

RISK ANALYSIS



DAVID PIRRIE

The Drawers - Headbones Gallery

Contemporary Drawing, Sculpture and Works on Paper

Work'n It
January 10 - February 14, 2008

David Pirrie

Commentary by Julie Oakes

Artist Catalog, David Pirrie
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RICH FOG



Micro Publishing
Toronto Canada

David Pirrie

Work'n It

David Pirrie's carefully rendered remains of vehicular accidents, in pencil on vellum, overlaid with a grid resonate with psychological and cultural implications. The motor vehicle is an icon that signifies positive as well as negative traits. The automobile is a symbol of wealth, status, style and even sexiness. Right down to the utilitarian vehicles for transportation - the eighteen-wheeler for example has become a pop trope, inspiring songs, literature, art and even *looking* like art with graphic, chrome and illuminated accessorizing. The motor vehicle is a necessity, a habit of convenience and a privilege.

The extension of the image of the automobile into wreckage - the dead body of all that the automotive industry has come to stand for - has a metonymic meaning. David Pirrie's drawings reduce the bulky, twisted steel and rubber carcass to a comprehensible size. It is comparable to a small crucifix, a reminder of mortality and hence a prompt from which to formulate living.

Picture the artist, David Pirrie, looking at a photograph of a wrecked vehicle, carefully drawing it in miniature, paying it attention, with a modeling that caresses the images. Miniatures were used in Persia to present private delicate subjects, in East India to depict intimate erotic realms, when travelling before photography loved ones could be viewed in miniatures in lockets and now the most individual of human emotions assumes a tiny format - grief from the accidental loss or physical injury caused by an automotive accident. Man has become so mighty and clever with his technical acumen, flying over distances at speeds far beyond his actual physical capabilities. Carried by his inventiveness on wings of fire, man flits as fast as a hummingbird but not without fallout. To consider the impact of a vehicle colliding with a tree, for instance, leaves many repercussive meanings and metaphors in its speedy wake. There could be moral inferences, especially in the light of declining oil supplies and the wars raged to secure sources of the black gold. There could be a subtle accusation that we are killing the planet with the misuse of fossil fuels. As America becomes fatter, so does the ability to conduct one's life (between malls and a global economy) without being ferried from the Need to the Fulfillment seem an impossibility. We are reliant on the automobile with a sickly dependency. A smashed vehicle is a loaded image, perhaps easiest to contemplate when it is rendered so tiny that the person who would have been driving it could fit into a palm like a Blackberry.

The wreckage when assigned a grid, allows an objective framework for the spectacle. The picture is quite neat and tidy, 'nicely' drawn, almost overly polite in addressing a subject that screams with emotional vim. Is Pirrie hoping to organise the clang of horrific associations by dividing the universally feared, yet preventatively imagined, scene into squares? As calculating as a military strategy where lives are disguised by names other than their own (the 52 Regiment, the 6th Platoon), Pirrie's beautifully penciled crashed cars, trucks and even (shudder) school buses permits the contemplation of irreversible tragic moments in a cultural context akin to the consideration given to Yorick's skull by Hamlet.

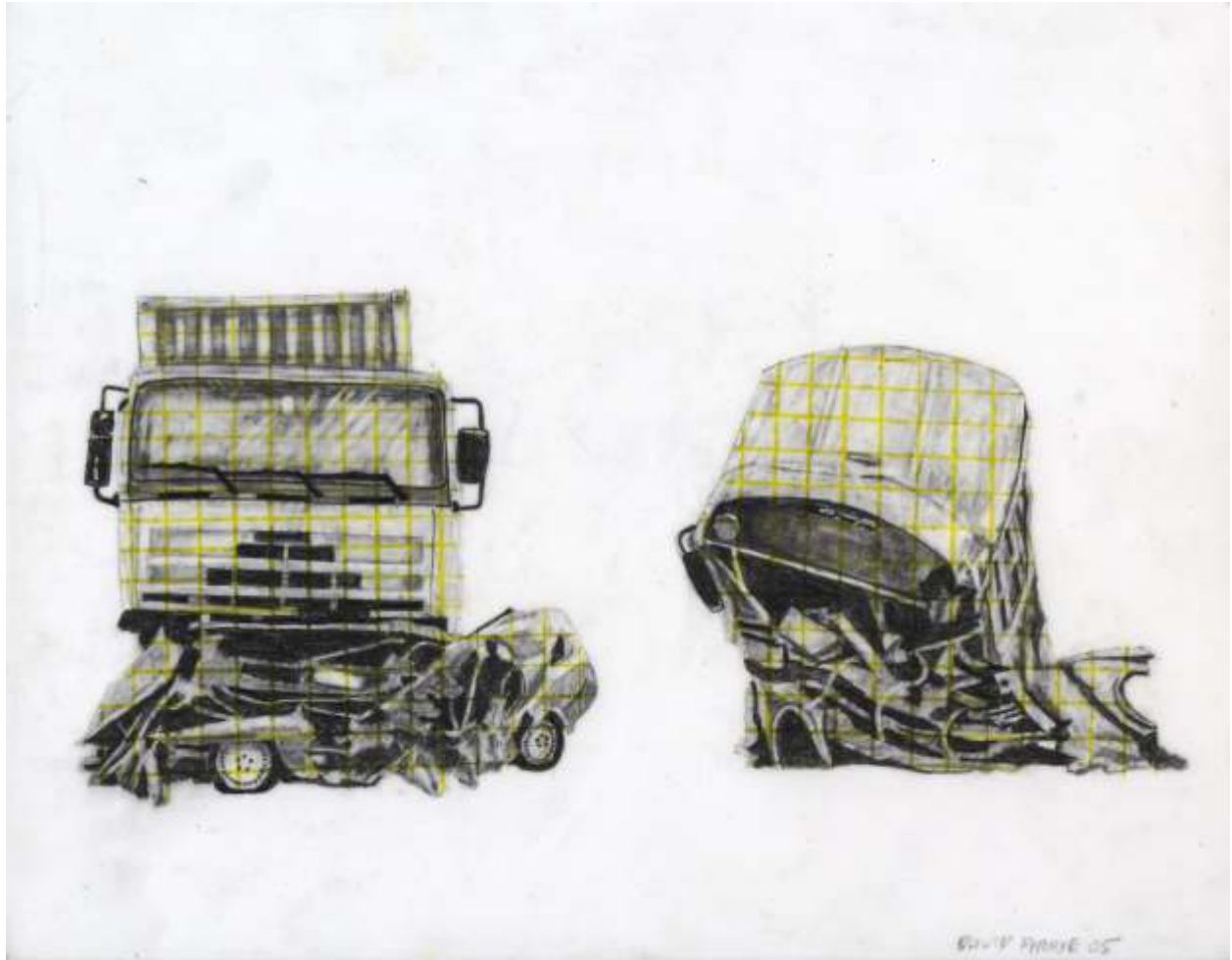
This sense of life's transience is especially poignant in the crumpled bus. It is empty and has been abandoned, useless in its vehicular capacity, as it transformed from a transportation for people to a smashed death trap. The viewer is, after all, still amongst the living, examining the tiny depiction of the remains of an accident that happened outside of his immediate ken. It has no identity other than a culturally pervasive, violent possibility of how death can occur. The drawings are remarkable examples of the ability to resurrect, from an image associated with death, a conceptual awe at man's trajectory from his discovery of the wheel to this contemporary, conceptual translation of where it has led him. This work speaks of the pity of progress, the fragility of human accomplishments and yet the sophistication of the overview of Pirrie's analysis grants a divine perspective on our condition.

Yet, as in a Godard or John Waters film, the car crashes keep coming, flowing off the end of the Pirrie pencil like the plastic flowers sprouting from telephone poles and road barriers. The drawings commemorate death or at the very least injury. A vehicle crashed, after-all, was once a vehicle driven, for the Pirrie crash is not a simple slide into a ditch but a violent collision. When the collision is with nature and the cars are slung from trees like limp flung socks or forming a pliable bend like a soggy vegetable, the message is even more disturbing.

