



DRAW BRIGHTON PRESENTS

The Draw Journal

VOLUME 2 | SEPTEMBER 2021

VIRTUALLY
STILL HERE

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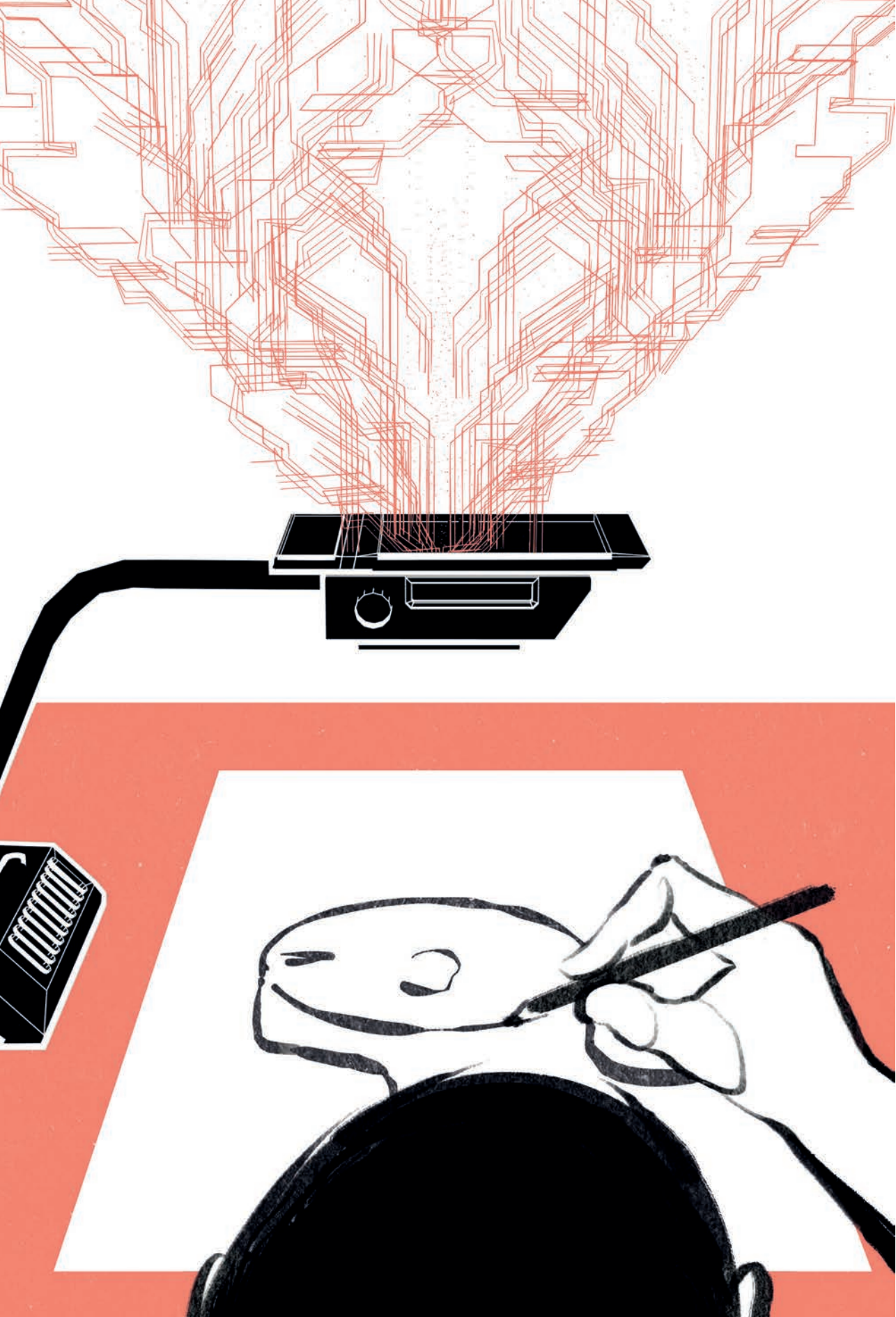
Introduction by Draw Head Tutor and Draw Journal editor Jake Spicer

The first Draw Journal was our response to an emergency - a means to both thank our community for their urgent patronage and an opportunity to re-distribute that money to contributing artists. Delivered by post, it was an antidote to the screen-fatigue of the first lockdown, a manifesto of corporeal concerns that dealt with the bodily aspect of life drawing. The collective moment of 2020 has passed and as we all find our own ways to navigate the challenges of this new reality, our second Draw Journal celebrates the positives of the last year. The new digital platforms at our disposal have allowed us to connect with new friends and forge lasting connections that will invariably spill from the screen into the real-world. Drawing online has provided fresh creative opportunities for life models, new tools for teachers and has helped to make classes more accessible and affordable. Through interviews and images, the next three chapters will present a rough sketch of how our newly ubiquitous virtual tools have affected how tutors teach, how models pose and how we all draw.



Above: Photography by Nicholas Brekespere

I have always believed that drawing is a fundamental social good. By learning to draw we can become articulate in a visual vocabulary that transcends the barriers of spoken language. By drawing together we are bound by a shared activity, allowing us to form common understandings that transcend differences of age or background. By drawing from another person, we can learn to become more empathic and to root ourselves in the moment of observation. While we cannot know what the next year will hold for us, the last year has shown how resilient our drawing community can be, opening up new opportunities for us to learn, work and create together and that is something worth celebrating.



TEACH

Teaching life drawing is part education, part theatre and the distance of the computer screen has turned the staged monologues and site-specific immersive performances of the life room into a kind of low-budget TV production. While Zoom has muffled the shared experience of a physical class it has also presented a series of new tools for enabling students to see differently. Helping people to learn isn't limited to directly imparting knowledge – it can be as much about creating an inspiring environment in which to learn and nurturing a community who can support that learning outside of a class. In this chapter we start by talking to Chloe Briggs, creator of Drawing is Free, about her conversion to online teaching and her initial scepticism about drawing on virtual platforms. Drawing is Free is much like our own Portrait Club and other mutual drawing sessions which sprang up simultaneously around the world with participants both posing and drawing one another over Zoom. In our second interview we speak to Matt and Janet from Drawing Cabaret Couture about developing their online fashion figure drawing sessions and nurturing a new international community. Matt and Janet are living adverts for the value of an art education – their creativity allowed them to pivot on the head of a pin, collaborating with other creators to develop new skills and adapting to a completely new pattern of working just a few weeks in to an international catastrophe.

