

MUSIC AS IMAGE AND METAPHOR

SELECTIONS
FROM THE
KENTLER
FLATFILES



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Selections from the Kentler Flatfiles

Co-Curators

David Houston and Florence Neal

Musical track by Michael Kowalski and Allen Otte

January 22 – March 20, 2021

Artists

Herbert Brün, Beth Caspar, Phillip Chen, Abby Goldstein, Takuji Hamanaka, Keiko Hara, robin holder, Richard Howe, Hannah Israel, Mary Judge, Kazuhiro Nishijima, Ralph Kiggell, Rosalinda Kolb, Jiří Kornatovský, Robert Lansden, Simon Lewandowski, Jim Napierala, Florence Neal, Margaret Neill, Morgan O'Hara, Gahae Park, Jaanika Peerna, Scott Pfaffman, Orlando Richards, Susan Schwalb, Viviane Rombaldi Seppay, Molly Snyder-Fink, Hugh Williams

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THE BO BARTLETT CENTER
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

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Music as Image and Metaphor plays on the shared cultural space of art and music. Both are an integral part of ritual, the quotidian, and, most recently, our overly commercialized world. They are intimately intertwined throughout history, they share a substantial vocabulary, and are both powerful cultural signifiers. Music and visual art can be viewed pragmatically, aesthetically, theoretically—or, each on its own terms, as a rich lingua franca of human emotion. In short, these two art forms—experienced individually or in tandem—offer a deep insight into the worlds of which they are a part.

For centuries the *Musica Universalis* first formulated by Pythagoras animated the heavens. By the beginning of the Modern age, reason and science had silenced the music of the celestial spheres, replacing them with earthly counterpoint and harmony. In the 20th century, Modernist music overturned and revolutionized the longstanding relationship between harmony and dissonance, as well as the traditional barriers between music, sound, and silence. It was the French poet Baudelaire who opened the floodgates of emotion and experience with his Symbolist notions of correspondence. The equivalence between art forms and human emotion revealed a transformational set of foundational ideas, the ideas that gave us the total work of art, the license to poetize noise, and the radical hybridity of our time.

For centuries art was a local and discrete phenomenon: site specific, or at least culturally specific, if you will. With the mingling of cultures that featured so prominently in the great world's fairs of the 19th century, to the advent of recording, to globally distributed print, radio, television, and the internet, our 21st century culture—without—walls has now evolved for practical purposes into a culture—at-your-fingertips, one that's transformed the old world of place—and-time into a virtual circus. In our own lives we've moved from a taste for collage to an aesthetic of sampling.

“Music as Image and Metaphor” was organized in the spirit of the times. As a collaboration between Kentler Director Florence Neal and me, the exhibition was drawn from the Flatfiles of the Kentler International Drawing Space. The show features forty-one works by twenty-eight artists from ten countries. Some of the connections to music are direct and analogous, while others subtly embody ideas and strategies that are shared—adjusting for the requirements of different media, of course—by both visual artists and musicians. The musical response to each visual work, a *correspondence*, expands the incipient dialogue between sight and sound. As composer-pianist Michael Kowalski notes, each of these musical correspondences springs from the fertile tension between a desire to compose and the necessity of improvising: from the creative urge to break out of the box—even one that we might have jumped into of our own accord.

Our wish is that the works in the exhibition and the musical responses be considered a total work of its own. Think of the world's diversity of art and music and see what you hear and hear what you see.

—David Houston

The Kentler International Drawing Space's Flatfiles have been an integral part of the gallery's program since its founding in 1990. David Houston and I have drawn on the riches and variety of this curated archive of drawings and work on paper by 290 artists from around the globe to explore the nuances of the visual arts' subtle, often surprising, and always dynamic relationship to sound art, particularly in the ways that the theory and practices of both visual and musical art have evolved over the last generation.

"Music as Image and Metaphor" continues and expands an exploration that the Kentler embarked upon early in its history. Art installations with sound and musical performance related to graphics have been a frequent feature of the gallery's program throughout the years, ranging from the work of filmmaker and composer Phill Niblock, instrument-builder and improviser Michael Delia, to the U.S. premier performance of the legendary Japanese songwriter Morio Agata. In 2016 artist Keiko Hara's gallery-filling forest of large-scale *mokuhanga* scrolls was accompanied by Donald Groskost's sound environment to create the integrated work "Topophilia Ma and Ki – Memory," part of which is included in the current show. In 2004 the Kentler drew on its holdings in the flatfiles to present "The Graphics, Music, and Writings of Herbert Brün," a concert and symposium accompanying its major exhibition—the first on the East Coast—of the pioneering computer-generated drawings and musical scores of this important German-American composer, political philosopher, and digital arts pioneer. One of the performers who was featured in that event, the percussionist-composer Allen Otte, will be combining forces with the Brün symposium's moderator, composer-pianist Michael Kowalski, to create a suite of forty one-minute musical correspondences to the visual works in this exhibition.

David invited Otte and Kowalski to make their musical analogies to the graphic work completely on their own terms, exploring the variety of ways in which music not only conjures images on its own but also can serve as a time-based analogue to visual composition in general. One might ask what inspired us to bring these forty-one artworks together. Their provenance is wide. Some are directly inspired by music. The composition of some might imply, at least by analogy, working methods akin to those employed by musicians. Some involve improvisation; others seem more plotted out in advance. Some exhibit a mathematical structure not dissimilar to notions employed by composers. Some have musical titles. And some exhibit no obvious connection to music, sound art, or even time art. But in all cases these visual works vibrate, they invite the viewer to dance to a rhythm, to feel a progression even in the presence of apparent stability—and some just sing!

Out of the many striking cases of visual-music crosstalk in the flatfiles, we have included two unusually fascinating and contrasting works: Morgan O'Hara's graphite drawing "Live Transmission," which was based upon the movements of musicians and technicians taking down the set for a performance of Merce Cunningham and David Tudor's "Rainforest"; and artist Viviane Rombaldi Seppey's collaboration with musician Benjamin Velez, who translated her drawings into mini piano rolls to be played by visitors on hand-cranked music boxes.

