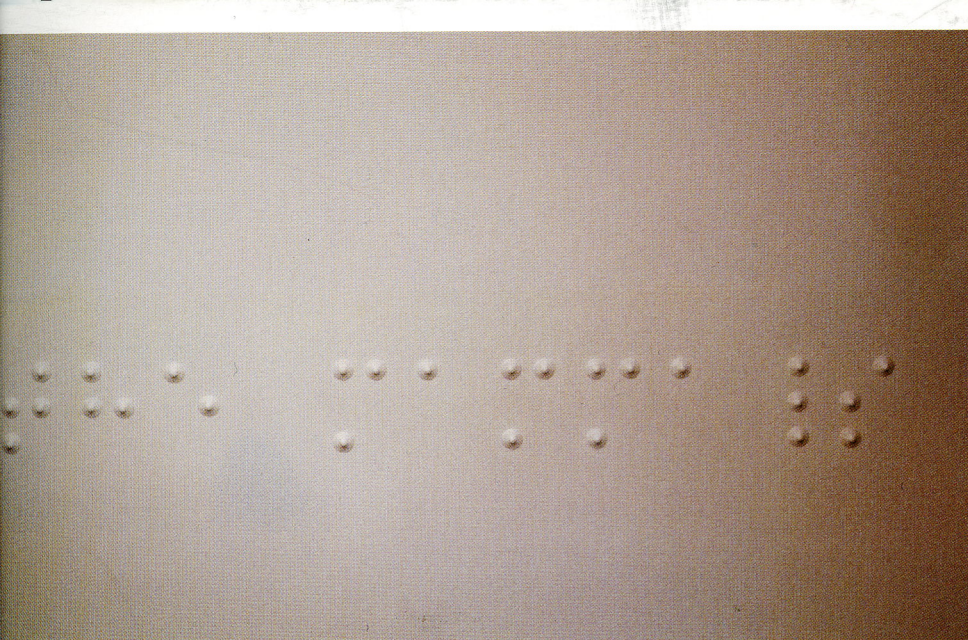


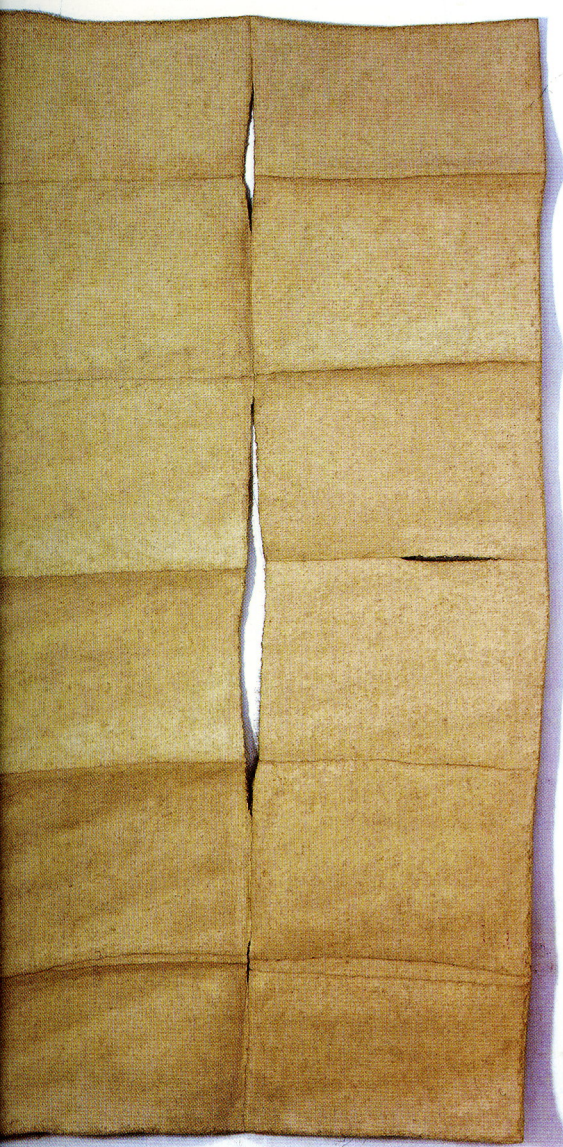
# Anchoring the Void



**Noa Lidor.** *The Mammals*. Plaster cast and paint on wall.  
20 cms x 176 cms approx. 2008.

Deirdre King moves between different shared spaces to record her impressions about *Drawing Space*.

DRAWING, AS A PRACTICE, EXCEEDS CONSERVATIVE DEFINITIONS RELATED TO THE USE of line, monochrome and limited materials. Drawing's metaphysical moment (the dot in the void is the first mark on the paper's expanse transforming a state of nothingness into a state of manifestation) can be re-formulated as a dialogue between incidence and erasure, action and stasis, form and formlessness.



