

21 January – 14 March 2010 (Private view Wednesday 20 January, 18.30 – 20.30)

SHUDDER

Edwina Ashton, Barry Doupé, Ann Course, Avish Khebrehzadeh, Matt Mullican, Raymond Pettibon, Naoyuki Tsuji and Markus Vater.

Presented by The Drawing Room and Animate Projects.

In this international group exhibition drawing, by nature in flux and mobile, is combined with animation techniques to create disjointed, deeply affecting narratives.

The exhibition includes three new co-commissions, by London-based artists **Edwina Ashton** and **Ann Course** and Canadian artist **Barry Doupé**, supported by Arts Council England. The works will premiere online on animateprojects.org in January 2010, to coincide with their presentation as part of Shudder.

Esther Leslie has said that for Adorno “the shudder represents the very principle of life itself, barely findable today but sometimes emergent in the experience of art”. In their attempt to imitate life, artists have the potential to trigger in the viewer genuine experience which is denied by modern rational society. Since its first use over 100 years ago animation has been seen as a means to bring the subject to life. In one of the earliest examples of drawn animation, ‘Fantasmagorie’ (1908) cartoonist Emile Cohl drew and filmed 700 drawings, double exposing each drawing and creating a two- minute film. The title is a reference to the “fantasmograph”, a mid-Nineteenth Century variant of the magic lantern that projected ghostly images that floated across the walls. The drawings are simple, a mere stick man, but in the two minutes the world is turned upside down, objects morph into animals and flowers, heads roll and the fractured narrative shifts constantly - ‘Fantasmagorie is a stream of consciousness’ which simulates lived experience.

The works in the exhibition tap into the cartoon tradition of anthropomorphism, shocking violence and deep psychological impulses but resist its narrative impulse. These artists are interested in using animation to develop characters and to investigate personal states of mind or interpersonal relationships. The medium provides the necessary capacity for metamorphosis and startling juxtapositions.

The selected artists employ a diverse range of approach and a broad range of techniques. Their often painstakingly slow procedures dislocate perceived reality in order to reveal what lies underneath. The process of the making is laid bare, leading to the de-animation of real time and the animation of rumination. Sound is often an important component, adding a sense of foreboding or absurdity at odds with the image.

As Barry Doupe points out, “Commercial computer animation has been on an unsuccessful quest for humanistic realism, in that it often tries to reproduce the human form precisely”. This exhibition exploits the capacity of drawing to bring characters to life, however basic they might be, a tradition much exploited through cartoons and caricature, and through simple animation techniques.

The exhibition is a collaboration between The Drawing Room and Animate Projects, who develop projects that explore ideas around, respectively, drawing and animation in contemporary visual arts.

Edwina Ashton



Edwina Ashton, 'Gladiators', 2008, drawing on soap, courtesy works|projects, Bristol © Edwina Ashton

Edwina Ashton makes drawings and videos, often creating room installations that combine the two. Her drawings of anthropomorphized creatures are made directly onto scraps of paper, wall coverings or soap, with throw-away lines of text adding to the disjointed sense of chance encounters and rambling thoughts. This sensibility is carried through into her videos of humans dressed in home-made insect costumes that render them unable to succeed in the physical task they struggle to perform. The absurdity and pathos of these scenarios speak of the human condition.

In the new commission, the artist's first using drawn animation, Ashton creates a "bad tempered, removed and extremely precise elephant living in a crumbling hotel on the shores of a Swiss lake".

Edwina Ashton lives and works in London and Italy. She studied philosophy at Cambridge and Fine Art at Goldsmiths. Recent exhibitions include Mori Art Museum, Toyko, Camden Arts Centre Reading Room (2006), Peer (2005).

Ann Course



Ann Course 'The News', 2004, 1 min, video, courtesy the artist, © Ann Course

"The first thing that hits the eye is the pure or downright brutal honesty that emanates from these simple, but very strong configurations. Superficially, the powerful, bold contours she uses to put her figures down on paper resemble the doodles of a bored schoolboy, who vents his boredom and frustrations in an exercise book or on a school desk. Explicit sexual fantasies, mutilation scenes, grotesque faces, ridiculous transformations and the occasional line or two of cryptic text. ...And yet something doesn't quite add up. The drawings transcend their explicit brutality. They express compassion just as much as they conjure up violence." (Edwin Carels, luxonline)

In the new commission **Ann Course** manipulates a restricted palette of language and imagery to suggest the instability of personal awareness, interpersonal relations, shifting roles and identities.

