

PRESS RELEASE**Deanna Petherbridge :: *Drawing and the Domain of Politics***

New works on paper

25 February – 25 March 2022



Migration 1, 2018, ink and watercolour on Arches paper, (diptych) 1050 x 1500 cm

For more than 50 years Deanna Petherbridge has been an eloquent and poetic chronicler of wars, natural disasters and the political and economic forces that shape the world we inhabit. In her last exhibition at Art Space Gallery in 2017, *The Destruction of the City of Homs*, now in the collection of Tate, and *The Destruction of Palmyra* were two colossal drawings that reflected on the horrors of the conflict in Syria.

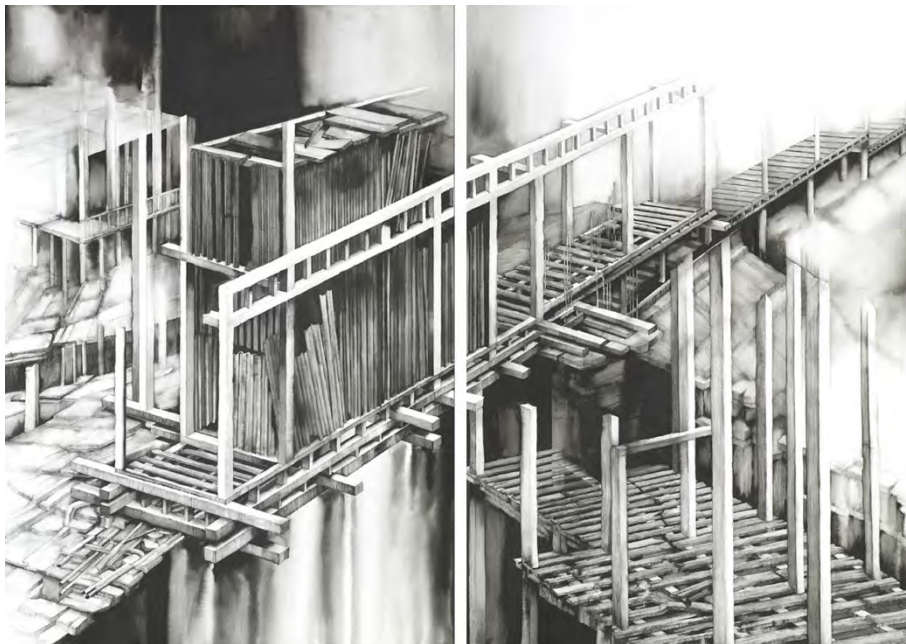
Since then, and throughout the Covid-19 lockdown, she has continued to challenge head-on the political issues and even the atrocities of our time: the intensification of mass migration from war zones and the perilous journeys involved, the aggressive border controls and the squalid and inhuman refugee camps, and the threat to democracy from corrupt populist governments and a deregulated media. And that's not to mention the inept handling by world leaders of the underlying dangers of global warming and a destabilizing pandemic.

With titles like *Migration I*, *Blood Crossing*, *Crossing the Abyss* and *Camp Covid* it is immediately clear that all the drawings in this exhibition are fiercely political works, and all are large. Using only ink line and ink wash on 1050 x 750 cm Arches paper, panels are brought together into a series of

diptychs and triptychs that weave together invented places and repetitive architectural motifs. The single viewpoint is absent, inside and outside space is ambiguous, complex rhythms and unexpected intervals are all deployed in pursuit of images that comment on the disturbing events going on in the world today. *Crossing the Abyss*, is described as a:

...drawing that openly alludes to rotting bridges and stepped pathways crossing floods and chasms; disintegrating wooden piles and dangerous platforms; insecure stretches of rocky but undercut landscape; rusting and collapsing walls of corrugated metal. Bridges, paths and roads signify passage and movement, so such evocations were designed to lead spectators to contemplate threatening narratives of time, dissolution and change.¹

Since the 1960s Deanna Petherbridge has sustained the dual role of practising artist and distinguished writer, lecturer and pioneer of critical thinking on drawing and its place in art. From 1995 – 2001 she was a Professor of Drawing at the Royal College of Art where she set up the Centre for Drawing Research. She has curated numerous exhibitions including *The Primacy of Drawing: An Artists View* (1991) followed by the publication of her acclaimed book *The Primacy of Drawing: Histories and Theories of Practice* (2010). Her works are in public and private collections worldwide and the monograph *Deanna Petherbridge – Drawing and Dialogue* was published by Circa Press in 2016 in association with the exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester, December 2016 to June 2017.



Crossing the Abyss, 2019, ink on Arches paper, (diptych) 1050 x 1500 cm

A 30-page illustrated catalogue with an essay by distinguished prints and drawings historian and curator Dr Frances Carey titled *Passion and Politics in the time of Covid* will accompany the exhibition as well as a compilation of Petherbridge's series of discursive online essays 'Drawing as Metaphor', Drawing Matter, 2022 investigating her recent practice in the context of current political and cultural issues.

¹ <https://drawingmatter.org/crossing-the-abyss>