Graphology

Curated by Edwin Carels

Graphology explores a genealogy of automated drawing from a contemporary perspective. The scope of the exhibition reaches back to the beginning of the 20th century and includes artists working today to question the status and impact of a trace, produced through the interaction of man and machine. Under investigation are the techniques that translate direct experience into different forms of systematised representation, between the trace and the sign, between writing and drawing. *Graphology* investigates the ways in which drawing intersects with typography, photography, film and computer-graphics.

The term 'graphology' implies a strong awareness of both medium specificity and human agency. A medium mediates, it is an agent; it sets its own standard, implies its own logic, it induces its own message. But so does the eye of the beholder. The exhibition focuses on the human hand as a living seismograph of inner life, but with extra attention to the 'mechanical unconscious of the machine' which imposes itself on the human eye. It considers how graphic techniques of reproduction, including those of the moving image, start to live their own lives.

Graphology explores the link between drawing and typography through works that use a diverse range of methodologies, such as Fiona Banner's 'Mother', an interactive work that includes a reconstructed typewriter and a ream of paper. The work references both the roots of language and the frustrations associated with its short-comings. Dean Hughes' plinth-based work consists of strewn staples that, variously distorted through use and in disarray, begin to resemble a cryptic language. Stefan Brüggemann's 'Make Me See' (2009) is a work consisting of neon letters that are sprayed black each time they are exhibited, leading to the gradual obliteration of legibility.

The parallels between photography and drawing are examined through the work of Pierre Bismuth and William Anastasi. Bismuth has made a series of 'Left Hand Tracing' works which fuse still or moving images of famous people with furiously scribbled lines. *Graphology* will include the 16mm film, 'Following the Right Hand of

Sigmund Freud' (2009) in which these scribbled lines, which follow the movements of Freud's hand, are drawn with light, a reference to the origins of photography. William Anastasi's 'Pocket Drawings', which are a continuation of the 'Subway Drawings' he began in 1964, are presented as a series of modular, framed scribbles that are produced in the artists' pocket (a makeshift darkroom) as he takes a walk of a pre-determined duration.

The durational unfolding of drawing, its linearity and capacity for rhythm, tie it inextricably to film, such as the presentation of Man Ray's 'La retour à la raison' (1923) as a strip of film that is displayed on a light box brings it back to its original drawn condition. The employment of electronic mediation and of generative procedures is also explored through the contemporary work of Anna Barham and Wim Janssen, while Brian O'Doherty's 'Boxed Duchamp', (1967-8) is part of a suite of works derived from mechanically produced 'cardiogram drawings' of Duchamp's heartbeat.

Responding to the gallery and University's architecture, Belgium artists Wim Janssen and Line Boogaerts have been commissioned to create new works especially for Art Exchange.

Graphology is conceived by Edwin Carels (curator, M HKA, Antwerp and researcher in the arts KASK/Hogent). Chapters 1–4 formed a series of exhibitions at M HKA, Antwerp, Belgium, during 2011. This exhibition, chapter 5, evolved in collaboration with the Drawing Room, as has chapter 6, *Graphology: drawing from automatism and automation*, a book that accompanies the show. It includes images from all chapters of *Graphology* and essays by Edwin Carels, Ed Krcma and Thomas Zummer.

Graphology is a project iniated by M HKA and has been produced in collaboration with Drawing Room, London.