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# GRACIOUS LIVING

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

*26 JUNE – 25 AUGUST 2010*

Bevan Honey

Leading West Australian artist  
**Bevan Honey**, presents an  
ambitious new body of work for his  
solo show in PICA's Westend Gallery.



# GRACIOUS LIVING

Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts

EXHIBITION CURATED BY LEIGH ROBB

## Bevan Honey

### List of Works

#### ***Burn out (state dependent memory)*** 2010

rubber, aluminium, mild steel, stainless steel,  
electric motor, electric components.  
ø 240 cm

#### ***Latitude*** 2010

chalk and acrylic binder on canvas  
214 x 450 cm

#### ***Knit one purl two*** 2010

pine, salt, oxidised nails (found  
decommissioned craypots)  
360 x 1030 cm

#### ***Tactical response*** 2010

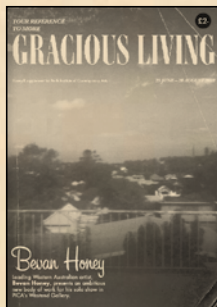
strawboard, balsa wood, plywood  
dimensions variable

#### ***Sieve 1-5*** 2010

photographs mounted on aluminium  
5 diptychs, 2 panels 25.4 x 20.4 cm each

#### ***Pre-tension*** 2010

graphite and auto acrylic on primed canvas  
214 x 353 cm



OUR COVER: sieve 1-5,  
2010

### Public Program

#### Opening

Friday 25 June, 6pm

#### Exhibition

26 June – 25 August

#### Artist Talk

Sunday 27 June, 2pm

#### Acknowledgements:

The artist would like to thank Kieran Wong and Emma Williamson from CODA, Mike Sully and The Kart Shop at The Cockburn International Kartway, and Susanna, Mia and Stella for their love and understanding.

Catalogue design by  
James Hensby

Exhibition Supported by:

**CODA**



### Artist Biography:

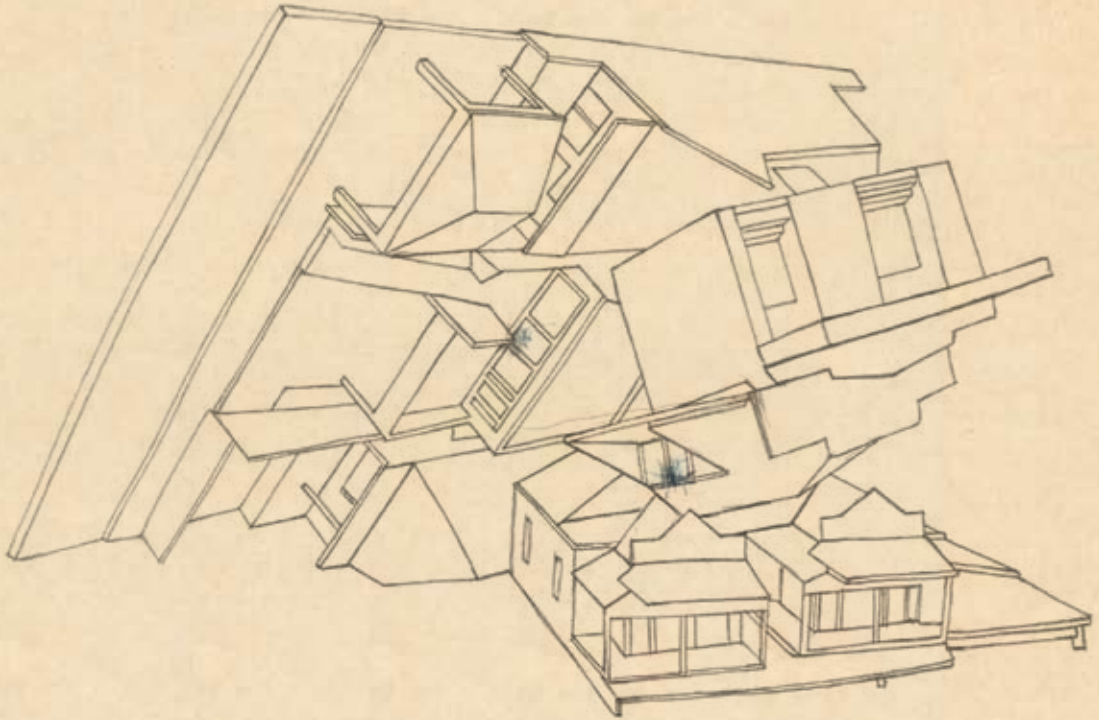
Bevan Honey was born in Perth in 1968. He received his Bachelor of Arts and Post-Graduate Diploma in Printmaking from Curtin University of Technology. His solo exhibitions include *RDO*, Galerie Düsseldorf, WA (2009); *plane*, Monash University Gallery, Vic (2006); *project*, Galerie Düsseldorf, WA (2006); *Canberra Biennial of Art & Architecture: love is blind*, Parliament Triangle, ACT (2005); *SPLIT The New Tinsheds Gallery*, University of Sydney, NSW (2004) and *1999 Wood Cuts & Charcoals*, Fremantle Arts Centre, WA (1999). *FH.NF*, Lawrence Wilson Gallery (1997) Honey has also participated in a number of group shows including *Yellow Vest Syndrome*, Fremantle Arts Centre (2009); *Linden 1968*, Linden Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (2008); *The Bon Scott Project*, Fremantle Arts Centre (2008); *Mix Tape*, Art Gallery of Western Australia (2003); and *Place where three dreams cross* Plimsoll Gallery, University of Tasmania (2005).



