

Artist of the Week: Dan Shaw-Town

by Nina Hooft Graafland / 04th February 2015



His works allude to the language of manufacture and are indicative of a sense of transformation and re-working. The final piece becomes entirely different to how the work has begun and in so to it's original intentions, the surface of the work having been altered largely.

His works vary in their textures and surfaces but they all are united in their purpose, they investigate the various possibilities of his materials and work to understand the medium's potential to take a variety of forms and achieve a wide range of visual effects.

An artist whose work is hard to classify, Dan Shaw-Town's art treads a fine line between drawing and sculpture, blurring the distinction that exists between them.

Although Shaw-Town works with the traditional mediums of paper and graphite, he uses paper as sculptural medium. A process of repeatedly folding, creasing and manipulating the paper allows Shaw-Town to investigate the various possibilities of his material, he is concerned primarily with creating a surface, using the paper to give form.

ESTETICHE DI CORRISPONDENZA: DAN SHAW-TOWN E JOSH TONSFELDT

Coppie di artisti ospitate alla galleria 1/9unosunove di Roma in una serie di quattro appuntamenti per condividere lo spazio espositivo, avviando un confronto a distanza su convergenze e specificità di elaborazione grazie alla regia di Marianne Derrien: il progetto *c/o - an alternate correspondence* debutta con l'inglese Dan Shaw-Town (1983) e l'americano Josh Tonsfeldt (1979), che sollecitano gli elementi della prassi a tradursi in strumento di dialogo e reciproca corrispondenza. Comune alla loro ricerca si rivela l'essenziale sobrietà dei materiali impiegati, privilegiandone il facile reperimento soprattutto in veste di oggetti riciclati, unitamente alla versatilità nella scelta delle soluzioni multimediali e alla consuetudine di armonizzare gli allestimenti compositivi con l'ambiente circostante. Analoga inclinazione si ravvisa nel trasformare la funzione delle immagini stampate attraverso il procedimento del transfer, che Shaw-Town esibisce in mostra con fogli di giornale fissati a caldo su piani di alluminio dipinti o trattati con grafite, creando tessiture variegate di stratificazioni materiche la cui plasticità appare esaltata dalla presenza di sbarre in acciaio esteriormente istoriate con segni grafici



veduta della mostra Josh Tonsfeldt c/o Dan Shaw-Town – *an alternate correspondence*, 2014. Courtesy 1/9unosunove, Roma. Foto Valerio Iacobini

parzialmente visibili, collocate dinanzi ai pannelli. Mentre i lavori di Tonsfeldt propongono lastre o tavole di gesso a forma quadrangolare, connotate da irregolarità superficiali ove s'inseriscono pigmenti d'inchiostro che lasciano appena emergere linee o abbozzi figurativi. Al di là delle sensibili differenze associate alla temperie espressiva dei singoli protagonisti, l'effetto corale suscitato dalle loro opere risalta nelle proprietà poliedriche delle rappresentazioni, giacché se i disegni che Shaw-Town stropiccia fino al logoramento avvalorano un'indagine sulle segrete qualità dei materiali, e le sculture "arcaiche" di Tonsfeldt evocano lontane memorie di un tempo da riscoprire nella mutevolezza dei suoi passaggi inattesi, l'apparente incompiutezza delle esecuzioni rimanda alla consapevolezza di un processo estetico ancora in divenire, ma attento nel cogliere i segnali intermittenti delle sue geometrie formali.

Paolo Mastroianni



veduta della mostra Josh Tonsfeldt c/o Dan Shaw-Town – *an alternate correspondence*, 2014. Courtesy 1/9unosunove, Roma. Foto Valerio Iacobini



Dan Shaw-Town, *Untitled*, 2014. Courtesy l'artista e 1/9unosunove, Roma. Foto Valerio Iacobini

How Brussels is Capturing the Hearts of European Dealers, According to Simon Christopher

Artsy Editorial

Sep 10th, 2014 2:35 pm

Last June, London dealer Simon Christopher, founder of Christopher Crescent, moved his gallery from the British epicenter to the Belgian capital. Though then considered a somewhat unusual move, his decision is now becoming more apparent—a city quickly and quietly becoming a major art destination, supported not only by its bevy of well-off collectors but now a hotbed of established and emerging galleries. We spoke with Christopher about the move, the burgeoning city, and his exhibition on view during Brussels Art Days gallery weekend.