So, yes, the range of artmaking aesthetics, techniques, and finished works that have been brought together here is certainly vast, but that shouldn't obscure the fact that they're all at least partially grounded in something akin to a musical sense. And we fully expect that the show's suite of musical responses to this body of visual work will impress you as equally diverse. With or without music, these forty-one artworks would resonate, but "Music as Image and Metaphor"—our proposed cross-media bridge—aims to expand the space.

–Florence Neal

Musicians' Note

Back in the 1970s there was a brief fad of musical improvising based on spontaneous reactions to just about anything: the phone book, imperfections on a piece of paper, elaborate collages of hieroglyphs that suggested standard musical notation but couldn't be read as such, etc., etc., . . . you get the idea. It all became very predictable very fast. As Stravinsky noted in his *Poetics of Music*, productive freedom is more often to be found in the observance of rigorous constraints. In "Music as Image and Metaphor" we've tried to split the difference between following extra-musical cues wherever they lead and working within strictly musical constraints. There's clearly no single path that leads to such a tricky compositional equilibrium, but for practical purposes, if not necessarily for our own sanity, we settled on three basic approaches to shaping our sonic responses to the works in the show: *imagistic*, *metaphoric*, and *unmediated-spontaneous* (understood as goals, even if, perhaps, unachievable ones).

The imagistic response groove broke into two specific working approaches:

- providing a *soundtrack*, à la classic Hollywood films; or . . .
- *developing musical responses to graphic gestures* as if they were the themes in, say, a jazz session or even a Beethoven symphony.

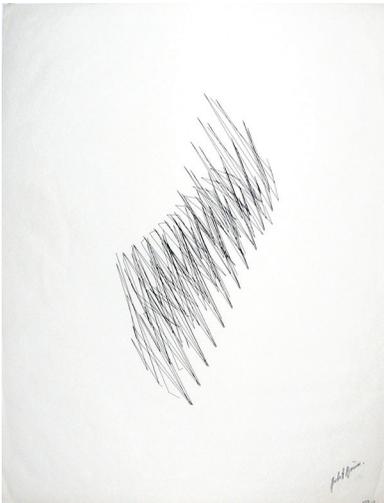
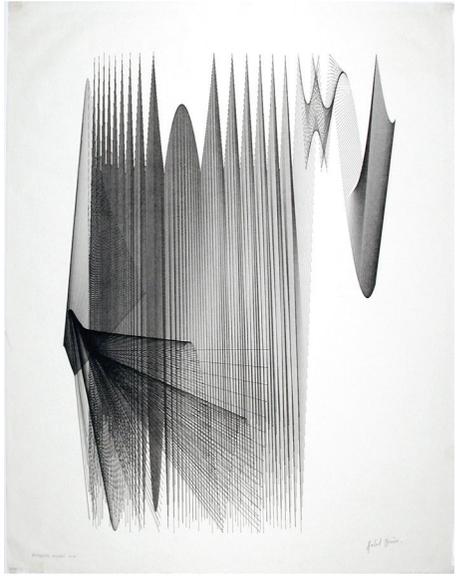
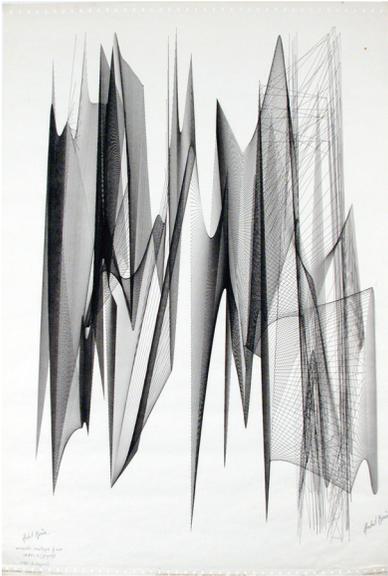
The metaphoric response groove broke into two more specific approaches:

- creating a composition in sound that seems somehow *analogous to the compositional approach that the artist might have employed*; or . . .
- creating a composition in sound that enters into a *dialogue, gesture-for-gesture, with selected figures in the graphic work*.

For each artwork we usually tried to make music within just one of the five possible response modes, not so much as a straightjacket but as a launching pad for our composing and performing. All of which is to say that, quite apart from revealing how we went about our work—which in a real sense is mere background—we hope that a similar spirit of adventure will inform the viewer's listening.

We've worked in many varied formats over the decades, often at the fringes of musical experimentation, but always with an emphasis on a high level of craft. Our approach in this instance actually calls to mind a working plan that we employed in one of our first large collaborations, a thirty-minute realization of John Cage's *Music Walk* for piano, percussion, electronics, and everything-but-the-kitchen-sink. For the current show we divided the forty graphic works selected by the curators into two sets of twenty and then proceeded to work independently over a period of two months to create our personal sets of musical responses, each one of approximately a minute's duration. This division of musical work isn't reflected in the arrangement of the show at the Bartlett Center, so the effect in the space is that of a random walk, with our respective musical points of view caroming off the forty graphic works in an unforeseen order. The resulting suite of forty-plus minutes of music includes work newly composed and performed for this show, excerpts from our respective performing catalogs, and re-arrangements—sometimes quite radical—of material drawn from earlier compositions.

