



DANE PATTERSON

Hypothetical Arrangements

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Introduction

Born in 1978 in Indiana, Dane Patterson is celebrated for his graphite drawings on paper that depict meticulously arranged rooms of hypothetical households. Elaborating on the tradition of still life, Patterson builds his hyper-realistic compositions from a foundation of photographs taken either by him when visiting grand historical homes or taken from highly-aestheticized interior design catalogues. The artist's imagined scenes are structured around real rooms belonging to the homes of real people, including Aerin Lauder, granddaughter of legendary businesswoman Estée Lauder. In an ironic twist, even though Patterson's sources purport to capture the spirit of the house-owner through their aesthetic taste, the artist's bizarre compositions eliminate the human presence and instead draw energy from the spirit of the still life within.

Using these carefully constructed, pre-existing domestic spaces as a stage, the artist manipulates the setting by re-arranging the objects and placing them in unanticipated situations. By inverting or subverting the expected functions of ordinary objects, such as tipping a chest of drawers sideways or placing a cushion next to a bathroom sink, viewers are struck with a sense of unsettledness and displacement. Patterson's work challenges the notion of order and coherence with nuances of disorder and nonsense. In an environment rooted so deeply in images of order and aesthetic predictability, one is struck by the feeling that things are simply not quite right.

"I am creating imagined, disordered spaces out of these perfectly ordered, often highly aestheticized rooms, basically turning a real space that has been created to be useful and legible into a nonsensical, defamiliarized space." – Dane Patterson

Patterson's hypothetical arrangements highlight the banality of domestic structures by re-assembling their constituents, the household objects, into scenarios that defy their usual function. In this world, why shouldn't a chair seat another chair? Why shouldn't a rug be pinned to the wall as decoration? When the laws are changed and definitions are re-evaluated, nonsense can then begin to make sense. This jars with the rules of the 'real world', where domestic objects are defined by their function and, moreover, are valued for their ability to perform it. Patterson explains, *"I think of these drawings as akin to thought experiments designed by philosophers when they puzzle through the consequences of particular questions. The drawings become a way to unsettle and visually think through domestic spaces, to imagine domestic spaces differently."* Indeed, viewers are left to consider the meaning of a domestic space void of human presence: how is the function of a household object defined if there is no human agent to engage with it?

Interview

Many of the scenes captured in Hypothetical Arrangements are inspired by photographs taken from interior design books. Why did you decide to use these images as your starting point?

For this show I wanted to begin with spaces that had a very clear design aesthetic to deviate from. Interior design worked nicely for this, as well as other no nonsense interiors such as those in Haus Wittgenstein or Shaker furnishings where things are intentionally sparse and direct. The design sensibility is clear, so it becomes striking when things are mis-arranged. I was really excited to draw the different furniture, patterns, and objects in these books. To me they seem innattainable. Maybe it's that they feel stifling? I just don't feel a connection with the aesthetic. They do offer me a great opportunity to bring others' artwork into the conversation. Having drawn the artworks within these pieces, I feel really close to them from these really nice collections. These ranged from ancient statuary to Cy Twombly drawings, and it was a great excuse to play around with other methods of drawing that are so different than mine. It was really fun to imagine ways to mess up such highly aestheticized spaces.

Please explain how your creative process has evolved from earlier series prior to Hypothetical Arrangements. Has technology become an increasingly important tool?

My creative process has changed a lot. My work up until now has been based totally on photographs that I've taken expressly to use as source material. I've done other room arrangements, but they were always physically re-arranged by me and then photographed and drawn. While the primary source material remains a photograph of a room, here the alterations are made up from imagination as I go. In a way some of these have been the most low tech images I've ever made. I just drew from observation while going through source material for most of the Aerin Lauder images, for example. Later, especially with the larger drawings, I crafted a photo collage in photoshop first and then projected. It really varied from image to image. I think this is the first group of drawings where I've let my hand become more visible in the drawings. There are a lot of washes with graphite in this work. This is quite a new technique for me. I mix gum arabic with powdered graphite and water to make a watercolor-like graphite wash. It's liberating to work with because I'm able to speed up certain aspects of the drawing. Large flat areas for example are a bit less tedious, though they all are still considerably detailed.

The scenes have an unusual quality of feeling both present yet timeless, as though they could be placed anywhere between the 19th to 21st centuries. What choices did you make to achieve this effect and why?

