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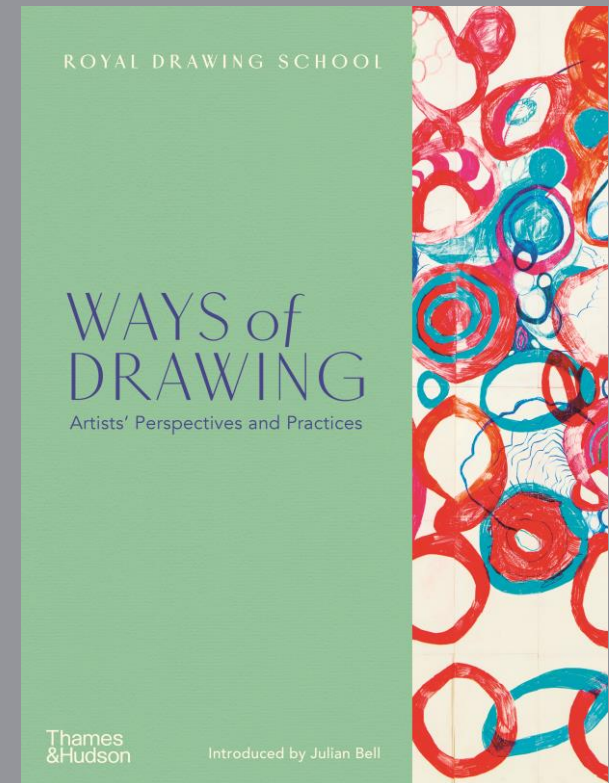
Ways of Drawing

Artists' perspectives and practices

Edited by Julian Bell, Julia Balchin and Claudia Tobin

A lavishly illustrated collection of essays on drawing as a vital intellectual, artistic and life practice, by the artists of the Royal Drawing School.

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Book

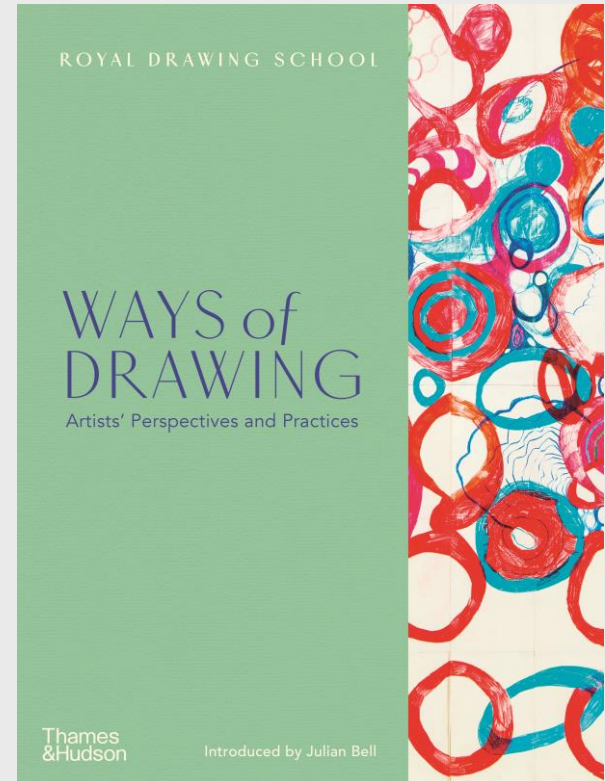
Praise for *Ways of Drawing*

‘Excellent ... this book is the most engaging, informative and affirming I have read on the making of drawing’
RA Magazine

‘Inspiring’
Artists & Illustrators

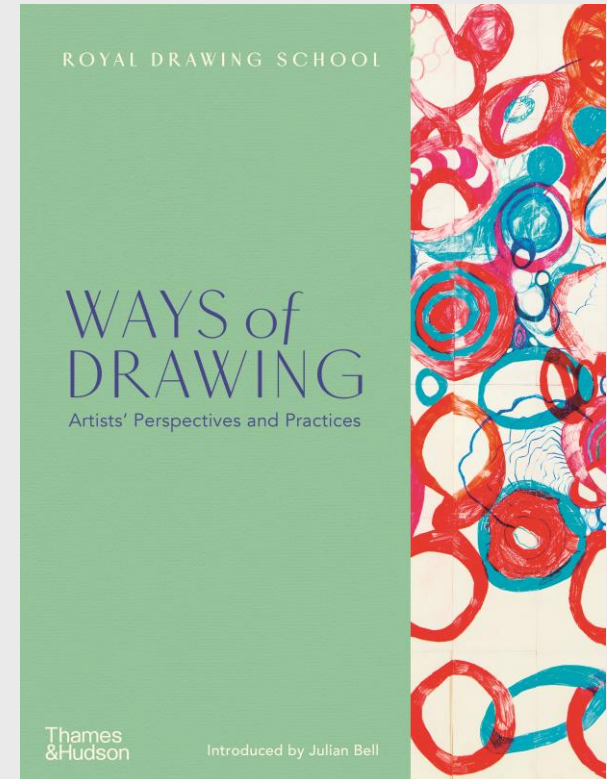
‘Grapples with the paradox of learning to shed one’s preconceptions and practices’
World of Interiors