—Michael Kowalski and Allen Otte

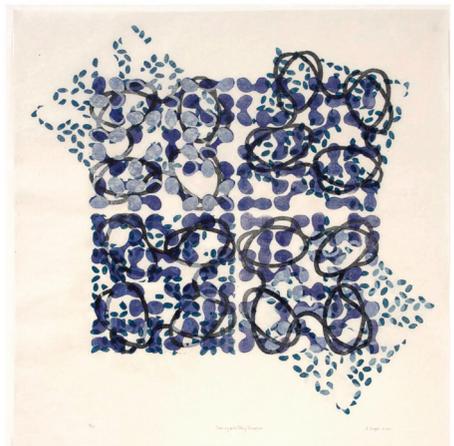
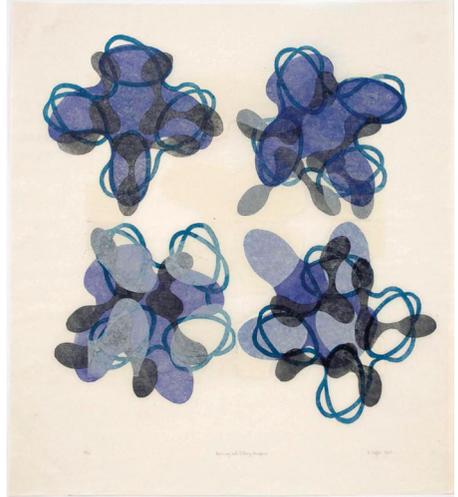


Herbert Brün

Ensemble Analogue Four, computer graphic, 29.5" x 22"

Orchestra Model One, computer graphic, 29.5" x 22.75"

Web I, computer graphic, 29.5" x 23"



Beth Caspar
Dancing with D'Arcy Thompson (series of 4), linocut, Edition: 4/10, 48" X 52.5"

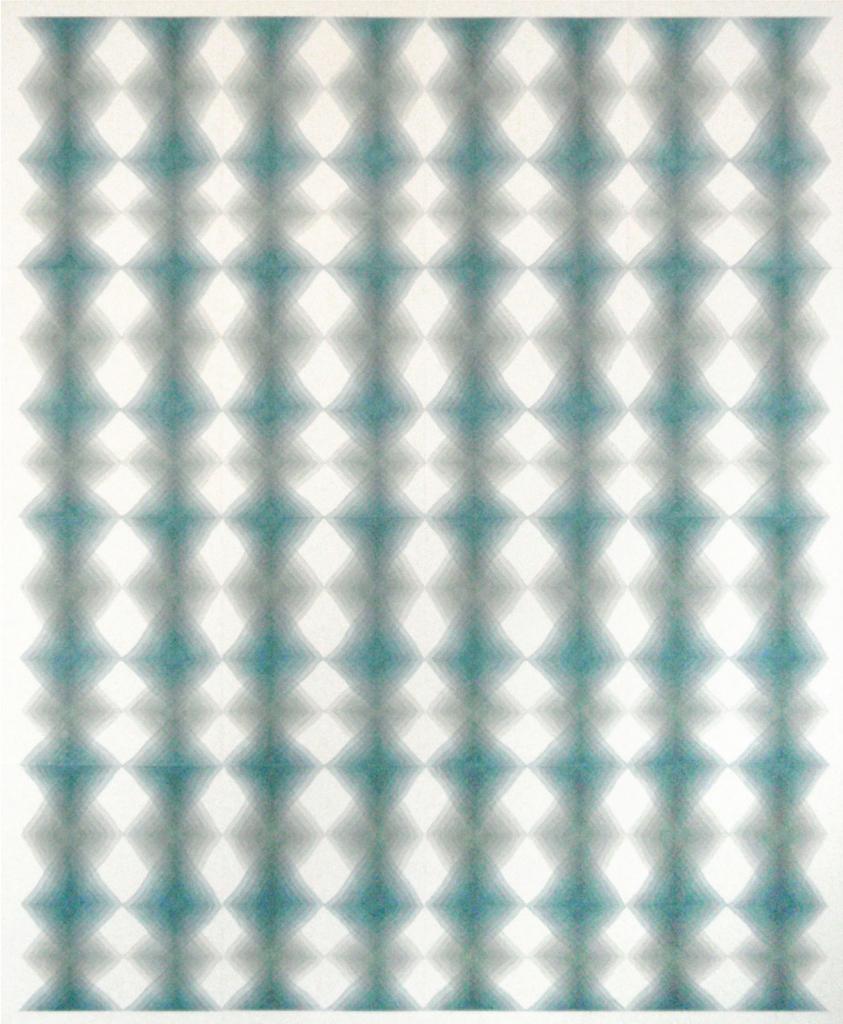


Phillip Chen

Acoustic Shadow, relief etching, 31" x 23"



Abby Goldstein
Untitled I, pigment and matte dispersion on paper, 22" x 30"



Takuji Hamanaka

Repeat After Me - Morning Column, mokuhanaga collage on museum board, 29" x 24"



Keiko Hara

Topophilia Ma and Ki - Memory, mokuhanga, stencil and collage on washi scroll, 72" x 24"

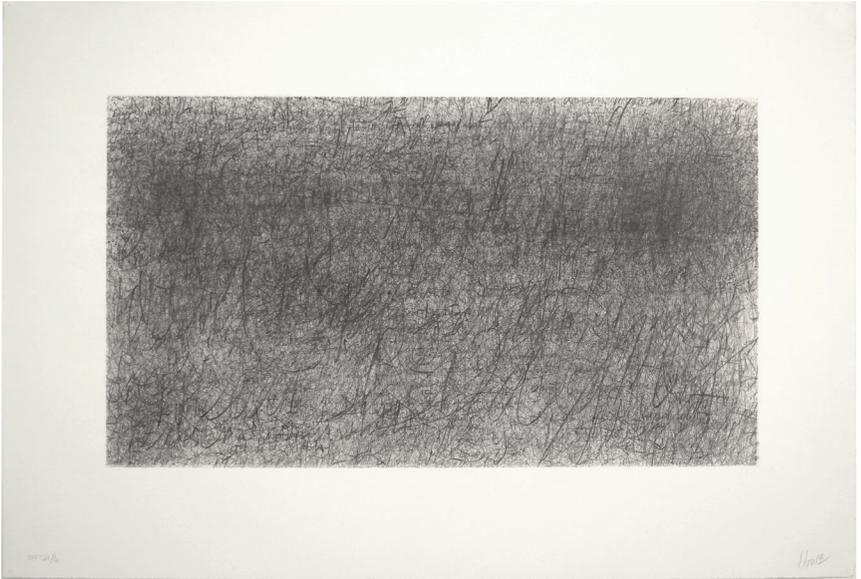
Topophilia Ma and Ki - Memory, mokuhanga, stencil and collage on washi scroll, 72" x 24"

