

# SHUDDER

**EDWINA ASHTON ANN COURSE  
BARRY DOUPÉ AVISH KHEBREHZADEH  
MATT MULLICAN RAYMOND PETTIBON  
NAOYUKI TSUJI MARKUS VATER**

**21 JAN TO 14 MARCH 2010  
WED TO SUN 12.00 TO 18.00  
PRIVATE VIEW  
WED 20 JAN 18.30 TO 20.30**

**THURSDAY 21 JAN 2010, 19.00  
ESTHER LESLIE 'IN CONVERSATION' WITH ANN COURSE,  
BARRY DOUPÉ AND MARKUS VATER AT THE BRIDGE  
ACADEMY, LABURNUM STREET, HACKNEY, LONDON E2 8BA.  
ADMISSION FREE, BOOKING ESSENTIAL.**

**AN EXHIBITION OF ANIMATED DRAWING WITH NEW  
COMMISSIONS BY EDWINA ASHTON, ANN COURSE AND  
BARRY DOUPÉ ALSO AT WWW.ANIMATEPROJECTS.ORG  
CO-COMMISSIONED BY ANIMATE PROJECTS & THE  
DRAWING ROOM**



**THE DRAWING ROOM TANNERY ARTS BRUNSWICK WHARF  
55 LABURNUM STREET LONDON E2 8BD  
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LOTTERY FUNDED

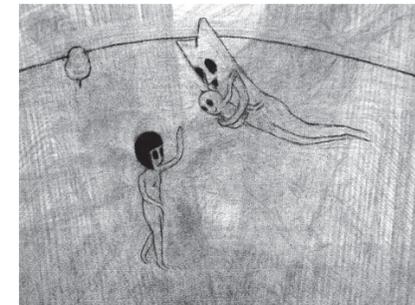
# THE DRAWING ROOM

Drawing is the foundation of **MARKUS VATER'S** practice but he also makes paintings, photographs and animations. *The Cave has been moved* is an animation that marks a new development in the artist's practice. Conceived to be projected outdoors, it uses Vater's favourite imagery of animals, humans and vegetation morphing into each other. The artist sets a grotesque and fairytale like scene in which trees undergo anthropomorphic metamorphoses in an endless chain of events – some positive or good, others negative or evil. This forms a backdrop to the humdrum comings and goings of everyday life – represented by cyclists passing by, a plane flying overhead and car head lights panning the scene. The combination conjures perfectly the endless cycle of life and death.



*The Cave has been moved* 2008  
drawn & computer-generated animation  
5.32 minutes  
Courtesy Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf  
© Markus Vater

**NAOYUKI TSUJI** uses a very basic technique to create his animations. He makes charcoal drawings, inspired by ideas that occur to him, photographs them, partially erases the image and then draws the next. This technique graphically exposes their means of creation and the honesty of manufacture extends to the characters and narrative that unfolds. The understated power of the imagery is matched by the minimal music of Makiko Takanashi. 'There is something tender and horrible about the way Tsuji draws, the world the artist can create in a few lines. What at first appears crude is extremely subtle, perverse and weird' (Adrian Searle, The Guardian, March 2007). With the simplest of means Tsuji conjures situations and emotions with which we can all identify but not name or categorise as such.



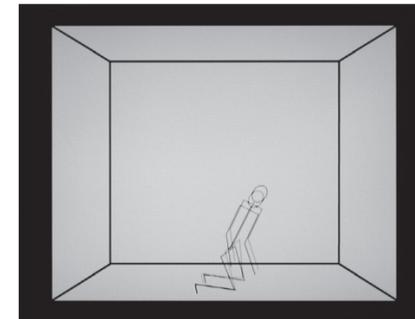
*Zephyr* 2009  
charcoal drawing animation  
6 minutes  
Courtesy Corvi-Mora, London  
© Naoyuki Tsuji

**RAYMOND PETTIBON** is best known for his ink drawings on paper which subvert the comic book form to create aggressive and sinister commentaries on contemporary issues. Pettibon combines imagery culled from popular American culture, including comics, cartoons, films and film noir in particular. Rendered in ink on paper, and often in a loose, expressive style, Pettibon's very personal idiom represents a non-ironic quest to explore the human need for truth or belief. *Sunday Night Saturday Morning* (2005) is one of only two animations made by Pettibon. Like the drawings, these animations deny the viewer the comfort of narrative continuity and instead assault them with a barrage of pulsating, disjointed and repetitive images.



