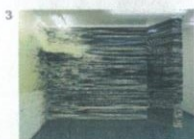


Monika Grzymala

"In a way this tape is a readymade, it's a readymade line – so to have my own spirit in this line, I need to do it myself"



1 **One Degree Above Zero** (2000), ice drawing with frozen watercolours, at skating rink in Hamburg, Germany

2 **Rhizome** (2007), 4.5km tape, installed at Gallery University of Art Braunschweig, Germany

3 **Swoosh** (2007), 7.5km tape, installed at Transmission Gallery Glasgow, Scotland

4 **Colours** (2008), branches, tape, handmade paper confetti, leaves, installed at Marfa, Texas

Opposite: **Farbrauschen/negative space** (2009), 50,000 dots made of tape, installed at the Bluecoat, Liverpool

MONIKA GRZYMALA draws in three dimensions, creating lines with unconventional materials such as adhesive tape, lead wire and branches. Barely anchored to the walls, these energetic forms leap into the gallery space, where they interweave to create what she calls "an architectural intervention". The frenetic nature of her installations is hardly what one would expect from the laid-back artist who is a DJ in her spare time. "I think these are the moments when everyone realises I exist", she says. "I'm here, I'm alive, I'm part of that world." Last year, her drawings at Marfa, Texas (see Issue 8) were made from brightly coloured branches; in 2000 she drew on a skating rink (see left), working her lines beneath 10 layers of ice; and her current series of installations, each inspired by London's skyline, are part of the Hayward Gallery's touring exhibition *The End of the Line: Attitudes in Drawing*. **INTERVIEW: Carla Yarrish**

How do you pronounce your last name?
Actually it's from Polish, in which Grzymala is pronounced Jee-ma-wuh, but when we emigrated to Germany they changed it to Grzymala, which is pronounced Jee-ma-la because they don't have the letter Ł.

The point of departure for your drawings is very important to you, isn't it?
Yes, it is important because otherwise it is just a wall drawing or an image on the wall. I never frame my works. I always try to leave the format so the question always remains, "Is there a format for my work? And if so, how is the work formatted? Do we want to frame this?" I think that a frame limits the drawing. It's very hard for me to make a drawing on a regular sheet of paper.

Why did you choose the London skyline as the theme for the *End of the Line* series?
When I see the skyline of London, the first moment, the first impression which is very dominant in my memory and my imagination is that it is chaotic but it's also a harmonic co-existence of different ages and architecture. You see historic buildings and then the next building is suddenly completely modern architecture, but they co-exist. Although it's chaotic you always recognise it as the skyline of London. And the landscape has a special colour here, a special grey colour.

How did you anticipate the works changing through the venues?
This was the difficulty when I started preparing myself for this touring exhibition. It's quite a big thing to have the five venues – all of them are very different. To pack my crate was really a challenge too. The choice of materials and colours, to find the dots and the lead tape – this was one way to prepare myself by preparing components. I'm also asking myself questions like, "Okay, I will start with something like a hatching/section

lining and then we'll see how I install it in the space. Do I hang it down from the ceiling or is it just on the wall or do I place it on the floor?" This is like a vocabulary of lines for me, it travels with me and helps me to make the first decision when I arrive at a venue that perhaps I haven't seen in advance: "How do I express myself in this space?" And then I find all my materials – I have a monster crate for this tour. It's very heavy because I have maybe 50km of tape and 62,000 dots [dots made from adhesive tape that can be applied directly to the wall]. It's my toolbox as well. I just need knives, scissors, the tape, and my sketchbooks of ideas as well. All the important things – my brain is in this crate.

The installations are very physical, almost a performance. Is this intentional?
In part, it is a performance. This is why I describe my work sometimes in kilometres of used tape, because I think that these kilometres that I leave behind in the process of developing a new three-dimensional drawing best describe the physical but also mental work I'm doing there. And the duration – time is a very important component of my work. The pieces are all like time capsules.

Do you work alone?
I never work with assistants because it makes it much more complicated. It takes more time to say to someone else, "I would like to have a line from this corner to the other corner." It's easier to do it myself. In a way this tape is a readymade line, so to have my own spirit in this line, I need to do it myself. This transformation is hard to describe in words.

Do you ever get tangled up in your installations?
No. This is why I really have to focus when I am installing. Otherwise, if I am working for two days on an installation like this and I don't pay attention to what I am doing for a

moment I could fall into the work and destroy it. I never make corrections so it's all the truth – it's a one-to-one translation of the moment.

It must be important to take a step back. Yes, otherwise I am just a mouse lost in a labyrinth. That's what makes us artists – to step back and realise what you're doing here and what it means in contemporary art or in art history. It's always about going back and forth between installing, doing the physical work, and then reflecting on what exactly I'm doing. Part of it is to find a balance between what I am doing or just to let it happen.

Do you install up until the last minute?
Some artists work until the last possible second – until the opening. I'm not that type. I prefer to be finished one day before the opening so I still have the time to say goodbye to the piece. I feel like I have left a part of my body in the exhibition.

