

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

523 West 24th Street, New York, New York 10011 Tel: 212-243-0200 Fax: 212-243-0047

Terry Winters

Press Packet

Yau, John. "Terry Winters's Allegiance to Science and Abstraction." *Hyperallergic*, June 12, 2021.

Scott, Andrea K. "Terry Winters." *The New Yorker*, June 21, 2021, p. 9.

Salle, David. "Musical Lines." *The New York Review of Books* 65, no. 13, August 16, 2018, pp. 58–59.

Yau, John. "Terry Winters's Inspired Rejections." *Hyperallergic*, June 10, 2018.

Yau, John. "Terry Winters Draws the Shape of Space." *Hyperallergic*, June 3, 2018.

Solomon, Deborah. "Review: Pencil This In." *WNYC*, April 6, 2018.

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HYPERALLERGIC

Art Reviews Weekend

Terry Winters's Allegiance to Science and Abstraction

Winters's art is about decisions, choices, quality of attention, the shaping of one's existence in time.

by John Yau
June 12, 2021

A list of words came to mind: field, layer, cluster, shape, line, frame, and diagram. They did not come all at once, but slowly, as I walked around the exhibition *Terry Winters: Table of Contents* at Matthew Marks Gallery (May 14–June 26, 2021). The accumulation of these words seemed to echo Winters's paintings, which feel as if a series of different visual vocabularies have been both worked out and bonded on the painting's surface.

Drawing might be the jumping off point, a way to begin, but the additive process of painting inevitably takes over. Working in oil, wax, and resin on seven paintings, all measuring 88 by 68 inches, Winters begins with a thinly painted, brushy layer, which he may cover entirely or partially with a linear structure or pattern of abstract shapes.

The recent paintings, which are eight inches larger than the ones he showed at this gallery



Terry Winters, "Index 1" (2021), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 88 x 68 inches (all images © Terry Winters, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery)

in 2018 (they measured 80 by 60 inches) and all vertically oriented, suggest that Winters is testing the limits of what could still be regarded as a human-scaled painting.

These paintings are complimented by five paintings on paper measuring 40 1/2 by 30 1/2 inches and *Table of Contents* (2020), a series of 26 drawings done in graphite, ink, and wax, measuring 11 by 9 inches, on the tabbed dividers you would buy in a stationery store.

Working within these established parameters, with a vocabulary that is derived largely from the sciences, Winters suppresses the individuality of the artist but does not eliminate it: everywhere in his work we can sense his direct and passionate engagement with materials and processes, as he breathes life into what could be a dry undertaking.

Winters employs a process that is about layers and different abstract vocabularies, working back into the painting, and making visible changes and adjustments. He leaves the work open enough for the viewer to consider the steps he took to arrive at the final painting. This is one of the many deep pleasures that his artwork offers us. It both invites scrutiny and provokes self reflection.

While Winters's working method shares something with process painting (the working out of everything in the painting), the differences are crucial. If process art, which originated with Jackson Pollock and developed with the rise of Color Field painting and Sol LeWitt's rule-bound wall drawings, was intended to minimize the importance of the artist's hand, Winter brings the hand and drawing back into painting without nostalgia for gesture and signature flourishes. In fact, the link between drawing and thinking is decisive to his works. They are like diagrams charting the steps of their emergence into full view. In that regard, his paintings are visual proposals.



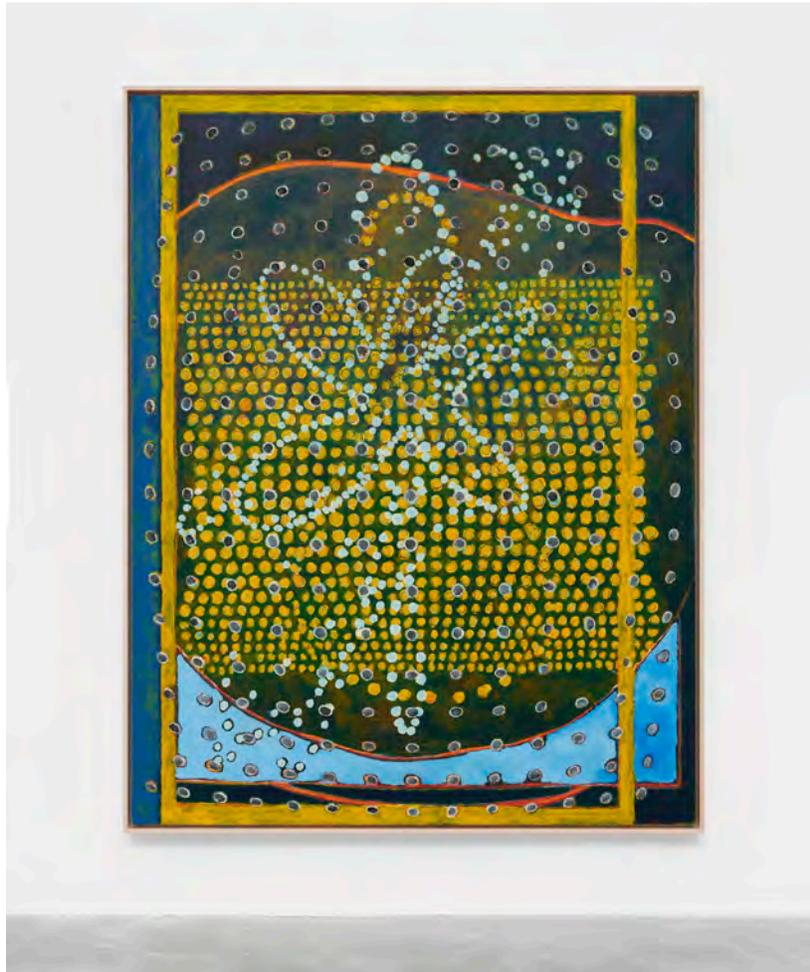
Terry Winters, *Table of Contents* (2020), graphite, ink, and wax on paper, 26 sheets, each 11 x 9 inches

By bringing together different abstract vocabularies used in different branches of science, Winters both reimagines LeWitt and turns his machine-like efficiency into an accumulation of handmade and visible decisions — into a state of forthrightness and vulnerability. Beyond the domain of art, which is to say in the realm of everyday life, Winters’s art is about decisions, choices, quality of attention, the shaping of one’s existence in time, owning everything you do, and staying intimately connected with the thing you are making. His works praise painting as an everyday activity

In “Index 1” (2020), Winters begins with a thinly painted, brushy turquoise ground, to which he adds a number of layers, each consisting of a specific set of open forms or perforated shapes (circles that are outlined and filled in with color). By accumulating a form that is open rather than solid and impermeable, he finds ways to join together his layers. The artist composes the wavering field of red circles, for example, by brushing red into the circles and outlining them in dark blue, with the turquoise blue of the background often still visible. As a result the red circles produce a halation effect.



Terry Winters, “Index 3” (2021), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 88 x 68 inches



Terry Winters, "Magic Architecture" (2020), oil, wax, and resin on linen 88 x 68 inches

A large, irregular red circle seems to rest on one of the bands going from the top to the bottom edge of an off-center rectangle within the turquoise field. Is it part of the field of wavering circles, which imply motion, or is it separate? Can it be both? The use of warm (red) and cool (blues and greens) colors suggests the answer is yes.

In the largely pink and red oil on paper "Curtain" (2020) and the other four works in this group, Winters generally brings together a few configurations of abstract patterns, usually circles and irregular shapes, and both joins and sets them at odds with each other. In "Echo" (2020), my attention shifts between how the different vocabularies connect and push against each other.

"Thyreos" (2020) is dominated by an outlined salmon-colored oval that contains a smaller oval composed of perforated circles, many of which are outlined in red and cream and filled in with gray and black. (A thyreos is a large oval shield that was used by Hellenistic soldiers after the death of Alexander the Great.) The ghostly outlines of earlier circular shapes are visible in the pink oval, which is set within a perforated blue ground. These outlines are among the features that will cause viewers to refocus attention, as well as recognize the visual instability of the painting.

Winters establishes a dialogue among the various layers by setting the pink oval within the blue field and overlaying both with perforations. The openings and perforations brought to mind the incised and punctured ceramic works of Lucio Fontana, and prompted a feeling that the picture plane had been violated and damaged. His use of multiple abstract patterns shares something with Australian aboriginal bark paintings, but Winters is not concerned with cosmology. He brings these associations to mind without resorting to direct citation or parody, deepening the breadth of his work.

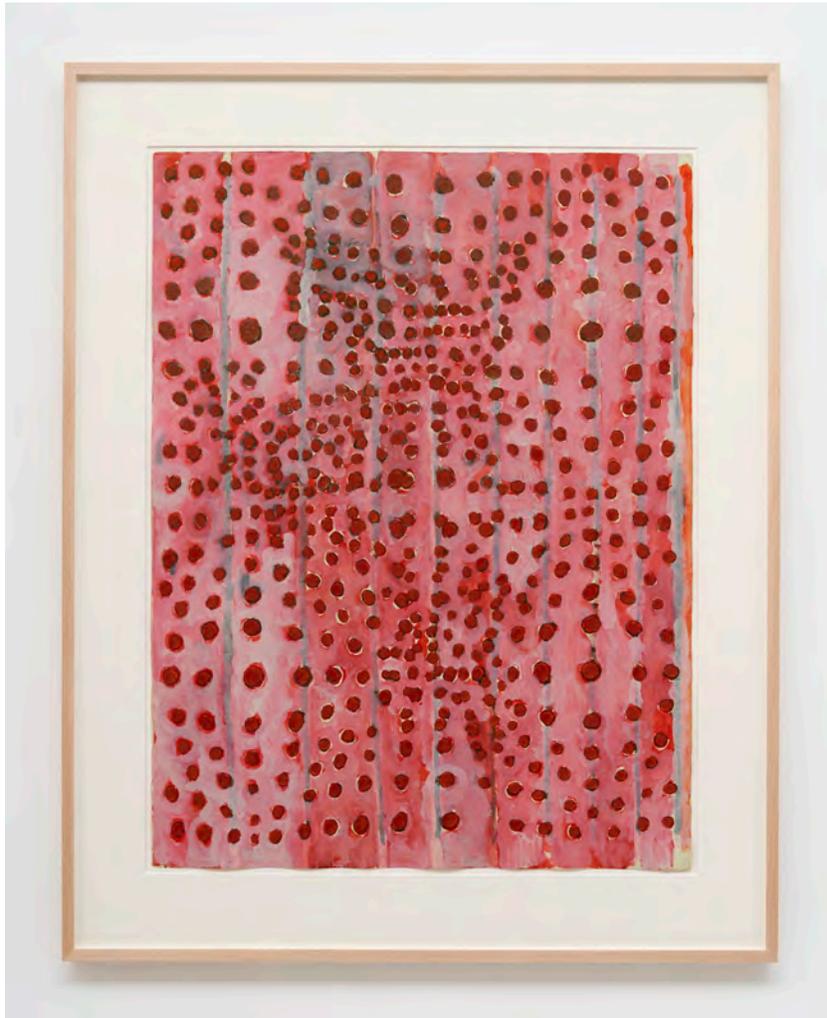
By superimposing perforated layers and fields of distinct forms, Winters arrives at a destabilized composition, where the boundaries between figure and ground are porous, while the smaller circles within the oval and the larger ones superimposed on them convey an irresolvable visual tension in which similarity and difference maintain a constant friction. That friction seems crucial to our experience of the work, as well as its meaning. We live in a state of continual contention and co-existence.

Consider all the different abstract patterns and compositional structures that Winters has brought together in “Magic Architecture” (2021), and one senses his ability to choreograph and compress multiple vocabularies.



Terry Winters, “Thyreos” (2020), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 88 x 68 inches

Yau, John. “Terry Winters’s Allegiance to Science and Abstraction.” *Hyperallergic*, June 12, 2021.



Terry Winters, "Curtain" (2020), oil on paper, 40 1/2 x 30 1/2 inches

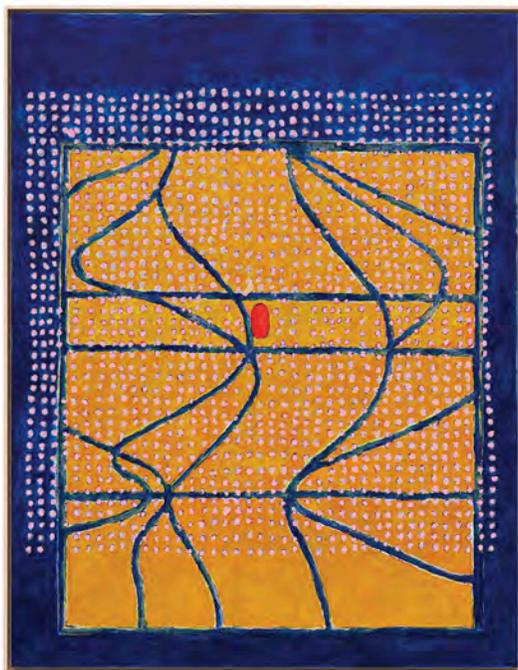
In "Curtain," the superimposing of a dense field of outlined red circles on a pink, abstract curtain made me think of the computer-generated representations of the COVID-19 virus, to electronic microscopes and other ways of detecting the invisible — all the new apprehensions that have entered our lives.

Winters's attention to the world of science gives this exhibition a particular twist, given the pandemic we have been living through for more than a year. In the 26 drawings done on tabbed index dividers, viewers may sense that each index sheet frames the "contents," but does not show what will be added. This adds a note of foreboding to the works in the exhibition, starting with the drawings, their patterns, clusters, tonal difference, and shifts in materiality. I think Winters is determined to make abstraction open to the world that he inhabits without becoming narrative or literal. This is one reason why he is a compelling artist.

Terry Winters: Table of Contents *continues* at Matthew Marks Gallery (522 West 22nd Street, Chelsea, Manhattan) through June 26.

THE
NEW YORKER

AT THE GALLERIES



In 1914, Marcel Duchamp wrote a note to himself: “Make a painting of frequency.” More than a century later, a superb new exhibition by the veteran American painter **Terry Winters**, now on view at the Matthew Marks gallery (through June 26), is on the same wavelength. Duchamp, a champion of “anti-retinal” art, might seem like an odd touchstone for someone as optically (not to mention haptically) all in as Winters, but the Brooklyn native has been reinvigorating abstraction by casting his mind’s eye on scientific systems, from astronomy to physics, for forty years. How to express spatial sequences— orbits, oscillations, perception itself—while carrying on a tradition whose lineage stretches (at least) from the New York School to the Aboriginal Australian master Warlimpirrnga Tjapaltjarri? Winters provides vibratory answers in the seven oil, wax, and resin paintings here (including “Index 2,” from 2020, above). Each one is more than seven feet tall, making viewing them a full-body experience. Winters, who came of age as an artist in the nineteen-seventies, borrows Minimalism’s strategies of repetition, but his works are anything but formulaic. Just when you think you’ve grasped the rules of his game—say, containing compositions within horizontal bands at the top and the bottom—you encounter an outlier like “Thyreos,” a bristling pink oval pulsing on a field of blue. — *Andrea K. Scott*

The New York Review of Books

Musical Lines

David Salle

Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions
an exhibition at
the Drawing Center, New York City,
April 6–August 12, 2018.
Catalog of the exhibition
with contributions by Claire Gilman,
Peter Cole, and Rachel Kushner.
The Drawing Center,
153 pp., \$20.00 (paper)

There's a Nichols and May routine from the early 1960s about a high-strung worrier of a mother who's going to the hospital for some tests. Her grown son asks her over the phone what the doctors intend to do. She tells him, "Well, they'll X-ray my nerves."

