

## Exhibition Text: Desire Lines (Fusebox)

Curated by Lizzie Fisher

Terence Gower

Jason Gubbiotti

Ulrike Heydenreich

Cynthia Lin

Joan Linder

Nicola Lopez

This exhibition brings together six emerging artists whose explorations of drawing reveal unadulterated pleasure in the relationship between line and space. The title, *Desire Lines*, is lifted from the jargon of urban planning; the phrase is used to describe the paths cut by pedestrians through freshly landscaped areas and around new buildings before pavement is laid, paths that unselfconsciously inscribe patterns of use in new spaces. Although the way we navigate the physical environment, whether in a car, plane, or on foot, affects our understanding of space profoundly, it is something we rarely think twice about. Our experience of space is mostly subliminal. In a spatial and temporal context that is increasingly unstable and subjective, these artists offer us different ways to revisit the way we engage with space, from abstract concepts to specific, delineated experiences.

Terence Gower's practice is rooted in an engagement with the language of modernist architecture, of planes and volumes described by color and line, invested with emotional and ideological significance. Gower's use of the color red, for example, is a deliberate reference to Le Corbusier's use of the same color in interior spaces. Placing his drawing on the glass front of the gallery, Gower creates a screen that opens out and layers different architectural spaces, inside and out, to raise questions both about our perception of discreet spaces and about the modernist preoccupation with materials such as glass – notwithstanding the symbolic values of transparency and honesty this material carried – as a means of defining space.

Jason Gubbiotti's lexicon is also drawn from the built environment, but it is the subliminal, generic shapes and spaces of daily life that are absorbed and translated in the process of composing a drawing or painting. His line describes passages and overlapping levels, floorplans and footprints of imaginary buildings as interconnected volumes and planes to be navigated in terms of their formal qualities, as pictorial spaces of light and color. The subtle quality of his line – its density, speed, and thickness – describes perspective and suggests physical boundaries within the formal structure of the drawing, all the time implicitly quoting the shifting spaces of our contemporary visual environment.

Ulrike Heydenreich's approach to drawing stems from a spirit of enquiry; her efforts seek to enable, explain or translate a physical relationship to our surroundings. Her doodles reveal plans for eccentric inventions like the *panorama drawing device*, which allows the artist to make a 360° drawing from a single, fixed point of view. The earlier *drawing from the sea* was a more intuitive attempt to copy, freehand and on a much larger scale, a map of the Atlantic Ocean. Where she drifted off course, rather than erase the offending line, she simply repositioned her pencil and redrew the right contour in the right place, resulting in a confusing, but strangely rhythmic, abstract composition. Heydenreich takes maps as both practical and formal touchstones, aping their logic and aesthetic sensibility, to articulate a fundamental relation between drawing a line and understanding space.

The spaces that concern Cynthia Lin, by contrast, are microcosmic. Her remit extends to the edges of the sheet of paper, polished enamel surface or gesso panel that she is working on. Her current work has evolved through a long examination of the language of modernist and abstract painting. Eliminating everything but surface and gesture, each drawing is like an epic painting on miniature scale; a world in itself. The tiny silver or graphite marks that look like specks of dust are actually carefully drawn by hand, and what seems to be a photographic rendering of a dusty surface is rather a painstaking composition of individual marks, quietly staking out a surface meticulously prepared for its specific luminous and textural qualities.

In Joan Linder's drawings of criss-crossing telegraph wires, poles and electric pylons, the pencil line assume a life of its own, quietly refusing to acknowledge the horizon of the paper. It weaves a web across the stark white space of the page that flattens perspectival space and pushes towards abstraction. Linder has an eye for detail, capturing in these drawings one of the largest, most intricate linear systems we have – the "grid" of energy and communication lines that spreads

across continents. The sense of space in these small drawings is tangible and the lines that span Linder's sheet of paper extend beyond the gallery, across the street, the city, and the vast empty spaces of the American landscape, via the smallest corners of our homes, to map the true spatial extent of our lives.

In Nicola Lopez' exploding megalopolis, we see our own struggles to conceptualize the spaces of the contemporary city. Lopez uses biro, pencil and scissors – common, unspecialized tools, immediately to hand – to render her cityscapes in a chaotic, cartoonish style that underscores the urgent, amateurish, obsessive – even psychotic – aspect of her drawings. She cuts, pastes, scratches and squeezes various skyscrapers, parking lots and strip-mall buildings into and out of Escher-like spaces, while a mostly monochrome palette enhances the apocalyptic aspect of her vision. Sprawling and vertiginous, Lopez' drawings articulate a surreal but familiar sense of urban space.

From the specific space of Cynthia Lin's drawings to the limitless sense of space evoked by Joan Linder, Gower's critique to Heydenreich's enquiry or Gubbiotti's formal translation and Lopez' emotional interpretation of the built environment, the drawn line speaks volumes.