

## **Roger Ackling – Stillness as a drawing method.**

### **Abstract**

From 1974 until 2014 the British Artist Roger Ackling made drawings on found pieces of driftwood by using the sun's rays focused through a magnifying glass. This research article discusses the contribution Ackling made to charting an ontology of drawing through a practice of stillness. By employing this method, he provides an original contribution to the knowledge base of drawing that values ephemerality and lightness through phenomenological bracketing. An evaluation is provided as to how Roger Ackling dwells upon and makes subject the precise moment of making in drawing.

### **Key words**

**Epoché  
Stillness  
Lightness**

### **Introduction**

***You can't assume that if you're a visual artist things happen in the visual realm  
– Roger Ackling (Ackling, 1997)***

The British Artist Roger Ackling (1947-2014) drew upon discarded materials. Using a handheld magnifying glass, he focused the power of the sun to a small point and drew dots which, once connected, became straight lines across the surface of pieces of wood. He found his materials at the hinterlands, and the surfaces he marked were often those of discarded wood – whether driftwood found on the coast in North Norfolk or lollypop sticks, a remnant from a summer treat. Ackling found value, purpose, and power in overlooked instances. Objects and materials that most would have thrown away were enlivened through a transformative process where parallel lines were burnt onto their surfaces. Arresting lights natural fall to earth and objects, Ackling worked from left to write as if composing a text. Dots became lines and lines became surfaces, in the way that letters become words to form sentences. The visual effect of these completed works is

as if they are a secret redacted text. Potentially readable but impenetrable, and yet, full of significance.

His working process was a fixed method that he employed with consistency from 1974 until his death in 2014. His work is synonymous with this methodology. It can be said that a piece of work made in 1985 in Weybourne is indistinguishable from a work made in 2002 in Morai, Japan. Parallel lines of scorched dots traverse the surface of discarded, generally man made, pieces of flotsam that result in blocks of burnt tone that pay attention to the shape and detail of the wood. There is very little that indicates a work's provenance whenever it was made.

There is a sense then in which Ackling's artistic practice and method of drawing was one typified by stillness. In this essay, I want to explore how in Ackling's drawings he developed stillness during this 40-year period. In doing so I want to take a different trajectory than one that says his working method stayed the same. I want to instead focus upon the development points within his work and in doing so invoke how he intensified still-ness in his work and used it as a drawing methodology. To achieve this, I would firstly like to outline the transition from Ackling's early experiments with the magnifying glass as a drawing tool towards his work that demonstrates a more fixed idiom.

Oscar Wilde said that most people spend their lives being other people – their ideas the ideas of others, 'their lives mimicry, their passions a quotation' (Wilde, 1999). I find Roger Ackling's artworks to be a bold challenge to this unfortunately common fate of creative work. From May 1994 when I saw an exhibition of his work at Annely Juda Gallery, London the work registered its idiosyncrasy. Whilst clear parallels exist for Ackling's work, for example his affinity with art and nature has clear lines of connectivity in British and European Conceptualism (Tufnell, 2006 and Wilson, 2016) and with Italian Arte Povera (Bonami, 2001). His work has strong relationships also with Japanese aesthetics also, particularly Wabi-sabi (Tanisaki, 2001) where beauty is found in ephemerality and impermanence when confronted with the autonomy of nature. These are just some of the rich contexts in which his work could be mentioned – these could join Alfred Jarry's Pataphysics (Jarry, 2001) and of course American minimalism and post minimalism (Meyer, 2001). Artists are nothing if not a delicate

spiders web of connectivity to other practices, world views and inflections.

For me, and prior to these contexts, Ackling's work foremost has an initial registration. Firstly, his drawing is distinguished by its original method. Secondly and accompanying this, is his use of stillness – I find Ackling's use of this method of creativity compelling as it exists as an antithesis to predominant accounts of making, and in particular making drawings. Stillness's cousin, silence is well documented within creative practice (Cage, 1994, and Maitland, 2009). Stillness is a well canonized trope in eastern philosophy and more emergent subjects such as environmental aesthetics (GAO, 2017). In Art History, stillness is well documented as an aesthetic situation in painting and sculpture. Consider for example studies on Vermeer (Thurston, 2017) or Statues and Performativity (Getsy, 2014). However, as a creative methodology 'Not Knowing' (Barthelme, 1997) which is ecstatic in its generation as method, is largely predominant (Fisher and Fortnum, 2013). Ackling's use of stillness is distinguished for its contribution to extending the knowledge base of creativity, how it can function, how it can work. Ackling's stillness is an antidote to not knowing which deepens our understanding of creative methodologies.

