

What Does A Drawing Want? is an essay exhibition that unfolds over the course of a month and across the turn of the year. It poses a series of video works, installations, scripts, talks, a newspaper intervention and a concert, as thoughts that inspire connections between the law, politics, friendship, social status and civil codices. In an attempt or effort of approaching a question, the program reflects on drawing as a gesture that has to do with free association and will, to arrive at the uncontrollable outcomes that bind the gesture (of doing something) to the body (of ourselves).

Drawing and writing are close to one another, as are music and notation, spoken word and script. Incited by the drawing as a "wild sign" with the potential to explode meaning into nonsense, madness, anarchy and even nature (Tom Mitchell) the exhibition program tries its hands at some aspects behind the logic of drawing, asking what it means to draw politically (rather than drawing a gun).

Some works inspire by reverie, like Gabriel Lester's soundtracks for silent films create a space for thought - interrupted by a concert for riots and fights. Jimmie Durham yields us to cathartic repetition of violence (against modernity) by stoning the fridge. Anetta Mona Chişa & Lucia Tkáčová transform friendship and brotherhood into confetti or a sculpture to be performed. Between drawing and writing, we witness the erasure, modification and preservation of a civil code in a work by Carlos Amoraes.

Deimantas Narkevičius' work questions the perception of history and the (im)possibility of objectivity in a partly drawn documentary. Hito Steyerl's film highlights the fragmentary aspects that compose a sense of reality, the entanglement of the acts of remembering and forgetting, particularly in the absence of evidence and archives. In both cases, the act of creating images, of drawing, of giving form is inevitably bound to the voice and gesture of the artist/author and the responsibility such an act -or expression- entails.

Wednesday, 12 December 2012

19:00 Screening of *Supprimer, Modifier, Preserver* (2011)

20:00 Artist talk by Carlos Amoraes

Wednesday, 19 December 2012

21:00 *Music for Riots and Fights* (2005) by Gabriel Lester, arranged for string quartet by composer Bahaa El-Ansary and performed by Essam Abdelhamid (Viola), Mohamed Abdelfattah (Cello), Yasser Ghoneim (Violin) and Khaled Saleh (Violin).

Wednesday, 9 January 2013

19:00 Screening of *The Role of A Lifetime* (2003) by Deimantas Narkevičius and *Journal No.1 - An Artist's Impression* (2007) by Hito Steyerl.

Monday, 14 January 2013

19:00 Talk by Christian Rattemeyer, Associate Curator of Drawing at MoMA on the political dimension of drawing (or how to draw politically).

“Often it is through the simplest of gestures such as writing and drawing that the most intimate aspects of an artist’s life come to the fore. Sometimes these gestures are the result of personal experience, sometimes simply a response to what goes on around oneself. But all of them assert one’s existence in the world.” - Christian Rattemeyer

In 1970, Japanese artist On Kawara sent a series of telegrams to his Dutch gallerist, proclaiming “I am still alive”. The simplicity of the message and the austerity of the medium suggest the revelation of a profound truth, but one stripped of its immediate specificity. In 1976, Turkish artist Cengiz Çekil stamped a page in his small diary for two months each night before going to bed with the letters “I am still alive today.” Although almost identical in wording to Kawara’s, Çekil’s gesture was a response to the increasing military tension in Turkey during these years and functions more like a private talisman of survival than as a conceptual gesture of existence.

These are the first few lines approaching the exhibition “I am Still Alive: Politics and Everyday Life in Contemporary Drawing” at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 2011 curated by Christian Rattemeyer, whom *Beirut* invited to expand on the question ‘What does a drawing want?’ by reflecting on the political dimension of contemporary drawing – or how to draw politically – based on his practice and taking “I am Still Alive” as a point of departure.

Christian Rattemeyer is the Harvey S. Shipley Miller Associate Curator of Drawings at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Prior to that he was a curator of Artists Space in New York. He has worked as a freelance writer and critic in New York and as communications editor for Documenta

11. He founded and co-directed OSMOS, an independent project space in Berlin, and he has curated film and architecture festivals in Berlin, Los Angeles, London, and New York. He contributes regularly to art magazines such as Parkett, Texte zur Kunst, Artforum, and Art Papers, and he has published many catalog essays on contemporary art. He holds an MA from the Free University of Berlin and is a PhD candidate at Columbia University.

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