Aluminium, steel or timber doors complete with equipment from £25/5/-, doors and equipment to suit all sizes. Complete installation service if required.

# Spatialising the Line: The Architecture of Bevan Honey

by Philip Goldswain



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*'... drawing may  
be proposed as  
the principle  
locus of  
conjecture in  
architecture.'*

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**Robin Evans**

The artistic practice of Bevan Honey is dense with marks, divergent narratives and oblique references to social, political and art histories. Over the past 20 years he has created a rich and compelling body of work. I would like to try to tease out of this dense mass a thread emphasising the 'line' and its 'projection' in space. Much of Honey's career has been spent exploring the potential of the line as the most basic of descriptive devices. In this exhibition, *Your Reference to More Gracious Living*, Honey tests the limits of the graphic capacity of the line and its transformation, via 'projection', into

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(Above) *Study for Tactical response*, 2009

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something else. I would like to draw this thread not only to other aspects of Honey's practice but also between the works in this exhibition.

It is useful to consider historian Robin Evans' description of the relationship between the line and object as established by architectural drawings.<sup>1</sup> Evans suggests that these drawings are 'projections', which means that 'organised arrays of imaginary straight lines pass through the drawings to corresponding parts of the thing represented by the drawings.'<sup>2</sup> Honey's work is grounded in this connection between the 'thing' and its 'drawing';

the oscillation between the object and its representation. But for this artist there is also an emphasis on 'making'- for it is the importance of this act which provides the means by which to bridge the substantial gap between the 'abstract' and the 'real.' It is this 'spatialising' of the line to an object that connects Honey's work to the discourse of architecture. However, instead of just 'taking information from flat representations to create embodied objects'<sup>3</sup> as Evans suggests is the role of architecture, Honey moves backwards and forwards through the drawing. He compresses objects' qualities into the drawing's surface and then expands

them outwards in sculptural form. While his practice has previously embraced two dimensional drawing and low relief, this exhibition marks a shift in Honey's 'spatialising' which embraces drawing machines, three dimensional sketching and the potential of the sculptural ready-made.

*Latitude* (2010) is made by the repeated 'pinging' of a brickie's string laden with chalk, stretched tautly between two nails and fashioned into a basic drawing instrument. When pulled and released the string leaves a chalky blue horizontal trace on the canvas. This line is blurred, imprecise and fragile

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(Above) *Tactical response*, 2010

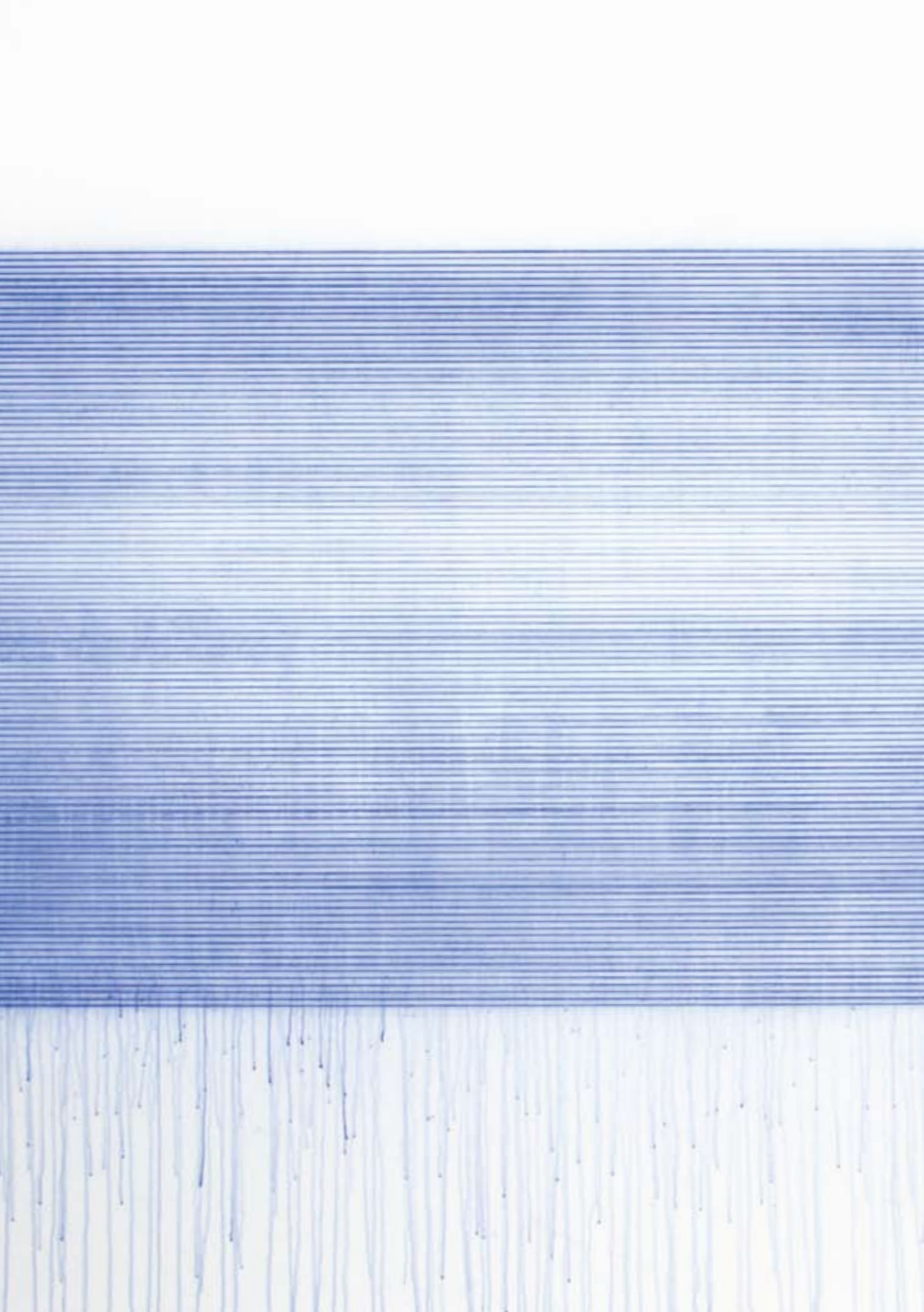
(Over leaf) *Latitude*, 2010 (detail)