The move to Brussels came about primarily because I was very keen to get back into a brick-and-mortar space after the previous two years spent nomadically between various cities. The gallery had been operating out of London, but for various reasons, my criteria for property weren't reached there, and I took to looking further into property in Europe. I knew a bit about Brussels anyway, but homed in on it after a few recesses, which allowed me to start to scratch the surface a bit more, with the help of some established galleries already there. The agreeable pace of life here was the first thing I noticed, and when you consider its great location from which to take in a lot of the continent, along with a network of galleries and a strong tradition of collecting, the pros stack up for the city. I'd also been in discussions with a potential new French-speaking partner in the gallery, and the location was key to that consolidating. As far as deciding upon Ixelles, it was pretty much down to convenience—to be a new face on an established art route. The aforementioned pace of the city is reflected well in our neighborhood, and outside of working hours, it's possible to spend (too) many hours at various cafes and restaurants if people-watching is one's want!

I'm still pretty new here, and I haven't felt obliged to make too much noise. You know, I think its good just to settle in, do the good work, and trust the audience will find you out. Of course, Art Days will help with visibility no end, and I'm really looking forward to beginning conversations with what I hope will be our a longer-term audience. It's such a great initiative, with really sound intentions. There's a talk within the program titled "How to transform Brussels into the European capital of contemporary art within five years time." It's an incredibly positive and considerate attitude, and it engenders the sense that the interested parties here want to work together to make the city realize what seems to be its enormous potential. London, Berlin, Cologne, and Paris—they all have an identity as an art center in one form or another. I think Brussels is still finding its own, or at least an adaptation of what of it currently has. And of course that can only come from the people that make up the community. I believe it starts from the bottom up, and I do see a good level of

organization and criticality amongst the project spaces. Take Komplot, for example, which is really an institution. The dedication to serious programing is totally admirable.

In terms of our program in Brussels, I hope that we might be able offer an international eye on things, and certainly plan to continue to show artists for the first time in the city. It will take me some time to connect with the local protagonists—we have time—so no need to rush into artist relationships. All my existing relationships have been built up over years, and I see no reason to be different here. The first few shows are two- and three-person affairs, something broad to give a flavor of things, but we plan to commence solo projects sometime in the new year. I feel it's a transitional period for the gallery, so all in all I guess we're not playing our full hand just yet.

The show to coincide with Art Days is a two-person project with [Dan Shaw-Town](#) and [Nestor Sanmiguel Diest](#), two artists that, for want of a kinder description, have varying years under their respective belts. I've worked with Dan since the gallery started, so I've seen the practice really evolve. He's an artist that never stops investigating. Be it a new way to transfer information from a newspaper to his grounds, or a new material he has found in the hardware store. Nestor, on the other hand, is an artist I've only gotten to know in the last 12–18 months. He's been exhibiting since the '70s, chiefly in Spain, and has a wealth of institutional visibility there, but has yet to breakout further throughout the continent. Both of their practices are built upon solid and trusted foundations, made up of familiarity with medium, technique, and motif. The labor and elbow grease put into Dan's production give a sculptural characteristic to the works, whereas Nestor instead creates these palimpsest-like pieces that are the sum of many, many hours of fine mark-making, and which can tend to verge on [Op Art](#). So as well as being at opposite ends of an age spectrum, there is also an antithesis in their methods. I think it will make for quite a vivacious show.

— *As told to Marina Cashdan & Max Schreier*

Art Review:

04/02/13

Dan Shaw-Town: Retro-Modern

By Oliver Basciano



Retro-Modern installation view. Courtesy the artist and Christopher Crescent.



Untitled (2010). Courtesy the artist and Christopher Crescent.

Dan Shaw-Town's particular and predetermined aesthetic, gained through his recurring use of graphite, stands at odds with the transience and informality that characterise his installation process. Formally, and at first glance, the six works on display at London's Christopher Crescent gallery, all untitled (all work 2010), harbour a slick minimalist quality. Hung from the wall on grommets, a 76cm sheet of paper is divided diagonally, one triangular graphite half facing its light blue spray-painted counterpart; adjacent, a graphite-on-paper rectangle, with a downward-pointing triangle cut out of the middle, hangs so that the bottom of the sheet laps onto the floor; across one corner of the room a lengthy graphite-on-paper sheet hangs over a strung-up washing line, itself overlaid with a smaller sheet of diagonally spray-painted sheet; and so on. On closer inspection, the mottled qualities of both the graphite and paint add depth and far more intricate surface detail than at first suggested. This is highlighted by a wall-mounted triangle of washing-line cord, the attention drawn to each pinned corner by a differently coloured concentrate of spraypaint directed onto the wall.

