

**Drawing Conversations Proposal, Jane Reid (Cook) Independent Artist Researcher.**

**The Kitchen Drawer: *explorative encounters with the kitchen and its contents.***

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This paper will discuss how the home can sustain a creative drawing practice and will focus on the domestic kitchen as a case study. The drawings presented within this paper discuss how situating a drawing practice within the kitchen; a room synonymous with efficiency, productivity, and functional standardised routines, it becomes possible to reflect upon socially expected behaviours and gendered ideals associated with a domestic kitchen. The drawings identify that by incorporating a drawing practice alongside daily tasks such as cooking or cleaning it becomes possible to challenge ingrained notions of what a domestic home should be, and the expectations associated with domestic tasks undertaken in the kitchen. This in turn positions the domestic home as an important creative environment which can support a drawing practice by enabling the drawer to convey personal lived experience.

The paper adopts a feminist lens and positions drawing as an empowering tool in which to explore what might be regarded as mundane, repetitious, drudge and domestic within the kitchen. Drawing outcomes and photographic documentation within the paper detail how drawing within the kitchen fosters the uncovering of hidden, tacit knowledge (Petherbridge 2008) and ethnographic understanding (Ingold 2011).

Research underpinning this paper recognises that a gender imbalance exists within the artworld (Gorrill 2021). The underrepresentation of women artists within the global art market (Morris 2022; Sieghart, 2022) can be attributed to the difficulties women artists face juggling duties of care, work, and financial commitments. This paper seeks to demonstrate that the domestic kitchen can be considered as a valuable source of artistic creativity. And by situating an art practice within the constraints of domestic life, it is possible to maintain an art practice and begin to address the underrepresentation of women within the art world.

The feminist lens adopted within this paper is underpinned by literature which positions drawing as a tool of feminist thinking (Pollock, 2021) and drawing definitions which position drawing as a flexible and open-ended tool of discovery (De Zegher 1996) and a method to uncover hidden, tacit knowledge (Petherbridge 2008, 2010). Texts by Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics Of Space* (1958) and Virginia Woolf *A Room Of One's Own* (1929) have guided the discovery of the creative potential of domestic kitchen and its contents.

The paper will briefly outline how my own frustrations of being a mother and artist led me to find methods in which to sustain a creative drawing practice within the kitchen. The paper

is organised under two phases. Phase One discusses how the preparation and cooking of food in the kitchen not only fosters imaginative and creative thought processes, but the gestures associated with repetitive domestic processes make visible embedded domestic knowledge. This phase considers Judith Butler's argument that to be a woman is to 'conform to an historical idea of 'woman,' to induce the body to become a cultural sign, to materialize oneself in obedience to a historically delimited possibility (Butler 1988, p. 519-531). Within this section I discuss how reflecting upon the legacy of women artists whose art practice during the 1970s protested about domestic servitude to challenge the concept of women's role in the home, provided a helpful prompt. I realised that whilst my own drawing practice had similar themes, such as domesticity, empowering women artists and the everyday, my practice was not a performative protest to drive home a point such as the difficulty women artists face in maintaining a professional art practice when undertaking duties of care in the home. Rather drawing in the domestic environment provided me a method of reflection, which enabled me to look anew at the kitchen and its contents.

The second phase of the paper discusses how the domestic objects and contents contained within the kitchen can inform mark making through playful and experimental approaches by moving past ingrained notions of what utensils, gadgets, devices do. In doing so, it becomes possible to regard the domestic contents contained within the kitchen as mark-making tools which have the potential to inform and sustain a creative art practice. My understanding that drawing can be a method in which to disrupt the domestic every-day is informed by Bill Brown's *Thing Theory* (2001). Brown argues that by paying attention to the thingness of an object, we can step outside fixed parameters of how an object functions or should be used. Discussions within this section also reflect upon the Anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2013) assertion that the materials objects are made of contain a hidden language 'a way in which to trace a path that others can follow' (2013, p.110). This section provides an account of how I progressed early mark making experiments with cooking utensils to domestic food packaging and cleaning materials, such as brushes and dish cloths, to an understanding that I could incorporate the domestic language associated with operating domestic objects, such as squeeze, scrub, press and pump into drawing processes. By embedding a drawing practice into everyday routines within the kitchen it becomes possible to build up a collection of mark-making outcomes. These mark-making explorations can be considered as a method of generative research building, which can help sustain and progress future drawings.

The final section of the paper briefly recaps on how embedding a drawing practice into everyday routines within the kitchen becomes both a method of progressing an art practice, whilst also providing those external to the home access to an authentic and personal understanding of who is drawing in the kitchen.