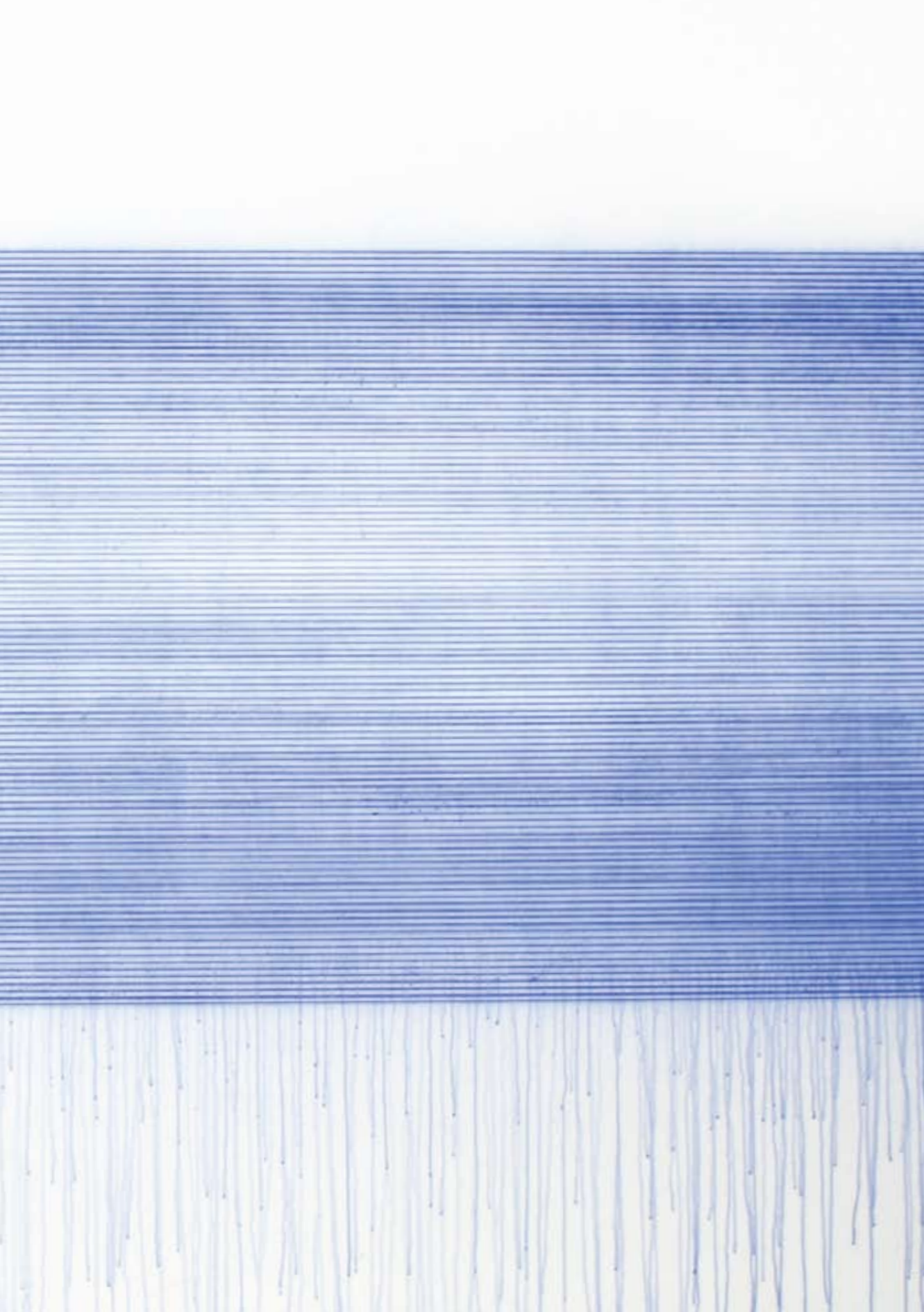
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<sup>1</sup> Robin Evans, "Architectural Projection" in *Architecture and its Image: Four Centuries of Architectural Representation Works from the Collection of the Canadian Centre for Architecture*, ed. Eve Blau & Edward Kaufman (Montreal: Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, 1989), 19.

