Symposium programme

8th July 2016
11-11.10 am
Introduction and welcome: Symposium convenor, Professor Roger Sabin

11.10-11.50
Keynote Lecture:
Pascal Lefevre, Evolving drawings and their changing interpretation

11.50 – 12.30
Tullio Viola, Peirce on Experimenting with Icons

12.30 – 1.10
Viviane Schwarz and Ellan Parry: The Theatre of Illustration

1.10-2.10 Lunch

2.10-2.50
Ian Horton, Let’s Start a Magazine (a Hard Werken Production)

2.50 – 4.30
Panel discussions and performances: contributions from illustrators who are either working on, or have recently completed, PhDs

2.50-3.10: Filipa Malva, Of Lines, Zoom and Focus: mediating drawing in performance

3.10-3.30: Luise Vormittag, Making (the) subject matter: Illustration as interactive, collaborative practice

3.30-3.50: Stephanie Black, Plume of Feathers: Performativity and Performance

3.50-4.10: Maria Hayes, The Seventh Egg

4.10-4.30: Discussion / audience questions

4.30 – 4.50
Camilla Brueton, Framing the City

4.50-5.00
Concluding remarks
An intriguing sequence in the French art documentary Le Mystère Picasso (Henri-Georges Clouzot 1955) shows the famous Spanish artist drawing on a blank screen. By continually adding new lines, the various constellations of lines refer to quite different objects: they evolve from flowers over a fish to a rooster, notwithstanding that the earlier representations are still included. What makes our interpretation change over time from one dominant interpretation to another? In collaboration with my students of LUCA School of Arts (Brussels) a new evolving drawing was conceived in the Spring of 2016. Under controlled conditions the video of the evolving drawing was shown to spectators; after each of the 15 phases of the drawing the interpretation of the participants was registered. I will present for the first time some preliminary results of this empirical study.

Pascal Lefèvre is special guest professor in the arts at LUCA, School of Arts (campus Sint-Lukas Brussels). He has widely published (in 9 languages) on graphic narratives and other forms of visual culture (like cinema). A recent publication is ‘No Content without Form. Graphic Style as the Primary Entrance to a Story’ in The Visual Narrative Reader (edited by Cohn 2016, Bloomsbury). More information on <sites.google.com/site/lefevrepascal/home> and on <luca-arts.academia.edu/PascalLefèvre>
Well-known as the founding father of contemporary semiotics and as the initiator of philosophical pragmatism, Charles S. Peirce was also a very original figure with regard to the theory and practice of drawing. A brief glance at his manuscripts shows that he made use of drawings of all sorts to push forward his reflections, often taking inspiration from the specific use of pictorial techniques in the disciplines he was well versed in, such as mathematics or biology. He also invented a system of graphical logic which he claimed to be both more powerful and more complete than usual symbolic notations. And in an effort to captivate his audience’s attention, he often made use of drawings in public lectures.

Alongside this concrete drawing praxis, Peirce offered a theoretical justification for the use of drawing in science and philosophy: a justification that is grounded on both his semiotics and his pragmatist understanding of cognition. Iconic signs, he claims, are the only kind of sign that have a real informative power, thanks to their ability to always disclose more properties of their object than those that were sufficient to determine their construction. But this informative or heuristic power does not require any passive contemplation on the part of subjects. Rather, it is only achieved by means of concrete, manipulative experiments with icons – as Peirce says, “with the aid of pencil and plenty of paper”. While discussing the most significant implications of these ideas, I will claim that they also suggest a way of looking at aesthetic values as overlapping with cognitive ones, since in both cases what is at stake is our ability to cope with the challenges posed to us by the environment, by means of experimentation practices that extend over time.

Tullio Viola is post-doc researcher in philosophy at the Humboldt University in Berlin. His areas of specialization are aesthetics, semiotics, philosophy of culture, and the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophy (in particular American Pragmatism). He has published a number of articles on Peirce, and co-edited a book on the relationship between drawing and thinking in Peirce: Das bildnerische Denken: Charles S. Peirce, Berlin 2012.
Viv Schwarz and Ellan Parry share a studio, a kitchen and some cats. Watching each other at work, not at work, and the bits in between, they became intrigued by the instances when their work and working processes seemed to overlap, and noticed that tools, exercises and perspectives from one discipline could usefully be borrowed or co-opted for the other. The Theatre of Illustration masterclass was created by Viv, Ellan and their colleague and sometime studio-mate Sarah Grange from an eclectic tool-kit of processes, games, theories and materials squirreled and magpie-ed from their combined experience in theatre design, devising, writing and authorial illustration. It first took place in 2015 at the Centre for Children’s Literacy in London. Aimed primarily at experienced author-illustrators, the workshop was designed to entice them away from their desks and introduce them to a practical, physical and participatory experience of scenographic and theatrical processes, which could then be carried over into their illustration practice, resulting in the semi-improvised creation of original picture books. Or their money back! This talk will describe the practical experience of running and participating in this workshop, along with some of the thinking behind it.