Some of the spaces, such as the Morris Jumel Mansion in upper Manhattan, are from the 19th century and have historically appropriate furnishings while the locations designed by Axel Vervoordt often include a mix of contemporary and historical objects. So while some of these drawings have a definite "period" look, I like the way that time becomes more ambiguous in many of the locations. I wanted to have a range of types of locations in this group of drawings, and when I bring in other elements from imagination or secondary source photos that clash between time periods as well as design styles becomes really loud.

The term Hypothetical implies an element of achievability. What role does logic play in your compositions?

I'd like the images to be plausible, and as I planned a drawing I tried to imagine myself in the space in order to consider how the physics of the arrangements would play out. What circumstances would have to be in place for a piece of furniture to be suspended in the room? How would it hang? So achievability was a big part of the thought process, but still, I also arranged things in some of these spaces in ways that are not plausible at all. A chair floating, for example. That I did not physically arrange these spaces gave me the freedom to sometimes skirt logic.

Many of your scenes depict objects in scenarios that are unusual and unexpected. Does the ordinary function of an object have any relevance to its role in your arrangements?

Functionality is really interesting to me. There needed to be some balance between things being placed in a functional versus nonfunctional way. I wanted to have enough objects properly placed so that the original context was still legible, but have enough contrary information or placement to set up a clear imbalance. In "Hypothetical Arrangement for the Interior Design of Axel Vervoordt #5" I kept the chair in the room as a focal point. It remains untouched and in its original placement. The rest of the room has been cluttered and painted about. I think I needed that chair untouched as an anchor to ground the otherwise nonsensical arrangement. So functionality, or perhaps partial functionality, plays that grounding role for me a lot I think.

Many viewers would describe your work as humorous. Is your work intentionally tongue-in-cheek, or is humour a natural companion to what can be seen as randomness?

Humor is a motivating factor for me. Tongue in cheek certainly, but as you said humor is a companion to the randomness of the re-arrangement. I remember a childhood friend's parents' home and their all white, seemingly untouched livingroom. It was like a museum and totally off limits. I still want to overturn those couches.

You once explained, "I think of these drawings as akin to thought experiments, such as those designed by philosophers when they puzzle through the consequences of particular questions". What questions are you posing in these works? Do you think you have arrived at any answers through the process of creation?

While thumbing through reference materials I form relationships between elements that interest me. For example, the leg of a designer chair gets shoved into an impressively decorated cake. When this is done, we have a conversation about value, or respect of objects. But it's also a funny gesture because it's just ridiculous. With thought experiments the philosopher puzzles through moral conundrums. In a way these images are aesthetic conundrums where I'm playing with extremes or interjections of nonsense.

Artwork Selection



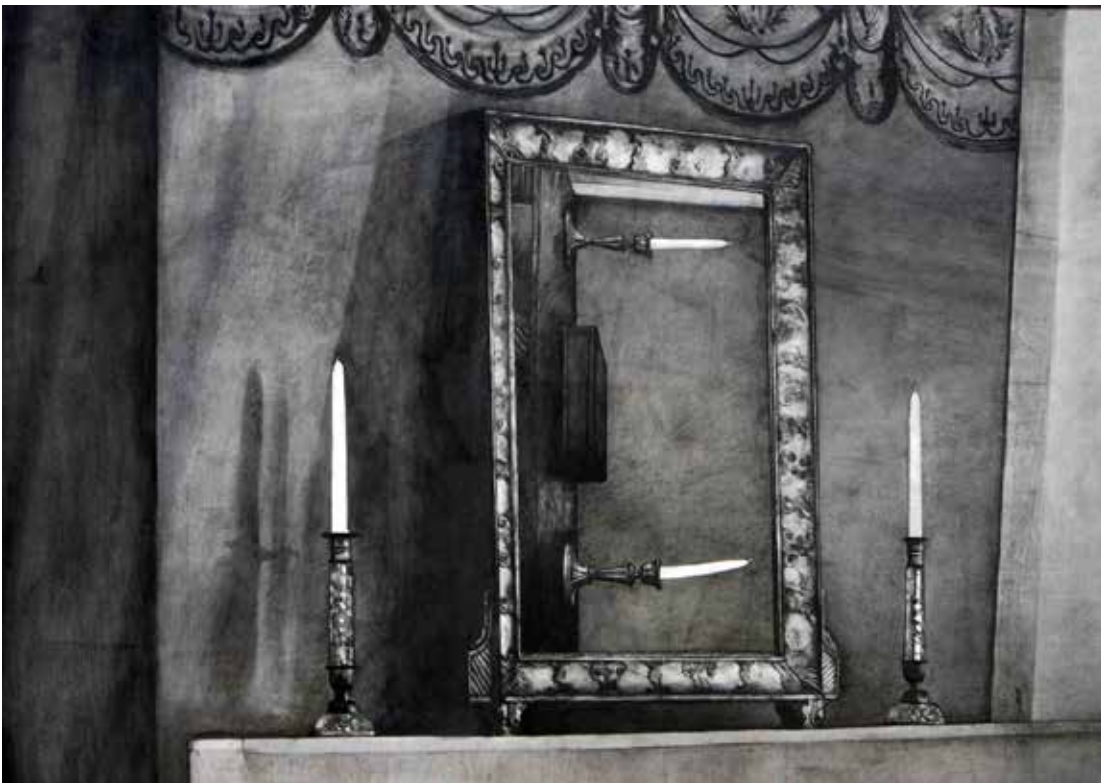
Hypothetical Arrangement for the Morris-Jumel Mansion #4, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
70.5 x 100.3 cm