DRAWING IS FREE

An interview with founder Chloe Briggs

JAKE: Before the pandemic did you imagine you'd be teaching online?

CHLOE: Never. No. I was asked lots of times to imagine teaching materials that could be online but I'm a purist about being in space and time with people, so I was very suspicious of it. But then I was thinking, that's a very romantic, outmoded view of how you might learn something, not least drawing. I think it has some connection to what a 'real' artist is - having a studio with lots of space. It's a model that for a lot of us that doesn't exist. I never had the financial means to have a proper studio - or time. As a mother, that's not something you have a lot of. We're doing away with this myth of what it is to be a real artist. 'Drawing is free' is very much a space where I just facilitate a drawing experience; I don't teach anybody anything. I'm just animating a moment together. But when I'm teaching - yeah, I busted the myth for myself. For so many reasons, online classes make learning accessible to people. That's what I'm about, like Draw Brighton is.

JAKE: And presumably your 'Drawing

is Free' sessions have gone from being something that was based in one physical space to an international online event?

CHLOE: Yeah. Well, it started in the school in Paris where I work, but I quickly wanted to take it outside of the institution. But then, the online format has opened it wide up. It's kind of a miracle, isn't it? You could be drawing someone in Australia who is in winter. It's lovely because we're drawing each other, and they're dressed in woolly hats and we're all in our summer clothes. That's magic.

JAKE: I don't know how you've found this but that has really made me reflect on the nature of shared space - I've always appreciated teaching and learning in-person because you are sharing space and time. Whereas drawing online has created a situation where so many of us are sharing time, a moment, but not sharing physical space.

CHLOE: Yeah. You don't have to have the whole ... Or maybe you compensate for that somehow with drawing. There's

an intensity to drawing online because you don't have the space element, you have to use your imagination. You bring something else to the flat screen because the drawing has to conjure space; the drawing works to make it whole somehow. I don't know about you but I was always such a purist about how, 'you can't draw from a screen!' But the quality of students' work hasn't suffered from drawing online at all and I've met people who have done amazing things. You know, I did a workshop for Tania Kovats for her online Drawing Ecologies course at DJCAD. An artist was drawing wildlife with a group of people, basically accessing webcams of birds from remote parts of the world and drawing them from the screen. And actually, that's so much more ecologically sound than taking a plane to draw from them in place! You can just gently watch and study them in real time and have the excitement of these animals coming and going. That's brilliant. And also, the compulsion to work as a group online, that's interesting. People want to come together as a group to do it, live in the moment.

JAKE: Absolutely! We're not just copying a picture; I think that's become explicit now. People have access to endless photographs to draw from, and they still want a slightly wobbly picture of someone moving a little bit, because it's a real interaction.

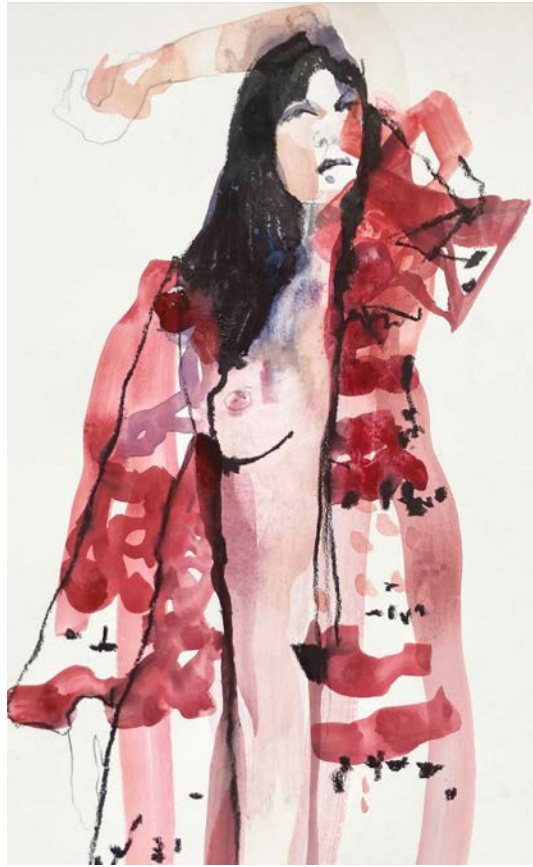
CHLOE: Yeah! Someone breathing. It's movement, isn't it? When it's live, something impromptu might happen also. It's not rehearsed. I really like that element of it. Someone might sneeze! I can't imagine going back to not using this as a tool, that's for sure.

JAKE: Imagining a point where we are safely out of the pandemic, what would be your ideal balance between real life experiences and these online communities be?

CHLOE: I think it's offering a choice. I've met you though this! We might not



Above: 'Drawing of loi Choi' by Chloe Briggs



Above: 'Sarah Chadfield Life Drawing Online' by Chloe Briggs

but it's very easy to meet people online. I've met more people in this last year - likeminded wonderful drawing community people - because of this. So, I think it's a choice. Drawing in a room with people is more intimidating because there are eyes on you, there are eyes on what you're doing - I always think it is a very vulnerable act, to draw. What's beautiful about this format is that you're drawing with other people but no one can see your work yet, so, there's this privacy to that daring. I think,

certainly for some students, that's really key to getting more confident and building up. Because your heart is racing in a group, isn't it? For me, it is! When I'm in a room full of people all drawing together it's like [gasp] even if you've drawn a lot, you never lose that buzz - 'this could be the best drawing I've ever done in my life...'. So I think to give people that option is important and drawing online certainly connects people around the world and gives people more access to the material. Again, that is what I share with Draw Brighton and what you've set up. It's about sharing the pleasure of drawing with as many people as possible and online drawing knows no bounds.

JAKE: So, has teaching online helped you to kind of reflect on how you're teaching and what you're teaching?

CHLOE: Yes. And to become more concise and articulate. Also using more visual aids and source material; searching more widely and not just having the same perspectives. It's finding ways to communicate which, when you're not in a room together, you take for granted. I'm not lazy but I became like, 'oh, I can animate a room full of people'. But here I'm like, 'but how do you do it when you're not with them? What does that take?' So, you find all these other tools and I would never go back to not using those tools or building

on them.

JAKE: Do you think there are implications so much new recorded material being available?

