

No direct line from my brain to my heart

Drawings by 8 artists. Curated by Violet Faigan

Whether wild with joy or wracked with guilt, medical science tells us, it is electrical impulses that course through the body to determine emotional states. The biological process however, never feels that precise to its owner. It isn't sensible or controllable like the technological electrical systems we are able to use in daily life. The words 'direct line' suggest immediate and absolute access, unlike a party line or extension number. There's no group discussion or set of possibilities, 'direct line' suggests comprehension and cooperation, perfect communication. This collection of drawings by eight artists shows many emotional nuances of the brain are complex and difficult to understand or predict. They exist in narratives involving other sets of complex feelings and can be experienced vicariously as well as directly.

Ann Shelton's portrait drawings deal with emotions of anger, threat and vulnerability felt by her subjects. These bare sketches suggest the expressive self-portrait of an imaginary character, and a narrative of conflict. Mirrors reflecting the subject explore an assertion of identity. Also suggesting a narrative, Stella Corkery's underground-cool girl-pop figures, hand drawn on paper attached to shiny mesh like backgrounds stylishly create the radical chic of an art-school pop band. The pouty expressions and vulnerable postures of the subject are threatened by polished finger nails from above, seeming to come through the back of the picture itself and about to tear through the mesh.

Violet Faigan's portraits move more serenely, a series that lift beautifully off the floor in to the air, faces unheld by frame or body are left floating lightly against the wall. Ascension is suggested by the framed works on the floor in heavy colour giving way to lighter pastel drawings on paper invisibly attached higher up. There are elements of the traditional portrait: recognisable individuals with a particular expression of emotion, as well as a more experimental approach to installation.

Jad Fair's landscapes are exuberant expressions of both joy and anger, drawn lightly on paper in felt pen. Like children's book illustrations, they capture an emotion completely, dividing them in to opposing panels and denying any narrative treatment of emotion. Graham McFelin's stunningly outlandish art often suggests more with one gesture than seemingly more complex artworks, a strike in the memory that resurfaces for months. Also denying narrative, his twinkled-out cigarette packet suggests a mistake that can't be undone. Allan Holt's trembling, amorphous ghosts float before a wavy background amongst letters spelling out moods.

We see through the eyes of the voyeur in Kirsty Cameron's landscape drawings of climactic extremes; from a lightning storm sketched in crazy fascination to the practical resignation of a man leaving a partially submerged car. While the lightning suggests artwork from a psychiatric ward, the man suggests a television viewer's fascination with extremes of experience. These drawings collapse the accepted and excluded voyeur, the psychiatric patient and the weather channel addict. Simon Cumin's voyeurs are two flies, two carefully drawn, green bodied, red-eyed beauties that look on from either side as two smaller black flies hump each other busily. The vile voyeur reveres the dirt.

In this show artist/curator Violet Faigan brought together 8 artists whose drawings address heart-felt emotions from remorse to jubilation while referencing the many contexts in which drawing occurs.

Alastair Crawford

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Alan Holt, Simon Cumin, Stella Corkery, Violet Faigan
Image: Rachel Brunton

