When both new media theorist Lev Manovich and art theorist-curator Nicolas Bourriaud identify postproduction as the working method of our age, they point to something so familiar that we hardly recognize the importance of it. Truly, we are more and more working from already existing material. The digital revolution makes everything re-editable, and thus, everything is always already open for (re)interpretation and updating. As many have pointed out, this strengthens some poststructuralist core arguments, like Jacques Derrida’s famous “there is nothing outside the text” and Roland Barthes’ “beneath every text is already another text”. It is indeed the end of the new.

Combining already existing things might be the working method of our day and age. But what happened to drawing and to the sketch? What happened to pre-production? This issue of merge brings some of these questions to the surface. Clearly, by pre-production we’re not suggesting that post-production isn’t important. But one has to start somewhere.

Love
The editors
and so his mouth was removed
By Patrik Mehrens

[...] and as his mouth was removed in his pictures
in principio verbum
paracles or the verbum perfectum: sinceritas
from the death cells in sight of Mt. Taishan & Pisa
Unfinished Business
Sveučilišna hospital
The building is divided simply into flats and staff, forming empty space around it.

The entrance of the flats are demarcated by the doors, which are fixed to the concrete walls. This creates a sense of separation and privacy. The doors are made of steel and are painted in a muted color, ensuring they blend into the surrounding environment. The windows are large and allow natural light to enter the rooms, creating a bright and airy atmosphere inside.

The ceilings are high and made of concrete, giving the flats an industrial look. The floors are made of concrete as well, adding to the overall minimalist design.

The building is a testament to modern architecture, with its clean lines and functional design. It is a perfect example of how design and functionality can coexist in a single space.
Leo Qvarsebo is a student of architecture at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm.
“In the most general sense of progressive thought, the Enlightenment has always aimed at liberating men from fear and establishing their sovereignty, for the fully enlightened earth radiates disaster tri-unphant.”

Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*

“Unlike dogs, images don’t have name tags.”

Dita Verlov

Last January, I was asked down to Florida to present a film by Harun Farocki, Miami Art Central (MAC) is a not-for-profit institution founded in (2002) and supported by the Gunilla Fenske Art Foundation in Coral Gables across from the University of Miami. *Imprint: Writings,* Harun Farocki; edited by Susanne Gaensheimer and Nicolaus Schafhausen, translated by Laurent Faasch-Ibrahim, assistant editor, Volker Pantenburg (New York: Luckas and Sternberg, 2001) was the film I chose to discuss. Two other Farocki works – “Frohliche Feuersturm” (1969) and “The Creators of the Shopping Worlds” (2001) – were also on display at the museum (on monitors) – part of an exhibition titled “The Creators of the Shopping Worlds” curated by Roger M. Buergel.

Farocki's works were some of those additions. The exhibition was the first modern mall? Or Farocki's provocative read of a photograph of a young woman at Auschwitz (New York: New York University Press: 1998) was the film I chose to discuss. Two other Farocki works – “Frohliche Feuersturm” (1969) and “The Creators of the Shopping Worlds” (2001)? – were on display at the museum (on monitors) – part of an exhibition titled “The Creators of the Shopping Worlds” curated by Roger M. Buergel.

Farocki was born to an Indian father and German mother in 1945 in the town of Neay, then part of German-annexed Czechoslovakia. He entered the newly established German Film and Television Academy (DFF) in Berlin in 1964, but lasted only 2 years – in 63 he and several other students were expelled for their political activities (among them, Harmit Blumensky, Helge Meier (later assassinated for his supposed RAF affiliation), and Wolfgang Petersen (director of *Das Boot*). As Air Force One, “The Perfect Storm.” Farocki returned to the Academy as an instructor in 1973. He would go on to teach in Duiseldorf, Hamburg, Manila, Munich, Stuttgart, and...
Farocki’s generation of New German filmmak- ers was influenced greatly by the French Nouvelle Vague: directors such as Claude Chabrol, Jacques Rivette, Eric Rohmer, François Truffaut, and especially Jean-Luc Godard, all of whom were associ- ated with Cahiers du Cinéma, the most important French film journal in the post-war period. These directors became known as auteurs, a term used as early as 1948 in an article by Alexandre Astruc, a leftist intellectual and filmmaker. Astruc declared “the birth of a new avant-garde: the cinema of auteurs,” calling for a new language of cinema in which the camera was to be used to write a philo- sphy of life. It was a model of filmmaking based on the idea of filmmaker as individual artist rather than methodical machine, or classical director. Instead of staging the real world for the camera — the traditional method of mise-en-scène — the Cahiers group notion of filmmaking demanded a coherent world-view and individualistic style, leading them to distinguish between those directors who simply dis- tinctive the ones who had mastered the language of cinema — and those who argued a position. In the late 1950s, Cahiers du Cinéma critics, tak- ing up the camera themselves, advanced a self- reflexive style of filmmaking (featuring cinematic forms and conventions), while making social and political themes central to their work. Influenced both by existentialism — a philosophy of individual agency, authentic action, and personal responsibility — and to varying degrees Marxist and Socialist ideologies, the Cahier group maintained a general position with regard to politics, and a particular disillusionment with French foreign policy in Algeria and Indochina. In matters of practice, these auteurs often collaborate- rated on each other’s projects, and developed a com- mon understanding of form, narrative, and style.

