There is an essential ambiguity within Patrick Mifsud’s current practice: Are all his works drawings? Or are some sculpture?

The installation Connect / Dissect lacks volume but animates space, interfering with our perceptions of it. It is a three-dimensional drawing but one in which features of the gallery’s architecture are vital elements. Conceived in direct relation to the proportions of the Project Space and its relationship to the ground floor gallery, it is evidently site-specific, although the shadows cast by lines of red thread onto the gallery walls are certainly a kind of drawing. However, the installation cannot be known from a single viewpoint – the work can only be fully brought into being as the viewer passes through the space; it offers an immersive experience, rather than just visual interest.

Chronologically and conceptually his Margin of Error drawings follow on from the development of the thread installations. They are also the result of repetition – a simple action repeated over and over again resulting in an accumulation of lines and the illusion of shape. He starts each of the ink drawings with an identical first line, although one small deviation will change the course of the next resulting in the gradual amplification of an original error. The title of each drawing is followed by a number that records the number of lines in the individual composition.

Mifsud’s work is rarely seen in a white cube space; conventional galleries are not natural hosts to an artist who seeks to impinge upon a person’s space or otherwise impede their movement. (His recent sites of exhibition have included the top floor of a multi-storey car park, the former showroom of a car dealer, a staircase, and outdoor spaces from parks to forests.) Photographs from an ongoing sequence titled Geometric Forms (Urban Series) are representative of the temporary interventions that he makes in public spaces, where a self-imposed rule is to use only pre-existing fixing points, such as a steel ring or lamp post, in order to enact the spatial drawings. Through such interventions he seeks to alter the function of a site and to offer an alternative view of a familiar environment. It is then left to the users of that thoroughfare – a tunnel, a footpath, a bridge – to destroy the work and restore the site to its regular use.

Patrick Mifsud (b. Malta, 1984) studied at the University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury (2006-09) and for an MA in Fine Art at Wimbledon College of Art, University of the Arts, London (2010-11). He was a prizewinner at Creekside Open 2011, selected by Phyllida Barlow, and a finalist in the 10 Gales Art Prize (2011). Other recent exhibitions include Futura Bold/ Futura Oblique, The Nunnery Gallery, London (2011), Relocation: Emerging Artists from Malta, Bank of Valletta HQ, Malta (2010), and Allunertive, Crate Space, Margate (2009). His commissioned works include a commemorative sculpture for the University of the Creative Arts, Canterbury and he collaborated with dance artists Maria Cassar and Jo Leahy in Walk the Plank, a work performed at the Manoel Theatre, Malta, during the Notte Bianca in 2010.

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