### **1. Turning away from the world**

In 1997 Ackling stated that he was 'always making the same work' (Ackling, S 1997) and that he 'didn't believe in change' (Ackling, 1997). Looking now at his entire oeuvre a variety does exist within this seemingly fixed methodology. Consider 'Bird' made in 1974 (Fig. 1) which details the outline of what could be an eagle seen either from above or below. Six years prior to this there exists a very early work made in 1968 entitled 'Broken Clock' (see Fig.2). The work is a small cylindrical cut of wood upon which is drawn the face of clock whose hands are misaligned. All these works are described using the phrase 'sunlight on wood.' Initially at least it seems that if continuity exists in method, form is more exploratory and varied. From the beginning then Ackling had stillness as a core aspect of his approach to drawing. Anyone who as a child has burnt leaves with a magnifying glass understands the need to be stationary.



Fig 1. Bird, 1974



Fig 2, Broken Clock, 1968

Even this singular phrase 'sunlight on wood' which accompanies his practice was occasionally interrupted with the phrase 'sunlight on card.' Ackling often made drawings on cardboard in months where the strength of the sun was a little too weak to burn with any consistency upon wood. Over the 40-year period from 1974 and 2014 in which he developed his practice, there is in evidence an increasing

honed focus from the use of the magnifying glass as a tool for drawing. The earlier works were sometimes seemingly used to 'draw' or describe external referents – the shape of a leaf for example.

In 1978 Ackling made the work 'Five Sunsets in one hour – Five One Minute Sun Lines' (Fig 3; hereafter Five Sunsets) now part of the Tate Britain collection. Subtitled a *country sketch* - Chillerton Down Isle of Wight England 24<sup>th</sup> June 1978 - it resembles anything but a sketch. Described on the Tate Gallery website (where it is in the permanent collection) as made using 'burnt lines on board and transfer lettering on card' it is clearly informed by the British Conceptual art tradition. Five lines are burnt onto a piece of wood each denoted by a particular time. The longest line at the bottom is timed at 6.50pm the shortest at the top 7.50pm. On the left-hand side of the burnt lines further text labels each burnt line as sunset 1 – 5 interspersed with the phrase – walking up the hill. It's clear from all the information contained within the work that what is being described in 'Five Sunsets' is Ackling's walk up a hill using the magnifying glass to record (via five drawn lines) the visibility of the sun as it disappears behind a hill at sunset.

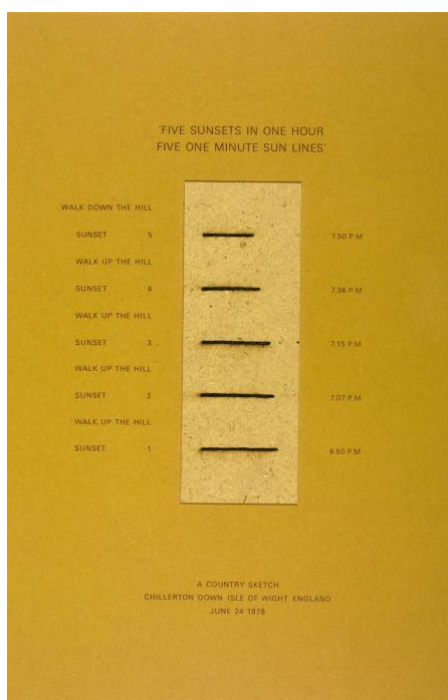


Fig 3. Five Sunsets in one hour, 1978

Made the following year, 'Cloud Arc' 1979 (Fig. 4) is comprised of 4 card panels, described again as 'sunlight on wood'. In comparison to 'Five sunsets in one hour'

this work is without text and is instead constituted by interrupted burnt parallel lines that describe 4 arcs. Some of the lines traverse the entire diameter of the arc uninterrupted. Other lines are little more than a series of small dots and dashes. Some elements of the arc are absent entirely, devoid of any mark making. In these instances, one's eye and mind complete the drawing of the edge of the arc through the continuity of the lines above and below it. The four drawings that constitute this work are descriptions of the path of light from the sun to Ackling's magnifying glass, interrupted on occasion by clouds.