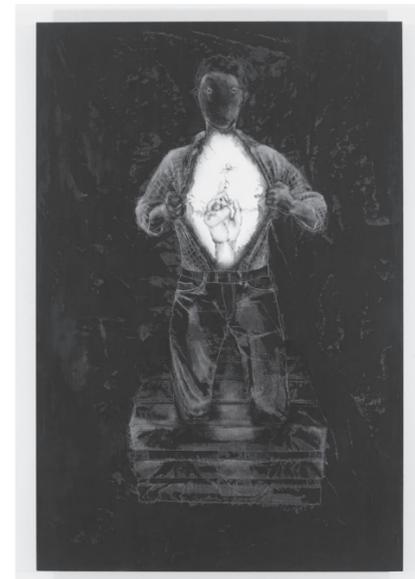
*Sunday Night Saturday Morning* 2005  
animation  
16.45 minutes  
Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles, CA  
© Raymond Pettibon

For the past three decades **MATT MULLICAN** has used a range of media, much of it drawing based, to examine how we perceive the world around us and to demonstrate that 'reality' is a construct of our imagination. He has created his own cosmology of signs and symbols to convey his intuitive, subjective interpretation of the world. His countless drawings of stick figures engaged in all manner of activities form part of this investigation. As a series, usually displayed on a pin-board alongside alternative representations of the human figure, these drawings animate the life of an imagined individual. *Dying Stick Figure* (2001) sums up Mullican's interest in using simple means to explore profound themes; the dying stick figure powerfully conveys the brevity of life and the fundamental fact of our impending death.



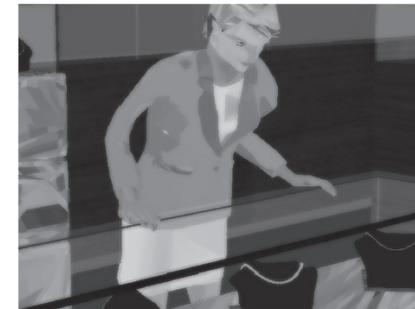
*Dying Stick Figure* 2001  
animation  
32 seconds  
Courtesy Mai36 Galerie, Zurich  
© Matt Mullican

**AVISH KHEBREHZADEH** produces animations that are projected onto drawn or painted supports. This technique creates a layering effect and together with her sparse, enigmatic imagery evokes veiled and remote worlds. Her work, 'revolves around three main themes: time, identity and the man/animal duality'. *Within and Without I* is a new work that is inspired by the series of frescoes that investigate vices and virtues that form part of Giotto's famous fresco cycle in the Scrovegni Chapel, Padua, Italy. The work consists of a painted panel which shows a man tearing his shirt in a pique of frustration and anger. This is balanced with the calming animated imagery played out on his bare chest, which suggests intimacy and makes clear his vulnerability.