That bit came to mind walking through the exhibition "Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions" at the Drawing Center. In drawing, one feels the nervous system at work. It is where the connections between the hand and the brain, between thought and action, and between action and reaction are made most immediately. Winters is one of the preeminent graphic artists of his, or anyone's, generation, and the show is by turns mournful, ebullient, mathematical, and sensual.

There are different types of graphic talent at work today: the imagists, like George Condo or Karen Kilimnik, who use line to bring an imagined world to life, and the more abstract mark-makers, like Jasper Johns or Charline von Heyl. And there are those artists who take something from each camp, like Amy Sillman or Joe Bradley. For Winters, his primary allegiance is to the materials of drawing themselves, their ability to record a sensibility.



Terry Winters: Schema (57), 1985–1986

Some artists see and then draw; others, like Winters, draw first, then see. Of course the drawing and the seeing occur almost simultaneously, like instant replay for the hand.

Winters uses marks to build, categorize, extenuate, and react more or less at the same time. His pencil moves at different speeds and degrees of pressure, either with short-span repetitions—back and forth, back and forth—or long and broad arabesques. Often, the gathering up of short, emphatically laid-down strokes, bristling with tensile energy, works in contrast to the outer-directed energy of the exploratory and encircling lines that create a sense of form and impose structure or pictorial cohesion.

Think of a border collie running in a wide loop around a flock of sheep—sometimes a compressed mass, other times scattered in random-seeming clumps. The sheep don't know they are being herded; the collie knows that it's doing the herding, but is not thinking about creating form. The sheep and collie can't have the overview that is provided to the artist. This is one of the central, and I think lovely, paradoxes of art: the artist is both the sheep and the collie, as well as the aerial photographer documenting their interaction from above.

Here are some Terry Winters drawings that illustrate what I mean: *Addendum/3* (2014) is an egg made out of smaller eggs, or a fly eye made out of hundreds of seeing cells, all held in a rectangular spiderweb. And the inside of a well or mineshaft seen from above, as the egg form begins its endless descent. The drawing is complicated by some grace notes on the upper-right edge of the form, some escaped hexagonal cells, both clinging to and floating free of the mother ship, or black ball fringe on a mantilla of lace.

Untitled (1) (1999) is a warp or tear in space-time; a dented and ripped window screen, greatly enlarged. *Untitled* (2014) is a structure of angular, ruled lines, inserting at odd angles, like a collapsing fire escape, seen through a question mark-shaped window.

Although Winters is interested in a range of philosophical and scientific ideas, his more immediate and tactile concern seems to be creating and manipulating visual rhythms. Winters has,

in fact, the visual equivalent of musicality, a quality he shares with our prehistoric graphic ancestors and, more recently, with Piet Mondrian, Jackson Pollack, and a few others.

By “musicality” I don’t mean simply that his work is lyrical or lovely, though it often is. I mean that quality we see most clearly in modern choreography: the ability to locate *this* exact phrase of movement in *that* precise beat of the score, but in a manner that is often unexpected. The shapes made by bodies in space and the dance phrases that contain them move through the musical line, intersecting with it at key points, while maintaining their independence. It’s rather like the uncanny sensation of being on a train and seeing, through the window, another train on a parallel track; their windows intermittently align as the trains pass each other at different speeds, affording one a fleeting view directly into another car, another parallel life, before, in the next instant, it disappears forever. Or think of the way a lyricist will fit a word or even just a syllable to exactly the right note on the right beat, deepening the meaning of both.

Musicality in art is the functional expression of the overlaps, intersections, pauses, and congruities that occur at specific, meaningful intervals within a fixed or fluctuating tempo. In a drawing by Winters, this can look like clusters of forms aggregated or dispersed across a surface, often according to some principle of organization from the natural world, such as the germination of seeds or mitosis in cells when seen under a microscope. A work may have two or three separate layers of mark-making, of contrasting visual weights, and the ways in which they overlap or intersect can be jumpy and contrapuntal or harmonious and lyrical.

Winters starts from the conventions of “all-over” painting, the dominant type of abstraction in American art since the 1950s, and brings it into the present. He takes the all-over, unitary field of modern painting and overlays it with another set of marks, and then another, and so on. The result, with its laminations, multiple armatures, and composite layers of graphic information, is something that can’t be teased apart; the interweaving is loose yet indivisible.

For example, *Untitled* (2009) is a mélange of musical notation, ingrown squiggles, flower-petal shapes, William Steig-like clefs, and the gentle warp-

ing of the time/space fabric. Winters takes the strings from string theory and makes clotheslines out of them.

A successful drawing is a truce between structure and improvisation. At times the marks look like a record of running thoughts, the mind as a dripping faucet. That’s one layer. Sometimes the marks converge, like snow shaped by wind, into surprisingly familiar images, like constellations of stars. These shapes become silhouettes of namable things: masks, faces, or the bodies of animals. It’s a sensation we’ve all had—seeing the figure in the carpet, the face in the tree bark; abstract shapes brought to a point of recognition. To be effective in the schema of the drawing, these shapes must have a specificity of character, but not be overdetermined; they should feel like something that originates in the drawing’s own DNA.

Winters makes a line that also has a certain character all on its own. These distinctive lines—thick, thin, febrile, agitated, bold, etc., in different materials, pencil, charcoal, ink, crayon, gouache—are often woven into patterns that exploit the expressive potential of intervals, of the spaces between lines or forms as they repeat, shift, expand, contract, or otherwise accumulate and morph. Intervals are the nuclei of pattern and are a fundamental part of any work engaged with rhythm, proportion, and structure.

Every era has its own rhythm, found not only in its music but also in its visual culture, architecture, and technological advances. Winters’s drawings are modern; they convey the lyricism of the concrete. He visualizes the rhythm of information, and his work reflects our obsession with the quantifiable. It’s something of a paradox: Winters, with his beautiful, sensitive hand and graphic refinement, has become a poet of the information age. His work is an adumbration of all the nuanced ways that information is staged, delivered, and understood. He does this without resorting to technical drawing or illustration. One doesn’t need to actually be a techie to create visual metaphors for the ideas that power technology. As an artist friend of mine put it, “I can’t read JavaScript but I can read my e-mails.”

Originality matters differently in painting than in the other arts. The eye is an efficient, if crass, abbreviator, establishing similarity and difference in

an instant. For an artist, finding a look or a style that falls within the available possibilities of art, yet is different enough from anything that has come before it, is both the ideal and also a near impossibility. It’s interesting that it still matters so much. Every major style that feels new is at heart an amalgam of originating impulses from previous art, though recombined in ways that obscure them, so thoroughly are they repurposed. It is art’s dimly perceived connection to what came before that allows us to register what is new in it.

When Winters first started to show his work at the beginning of the 1980s, some people, noting the aspect of his technique that emphasized a linear approach to form and the loose placement of those forms around a light-colored ground, as well as a tendency toward an elegant handwriting type of line, thought “Twombly,” as if that settled the matter. Since then, Winters has developed into a kind of artist very different from his apparent precursor, with a different narrative thrust. In any case, we don’t undervalue Peter Handke for his early resemblance to Kafka or Beckett. Quite the opposite, in fact; it’s the obvious connection to the whole Modernist tradition that proves his elevated ambition, his claim to seriousness. Visual art is perverse that way: better an artist should approximate a bum than an aesthete.

Then there is the snobbism of the de-skilled. Everyone understands that in the performing arts talent and extreme skill combine to create something that holds our attention. We don’t imagine that we could conduct the orchestra, except in our fantasies. An artist with a hand as sensitive as a polygraph, however, is politely acknowledged before being condescended to.

One measure of good artists is that what they do looks easy—once they’ve done it. Winters’s line looks so much like what we might imagine an art line to look like that we begin to believe—both the manually inclined and those who have never picked up a piece of charcoal—that we could do it too. Alas, most of us cannot.

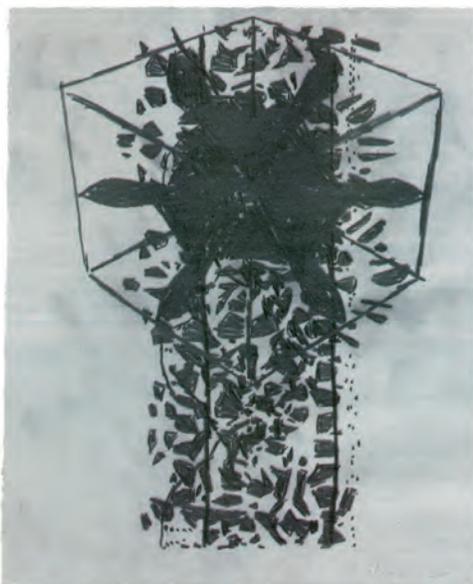
For Winters’s graphic output, that somewhat overused metaphor *it flowed from his hand* is for once exactly right. That flow has been more or less constant, continuously evolving since the late 1970s, and a survey of his drawings puts the focus on the flow itself, the sensation that one is looking at a naturally occurring phenomenon, something

with the capacity for endless renewal, or perhaps like a vein of crystals, to which some drawings refer.

The show at the Drawing Center, ably curated by Claire Gilman, restrained though it is by the modest size of the space, is a robust sampling of the last thirty-five years of Winters's career, with larger works on the walls and smaller, unframed sheets presented in three long vitrines in the middle of the room. The selection shows that Winters's visual vocabulary has ranged widely over the years, but what impressed me the most is how consistently he has dug down deeply into the nature of his materials to extract from them his broader concerns: for systems, the underlying order of naturally occurring structures, mathematical theory, mapping, topology, and other representations of time and space.

At the start, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Winters was taken up with images and structural ideas informed by the world of biology, botany, mitosis, cellular structure, and the like. Somewhat as an organism itself evolves, by the late 1980s and early 1990s he shifted his concern to the larger, or smaller, patterns or systems that underlie the natural world and comprise it. He engaged, in the way that a visual artist can, with the ideas of astronomy, physics, and mathematics. It was as if he suddenly looked up, turning his gaze from the pinecone's helix to the heavens, to celestial evidence of star formation, dispersal, and extinction.

In this later phase of Winters's drawing, we see the grid loosened, the woof, or the warp, warped. The space in a Winters drawing is very free. Optically speaking, he works with shifting points of view, placing the viewer at various oblique angles to the webs of marks on the surface. Like an open-weave wall hanging taken down and stretched at an angle to the viewer, some drawings provide a worm's-eye view, looking across a receding plane, and that plane, seen in perspective, might have openings through which can be glimpsed another, differently conceived world of marks. Winters's drawing hand can do a lot of different things. Dust motes and space dirt. A Milky Way of cosmic dust blown across the sky. Marks spilling down as if through a funnel, or boiling over, or thrust upward like a shower of sparks.



Terry Winters: Ennead/4, 2012



Terry Winters: Animation, 1996

In *Animation* (1996), for example, we can see the biological and botanical give way to the more purely mathematical or even the intergalactic. Oddly, as they describe more abstract, universal processes, the marks seem to take on more personality. They have greater scale and force, as the bulging interior shapes press against the sides of the paper.

In *Thickness)points/2* (2014), as the title has it, thickness is all. Contour is emphasized, exerting great pressure on the interstitial spaces. The shape comes to life, a blackened form becomes a pit bull with alert ears or cartoon horns, outstretched arms and indented eyes,

while the underlayer takes on the aspect of an ostrich egg of graphite lines.

In *Ennead/4* (2012), stubby windmill arms are mounted on top of a tower of shards, about to cascade right off the paper onto the floor; the only thing saving it from total collapse is getting the elements to pose for this snapshot.

Winters is extremely witty in person, and his art, though generally sober, reflects a sophisticated, turning-things-inside-out type of humor. Occasionally a drawing will be laugh-out-loud funny. *Untitled* (2004), for instance, shows an imagined meet-up between Calder's circus, the mid-century painter Richard Linder, and Plains Indian battle drawings from the nineteenth century. It's wacky, slightly anxious, and highly animated.

Winters's drawings show the way that information, systems, grids, etc., turn into an image. It's a large feeling, one that connects us to the undergirding of the physical world. Some of Winters's drawings are like watching a cloud, densely packed and shapely, start to break apart and dissolve into cotton candy wisps and finally into nothing at all. They have the timeless appeal, the sense of rightness, of a pair of handmade shoes; justified in their extravagance because of their superior construction, fit, and durability. They're so comfortable you may forget you have them on; when you look down and see the perfectly shaped toe it quickens your step. □

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HYPERALLERGIC

ART • WEEKEND

Terry Winters's Inspired Rejections

Winters's painting technique argues against gestural abstraction's sweeping structures and minimalism's solid-color surfaces.



John Yau June 10, 2018

Last week I reviewed *Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions* at The Drawing Center. I felt that I would be remiss if I did not also write about *Terry Winters: 12twelvepaintings* at Matthew Marks. The reason for writing about both exhibitions is the strong connection Winters makes between drawing and painting. As the gallery's press release points out, the 12 paintings:

[were] completed in 2017. Each is five feet wide and almost seven feet tall and has been built up in layers of oil, wax, and resin. Winters begins each painting as a drawing, or a composite of drawings. The drawings themselves incorporate and modify found imagery, which is largely technical in nature.



Terry Winters, "Viridian" (2017), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 80 x 60 inches, 203 x 152 cm (all images © Terry Winters, Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery)

Knots, EKG charts and thermal imaging are among the representations and diagrams that have inspired him. For years, he has had an interest in tessellation, which connects to artifice and nature, tiling in Islamic art and the hexagonal cells found in honeycombs. If one strength of painting is to absorb the possibilities attained by science and technology, especially when

Yau, John. "Terry Winters's Inspired Rejections." *Hyperallergic*, June 10, 2018.

it comes to seeing, Winters extends and broadens that strain, which dates back to Georges Seurat and his knowledge of optics.

By utilizing topological diagrams which often consist of many small abstract sections that, together, compose a pattern, multifaceted shape, or grid-like structure, Winters is able to focus his attention on two compositional formats central to abstract art: the centrally located shape and the all-over grid. The point is not to re-work or parody these conventional compositional formats, but to push their possibilities into new territories that have little to do with style or fashion. He seems to want to effect change through his attention to the smallest components of a shape or grid.