Ann Course lives and works in London. She studied at Chelsea School of Art and the Royal College of Art. Her films and sculptures have been widely screened and exhibited, including Tate Britain, the

Rotterdam Film Festival, Oberhausen film Festival, LUX gallery, First Site Gallery, Colchester and the Whitechapel Gallery, London. She teaches at Central Saint Martins School of Art.

Barry Doupé



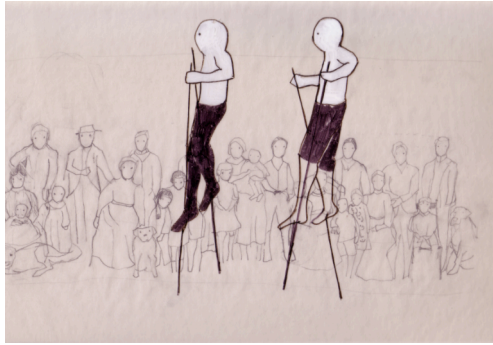
Barry Doupé, still from 'Ponytail' 2008, computer animation, 92 mins, Courtesy the artist © Barry Doupé

“The unnervingly seductive videos of Vancouver-based artist and animator **Barry Doupé** blend painterly skill with the look of early 3D video games in gothic dreamscapes, at once familiar and forever out of reach.” (programme note, Gene Siskel Film Center, Chicago)

In his new animation Doupé is investigating formal aspects of image making and how hand drawn images translate into computer graphics through a series of video portraits. “I'm interested in the reproduction of personality and countenance, and in the artifice of facial expression through animation. I'm also interested in how a characters' personality alone can carry a film, how their perception and reactions of the world provide a particular spectacle.”

Barry Doupé lives and works in Vancouver, Canada. He studied at Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, and is a member of The Lions, a collaborative drawing and publishing group. His films have been shown widely internationally, including Image Forum, Tokyo; Anthology Film Archives, New York; Oberhausen Film Festival; Tate Modern, London; and Aurora, Norwich. Ponytail, his latest feature length animation, was shown at Whitechapel London, in September 2008.

Avish Khebrehzadeh

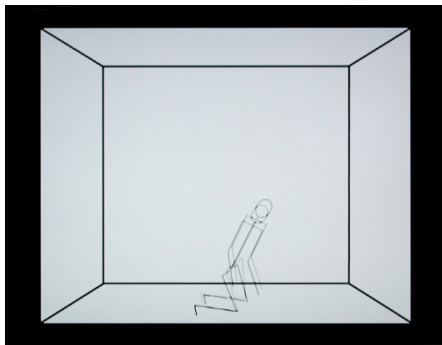


Avish Khebrehzadeh, 'Distant Memory II', 2003, graphite, olive oil, resin on layers of paper, 157 x 90" with video projection, 2 mins, 12 secs. Courtesy Albion Gallery, London © Avish Khebrehzadeh

Avish Khebrehzadeh, who will be presenting a brand new work in this exhibition, creates animations that incorporate projections onto layered drawn or painted supports. This technique creates a layering affect and together with her sparse, enigmatic imagery evokes veiled and remote worlds. Her work, in her words, "revolves around three main themes: time, identity and the man/animal duality". "I like to be frugal in giving the visual information to viewers. I want each viewer to participate and finish the story with his or her own imagination".

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

Matt Mullican



Matt Mullican, 'Dying Stick Figure, 2001, dvd. Courtesy Mai36 Galerie, Zurich

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, a description of which is captioned beneath, form part of this investigation. As a series, usually displayed on a pin-board alongside alternative representations of the human figure (for example a photograph of a corpse or of a doll), these drawings animate the life of an imagined individual.

In 'Dying Stick Figure' (2001) we watch as the standing figure before us first falters, then falls to the ground and lies there motionless, dead. The animation of the figure replaces the need for words. It is alarming that so simple a form of representation can convey so powerfully the brevity of life and the fundamental fact of our impending death.

