

MILDRED LANE KEMPER ART MUSEUM

Educator's Guide

Notations: Contemporary Drawing as Idea and Process

September 14, 2012–January 7, 2013

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed as a multidisciplinary companion for educators bringing their students to view *Notations: Contemporary Drawing as Idea and Process*, on view at the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum from September 14, 2012–January 7, 2013. Our intent is to offer a range of learning objectives, gallery discussions, and postvisit suggestions to stimulate the learning process, encourage dialogue, and make meaning of the art presented. Teachers at all grade levels should glean from this guide what is most relevant and useful to their students. Vocabulary words that appear in **bold** are defined at the end of the guide.

IN THIS GUIDE

Before You Visit | p.2

In the Gallery | p.3

Collection Connections | p.5

In the Classroom or at Home | p.6

Vocabulary | p.7

Additional Resources | p.7

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION



Eva Hesse, *Untitled*, 1963-64. Collage, gouache, watercolor, and ink on paper, 22 x 30". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. © The Estate of Eva Hesse, Hauser & Wirth Zürich London. Photo by Peter Muscato.

Uninhibited by the obligation to create a finished and independent object, as is traditionally associated with painting and sculpture, drawing as a **medium** lends itself readily to the theoretical and the experimental. *Notations: Contemporary Drawing as Idea and Process* explores the medium of drawing, particularly as it relates to practices found in **Minimal**, **Process**, and **Conceptual art** that emerged in the late 1950s through the 1970s. Bringing together over sixty works by thirty-nine artists from the postwar decades to today, the exhibition is divided into two thematic sections: “Repetitive and Serial Systems” and “Presentation Drawings and Proposals.” Each section highlights key conceptual and material strategies employed by postwar artists in their bid to rethink the work of art and the nature of representation. All artworks in the exhibition are on loan from the collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky, New York, and The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

INTERDISCIPLINARY CONNECTIONS

Art, Art History, Drawing, Painting, Sculpture

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **All grade levels:** Students will explore the various drawing materials and methods highlighted in the exhibition.
- **All grade levels:** Students will discuss the role of drawing as it relates to the creative process of art-making.
- **High school level:** Students will examine the medium of drawing, looking closely at the manner in which artists associated with Minimal, Process, and Conceptual art employ it and expand its parameters.

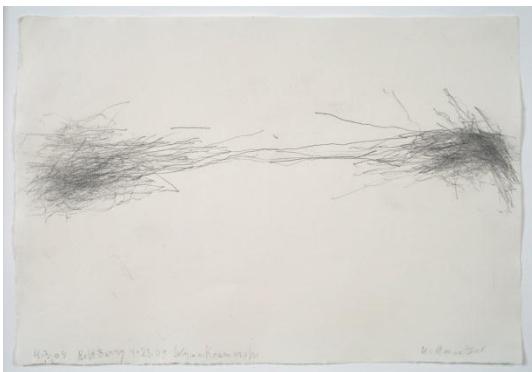
BEFORE YOU VISIT

Suggested topics to explore, research, and discuss before visiting the exhibition.

ALL GRADE LEVELS

Nontraditional Drawing Materials and Techniques

You may be familiar with traditional drawing materials such as pencil and paper, but many artists in this exhibition use unexpected implements like tape and a typewriter. How do you define drawing? What other materials can you think of that can be used to make drawings?



Many artists in the exhibition make use of nontraditional techniques like **automatic drawing** in an attempt to allow chance to influence the outcome of a work and to move away from subjective compositional strategies. For example, to make his subway drawings, artist William Anastasi records the passive movements of his body while riding a subway in New York City by resting a pencil on paper and closing his eyes. How would you expect this to affect the final product? Would it look like "art" as we usually think of it? Name some other nontraditional drawing techniques. How are the results of these approaches different from the results of more traditional drawing methods?

William Anastasi, *Untitled (Subway Drawing)*, 2009. Graphite on paper, 8 x 11 1/2". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. © 2012 William Anastasi. Photo by Laura Mitchell.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS

Minimal and Conceptual Art

Minimal art celebrates extreme simplicity of form by eliminating all but the essential elements needed to identify the essence of the artwork. Artists often use industrial materials and serial repetitions in an effort to free art from any symbolic emotional content. **Conceptual art** emphasizes the idea or the concept behind the work of art; the way the art looks is secondary. The planning and decisions of the artist take precedence over the execution of the art itself.