Julie Oakes



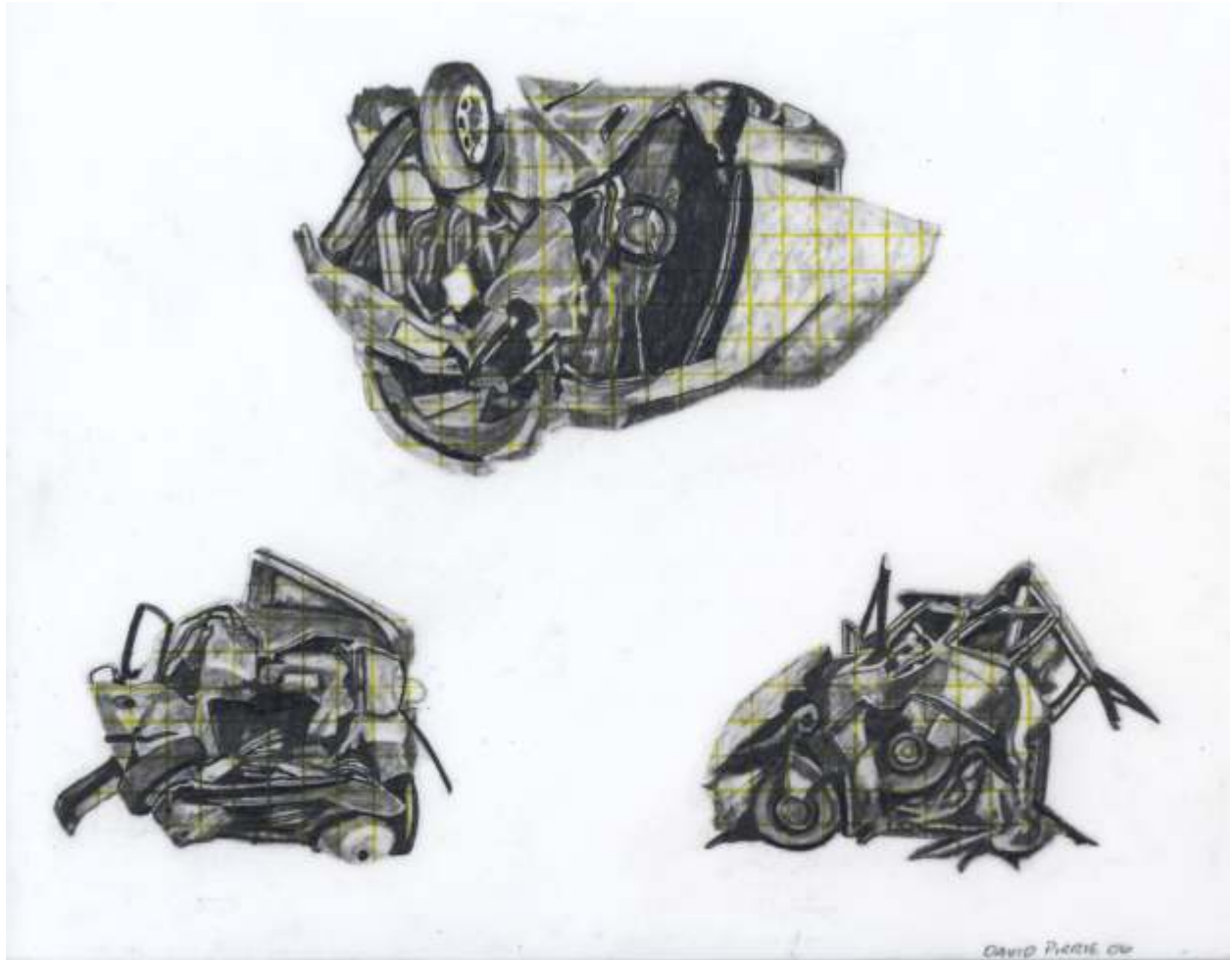
Risk analysis 865D1 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



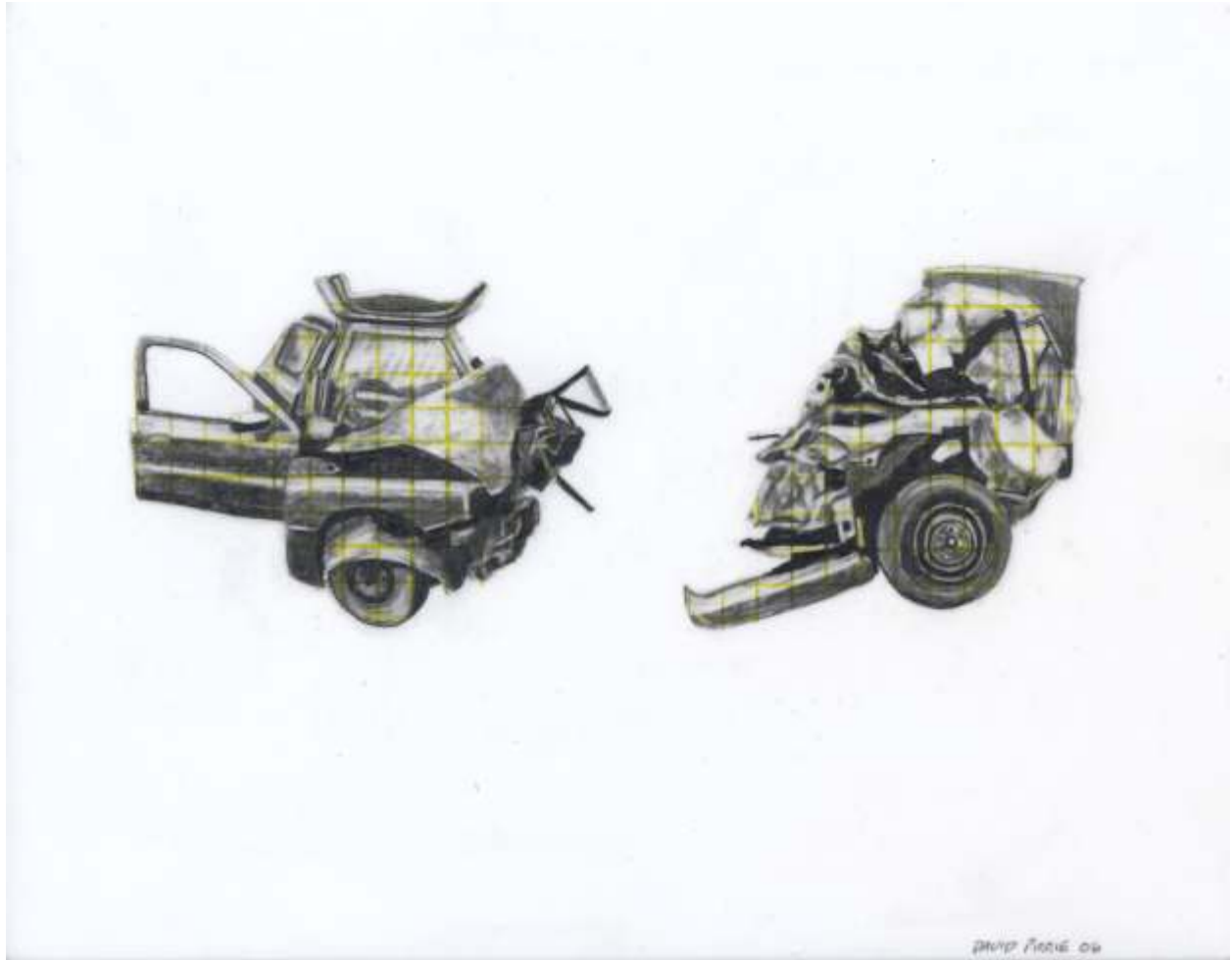
Risk analysis 865D2 - 2005
graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