<sup>2</sup> Evans, 19.

<sup>3</sup> Evans, 19.







where the repeated ‘pinging’ not only adds a new layer of ‘chalk’ but disrupts the stability of the previous line. Fixative is applied to the drawing to arrest this fragility. This adds another layer of marking as it runs down the canvas, collecting on its taut bottom edge. The drawing process is laborious, new marks add but impinge upon previous work, while the fixative drips transform the horizontal lines into an uneven grid. The ‘drawing’ requires us to consider its making as integral to the piece as much as the final object itself.

The drawing is not just the result of a process of the machine but is layered with an intent informed by Honey’s previous work. *Latitude* may be read as Modernist picturesque, a hybrid that combines the visual hierarchy typical of this kind of landscape view with the formal sensibilities of abstract modernity. The work contains an ambiguous blurred horizon of sorts; a dark mass in the bottom corner suggests a headland or thicket or a series of tiled roofs. The chalk lines condense and darken toward the top as the depiction of the sky might in its painterly representation. The spatial and visual narrative of the picturesque is underpinned by the ubiquitous modernist form of the grid. The ambiguity of *Latitude*’s formal and artistic antecedents, both modern and pre-modern, can be extended to its making with the rudimentary drawing machine’s chalked string suggesting that this is both drawing and print making.<sup>4</sup>

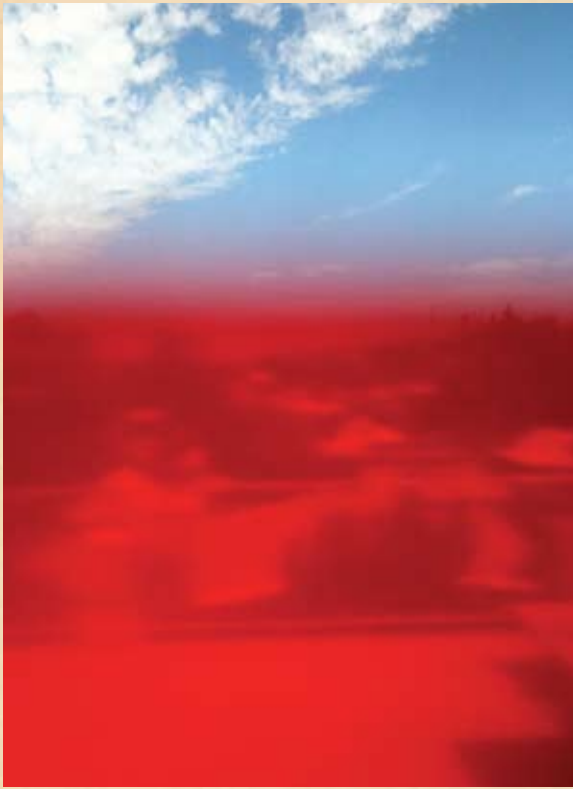
The *Sieve* (2010) series of photographs continues the exploration of layering and hybridisation with images generated by

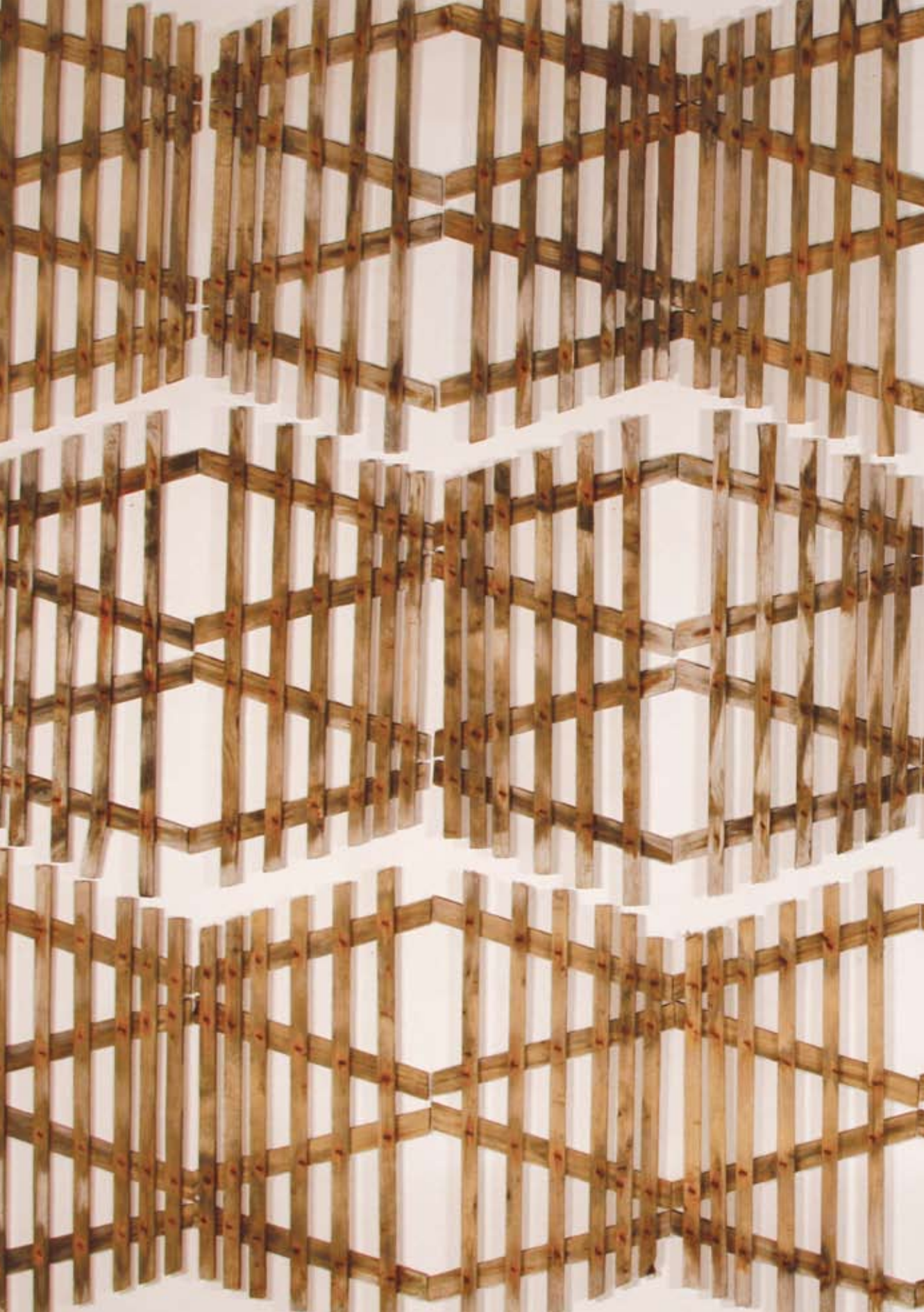
(Above) *Sieve purple*, 2010 (detail)  
(Right) *Sieve red & green*, 2010