At the same time, the wavy lines in “Wave” reminded me that Winters does something unexpected in his paintings: he seldom makes a continuous, fluid line. In that sense, his art is not smoothly elegant. Rather, he often renders a line in sections, depicting a kind of scratchy movement that adds a feathery edge to his linear elements. This can be read as a sign of his hesitation or as his commitment to slow everything down and develop a painting part by part. I think it is the latter, which is interesting because this incremental manner of composition

runs counter to the history of American postwar abstraction, starting with the Abstract Expressionists, with Jackson Pollock’s poured paintings being the one exception.

While Winters is not a naturally gifted painter, such as Willem de Kooning, he refuses to take the easy road. He neither avoids doing what is difficult for him nor turns his clunkiness into a signature style. His dedication is admirable, especially since everything he attains in his paintings is hard won.

It seems to me that Winters’s interest in multifaceted structures, as in the cell in the largely red painting “Cell,” reveals a proclivity for forms that are atomized or in a state of change. The torqued structures and shapes he begins with are already undergoing pressure and transformation; nothing is static or secure. The layered process he uses to



Terry Winters, “Wave” (2017), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 80 x 60 inches, 203 x 152 cm



Terry Winters, "Cell" (2017), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 80 x 60 inches, 203 x 152 cm

arrive at the final painting allows him to make various sets of decisions about the separate shapes within the overall form; he can move through the form slowly, changing things along the way.

Winters's painting technique argues against gestural abstraction's sweeping structures and minimalism's solid-color surfaces. He seeks to shift our attention away from these by-now-commonplace ways of seeing into a new kind of concentration. So while the grids and centrally located shapes might strike us as familiar modes, his attempt to undo and interfere with them is fresh. His paintings often display a constant tension between the individual shapes and the overall configuration; this causes one's attention to keep shifting in attempt to process divergent kinds of visual data. By adding visual information from another source, he complicates the tension. The artist seems to deliberately refuse to arrive at a unified resolution in his work: he wants to keep the visual situation complicated, but not unnecessarily so — which is a hard feat to pull off.

At times, Winters appears to fill in a small outlined circle with one color and then change his mind and cover it over with another. This can result in a halation effect, as in the red outline

around cobalt blue shapes in “Cobalt.” Recognizing that everything that has been done in painting is available to him — from the optical to smudges — he includes it all in his work without resorting to parody, citation, or irony.

Winters is not interested in covering his tracks, which connects him to certain aspects of Abstract Expressionism. The surfaces run from matte to shiny, from thin, transparent layers to brushy surfaces. We see earlier forms peeking through the color, as well as splotches of paint dispersed across the surface. The swirling configuration of the parts is underscored by color choices, which enhance, alter and interrupt the sense of movement implied by the orientation of the shapes. The layered process involves three different materials: oil paint, wax, and resin. Each has its own materiality. His surfaces are neither smooth nor



Terry Winters, “Surface” (2017), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 80 x 60 inches, 203 x 152 cm

impasto. He has left the process of applying paint open to scrutiny, from the paint brushed in to fill an outlined shape to the layers of thinly applied, transparent colors.

The layering also enables Winters to bring together different sources, to compress two or more different diagrams. Instead of merging into a single, readable form, the layers interfere with each other. This interference becomes one of the hubs of our attention. We try to untangle what cannot be unraveled. He rejects the idea that a painting should be seen all at once (or what Frank Stella famously characterized as “what you see is what you see”). I think this rejection is both aesthetic and ethical: he knows that such seeing betrays the complexity of modern life. His layered process never adds up to a holistic image that can be easily absorbed.

At the same time, Winters’s paintings are not a record of their coming into being, as postwar gestural paintings have often been described; I would go so far as to say that his paintings are not gestural, nor do they describe their coming into being. They are layered groupings of fragments, each of which possesses its own identity.

While the artist has pursued this complexity of seeing through his incorporation of scientific diagrams and models, he has become a masterful colorist. This certainly wasn’t the case when



Terry Winters, "Cerulean" (2017), oil, wax, and resin on linen, 80 x 60 inches, 203 x 152 cm

he started out. He has moved from a near-monochrome palette consisting of earth tones, blacks, and oranges, which dominated his works of the 1980s, to a palette of colors and hues that changes from painting to painting. Some paintings in this exhibition work tonally ("Viridian"), while others work by contrast ("Figure"). Between the 1980s and today, there were times I felt that Winters was learning about color in public, that he was not afraid of showing paintings that worked by graphic contrast rather than something more subtle.

Winters's use of different models and diverse strata is the opposite of reductive painting, Color Field painting, Pop Art, and Conceptual Art, which dominated the art world for many decades. Although he began exhibiting in the 1980s, he shares little with his Neo-Expressionist counterparts, many of whom, like Jim Dine and Lucas Samaras, have devolved into period artists. What most struck me about the current exhibition are the singular places into which he was able to push his strongest paintings. In his manipulation of faceted forms and grids, he reminds us that Stella was wrong to advance that something in painting could be used up. The fact is that nothing gets used up, at least in art.

I am reminded of something that Thomas Nozkowski said to me in an interview that appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail* in November 2010:

Yau, John. "Terry Winters's Inspired Rejections." *Hyperallergic*, June 10, 2018.

Improvisation [...] is essential to my work. I want my ideas to be located at the tip of my brush. I want my materials to talk back to me. I want to be surprised.

The desire for surprise runs through the strongest paintings in this exhibition. You get the feeling that the brownish-red shape in “Cinnabar” is going to change or the bulging grid of red circles in “Frame” is going to burst through the picture plane. This sense of a world undergoing constant change is a central feature of this work. How we might understand this vision without it becoming simplistic or reductive is just one of the reasons I keep looking at and thinking about Winters’s art.

Terry Winters: *12twelvepaintings continues at Matthew Marks (523 W. 24th Street, Chelsea, Manhattan) through June 16.*

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HYPERALLERGIC

ART • WEEKEND

Terry Winters Draws the Shape of Space

In his best drawings, everything is keyed to the way that Winters attains difference while doing the same thing over and over.



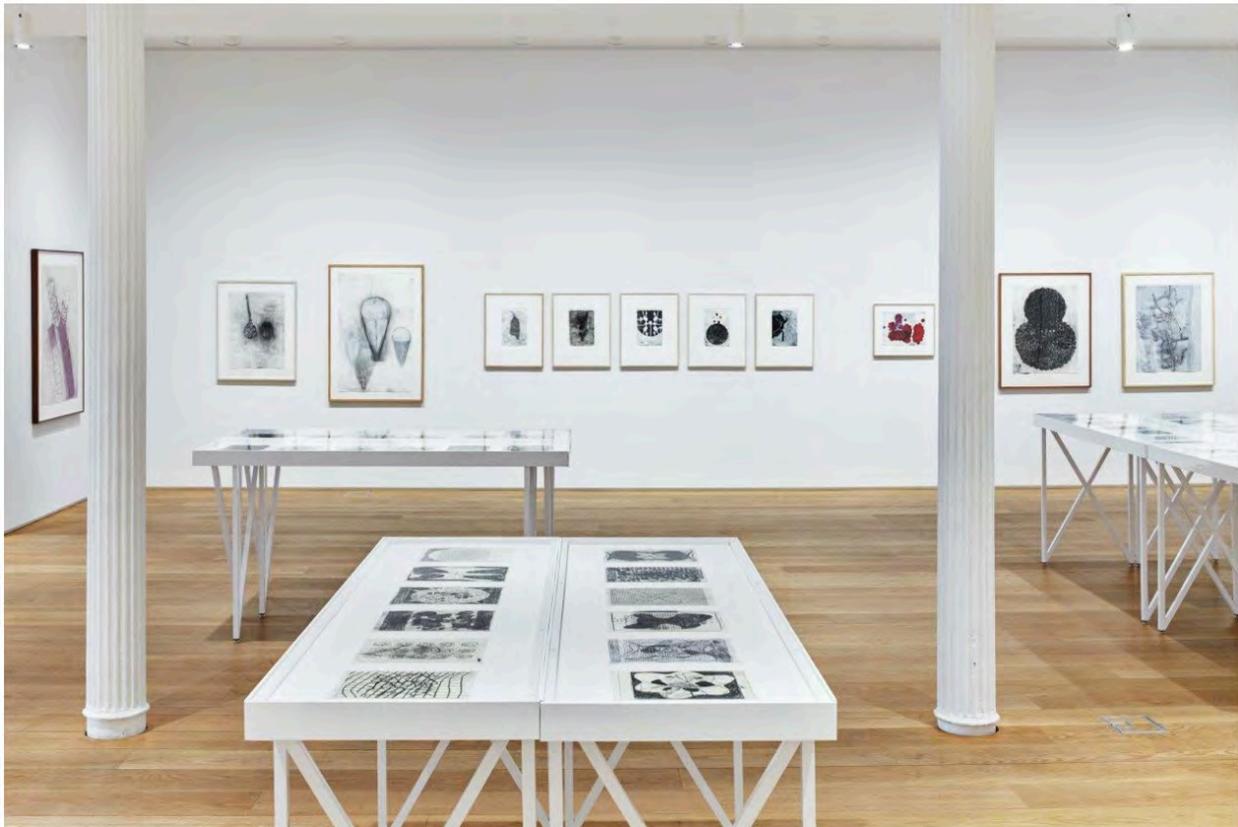
John Yau June 3, 2018



Installation view of *Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions* at The Drawing Center, New York (all photos by Martin Parsekian unless indicated otherwise)

“Sumptuous” is one of the first words that comes to mind when looking at the drawings of Terry Winters. His drawings bring together two divergent aesthetic possibilities — material sensuality and structural restraint — to attain a form that never devolves into mere visual effects. This is because he uses topological models and diagrams as a starting point for

Yau, John. “Terry Winters Draws the Shape of Space.” *Hyperallergic*, June 3, 2018.



Installation view of *Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions* at The Drawing Center, New York

his work. Often consisting of many small abstract sections, which add up to a pattern, a multifaceted shape, or a glyph-like linear structure, these forms limit the ways the artist can manipulate them, which is clearly his intention.

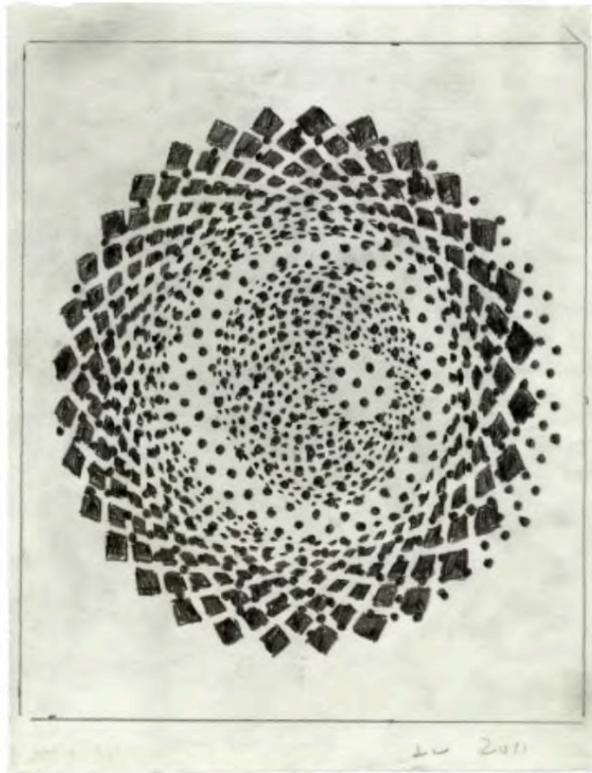
This method of drawing connects Winters to Jasper Johns, who was limited by the American flag; Brice Marden, who worked with a grid or the surface of a rectangle; and Sol LeWitt, whose sets of self-devised rules determined the placement of a line in advance. The shift from being inventive — after decades of Picasso’s wild inventiveness left many artists at a dead end — to using a readymade form is particularly crucial in the work of Johns, and his work inspired many young artists, including Marden and Winters. It gave them a way to begin. (Philip Guston and Richard Artschwager provided different possibilities, but that is the subject of another essay.)

Topology is the study of the properties of space that can be preserved when a form, such as a Möbius strip or a trefoil knot, is stretched, twisted, crumpled, or bent, but not collaged or cut apart. It became a major branch of mathematics in the middle of the 20th century. For Winters, the use of topological forms enables him to resist the tyranny of the plane without resorting to well-trod means such as perspectival space or collage. His drawings of topological forms relate to the relationship between surface and space, part and whole — between things in themselves and the sets they belong to. In contrast with many of his peers, for whom

drawing has been a means of expression or a type of production rather than a form of investigation, for Winters, drawing is the driving force of all his art.

The opportunity to delight in the meeting of sumptuousness and rigor — a meeting we often associate with music — is more than enough reason to see the beautifully presented exhibition, *Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions* at The Drawing Center, thoughtfully organized by Chief Curator Claire Gilman.

The exhibition begins with “Dark Plant 11” (1982) a deep black drawing in crayon and



Terry Winters, “Untitled (Page)” (2011), graphite on paper, 11 x 8 1/2 in (courtesy of the artist and Matthew Marks Gallery, New York, © Terry Winters, courtesy of Matthew Marks Gallery)

charcoal. Like other botanical drawings from the 1980s, the drawing is smudged, smoky and sensual. The exhibition also includes several sets of drawings on 8 ½ by 11-inch and 11 by 14-inch paper, displayed in vitrines, as well as works on paper as large as 44 1/4 by 30 1/2 inches, rendered in graphite, gouache, watercolor, ink, and colored pencil. It seems to me a shift took place when, toward the end of the 1990s, Winters moved away from botanical forms and toward topological diagrams. Linear structures and perforated shapes replaced solid forms. In a sense, the drawings became more abstract — more about line and shape than about the thing, whether plant or seed pod. This change took him into new territory and, to his credit, the work became less materially luxurious.

Winters often places forms in the center of the composition and composes them of units dispersed more or less evenly across the paper’s field. Attention shifts between the overall form and the individual units, or moves between the formal and the scale shifts of the units, which conveys an internal movement within an otherwise static form.

He is always attentive to the smallest mark, no matter how many of them are needed to arrive at the final shape or field. There is something deliberate and meditative about his process, his willingness to move slowly as he fills the paper. The narrow crevices between the colored areas become languid, sensuous lines, so that the composition cannot be separated into sections of fullness and emptiness. Some drawings consist of a cluster of similar shapes in



Installation view of *Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions* at The Drawing Center, New York

one area, with other areas left blank. The relationship between difference and similarity is minute and distinct. In his best drawings, everything is keyed to the way that Winters attains difference while doing the same thing over and over. It reminds this viewer, at least, that every one of our signatures is unique.

