



Silverpoint drawing series

A series of "durational drawings" made in silverpoint that explored and connected processes of walking, landscape and climatic phenomena.

The work featured in a number of exhibitions, and was seen in its entirety at a solo exhibition at ROOM, May - June 2008.

Submitted by Lesley Punton
Output No. 1



OUTPUT

A series of "durational drawings" made in silverpoint that explored and connected processes of walking, landscape and climatic phenomena.

The work featured in a number of exhibitions, and was seen in its entirety at a solo exhibition at ROOM, May - June 2008, featuring 17 works in the series. Lesley Punton is represented by ROOM in the UK and in Europe.

The initial, first works in the series were featured in Next Level magazine (ISSN 1476-4369) immediately prior to solo exhibition, and at *Zoo Art Fair*, Burlington Gardens, London. The show also travelled as a solo exhibition to EKAC, Scotland in July 2008, and some of the works featured in "*Mapping the Terrain*", Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow, Nov 2008, and in "*Back to the Things Themselves*", a 2 person exhibition (with Judy Spark) for Glasgow International festival of Visual Arts, (GI), April - May 2012, at the Briggait, Glasgow.

The work also features in a monograph on the artist's work *Lesley Punton – mountains without end*, published by ROOMBOOKS, Sept 2013.

Title

Series of 17 silverpoint drawings – various titles (artefacts)

Submission No.

1

Authors/Creators

Lesley Punton



Next level magazine, issue 12 (ISSN 1476-4369), where the work was first published

CONTEXT

Tamsin Clark of Studio Voltaire, (then of ROOM) wrote about these works:

“Drawing is a process which Punton likens to the rhythm of walking. The method of marking a surface is a mapping of sorts which she tackles with the diligence of a climber en route to a summit. Her drawings touch the canvas so lightly that at first glance they might appear almost blank. The artist would certainly encourage the metaphors of mist, snow, cloud and void that the encounter with her works readily conjures up. One piece entitled Thin Air aptly voices this preoccupation.

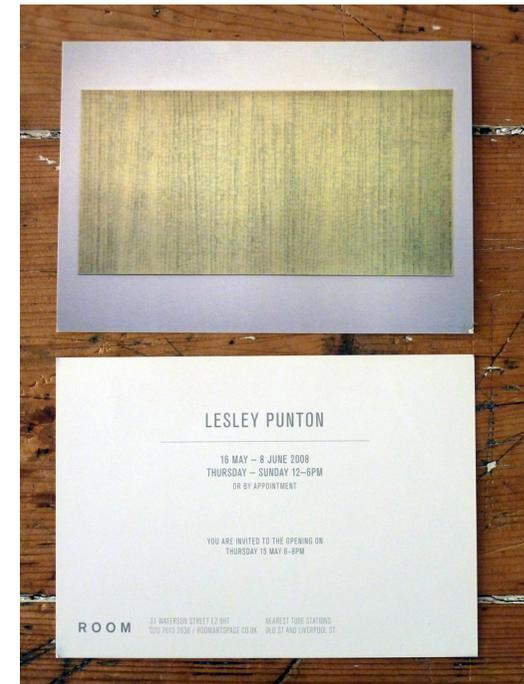
These drawings seem to demand a slow, patient response from the viewer that in turn mimics their painstaking creation. She comments: ‘I suppose there’s always been part of my practice that builds upon repetition and variation...in that obsessive intensity that comes from persistence’.

For this solo exhibition at ROOM Punton presents her recent rhythmic works which seem sympathetic to a tradition of abstract minimalism, but also have the reference of landscape omnipresent. ...In the

vertical pull of certain panoramas the teeming flow of a mountain stream or the rough grains of bark might be recalled. The mottled, map-like contours of her drawings are testaments of flux and impermanence, even conjuring the turbulence of her Highland skies.”

