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## ‘Wayfinding’: The Bridget Riley Art Foundation and Central Saint Martins at the British Museum

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A new display entitled ‘Wayfinding’ has been put up in Room 90 as part of the Bridget Riley Art Foundation (BRAf) Programme at the British Museum. For this exhibition of 14 works I have paired the drawings of Fine Art students with the works that inspired them during their visit to the Prints and Drawings Study Room. The display explores drawing as a tool that artists, both emerging and established, use to find their way. Their ‘way’ may be an examination of their artistic process, the development or destruction of a personal style or the path to a finished work. Regardless of what form the path takes, drawing is a method through which an artist can clarify their direction.

The BRAf Programme is a three year project in the Department of Prints and Drawings that supports two posts: a project curator, Isabel Seligman, and myself as project officer. A key part of the programme is to research the drawing practice of emerging artists, specifically university art students. In the past year we have brought almost 500 students into the Prints and Drawings Study Room to take inspiration from drawings. We do this through curating and leading workshops, and selecting works from the Museum’s rich drawing collection, one that stretches from the fifteenth century to the present day. Responses from the students and tutors have been invaluable to our understanding of the role of drawing in contemporary arts practice and education. These insights have also contributed to Isabel’s curation of an exhibition of British Museum drawings that will tour the UK in 2016–2017.

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Aurélie Poux drew *Untitled* shortly after working from a drawing by British abstract artist Paule Vézelay. Poux’s modulations of grey and subtlety of line are experiments drawn from what the artist has called ‘Vézelay’s silent delicacy’. The stability of Poux’s monumental figures is undone by the cracks and fissures that materialise from the drawing’s gradation of tone. Her meticulously drawn surface is intended to create an unsettling contradiction between youth and decay. Through exploration of Vézelay’s graphic mark-making and tonal variation, Poux found the artistic language she needed to confront the difficult subject of sickness and abuse through aesthetically pleasing form.

Beyond these artworks, visitors can also see the drawings of George Grosz, Frank Auerbach, Sol LeWitt and Giuseppe Galli Bibiena paired with responses from emerging artists Katherine Illingworth, Isabelle Cole, Pooja Patel and Rianne Owen.

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