

Blurring the Line

This catalogue is published on the occasion of *Blurring the Line*, an exhibition organized by members of the Spring 2014 Mills College Museum Studies class: Paulina Alvarez, Keegan Amit, Gillian Chan, Cassandra Colten, Rachel Davis, Maggie Freeman, Kelly Hird, Sonya Kohli, Anya Rome, Nora Roth, Lisa Smith, and Lyndsey Werner.

The exhibition was presented at 70 South Park, San Francisco, April 12 through May 4, 2014.

© 2014 Mills College Art Museum, 5000 MacArthur Boulevard, California, 94613, mcam.mills.edu. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner without permission.

The Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. As a teaching museum at a dynamic liberal arts college for undergraduate women and co-ed graduate studies, the museum is dedicated to engaging and inspiring the intellectual and creative life of Mills students through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections.

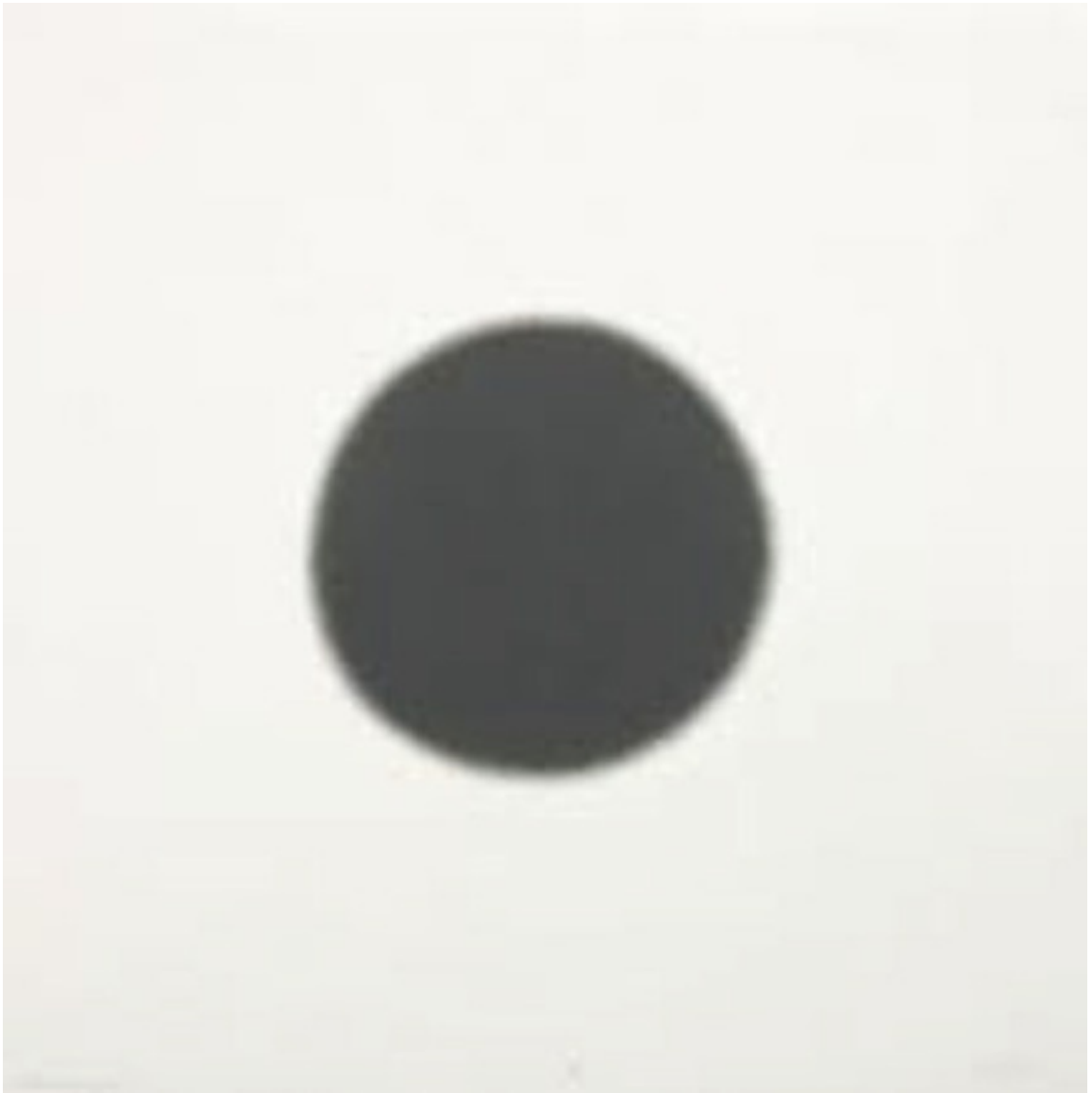
COVER: Carrie Gundersdorf, *Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring*, 2005, Oil on canvas

MILLS COLLEGE
ART MUSEUM

Blurring the Line

CONTENTS

5	INTRODUCTION	Dr. Stephanie Hanor
7	WHAT IS DRAWING?	Paulina Alvarez
13	THE BEAUTY OF ESTHESIA	Keegan Amit
21	MULTI-FACETED AMPLITUDE	Gillian Chan
27	LINES AND THE STORIES BEHIND THEM	Cassandra Colten
33	AN EXPRESSIVE AND FOUNDATIONAL PROCESS	Rachel Davis
39	THE HONESTY OF THE ART	Maggie Freeman
45	DRAWING THE LINE	Kelly Hird
51	LINE CONVEYING MOVEMENT	Sonya Kohli
57	WEBS OF MEANING	Anyia Rome
63	DISCOMFORT AT HOME	Nora Roth
69	ICONIC TRANSFORMATIONS	Lisa Smith
75	TO WEAVE AND TANGLE	Lyndsey Werner
80	WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION	



Gloria Ortiz-Hernandez, *Sequitur I-V*, 2005,
Graphite on paper, Collection of Penny
Cooper and Rena Rosenwasser

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Stephanie Hanor

Blurring the Line represents the third collaboration between the Mills College Art Museum and Bay Area collectors Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles. Curated by members of the Spring 2014 Museum Studies Workshop, *Blurring the Line*, is a remarkable opportunity for students to learn curatorial practices first-hand through an extraordinary collection of artwork created by contemporary women artists. The Niles have generously invited students to curate an exhibition from their collection in their gallery space, giving the all female group of students a unique opportunity to research and examine the work of an international roster of women artists.

The resulting exhibition explores contemporary ideas around the process of drawing, perhaps the oldest form of artistic production. *Blurring the Line* examines both traditional and expanded forms of drawing, especially in relation to three-dimensional and architectural space and the use of artistic mediums that are not traditionally associated with drawing, such as photography, sculpture, and video.

Featuring approximately 40 works, *Blurring the Line* includes work by Uta Barth, Andrea Bowers, Tracey Emin, Carrie Gundarsdorf, Mona Hatoum, Nina Katchadourian, Rachel Khedoori, Liz Lerner, Vera Lutter, Julie Mehretu, Ana Mendieta, Shirin Neshat, Gay Outlaw, Amanda Ross-Ho, Kiki Smith, Sarah Sze, Nicola Tyson, Anna Von Mertens, Pae White, Rachel Whiteread, Sue Williams, Anne Wilson, and Andrea Zittel.

The exhibition also includes a selection of drawings by Columbian artist Gloria Ortiz-Hernandez from the the collection of Penny Cooper and Rena Rosenwasser. Ortiz-Hernandez's labor-intensive works focus on rudimentary geometric forms built through repetitive layers of graphite to create intricate and visually stunning drawings.

Blurring the Line is curated by Paulina Alvarez, Keegan Amit, Gillian Chan, Cassandra Colten, Rachel Davis, Maggie Freeman, Kelly Hird, Sonya Kohli, Anya Rome, Nora Roth, Lisa Smith, and Lyndsey Werner. Their research and writing are featured in this catalogue and bring new interpre-

tations to the significant group of works they have selected for this exhibition.

The members of the Mills College Museum Studies Workshop and the staff of the Mill College Art Museum thank Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles for their willingness and encouragement in providing this opportunity to learn about and engage with contemporary ideas and practices through their collection.



Nicola Tyson, *Untitled #97*, 1999, Charcoal on paper

WHAT IS DRAWING?

Paulina Alvarez

The evolution of the term “drawing” arose with its appropriation by viewers, critics, and even artists at different times and in different ways. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary defines drawing as: “the formation of a line by drawing some tracing instrument from point to point on a surface; representation by lines; delineation as distinguished from painting . . . the arrangement of lines which determine form.”¹

Blurring the Line does not attempt to find an all-encompassing definition of drawing, and is not preoccupied with looking at art works with a list of what may or may not constitute as this form of visual art. It is, rather, an exploration of developments about the oldest art form. Consequently, the exhibition expands any previous limited perceptions of the term to include more contemporary ideas about the use of color, definition of space, medium and dimensionality.

The Post-Modern era is heavily characterized by artists’ expansive utilization of media in the cultivation of their artistic objectives and consequently paved the way for drawing to be performed, viewed and received in new ways, adapt

ing to a much more experimental medium. Giorgio Vassari describes drawing to be the beginning of everything in art, essential for the creative process responsible for documenting what is seen, imagined, and so forth. In the sixteenth century when Raffaello Sanzio da Urbino and Leonardo da Vinci made their drawings, otherwise known as studies for their masterpieces, they were not seen as legitimate pieces of art. They would not be displayed for others to see—one was interested solely in the final product, the painting. Since, drawings have become a valuable art form facing little to no hierarchical restrictions.

One can see the changes in the role of drawing in this new modern reinterpretation and incorporation in the photograph of Vera Lutter. *303 East Wacker Street, Chicago, IL, October 13, 2001* is consumed by dynamic shading and gradations of black and white, emphasizing the sharpness of the lines that reduce the image to a linear plane with light and shadow inverted. This contrast breaks up the image while the uninterrupted rows of windows construct the building, giving the architecture a sense of vibrancy and visual unity. The patterns created by the perspective lines forge an

impression of shimmering movement and its reflective property elevates the picture’s monumentality as it frames the vertical, horizontal and crosshatched lines of other structures. Lines have the capacity to divide, unify, and if they accentuate the composition enough, become the focal point; such is the case with Lutter’s work.

Buzzzz (Perforated Cube Study 1) created by Gay Outlaw is one of three works that begins with a basic cube shape, all of which are equal in size, with holes that Outlaw refers to as “voids and units” punctured into each structure and which increase in size allowing one to see through.² Thus Outlaw’s work “invariably blurs the boundaries that relate shapes to their external referents and internal workings.”³ Questions like whether negative space is defining form or if this object occupies or illuminates the space are integral to the piece. The *Perforated Cube* is one of the most basic geometric shapes, but even so, it challenges our perceptions of what space looks like and expands one’s objective percep-

¹ <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/w/what-is-drawing/>

² <http://www.artcenecal.com/ArtistsFiles/OutlawG/OutlawGFile/GOutlawEssay1101.html>, Mary-Kay Lombino, Curator of Exhibitions, *The Illusion of Instability*

³ Ibid.

tions and experience. Thus, this work revolves around a person and their conception and perception of space.

An exploration of line can be seen in Tomma Abts' work, whose design in *Untitled (diagonals)*, like much of her work, evolves around geometric shapes and forms. "While abstract, the works are still illusionistic, rendered with sharp attention to shadows, three-dimensional effects, and highlights that defy any single, realistic light source. The resulting canvases convey balance and movement, while maintaining a sense of uncertainty, which seems akin to memory."⁴ Movement has been fabricated in what could very well be described as visual optics, as the seeming uniformity constructed by the sharp diagonal lines and patterns of colored segments that contract and expand with a facet like complexity. This visual trickery is one that has been present throughout the history of art, such as *trump l'oeil*, meaning to "trick the eye," as it would make a viewer believe that a two-dimensional work they were viewing actually had three-dimensional depth.

Nicola Tyson's drawings are far away from the spectrum of representational, though there is still an identifiable likeness. As evident by *Untitled #97*, she does not seek to create a "physical version of figures," instead she is interested in a "psychological version of the figure in unorthodox bodily form, metamorphosing their enigmatic attributes into raw, tangible

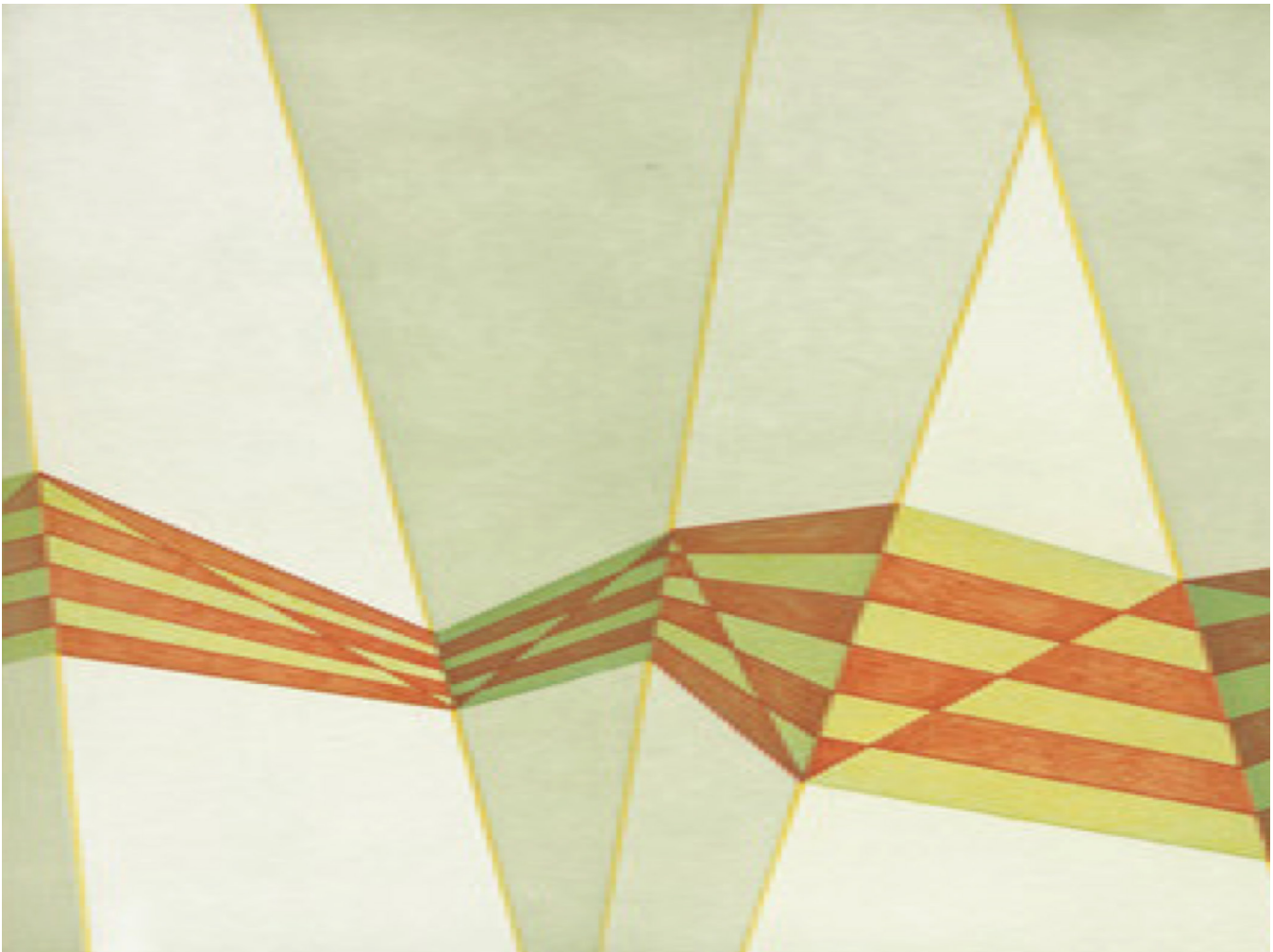
characters."⁵ It is this balance of figuration with abstraction and psychological complexity that refers back to Surrealist artists. The network of gestural black lines allows one to trace the contortions of the jet black lines of this pronounced form which become tighter and overlap as you look away from the center.

This space explores the transformation of the visual medium in regard to the use of pattern and line as manner of constructing space, as well as the linear structure of architecture. These contemporary artists have literally and figuratively drawn from formal concepts and made a case for its continued weight across all art forms, while stressing a historical departure from traditional institutional definitions and limited tools that revolve around drawing.

4 <http://www.davidzwirner.com/artists/tomma-abts/biography/>

5 <http://eyeseehue.com/Nicola-Tyson>

Tomma Abts, *Untitled (diagonals)*, 2009, Color aquatint with softground etching



Tomma Abts

(British, born in Germany, 1967)

Untitled (diagonals), 2009

Color aquatint with soft ground etching

Abstract painter Tomma Abts' designs are constructed without any preconceived expectations, and without any source material or preliminary sketches. The conservative amount of color applied is most subdued in its variations and *Untitled (diagonals)* epitomizes the typical construction of her creations through the use of repetition and pattern: "rendered with sharp attention to shadows, three-dimensional effects that create the impression of depth, and highlights that defy and single realistic light source."¹ This work bridges the themes of line as movement, use of pattern and line, as well as the unique relationship of two-dimensional and three-dimensional renderings.

¹ <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/viseo/turner-prize-2006-tomma-abts>

Nicola Tyson

(British, 1960)

Untitled #97, 1999

Charcoal on paper

Recognized for her distinctive depictions of the human body, Nicola Tyson creates characters that are bizarre, untraditional, and psychological and thus are not representational, or naturalistic physical beings. Such depictions are described as having “abnormal limbs, skewed or featureless faces,” though remaining distinguishable by “garments and sexual attributes.”²

The artist speaks of how she, “Begin[s] to draw and see[s] what happens! The paintings develop from drawings—it all starts with the line.”³ Such remarks are most telling of her methodology and tradition of creating unorthodox depictions that could only be tapped from her personal exploration of “imagination” and “focused free-association.”⁴

Gay Outlaw

(American, 1959)

Buzzzz (Perforated Cube Study 1’), 2001

PVC, epoxy resin, chalk, pigment

This piece is typical of most of Gay Outlaw’s work, which explores ideas of space. Real versus illusionary depth cause onlookers to question any first impressions. The work is part of a series that commemorates the interest in cubes of Sol Lewitt “as the perfect object for exploration of the way we perceive three dimensions.”⁵ The complexity of this sculpture’s dimensionality encourages the individual manipulation and control of its illusionistic construction.⁶ As such, the work challenges the formal aspects of drawing by redefining line, shape, and dimensionality.

² <http://eyeseehue.com/Nicola-Tyson>

³ Ibid.

