

Making Line Work

Since early 2019, Sue and I started our studio collaboration with no aims and projects in mind except to continue to meet weekly. We explored the practice of mark-making during the two-hour sessions we had together. We alternated our roles to construct the work around materials, objects, medium, sizes and subjects. Sometimes we read, sang, listened, walked, and visited places while we continued making marks on the materials we prepared. In addition to the weekly session, we prepared and exchanged two sets of materials, including drawing books, piano rolls, pieces of fabric which we each brought home to work and brought back to discuss. We would then take another piece to continue, where one another had left off each week, until we finished the book or the roll.



Line Work#3

Line Work#5 was made in the early days of our collaboration in Phaptawan's studio which looks onto the garden at her home. We drew individually on large sheets of rice paper. Phaptawan worked with charcoal whilst I used coloured ink and brushes. We listened to the ambient sound of the Thai music, which added to the pleasure of exploring our favoured materials. I enjoyed the lightness and fluidity of the ink and brush, a sense of connection working alongside Phaptawan.

- Sue Pedley



Line Work #5



Line Work #16

Before the COVID-19 outbreak started, we alternated our collaborative setting between Sue's studio and my study room at home. This work was done in Sue's studio where we explored the rice paper. Mine was purchased from Thailand (left), and Sue's was from Vietnam (right). I noticed the line work I produced started to reflect the background stories concerning Thai politics. I had just finished reading the book *Bangkok Wakes to Rain* and my memory came through the impression, which I made when we alternated working on the two pieces of paper.

In 2020 we continued working regularly as we practiced social distancing through the first wave of the pandemic. I now sublet a studio space in the Ultimo Project studio complex from which Sue has worked over fifteen years. We could not go into each other's studio to work, so we discussed our plan at an outdoor meeting point, and we then continued working together a corridor apart speaking across studio walls.

These works were the instruction given by Sue on rubbing impressions from found objects in our respective studios. Objects from Sue's studio are mostly objects of memory, from places she had visited, from Asia, (Japan, Vietnam, Sri Lanka) to Europe. Sue worked the rubbing from bamboo blind and rope she had collected from her trips. In contrast the objects I found in my studio are functional and include palette knives, coin rings, a fan, and a sponge. We then discussed our experience and the materials we chose. Sue's objects reflect memories whilst mine reflect the process of making.

- Phaptawan



Line Work #21

The Black Lives Matter demonstrations in 2020 inspired us to make a banner. The SURFACE is the FACE SHAPE & SKIN and Look into the HEART & BLOOD are the English translations of words written by Phaptawan.

By this time, we had established a method of collaboration where we alternated as to who set the premise of our weekly two-hour session, including the choice of materials. I suggested to Phaptawan that we make a banner to carry on the Black Lives Matter march scheduled for the week ahead. Phaptawan spoke of her experience of participating in demonstrations in Thailand in the 1970's and her reluctance to participate in this demonstration. Phaptawan wrote text in Thai language and we overlaid the text with the English translation. It was important for me to listen to Phaptawan's experience in Bangkok surrounded by so much political turmoil.

- Sue



Line Work #17

Sue's instruction during social distancing was to look for patterns in our respective studios to draw as *Line Work: Rivers of the Basin* was in development. I was also thinking through Margo Lewers' wide range of practice and her interest in abstract art. Lewers made artwork and objects inspired by the surrounding space from her home studio. This was the context in the catalogue of the Margo Lewers retrospective exhibition curated by Pamela Bell at the National Trust S.H. Ervin Gallery in 2002.

I looked up and found the ceiling circular pattern of the studio ventilation, then the geometrical forms from the box, in which I keep brushes and tools and I thought of Margo's abstract forms in her many works. We brought the pair to pin together and to discuss after we had both worked on each of the works.

