

ON LINE EXPLORES THE TRANSFORMATION OF DRAWING THROUGHOUT THE TWENTIETH AND TWENTY-FIRST CENTURIES

Exhibition Challenges Definition of Drawing through Gallery Exhibition, Site-Specific Installations, Dance Performances, and Film Program

On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century

November 21, 2010–February 7, 2011

The Joan and Preston Robert Tisch Gallery, sixth floor

NEW YORK, November 16, 2010—*On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*,

on view at MoMA from November 21, 2010, through February 7, 2011, aims to challenge the conventional definition of drawing as a work on paper by exploring the radical transformation of the medium throughout the last century, a period when numerous artists critically examined the traditional concepts of drawing and expanded its definition in relation to gesture and form. The exhibition brings together approximately 300 works, many drawn from MoMA's collection, by over 100 artists—both canonical and less well-known—from over 20 nations. Crossing disciplinary boundaries, these works relate drawing to selections of painting, sculpture, photography, film, and dance (represented by films and documentation, as well as live performances). The exhibition is organized by Connie Butler, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art, and Guest Curator Catherine de Zegher, former Director, The Drawing Center, New York (recently appointed as Co-Director of the 18th Biennale of Sydney).

Deriving its title from the essay "On Line," which Vasily Kandinsky wrote in 1919–20, *On Line* follows artists' exploration of line as the basic element of drawing over a century and, consequently, argues for an extended field of the medium: the cutting and pasting of collage; sketching in notebooks; tracing with pen and ink; outlining with pencil, crayon, or charcoal; winding with wire and strips of cloth; wrapping and binding; and line etched on canvas or in the land. The exhibition is organized chronologically in three sections that examine different stages of this aesthetic exploration: *Surface Tension* considers the artistic drive to represent movement within a flat picture plane; *Line Extension* includes works in which lines extend beyond flatness into real time and space; and *Confluence* presents contemporary works in which line and background are fused, giving significance to the space between lines.

Through the work of a diverse group of artists, including Alexander Rodchenko, who wrote about "The Line" as module and movement, and Lygia Clark, who proposed the "organic line" in the 1960s, *On Line* argues for an expanded history of drawing that moves off the page and into space and time—as the path of a moving point or a human body in motion (the dancer tracing dynamic lines across the stage, the wandering artist tracing lines across the land). The exhibition thus includes works addressing dance, such as Gino Severini's *Dancer* (1912), Vaslav Nijinsky's

Tänzerin (1917–18), and works made by prominent dancers, such as Françoise Sullivan's *Danse dans la neige, #1–17* (1948) and Trisha Brown's *Untitled* (2007), along with films of dancers William Forsythe and Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker. A series of live performances will be presented in the Museum's Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Artium in January. As installments of MoMA's ongoing Performance Exhibition Series, these works address the idea of line as a trajectory of the human body through space. The featured artists include the Trisha Brown Dance Company, Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Ralph Lemon, and Xavier LeRoy.

The exhibition begins in the Museum's lobby with Arturo Herrera's *Walk/14 Parts* (2009), for which he repurposed his drawings into digital form for the nine lobby screens. Installed in The Agnes Gund Garden Lobby is Zilvinas Kempinas's *Double O* (2008), which consists of two strands of magnetic tape that are kept afloat and take on various shapes in the wind created by two industrial fans. Hanging from the ceiling on the sixth floor is Ranjani Shettar's *Just a bit more* (2005–06), made of thread dyed in tea. *Two Parallel Lines* (1976–2010), by Luis Camnitzer, which welcomes visitors into the first gallery, consists of one line drawn with detritus and one line written in pencil of phrases defining drawing. The work is an example of a line-generating process that flows from an exchange of responses between making and material.