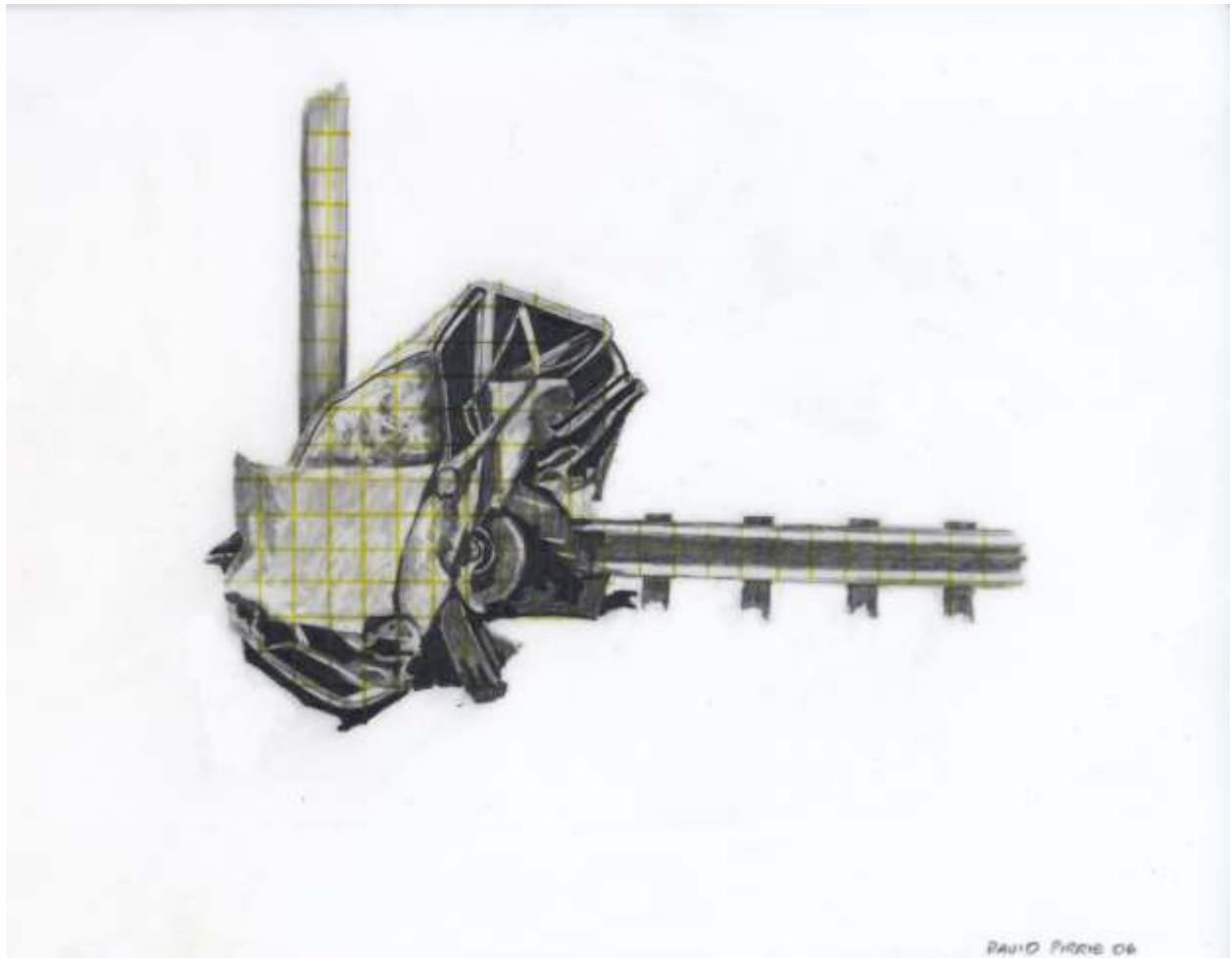
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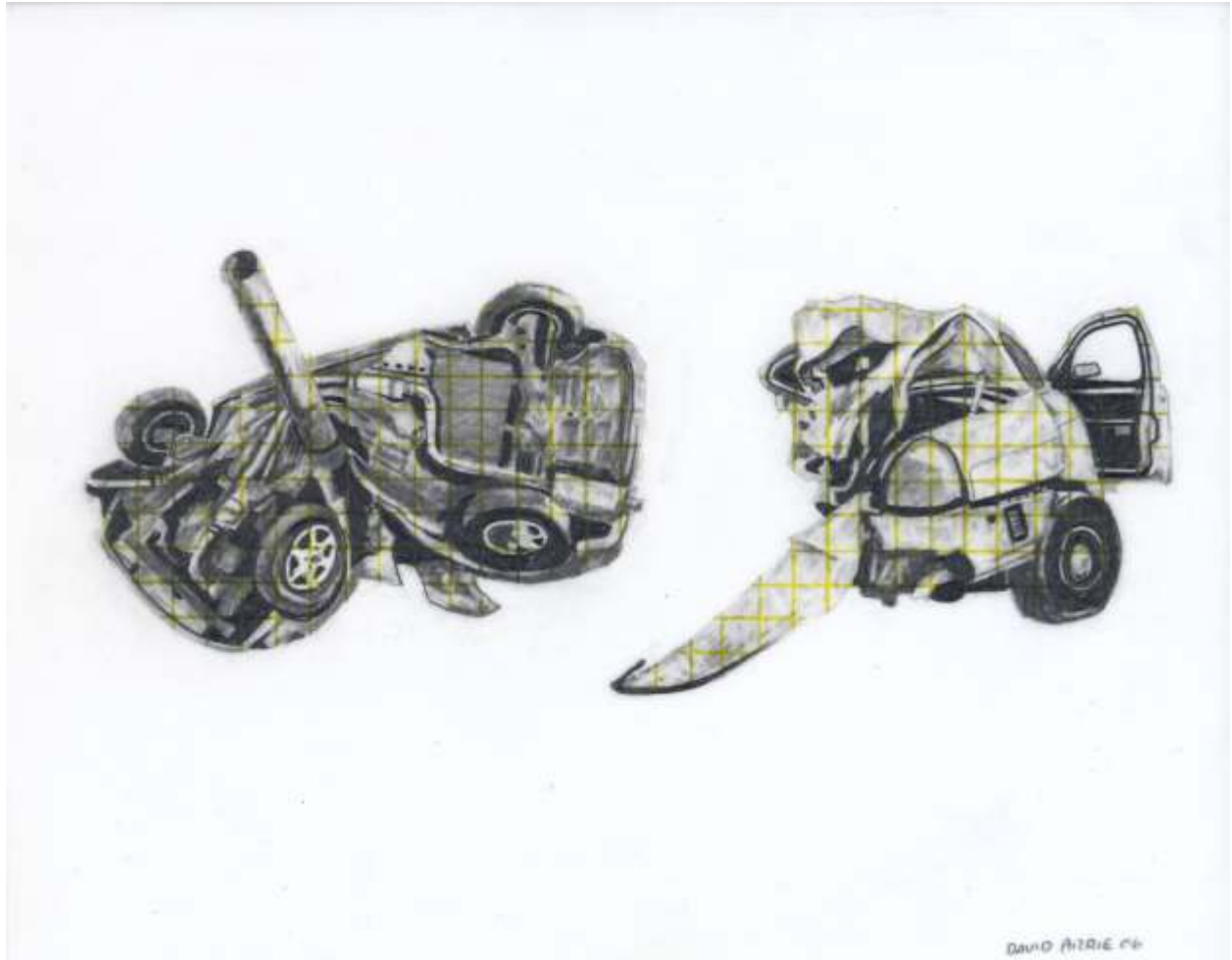
Risk analysis 865D4 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



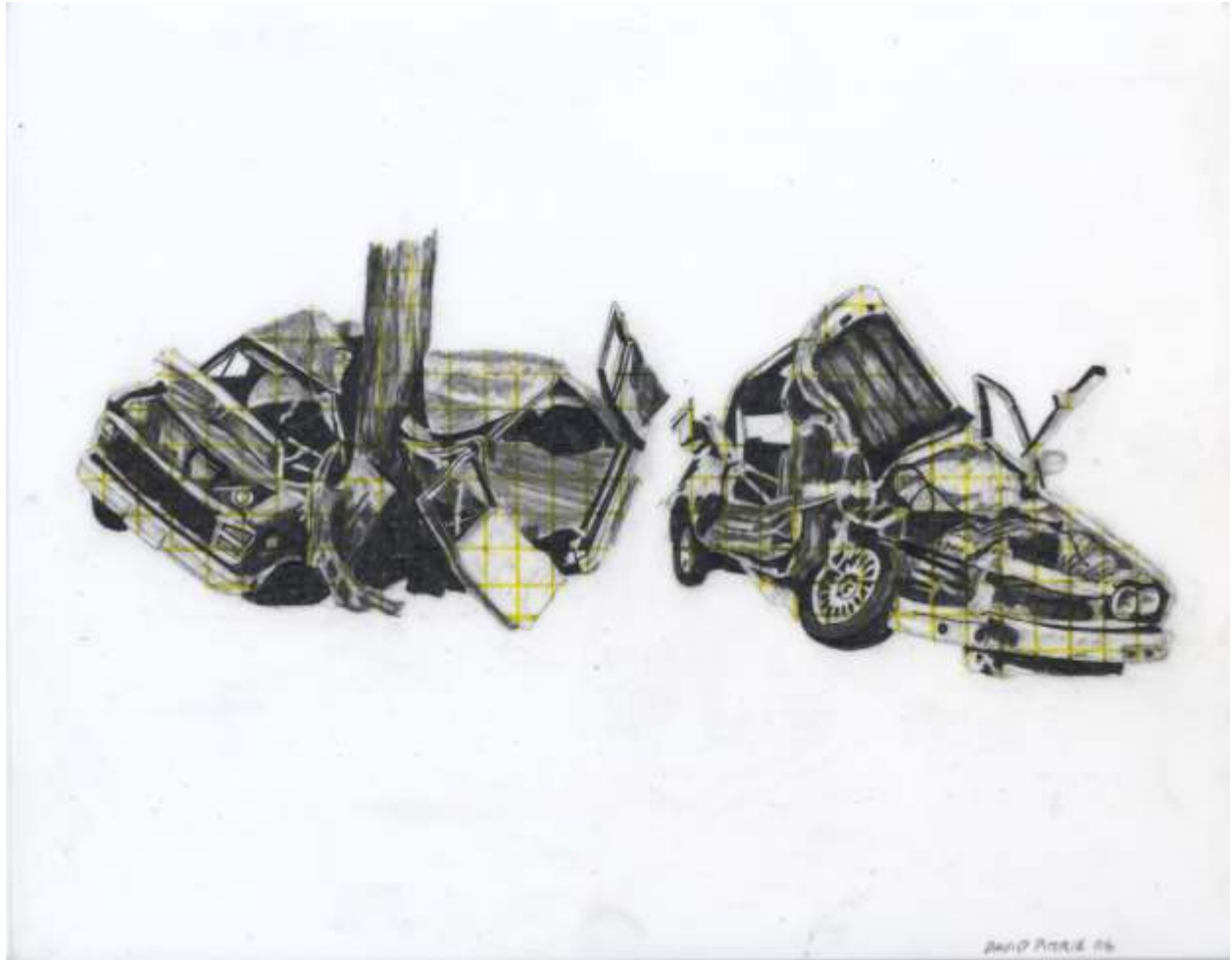
Risk analysis 865D5 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