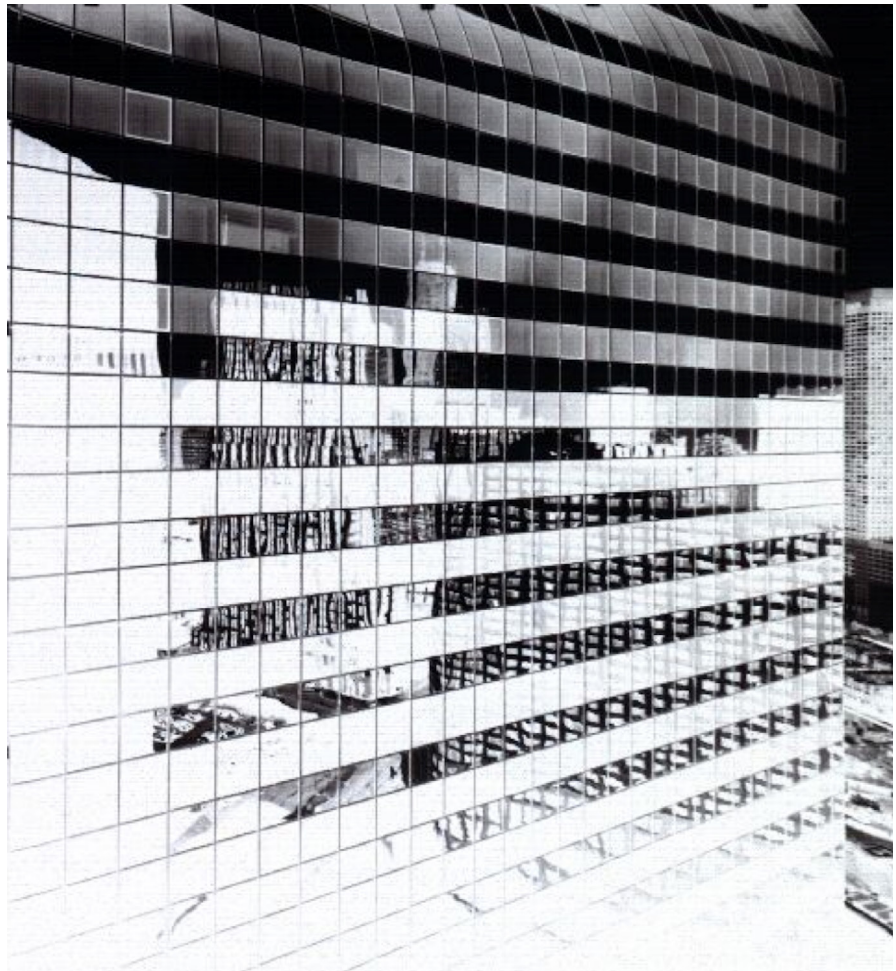
⁴ <https://artsy.net/artist/nicola-tyson>

⁵ <http://www.artscenecal.com/ArtistFiles/OutlawG/OutlawGFile/GOutlawEssay1101.html>.

Mary-Kay Lomgino, Curator of Exhibitions, *The Illusion of Instability*

⁶ Ibid.

Vera Lutter, *303 East Wacker Street, Chicago, IL, October 13, 2001*, 2001, Unique gelatin silver print



Vera Lutter

(German, 1960)

303 East Wacker Street, Chicago, IL, October 13, 2001, 2001

Unique gelatin silver print

Vera Lutter uses a room-sized camera obscura to capture large black and white images: "Through the aperture of a pinhole, rather than a carved lens, an inverted image of the outside world was projected onto mural-sized sheets of photographic paper."⁷ With a range of subject matters from urban centers, industrial landscapes, abandoned factories, and transit cites, Lutter has gone a step further and taken replication out of the picture by solely "retain[ing] the unique negative print in an effort to maintain the immediacy of her images."⁸ The formal linear structure of architecture and monochrome scale of the windowpanes that build up the structures compressed together heavily contribute to the drawing like characteristics of this photograph.

⁷ <http://veralutter.net/home.php>

⁸ Ibid.



Chloe Piene, *Coddling*, 2003, Charcoal on vellum

THE BEAUTY OF ESTHESIA

Keegan Amit

Kiki Smith, Chloe Piene, Aleksandra Mir, Danica Phelps and Angela Lim, five living, female, artists, invite us to walk the line. Yet as much as they invite us to do so, they also obfuscate that line and its meaning. Drawing is a particularly powerful way to deliver this dual message since it is so often considered a lesser medium, even a “throw away” medium. The same can be said of needlework, which despite being capable of generating great beauty, was overlooked as art for centuries. There is a delicacy to each work here, an ephemeral quality: almost like skin; precious and bound to be shed over time. These five artists unite and untie body and voice, sacred and profane, object and agency, great artwork and a primacy of things we handle everyday in ordinary ways.

In describing her work, Aleksandra Mir states a parallel which describes the work of the other five artists as well as her own: “My work is often described as “feminist” but. . . the content of my projects almost always pulls in

the opposite direction, showing frailty, vulnerability and pathetic incompetence towards the status quo.” In showing and exposing such weakness, these artists act courageously, embracing beauty and femininity and altering preconceptions of categories presumed to be fixed. Upheaval of social norms is achieved with poetic intimacy. This intimacy results from confronting the audience with the interplay of documentation and translucency that runs through media and theme for all five artists, as does an obsessive or devotional component, as if each is compelled to capture and celebrate the delicate.

Their individual uses of translucency are as diverse as the six works in this exhibition, but it is with translucence that each artist expresses their infatuation with ephemera and fragility. Described as homemade sequins, Angela Lim has layered fish scales, gossamer thin, to cover the entire skirt of the apron of *Cockaigne in your Clumsily*. Reflecting and diffusing light, their fragile translucence

defies easy recognition. The poem stitched in the bodice reveals deeply private longing, letting light into something typically unseen. As exemplified in *e.e. #65, 2nd gen.*, Danica Phelps traces her sold drawings so not only is the tracing paper translucent, she adds records to make transparent how she spent the money generated by the sale of that drawing. In her public record keeping, she exposes the exchange inherent in the commoditization of art. The resulting artwork, the record, is sold in turn—a reminder that even records are impermanent. Similar to Phelps’ use of tracing paper, Chloe Piene favors vellum for most of her two-dimensional work, including *Coddling*. The image, is at once skeletal and figurative, like the surface is meant to be seen through. Piene reveals the brittle and slightly grotesque, Phelps reveals the commercial and ordinary, Lim the deeply personal and unsatisfied, all parts of life usually not discussed in polite company. Yet all insist on beautifying as well as preserving; the result is

both alluring and strange.

In *Whisper Drawing*, Kiki Smith brings us what cannot be said aloud. Smith chooses a very particular Nepalese paper for her drawings of the human form, including *Whisper*, because of its skin like quality. Though opaque, it has a luminous, sheer quality over which Smith's pencil lines seem to float. Evocative of revelation and secrets, the light application of line conveys neither the minimal information of a line drawing, nor is it rendered in detail.

In *Lake Okeechobee/Brighton* and *Evesham #89* by Aleksandra Mir, the large, white paper sheets are eggshell thin and hint that the hopeful eye could see through them. The Sharpie marker appears absorbed by the paper but as though the marker was the stronger force, and this enhances the exquisite precision, and at times, even reveals gesture in little gaps or variations of tone. The thinness and scale of the paper and the graphic quality of line give the impression these works were lifted from a draftsman's table, like blue prints—disposable and yet kept forever. In all six works, there is an intersection of things precious, and yet deeply personal. Morbidity and affection always meet on a shared plane.

With these insistent reminders of death comes the desire to preserve or document. Intertwined with the documentary element, these works share an obsessive quality in their production. A devotional repetition, that at moments takes on the spiritual quality of ritualized behavior. For Mir and Phelps this hinges on systemization, as well as something proce-

dural in their methods. Phelps is clearly obsessive in her meticulous documenting. The production of so many tiny lines is itself startling, and their handmade quality enhances this. The chart-like quality of these lines clearly encode something, but the work retains a mysterious “map without a key” quality, pointing to a fetal ultrasound that reveals life only to the trained eye. In recording her drawings and the income they generate, there is an element of commerce that removes a degree of the personal. Yet, both by tracking everyday expenditures and the deeply personal subject of the original drawings—exemplified by this series capturing her time receiving IVF treatments in India—Phelps enshrines personal routine.

Mir, who often recasts history or material from popular culture, is playing with the idea of records, with how “truth” and “fact” become enshrined through repetition and how, with that enshrinement, their subjectivity is made invisible. Mir's carefully executed large drawings are less compulsive but there is something obsessive about recoding and re-examining borders, mapping and re-mapping. She often explores the same subject multiple times, including different information in each iteration—all true—to intentionally defer categorical meaning and undermine absolutes.

Lim also explores the limitations of language, specifically, the ways language artificially limits and excludes. This is inescapable in the medium of fiber, so long relegated to craft status, but the conceptual aspect of her work does so also. For example, she titled a show *Exemplum*, the Latin word

for “sampler,” paying subtle reference to commoditization of handiwork and the Victorian tradition of indicating a bride's worth with that object of mastery. *Exemplum* is also found in fourteenth century artists' manuals, used to describe a “masterpiece,” the painting painted as the final test to rise within a guild from journeymen to master. Lim's obsessiveness is both mechanical and devotional; the hours spent gluing a single scale at a time like a monk with a grain of mandala sand. As well as the devotional quality of repetition, there is a reliquary aspect to the enshrinement of organic material.

The reliquary is found in Piene's drawings also, though in subject rather than literal material, as is devotional production. Piene describes a trance-like state when drawing, a sort of automatization. The resulting imagery is ensnared with macabre and forensic tones. Likewise Smith's work has documentary quality in portrayal of the body, and particularly the female body. It has been called an “obsessively demanding exploration of the condition of living” leaving no part untouched in her tireless documentation of every aspect of the human experience. Viewing both Smith and Piene's drawings can feel like examining an X-ray of interiority, both unrecognizably foreign and deeply personal.

Kiki Smith, *Whisper Drawing #2*, 2000,
Colored pencil on paper

The work of all five artists raises many questions rather than answering them. There is something deeply connected but almost abandoned in their drawings. Emotion has long been characterized a feminine trait and these artists embrace every spectrum of feeling, celebrating if not normalizing, every imaginable flavor. They celebrate the beauty and fragility associated with the feminine. In Smith's words: "I really like making things delicate. I guess you could call them "girls' materials;" but they're just things that are associated with girls: soft materials like paper-mâché. . . I don't have any ultimate allegiance to it. I would just as easily use some other material, but I like that quality of fragility. . . It's a little bit deceiving because it looks much more fragile than it really is."

Despite their differences, powerful common threads unite these five artists. These are the threads of femininity but also of art's greatness. Each work of art in this collection is thoughtful, provocative and more than a little obsessive. Their bodies of work each explore delicate prettiness and the disturbing, animalistic and terrible. They walk the line between two seemingly disparate extremes and the result is beautiful esthesia.



Kiki Smith

(American, 1954)

Whisper Drawing #2, 2000

Colored pencil on paper

Kiki Smith's drawings are among the legendary Feminist artist's most intimate work, which spans mediums from sculpture and installation, to printmaking and textile. She is part of innumerable public collections. Her accolades include the U.S. State Department Medal of Arts given by Hillary Clinton, election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and, in 2006, *Time* magazine's "TIME 100: The People Who Shape Our World."

Whisper Drawing is on Nepalese paper, which Smith prefers for drawings of the body due to its skin-like quality. Its delicately translucent appearance belies its durability and archival purpose. Smith intentionally drew with varied pressure and subtle rendering but the lines are so light they appear almost tentative. Likewise, the women depicted seem both intimate and distanced from one another and from their bodies. Their heads loom oversized above small body parts: oddly narrow shoulders, breasts, and floating hands. Their

eyes are blank as though unmoored from the particularities of time and space. Next to the dark circle of each pupil, an empty circle suggests reflected light reminiscent of the effect of flash photography. On the left-hand figure, two faint spots near the corner of eye would seem to be tears but they run up rather than down her face. Combining and undermining, these mixed signals render confusion and disconnection like a children's game of telephone.

Chloe Piene

(American, 1972)

Coddling, 2003

Charcoal on vellum

Chloe Piene has work in public collections the world over. The scope of her work is diverse, both in material and influence. Her drawings and sculptures pull from wide ranging styles and languages, from Post-War giants like George Grosz and Willem de Kooning to the macabre tendencies of the Northern Renaissance and erotic, antique mythology, to the automatism of Joseph Beuys' drawings.

Piene's subjects are whole and yet divided. She uses strong contour lines, contorting the figure. They feel at times nervous yet still have a graphical, luscious quality to them. They combine elements of bone, skin, void and surface, evoking luxury, suspense, tension and a certain pleasure in forensic accuracy, suggestion and detail. Like many of her drawings, *Coddling* balances on the edge of sweet and grotesque—paper thin and delicate—but that delicacy can quickly take on a documentary edge. Bold line is tinged with fragility—as if it is about to unwind. *Coddling* speaks of ritual, commemoration, death and epic privacy.

Aleksandra Mir

(Polish, 1967)

Evesham #89, 2003

Marker pen on paper

Lake Okeechobee/Brighton Seminole Indians Res. #22, 2003

Marker pen on paper

Aleksandra Mir currently lives and works in London, though she has called many places home. Her work is shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions in the United States and Europe and is part of the permanent collections of several prestigious institutions around the

Aleksandra Mir, *Lake Okeechobee/Brighton Seminole Indians Res. #22*, 2003, Marker pen on paper

world—though she likes to challenge what is museum worthy and ideas of exclusivity more broadly.

To do this, Mir develops “projects that combine photography, sculpture and interactive performance, as well as drawing. Here two large-scale drawings, *Lake Okeechobee/Brighton* and *Evesham #89*, exemplify her “naïve cartography” presenting many disjointed yet undeniably familiar fragments that incite cynicism about the reliability of maps. The biting wit found in much that Mir produces is sublimated here but the invitation to examine cultural beliefs is taken a step further. Mir questions “fact.” The Sharpie marker on large, white paper whispers reminiscently of the drafting table in *Evesham #89*, but in *Lake Okeechobee/Brighton* encapsulates the felicitousness of a political cartoon and the timeless earnestness of a social studies project. Mir explains “the marker is an unpretentious tool in my immediate environment, and in the environment of the general public. Using it as a fine art tool means getting immediate access to a vernacular present.”



Angela Lim

(American, 1960)

Cockaigne: In Your Clumsily . . ., 1998

Linen apron with hand embroidery and fish scales

Angela Lim's delicate fabric artworks incorporate fine, intricate embroidery as well as blood, fingernails, fish scales, dirt, human hair and teeth. She received the New Langton Arts' Bay Area Artist Award in 1995 and has participated in solo and group exhibitions at such institutions as University of Davis and the Catherine Clark Gallery.

Part of a series of sculptures exploring identity, sexuality, and domesticity, *Cockaigne in your Clumsily* is one of twenty-five apron sculptures embroidered with poetry, a visual manifestation of the contradictions and double standards that preoccupy Lim. Her choice of medium recalls the often-overlooked women's domain of needlecraft and is sensually inviting, soft and delicate, but the text is unapologetic, powerful to the point of subversive. To consider this work sentimental or to consign the work only to the realm of emotion, however, would be a mistake. Lim wields both conceptual prowess and the art historical cannon, often through words. For example the title, *Cockaigne*, refers to Pieter Brueghel's *Pays de Cocagne (Land of Cockaigne)* a playful allegory of a mythical land of plenty in a time of poverty. Brueghel's fanciful depiction of everyday food stuffs- a lake filled with milk, walking eggs, and a rooftop piled with pies- that juxtaposes famine and abundance. Lim, likewise, explores the relationship and conflict between duty and desire, responsibility and fantasy, monotony and flux, and commitment and temptation.

Danica Phelps

(American, 1967)