CHLOE: Really interesting that, isn't it? It's like with the drawing correspondence that I set up with Tania Kovats and Anita Taylor - we talked about how you archive material. I did a workshop with Rob Unett from the Newlyn School of Arts, whose work I really appreciate. It was £9, and I have a recording of it for a year - I can look at it again, and it's nice to know that I have it. I only managed to do half of it, and there were lots of things that he said that I'd like to hear again and I'd like to try again. That was something I would like to repeat. I think my answer to your question is that I don't think the recordings have the excitement of the live moment in time. I think they will date. I think it's about now. I think I'd like to use online in the now. When I draw, I'm interested in the next drawing, not in the one I just did. It's about doing it again in a better way, in another way, with a different group, and always discovering. I'm not capitalist about making money from an archive of something. There is precious material but I think Zoom is a free space. I don't know. What do you think? What about all this material? What should we do with it?

JAKE: Well at the moment we're running

fewer live tutored sessions at Draw, and we've got all of our live, tutored sessions recorded as an archive on the Draw Patreon. People are signing up to use that historical archive while other people were only interested in it when it was delivered live. Lance structured those videos wonderfully, but all of those kinds of lessons are available in a similar form for free on YouTube. What I think is really interesting is that people are paying a subscription to access something that essentially, they could access for free somewhere else. They like the element of selection but also, they feel the need to be part of the community that has existed around that recorded material. Because we don't get any other funding, their monthly payments keep everyone in work and help us to make more tutorials - it's a really positive, grassroots-funded cycle. If we didn't have the archive, we wouldn't attract the new people who want to use it, and they are an important part of the community.

I'm really excited about the potential of recorded lessons too - I've been teaching the same kinds of classes for twelve years. Although they have evolved I was definitely teaching the same kind of two-hour introduction to portrait drawing at every gallery I worked at. At the moment I'm thinking, there's a lot that I can record, package up, and then put aside for people to

watch, giving me more time to focus on the more exciting, reflective live sessions that can accompany those recorded lessons.

CHLOE: That's a nice balance. So you record the 'nut' of the thing that you want to impart, and everything else comes from the students' work and from the results of what you've shared live. I was just thinking that I've had a long interest in the history of the foundation course and I've looked through the archives of how it evolved in different countries from its Bauhaus origins. So little is documented of teaching in art schools; it's an oral tradition predominantly. There are briefs sometimes, there are traces of ideas, and then it's in the students' work – but actually what is said in the students' classroom is not documented. Whereas this year is probably the most documented in our history. I don't know what to do with recordings yet! If there is something to mine from it, or something to extract from it to use, I don't know.

JAKE: I guess we'll have to revisit this in a year's time to find out!

CHLOE: I was thinking what a delight it is to talk to you at the end of this year because when we spoke this time last year it was the unknown. The complete unknown. Well, it's still the unknown but we've managed to do what we love to

do despite this, haven't we? And in so many ways, just flourished!

I've got this beautiful collaboration with the Aga Khan Centre gallery and the RHS Lindley Library, inspired by Esen Kaya's paradise gardens exhibitions. I'm working through these drawing resources that are going to be free for download from the different institutions. So yeah, I draw to find out what I'll put in! So, this morning I was out in the windy park drawing leaves in the wind, just trying to imagine the things I might do. And I suppose that it's the same with the online learning. There's no one right way to do something and a constraint is incredibly useful for finding a creative way through. Like plants, you just look for the light, don't you? You just look for a way to grow! I couldn't imagine anything worse than sitting for a year, thinking that things were out of my control and I had no way to make anything positive. That would be devastating. Drawing is amazing for so many reasons, but not least for coping with this angst-ridden time. I mean, it centres me. So many people speak of just how good it makes them feel to draw. If we can promote that – just that – the good feeling that comes from it, who cares about making a skilful drawing if we can just have that moment? That's beautiful, I think.

Interview by Jake Spicer

TEACHING ONLINE

Tips for online teaching by tutors in our extended Draw community



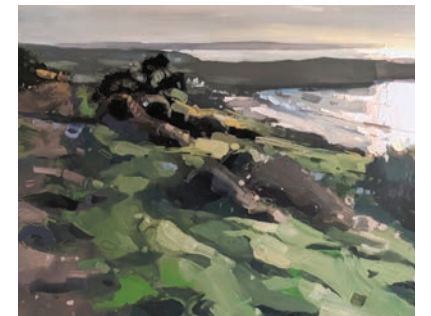
Above: Jade by Lancelot Richardson

1. Digital lessons can be delivered in many different formats, such as live lectures and interactive workshops, or pre-recorded videos, so think about what works for your teaching style, class size, students' needs, and personal situation. Preparation goes a long way, especially for live lessons, so plan carefully and consider running rehearsals to ensure your set-up works as intended.

Lancelot Richardson

2. Find out how to mute everyone and don't feel bad about it! You can always warn people you're going to do it, and invite them to unmute/type later. And if you're doing a demonstration, it can be really great having someone compère, asking sensible questions, even fielding chat/queries and keeping an eye on the audience if you're hands are too dirty to touch your computer.

Hester Berry



Above: 'Woolacombe Down' by Hester Berry



Above: 'Hove Lawns' by Shelley Morrow

3. Start small - having smaller tutorial groups helps to keep things more manageable and personal when you are starting out. I also have a small 'guinea pig' group where I can test out ideas for teaching and offer a reduced rate in return.

Shelley Morrow

DRAWING CABARET COUTURE

An interview with founders Matthew Lawrence and Janet Mayer

JAKE: How have you found building community in a virtual space?

JANET: I guess we were so optimistic and positive from the beginning because we had nothing else to pour our energy into. We'd lost all our work. All the dancing had gone. So, we were like, 'right, we must throw everything we have into this, because what else do we have?'. We have folders of beautiful pictures. So, I started sending those out through Patreon to begin with but honestly Jake, with the online drawing classes, we were like, 'nah! Who's going to possibly want to draw off a screen?' We did not see that coming from anywhere.

MATT: We were thinking more about the product itself rather than the wholesome benefits you get from connecting with people. So that

obviously came out to be the stronger - what people actually want is regularity, knowing that 'I'm going to be drawing with a load of other people at this time and its going to be live.'

JANET: The first livestream was terrible. It was on the farm. It was really pixelated. We re-watched it and we were both embarrassed, weren't we?