Theatre designer Ellan Parry trained at Wimbledon and Motley; she is a previous winner of the Jocelyn Herbert Prize and a Linbury Prize finalist. Her designs for theatre, opera and dance have been shown nationally and internationally. Current projects include the West End transfer of cult hit Rotterdam. She will shortly be starting a PhD in gender and performance.

Internationally published London-based children’s author and illustrator Viviane Schwarz was born in Germany and studied illustration in the UK. She recently won the Little Rebels Award for I Am Henry Finch, and was twice shortlisted for the Kate Greenaway Medal. She also teaches, lectures and designs interactive games and workshops.
This presentation will examine the relationship between the graphic staging of the performance Let’s Start a Magazine and the visual style of the cultural magazine Hard Werken, both produced in Rotterdam in the early 1980s. Let’s Start a Magazine was created by the performer Ton Lutgerink and described by a contemporary reviewer as “…a collage of dance, movement, mime, song, spoken word, music and images… based on 23 poems by E. E. Cummings… the performance unfolds with the diversity of a magazine’. The performance of 23 ‘movements’ did not literally illustrate the poems but took them as a point of departure with the staging reflecting the notion of collage through the addition and removal of graphic elements by the actors.

The magazine and stage performance are directly linked by one of the members of Hard Werken, Tom van den Haspel, who designed both the staging for the performance as well as the posters promoting the event. Based on a detailed visual analysis of the magazine and stage design, it is argued that, in both form and intent they were significant in the early 1980s in heralding Rotterdam as the creative centre of the Netherlands and marking the emergence of a movement that blurred disciplinary boundaries.

The magazine Hard Werken also took collage as starting point for its layouts, using experimental yet classically informed typography and illustrated with gestural painted forms and constructed photographic images. The magazine provocatively promoted Rotterdam as a creative city in direct opposition to the dominance of Amsterdam as the cultural capital of the Netherlands. The innovative graphic form of the magazine is not surprising as key members of the editorial board (Henk Elenga, Gerard Hadders, Tom van den Haspel, Willems Kars and Rick Vermeulen) went on to form an equally influential graphic design practice, also called Hard Werken, active from 1980 to 1994.

Ian Horton is Contextual and Theoretical Studies Coordinator across the School of Design at London College of Communication, University of the Arts London. His present research is focused in three related areas: experimental typography, Dutch graphic design and comic books.

With Professor Roger Sabin he organizes the Comic Studies Network at the University of the Arts London. He has recently presented papers on self-published comic books and creative freedom; experimental typography and curatorial practices; information design and graphic narratives at international conferences by organisations such as the Comics Forum, Comics Grid, Graphixia and the International Association of Word and Image Studies.
Filipa Malva

Of Lines, Zoom and Focus: mediating drawing in performance

Drawing is both an individual and a collective collaborative process. The dual and simultaneous ability of drawing to registry and reflect upon action allows for incidents and absences, it is open to change and to chance, an integral part of the rehearsal process. As an instrument for the design of scenography, it can be at the centre of the mise-en-scène.

Real-time or pre-recorded drawing sequences are used in performance as scenographic components of a scene, in contrast or in complement with performers’ movements and gestures. Drawings can be operated on stage or off-stage opening a visual and spatial exchange between the page and the stage. Mediated through a camera and a screen, a drawing can change scale, texture and colour, offering the drawer-scenographer a chance to open a scene into multiple fictional places.

This talk describes and analyzes examples of the use of drawing in the show O Meu País é o Que o Mar Não Quer (My Country is What the Sea Does not Want, directed by Ricardo Correia, Casa da Esquina, Coimbra), looking at the different aspects drawing is performed and mediated through camera, screen and actor, as a process of amplifying or (re)focusing the scenography. It also examines the processes of collaboration between scenographer and performer, which happened in rehearsal and in performance and how they impacted on the operation of live-drawing.