Winters's source for his forms is irrelevant because he makes them into something else: shapes to ponder and reflect upon. His sensitivity to materials is extraordinary in that we see what the marks are made of; each line and facet is both a thing unto itself and part of something larger. I found myself returning to the drawings in which one pattern or diagram was overlaid on another, compelling me to untangle them, which generally proved nearly impossible. I liked that they prompted me to actively engage with their compression and density in this way, which is not a common feature of drawings. They reminded me that we live among multiple, overlapping systems and networks without necessarily being conscious of them.

If I have one quibble — and it is a small one — it is that Winters does not seem particularly interested in composition. In some drawings the form is centered and takes up a large part of the picture plane while other surfaces are saturated with all-over activity. However, neither Johns nor Marden were concerned with composition earlier in their careers. That came later, as I think it will for Winters. He strikes me as artist who is simultaneously patient and restless, not content to stay where he is. It also strikes me that drawing is his way of being in

touch with his imagination, with dreaming up a possibility. It is a means of moving forward, and of bringing his painting with him.

In his early drawings of plants, mushrooms, and other organic forms, Winters was incredibly seductive. He could have stayed there, but he didn't. He did not settle for what he had mastered and instead pushed himself to do something more complex — something that pushed him to tamp down the seductiveness of his forms in favor of a more rigorous practice. That is major achievement.

Terry Winters: *Facts and Fictions* continues at *The Drawing Center* (35 Wooster Street, Soho, Manhattan) through August 12.



Installation view of *Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions* at The Drawing Center, New York

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WNYC
news

Published by
WNYC News

Review: Pencil This In



This piece by artist Terry Winters is now on view at The Drawing Center at a new exhibit open April 6, 2018.
(Terry Winters/Matthew Marks Gallery/The Drawing Center)

Apr 6, 2018 · by Deborah Solomon

It sometimes seems as if Cy Twombly endured more critical slights than any other major artist of his generation. In 1964, when he was in his mid-thirties, he showed a group of new paintings — spare, florally-inclined abstractions — at the Castelli Gallery and received an infamous drubbing. Nothing sold; the sculptor Donald Judd wrote a pan and labeled the show “a fiasco.” The general public, in the meantime, looked at Twombly’s expanses of freely rendered scrawls and scribbles and instantly dismissed him as the ultimate my-kid-could-do-that artist.

How could so many people be so wrong about Twombly? A breathtaking show of his drawings is currently on view at the West 21st Street outpost of the Gagosian Gallery in Chelsea. Billed as the first-ever comprehensive survey of his drawings, it coincides

Solomon, Deborah. “Review: Pencil This In.” *WNYC*, April 6, 2018.

with what would have been his 90th birthday. It covers his entire career, from early works circa 1951 that pay diligent homage to the modernist grid to the late, more lyrical works in which he tossed the grid to the winds.

I've always been partial to the blackboard works, which explore the difference between the marks of painters and the marks of writers. Many of his drawings put you in mind of handwriting, or rather cursive script tiling in a rightwards direction across the page. His achievement was to add a literary quality to gestural abstraction; he proves it is possible to write a beautiful sentence that has no words in it. He was also a serious colorist. There is no shortage in this show of lusciously colored drawings in which watercolor drips down the page like the juice of crushed berries, evoking the bloom of nature.

There's a second great drawing show in town right now. "Terry Winters: Facts and Fictions," at the Drawing Center in SoHo, brings together both large-scale drawings and smaller, so-called "page drawings" that are distinguished by their physical energy. The show goes back to the early 1980s, a time when younger artists were looking for a way beyond Minimalism. Winters, who was born in 1949 in New York City, is a generation younger than Twombly, and he shares his devotion to abstract art.

But that is where the similarities end. Twombly's work seems rooted in a world so ripe it could be approaching a state of rot. Winters, by contrast, is more interested in how life begins — in things that are budding and sprouting and forever expanding into new patterns. His drawings extend the reach of abstract art into systems of all kinds. Initially, his drawings referred to plant cells and human cells or orbiting planets. More recently, the natural imagery has been supplanted by knot shapes and linear networks that reference technology and dot-matrix imagery. Throughout, Winters' drawing style has been deliberately clunky. At times he presses his pencil so hard and packs his lines so closely together the marks solidify into a shiny, silvery-black substance, as if a mineral deposit of ore had landed on the paper. The works I like best are smudgy and sludgy and let the erasures show. They remind us that creativity is a system too — one with a lot of starts and stops.

The New York Times

6 AR

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, APRIL 1, 2018

The Week Ahead

A SURVEY OF THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

ART | NOT QUITE PENCIL DOODLES

WILL HEINRICH

▶ Terry Winters's deceptively ambitious graphite and watercolor drawing "Schema (57)," 1985-86, sets easily read Platonic geometry against fuzzy edges and semantic ambiguity to create a kind of neurological illusion.

Five clear, brightly colored dots tilting over a shadowy planet speckled with craters immediately light up the language centers of your brain: They look too clear and simple not to mean something equally clear and simple.

But in fact they don't mean anything specific at all, so you are left with no object for your understanding except the process of understanding itself.

To put it another way, the drawing can make you hear yourself think — as can most of the 80 or so drawings and works on paper, from the 1980s to present, that comprise this thematically organized retrospective at the Drawing Center, starting Friday.



TERRY WINTERS

"Schema (57)," by Terry Winters, who has a retrospective at the Drawing Center.

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the PARIS
REVIEW

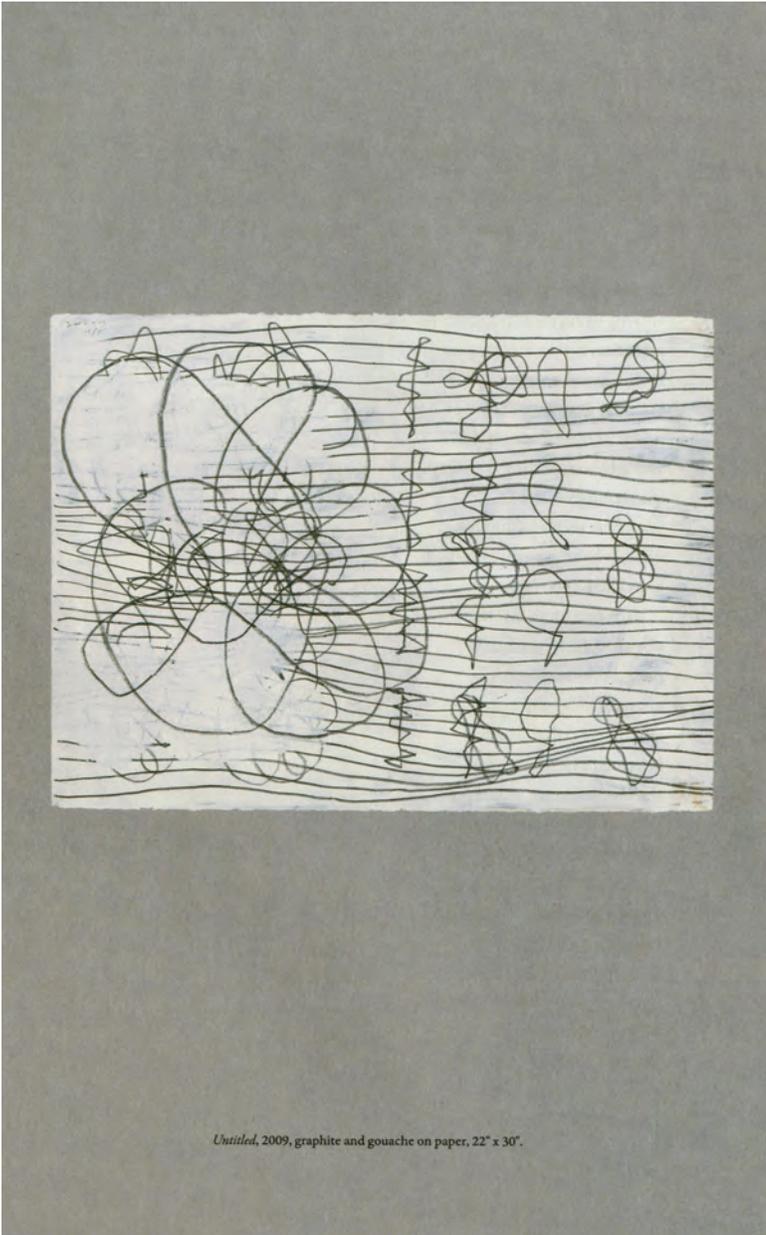
*Poems by Peter Cole,
Drawings by Terry Winters*

from "A WINTERS TRAIL"

Drawing draws us in-
volving us further and stretching
attention it sketches reaching
inching in ink and grasping
graphite graphing drawing
draws us out of our cells
and selves extending thinking
into seeing what was
sensed or seen as something
once in hand an eye
or at the fingers' tips
it leads one on to a place
of twos and too and into
depths and arcs as angles
curve through layered swerves
and lines as tines drawing
is first and quickest to
the quick and draw and yet it
slows and flows unfolding
time raveling mine it
tries out signs along
a way a wavering it's
a doodle dancing within
its perfect incompleteness
now a mesh and not a
mess a net that's working
through a seam between us
drawing seems to hone
what might be true and turn



Untitled, 1988, gouache and charcoal on paper, 30" x 22".



by turn it trains but doesn't
tame. Like runes. It tunes us.

There is a score to all
that isn't said a constant
buzz or hum enlarged
a pulse that soon becomes
like something sung or spoken
within there is a string
no, there are wavering
violins we bring
a tension like a wish
a wind along a wall
or laundry line and clothespins
marking time with keys
shifting through an un-
quaint calm and now
a chaos of tangled thinking's
twine, in a drawer,
a silent roar the world
is bound by secret knots,
they say, though what that means
is hard to know and flickers
so, also, and really
are those knots a noose
that hangs or ties that bind
our being stuck or held
together like a bridge
to build and cross or maybe
draw on or up
so no one can there is
a score to all that...



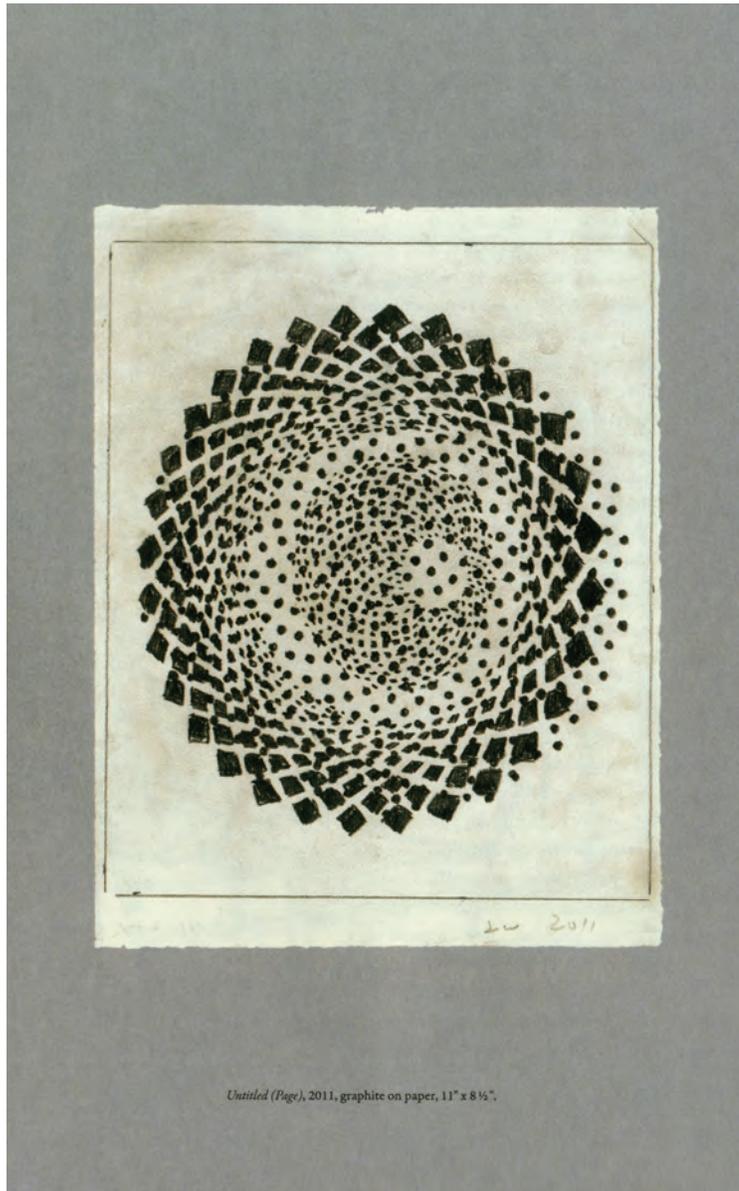
Animation, 1996, charcoal, graphite, and oil on paper, 41 1/2" x 29 3/4".

•

This writing's on and off the wall
and tells us what it is and why
we're so intent on understanding
a layered saying that seems to say it
all and nothing in particular
just like everything seen by those
who know it shows at best the whole
in part that's growing with the telling
and spell dangling in between
like someone listening into a
certain sort of uncertainty speaking
of uncertainty as a song
of songs truly tangled in our
being led along a luminous
line singed and limned within
the singing's seeing seeing us through

•

This world's dotty matrix calls
and draws us toward a broken cause's
lozenge rose or window wall
and whorl or just a kind of clausal
contract with the viewer you
might be paying attention now
to the verb itself as somehow
pay implies a currency in
a thicker economy of concentration
and price that rhymes with sacrifice
which may be why these vortices bear
spheres and diamonds in their whirl
this morning's something we almost feel
or feel but can't quite put into words



Untitled (Page), 2011, graphite on paper, 11" x 8 1/2".

or give a name to and that's the pearl
a cone of dark that lets light through
a future via repetition's
asking once and then again
a tension's moving around within
what might be only a fancy screen
savored and caught in a nick of Time
on a page we drift across
the day and toward its deckled edge
giving way to what it suggests—
beauty's keeping secrets between us
or screaming in silence to be seen
making a music of its emergency
sail to a small magnificence or
this eddy's swirl's a pendant to
a listening that's an end and means:
an eerie earring funneling care
as hours that are always there.

