

'Fragmenting Practice, Gathering Learning: A reflective essay on myself as a Pedagogue'

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My pedagogy, like my practice, often begins with the close consideration of images, collections and environments in which images may have been made. I often fragment a historical image as the starting point for a learning exercise or I fragment an image made by the learner. In the case of life drawing which has formed the basis of my Learning in Practice Case Study, I looked within marks, my own and others. This enables me to reflect my understanding and experience of making within a learning environment and find a learning route for others. I consider my teaching to be the final stage of the re-integration of an image which can result in myself and learners developing and re-inventing forms of practice.

In the example of RCA life drawing, the contemporary life drawing produced in the six life drawing environments we created¹, moved away from late 20th Century preoccupations with the figure as subject and early 21st Century interests in the body beyond subject connected to fictional and spatial contexts². Through theory and practice based pedagogical enquiry, the contemporary life drawing that developed in our classes, explored the capacity of mark making to re-address the social, institutional and environmental structures in which we make and learn about life drawing. The temporary life rooms we created changed nearly every week and introduced a new mark making and practice opportunity with each session³. The sessions also offered an opportunity to challenge and re-invent traditional roles associated with life drawing and its influence on wider forms of creative practice. A number of our models re-addressed life modelling itself as a form of practice in our sessions with one model particularly, Dominic Blake, exploring the capacity of the pose to work in symbiotic relationship with the mark:

*"My work is a physical mode of artistic expression within which I use my body as my medium. The forms I create emerge spontaneously in solitude, and in collaboration with other artists. They are a direct emotional response to the environment in at any moment in time, to internal dialogues and to my body itself. Inspired by infinite stimuli from the arrangement of branches in a tree to music, sculpture, poetry and beyond"*⁴

Knowledge and fragmentation of historic drawing often formed a pedagogic starting point. Working with Blake, in 'Drawing Movement', I used Leonardo da Vinci's 'Neptune' drawing to begin a drawing exercise which explored not only Da Vinci's description of movement in his imagery of running horses, but used the mark to generate the pose and drawing activity⁵. In turn, learning roles were re-addressed and wider forms of practice were reconsidered. Our students have commented on how life drawing is influencing their practice and broadening practice opportunities:

*"Despite finding it really really hard (and constantly berating myself for not being able to do it) life drawing has definitely helped me loosen up and made me think a lot about my own practice and how I use drawing"*⁶

1 Gallwey, Lucy 'Learning in Practice Case Study', 2019

2 Herbert, Martin 'The Perpetual Line' in 'Drawn from Life, People on Paper', ed Hayward Publishing, ed 2016, p 13-14

3 See my Learning in Practice Case Study, Summer Term 2019

4 Blake, Dominic 'Are Life Models Artists?', 2017-19, <https://www.dominicblakelifemodel.co.uk/are-life-models-artists-1>. Accessed 24th November 2019

5 Gallwey, Lucy, 'Learning in Practice Case Study', session 6, 2019

6 Tidmarsh, Amy, //Instagram.com/Tidmarsh.studio?igshid=ntmfko1cnum5. Accessed 24th November 2019

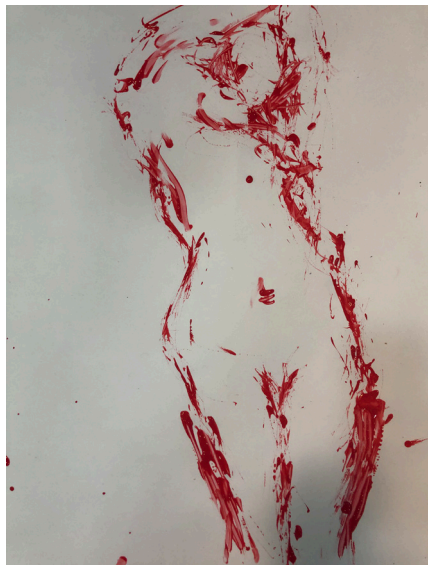
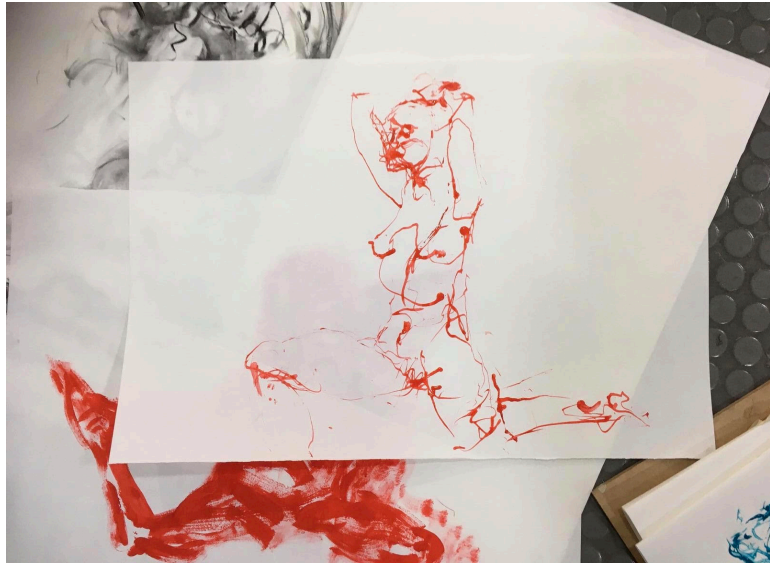


