

all originating entirely from within its carefully preserved frame of reference.

*Jane Eyre* is at present better known as a TV serial than a book. Unwittingly (perhaps), Parker has represented in this very public museum context two of the most popular current subjects for TV programmes: family history (*Who Do You Think You Are?*) and the supernatural (*Most Haunted*). One outcome of the project is a short film by Parker of lively 90-year-old Phyllis Cheney, who considers (not without some substance) that she is Branwell Brontë's great-granddaughter. Parker's application of science to these Brontëan proclivities runs intentionally counter to the supernatural references running through most of the Brontë novels, and the feeling that many visitors to the House take away with them of having experienced an irrational closeness to its former residents. But at the same time, Parker has allowed herself to feed upon these tendencies, inviting two female psychics to wander about the house with her, recording their responses to its invisible or imaginary undertows. Short recorded extracts from these ambulatory conversations are preserved and relayed discreetly via headphones in most of the rooms.

There are no surprises here for those already attuned to Parker's investigative temperament and poetic, witty way of working. As with her previous projects related to Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein and Adolf Hitler, she has visually amplified physical residues tangentially associated with the Brontës, often very slight in nature, in order to penetrate some of the 'tiny little crevices' in the monumental mythos which permeates their holy relics. And yet there is no sense that Parker has applied her established methodological template casually to this task. It is obvious that she was profoundly engaged by this project. The modest scale of the magnified objects echoes perfectly the intimacy and inward-looking focus of the house itself. 'I feel a huge energy of creative sparks around here,' observes one of the psychic commentators near the dining room fireplace. 'It's still fizzing away. You almost want to calm it down.' She might have been referring to Parker's imagination. ■

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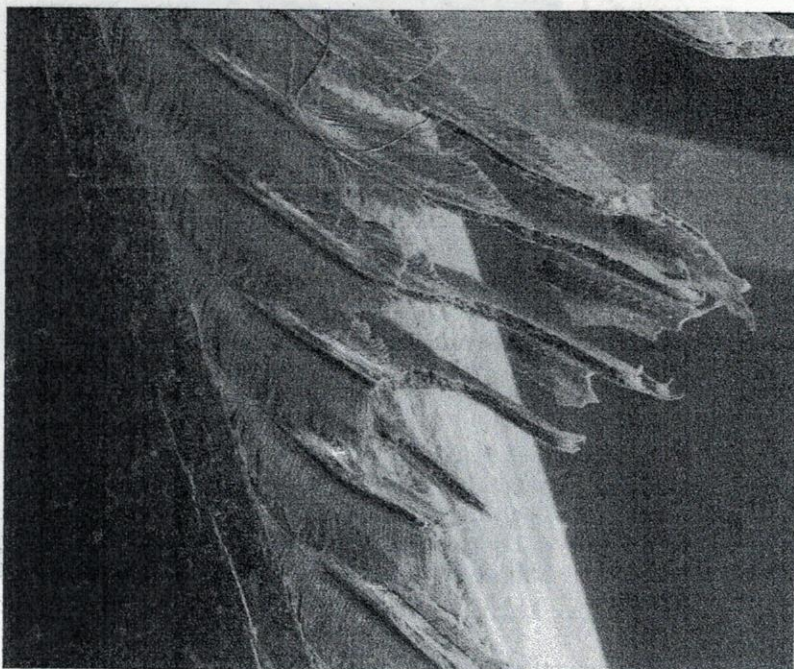
## ■ The Secret Theory of Drawing

The Drawing Room London

October 5 to November 19

The artist, if we choose to retain what Roland Barthes called (in his essay on Cy Twombly) 'this somewhat kitsch term', is the most convenient but by no means the only organising device for exhibitions. And the territory of exhibition-making where theme is not allowed to dominate, and where works on different trajectories are allowed to appear in unexpected but not over-insistent relation, is frequently kindest to art. 'The Secret Theory of Drawing', a selection of works proposed by Caomhín Mac Giolla Léith, aimed to distance itself from 'the more popular conception of drawing as gestural, expressive, more or less instantly communicative' in favour of works that 'conspire to emphasise the status of line, graph, pulse'. It also had the feel of something like an ideal temporary private collection, based on bonds of knowledge and friendship, and this formed a persuasive model for an intervention into public exhibition.