‘More than a teach-yourself manual, offering prescriptive lessons in perspective or proportion, colour palettes or light ... the emphasis of this book is on range, on a variety of approaches’
The Times



Key Sales Points

- Contributions by renowned contemporary artists at the forefront of the drawing revival, including Julian Bell and Timothy Hyman RA.
- Inspiring reflections on mark-making as a way of thinking – including life drawing, calligraphy and comics, all abundantly illustrated.
- Short, provocative 'In Practice' pieces, from a recipe for making oak-gall ink to ideas for drawing from film stills.
- Illustrated by drawings, prints and paintings by alumni of the Royal Drawing School, and works by established artists past and present.





ROYAL DRAWING SCHOOL

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STUDIO SPACE





Learning the City *Liza Dimbleby*

Walking and drawing the streets without regard to studio agendas, as a way of learning and experiencing the city and opening up new forms of articulatory.

Drawing the city is another way of walking it, but a physical stride is needed to set the work in motion, as preamble and accompaniment. Both actions start from a sort of restlessness, an inability to stay put, to be at ease in the given world. The city that we imagine and experience around us is a familiar yet constantly changing space. It contains hints and promises of transformation. A drawing walk begins with a decision to trust these obscure potentials, to give ourselves up to the unforeseen. In what follows, I look at three ways that we – myself and fellow walkers, such as my students – might approach such a journey into the unknown.

Setting forth on the city: Rhythm

Our drawing walks are not made in hopes of perfecting an urban perspective or depicting an immaculate façade. We walk, and as we walk the nervy distractions of our mind are slowed, as we tire and yield to the rhythm of the streets themselves. Robert Musil wrote,

Cities, like people, can be recognised by their walk. Opening his eyes, he would know the place by the rhythm of movement in the streets long before he caught any characteristic detail. It would not even matter if he only imagined he could do this [...]

This trust in the rhythm of the streets is crucial to a sort of drawing that can hook itself in, underneath the geometry and façades, to show something of how it was at this moment of this day, in this place, in this person.

The person setting forth in the contemporary city is subject to the immense space beyond them, and this person attempts to conjure or field that space by marking it. We walk to establish the ground of our drawing and then we make our own incursion, fielding the space again with our marking of it. The notes or marks are the meeting point of our inner rhythm with that of the encompassing landscape; the measure of the freedom with which we can deflect this space that we are ultimately subject to, in notes or pencil strokes. Setting forth is also the setting of a rhythm.

There is the bodily pace of our walk and our thoughts; the movement of the city around us; the noise and variety of traffic, of people, a seagull's swoop. You notice the shape and pace of exchanges, the clatter of coffee

Sophie Charalambous, *Pearly kings and queens*, 2009, watercolour on paper





Left:
ALBERTO GIACOMETTI
Crowd at Intersection, c. 1965, lithograph,
42.5 x 32.5 cm (16¼ x 12¾ in.)

Crowd at Intersection is no. 16 in a series of prints, *Paris sans fin* (1969), depicting daily life in Giacometti's beloved Paris. He described the works, which seek to capture something of the fleeting, chaotic character of the city, as 'images and memories of images.'

Below:
LEON KOSSOFF
A Street in Willesden no. 2, 1982, charcoal
and pastel on paper, 59 x 65.4 cm (23¼
x 25¾ in.)

London, particularly the East End and areas of Kilburn and Willesden, has long been the focus of Leon Kossoff's frenetic, layered drawings and paintings – pictures, he says, of 'life going on.' He draws *in situ*, often returning to the same sites.



Liza Dimbleby, *title, date, materials*

shops, the repetitions and variations of a day. You stop and draw, and as you draw you notice more, and you notice how the rhythm of your drawing might change in response to the world as you go to meet it; to the speed, sound and mood of its unfolding. Some people seek out traffic junctions at rush hour; others prefer the slower motion of a cafe, a side street or shop window. If at a loss, a subway or a station exit can be a good place to re-engage. You stand, unseen, and catch the lulls and flurries of activity. Bodies emerge in random parts: legs, torsos, heads; then heads, torsos, legs shuttering from the stairs or concrete dark like the clattering segments of a Jacob's Ladder toy. Unseeing faces rise to meet you. Objects are borne upwards on a tide of random offerings; a bunch of flowers, an umbrella, oddly shaped packages – sudden gifts.