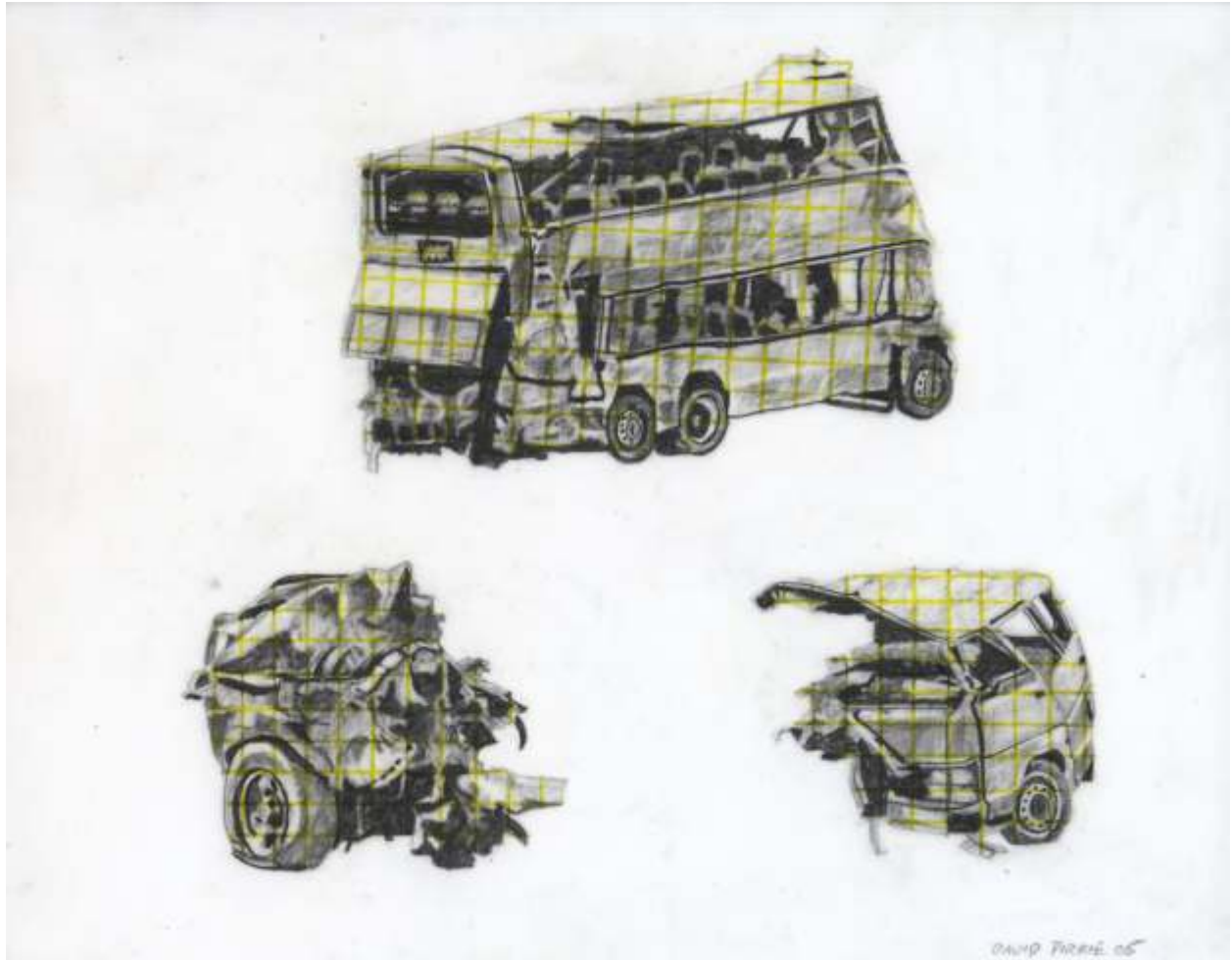
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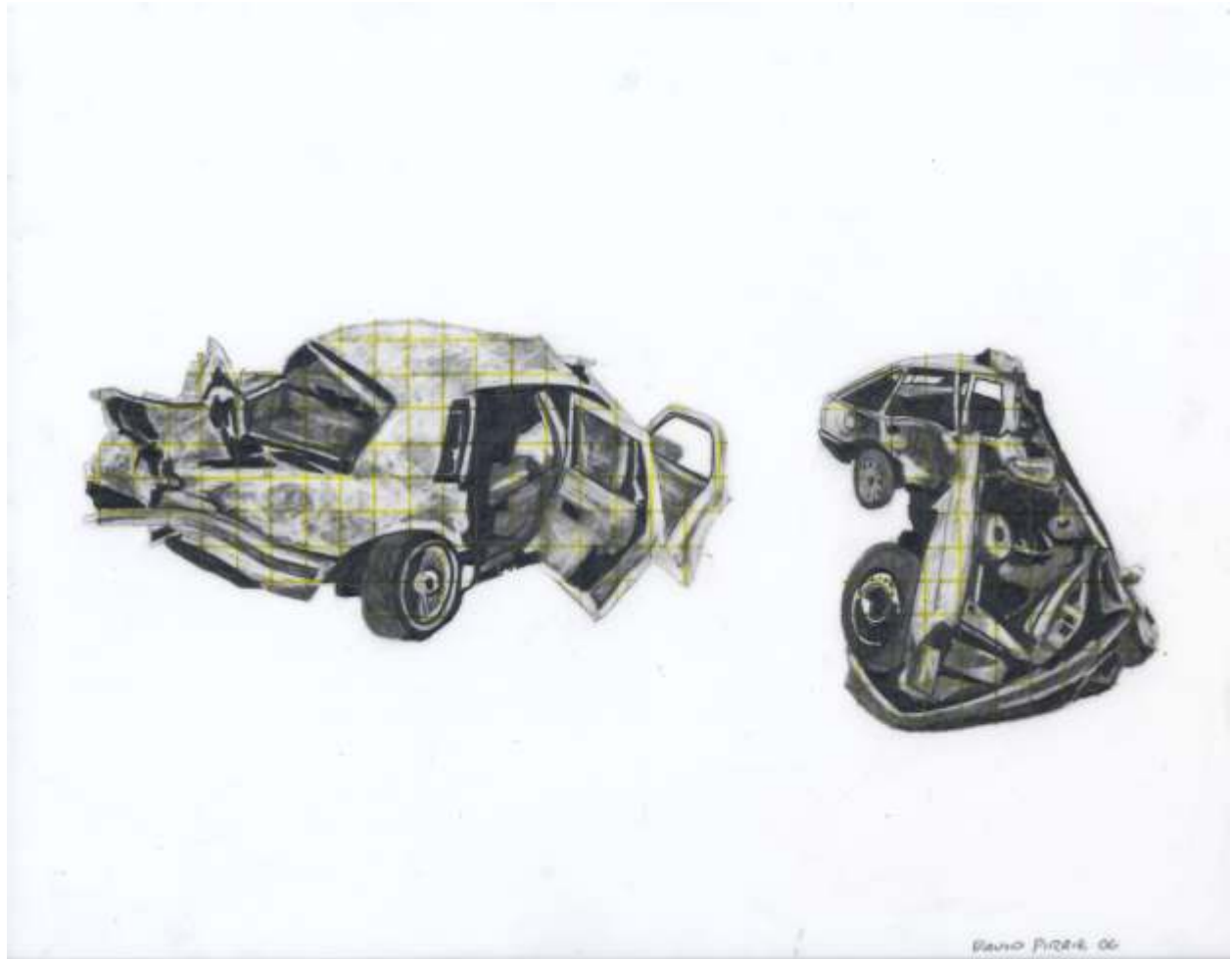
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graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