Filipa Malva is a scenographer and drawer. She has a degree in Architecture and a MA in Performance Space. She works with Casa da Esquina and O Teatrão in Coimbra, and collaborates regularly with O Bando, Cornalusa and other Portuguese companies. She has extensive experience as an illustrator and scenic artist.

She has a PhD in Theatre Studies/Scenography from the University of Coimbra, where she is a guest lecturer and is preparing her post-doc project on Drawing for Performance.

She is a founding member of the Portuguese Association of Scenography (APCEN) and a member of Inter-Disciplinary.Net’s Steering Group for Performance.
Making (the) subject matter: Illustration as interactive, collaborative practice

Luise Vormittag

Traditional models for operating as a commercial illustrator are being affected by a rapidly changing media landscape and a reduction in commissioning budgets. Illustration as a discipline can use this time of financial uncertainty and change to reflect upon related fields in the creative industries and as well as referring back to its own core values, skills and objectives.

In the context of fine art there have been a number of terms and practices discussed over the last decades that centre around social engagement and collaboration: relational aesthetics (Nicolas Bourriaud), new genre public art (Suzanne Lacy), connective aesthetics (Suzy Gablik) and dialogical aesthetics (Grant Kester). Similarly, design has seen a variety of initiatives and organizations that focus on engaging with communities in order to improve people’s lives in meaningful ways while taking into account complex social, political and environmental challenges.

Illustrators can use elements of these practices to expand their remit while continuing to take advantage of their core skill of giving visual form to externally given content for a particular audience. Taking responsibility for generating content through outward-facing engagement while also having a stake in the methods of distribution opens up a wealth of opportunities that promise to be productive for the discipline.

Luise Vormittag is a London based artist, designer, illustrator and educator. She practiced under the name Container in various collaborative constellations from 2002-2014 and has worked on a broad range of commissions for national and international clients. She trained as an illustrator, graphic designer, photographer, fine artist and theorist and her creative practice reflects this eclectic education. She now works as a lecturer at Central Saint Martins on the Graphic Communication Design programme and is studying towards a PhD at London College of Communication.
This talk will begin with questions concerning the performativity of the written thesis that arose from practice-led PhD research and whether it does what it says, specifically in relation to the argument’s location within the “more plausible but less sharp” writing (Price, 2006). However, illustration offers the possibility of taking an argument directly to the viewer by way of image/text relationships, sequential imagery and in the case of this talk’s focus a live performance of all of these things set to music. At this point the discussion will shift to research-led practice to bring research outcomes directly to the viewer.

By dissecting the issues that arise from considering time in relation to this project we will explore questions related to the maker and the viewer; of authorship and openness, and commitment to an outcome by the audience. Negotiating the balance of words, pictures and music is a challenge to my understanding of illustration as counterpoint; an opportunity for practice to provide a voice in relation to theory. Time also defines the audience and dictates to them to some extent, as the commitment of time demanded by live music discourages the casual punter from a visual background and reinforces the stratification of that artform’s audience. This is set to the backdrop of institutional demands for ‘significance’ and ‘impact’.

To counter this and be less dictatorial with the audience’s time, the discussion will move on to packaging up the underlying research and visual outcomes (research for and research in illustration, to use Bordo’s terms) into an alternative form and the questions that raises in turn. The challenge of translating the temporal aspect of the project into papers and pages returns the enquiry to the starting point of this talk; the tools illustration has at its disposal to make an argument through image and text in book form, and to try to offer an alternative to performance that reflects some of its principles.

Stephanie Black is a practitioner-researcher in illustration, and completed a practice-led Ph.D. at the University of the West of England (Bristol). She has exhibited nationally and internationally, works to commission, and is also co-editor of an online drawing research project called Hatch. Stephanie also writes about illustration, focusing on the methods employed and theoretical territory it traverses.
This presentation is more performance than paper. Drawing movement in performance has long been my passion.

There is a nationwide effort to reintroduce Ospreys, which ten years ago had almost disappeared from the UK. In 2002 someone spotted an Osprey in this area of North Wales and in 2003 a nest was located. The RSPB organized projection for the birds until 2013. When the RSPB pulled out, a team of volunteers established Glaslyn Wildlife: Bywyd Gwyllt to continue to protect and encourage the breeding Osprey’s and the Glaslyn Osprey Centre was established in 2004.