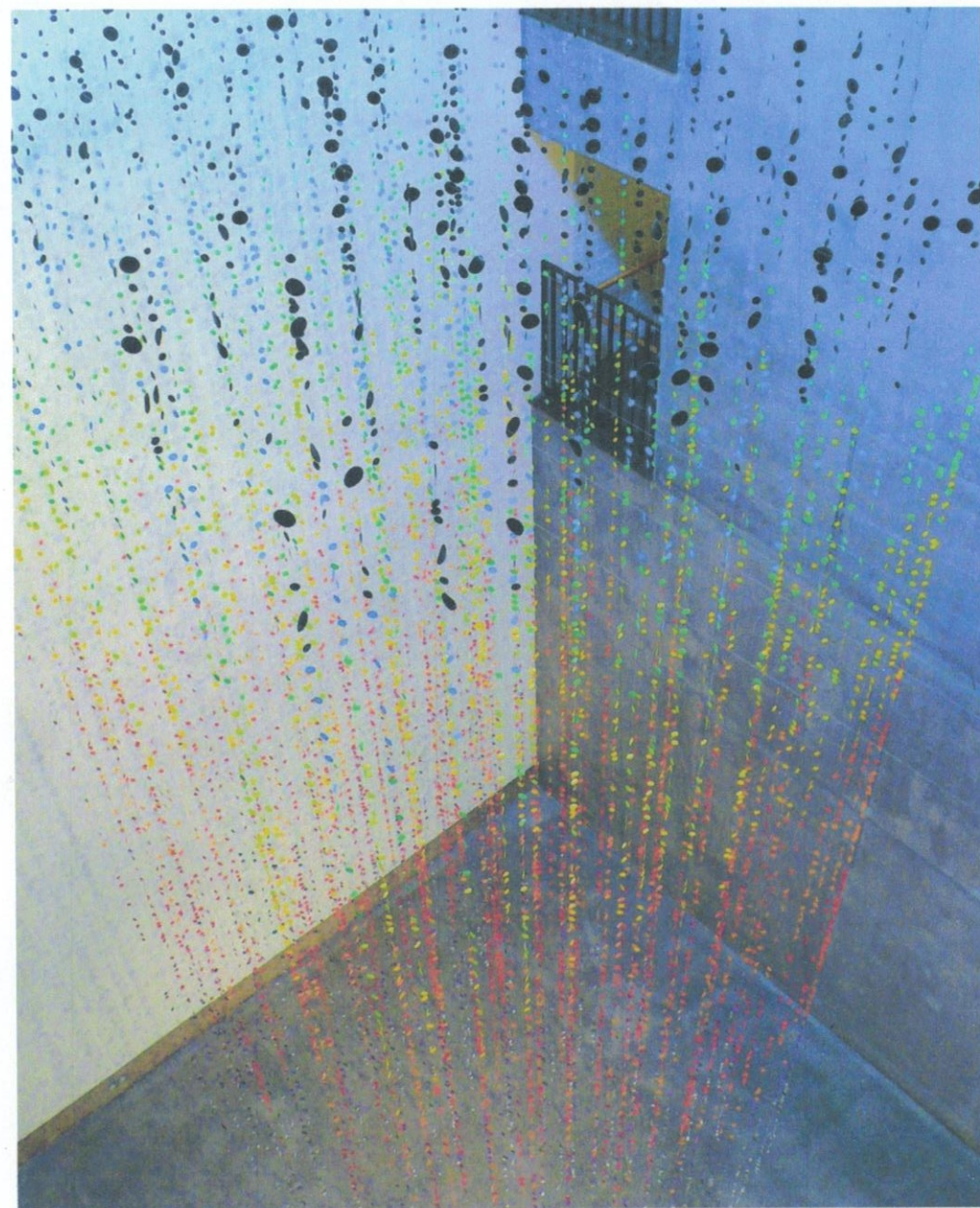
What do you do with the works when they are done?
I de-install them and if possible I keep the bundle of lines, the installation in its entropic stage, and take them back to my home studio and hang them from the ceiling. Or I sell them to collections, or donate them to friends who helped in the process of creating a new piece.