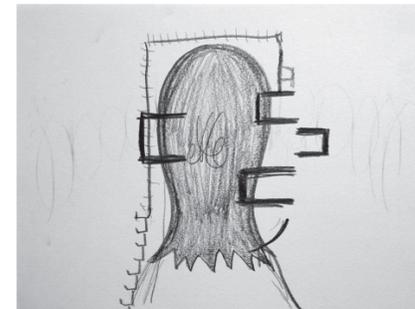
*Within and Without I* 2008  
oil on gesso and wood with video animation projection  
2.45 minutes  
painting: 183 x 122 cm  
Courtesy the artist and Albion Gallery, London & New York  
© Avish Khebrehzadeh

Intense and profoundly unnerving, **BARRY DOUPÉ'S** animations draw the viewer into a world of uncertainty. The apparently linear yet contradictory narratives are darkly complex meditations on the often invisible violence of political structures, challenging us to consider the fine line between order and chaos. Made with 3D computer software, *Whose Toes* undermines the imperative for the hyper-sharpness of the digital graphic image. Surface clarity is scrubbed away to reveal murky distortions, teasingly denying the usual narrative resolution, and thus exposing the fragile consensus that underlies constructions of truth.



*Whose Toes* 2009  
computer animation  
33 minutes  
Courtesy the artist  
© Barry Doupé

**ANN COURSE** makes sculptural objects and drawings, which she develops and assembles into short animations. She works quickly, producing images that are intensely personal, provocative and disturbing. As Edwin Carels notes, 'the first thing that hits the eyes is the pure or downright brutal honesty that emanates from these simple, but very strong configurations' (www.luxonline.org.uk). Her new work, *The Collaborators*, is characteristically raw and searing in its brutal intensity. The soundtrack, a stilted dialogue of questions and accusations, evokes the anguish, complexities and contradictions of relationships.



*The Collaborators* 2009  
drawn animation  
3.50 minutes  
Courtesy the artist  
© Ann Course

**EDWINA ASHTON** makes drawings, videos, performances and installations that obliquely evoke absurd notions of character and narrative. Her anthropomorphic characters expose the frailty, vanity and pathos of existence. In its sense of fairytale foreboding, *Mr Panz at Lake Lemman (Notes on Mammals and Habitats)* is characteristically uncanny; at once charming yet sinister, the darkly comic story of a disaffected gentleman elephant forms a complex musing on nostalgia, loneliness and alienation.



*Mr Panz at Lake Lemman (notes on mammals and habitats)* 2009  
drawing animation  
6 minutes  
Courtesy the artist and WORKS | PROJECTS, Bristol  
© Edwina Ashton

***Shudder**: the shutter snaps up and down in the camera. **Shudder**: the filmstrip snags its way through sprockets of the projector. **Shudder**: the frame and the frame rate are misaligned. **Shudder**: the figure who moved too quickly for the frame-rate appears to judder. **Shudder**: the handheld camera nears its object, jittering as it zooms. **Shudder**: the high shutter speed matched with a low frame rate generates a strobing effect. **Shudder**: the pixels drop out micro-momentarily on the LCD screen. **Shudder**: the backgrounds in the HD film tingle in the deep field of focus as if animated. **Shudder** is intimate to film, in many ways. Shudder is the usually unwanted by-product of technical failure. In a digital world, **shudder**’s appearance as jitter, weave, flicker, image instability, scratches, noise and grain is the stuff to be cleared away in pursuit of the pristine digital image. In his day, Adorno embraced it as sorely needed, consolatory, evidence of the machinery’s lack of omnipotence, despite all appearances to the contrary. He held out, for example, for the moment when the gramophone’s mechanical spring wears out and the music droops. And his essay on the young German filmmakers of the 1960s, ‘Transparencies on Film’, opened with a defence of the ‘incompetence’ of those works that ‘have not completely mastered their technique, conveying as a result something consolingly uncontrolled and accidental’.<sup>1</sup> In breakdown and blunders there is a chance of escape from mechanistic and other life-limiting logics.*

But the machinery is more often than not victorious, and ever more insinuated into our lives, especially at those moments when we think ourselves most relaxed, most at leisure. The ‘grating, whirring sound’ of the cinema projector is a sign of our enthrallment to the technical, notes Adorno, but we cannot hear it above the film’s soundtrack, which ‘attempts to interpose a human coating between the reeled-off pictures and the spectators’.<sup>2</sup> If we could discern it, we would **shudder** at the unmediated exposure to the abyss of emptiness that those filmic shadows, those ‘living and non-living’ effigies, impersonating us and ours, in the guise of humans, represent. We would be chilled by the horrible truth they display, which is the actuality of cinema’s efforts to mechanize even us, as it conspires to make all of life a matter of industry, a technical lethality.

