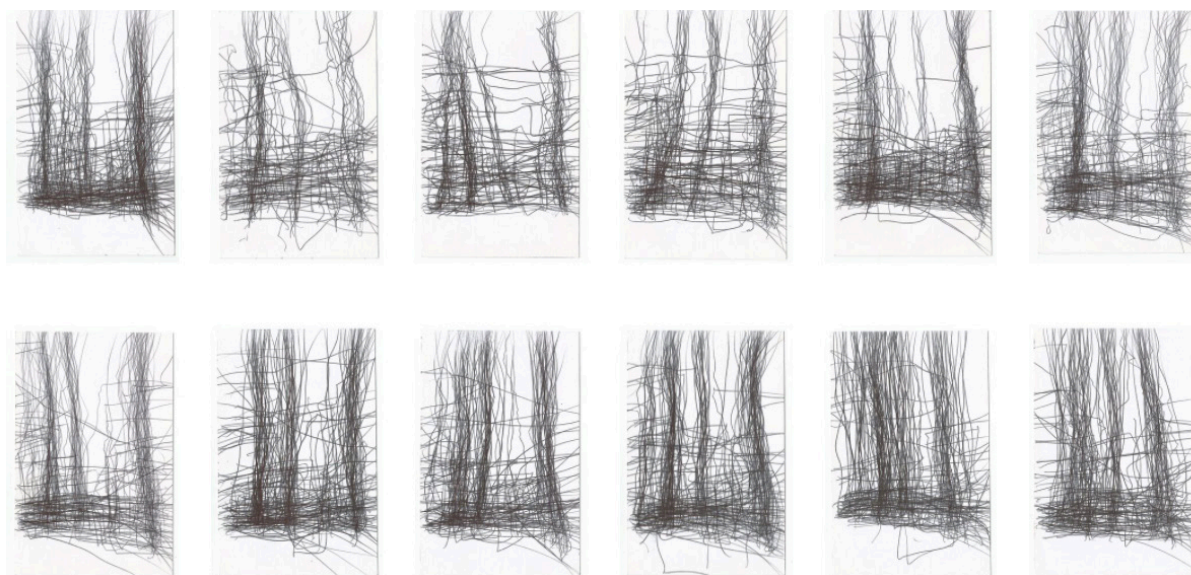


Fig. 1. 12 drawings.



Fig. 2. Still from film/documentation

12 drawings of the same walk, over the same period of time were made over 12 days, in a process that became a kind of geo-phenomenological documentation.

In illustrative landscape drawing, temporal succession can be held in perspective. However, here it is held in layering, the grammar of the work being kept in the present. The drawing is revealed in and by time, in an interplay between kairos and chronos. Cadence, and speed of walking act upon line, becoming affective. My body acts as a time line (set as 'now') as the mark-making documents the instant future's journey to the instant past.

The process was then filmed/documentated using a head camera ¹. The resulting slowed film translates drawing into fiction, holding the vision of 'nows' in an archive. However, by bringing the artist into the frame and showing multiple subjects, it becomes an ostention of the lived experience. More subjects were ascribed/described by the process: the artist, the act of drawing, time, gesture,

1 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Gx6w70JSFQ&feature=youtu.be>

PASSING THROUGH SCORE.

Take postcards and pen
walk
keep you focus
on the paper
and you feet
this is your viewing frame
mark the lines as they appear
in your viewing frame
as they pass underfoot
if a witnessed line you draw
continues after you reach the top
of the paper
bring the pen back to its starting point
and repeat until line has passed by
do not concern yourself with accuracy
simply mark the moment as it happens.

Fig. 3. Score



Fig. 4. *Passing Through*. Backlit Gallery, Nottingham, UK. 2021. Photo: Ryan Boulton

This score was then sent to a group of 14 artists from 7 countries, including Mark Clay, Jo Lewis, Réjane Lhôte, Katharina Fitz, Nicole Valois and Nicole Lenzi ², most of whom I had never met. Each artist was sent the same materials (card and pen) by post and asked to make 12 drawings from the score, whilst walking their chosen route 12 times. Drawing sets were returned, some with notes, comments and stories, other with additional drawings on the back. The pleasure in receiving them was enormous.

144 returned drawings were placed in exhibition, each displayed on a concrete hand-made stand on the floor, echoing the original viewing frame and exposing the notes and other marks made by the artists on the back.

² - See <https://www.sarah-tutt.com/home/passing-through>







Conclusion:

Passing Through operates as a series of translations, where the central act of drawing becomes an act of 'taking note' and 'taking notes'. The process of writing a score allowed the (re)discovery of the 'what' and 'how' of process. Describing became a way of finding, deciphering a route from and back to drawing. By translating out to film and out through score sharing, further subjects became ascribed. Sharing the score challenges a decisive moment to hold a broader narrative and allows a translation of the lived experience into a collective series of 'nows' held elsewhere in space and time. There was great generosity in the response of each participating artist. They took the time to

activate the score repeatedly, many drawing outside in winter, sending their works back so that I might see the results. My hope was that, in return, the activation of the score might be generative for their own practices.

Placing the collective works together in exhibition brought each translated moment of lived experience back to a communal moment of 'now', which was further translated by the viewer.

My practice acknowledges a friction between drawing as a place of movement and line as something that is (has become or will be) fixed. I approach drawing as a language through which to meet, and in which to be. In *Passing Through*, the work evolved (and is still evolving) as a series of documents drawn out of this process.