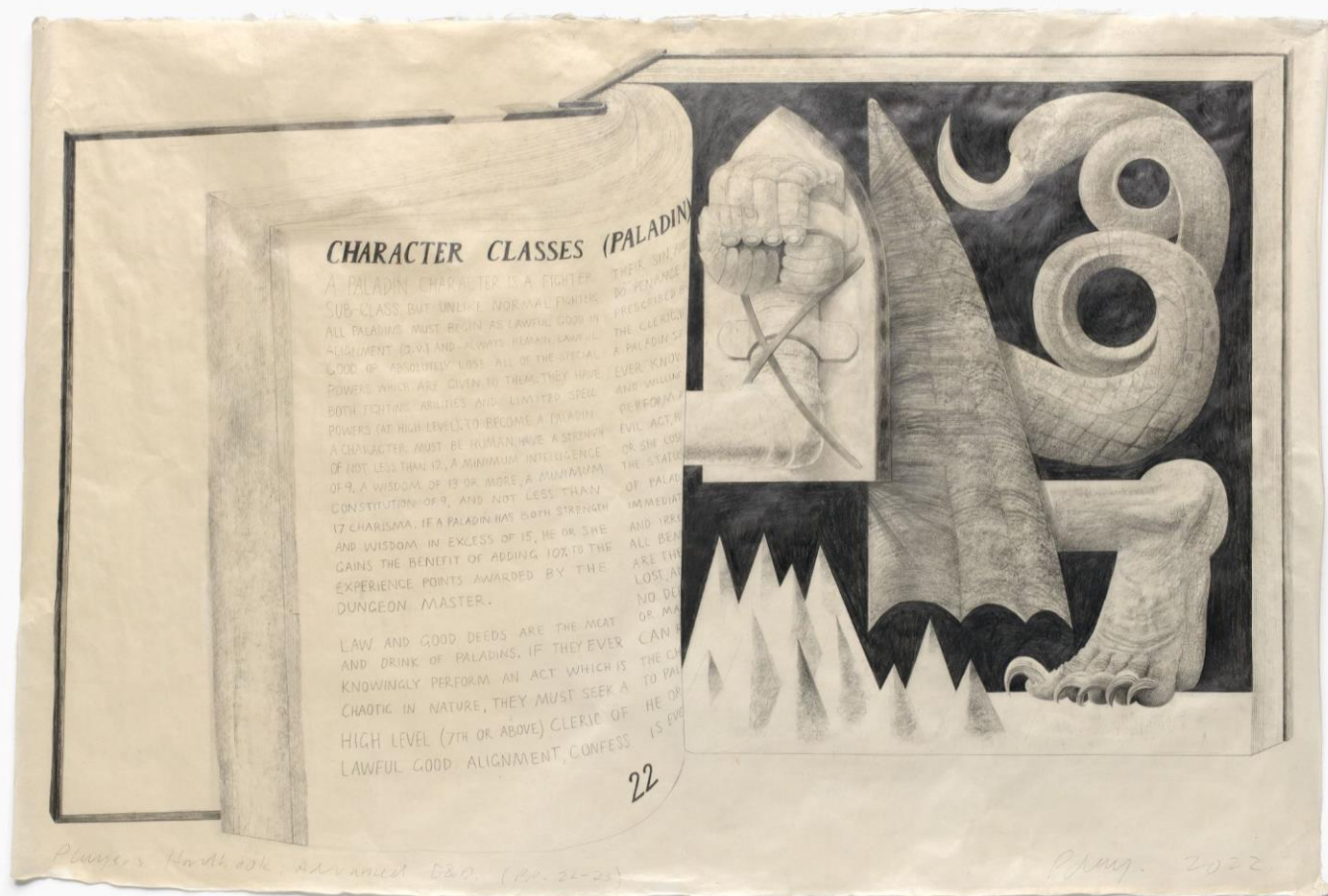




GALLERY

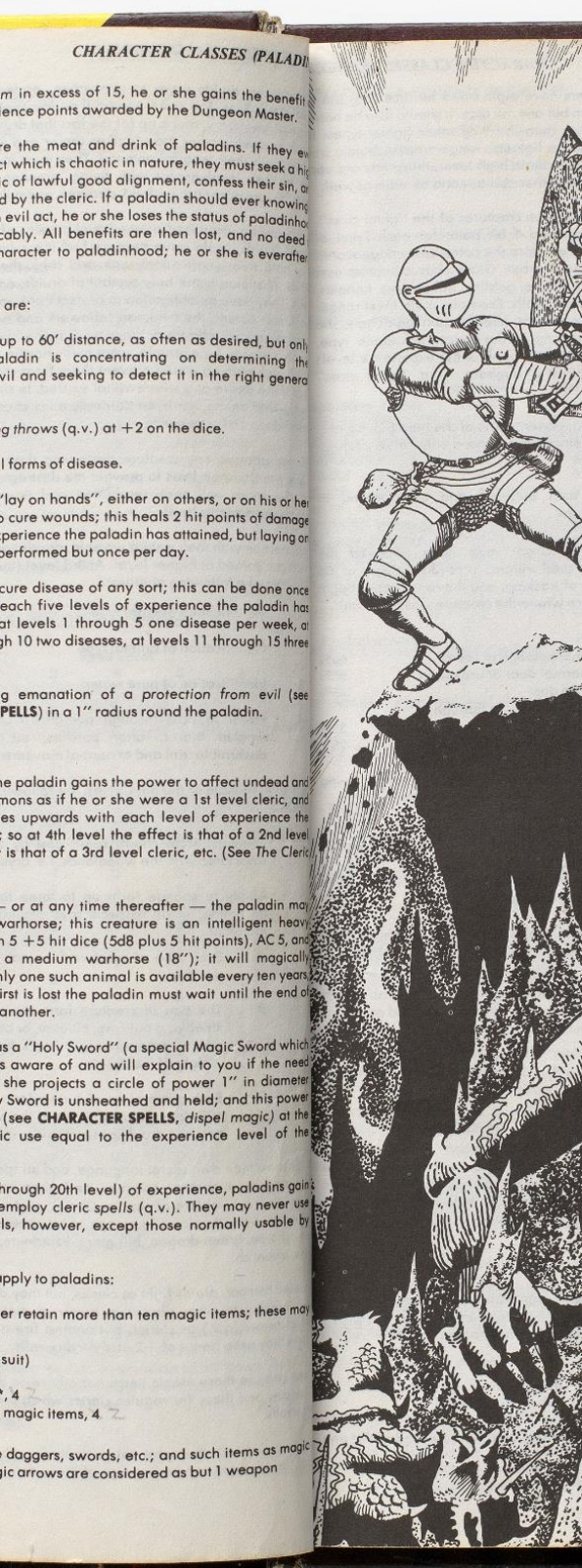


Phil Day

DRAWINGS: BIG & SMALL

Exhibition Catalogue

September 20th – October 3rd



Phil Day

Phil Day invited Cassandra Atherton & Paul Hetherington to edit an international collection of contemporary prose poems. Upon completion the editors invited Phil to make some drawings for the final book. Instead, he made a drawing for every poem - resulting in over 100 drawings.

Phil Day is a Melbourne based artist who began practicing as an illustrator and caricaturist for the Canberra Times in 1994. After graduating from the Australian National University in 1995, he commenced working as a printer, binder and designer of artist's books in the Edition + Artist's Book Studio, Australian National University. After his inclusion in the 2000 Australian Drawing Biennale, Canberra, Day has collaborated with authors in the making of books. To date, Day has created over 70 books. His work is held in collections including the National Gallery of Australia and the National Library of Australia and has been published in the New Yorker Magazine.

Image (left): *Players Handbook*
Photography: Matthew Stanton

Hume Highway conversation

Driving to from Melbourne to NSW, Phil Day and his friend, Jed Stone, recorded an hour long conversation: The following is excerpt:

Jed Stone: So much writing is kind of a bore. But then there's that writing that is striving to capture that the fact of living is something. And oddly, striving to better catch this in a way, even more mundane than if we just carry on. I can't go on so I will go. No?

Phil Day: Well I think you're touching on something - it's a good starting point. Because when I'm having a conversation with someone, I have to use words that are part of my vocabulary, and I defer to them because those words best articulate my point. The same it true of a sentence - a phrase I might use

JS: They can be like bread crumbs for the luster to follow.

PD: Yeah. And then there's the surface of the conversation, the tone, depending on what I'm talking about the tone will shift as the conversation moves along. But as far as the content of the conversation, I really don't know what I'm gonna say as I meander along. But I go on anyway, with no real knowing because the other speaker will interject and expand the conversation. Neither speaker can have any clear idea of where the conversation will end.