Working with Blake in Hyde Park at the end of summer 2019, exploring drawing the figure in the landscape after the Learning in Practice Case Study

My pedagogy in turn has been enriched by the integration of theory, practice and interdisciplinarity in life drawing. Initially, I used theory and reflection within my practice as a starting point for structured drawing activities but I was less involved in the activity. I now more confidently participate in the learning activity if the session requires this and I am much keener to explore the play and experimentation involved in this. In two recent life drawing exercises, I asked the group to draw with a familiar and then unfamiliar tool presented through a group drawing kit I collected over a week. Doing this helped form my pedagogy, bringing our learning together in our shared understanding and experience of new and familiar drawing tools. It also led me to make new drawings. As a result, I now identify my pedagogy as circular in nature. It starts with my practice or interest in a drawing theory and connects with the group in their exploration of it:

"I'm so grateful for the life drawing classes but more importantly the guidance and teaching offered. Such varied, creative themes and processes (even the music!) have benefited me enormously in my Textile practice. The guidance gives you permission to drop any styles or preconceptions that more than often hold you back. Being pushed out of your comfort zone, whether it's even with the tools you're using, opens up surprising and often exciting drawing results⁷"

⁷ Langmead, Lois, //Instagram.com/loislangmead?igshid+1ivpfoixznvvh. Accessed 24th November 2019.



Participating in the tools session, after the Learning in Practice Case Study when we all drew with familiar and unfamiliar tools. An good example of the circular nature of my pedagogy, with the activity feeding back into my practice. Lois Langmead's drawing, made with a screw, and mine (bottom right) with a paper clip

My background is History of Art has heavily influenced the way in which I integrate theory and practice in my pedagogy. I very often use two heads when I support learning or I'm teaching. With my objective head, which feels like my art historical one, I'm looking at images as evidence, for what they say about this moment in time and what they might be saying about a maker. My second head feels like the instinctive maker, when I'm just making and exploring materials, ideas and environments, with my interests and my observations leading me. In my recent 'Returning to Marks' session, I explored a research interest in how paintings and drawings change and evolve through time⁸. I explored the life cycle of drawing in a session which explored the evolution of narrative imagery through layered drawing and a returning to imagery that had been rejected by previous drawers⁹. This evolved through a practice based pedagogical method where I tested ideas about how layered and narrative imagery evolves through my experience of being taught life drawing and reflection of mine and others practice and pedagogical approach.

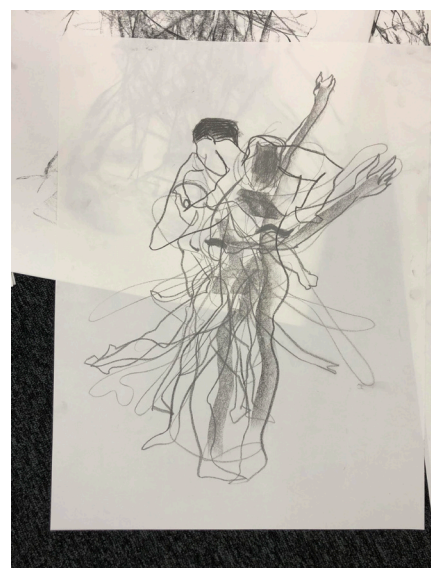
⁸ Rutherglen, S and Halle, C, 'St Francis in the Desert: Technique and Meaning', in 'In a New Light: Gio-vanni Bellini's St Francis in the Dessert', pp 81-95

An aspect of my pre-doctoral research explores the undrawing in Bellini's St Francis painting as it relates to historic and contemporary landscapes and urban contexts possibly related to the painting. In this session, considerations of the way Renaissance drawings erode and changed with time and their dependency on conservation methods to survive, related to the making and evolution of contemporary life drawing as an embraced or abandoned activity dependent on an environment and interested participants to be sustained.