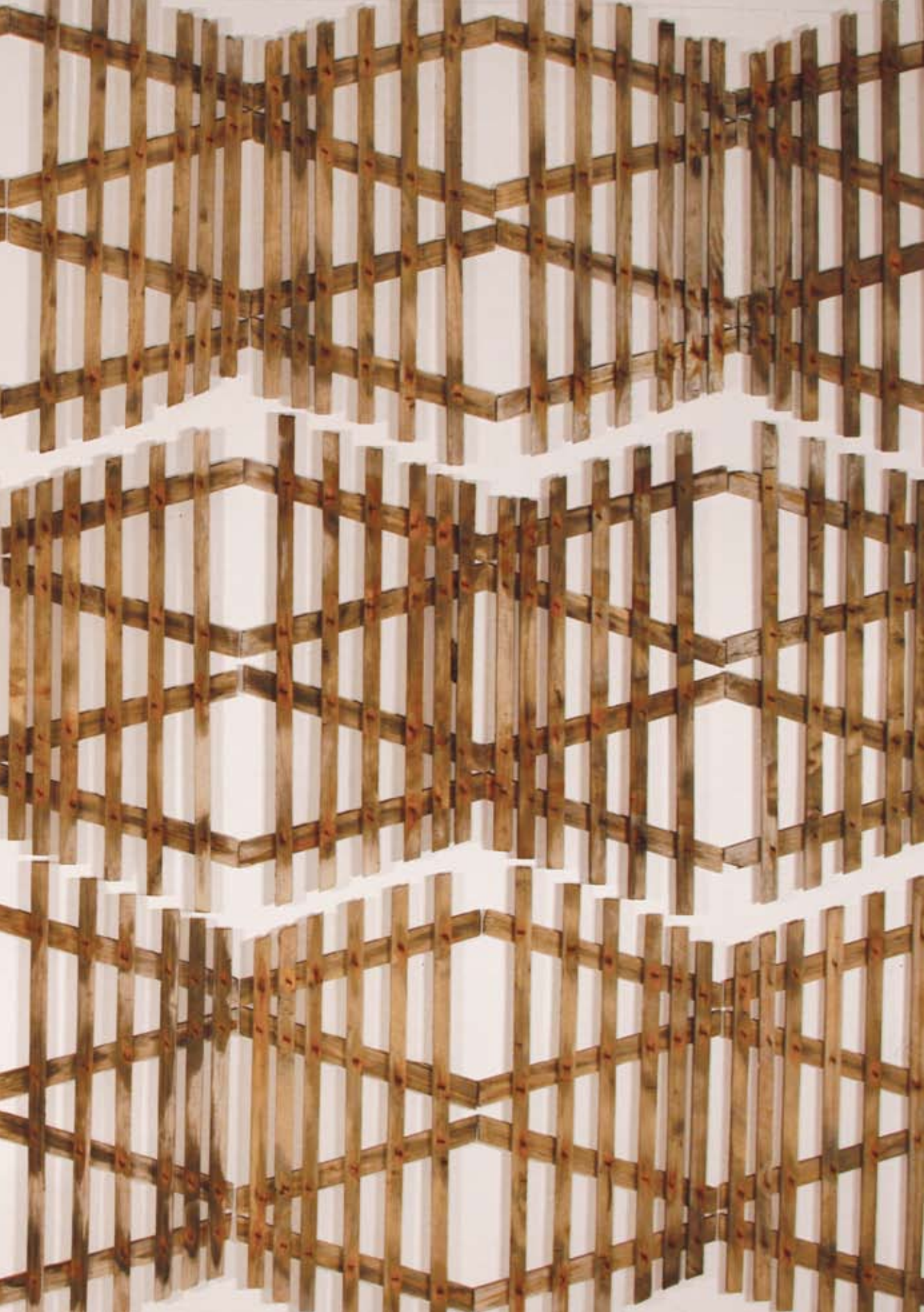
(Over leaf) *Knit one purl two*, 2010 (detail)