These works were made very much within a context of a wider history of landscape practice that concerns itself with ideas of a participatory engagement with place, experienced through a primary engagement with the landscape it references. It seeks to translate the experiences of being in (in this instance) wild land with a non literal *equivalency*, rather than through descriptive or mimetic representation.

Recent years have seen a resurgence of nature writing (characterised in the contemporary arena by, for example, the work of Robert McFarlane, Roger Deakin, and Kathleen Jamie) and there seems to be a similar, parallel context emerging in the visual art world whereby landscape preoccupations have reappraised the tradition of the “pastoral” in conceptual terms, if



Invitation card for solo show at ROOM 2008

CONTEXT

the pastoral might be understood as an open field of engagement with the felt world. I see myself producing work in this context.

My work explores the relationship of the physical through direct, lived experience of place, with an emphasis upon walking in particular. It is this questioning of the experiential and its relationship with landscape, and in particular, “wilderness”, in the context of contemporary culture that I wish to explore.

Through intensive and laborious drawing processes I aim to question the ways that these experiences of landscape (rather than landscape itself) both resist and enable the translation into physical form. The work is therefore intended to physically embody an experience as opposed to simply recording one. WG Sebald’s tangential explorations of place, Rebecca Solnit’s writings, and notably, from the early 20th Century, Nan Shepherd’s considerations of how she encountered and inhabited the Cairngorm’s



Installation view of solo show at ROOM, Waterston St, London, May-June 2008

CONTEXT

also provide wider context to my exploration of and interest in journeying. Key research questions are how might an exploration of wild landscape allow us to find understanding and comprehension of how we engage with and participate with locales we commonly inhabit, and how do we pass through or inhabit these various environments?

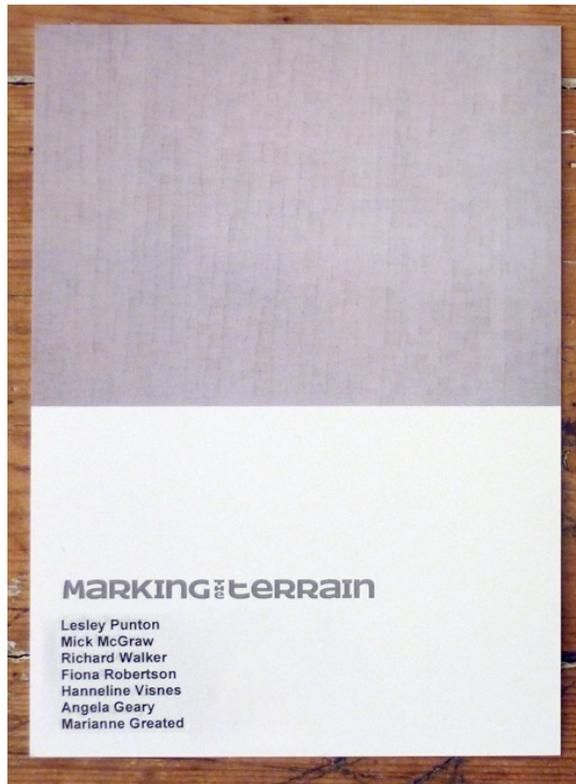
My studio practice is an ongoing exploration of such concerns, shaped particularly by my own practice of mountain walking and winter mountaineering. Whilst, unlike Fulton and Long, my walks are not “the work itself”, walks and walking nonetheless form crucial beginnings in almost all of my work and consequently are key to my working methodology. The production of artifacts emerges from such processes, with diversions and digressions occurring - as happens during many a walk - along the way.

These drawings on silverpoint function as indicators of measures of time and distance, studio bound iterations of walks held in memory, mapped into a divergent form.