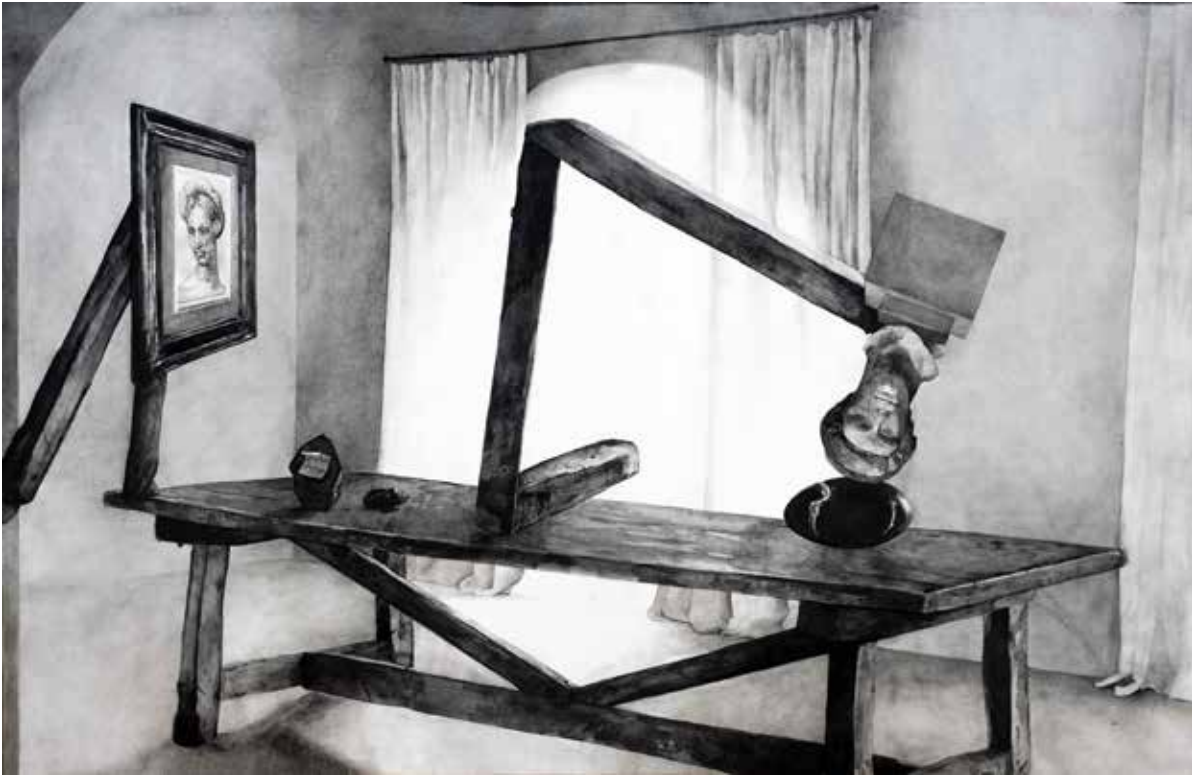
Hypothetical Arrangement for the Morris-Jumel Mansion #1, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
46 x 61 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Morris-Jumel Mansion #2, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 46 x 61 cm