'Cloud Arc' recalls John Constables Cloud studies of 1821-22. Both Ackling's 'Five Hours in one sun set' and 'Cloud Arc' are, like Constable studies, meteorological in intent, all describing, albeit in different ways, the climate conditions of their production. However, both these works from 1978 and 1979 mark a turn in Ackling's work away from the outward descriptions of visual events towards another kind of linear demarcation. Like American abstract painter, Agnes Martin (who Ackling met in 1992) he began to choose to work with his 'back to the world' (Martin, 2002). From 1980 onwards Ackling's work develops a greater consistency of approach away from describing the outward appearance of the world. Taken sequentially these two works of Ackling's are points of development towards a method of working which was more concerned with the artist's states of mind whilst making.

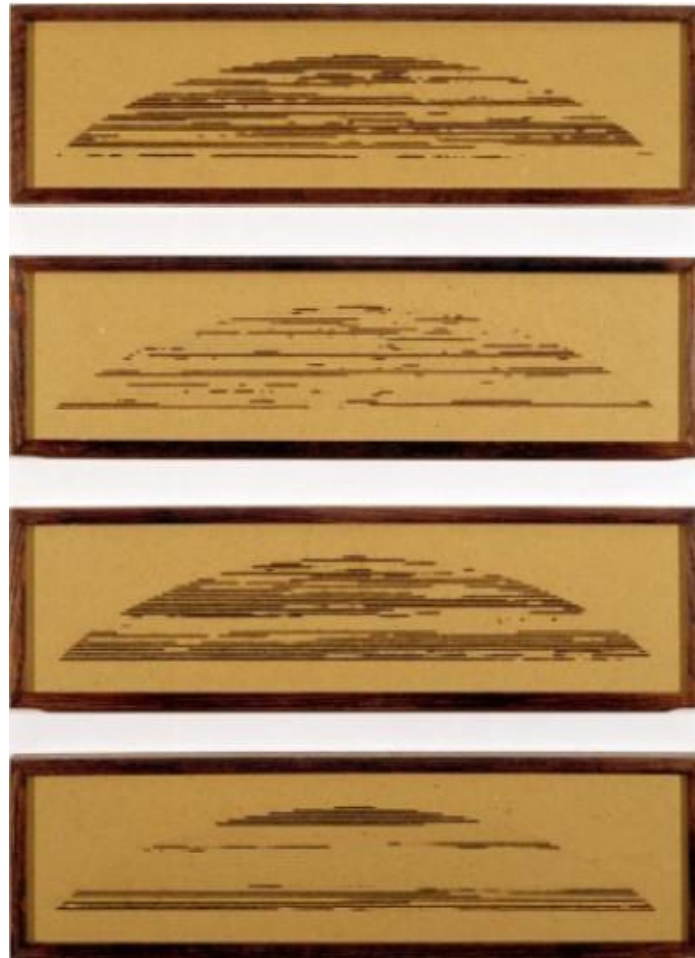


Fig. 4 Cloud Arc, 1979

Although Ackling travelled a great deal and made work in different locations – such as the Isle of Harris in Scotland, or Shionomisaki in Japan – his work from the mid 1980s onwards has been predominantly associated with North Norfolk, particularly Weybourne. In 1987 he bought (and lived and worked) for 10 years in an old coast guard's cottage, perched on a cliff above the beach at Weybourne. Its location is an area of the UK that experiences a great deal of sea erosion and so feels impermanent. Its coast and dwellings are in constant negotiation with the sea and the elements. Weybourne is a storm beach with a berm of pebbles larger than the smaller shingly stones closer to the seas edge. Tides at this location brought Ackling the material starting points, his surfaces, to his feet. Travelling to locations, whilst still evident within his working practices, became less important as he allowed circumstances to come to him. The turn I have described within his work towards the internal mental states of making in his work from 1980 onwards

contrasted to the depiction or concern with external phenomenon (from 1968 to 1979) is mirrored here in his adherence to a more static geographical location.

