

Toward a Shadow — 6s Drawings

**The act of casting a shadow**

Six seconds is how long it takes my scanner to generate an image at 150 dpi. Six seconds is how long it takes the scanner head to travel across the surface from one end to the other. Time and space are captured through an emitter and receiver of light.

During those six seconds I perform gestures over the scanner using different materials, tools, and brushes. These gestures, interpreted by the scanner, produce marks, areas of density and emptiness that generate an image. I call this image a drawing.

Unlike a traditional drawing, the movement or gesture of my body does not produce an immediate mark on paper—or on a screen. Instead, my gestures are closer to those of a dancer, who measures the frequency and duration of their movements in relation to tempo and space. Each movement responds to the one before it and anticipates the next, composing a sequence that exists only for the time it takes the machine to travel across the surface.

It is a small dance. A six-second dance.

Before performing the gesture, I can only imagine the drawing in my head and coordinate my movements with the movement of the machine. The result always contains something unexpected: a mark, an interruption, or an uncontrolled nuance. The surprise of discovering the image after each dance is what makes it worthwhile.

This system for making drawings emerged from an investigation into the origins of the words dibujo and drawing. In Latin, one of the words associated with the act of drawing was adumbratio, derived from umbra: shadow. I am fascinated by the poetic dimension of this term: drawing understood not necessarily as a mark traced onto a surface, but as the projection of a shadow—a form that appears where light encounters a body. To draw was, in a sense, to make an absence of light visible. The image emerged not solely from matter or contact, but from a relationship between light, body, and surface. Thinking about drawing through this idea—through something as intangible and transient as a shadow—opens up, for me, a much broader understanding of what a drawing can be.

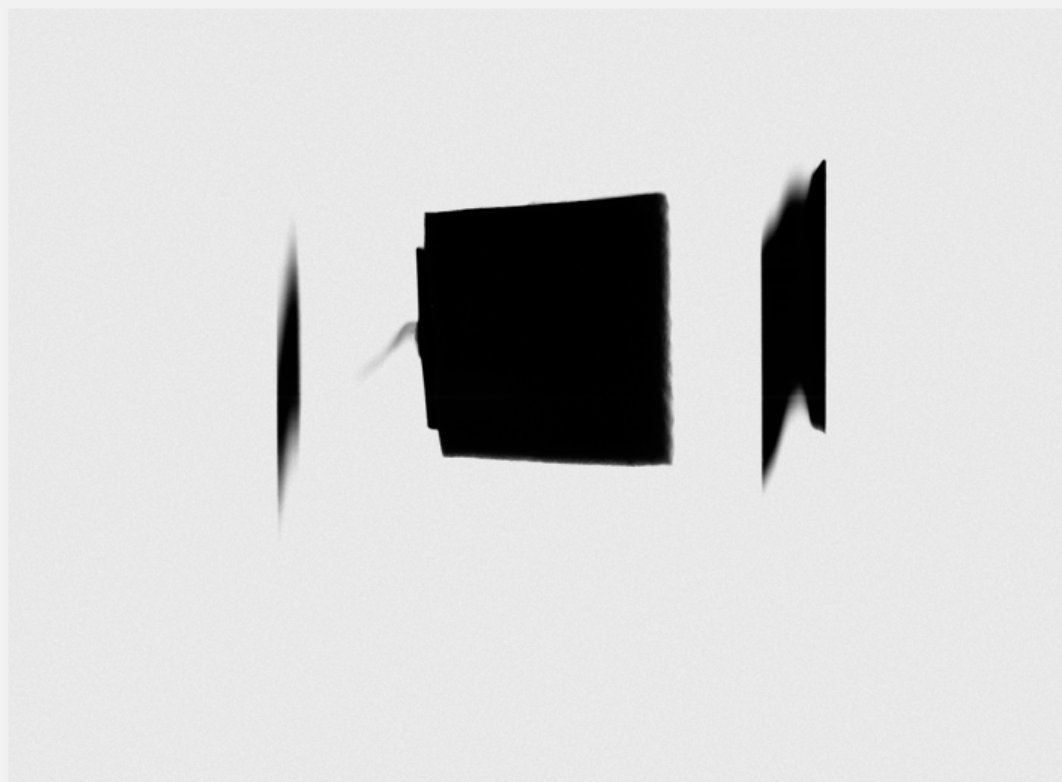
The history of the Spanish word dibujo, however, as well as related terms in other Iberian languages, has been linked to the Old French déboissier, associated with bois—wood—and with actions such as carving or working wood. Its origin is therefore material and, in a sense, surprisingly sculptural. English took a different path, one that is profoundly physical and gestural. The word drawing derives from the verb draw, from the Old English dragan: to drag or pull something. Over time, this movement entered the graphic realm as well: drawing could be understood literally as dragging a tool across a surface to produce a line. I consider an understanding of these linguistic structures and roots important because language structures thought and, consequently, our actions. In the context of this series, investigating the etymology of the word drawing allowed me to free myself from the conventional relationship between an object that makes a mark and a surface that receives it. Drawing could then extend into a broader, more poetic field: a space where a mark can be light, shadow, time, movement, or gesture, and where boundaries are no longer necessarily “designated.”