The first section of the exhibition introduces the Cubist drawings of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso and the integration of collage into avant-garde art by the Cubists in 1912—among the most radical innovations in drawing of the twentieth century. Among the inspirations for the Cubist drive to construct movement within the flat picture plane were motion pictures and onstage dance, such as the performances of Loie Fuller. The desire for space in the plane of the surface was further explored in the open-form concept of the Russian Constructivists, who, by the early 1920s, expanded the notion of sculptural form through their exploration of energy and movement, as in Rodchenko's, *Non-Objective Painting* (1919) or *Spatial Construction, No. 12* (c. 1920). Similar attempts had been undertaken by the Italian Futurists, as seen in drawings by Umberto Boccioni.

Between 1923 and 1928, El Lissitzky was among the first of his generation to visualize a new, radical geometry of space and movement that blurred the boundaries of architecture, painting, drawing, and typography. Visitors will be able to experience the gravity-defying sensation of Lissitzky's geometric shapes and linear vectors wrapping around corners and launching to the ceiling in a reconstruction of the artist's Proun Room. Artists represented in this section also include Alexander Calder, Marcel Duchamp, Paul Klee, František Kupka, Lyubov Popova, Kurt Schwitters, and Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

The middle section begins in the late 1940s and 1950s, when the spatial expression of line as embodying an engagement with drawing can be traced through an investigation of the painted surface by artists working in Europe, Japan, Latin America, and the United States. Luciano Fontana advocated escaping from the imprisoning flat surface to explore the dynamic concepts of

movement, time, and space through his famous holes and linear cuts, as in *Spatial Concept* (1957). Whereas some artists were interested in the absence of lines as gaps that make the surface dynamic, causing the work to spill over and contaminate space, others, like Anna Maria Maiolino and Pierrette Bloch, became increasingly preoccupied by the material presence of the line in actual space, using things such as thread and horse hair to mend the gap and refocus on the intertexture of two-dimensional plane and three-dimensional space, as seen in Maiolino's *Desde A até M (From A to M)*, from the series "*Mapas Mentais*" ("*Mental Maps*") (1972–99), and Bloch's *Fil de Crin* works, made with horse hair, from the 1980s.

The end of the 1960s was shaped by revolutionary thinking, and artists were taking a radical stance by attacking the values of established institutions of government, industry, and culture, and even questioning whether art as the private expression of the individual still had an ethical reason to exist. Concurrent with the radical experimentation of postwar European art was the work of artists in Eastern Europe (Edward Krasiński, Karel Malich); Latin America (Leon Ferrari in Argentina, Lygia Clark, Mira Schendel, Cildo Meireles, and Anna Maria Maiolino in Brazil, Jesús Rafael Soto and Gego in Venezuela, and Cecilia Vicuna in Chile/New York); and North America (Eva Hesse, Robert Ryman, Richard Tuttle). Working from very different cultural positions, these artists explored the line apart from figurative representation, seeking instead an essence of form, and occupation of "real" or dimensional space.

The grid, formed by the intersection of multiple lines, became a touchstone for many artists in the later half of the twentieth century. While artists like Sol Lewitt, with his sculpture *Cubic Construction: Diagonal 4, Opposite Corners 1 and 4 Units* (1971), explored the regularity and infinite spatial possibilities of the grid, for artists like Cildo Meireles the intersection of lines was more politically resonant, as in his *Malhas da Liberdade (Meshes of Freedom)* series from the 1970s. Cornelia Parker's recent wire drawings from 2009, created out of metal extracted from bullets, link this classic form with the political realities of modern society.

The last section contains documentary works based on a number of outdoor projects that use line as a mapping device or a metaphor for a kind of nomadic movement of the body through time and space. Iain and Ingrid Baxter (the N.E. Thing Company) created works on the west coast of Canada by skiing in the snow (*One Mile Skied Line* – 1968). Michael Heizer realized his motorcycle drawings on dry lake beds in Nevada, seen in the photograph documentation of the performance, *Circular Surface Planar Displacement Drawing* (1970). Emily Kam Ngwarray, an Aboriginal artist, created her painting *Wild Potato* (1989) while sitting on the ground, using a network of lines that is meant to represent the spread of roots and vines in the Australian outback.