During the Second World War, Americans developed lightweight 16mm cameras, making it possible to film individually or in small groups and on location. These handheld cameras — designed for faster, more free editing style that didn’t conform to the editing rules of Hollywood, often drawing attention to itself — were a great way to do this. To interrupt the filmic convention of seamless correspondence between images, nar- ratives, texts, and sounds — to expose or open up the audience. Brecht didn’t want the audience to feel emotion. He wanted them to think, and to this end, he insisted on the elimination of theatrical illusion. By eroding the production of emotion, the political truth would be more easily understood. For Brecht, drama must avoid the Aristotelian premise that an audience should be made to believe in the actual- ity of what is on stage. This is why the Verfremdungseffekt (making strange) designed by Brecht is so important. Central to Brecht’s theory of drama was a technique he called the “Verfremdungseffekt,” or alienation effect. This model for a political avant-garde theater, one which rejected a system of representation based on illusionistic narrative and empathetic engage- ment or identification, was translated into a struc- turalist alternative cinema that was anti-Hollywood as it was anti-pathetic to the specular seduction of the image, challenging the strategies and tastes of popular audiences with an activist or interven- tionist agenda — at the same time, a critical and well-crafted media cinema. For Bertolt Brecht, speaking with regard to theater! This meant not “supply the production apparatus without the thing that appears [itself],” and that meant not only changing the form, but also the nature of distribution and tang. For Godard, the “problem [was] not to make political cinema, but to make them politically.” For Brecht you could do both: realize the possibility of the “connection of film production to critique, while keeping Walter Benjamin’s call to the artist (the ‘Author as Producer’) to transform readers, that is, the work’s audience, into active participants in that work’s meaning, in effect, to allow them to enter as collaborators in the work’s making. One way to do this is to interrupt the filmic convention of seamless correspondence between images, nar- ratives, texts, and sounds — to expose or open up the...
Farocki, the relation of writing to film is not simply one of annotation, outline, diagram, or direction. It is not hierarchical. The text does not function like a conventional script or narrative. The words do not necessarily describe or appear up with images and sounds. His work has often been called an “essay,” a form of “cinema writing.” Farocki himself prefers the phrase, “form of intelligence.” He claims to “serve the editing table and edit the typewriter.” Regarding voice-over: “I think that often I make my way out of the “Voice of God” syndrome, so to say, by playing cards in a game.” “From these pictures come a code. And it is not a matter of what is in a picture but rather, of what lies behind. Nonetheless, one shows a picture as proof of something which cannot be proven by a picture.”

Harun Farocki, Before Your Eyes – Vietnam (1982)

“Images of the World and the Inscription of War” concerns precisely this relation between images and words, pictures and written accounts, (photo)graphic documents and how we interpret them – about how previously impressive images are for all of photography’s brute facticity – the mechanism seen determination of image by apparatus – in the end, photos tell us very little: only that a camera was in a certain place at a certain time and that an aperture was opened and a photographic surface exposed. The photograph captures the moment: “It crops away past and future,” a violent reduction of world to code. “No preservation without destruction.” Imaging technologies have moved beyond the simple recording of an impression, to translating that impression into code – both, as a set of rules (of conduct), and as a set of symbols that are arbitrarily assigned meaning – and the representational analog to what Delsarte has described as the replacement of a disciplinary society (Boulevard) with a “central society.” The “Kino Eye” (the cinematic lens), which for Vertov was an extension of the human eye, has given way to the “Robot Eye,” the absolute replacement of human with machine.