<sup>4</sup> In the introduction to *The Printed Picture* Richard Benson argues that printing has existed as long as people have been making images. He argues that alongside the first European cave drawings are the first examples of print making. These are both positive images where a pigmented covered hand leaves a mark as well as negative images where blank hands are surrounded by paint. Richard Benson, *The Printed Picture*, (New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 2008), 4.









placing a piece of translucent film in front of the ubiquitous mobile phone camera. The ridiculous simplicity of this act defies the remarkable images generated by this process. Like *Latitude* a new blurred horizon is created as a suburban view is transformed, subsumed by a Modernist colour field.

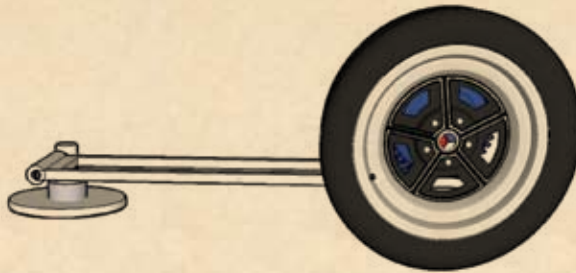
What intrigues me about the second of Honey's drawing machines, *Burn out (State Dependant Memory)* (2010), is not just the exquisite finished object but its study (Figure 1). This 'built sketch' is made of the stuff of the suburban garden – reticulation poly pipe, a kind of useful Lego for grownups with infinite variability to adjust for the dimensions of the domestic Eden. Honey exploits the pipe's sculptural potential as a three dimensional line formed by an extruded circle. The study is a 'drawing' in three dimensions, a maquette made of lines rather than a facsimile for its final material. The study, the refined final object and the mark it makes fold in on themselves; the study is a three dimensional outline of a three dimensional object that will ultimately trace the study's



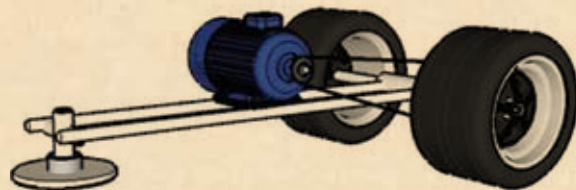
## *Burn out (state dependant memory)*

2010

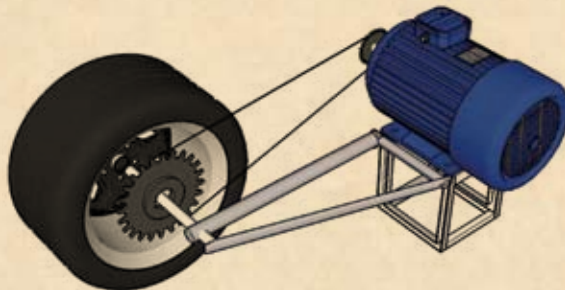
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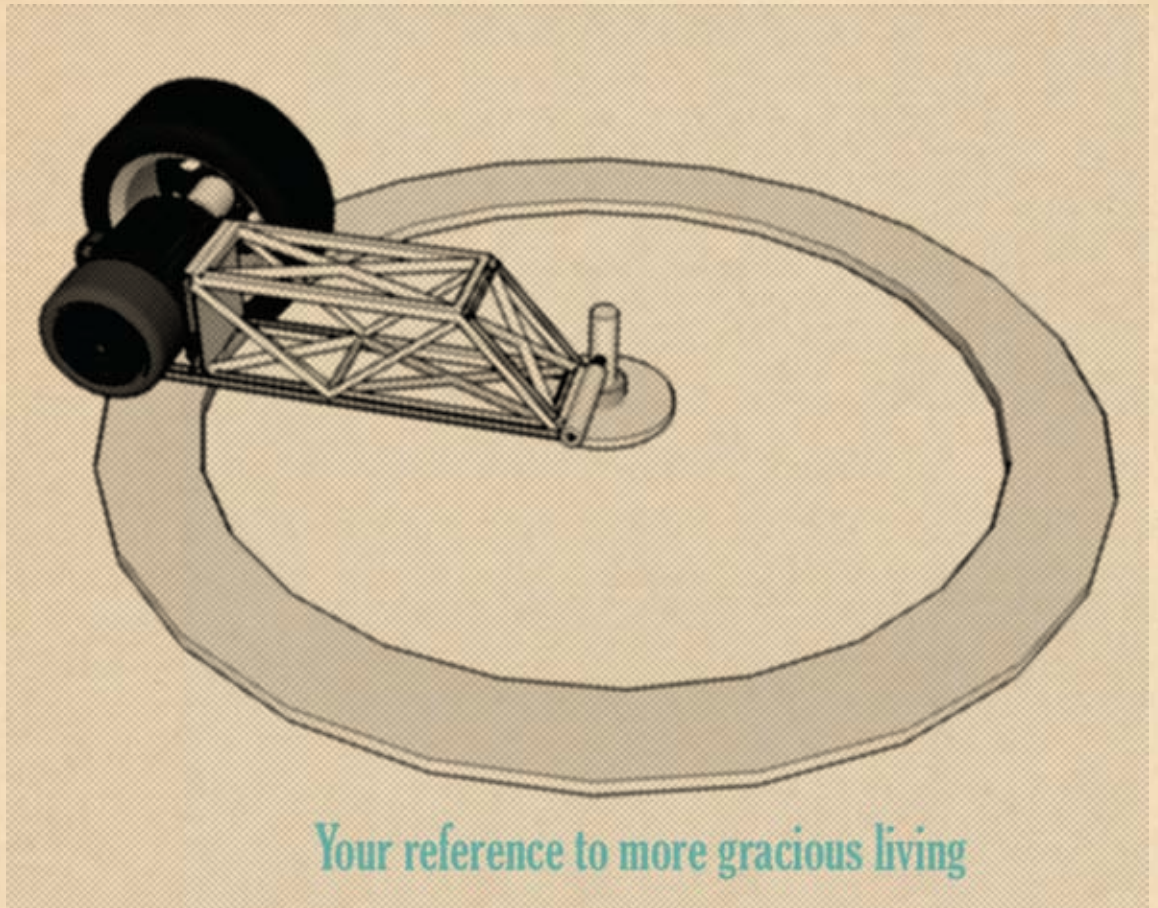
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primary form, the circle, on the floor of the gallery.