Risk analysis 865D8 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



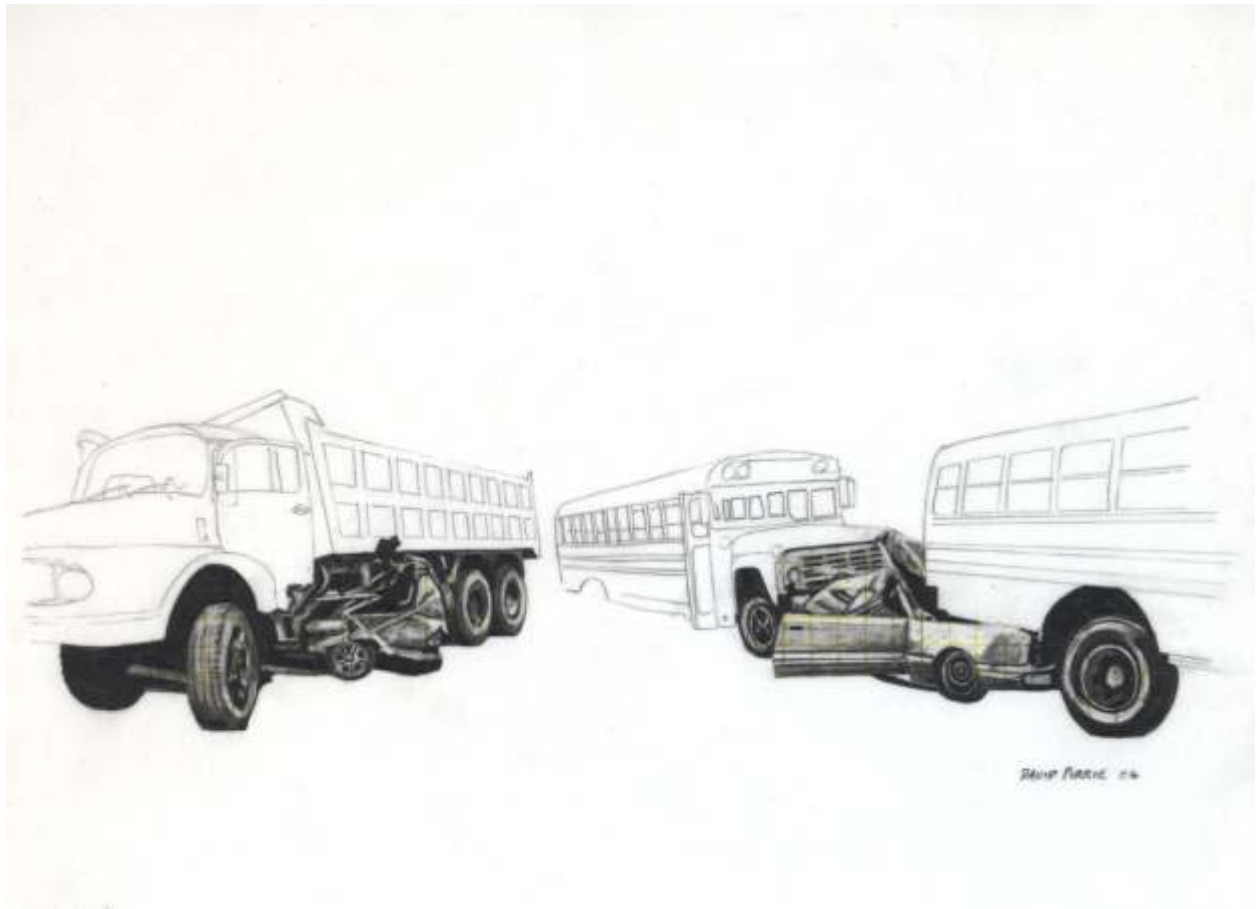
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graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



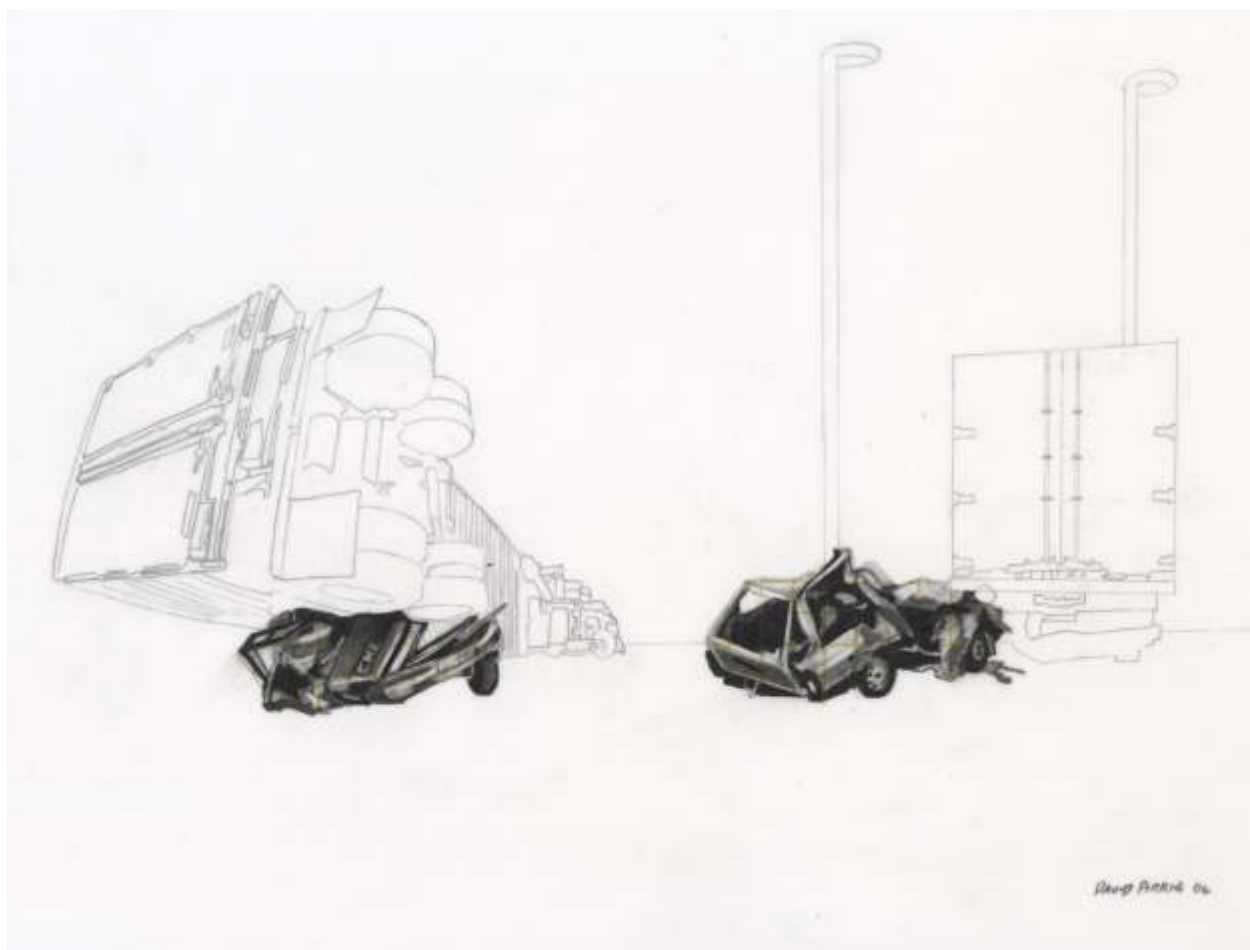
Risk analysis 51 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 7 x 9 in