JS: Yes, both the speakers are authors and readers striving to capture something that really can't be caught.

PD: Definitely not caged. And that's the sort of reading I find exciting, and poetry tends to deliver this to me the most.

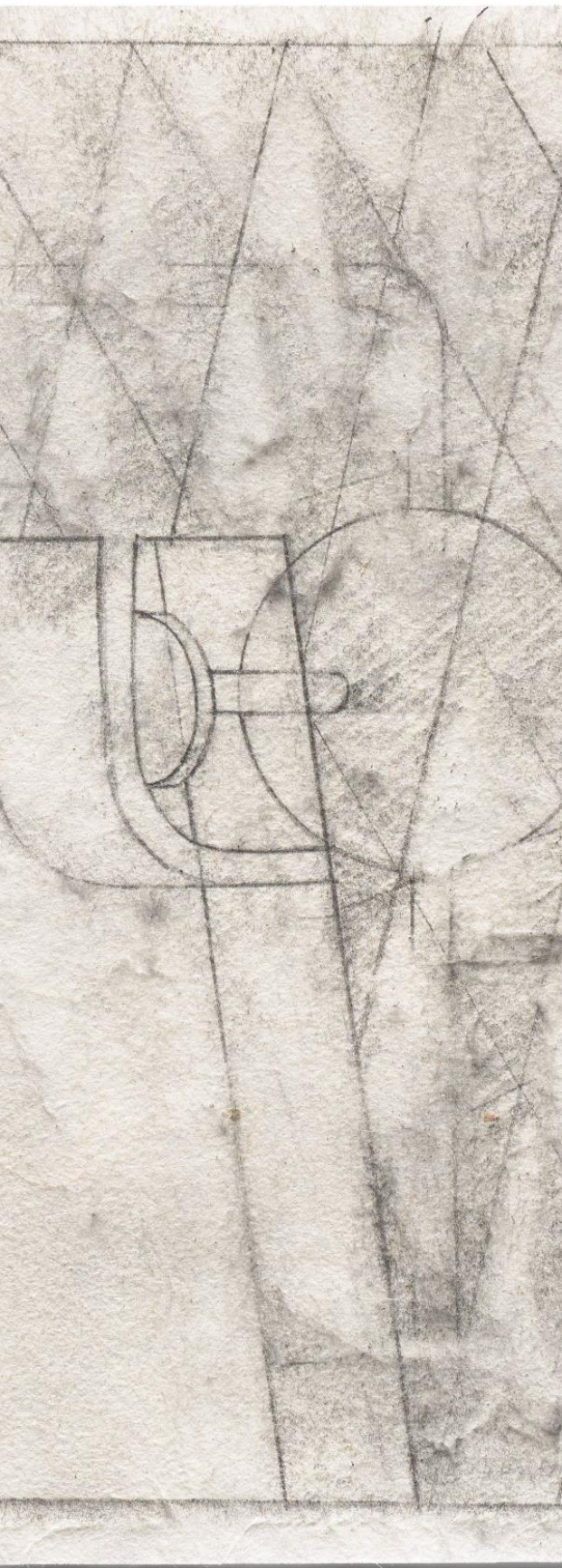
JS: And you try to catch them in drawings?

PD: I try. I try to read poems with as empty a head as I can, and then something from reading a poem causes me to start a drawing - it's like a conversation. I know I'm going to say something - and I'm listening to what I read and I'm reading the lines as I make them. This is different to observational drawing of, say a nude model standing in front of me. I've well over a thousand hours of life drawing - drawing the human body. And that is a lesson in looking and matching: there's the subject, that is the fact, I'm gonna talk at and listen to that factual topic. I'm gonna match these lines to those shapes and tones. But poetry doesn't have such matching facts. There is a matching going on, but it's not wholly perceptual. The subject device of the poem is never really the topic. Like Blake's Tyger. It's not really about a tiger.

JS: No, of course.



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as the bear.



PD: And to illustrate the poem with a picture of a tiger might catch Blake's tiger, but not the Tyger poem. A picture of a tiger could jolt a less curious reader to a resolve that isn't really there. A poem is naturally ambiguous, yet I do, and you do, without wanting or trying, conjure up lots of stuff from a poem. And it's unlikely I would come up with the stuff without the poem ...