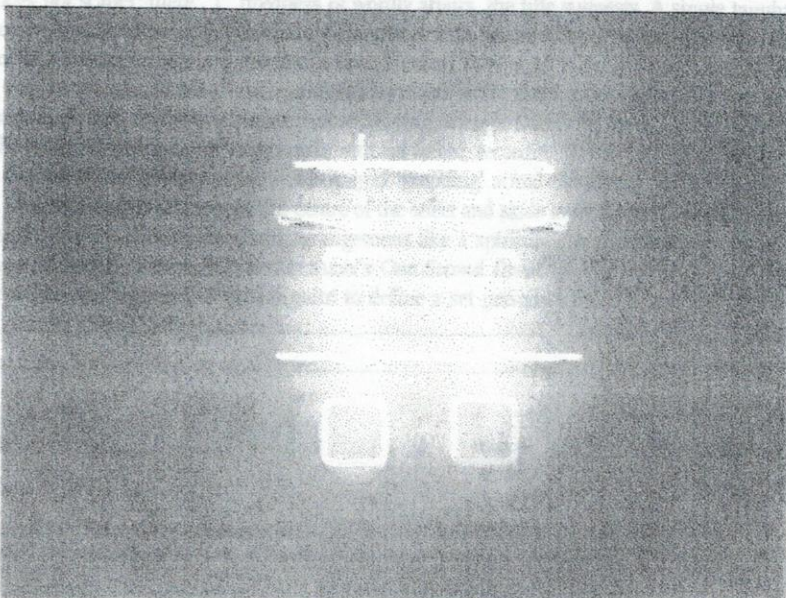
Three works, including one by Joëlle Tuerlinckx that was



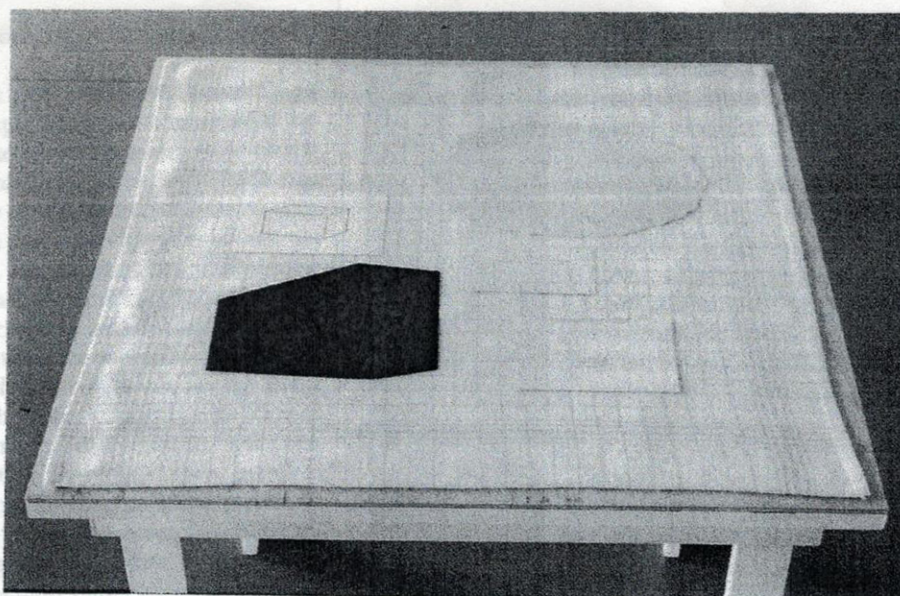
Cornelia Parker  
*Brontëan Abstract (Shaft of  
Charlotte Brontë's quill  
pen) 2006*

*Cuisine 3D jaune*, 1994-2006, is an arrangement of drawings on file card, paper scraps, the decorative oval of paper that might line a brasserie's bread basket. (This last is a thing that I realise I have no name for: it is not really a doily. It is always good to encounter things you cannot name.) All these are arranged on a yellow check tea-towel that shows signs of use, in a series of 16 permitted permutations. Given the diagrammatic drawings of rectangular forms – thought-forms par excellence – you seek to find the three-dimensional possibilities of reading a flat black paper polygon, also included in the arrangement. You can and cannot do this, but the attraction of trying persists. The thought activity of moving between two and three dimensions is not circumscribed by or simply opposed to the domestic associations as some kind of hypostasised other to thinking, and it takes place within an arrangement not unlike those of Jean Arp's torn paper collages, but which can be changed. It is a truly eloquent updating of dadaistic uncertainty. It is mean of me to contrast it with Douglas Gordon's *A drawing a day* sequence of typed empty

Dominique  
Gonzalez-Foerster  
*Double Bonheur 2001*







Étude-Cuisine 3 D jaune  
1994-2006

envelopes, which was made specially for the show, but I will. These are envelopes typed with permutations of statements such as *The most beautiful drawing ever made* or *The most beautiful ever unmade*. This is game not play: the uncertainty seems wilfully asserted, and therefore not really uncertain at all.