Research these art movements and the artists associated with them. Do we typically value our response to an artwork more than how it looks? What common assumptions about art do these movements challenge? How can the main principles of these movements be seen in the artworks?

Process Art

In **Process art**, emphasis is placed on the steps taken to produce an artwork and also often on the changes that occur after it is complete. The movement is rooted in the work of Jackson Pollock (1912–1956), whose method of splattering and flinging paint onto a horizontal canvas became inseparable from his finished paintings. Process art is also related to Earth art because both movements involve natural, organic progressions like decay and erosion. In this exhibition, artists Eva Hesse, Barry Le Va, and Robert Morris engage with Process art by using drawings to enhance or record their artistic methods. For example, to produce *Untitled* (1967), Eva Hesse drew hundreds of circles into the grid of graph paper, making it almost impossible to look at the work of art without imagining the artist's hand at work.

Consider your own experience drawing, whether doodling or something more formal. In what ways do your drawings record your thoughts and actions?

Repetitive and Serial Systems

Many artists featured in the exhibition work in series or make use of repeated actions, symbols, or marks to produce their drawings. Some artists, including William Anastasi and Jill O'Bryan, establish mark-making systems in advance, which they then follow to produce a series of drawings. Other artists in the exhibition make use of a single symbol many times within one work of art, as in Allyson Strafella's *factor* (2007) or Jennifer Bartlett's *Chicken Tracks* (1973).

What advantages does working in series offer? Why might an artist choose to repeat the use of one kind of mark or reuse the same process again and again?

Presentation Drawings and Proposals

Preparatory and presentation drawings serve as a way to work through ideas for artworks in other media, as well as provide records for temporary installations. They also exist as finished works of art in and of themselves. Preparatory drawings are often made using common and economical materials like notebook paper and ink, and they are frequently covered with notes and measurements. Many artists do not present them as artworks on their own but are quick to acknowledge them as a vital part of the creative process.

Artists often use proposal drawings to communicate their ideas to the people who fabricate and install their artworks, including teams of workers, city public art officials, and private collectors. What aspects of the drawings would be important to these individuals? Think of your own history of **sketching** or notetaking. How can preparatory and presentation drawings help artists work through problems that might arise during the creative process?

IN THE GALLERY

Ideas to consider when viewing the exhibition.

Repetitive and Serial Systems: Works in this section incorporate the use of repetition, particularly repeated lines, gestures, marks and symbols, and serial variations. Many of the artists highlighted here adopted these systems as a way of demystifying and revealing the creative process.

Art Interaction: William Anastasi, *Untitled (Subway Drawing)*, 2009

William Anastasi is known for his “unsighted” or **automatic drawings** that consist of involuntary marks made by the artist’s hands as he sits with pencil and paper on moving subway trains. His eyes are closed and he wears headphones to block out any exterior noise. By surrendering himself to the unknown and effectively releasing the outcome to chance, he has severed the historical connection between the artist’s eye and the hand, particularly as it pertains to drawing. How does knowing the process behind these works change your understanding of them? How do the marks you see relate to this process? What role does the artist’s body play in this work?

Art Interaction: N. Dash, *Commuter*, 2011



Like William Anastasi, N. Dash also creates her art while riding subways and trains on her daily commute to her studio. But instead of releasing control of the work through chance, she consciously folds and refolds paper to create a series of marks. She then rubs graphite or indigo powder onto the surface of the paper in an effort to highlight the creases. A three-dimensional quality arises from this method and adds to the sculptural effect of her work. How are the procedures demonstrated in Anastasi’s and N. Dash’s work different from traditionally controlled procedures? How is the artist’s thought or planning process different?

N. Dash, *Commuter*, 2011. Graphite on paper, 14 3/4 x 9 3/4". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. © 2012 N. Dash. Photo by Laura Mitchell.