Artists today thrive on the interdependency of drawing, printing, painting, sculpture, and performance, of surface and space, and mostly of line and support, whether on paper, floor, or wall. For contemporary artists, drawing goes beyond the sheet of paper—a process that is often materialized by extrapolating lines into space—as seen in the site-specific works in the exhibition

and also in the work of such artists as Marie Cool and Fabio Balducci, Avis Newman, Joëlle Tuerlinckx, Julie Mehretu, Edith Dekyndt, and Sophie Tottie. Monika Grzymala creates site-responsive installations with tape and paper, creating lines that merge with and depart from the walls and planes of the gallery space. Her work *Untitled (skeleton of a drawing)* (2010) is installed outside the exhibition's exit, above the doorway, and spills down onto the wall of the Marron Atrium.

The exhibition is accompanied by a film program, *On Line: Drawing and Film*, focusing on films primarily from MoMA's collection by artists whose work redefines the very parameters of drawing through the investigation of the line, both static and kinetic. The film program takes place in January 2011.

SPONSORSHIP:

The exhibition and accompanying performance series are made possible by MoMA's Wallis Annenberg Fund for Innovation in Contemporary Art through the Annenberg Foundation, The International Council of The Museum of Modern Art, Maja Oeri and Hans Bodenmann, The Contemporary Arts Council of The Museum of Modern Art, and the Robert Lehman Foundation.

PUBLICATION:

The exhibition catalogue, *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century*, includes reproductions of nearly 250 works by over 100 artists in the exhibition, including Aleksandr Rodchenko, Alexander Calder, Karel Malich, Eva Hesse, Anna Maria Maiolino, Richard Tuttle, Mona Hatoum, and Monika Grzymala, among many others. Essays by the curators illuminate individual practices and examine broader themes, such as the exploration of the line by the avant-garde and the relationship between drawing and dance. *On Line* is published by The Museum of Modern Art and available at the MoMA Stores and online at MoMAstore.org. It is distributed to the trade by D.A.P./Distributed Art Publishers in the United States and Canada, and through Thames & Hudson outside North America. 9 x 10.5 in.; 216 pages; 230 color illustrations. Hardcover: \$50.00

PERFORMANCE EXHIBITION SERIES:

January—February 2011

The Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium

On Line includes a program of live performance and dance in the Museum's Donald B. and Catherine C. Marron Atrium. These performances are organized by the exhibition's curators, Connie Butler and Catherine de Zegher, with Jenny Schlenzka, Assistant Curator for Performance, Department of Media and Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art.

Performance 11: Trisha Brown Dance Company

Program consists of: *Relay Re-Laid* (2011) (based on *Roof Piece* [1971]); *Sticks* (1973); *Scallops* (1973); and *Locus Solo* (1975).

Performed on January 12, 15, and 16, at 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Performance 12: Cool Balducci

Selected untitled works (2004–09).

Performed on January 17, 19, and 20, at 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Performance 13: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker

Violin Phase from *Fase: Four movements to the Music of Steve Reich* (1982), and *The Line* (2009), in collaboration with Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François.
Performed on January 22 and 23, times to be announced

Performance 14: Ralph Lemon

Untitled (2008), with Ralph Lemon and Okwui Okpokwasili.
Performed on January 26, 29, and 30, at 3:00 p.m.

Performance 15: Xavier LeRoy

Self Unfinished (1998), a collaboration with Laurent Golding, music by Diana Ross.
Performed on February 2, 5, and 6, times to be announced

FILM PROGRAM:

On Line: Drawing and Film

January 2011

Theater 3 (The Celeste Bartos Theater), mezzanine, The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building

The intersection between the world and the line, both as a visual element and a rich metaphor for life, can be found in numerous films from the dawn of cinema in the late-nineteenth century to the present. *On Line: Drawing and Film* focuses on films from MoMA's collection by artists whose work redefines the very parameters of drawing through the investigation of the line, both static and kinetic. Films included in the program are Winsor McKay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1914); Mary Ellen Bute's *Tarantella* (1940); *Circles I* (1971), a dance film by Doris Chase; Bill Morrison's *Night Highway* (1990); and *A Season Outside* (1998) by Amar Kanwar. *On Line: Drawing and Film* is organized by Anne Morra, Associate Curator, Department of Film, and Esther Adler, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art. The program begins in January 2011. Please visit MoMA.org for schedule.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS:

Brown Bag Lunch Lectures

Monday, November 29, and Thursday, December 2, 2010, 12:30 p.m.