Topophilia Ma and Ki - Memory, mokuhanga, stencil and collage on washi scroll, 72" x 24"

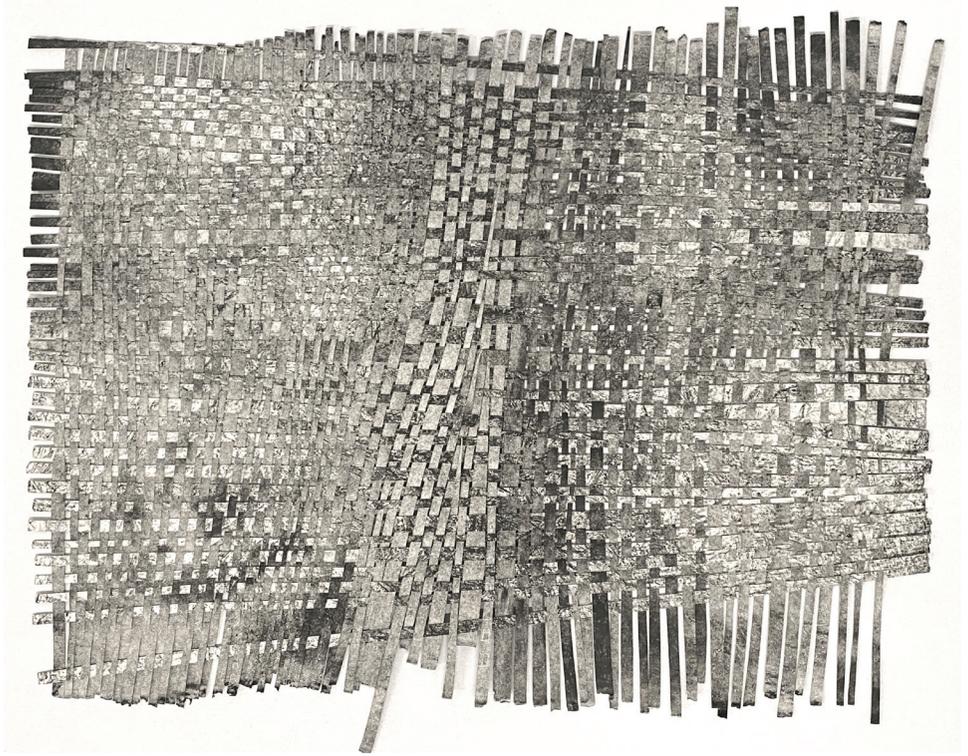


robin holder

Five Spot 2, stencil monotype, 22" x 30"

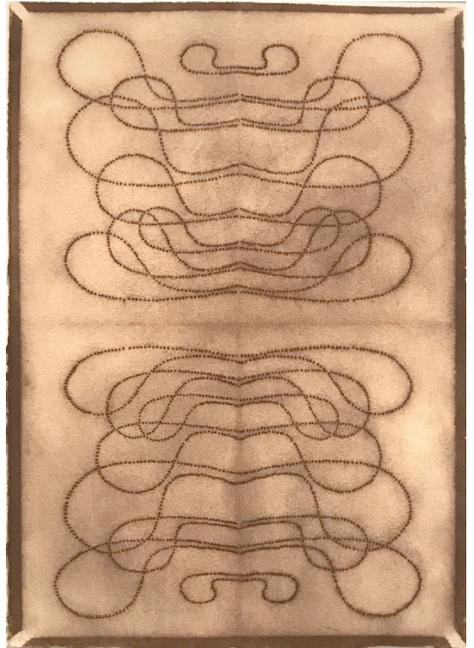
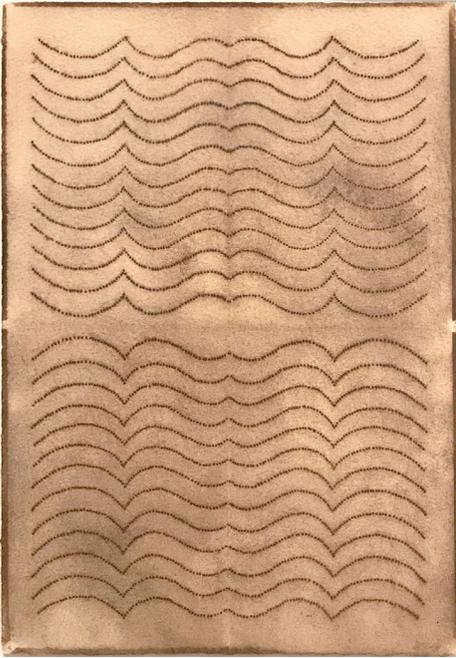


Richard Howe
030211/2. graphite on paper, 15" x 22"
030210/6. graphite on paper, 15" x 22"



Hannah Israel

The same and other, etching, cut paper, 19" x 24"



Mary Judge
Automatic Writing Series no. 17, powdered pigment on 100% rag paper, 10" x 7"
Automatic Writing Series no. 16, powdered pigment on 100% rag paper, 10" x 7"



Kazuhiro Nishijima

Untitled, syu (Japanese vermilion ink) and sumi (Japanese carbon black ink) on Japanese cotton, 11" x 13"



Ralph Kiggell
Progression, water-based woodblock print (mokuhanga) on handmade
Japanese paper (washi), Edition: 4/10, 5.9" x 17.7"