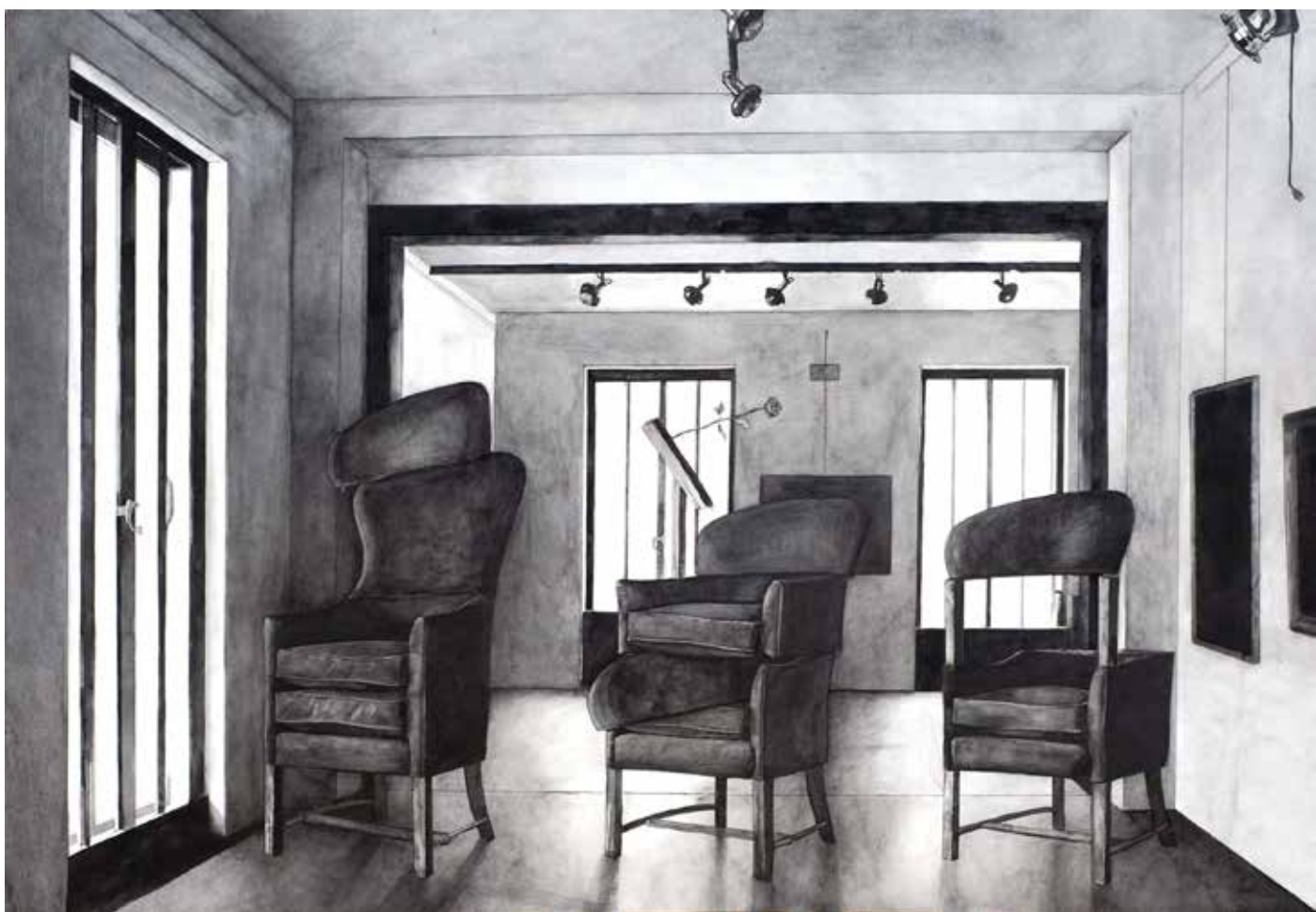
Hypothetical Arrangement for the Morris-Jumel Mansion #3, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 68.5 x 101.5 cm