MATT: It was from the camera on the Mac. We had really bad reception outside in the field. We put so much effort and energy into what we were going to do and how we were going to teach it and you couldn't see or hear anything!

JANET: Then people kept coming back and we were like, 'what is going on here? We must be doing something right', so we just kept doing it. The farmer

upgraded the internet (my dad!) and it became a weekly thing.

MATT: Every Thursday 7pm. And we'd do an 11 one to reach more time zones. And as soon as we started that regularity, it was non-stop - it just grew and grew and grew.

JANET: People told other people - social media is so important. A lot of the artists have said if they miss a class

they see it all over social media the next day so they feel, 'damn, I should have gone to this class, it looks so good!' They don't want to miss out, and they want to be there. And people say that nothing comes close to drawing it live and yes, there are catchup videos and stuff, but I think it's the live that people want. And they don't know what to expect, what's going to come on the screen with us.

JAKE: I'm guessing it started with people you already had a connection with, but how's that changed over the last year?

JANET: It's been international, it's been amazing. So many fashion illustrators from all the fashion capitals - LA, Paris, America in particular - they just tell their friends, and the rest is social media. And we're sharing the artists' work as much as possible - we've got a few more magazines that come to our classes - it generates amazing content for their magazine, and of course the artists' works are featured. The more that is getting seen and shared, the better it is for everyone - I think that is really important.

JAKE: I think that's one of the things you've done so well. Everyone involved is creating something and everyone is collaborating to make that happen.



Above: Janet Mayer modelling, clothing designed by Christopher Antonio, lighting and photography by Mars Washington, Set Design & Art Direction by Drawing Cabaret Couture



JANET: I think as well, we work with a lot of graduate designers who have just come out of college. Over the pandemic, it's been so hard for designers to get their garments out there - we give the designers the chance to get their work shot professionally and with a professional model and a professional backdrop, like a proper editorial shoot. When that gets highlighted in a magazine or shared, it benefits so many different people, and that's the beauty of it.

JAKE: It's really exciting! So what's next? Are you going to keep pushing the online sessions or is there a real-life manifestation of it? What's the balance now?

MATT: We can't stop now, because we've got family, every week. You know, I could name ten people off the top of my head - I know they will be there on Sunday at our bonus classes. They might not be able to come to live ones when we do them, so we can't stop it. We don't want to.

Also, just knowing the technicality side of things, my god, I don't know how you've managed, but I didn't know a single thing before we started this way back last year!

JAKE: Between March 10th and March 29th, I feel we all went through an intensive training programme in everything techie!

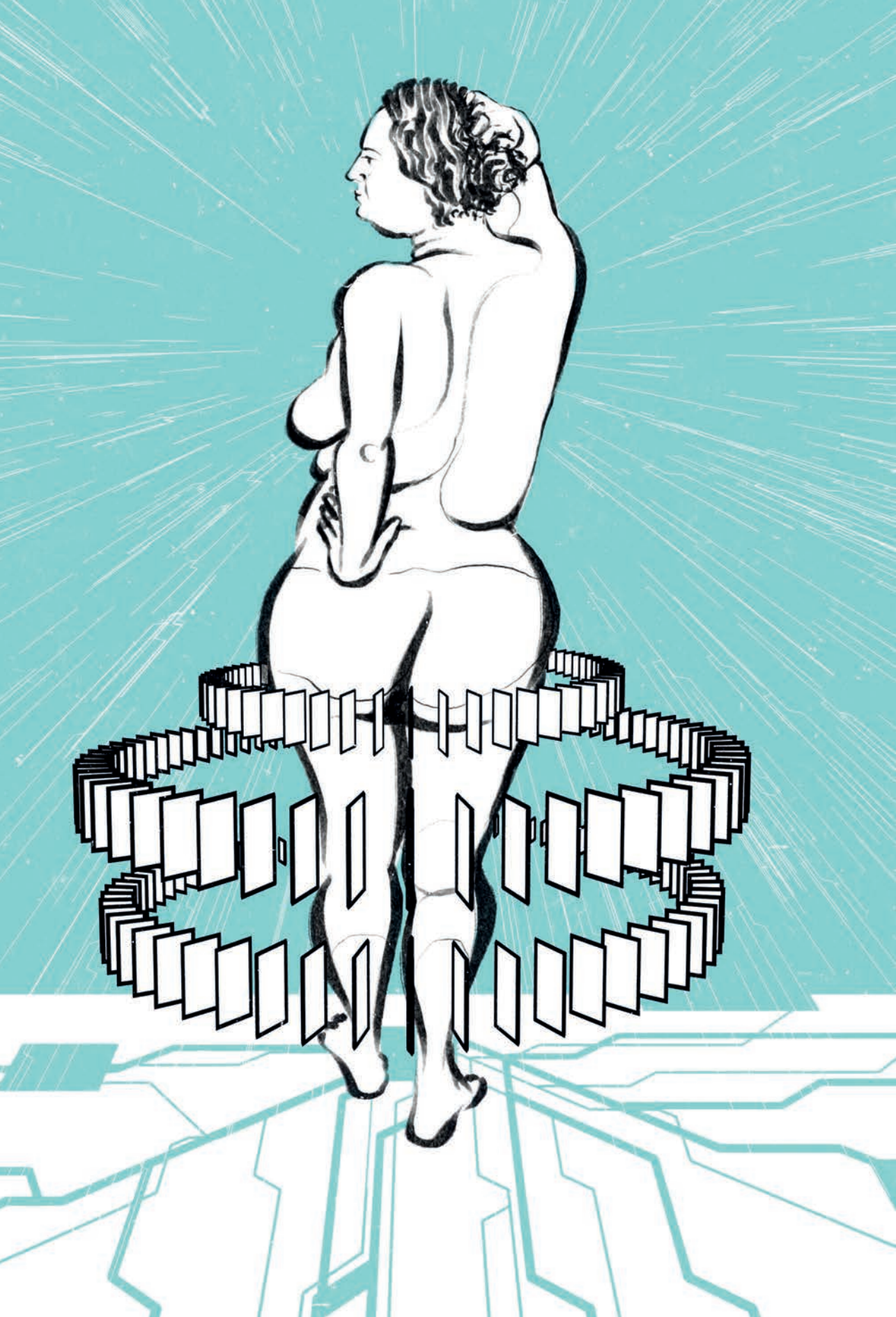
MATT: One hundred percent! We've basically taught ourselves television broadcasting. I've been learning about audio-mixing devices and tethering cables, how to shoot properly and understand cameras and how to understand software that records and livestreams at the same time. It's been a constant learning process and there's still so much to learn. It takes time because it's so expensive - it's an investment any time you want to upgrade anything.