Farocki sees the moment of Auschwitz as “a turning point in human history,” but a turning point that is constituted as a crisis in representation; the experiment in see if human beings can be totally demoralized reflected in new automation technologies capable of making images independent of a human subject, technologies with which we are now all too familiar. Recording and Domination/Coding and Docility. “How the two go hand in hand.” Think about the normalization and accelerated implementation of surveillance and monitoring devices. Think Patriot Act and Homeland Security. Think the next time you use an ATM, or check your email. Think. The crisis of representation: How to see what no human eye is capable of seeing? How to represent the unrepresentable? How to imagine the unimaginable? – The Romantic problem reaching its apotheosis in Auschwitz; and its surpassing, a post-modern problem posed in the question: How to recode a code? Turn a code around. – Invent a new one. Farocki provides an example: a prisoner resistance movement that operated the creation and exchange of coded messages culminating in the partial destruction of a gas chamber. From these pictures come a code. And from this code a picture. A different picture.

No, Farocki is not yet ready to abandon images, nor to deny their utility. “Perhaps we need images, so that something that is hardly imaginable can make an impression – photographic images, impressions of the actual at a distance.” At the same time, we cannot rely on images alone, first-hand accounts are indispensable. “Both types of narratives, both types of images are inadequate, both are inappropriate.”

The old dualism of word and image – we cannot simply opt for one or the other. We have to try to establish a relation between the two.” In the writing of history there is “an interplay between image and text: texts that should make the images accessible, and images that should make the texts imaginal.” But perhaps we need our own kind of pictures, too, a technical image (e.g., the aerial photograph), and the other concerning in which Farocki calls a narrative mode of historical writing, a “snapshot.” Says Farocki, “ Imamge one image can elucidate the other, critique it, give it some experimental validity. With regard to cinema itself, cinema [should be seen] not as part of the history of storytelling, but as belonging more to the history of other techniques and technologies of surveillance, measuring, calculating, automation.” A technical cinema. Cinema seen as a technical place of surveillance, measuring, calculating, automation – the “technical image.”

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as part of a larger project of dehumanization, but also, a potential vehicle for its demise. Much of Farocki’s recent work has been dedicated to investigating new types of images produced with surveillance and policing technologies – looking at the ways in which imaging devices are used as tools of surveillance, manipulation, and control. “The Creators of The Shopping Worlds” included in the “How Do We Want to Be Governed?” exhibition is one such example; another, “I Thought I Was Seeing Convicts,” is a video installation made with surveillance recordings collected from the California State Prison at Corcoran – images which reveal the murder of 2 inmates by guards. These works link incarceration to consumption. They show how similar policing methods, technologies, and design strategies are employed in prisons, shops, and malls. Farocki has continued to produce works that investigate the relationship between instruments of war, imaging, and automation; in particular, films dealing with the (First) Gulf War’s conjunction of camera and bomb. A note on Farocki’s sources: Many of the images he uses are archival stills, and footage from institutional records, industrial films, instructional videos, surveillance tapes, and home movies. Some shots come from his commercial projects. There is an incredible economy of labor in his practice, one he likens to the steel industry: “In my work, I try to make a composite according to the model of the steel industry, where every waste product flows back into the production process and hardly any energy is lost. I finance the basic research with a radio show, books studied during the research period are dealt with in shows on books, and some of what I observe while doing this work appears in television shows.” Farocki regards “Images of the World” not as “a fully worked-out film so much as the design or blueprint of maybe several films.” He wants to leave things open. A certain manipulation of the material is obvious, but one intended to raise questions rather than provide simple answers. “Images of the World and the Inscription of War” presents images as coded messages, images to be read. We must see this film within its historical context – 1988, a year before the Wall came down – as a response to the crisis of US missile deployment in Western Europe, in particular in West Germany. Farocki begins the film with a 1983 quote from Günter Anders: “Reality would have to begin. This means that the blockade of the entrances to the murder installations, which continue to exist, must also be continuous.” Anders was a Jewish philosopher, essayist, and journalist; the husband of Hannah Arendt; and one of the founders of the German anti-nuclear movement. He died in 1992. Anders compares the failure to prevent access to the camps, the failure on the part of the Allies to bomb the tracks leading to the camps, to the Cold War crisis. One instance of inactivity failed to intervene in a Holocaust. Another such instance might fail to prevent one again. For Farocki, “the existence of nuclear installations is [...] no less a scandal than political dictatorships or the 5-year plan.” His remark was made during an interview in 1993. Some 12 years later the terrain has shifted. The urgency has not. It would be interesting to hear what he might add to that list of scandals today.
So another way of describing the genesis of this talk you heard just now is that it grew directly out of a huge amount of reading and coding up some similar content. Davies, who has written so much about the soundscape, and soundscapes, in the UK in particular, is linking up with, say, an essay on £100 music and the history of the phonograph. So there's all sorts of resonances there, and some resonances that I've been ruminating over for a very long time. Just to jump ahead a bit, I've been doing a lot of work recently on animal sounds in rockabilly, and thinking about the way in which those animal sounds are a kind of code for larger social and political events. So that's what I mean when I talk about the kind of work I'm doing on animal sounds in rockabilly, as well as the kind of work I'm doing on the Civil War and the first prophetic engagement in the Civil War and the first prophetic engagement in the US in the 19th century. 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That's the kind of work I'm doing on animal sounds in rockabilly as well as the kind of work I'm doing on the Civil War and
I don’t like telling people what to think. I prefer showing them how I think.