In connection with this reflection, there is a scene that has remained etched in my memory since I was a teenager. It took place in Beijing, at the Summer Palace. A man was drawing on the ground with what looked like a mop or a very large brush. He would dip the brush into a bucket and trace signs directly onto the pavement. When I came closer, I realized that he was practicing calligraphy on the dark gray surface of the stone. What was in the bucket was not ink, but water. The characters came to life solely through the contrast between the dry stone and the wet stone. But the most poetic moment came immediately afterward. It was the summer of 2010, and the heat in Beijing was stifling. The water evaporated so quickly that the first characters began to disappear before the man had even finished writing the ones that followed. He practiced his calligraphy incessantly—one character after another, one word after another—but never managed to construct a complete text. The signs disappeared before that could happen.

The drawing therefore existed for only a few moments. No permanent mark remained on the surface; only the gesture, the water, and the time during which that mark remained visible. Fortunately, by then I was already an avid photographer—and a fairly organized and forward-thinking teenager—and I still have a photograph of that moment. I was sixteen years old.



Man practicing calligraphy. Summer Palace, Beijing, 2010



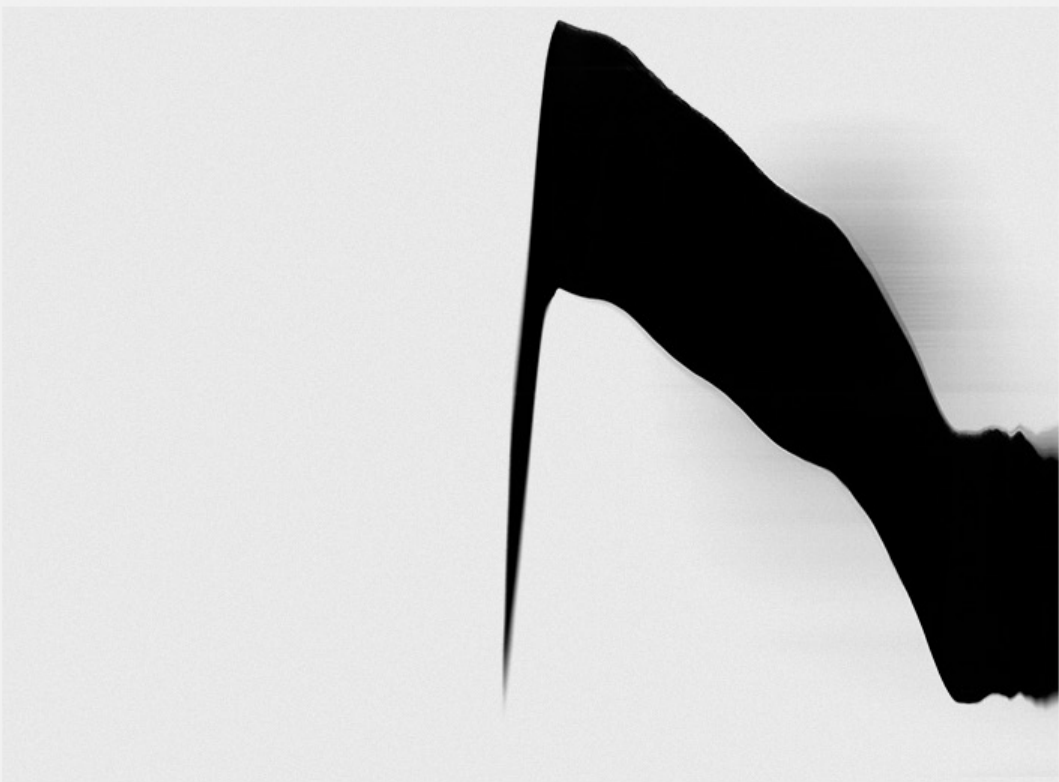
Untitled (6s Drawings), 2026  
Inkjet print on Hahnemuhle paper  
22.5 x 31 in. (57,2 x 78,7 cm)  
Framed