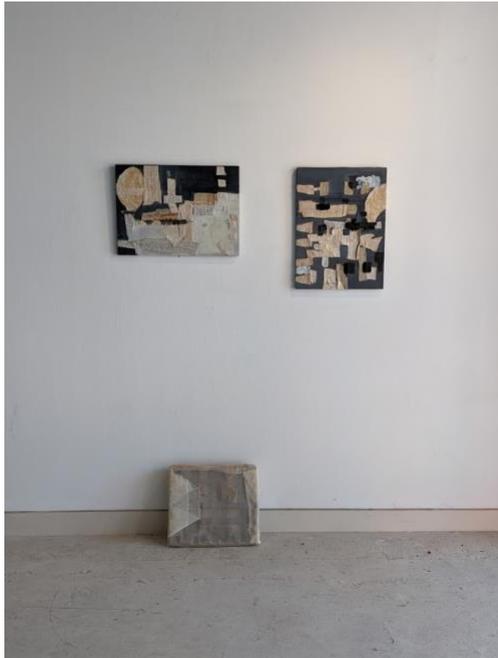
- Phaptawan



Line Work #19

The premise for this work was to create three 3D works by folding, wrapping and stitching with materials of our choice. Until now our work was mainly on paper. Phaptawan used threads, silk, cotton gauze and a stiff voile/drafting film. My materials were copper wire, aluminium wire mesh and tarlatan. Each work took 10 minutes. I enjoyed the delicacy and organic shapes of Phaptawan's objects. Whilst my works were geometric shapes made from industrial materials.

- Sue



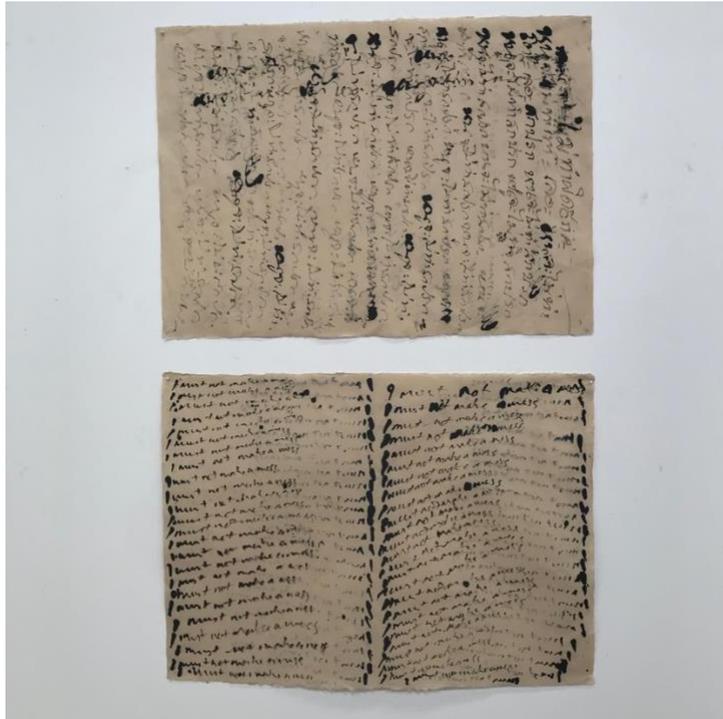
Line Work #21



Line Work #12

Sue and I found the discarded objects from the studios where we worked which included two boards and two packaging cardboard blocks. Using leftover fabric from my previous work we made a collage on boards and painted them over with black ink and white paint. We worked on the boards while we observed and used the references from the form of the packaging blocks. Sue cut the fabric pieces to the form which reflects the map of places, while my cutting reflects the visible and invisible shape and shadow from the packaging blocks. We wrapped and sewed muslin clothes on a packaging block during the following sessions. I noticed one of the methods of mark making which I used more frequently at the later stage was marking the reduction of the marks, rather than making the mark. This was evident in the work *Line work # 27* diptych. The underpainted masking fluid dried off after we each painted. It revealed its marks as blank when we peeled the layer off the ink paint. We then painted over it with another layer on top of it. The drawing on the right was written over with water in Thai scripts which created the marks which soon disappeared. The following work on silk, also reflected the shadow where I filled in the gaps between shapes, and hence made visible the void. I find the collaborative process with Sue has allowed tensions to be present. Perhaps this could be one of the ways the unutterable speech, which is implicit in complex political and cultural issues of my background make its marks.