The surface quality and the innate randomness of the patterning the materials produce make a neat link to Shaw-Town's method of realisation and subsequent arrangement of the works during the installation process. The artist apparently arrives with various components – the graphite-on-paper sheets and the like – only to make the compositions *in situ*. An element of spontaneity is thus invoked. The sole work to veer away from complete titular anonymity is a case in point. *Untitled (Drugs Suck)* sees the uniform monochrome disrupted by the paper clipping of a found promotional photo of New Kids on the Block star Jordan Knight. The original home for the photo, the press release tells us, was on the gallery owner's fridge. It was coerced into performing as an art material just days prior to the show's opening. This disruption of the otherwise uniform aesthetic is a pivotal point to the show – it levels all the materials as 'found', whether on a fridge door or in the art supplies shop. This imbues the work with a sense of process, biography and history, which an art object, however minimal, always necessarily contains but which is frequently left unapparent and hidden by its finish.

frieze

Steve Bishop & Dan Shaw-Town

If one had to guess at an art work that Steve Bishop and Dan Shaw-Town both revere, it might be Marcel Duchamp's *With Hidden Noise* (1916). This ball of twine sandwiched between two brass plates rattles when lifted; while making it, Duchamp asked collector Walter Arensberg to place a mystery object inside, then screwed the art work shut, stowing within it something enigmatic even to himself. From the outside, though, *With Hidden Noise* can be sized up; we know exactly what it's made of. In this sparse, six-work show, Bishop and Shaw-Town conformed to this alloying of candidness and secrecy, not so much updating it as repurposing it for a moment when holding back something of yourself might almost be a political act.

Bishop makes shallow Perspex boxes, pours in some liquid mercury, stuffs in a T-shirt printed with a photograph taken in his studio, and then adds more mercury before enclosing the whole in a boxy wood frame and attaching it to the wall. The result, two examples being on show here, is an unstable para-painting: the quicksilver catches in folds of dusty pinks, washed-out orange and grey-blue, pressing flat against the plastic and creating a chance-driven composition of rivulets and undulating waves: shake it up and it recomposes anew. All strictly materialist, except of course you won't know what the image is – even if you interrogate the gallerist sufficiently to know that there is a photograph involved.

If a faint, refined echo of Richard Serra's experiments with throwing molten lead rebounds through Bishop's art, then post-minimalism's metal guru is even more strongly evoked by Shaw-Town's procedural works, which make Serra's titanic aesthetic near weightless. (Or which, less generously, pick up where the older artist's drawings leave off.) Known for covering sheets of paper with dense fields of graphite, mixing illusory heaviness with actual flimsiness – one was on show – Shaw-Town here also presented two low welded tables neatly topped with graphite-covered paper, each crowned by a folded sheet of rubber that has been sprayed with enamel and sanded to create a rough, minimal, painterly but austere surface. We can only see the top of this; there's a fair bit concertinaed away that we can't access.

The suppressing here is symbolic and ludic: the artists know it, and surely know that we know it too. Because, really, who

About this review

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By Martin Herbert



Steve Bishop & Dan Shaw Town,
2011, Installation view

[Back to the main site](#)

cares what Shaw-Town isn't sharing with us – it's not like the visible areas of his work are that interesting – and it's hard to feel achingly curious about what Bishop's T-shirts would look like unravelled. (For the record, one of them apparently features a photograph of a tray of Listerine mouthwash, though which flavour remains unknown.) So this isn't about a specific refusal so much as the concept of it, I think, and what that might stand for today. Notably, the press release for this show – which delivers precisely zero information about its contents – is a transcript of a scatty chatroom exchange between the artists. If that particular interface epitomizes an online culture of continuous interaction that frequently adds up to nothing, what might art's role be within that context? Where, and how, might it make meaning, make stands?