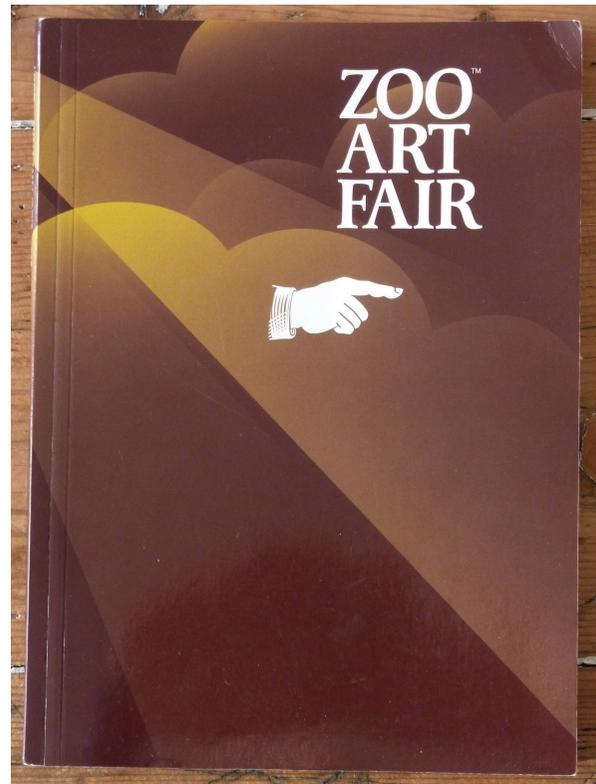


“Flurry”, silverpoint on gesso, 2008, L. Punton

CONTEXT

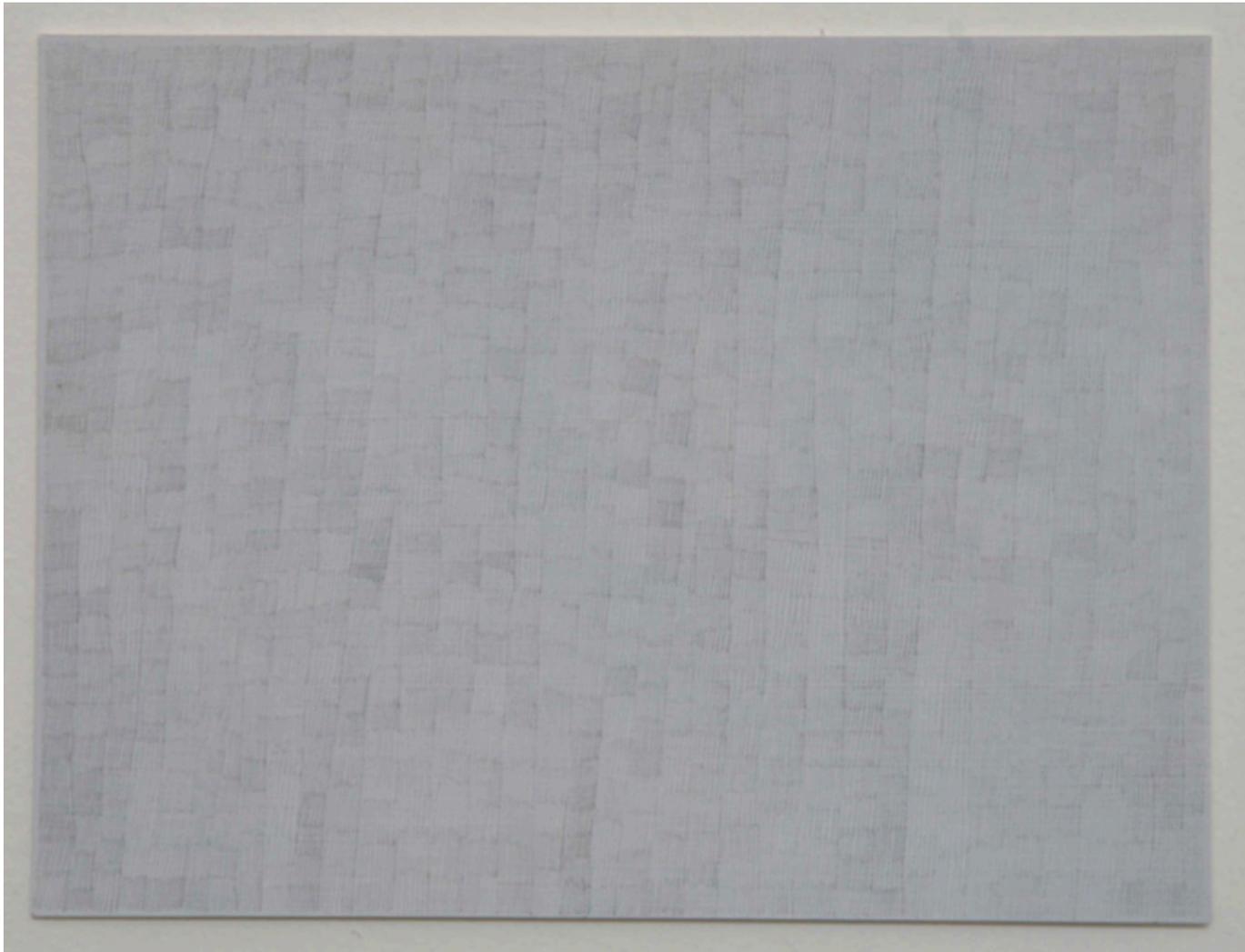


*Invitation card for "marking the terrain"
Mackintosh Museum, Glasgow 2008, with silverpoint
drawing used on the card*



Zoo Art Fair Catalogue 1st exhibition venue for the early/precursor works. ISBN 978-0-9554034-1-5





"inversion" silverpoint on tinted gesso, 2008, L. Panton

METHODOLOGY

As mentioned, much of my work emerges from a process where I seek to translate experiences of active, physical participation in wild land through drawing.

These silverpoint drawings were particularly concerned with the time based aspects of drawing and walking. Almost like tally marks, each drawing began whereby a rule