The lines made by this machine are simultaneously accumulative and subtractive, leaving behind a mark of rubber, whilst removing a sacrificial coat of paint from the gallery floor. This creates a layering of markings; the line from the wheel, the removal of paint, a circle whose circumference is determined by a standard dimension of the construction industry, a dimension that demarks and formats the spaces in which we live. This is ultimately a futile gesture as the machine spins its wheels, going nowhere.

*Knit one purl two* (2010) follows a similar interest in projection; this time on a more disconcertingly sensorial level. Here the lines are already three dimensional, flat battens of timber from the ends of craypots, layered upon one another with the accumulated history of the found object. The piece exhibits the strange combination of both a perspective and isometric drawing. The unevenly spaced vertical battens suggest the diminution of scale and space experienced in a perspective while the diagonal battens are uncannily consistent with how a square might be rendered in isometric. The graphic qualities of these two architectural projections are fundamentally incompatible.



By locating the viewer in a fixed position in relation to the objects depicted, the perspective established by *Knit one purl two* replicates a precise mathematical relationship that is essentially a Renaissance conception of space. On the other hand, the isometric projection allows an omniscient viewer to hover over an object located in a potentially infinite plane. The disengaged viewer is always external to understanding the object and is never located within its space. The isometric drawing gives equal emphasis to all sides of an object where the perspective is hierarchical with a fixed and permanent relationship between the viewer, the object and space. The isometric is measurable; its dimension can be traced back to the thing easily and

while the perspective gives a convincing rendering of space it is fundamentally distorted. Despite the mathematical basis for their architectural projection, when combined on the wall as a tessellated pattern the experience of this object is unsettlingly visceral. The combination of these two drawing types creates a dense surface that becomes impossible to fix, pulsating in and out of recognition as its perspectival qualities and its isometric abstraction clash. Its pattern simultaneously recedes into the wall and thrusts out towards the viewer.

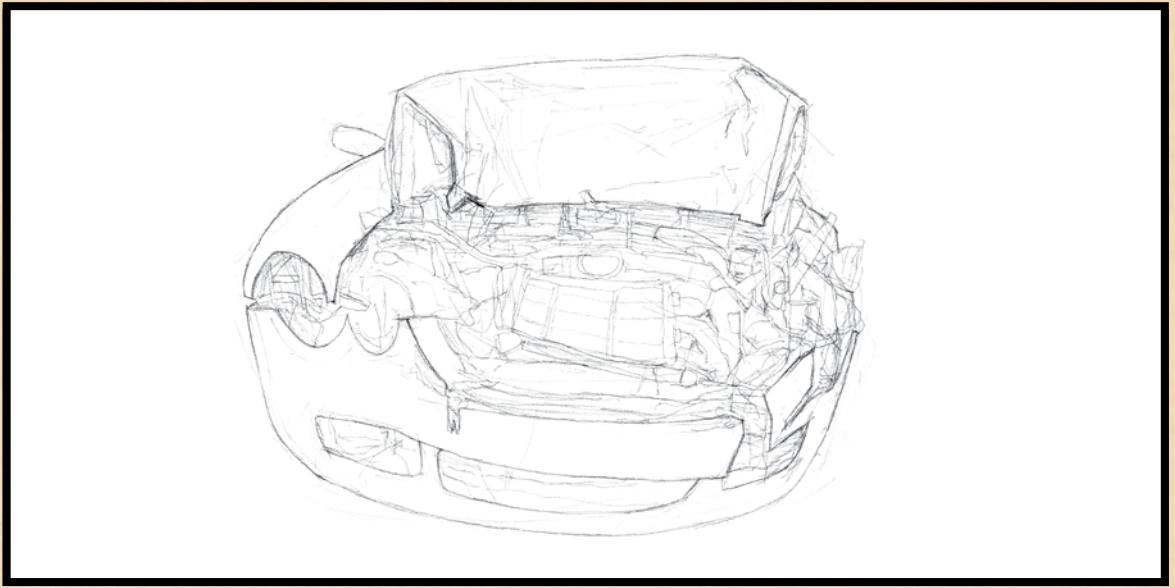
*Latitude* relies on the additive process of drawing being revelatory where an understanding is gained by the addition of each line. This is not the case with *Pre-tension* (2010). Here the crumpled form of the crashed car is increasingly

