

Journal of Drawn Out

I of 4

I'm working on the this roll whilst living in a flat in London. I've been taking weeks out my job to draw these lines.

My body doesn't really move for most of the day, just my hand, everything else is perfectly still. My head is tilted and head is hung low to the paper to see the contact that occurs below my fingers. Table presses onto my chest when I move up the drawing from the middle.

After almost half a year of drawing I finished; my hand was cramping with callouses across my fingers.

When I unrolled the paper on the floor I realised that this single roll, once exhibited on a white wall, would look from a distance like one broad grey line. At that point my intentions for this roll to be a finished piece changed. I decided that I needed to complete a further three identical rolls, which when exhibited together would resemble the repeated the set of four lines which fill them - a fractal pattern.

The reasons for the first roll will be the same for the second, third and fourth, but I need to focus and drawn alone.

II of 4

I've moved into a hamlet in the French Alps to work on this remaining rolls in isolation.

I have trapped a nerve in by back from reaching across to the top of the drawing, I've hardly slept in the last three nights. I have to turn the drawing upside down to fill the top as I don't want to further compromise my spine by reaching across the sheet at an awkward angle.

The trapped nerve has eased.

My fingertips are smooth and my finger prints are almost non-existent on my thumb and index finger because of the constant rubbing. The point of contact in my little finger had calloused into a lump which I have to balance on to draw.

The months are starting to roll by. When I arrived the village was covered in snow, now there is only the sound of drips from rooftops. It sometimes snows but when it does it melts away a few hours later. I like looking outside when it snows and trying to imagine the space that ten million snowflakes takes up as they fall in front of me (the drawings will eventually consist of approximately ten million marks).

III of 4

Trapped the nerve again. I hobbled out the house attempting to walk off some pain but my back went into spasm and I fell to the ground before I could make it any further. It continues to spasm, each time dropping me to floor. Its difficult to manoeuvre. Far more pain than last time. Barely sleeping.

It feels as if each mark is quantifiable for the overall aesthetic for the piece. I enjoy drawing and even though the days are blurring and I'm beginning to feel very separate form the world, I know I'm getting something from this; I'm not sure what yet.

The French voices that I hear when I'm outside are indecipherable. This makes me feel separated from the remaining people when I leave the house. The language barrier helps to enforce the social separation, which is ideal.

Some days I don't leave the table but to make food (which I eat whilst drawing). I get up at around 7-8 a.m. and put a glass of water and a coffee on the table. Sometimes I finish the last marks of a section just before I sleep.

It's hard to see the end of this project.

The lump of toughened skin across my finger caused by the persistent contact makes the first marks of the day the most uncomfortable.

I get cold because I'm practically motionless, sometimes I light a fire in the evening, which makes for good company. I guess it's man's oldest friend. Logs in exchange for warmth, entertainment and company - good trade.

My hand keeps shaking for hours after I've finished. There are impressions on the inside of my palm, left from my fingertips curled and pressing into it. In the morning the joints and muscles in my hand ache. They are very tight, it takes a while for them to loosen.

I'm experiencing the most minimal reputations of life without any man-made distractions, apart from this drawing.

Taken to talking to myself. Like us all, my internalised thoughts are abstract and even though I have no audience I still tend to speak in coherent sentences. I am alone so why do I feel the need to be understood by someone who is not there? It's quite amusing that I should find it necessary to be understood by an empty room.

Since I've been sitting quietly in a still room for so long my eyes have started to play tricks on me. I keep seeing flecks of movement in my peripheral vision. Sometimes at night this can be disconcerting, although most of the time I play along with them.

Almost finished the third roll. Emotions of relief almost got the better of me as I edged into the last millimetre, but they were quick to subside after I reminded myself that there's still another ten meters of work to complete.

|||| of 4

I've had seventeen dreams about the drawing so far and counting (which I could remember).

A worrying side effect from this project is that now my eye sight has dulled. My eyes have been staring at a surface just ten inches from my face for such a long time that trying to focus on an object any more than a meter away is noticeably blurry. I'm hoping they'll re-adjust, once I get the chance to stretch the eye muscles normally.

I've drawn every day, since I started the first roll around year and a half ago. Since starting the second roll, I have drawn all day every day.

The marks I'm making on this final roll are slightly tighter and smaller than the previous areas. I don't feel the need to race to the finish line - not that it's possible to finish quickly anyway. Perhaps finishing isn't as much of an incentive anymore as it used to be.

I've started to feel odd over the last few weeks, jittery and unsettled. I'm seeing pronounced movement from the corners of my eyes, I look up at things which I swear are moving but there is nothing, its annoying. My imagination is taking control.

When I wake my hand aches a lot and I can bend my fingers less and less. It's impossible to make a fist, my fingers form a tube instead. It used to be that every line I drew was painful, that's not the case anymore.

I'm moving too slowly down this 4th roll. I try to not look at what's left.

There is so little distinction between the days and months that pass that I can't remember what occurred yesterday apart from it being the same as the day before, and the day before that. There are no peaks and troughs, no marker to take note of, no event in the near future to measure and to look forward to. The drawing itself is rolled at both sides like a scroll so progression is hard to gauge. I'm getting progressively disorientated, everything I do I feel I've done forever. Through repeated conditioning my motor skills take me through the daily motions without hardly being aware of what's going on. There's no part to the day is remotely complex. My life is a sequence of basic human functions with drawing being as intuitive as breathing. This is a minimal, primal existence.

Although this project started more than a year ago, the lines are far older since they are the same ones I was making as child. The line between my past and present is now blurring. This routine seems to make time stop. I've often daydreamed about having the power to stop time, to walk around in a frozen environment industriously stealing things for when I choose to start time back up again. It seems I have stopped time but cannot start it back up. These last few weeks have been particularly difficult, I'm caught in a bad dream. I'm so removed that I feel like I've died. Like a ghost I don't interact with the few people I see. The inevitability of leaving this sanctuary of solitude is a surreal thought.

I wake up and fall asleep later and don't stop drawing until the morning, starting to become nocturnal for some reason. My hand is now ridged when I wake up.

I've stopped lighting fires.

Close to finishing now, just a month or so left.

I compare the speed in which the ink moves down the paper to the dreams one occasionally has of running as fast as one can but without seeming to move. This feels more real now than it does in the dream.

As an artist I have a certain function to perform and it takes up a great deal of my time, sometimes I speculate that I haven't accommodated for anything else. This drawing has taken me further away from society than I thought possible. The time to leave this womb is coming to an end, I've gone over the time I previously allocated for this piece - this is going to be an overdue rebirth.

Saturday 9th May 2015, tears fall onto the paper as the project comes to an end. This drawing has been a trial and a right of passage, being free of it is unreal.