## **2.Epoché**

In an interview from 1994 recorded on the beach at Weybourne, Ackling was stating how his work is comparable to engraving in that nothing is added to the wood but material is taken away – *‘energy is released in the form of smoke but the practice is unlike an engraver as the source he is using is 93 million miles away’* (Ackling, 1994). His tool, sunlight, lacks the proximity of a burin. But Ackling also considers that his work *might* have been the smoke. It’s a very displaced attitude for a practice focused on the activity of drawing lines precisely onto surfaces to suggest that the actual work might have dissipated.

In presenting a displaced view of his working focus, he is affirming a suspended view, a ‘bracket’ or what Austrian-German Philosopher Edmund Husserl would call a *universal epoché* which encourages us to resist our prejudices and examine a whole phenomenon. Epoché has its origins with the Greek sceptics who considered it a suspension of judgment – in this context I think Ackling uses a comparable process which suspends normality or what Husserl would call the *Natural attitude* (Husserl, 1973). The Natural attitude is the situation which we find ourselves in the world – an object on a table, a phone in my hand. This everyday existence carries with it a degree of presumption that is a hindrance to observe things properly. Ackling’s contribution is that he permits an ‘acceptance of reality’ (Ackling, 1994) that allows his working method to jettison prejudice and confront what Flusser calls the ‘occidental perspectives’ (Flusser, 1991: 64) found in most drawing practices. Epoché enables Ackling to see beyond framing the natural environment to find congruence between the moment of making and their situatedness. It is also a leitmotiv through this article. Ackling’s epoché allows him to stand back from detailed encounter yet remain alert. As he says, ‘art stands for the awareness of action’ (Ackling, 1997) and its epoché that delivers Ackling’s attentiveness in drawing.

### **2.1 Stillness**

From 1980 onwards Ackling’s practice demonstrates a greater adherence to a fixed

method of burning parallel lines on discarded pieces of wood. This stillness is both geographical and within his method of making. Whilst he worked with great consistency and solely with a small handheld magnifying glass prior to this, it's from this point onwards that he developed the bands of intensified lines that become synonymous with his use of the sun as a tool for drawing. If Richard Long and Hamish Fulton, albeit in different ways, made a commitment to art built around distant and continental peregrination, Ackling's was altogether more static. Ackling's method of working on singular pieces of wood demanded that he remain rooted to the spot, *still* within a location for a period which might have been a minute but could be anything up to 7 hours. From the 1980s onwards and particularly from 1987 when he purchased the coast guard's cottage at Weybourne he travelled less and allowed the materials to come him. The location of this house and its pebble storm beach below brought driftwood to Ackling, the sea delivering wood to the studio as if, in Chris Yetton's description, '*on the palm of a giant hand*' (Yetton, 2003). His drawing practice is one which is distinguished by its commitment to 'stillness and silence' (Ackling, 1994).

In a 1981 solo exhibition of his work held at the Lisson Gallery, London, Ackling published a small verse in the invite/booklet which accompanied the exhibition. It read,

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb, let the flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind, and fire,  
O still small voice of calm!

This exhibition would be one of the first instances where Ackling presented what became in the subsequent thirty-four years the core method by which he drew using the magnifying glass: parallel lines being burned against the grain of the surface of wood, as in the 1980 work 'The wedding at Cana' (Fig.5). It is informative to accompany this text with the inauguration of this mode of drawing, for contained within the beginning of this work is, I think, the enterprise of his project. Ackling's works are drawings as fragments of a much greater whole. His approach and method of creativity is unusual, but not unique in its fixed adherence to a singular method.

Several artists that emerged in the mid 1960s adopted a familiar strategy. For example, the Swiss artist Neile Toroni, or the British Alan Charlton who, since 1969, has remained 'an artist who makes a grey painting' (Charlton, in Barker 2018). Creativity for these artists is a product of restriction rather than the generation of options and Ackling is no different in this aspect of his work.



