

**EXHIBITION OF DRAWINGS FROM MoMA'S COLLECTION EXPLORES UNIQUE VISUAL LANGUAGES**

***Glossolalia: Languages of Drawing***

The Paul J. Sachs Drawings Galleries, third floor  
March 26–July 7, 2008

**NEW YORK, March 24, 2008**—The Museum of Modern Art presents ***Glossolalia: Languages of Drawing***, featuring some 100 works from the collection, many on view for the first time at the Museum. The exhibition includes the work of outsider and self-taught artists, as well as that of contemporary artists who share an idiosyncratic visual vocabulary or a unique approach to their medium. The term “glossolalia” refers to the phenomenon of speaking a language that is undecipherable to all but the speaker. The drawings in this installation incorporate extremely personalized figurations as well as real and invented text and verbal systems. Dreams and the imagination are recurrent themes along with the desire to understand the world’s harsh sociopolitical realities. Works by roughly 50 artists are shown, including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Jonathan Borofsky, Louise Bourgeois, Joseph Cornell, Russell Crotty, Henry Darger, Alfred Jensen, Jim Shaw, Amy Sillman, Patti Smith, and Bill Traylor. On view March 26 through July 7, 2008, the exhibition is organized by Connie Butler, The Robert Lehman Foundation Chief Curator of Drawings, and Esther Adler, Curatorial Assistant, Department of Drawings, The Museum of Modern Art.

“The exhibition *Glossolalia* is an opportunity to consider MoMA’s history of collecting the work of self-taught artists, as well as the numerous links between this work and that of many contemporary artists working today,” states Ms. Butler.

One of the most recent acquisitions in the exhibition, Dan Miller’s (American, b. 1961) drawing *Untitled* (2006) fixates on everyday objects such as light bulbs and other household appliances, which he represents through words and sketches. His technique of repeating images, numbers, and words creates complex abstract patterns. Language becomes visual data that dissolves into a web of lines, obliterating any discernable form. The artist’s obsessive method is reflective of his attempt to organize and process the world around him.

James Castle (American, 1900–1977), deaf from birth, never learned to speak, sign, read, or write. Refusing formal art training, he created a visual language inspired by his Idaho home and daily life. His work, intimate in scale and focus, became his form of communication. He drew with a sharpened stick, in a mixture of soot and spit, on found surfaces, and created thousands of drawings, constructions, and books throughout his adult life. Three of his works are on view in the exhibition.

For the *Dream Drawing* series (1994–2002), by Jim Shaw (American, b. 1952), the artist applies the style of classic pulp-comic art to the memories of his own dreams and nightmares. Existing cultural symbols like Betty Boop, characters from *The Simpsons*, and comic book superheroes are pulled from the artist’s unconscious and inserted in the work, transforming them to embody his personal experiences and preferences.

In Patti Smith’s (American, b. 1946) *Self Portrait* (1971), the artist scrawls directly onto the work as a commentary on the challenge and frustration inherent in the creative process. The singular character of her handwriting enhances the personal aspect of the composition. Smith’s imagery of language, text, and self draws from myriad influences—ranging from underground music to visionary artists and authors like William Blake and Arthur Rimbaud.

# # #

For downloadable high-resolution images, please register at [www.moma.org/press](http://www.moma.org/press).

**No. 36**

**Press Contact:** Kim Donica, 212/708-9752 or [kim\\_donica@moma.org](mailto:kim_donica@moma.org)

**Public Information:**

**The Museum of Modern Art**, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

**Hours:** Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.  
Closed Tuesday

**Museum Admission:** \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free, members and children 16 and under accompanied by an adult.  
(Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)

**Film Admission:** Target Free Friday Nights 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.  
\$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

**Subway:** E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

**Bus:** On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.

Visit us on the Web at [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org).