Art Interaction: Christine Hiebert, *Untitled* (t.02.3), 2002

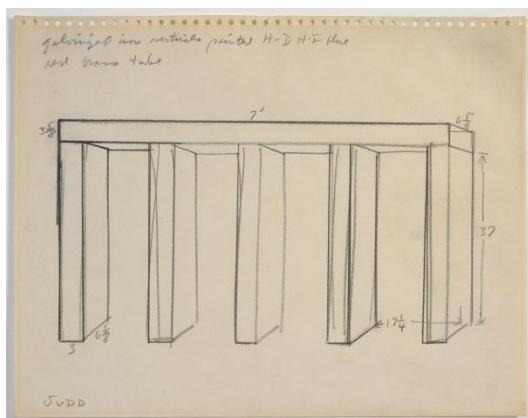


Using blue tape to form this abstract drawing, Christine Hiebert expands the traditional notion of drawing, typically considered graphite or pen on paper, to emulate qualities of a painting. In Hiebert's work, drawing becomes a construction with line being the building block, but also a problem that needs to be solved: how to form the line, how to follow it, and how to end it. As she incorporates other media such as tape into this process, she investigates their material properties and their relationships to the drawing as a whole with each work striking its own balance. Like the work of her predecessors on view in this exhibition, she engages with a free form of experimentation with materials, resulting in works that often blur the lines between painting and drawing. In what ways does this work engage the practice of painting? How could it be considered a drawing as well?

Christine Hiebert, *Untitled* (t.02.3), 2002. Blue tape on paper, 13 7/8 x 16 3/4". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. © 2012 Christine Hiebert. Photo by Laura Mitchell.

Presentation Drawings and Proposals: The drawings in this section relate to the production of works in other media. While several of the works relate to presentation drawings for **site-specific** installations, other drawings include studies for sculptures and paintings as well as proposals for larger undertakings such as **earthworks**.

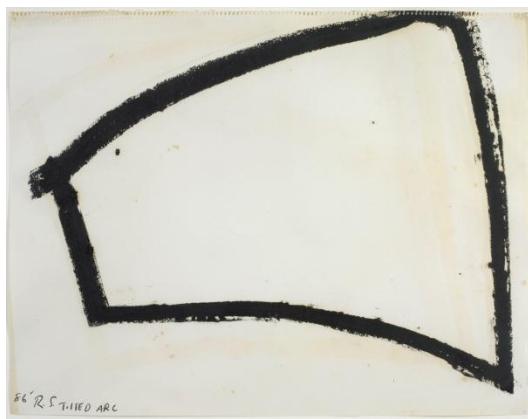
Art Interaction: Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1967



Many versions of Donald Judd's *Untitled* (Galvanized Iron Verticals Painted H-D H-F Blue) have been fabricated since Judd, considered the father of Minimalism, sketched this version in 1967 in a spiral notebook. Drawn as a three-dimensional structure with clearly delineated spaces and simplified forms, the **sketch** and the resulting sculpture epitomize **Minimal art**. The initials H-D H-F probably refer to Harley-Davidson Hi-Fi Blue, a motorcycle color from the 1960s. Try to imagine the sculpture that resulted from this drawing. What kinds of information does the sketch provide? What information do you need to imagine on your own or fill in?

Donald Judd, *Untitled*, 1967 (Galvanized Iron Verticals Painted H-D H-F Blue). Graphite on paper, 10 3/4 x 13 1/4". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. Art © Judd Foundation. Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photo by Ellen McDermott.

Art Interaction: Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1986



While many of the drawings on view in this section were completed before an installation or sculpture was executed, Richard Serra inverts this process in his drawing *Tilted Arc*, a drawing completed after his large **site-specific** sculpture made out of Corten steel was installed at Federal Plaza in New York City. Drawing is a significant part of Serra's artistic practice. While his drawings are linked to his better-known monumental steel sculptures, they also stand alone as independent works of art. *Tilted Arc* was drawn five years after the construction of the sculpture by the same name and remains as a record of Serra's experience of the now-destroyed work. How does the drawing of *Tilted Arc* relate to the actual sculpture? How does the **medium** of oil crayon add to the drama of the drawing? How would the effect be different if it were drawn with pencil?

Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc*, 1986. Oil crayon on paper, 19 x 24 1/2". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. © 2012 Richard Serra / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo by Ellen McDermott.