Matt Mullican was born in Santa Monica, California, USA in 1951. He lives and works in New York City & Berlin. He has exhibited internationally since the 1970s. Recent exhibitions include: Whitney Biennial 2008, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Institute of Contemporary Art, University of Pennsylvania, USA, 2008, STUK Kunstencentrum, Leuven, Belgium (solo).

Raymond Pettibon



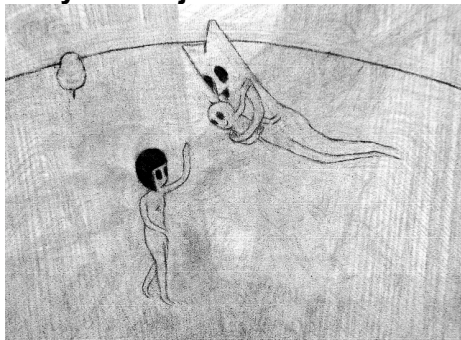
Raymond Pettibon, 'Sunday Night Saturday Morning' 2005, animation, 16 min, courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles, CA © Raymond Pettibon

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. Symbols and characters of this culture constitute repeated and therefore emphatic quotations throughout his drawings. Personal commentaries and clichéd phrases, at odds with the images, are scrawled alongside, producing hard-hitting works that belie the modesty of their production. Rendered in ink on paper, and often in a loose, expressive style, Pettibon's very personal style 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 sequences of images.

Raymond Pettibon was born in 1957 in Tucson, Arizona. He currently lives and works in Hermosa Beach, California Raymond. He received his B.A. in Economics from the University of California, Los Angeles. He has been exhibiting internationally since the 1980s. Recent solo exhibitions include, 2008: Museum of Contemporary Art at Goldman Warehouse, Miami, FL; Museum Morsbrioch, Leverkusen, Germany; National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania; 2006: Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga, Spain; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY. Group exhibitions in 2008 include: Guggenheim Museum, Berlin, Germany; Vancouver Art Gallery, Canada; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, USA.

Naoyuki Tsuji



Naoyuki Tsuji, 'Zephyr', 2009, charcoal drawing animation. Courtesy Corvi-Mora, London © Naoyuki Tsuji

Naoyuki Tsuji uses a very simple technique to create his animations. He makes charcoal drawings, photographs them, partially erased the image and then draws the next. The drawing style is similarly simple and almost child-like. However, the sum of these parts is anything but innocent. "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).

Shudder will include a brand new work, 'Zephyr' (2009), in which, in the words of the artist "a baby plays with the wind and travels in the sky". 'Zephyr' continues the themes explored in 'The Place, Where We Were' (2008).

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

Markus Vater



Markus Vater 'The Cave has been moved' 2008, animation, 5.32m, courtesy Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf © Markus Vater

Drawing is at the foundation of **Markus Vater's** practice but he also makes paintings, photographs and animations. Vater studied philosophy as well as art which has had a profound affect on his approach to art-making and in particular influences works that combine drawing and text. Many of these take the form of short animations which are drawn on the computer. '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 artists 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.

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

About The Drawing Room:

The Drawing Room is a non-profit organisation that explores ideas around contemporary drawing and makes them visible in the public domain. As the only public gallery in the UK dedicated to the investigation and support of contemporary drawing practice, The Drawing Room provides a unique resource for the promotion of drawing, its practice, theory and methodology. It presents exhibitions that are disseminated through an education programme, publications and touring exhibitions to museums and galleries within the UK and abroad. The programme provides opportunities for artists, across nationalities, generations and cultures to develop their practice.

Visit www.drawingroom.org.uk

About Animate Projects: Animate Projects commissions artists to make work that explores the relationship between contemporary art and animation, for broadcast, gallery, cinema and digital exhibition. Over 100 groundbreaking films can be viewed on animateprojects.org, alongside interviews with artists, essays and other background material. Our recent projects include Primitive, a multi-platform project by Apichatpong Weerasethakul, and Jane and Louise Wilson's Unfolding the Aryan Papers, where the artists were invited to make a work in response to the holdings of The Stanley Kubrick Archives. In September 2009, we will be launching Engine, a new online space for critical debate and discussion across the broad range of moving image and digital creativity, supported by UK Film Council. Animate Projects is funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England and by Channel 4.

Visit www.animateprojects.org

For further information please contact Mary Doyle or Kate Macfarlane at The Drawing Room on 020 7729 5333 or mail@drawingroom.org.uk

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