

Drawing as social gesture (Amiens, 9–10 Oct 25)

Amiens, France, Oct 9–10, 2025

Deadline: Dec 31, 2024

Marine Schütz, Marseille

Drawing as a social gesture. Developments in the theory and practice of drawing through the lens of ethnicity, class and gender.

Organisation :

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Localisation, department of visual arts, UFR des arts,
30 rue des Teinturiers, 80000 Amiens.

Over the last twenty years or so, artists' use of drawing has demonstrated that it allows to “reflect on and actively engage with the world” (Fortnum 2021). Able to bring about change, often starting with the way artists themselves choose to respond to their experience and their environment, this familiar, lightweight device, porous to both visual technologies and thought, is increasingly used as a catalyst.

Contrary to the view that drawing was a blind spot in artistic debate in the 20th century, since the 1990s there has been a resurgence of interest in this field on the part of artists such as Kiki Smith, Nicola Eisenman and Raymond Pettibon. Since the 2000s, issues of power and domination in the matrix of gender, race and class seem to have been added to the old so-called critical motifs, which may have appeared more clearly in the drawings of previous generations (consumption, the art market, the geopolitical situation, etc.). However, except for a few texts by Benjamin Buchloh or Karen Kurczynski, who argued that the critical dimension of contemporary drawing was linked to its material resistance, this historiography is still lacking.

The aim of the symposium is to fill this gap and add to the field of historical and critical knowledge of drawing by focusing on a particular moment in its development, on the scale of exhibitions and publications, in Europe as well as in North Africa and in the United States.

Drawing's own resources, such as its ‘indeterminacy’ (Kurczynski 2014) and its ‘relational dimension’ (Ed Crema 2010), seem to us to be key aspects to be taken into account in order to understand why artists who aspire to disturb difference rather than fix it are increasingly using drawing. These qualities of drawing enable artists to respond to localised histories born of the effects of globalisation or to challenge conservative representations (Sofiane Ababri, Pélagie Gbaguidi).

The aim of the symposium is to study the uses and discourses surrounding the practice of drawing as a social gesture, encouraging analysis of the links that are forged between identity

and drawing through the circulation between drawing and theory and the evolution of contemporary drawing forms. As the exhibition Pushing the paper (British Museum Seligman) reveals, wall drawing and performance are forms that are making a comeback in this context. The question of the relationship between artists and the image will be one of the issues to be explored. As a space of openness, hybrid with others as well as with other visual technologies and images (Krma 2014) or of withdrawal (Derrida 1990), the very materiality of drawing must be considered in order to reconsider the way in which artists approach the field of representation, particularly those which, by reifying otherness, have reinforced their disadvantage.

Drawing on the resources available at the Frac Picardie and on a partnership established between the UFR des Arts and this institution, the colloquium aims to bring together proposals from international researchers, museum practitioners and artists who are able to advance research in this field and who wish, without exclusion, to engage in reflection on one of the following four issues:

- (1) the development of drawing as a key vehicle for addressing issues of ethnicity, gender and class.
- (2) the development of drawing as a tool for social and collective action.
- (3) the links between the development of art education and postcolonial and feminist theory and drawing.
- (4) the place in contemporary drawing for the legacy of the gestures of the pioneers of drawing (processual, feminist, etc.) in the 1970s and 1970s.

The propositions (of maximum 2000 signs) are to be sent before the 31st December 2024

In English, French or German

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Reference:

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