



In the Making Contemporary Drawings from a Private Collection

Eve Aschheim, Jill Baroff, Suzanne Bocanegra, Marco Breuer, Brad Brown, Russell Crotty, Elena del Rivero, Emma Dewing, Teresita Fernandez, Christian Garnett, Christine Hiebert, Jim Hodges, Mary Ijichi, Linda Lynch, Karen Margolis, Linda Matalon, Cyrilla Mozenter, James Nares, Deborah Gottheil Nehmad, Laurie Reid, Karin Sander, Cary Smith, Sara Sosnowy, Tam van Tran, Joseph Vito



CHRISTINE HIEBERT, *L.99.1*, 1998–1999

In the Making

Contemporary Drawings from a Private Collection

DRAWING is the oldest artistic medium and—given the way in which the drawn line so palpably traces the workings of the artist's mind—the most intimate. One of the most sophisticated collections of contemporary drawings in the United States today is that of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. Wynn began assembling the collection in the late 1950s and early 1960s, relying on his unerring eye for the integrity of each drawing, and for his faith in his own artistic judgment. The Kramarsky collection is known for its preponderance of abstract, geometric works by artists associated with minimalism and post-minimalism, including Dan Flavin, Eva Hesse, Mel Bochner, Carl Andre, Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt, which reflects Wynn's interest in mathematics and science. Wynn has always supported younger artists, and his collection reflects his enthusiasm for new work.

In the Making: Contemporary Drawings from a Private Collection comprises thirty-six works made within the last ten years by a younger generation of artists who have absorbed the lessons of minimal and post-minimal art but subvert its tight control. Rather than emphasizing the hard edge, the solid field, the series, and the word, the drawings in this exhibition tend to be looser and more capacious, stretching the notion of making and materials. They are not studies for work in other media but finished drawings that stand on their own as complete works.

The artists represented in this exhibition draw to apprehend the world. Many work almost exclusively on paper; others

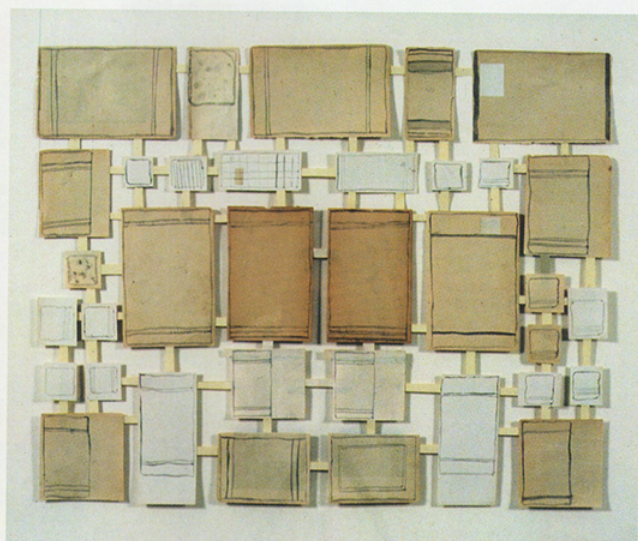
move freely between drawing, painting, sculpture and other media. All of them approach drawing with a remarkable level of openness and willingness to explore. They emphasize process and material and challenge conventional notions of drawing. Many experiment with supports other than the traditional paper—cardboard, old scraps and bits of paper, Mylar, vinyl, or found objects such as string. In addition to pen, pencil, and charcoal, they use different materials to make their marks—watercolor, fire, lint, and wax. Several add materials to build drawings; others nearly cover the surface with marks. Some of their materials and mark making seem organic, almost biomorphic.

Suzanne Bocanegra and Brad Brown draw on accreted bits and scraps of various kinds of paper. Bocanegra is a sculptor who elegantly arranges found objects and disparate materials almost as if they were scientific specimens.¹ Since 2000 she has been engaged in an ongoing project in which she categorizes and draws

and incorporating different kinds of figural and abstract marks. In addition to working and reworking the torn images, Brown exposes them to studio stains, integrating footprints and spills into the imagery. Although the project was originally intended to be a wall installation, Brown ultimately chose to reassemble the fragments into discrete drawings like this one.