Fig 5. The wedding at Cana, 1981

What is distinctive about Ackling's work is his singular use of a simple magnifying glass as a tool for drawing. His motif of the burnt image of the sun – the dot that became lines – is comparable in conception I think to On Kawara's Date Painting series, which was inaugurated on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 1966 (see Denizot, 1991) a project in which the date of the painting's making is painted upon the surface of the painting. Both projects are inaugurated – they determinately begin and produce as they unfold a succession of 'Nows'. In On Kawara's work we are delivered to the present-ness of painting; in Ackling's, it is the present-ness of drawing.

If the 1981 exhibition at the Lisson Gallery is the first instance of using what would become his fixed methodology, it is also the last instance of Ackling utilizing allegorical titles – from this point onwards Ackling’s work would bear the provenance of their geographical location. Alongside the ‘The wedding at Cana’ the other eleven works that constituted the exhibition have titles that reference Christian faith. The ‘Wedding at Cana’ has a long register in this sense as it depicts the moment Jesus changed water into wine. As a moment of transfiguration, it is I think difficult to not read or consider Ackling’s future work through this lens; he uses drawing as a method of elevation, one that is transformative, restorative, and magical in intent; yet produced by a commitment to stillness as a drawing methodology.

## **2.2 Lightness**

Franz Kafka understood the value of remaining in a fixed place, ‘You do not need to leave your room’, he wrote. ‘Remain sitting at your table and listen. Do not even listen, simply wait, be quiet, still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked’ (Kafka, 2016). What I want to explore next is how Ackling intensified stillness through his drawing process.

The Italian novelist and essayist Italo Calvino titled the first of his 1988 Charles Elliot Norton Lectures ‘Lightness’ (Calvino, 1996). For Calvino this quality is one possible response to an ever more complex and unquantifiable world. Ackling’s response to an increasingly complex and networked world that had the potential to ossify was to employ lightness as a drawing method. In making his work he held the wood in his left hand (and sometimes rested in his lap) whilst his right hand held the magnifying glass. With the sun over his right shoulder, he holds the lens 30cm from the surface of the wood. This distance is dependent upon the strength of the sun and a calibration exercise is required to generate the heat necessary to make a mark.

The byproduct of his drawing process was often a burnt right ear (Yetton, 2014), scorched by the sun. He had often described his working dynamic as utilizing a medium that was ninety-three million miles away (Ackling, 1994), but for Ackling what was important was that there was a lack of direct physical contact with his drawing medium. He holds the wood; he holds the glass and in an extended manner he holds his posture and frame to permit the burning of marks with consistency. His medium however is touched lightly, minimally. Sunlight has passed through space and then

the fixed geometry which Ackling has orchestrated to allow a mark to be made. In this drawing practice ephemerality and lightness are virtues that have been arrived at through a drawing practice of stillness. For Calvino, the Greek mythological hero, Perseus, embodies lightness, avoiding 'slow petrification' (Calvino, 1996: 4) through being fleet of foot and looking indirectly at Medusa. Ackling's use of lightness of touch is a counterbalance, I think, to the imposing inertia and encroaching weight of the world that could take hold when one remains still, like stone. His drawing method, exemplary in its use of lightness, allowed Ackling to deepen his relationship with being still, without the risk of a stultifying weight of the world encroaching upon his practice.



Fig 6. Orkney, 2007

### **2.3 Stillness as decision making.**

There are manifest reasons for Ackling to decide to draw upon a piece of wood, but they are a product of creatively limiting one's options. He allowed his materials to come to him. This is a methodology Ackling would have been familiar with from St Martins School of Art, where in 1969 in the infamous 'locked room' art students were liberated from habitual responses to the world (Westley, 2007). The objects and

surfaces that become works to draw upon are remnants of previous lives and uses – a piece of a wooden chair or section of a door for instance, delivered to the beach below his studio. What seems important to him was that these objects had been something; but through neglect or lack of care they had been unlovingly discarded. There is something determinately inadequate about the objects that he works with. He couldn't seem to draw and work upon an object that was already certain and had been invested in. 'It's too active', he noted, 'it looks like it's already something. I prefer to work on something that's been really rejected, that no one wants – I like that quality very much.' (Ackling, 1994). Dwelling creatively in one place gave Ackling the material he needed to work. However, these pieces were more than just stuff; as a product of a chance operation, they provided an extraordinary variety of difference.

