

The Museum of Modern Art

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Press Preview:

December 15, 11 am to 4 pm

PROJECTS: NANCY GRAVES, the fifth in a series of exhibitions of recent work by contemporary artists, will be on view from December 16 through January 24 at The Museum of Modern Art. Included in the exhibition are a sculpture, "Variability and Repetition of Variable Structures," several drawings, and four paintings, the latter representing the most recent development in the artist's work, and on view in New York for the first time.

Nancy Graves has consistently used realistic forms based on paleontology, anthropology, and archaeological material, to deal with formal and perceptual problems. The sculpture "Variability and Repetition of Variable Structures" (1971) consists of 38 vertical units ranging from 9' 4" to 10' high and distributed over an area approximately 15' by 35'. Each of the units rests on the floor and is separated from those nearest it by prescribed intervals. Attached to each large vertical member the artist has created a range of organic forms -- images of butterflies, twigs of trees, vines, berries, beetles, corrie shells, bones and feathers -- from one inch square to 36 inches long. The individual vertical units are totemic and in visual tension with the multiplicity of smaller sculptural units.

Scale, multiplicity, and the distribution of elements make a single perception of the entire work impossible. As one moves around and away from the work, the content changes and the individual objects become part of a continuously fluctuating abstraction.

The paintings, the first made by the artist since 1965, are an extension of the illusionistic concerns of her sculpture. In both she uses a diffusion of varied, repeated units. A multitude of dot-like brush strokes dematerialize the recognizable elements of the paintings into layer upon layer of ephemeral planes, dissolving images of organic forms in a natural camouflage environment.

Nancy Graves has had one-woman exhibitions in New York, San Francisco, Ottawa and Aachen, Germany, and has been included in numerous group shows in this country and abroad.

This Projects exhibition is directed by Joan Rosenbaum, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings.

Additional information available from Mark Segal, Assistant, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director,
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