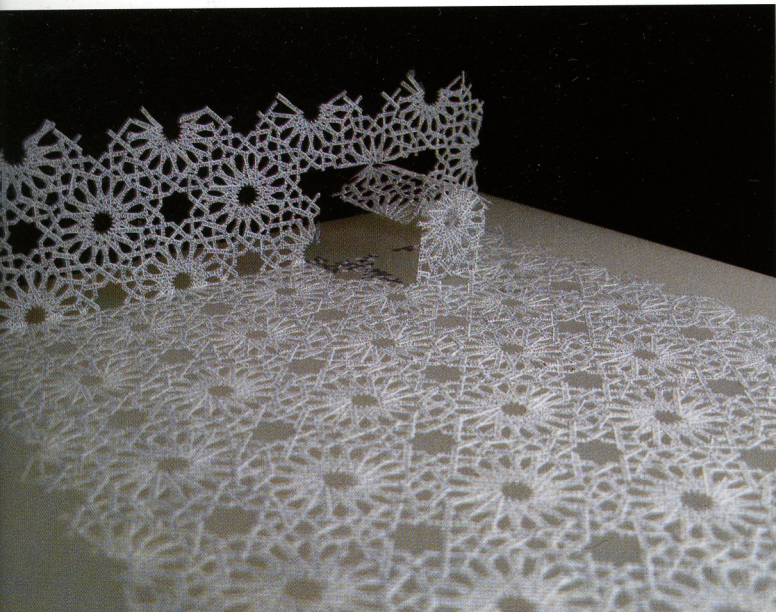
*Drawing Space*, at Green Cardamom, London, from July 24th to September 27th, brought together works by eleven artists employing a wide range of media including video, photography and sculpture. The artists took their inspiration from life (this was the second show in a trilogy, titled, *Drawn from Life*). However, the show's conceptual premise – that intangible space could be articulated through 'embodiment' or 'habitation' by memory or objects – barely extended drawing's basic metaphysical point.

Although an inadequate filter for approaching this enjoyable show, 'embodiment' occasionally yielded fruitful translations. The meshed lines of Mohammad Ali Talpur's *Untitled* (Leeka drawing, 2006) inscribed the void into existence whilst Sojwal Samant's paper sculpture *Beyond Reasonable Doubts* (2007) captured it concretely – inscrutable blankness, presented as an unfolded letter, was made legible in her work.

The exhibition evoked new spaces, predominantly cognitive, by exploring liminality – the transgression of formal, sensual and conceptual boundaries resulted in a new understanding of spatiality. Seher Shah's drawings depended on the conflict between abstract and representational elements, her iconography alluding to war and different religious identities. The impossibility of finding a resting point on a surface or in depth, in reference or in ornament, destabilised pictorial and cultural space, leaving identity in a state of flux.

Noa Lidor and Zarina used physical responses to explore conceptual space. By disrupting boundaries between different modes of perception, Lidor challenged the prioritising of the intellect, reminding us how mammals are sense-based creatures. *The Mammals* (2008) spelled out its title in braille in plaster nipples fixed to the wall. The work compounded the use of sight, touch

**Sojwal Samant.** *Beyond Reasonable Doubts*. Paper pulp and wire.  
180 cms x 94 cms. 2007.



**Hamra Abbas.** *It Was A Little Demon, I Can Tell You* (Detail). Paper collage, Perspex.  
26 cms x 211 cms x 30 cms.



**Jess MacNeil.** *The Shape of Between.* Video, DVD. Dimensions variable. 2006.  
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and intellect with unusual scale and modelling and forced us into a new hybrid form of communication.

Zarina's *Few Steps in the Land of Confucius* (2008) negated easy assumptions about progress. This piece of enigmatic minimalism drew you in, revealing itself as a temple pathway hung vertically. Trying to understand a path to spiritual enlightenment through what looked like a block was like grappling with a mind-expanding Zen koan.

An ambivalent decoration/representation axis in works by four artists reconstructed semantic space. In *Aasaar* (2008), Iftikhar and Elizabeth Dadi's photographed details of Karachi's cityscape were each scaled similarly, framed by a circle and arranged in a grid. Reducing reality to a pattern of motifs transformed them into a set of glyphs, with

potential for new interpretation. Similarly, the amorphous motifs in Muhanned Cader's sketches, *Scapes in Shapes* (2008), showed Scottish seascapes, reminiscent of his native Sri Lanka. Melding different cultural references implied the subjective construction of truth.

The jaali, a decorative and functional screen allowing women to see without being seen, was used in Hamra Abbas's *It Was A Little Demon, I Can Tell You* (2008), which questioned definitions of 'love'. Sheets with motifs made out of tiny pieces of paper saying 'love' were broken through by a cage-like structure, the rupture of claustrophobic repetition coinciding with individual expression.

Repetition undermined complacent understanding based on familiarity in Nazgol Ansarania's *Untitled 1 - Patterns Series* (2007). It apparently held the design for a Persian carpet

constructed by repeating the patterns on one quarter of a square. You could see, on close inspection, that the pattern was interrupted by scenes of everyday life.

Jess MacNeil's *The Shape of Between* (2006) was a video with four sets of subtly differing footage, showing four boats slowly rowing in the river at Varanasi. The still focal point, anchored on a different boat each time, produced almost imperceptible perspectival changes. The viewer's visceral identification with the shifting images, together with the soundtrack bearing atmospheric noise recorded between bouts of cello playing, produced a physical effect, like being in a stationary train alongside a moving one. Undoing the liminal sutures in internal and external spaces, MacNeil opened us to an ekstatic form of understanding.