There was another work by Bishop here: a white javelin with a silver tip and blue twine grip stands on end next to a wedge-shaped silver shelf, upon which sits a white cup with the IBM logo picked out in blue. Silver, white and a particular shade of blue bounce between the art work's components, the colour-coding temporarily suggesting that the whole possesses a larger integrity and purpose. It doesn't (and again, we're seemingly expected to realize it). But it does implicitly tie an embodiment of vacancy to a technologized world. One might lean dangerously heavily on all this and see Bishop and Shaw-Town as fretful moralists, as unnerved by the contemporary, web-enabled culture of transparency – bear in mind the former's use of plastic screens, the latter's interest in insubstantiality – as is Jaron Lanier in his anti-Web 2.0 polemic *You Are Not a Gadget* (2010). Maybe, though, there's less to it and Bishop and Shaw-Town are simply both reacting against an art culture that demands its denizens give of themselves in pursuit of market responsiveness, reacting by performing instead a theatrical withdrawal. The irony – that such a move might be attention-snaring in its own crotchety way – surely isn't lost on them.

Martin Herbert

Los Angeles Times

By Sharon Mizota

August 16, 2012, 6:30 p.m.

Punk and Minimalism aren't usually mentioned in the same breath. Punk overloads the senses with chaos and fury, while Minimalism short-circuits them in almost the opposite way, with the stolidity of sheer presence.

Yet both movements emerged within a few years of each other: Minimalism in the late 1960s, and punk in the '70s. For all its bluster, punk is perhaps just a more angry kind of minimalism, stripping everything down to its barest, rawest form.



“Interruption,” an elegant group show curated by Kim Light at Michael Kohn Gallery makes this point, although perhaps unintentionally; it purports to be about gaps in established modes of perception (which actually might amount to the same thing). Interestingly, it is not a historical exhibition, except for the art of Bruce Conner, which serves as a kind of touchstone for the works of the other 12 artists, all of which were created this year.

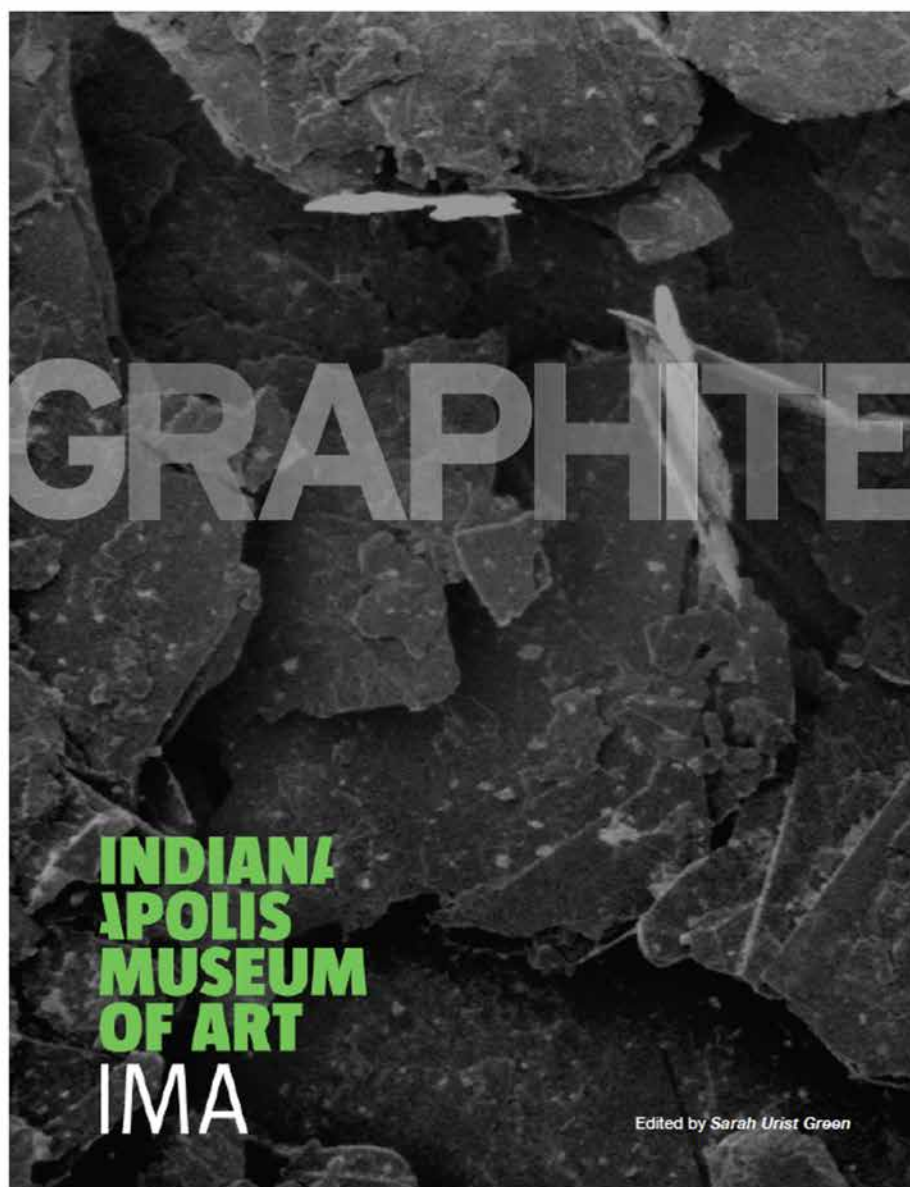
Conner, who passed away in 2008, was something of a punk, but certainly not a Minimalist. He did, however, astutely question the boundaries of any given medium and the parameters of art itself. His works in this show — a rough, 1997 collage that refers to the San Francisco punk club Mabuhay Gardens, and a photograph of a large “X” graphic on a 1970s TV screen — convey a certain nihilistic abandon.