As far as others doing similar work is concerned, I find that the format and content of the arguments I’m making don’t all add up (though, back consciously (because I’m not) and not because of the formality of working on slides, audio and video clips, humor, rhythm, delivery as much as possible and to try to invent new ways of presenting ideas and making arguments). Usually the formats I opt for place pressure on the technical resources of the host institutions (which is why I’ve had to turn to CD’s and DVD’s) and I have an aversion to Powerpoint in particular - it takes the edges off of rough ideas and makes happy accidents, and uncertain conclusions strong stuff. I find (and I’ve been talking about this for a long time) that CD’s and DVD’s are hardly the best tools to use in the classroom, especially in the small classroom, and that the book is a rich, polysemous medium that I’ve had to put aside. CD’s and DVD’s just aren’t the right technology.

In academic contexts, to ignore audience expectations is to assume the interpretive traditions that still underpin the institutional settings. Artistic work is more profound discomfort with/resistance to the sanctified modes of delivering the Truth. I think that’s why I like to do performance as much as possible (I prefer audio tape to CDs, video tape to DVD’s) and I have an aversion to Powerpoint in particular - it takes the edges off of rough ideas and makes happy accidents, and uncertain conclusions strong stuff. I find (and I’ve been talking about this for a long time) that CD’s and DVD’s are hardly the best tools to use in the classroom, especially in the small classroom, and that the book is a rich, polysemous medium that I’ve had to put aside. CD’s and DVD’s just aren’t the right technology.

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the liberal left in this country is far too polite and because (John Edwards please note) it isn't. I think not to say that the war of ideas is a beauty contest. At the same time, the hectoring/supercilious tone track audition-ordeal further marginalize and punch forces contributing to the marginalization of "critical coverage and commentary on the Iraq war."

And (non-Murdoch-owned) broadcast TV networks bringing home to "America's staunchest allies," the press performance of the UK media where, despite being the country's largest country, has had no critical voices. The idea of innocence as a distinctively American romanticism, innocence is now bound up with the legacy of 200 years or so of European and American romanticism, innocence is now bound up with the concept of innocence. The only radical ideas that get any legitimacy and success of the neo-con conjuring/confidence trick. Intellectual-as-inauthentic-alien is one of the keys to the idea about public, left-leaning intellectuals is that they are "thinkers" working professionally within professional, not "actors," "dreamers" not "realists," "artificial" minds. It's this idea that autonomous intellectuals in the USA are that they are "thinkers" not "doers," "phony" not intellectual, "European" (or in shorthand, "French") not "American," "authentic," "European," "authentic," "French," "American" is not "natural," "European," "natural," etc. etc. etc. the cut-throat nature of intellectual exchanges, always at least, always at least, prestige. The idea to be inimically opposed but which were, in fact, at the same time, the relationship of the visual that legitimated material and medium in art. The incorruptible subject of sound design and engineered soundscapes is now a commodity, a map of one kind or another. What it produces instead of policy wonks, spin-meisters, accredited "experts" zero tolerance, the war on drugs, etc., etc. What it interacts with, and, in alternatingly humorous and frightening, the flanking of religious faith over secular reasoning, the war on drugs, etc., etc., has managed, virtually without challenge at least, the atrocity that has sprouted on the edges of the US and its allies. tanks that have sprouted on the edges of the US and its allies. The dead visit me unsummonsed.