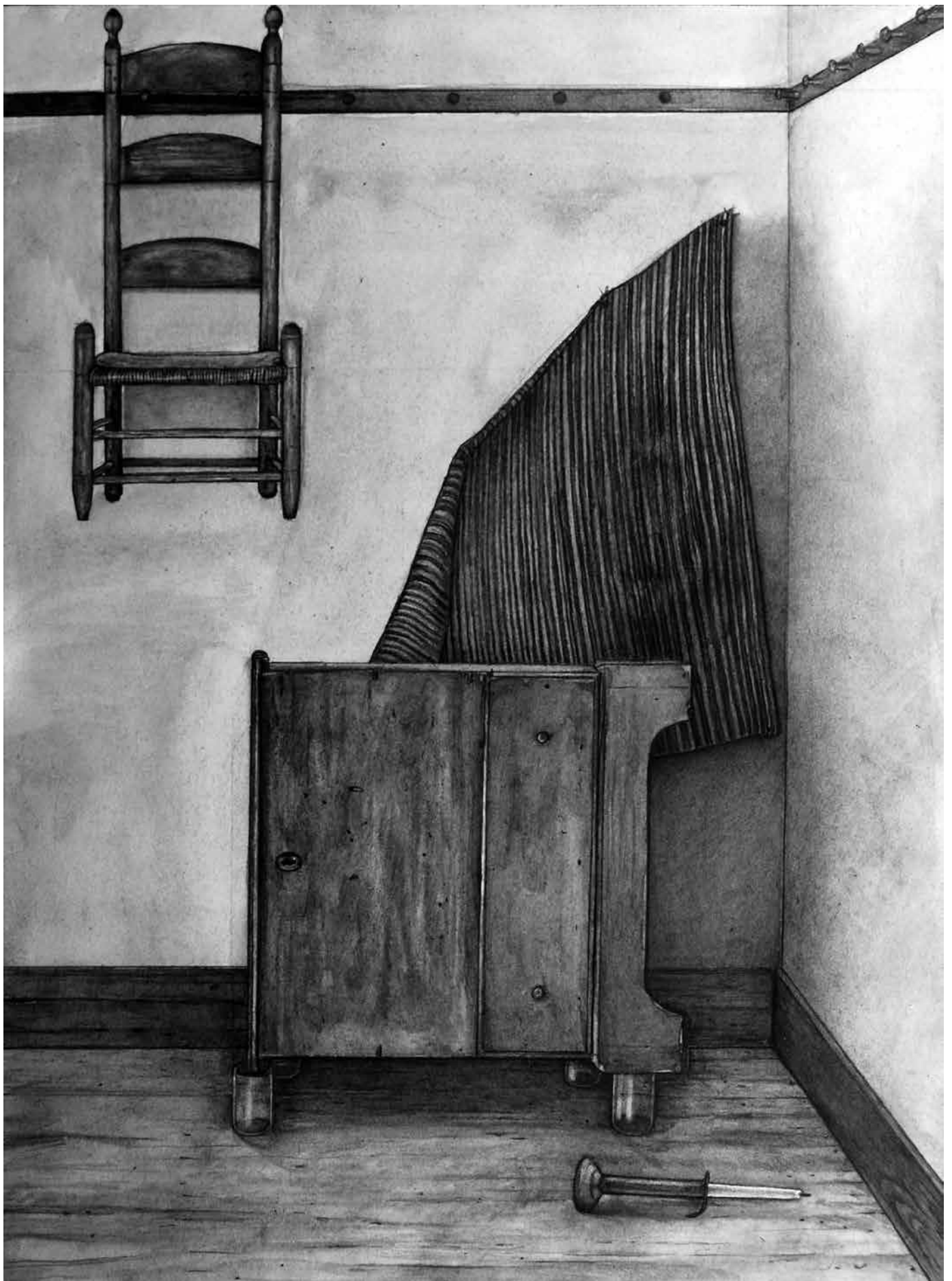
Hypothetical Arrangement for the interior design of Axel Vervoordt #3, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 70 x 106.5 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for Haus Wittgenstein #2, 2014
 Graphite, graphite wash and gesso on paper
 77 x 109 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for Haus Wittgenstein #1, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
77 x 109 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Period Rooms at the Met. (Shaker), 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
23 x 32 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the interior design of Axel Vervoordt #5, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 77 x 109 cm



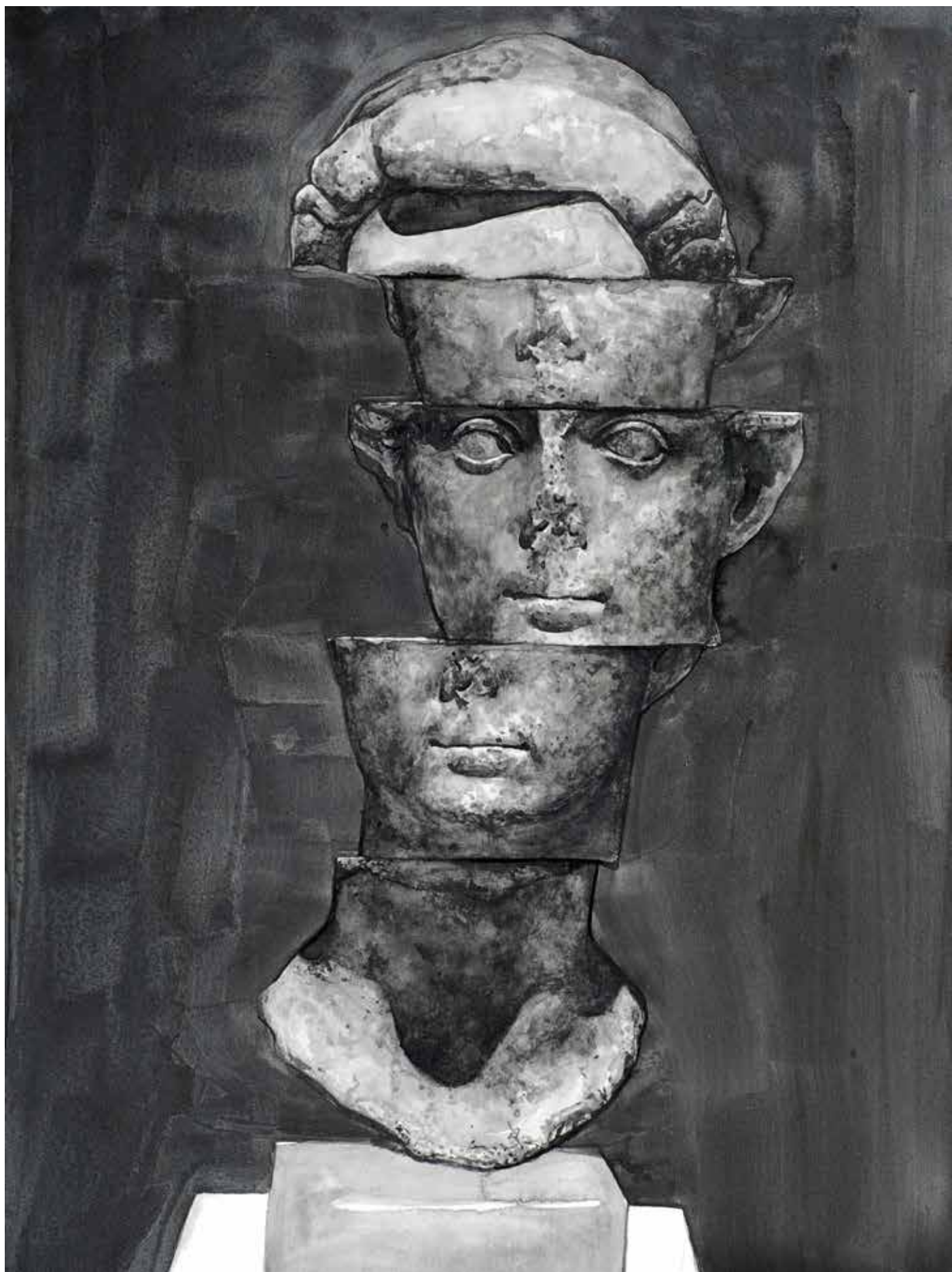
Hypothetical Arrangement for the interior design of Axel Vervoordt #2, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 46 x 110.5 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the interior design of Axel Vervoordt #4, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
76 x 109 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the interior design of Axel Vervoordt #1, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
75 x 108 cm



Study for Vervoordt, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
45.72 x 60.96 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Home of Aerin Lauder #2, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
35.5 x 51 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Home of Aerin Lauder #4, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 23 x 32 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Home of Aerin Lauder #3, 2014
 Graphite and graphite wash on paper
 46 x 61 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Home of Aerin Lauder #1, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
35.5 x 51 cm