JANET: We definitely want to do some in-person sessions, for sure. They won't be as big as they used to be...

MATT: It took us two months to plan the last one but we're at the stage where the online business has become a full time job for both of us, and now our old jobs are starting to demand attention and asking for us back. So now it's a game of spinning plates or figuring out if we can get another person on board. It's up to us, at the end of the day - how far we want to take it.

Interview by Jake Spicer

Left: 'Tuncer', Janet Mayer modelling, clothing designed by Erica von Stein, lighting and photography by Mars Washington, Set Design & Art Direction by Drawing Cabaret Couture



POSE

You are never more conscious of your own three-dimensionality than when you pose for a life class in the round, your body being drawn from every direction. The life model wears the shared air of the studio, and their physical body exerts its gravity on the room, holding the attendant artists in an orbit of attentive observation. Life modelling online is the exact opposite – the model does not share physical space with the artists but broadcasts their self-set 2-dimensional composition out to kitchens, bedrooms, and studios. Both the sender and recipients of that live, moving-still-image are alone in their own private spaces and exert full autonomy over their art – either the pose itself, or the drawn response. The online platform has changed so much about life modelling that we will only be able to quantify its impact in retrospect – it has increased the diversity of models' body shape, skin colour and gender but has reduced the diversity of age and excluded less technologically competent models. It has created new international networks but seen drawing classes move away from supporting local modelling economies. It has boosted the status and income of professional models but increased the barriers to entering that profession. It has bought the discipline of life modelling into the simultaneously censored and sexualised realm of the computer screen. In this chapter we invite accounts of what it is like to model now, in anticipation of discovering where we go next.

MODELLING ONLINE

An interview with Danna Sim, aka Conkunktion

JAKE: Tell me a bit about the transition to online life modelling - you started digital life classes pretty early didn't you?

DANNA: Yeah, it was probably around April [2020] - the lockdown happened in March and by April, it became clear that there wasn't going to be anything happening for quite a long time. Honestly at that point, it was a knee-jerk reaction because I thought, 'Shit! I need to work, so I need to get on to something.' A few models I know were starting to consider it as well; Françoise got right on it early and I think that gave me confidence to give it a shot. My first session was very much an experiment. I'd spent honestly all day draping my backdrop, because I love draping, I love fabrics. I thought, 'I'm going to make it really curated and beautiful.' I turned the laptop camera on and realised that the framing was completely off! I had spent all this

wasted time, basically, draping the background, and you could see the whole of my living room, because of the format of the camera. So that was a very early lesson - check your composition as soon as you set up the camera!

JAKE: You set up your Patreon then didn't you - sharing your own reflections, your own writing and photosets?

DANNA: Yeah, it's kind of a place where I ... I don't know, I've had some feedback where people had said, 'Oh, I was expecting to have more actual reference imagery to work from'. I thought if I just fill the Patreon just with pure reference imagery, it doesn't give me an opportunity to get into all the other weird little bits I like to do. So, I hope it gives a bit of both, the best of both worlds. It's also been a great outlet for consolidating everything in one place. Because I've got different



Above: 'Inkling' by Siri Berlin

bits of different types of work going all the time, it makes my head feel a bit scattered and a little bit, 'oh, what am I doing? Who actually am I as a creative person?' When I can write a bit about it and just chat with the writing, I think it helps me understand my own processes as well and my own drives.

JAKE: What's your relationship to the reference images you make and the work that's created from it? And what's your attitude to selling it?

DANNA: It's a very good question! Let me think about it for a minute.

I have really had to compartmentalise selling it in my head and sort of... I don't want to say 'detach from it', because I don't think that's really what I mean, but in order to do it, and just put those images out there, I do feel like I have to be a little bit detached from them in some way. If you think about things too much then you get freaked out! Because I am sending photos to people I don't know, to places I don't know, you try to control it as much as you can, but you can't fundamentally control every aspect of it. So, I think I just get my head into this place where I think, okay, those images are going out there, and they'll take on their own life. Aside from that, I've enjoyed creating the images themselves so much. In life modelling,

you can certainly show aspects of your personality when you're working in real-life, but the reference imagery has really given me an opportunity show some strange ideas that I have. It's such a joy to do that and the feedback has been pretty good!

JAKE: As life models are essentially running most of the classes from their own houses, what do you think an organiser, who isn't a model, brings to an online session?

DANNA: I think they've been fundamental. Some models have a strong network anyway, but for those models who haven't got an online presence, the organisers are equally important because they're bringing the people in. Now that the models are assumed to be the ones who make the sessions happen in so many respects, maybe the organiser's role has changed slightly. I think the organisers have been having to adapt in the same way as the models.

JAKE: Are there any ways that you think the running of online sessions could be improved?

DANNA: Nothing comes to mind honestly. But the thing that I would like to see some more discussion around is the lead up to the sessions, and how

people are promoting them, and what they're asking models for. What they're promoting with as well – whether it's images of the model or drawings of the model from other people's work. There is a bit of a disconnection between the advert and the session at times, and I think that can be quite dangerous. I've fallen into that hole myself, because some of the sessions I've done have been very theme-driven and I've had props and setting and whatever. I feel that I need to not over-advertise it, because you want to be honest about what you're giving people in the session. So, there's no point in putting a photo of you dancing up on a roof with a bloody cape on because if that's not what people are going to see in the session! You don't need to absolutely go to the ends of the earth to promote the session - it should just be a simple reflection of what you're going to see in the event, I think.

JAKE: What do you think is next for life drawing, or for you?

DANNA: I've done some real-life sessions in the last month, some in Glasgow and London, and it just does not get better than doing it in real life, and we all know that. But that's why I don't think I'll ever be able to just go online because I get that satisfaction from actually being in person. And

being an artist as well, I don't think anyone could say that they prefer being online. So, I think I'm just going to try and schedule online life drawing once a month once I'm back in Glasgow, and then just see how winter goes, because who knows what's around the corner. But certainly, I guess for all of us, we've got our set-ups so it would be a shame not to continue and keep on learning.

