

Drawing Centre FOR Humans AND Machines

DAY 1 — WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE

09:30 — 10:00	Refreshments + Registration ROTATING WORKSHOP SESSIONS SIGN-UP
10:00 — 10:30	Introduction + Welcome FREDERIC FOL LEYMARIE + MICHAEL NEWMAN <i>CO-DIRECTORS OF THE DRAWING CENTRE FOR HUMANS AND MACHINES</i>
10:30 — 11:45	Plenary Lecture 1 — drawing with robotics PATRICK TRESSET <i>FROM NERVOUS TO CULTURAL TRACES : PERFORMATIVE DRAWING MACHINES AS ACTORS IN STORIES ABOUT US</i>
12:00 — 13:30	Panel 1 — computing, robots + AI in drawing VAL RAVAGLIA <i>HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AUTOMATED MARK-MAKING AND MACHINE AESTHETICS</i> WILLIAM LATHAM <i>DRAWING, EVOLUTION AND AI, ALL MIXED UP</i> FREDERIC FOL LEYMARIE <i>ROBOTICS AND ART AT GOLDSMITHS (SINCE 2009) : ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ROBOTIC DRAWLAB</i>
13:30 — 14:30	LUNCH BREAK
14:30 — 15:45	Plenary Performance Lecture JEAN KATAMBAYI MUKENDI <i>MANIPULATION</i> INTRODUCTION BY JOHANNES MUSELAERS
16:00 — 17:15	DCHM/CPCT Lecture — drawing + philosophy STÉPHANE SYMONS <i>AGNES MARTIN, JANMARI AND EVA HESSE DRAWING STRAIGHT LINES AND UNCLOSED CIRCLES IN THE 1960S</i>
17:30 — 18:45	Plenary Lecture 2 — drawing + AI DAVID MUSGRAVE <i>THE WONDER AND HORROR OF HIGH-DIMENSIONAL VECTOR SPACE</i>

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DAY 2 — THURSDAY 25 JUNE

09:30 — 10:00

Refreshments + Registration

ROTATING WORKSHOP SESSIONS SIGN-UP

10:00 — 11:15

Plenary Lecture 3 — drawing + robotics

SOUGWEN CHUNG

DRAWING AS METAMORPHIC OPERATION

11:30 — 13:30

Parallel Sessions —

PARTICIPATORY DRAWING WORKSHOP LED BY LIZA DICKSON

SOUND AS SENSATION / DRAWING THE DRONE

PARTICIPATORY DRAWING WORKSHOP LED BY JOSEPH WALSH

DEEP OBSERVATION : PLANT FORMS

DIGITAL WELLBEING DRAWING WORKSHOP LED BY ELLEN GILBERT

THE AGENCY COMPASS : MAPPING HUMAN AGENCY IN THE AGE OF AI

PRESENTATIONS ON ROBOTS LED BY FREDERIC FOL LEYMARIE + DANIEL BERIO

LIVE DEMONSTRATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS OF ROBOTIC DRAWING SYSTEMS + COMPUTATIONAL MARK-MAKING

13:30 — 14:15

LUNCH BREAK

14:15 — 15:45

Panel 2 — human drawing + machine

MARGARITA GLUZBERG

TRANSCENDENTAL STUPIDITY

PIERRE BISMUTH

WHERE IS AI'S UNCONSCIOUS? : DRAWING AS A PRE-REFLEXIVE AND CONTINGENT APPARATUS

MICHAEL NEWMAN

DRAWING AND DISTRIBUTED AGENCY

16:00 — 17:30

Panel 3 — human + machine partnerships

TOBY CHRISTIAN + GABRIEL STONES

STRINGER (BONES AND TENTACLES)

ANNA RIDLER

THE MACHINE AS INHERITOR

DANIEL BERIO

SKETCHING GRAFFITI FORMS WITH CODE AND ROBOTS

17:30 — 18:30

Drinks Reception

VIEWING OF DRAWING BIENNIAL

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CONFERENCE STATEMENT

Drawing for Humans and Machines is a two-day international conference proposing that drawing — one of the oldest and most philosophically charged human practices — offers an unusually clarifying site at which to examine the present transformation of human–machine relations. Drawing is approached here as a *techne*, a way of disclosing the world, and as a technology in the most fundamental sense: an originary supplement through which the human comes to be at all. To say, as Bernard Stiegler does, that we are technological from the outset is, on this view, to recognise that drawing has always already mediated what we take ourselves and our tools to be.