Treed - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



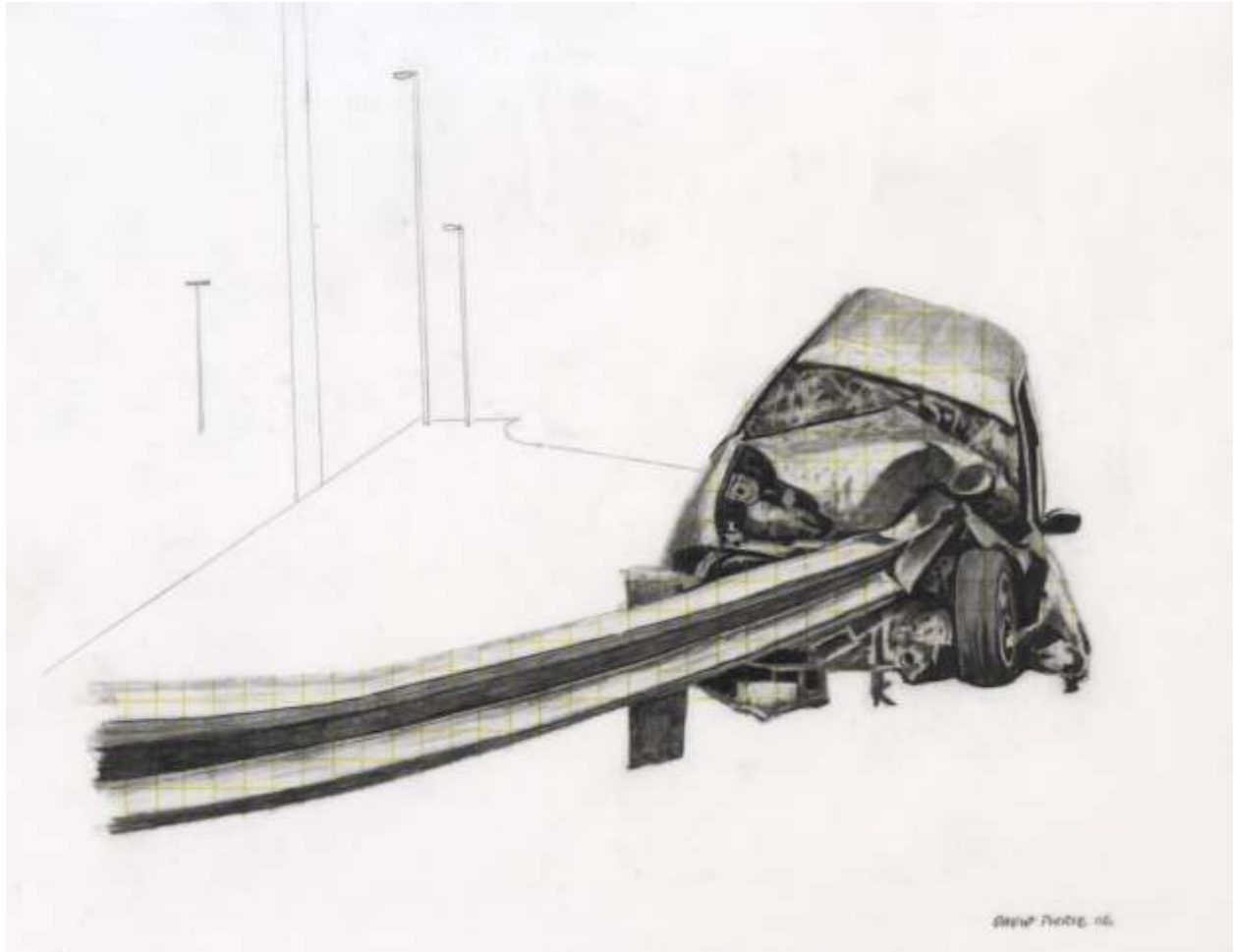
School Buses and DumBDAAE - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



Semis - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



Tour Bus - 2007
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



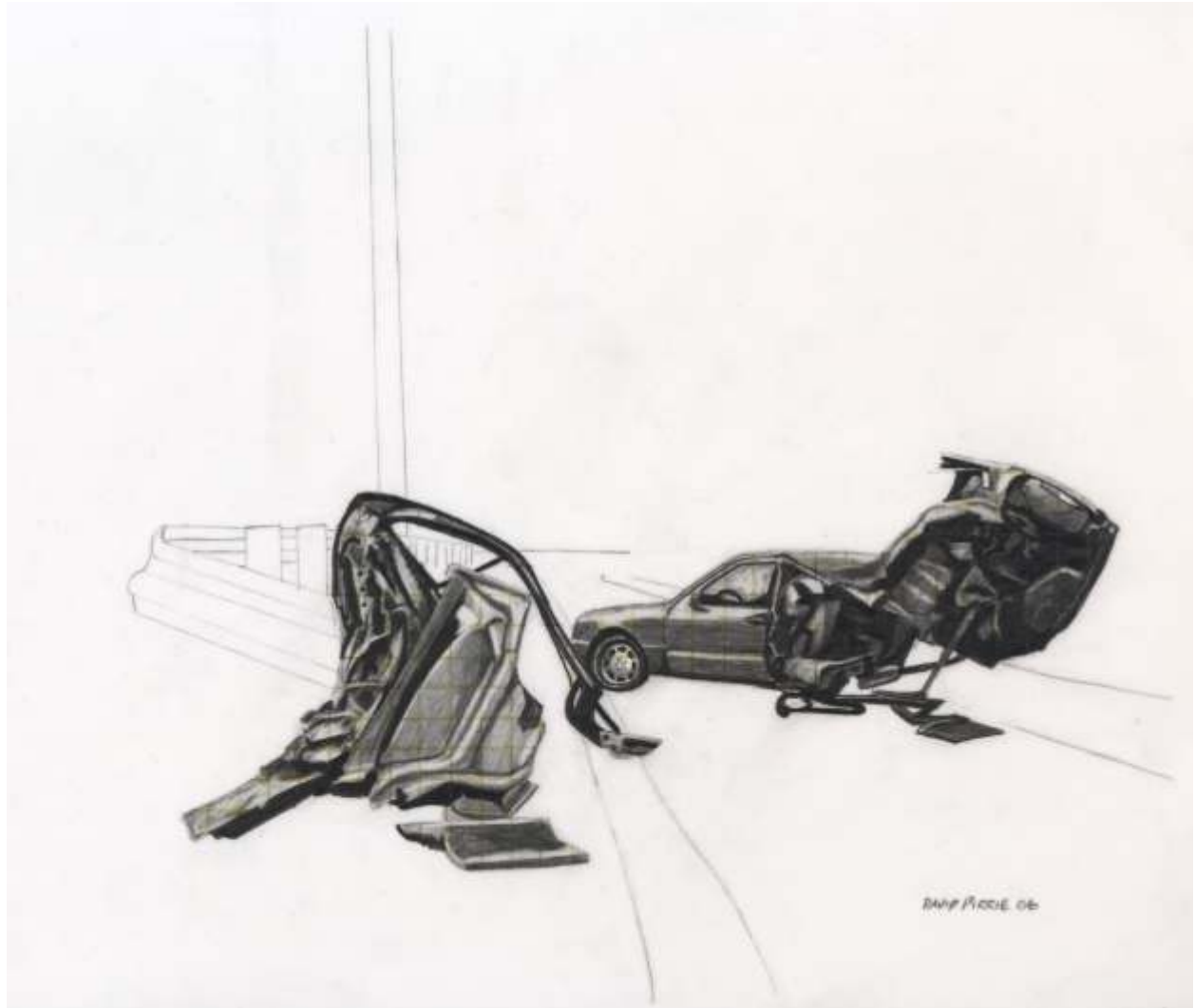
Guardrail 1 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