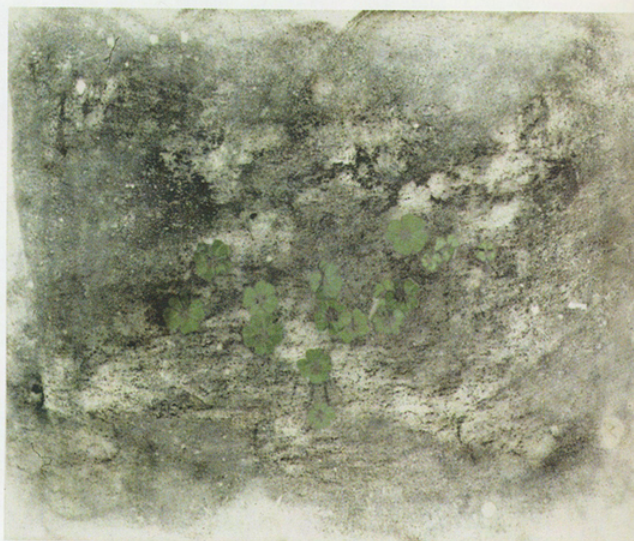
Christine Hiebert builds her large-scale charcoal drawings slowly and intuitively, making marks in response to other marks, then erasing and marking again. She gives lines different shapes, sizes, and personalities, creating an active, allover field that entices the viewer into the drawing to negotiate a path from line to line. Hiebert prepares the surface of the paper with rabbit-skin glue, creating a patina that when erased bruises, causing subtle shifts in color.

In the Making includes several works incorporating materials not usually associated with drawing. In her *String Drawing #2*,



SUZANNE BOCANEGRA, *DRAWING EVERYTHING IN MY HOUSE: TOWELS*, 2001

“everything” in her domestic environment. *Drawing Everything in My House: Towels*, 2001, is made of paper scraps of different colors and sizes arranged and attached to a paper grid in a subtle relief. Their ink- and brush-drawn patterns reveal these to be towels. One of Bocanegra’s influences for this project is the French artist Daniel Spoerri, specifically his *An Annotated Topography of Chance*, in which he mapped the objects laying on a table in his room, described each in great detail, and included his and his friends’ free associations about the objects and their histories. Bocanegra is further influenced by the idea and rich tradition of still life: her project explores what it means to use as art subjects inanimate objects with which you live.² Drawing is Brad Brown’s primary medium. *The Look Stains* (681-695), 2002, is part of a project in which Brown tears drawings in a grid pattern and develops the fragments using various media (cardboard, spiral notebook backs)



JIM HODGES, *DRAWING ON CLOUDS*, 1993

2002, Mary Ijichi layers pale colors of acrylic paint over horizontal rows of string on long scrolls of Mylar. Light bounces over these irregular bumps of peach, pink, yellow, and blue to create a glimmering interplay of color and texture that cascades to the floor. The work’s quiet, contemplative effect reflects the artist’s eastern origins and minimalist aesthetic and is counterbalanced by a rich and sensual use of materials. Cyrilla Mozenter’s *Preserve I*, 1990, is a vertical drawing made of twenty-nine balls of string coated in beeswax and strung from a cord stretching from floor to ceiling. Its title reflects Mozenter’s interest in ordinary stuff—string, peanuts, used soap—which she coats with wax and subtly arranges, thereby honoring its utility, singular beauty, and complex associations.³

Other drawings in the exhibition show traces of their making. Marco Breuer is known for the unique photographic works he

produces by the simplest of means, usually without a camera. He burns, sands, scratches, and strikes photographic papers whose emulsions respond variously to different forms of energy.⁴ Two of his drawings, titled *Study for One Ten*, 2000, are studies for books. Because they needed to be folded and bound, Breuer used Fabriano drawing paper rather than photographic paper. The drawings record Breuer's experiments with heat and fire: he briefly connected two live, 110-volt wires over the paper, creating sparks and carbon stains that through controlled chance produced elegant organic forms and colors—brown, yellow, green—and sensuous hints of texture and depth. Laurie Reid's watercolor drawing, *To Make a Prairie It Takes a Clover and One Bee*, 1996, was made using a brush so water-laden that its strokes raised and puckered the paper in vertical bands. Her title, after an Emily Dickinson poem, evokes the elemental beauty of natural processes and engages our senses of sight, sound, and smell. Conceptual artist



CYRILLA MOZENTER, *PRESERVE I*, 1990



MARCO BREUER, *STUDY FOR ONE TEN*, 2000

Karin Sander works in many different mediums and formats, creating series that give material form to singular ideas. Her drawings, *Lint Pick Up - Ina*, and *Lint Pick Up - Karin*, both from 1999, were created by passing Lint Pick Up tape over a person's body, recording a portrait of that person on that day.

Like those of Cyrilla Mozenter and Marco Breuer, Linda Matalon's materials and mark making seem organic, even biomorphic. Matalon considers drawing to be her primary medium and sustains a lively interplay between her drawings and sculptures. While the latter depend on line, her drawings which use different amalgams of beeswax, are tangible, almost sculptural. In her Untitled drawing from 2000–01, Matalon applied wax to the paper, creating a shiny surface which she works aggressively, leaving evidence of marking, layering, smudging, erasing, and gouging. The small, bone- or vegetation-like forms she creates with wax and graphite are delicately integrated in her open field to create an overall luminosity. Her recent drawings show the influence of the paintings of J.M.W. Turner (1775–1851), known as the "Painter of Light."⁵

Jim Hodges uses silk flowers and other unassuming materials and objects to prompt sensation and memory. *Drawing on Clouds*, 1993, is a small charcoal drawing of thick, dark clouds on which he has 'floated' four-leaf clovers made of green silk. The clovers seem fragile and innocent, if artificial: the clouds may symbolize imminent trouble or disturbance. Hodges often leaves us suspended this way between optimism and sorrow, searching for his meaning.