JS: It's a relationship.

PD: Yeah, because it's not like when I'm illustrating a narrative, say, a New Yorker cartoon. If the cartoon has dogs talking to each other, I'll need to draw a dog talking to another dog. But with a poem I've got the poem talking to me, and my drawing is trying to talk back. Well, that's what I think I'm doing.

JS: Do you have any success?

PD: Hard to tell. I guess I've done what I felt was right to what might be immediately not there.

JS: Ok ... so you're making something that's equally open to another interpretation?

PD: That would be exciting if people were that engaged with the drawing. But I find drawings fall much shorter of where poems can go, they engage with people so differently. Poems are by nature intellectual in that they must be read to enter them. A child who can't read can't enter a poem, but they can look at a picture and go in all sorts of exciting directions. I think the act of reading anything has a particular grip, and it can be suffocating, but that's not the case with poems - not for me - there's a lot of wriggle room.

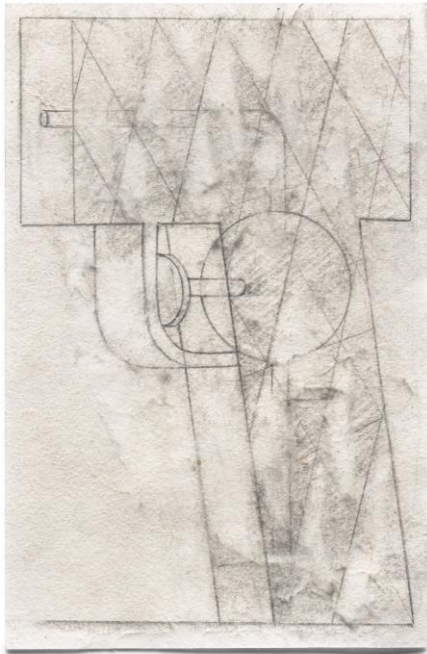
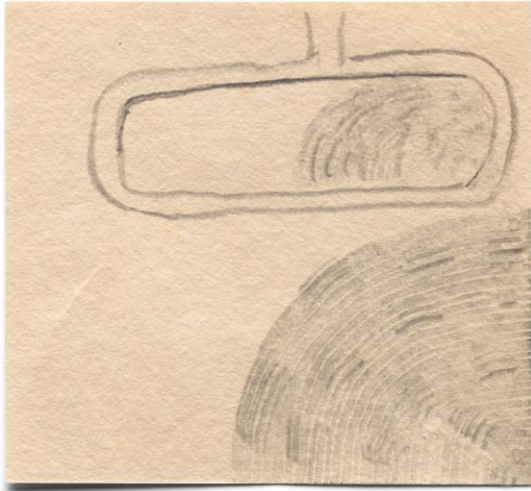
JS: Because there's no conclusion, no end.

PD: Exactly At what time do you tire or refuse to go on contemplating a poem. And that's the role of the reader. And drawing a picture is parallel to that behaviour: at what point do I feel - that's it - drawing done.

JS: Do you consider the poet at all?

PD: Never. I think it is dangerous. Dangerous to me. Because I might try to charm them, you know, put on a smile of sorts, give them a bigger slice of cake, surprise them or something like that. I'm just trying to be alone in myself to draw my honest response.

Jed Stone is a philosophy graduate of Melbourne University. Jed is of the opinion that literary fiction is capable of unearthing life's anxieties. He is the owner and operator of Sunup Cycles, and the bassist for Mining Boom.