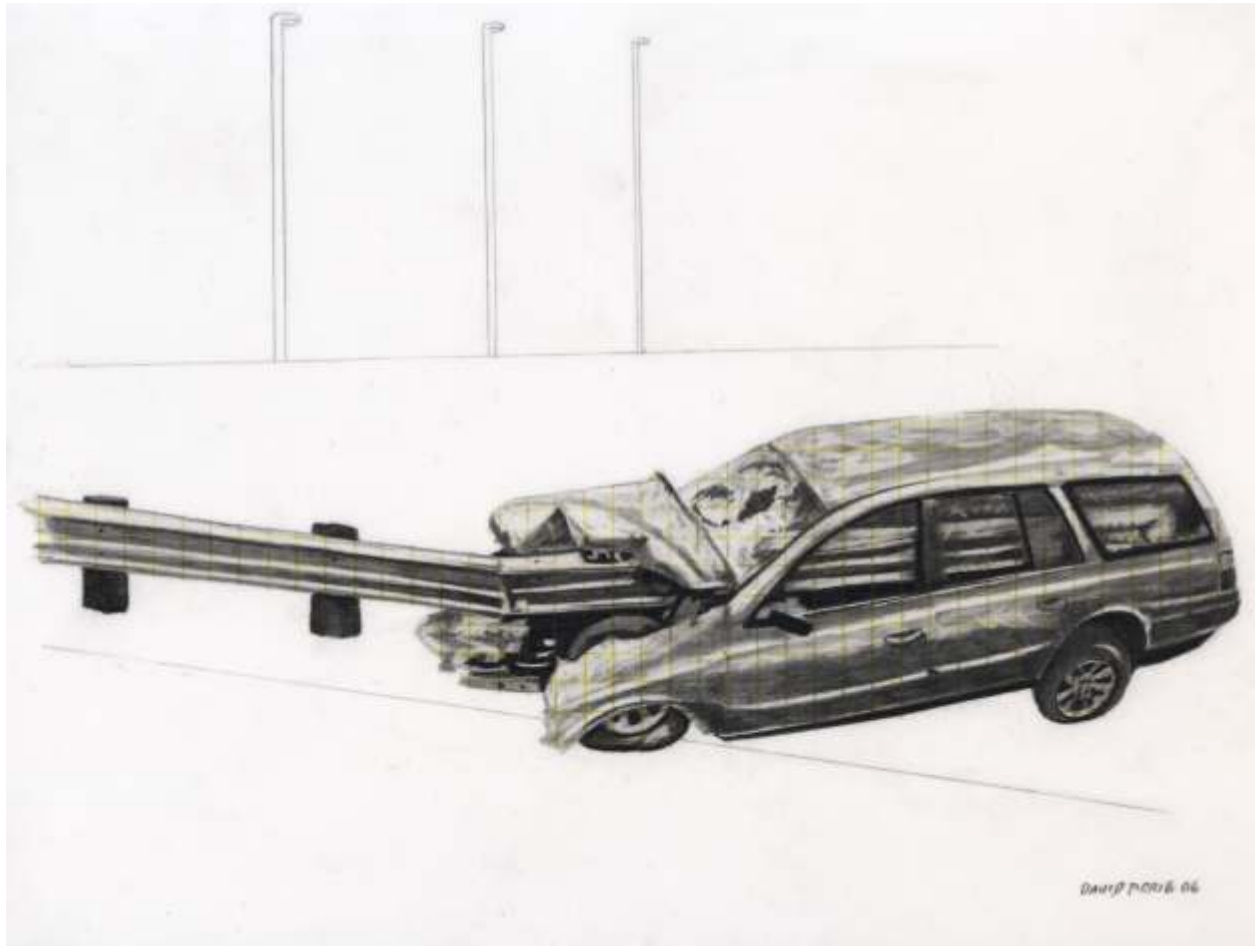
Cornered - 2007
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



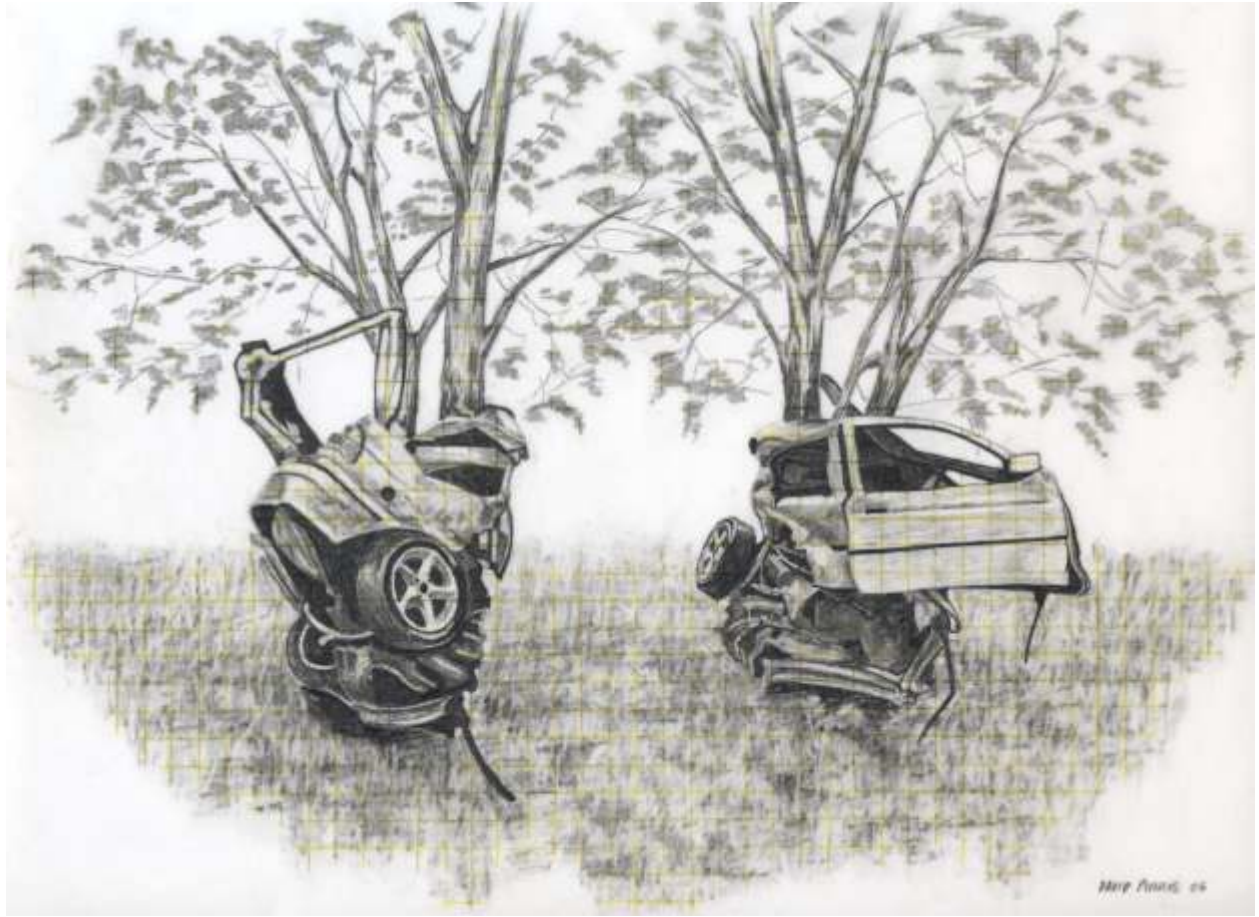
Reverse Pole - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



Mercedes - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



Guardrail 2 - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in



Spring - 2006
graphite on mylar, 9 x 12 in

David Pirrie

Lives and works in Vancouver Canada

Born in 1965

EDUCATION

- 1993 B.F.A., Concordia University, Montreal.
1988 Diploma of Studio Arts, Capilano College, Vancouver.

AWARDS

- 1993 The Canada Council: Explorations Grant.
1994 B.C Cultural Services: Project Grant.

VISUAL ART EXHIBITIONS / Solo

- 2006 "Western Drift", Simon Fraser University, Teck Gallery, Vancouver.
2006 "Risk Analysis" Douglas Udell Gallery, Vancouver.
2005 State Gallery, Vancouver.
2004 "Subduction Zone". Verge Gallery, Vancouver.
2004 "The Loneliest Highway". Atelier 31 Gallery, Seattle.
2002 Atelier 31 Gallery, Seattle.
1995 "Engage", Vancouver East Cultural Centre Gallery.
1994 "Bearings", Vancouver Community Arts Council.
1993 A.C.E. Gallery, Vancouver.
1991 Canal Complex, Montreal.

VISUAL ART EXHIBITIONS / Selected Group

- 2008 "Shift Re-Shift, Contemporary Landscape". Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey BC. Curated by Brian Foreman.
2008 "Work'n It". The Drawers, Headbones Gallery, Toronto.
2007 Toronto International Art fair, The Drawers Headbones Gallery.
2007 Toronto International Art Fair, Douglas Udell Gallery.
2007 "Fall Show". Douglas Udell Gallery, Vancouver BC.
2007 "Spring Show". Douglas Udell Gallery, Edmonton AB.
2007 "Spring Show". Douglas Udell Gallery, Vancouver BC.
2006 Inde-Picks, Independent Curators Selections. The Drawers, Headbones Gallery. Toronto.

