“Drawing as Placemaking: Environment, History and Identity”

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“Drawing as Placemaking: Environment, History and Identity”, considers a range of contemporary drawing practices which engage with historical sites of narrative, with real and imagined places, and with drawing and the body as places of making. It focuses on how drawings and drawing processes can examine and articulate our relationships to placemaking, to our concepts of home, to historical and memorial sites, to our personal histories, and to imagined and actual places. The chapters and conversations with artists expand upon the complexities of the relationship between drawing and a particular position, point, area in space, location or home.

The contributing artists use expanded drawing approaches to present different perspectives on how drawings are made, and how they can be used to describe, analyse, reimagine, transform and to make new actual, historical, and psychological places. The artist authored chapters and the conversations with artists are interwoven to facilitate broader conversations about our human interactions with place, through all our senses; what we can see, touch, feel and hear, alongside what we know, theorise or imagine. The re-evaluation of placemaking from a range of cultural perspectives highlights new stories whilst reconsidering older ones. The exploration of projected and imagined places – outer space, and the shape of the world in the future, are also explored. The book reveals new and contemporary insights into the long historical connection between drawing and placemaking and contributes to new debates around placemaking. It offers a deeper understanding of how we use drawing to better define ourselves and our place in the world.

“I Heart Canals: Drawing, Walking and Song as Placemaking” traces projects that engage with layers of history of canals and towpaths in the UK. The artistic residencies and projects initiate and align the artistic processes of walking, drawing and song making, whilst engaging with notions of placemaking through a site’s history and possible future trajectory. Mapping and Interpreting surfaces, echoes of history in the present alongside the physical, deep mapping process of examining sites, is central to the projects. The collective and cross-conversational dimension of a drawing methodology mediates through vistas of history, through a physical and pictorial spatial process of interpretation and articulation.

The historical and archetypal gesture of the canal is to connect places (and therefore people) that had never been connected before. So, using that analogy, the artist wanted to develop a drawing methodology that connected and united histories and places, layers of non-linear and unconnected narrative through walking, drawing and song making method, examining and celebrating the past in the present. It is the becoming, the promise, the future vision of a site that the artist imagines through the process of navigating through sites. The process engages with the spaces and surfaces through both the physical process of drawing to the psychological experience of walking into the unknown.

References

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Drawing Out The Monastery, Installation, Graphite Rubbings on Paper (2025) Photo by Jake Harrison