

Press Release

The Cob Gallery is proud to present a group display of three emerging artists for Drawing Now 2017.

Allen, Pugh and Roissetter are individually known for their labour intensive explorations of drawing's potential- presented together the scope and versatility of the medium is revealed.

All three artists turn to the transformative process of drawing as a form of storytelling and or catharsis exploiting the medium as a way of understanding and investigating patterns in nature, collective consciousness, human experience and personal memory. In their practices we see a celebration of dynamism, energy and movement created by the act of drawing itself whilst their works simultaneously capture a quiet intensity in their individual artistic expression. There is a reveal of the unlimited potential of drawing in their abandonment of traditional methods and employment of a variation of unique and contemporary approaches to the mark making process - be it drawing in bleach, gunpowder and fire or meticulously and repetitively drawing with a needle, or finding beauty in using drawing as a means to destroy, deface and distort.

Focus artist: Emilie Pugh

"In all my work I am interested in capturing a sense of movement- flux, change and the transient nature of all things It's not important to me but rather more simply as energy in motion."

Pugh's work is guided by an interest in the interconnectivity of all living things "from the spiritual to scientific" to the micro to the macro and the conflicting or confluent universal forces that govern them. Pugh is compelled by the tensions that exist between the transient and the permanent; between form and the void, and what is material and immaterial.

Pugh is compelled by the immediacy of drawing and the delicate subtleties that can exist within it. She tends to draw with individual lines rather than tone to trace contours and feel around an unfolding thought or sensation. Her work is driven by an intrigue in the point of contact between the artist and surface; how the viewer can trace the hand or arm movement to unravel the drawing. "I like how the largest arcs are my maximum arms reach and the smallest the flick of my wrist. I think drawing

She draws with gunpowder, fire and bleach to gently map the subtle "conflicting or confluent universal forces that govern life." She likens the gentle intricacies within her work to a whisper; they make you lean forward, engage and notice the subtleties nearly invisible to the human eye. It has the capacity to lure the viewer towards it, rather like a whisper might compel you to lean towards it. My drawings are often very detailed and time-consuming. It's important to me that they do take time; it becomes a kind of record. I feel energy and time gets embedded in the drawing and can be sensed when you look at it."

With recent works, Pugh incorporates mirror to interact with her drawings, often meaning the viewers reflection is visible in the lines of the form. This interaction can be seen as the meeting point of minds between artist and viewer. The act of viewing it alters the works appearance as it shifts with the viewers position and movement sometimes obscuring the viewers ability to see the work in its entirety-an inverted perceptual experience.

In both works Anatomy of Thought and Whorl, dynamic and rhythmic forms materialise through linear patterns of ink, but dissolve into burned sections. These intricate burnt holes are made using the very tip of a lit incense stick to prick holes into rice paper.

Also on display are a selection from Pugh's Nocturne series. Almost nebular in appearance, reminiscent of swirling galaxies or collapsing stars,, these works were initially inspired by the Surrealist movements 'unconscious drawings' in marbled paper and are drawn in bleach following the artists search for a luminescent material that felt almost electric. "The dark blue, purple background and glowing but indecipherable forms are like peering into the night sky, deep water or indeed your own thoughts and memories in your own mind. I want my work to have an ambiguity to leave it up to the viewer to decide what they see it as. "

Becky Allen

With a heavy emphasis on comparative mythology Allen takes inspiration from Greek, Roman, Hindi, Buddhist and Nordic mythology- Allen's particular focus is the female perspective derived from these myths. She underpins this with a simultaneous interest in ancient stories that involve fabric and material and their relationship to cultures worldwide. Her work also celebrates the beauty of natural elements inherently related to each story whilst aiming to link historic and spiritual stories from around the world to focus on their intrinsic universality of meaning. Fascinated by the inchoate nature of form and capturing the simultaneous duality of both reality and abstraction, Becky Allen's imagery is created with intense mark-making by either pen, pencil or needle. Her specialisms lie within drawing in which the organic progression of her marks is transformative, forming images that have a natural and rhythmic quality. Inspired by domestic textile production and characterised by her repetitive use of pattern, the works assume a material quality. Meditative by nature and embodying patience, the marks repeat in continuous streams of consciousness. The repetitive and ambitiously laborious nature that characterise the production of the pieces can endure over a period of weeks- previous drawings range in size from two to four and a half meters in length. The ritualistic state reached when drawing acts as a form of meditation creating a place of silent study or a space for introspection and tranquility

The works on display are from an ongoing series of drawings made on handmade Chinese bamboo paper. The process of repeating drawn lines reflects ancient Eastern philosophies on the cyclical nature of time, with each end a new beginning. The concepts of Samsara, wandering and circuitous change and Yantra, a geometrical symbol used in rituals and meditation, inform the boundless cyclicity of the drawings.

Cat Roissetter

Roissetter employs a labour intensive drawing method that she overlays onto source imagery including personal photographs and archive illustration. She deliberately mistreats her source material, in such a way they transgress through sun-bleaching, dust- gathering, scale-collecting, damp and general rot. Through the neurotic observation of the imagery she then degenerates the forms through continual distortion of drawing.

The early works of 'Somnambulists' Flight Prep' contain the barely formed vignettes evocative of the forms found in classical illustration and the traditional English picture book. Roissetter became absorbed in drawing the figure of the Victorian workhouse child, relinquishing them from their tragic little destinies as they dance and levitate around grassy knolls with hoofed creatures well accustomed to the savagery of life.

The large graphite works 'Violent Ordeals' evolved from Roissetter's obsession with a collective English past to her own existential one. This time from a 5 year hoarding of childhood photographs which have been allowed to fester in the studio. The perverse inclination to pull apart each figure and scrutinise each nook and cranny of past playgrounds allowed a body of drawings to materialise.

