

**EXHIBITION EXPLORES DRAWING'S RENEWED IMPORTANCE IN CONTEMPORARY ART**

***Drawing Now: Eight Propositions* Features More Than 250 Contemporary Drawings, Including Newly Commissioned Wall Drawings and Site-Specific Installations**

On View at MoMA QNS from October 17, 2002, to January 6, 2003

NEW YORK, October 2002—Drawing has become a major mode of expression for some of the most significant artists who have emerged over the past ten years. ***Drawing Now: Eight Propositions*** features approximately 250 drawings, including newly commissioned wall drawings, site-specific installations, and series rarely seen in their entirety, by a diverse group of 26 young artists from Europe, Asia and the Americas, some well known, others relative newcomers, who have seized this most basic of mediums and pushed it to the forefront of contemporary art. *Drawing Now* is divided into eight sections, or “propositions,” each presenting a unique artistic strategy in contemporary drawing. The exhibition is organized by Laura Hoptman, Guest Curator, and is on view at MoMA QNS from October 17, 2002, to January 6, 2003.

The artists in this exhibition have greater affinity with nineteenth-century drawing than with the graphic works of American artists in the 1970s, the last time drawing came to the forefront of contemporary art. Many of the works in this exhibition are both descriptive and narrative. By and large, these drawings are finished and autonomous and to some degree representational. Ms. Hoptman states, “The artists in this exhibition are creating a kind of drawing that refers as much to the language of life around us as it does to fine art. The drawings communicate information, narrate a story, create a scenario, or conjure a world or a system of belief.”

MoMA has a long history of organizing exhibitions that present a selective overview of contemporary art—for example, the periodic surveys in the 1940s and 1950s assembled by Dorothy Miller, former curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture. It has also occasionally attempted to rethink the function and importance of whole fields of artistic practice—as Bernice Rose, former curator in the Department of Drawings, did in her landmark *Drawing Now* exhibition of 1976, and again in *Allegories of Modernism* in 1991. Ms. Hoptman’s *Drawing Now* exhibition—guided by a focused idea, and introducing relatively young and emerging artists to the Museum and to a broad public—is a new analysis in the tradition of these enduring practices.

The newly commissioned wall drawings are by Richard Wright and Los Carpinteros; the site-specific installations are by Mark Manders, Barry McGee, and Yoshitomo Nara. The other artists in the exhibition are Franz Ackermann, Kai Althoff, Kevin Appel, Russell Crotty, John Currin, Toba Khedoori, Graham Little, Julie Mehretu, Takashi Murakami, Paul Noble, Jockum Nordström, Chris Ofili, Laura Owens, Jennifer Pastor, Elizabeth Peyton, Neo Rauch, Matthew Ritchie, Ugo Rondinone, Shahzia Sikander, David Thorpe, and Kara Walker.

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The Eight Propositions

I: Science and Art, Nature and Artifice

The first section includes works that refer to a tradition of descriptive drawing of natural phenomena. Among the artists are Russell Crotty, Jennifer Pastor, and Ugo Rondinone. Crotty, an amateur astronomer, watches the stars from a homemade observatory in California and transcribes what he sees into handmade linen “atlases” that can range from a few inches to several feet in length.

II: Ornament

Laura Owens, Chris Ofili, and Richard Wright are featured in the second proposition because their work makes reference to the tradition of ornament. Wright, who will create a newly commissioned wall drawing, uses motifs inspired by tattoos, Sienese painting, and Gothic and Celtic symbols, among other motifs. He creates elaborate drawings freehand on the wall, using not only the flat surfaces but also the corners where walls meet, or sites of architectural details.

III: Architectural Drafting

The third proposition includes work by Kevin Appel, Toba Khedoori, Los Carpinteros, and Julie Mehretu all of which refer to the conventions of engineering and architectural drawings. The drawings of Alexandre Arrechea, Marco Castillo, and Dagoberto Rodriguez, who together are known as Los Carpinteros, deal almost entirely with buildings and their materials—resonant subjects in their native Cuba, with its decaying infrastructure.

IV: Visionary Architecture

Visionary architecture is explored here through the work of Paul Noble, Neo Rauch, and David Thorpe. For the last several years, Thorpe has used the medium of intricately cut paper to create fantastic land- and cityscapes. His recent collages depict dramatic mountainous landscapes, entirely imaginary but loosely based on representations of the mountains of the American West.

V: Cosmogenies

Franz Ackermann, Matthew Ritchie, and Mark Manders use drawing to develop metaphysical systems and narratives. These artists aim to explain not a specific place but an entire state of being. Ackermann produces a series of gouaches based on the many cities he has visited. He describes his drawings as “mental maps,” a term suggesting that each is a picture of his mind reacting to a particular environment.

VI: Vernacular Illustration

Artists like Shahzia Sikander, Jockum Nordström, Kai Althoff, and Kara Walker show strong connections to vernacular illustration, using it as a means to examine cultural traditions and to reexamine old myths or fashion new ones. Sikander focuses on traditional South Asian miniature painting, but instead of depicting traditional scenes, she incorporates references to Muslim, Hindu, and Western myths and folktales.

VII: Comics and Animation

Barry McGee, Takashi Murakami, and Yoshitomo Nara show the influence of comic book and animation traditions. Both Murakami and Nara are influenced by *anime* (Japanese animation) and *manga* (Japanese cartoons). Nara has created a cast of characters that include sad-eyed, floppy dogs reminiscent of stuffed animals as well as sharp-eyed schoolgirls with gigantic heads.

VIII: Fashion and Likeness

The final proposition deals with portraiture and includes John Currin, Elizabeth Peyton, and Graham Little, whose work recalls fashion illustration, nineteenth-century pencil portraits, and other sources. Peyton's colorful and whimsical portraits seem to harken back to the Pre-Raphaelites, but she also incorporates contemporary fashion illustration in her stylized and idealized drawings.

Drawing Now: Eight Propositions is accompanied by an illustrated catalogue featuring an essay by Laura Hoptman, a checklist of the exhibition, and an exhibition history and bibliography. The book has 192 pages, 145 color plates, and 10 color illustrations. It is published by The Museum of Modern Art and is distributed by D.A.P. (Distributed Art Publishers). Price: \$29.95.

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Press Contact: pressoffice@moma.org