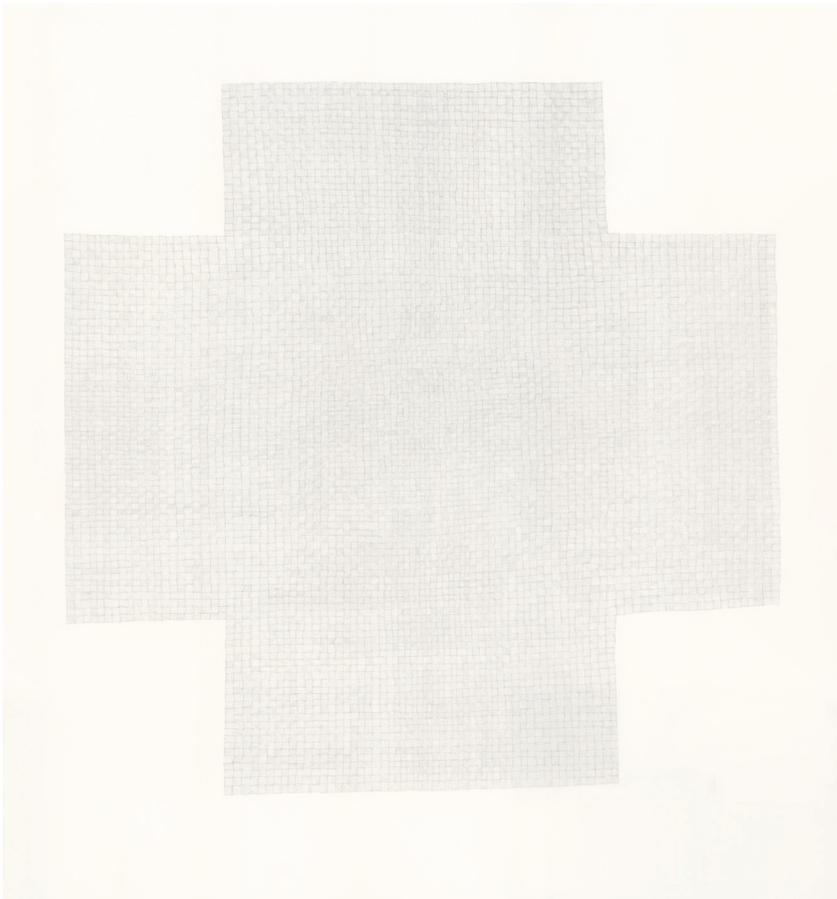


Rosalinda Kolb

Exile Series: #11, colored pencil on paper, 19" x 26"

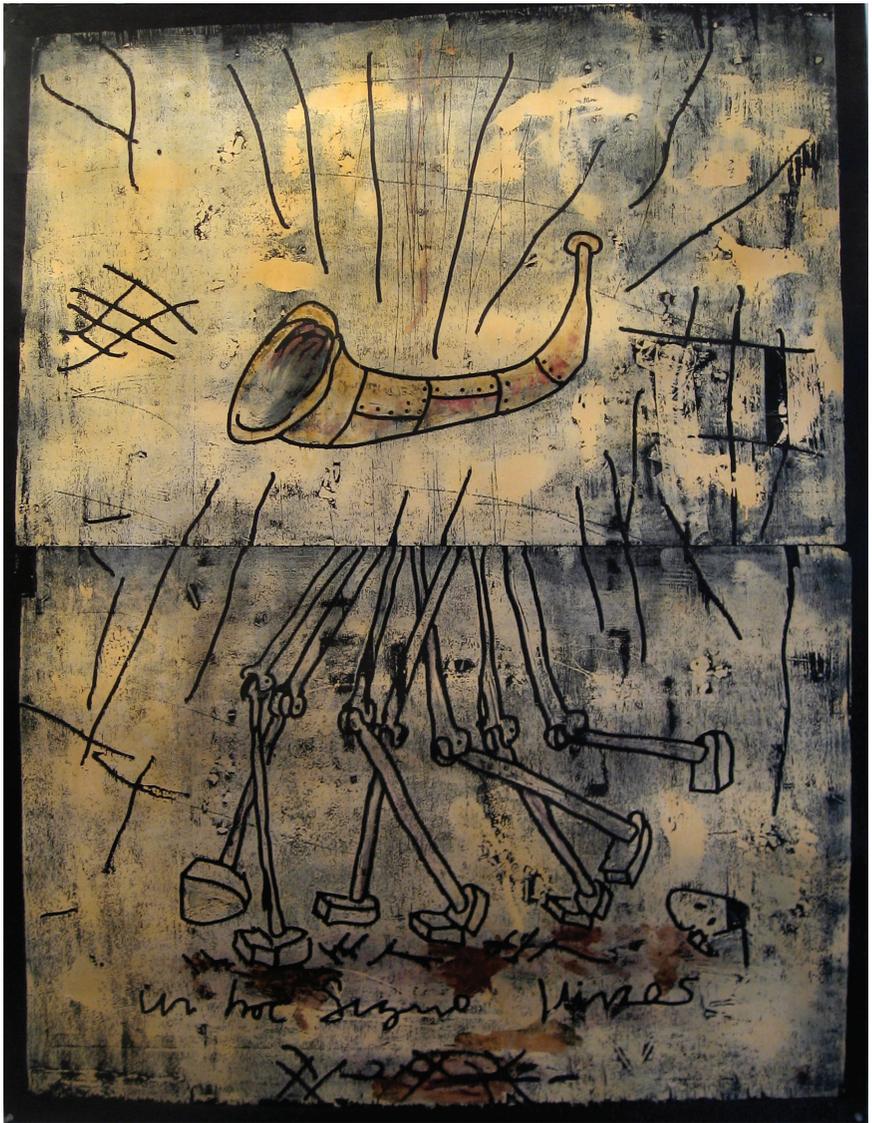


Jiří Kornatovský
Basic Story, graphite on paper, 85" x 180"