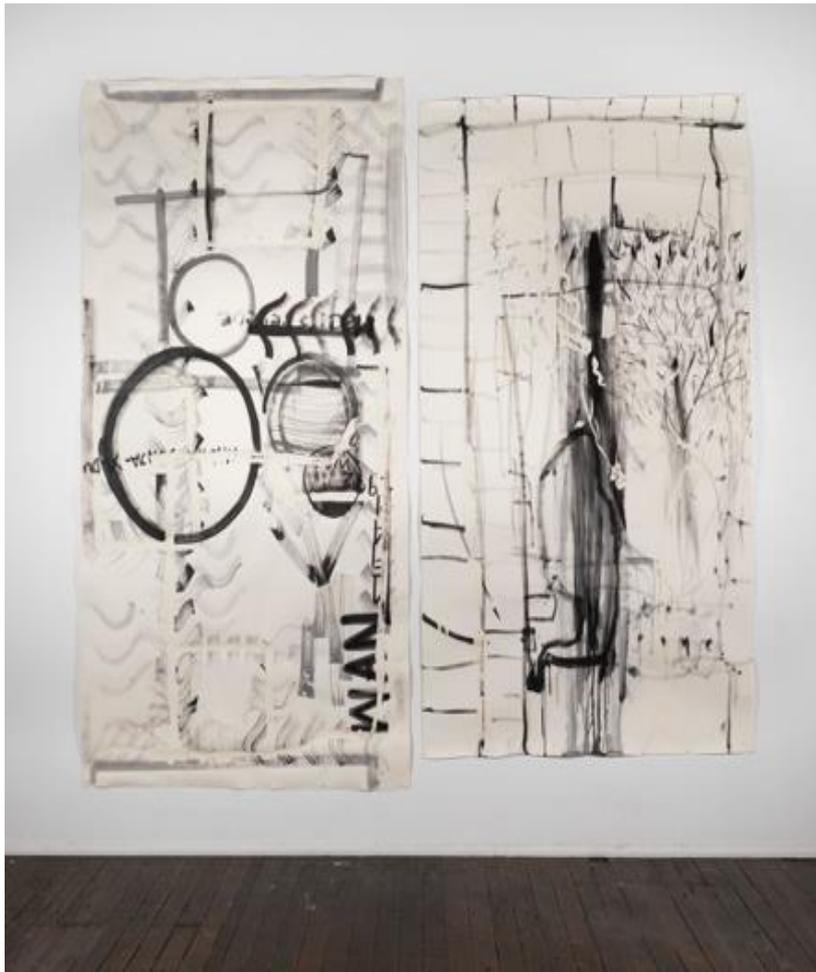
- Phaptawan



Line Work # 22

This work was made under the pergola of the community garden nearby our Marrickville studios. Using black ink on porous Vietnamese kozo paper, we created marks with sticks and other objects found in the garden. Due to the porosity of the paper we eventually had pages with images on both sides forming the potential for a book. One of the memories that surfaced for me was from being at school on detentions where I had to write a hundred times - "I must not make a mess". I was fascinated to hear about Phaptawan's early education in Bangkok which was so different from mine.

- Sue



Line Work # 27

At this stage, we were exploring drawing as a way of mapping, walking and movement. The specific prompt for *Line Work #27* was a series of walks taken near our Marrickville studios. We recorded our memories of those walks on the twin sheets of paper – using layers of masking fluid and ink – while repeatedly swapping the sheets between us. Finally, we removed all the masking fluid and the sum of our shared experience was revealed.

I enjoyed seeing how differently we responded to visualising the same walk. Phaptawan and I worked with lines drawn by walking, observing, storytelling, singing, drawing, and writing. Together our interweaving and interconnecting lines weaved a path between our past and the present.

- Sue