⁹ See my observation exercise with Gareth Polmeer, Royal College of Art, 23rd October 2019

Aspects of Dilip Sur's life drawing and teaching for example, encourages a return to drawing and reworking of imagery¹⁰. James Lloyd's method of continual removal and building up of marks also influenced aspects of my drawing and pedagogic method in the 'Returning to Marks' session¹¹. Similarly, Francis Bacon's rejection of drawing but assertion that it could form a valuable starting point, a "kind of skeleton" .. "of the way a thing might happen", also positions drawing as a starting point, a body, through which other practices might start¹².

My BA in History of Art has also led into the aspect of my pedagogy where close looking can help learners generate a response to things. In my keenness to engage and understand things, I connect with learners, I open out ideas and introduce challenging methods and questions. As evidenced in my Learning in Practice Case Study, in a number of my life drawing sessions, discussion and close looking around a historical image, formed the start or end point of a session and lead into a wider exploration of mark making methods and influenced other practices. Blake and Wan for example both explored movement for the opportunity it offered them to create movement narratives that expanded on static poses¹³. Accompanying this aspect of my engaged, supportive pedagogy is the process of creating a learning route that integrates what I and learners bring to the room. In the example of life drawing sessions 1, 2 and 6, the group was brought together through a shared looking activity involving a historic image, which encouraged participation and created equal opportunities for learners at all levels to explore creating movement in their drawings with opportunity to feedback on the success of the method¹⁴. This pedagogical approach also allows learners to work in interdisciplinary ways and through student focused learning, cultivates a pedagogy which allows learners to improvise, play and find learning opportunities that work for them. The process is integrated, linking back to my practice, and through critical reflection allows a method to develop where everyone has opportunity to develop creative practice through a shared starting point.



Working with David Wan on the 'Returning to Marks' session, creating narrative sequences and movement, with examples of the drawing that followed

10 Sur, Dilip, <https://www.royaldrawingschool.org/royal-drawing-school-videos/dilip-sur-tutor/>, Royal Drawing School, 2019. Accessed 24th November 2019

11 Lloyd, James, <https://www.royaldrawingschool.org/artists/faculty/james-lloyd/>, Royal Drawing School, 2019. Accessed 24th November 2019

12 Black, Paul and Winner, Calvin, 'Francis Bacon: Sketching and the Skeleton in the Cupboard', Artlyst, 2015. Accessed 24th November 2019

13 Gallwey, Lucy, Learning in Practice Case Study, session 6, 2019

14 Op.cit, sessions, 1, 2 and 6

Accompanying this is an aspect of my pedagogy which developed out of learning experiences in my childhood and my MFA at Edinburgh College of Art. Whereas at Warwick University I generally felt nurtured and supported in my learning, at Edinburgh, there was a lack of professional standards in the behaviour of course leaders and the course framework. The MFA programme provided no regular tutorials, seminars, lectures and no written component accompanying practice. The pedagogical approach of my tutors was that a lack of learning structure generated learning freedoms and helped students generate progressive work which challenged institutional frameworks and traditions. My experience and the experience of many others on the programme was quite the opposite. We felt lost, we under produced and were underconfident in our learning. As a result, I took control of my own pedagogic route at art college and turned my back on the art college to a certain extent. I partly did this through walking, and walking remains an important part of my pedagogy and practice. In Edinburgh, it was the walk away from the neglectful learning room, the studio, that resulted in me finding a new learning context, a 19th Century pocket garden in Edinburgh's old town originally integrated into the city by the 19th Century botanist, town planner and 'visual thinker' Patrick Geddes as a means of dealing with the social, educational and environmental health of the city¹⁵. Geddes educational ethics inspired me to make the garden the centre of my learning and practice culminating in the regeneration and opening of the garden through my degree show 'Living by Leaves' installation¹⁶.