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ARTFORUM

“TERRY WINTERS: FACTS AND FICTIONS”

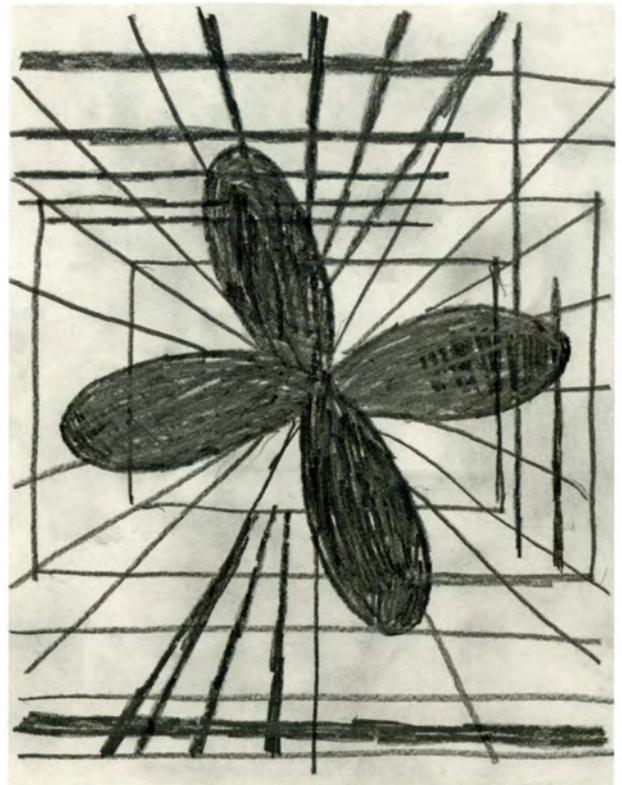
Drawing Center

April 6–July 29

Curated by Claire Gilman

Terry Winters has said that, as a young man mesmerized by Minimalism, he was led by the desire to draw “away from that blankness and toward developing an imagery that could play a role in my work.” This effort precipitated the atmospheric paintings inspired by scientific illustrations of organic specimens for which he first became known in the early 1980s. The seventy-eight works in this retrospective will follow Winters’s development from that time through the more fully abstract approach that has occupied him since the ’90s, with dense weaves of swirling, crisscrossing lines and scattered blips, and will include more recent drawings that reclaim shapes reminiscent of his earliest phase within the more complex spatial context he’s since developed—what he’s called a “vitalized geometry.”

—Barry Schwabsky



Terry Winters, *Addendum/4*, 2014, graphite on paper, 11 × 8½"

JANUARY 2018 69

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NEW YORK

To
Do

Twenty-five things to see, hear, do, and read.

NOVEMBER 30 - DECEMBER 14

ART

8. **See** Terry Winters

As beautiful as a Chardin bowl of strawberries.

Matthew Marks, 522 West 22nd Street,
through December 23.

Merging morphogenesis, chasms that open in painterly cadences with circus mind patterns, and fluttering structures of butterfly space, maestro painter Terry Winters's restless vision undulates in rich new mystical, elaborately simple ways. Root structures and grids turn into tapestries, canvases feel flexible, fruity blooms of metaphor intertwine.

J.S.

PRINT QUARTERLY

Terry Winters

Nancy Princenthal

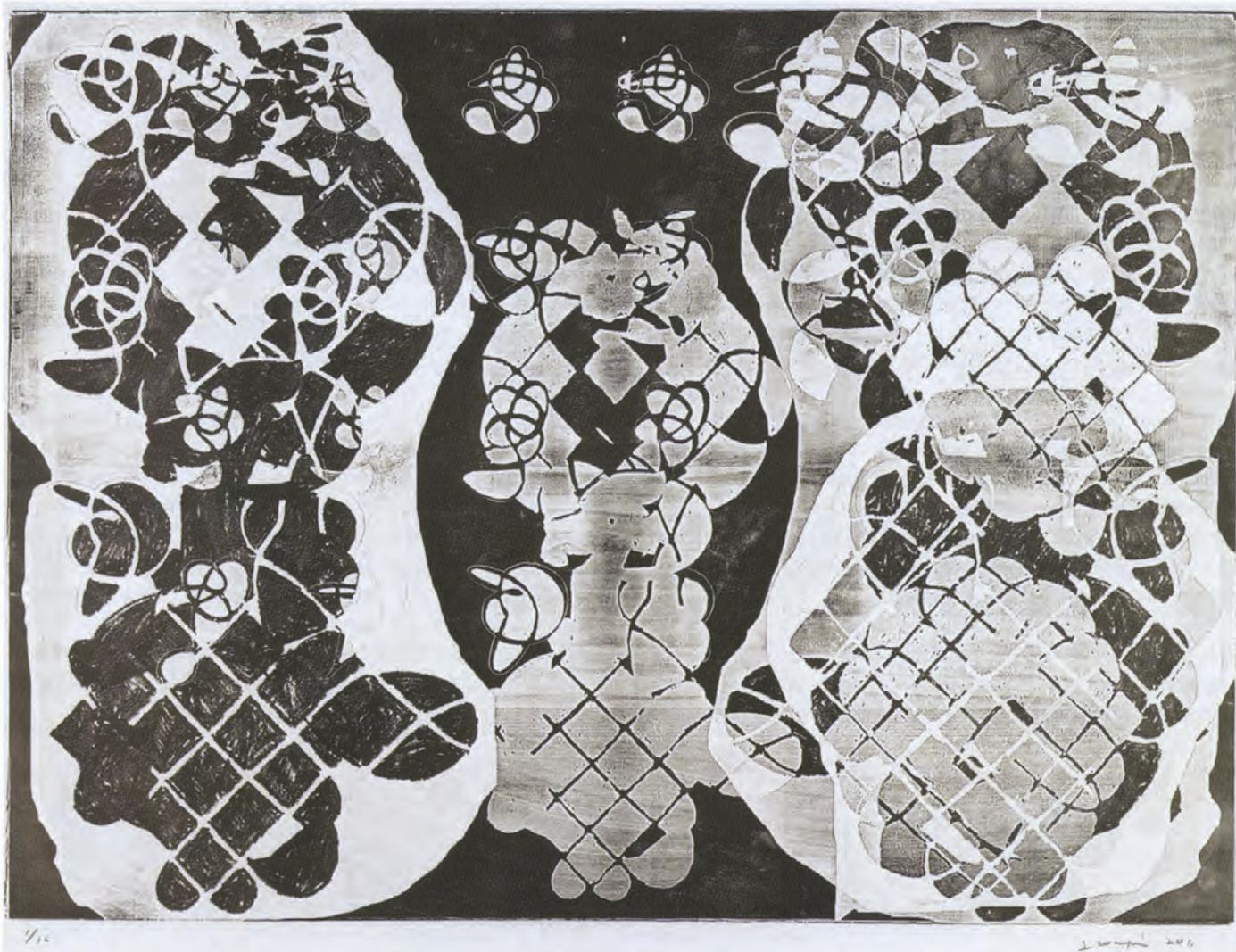
Michael Semff and Elizabeth Finch, *Terry Winters: Prints 1999–2014*, Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, 18 December 2014–1 March 2015; Humblebaek, Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 18 June–30 August 2015; related exhibition “Terry Winters, Printed Matters”, Waterville, ME, Colby College Museum, 12 February–10 May 2015, Munich, Prestel, 2014, 144 pp., 80 ill., £35.

A longtime resident at the intersection of nature and technology, Terry Winters (b. 1949) has also had an enduring interest in the full spectrum of printmaking processes – particularly those in which organic form and hand-drawn line encounter sophisticated techniques and rarified ranges of abstract thought. Michael Semff and Elizabeth Finch’s *Terry Winters: Prints 1999–2014* is an elegant and illuminating catalogue that accompanies two exhibitions, one organized for the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, München, the other for the Colby College

Museum in Waterville, Maine. The publication doubles as a catalogue raisonné for the 70 editions produced since Nancy Sojka’s previous similar effort, *Terry Winters Prints 1982–1998: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Manchester, VT, 1999).

Winters has often drawn on, and at times collaborated with, thinkers far outside the precincts of visual art – those cited in this book include psychiatrist Victor Tausk, literary scholar Jean Starobinski, and philosopher Karl Popper, as well as the contemporary fiction writer Ben Marcus and essayist Eliot Weinberger, both of whom have contributed texts to Winters’ print projects that are reprinted in full in this publication. It is fitting then, that the first of its essays is a short text by Francine Prose, an esteemed novelist as well as an astute observer of contemporary art. In a bracing summary of the rather immodest tasks, as she sees it, that Winters has set for himself, Prose exclaims:

Find a way of describing what it is like to be alive today! Describe what it means to be human, how it



195. Terry Winters, *Wood/Cut/Figures*, 2011, woodcut, 762 x 1,029 mm (Waterville, ME, Colby Museum of Art. Image courtesy the artist and Two Palms, New York).

feels to exist in time and space, history and nature – and (here is the hard part) do it without any words! Prose’s breathless tone is a knowing complement to the decidedly more sober responses that Winters’s work has tended to invite. Indeed, it is a challenge to honour his wide-ranging intellectual interests, which shape the pursuit of what he calls a ‘vitalized geometry’ – a language with which to map the active, underlying structures of the visible world.

In an essay that follows Prose’s, Semff capably summarizes the themes of Winters’s editions over the past fifteen years and the processes they have involved. While shorter than the comparable text Richard Axsom contributed to the earlier publication, Semff’s is similar in its goals and reach. But Finch departs from that precedent; her contribution comprises more than two-dozen short, freestanding texts elucidating individual print projects, a felicitous choice. Her writing is informed, perceptive and

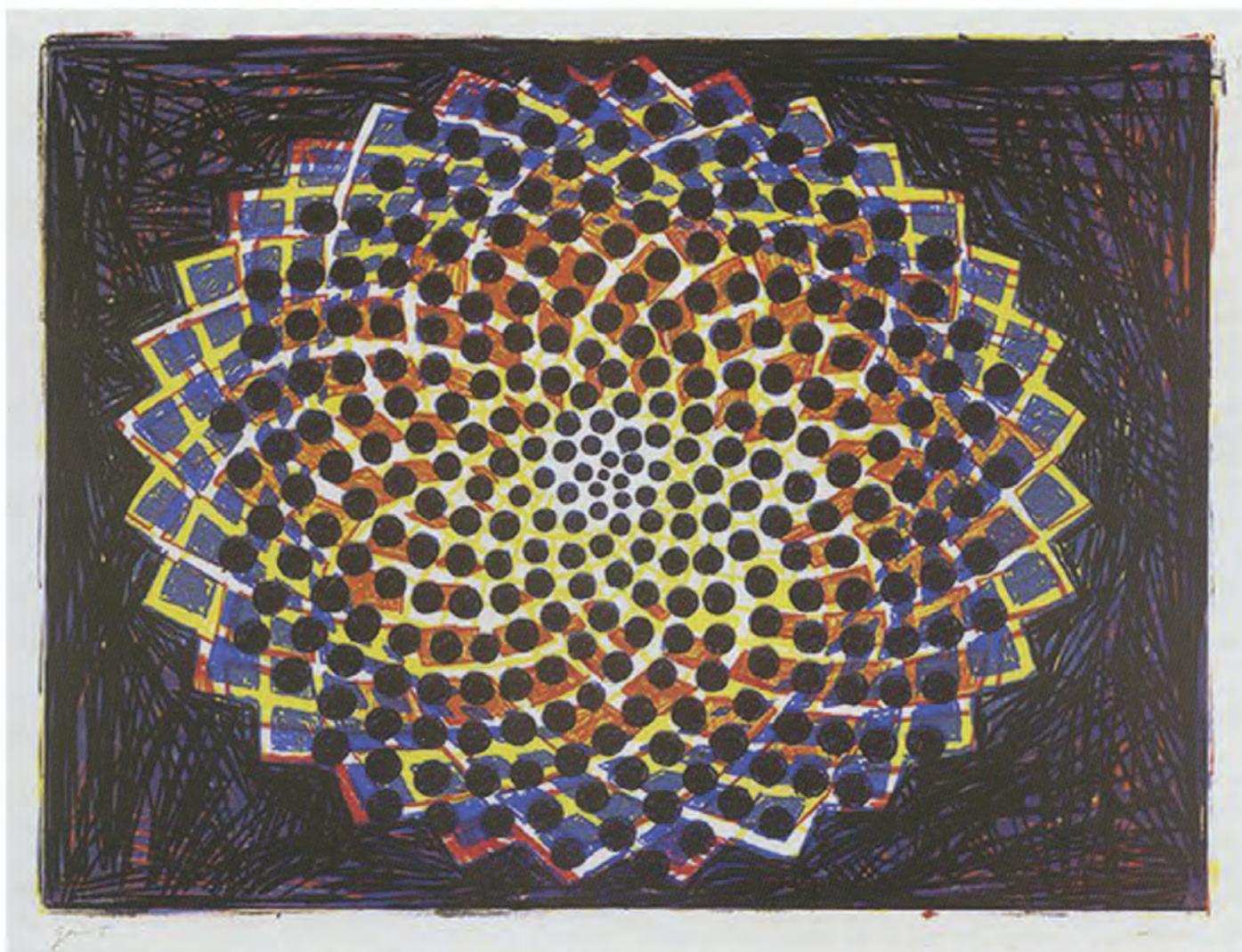
lucid, each text integrating careful accounts of the project’s conceptual basis, imagery and printmaking process. For instance, of *Wood/Cut/Figures*, from 2011, Finch writes, ‘No part of the surface was left unmarked by the force of the press, which tested the structural integrity of the wood panel. The resulting printed surface is, in essence ... a permanent record of an energy transfer that could be mapped like the evidence of a geological event’ (fig. 195).

In many cases, paintings and drawings related to the prints in question are brought into Finch’s discussions (there are useful collateral illustrations), and she refers to motivations that stretch across the span of Winters’s work. As she notes, Winters typically paints in layers and his work is fundamentally graphic; hence, the relationship among mediums is particularly fluid. And Winters has used a very full range of techniques, from lithography – as in his first print project, *Ova*, of 1982, produced at ULAE – to etching and other intaglio processes, which

followed half a dozen years later; woodcutting and, ultimately, digital composition and output ensued. In his earliest work, Winters favoured explicitly organic forms, from the cellular to the botanical. Inspiration has since come from sources as diverse as petroglyphs and cave paintings, mass-produced Indian calendars, hand-coloured mediaeval woodcuts and, in great variety, diagrammatic, cartographic, topological and mathematical notations: wave contours, including Lissajous figures, complex knots, warped grids and various deformed geometries. At the same time, Winters has been keenly alert to propositions about the inherent limits of such notational systems. For example, Popper argued that, rather than all phenomena being measurable – clouds as reliably as clocks – instead, ‘all clocks are clouds’, shifting and unpredictable. As absorbed by Winters through the Hungarian composer György Ligeti, Popper’s language is a source for the large lithographs *Clocks and Clouds* /1–6, of 2013, one of which

provides this book’s cover image (fig. 196).