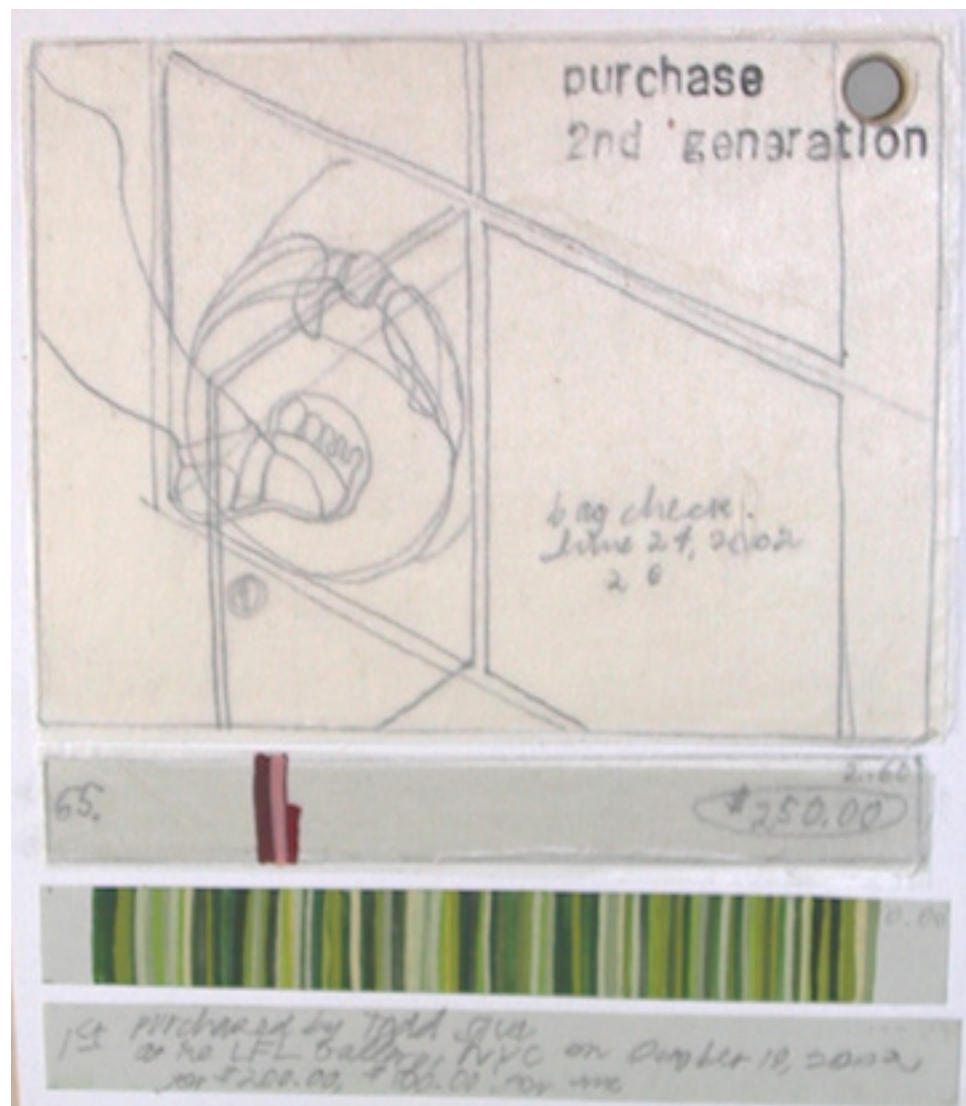
e.e. #65, 2nd gen., 2002

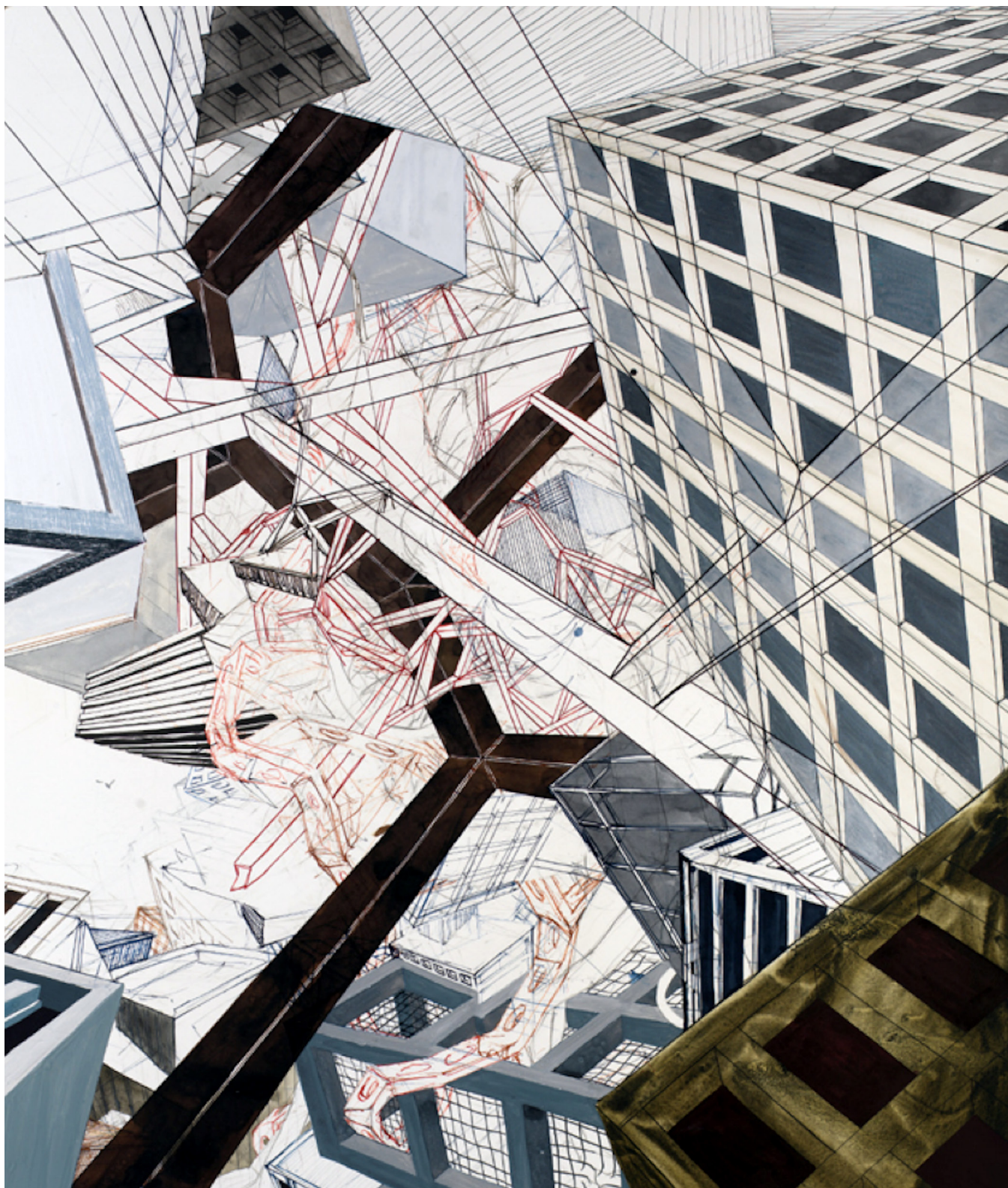
Graphite and watercolor paper and board

Since 1996, Danica Phelps has developed an elaborate diagrammatic, documenting financial transaction by visually signifying each dollar by a single stripe of watercolor: green for incomings, red for outgoings and grey for credit. She exhibits extensively in the United States and internationally and her work has recently been acquired for institutional collections.

Danica Phelps, *e.e. #65, 2nd gen.*, 2002,
Graphite and watercolor paper and board

As she does in many works, here Phelps has produced a point-by-point diary of how she spent the money from the sale of a particular drawing. She traces the sold drawing on transparent paper, which she mounts on board before layering hand-made, paper stripes and notations about the particulars of the transaction. The drawings themselves are deeply personal, celebrating sensitive intimacies of life: taking a shower, making love, grocery shopping, traveling or time with friends. Thus, by first enshrining her life and then recording in detail not only the sale of the “shrine” but all the resulting minute financial transactions of how she spends the money, Phelps is announcing her complicity in the exchange underlying the art market and calling to attention the fallibility of its tenants of the inimitability, creative value.





Nicola Lopez, *After the Storm*, 2009, Ink, gouache, gesso, crayon, graphite on paper

MULTI-FACETED AMPLITUDE

Gillian Chan

Blurring the Line aims to explore the subject of drawing expressed through traditional approaches as well as alternative forms such as painting and photography. Drawing has traditionally served as the foundation for all the arts. To attain sovereignty in painting, sculpture or architecture, first it was necessary to master the fundamentals of drawing. Hence, the exhibition further inspects the dynamics of drawing between three-dimensional and architectural spaces, and contains a wide body of works and diverse media.

Four works in the exhibition, Mona Hatoum's *Untitled (graters)*, Nicola Lopez's *After the Storm*, Nicole Phungrasamee Fein's *1100108*, and Lynn Woods Turner's *Untitled*, aptly represent the many facets of the show. Their subject matters differ, however, if one looks at the works as sets of repeated lines and patterns—fundamental properties of drawing—then one can easily discover the qualities that unite the works as a whole. Although all four works are produced on paper,

different mediums have been used such as photography, ink, graphite or watercolor. The variety of the mediums rendering the lines in the works shed light on unconventional ways of perceiving the concept of drawing—this coincides with the title of the exhibition *Blurring the Line*, where the boundary of what defines drawing is extended and blurred.

Mona Hatoum's *Untitled (graters)* plays with the concept of architectural space placed within a linear space. Seven graters are leaning against windowpanes and the objects in the photograph are shot at an angle that displays negative space between the windowpane and the graters, adding a sense of depth. The negative space is further highlighted by a monochromatic tone, shadows cast by the sun and the relationship between the horizontal lines of the window and the holes on the graters. Hence, a three-dimensional illusion is created on a flat surface, in this case the paper. The intersection between the lines and the graters, as well as

the juxtaposition between the two and three-dimensionality of the surface brings a more abstract notion to the exhibition.

Similarly, Nicola Lopez's *After the Storm* delves into the realm of architectural space on a flat surface. The composition is linked by a cluster of unknown cube-like and three-dimensional linear structures. Although the structures are all rendered with straight and linear lines, they have been distorted by overlapping each other and by creating an alignment of different angles. This figuration creates an interesting portrayal of chaos built up by undeviating structures. On one hand, straight lines construct the most perpendicular, erect, and ordered shapes. On the other hand, it is awfully easy to disrupt this immaculate imagery by realigning these shapes in an unorganized fashion. *After the Storm* not only echoes the exhibition's theme literally, it also suggests the ambiguity and the infinite possibility of lines through manipulation, hence blurring the functionality of lines.

In contrast, Nicole Phungrasamee Fein's *1100108* and Lynne Woods Turner's *Untitled* serve as examples that display the conjunction between patterns and lines. *1100108* is simple, serene and systematic. Fein challenges the conventional use of watercolor and defies the limitations normally associated with the medium. Layers of watercolor of varying color tones are built on each other, creating a pattern or series of small squares with a cross set within. The blank space between the patterns can be seen as rows of horizontal white lines, displaying an intertwining relationship between patterns and lines—that they are inseparable from each other.

Untitled is perhaps the work that aligns with the theme of the exhibition in the most literal way. Turner worked with the most authentic medium associated with drawing: pencil. The lines build up small circles covering the entire surface and subsequently they create a wavy pattern on the piece of paper, further emphasizing the interweaving link between lines and patterns. *1100108* presents the crispness of linearity created by collinear lines and patterns, whereas *Untitled* displays how lines and patterns can create a sense of softness, demonstrating the duality of lines.

Mona Hatoum, *Untitled (graters)*, 1999,
Gelatin silver print



Mona Hatoum

(British, born in Lebanon, 1952)

Untitled (graters), 1999

Gelatin silver print

Mona Hatoum is a Lebanon-born sculptor, performance, and installation artist. Hatoum's art transformed from confrontational performance in the 1980s to a more reflective engagement with a minimalist and conceptualist heritage in the 1990s. Through her experience as an exile from Lebanon during the civil war, Hatoum's artwork provides a unique lens to the consequence when accustomed surroundings shift or even vanish. In *Untitled (graters)*, a kitchen utensil has been enlarged comparable to the scale of the skyscrapers half covered in the background. This perhaps suggests that something that is so common in our daily lives can turn into something sinister momentarily—acting as a hiding and dividing facade. The intercrossing of the horizontal lines on the windowpane and the circular patterns on the grater adds an illusionistic geometric effect for the viewer, blurring the vision of the viewer and encouraging

them to look beyond the surface of the graters.

Nicola López

(American, 1975)

After the Storm, 2009

Ink, gouache, gesso, crayon, graphite on paper

American artist Nicola López teaches at Columbia University in New York City. She specializes in installation, drawing and printmaking. She gives her own interpretation of the world through reconfiguring the contemporary urban landscape. The architectural structures in her work, *After the Storm*, create a landscape that seems unorganized and distorted. However, like her other works, they are not depictions of actual places; rather they are maps that represent how the actual world is structured, not literally geographical, but on an experiential level. The mixture of media in her work symbolizes different phases in human history. For instance, printmaking addresses mass production that aided to advances of the current world and the use of graphite connotes a pre-fabricated era and also essential medium in creating drawings. The overwhelmingness and chaos created by overlapping the ordered lines and structures in the work mirrors the tension between order and disorder that exists in the world.

Nicole Phungrasamee Fein

(American, 1974)

1100108, 2008

Watercolor on paper

Mills MFA graduate Nicole Phungrasamee Fein focuses on watercolor paintings on paper. She is known for her meticulousness in slowly layering the thin coats of watercolor in a finite square. Each work is usually done within a single sitting and hence it requires intense concentration for completion. However the intensity involved in the process has resulted in a work that gives off a sense of tranquility. This effect is perhaps reflected in Fein's iterative approach in creating the work, having to pace out the speed during the process. The pattern built up by the squares is emphatic and ethereal, reductive and quietly expressionistic. It is certainly interesting how the blank spaces between the patterns produce white, transparent lines. The roles between lines and patterns have reversed—highlighting the duality of their functions operating on a physical space, and in this case, the paper.

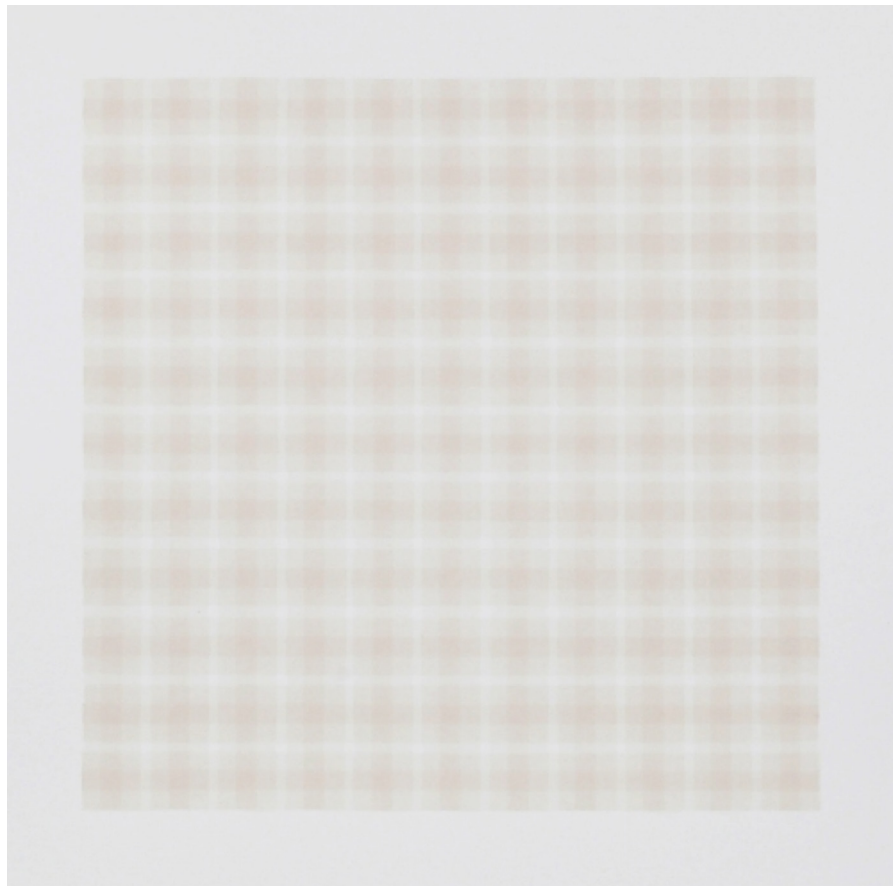
Lynne Woods Turner

(American, 1951)

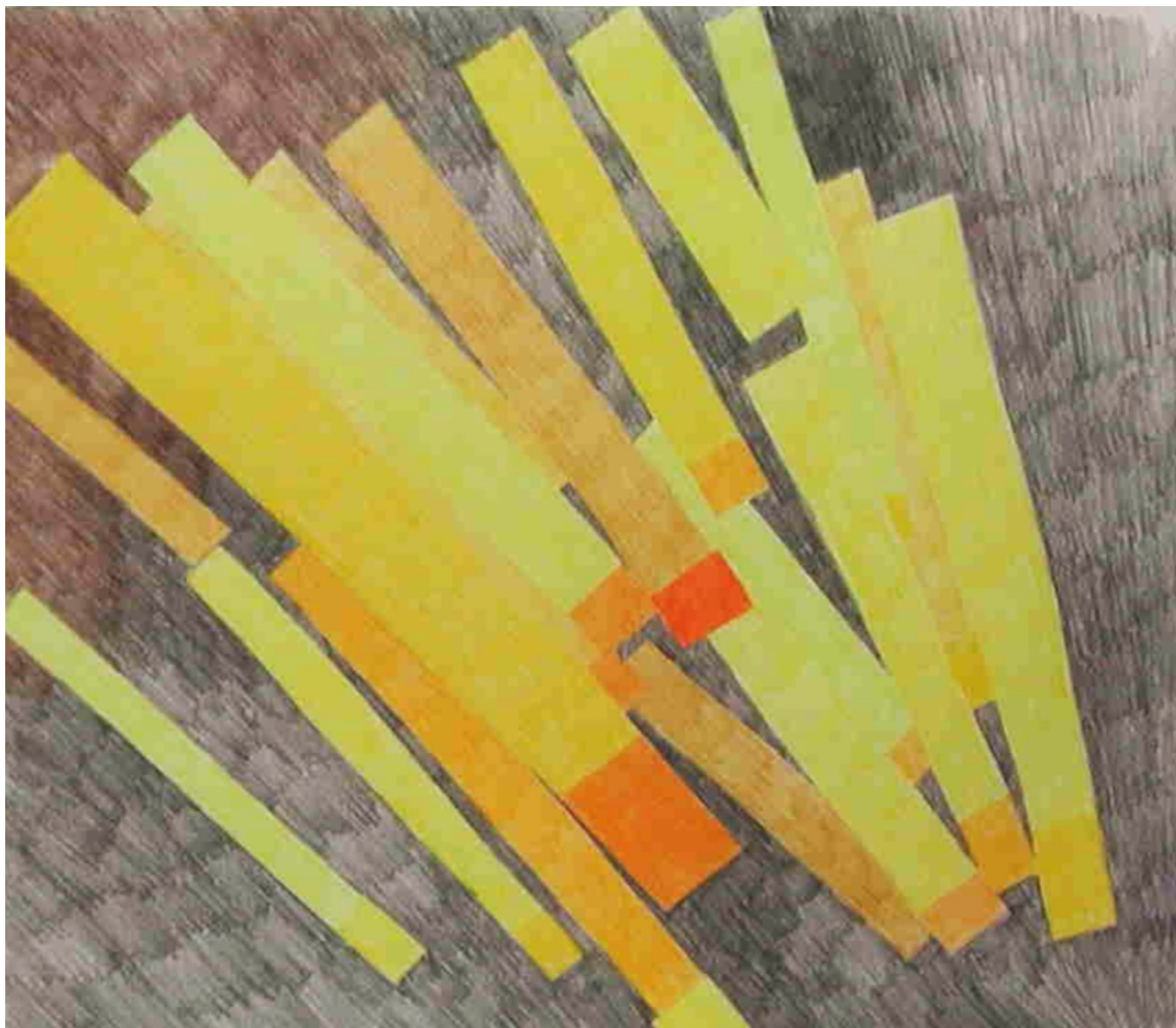
Untitled, 1999

Pencil on parchment paper

Lynne Woods Turner has a deep appreciation of atmospheric beauty and geometric forms. Her works normally feature a great sense of gradated hues. Although *Untitled* is a monochromatic work, Turner nevertheless rendered the circles in a way that creates a soft, spectral, and gentle composition. From afar it appears to be a set of wavy lines that makes up the entire composition. However, when one looks closer the “lines” are in fact created by little circles, projecting an impression of formlessness and spatial drift. The work sheds light on the intertwining relationship between lines and patterns, and on how they are dependent on each other. Inspired by nature, art history, and the body, the work asks the viewer to feel the presence of sight.



Nicole Phungrasamee Fine, *1100108*, 2008,
Watercolor on paper



Carrie Gundersdorf, *Star Trails-15 min. exposure*, 2005, Watercolor and colored pencil on paper

LINE AND THE STORIES BEHIND THEM

Cassandra Colten

Carrie Gundersdorf, Liz Larner, and Ana Mendieta are female artists interested in nature and feminism. Gundersdorf's art focuses on connecting outer space, science, and art. She paints and draws, but her painting often look like drawings. She uses small brushes for the foreground and creates very detailed paintings that appear to be drawings. Her art in this exhibition, *Star Trails* and *Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring*, show her interest in combining art and outer space.

Carrie Gundersdorf's two pieces are in a section of the *Blurring the Line* exhibition that focuses on architectural space and how lines are formed to create space. The painting is based off of a photograph where orange is superimposed on an image of two sections of the epsilon ring around Uranus. The orange shows where there is less matter and more light coming through the ring. Gundersdorf created a different sense of architectural space by taking a circular object and painting it as flat, but the lines still convey a sense of motion.

Liz Larner's *Untitled* is in the same section of the exhibition as

Gundersdorf's works. Her sculpture is a three-dimensional piece that bridges the gap between two-dimensional and three-dimensional depictions of space. Larner is known for using over-the-top pieces to make people realize the gender gap in society. Past pieces have included super feminized and macho figures that make people uncomfortable and force them to acknowledge the messages media sends to society about gender.