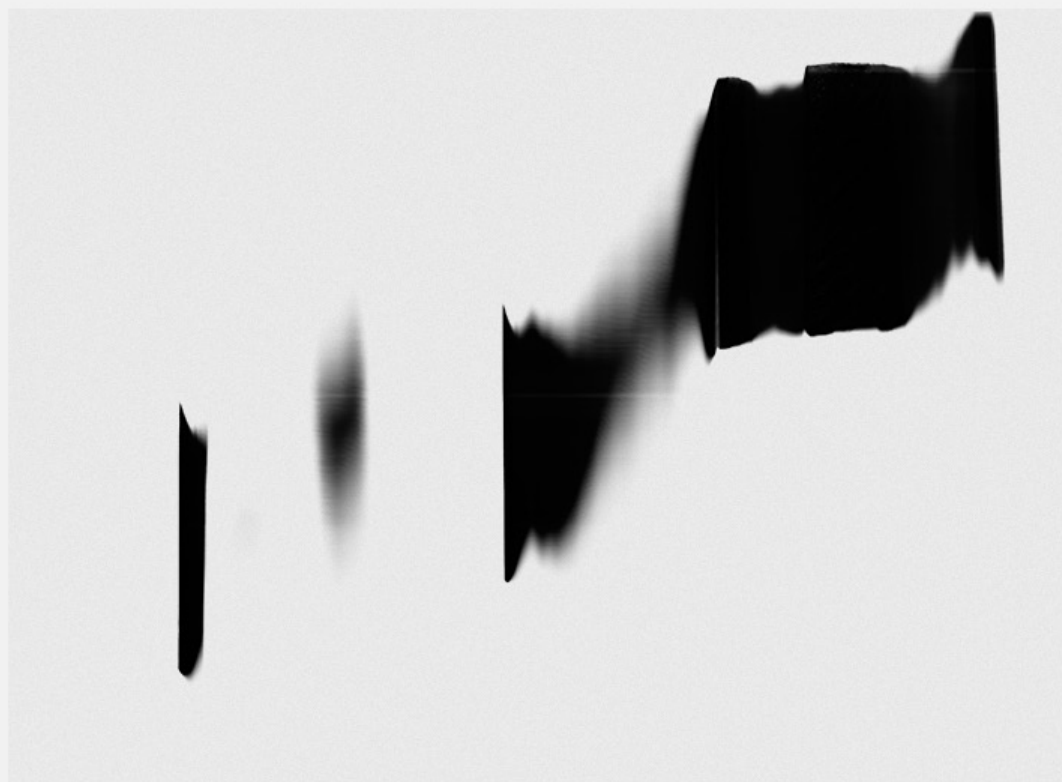
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