PHIL DAY

Alcatraz: selected drawings

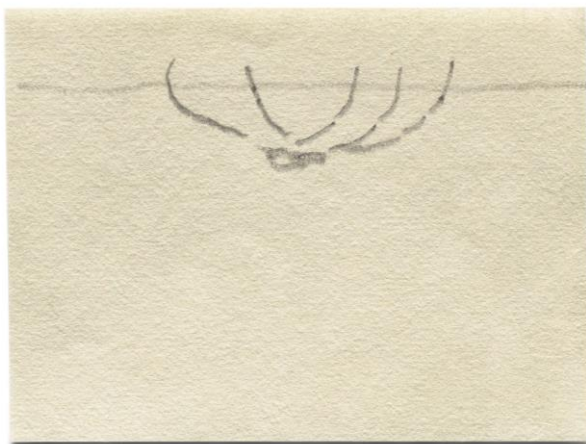
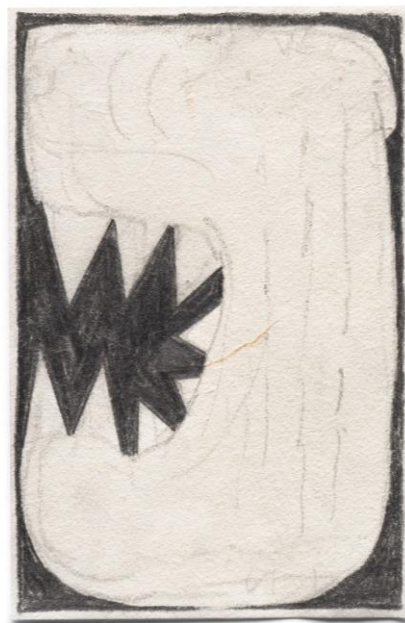
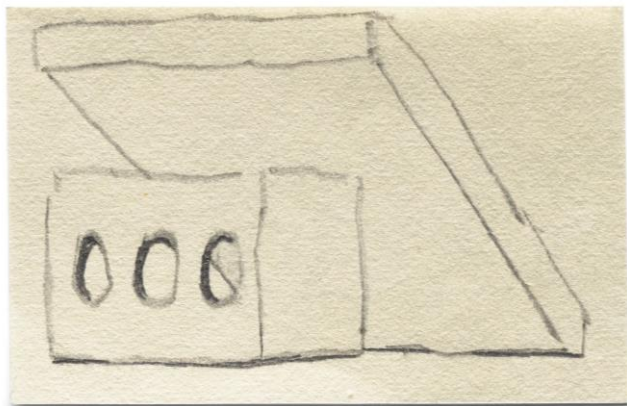
Pencil on paper

Scroll size: 10235 x 465 mm (W x H)

Edition of 1

Price on application

Photography by Matthew Stanton



PHIL DAY

Alcatraz: selected drawings

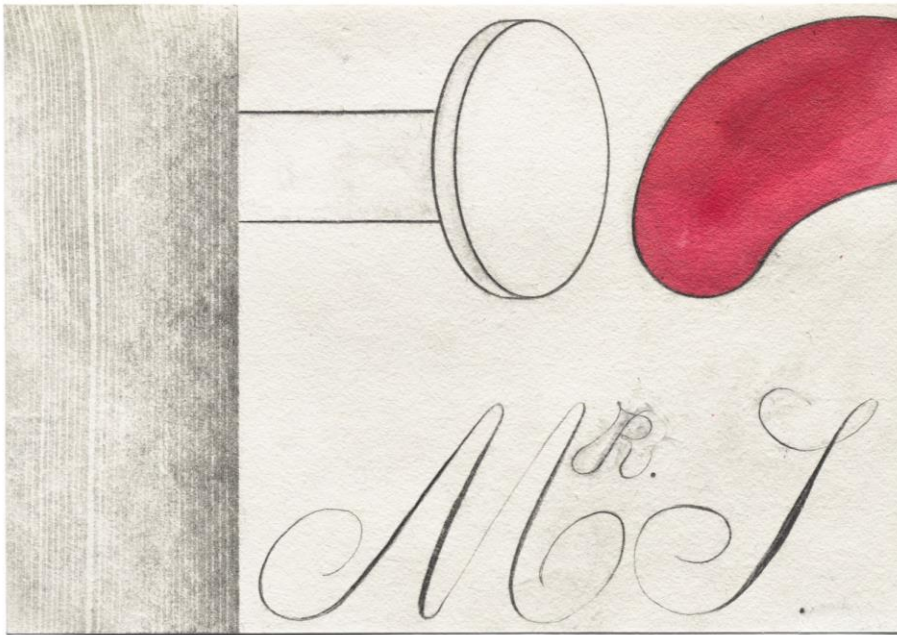
Pencil on paper

Scroll size: 10235 x 465 mm (W x H)

Edition of 1

Price on application

Photography by Matthew Stanton



PHIL DAY

With his finger No.3

Pencil and gouache on paper

Frame size 385 x 305 mm (W x H)

Framed: \$550



Image (above): Roger Hargreaves's illustrations for the Mr. Men series. (1971-1984). Not for sale