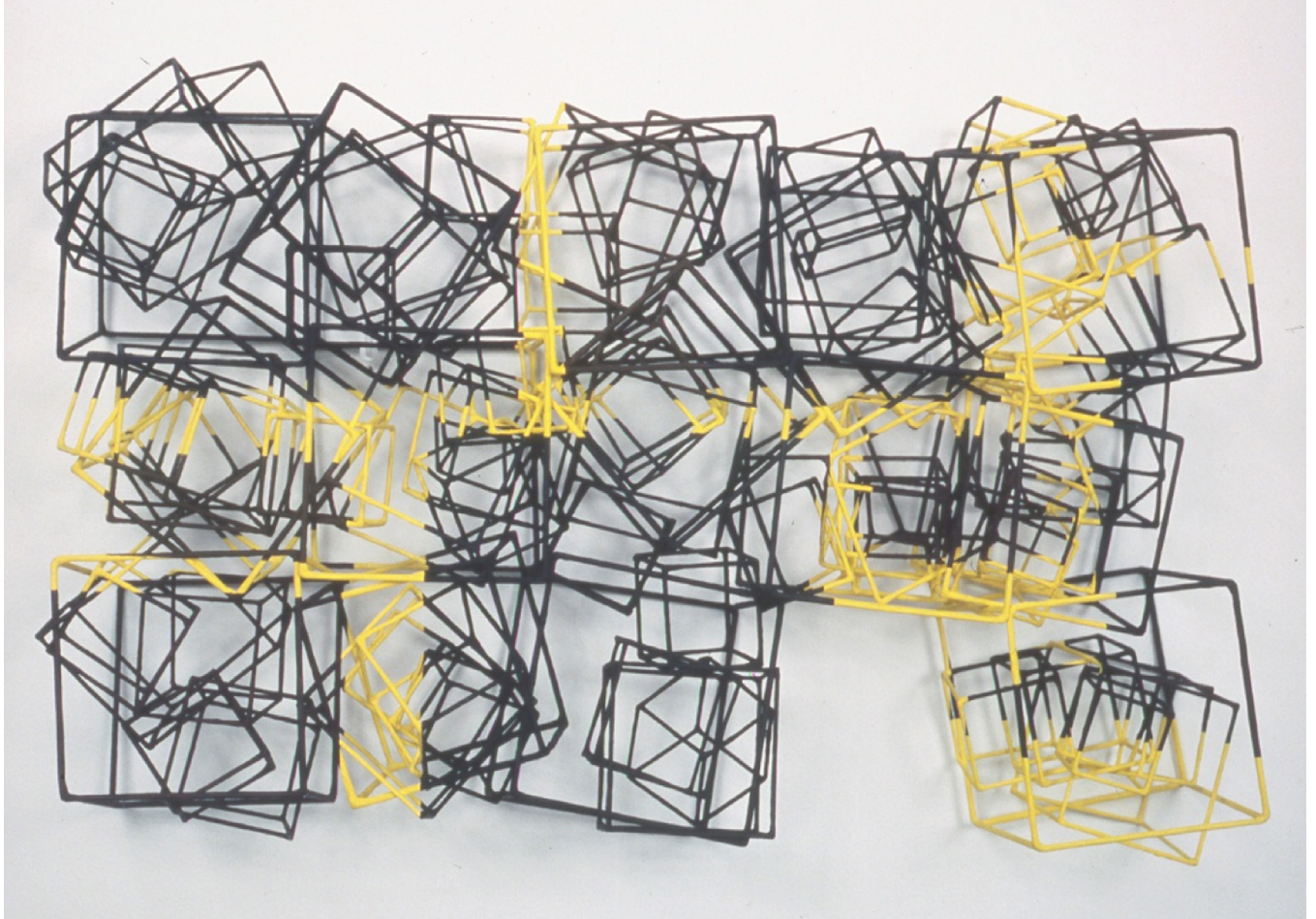
In addition to her gender pieces, the untitled piece in this exhibition mimics the form that many of Larner's aluminum pipe pieces take. She is fascinated with using materials for their inherent meanings and hidden political stories. Larner loves that the tubes show how lies can be told even when the thing is there as proof, but then the thing or material itself is also what disproves the lie. This interest in illusions can be seen in this untitled piece where the boxes seem never-ending and the bursts of color distract the viewer from distinguishing where one box ends and the next one starts.

Ana Mendieta was known for her very feministic and expressive pieces. Several works depict

her covered in blood and feathers protesting the lack of repercussions for rape against females. She is also known for her body work, and this piece shows that. It is abstract, but still expresses the impression of a female form to its viewers. *Untitled* is also one of the few drawings in this exhibition, but it is not the typical form of drawing that people expect. It is faint and appears three-dimensional, like curls of paper were outlined and arranged on another paper. This is achieved through Mendieta's light shading and varying shapes of the lines. In some areas, the lines that form the swirls are wide and almost rectangular in their shape. In other parts of this piece, the lines are narrow and so close together that it is difficult to distinguish two separate lines, instead of just one melded together.

These artists have used lines in different mediums and forms to create their art. Gundersdorf works with drawings based off paintings. In her painting, *Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring*, the lines are carefully created to look like a drawing, instead of an oil painting. Larner uses lines to represent architectural creations and

hidden political meaning. Mendieta uses lines in her drawing to represent feminine curves and how they fill the otherwise empty space of her work.



Liz Larner, *Untitled*, 2002, Stainless steel, paper, watercolor, and egg tempera

Carrie Gundersdorf

(American, 1973)

Star Trails—15 min. exposure, 2005

Watercolor and colored pencil on paper

Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring, 2005

Oil on canvas

Carrie Gundersdorf is a Chicago-based artist interested in connecting science and art. Many of her pieces have themes of wonder and discovery and are based on outer space. Her works often are a balance between painting and drawing, or a combination of the two.

Gundersdorf's fascination with science and space can be seen in her two works *Star Trails*, and *Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring*. They both play with lines and rectangles. *Star Trails* shows rectangular forms falling, similar to the trail of falling stars or fireworks. In *Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring*, a flat canvas appears three-dimensional through Gundersdorf's use of perspective and lines. This image was created by Gundersdorf superimposing orange on an image of two sections of the epsilon ring around the planet Uranus. The rings appear to simultaneously be connected and separate in the painting. Gundersdorf creates images of spacial objects that only appear to be connected to outer space at a closer look.

Liz Larner

(American, 1960)

Untitled, 2002

Stainless steel, paper, watercolor, and egg tempura

Liz Larner was born in 1960 in Sacramento and currently lives in Los Angeles. She studied photography, but prefers to work with sculpture because she feels that sculpture allows her to address how our world is produced and the factors that went into forming it. This shows in her work, which is all about being in the current world and is literal, metaphorical, and theatrical. Larner often uses non-traditional materials in her sculpture for their inherent references. Though this piece is made out of stainless steel, similar sculptures have been created using aluminum pipes. Larner links her use of aluminum pipes to the pipes that started the Iraq war, which were thought to be for nuclear weapons and then proven to not be capable of handling nuclear power.

This sculpture, even though it is made out of stainless steel, carries similar ideas to her aluminum pipe sculptures. It is intricate and seems never ending at first glance. Then, at a closer look, it is revealed that the piece is radiating boxes, or small cubes connected to larger cubes that form fifteen different areas of squares.

Ana Mendieta

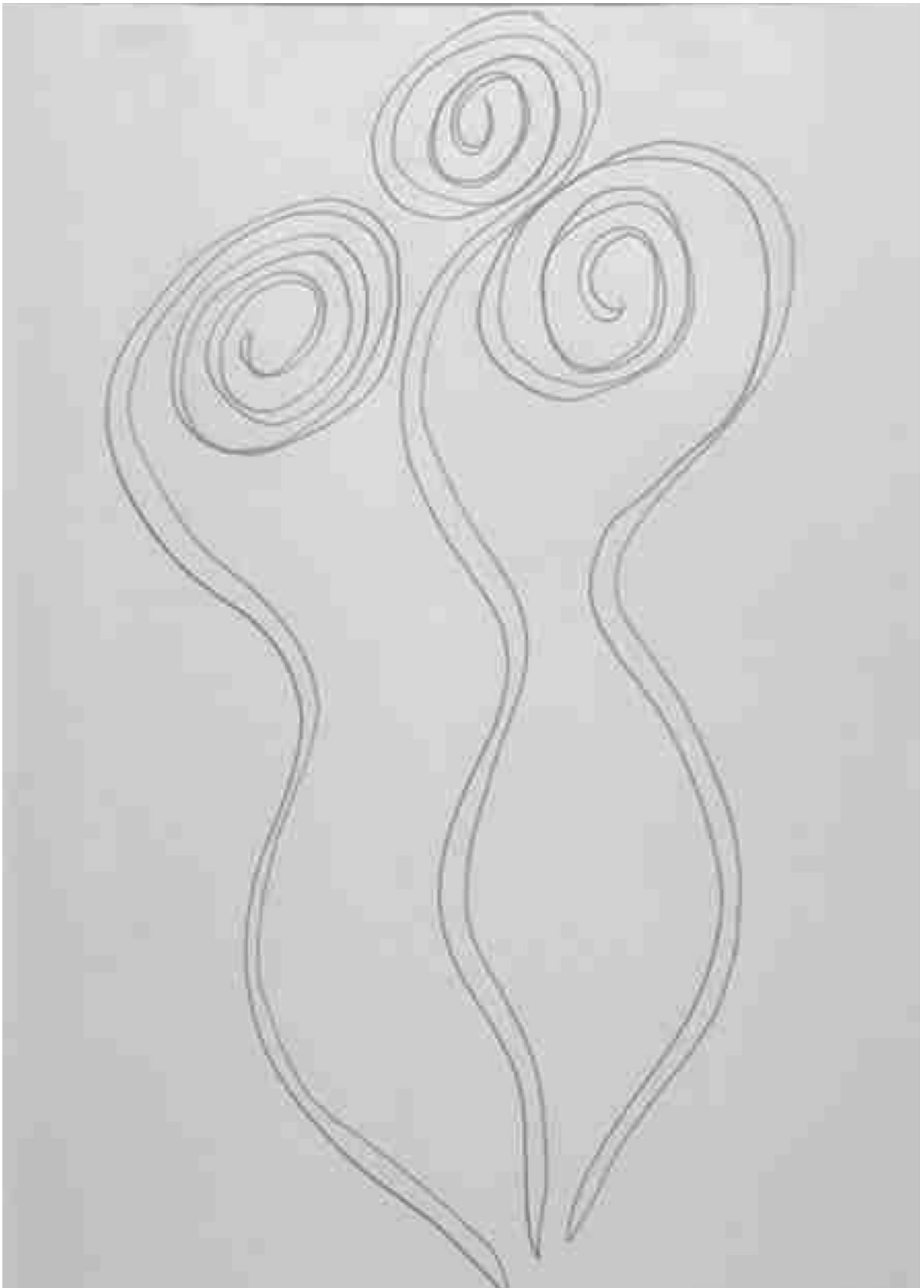
(American born Cuba, 1948-1985)

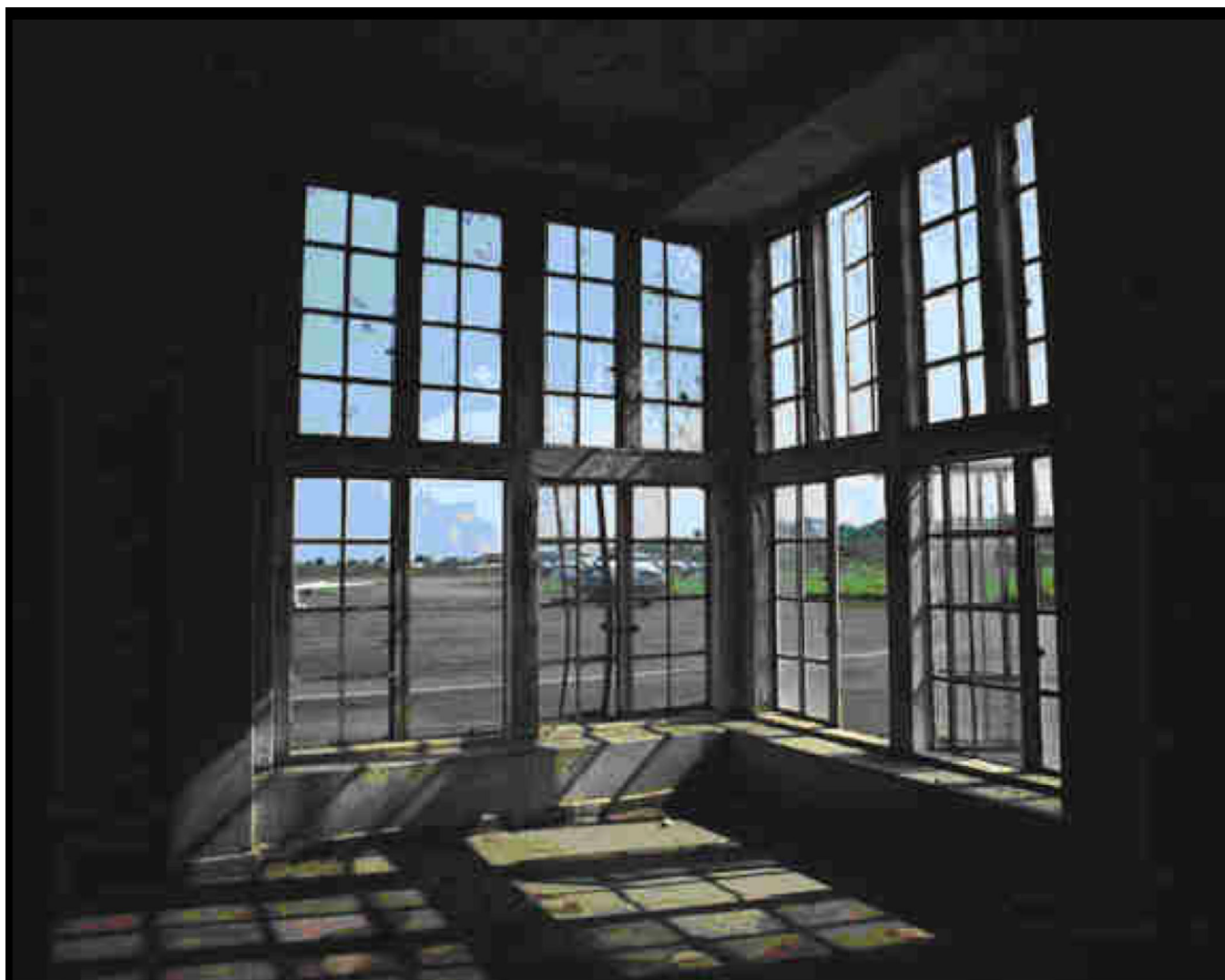
Untitled, ca. 1985

Pencil on paper

Ana Mendieta was a Cuban American performance artist, sculptor, painter, and video artist that tragically died in 1985. She was best known for her “earth-body” work and combining different techniques to create fascinating works of art. Mendieta was interested in society’s views of women and how they are treated. She created dramatic pieces to draw attention to crimes against women and often used different versions of the female form in her art. Here, Mendieta created an abstract drawing that references the female body. This drawing has curves that are similar to a woman’s body and could be a very abstract form of a woman.

Ana Mendieta, *Untitled*, ca. 1985, Pencil on paper





Zarina Bjimji, *Bapa Closed His Heart, It Was Over*, 2002, Ilfochrome Ciba Classic Print

AN EXPRESSIVE AND FOUNDATIONAL PROCESS

Rachel Davis

The artwork in *Blurring the Line* all relate back to the idea, process, and aesthetic of drawing in one way or another. The principal of drawing not only subjects us to an original art form, but also contextualizes a perspective and manner of thinking, with the intent of using these roots and traditions to escalate, relate and develop new means of expression. Through the various mediums, the exhibition plays with pattern, line and different depictions of space. Through this meditation on line and space in relation to drawing, we begin to recognize a correlation of themes, thoughts and ideas that are all intertwined within the work.

This assemblance and continuity creates a fluid strand, or rather line, of the development and expansiveness of art in a new and contemporary setting, where the works delve into the aesthetic qualities of drawing and line through three-dimensional sculpture, painting, photography, etc. But this principal of drawing, as one of the oldest art forms, connects to additional themes such as how the past molds into the future. Zarina Bhimji's *Bapa Closed His Heart, It Was Over* juxtaposes this idea of past and present in a similar way, but in a

political manner. The composition of her photograph uses the window's shadow lines of the empty space to mark and signify an absence, from which time has passed. Lines make up our world, through architecture, writing, objects, clothing, etc., it is all a matter of shape and line, an actualized drawing in a sense. Line, also in a metaphorical sense, ties us all together in a historic and also humanistic manner. So as this theme and idea challenges viewers to rethink drawing in new ways.

Uta Barth in a similar manner transcends the notions of looking and perception in her work. Her piece, *Ground #70*, is a conceptual photograph that leads the viewer to reimagine the act of looking; with compositional linear window patterns. With many works in this exhibition one begins to question what is drawing and what is adaptation. This ambiguity not only creates a new sense of how tradition merges with contemporary techniques, but how perspectives and ideas to create new and exciting modes of expression.

The attention of the geometric quality and shape of drawing, line and shape is depicted throughout the exhibition as the viewer is chal-

lenged to look at different forms with the concepts and basis of drawing in mind. Contemporary art is often associated with conceptual ideologies and meaning; however, the artwork presented offers a return to the simplistic forms and roots of artistic production, line and form and how this frame expanded to such a vast and expansive construction and development of art.

Gay Outlaw is one artist in particular who directs us to a principal of "free association" where there are no expectations in the content and commentary of the works, but rather a study into the depths of what purpose, significance and meaning these bold and indefinite shapes hold, not only in the artwork, but also in the world around us. These three artists all combine ideas and themes of reinterpretation, juxtaposition of past and present, and a new contemporary viewing practice. It becomes apparent that these ideas correlate directly to their subject matter, but also to the process of drawing: the principal of a vastness encapsulated through linear lines, shapes and geometric patterns.

Through this exhibition the alternative and abstract meet with a common and conventional craft,

where we unveil the concepts of drawing that pervade and intertwine through the selected contemporary works.



Uta Barth, *Ground #70*, 1996, Chromogenic print on panel

Uta Barth

(German, 1958)

Ground #70, 1996

Chromogenic print on panel

In Uta Barth's *Ground #70*, the artist guides the viewer through an empty and rather mundane subject to emphasize and explore the process and notion of looking and perception. The curved lines of light that she photographs are the results of her physically manipulating light by moving her curtains. This almost elusive, stream of consciousness aesthetic challenges the viewer to rethink the traditional conception and function of the photographic image.

The photograph has a light and airy quality to it, with the blurred light and color. The faded linear composition, further creates a dream like composition. There is a quiet peace and elegance to the variety of sharpness with the contrast of line. This ethereal depiction serves to encourage the viewer to question how we see and what we see.