## SHUDDER – SHUTTER – SHATTER

Esther Leslie

Were the shudder to come, occasioned by the music’s fall out or the stuttering of the filmstrip in the projector, it would itself be a hopeful sign, standing in for the very principle of life itself.

For Adorno, the shudder is a primal component of experience, emerging just as humans began to conceptualise the world and differentiate themselves from amorphous nature (*they shudder to think ...*). The **shudder** indexes terror, a register of the uneasiness induced by strangeness (and, as such, it is the Enlightenment impulse for mastery over nature, its subjugation into the schemata of instrumental rationality). At the same time, though, the **shudder** is a manifestation of wonder and a recognition of the possibility of anti-egoistic human interrelationships with other or non-beings. Its twitching indicates a capacity for mimesis, for a connection between self and otherness.<sup>3</sup> The **shudder**, then, is on the cusp. It inaugurates the attempt to master nature, to overcome all that is different. But it also marks the point of an afterwards that might still – if only bodily, unconsciously, involuntarily – remember what it was like to once be touched by something different, unassimilated. The effort to subjugate (or tame) nature eventually threatens to eradicate the shudder. All that is different, nature’s otherness, is subsumed in rationality, in industry, in synthetics, in banality. The **shudder** threatens to dissipate and with it any possibility of true experience.<sup>4</sup> At moments in our ‘damaged lives’,<sup>5</sup> particularly moments of true aesthetic encounter, genuine experience still occurs, and when it does, it does so with a shudder, which is, simultaneously, a recognition of the deadening nature of universal fungability and a self-liquidating encounter with the non-identical, the radically different. The self, for a few moments, recognises itself as semblance. The ‘I’, ‘that internal agent of repression’ is shattered by art, which is, at that moment, ‘the historical voice of repressed nature’.<sup>6</sup> Curiously, the German word used by Walter Benjamin to describe the transfiguring impact of film and cinema on aesthetics – *Erschütterung*– which means quake, shake up, vibration, trepidation, shock, labefaction – compounds, if slippage is allowed across languages, three terms: **shudder**, shutter, and shatter.

‘Ultimately’, notes Adorno, aesthetic comportment is to be defined as the capacity to shudder, as if goose bumps were the first aesthetic image’.<sup>7</sup> The goose bump, Adorno observes, is a sign of being touched by an other, an opening outwards from pure objectivity. ***Shudder**: My skin is pitted – am I becoming an anima? **Shudder**: the moment of uncanny recognition – that stick there, perhaps it has a world for itself too, as it climbs that ladder. That squiggly line moves like a man, but is not one. Those sausages are having sex. .... **Shudder** registers in a marking on the body, horripilation, result of the contraction of many little muscles, which thrust the hair follicles above the rest of the skin. Quite literally the skin begins to crawl, upwards. Such twitching is the result of electrical activity conducted by the nervous system. Our bodies process bio-electricity, and it makes even the dead jolt, as Luigi Galvani found, in the 1780s. The stories differ: perhaps the frog’s leg jerked as Galvani watched his wife slice it up with a metal knife for soup (*ugh!*), or, perhaps the spasm occurred as his scalpel touched the frog and a brass hook at one and the same time, and perhaps this was carried out during a thunderstorm. In any case, this frog’s **shudder** – after death – became a celebrated event, indeed it appeared as a new type of magic, a reanimation, even as it was also a scientific sensation. If the body is electric, perhaps electricity could properly, or improperly, shock the inanimate into life, as Mary Shelley proposed in 1818 – to terrible effect – in *Frankenstein*, the monster re-animated by the sparks of electricity.*