They are surrounded by comparatively restrained works by the likes of Gedi Sibony, Valeska Soares and Owen Kydd. Kydd’s video of a black plastic bag whose edges flicker in the breeze every now and then is unsettling not only because at first it looks like a still photograph, but also because it resembles a body bag.

Minimalism also turns sinister in an untitled painting by Dan Shaw-Town. Featuring a single red spray paint mark surrounded by a bleed of paler brushstrokes on a slick white panel, it’s both a gestural abstraction and a bloody mouth. Quieter still are the off-kilter grid paintings of Andrew Sutherland, whose incomplete black scaffolds look like desperate duct tape cover-ups.

And then there are Andrea Longacre-White's photographs of crumpled and torn black-and-white images. It's impossible to identify the original subjects, although there are hints of portraiture, which makes the damaged surfaces seem doubly violent.

It's hard to say whether these spare works would read as "punk" without the presence of the more feisty Conner pieces. Perhaps they would just be enigmatic abstractions. But what emerges in "Interruption" is the same thing that unites punk and Minimalism: a recognition that sometimes you have to strip it down to see it all anew.



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[ARTISTS](#)

[CONVERSATIONS](#)

[EXHIBITION TOUR](#)

MARA HOBERMAN AND DAN SHAW-TOWN

Conducted via e-mail
AUGUST 2012

MARA HOBERMAN: One interesting aspect of presenting your work in the context of the *Graphite* show at the IMA is that it enables us to look closely at the material you use, unfettered by constrictions of traditional media descriptions. In other words, we can talk about your practice and materials without getting caught up in whether a specific work should be classified as a “drawing” or a “sculpture” or an “installation” per se. I think this will prove to be an effective—and liberating—way in which to approach your work, and I am looking forward to talking with you about how, why, and to what effects you use graphite.

To begin, a very basic question: Which specific qualities of graphite appeal to you and why?

FIGURE 1



DAN SHAW-TOWN: What I like most about graphite, in the way I use it, is its ability to transform the surface or object to which you’re applying or transferring it. By giving things a thin metallic coat, it acts as a disguise in some way. I never use fixative on my graphite works, because for the fixative to function I would have to apply so much that it would completely change the appearance of the work’s surface. Therefore, in my case, I’m interested in the way graphite remains in a state of constant flux—it doesn’t dry or harden. Whenever my pieces are moved and installed, everyone involved ends up covered in the stuff . . . I like that.

HOBERMAN: What have you learned about graphite as a material, having worked with it in various ways and over a period of time?

SHAW-TOWN: It gets everywhere! My old studio looked like a coal mine when I moved out. Also,

the way I use graphite involves a lot of physicality. Because the material is so hard—it is a mineral, in fact—it takes real stamina to apply it to such excess. In my current studio I have a separate room dedicated specifically to the graphite work.