The conference proceeds from the observation that the technologies through which drawings are now made are undergoing rapid change. Robots generate marks with mechanical precision, or that replicate human, manual and sometimes hesitant ways of drawing; generative AI models compose images from vast corpora of human work; learning systems mimic, extend and at times surprise the gestures of the hand. These developments reshape what a drawing can be and how we conceive of both the human and the machinic. They raise pressing aesthetic, ethical and political questions about what is shared and what remains distinct between human draughtspersons and drawing machines, and about the new forms of collaboration emerging between them.

Three substantive strands organise the programme.

The first strand examines **drawing as a way of understanding how the human is affected by technology**. Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, technologies have supplied the metaphors through which Western thought has conceived perception and consciousness — from the camera obscura, with its interior–exterior architecture and its corrected inversion, through the photographic and cinematic cameras, to the computer with its distinction between hardware and software. As Sarah Kofman observed, such metaphors do not remain metaphors: they harden into models, and

the models come to determine what is taken to be human. The dominant metaphor of the present moment is the neural network, originally inspired by the brain and now used to describe both AI systems and the brain itself — a striking collapse of figure and model that an emergent ‘AI ontology’ extends to life as such, defined as information plus computation. The conference proposes that drawing, undertaken with hand and body, is uniquely placed to expose the limits of this ontology — not by appealing to a mystical or theological notion of human essence, but precisely because drawing is itself technological. A drawing registers the weight of a particular body, the resistance of a particular surface, the inflection of a hesitation; it engages dimensions that the information-plus-computation picture struggles to accommodate, most notably contingency — that which escapes both necessity and probability — and context, the demand for judgement in a singular situation.

The second strand turns to **hybrid and distributed authorship**. The very category of the tool is being reconfigured. Building on Bruno Latour’s analyses of distributed agency, the conference asks what changes when the tool can itself learn. The hand-tool and the factory machine await instruction; a learning system, by contrast, can adapt, generalise and produce outputs unanticipated by its designers. Several configurations will be considered: the AI as autonomous artist trained on extensive corpora of human work, with its unresolved questions of consent, copyright and credit; the AI as partner, whose training data, prompts and post-processing are deliberately shaped by the artist; and the AI as interlocutor, whose outputs serve as provocations to which human draughtspersons respond through hand and body. Across these configurations, the inherited picture of authorship — at once theological and Romantic — comes under pressure, giving way to a conception of distributed authorship that extends not only between humans and machines but, more radically, between humans and more-than-human agents. The mark-making of primates and the line-laying of spiders and snails may legitimately be

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redescribed as drawing; conversely, as the artist David Musgrave will argue, in the conference, the abstract vector space internal to a large language model may itself constitute a form of drawing. Rather than imposing existing definitions of drawing upon these phenomena, the conference proposes the reverse move: drawing as a concept and practice can be extended and expanded by them, and our understanding of the relations between humans, machines and the more-than-human can be correspondingly rethought.

The third strand frames **drawing as questioning and ethos**. Drawing is a practice of mediation; it thinks in the between. It sits between planning and contingency, between trace and generativity, between gesture and diagram. These mediations are not deficiencies to be resolved but constitute drawing's specific intelligence and its peculiar suitability to questions concerning humans and machines. The conference argues that drawing has an essential role to play in engaging current developments in AI and robotics in three registers: directly, by making work with and through robots and generative systems; indirectly, by sustaining art as a site at which exploratory, careful and sometimes recalcitrant relations to technology can be elaborated, in contradistinction to prevailing instrumentalist and extractive paradigms; and critically, by interrogating those forms of dehumanisation and oppression in which human beings are themselves treated as machines — reduced to standardised inputs and outputs, measurable only insofar as they are computable.

Finally, drawing is offered as the ground of an ethos: a way of being together with what we have made and with what makes us, an attempt to hold humans, machines and the more-than-human in the same field of responsibility and address.

The conference is an important step towards the establishment of a Drawing Centre for Humans and Machines at Goldsmiths, jointly supported by the Schools of Art and Computing, and with which Drawing Room will be a partner. Artists, philosophers and computer scientists will take drawing as a way of exploring the relations between humans and machines through lectures, panels, performance, participatory drawing sessions and robot demonstrations. The intention of the conference is not spectacle, but a tentative collective experiment in what it might mean to share authorship across markedly different kinds of agency. Specialist background is not assumed; the conference is designed for scholars, practitioners and a wider public alike, and aims to send participants away with new conceptual tools, new questions for their own practices and how those might involve machines as partners, and a renewed sense of why drawing matters now.

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DRAWING ROOM
Goldsmiths
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON