



Bullet Drawing

Parker, Cornelia

Not on display

Title/Description: Bullet Drawing

Artist/Maker: Parker, Cornelia (Artist)

Born: 2011

Materials: Lead, Paper

Measurements: h. 865 x w. 865 mm

Accession Number: 50855

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Credit Line: Purchased with support from the Art Fund, 2020

The idea for Cornelia Parker's wire drawings came when she took down her hanging sculptures and the tangled wires became like a dynamic three-dimensional line drawing. Beyond the materiality of the wire, she is interested in the meaning that it could hold: 'Wondering how you could imbue a piece of wire with a narrative, a history, with monumentality'. [1]

She became interested in how metal objects can be transformed into wire and hold the memory of their former structure. In the series of works known as her *Bullet Drawings*, Parker has bullets melted down by a silversmith and drawn out into wire:

The bullet is perhaps the most romanticized means of death, a state that is therefore implicit within this object.

The Bullet Drawings (part of an ongoing hail) are made from various different types of bullets that have been melted down together and drawn into lead wire. Through the process of being drawn (and by default, disarmed), the bullets have been made into their own possible trajectories. [2]

Much of Parker's practice assesses the violence of war, and diffuses it, for example in the neutralising of bullets. As artist and curator Mary Griffiths writes, 'Cornelia Parker's only weapon is her art, and much of her time as an artist over the past thirty-five years has been spent addressing, and negating, violence'. [3]

Parker relates the grid of her bullet drawings to the abstraction of Minimalist artists such as Agnes Martin, Sol LeWitt and Richard Serra. But the material nature of her work subverts this: 'confounding their abstract appearance is the fact that they are, by the very nature of their material, 'loaded'. [4]

Whilst Parker is primarily known as a sculptor, the notion of drawing runs throughout her practice. She is interested in how the method of pulling the molten metal into wire is called 'drawing', relating it to artistic practice. The lead of the bullet connects it to the traditional material of pencils. It is therefore materially and aesthetically connected to the practice of drawing. The wire has been suspended between two planes of Perspex, so it becomes three-dimensional, emphasised by its shadow on the back board. Parker says,

'The idea of suspension, literal or metaphorical, has always been there in my work even when I was a student [...] My work is consistently unstable, in flux; leant against a wall, hovering, or so fragile it

might collapse. Perhaps this is what I feel, about my own relationship to the world. It is a universal condition, that of vulnerability'. [5]

Tania Moore, February 2022

[1] Cornelia Parker in Iwona Blazwick (ed.), *Cornelia Parker* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014), p.94.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.208.

[3] Mary Griffiths, 'Wonder Material' in Maria Balshaw et al, *Cornelia Parker* (Manchester: The Whitworth, 2015), 55.

[4] Parker, 2014, p.208.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp.106-107.