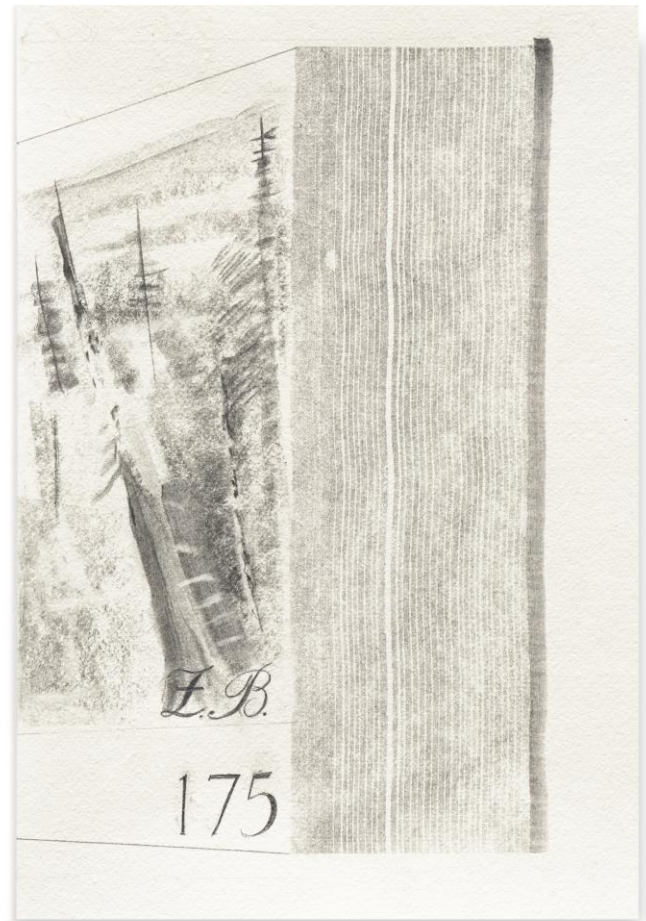
PHIL DAY

Swords and Spells (pp. 29 – 30)

Pencil on Paper

Frame size: 370 x 350 mm (W
x H)

