

LAMP

Charlotte Mann

MY FAMILY
SOME PLANTS
AND
THE NEWS

My Parents met on Meeting House Lane, this Meeting House Lane, in a bit of Camberwell Art School that used to be here. She was his student.

Not so long ago I made a series of drawings of my father and our family around him as he was dying and after he was dead. These drawings along with other work are in this show.

They are a very different kind of drawing to the large wall drawings I am known for, they are small, they are of human beings, they were not made for an audience. In the other kind of drawing I make, the public kind, I never draw people or sentient creatures and I am always thinking about the future eyes and bodies that will experience the work, not so much anticipating, wishing to control or even suggest to them just knowing that they are the point, they are why I get to do it. This public work is not about *my* perceptual moment. In these public works I make drawings or paintings of things, but in the mode of re-making a version. In these cases I am working more in the language of the map or diagram, but with spatial empathy at the core and bodily reckoning as the standard or measure of it all, what engages and excites me is the challenge of making work about objects in context, in place and in space but weeding out perspective, and point of view. Relaying a visual message 1-1 scale (life size) while moving from 3 to 2 dimensions and savouring all the paradoxes that this entails. A sort of flat sculpture. Scale is everything.

In the case of The Paper (the newspaper work in this exhibition which started with a drawing I made of The Guardian from the date of my daughters birth) one of the things which especially interests me is the extent to which this thing of huge cultural significance—a newspaper is both 2 and 3 dimensional and maybe it's not essentially dimensional at all (a similar product/service could be transmitted orally and exist solely as memory). It seems that we are on the way to losing the 3 dimensional version and that concerns me because I feel it is a mistake to underestimate the importance of imbibing information through complex and dynamic (not fully controllable) dimensional relationships with objects. The tangled relationship between this message and its medium has its tendrils deep into the fabric of society, maybe getting rid of paper newspapers would be like cutting the head off a tapeworm.

I wouldn't be making this work (the 1-1 scale large flat sculptures). If it wasn't for the fact that I've spent my whole life ever since I could hold a pencil making another kind of drawing. Drawings like the ones I made as my father was dying, drawings where my private perceptual moment is the inevitable companion subject to whatever I'm looking at or thinking about. As a young child I could draw with no thought of what a 'drawing' should look like, no ideas of right or wrong, just gradually learning to recognise the only relevant thing in governing the value of it: how wholehearted, how present, how engaged, how focused, how open and available I was or wasn't to the act. Now I'm older and therefore self conscious I have to self consciously disengage from ideas of what each drawing might/should/could/would look like, which is interestingly hard and I mostly fail, in order to let the act bring me to things, take me to stuff and teach me things I didn't know I wanted to know, things I didn't know were there to be known. I learned to draw like this because it's what my father especially and mother and many of their friends did and do all the time. Drawing because there is no other activity (when approached the way I learned it) remotely comparable in how it helps you to be precisely present and available to notice and appreciate experience, and to respect, marvel at and love the external stimuli that gave you that experience.

In the other work in this show I am traveling between these two very different kinds of drawing.