Cinemas have long been a place where people go to reproduce the **shudder** synthetically. Film, from its earliest days, and no type more so than animation, used a technological pre-disposition (the shutter) to play with the **shudder** – the **shudder** – or animation – of its object as well as its viewing subjects. (Adorno wrote of the **shudder** and enlightenment – the **shudder** is the frisson that comes from humans letting in the light of reason. Analogously, the shutter and light – the shutter is the jerk in the camera mechanism that lets in the light of the world). Most animations are made in some way or another out of a combination of incremental moves and abrupt moves: the shifts from frame to frame that produce the illusion of mobility. The **shudder** is just such a smallest gesture, a flicker, a hint of life. (*Was that a glimmer of a smile on the barely formed face? Is that stick a man*

*breathing his last breath?*) J. Stuart Blackton developed stop motion in *The Haunted Hotel* (1907), which shows a wobbling building (actually a quivering camera) and then a lunch preparing itself as a knife slices bread on the table, a teapot tips its contents and sugar cubes hop into a cup. In Segundo de Chomon’s *Electric Hotel* (1908) suitcases unpack themselves and hair styles itself. Whether haunting or electricity motivates such object possession, the result is the same. In both strips, at the end, there is a loss of control, an excess of spirit (animation) and everything spins into oblivion. Just after this, Ladislav Starewicz adopted these and other techniques to re-animate dead nature another way. He made articulated puppets out of the corpses of beetles, grasshoppers and frogs and moved them by unseen wires before an open shutter. Two decades later, a more benign version of the **shudder** that brings the dead to life, the immobile into mobility, appeared in cel cartoons. Frisky footstools, cheeky umbrellas, gloves that dance: Mickey Mouse finds these ‘thru the mirror’ in 1936. Disney’s spirited furniture and humanised technology struck Walter Benjamin as elements of a miraculous existence promoted in cartoons, which – consolingly, redemptively – suffuses with magical impulses all those alienated existences that are set adrift within nature and second nature alike.<sup>8</sup> (*What are these animated entities? – at one and the same time, they morph from and into humans, animals, things – and also they are nothing but ... animations.*) Seen through Adorno’s eyes, the elimination of subjectivity, by the ‘culture industry’, is premised on subjectivity’s migration into the object (the very mechanism of Marx’s fetishism of commodities). But if we manage to regard this with a **shudder**, a frisson of fear mingled with anticipation (*shudder always contains an element of anticipation .... I shudder at the very thought ...*), then the mirrorworld might yet be an upset world, a world that could be shattered, for us.

**Edwina Ashton** born 1965, London, UK. Lives in London. Recent exhibitions include Pictoplasma, Berlin, D (2009); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, J (2007); Camden Arts Centre Reading Room, London (2006), Peer, London, (2005).

**Ann Course** born 1965, Watford, UK. Lives in London. Screenings include ‘Break Even’, International Film Festival Rotterdam, NL (2010); Image Forum, Japan (2002). Exhibitions include ‘Mutti ist böse’ Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin, D (2008); solo exhibition, Mercer Union, Toronto, CDN (2005); ‘The Animators’, Angel Row, Nottingham, UK and touring (2005/6); ‘A Century of Artists’ Film in Britain’, Tate Britain, London (2003/4); ‘East End Academy’ Whitechapel Art Gallery (2004); ‘Light Box: Art Now’, Tate Britain (2003).

**Barry Doupé** born 1982 Victoria, BC, Canada. Lives in Vancouver, CDN. He is a member of The Lions Collaborative Drawing Group (www.lionspire.ca). His films have been widely screened including at the Ann Arbor Film Festival, Michigan, USA (2006); the Anthology Film Archives, New York, USA (2006, 2009); the Lyon Contemporary Art Museum, F (2006); the Pleasure Dome, Toronto, CDN (2007, 2008); Whitechapel Gallery, London (2008); Tate Modern, London (2007).