High definition cameras and state of the art binoculars and scopes are all in use at the Glaslyn Osprey centre. However, it turned out that there is still a place for the hand drawn image. Last year I walked into the centre and asked if they would like an artist-in-residence. They decided they would, so an informal arrangement followed where I drew the Ospreys from the live video feed in the centre as often as I could throughout the season. As the drawings emerged I put them up on display and many were sold to the volunteers and visitors. Everyone loved watching the images come into being. A few times children gravitated to me and I offered them paper and pen and we would draw together. One volunteer told me he was waiting for the drawing he wanted. He monitored my progress carefully, and when I finally drew ‘the one’ – he recognized it.

The breeding pair at Glaslyn successfully raised 23 chicks between 2004 and 2014. However, in 2015, disaster struck. Mr. G, the breeding partner of Mrs. G, didn’t return. It looked like there would be no chicks that summer. Then surprising things happened. I will tell you the full story through the drawings. This year the centre has set up a live video feed and I will use this to demonstrate my drawing process and invite you to join in. Bring a sketchbook.

http://www.glaslynwildlife.co.uk/

Dr. Maria Hayes is a visual artist who has developed a method of drawing movement from observation using video projection technology. She has collaborated with dancers, musicians, storytellers and performers throughout the UK and Europe.

As an educator she received the Drawing Inspiration Award from the Big Draw in 2011, and in 2012 Action for Children’s Arts gave her a Members Award in recognition of the contribution her work makes to the enrichment of children’s lives through the arts.

In 2013 Hayes was awarded a PhD in Fine Art from Aberystwyth University.

You can see more of her work at www.mariahayes.info
Framing the City is a visual essay that reflects on the construction of images and the fabric of place. Combining original collages and writing by Camilla Brueton with quotes from theorists and artists who influence her, it presents the city as a living collage. Hopes, dreams and optimism from different decades are embedded in the built environment; constantly framed and reframed by our movements and actions as we go about our daily lives.

Camilla Brueton is a London based artist interested in the construction of place. Recent group shows include CHROMA, Safe House 2, Peckham London (2016); ART/ Converters!, Studio 1.1, Shoreditch, London (2016); We All Draw, Bargehouse, Oxo Tower Wharf, London (2015); The Locale, McCune Smith, Glasgow (2015); Assembly, Cookhouse Gallery, London (2014). Brueton also writes, and has the following published: ‘Framing the City’ a visual essay, JAWS, Volume 1, Issue 2, Intellect (2015), ‘In search of hope and optimism at Clapham Junction, Illustrated essay’ and ‘Perspectives on Urban Motorways and Elevated Roadways’ both published by Interartive.org. Brueton is the Postgraduate Community Coordinator at UAL, and completed MA Drawing at Wimbledon College of Arts in 2014.
Aurora Melchor is a Visual Storyteller and Illustrator, who draws live, documenting and amplifying events or parties. Armed with brushes instead of a camera, she produces reportages of events as they are happening. Clients range from organisations such as PWC and General Assembly to conferences such as EuroIA and UX Bristol. She has worked in Spain, Bulgaria, Poland and the UK. She is also a trainer in Visual Scribing.

Aurora is available for hire at events or for training, so contact her if you’re interested:
http://www.auroramelchor.com/

She is also passionate about comics and is participating in the Awesome Possum Anthology this year as well as having several projects underway.

Woodrow Phoenix is a British comics artist and writer who also works in the fields of editorial illustration, graphic design, font design and children's books. He is known for his experimentation with illustrative and graphic styles, offering up an incongruous mix of the cute and the sinister. His graphic story ‘End of the Line’ first appeared in The Brighton Book, a mixed-media anthology published by Myriad in association with Brighton Festival. Phoenix is the author of the much-acclaimed Rumble Strip (2008), a graphics book exploring the complicated psychology of the relationship between people and cars. He is co-editor of Nelson, a collective graphic novel with 54 creators, published by Blank Slate, for whom he is also Art Director. In spring 2014 Phoenix completed a new graphic novel, She Lives, unusual for its size and dramatic presentation: a single-copy, handmade, handbound book that is one metre square.

Gareth Brookes is a graphic novelist, print maker, textile artist, small press publisher and enthusiastic home brewer. He graduated in Fine Art Printmaking at the RCA. He makes weird, humorous and experimental graphic novels and handmade comics utilizing unusual materials such as embroidery, pressed flowers and fire. In 2012 he won the First Graphic Novel Prize and his graphic novel The Black Project was published by Myriad Editions in 2013.

He runs workshops in linocut and monoprint printmaking and aspects of comics and graphic novel practice at colleges, shops, book fairs and festivals. Contact him if you would like this to happen in your vicinity:
https://gareth-brookes.squarespace.com/contact/