

Paper Weight

Diverse in style, medium, and technique, the artists chosen for *Paper Weight* are united by their focus on creating works on paper. This survey presents over 40 works on paper from emerging and established artists, and includes a selection of prints, pulp painting, installation, book arts, and drawings. Artists exhibited include Judith Braun, Michael Dal Cerro, Jonathan Gabel, and Lucas Monaco with additional works from Chakaia Booker, Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons, Willie Cole, Ronna Lebo, John Rappleye, Kiki Smith, and Buzz Spector.

Stepping away from recognizable imagery, Judith Braun creates a series of drawings where the graphite marks appear and disappear into the whiteness of the paper. The precise lines resemble those made by a tracing wheel in pattern-making. The intimate scale of these works, and the faintness of the marks, invite close inspection. Braun approaches these hand-drawn works with the eye of a perfectionist. She uses a set of four guidelines as parameters for making each drawing.

Michael Dal Cerro shows a similar interest in structure and repetition in his wood block prints. The prints suggest futuristic urban environments and stylistically refer to comic book illustrations. Dal Cerro's work is as much about process as it is about image. This laborious technique uses multiple wood blocks, each cut and printed in layers of separate color, to produce the final image.

Jonathan Gabel worked with simple robotic systems to create this series of mechanical drawings. Using his knowledge of electric circuitry, Gabel developed a machine whose sole purpose was to create the most complex and subtle drawing it possibly can. The resulting drawings are reminiscent of the natural tendency of electrical current to flow in the form of a wave.

Lucas Monaco's aerial landscapes are part of a series of ink and gouache drawings based on urban topography. Displacement is sensed in Monaco's work. The isolated sections of sprawling development resemble islands of imagery on the white paper. His semi-fictional landscapes reflect the past and potential future geography of urban centers. His work considers issues of urban planning, architecture, and socio-economic trends.

Chakaia Booker typically uses rubber tires and wood to create her three dimensional works. Booker's work explores and pushes these materials to their limits. In "Visual Impressions #2", Booker uses handmade paper and wire as her materials. In her earlier works, Booker addresses African-American identity in largely figurative sculptural pieces. More recent works are abstract and Booker's use of references becomes less apparent.

John Rappleye's work often combines fantastical landscape with hyper-realistic animal imagery. Here, his realistic drawing style is applied to a single female figure. The figure is surrounded by cartoon-like imagery, creating a bridge between drawing styles. The subtle background color provides a strong contrast to the graphic shapes in the foreground.

Kiki Smith focuses on nature and storytelling in her two dimensional and three dimensional works. Smith is represented here by two prints. Throughout her career, Smith has worked with printmaking, a process she considers to have a crucial role in her work. "Parrot" is an example of Smith's delicate drawing style combined with her interest in decorative elements. A second print exemplifies Smith's interest in creating a narrative. Smith often recounts fairy tales with feminine characters in her prints.

Maria Magdalena Campos-Pons focuses her practice on issues of memory and identity. Her work is largely autobiographical, examining her Afro-Cuban roots. Her print is a photolithograph with eyes painted on the surface of the paper using paper pulp. This process uses pigment-ed paper pulp as a drawing medium.

Buzz Spector's works explore concepts involving the book as an object. His works consider associations of knowledge, structure, and order. In this piece, Spector has created a waterfall effect with string. The string, embedded in paper at the top of the piece, is pulled out from the paper towards the bottom. The string rests in a pile on the floor, recalling the splash and tumble of water as it reaches the bottom of the falls.

Ronna Lebo is also interested in the book as an object. Lebo has created a handmade book in the shape of a hand grenade. Inside the book, images of birds explode on the pages. Lebo explores issues of personal space, while referring to territorial conquests and boundary crossing. Particularly in mind, is the relationship between government territory and the personal territory of a suicide bomber, especially young teenagers. The birds represent a loss of innocence and senseless destruction. They also represent how youths are often used in the most violent acts of hostile negotiations.

Willie Cole is represented by a print titled "Bush Burn". Cole makes a strong statement on the involvement of the United States in current global politics. The image of a burning bush references the Biblical story of Moses leading his people out of slavery. Surrounding the central image are thirteen red stars, recalling the original thirteen British colonies in North America. Finally, the title refers to President George W. Bush. Interpreted together, the symbolism reflects Cole's objection to the role of the United States in world politics.

This exhibition examines many forms of works on paper from both emerging and established artists. Many thanks to the Brodsky Center for Print and Paper, for its generosity in lending works for this exhibition.

-Rachael Faillace, *Curator*