Jill Baroff's work acknowledges and transforms space and light. *Squarings*, 1997, is a portfolio of four square drawings using gampi and kozo, two kinds of papers Baroff first encountered in a 1996 trip to Japan. Baroff bathes the gampi—tissue-thin, but strong because of its weave—in a warm bath, coats it with glue, and mounts it on the opaque kozo. The translucent gampi absorbs light and casts an ambient glow; over kozo it takes on a warm, subdued honey tone.⁶ Baroff then highlights the edges of the

gampi with a single graphite line, following its bends and folds by way of acknowledging the space of drawing. For art critic and writer Lily Wei, Baroff's work is ultimately "a quality as much as it is a quantity, a sensed experience of shape, form, color, line and texture as well as a cognitive acknowledgment of its materiality, its status as an art object."⁷

Teresita Fernandez's sculptural installations explore the ways in which color and light affect our perceptions of space. Her drawing, *Hazel, Camille, Audrey, Eloise*, 2000, is inspired by the luminous color and energy of hurricanes, whose fast-whirling currents suck air into their centers, drawing it upwards in a spiral around a calm core. Fernandez uses Mylar as a ground support and marks it with pencil and ink. The ink provides the color, bleeding and smudging softly in pale-to-darker blues and lavender; the pencil defines the edges of color. Each hurricane is named in pencil near or within its spiral form. A top layer of vinyl cut into concentric circles provides a transparent, iridescent overlay that shapes the swirls of light and atmospheric energy. The overall effect is as beautiful as hurricanes are destructive.

More than any other graphic medium, and much like writing, drawing gives intimate visible expression to the artist's thoughts and ideas. Drawings, like books, are best savored in solitude, over time.⁸ Wynn Kramarsky's passion for collecting began when he was a child in an empty drawing gallery where, looking closely and sustainedly at the works, he first appreciated the many choices of medium, line, mark, and support that result in a drawing. As an adult he saw that possessing a drawing enormously expanded the possibilities of interpreting and appreciating it. "When you finally buy a drawing and actually have that piece of paper in your hand," he has said, "there is something so sensuous and exciting about it. There is no glass; there is no frame. As you hold it, you actually feel what the artist has felt. And that's the beginning of a wonderful addiction..."⁹

—Betsy Siersma

NOTES

1. Janet Koplos, *Art in America*, January 1991, pp. 132–3.
2. Electronic mail from the artist to the author, March 25, 2003.
3. Elizabeth Finch, "Any saint at all: The Drawings of Cyrilla Mozzenter," in *Cyrilla Mozzenter: Very well saint*, The Drawing Center, New York, 2000, unpaginated.
4. Jacqueline Brody, "Marco Breuer: Counting in Circles," *Art on Paper*, September–October 2001, pp. 42–49.
5. Conversation with the artist, March 5, 2003.
6. Lily Wei, *Jill Baroff: Stacked Drawings*, Fifth Floor Foundation, New York, 2000, unpaginated.
7. Ibid.
8. For a discussion of drawing and writing see Dieter Schwarz, "Not a Drawing: Some Thoughts about Recent Drawing," in *"Drawing is another kind of language": Recent American Drawings from a New York Private Collection*, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, 1997, p. 11.
9. Werner H. Kramarsky in *On Drawing: A Conversation with Werner H. Kramarsky, Connie Butler, and Harry Cooper*, Pollock Gallery, Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, 2000, p. 5.



KARIN SANDER,
LINT PICK UP-KARIN, 1999

Acknowledgements

Wynn and Sally Kramarsky have generously shared their drawings with the University of Massachusetts Amherst community. Wynn and his Registrar, Amy Eshoo, developed the curatorial criteria for *In the Making*, and selected the drawings on view — a grouping of works shown together here for the first time. Our deepest thanks go to Wynn and Amy for a beautiful and rich exhibition. We thank Amy also for her gracious support in all aspects of its organization. We wish to thank Peter Muscato for installing the three complicated multi-part installation drawings. We greatly appreciate the magnificent efforts of the twenty-four artists whose works are featured here.

At the University, I would like to thank Tekla McInerney for designing this elegant brochure and John Sippel for his graceful edit of the text. Gallery Manager Craig Allaben, Preparator Justin Griswold, and Installation Assistant Mike Ward installed the exhibition with precision and sensitivity. Gallery Registrar Jennifer Lind expertly handled loan and shipping arrangements and assisted with installation. It was at Curator Regina Coppola's prompting that we showcased work from this illustrious collection, and she placed the exhibition masterfully.