HOBERMAN: Some of your works possess an alluring haptic quality [fig. 1]. They appear soft, lustrous, weighty, and worn. It almost seems as if the heavily applied graphite transforms the paper itself into a new and unique material—something between buttery leather and metallic cloth. The effect is particularly interesting because raw graphite does not itself possess any of the above qualities that make one want to cloak one’s self in the material. Is there an aspect of alchemy in your use of graphite? Do you feel as though you are changing the material properties of the substances you work on?

SHAW-TOWN: Absolutely, alchemy and entropy are at

the heart of the graphite works. I actually think of the paper as being a primary material in that body of work—as much, if not more so, than the graphite I apply. The paper is being transformed; the graphite is a tool. In the pieces you reference, the graphite saturates the paper, allowing me to handle it in such a way that it ends up looking like metallic cloth (as you describe). This involves hours of kneading and ironing. That kind of handling simply wouldn't be possible without the initial graphite coating. It goes back to this notion of disguise, and the paper losing its paper-ness and becoming something else entirely.

HOBERMAN: How do you achieve the range in tonality and texture in works such as *Untitled* (2011) [fig. 2]? Is this pure graphite-on-graphite, or is there another element contributing to the lighter or darker areas?

SHAW-TOWN: The paper has been kneaded and ironed flat again following the initial graphite coating. And then a range of layers and different qualities of white spray paint have been used. I've experimented with lots of spray paint brands, as well as having my own compressor, but to achieve that light, dusty finish you can't beat the no-frills, low-quality spray can stuff.

HOBERMAN: Could you say more about how entropy factors into your practice and the final works? Is it a matter of not using any kind of fixative—which means that there really is no “final” or “fixed” state to these works? Would you agree that your graphite works could be described, at least to a certain extent, as ephemeral (since the graphite is always coming off or at risk of smudging against something or someone)?

SHAW-TOWN: It starts even earlier than the stage when one would usually apply fixative. In most cases it begins with the blank sheet of paper. By covering the paper in graphite, I feel I'm erasing what's already there as much as I am adding something new. The paper itself is a beautiful object, and I often feel like I'm disrespecting how it should be properly used when I make these works.

I do think of my works as ephemeral, and find myself battling with the assumed fragility and the generally conservative attitude that surround works on paper. This has led me to display pieces on the floor or low steel tables. I'll often turn up to install a show at a gallery with a group of works and no preconception of which

FIGURE 2



pieces will end up on the floor or the wall. I like to allow room for experimentation and improvisation in the gallery space—an environment that I find difficult to energize.

Having to deal with real (practical) situations often results in the most interesting work. When I had my first show back in London after having moved to New York, I had to transport the graphite work in my hand luggage. That was the first time I ever folded the graphite sheets [fig. 3]. It was only when I got there that I decided to leave them folded in the exhibition.

HOBBERMAN: When I think of graphite, two typical uses immediately come to mind: quick sketches done with compressed graphite sticks, and on the other end of the stylistic spectrum, very carefully drawn pencil lines—as in architectural renderings or schematic drawings. In both of these cases graphite is used sparingly

and finely to create lines, shapes, or shading. What led you to experiment with using massive amounts of this material and in such a way that the mark of the graphite completely dominates the surfaces upon which you work?

SHAW-TOWN: When I moved to New York four years ago, I had a tiny studio and was struggling a bit because I'd just finished my MFA at Goldsmiths in London specializing in sculpture, and I just had no space to continue that practice. So I began making drawings of my previous body of work from photos [fig. 4].

The results were strange, as it was almost like doing preliminary sketches after the work was made. (I never did any preliminary sketching before . . . ever.) I started to view the drawings as portraits of sculptures, but the problem was I wasn't that good at drawing and would often scribble over things I wasn't happy with. This eventually led to my completely covering over

the original drawings with graphite. The earliest works all have drawings under the graphite-covered surface. And from there it was the straightforward process of engulfing sheets of white paper that held my attention. To cover a 50 x 38-inch sheet of paper takes about four eight-hour days, going at it constantly. It's a very labor-intensive and consuming activity. It's more like polishing or sanding than it is drawing.