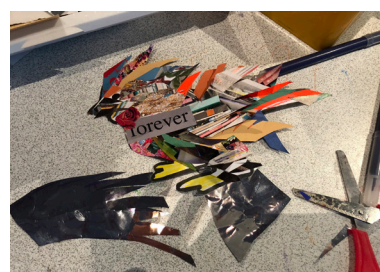
My Living by Leaves installation in the Westport Garden, Edinburgh, one of Geddes' original 19th Century pocket gardens, with an example (left) of learners viewing the installation and learning about the garden

15 Morrison, Gavin, 'Geddes and Philosophy: the Roots, the Aftermath', in Patrick Geddes' "By Leaves We Live" eds Okutsu, Johnston, MacDonald, Sadakata, ed YICA . 2005, p 109-111

16 Gallwey, Lucy, Finding Landscapes, <https://www.lucygallweylandscapes.com/3rd-gallery>. 2015. Accessed 24th November 2019.

My pedagogy as a result of this experience is attentive, supportive and engaged. It supports a persons need to learn, explore feelings, ideas and pursue their own ambitions. Students have something to say and I want to help them say it. Their communication can be verbal and non-verbal, visual and non-visual. As a result, I create supportive and intriguing learning environments in which they can communicate and express themselves. In the example of life drawing, I create a welcoming, engaged, productive atmosphere for learners from the moment they enter the room. We have a materials and resources corner and I sometimes bring books, music, images and tools that I and learners can refer to during the session. The actual environment the model inhabits has also become an important focus. In a narratives session, I brought objects from my practice to inspire narrative poses and asked our students to bring objects with personal stories to encourage narratives for model poses¹⁷. I also create intriguing and enquiring pedagogic environments through creating some structure through which drawers can explore and challenge methods. In the case of life drawing, I often introduce planned exercises in the first half of the session, but introduce opportunities to explore or reject a drawing method in the second half.

My pedagogy is inclusive and non-discriminatory. Everyone is included and not one person's opinion is more important. Learning gaps in my history when I was sometimes excluded from learning conversations which required a particular vocabulary or learning expertise to take part have cultivated a professional standard in my pedagogy where respect for different learners and learning capabilities is a priority. In my Learning in Practice Case Study and in my observation exercise with Gareth Polmeer, I critically reflected on a need to bridge learning roles and hierarchies in my pedagogy¹⁸. Experiences in my learning development involving sexism, intellectual elitism and aversion to creative mess have also made me passionate about addressing destructive learning dynamics, creating safe, dynamic, socially inclusive learning spaces at HE level and for families and young people at the V&A. I generate inclusion through asking all learners to take part in the same activity. In life drawing, I introduced tools that are not associated with traditional drawing media as a means of bridging capability and encouraging participation. I nearly always introduce discussion and group reflection at the end of every life drawing session so that knowledge opportunities and exchange is offered to the whole group, not particularly individuals.



Making the bird tree at the V&A Museum of Childhood. A good example of an inclusionary learning activity, with all age groups and capabilities taking part in the same activity. Examples of a child's bird (top right) and an adult's bird (bottom right)

¹⁷ Gallwey, Lucy, 'Learning in Practice Case Study', session 1 and observation exercise with Gareth Polmeer, Royal College of Art, 2019

¹⁸ Op cit, sessions 1 and 3

Attending other pedagogues' teaching sessions and working collaboratively with Sarah Mercer on our life drawing course has allowed me to reflect on the skills I need to work on as a reflective pedagogue. For example, observations of Joel Chan's teaching method have made me consider critical reflection of practice stories as a way of leading into a learning activity¹⁹. Observational distance, really listening to my learners and allowing for further play are skills that I want to develop. Attending other drawing classes outside of HE has also influenced my pedagogy. The classes I have attended with the London Drawing Group recently have affirmed the need for me to create learning environments which are welcoming and engaged and not exclusively technique focused²⁰.

As a result of my learning history, current practice and research interests, my identity as a pedagogue embraces visual and non-visual dialogues within learning spaces and the opportunities learners present to me to sustain and develop an effective pedagogy. My teaching is historically influenced, not guided, with practice, values and theory informing how I and others learn. I create, adjust, and evolve my pedagogy through the opportunities and dialogues learners give back to me, which in turn, develops my practice and my understanding of how different people learn.

¹⁹ See my Observation exercise with Joel Chan, UCA, 20th November 2019

²⁰ London Drawing, <https://londondrawing.com/locations/waterloo-action-centre/>. Accessed 29th November 2019. An un-named tutor, offered individual drawers' feedback on technique which involved him drawing on their work as he walked around the drawing circle. I found this invasive and disrespectful as a pedagogic method as it did not offer drawers freedoms to explore individual drawing methods although he did ask for our consent. Session attended 28th October, 2019.

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