JAKE: That's all really great, unless there's anything that you wanted to throw in?

DANNA: The only other thing I wanted to add really was the lasting effects of all of it, I think we covered it in the opening question really, was that community. You know, I think there's a lot of models who have connected internationally to tutors and to individual artists. I've certainly met people online who have just been incredible! It blows my mind sometimes, you know, that this one thing is bringing people together. After all of this a lot of folk have said it's been the thing that's gotten them through the lockdown, and it's the same for me. If I didn't have it to focus on and if I didn't have it as a job to put my energy into, it would have been a lot more difficult. Life drawing can change the world, I think.

Interview by Jake Spicer

ANNA CATHERINE

A photo essay by Anna Catherine

“The connection I feel with my cameras is everything to me. Self-portraits aren’t just about taking a photograph but aligning my visual mind with my own thoughts and ideas. I had to find a way to express the anarchy and chaos of my feelings through quarantine. This is when I came to realize that this camera had become my visual soulmate. My dreams and nightmares come alive when I hear the click dropping, the film ejecting or the loud beeping sound before the shot is taken. For me this has been the therapy that has kept me alive during such dark days. I can feel my soul release the heavy burdens in these moments, and there is nothing in the world that can touch me. In a world that censors women’s bodies it feels good to have a space where I feel completely free to create as I want and with the visual stimuli of my dreams.”





BRIGHTON STUDIO: BACKSTAGE

Backstage at a Draw photoshoot

New England House has been home to our in-person life classes for the past decade and within its austere shell, it's the building where you'll find people who make just about anything, from architects to filmmakers, painters to bakers. In March of 2020, with lockdown looming and our sessions closed by staff illness, we spent four



Above: Olly and Laura on the iPad

days conceiving and setting up our Patreon page in the hope of saving the studio. At the time we had no idea what Zoom was nor the foresight to imagine that life drawing would soon be hosted on video conferencing platforms, so we envisaged a system for releasing weekly reference images of our life models – paying them a monthly royalty for the use of their images and keeping everybody drawing from home. I called Olly Hearsey, owner and principal photographer at the Brighton Studio, a huge photography studio on level 2 of the building, and asked him for his help – he had shot the photographs for my Figure Drawing book in 2019 and I imagined we could try something similar. He agreed to photograph 15 of our life models in two days at a heavily discounted rate and over the next few hours I got in touch with our core models, hashing out the details of the shoot. With Laura and Frankie as crew and Olly as studio technician and photographer, I directed the shoot from Wales via the Discord app, my voice

Right: Laura at the Brighton Studio





Above: Laura and Mark set up a shot

piped live to the studio and the back of the camera hooked up to my iPad via a live stream. A new model arrived at the studio every hour, to be greeted by Frankie, briefed by Laura and shot by Olly. I ticked my way through a tally of the planned poses on printed sheets of A4, checking them off against the images which came up on my iPad in Wales each time Olly's shutter snapped in Brighton.

Even with the deep discounts offered by Olly, the costs of studio, crew and models cost us all of the Draw cash reserves and put us at the bottom of our overdraft, making the launch of the Patreon all the more tense and its astronomical success all the more of a relief. That first week helped us create the foundation on which we are now building. No longer a sticking-plaster substitute for life drawing, we are now creating the most comprehensive and ethical life drawing photo-resource in the UK, adding new photo sets each week and shooting new photographs with Olly every four months. Alongside our life and portrait sets, we're now inviting artists to art-direct shoots and have begun to invite models from our newly expanded national community to pose for sets. Soon, supporters of our Life Drawing and Student Patreon tiers will have access to a 5000 photograph

archive, with the models who posed for those photos paid an equal split of 25% of the Patreon income, going some way to balance the continued loss of work that so many of them have suffered over the last year.

About the Brighton Studio

The Brighton studio is a phenomenal resource for the city and Xoe and Olly are the most welcoming, community-minded hosts we could hope for. If you're looking for a project space for a shoot in Brighton, they couldn't come more highly recommended. This is not an advert for the studio so much as a heartfelt recommendation for a clean and welcoming space with four custom-built studios, an in-house agency for crew and equipment hire, all in the humble basement of our beloved studio block.

www.thebrightonstudio.com

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Words by Jake Spicer



DRAW

The popularity of zoom life drawing is a testament to the creativity and adaptability of our entire community. Within weeks of the international lockdowns of early 2020 life drawing groups had settled on Zoom as a platform for live broadcast. Models had learnt to light themselves in their own living rooms, upgrading their cameras and wifi to make their homes into film-sets. This new context upended the binary of working from a photograph or working from a live subject as the artist and model were able to share a moment in time without sharing physical space. At first, drawing online was a kind of clinging – it gave us focus in a time of uncertainty and allowed us to be together whilst apart. The universal nature of that moment was unique in our lives so far – the simultaneous, international pandemic response united drawers from Israel with models from Spain with life classes in New Zealand. All of society was required to join artists who had always been in isolation, separated from drawing communities by geography or disability. While we are no longer experiencing that shared moment, its vestiges remain and online life drawing is here to stay, offering a new structure to new communities. If you feel the need to draw from a model, or to connect with other artists, you now always have somewhere to go. In this chapter we celebrate new connections with artists who we'd have never been able to work with otherwise - artists who we were able to interview online like Curtis Holder and Wuon-Gean Ho as well as new members of our drawing community like Gabriel HG and JM.

CURTIS HOLDER

Selected quotes from an interview with Curtis Holder

As part of our Instagram Live Interview series, Laura Ryan spoke to Curtis Holder about making the transition from working completely from life, to using a mixture of life, live online sessions and photo reference as a necessity of lockdown. You can watch the full interview on the Draw IGTV.

"I have always been quite envious of people who are able to bring life and emotion to a piece, simply using

photography... Because for me, drawing is about trying to understand what I'm looking at, who I'm looking at, why I'm there. It's about answering a lot of questions for me and with photography I found that it was like someone handing me a puzzle, but at the same time, they're handing me the answers. And I'm there going, 'But there's nothing for me to work out!' But that's just for me.

[Before the pandemic] I could have

models in, go to various different life drawing sessions all over the place – and that instantly stopped. And, just like everybody else, I found that really disturbing, I found that upsetting. Because for me and my practice, it is about connection. It's about having that human connection, and so I was forced to have a different approach. And, being an artist, I think that's always a good thing.