In other words, Winters’s focus throughout has been on those areas where the fixed systems of technology and the mutable ones of nature can be seen as isomorphic. ‘The boundaries of the natural and the artificial aren’t so distinct’, he told the artist Adam Fuss in 1997. Winters is not entirely alone in this belief. Video artist Bill Viola has argued that televisions come from the earth (indeed, breaking down their components far enough will get you there) and Donald Farnsworth, of Magnolia Editions, rejects as useless the term ‘digital’ in a world where everyday objects begin with computer programs, ‘Your T-shirt is digital’, he insists. Winters is distinctive, though, in making the slipperiness of the relationship key to his work, which explores in great depth the question of how information becomes image. It can be said that this interest, and his inclination toward active collaboration, are key to his long and extraordinarily fruitful engagement with printmaking.



196. Terry Winters, *Clocks and Clouds*, No. 5, 2013/14, lithograph, 1,067 x 1,321 mm (Waterville, ME, Colby Museum of Art. Image courtesy the artist and Gemini G.E.L.)

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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

LIFE & STYLE

Terry Winters's Artwork Meets Nature at His Countryside Studio

Soaring Ceilings, Walls of Glass and the Taconic Mountains



Artist Terry Winters sits in his sunlit studio amid some of his most recent works, which he says have been influenced by his relocation to a more natural setting in Columbia County, NY, from the city. *RICHARD BEAVEN FOR*

By ARUNA D'SOUZA

Oct. 15, 2014 1:41 p.m. ET

Artist Terry Winters decided he needed a new kind of studio about 13 years ago, one that would function as another creative tool in his arsenal, he says.

The artist, whose large-scale paintings and smaller works on paper are distinguished by abstracted natural forms such as crystals, shells, molecules and cell structures, had always worked in classic loft buildings in the heart of lower Manhattan.

He didn't want to fix up another city building this time. "I've done that quite a bit," he says. Despite being a lifelong New Yorker, the idea of moving his work closer to the natural world his paintings evoke began to appeal to him.

So in 2002, Mr. Winters and his wife, Hendel Teicher, an art historian and curator, purchased a 47-acre parcel in Columbia County, about 110 miles north of New York City. They began living part-time in the small house on the property. Mr. Winters purchased a stainless steel Quonset hut online to use as a summer studio.

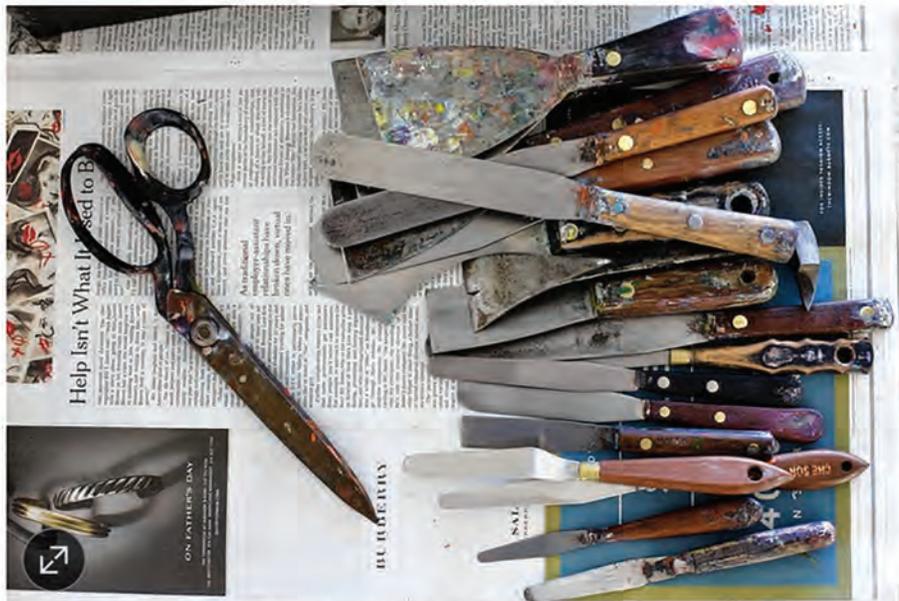
D'Souza, Aruna. "Terry Winters's Artwork Meets Nature at His Countryside Studio." *The Wall Street Journal*, October 15, 2014.

It was only after four years of living there and becoming familiar with the landscape, light and topography that Mr. Winters and Ms. Teicher felt ready to build. They teamed up with MOS Architects, the Manhattan firm known for its research-based approach to design and Rick McCue, a local builder.

"I like to think that we formed a triangulation that took advantage of everyone's best qualities," Mr. Winters says.

The resulting space, completed in 2007, is larger than anything he worked in before—about 130 by 42 feet, with a soaring ceiling. At every point, the goal was to integrate the building and the surrounding landscape, he says.

The studio's asymmetrical roofline, angled porches and facades are wrapped in an uninterrupted skin of zinc panels. The mineral color, weather-beaten patina and matte quality of the zinc mesh with the natural slate outcroppings that mark the site.



Artist Terry Winters's painting tools in his Columbia County, N.Y., studio. RICHARD BEAVEN FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Inside, a free-standing cube housing a small library, kitchen and other amenities divides the open space into two studios. In the bigger one, Mr. Winters works on large paintings; in the smaller, he focuses mostly on paper.

Mr. Winters and his design team decided against skylights to preserve the continuous curve of the ceiling. Instead, immense glass sliding doors provide ample illumination.

The brightness and panoramic views of the Taconic Mountains have had an effect on Mr. Winters's artwork, he says. In his recent large paintings, he sees something new emerging.

The space of the studio, its view onto the landscape and its plentiful light are "getting fed into the pictures now," he says. "It's more about the atmospheric here, and understanding the correlation between the real-world atmosphere and the optics of oil paint."

The New York Times

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2012

Art in Review



TERRY WINTERS/MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

Terry Winters's "Tessellation Figures (7)," left, "Cricket Music" and "Tessellation Figures (1)."

Terry Winters

'Cricket Music, Tessellation Figures & Notebook'

Matthew Marks Gallery
522 and 502 West 22nd Street,
Chelsea
Through April 14

Terry Winters's new, vigorously painted abstractions are ravishing enough to risk the old pejorative "decorative." As if to defend against anti-hedonist judgment, Mr. Winters also offers a series of notebook collages combining scientific and quasi-scientific imagery in Matthew Marks's small exhibition space at 502 West 22nd Street. Mixing diagrams, charts, children's drawings and microscopic and astronomical representations, and with transparencies layered over opaque pages, they suggest the research program of an addled consumer of popular science magazines.

The collages are interesting, but the paintings are riveting in their gorgeousness. All but 2 of the 11 on display measure a nearly square 80 by 76 inches and most have the title "Tessellation Figures." Tessellation is a kind of patterning in which the units cover a surface without gaps or overlaps — a checkerboard, for example. Mr. Winters favors diamonds, which in some cases, as in "Tessellation Figures (9)," extend flatly all over the canvas.

Despite the flickering colors and darks and lights, that topography appears inert compared with most of the other paintings, where patterning is warped and layered to complicated, spatially illusory effect. In "Tessellation Figures (1)," mint-green diamonds in a big circle diminish in size toward an open center, creating a tunnel-like structure that sucks your gaze in toward a hazy, blue and green ovoid hovering in luminous, orange space. The effect is psychedelically thrilling; it is like a portal into another universe.

KEN JOHNSON

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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ARTFORUM

Depth Charge

TERRY WINTERS TALKS WITH JOHN ELDERFIELD ABOUT DE KOONING

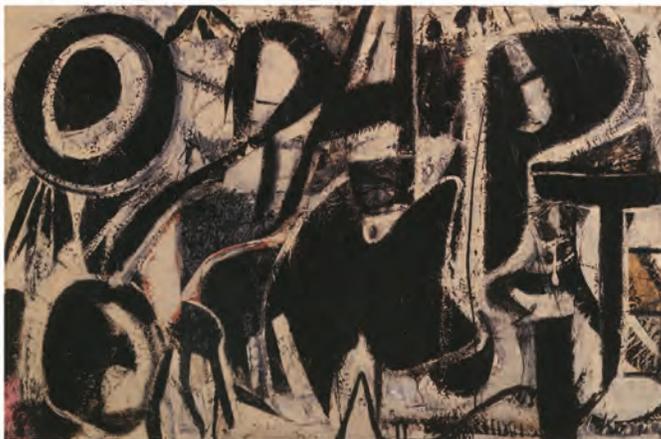
DESPITE THE UNDIMINISHED reputation of Willem de Kooning as one of America's preeminent gestural abstractionists, more than a quarter century has passed since his work was last afforded a comprehensive museum survey in the US. This fall, the Museum of Modern Art in New York brings that interregnum to a close with "De Kooning: A Retrospective," organized by the institution's curator emeritus, John Elderfield. In anticipation of the exhibition's opening in September, artist Terry Winters spoke with Elderfield about de Kooning and the important lessons of abstraction still to be gleaned from the painter's transformative work.

TERRY WINTERS: How do you begin putting together an exhibition like this—what's the strategy? Do you start with a certain set of questions or concerns?

JOHN ELDERFIELD: Yes, but the questions also come along as you're working. In fact, at a certain point, they just start rolling down the hill at you. And certainly some of the motivation is simply feeling that it's an exhibition I'd like to see myself.

The past twenty years have brought us major retrospectives of the work of Jackson Pollock, Barnett Newman, and Mark Rothko, but the last de Kooning retrospective was back in 1983, at the Whitney. At the outset, I wanted to get a sense of de Kooning's artistic practice as it extended between types of work. As I began my research, though, I found myself more and more interested in trying to fathom the big breaks or, perhaps better, trying to figure out whether there even *were* big breaks.

TW: His approach to practice seems like a key difference in relation to the other painters you



Willem de Kooning, *Orestes*,
1947, enamel and paper on board,
24 7/8 x 36 1/8".



Woman I, 1950-52, oil on canvas,
75 7/8 x 58". All works by Willem
de Kooning: © Willem de Kooning
Foundation/Artists Rights Society
(ARS), New York.



Willem de Kooning, *Excavation*, 1950, oil on canvas, 81 x 100¼".

mentioned. There's a fluidity to his work because of his involvement with process and his interest in developing images in unexpected ways.

JE: Yes, I agree. His colleagues now seem more tied to the history of that period than he does. He seems absolutely a mid-twentieth-century painter, but look at the work in the context of his peers and it doesn't fit. I think that's why everybody has always said *Woman I* [1950–52] looks out of place at MOMA. I think de Kooning is often out of place.

TW: Because of the way he connects to earlier historical paintings?

JE: Well, that is one reason. Clement Greenberg was right: De Kooning's ambition was to create a synthesis between the decorative flatness of modernist painting and something messier and more volumetric. And so you can see why Greenberg just walked away after *Excavation* [1950]. Up to that point, de Kooning is doing what everyone else is doing, although he is caught by other impulses. The fact that he's working simultaneously on paintings that become abstract and others that become figurative seems to be central to his thinking. He wants both to be options.

The idea of fitting into some historical inevitability was a great force behind what Newman and Rothko and Pollock did. They saw themselves as gathering momentum from the past and really pushing forward. But because de Kooning didn't see himself in a track, he was free to look at anything. And he obviously looked at a lot of things and thought about a lot of things and how they worked, and he was able to find a use for them.

I was thinking recently, for instance, about the huge impact *Guernica* had in the '40s. Maybe *Excavation* was an attempt to address its implications. De Kooning had to have been fascinated by the idea that a painting could be constructed by composing various discrete spaces. That spaces themselves could be elements of composition that you could put together—organize into a colonnade of spaces. In the '40s pictures, when de Kooning moves an image from one painting to another, he's not just moving the figuration, he's moving the space.

TW: And those concerns don't fit with Greenberg's narrative. De Kooning didn't follow the prescribed trajectory.

JE: And the way we have understood the history of art after Abstract Expressionism has made it harder to find a place for him. The 1960s happened, and the options of Pop art and Minimalism didn't seem to have anything to do with de Kooning. It was especially the dominance with which Minimalism took hold of everything that made it harder for de Kooning to have a place.

TW: Particularly the way Judd formulated the conversation. Anyone who couldn't justify the literalness of Minimalist work was seen as being retrograde. De Kooning, with his willingness to complicate space, seemed tied to older European concerns. Plus, he was being blamed for his many followers.

JE: His followers at times made highly accomplished things, but things that are conceptually more conservative than de Kooning's work. This bothered Greenberg, and it's one of the reasons that he says de Kooning became popular in the early '50s—because his open spaces made things comfortable for people. Maybe. But that didn't mean he was making sentimental and nostalgic art himself. Johns and Rauschenberg, for example, understood the idea central to the *Woman* paintings, of creating a field of painterliness, which is attached to an image. *Orestes* [1947], with the big flat shapes, is really Johns's Numbers before the Numbers [1957–69].

TW: Where image and paint are inseparable?

JE: You can see them separately, in a funny way. It was Johns who said you can make them seem separate if you choose an even more iconic image—so you don't have a woman, you have a number or a flag or a map.

TW: As I was walking through MOMA's "Abstract Expressionist New York" exhibition today, it occurred to me that if AbEx was about anything, it was about scale. No work has been made since then that doesn't address that scale in one way or another, whether it's Minimalism, process or Land art, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter. One way or another, everyone addresses it or tries to avoid it—whether it's people



Left: Willem de Kooning, *Untitled (The Cow Jumps over the Moon)*, 1937–38, oil on Masonite, 20½ x 36¾".



Willem de Kooning in his studio, East Hampton, New York, 1967. Photo: Ben Van Meerendonk/Getty Images.



Willem de Kooning,
Painting, 1948, enamel and oil on
canvas, 42⁵/₈ x 56¹/₈".

doing a kind of figurative work now, self-consciously making easel paintings again, or supersizing the scale of the mural or whatever. It's either a reaction against or an extension of what the Abstract Expressionists established. What about the issue of scale and de Kooning's choice of size? After *Excavation*, few paintings would be larger than his standard seventy-by-eighty-inch canvas.

JE: Scale, of course, is never only an issue of size. In his case, it very much relates to the cumulative painterly activity that goes on until the pictures get made. That is one reason why he didn't make many big pictures. After *Excavation* he said, This thing is taking me forever, I just can't work like this.

TW: But there were other motivations with regard to his choice of size.

JE: As I've been thinking about his paintings from the '60s and '70s in particular, I find it interesting that, when they're seen from a distance, their painterly quality disappears. Working in the studio with his chair far back from the picture, de Kooning obviously wanted to calibrate two things: the sense of the canvas at a distance without the tactile presence, and then working very physically, up close.

TW: So what was he seeing at a distance?

JE: Well, when you see them at a distance, they look like small paintings without any texture. And then you walk up to them, and they're big paintings with qualities you associate with small paintings. He said that one reason he wanted to keep the paintings wet all the time—which also precluded working on a big picture—was so that he could achieve the kind of freshness that you usually only get with a really small painting. This is part of the wonderful shock of these '60s and '70s pictures. Moreover, unlike earlier paintings by de Kooning, where you were given lots of clues as to the temporality of the creation, with the later paintings it's just all there.

TW: And he's keeping the paintings wet in order for them to feel instantaneous.