- 2006 Fall Show, Douglas Udell Gallery, Vancouver
 2006 "Roadrunners", Kelowna Art Gallery, Kelowna BC. Curated by Linda Sawchwyn.
 2006 "20th Anniversary Exhibition". Douglas Udell Gallery, Vancouver.
 2005 "Arte Fiera" (Bologna Art Fair), GAS Gallery Turin Italy.
 2004 "Bites". Atelier 31 Gallery, Seattle.
 2004 "Tra Est e Ovest" (From East to West) GAS Gallery, Turin Italy. Curated by Stefano Catalani.
 2004 "Vancouver Art Gallery Auction". The Vancouver Art Gallery.
 2004 "Consumables", Bumpershoot Biennale, Seattle. Curated by Mathew Kangas.
 2004 "Small Surprises". Verge Gallery, Vancouver.
 2003 Third Avenue Gallery, Vancouver.

CURATORIAL PROJECTS

- 1997 **Guest Curator**
 "Mining the Body: memory / absence / sensation". Pengah Gallery, Vancouver.
 1994-5 **Curator, Project Director**
 "Currents, An Exhibition of Contemporary Art", Vancouver.
 1993-4 **Curator, Project Director**
 "Work In Progress: Vancouver Artists in Their Studios", Vancouver.

CATALOGUES AND PUBLICATIONS

- "**David Pirrie, Independent Curator's Selection**". Published by Rich Fog, Toronto, 2006.
 "**Roadrunners**", published by the Kelowna Art Gallery, 2006.
2004 Art Auction, Published by The Vancouver Art Gallery, 2004.
 "**Tra Est e Ovest**", **Ritratti di gallerie internazionali 2 La Galleria Atelier 31 Seattle**. Published by GAS Gallery, Torino Italy, 2004.
 "**Subduction Zone**", Published by Verge Gallery, Vancouver BC, 2004.
Currents, An Exhibition of Vancouver Contemporary Art. Published by The Vancouver Life Drawing Society, 1995.
Work In Progress, Vancouver Artists in Their Studios. Published by Arts in Action Society, Vancouver BC, 1994.

PRINT MEDIA

- Selk, Jen: "*Pirrie Fire*". Ion Magazine. Winter edition 2007
 Gustafson, Paula: "*David Pirrie*". Artichoke Magazine of The Arts. Summer Ed. 2005.
 Rubiffini, Emanuela: *Giovani Artisti Italiani* (Torino Italy). November 20th, 2004.
 Brayshaw, Christopher: *The Georgia Straight*. June 10th, 2004

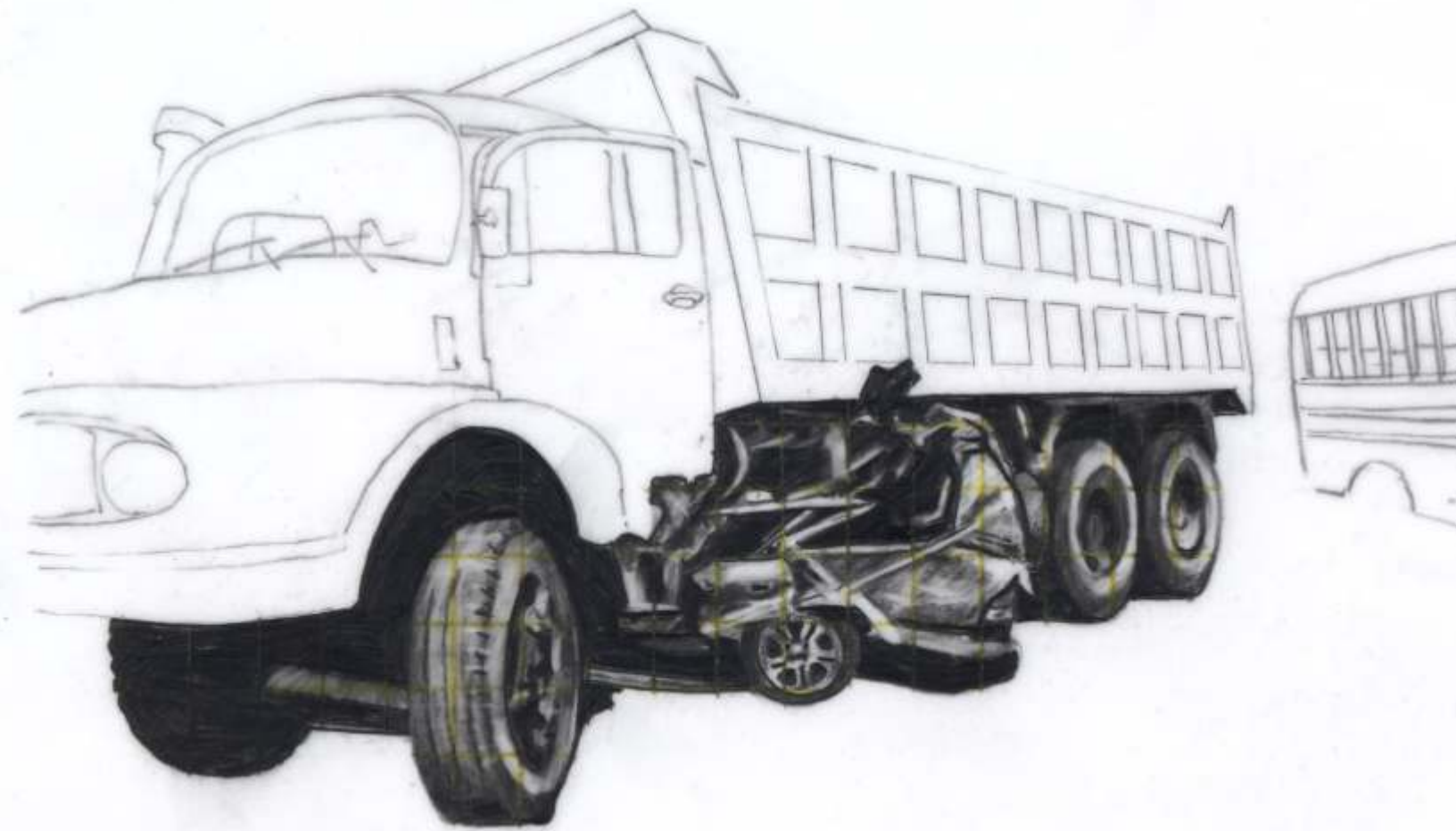
Loydd, Dick: *Arts and Life*. The Vancouver Sun. June 7th, 2004.
Engelson, Andrew: "SW Pick". The Seattle Weekly. January 7-13, 2004.
Nicholls, Jim: "Memory". Arcade, The Journal for Architecture and Design in the Northwest. Fall 1997.
Laurence, Robin: "Currents, An Exhibition of Contemporary Art". The Saturday Review, The Vancouver Sun, April 1st, 1995.
Wilson, Peter: feature interview, "Thursday Calendar". The Vancouver Sun, March 16th, 1995.
Gustafson, Paula: "Arts Notes". The Georgia Straight. March 16th, 1995.
Shefrin, Elizabeth: "A Sense of Place". Pacific Current Magazine. March 1995.
Laurence, Robin: "Art in the Merry Month of May". The Saturday Review, The Vancouver Sun, May 28th, 1994.
Wilson, Peter: "Artists Door to Door". The Vancouver Sun, May 5th, 1994.
L'Ecuyer, Sylvia: "Arts Review". Vent d'Ouest, Radio CBC, June 9th, 1993.
Rosenberg, Ann: "The Saturday Re view". The Vancouver Sun, March 6th, 1993.

TV AND RADIO INTERVIEWS

Cluff, Rick: *The Early Edition*. CBC Radio, June 2004
Granger, Peter: interview, "Currents". CBC Evening News, March 24th, 1995.
Hegey, John: "Zero Avenue". CBC TV, May 24th, 1994.
Hegg, Stephen: "Vancouver Artists in Their Studios". KCTS Channel 9, Seattle. Four minute documentary. May, 1994.
Wake, Hal: "The Early Edition". CBC Radio, May 20th, 1994.
Friend, Ted: "Your Town". U TV, May 14th, 1994.

COLLECTIONS

The Four Seasons Resort, Whistler BC. The Pan Pacific Resort, Whistler BC.
James Stafford Chartered Accountants, Vancouver BC. The collection of Claudia Beck and Andrew Gruff, Vancouver BC.



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