

**PETER GREENAWAY'S  
Private Speculations**

**22 March - 31 March, 1990**

**Ivan Dougherty Gallery**

**College of Fine Arts, The University of New South Wales**

## Private Speculations

The present collection of drawings, paintings and collages is part of my research process as a film-maker. One could imagine a similar collection produced by a writer.

My enthusiasm for film-making started with two interests: the manipulation of images and of words. I hope now that my work is more than the sum of these two parts, and that they cannot be too obviously separated. And yet I remain particularly stimulated by the specific characteristics of painting and drawing--and literature--which are irreducible, and whose form, content and metaphor will always resist translation into cinema.

The works in this collection play--or have played--various rôles. Sometimes, like the map-paintings of *A Walk Through H* and the drawings of *The Draughtsman's Contract*, they are part of the construction of a film. Sometimes they are the trace of the process that led to the film. They can also be the evidence of a dead end, or of projects or solutions that were later abandoned, or even of impracticable solutions. Sometimes, again, as in the drawings for *Drowning by Numbers*, they betray forgotten *pentimenti*, for I always find it hard to consider a film finished. The drawings can also relate to a public response or critique, long after the film is completed. Sometimes the drawings are all that remains of an abandoned project, but also, and this is more interesting, sometimes they are ideas for projects which are just waiting to take off, like *The Death of Webern* and *Prospero's Books*.

Whether these works will stand up to the sustained examination which is implied by public exhibition depends on those who look at them. They are not story boards, nor are they working drawings intended for the art director; in the same way, they are not of much use to the producer trying to raise finance, nor to the publicists. They are private works, private speculations dealing with the different densities of imagery which allow me to create my films.....

Peter Greenaway

**Catalogue** [all measurements are in centimetres, height before width]

1. *A Walk Through H : Wither Shall I Wander?*  
1978  
ink, acrylic and ball point on paper  
15.1 x 21.2
2. *A Walk Through H : Windmills*  
1978  
pencil and ink on paper  
26.5 x 12.0
3. *A Walk Through H : The Call of Phalarope*  
1978  
acrylic, pencil and ink on paper  
6.0 x 9.5 and 18.0 x 14.0
4. *A Walk Through H : Two Small Cities*  
1978  
ink, acrylic and ball point on paper  
7.4 x 7.6 and 9.4 x 8.6
5. *A Walk Through H : The Garden Suburbs*  
1978  
ink, acrylic, pencil and ball point on paper  
10.0 x 7.2 and 8.0 x 12.0
6. *A Walk Through H : The Letter R and The Transparent Score*  
1978  
acrylic and ink on paper  
3.5 x 5.2 and 8.6 x 6.9
7. *A Walk Through H : Part-Ridge Map*  
1978  
acrylic and ink on photocopy  
10.0 x 30.5
8. *The Draughtsman's Contract*  
1982  
pencil on paper  
33.5 x 54.5

"These drawings are the structure and reason for the film, *The Draughtsman's Contract*."

Richard Neville, a draughtsman from the eighteenth century, cynically fulfilling a contract where he is assured of being the prime beneficiary, finds himself caught unawares in an intrigue of death and inheritance. He declares that he is interested in the veracity and scrupulous representation of what he sees rather than what he knows, but unwittingly includes a variety of clues in his drawings: a ladder, clothes, a torn shirt, a pair of boots.....simply because they are there. These clues, as in all orthodox detective novels, suggest different interpretations.....and it is through the interpretations forced upon him by the female protagonists that the draughtsman loses his sight and his life." (Greenaway)

9. *Dear Boulee Two : Eight Roman Postcards*  
1985  
collage  
10.0 x 14.5 each
  
10. *The Billiard Game : Stage Nine*  
1988  
crayon on paper  
71.0 x 52.0
  
11. *The Billiard Game : Stage Fifteen*  
1988  
crayon on paper  
71.0 x 52.0
  
12. *Jumping the Cliff : The Head*  
(undated)  
crayon on bristol board  
71.0 x 52.0
  
13. *The Death of Webern : The Sisters of Strasbourg*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
112.0 x 81.0

"Act 8 of *The Death of Webern and Others* deals with a composer and librettist, Geoffrey Fallthuis, whose sensational and violent opera *The Sisters of Strasbourg*, provokes an animosity that leads to his murder.

Webern's hand holding a cigar is represented, as are the composers Lully and Alcan; their eccentric deaths make them suitable investigators of the enigmatic murder of a composer." (Greenaway)

14. *The Death of Webern : Roman Traffic Death*  
1988  
pencil on paper  
71.0 x 52.0

"In 1959 the half-burnt corpse of Charlie Marseil was discovered eight weeks after his death, during the excavation of a roadway near Rome. The autopsy indicated that a hat was found with the corpse along with a pair of sunglasses, an Havana cigar and an American passport."  
(Greenaway)

15. *The Death of Webern : Ménilmontant Accident 1*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
71.0 x 52.0

"This drawing is about the death of a Spanish violinist living in exile in the Paris suburb of Ménilmontant in 1951. His body was found under an electric train. The authorities declared that his death was the result of an accident on a crowded platform, but as the event had taken place at midnight this explanation seems very unlikely. Like Webern, this Spanish violinist was smoking an Havana cigar, and wearing a hat and glasses at the time of his death. Like Webern, he was survived by a disconsolate widow; had been shot by night near a park; and at the autopsy three bullets were found in his body. As with Webern, his murderer carried an American passport." (Greenaway)

16. *The Death of Webern : The Swimmer Shot*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
71.0 x 52.0

17. *The Death of Webern : The Corntopia Shooting*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
71.0 x 52.0

18. *The Death of Webern : The Wheeled Horse*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
71.0 x 52.0

"C. P. Rosa, a composer and pianist who specialized in Western scores, was found dead in a bovine abattoir in Fray Bentos during the summer of 1954. Like him, his favourite horse was killed by three bullets. In memory of his son, Rosa's father stuffed the thorough-bred and mounted it on wheels, but his mother could not stand the sight of it and covered it with a curtain." (Greenaway)

19. *Drowning by Numbers : Handicap Catch 1 - Pyramids*  
1988  
pencil on bristol board  
81.0 x 112.0

20. *Drowning by Numbers : Hangman's Cricket*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
112.0 x 81.0

The plan of action of a game of hangman's cricket is traced on the sand close to the ocean. The loser and last player is present, his body balanced on the gallows just below the high-tide mark.

"Can we explain the nature of a game simply from the examination of the game's field? Hangman's cricket is one of the prophetic games in the film, *Drowning by Numbers*.

It is played by an unlimited number of players for long hours. It is a variation on the children's game "French cricket" but in this version each player has a specific identity, eg. The Fat Lady, The Cretin, The Emperor, The Priest, The Happy Girl, The Business Man, The Red Queen etc., not to mention The Executioner.....one cannot deduce the existence of any of them from the game's field after the end of the game." (Greenaway)

21. *The White Miller : The Post*  
1988  
crayon on bristol board  
112.0 x 81.0

A tall post, whose purpose is only too clear, rises out of a landscape full of obvious clues.

"The historical work of Carlo Ginsburg, *The Cheese and the Worms* is the starting point of a speculation on heresy and its punishments. At the end of the sixteenth century, a miller believed that the world was a piece of rancid worm-eaten cheese. He was burnt at the stake with his books. The miller's execution post evokes other posts of punishment and correction and is surrounded by testimonies of humiliation." (Greenaway)

22. *Prospero's Books : Caliban - All Ears, Nose and Mouth*  
1989  
crayon on paper  
71.0 x 52.0