In making his drawings he would ask how to respond to a protruding and weathered nail, whether he would burn over a paint mark or circumnavigate it (see Fig. 7 Weybourne, 2012). Would he burn around the edges or remain upon the surface? His burnt drawn lines are responses to the individual conditions and their constituent character. For example, if a hole was present in the wood, perhaps two other hole shaped burnt areas would be added to the piece, as an echo of the wood's dormant quality. What did seem important was that the area of activity, the site of the drawing was decided in advance. These drawings are imbued with process and one whose area and location was predetermined.

In Ackling's instance judgements are frontloaded in the creative process. He is removed from the detailed decision-making process incumbent upon contemporary artists. He has said that he sometimes imagines himself travelling over a vast landscape, as if flying in an airplane (Ackling, in Kalkhoven, 2015: 44), with the grain of the wood constituting valleys and plains. In his drawing Ackling is looking for an equivalence between sensing a landscape and the mental, conscious conditions of making an artwork. An ideal situation would be the congruence between the external experience of a particular space and the internal landscape of making a drawing. His drawings are an attempt to find a unison of what American Philosopher Alva Noë describes as the '*dynamic pattern of interaction between body, brain, and world*' (Noë, 2009: 47). For Ackling this process requires stillness.



Fig 7. Weybourne, 2012

#### 2.4 Magnifying glass as 'strange tool'

There is an important facet to Ackling's use of a magnifying glass as a tool for drawing. Normally magnifying glasses and lens are an aid for vision, a tool for reading, or a tool for looking through, to increase the visibility of what is seen for the viewer. They can be a tool for viewing the imperceptibly small or for augmenting a failing vision, but they are quintessentially to be looked through. To peer, to adjust one's body and hand relative to the eye and to bring into focus the thing being looked at. In Ackling's case a nuanced relationship to vision is being developed or practiced. The process of focusing the sun's rays to create heat upon the surface of wood to allow a small fire to burn a dot is still one that requires a relational understanding of the body, eye, and hand – the dot needs to be white hot to connect ephemeral light to create a mark.

There is sense in which we can understand the physical practicalities of Ackling's dynamic of working – the sun, the rays, the body holding a lens, the focused point on a surface – as a surrogate camera obscura. Certainly, the physical geometry of how light is arrested and focused upon a surface shares the same physical principles of those early experiments in producing a photographic image. The English writer Roger Deakin in his book *Wildwood* states emphatically that Ackling 'is

a camera' (Deakin, 2008). The working process that Ackling employed does produce as a dot an overexposed image of the sun which conceptually at least exhibits a 'photographic quality' (Pennell, 1891: 72). Indeed in the process of focusing the sun's rays onto a piece of wood there is an experience congruent with lens camera obscuras. You see the sky, potentially clouds, formed as an 'inverted real image upon a receiving screen' (Mills, 1998: 214). The receiving screen in Ackling's case is the wooden surface. Where his working process diverts from its affinities with a camera obscura is that the focusing process, to produce the necessary heat to burn an image of the sun, needs to move beyond the lure of the photographic projection.

In moving beyond the image in this manner his working process is not to look through the lens visually but rather obliquely. He is looking at the burning point focused upon the wood that the lens is creating through being held in a particular relation, a geometric tension between the sun, the lens that arrests and focuses the rays, and the wood, the sun's destination, which is the final focused point. In Ackling's work the magnifying glass is misused, redeployed as a tool for drawing, a *strange tool* as Noë might say (Noë, 2015). It is a revelatory act that gives us access to what is hidden from the misuse of a tool for bringing things into focus. In this method the magnifying glass is not used as a tool to augment the eye but rather is a tool which is used to gauge the body. Ackling here in this situation can 'see himself seeing' (Merleau-Ponty, 1961: 354). His body, and its orientation, is held in relationship with the eye that is focused upon the black dot. In bringing distinctive attention to the mode and moment of making a mark Ackling reifies the precise point of gesture in drawing. Ackling's artistic practice is distinctive for its contribution to the knowledge base of drawing in the way it dwells upon and makes a subject of the moment of making.