Zarina Bhimji

(British, born in Uganda, 1963)

Bapa Closed His Heart, It Was Over, 2006

Ilfochrome Ciba Classic Print

Zarina Bhimji's *Bapa Closed His Heart, It Was Over*, is a political piece filled with issues of violence, migration and complex colonial histories. The space depicted is the Entebbe airport, which was the site of an attempt to resolve an Israeli hijacking crisis as well as the site of the evacuation of Asian refugees. Bhimji's work is based around the historic architecture in order to divert from a merely aesthetic approach. In this sense, Bhimji delves deeper to the core of these issues, going beyond mere documentation. Her process and perspective surrounding her artistic practice deal with wanting to analyze these events and spaces further. She draws awareness to the echo that these events left, what we are left with, and how we move forward. The photograph develops a humanistic approach to such political issues.

This photograph, from her series called *Love*, provides a stark contrast between the desolate airport and the private aircraft outside. The light and shadow create interconnecting linear patterns, emulating qualities of a prison. The long drawn lines and patterns in

conjunction with the open landscape evoke a quiet, subdued and almost haunting resonance that leaves the view with a poetic political perspective.

Gay Outlaw

(American, 1959)

Ocean View, 2004

Mirrored mold-blown glass

In Outlaw's work the objects stand for what they are. Outlaw states, "The message is no message. I call it free association." With no definitive meaning, the artwork is able to transcend the viewer's expectations while taking multiple shapes and interpretations. In this way, creating a meditative viewing experience.

The curved lines, shapes and architecture of the mirrored glass objects create not only visual light patterns, but also a definitive form from their individuality but togetherness. With Outlaw's work grounded in this principal of "free association" it seems to return to a simplistic sense of viewing. Like the basis of drawing, through line and pattern, we see a correlation between the developments of Outlaw's work. Her sculpture is grounded in what the objects are; the lines and shapes of this piece seamlessly evoke a similar idea of drawing in relation to line.

Gay Outlaw, *Ocean View*, 2004, Mirrored
mold-blown glass





Shirin Neshat, *Bonding*, 1996, Gelatin silver print with unique ink calligraphy

THE HONESTY OF THE ART

Maggie Freeman

Drawing is not only one of the oldest forms of artistic production, but it is also fundamental to the creation of works of art across other media, including painting, sculpture, photography, and architecture. Many of the artists in this exhibition use drawing, or elements of drawing such as line, form, and movement, as the basis of pieces that blur the lines that exist between painting and photography, sculpture and installation. One of the most basic forms of artistic expression, drawing is easily manipulated to look like something else entirely. In playing with conceptions of what drawing is or should be, artists embed complex questions on the history and standards of art-making traditions into their work. In the works of three artists in this show—Shirin Neshat, Tracey Emin, and Sarah Sze—these questions expand to include musings on the role of nature, chance, and the environment in shaping works of art; the use of drawing or written text by marginalized groups within society; and drawing as a stand-in for written, diaristic means of self-expression.

Shirin Neshat's *Bonding*, from her early *Women of Allah* photo-series, is part self-portrait, part

calligraphy, and part documentary photography, combined to make a political statement aimed at the government of Neshat's native Iran. The series is based on reports that began to emerge in the 1990s of the role that female militants played in facilitating Iran's 1979 Revolution, a part of the revolution's history that had been purposefully silenced by the Iranian government. Neshat herself is the subject of all the photographs in the series, including *Bonding*, where her hands are seen clasping those of her then five-year old son. Her hands are inscribed in a flowing, calligraphic script with lyrics of poetry by Iranian women on subjects such as martyrdom, exile, femininity, and identity. The piece itself is effectively "silent," with no reference to Neshat herself or even any specific woman within the work—rather, her hands become an anonymous, faceless stand-in for the lived experiences of Iranian women and mothers. However, Neshat utilizes various media and modes of expression to illustrate the complex, multi-faceted roles occupied by women in patriarchal societies. Acting as model, calligrapher, and photographer, Neshat's adoption of several different artistic

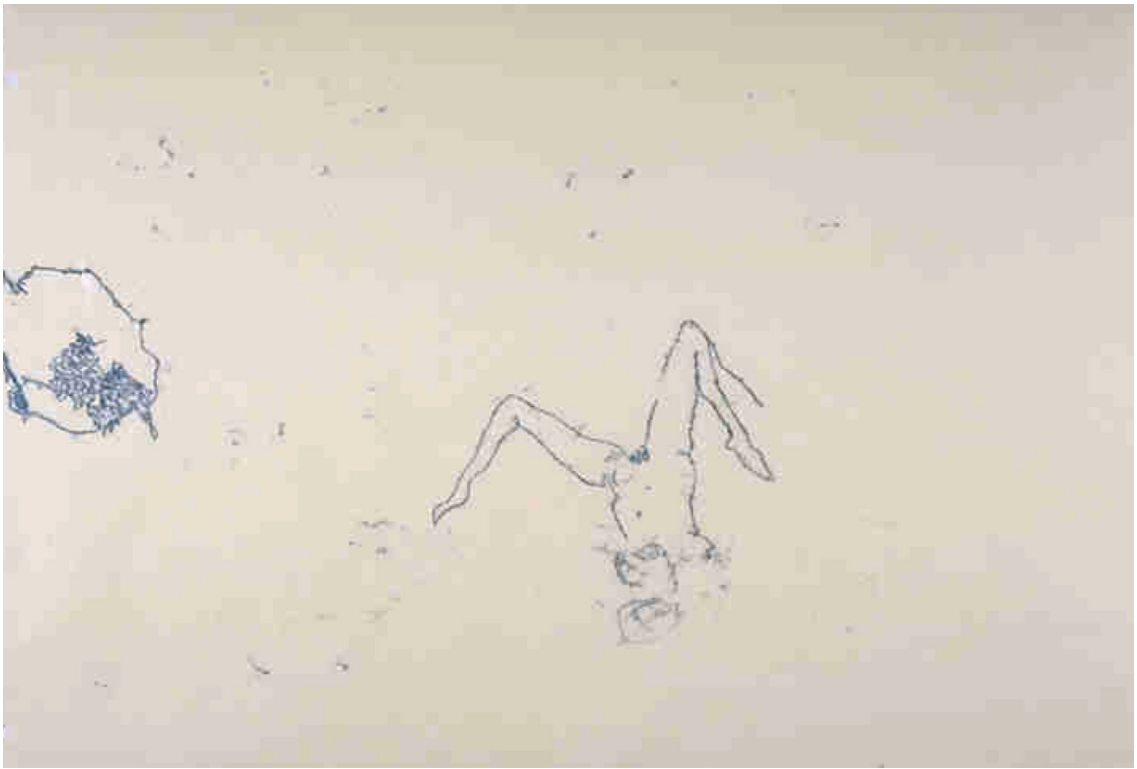
roles and media parallels the very subject matter of *Bonding*; namely, the idea that women are militants and mothers, martyrs and saints, warriors and worshippers, all at the same time and in the same body.

Tracey Emin's *I want to be consumed* is the most straightforwardly, obviously drawn piece among this particular grouping of artists. Emin's work is intensely personal in nature; she has stated in the past that she uses drawing as a substitute for writing in a journal, such that her pieces become rapid, one-off glimpses into Emin's psyche during a given moment in time. The autobiographical qualities of her work, combined with her candid, up-front attitude toward her personal life, lend each piece an emotional rawness that belies the hasty and careless nature of her compositions. The small scale and relative lack of detail in *I want to be consumed* renders Emin's (assumed) self-portrait as a solitary, even lost female figure, seemingly adrift in an empty landscape. Where Neshat's photograph is densely populated with black ink, *I want to be consumed* demonstrates the inverse—a female figure formed by just a few pencil strokes is alone, upside-down, adrift within

the negative space of the page. But similar to Neshat, Emin foregrounds her body and experiences within the work while simultaneously rendering her drawn female figure anonymous enough to be read as the body of any woman, anywhere.

Sarah Sze occupies the intersection between Neshat's deliberately constructed and posed photographs and Emin's dashed-off drawings. Her installation pieces, created entirely from found objects and materials, have elements of chance and randomness to them; however, they are deliberately constructed and combined by Sze to convey certain messages about the uneasy interaction between people and their environment, stereotypes surrounding norms of gender, and the juxtaposition between high and low forms of art and art-making. In *Addition*, Sze's choice of materials, although allegedly random and chance-driven, has symbolic significance. The beads and bird's nest refer to feminized adornment and traditionally feminine acts of nurturing, while the measuring tapes connote stereotypically masculine pursuits. The measuring tape itself is also an inherently logical, rational, and also man-made tool, while the bird's nest is a seemingly random natural construction. Sze's interest in line and movement, essential components of drawing, are revealed in the juxtaposition between the precise angles formed by the two measuring tapes and the chaotic, haphazard jungle of the bird's nest.

Tracey Emin, *I want to be consumed*, 1997,
Monoprint



Tracey Emin

(British, 1963)

I want to be consumed, 1997

Monoprint

Like Neshat's *Women of Allah* series, Tracey Emin's monoprints represent the earliest distinct body of work in her career. The rapid, one-off technique involved in making monoprints is suited to immediate expression, as is Emin's scratchily informal drawing style. Emin's monoprints each possess a crudeness of line and form that gives each piece a hastily-rendered air. However, her monoprints also incorporate autobiographical, diaristic aspects, lending works such as *I want to be consumed* a depth and rawness that belies their sketchy appearance. The subject matter of Emin's work frequently veers into the explicitly personal, and *I want to be consumed* is just one example of the agitated, frustrated sensuality present in many of her artistic creations. Emin uses the rapidfire quality of her drawn lines to imbue the depicted female figure with a sense of aggressive sexuality, so much so that the lines almost seem to vibrate on the page.

Shirin Neshat

(Iranian, 1957)

Bonding, 1996

Gelatin silver print with unique ink calligraphy

Shirin Neshat created her *Women of Allah* series, to which this piece belongs, after a trip to Iran following decades of exile in the United States. The series, Neshat's first mature body of work, speaks to commonly-held conceptions of femininity in relation to male authority and Islamic militancy in her home country. Neshat posed for all the photographs in the series herself, overlaying various parts of her body with lyrics of poetry by Iranian women on subjects such as martyrdom, exile, femininity, and identity. *Bonding*, when read within the context of a larger body of work, reveals an unprecedented degree of agency and self-determination hidden beneath the surface of the work. Neshat utilizes the act of writing to illustrate the complex, multi-faceted roles that women in patriarchal societies occupy. The fluidity and elegance of the calligraphic script speaks to traditional ideals of femininity, while the content of the text itself invokes the forced silence experienced by many Iranian women. Acting as model, calligrapher, and photographer, Neshat reclaims both her body and her voice, revealing the sense of agency and self-determination embedded within the work. As a political statement Neshat's message certainly did not go unheard—the series resulted in her being banned from entering Iran again.

Sarah Sze

(American, 1969)

Addition (Birds Nests and Measuring Tapes), 2011

Wood, enamel, wire, plastic, metal

New York-based artist Sarah Sze utilizes everyday, found objects in her work, which she presents as the vestigial remains of human behavior and actions. Decontextualizing these commonplace objects allows them to gain an ambitious grandeur as works of art. A bird's nest bedecked with found beads acts as a visual reference to nature's role in the creation of works of art. Sze's works have elements of randomness and chance to them, but this is mitigated by the careful deliberation with which Sze composes and combines her sculptural installations. Her work exists at the intersection between several art forms including installation, sculpture, painting, and drawing. Her interest in line is evident in the juxtaposition of the curving, chaotic lines of the bird's nest with the precise angularity of

the measuring tapes. Sze's choice of materials is symbolically significant as well; the measuring tapes connote traditionally masculine pursuits such as building and construction, while the beads and bird's nest refer to feminized adornment and traditionally feminine acts of nurturing. The various components of the artwork, when combined, effectively blur the lines between masculine and feminine, natural and manmade, and high and low forms of art.



Sarah Sze, *Addition (Birds Nests and Measuring Tapes)*, 2001, Wood, enamel, wire, plastic, metal



Andrea Bowers, *Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger*, 2006, Paper, wire, gouache, political button

DRAWING THE LINE

Kelly Hird

While the word “drawing” traditionally evokes an image of charcoal studies or preparatory sketches, often monochromatic and certainly two-dimensional, the definition of the term has expanded well beyond these associations in recent times. Throughout its evolution as a term, there are a few ideas about the nature of the process that have held true, one being the element of line as a central component of a composition, or at least its construction.

The work of Andrea Bowers, Ana Mendieta, and Anne Wilson shown in this exhibition makes use of the rendering of lines as an immensely important element of each composition. All use line in a manner that is three-dimensional, though in the documentation of Mendieta’s and Wilson’s pieces the captured image is itself flat. However, even seen through a camera’s lens, the materiality of both pieces are some of their most powerful components. In *El Laberinto*, Mendieta has used earth, speckled with tiny bits of decaying matter, a material rarely seen as medium due to its raw, messy nature to render her wonderfully organic spirals. Seen as a part of the land from which they came, one can almost feel the sensation of the rich earth in the

artist’s hands, being molded and sculpted into place. Traces of fingerprints are left in clay-like folds, emphasizing the process of their creation in the final product. Their physical prominence gives them a powerful presence, especially considering their location, lying flat on the ground. Their placement is altered by the incorporation of photography into the work, as the landscape is brought up vertically to face the viewer, rather than something to be looked down upon.

The innate power and presence of the human figure that is presented in Mendieta’s piece truly is remarkable, especially when one considers that the entire piece is actually composed of only two lines. Far from seeming a simple construction, the work speaks hauntingly of identity and absence, of the emergence of all life from the earth and simultaneously its inevitable return back into the ground.

In Bowers’ piece, thin swirls of wire comprising the main line elements of the sculpture are delicately encircled with tiny cutout paper flowers. This leads the paper itself to function as the line being rendered, which is interesting in relation to ideas about traditional

drawing materials and techniques. While the wire constitutes and retains the physical form of the piece, its materiality can be assumed to be more of a symbolic choice in relation to the wire hanger depicted on the pin, rather than an aesthetic one. The paper that the flowers are cut from seems descriptive of their ephemeral, fragile nature, rather than being a direct material reference. Aside from the blooming calla flower, they are all small and white, blending into the walls behind them. While their rendering is exquisite, their subtlety causes them to fade slightly into the background, emphasizing the symbolic importance of the calla flower and pin, which with their red tinges command the majority of the viewer’s attention in this piece. This piece is characteristic of Bowers’ work in combining an overt political statement on women’s rights to agency and reproductive choice with meticulously delicate rendering.

Anne Wilson’s *Errant Behaviors*, originally inspired by her *Topologies* piece, also focuses intently on the nature of line in three dimensions, and as captured through film as a sculptural subject. The convergence of traditionally feminized, domestic materials with the soundscape

presented in this piece, along with its animation, lends an alien buzz to the monochromatic, carefully arranged cityscapes. While many of her works are static, arranged to be viewed through thin Plexiglas windows in a quiet gallery setting, this piece breaks through the layer of quietude present in much of her previous work to present a frantically alive portrayal of objects usually seen as the tools for construction of meaningful materials, not highly regarded in their own right.



Ana Mendieta, *El Laberinto de la vida/The Labyrinth of Life*, 1982, Black and white photograph

Andrea Bowers

(American, 1956)

Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger, 2006

Paper, wire, gouache, political button

Andrea Bowers is known for her ability to relate contemporary political and social issues through works that often use somewhat ethereal media to convey powerful messages. Bowers uses her role as an artist/activist to imbue contemporary issues with historical and conceptual context, bringing her activist principles into the galleries in order to reimagine them as spaces for community engagement.

Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger is a characteristically exquisite juxtaposition of Bowers' delicate rendering with a fiercely political concept. The tiny paper flowers wind delicately about wire vines, their outline subtly alluding to female anatomy, and generally to fertility. Their spirals culminate in a calla flower. This flower, which Christians have historically considered symbolic of their ideals of chastity and death extends prominently off of the wall, the tips of its creamy white petals tinged with blood red. The colors mirror the instantly recognizable pro-choice pin set in the piece's center, which even as the piece's smallest element provides a direct explanation of the work's intent.

Ana Mendieta

(American born in Cuba, 1948-1985)

El Laberinto de la vida/The Labyrinth of Life, 1982

Black and white photograph

Despite the short length of her artistic career, Ana Mendieta was a renowned artist whose work spanned a number of movements. Her images are diverse and difficult to summarize, but tend to focus on feminism and the idea of belonging to a physical space. This photograph depicts one of her "earth-body works", pieces that she created using the earth itself as her canvas and sculpting medium. These pieces are often seen as relating to her childhood, in which she was sent away from her native Cuba to live in Iowa, leaving her with a profound need to explore relationships between physical place and the human body.

Although much of her work in this series is subtractive in that the forms are dug into the earth, *El Laberinto* is comprised of spiral-

ing mounds of dirt which create an abstracted female silhouette, vaguely reminiscent of early depictions of female and fertility goddesses with its focus on the abdominal region.

Anne Wilson

(American, 1949)

Errant Behaviors, 2004

Video with sound

Anne Wilson's work aims to transform common, almost mundane objects into representations of ritual and the passage of time. She has often used fiber and textile art skills across a variety of media to capture the essence of line, and this piece builds upon her traditional approach, using animation and sound to develop and illuminate unseen facets of her creations.

In this particular piece, she uses her traditional materials, but the integration of seemingly innocuous materials such as pins and thread into this video and sound piece completely transforms the way that the viewer relates to these objects. The inspiration for this piece came from a previous sculpture, *Topologies*, which had used the same materials to create three-dimensional maps portraying futuristic cities and landscapes within tiny entanglements of pins, needles, and thread. Wilson relates the careful yet haphazard construction to that of lace. This animation breathes life into the stark, components of the previous work, imbuing them with the buzz and frenetic energy of a tiny alien insect civilization, or perhaps our own, seen at another scale. Both the sound and video are looped, but do not correspond, creating an ever-evolving network of relationships between the objects and the sounds they seem to emit.

Anne Wilson, *Errant Behaviors*, 2004, video with sound





Rebecca Horn, *Dance of Ghosts*, 2005,
Mixed media on paper

LINE CONVEYING MOVEMENT

Sonya Kohli

The exhibit *Blurring the Line* explores the different mediums and ideas surrounding the process of drawing and how artists use pattern and line to create two and three-dimensional spaces. One aspect this exhibit explores is how lines convey movement through space. This can be expressed by using literal movements to create line, as seen in Rebecca Horn's piece *Dance of Ghosts*, or a more abstract simplistic view, using sculpture as seen in Birgitta Weimer's *Coil II*, or even an actual drawing using abstract lines to portray movement within the piece like in Julie Mehretu's *Local Calm*.

In Horn's *Dance of Ghosts* she creates an abstract painting through her choreographed movements. At first glance the piece looks simply like an abstract drawing, but Horn's piece uses swift energetic brush strokes to convey her movements as she stood before the canvas, combining performance with the traditional ways of painting and drawing. This takes on the

literal process of drawing lines through sweeping gestural movements of the artist.

Weimer's piece takes on another literal aspect of drawing and movement with *Coil II*. This piece uses sculpture to convey the process of circular and spiraling movement, two basic forms found in drawing and line. The viewer's eye does the movement as it follows the strand of rubber cord wound around itself. Although it is a relatively two-dimensional sculpture, the cord is continuous and as the coil finishes it comes back around to start all over again allowing it to move within the three-dimensional space.