The city is full of such odd-shaped offerings, and it is only through drawing that we realise their playful strangeness; that we notice them differently. The chamois-leather omelette on a plate through a cafe window, or the exuberant array of irons, mops, or a hundred pairs of shoes walking up a shop display board. Everyday shapes and arbitrary framings become the punctuation and patterning of a page. At a market, the stuttering metal clamps that peg out the stalls' tarpaulins have a weight and accent, a percussive beat that sets a rhythm for the drawing. There is shape-shifting

Night Drawing: Letting Go *Mark Cazalet*

WHERE: outdoors, then, later, indoors

WITH: black or dark-coloured paper and gouaches, pastels or coloured pencils

Prepare some paper with a dark ground – a diluted wash of dark-coloured ink or watered down acrylic paint – or use black or dark paper. Select a range of colours you'd like to work with and lay them out so you don't have to think about your palette later. Leave this to one side.

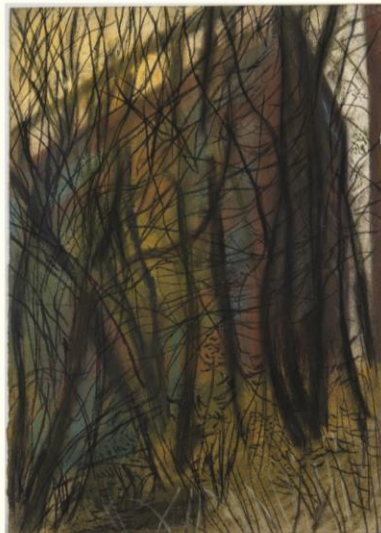
Go into a quiet garden or wood at dusk. Don't draw, just sit and stare at the rapidly changing colours, space and shifting tones. Above all, listen as night takes over from day. Allow at least twenty minutes of meditative acclimatization, firmly putting away any distracting thoughts or plans as to what you will draw.

Then, go back to your studio or wherever you like to work. Draw your experience of your complete encounter from the garden onto the paper. Think about perceptions of space and sound rather than form or how things really looked. Make considered marks to build up your surface. Work with economy rather than detail.

This approach can allow you to be less self-conscious in your drawing and less focused on the final outcome. As the poet Rumi said, 'Put your thoughts to sleep, do not let them cast a shadow over the moon of your heart. Let go of thinking.'



Holly Mills, *Untitled 1*, 2018, pastel, conté and charcoal on paper



Holly Mills, *Untitled 2*, 2018, pastel, conté and charcoal on paper



Laura Footes, *Memory of Bedford Square at Night*, 2013, ink, biro and black chalk on paper



Charlotte Ager, *Private Night Park*, 2018, charcoal, ink and gouache on paper

Graphic Medicine *Emily Haworth-Booth*

Experiencing the fallibility of your body and how drawing might help you address that experience.

I stopped drawing when I first became unwell with ME (Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, or Chronic Fatigue Syndrome). Getting dressed, eating, moving from one side of the room to another was difficult enough. Why on earth would I attempt anything beyond that?

But convalescence is boring, and eventually I reached for my sketchbook. I started making slow observational sketches of what I could see from the sofa. The folds of the curtains around the living room window, my dog snoring on a cushion, my husband reading on his iPad. One of my most disturbing symptoms was what is sometimes called 'brain fog'. This is like being drunk all the time – but with only the disorientating aspects of drunkenness and none of the good ones. Reading and writing sent me into a spin. Drawing, however, became a kind of anchor that I could drop to ground myself, to reassure myself that I was 'here', that reality was solid, vivid and encompassing.

The act of making observed drawings of my immediate surroundings was symbolically important – reminding me to stay present, rather than worrying about my illness. But its usefulness went beyond this; it also performed a medicinal function. There are several schools of thought about what causes ME, and even what it is; that is part of its slipperiness. One theory, which my own experience supported, is that it is a condition related to the over-activation of the sympathetic nervous system – also known as 'fight or flight', the crisis mode in which perceived dangers trigger a series of hormonal and physiological changes in the body. In other words: anxiety made my symptoms worse. By helping me to stay present and focus on what was physically in front of me, much like observing one's breath in meditation, the act of drawing helped me see that most of the 'danger' to which my body had been responding was imagined or remembered, rather than embodied in the actual reality of my immediate circumstances. This perceptual shift, as well as the concentrated quiet of the act itself, noticeably reduced my anxiety and slowed down my breathing and my heart rate, activating my parasympathetic nervous system: the 'rest and digest' mode which, acting as a kind of brake to the sympathetic nervous system, allows healing to take place.

Emily Haworth-Booth, extract from *Are you comfortable sitting like that?*, 2016, pencil, ink and digital processes

Graphic Medicine *Emily Haworth-Booth*