## **2.5 Drawing against movement**

A way to approach the language of drawing is as movement – a motional force both away and towards. Even Robert Rauschenberg's antithesis of drawing's graphical ontology, Erased De Kooning (1953), presents a motional force in reverse. By presenting a rubbed-out drawing made by canonical abstract expressionist Willem De Kooning, the page is not quite blank and contains, conceptually if not visually, De Kooning's original drawing as intent. By contrast Ackling's drawn lines do offer a different perspective on the properties of drawing. Whilst still resulting with 'drawn' lines across a surface, upon closer examination these artworks attest to the idea that

they are made part-by-part – a succession of small dots connected to create a line. These burnt moments lack the fluidity of marks made by pen and pencil. Drawing and writing are composed of lines, whereas Ackling makes dots. His gesture is a motif of an overexposed image of the sun, and connected side by side they become lines, but they remain resolutely a succession of tiny ‘now’s’. Each dot is an instant as a present moment, surpassed and supplanted by another present moment contained within the next dot.

Drawing and writing, as physical activities are strikingly similar and share the idea of gesture. They form what psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Serge Tisseron (Tisseron, 1994) has called a ‘motional force’, whose direction is distinct from a state of inertia or stasis. Tisseron’s psychoanalytical view of the genesis of drawing is in the initial moment of marking – *any marking*. He hypothesizes Sigmund Freud observing his grandson throwing and reclaiming a toy – in what become known as the *forte-da*. The vertiginous blank page is an invitation to make a mark, whilst at the same time it can also have the potential for inertia; overcoming the blankness of the page can be an exercise in an emptiness of ponderous circularity. As Tisseron states, echoing the dichotomy of drawing and writing:

‘...any marking, is when “something” (for what does one call an original notion, an idea, an intuition, and inspiration?) which has neither extension nor duration is given both a spatial existence (its marking) and a temporal existence (the time it takes for the eye to run across it)’ (Tisseron, 1994: 29).

Ackling’s drawings offer a different proposition in relation to movement and the act of placing a mark upon a surface. American writer James Elkins, in conversation with British writer John Berger, has described drawing as the ‘invaluable record of the encounter’ (Berger, 2005: 107). When looking at an Ackling work the drawing we are asked to confront and contend with is composed of a surface and how it’s been marked. The drawing process is still, concentrated, focussed; its method of lightness of gesture gives the work an extraordinary precision. A record of human time spent is therefore contrasted with the surface upon which the drawing finds itself. This surface is not a *tabula rasa* but is the unstructured space of nature made by the accidents of the elements, water, wind, and sun. These drawings are unknown, fathomless time (the wooden surfaces), placed in contrast to the fixed determinate

intention of Ackling's drawn lines. Ackling's motioning, his movement, is towards stillness, towards 'now'. The Mexican poet Octavio Paz says that 'the present is alternately luminous and sombre' (Paz, 1990: 32). Comparably Ackling draws by lighting a succession of tiny fires on dark forgotten surfaces.



Fig 9. Ackling working in 2007

#### **4. Conclusion**

Ackling's drawings act as intersections between opposing views. For instance, there is a physical geometry to his working method as light passes through different transitions and is lastly focused to a dot on a piece of wood. Yet at the same time this drawing process was very ephemeral. Ackling thought that the most interesting art was made when the elements didn't touch (ref- in conversation with the Author). He saw within art making an underexplored area for operation where the evanescent was delicately uplifted. His dedication to stillness in its varying degrees has deepened our understanding of creativity and in particular drawing. Lightness for instance in Ackling's drawings is not flimsy but possess an exquisite precision that intensified during his career. Roger once told me that making art was like being a window cleaner. A lot of time was spent on the outside of the glass, but more dedication was required working on the inside – seeing out as well as looking in.

**Word count 5000**

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