My mum always used to say, 'desperation breeds innovation', which means that, these things that are sent to try us will inevitably, I think, push your practice, in ways that you never expected. I found drawing online quite frustrating, because it's kind of like drawing from photographic reference. You've still got the tension of the model being live and moving, but there is that essence of 2D-ness to it all which, for me, my brain had to click into something slightly different. But what that did allow me to appreciate is that you can have that connection online.

The models I've come across are artists and photographers themselves and they're giving you a part of themselves when they are producing these photo sets. I just love the fact that there's that empathy there and it's not just a photo, it's a conversation that's continuing from the [live] session, which I think is amazing. And on a



Above: 'Mr Sweezy' by Curtis Holder

practical level, in the photosets that I've managed to purchase, the quality is exceptionally high. So they will cater for someone like me who uses it in maybe a more structural way to people who are photorealists, because they can zoom in and work their magic with those photographs...To me, it always feels like a collaboration when I'm using photosets. It doesn't feel like I'm just using stock photography. It just feels like, I know that model. I know what they were trying to achieve. I was in that session and this is just a continuation of that and we're working together on something even though they're not there. And on top of that, it's just a brilliant way to support artists and life models."



Above: 'Paul, Boakye and Curtis' by Curtis Holder

GABRIEL HG

A showcase of work by Gabriel HG

While our initial supporters came from the existing Draw community, it didn't take long before we started seeing new people signing up to support the Draw Patreon or to attend our online life classes. No longer restricted by geography, our growing community is now spread across the world – at least in time zones that work with our life drawing schedule. One of our earliest and most loyal international supporters was Gabriel HG, a painter from Mexico. Gabriel is still regularly attending our online sessions, so we're really pleased to be able to showcase some of his work here, translated from Spanish.

About Gabriel HG

Gabriel HG (b. 1993_) is a painter based in Coatepec, Veracruz in Mexico. His acrylic work is born from a vocation linked to the concern to create works that, function as a kind of balsam for the viewer. He orients the painting to balance conceptual and formal elements: idea, form, composition, colour. He also aims to reflect or evoke the conditions of human fragility, establishing relationships between the

figurative and the abstract as well as between the subject and the object: the person and their environment. The human figure and strong colour are the constants, the vehicles to lead the viewer to introspection; in addition, they seek to be a caress: to make the viewer feel good.



Left: 'Encounters' by Gabriel HG



Above: 'D' by Gabriel HG



Above: 'Sun of Veracruz' by Gabriel HG



Above: 'Dream Morph' by Gabriel HG

WUON-GEAN HO

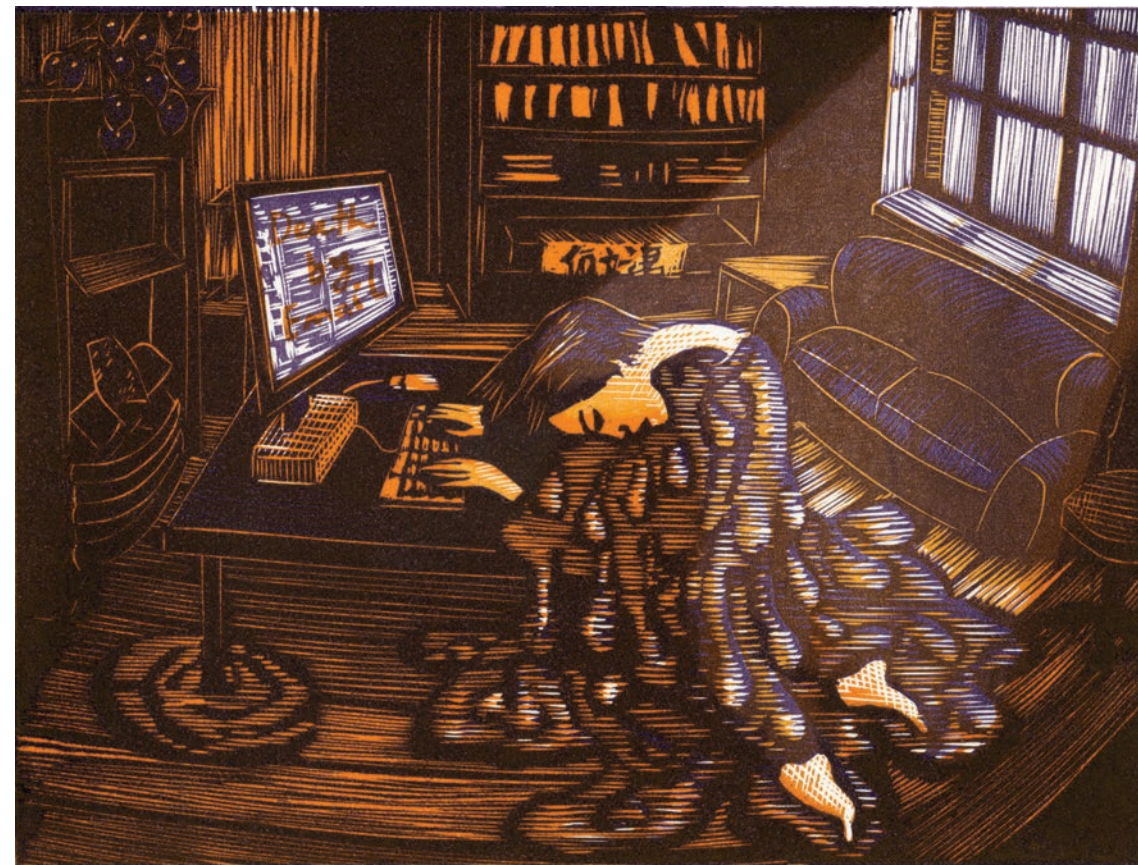
Selected quotes from ETC: Art/Work interview with Wuon-Gean Ho

We interviewed artist Wuon-Gean Ho for our series of interviews and as part of that interview we talked about the shared experiences of the pandemic. While some artists have struggled to create effectively during the lockdowns, Wuon-Gean has been prolific and has made a series of lino cuts for a series called 'Covid Tales' – we have pulled out a few of those images here alongside some quotes from the interview as an introduction to Wuon-Gean's work. Take a look at the Draw Brighton YouTube channel to watch the full 1-hour interview and visit Wuon-Gean's website to see more of her work.