JE: I think in a way they *are* instantaneous.

TW: Everything was slippery and subject to the same set of changes that were happening on the surface.

JE: Yes. Interestingly, that's one of the reasons why he didn't use earth colors. He knew that they dried quicker, so he couldn't get that effect. Those color charts that he made—the ones you see in photographs of his studio—had to do with mixing earth colors from prismatic colors. It's incredible, the kind of thoughtfulness that went into his work.

TW: The paintings are extremely intricate.

JE: It has been interesting reading the critical literature, because both sides—the Greenberg

side and the [Thomas B.] Hess/[Harold] Rosenberg side—make so much about spontaneity and a willed de-skilling, as we'd now call it. But when you look at the pictures, you see they're not spontaneous, and they're hugely skillful. It's just a different kind of skill.

The critics set up an opposition between things that are willed and things that are spontaneous. But de Kooning found ways to make marks that were both willed and last-minute. There's a wonderful story about what he learned from Arshile Gorky: Gorky said you determine where you are going to put the line, and at the last minute you move your hand and put it somewhere else.

There's the sense that his skill lay in building up a kind of resistance to conventional facility. And it's something that is only achieved, paradoxically, by habit and by repetition. In that sense, it's like regular artisanal skills—

TW:—and a kind of athleticism; there's kinetic or muscle memory involved. And as you say, he set up obstacles and then invented ways to get around his own ability.

JE: I think it's one of the things that allowed him to paint even with his physical impairments in the '80s. Because he had been, in a way, training for it all his life. He just knew how to do it.

TW: While always allowing the qualities of the material itself to help form the image.

JE: Yes, finding pictures through the manipulation of the medium, which he did from early on, like the amazing black-and-white picture, at MOMA—*Painting* [1948]—where the surface is leatherlike. The paint was applied as treacle, which flattened out. He had the skills to coax the material into doing things that he had no way of predicting. Or even after having made so many paintings, and generally knowing what's going to happen, there's always going to be something unpredictable. That's the nature of material, but art is always about human agency.

TW: De Kooning pushed paint to extremes: It was his method for generating pictures. He hits a peak in the mid-'70s—and he's off on his own at that point, I imagine?

JE: At that point, yes. And it's funny because it's also the moment where he's most like the old masters he loved. He's most like a Venetian painter, in that he's interested in color as a *singular* thing rather than colors in *plural* to be placed next to each other and organized. That organization was something characteristic of both Minimal and Pop art. With de Kooning's paintings, you feel it's more about some kind of Venetian envelope of color, and how he found space in that continuum.

TW: Because he was working a completely wet surface, there is a seamlessness, which gives his canvases an odd, screenlike quality. And that uniformity of the screen surprisingly opens up to illusionistic vistas. There is something so mysterious and contemporary about those '70s paintings now.

JE: That screenlike quality is interesting, but for de Kooning that was not possible without the handmadeness. That said, the idea that somehow he should now be thought of as being again of interest because we're tired of technology and we like the handmade, that's a kind of nostalgia which has nothing to do with him. That approach doesn't address why he is relevant, because painterly painters have been doing that forever. Why is it we care about *him* in a different way? I think it has precisely to do with this strange seamless quality you mention. When de Kooning stops being painterly in the '80s, you actually see it for what it is: a rolling, turbulent kind of space.

TW: The '80s pictures aren't wildly gestural, but they are physical. The shapes are thoroughly invested with de Kooning's technical and emotional experience.

JE: And so, induced.

TW: Yes, induced—whereby the imagery emerges from the painter’s engagement. He’s demarcating a limited space within which he can operate. He talks about exploring the space between the fingertips of his extended hands; he’s occupying that space.

JE: He’s in there.

TW: He’s moving material and opening an available expanse, unlike expressionistic space, where one is looking in from the outside.

JE: That’s the big problem with the whole action-painting paradigm. Somehow the mark is referring back to the gesture, the gesture is referring back to the person. This isn’t what de Kooning’s work is about at all.

TW: He once said, “One thing nice about space is it just keeps on going,” and if you’re willing, you can go along for the ride. What you called an “envelope of color” seems like a way he organized the commotion of his pictures. And that chromatic space feels like something new.



Willem de Kooning,
Interchange, 1955, oil on canvas,
79 x 69".



Willem de Kooning,
... Whose Name Was Writ in Water,
1975, oil on canvas, 76¾ x 87¾".

It’s not relational composition or Pollock’s all-over painting. The way that figural images emerge within that field seems like another category of representation.

JE: It’s difficult to talk about because of the terms. One of the very smart things about Greenberg’s take on de Kooning is that he understands that there are certain things traditional to representation that don’t actually have to be used to produce representational pictures but that nonetheless will continue to invoke a kind of figural spatiality even if they’re not invoking “the figure.” And, conversely, things that are associated with abstraction can actually be used to make figural images.

De Kooning operates within that orbit, but he complicates it further because he realizes that, first of all, he isn’t against figuration. At least not in the way Greenberg is against the idea. The latter came to see Abstract Expressionism as conservative because of its wish to hold on to figural reference.

Greenberg admires pictorial elements purged of volume and form, so that's what he finds admirable about Pollock—the line doesn't come to a defined shape. It does in de Kooning, and so the black-and-white paintings of 1947 through '49 are thought to be inferior to Pollock's. Which is to say, they evoke representation even though they are abstract. And I think this is something de Kooning wants and clings to, but not out of nostalgia—rather to recognize that the art of painting would be impoverished if there weren't a way of remaking that space. I think this is what is going on.

TW: In one way or another, throughout all of his work.

JE: It was there in the early '40s, and its development led to *Excavation*. Then what happens in and after the '50s is extraordinary and, I believe, still not understood properly.

TW: So what was he doing in the '50s? Following through on, or trying to extend, the implications of the black-and-white pictures?

JE: What Greenberg had said about the 1948 show seems very much to the point. He said that de Kooning wanted the flat decorative aspects of modernist picture making, but to still find space for sculptural form and contour—the rolling volumes of the old masters. He might be seen as bringing those things together. And maybe having to bring them together was the basis of figuring out what a new kind of spatiality could be. Knowing that if he didn't bring them together, he would be restricted to a kind of stage-set painting. Basically a kind of Cubist scrim, where everything was arranged in parallel to the picture plane.

I think this is the fascination of what happens afterward. Because the *Woman* paintings really are both. They are flat and frontal, confined to their format, but the cursive marks are still the kind of mark-making that was there in the late-'40s pictures, just flattened out and made into big planes.

TW: Which still have modeling. You can't avoid those spatial readings.

JE: No. And then he moves out of the *Woman* pictures by effectively zooming in on them. There's one beautiful painting from '54 or '55 of two women, where one of them is recognizable as a woman and the other, if taken by itself, you wouldn't recognize because all the internal contours are offset from the whole body [*Two Women*, 1954–55]. And this is what's happening as well in the mid-'50s, with, say, *Interchange* [1955].

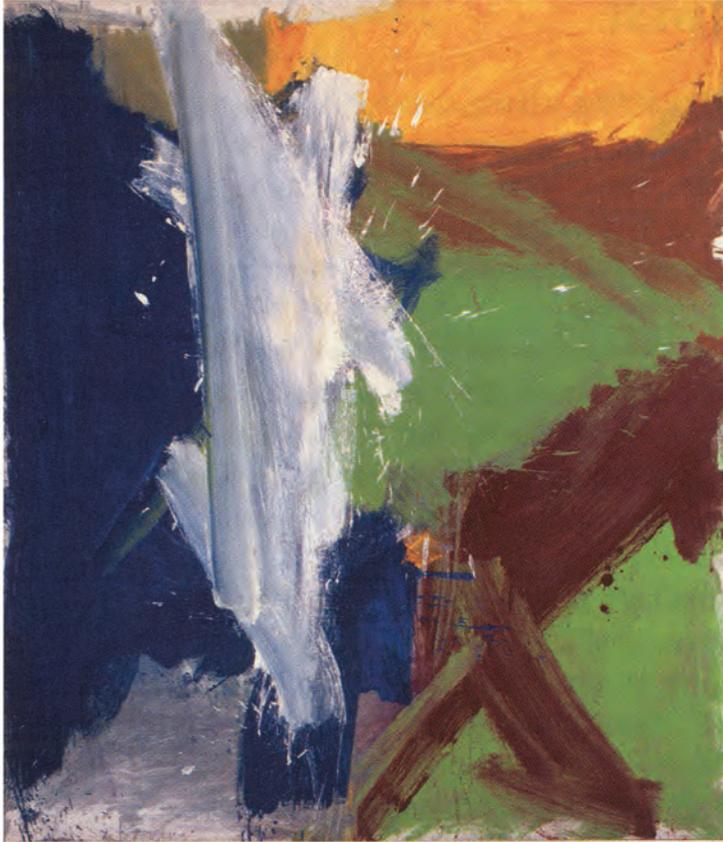
TW: That charged space between depicted figures is also a subject, maybe the same subject?

JE: The space is as much body as the figures are, and the figures are as much space.

TW: And you get a sense that the space he's inventing and activating is complete and whole and yet full of incident across the surface. Maybe that's what he is seeing from a distance: the painting as an image of his movement and activity.

But regarding his formal attitude, I'm curious where you put him in relationship to Mondrian. Mondrian seems to be on his mind through so many periods, in terms of both the use of primary colors and the way in which everything is perfectly arranged, even within the agitation.

JE: From what de Kooning wrote about pure abstraction, it seems pretty clear that Mondrian is the only one he had any time for. He's really unpleasant about other people. And I think some of it is the way he got to abstraction himself, through WPA-type abstraction, strongly influenced by Léger. You can look at de Kooning's first abstract paintings and say they actually aren't abstract, they're representational pictures of abstract forms. As you can also say of a Léger "Contrast of Forms" work. It's representational painting of something that you can't recognize. This is something de Kooning had to work his way through.



Willem de Kooning, *Merritt Parkway*, 1959, oil on canvas, 80 x 70½".

Mondrian helped him by making paintings that speak in terms of spatiality but that are also extraordinarily embodied. Standing in front of his pictures you feel a physical presence. De Kooning wanted all of that. But maybe he didn't want the dynamic equilibrium of Mondrian, where you have something here and you put something there. You don't really feel that de Kooning is doing that.

TW: He's building a complex picture, where everything is equally important although the distribution isn't equal—or random. He's painting scale-free networks. That's a term being used now to describe the way many things connect—biological systems, airline routes, and social groups. In some ways, de Kooning's paintings can be seen to anticipate that model.

He spoke about not being interested in established orders, complaining that "the Greeks hid behind their columns." You sense him trying to find his own systems of order—at arm's length and also at a distance—while you're trying to figure out the image. That isn't something you're doing with Mondrian.

JE: True. And some of de Kooning's paintings are pretty memorable as images. There are great paintings in the world that are very hard to remember. Presumably it has to do with graphic clarity; you can remember a Matisse more easily than a Bonnard, where you can never actually hold all the information together.

De Kooning wants it both ways. Some of his paintings are extremely memorable, and others you find you haven't remembered at all well. Some of this has to do with the perception of size. It's also difficult to hold that memory. There have been times when I've gone to Chicago and found *Excavation* to be much smaller than I'd thought; other times, I found it larger than I'd remembered.

TW: De Kooning is recording so much information that it's difficult to put into patterns—patterns that become memorable. But then there are paintings that appear like illuminations— . . . *Whose Name Was Writ in Water* [1975], for instance.

JE: Yes. It comes back, I suppose, to his dislike of geometric abstract art (with the exception of Mondrian's, of course)—his feeling that painting is not about taking things out. He wants to put more and more things in. I've been thinking about the kind of imprinting he was doing, like the newspaper in *Easter Monday* [1955–56].

What he's doing in the *Woman* paintings is comparable to what happened with early Johns, where the background is the graphic image and the foreground is the painterliness. De Kooning then switches them back around and imprints the image on top of the painterliness in a few pictures. But obviously, he never really pursued that. He does it in *Gotham News* [1955] and then in *Easter Monday*. When asked about it, he said, Well, it was an accident, but he thought it looked kind of nice. He realized there was something about it he could use, although that device goes into abeyance for the rest of the '50s and into the '60s, when the work gets flatter and flatter.

TW: When he's using a big, wide brush—the paintings are flatter and more engaged with Kline. Then, by the time he moves to East Hampton [in 1961], everything opens up and expands.

JE: It's ironic that it's at precisely this moment that painting in New York switches to something similar to what he's just given up. No longer flat, and graphically clear, his work looks increasingly anomalous in the context of New York painting. And by 1975 the paintings become drop-dead amazing.

TW: Yes, they're great, but even in the '60s, with the first *Montauk* painting [*Montauk I*, 1969], which seems like a hyperdimensional version of the *Parkway* pictures [1957–61], he's conjuring up baroque spaces. You were talking about him *finding* images. And that imagery is so alive, almost in an animistic way. The pictures have a cave-art feeling to them—in the sense that if there were cave art now, this is it.

JE: But it isn't primitivism; it isn't stylistic.

TW: I don't think so, because initially he distrusts the image, and he's finding it new again in every picture. You feel it when the paintings are working, and his discoveries are often shocking. You don't really know if the entities in his paintings are benevolent or malevolent. He's finding his way into another descriptive space.

JE: Yes, where *representation* isn't a bad word. And where one can accept the fact that abstract painting can be representational. And I think it's not a matter of being figurative, and neither is it of being a representation of the abstract. It's the other way around, the way in which the mechanisms of abstraction can be mechanisms of representation. Because if they're not that, what future is there for them? That seems to be one of the messages.

TW: Maybe his real audience is now—good timing.

JE: Yes. How do you use abstraction in a way that creates a representation of spaces that you can't achieve through the means of classical representation? I think this is why de Kooning's work matters. □

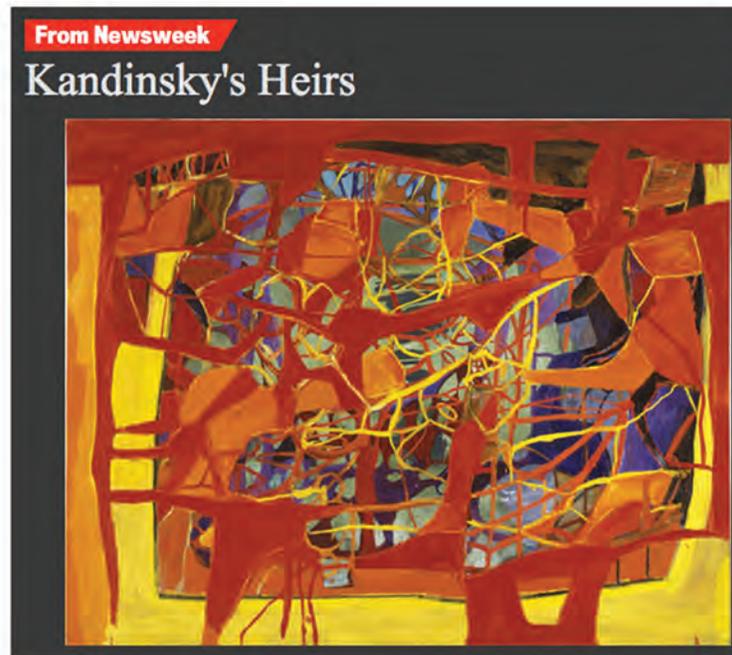


Willem de Kooning, *Gotham News*, 1955, oil, enamel, charcoal, and newspaper transfer on canvas, 69 x 79".

