

3. Christine Hiebert

Of the five artists included here, Christine Hiebert and Hanns Schimansky draw almost exclusively. Although their work bears no resemblance to each other, both are committed to abstraction and, perhaps more importantly, to the rejection of using lines to draw images. Their line remain lines—something that is also true for the three other artists in the exhibition.

Whereas drawings has often been regarded as subsidiary to painting and sculpture, Hiebert and Schimansky have done much to enlarge its parameters, as well as elevate its status. Hiebert, for example, has worked directly on the wall, making large on-site drawings, while Schimansky's unique combinations of folded paper, marks, and shapes endow what he calls his "Foldings" with an object-like presence.

Hiebert draws on walls and sheets of paper, some of which she might have coated with rabbit skin glue. Her drawing materials include graphite, charcoal, printer's ink, and blue tape. She employs each of these materials as discrete elements within her vocabulary, with the blue tape and printer's ink always retaining their distinct physical properties. The focus of these diverse elements, however, is invariably the line, whose identity is determined by the material Hiebert uses to make it.

Drawing is Hiebert's way of slowing down gesture and therefore time, of examining how the latter can be shaped even as it shapes her. When she makes a drawing using different mediums, she never intends the outcome to coalesce into a smooth overall image. Instead, the elements mesh while remaining distinct, leading viewers to both assemble and disassemble them in their mind's eye, which, if you think about it, is a rather remarkable achievement.

In contrast to Jackson Pollock, whose poured enamel paintings come across as consistent gestures layered into compressed accumulations, the material differences among Hiebert's lines and marks, from granular charcoal to visceral blue tape—and this includes erasure and smudging—are integral to the viewer's experience. She is particularly sensitive to the way her materials interact with the paper and the wall, the particularities of resistance and vulnerability.

Despite the evident visual and material differences between the mixed media works and the tape drawings, the viewer senses that both kinds of drawing come out of the same process: the artist feeling her way across the surface. In this regard, Hiebert recognizes that our ultimate destination—both individually and collectively—remains beyond comprehension. Concomitant to this disquieting realization is the equally unsettling awareness that our origins remain remote to us; that we literally exist between past and future without knowing either.

This is the unstable domain that Hiebert determinedly explores, without seeking recourse to the security that might be provided by images or signs. Although she is a resolutely abstract artist, her domain in fact shares a border with everyday life.

Hiebert's drawings are diaries in which anecdote and signs of reassurance are not an option. They are records of their coming into being. Borne along by time, the artist uses drawing as a means to flourish in a state of uncertainty and susceptibility—to be open to time passing. Made of charcoal and graphite (dust), ink (dried liquid), and tape (an impermanent skin), Hiebert's drawings exist between dissolution and resolution, and, in that regard, mirror our existence. Linear and porous, yet intuitively cogent, the structures she makes are vulnerable and enduring.

JOHN YAU, *Guest Curator*