Something similar is found in Mehretu's piece *Local Calm*. The large scale piece contains mixed media line and drawing to create a three-dimensional space with the two-dimensional surface. The curved lines and sharp shading sprouting up from the core of the paper gives the piece and essence of something that has caught fire or exploded and smoke is drifting

upward. The effect created by the layering of the line, color and shading shows great depth and turbulence within space.

The process of drawing contains movement within itself, but it conveys movement when the lines created meet the space that contains them. Rebecca Horn, Birgitta Weimer, and Julie Mehretu fully understand this concept and explore it within each of their pieces. Horn combines the gestures required to make a drawing to make a performance out of her piece, her result is a painting that contains swift and dynamic lines to create a chaotic and abstract drawing. Weimer uses sculpture to create a simplistic and organic form out of rubber cord; the continuous spiral bridges the two and three-dimensionality of line and movement. Mehretu's drawing does something similar by creating a three-dimensional space within a two-dimensional space as well as layering line and forms to instill movement within her space. All three artists combine line and

drawing within their work to create some kind of movement, they blur the line between two and three-dimensionality and create abstractions through line and drawing.



Birgitta Weimer, *Coil II*, 2001, Rubber cord

Rebecca Horn

(German, 1944)

Dance of Ghosts, 2005

Mixed media on paper

Rebecca Horn is famous for her body modifications, sculptures, performances, and drawings. With much of her work Horn sometimes will combine art forms to create elaborate and abstract pieces like her drawings which combine choreographed gestures with paint and other media.

Her piece *Dance of Ghosts* combines performance and sculpture to create the large gestural drawing. With her drawings, Horn stands before a sheet of paper and uses her arm span and reach to create the abstract formations. The piece which is concentrated at the upper center of the paper at about shoulder height show how her body moved and the choreography behind the swift and dynamic lines. These energetic and chaotic colorful lines draw the viewer into the artist's perspective as they stand before the large scale drawing and imagine the exact movement needed to create each line.

Birgitta Weimer

(German, 1956)

Coil II, 2001

Rubber cord

Birgitta Weimer is contemporary artist known for her scientific and nature-based works that explore a wide range of natural and philosophical concepts. She uses industrial materials, like rubber cord, to create organic structures that take on many different meanings.

In her piece *Coil II* she used a tightly wound rubber cord that seems to be never-ending, much like the saying "what goes around comes back around." When seeing the piece the eye travels along the lines of the cord spiraling outward until it comes back to the start. Weimer's piece is simple yet complex in its design and allows for viewer interpretation.

Julie Mehretu

(American, born in Ethiopia, 1970)

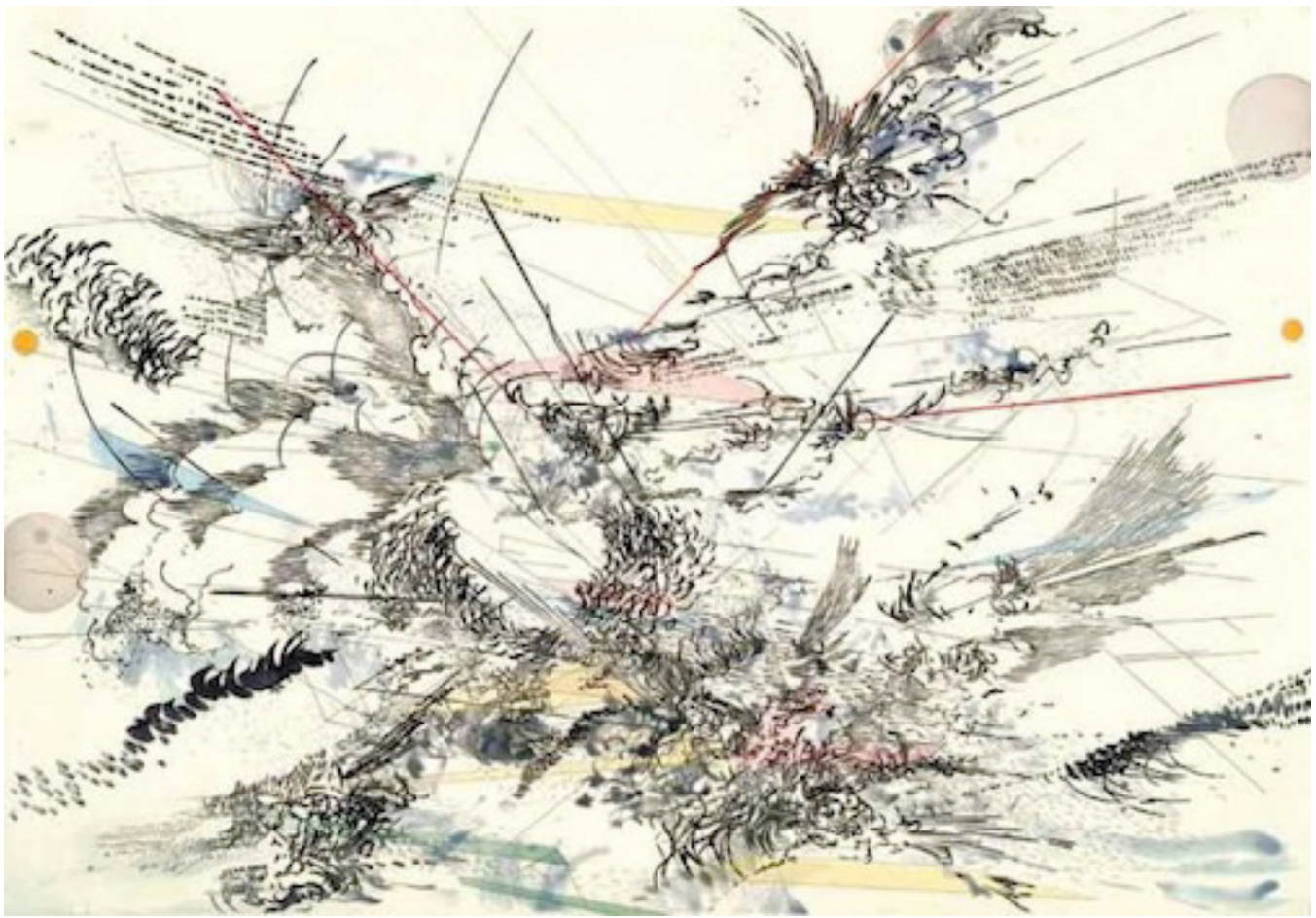
Local Calm, 2005

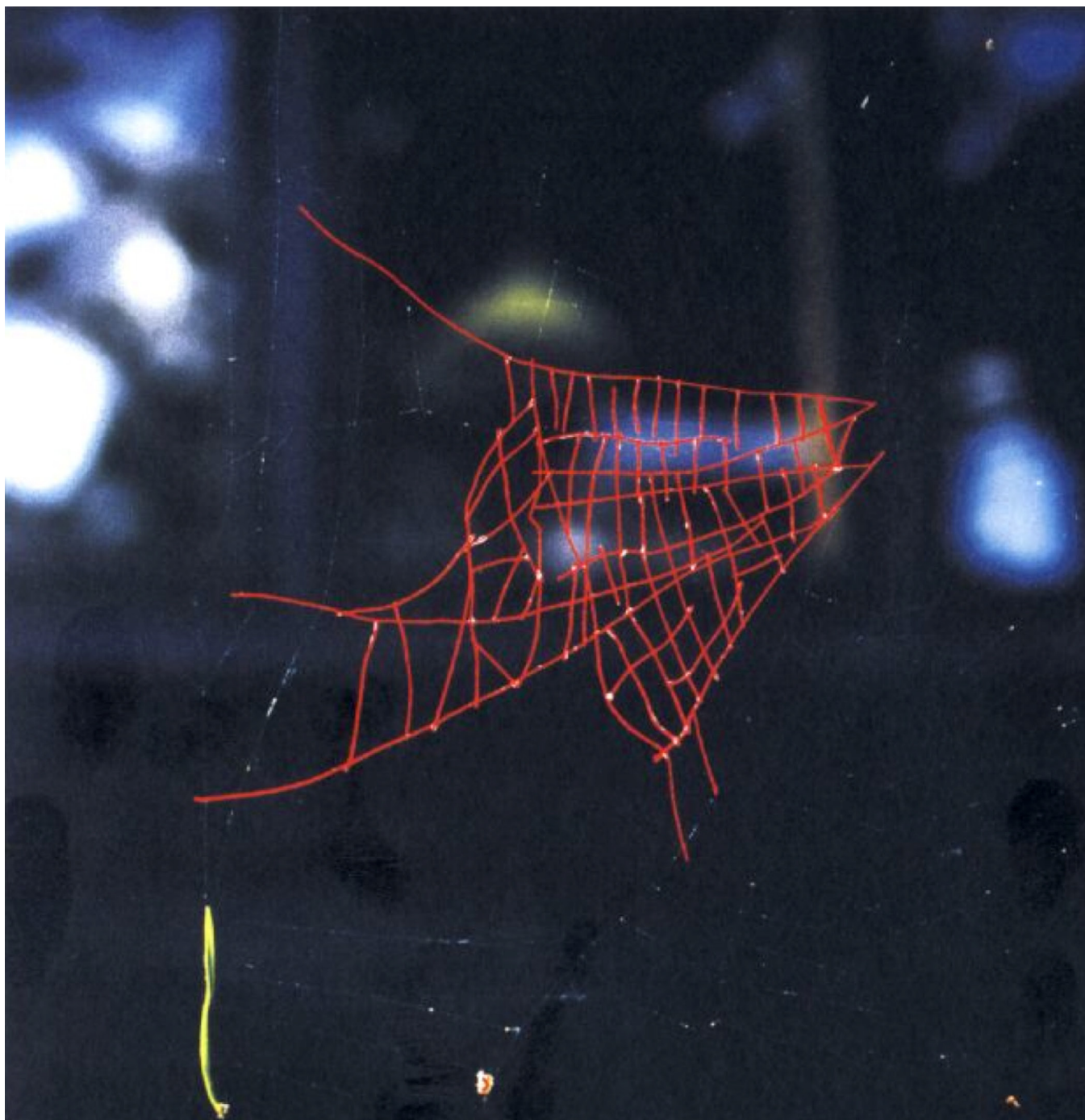
Sugar lift aquatint with color aquatint and spit bite aquatint, soft and hard ground etching, and engraving on Gampi paper chine colle

Known for her mixed media drawings, Julie Mehretu combines architectural and geographical influences to create large scale abstract works. The layering within her work allows for depth within the 2D space, aerial views of turbulent worlds. She creates these abstract maps fit for characters of her own creation.

In *Local Calm*, the piece exudes anything but calm. The repetition of curves all over the paper resemble smoke floating upward out of the piece, as if an explosion has occurred and shrapnel and smoke are flying everywhere. Viewers can stand before the piece and imagine a different reality or scenario.

Julie Mehretu, *Local Calm* 2005, Sugar lift aquatint with color aquatint and spit bite aquatint, soft and hard ground etching, and engraving on Gampi paper chine colle





Nina Katchadourian, *Mended Spiderweb #8*
(*Fish Shaped Patch*), Web Mended July 16,
1998, 5 am, 1998, C-print

WEBS OF MEANING

Anya Rome

Blurring the Line asks the viewer to consider how the concept of drawing can be expanded. It investigates how the three-dimensionality can be perceived as two-dimensional and vice versa, which not only allows for the possibility of a two-dimensional drawing to describe depth and space, but also allows viewers to consider our three-dimensional world in two-dimensional composition. It explores the possibility of line patterns to suggest virtual space that extends away from the piece of art, as well as the differences between man-made, animal-made, and natural lines.

In the work of Nina Katchadourian, Pae White, Rosemary Trockel, and Sue Williams, line transforms into symbol, describes form and pattern, and takes on function. These four artists use line not only as a medium to be manipulated, but also as a medium which comes with its own set of meanings.

Many of the works in this exhibition feature materials that reference “craft” arts, which historically have been considered to

belong outside of “high art” and to be “women’s work.” When craft materials such as yarn and thread are used in the context of contemporary art, it is consistently read as taking a subversive or feminist stance. For the last few decades, many of the featured artists have been exploring and exploding boundaries and expectations by consciously employing these materials.

Trockel deals with this idea most directly, in her piece *Untitled (plus-minus)* where she plays with how context affects perceived meaning in material and pattern. By stretching her machine-knit material on panels that are displayed like paintings on a wall, she challenges the cultural construct of high art.

In *Mended Spiderweb #8*, line in the form of red thread, takes on political meaning with Katchadourian’s act of “mending.” Mending references a domestic, historically female activity—the quotidian and benevolent act of fixing clothes or material. However, Katchadourian refers to her attempts to mend

spider webs as “uninvited collaborations.” Her work appears to be delicate and refined, but in reality she caused more damage than she could possibly fix, and her patches were consistently rejected. Katchadourian’s work allows for the possibility of mending to imply more than “benevolent-woman-in-the-house.” Her work reframes this act in order to transcend boundaries of intention, consent, and nature.

Spider webs work well as a theme in this exhibition for many reasons, and it is interesting that they make multiple appearances in *Blurring the Line* in the work of both Katchadourian and White. White deals with the material of spider webs differently than Katchadourian. For her, the line of the spider web is not as much political, as it is spatial. She uses the medium to create a space that has both surreal and natural elements, that has depth, detail, and vastness though it is all contained in a two-dimensional frame.

Sue Williams uses drawn line to

minimally describe human form. Everything about the woman depicted is recognizable—the title, the pose, the exaggerated proportions, and the quality of line; this woman in repose is emblematic of a category of women invented by male artists in the twentieth century, symbols of beauty as defined by a patriarchy. For an artist who usually expresses herself through imagery that is bold, and violent, *Woman in Repose* is minimal and subdued. The power of the piece however lies in the politics of the line that forms her.

As one can see through these four examples, *Blurring the Line* allows the viewer to revise their conception of the significance of the line through visual and ideological space.



Sue Williams

(American, 1954)

Woman in Repose, 1997

Ink on paper

Sue Williams' work is passionate, political, and subversive. Her subject matter, inspired by her own experiences, often depicts female victims of rape and abuse.

On the surface, *Woman in Repose*, reads as a typical gesture depicting a nude woman. But when considered within the matrix of the rest of her work, it can be considered as a commentary on hundreds of years of art dominated by patriarchy, as an ironic reference to the female body under the gaze of the male artist. The name, *Woman in Repose*, situates it within a collection of thousands of "women in repose," all painted by men through the ages. The over exaggerated breasts and curves critique an objectification of women, symbols of beauty that get regurgitated in art.

Pae White

(American, 1963)

web sampler (#1), 2000

Spiderweb on perfect paper

Pae White's work deals with the juxtaposition between the natural and the man-made. She does not, however, try to capture nature. Instead she mimics natural patterns. She explores and expands upon them through mediums that are man-made, synthetic. In *web sampler #1* this contrast can be seen in the pairing of the intense ombré blue pigment with the delicate spider web, which has been collaged on top. The piece has a surrealist, dream like quality. In some ways the pigment suggests the wide-open space of the sky, but in other ways it is clearly synthetic. The web itself deals with the interface between artifice and nature. Her manipulation of materials does not take a forthright moral stance, leaving the work open to interpretation, focusing instead on the experience of the viewer.



“You can make a world in a very small gesture, and you can make a world in a very huge gesture . . . a world can be as small as your fingertip, and as endless as [a] lagoon.” – Pae White¹

Nina Katchadourian

(American, 1968)

Mended Spiderweb #8 (Fish Shaped Patch), Web Mended July 16, 1998, 5am, 1998

Mended Spiderweb #8 is part of an exploration in which Nina Katchadourian found broken spider webs and carefully mended them with red thread. The patches she made sometimes took the form of text or were made to represent animals, such as a fish in

¹ Pae White - Venice Biennale 2009. Perf. Pae White. [Http://www.labiennale.org](http://www.labiennale.org). La Biennale, n.d. Web. <<http://www.labiennale.org/en/mediacenter/video/white.html>>.

Mended Spiderweb #8. Afterwards, the spider would meticulously undo Katchadourian's work, rejecting the patch, and fix the web itself.

This piece invokes different qualities of line, utilizing craft to blur the line between the aesthetic and the functional. Katchadourian's patches have a clear function as denoted by the title of the piece, but she inserts another level of meaning into the work by sewing words, or in this case, depicting a fish. Katchadourian refers to the pieces in the *Mended Spiderweb* series as "uninvited collaborations." This name questions the meaning of collaboration in terms of willing participants and intention. The possibility of mending as uninvited or destructive creates a contrast between self and other, between authentic and inauthentic. Where there is supposed to be some sort of unity, this piece emphasizes division.

Rosemarie Trockel

(German, 1952)

Untitled (plus-minus), 1985

Knitted wool

Rosemarie Trockel engages viewers in questions about what signifies "high art"

She uses quotidian materials and symbols. In her work, she invokes the many associations that people attach to material and symbol, developed through the context in which people interact with them everyday. In this piece, she uses knitted material and stretches it over two frames in order to create a diptych, suggesting the idea of "wool paintings," or of tapestry, asking the viewer to see the knitted material as a new dimension of meaning and value. Similarly, her use of line suggests the dual possibility of aesthetic pattern or of iconography. Is the piece meant to be looked at or read? Is it visual design or a mathematical equation?



Rachel Khedoori, *Untitled (Pink Room #6)*,
2001, Ilfochrome print

DISCOMFORT AT HOME

Nora Roth

In general terms, we can understand the idea of home as a safe haven from outside troubles, violence, and darkness, and in an ideal world, a place of sentimentality, comfort, and reassurance. However, for many individuals, the more troubling aspects of the outside world thrive exceptionally well in their own homes. Especially when sentimentality and fond memories have given way to more negative feelings, home can be a place of discomfort and peril. Julia Fish's *Entry (Fragment Three)*, Laura Paulini's *Crazy Legs*, Anna Gaskell's *Untitled #30*, and Rachel Khedoori's *Untitled (Pink Room #6)* all explore the concept of home as a place where the line that divides domestic comfort and the harshness of reality can be blurred. Moreover, these artists touch upon how memory and the passage of time influence our understanding of this intersection between sentimentality and discomfort in the home.

Julia Fish, a resident of Chicago since 1985, creates works exploring the nuances of her home and

studio space, a two-story former storefront. Admittedly inspired by architectural history, Fish records and studies the architectural details of her home. She frequently shifts and inverts perspectives of tile patterns, staircases, and light fixtures, presenting incredibly varied approaches to viewing her personal space. Fish's *Entry* series presents positive and negative images of hexagonal tiles as a means of discussing "fact and recollection." Though *Entry (Fragment Three)* can be understood as a representation of "fact," Fish's approach is rather ambiguous in that her representations of "recollection" lack any kind of sentimentality. Fish appears to be suggesting that although these architectural details are symbolic of her home's history, she is personally alienated from that passage of time. As a result, *Entry (Fragment Three)* takes on a sense of unease—although the tile pattern is a literally represented remnant of a home's history, it cannot fully communicate the stories that have unfolded within the building's

walls.