Above: 'Screen Overload' by Wuon-Gean Ho

“I want to say the positives first. I thought while working at home you can work and you can be in the kitchen, next to the laundry, you can eat and drink, you can have your chrysanthemums nearby, you know, there are a lot of benefits to being at home.”



Above: 'Death by Email' by Wuon-Gean Ho

“But after a while I really did feel that communicating through the screen is just so demoralizing. This is my fantasy: that I would die and no one would know and I'd melt away. They'd only break the door down when they smelled something. My “Death by Email” print.”

“But I wanted to end on a positive note so the comedy has to come back. This is the lock down chop - which is growing out. And the joy of being in the pool. I’m really lucky. I live near the London Field Lido.”



Above: 'Lockdown Chop' by Wuon-Gean Ho

“It’s outdoors but heated so we have had months of glorious swimming outdoors that they made possible through covid-secure measures. I’m lucky that I’ve had that. And my beautiful orchids, which are like my best friends because they hang out with me all the time. [I made a print] before all of this happened. It’s called Cassiopeia, and it’s just to remind us that the stars are an enduring thing and we should maybe look up in order to look past what’s happening at the moment.”

Right: 'D R A W', a poem by JM

D R A W
(two sketches, a portrait, & a full figure)

I
collective we drag
a chalk nail first line,
a wisp flick, a hit, stick, spinal
don't erase it. Consider, in part, the
body, the line, life in the gesture
if we're lucky but
time is finer than
the line ^{here}

II
forget in how we forget feeling the ears
the eyeballs: work 'em, but throw ache out,
any. This-gaze is action is compartment is
intent. It sips shadows as satiate & let's
a rub reckon everything.

III
EYEBROW into
lip into
collarbone, no, blush
i figure their eyes mid-blink,
catch it evry minute or so
as crumple good expression settled
only in the living face
whether fingernail big or
otherwise, figure lip-again
a fleshy register in mute sketches
where the hand by the jaw
siphons off a minute more...

IV
the model holds frame
a present absent focus;
we draw every breath.

THANK YOU

A special thanks to all the tutors, models, artists and Draw Patreon Supporters, without whom none of this would be possible. Below is a list of all of our Kickstarter supporters who made this issue of the Draw Journal possible: a huge thank you for supporting Draw.

Aaron Jacob Jones	Beth Griffin	Clive	G A Foot
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And finally, a huge thank you to all of the artists, models and tutors who have contributed to this issue of The Draw Journal.

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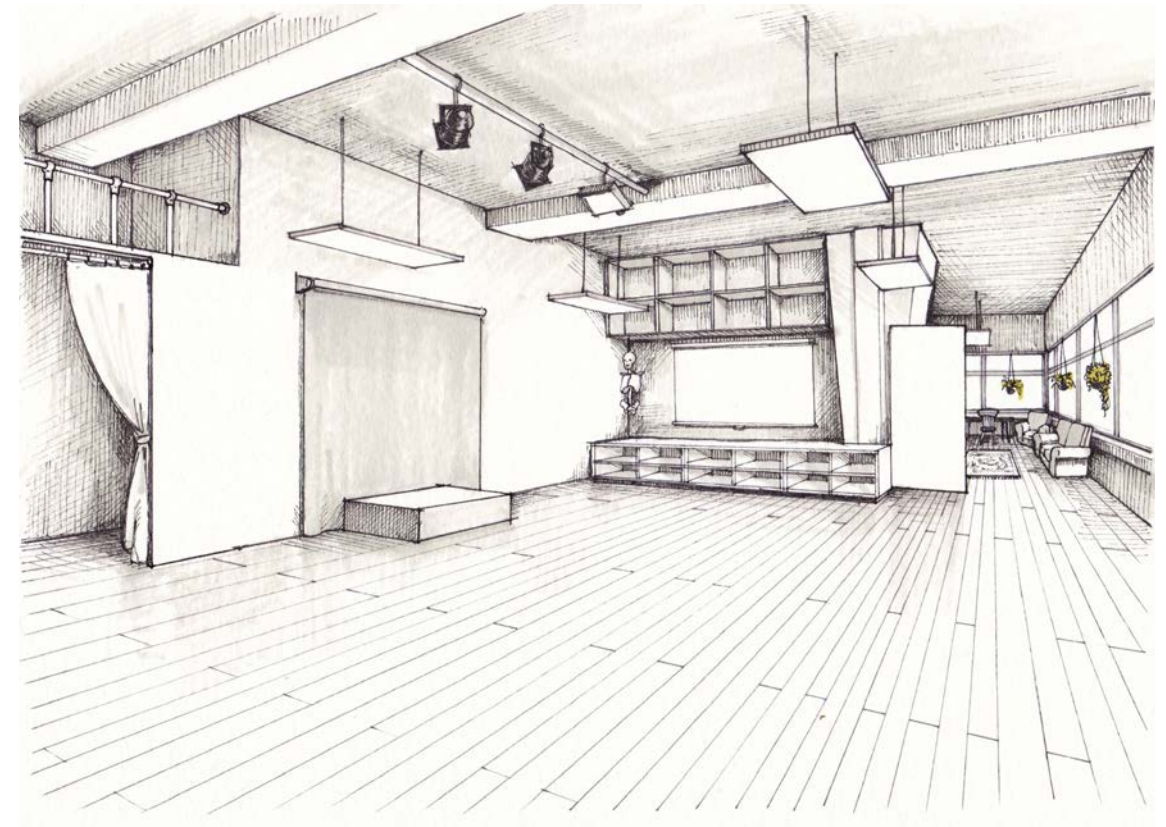
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Plan drawing of the new Draw studio by Jake Spicer

This publication was written and edited by Draw's head tutor Jake Spicer and the design was by Draw's model co-ordinator Megan Snyders. The front cover illustration and three main feature illustrations by Will Scobie were specially commissioned for this publication.

Draw is a social enterprise running flexible and affordable life drawing classes, accessible to everybody. We had to close the original Draw Studio in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic; it is thanks to the generosity and support of our community on Patreon that we've been able to keep running online throughout the pandemic and it is thanks to our Kickstarter supporters that we will be able to open a new studio here in Brighton in 2021. This Journal as also been funded in part by money raised on the Kickstarter campaign; to support the work we do at Draw and to get access to our online life classes and drawing resources, visit www.patreon.co.uk/DrawBrighton