Hypothetical Arrangement for the Home of Aerin Lauder #5, 2014
Graphite and graphite wash on paper
35.5 x 51 cm

Biography

Dane Patterson was born in Columbus, Indiana in 1978. He graduated from IUPUI Herron School of Art in Indianapolis in 2002 and pursued a M.F.A. from School of Visual Arts in New York. His awards and distinctions include: Artist Fellowship in Drawing, Printmaking and Book Arts, New York Foundation for Arts (2009); MacDowell Colony Residency and Fellowship (2010) and Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Competition Award Nomination (2010). Dane Patterson has participated in numerous exhibitions including Galerie Bertrand & Gruner, Geneva, Switzerland; The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA; Exit Art, New York, USA; Real Art Ways, New Haven, USA; The Morris Museum, Morristown, USA; Drury University, Springfield, USA and Gallery 32, London, UK. The artist lives and works in New York, USA.

Curriculum Vitae

Education

- 2005 M.F.A., School of Visual Arts, New York, USA
- 2002 B.A., IUPUI Herron School of Art, Indianapolis, USA

Awards

- 2010 Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation Biennial Competition Award Nomination
MacDowell Colony Residency and Fellowship
- 2009 Artist Fellowship in Drawing, Printmaking and Book Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts

Solo Exhibitions

- 2014 'Dane Patterson: Hypothetical Arrangements', Art Plural Gallery, Singapore
- 2011 'Again, and Again, and Again', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
- 2009 'New Work', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
- 2007 'Thirty-Eight Eyes', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
- 2005 'Clutter and Noise', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA

Group Exhibitions

- 2014 'Flux: Collective Exhibition', Art Plural Gallery, Singapore
- 2013 'Single Fare 3', RH Gallery, New York, USA
- 'Wheaton Biennial: Drawing out of Bounds', Beard & Weil Gallery, Massachusetts, USA
- 'Excess', Art Plural Gallery, Singapore
- 2012 '13.0.0.0.0', RH Gallery, New York, USA
- 2011 'Portraits: Cabinet de curiosités', Galerie Bertrand & Gruner, Geneva, Switzerland
- 'Spring Round Up', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
- 'Benefit Auction', Exit Art, New York, USA
- 2009 '40 / 40 Vision', Herron Alumni Show, Indianapolis, USA
- 'Speakeasy 2009 Benefit Auction', Exit Art, New York, USA
- 'Slide Slam', Real Art Ways, New Haven, USA

- 2008
- 5th Annual International Juried Exhibition, The Shore Institute of the contemporary Arts, Long Branch, USA
 - 'Timeless: An Exhibition of Drawings', The Morris Museum, Morristown, USA
 - 'Magnitude 7', Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati, USA
 - 'The Line That Connects You to Me', Brooklyn Arts Council, Brooklyn, USA
 - Volta 4, Galerie Bertrand & Gruner, Basel, Switzerland
 - 'Expose Benefit Auction', Exit Art, New York, USA
 - 'Slide Slam', Real Art Ways, New Haven, USA
 - 'Works on Paper', Galerie Bertrand & Gruner, Geneva, Switzerland
- 2007
- 'International Drawing Annual: Exhibition in Print', Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati, USA
 - 'Five Years 2002-2007', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
 - 'Slide Slam', Real Art Ways, New Haven, USA
- 2006
- 'Representing the Self', Spencertown Academy Arts Center, Spencertown, USA
 - 'I Love Exit Art: A Benefit Auction', Exit Art, New York, USA
- 2005
- 'Drawn from The Proposition', Joyce Goldstein Gallery, Chatham, USA
 - SCOPE Hamptons Art Fair, The Proposition Gallery, Hamptons, USA
 - 'Above the Trendy: The Down and Out', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
 - 'Other America', Exit Art, New York, USA
 - 'The Best MFA Thesis Show', The School of Visual Arts, New York, USA
 - SCOPE New York Art Fair, The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
 - 'Paper Deviations', The Proposition Gallery, New York, USA
- 2004
- 'Draw_Drawing', Gallery 32, London, UK
 - 'Emerging: NYC', Pool Art Center, Drury University, Springfield, USA

Acknowledgements

Introduction

Gillian de Boer

Interview

Gillian de Boer

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Sonal Tavkar

Images

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