The other most common material I use in conjunction with graphite is spray paint. I love it for its efficiency and speed. One work in the Indianapolis

FIGURE 3




FIGURE 4



show [fig. 5] has been covered in graphite on one side (which took a couple of grueling, long days), and the other side, which I coated in spray paint, was done in seconds. I'm very interested in artworks being a document of time and process, but that doesn't mean the process has to be long and laborious.

HOBBERMAN: I like the idea that there are ghosted images under the heavy layers of graphite and that you built a new body of work directly on top of previous attempts. Do the under-drawings remain visible at all in the final work?

SHAW-TOWN: The original drawings were made with a much harder form of graphite, such as 2H, but I use the softer 6B when covering large areas. So upon close inspection you can see the indented lines that the 2H pencil left in the

paper. I've considered producing new works on paper that has already been printed on in some way, but I think too much emphasis would fall on what I was covering over. I also want to give a nod to Rauschenberg at some point and cover over someone else's drawing—a very different sort of erasure from his de Kooning piece. 

HOBBERMAN: It's interesting that you mention Rauschenberg because I find a certain affinity between some of your graphite works and drawings by Jasper Johns. Like you, Johns has used thickly applied graphite; at times it is so heavily applied that his iconic imagery—flag, map, target, the alphabet—is all but obscured by the layers of dark and iridescent graphite. In particular, I am thinking of *Alphabets* (1957) [fig. 6], one of Johns's early alphabet drawings, which

incorporates pencil and collage, in comparison with your work *Untitled* (2011) [fig. 2]. The reference to the underlying grid and the illegibility of the image are points of comparison, but I also find the handling of the graphite to be similar. Is Johns someone whose work—graphite drawings or otherwise—interests you?

SHAW-TOWN: I think about and look at images of Johns's "cross-hatch" works on a daily basis. They are so simple and so good. To me those works are about covering the surface. He starts with a blank support and devises

FIGURE 5



FIGURE 6



a system to work his way from one corner to the other. I've tried to copy one before and it's terrifically difficult to imitate.

HOBERMAN: Something I find particularly interesting about your practice is that, on the one hand, your use of graphite is very straightforward and deliberate, but in another sense, you let the environment (or, as you say, practical situations) dictate the works' presentation and final appearance. The tension between the strong sense of authorship and a certain resignation of control seems to me to be an important aspect of your work. There is another piece [fig. 7] that I would like to bring up here because I think it is part of the "entropic" vein of your work. To create this work, you use a piece of high-density foam board basically as a blank slate

that picks up graphite dust as well as other debris and stains from your studio. The concept reminds me a bit of Yves Klein's *Cosmogonies* from the early 1960s. For this series Klein let dust, dirt, wind, rain, and other natural forces create images on canvas. In your case, however, the traces left on the surface relate to your studio practice, even if the materials are indirectly applied. Could you describe this piece and how you came to it?

SHAW-TOWN: Sometimes I feel my own hand gets in the way of the work—the decisions about what mark to put where, how many marks, how few, and so forth. I find myself not necessarily wanting to make those choices directly visible on whatever the chosen support or surface. The piece involving high-density foam board—a material I chose for the way it attracts dust and grips onto it—is a way for me to make a work that is created by a situation that I'm only partially in

control of, but where the parameters are clearly defined. I'd like to think this work speaks about "potential" as much as anything else.

FIGURE 2

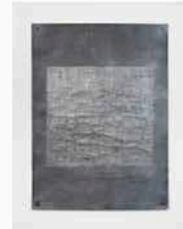


FIGURE 7



Dan Shaw-Town at Lisson

As part of their Surface/Tension shows, the Lisson Gallery present the painter/sculptor's experimental works with unusual materials

The [Lisson Gallery](#) has a formidable reputation for showing 'good art', intelligent, accessible and visually rewarding representing [Marina Abramovic](#), Anish Kapoor and Tony Cragg. Their latest show Surface/Tension is a three person show exploring the artists' use of materials and their individual approaches to them. For Surface/Tension, [Dan Shaw-Town](#) treads a fine line between painting and sculpture, Kitty Kraus experiments with glass and Gedi Sibony works with everyday found materials. Having worked separately the artists work with their chosen materials both visually and conceptually.

Dazed Digital: What is the premise behind Surface/Tension?