The transparent box or cube as a thought-form becomes the notional room for portrayed action in the stick figure drawings by Matt Mullican, which form part of an untitled bulletin board from 1971-86/2006. In the narrative of Mullican's career these are related to his subsequent attribution of drawings to his hypnotically induced alter ego, 'That Person'; but leaving that connection aside, there is a simple fascination in the context the exhibition makes with the stick figure as a walking hieroglyph, a set of lines representing a complex articulated form. He also has a notional corporeality (he sniffs his armpit) and is shown ingeniously crumpled and bent, sniffing the floor. That stick figures sniff and give off odours should not come as a surprise, but it does. The shifts of register are anxious, preoccupied by death. The obviously partnered work is *Precision*, 2002, by Cathy Wilkes, whose proud title is justified. Either side of a radiator strips of wood, a tray and cup form an expanded fallen or reclining figure, a notional armature. Wilkes is so much better than other scatterers, precisely because she does not scatter: there is a mad order drawn out from forlornly creative, Asbo Jugend violence. It is an active notion of representation and construction (plausibly connected here with drawing) rather than a passive one of scenographic or journalistic portrayal.

Context is also beneficial to the photos from 2004 by Anri Sala. These show moths, whose changing configurations define the corner of a white room. They are modest but do function independently, released from the burden of comparison with *Lakkat*, Sala's astonishing and widely shown video made in Senegal in the same year, which also featured

the motif of moths. The elementary description of rectilinear space by means of line almost emerges as a theme in the show, but there is also an evident curiosity about graphic symbols and letter forms. Above Sala's photos is a repeated line of ampersands, *&*, 2005, by Ceal Floyer. Repeated ampersands here become a frieze, the function of a frieze being to decorate without being much noticed. Floyer reverses this idea to make a frieze that is only too noticeable. Wrongness is also part of the impact of Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's *Double Bonheur*, 2001, a blue neon version of the Chinese character on a large but defined area of painted blue wall. I haven't made a survey, but the Double Happiness ideogram is associated strongly in my memory with red and gold, the colour of the envelopes inscribed with it that Chinese people use for gifts of money. This chilly blue is peculiar. But the stronger reasoning around the work's inclusion lies again in the way a two-dimensional symbol or arrangement of lines becomes a three-dimensional form, a theme picked up on in Bojan Sarcevic's curious wall sculpture in brass and thread, *Ô fatigue de ce monde*, 2006. This resembles an anthropomorphic letter form or part of a music stand (a confusing thing to assemble into three dimensions, as I remember) collapsing down and rightwards; through tiredness of wordly affairs, the title suggests. A single taught thread is tied between two of the brass lengths, as though to prevent further collapse.

Commendably, there is not much work included that relies on the notion of trace, though Olafur Eliasson's grid of drawings made with his father, recording the rocking of a boat, are in the territory of 'graphing' actual movement (the line begins in the centre of the sheet and skids away to negotiate the edge: some arrangement like a spiritualist's planchette, perhaps). John Latham's *One Second Drawings*, these from 1970, use spray paint to define a set period of time. As satellite to the

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exhibition, in Alan Johnston's *Sleeper Gallery* in Edinburgh, Patrick Ireland's *Some Electronic Residues of the Corpus of M.D.* were shown. This is one of the works made by Ireland from his recording of Marcel Duchamp's heartbeat in 1966, and which he does not allow to be shown in England, and which I have not seen. The notion of line as graph or pulse was here literalised, in a work that Duchamp realised would 'outlive' him. This and other displaced means of drawing can usefully be counterposed to the too easy consumption of drawing as gesture or immediacy, as Mac Giolla Léith suggests, but in that at least one work in the show led directly, if ironically, back to the artist's body as source, suggests that the 20th-century love affair with gesture, or with the artist as gesture, cannot be over. ■

Patrick Ireland, 'Some Electronic Residues from the Corpus of M.D.', was at *Sleeper Gallery*, Edinburgh October 2 to 20.

IAN HUNT is a writer; *Green Light*, poems, is published by Barque press. He will join *Art Monthly* as assistant editor from next month.