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Coming to terms with the eternal return.

Lars Arrhenius

For a couple of years, pictogram have been the starting point for artist Lars Arrhenius. He saves, as in the insert Carpe Diem, the recognisable figures from instinctive signs that surround us, but he builds an entire world around them. Arrhenius' figures do not tell us where the bathroom is or how we should disembark the aircraft in case of an emergency. They can rather very much like any ordinary dinner, very much like you and me, caught in the rat race, trying to deal with it. So far his project has resulted in both pictorial stories and some films, which he makes with his old friend, Johannes Müntzing.

"Philosopher Otto Neurath kind of invented the pictogram in order to establish certain stereotypes of the typical person," says Arrhenius over the phone. "But I didn't know that when I started to work with them."

Well, I have to confess that I didn't know of Neurath either, but I feel I got the general idea. It's a bit like Britton William Gallon who by the end of the 19th century tried to identify the looks of the true human by superimposing several photos of crimi-

nals. Not such a nice reference, perhaps. But maybe this is what makes Arrhenius project so interesting; he tries to insert life into the stereotype. In our day and age, this is more than just commendable…

He builds an entire world around them. Arrhenius responds, "I like to find new concepts to them."

"But it does seem to me that you like to narrow the options in beforehand?" I inquire. "Not only do you work with recognizable figures in your art, but you also appropriate or create mixtures that are easily grasped and understood?"

"Yes, I do. I have difficulties with abstraction to somebody else's will, I really do. I reserve the right to be in charge of what I should and shouldn't do. I do, for instance, find it hard to accept a New- rawn concept from a curator: I am happy to accept an invitation, but I need to be in charge of my work. Save Johannes, who animates the films. We know each other well enough for me to trust his options. It's not a moral thing. I know a bit of artists that are fine with doing art after somebody else's ideas, and it works for them. But I really can't. So far, I have been lucky, when the museum in Santiago de Compostella commissioned the film. The Street men bound my idea without any complaints. But the show was very much about the town of Santiago and I knew that many artists just to adjust to that or just not be part of the show. That is one of the beauti- ful things with working with pictograms, people think that it looks very much like their hometown. I have heard this in almost every place I have shown the film."

"Tell me a bit more of the worlds you insert your characters in and the relationship between the in- habitants."

"Well, so far I have aimed at a world that is eaisy understandable, with the same with the pictograms. In the Street the framework is 24 hours in a city, where people live, work and sleep in an apartment building and have people work on multiple floors. In other words, the pictogram is also kind of a sad story, because you can't solve that when that, isn't it? The things you lack the most are the things you hardly pay any attention before you lost them and realized how much you needed them. Bu- to Arrhenius called attention to the map itself, not the use it could have for him, but the very struc- ture of the A-Z itself. He had been looking for some kind of structure, and now, there in Berlin, he found it by losing it."

"I got several proposals after that one, making new maps for other cities, but it never materialized. Arrhenius responds. "I like to find new concepts to them."

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PROSECUTING

THE FOOD IS TRANSPORTED FROM MANY COUNTRIES
... CAN YOU RECOGNISE SOME OF THEM?

GOODNIGHT

LA LA LA...

LA LA LA...

HE IS THINKING ABOUT SOMEBODY ELSE...
... SHE IS DOING THAT ANYWAY...

SEX IS GREAT

THE MAN HAS SOMETHING STRANGE DREAMS

THE NEWS ARE INTERESTING

THE FAMILY DINNER IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MEAL

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Jay Ryan is a poster and print maker from Chicago.

Jay Ryan is a poster and print maker with the soul of a kid, founder of the indie silk-screen shop The Bird Machine; bass player for the band Dianogah. A native of Chicago, Ryan has developed something of a cult following in the independent music scene for his posters for bands like Kings of Convenience, Stereolab, Rockets over Sweden, Intern-peg. The aesthetic of these posters is startlingly cute, with a bit of a dark edge, and have a winning do-it-yourself local flavor. Ryan is one of those young artists whose appealing doodles fit into the craft-oriented graphic style in vogue at the moment.