obscured by the addition of new marks. The residual energy embodied in the vehicle (that required to manufacture it as well as the fearful force that has radically transformed it) is hidden by Honey's application of an overlay of lines. The car recedes from our view and only the traces of its making, the long drips of paint that describe the crashed car, remain.

In the drawings that preceded this painting one can sense the force that has created this compressed form.<sup>5</sup> In *Study for Hatchback* (2008) this energy can be seen in two ways. The form of the car was once defined by its aerodynamic lines and structural creases that gave its individual panels their strength. After its collision Honey has drawn the tangled and crumpled lines of the hatchback

(All images in this spread) *Studies for Burn out (state dependent memory)*, 2010

<sup>5</sup>These drawings can be found in *Bewan Honey MHF #13*, exhibition catalogue, (Mark Howlett Foundation, Perth, 2009), 10 -11.



so that these once smooth lines now register and embody some absent force whose energy has been transferred into the car's bent steel, broken glass and rubber. Likewise in a similar drawing *Study for Jaguar* (2008) the viewer feels as if they are locked in this ball of energy which has crushed the bonnet of the Jag, inadvertently revealing the car's engine block, its own source of kinetic potential. Residual in these wrecked cars is our aspirations for the individual freedom that the car promised. Reyner Banham's description of an 'autopia,' a city determined by the characteristics of the car, turns out to be a dystopia of pollution, alienation and fragmented urban fabric.<sup>6</sup>

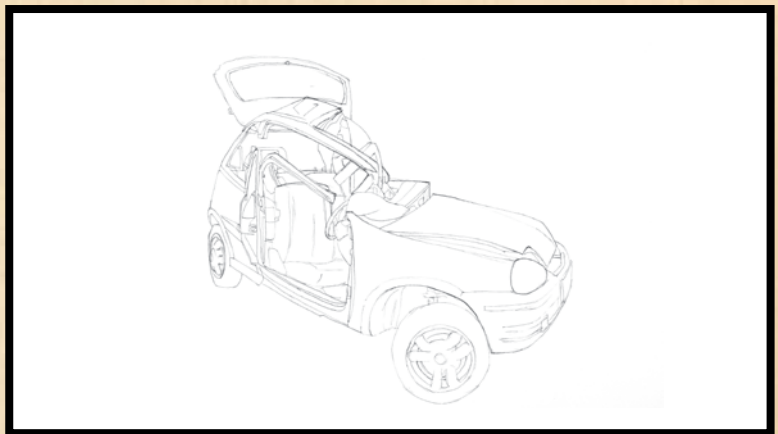
The notion of the 'residual' can also be found in *Tactical Response* (2010). This pile of discarded architectural forms suggests a rejection of these models' embodied values of space, form and domesticity. Their status is

always to remain as a 'project' rather than a 'work'.<sup>7</sup> This is not necessarily a forlorn state; the utopian aspirations of every work of architecture remains embodied in the model's conceptual status, unsullied by the compromises of actually having to exist in the 'real.' The 'no-where' place of utopia exists in their miniaturised and dematerialised form as they rest on a tabula rasa of cardboard.

Honey's work is able to accommodate classical references, heroic modernity and suburban post-modernity. One might expect the resulting tension between these competing schemas to manifest itself in the work but there is an ambiguity

to his art that allows it to accommodate this multiplicity of forces. Robin Evans argues that it is 'the architect's imaginative intelligence' which is divided between 'inventing the drawing and inventing the thing.'<sup>8</sup> We could extend this definition to the work of Bevan Honey whose practice collapses architectural intelligence into a body of work that exists as both drawings and objects, projections and things, constructions and ideals.

**Philip Goldswain** is a lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts at The University of Western Australia.



(Above) *Study for Jaguar*, 2008  
(Right) *Study for Hatchback*, 2008  
(Over leaf) *Pre-tension*, 2010

<sup>6</sup> In his 1971 book *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* architectural historian Reyner Banham describes the west coast city as being divided into four ecological models one of which was 'Autopia.' Banham also famously suggested that while 'Los Angeles is the greatest City-on-the-Shore in the world... its only rival in potential is, probably, Perth, Western Australia.' Reyner Banham, *Los Angeles: the Architecture of Four Ecologies*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2009), 19

<sup>7</sup> These models were gifted to Honey by Fremantle architectural practice CODA

<sup>8</sup> Most architectural offices would make the distinction between unbuilt design which are considered 'projects' and completed designs which are described as 'works.'

<sup>9</sup> Evans 21





# Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts



## Gallery Hours:

Tuesday – Sunday 11am – 6pm

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