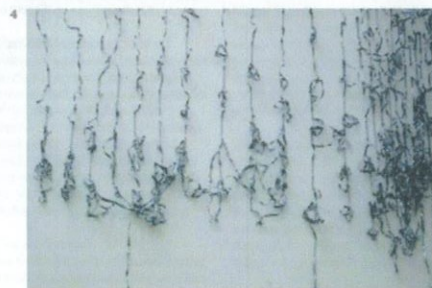
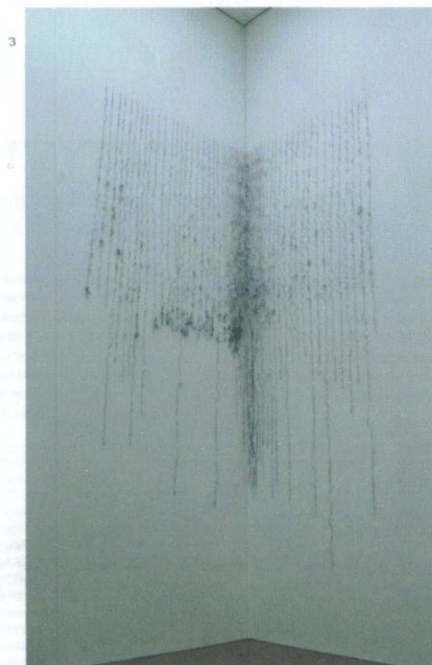
Finally, if you could live with any work of art ever made, what would it be?
There are some works that move me so much that I start to cry and think, "Thank God there are people doing art and creating such a beautiful piece." One is *Untitled (Loverboy)* by Felix Gonzalez-Torres [created in 1999]. It's a pale blue curtain gently waving in an opened window – very poetic.

Exhibitions: City Museum and Art Gallery, Bristol, 11 Sep–1 Nov; The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, 14 Nov–10 Jan 2010, www.southbankcentre.co.uk

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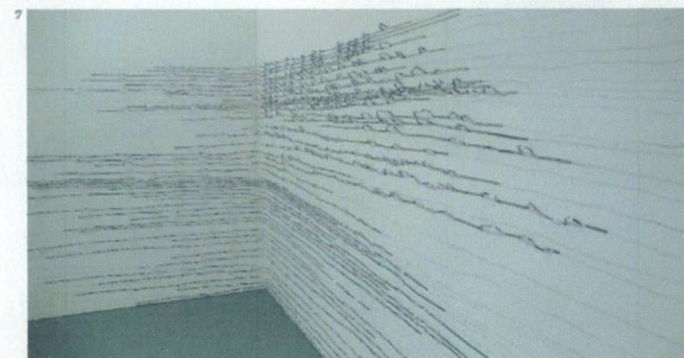
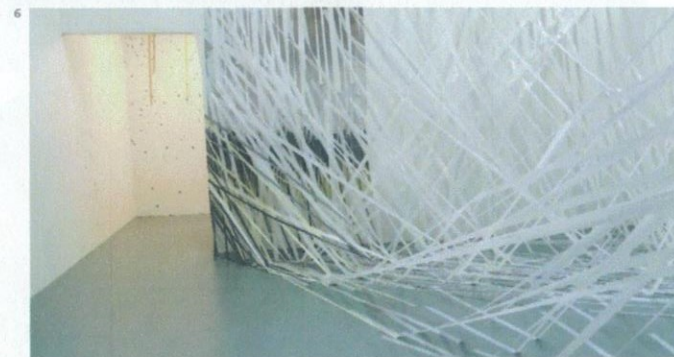
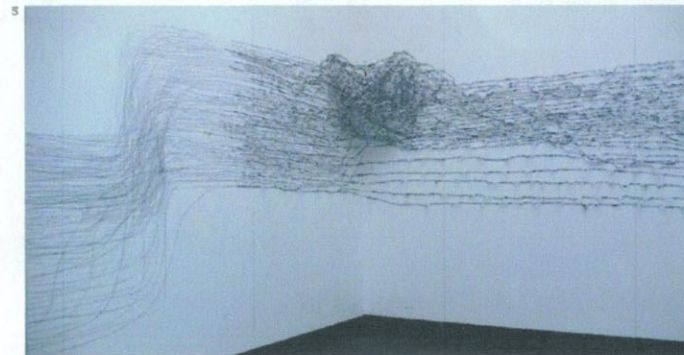


7

Monika Grzymala's "vocabulary of lines"

For the Hayward's touring exhibition *The End of the Line: Attitudes in Drawing*, Grzymala has created a specific "vocabulary of lines". She uses lengths of adhesive tape, colourful dots cut from adhesive tape which she recently discovered in a speciality store in Berlin, lengths of lead tape, and graphite pencil. The resulting installations, at different venues across the UK and at an independent exhibition in Berlin (opposite, top), reveal subtle differences in the application of similar media. Tape dots were used at the Bluecoat (previous page) and The Drawing Room (left), "because a line contains millions of dots. They can build a line but they can be what is left when there is a bursting line – the end of the line, which is the title of the touring exhibition."

All images copyright and courtesy Monika Grzymala. Works shown in 2–5 commissioned by The Drawing Room, 2009. Photos: Andy Kester



- 1, 2 **Farbrauschen (chromatic noise)** (2009), tape and dots made from tape, installed at The Drawing Room, London
- 3, 4 **Duplex 1** (2009), graphite and lead tape, installed at MDMA, Middlesbrough
- 5 **Pas de Deux** (2009), graphite and lead tape, installed at Akademie der Künste, Berlin
- 6 **Solex** (2009), white tape, gaffer tape, fabric, installed at The Drawing Room, London
- 7 **Eins (alpha)** (2009), graphite and lead tape, installed at The Drawing Room, London