Framed: \$550



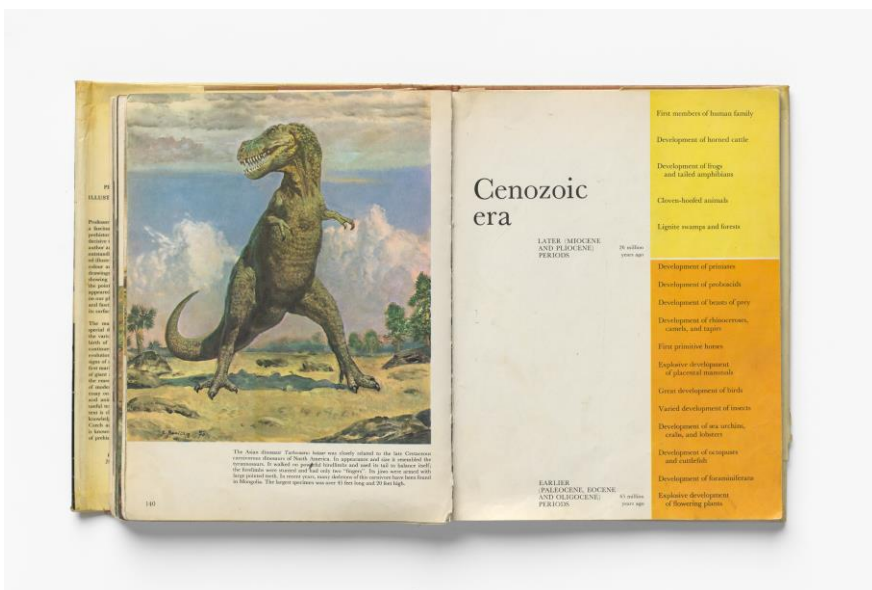
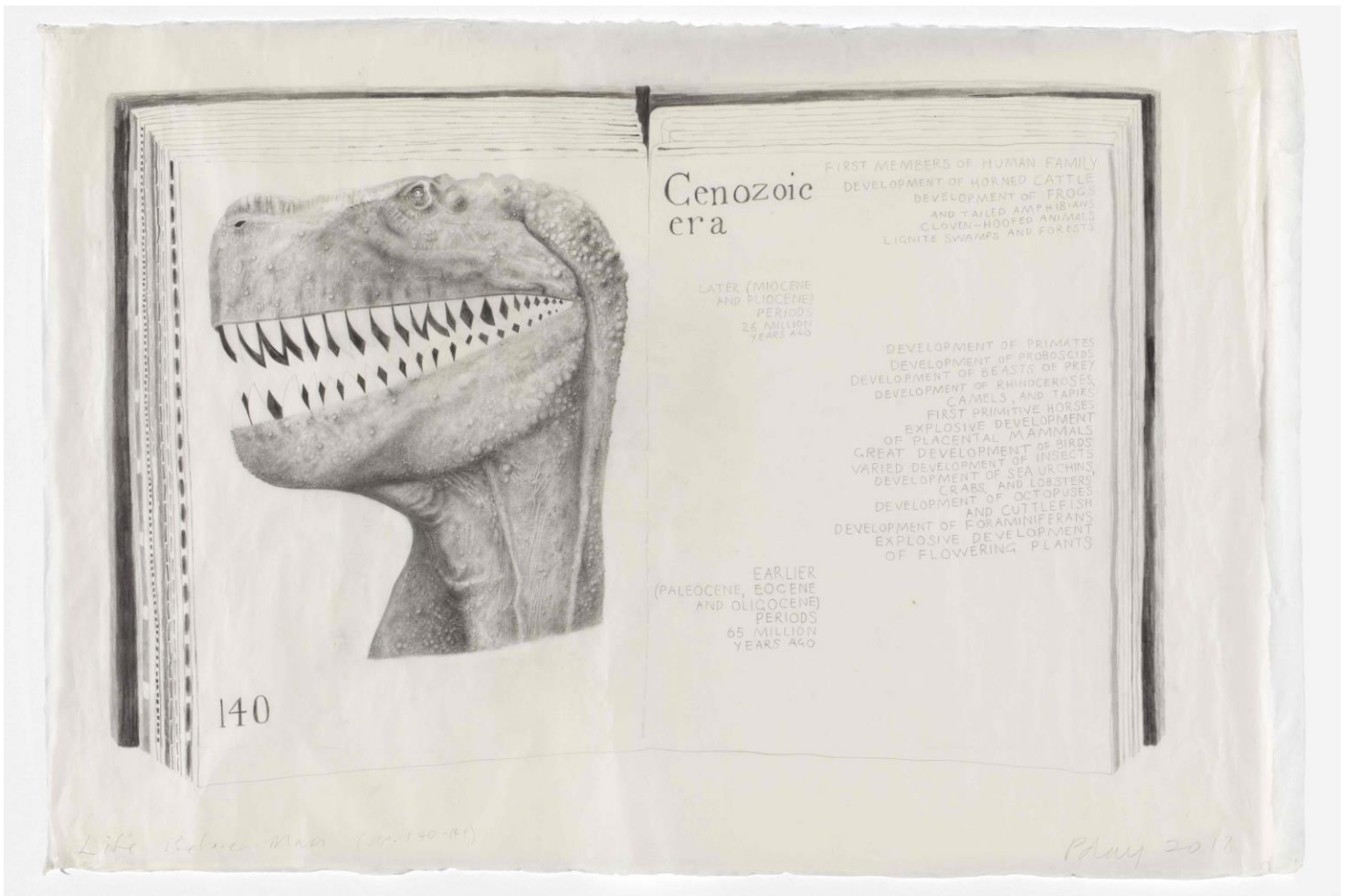
PHIL DAY

Life Before Man (pp. 174 – 175)

Pencil on Paper

Frame size: 680 x 395 mm (W
x H)

Framed: \$790



PHIL DAY

Life Before Man (pp.140 -141)