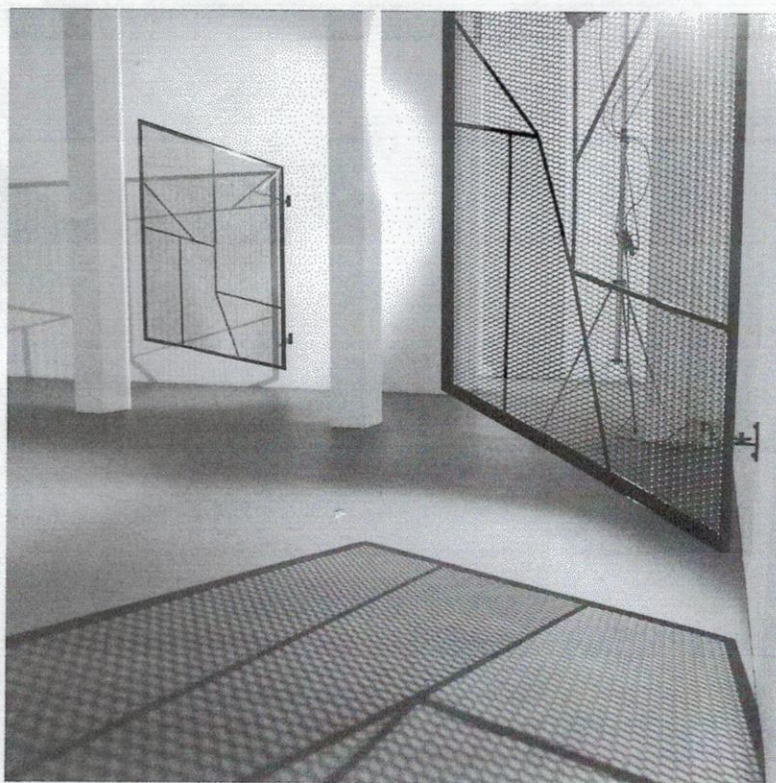
## ■ Street: behind the cliché

Witte de With Rotterdam

September 9 to November 19

On the opening night of 'Street: behind the cliché' a full-scale street party was taking place in Rotterdam's Witte de Withstraat. All the bars, clubs, galleries and restaurants in the street were open and spilling onto the pavements. The street was closed to traffic and crowds of (mostly young) revellers, plastic beakers or cans of beer in their hands, congregated at the various DJ tents set up along the street. Inside the Witte de With gallery the atmosphere was rather less festive – here unthinking hedonism was replaced by the reflexive attitude associated with the contemplation of art. Curated by Renske Janssen and Nicolaus Schafhausen, 'Street: behind the cliché' was pitched as 'a reconsideration of how public space operates' and an analysis of the 'fraught' relationship between popular culture and sub-cultural identity.

The street has become a contested terrain, fought over by commerce, street rights movements and municipal zoning schemes, not to mention pedestrians and cars. Street life has generated its own set of codes and clichés, whether it's the nostalgic longings of Jane Jacobs for scaled-down urban neighbourhoods every bit as authoritarian as the postwar planning she was criticising in the early 60s, or attempts to rebrand streets as miniature theme-parks where history is reinvented as a lifestyle choice (as has happened in some parts of Rotterdam). We're all so familiar with (if not contemptuous of) the notion and reality of the street, especially those monotonous streets so characteristic of suburbia, that we're always hoping (usually in vain) for a serendipitous surprise, something to relieve the boredom.



One would have thought that the artists in 'Street: behind the cliché' could have provided some clarity regarding these issues, and maybe even entertained us at the same time. As it is, we see very few references to actual streets, the main exception being Laura Horelli's photographs of two boulevards lined with Stalinist architecture, one in Berlin and the other in Kiev. In a diary-like text she provides her personal response to these two historically charged streets. Similar buildings (70s high-rise blocks of flats in Amsterdam's Bijlmer district) are to be seen in Aram Tanis's series of sombre black and white photographs entitled *Deconstruction*, 2006, together with equally unappealing shots of an overweight nude woman.

Marius Engh reveals how buildings can drastically change over the course of the years: four photographs of a graffiti-covered mansion are cheekily labelled 'Rich kids on LSD'. Another cross-cultural invasion is demonstrated in Matt Stokes's *Long After Tonight*, 2005, a video showing people dancing to Northern Soul music in a Dundee church. Intercut with shots of the dancers are details of the Gothic interior of the church, a rather arbitrary contrast that might perhaps be more effective in Stokes's performance in November of Heavy Metal songs on a church organ in Rotterdam. Other photographic works in the exhibition feature youths loitering in a park outside a porn cinema in Berlin (Tobias Zielony), participants in an officially sponsored graffiti contest (Alex Morrison's *Open Air Cinema*, 2005) and Nigerian street entertainers with their pet hyenas and monkeys (Pieter Hugo). Less complacent, and striking an uncanny note of discordance,

Martin Boyce  
*We Are Fragile and  
Unstoppable. We Appear  
and Disappear* 2004

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