With a monograph in the works at Chicago’s Punk Planet Press, several recent exhibitions in Europe, and a growing demand for him on the art school lecture circuit, Ryan is having a blast doing what he does best: great posters full of adorable details and moments.
authenticity, of a reality that is endearingly low-tech. It's a perfect match for Ryan's dark-tinged version of the cute aesthetic.

Signals a refusal of the slick. This physical materiality presents a sincere alternative to the digital—there's a sense of immediacy and for inexpensive degradable substrates like thin newsprint and chipboard—a cheap, rough, brown uncoated stock that materially the physical pull of the squeegee across the surface of the paper. The hand-made texture is further enhanced by Ryan's preference.

The Bird Machine, there's not the slightest whiff of mass-production about them. You can feel the layers of paint laid down in the result is so satisfying. The ambient value of handhewn letters can't be over-estimated within the contemporary context of process. In some early posters, typography jars with the line quality of his drawing. But now everything is done by hand, and on some posters is dizzying, especially when you think about cutting it all out of rubylith, part of the labor-intensive silkscreen

Danger and panic are in the air, but the context remains mysterious, full of portent. In the print “Tiny Car,” the moment is almost filmic, but truncated because it’s just a single frame from that feature. The subject is a baby lamb, lying in a bed, and it's clear he's not going to be well. The case has been made that this is a popular feature of posters, but here is the same kind of affectation in Ryan's work that we see in the posters from those same years. Another way of saying what we’re seeing is that the affectation repeats itself in different contexts.

Ryan’s affection for his characters—human and animal alike—is matched by the clear love he has for letters. The amount of text on some posters is dizzying, especially when you think about cutting it all out of rubylith, part of the labor-intensive silkscreen

Another sinister scene occurs in a poster for the band TV on the Radio:

Eggs, is frighteningly apocalyptic. Against the distant background of a city skyline, a sweet fluffy lamb, a chicken, and a goat-like creature sit around a picnic blanket, apparently sharing pie, coffee and milk. The dark twist is that they are all on fire. The dark twist is that they are all on fire.

These examples of excessive love here in the work of Ryan are reminiscent, perhaps, of the writings of Sharon Kinsella who sees something similar in Japanese cute DNA of Ryan's friendly, hugely competent drawing style.

The cute factor in his work finds parallels everywhere at the beginning of the 21st century, including the hyper-sweetness of Japanese kawaii, the shimmery 3-D figures that bounce and float through designer Amy Franceschini’s digital landscapes, and the reinforced, small details of the Icelandic band Mum.

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Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) was an artist who had been educated by the humanist Pollastro to become a learned practitioner of his vocation. Alongside his artistic production he was also active as a theoretician, art historian and collector of drawings. At a time when artists were beginning to assert their independence of the craft guilds and medieval hierarchies, Vasari sought to find the key that would offer artists entry to a freer, academic world. This involved creating a theoretical basis and intellectual foundation for the work of artists that would distinguish them from other craftsmen. The keywords were disegno (drawing, linear design) as a form of idealism while coloreto (use of colour) served as a symbol of uncomplicated naturalism. This framework was to provide the basis of almost all the theories about painting that were to follow, from Agucchi, Bellori, Abbé Dubois and Sir Joshua Reynolds to Winckelmann, Lessing, Quatremère de Quincy and Charles Blanc.

Vasari created a collection of drawings on which to base his writing about the history of art. He was after all an artist himself and realized the significant role played by sketches in the creative process. As a collector he was a pioneer and he acquired his material straight from the workshops and studios of artists, mainly in Florence. Many of these workshops and studios were family businesses that had been handed down from father to son, from master to pupil through generations. The sketches were regarded as common property that could be used again and again.