Art Interaction: Robert Smithson, *Bingham Copper Mining Pit – Utah Reclamation Project*, 1973



Known for his large-scale **earthworks** like *Spiral Jetty* (1970), Robert Smithson's *Bingham Copper Mining Pit – Utah Reclamation Project* is a proposal drawing for an outdoor project at a mining pit in Utah. To make the drawing, Smithson drew in wax pencil on plastic overlay and attached it to a photograph of the mining pit. Land-reclamation projects like this involve working in devastated industrial sites as nature gradually reclaims what humans destroyed. For Smithson, reclaiming land through art both integrates art into society and highlights ecological disasters. The mining company however, rejected this proposal, so the project was never built. How does Smithson's drawing interact with the photograph behind it?

Robert Smithson, *Bingham Copper Mining Pit – Utah Reclamation Project*, 1973. Wax pencil and tape on plastic overlay on photograph, 20 x 30". Collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky. Art © Estate of Robert Smithson / Licensed by VAGA, New York, NY. Photo by Ellen McDermott.

COLLECTION CONNECTIONS

Explore these connections to artworks on view in the Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum's permanent collection.

Max Ernst, *L'Oeil du silence (The Eye of Silence)*, 1943–44

German-born painter Max Ernst (1891–1976) was an important participant in the Dada and Surrealist movements in Europe following World War I. Surrealism was an art movement focused on the creative potential of the unconscious mind and was heavily influenced by the writings of Sigmund Freud and the then-new art **medium** of photography for its ability to capture chance encounters and fleeting moments. This painting, which appears to depict an eerie lake surrounded by rock formations, was painted while Ernst was living in exile in the United States. To create some of the undulating forms, Ernst employed a Surrealist technique called decalcomania, a form of automatism that involves pressing paint onto the canvas using a flat surface like cardboard or glass. By incorporating this element of chance into his compositional practice, Ernst attempted to remove the connection between the artist's eye and hand much like the subway drawings of William Anastasi. How do elements of chance influence their work?



Max Ernst, *L'Oeil du silence (The Eye of Silence)*, 1943–44. Oil on canvas, 43 1/4 x 56 1/4". Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis. University purchase, Kende Sale Fund, 1946. © 2012 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / ADAGP, Paris.



Alexander Calder, *Bayonets Menacing a Flower*, 1945

Alexander Calder (1898–1976) often referred to his kinetic sculptures as three-dimensional drawings in space and developed a method of creation using wire that he would twist, bend, and mold. He often challenged himself to produce continuous line drawings in pencil or wire, creating an image using only a single line. This sculpture, reminiscent of an insect with spindly legs, is an example of a “standing mobile,” a part kinetic, part static hybrid developed by Calder. Many scholars feel that this sculpture, with its spiky bayonet protrusions aggressively confronting a whimsical flowerlike form, was Calder’s reaction to the violence and destruction of World War II. How does this sculpture create an image out of a single line? How is it like and unlike a drawing? Compare Calder’s continuous line to the continuity of William Anastasi’s **automatic drawings**. How is the sculpture’s relation to the destruction of the war similar to the relation of Robert Smithson’s work to environmental destruction?

Alexander Calder, *Bayonets Menacing a Flower*, 1945. Painted sheet metal and wire, 45 x 51 x 18 1/2". Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis. University purchase, McMillan Fund, 1946. © 2012 Calder Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Dan Peterman, *Accessories to an Event*, 2006

Dan Peterman (b. 1960) creates sculptures through the process of adaptive reuse, or altering postconsumer materials to create something new and functional. The six benchlike units on the Florence Steinberg Weil Sculpture Plaza are made of reprocessed plastics and stainless steel hardware. Situated among other sculptures, the benches are three-dimensional art objects, but the title of the work, *Accessories to an Event*, implies that they are part of a larger purpose. Like drawings by Donald Judd and Robert Morris seen in the exhibition, Peterman’s art embraces the notion of simplicity of form found in **Minimal art**. What other connections between Peterman’s sculpture and Minimalist drawings can you find?



Dan Peterman, *Accessories to an Event*, 2006. Postconsumer reprocessed plastics and stainless steel hardware, dimensions variable. Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis. University purchase, Bixby Fund, and with funds from the Weil Family, 2006.

IN THE CLASSROOM OR AT HOME

Follow your visit to the Museum with one or more of these suggested activities.