Robert Lansden

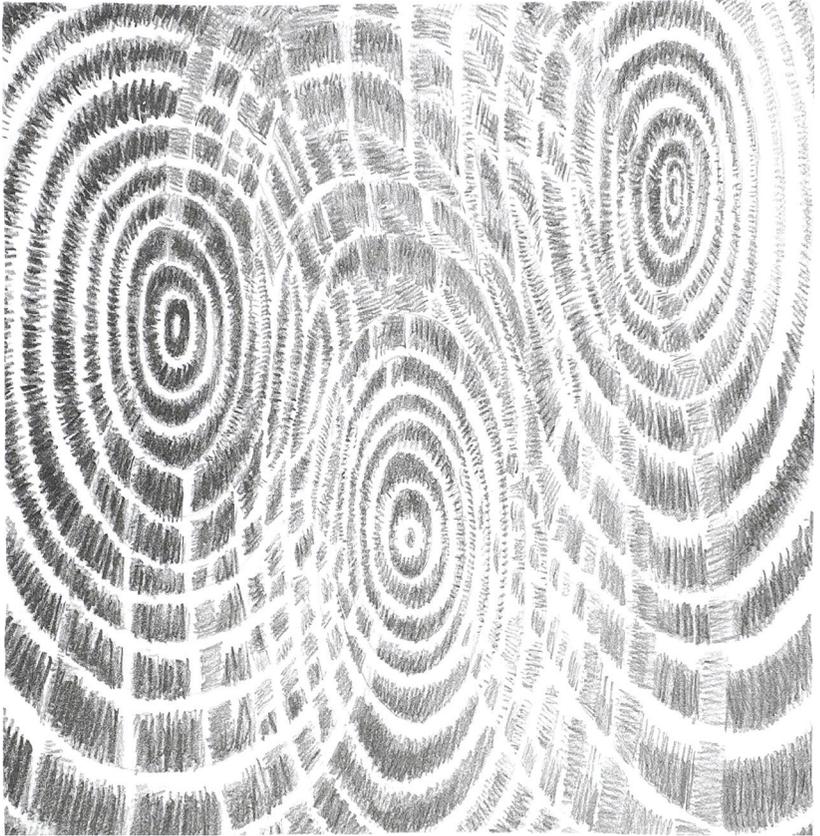
Echo, pencil on paper, 22" x 22"



Simon Lewandowski
In Hoc Signo Vincas, woodcut, 66" x 51"



Jim Napierala
Harmonic, mixed media on veneer, 14.5" x 12.5"



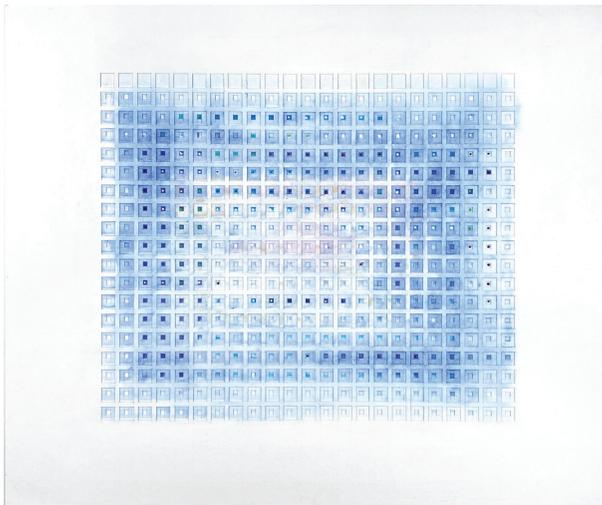
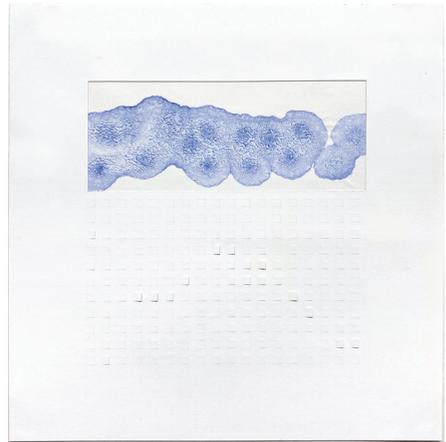
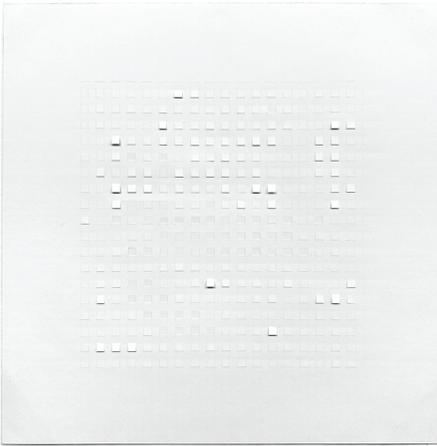
Florence Neal
Trio II, lithograph, Edition: 1/1, 8.25" x 8.3"



Margaret Neill

Respite 1 (Black & White), India ink on paper, 15"x 15"

Respite 3 (Black & White), India ink on paper, 15"x 15"



Gahae Park

Music Drawing, ink on cut paper, 14" x 14"

Music Drawing in Blue, ink on cut paper, 14" x 14"

Music Drawing in Blue, ink on cut paper, 13.5" x 16.5"

