

## Learning Resources for Schools *Space YZ* - Ben Denham

**Video interview:** <https://vimeo.com/524643679>

*This learning resource accompanies video interview created as part of exhibition Space YZ at Campbelltown Arts Centre. Resources are for primary and high school students and teachers and focus on visual and creative arts.*

### Artist bio:

Ben Denham is a performance and video artist who makes machines that engage different parts of the body in the process of drawing and writing.

Ben's art practice revolves around the relationship between art and neuroscience, with a special focus on movement, the way we carry our feelings in our body (embodiment), and language. He focuses on the relationship between the science of the living world (biological sciences) and their connection to the practice of art making.

Ben grew up in the Blue Mountains and studied visual art at the University of Western Sydney. He lives in Croydon Park, near the Cooks River and teaches drawing at the National Art School in Sydney.<sup>1</sup>

### Themes:

- Bodily movement
- Identity
- Science
- Nature
- Speech and sound
- Music
- Personal transformation
- Technology

### Artist quote:

*"How we work with and against our natural habits... against that habit to create something new. How can I work against the things that I think I know, how can I transform that process that makes something new again that takes me back to primary school to when I was trying to write to put me in this unfamiliar space, that way I can witness something else emerging there"<sup>2</sup>*

### Practical activity: Make your own drawing machines

*See video interview for artist's explanation: 4.28 - 6.09mins*

*Recommended for ages 7 - 16 years*

**Materials:** pen/pencil, rubber band, stick, paper (A4 & A3+), sticky tape or blue tak, small electric whisk or fan.

### Part 1 (all ages)

- if you are right-handed try do drawing with your left hand; if your left handed draw with you right hand
- See how that changes the kinds of marks that you make

### Part 2 (all ages)

- use the rubber band to attach a pen or pencil to a long stick
- stick a large piece of paper to the wall
- experiment with drawing using your device and see how your drawing process has changed

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bendenham.com/bio-contact-cv/>

<sup>2</sup> Space YZ interview -13:29.

**Part 3 (recommended for ages 12+)**

- get a hand-held whisk or a small, motor operated device (with adult permission first!)
- use a rubber band to attach a pencil to the end of the whisk
- turn the whisk on and hold it over a piece of paper to create mechanical drawings

You have a drawing machine! See how this changes your mark-making and drawing process.

**References:**

<https://www.spaceyz.com.au/ben-denham>

<http://www.bendenham.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/bendenhamartist/>

<https://www.mca.com.au/artists-works/exhibitions/primavera-2014-young-australian-artists/ben-denham-primavera-2014/>