

Drawing, Embodiment and the Absent Body

an illustrated lecture

Tuesday 29 June at 6.00pm. Mill Lane Lecture Theatre, 2

For centuries, artists have employed drawings of the human figure to express a complexity of religious, historical, political and symbolic subjects. But there have always existed alternative visual traditions, such as that of Byzantine art and its subsequent long Eastern European history of disembodiment and abstraction. In this wide-ranging paper, Professor Deanna Petherbridge will contextualise the emergence of Modernist abstraction and relate it to such spiritual and anti-corporeal traditions as are found, for example, in the seminal writings of the Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky and his Bauhaus colleague, Paul Klee. The latter's writings were equally important for the teaching of a new kind of drawing, related to what Ernst Gombrich called 'the preference for the primitive'. Through his highly eclectic admiration for decorative European folk traditions, the art of children, the varied visual production of non-European cultures, the 'art of the insane' and the influence of psychoanalysis, he sought a return to spontaneity, authenticity, originality and 'innocence' in drawing. The influence of Cubism and Futurism and the importance of the fourth dimension or time and cinematic speed in constructing the new 'plastic realism' of modernity also had a profound effect on attitudes towards drawing, now freed from its academic role. As line is an abstraction in itself — there are no outlines in the observed world, only edges — this richly illustrated talk will address the enormous range of possibilities incorporated into and expressed through the art drawing.

Deanna Petherbridge is an artist whose practice is entirely drawing based, and who has devoted the last twenty years to teaching, lecturing and writing about drawing. Her book *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* was published by Yale University Press in May 2010. She was Professor of Drawing at the Royal College of Art from 1995-2001, and Scholar at the Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, in 2001-2, and she has since held various research professorships and residencies at universities in Britain and abroad. She was curator of *The Primacy of Drawing* 1991-2, *The Quick and the Dead: Artists and Anatomy* 1997-8 and *Drawing as Vital Practice*, 2007. In 1996, Petherbridge was awarded a CBE.

Stations of the Temporal

a panel discussion and film viewing

Thursday 1 July at 6.00pm. Mill Lane Lecture Theatre, 2

The evening's panel discussion will echo the concerns addressed by the *mind-spirit-body-matter: drawn to the human* workshop organised by Kettle's Yard, University of Cambridge (from 28 June to 2 July 2010). Speakers will explore the extent to which film and other lens media have been successful in capturing the timed-bound, therefore rhythmic and highly ritualised or improvisation structures of dance, as the most exalted expression of the human body. Speakers will also reflect on the significant impact of tribal cultures on the modern movement, as witnessed in the work of early ethnographers and journeymen-filmmakers.

Addressing these topics will be three renowned speakers from the fields of dance, anthropology and film. Dancer-choreographer Sarah Warsop will show her film 'Lying in Wait' (in collaboration with artist Idris Khan), its mesmerizing effects, inspired in part by the photographs of Edwaerd Muybridge and Jules Etienne Marey. Dance-anthropologist, Professor Andrée Grau, asserts that neither 'dance' nor the 'body' can be accepted as universal concepts since they are both embedded within typically 'Western' understandings. Her work among the Tiwi people of Melville and Bathurst Islands, and Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat reflects this cross-cultural and interdisciplinary perspective. Rodney Wilson was executive producer of the acclaimed BBC/Arts Council television series 'Dance with a Camera'. He affirms: 'I realised I was more interested in looking at dance through a camera lens on location than on a stage. The affinities between dance and cinema fascinated me, since at the heart of this connection between two art forms is movement.'