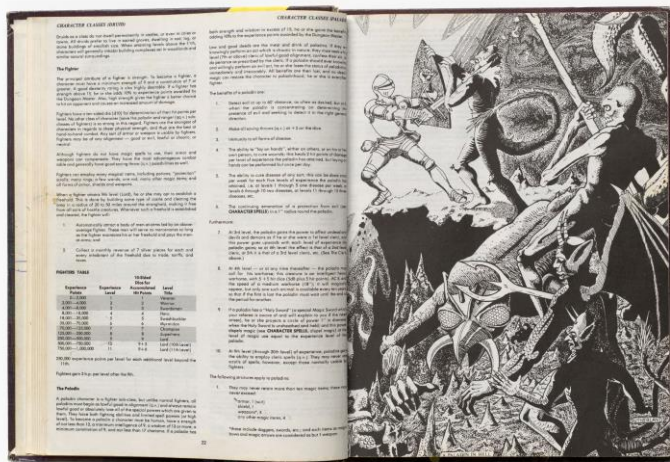
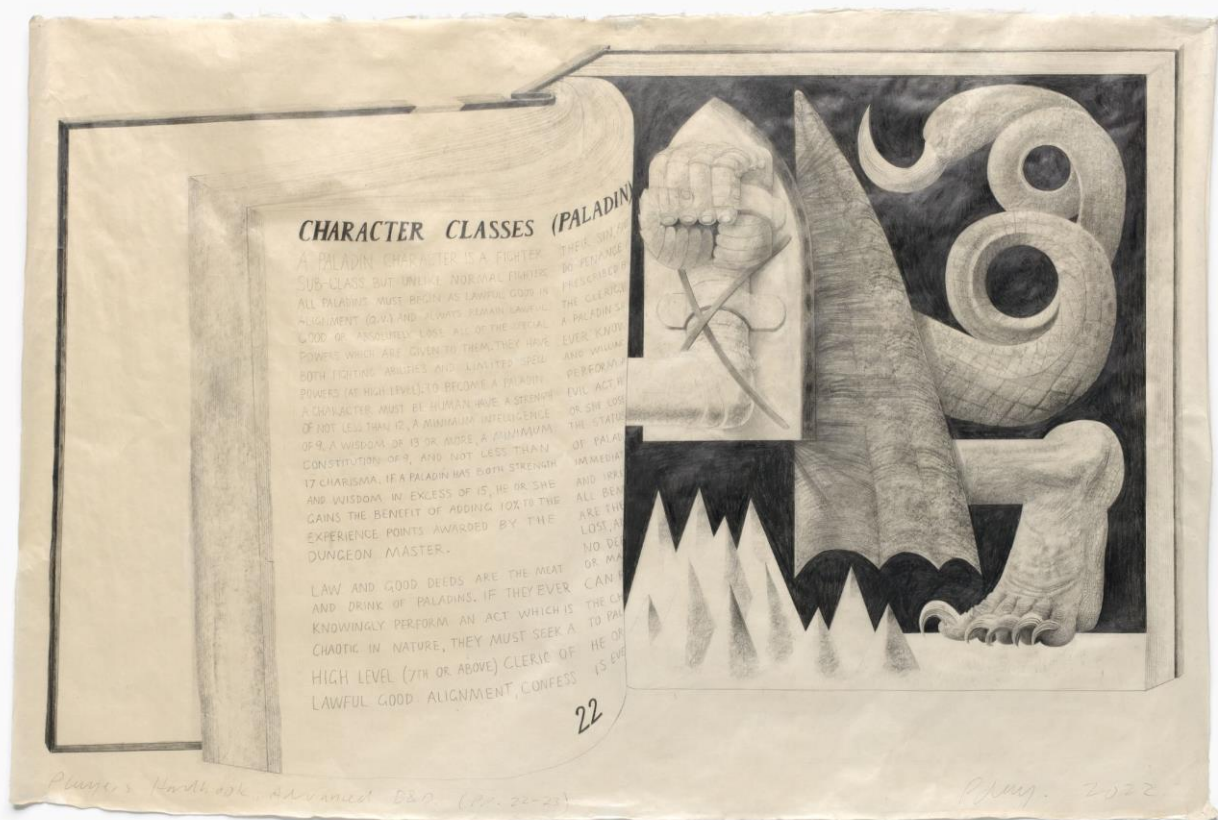
Pencil on Paper

Frame size: 1140 x 830 mm

(W x H)

Framed: \$2,300

Image (left): Zdeněk Burian's palaeo illustrations for book *Life Before Man* (1972).



PHIL DAY

Players Handbook,
Advanced D&D (pp. 22-23)

Pencil on Paper

Frame size: 1140 x 830 mm
(W x H)

Framed: \$2,300

Image (left): David C. Sutherland
III for role playing game Dungeons &
Dragons (1974 - 1997). Not for sale