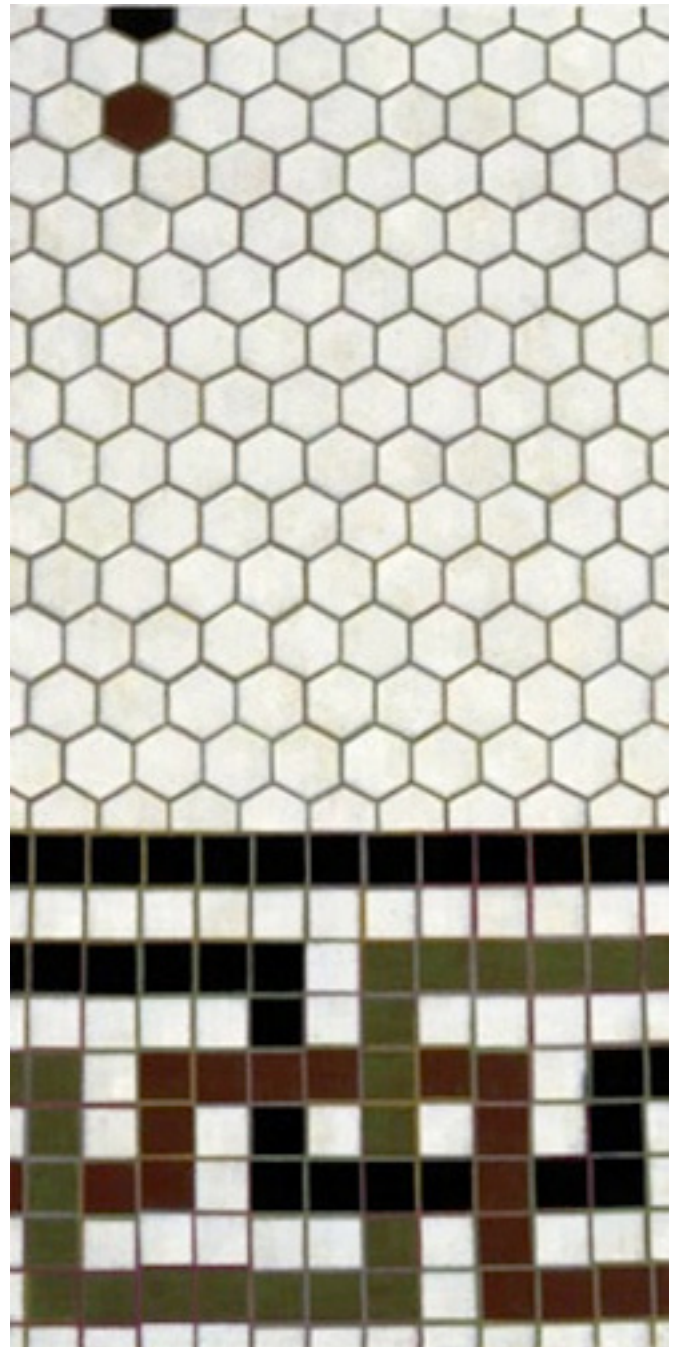
In terms of geometric form, Laura Paulini's *Crazy Legs* is created in a vein similar to Fish's *Entry (Fragment Three)*. Constructed of tiny dots of paint, much like decorative tile or an ancient mosaic, *Crazy Legs* mixes meticulous craft with history. Paulini, who has a deep fascination with historical ruins and human preoccupation with such artifacts, creates works in which the process of their creation and the objects created are of equal importance. *Crazy Legs*, with its allusions to the Greek and Roman mosaics that once adorned the homes of the wealthy, seems to vibrate with an energy that originates from the work's historical roots. Unlike Fish's *Entry (Fragment Three)*, *Crazy Legs* appears to extend beyond the stillness of a traditional painting, enticing viewers to engage with its buzzing sense of life and history. While the history of *Crazy Legs* is meant to be ambiguous, it is still inviting and open to the viewer's own sentimental reception of the work.

However, Anna Gaskell turns

sentimentality on its head with her pen and ink drawing, *Untitled #30*. Making a deliberate nod to the popular, and rather innocent, bedtime story Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Gaskell paints this tale in a much more sinister light. Here, Gaskell gives no visual context for the two figures, simply focusing on the act of a young girl being viciously mauled by a bear. The assumption Gaskell makes of her audience is familiarity with the referenced story, however, as there is such a drastic difference between the violent scene Gaskell has rendered and the story she uses as source material, viewers are left questioning if this children's story is as innocuous as they once thought. The stark minimalism of Gaskell's drawing is especially disturbing in this context, as it does nothing to disguise the fact that dearly held memories, such as children's stories, are often touched by darkness.

Rachel Khedoori employs a similar method of infusing sentimentality and the comforts of home with unsettling outside forces that seem to taint positive places. *Untitled (Pink Room #6)* is heavily distorted by use of unseen mirrors, creating an Alice in Wonderland-esque visual effect. Brightly colored and patterned walls are easily folded and refracted—creating an image of a room where it appears one could fall weightlessly through space as easily as one could stand. Similar to the approach of Julia Fish, Rachel Khedoori appears to explore the concept of “fact” versus “recollection.” *Pink Room* could easily be a stand-in for a favorite childhood room or a home remembered fondly, yet without windows or doors, the space becomes claustrophobic

and the memory much more jarring and negative.



Julia Fish, *Entry (Fragment Three)*, 1998, Oil on canvas

Rachel Khedoori

(American, born in Australia, 1964)

Untitled (Pink Room #6), 2001

Ilfochrome print

Rachel Khedoori's photographs and installation pieces mix familiarity with foreignness, shifting and mirroring brightly patterned rooms to unsettling effect. Khedoori alters what could easily be a favorite childhood room or a place remembered fondly, into a twisted maze in which there is no entrance and no exit.

Untitled (Pink Room #6) is largely reminiscent of folded origami paper, in which floral walls and pink baseboards are creased by the refraction of an unseen mirrored surface. The folded nature of the piece gives the *Pink Room* an uncomfortable lack of stability, creating a Wonderland-esque visual effect. It appears as though one could fall through space in this room as easily as one could stand.

Julia Fish

(American, 1950)

Entry (Fragment Three), 1998

Oil on canvas

Julia Fish's paintings and works on paper are detailed studies and documentation of her home and studio space, a former storefront building in Chicago, Illinois. Particularly interested in architecture and architectural history, Fish explores these concepts in the context of her personal space, lending her work a particularly introspective quality. Especially as many of her works are altered perspectives of the same rooms, landings, staircases, and light fixtures, Fish appears to challenge how individuals view the spaces they occupy. What details do we notice or neglect in our homes and work places? How can these minute details communicate history and the passage of time?

These questions motivate Fish's *Entry-Fragments* series, in which she inverts, flips, and shifts detail views of hexagonal tile work in her home studio. *Fragments* takes an almost photographic approach to painting, as Fish presents positive images alongside their negative counterparts. According to the artist, the inverse images are "theoretical [. . .], through which surface and interior, fact and recollection could be equally scaled, contradicted and reflected." *Entry (Fragment Three)*, a positive image, does not allude to any

particular memory of Fish's home. Although the old-fashioned tile pattern alludes to sentimentality, the complete history of this tile floor and the rest of Fish's home remain unknown, thus creating a sense of emotional distance from a space that is the nucleus of the artist's domestic and creative life.

Laura Paulini

(American, 1963)

Crazy Legs, 2007

Egg tempera on panel

Laura Paulini works in a predominately abstract style, using meticulously applied paint to create geometric and quivering lines that simultaneously "vibrate," yet "retain a sense of stillness." For Paulini, the means of artistic production and the artwork itself are of equal importance, perhaps explaining her interest in the human obsession with "ruins" and "objects worn and marked with the history of their use."

Crazy Legs, though very geometrically stable, appears to glow and pulsate with energy and color. Much like ancient Grecian mosaics, *Crazy Legs* is comprised of small and relatively uniform dots of paint. The intentional absence of some of these tile-like dots gives the work an aged appearance, as if some of the visual information of the piece has been lost to history. However, the vibrancy of the painting, despite its nod to the passage of time, is very much at the forefront of the work; perhaps asking the viewer, "What life does an object have beyond the context of its creation and intended use?"

Anna Gaskell

(American, 1969)

Untitled #30, 1998-99

Ink on paper

Anna Gaskell has produced photographs, drawings, and films, all somewhat related to a theme of young girls in positions of either direct or indirect peril. Some of her early photographs rely heavily on nods to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, while other works are very much in the vein of Grimm's *Fairy Tales*. Her ink on paper drawings are reminiscent of loose, free-form childhood scrawlings, many of which serve as studies for her photographs or films. Despite the rather whimsical nature of Gaskell's source material, there is an inherent darkness and ambiguity to the work that she produces.

Although the “little girl lost” types portrayed in her images are often iconic characters, Gaskell’s representation of their vulnerability can be understood as a universal reality for any young girl.

This particular piece, *Untitled #30*, makes reference to the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, albeit with a decidedly more terrifying ending. Gaskell’s minimalist interpretation depicts a young girl being viciously mauled by a bear, the two figures locked in combat within a completely blank field. Rather than placing her subjects within the context of a whimsical tale, Gaskell remains ambiguous in her approach, even going so far as to omitting limbs and body parts from her drawing. She could very well be suggesting that in perpetuating innocence and naiveté as an inherent part of girlhood, we are omitting the fact that such qualities often present opportunities for others to commit acts of violence and control against young girls and women.



Ana Gaskell, *Untitled #30*, 1998-99, Ink on paper



Anna Von Mertens, *North*, 2003, Hand-stitched hand-dyed cotton, plywood, mattress frame

ICONIC TRANSFORMATIONS

Lisa Smith

Do you ever question the function of familiar occurrences? Do you think about the way our bodies interact within space? Is normality the only way to live? All of the artists within *Blurring the Line* define a new representation of formal concepts or practices.

The works discussed in this portion of *Blurring the Line* have framed questions of the familiar and iconic. The artists create opportunities for dialogues to happen that may define new possibilities in the way that individuals think and live. Each piece has defined processes of thinking or conventions of creation in unconventional ways. When a viewer is challenged to compare and contrast conventional methods and images an internal dialogue occurs within the viewer. The forms used in these works are familiar and iconic. The artists explore the transformation of the iconic in three different ways.

Anna Von Mertens uses appearance versus reality to draw the viewer into her piece *North* and capitalizes on layered information

to create a new form of storytelling. Traditionally quilts have been used as methods of storytelling. Upon first glance the piece appears to be a typical quilt. As the viewer begins to interact with the work it is revealed that there is a layering of information and pattern. She stitches her research into quilts, which is an unconventional way of displaying information.

Another artist, Nicola Tyson, explores the way that we view human anatomy and over exaggerates it to force the viewer to question its function and possible sensitivity. Tyson depicts a solitary individual in her piece *Untitled #13*. Tyson focuses the viewer's eye on feminine body parts and amplifies areas of the body to form a discussion. This is typical of Tyson's work. She leads the viewer on a path of sexual exploration through the distortions she creates in her drawings.

The last artist of this section, Andrea Zittel uses monotonous practices of daily living overlaid in formal architectural representation of a two dimensional plan as a

way to identify thoughts about the importance of the body and the significance of the elements the body interacts with daily.

All of the artists within this section push viewers to think beyond what is given and transform the familiar into something new whether it is in thought or built form. From this, viewers can reflect upon and confront their own lives and begin to question the possibilities of the familiar.



Nicola Tyson, *Untitled (sketch book page)*
#13, 2004, Graphite on paper

Anna Von Mertens

(American, 1973)

North, 2003, from *Suggested North Points*

Hand-stitched hand-dyed cotton, plywood, mattress frame

Anna Von Mertens is known for her quilted depictions of processes and events in time. Her patterns are derived from natural occurrences, rather than store-bought form patterns. Her stitching process is an important, and necessary link to the final piece. Her quilts represent a record of time, space and trajectory flattened and compressed over one plane. There is a global and local representation of information in her pieces.

In *North*, from the *Suggested North Points* collection, Von Mertens has sewn patterns that she has researched, depicting metabolic pathways of a cell. There are layers of information that inform her final piece. She uses constructed frame box to represent the intimacy of a bed. She uses a gradient of blue hues to depict a winter landscape, which interact with the stitched cell pathways. Upon first glance this piece may appear to be simple depiction of pattern-making, but a deeper look reveals a layered process of dense information.

Nicola Tyson

(British, 1960)

Untitled (sketch book page) #13, 2004

Graphite on paper

Nicola Tyson erotically displays identifiable and salient features of the human body in her work. She does this by exaggerating and distorting recognizable elements of human anatomy. The body parts are depicted as out of proportion. She explores identity in this way and allows the viewer to discover her survey of sexuality through a playful process of gender exploration.

In Tyson's *Untitled #13* she hints towards an anatomy of a feminine structure. There is a sketch quality to the drawing. A single body is pictured squatting with thighs amplified and disproportionate to other parts of the body. The hands appear to be bound towards the back of the body. Tension is created within the stance because of the uneasiness of the unnatural and awkward posture. Tyson has drawn the eye toward the female genital area and forced the viewer to deal with the uncomfortable position that has occurred.

Andrea Zittel

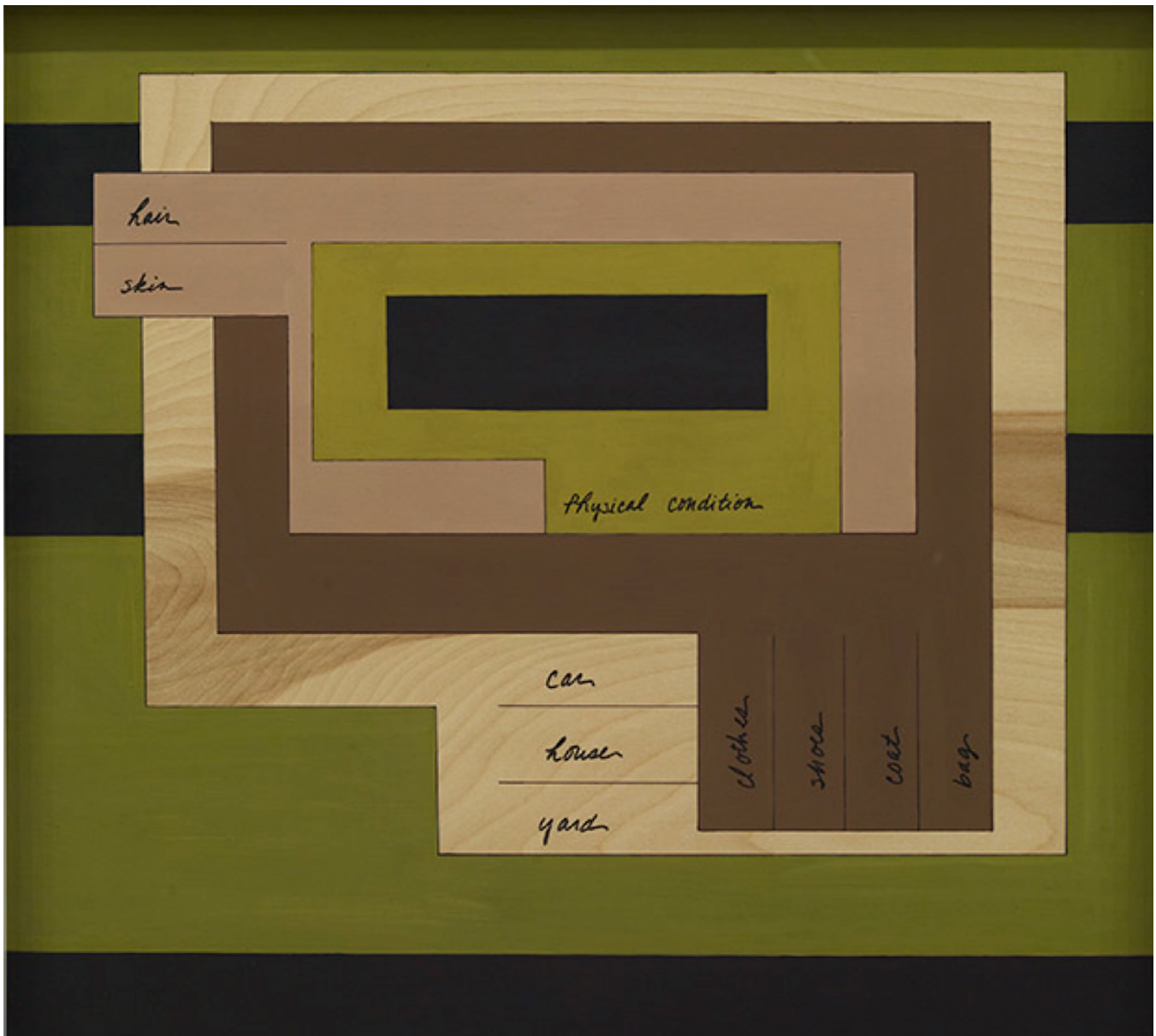
(American, 1965)

Radiating Arenas of Enchantment #4, 2007

Flashe on fir plywood

Andrea Zittel creates responses to living conditions and the functional needs of daily life. She questions the bounding structures that surround and define our processes in life. By identifying these elements she develops new possibilities for living. She uses two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms to explore these facets of life. She looks to the elements driving the routine and the familiar context of the home. Zittel transforms the traditional ideas of art into a way of life not confined to a 2D surface nor a 3D object held in static singular space. Her art is one that evokes possibilities and can be ever-changing.

In *Radiating Arenas of Enchantment #4*, Zittel defines spacial arrangements on a 2D surface reminiscent of a plan view of a home. She identifies components that define the body and the surroundings that interact with it. A six-sided shape is repeated from a central core and amplifies outward in scale. A thickness is created in each repeated shape like walls that bound and define a home. The elements Zittel feels are closest to the internal necessities of the body are closest to the core. These elements are labeled in vinyl lettering. The elements that are least necessary for individual functions are farthest away from the body and thus farthest away from the core of the design.



Andrea Zittel, *Radiating Arenas of Enchantment #4*, 2007, Flashe on fir plywood



Amanda Ross-Ho, *White Goddess #12 (namesake)*, 2008, Acrylic on cut canvas attached to sheetrock and plywood wall

TO WEAVE AND TANGLE

Lyndsey Werner

Women have been associated with creating textiles for hundreds of years. Whether with fabric or baskets, it is an art form traditionally dominated by women. Quilting, for example, has been considered a very flexible medium in contemporary art; it can be narrative or abstract. It might be the oldest form of drawing in which women have had more control than men. Amanda Ross-Ho's *White Goddess #12*, Leigh Wells' *Big Tangles*, and Rachel Whiteread's *Study for a floor* can be seen as interpretations of weaving without actually using the medium of textiles. *White Goddess #12* is a canvas cut to look like macramé; *Big Tangles* can be interpreted as a drawing of disregarded thread or strands of grass; and Rachel Whiteread's drawing is a depiction of a section of floor, but has a woven pattern and fibrous-looking texture.