was enforced upon them that would inevitably fail, but where the rule would be drawn back upon the drawing to regain control and impose order. Over time, the drawing would gradually unfold – almost by it's own making – and the resultant image was of a monochromatic, shimmering colour field at odds with the simplicity of it's manufacture.

I used silverpoint for a number of reasons. Practically, it was a sensible choice since, unlike graphite, it was more permanent – indeed, it's permanence means that it cannot be erased, so each mark made in the drawing's journey (including “errors”) is visible.



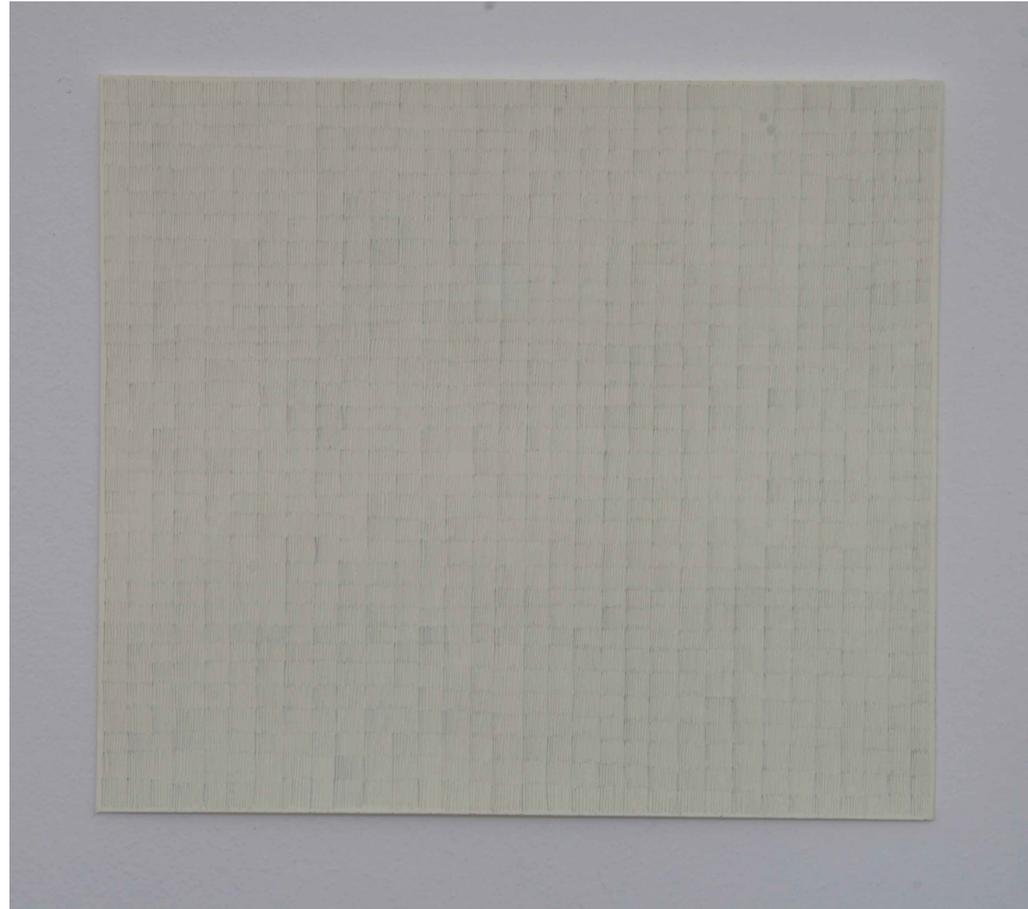
Documentation of the production of one of the works in the series. (“thicket”, 2008, silverpoint on tinted gesso).