Education Classroom B, mezzanine, The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building

This lecture will trace the key themes of the exhibition through the work of selected artists, making an argument for a reconsideration of the idea of drawing, and its fundamental position at the heart of twentieth century art. With Esther Adler (MA, University of Maryland), a curatorial assistant in the Department of Drawings at The Museum of Modern Art. You may bring your own lunch. Tickets (\$5; members, corporate members, students, seniors, and staff of other museums \$3) can be purchased at the Museum at the lobby information desk, at the film desk, or in the Education and Research Building lobby.

Symposium: Crossing the Line: Drawing and Its Extension

Friday, January 21, 2011, 1:00–5:00 p.m.

Theater 3 (The Celeste Bartos Theater), mezzanine, The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building

This half-day symposium explores the extended field of drawing by analyzing the development of line throughout the century in two panel discussions. "From On Line to Online," moderated by Catherine de Zegher, features artists Anna Maria Maiolino, Julie Mehretu, and Luis Camnitzer, and Jean Fisher PhD, Professor of Fine Art and Transcultural Studies, Middlesex University, and writer on contemporary art. "The Performative Line," moderated by Connie Butler, includes Benjamin

Buchloh, Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Modern Art, Harvard University; Ralph Lemon, artist and choreographer; Nick Kaye, Dean, College of Humanities & Chair in Performance Studies, College of Humanities, University of Exeter, England; and Janet Kraynak, Assistant Professor of Contemporary Art, New School University. Tickets (\$10; \$8 members; \$5 students, seniors, staff of other museums) can be purchased [online](#) or at the lobby information desk and the film desk.

Modern Poets: The Political Line

Wednesday, February 2, 2011, 6:00 p.m.

Theater 3 (The Celeste Bartos Theater), mezzanine, The Lewis B. and Dorothy Cullman Education and Research Building

Artists throughout the last century have pushed line across the plane and into real space, thus questioning the relation between the art object and the world. *On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century* addresses the transformation of drawing, mark making, and gesture, as well as the role of the political line in art and everyday life. On this special evening, poet Cecilia Vicuña selects three international poets to read their own works about the political line. Participants include Will Alexander, Dunya Mikhail, and Luljeta Lleshanaku, along with translator Henry Israeli. Tickets (\$10; \$8 members; \$5 students, seniors, staff of other museums) can be purchased [online](#) or at the lobby information desk and the film desk.

MoMA AUDIO:

An audio program featuring commentary by the curators of the exhibition and artists Luis Camnitzer, Nina Canell, Françoise Sullivan, Anna Maria Maiolino, Richard Tuttle, and A. Balasubramaniam will be available at the Museum free of charge, courtesy of Bloomberg; on [MoMAWiFi](#); and as a podcast on [MoMA Audio](#) or on iTunes. MoMA Audio is a collaboration between The Museum of Modern Art and Acoustiguide, Inc. Available in English only starting November 21.

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For downloadable high-resolution images, register at MoMA.org/press.

Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019, (212) 708-9400

Holiday Hours 2010: Thanksgiving Day (Thursday, November 25), closed
Christmas Eve (Friday, December 24), 10:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m. (Museum closes early)
Christmas Day (Saturday, December 25), closed
Sunday, December 26–Monday, January 3, 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. (Museum opens one hour early)
Tuesday, December 28, 9:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. (Special Tuesday opening)
New Year's Eve (Friday, December 31), 9:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.–5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.–8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesday

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs). Target Free Friday Nights 4:00–8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

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