**Avish Khebrehzadeh** born 1969, Tehran, Iran. Lives in Washington DC, USA and Rome, Italy. Recent solo exhibitions include Albion Gallery, London & MACRO, Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome, I (2008); Conner Contemporary Art, Washington D.C, USA; Museum of Art, RISD, Providence, RI, USA; Galleria S.A.L.E.S., Rome, I (2006).

**Matt Mullican** born 1951, Santa Monica, California, USA. Lives in New York City, USA & Berlin, D. He has exhibited internationally since the 1970s. Exhibitions in 2008 include: Whitney Biennial 2008, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, USA; STUK Kunstencentrum, Leuven, B (solo).

**Raymond Pettibon** born 1957, Tucson, Arizona, USA. Lives in Hermosa Beach, California, USA. Pettibon has been exhibiting internationally since the 1980s. Solo exhibitions in 2009-2008: URAI, Istanbul, Turkey; Museum of Contemporary Art at Goldman Warehouse, Miami, FL, USA; Museum Morsbrioch, Leverkusen, D; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, RO. Group exhibitions in 2008 include: Guggenheim Museum, Berlin, D; Vancouver Art Gallery, CDN; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA.

**Naoyuki Tsuji** born 1972, Shizuoka, Japan. Lives in Yokohama, J. Recent solo exhibitions/screenings: Tomio Koyama Gallery, Kyoto, J (2009); Corvi-Mora, London, UK (2008); Museum of Modern Art, New York (screening) & Gallery Simon, Yokohama, J (2007); Uplink X, Tokyo, J & Yokohama Red Brick Warehouse No.1, J (2005); Iwasaki Museum, Yokohama, J (2002).

**Markus Vater** born 1970, Düsseldorf, Germany. Lives in London, UK. Recent solo exhibitions include Wilhelm Hack Museums, Ludwigshafen, D (2009); Sies + Höke Galerie, Düsseldorf, D (2008); art agents gallery, Hamburg, D, (2007); ZINGERpresents, Amsterdam, ND. Recent group exhibitions include Leeds City Art Gallery (& touring), UK (2009); Museum Franz Gertsch, Burgdorf, CH; Museum Baden, Solingen-Gräfrath, D; Fundament Foundation, Tilburg, ND (2007); Studio Voltaire, London, UK (2005).

<sup>[1]</sup> T.W.Adorno, ‘Transparencies on Film’, The Culture Industry, (London: Routledge, 1991), p.154.

<sup>[2]</sup> Adorno/Eisler, Composing for the Films, p.59.

<sup>[3]</sup> This argument is voiced in Dialectic of Enlightenment (1947), co-authored by T.W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer.

<sup>[4]</sup> T.W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, (London: The Athlone Press, London 1997) p.80.

<sup>[5]</sup> T.W. Adorno subtitled his 1951 book Minima Moralia ‘Reflections from Damaged Life’.

<sup>[6]</sup> T.W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, (London: The Athlone Press, 1997) p.246.

<sup>[7]</sup> T.W. Adorno, Aesthetic Theory, (London: The Athlone Press, 1997) p.331.

<sup>[8]</sup> Walter Benjamin, Gesammelte Schriften vol.II.2, (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 1991) p.218–9.

<sup>[9]</sup> Esther Leslie is Professor in Political Aesthetics, Birkbeck, University of London and author of ‘Hollywood Flatlands: Animation, Critical Theory and the Avant-garde’, (2002), ‘Synthetic Worlds: Nature, Art and the Chemical Industry’, (2005), ‘Walter Benjamin’ (2007).

The Drawing Room Patrons: Elizabeth Bauza, Marie Elena Angulo & Henry Zarb, Mina Park. Corporate Patrons: John Jones.

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The Drawing Room forthcoming exhibition: 29 April – 20 June 2010
Melanie Jackson The Ur-plantze (Part 1)

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