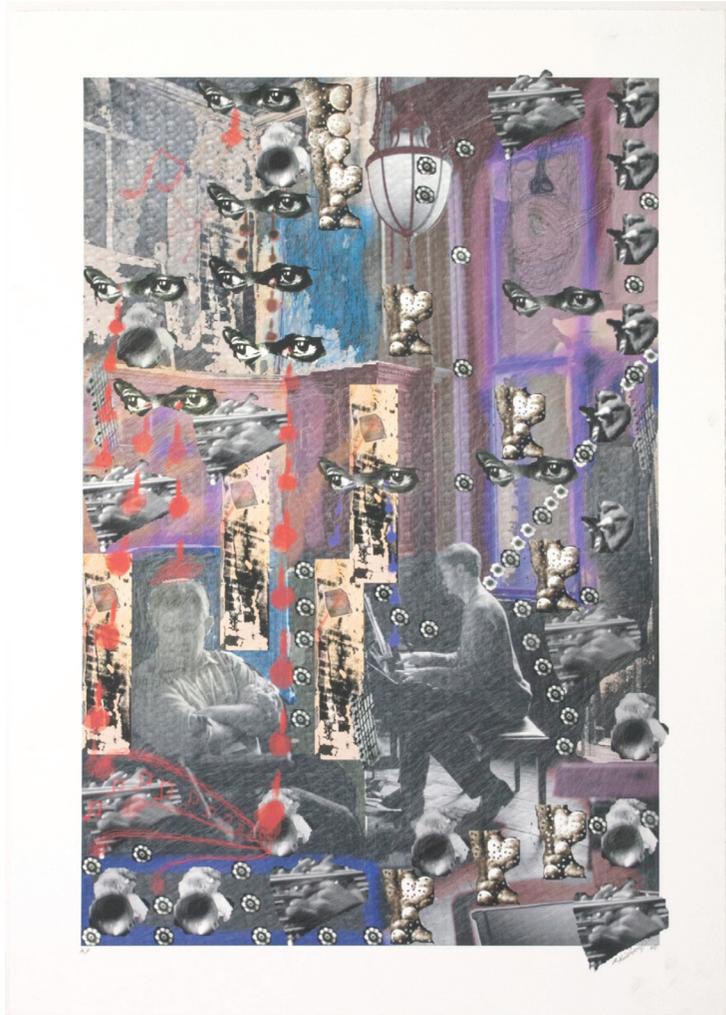


Jaanika Peerna
Droopliness, graphite and colored pencil on Mylar, 24" x 8" x 6"

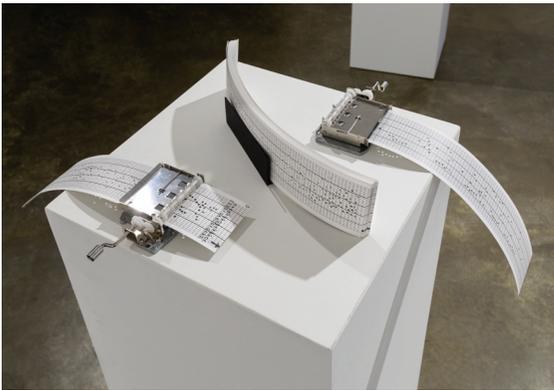
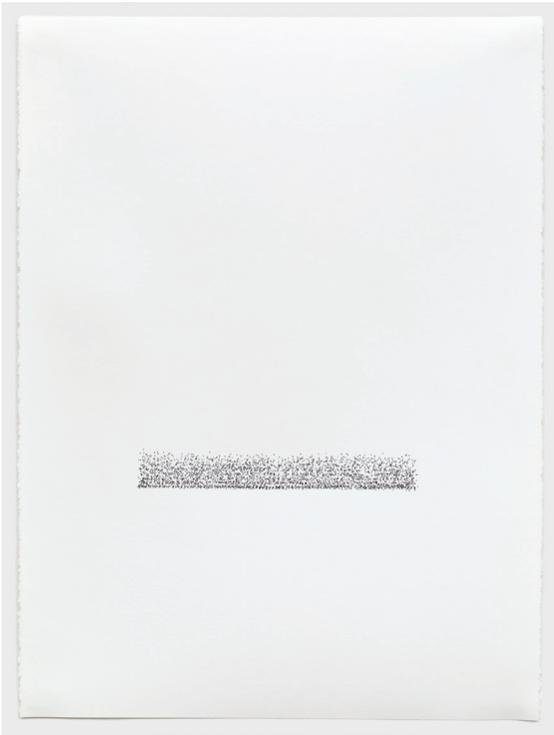


Scott Pfaffman

Note, gouache on paper, 10" x 8"



Orlando Richards
Music Man, digital print, 29.5" x 21"



Viviane Rombaldi Seppey

Cacophony, ink on paper, 30" x 23"

Singing Letters, two crank music boxes, paper strips, collaboration with musician Benjamin Velez, who translated Viviane's drawings into musical scores, 2.75" x 14" each



Susan Schwalb
Strata #230, metalpoint, 9" x 9"



Molly Snyder-Fink

Pianoman, charcoal on paper, 14" x 17"



Hugh Williams
Gospel Singer, charcoal on paper, 40" x 26.5"

Bios

David W. Houston

David W. Houston is the Director of the Ohr O’Keefe Museum of Art in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Florence Neal

Artist and Curator Florence Neal is Co-Founder and Director of Kentler International Drawing Space in Brooklyn, New York.

Michael Kowalski and Allen Otte

Composer-pianist Michael Kowalski and percussionist-composer Allen Otte have been collaborating on musical projects since the early 1970s. In addition to his work as a soloist, teacher, and composer, Otte is a founding member of two of the most important multiple percussion groups in the United States, the Blackearth Percussion Group and the Percussion Group/Cincinnati. Kowalski was a pioneer in computer-assisted sound synthesis and algorithmic composition in the 1970s. After years of composing primarily for percussion, dance, and electronics, he turned to theatre and chamber opera in the 1990s. Kowalski’s “Gringo Blaster,” commissioned and premiered by Otte and the Percussion Group/Cincinnati, is available on an Einstein Records CD of the same name.