METHODOLOGY

I also like it's relation to time and photography since it tarnishes slightly, and changes over time, settling down to a slightly warmer tint than it's initial cool grey. Silver is, of course, the metal used in light sensitive emulsions, so I rather like the circularity of ideas suggested by it's use (I have a photographic practice as well as using drawing).

The drawings, once complete, sometimes started to resemble, very loosely, elements of the real world, (though it always explicitly apparent that these are abstract images not based on "things") and in their parallel readings, I found they began to suggest their own titles.

For instance, one work, "thicket" reminded me of a dense growth of bamboo; other's were more loosely evocative, and were named (bearing in mind my imaginings of mountain walks) things like "culoir", "steall" (after the Steall falls in Glen Nevis), "flat light", "bergschrund", "serac", "inversion", "talus", "spindrif", "thin air", etc.



"rime" silverpoint on tinted gesso, 2008, L. Punton

METHODOLOGY

I have always been interested in the weather as a metaphor, and it seems appropriate that qualities of light, of things lacking permanence, should be referenced in these “time-based” drawings.

There is an element of the performative in them, and whilst the end result is of course a concern, they are clearly very linked to process itself. I always likened them, in their systematic, methodical approach, to walking, in that when one climbs a mountain, it's not by an epic effort that one achieves success – it can be broken down into individual steps, one foot in front of another – and it's only in the accumulation of steps that the ‘goal’ is achieved. Likewise, these drawings are made slowly, over time, by very simple, incremental means that only make sense once viewed as a whole.

I made an extended series of these drawings. They varied subtly, but significantly from piece to piece, just as one's experience of a walk varies. Most were made on a surface of sanded white gesso on paper, but a few had slight tint's added to the gesso to create subtle colour shifts between the pieces.



Frontispiece and title page of “Lesley Punton – mountains without end”, ISBN 978-0-9549915-6-2, published by ROOMBOOKS, 2013, featuring a detail of “floe” 2008

DISSEMINATION

The primary showing of this work was at ROOM, London in a solo show in May 2008.
<http://www.roomartspace.co.uk/>

The early works that were precursors to the main series were exhibited at ZOO, Burlington Gardens, in Oct 2007. See also Zoo Art Fair ISBN 978-0-9554034-1-5.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoo_Art_Fair

One of these "precursor pieces" was also published in Next Level, London, No. 12, October 2007 (ISSN 1476-4369)

Works in the series have since been purchased by Doris Lockhart Saatchi, (co-founder Saatchi collection) Marie Donnelly (trustee of the Tate Gallery), and Adam Fritsch (Colorado based collector of minimalist art).