Drawing embodies the hesitant beginning of the creative process in its most spontaneous phase. Here the artist is exposed to a minimum of external influence – he is working for himself, in a monologue, making his own choices, setting the limits for what the image may express, concentrating on essentials and able, if necessary, to start again from scratch to test new solutions. It is often possible to trace sketch by sketch the development of a visual concept from the vaguest inking of an idea to its full-fledged outcome. It is in the drawing that the artist reveals his intentions and where the creative impulse is brought forth. The image is born in joy or pain – it might protrude in ecstasy or agony but mostly the original idea needs a number of modifications. Vasari was the first to recognize the correspondence between the pen-work of the artist and his personal...
great deal about our correspondent's current state. Therefore, we are not only in more or less harmonious configurations. When we into flourishes, etc. The writer's mood also sets its less distinct, letters at the ends of words contract early schooling when the whole array of shapes con remove. If closer study is made not merely of the ad. From handwriting to styles of drawing is no great handwritings. Most of us are able to identify about a hundred differ- tary recognizes the handwritings of all his colleagues as well as other people recognize the handwritings of the style of different artists just as an efficient secre-ity in its most elementary stages and see how ideas become cleaner sketch by sketch, to mature and be refined. All the time two forces are competing for mastery. The artist's highly personal desire to find expression, which in reality knows no limits, and the pictorial conventions and the system of iconography that has formed part of his training. In most cases these elements pose no obstacles for the viewer's understanding of the image. He will rapidly grasp the codes, construe the contents of the image and infer the artist's intentions. If the material is plentiful and uninterrupted so that it is easy to trace the flow of thought from sheet to sheet, the experience of the artistic process is more fruitful and conclusions can be drawn with greater certainty. An early example is a drawing where a number of separate studies have been brought together in one sheet to form a rudimentary composition (Illustration 3). Vasari, who once owned the sheet, considered it as a drawing by a rather obscure artist, Delio Delli, a painter and sculptor who collaborated with Uccello. He comments on Delio in the following words: "Delio was no very good draughtsman, but was surely one of the first to show discernment in revealing the muscles of nude bodies, as can be seen from drawings in our book done by him in chiaroscuro."

The drawing, from c. 1470, represents eleven male figures, a small bear and a dog disposed on four lev-els of a twelved-sided structure. The central figure in the foreground is presented as the basic formula of an antica nude, shown frontal in contrapposto. Most of the other figures are arranged in counter-point: two lateral figures step up and down respectively, four stand upon the parapet while two more appear in the background. Less than twenty-five years later Raphael creates a composition with by and large the same number of figures, characterized by perfection in depict- ing the positions and attitudes of the harmoniously proportioned characters that form the composition (Illustration 13). Each single figure and each group of characters had of course been the subject of a great number of drawings, close studies of details, posi-tions etc. before Raphael was prepared to create the complete image. His goal was to present a harmoni-ous unity where all the elements concur into a seem-ingly obvious whole. The strength of Raphael's draw-ings was his calligraphic lines, drawn without any hesitation. The drawing thus became an aesthetic object as an end in itself, although it would have a further function as preparation for a painting. Some hundred years later Rembrandt used his pen not merely to prepare his pictures but as a support for his memory in recording incidents from his pri-vate and professional life. He depicts trivial scenes from his home with the same enthusiasm as he de-scribes imaginary actions from the Old Testament. With a few simple lines, he makes a subdued depic-tion of an intimate, being scene between mother and child (Illustration 4). When he first faced an elephant in 1637, he was in an entirely different mood, using a generous amount of black crayon in a pattern of sharp, thick lines al-luding to the rough hide and the overwhelming vol-ume of the animal. He signed the drawing in large letters and sweeping lines, evoking the grand scale of the motif itself (Illustration 2). Actually, this is the only drawing we can be certain that Rembrandt ever signed! The meeting with the elephant must have been a major event for him. Probably, this was the only elephant in Europe during the first part of the 17th-century, and the same animal was later admired in Rome, where Bertin, Poussin and Pietro Testa all made drawings of it.