- Visit Laumeier Sculpture Park to see sculptures of Donald Judd, Robert Morris, and Sol LeWitt, whose preparatory drawings and **maquettes** are in the *Notations* exhibition.
- Visit the Saint Louis Art Museum to see the exhibition *Federico Barocci: Renaissance Master* and compare the creative process of drawing during the Renaissance with modern and contemporary drawing practices.
- Experiment with **automatic drawings** by holding a pencil to paper while moving—perhaps on an elevator or on the bus back to school after your visit to the Museum.
- Experiment with an unusual drawing material such as tape or wire. How is the process similar to drawing with a pen or pencil? What makes it challenging?
- Research Richard Serra’s controversial public sculpture *Tilted Arc* (1981). Conduct a classroom debate about the pros and cons of public art.

VOCABULARY

1. **Automatic drawing** – drawing without conscious control.
2. **Conceptual art** – art in which the idea or concept presented by the artist is considered as important, if not more important, than the finished product.
3. **Earthworks** – a type of art prominent in the late 1960s and 1970s that uses earth, rocks, and soil as its primary materials and is typically very large in scale and out of doors.
4. **Maquette** – a sculptor's small preliminary model or sketch.
5. **Medium** – a term used generally to describe the type of artwork and the materials used by artists.
6. **Minimal art** – a type of abstract art, particularly sculpture, characterized by extreme simplicity of form, often on a large scale and using industrial materials; the movement emerged in the 1960s and has been influential ever since.
7. **Notation** – a system of written graphic symbols used to represent numbers, amounts, signs, characters, figures, or elements.
8. **Process art** – a style of art that focuses on the creative process and is created mainly as a record of that process.
9. **Site-specific** – a term applied to art that is dependent for its meaning or effect on the particular place in which it is sited.
10. **Sketch** – a rough, preliminary version of a composition.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Books

- Amy Eshoo, ed., *560 Broadway: A New York Drawing Collection at Work, 1991–2006* (New York: Fifth Floor Foundation, 2008).
- Josef Helfenstein and Jonathan Fineberg, ed., *Drawings of Choice from a New York Collection* (Champaign, IL: Krannert Art Museum, 2002).
- David Joselit, *American Art Since 1945* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2003).
- Pamela Lee and Christine Mehring, “*Drawing Is Another Kind of Language*”: Recent American Drawings from a New York Private Collection (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 1997).
- Meredith Malone, *Chance Aesthetics* (St. Louis: Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, 2009).
- Harriet F. Senie, *The Tilted Arc Controversy: Dangerous Precedent?* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002).

Online

- *Drawn / Taped / Burned: Abstraction on Paper*, online catalog, <http://www.aboutdrawing.org/drawntapedburned/>.
- Tyler Green, “The Best American City for Richard Serras,” *Modern Art Notes*, March 13, 2012, <http://blogs.artinfo.com/modernartnotes/2012/03/the-best-american-city-for-richard-serras/>.
- “Excerpt from *The Trial of Tilted Arc*,” *Making Sense of Modern Art*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, <http://www.sfmoma.org/explore/multimedia/videos/90>.
- William Anastasi: Subway Drawing, *NewArtTV*, April 21, 2011, <http://newarttv.com/William+Anastasi%3A+Subway+Drawing>.
- “Richard Serra on his Drawing Retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,” *Charlie Rose*, April 21, 2011, <http://www.charlierose.com/view/interview/11634>.
- “NGA Kids Inside Scoop,” National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Winter 2010 Pull-out, <http://www.nga.gov/kids/scoop-calder.pdf>.
- *Notations: Contemporary Drawing as Idea and Process*, online catalog, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, <http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/notationscatalog>
- *Chance Aesthetics* Education guide, Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, <http://kemperartmuseum.wustl.edu/files/ChanceAestheticsEdu.pdf>

Notations: Contemporary Drawing as Idea and Process is curated by Meredith Malone, associate curator. All artworks in the exhibition are on loan from the collection of Sally and Wynn Kramarsky, New York, and the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Support for the exhibition was provided James M. Kemper, Jr., the David Woods Kemper Memorial Foundation, Washington University's Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Art, the Hortense Lewin Art Fund, and members of the Kemper Art Museum. The online exhibition catalog is organized and edited by Rachel Nackman, curator of the Kramarsky collection.