Dan Shaw-Town: I believe the premise was to select a group of artists whose practice at least in part involves transforming their selected materials. This might be pushing something to near breaking point, or re-locating an otherwise arbitrary material in a new space, in each case often treating the chosen material in an unfamiliar manner. Therefore the process may differ but there appears to be a shared goal, a goal that I think has more to do with 'potential' than anything else.

DD: You often work and re-work your pieces how did this working process come about?

Dan Shaw-Town: A large part of my practice is concerned with creating a 'surface'. A physical and repetitive process of mark making, an entropic cycle of creating whilst, at the same time, erasing and ultimately changing. Once a new surface is made I always want to disrupt it again in some way, but this can lead to making a work with too much going on (visually). So then I have to back track. Most of the works went through a series of transformations before settling on their final appearance.

DD: Does this hold meaning (the re-working of your work) or is it purely for visual affect?

Dan Shaw-Town: I wouldn't say the 're-working' aspect holds any specific meaning nor is it intended to act as a visual affect, it's just part of my process, it's the way I make work.

DD: Why do you term your work sculpture?

Dan Shaw-Town: I have constant conversations with myself in the studio about whether I make drawing or sculpture, occasionally I even try to convince myself I make paintings but that doesn't last long. The argument for sculpture is strong : I work 'with' rather than 'on' paper, I render the surface which leaves behind marks as document of that process. I then roll, bend and crumple the sheets to give them form, before pressing them flat and hanging them on the wall using grommets, therefore displaying the method without illusion (as in frame etc). Occasionally I even fold works and display them on the floor. There is no doubt in these cases.

DD: Surface/Tension is a group show. Was the process in any way collaborative?

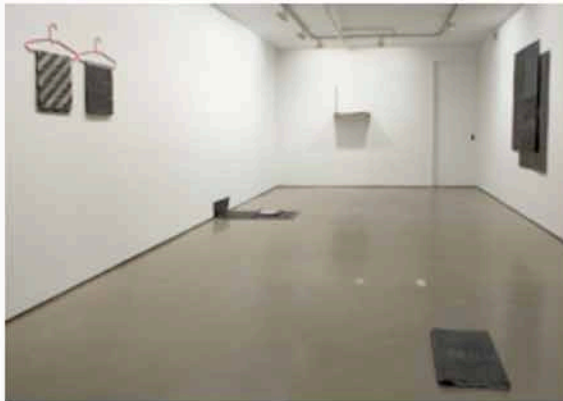
Dan Shaw-Town: No the show wasn't collaborative, the 3 artists were selected by Alex Logsdail (Associate Director The Lisson Gallery). I have worked with Alex before and he knows my practice well and I was already familiar with the work of Gedi and Kitty, so I had full confidence that I was in good hands and good company.

ARTFORUM

Dan Shaw-Town

**GALLERY-C AT TEAM GALLERY 83 Grand Street
September 3–October 3**

“Drawings” is a deceptive, if challenging, title for Dan Shaw-Town’s first solo exhibition in New York. The five untitled works on view (all 2009) feature pieces of paper copiously coated with a lustrous layer of graphite and incorporating additional media such as spray paint, enamel, and found objects. Only one piece is hung flush against the wall; the rest are displayed as sculpture—shimmering dark gray folded sheets resting either directly on the floor or on unorthodox wall mounts such as clothes hangers or a simple cardboard shelf.



Shaw-Town’s graphite burnishing technique transforms plain paper into sumptuous faux fabrics and leatherlike materials that beg to be touched, possessed, and worn. In addition to the silvery drawings’ being shown at this gallery (in a neighborhood overrun with high-end boutiques), their presentation on hangers and shelves accentuates their couture kinship. *Untitled Diptych* comprises two graphite-on-paper sheets neatly folded lengthwise, each slung over a pink plastic clothes hanger like

twin pairs of slacks. Another folded drawing sits atop a scrap of cardboard supported by IKEA-style metal brackets, like a sweater on a makeshift wardrobe shelf. Even the piece hung on the wall in the most traditional manner manages to conjure a cut of buttery, metalized leather awaiting transformation into a trendy handbag or jacket. In all the works, the abundant creases and folds—scars from multiple foldings and refoldings— flaunt Shaw-Town's handling of materials. The "Drawings" are themselves luxury goods, and by flirting with the viewer's desire for tactile appreciation, Shaw-Town draws attention to that which separates his artworks from other commodities.

— *Mara Hoberman*