White Goddess #12 and *Big Tangles* are contrasts for one another. Both are black and white and they imply a similar subject through different mediums. Mac-

ramé requires precise knotting and a lot of control. *Big Tangles* is what happens to the threads or fibers if they are left to snarl together; both would be difficult to unravel. *Big Tangles* and *White Goddess #12* are large in scale, and in fact, *White Goddess #12* is the largest piece in the exhibit. This creates an interesting effect as the state of the material—strands or thread—are usually seen on a smaller scale, such as balled up wads of grass or friendship bracelets.

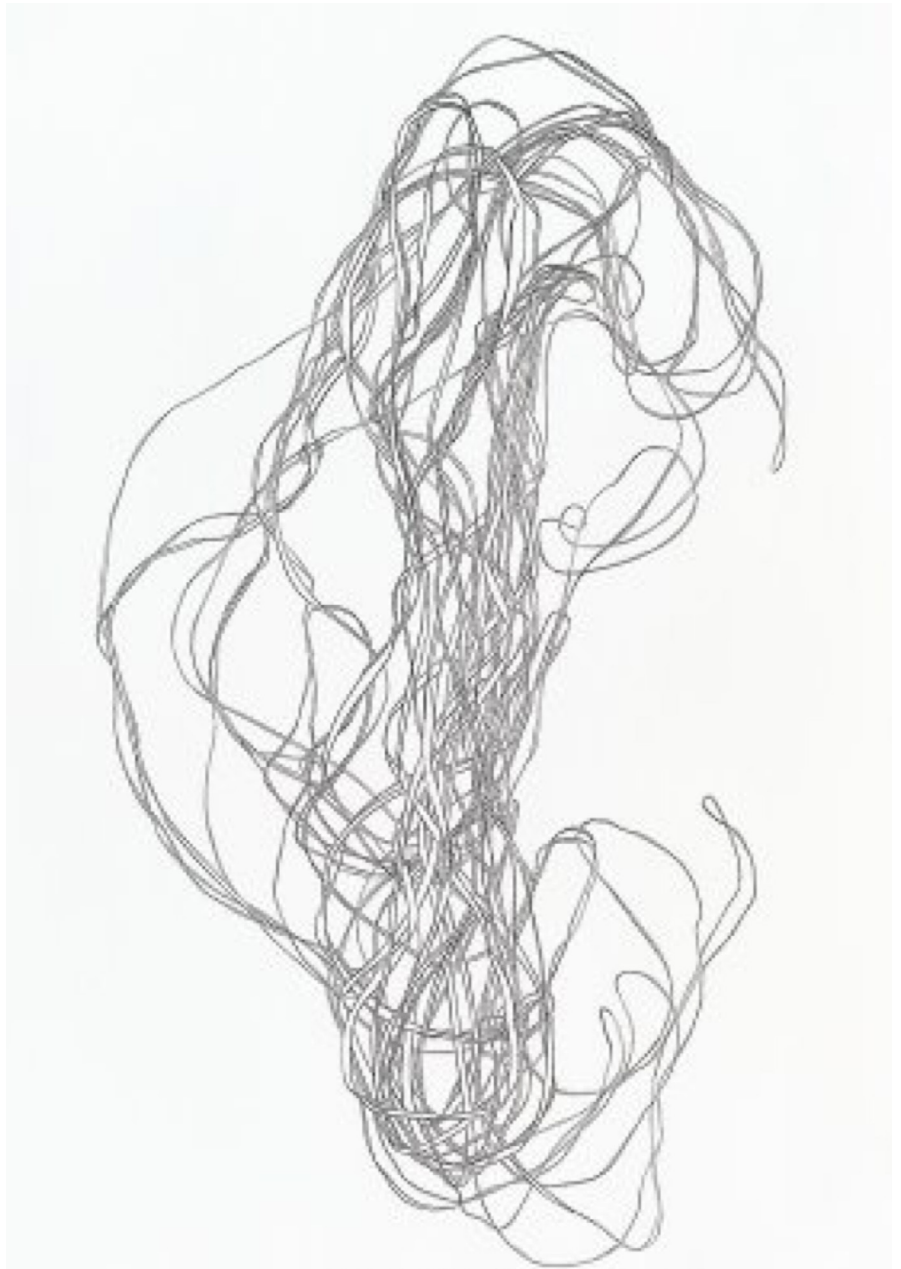
White Goddess #12 and *Big Tangles* both have a strong connection to motion. *White Goddess #12* is a hanging work of art that is capable of movement, especially the longer strands. By using a larger scale, an observer can appreciate every loop and twist involved in the pattern created by the macramé. They can observe the slack and tension. *Big Tangles* is almost a gesture drawing, but the lines are too clean. If the viewer follows one of the lines, their eyes will be in constant motion. It is a dizzying experience.

The Whiteread drawing is much

smaller than *Big Tangles* or *White Goddess #12*. The drawing is of a floor, reminiscent of tiles. The tiled floor is slightly contradicted by the texture of the boxes themselves. The layered lines that constitute each tile give the impression of thatching. The thatching creates a texture of some kind of plant fiber, such as hay or a palm leaf, which might be woven into a mat. The pattern also looks like a weave. The negative space prevents the assumption of a woven surface. If there is a suggestion of motion it is because of the negative space. The negative space makes the image appear three-dimensional, and it instills the idea that the boxes can be shifted slightly, like rows of dominos. Or, that if it was possible to reach out and stroke the artwork, the texture would feel like the bumpy surface of a tiled wall.

White Goddess #12 and Whiteread's drawing are patterns. Ross-Ho emphasizes the pattern of *White Goddess #12* using the size of the piece and her decision to make it all black. Most macramé

pieces show a pattern within a pattern using brightly colored thread in addition to the designs created by the knots. Ross-Ho claimed that she was most interested in the technique of knotting. By removing color from the equation entirely she allows the viewer to focus solely on the patterns that knots create. Ross-Ho further emphasizes the pattern with her decision to enlarge the entire work. The intricately knotted string of normally scaled macramé can only be appreciated up close (which is why they tend to be more colorful, incorporating easy to notice patterns). The tiled configuration of Whiteread's drawing is much looser. The lines lack the mathematical precision of a straight edge. Some of the boxes have bumps, which are often compensated for in the next box. While Whiteread's drawing and *White Goddess #12* are distinguished by patterns, *Big Tangles* is characterized by a distinct lack of pattern.



Amanda Ross-Ho

(American, 1975)

White Goddess #12 (namesake), 2008

Acrylic on cut canvas attached to sheetrock and plywood wall

Macramé is the same method that children use to make friendship bracelets. It toes the line between simple and intricate. While friendship bracelets are characterized by brightly colored thread, this canvas and acrylic macramé is black. It relies solely on the representation of knots to convey its beauty. The aesthetic of thick black strands contrasting against the white wall is reminiscent of ink on canvas. The strips of canvas that create lines weave in and out of each other; forming patterns in the same way a painter uses a brush.

Amanda Ross-Ho uses more complex forms of knotting as a pattern and dramatically scales the macramé to a larger size. *White Goddess #12* is far larger than any other piece of the artwork in the exhibit. The monochromatic representation of macramé hangs from the wall like a tapestry. The display and the size put a distance between the viewer and what is normally an intimate artwork. Macramé is generally jewelry, often shared among friends. It is a personal object. The size makes this macramé a public one.

Leigh Wells

(American, 1964)

Untitled 02 (Big Tangles), 2008

Ink on paper

There are no straight lines in this winding thread. If you choose a spot and follow it, your eyes will do loops and whorls. Some of the lines run parallel to each other, creating the illusion that they are outlining a single white line. It can also be interpreted as one tangled line, twisted, diving in and out of itself. On a smaller scale this would look like tangled grass or string rolled together between to fingers. On this scale, every twist looks intentional. This is a drawing that had no pause or hesitation; the tangle was drawn in a continuous motion. The areas where the parallel lines are prevalent give the impression of a weaving, while the fringes, where the individual lines are more obvious, look like loose thread.

Leigh Wells, a Bay Area artist, creates flowing, clean images. Though the ink that forms the twisting string is tangled, there are no small

Leigh Wells, *Untitled 02 (Big Tangles)*, 2008,
Ink on paper

lines straying from it. The image is free of lines without a place to go, or loose lines that would make it look as if the thread were beginning to unravel. This indicates a certainty and constant movement in the artist's hand. This is more powerful as the large size of the drawing would have required the artist's entire arm move confidently.

Rachel Whiteread

(British, 1963)

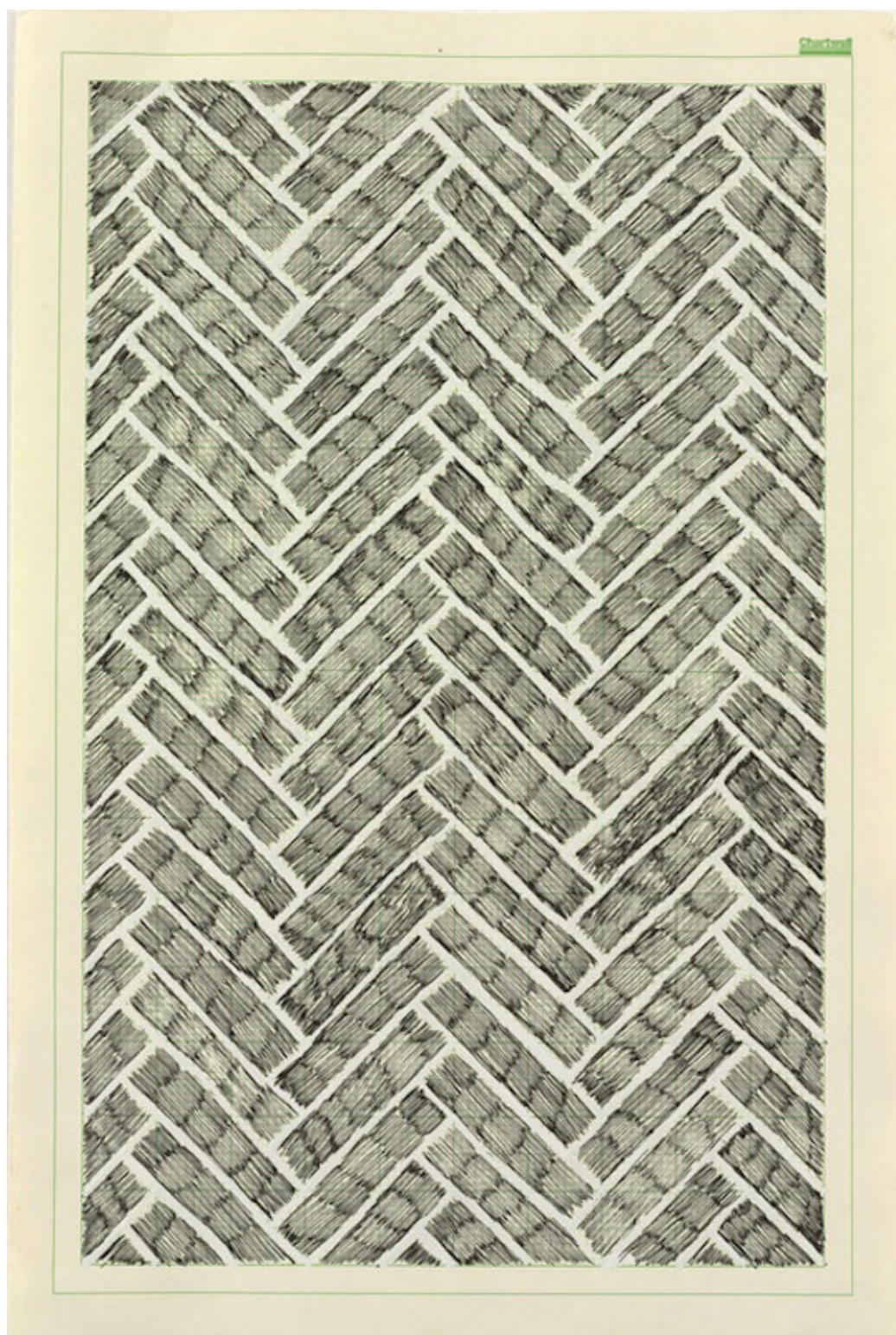
Study for a Floor (Black detail), 1992

Ink on paper

The repetitive nature of this drawing makes it almost tactile. The drawing is of a floor, yet, the tiled arrangement is also reminiscent of the pattern created by the treads of a tire. The texture within each tile is layered, fashioning a pattern within the pattern. These lines resemble small, segmented bundles of hay or straw, while the negative space of the drawing makes the pattern appear more three-dimensional.

Though Rachel Whiteread is best known for her sculpture, this ink on paper drawing is similar to certain aspects of her sculpture such as the depiction of cubes and repetition. The built environment and architectural theme of the drawing is also related to the themes of her sculpture. Whiteread has other similar drawings that also have a diagonal pattern. The lines are not mathematically straight. They are controlled, but loose enough to make the inconsistency seem natural. The effect was achieved through use of graph paper. The graph lines in the negative space have been rubbed away. This added to the aesthetic of the drawing. It is a reminder that it is not just a print of a pattern, but rather, a painstaking process to create something new.

Rachel Whiteread, *Study for a Floor (Black detail)*, 1992, Ink on paper



WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

All works in *Blurring the Line* are from the collection of Lenore Pereira and Rich Niles, San Francisco, unless otherwise specified.

TOMMA ABTS
(British, b. Germany, 1967)
Untitled (diagonals), 2009
Color aquatint with soft ground etching

UTA BARTH
(German, b. 1958)
Ground #70, 1996
Color photograph on panel

ZARINA BHIMJI
(British, b. Uganda, 1963)
Bapa Closed His Heart, It Was Over, 2002
Ilfochrome Ciba Classic Print

ANDREA BOWERS
(American, b. 1965)
Political Slogans and Flower Magick: No Hanger, 2006
Paper, wire, gouache, political button

TRACEY EMIN
(British, b. 1963)
I want to be consumed, 1997
Monoprint

NICOLE PHUNGRASAMEE FEIN
(American, 1974)
1100108, 2008
Watercolor on paper

JULIA FISH
(American, b. 1950)
Entry (Fragment Three), 1998
Oil on canvas

ANNA GASKELL
(American, b. 1969)
Untitled #30, 1998-99
Ink on paper

CARRIE GUNDERSDORF
(American, b. 1973)
Star Trails—15 min. exposure, 2005
Watercolor and colored pencil on paper

CARRIE GUNDERSDORF
(American, b. 1973)
Discovering the varying widths of the epsilon ring, 2005
Oil on canvas

MONA HATOUM
(British, b. Lebanon 1952)
Untitled (graters), 1999
Gelatin silver print

REBECCA HORN
(German, b. 1944)
Dance of Ghosts, 2005
Mixed media on paper

NINA KATCHADOURIAN
(American, b. 1968)
Mended Spiderweb #8 (Fish Shaped Patch), *Web Mended July 16, 1998, 5 am*, 1998
C-print

RACHEL KHEDOORI
(American, b. Australia, 1964)
Untitled (Pink Room #6), 2001
Ilfochrome print

RACHEL KHEDOORI
(American, b. Australia, 1964)
Untitled (Pink Room #2), 2001
Ilfochrome print

LIZ LARNER
(American, b. 1960)
Untitled, 2002
Stainless steel, paper, watercolor, and egg tempera

ANGELA LIM
(American, b. 1965)
Cockaigne: In Your Clumsily . . ., 1998
Linen apron with hand embroidery and fish scales

NICOLA LOPEZ
(American, b. 1975)
After the Storm, 2009
Ink, gouache, gesso, crayon, graphite on paper

VERA LUTTER
(German, b. 1960)
303 East Wacker Street, Chicago, IL,
October 13, 2001, 2001
Unique gelatin silver print

JULIE MEHRETU
(American, b. Ethiopia, 1970)
Local Calm, 2005
Sugar lift aquatint with color aquatint and spit bite aquatint, soft and hard ground etching and engraving on Gampi paper chine colle

ANA MENDIETA
(American, b. Cuba 1948-1985)
Untitled, ca. 1985
Pencil on paper

ANNA MENDIETA
(American, b. Cuba, 1948-1985)
Le Laberinto de la vida/Labyrinth of Life, 1982
Black and white photograph

ALEKSANDRA MIR
(Polish, b. 1967)
Evesham #89, 2003
Marker pen on paper

ALEKSANDRA MIR
(Polish, b. 1967)
Lake Okeechobee/Brighton Seminole Indians Res. #22, 2003
Marker pen on paper

SHIRIN NESHAT
(Iranian, b. 1957)
Bonding, 1996
Gelatin silver print with unique ink calligraphy

GLORIA ORTIZ-HERNANDEZ
(Columbian, b. 1943)
Sequitur I-V, 2005
Graphite on paper
Collection of Penny Cooper and Rena Rosenwasser

GAY OUTLAW
(American, b. 1959)
Buzzzz (Perforated Cube Study 1"), 2001
PVC, epoxy resin, chalk, pigment

GAY OUTLAW
(American, b. 1959)
Ocean View, 2004
Mirrored mold-blown glass

LAURA PAULINI
(American, b. 1963)
Crazy Legs, 2007
Egg tempera on panel

DANICA PHELPS
(American, b. 1967)
e.e. #65, 2nd gen., 2002
Graphite and watercolor on paper and board

CHLOE PIENE
(American, b. 1972)
Coddling, 2003
Charcoal on vellum

AMANDA ROSS-HO
(American, b. 1975)
White Goddess #12 (namesake), 2008
Acrylic on cut canvas attached to sheetrock and plywood wall

KIKI SMITH
(American, b. 1954)
Whisper Drawing #2, 2000
Colored pencil on paper

SARAH SZE
(American, b. 1969)
Addition (Birds Nests and Measuring Tapes), 2011
Wood, enamel, wire, plastic, metal

ROSEMARIE TROCKEL
(German, b. 1952)
Untitled (plus-minus), 1985
Knitted wool

LYNNE WOODS TURNER
(American, b. 1951)
Untitled, 1999
Pencil on parchment paper

NICOLA TYSON
(British, b. 1960)
Untitled #97, 1999
Charcoal on paper

NICOLA TYSON
(British, b. 1960)
Untitled (sketch book page) #13,
2004
Graphite on paper

ANNA VON MERTENS
(American, b. 1973)
North, 2003
Hand-stitched hand-dyed cotton,
plywood, mattress frame

BIRGITTA WEIMER
(German, b. 1956)
Coil II, 2001
Rubber cord

LEIGH WELLS
(American, b. 1964)
Untitled 02 (Big Tangles), 2008
Ink on paper

PAE WHITE
(American, b. 1963)
web sampler (#1), 2000
Spiderweb on perfect paper

RACHEL WHITEREAD
(British, b. 1963)
Study for a Floor (Black detail),
1992
Ink on paper

SUE WILLIAMS
(American, 1954)
Woman in Repose, 1997
Ink on paper

ANNE WILSON
(American, b. 1949)
Errant Behaviors, 2004
Video with sound

ANDREA ZITTEL
(American, b. 1965)
*Radiating Arenas of Enchantment
#4*, 2007
Flashe on fir plywood

Laura Paulini, *Crazy Legs*, 2007, Egg tem-
pera on panel