This work was also viewed by Keith Donnelly of East Kilbride Arts Centre (EKAC), Scotland, who negotiated with ROOM to have the show tour to East Kilbride for a solo show there in 5 -

27th July 2008. I gave a public talk on my work there on 6th July 2008. There was also a gallery education week 8 – 12th July where art classes were carried out within the context of the show by local community arts organisations.

These silverpoint works were also subsequently shown in, "*Mapping the Terrain*" in the Mackintosh Gallery, Glasgow School of Art Oct – Nov 2008 where my work was used as the invitation card image.

One work, "*Flurry*", was exhibited in a two person show "Back To The Things Themselves" with Judy Spark for Glasgow International Festival of the Visual Arts at The Briggait, April-May 2012.
<http://www.glasgowinternational.org/>
http://lesleypunton.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/back-to-things-themselves_24.html

"*Flurry*" was also exhibited in *Learning to Draw/ Drawing to Learn*, at The Fleming Collection, Mayfair, London, 3rd Sept - 9th Oct 2013

DISSEMINATION

This was also referenced and reproduced in a piece by Magdalena Chau in The Daily Serving, 3 May 2012.

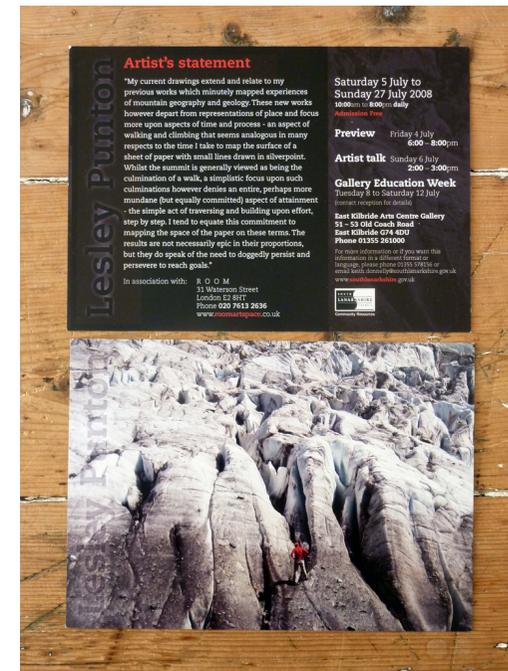
<http://dailyserving.com/2012/05/back-to-the-things-themselves/>

This article has also been published in San Francisco based arts organisation Art Practical <http://www.artpractical.com/feature/glasgow-international-festival-of-visual-arts/>

The silverpoint drawings are featured within a major monograph of my work, *Lesley Punton – mountains without end* published by ROOMBOOKS, Sep 2013, ISBN 978-0-9549915-6-2 . The book features a critical essay collaboration regarding walking as an aesthetic practice between myself and Dr David Watson (Sydney, Australia), a critical text on my work by the poet Thomas A Clark. (UK), and a prose poem on walking, by poet Alec Finlay (UK), *pataphysical cuillin*, which is a work influenced by Rene Dumal's unfinished novel *Mount Analogue*.



Exterior view of "back to the things themselves" (left), and invitation card for solo show of silverpoint drawings at EKAC (right).



Acknowledgements

Next Level, London, UK No. 12, October 2007
(ISSN 1476-4369)

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The Briggait, Glasgow, UK

Adam Fritsch, collector of international
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Glasgow School of Art, UK

Magdalena Chau, The Daily Serving, UK/USA

Art Practical, San Francisco, USA

Thomas A Clark, UK
<http://thomasaclarkblog.blogspot.co.uk/>

For further general information, my website can
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my blog at <http://lesleypunton.blogspot.co.uk/>