**KENTLER
INTERNATIONAL
DRAWING
SPACE**

Kentler International Drawing Space, founded in 1990 by two artists, is a nonprofit organization in Brooklyn, NY dedicated to bringing contemporary drawings and work on paper by emerging and under-recognized national and international artists to the public. We provide artists with opportunities to experiment, explore and expand the definition of art in society. Our programs include exhibitions and educational events, the K.I.D.S. Art Education program and Kentler Flatfiles, a collection of over 2,000 contemporary works on paper. www.kentlergallery.org



Photo Credit: Matt Millman



THE BO BARTLETT CENTER
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS, COLUMBUS STATE UNIVERSITY

The Bartlett Center at Columbus State University is a dynamic, creative learning laboratory that is part gallery, part experimental arts incubator, and part community center. Based on the belief that art can change lives, the center has a two-fold mission: community outreach programs that help facilitate an inclusive environment by encouraging participation from diverse voices, and a national mission to partner with other institutions to provide innovative exhibitions that deepens our understanding of art through publications, and public programming. It is a unique cultural institution that is taking a leadership role in the broader University and Columbus arts community and creating a new paradigm for innovation and service. The center houses and displays The Scarborough Collection, 14 monumental paintings by artist and Columbus native Bo Bartlett, and often features rotating exhibitions of national and international acclaim.

www.bobartlettcenter.org

Exhibition Checklist

- Herbert Brün, *Ensemble Analogue Four*, computer graphic, 29.5 in X 22 in, June 28, 1974. (Private Collection)
- Herbert Brün, *Orchestra Model One*, computer graphic, 29.5 in X 22.75 in, 1971.
- Herbert Brün, *Web 1*, computer graphic, 29.5 in X 23 in, 1971.
- Beth Caspar, *Dancing with D'Arcy Thompson* (series of 4), linocuts, Edition: 4/10, 24 in X 26.25 in. each, 2000.
- Phillip Chen, *Acoustic Shadow*, relief etching, 31 in X 23 in, 2002.
- Abby Goldstein, *untitled 1*, pigment and matte dispersion on paper, 22 in X 30 in, 2019.
- Takuji Hamanaka, *Repeat After Me – Morning Column*, mokuhanga collage on museum board, 29 in X 24 in, 2011.
- Keiko Hara, *Topophilia Ma and Ki – Memory*, (1, 2, 3) mokuhanga, stencil and collage on washi scrolls, 72 in X 24 in, each, 2016.
- robin holder, *Five Spot 2*, stencil monotype, 22 in X 30 in, 2005.
- Richard Howe, *030210/6*, graphite on paper, 15 in X 22 in, 2003.
- Richard Howe, *030211/2*, graphite on paper, 15 in X 22 in, 2003.
- Hannah Israel, *The same and other*, etching on paper, 19 in X 24 in, 2019.
- Mary Judge, *Automatic Writing Series no. 17*, powdered pigment on 100% rag paper, 10 in X 7 in, 1999.
- Mary Judge, *Automatic Writing Series no. 16*, powdered pigment on 100% rag paper, 10 in X 7 in, 1999.
- Ralph Kiggell, *Progression*, water-based woodblock print (mokuhanga) on handmade Japanese paper (washi), Edition: 4/10, 5.9 in X 17.7 in, 2011.
- Rosalinda Kolb, *Exile Series #11*, colored pencil on paper, 19 in X 26 in, 2007.
- Jiří Kornatovský, *Basic Story*, pencil on paper, 85 in X 180 in, 1990.
- Robert Lansden, *Echo*, graphite on paper, 22 in X 22 in, 2008.
- Simon Lewandowski, *In Hoc Signo Vincas*, woodcut, 66 in X 51 in, 1995.
- Jim Napierala, *Harmonic*, mixed media on veneer, 14.5 in X 12.75 in, 2007.
- Florence Neal, *Trio II*, Lithograph, Edition: 1/1, 8.3 in X 8.25 in, 2006.
- Margaret Neill, *Respite 1 (Black & White)*, India ink on paper, 15 in X 15 in, 2013.
- Margaret Neill, *Respite 3 (Black & White)*, India ink on paper, 15 in X 15 in, 2013.
- Kazuhiro Nishijima, *Untitled*, syu (Japanese vermilion ink) and sumi (Japanese carbon black ink) on Japanese cotton, 11.25 in X 14.25 in, 2002.
- Morgan O'Hara, *Live Transmission: Movement of musicians & technicians striking the set of RAINFOREST 4/ Clark Theatre at Lincoln Center / New York City / 20 July 1998*, graphite on paper, 13.75 in X 17 in, 1998. (Private Collection)
- Gahae Park, *Music Drawing*, cut paper, 14 in X 14 in, 2001.
- Gahae Park, *Music Drawing in Blue*, ink on cut paper, 14 in X 14 in, 2001.
- Gahae Park, *Music Drawing in Blue*, ink on cut paper, 13.5 in X 16.5 in, 2001.
- Jaanika Peerna, *Droopliness*, graphite and colored pencil on Mylar, 24 in x 8 in x 6 in, 2016
- Scott Pfaffman, *Note*, gouache, 10 in X 8 in, 2016.
- Orlando Richards, *Music Man*, digital photo print, 29.5 in X 21 in, 2008.
- Viviane Rombaldi Seppey, *Cacophony*, ink on paper, 30 in X 23 in, 2019.
- Viviane Rombaldi Seppey, *Singing Letters*, crank music boxes, paper strips (2.75" x 14"), Collaboration with musician Benjamin Velez, who translated Viviane's drawings into musical scores, 2.75 in X 14 in, 2019.
- Susan Schwalb, *Strata #230*, metalpoint, 9 in X 9 in, 1998.
- Molly Snyder-Fink, *Pianoman*, charcoal on paper, 14 in X 17 in, 2005. (Private Collection)
- Hugh Williams, *Gospel Singer #2*, charcoal on paper, 40 in X 26.5 in, 2005.



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921 Front Avenue
Corn Center for the Visual Arts
Columbus, Georgia