The importance of drawing in the artistic process is still a relevant issue. The recently deceased Swedish artist Lennart Rodhe was almost constantly draw-ing. All of his major compositions were preceded by an abundance of studies, and since Rodhe – being somewhat pedantic – started dating his drawings at an early stage, it is possible to follow the trail of his thoughts in detail. When Lennart Rodhe (1916–2005) finished his studies at the Royal Academy of Art in Stockholm in 1944, he moved back to his mother in Uppsala, whose house was located across the street from a church yard. Soon, he was obsessed by the image of the church yard. Since this was at the late stage of the war, this was a logical association, but the subject matter also offered several possibilities related to Rodhe’s in-terest in complicated spatial relationships. At first, his artistic research developed along three different lines: a study of the subject matter and its compo-nents, the discontinuity of space and the “metamor-phoses” of foliage. The result was an unpretentious color lithograph which was printed in an edition of eight. There are more than sixty preliminary studies for this image. I have chosen to comment on four of these. Rodhe’s starting point was reality (Illustration 4). In the earlier drawings, the degree of abstraction is low, the images have a narrative, illustrative quali-ty. He studies the trunk and follows the patterns of the branches. He makes note of the asymmetrical position of the gravestones, how some stand tall while others have a slant. A lonely wanderer moves between the trees. The buildings on the other side of the church yard can be seen in the background. It is November, the leaves have fallen, the trunk reach upwards, verticals dominate and the atmosphere is serene. The gravestones and occasional visitors ap-pear as solemn shapes in a hall of pillars. Peace and quiet reigns. At this point, Rodhe seems ready to turn the church yard into a stage. He emphasizes certain elements with ink and signals an increasing expressive urge (Illustration 5). In a sketch he tries to find new mean-ings in the image. The figure of a gravedigger was previously featured in a realistic sketch, but now he is given further symbolic relevance. In a fragmen-tary, although fundamentally realistic, image of the church yard he has incorporated a pair of lovers in the left of the foreground and the gravedigger to the right, emblems of life and death, and visual coun-terparts to the juxtaposition of the living tree trunk and the dead matter of the tombs. The humans mirror the shapes of the inanimate objects, while ex-pressing a furious energy. However, this compositional exercise turns out to be fruitless. We can see how the rough and expres-
Illustration no.7: Rembrandt: Mother and child. c.1630. Pen and brown ink. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm

Illustration no.6: Lennart Rodhe: The Cemetery. Preparatory drawing. Pencil. 26/2 1945
sive shapes of the trees are substituted for gentle, sweeping lines and Rodhe instead tries to find the potential in the spatial qualities of the motif.

In the new year of 1945 Rodhe makes significant progress when he joins the shapes of the trees and the tombstones in a single compositional pattern. Initially, he does this in a playful manner, connecting the outlines of the trunks and the branches in soft curves which sweep across the surface in whirling shapes. As in the work of Raphael, there is a dialogue between the calligraphy and the figurative elements of the image.

The trees and tombstones soon lose their substance, they have become elements within two systems of shapes on different scales: All outlines are extended and overlap (illustration 8). A whirling grid appears with a resulting ambiguity between object and background. The diagonals which imply depth in continuous space disappear, conventional pictorial space is shattered as the image consists of layers of parallel surfaces. Rodhe uses different patterns to locate the surfaces in space, and an intricate drama between the surfaces takes place.

From now on, Rodhe strives to combine the trees and the gravestones in a single reality (illustration 6). The two patterns are placed on top of each other as equal objects, with a resulting linear ambiguity. In a series of experiments, he cuts through a cluster of rectangular shapes with diagonal lines, shades some of the resulting squares and leaves others white. We can see him examine how illusory space appears and disappears. He works in a playful, tentative mood, apparently waiting for chance to create an interesting result. This relaxed attitude also shows how Rodhe worked, following long periods of hard, systematic work with improvisation and moments of inspiration.

While examining the possibilities of the subject matter, Rodhe also spent much time and energy studying the work of Picasso. He was intrigued by the stage set for the “Pulcinella” ballet which Picasso created in 1922, where the artist attempted to transform the pictorial space from his paintings into three-dimensional space. Picasso, and after him Rodhe, wanted to turn our attention to the lack of continuity in space. The principle is the same for both artists. Two different spatial structures are diagonally pushed into the “stage” from left and right, and where they clash there is a tension that conveys a dramatic effect.

The trees and the gravestones, as well as shade and light, become individual shapes. In one constellation a surface appears as a light tree trunk, in another one the same area seems to offer a glimpse through the branches. Lennart Rodhe himself referred to this phenomenon as “intangible space”, each volume has several meanings. Once again, the proximity to theater is obvious. The light, which in nature is sifted through branches, leaves and patches of snow, is almost material in the theater, the spotlights and the stage dust create pillars of light which stand out against the dark background.

Rodhe uses the language of abstraction to return to the playfulness and the sense of adventure which characterized the Renaissance exploration of central perspective and its constant collisions between different degrees of reality (illustration 9). For Rodhe, it was important to diminish the distance between the beholder and the artwork, but at the same time his true ambition might have been the opposite – to bring the spectator in contact with a strange world where continuous space is questioned, just like mirrors are used to alter the rules of perception in an amusement park.

Lennart Rodhe was on a mission, to find “intangible space” – and he did. The exploration of this space would be the central theme for his art for decades to come, a constant source of inspiration.

Per Bjurström is professor emeritus and former head of Nationalmuseum. He is the author of numerous books, most recently one on connoisseurship.