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

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Newsweek



Terry Winters

Courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

The Brooklyn-born Winters originally gained notice in the early 1980s as one of the "new image" painters who felt constrained by all the unofficial rules of "no this" and "no that" that had been built up around abstract painting. So he introduced bits of biomorphic figuration into his pictures and for a while was known as "the pod painter." But by the time "Field of View," right, was painted, he'd returned to a fearless abstraction that, if it were poker, would declare itself all in. The 60-year-old Winters is still breaking rules—like those that hold that you can't just paint a red-and-yellow painting over a blue-and-violet one and let both show—and taking Kandinsky into previously unimagined realms of color.

Field of View, 1993

Oil, alkyd on linen 76 x 96 inches

Matthew Marks Gallery, New York

ARTFORUM

DUBLIN

Terry Winters: Signal to Noise

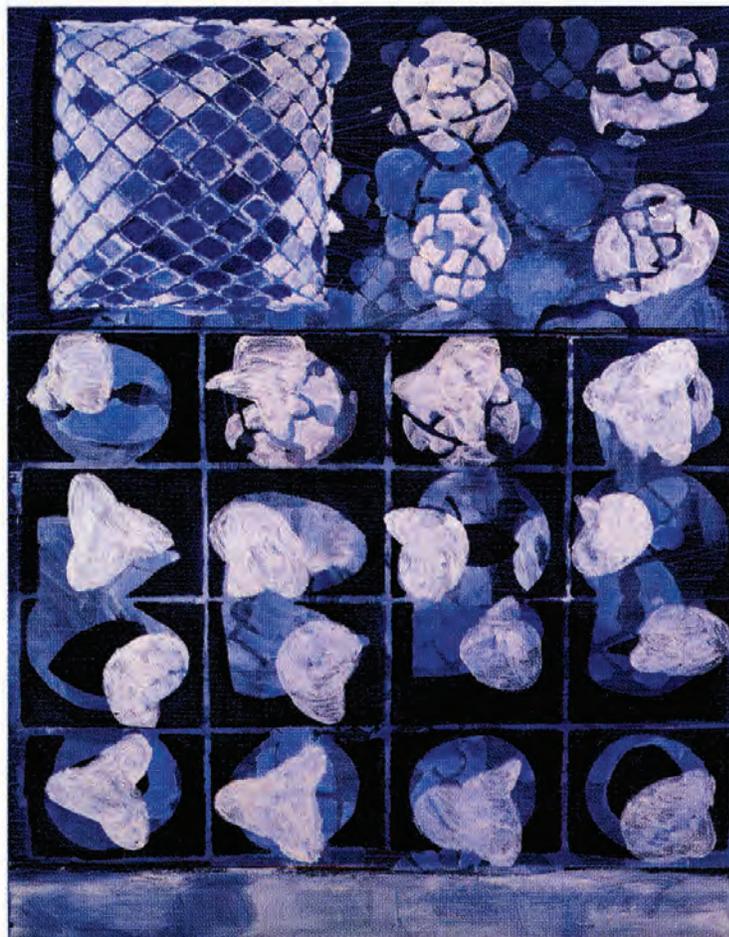
IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

June 12–September 27

Curated by Enrique Juncosa

A consistent presence in abstract painting for nearly three decades, Terry Winters has recently stressed that his interest in the medium is motivated less by belated modernist ambitions than by a liberal, manifold curiosity—about organisms and the natural world, pictures and diagrams, information technology and processing, and, most broadly, cognition. With this survey of Winters's painting and drawing since 1998, curator Enrique Juncosa explores the artist's symbolic language and that vocabulary's myriad effects through large-scale works and serial systems alike. An equally expansive catalogue featuring contributions by Juncosa, David Levi Strauss, Francine Prose, and Peter Lamborn Wilson (aka Hakim Bey) will cover an appropriately multifarious range of subjects, from hermeticism to the use of technical imagery in contemporary painting.

—*Suzanne Hudson*



ARTFORUM

NEW YORK

Terry Winters

MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

Terry Winters's series "Knotted Graphs," 2008, consists of eleven large abstract paintings—seven of which measure seventy-seven by ninety-eight inches—that, in their mood indigo, introduce, as it were, Jasper Johns to Henri Matisse. The works balance empyrean pleasure and sober order—a contrast struck by Matisse during his epochal struggle with Cubism in the teens of the previous century. Matisse's reconciliation of these antipodal approaches set an unsurpassed example for painting in modern times. So, while not breaking the mold, Winters's hard-won reprise of Matisse sounds a distinguished note at a moment when seriousness in art is confounded by the claims to seriousness made in the name of merely comfortable achievements, which these ambitious paintings are anything but.

Winters here works intuitively, producing figures resembling the parabolic form known as the Lissajous curve as well as "Turk's head" and other decorative knots and the path a plumb bob cuts through space as it seeks stasis, ultimately pointing to the earth's core. In his giddy arrangements, Winters creates alignments, superpositions, and interruptions, setting one figure against the other like devouring Pac-Men in a way that recalls Matisse's *Les Marocains*, 1915–16, with its massive, ungainly forms, not to mention the more obviously related decorative *papiers collés* of his latter years. Need one add that the Lissajous curve is, in its way, for Winters, what the catenary is for Jasper Johns? The path of the Lissajous when stretched taut becomes the Harlequin's lozenge—as meaningful to Winters as it is to Johns, since it signals, across Picasso, a very fundamental index, an ur-form of modernism.

Lissajous figures also evoke the sequential spiraling patterns of plants and unfurling petals as recorded in Karl Blossfeldt's critical volume, *Urformen der Kunst* (Archetypes of Art, 1928)—an encyclopedic collection of natural forms that the diligent *Neue Sachlichkeit* photographer saw as fundamental to art. Leafing through these images, one encounters all the motifs found along Winters's painterly trajectory—from the isolated natural forms of his first mature paintings from the '80s to the pervasive indigo of these recent knots.

Winters was not then, nor is he now, a facile painter; indeed, his brushy, scrubbed touch conveys a choked authenticity that distinguishes his work from easy pattern making. Rather than rediscovering just

another neat grid or monochrome rectangle, Winters, like Cubist-era Matisse, "finds" his paintings through hands-on struggle. Markedly graphic, Winters's works tend to rely on dark/light contrasts to carry the day. The large body of related drawings—so weighty in their tamped-down concentration—brings Richard Serra's paint-stick drawings to mind far more than it does the felicitous grayed graphics of Jasper Johns, with whose work, in other respects, Winters's is naturally affiliated.

Winters's elementary designations of color—the Lissajous shapes often appear black when not blue; the Turk's heads are often in red or red-orange—addle when he adds yellow to the palette, leading to murky passages of grayish green and the like. That said, my preferred *Knotted Graph* is his first one, which happens to have yellows going green and gray but also, just right of center, a passage of stinging tenderness. And this tenderness once registered finds many equivalent passages throughout the impressive range of the series.

—Robert Pincus-Witten



Art in America

TERRY WINTERS

A CREATOR OF LUSH ABSTRACT PAINTINGS driven by a rigorously graphic sensibility, and graphite drawings of painterly depth, Terry Winters has been negotiating competing impulses for more than 30 years. The recognizable biological forms—plants and shellfish, at one scale; cellular and crystalline structure, at another—that appeared in his early work gave way, by the '90s, to more resolutely nonfigurative compositions whose sources are hinted in series titles: "Computation of Chains" (1995-98), "Set Diagram" (2000-02), "Turbulence Skins" (2002-04). Without completely abandoning his interest in depicting the real world, Winters turned away from tangible objects toward the kinds of spaces being investigated by mathematicians and physicists, and toward the spatial metaphors, technical processes and informational resources of digital technology. All continue to inform his work. At the same time, he has remained deeply committed to hands-on, first-person execution.

Winters's interest in exploring space in unconventional ways has extended to installations, notably when he collaborated with Rem Koolhaas for a 2001 exhibition at Lehmann Maupin gallery, then in SoHo, which the architect partially lined with plywood; three of the 60 paintings on view were hung on the ceiling. Also in 2001, the Metropolitan Museum of Art presented a survey of Winters's prints, showcasing a medium that has long held special interest for him. An exhibition of work in all mediums spanning the decade 1994-2004 originated at the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Mass. in 2004 and traveled to museums in San Diego and Houston [see A.i.A., Apr. '05]. Winters's first major museum show was organized in 1991 by the Whitney Museum of American Art.

The exhibition of recent work that opened at Matthew Marks in November was Winters's seventh at the gallery. Called "Knotted Graphs," it featured selections from several bodies of work in addition to seven big canvases from the titular series (all works were completed in 2008). Though some elements discernibly differ from one series to the next—an underlying grid is slightly more apparent in the "Knotted Graph" paintings than in the "Illustrated Set" works—kinships prevail. Luminous color, in particular a marine blue that suggests stained glass, distinguishes the entire group of paintings. A bulbous, burgeoning module that in one permutation or another has recurred throughout Winters's career appears repeatedly. It generally takes the form of a soft shape bound by string that leaves its mark in negative, as if it had been applied to the surface of the painting and then pulled off.

The paintings are composed in layers, so several iterations of these modules often shadow each other; the effect suggests a deliberately misregistered print. Often, the surfaces begin with two or more mutually interfering patterns: wavy parallel lines and grids, or helixes. The transparency of the oil paints that Winters uses, and the simplicity of his palette, contribute to a remarkable degree of lucidity, given the predominant impression of barely constrained chaos. We are made aware, as Winters wants, of every decision that has gone into each work. At the same time, he has us chase the elusive moment at which line becomes form, pursuing what could be called a string theory of visual description. The complicated spaces that the drawings seemingly create both behind and, more surprisingly, in front of the paper's surface expose Winters's thinking most clearly. Which is to say, we feel we would like to know more.

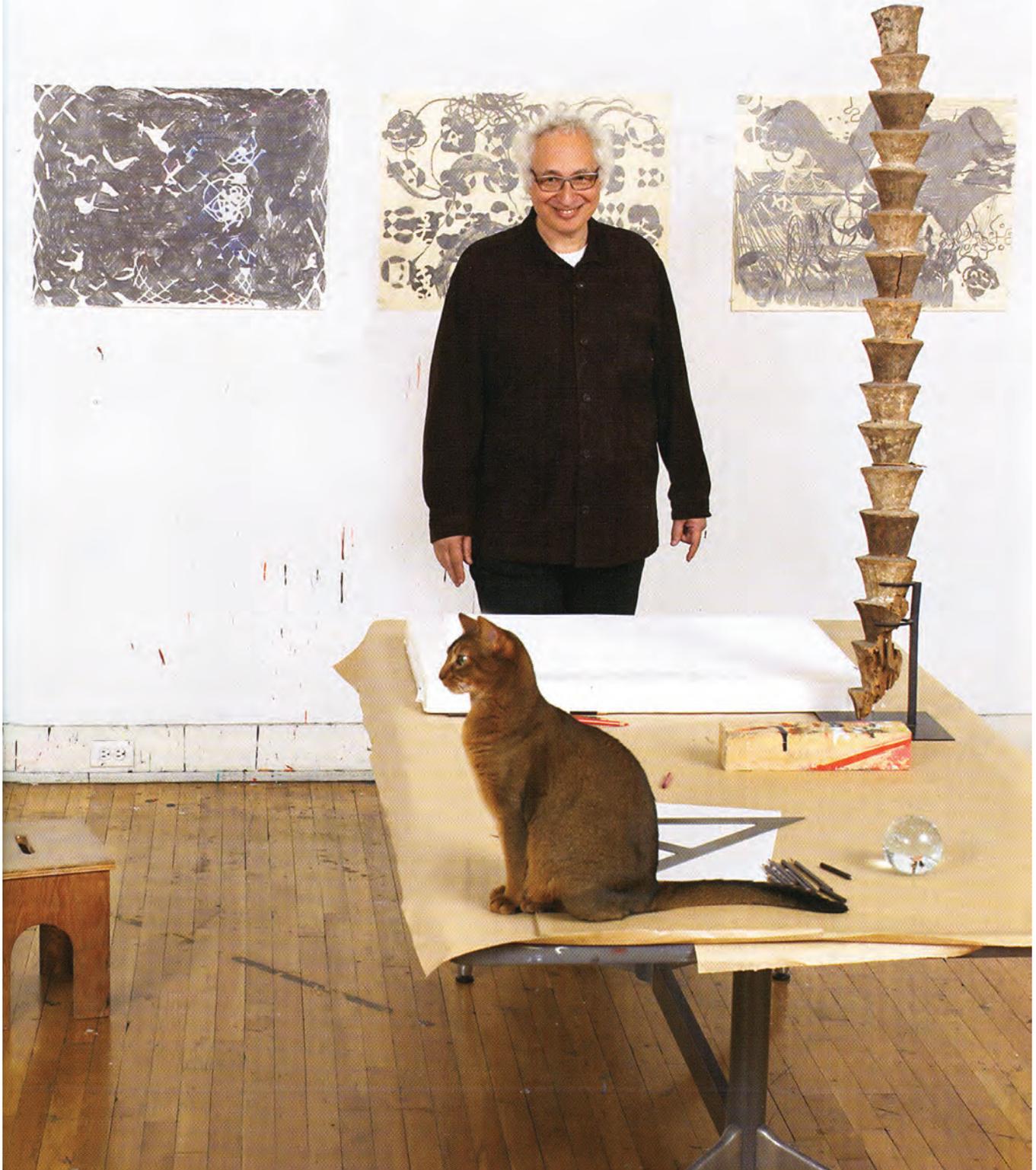
Born in Brooklyn in 1949, Winters received a BFA from Pratt Institute in 1971. He now splits his time between Tribeca and rural Columbia County in upstate New York. The following interview took place in November at his Manhattan studio.

—NP

Terry Winters in his New York studio, 2008. Photo Martien Mulder.



AN INTERVIEW BY NANCY PRINCENTHAL



NANCY PRINCENTHAL Let's start with the new studio in Columbia County. How has being in the country affected the work?

TERRY WINTERS I've been working in these classical New York loft spaces for a while, the 25-by-90-foot buildings. I wanted to get a space that was wider so I could work across the paintings in a different way, and have a different sense of how they're developed. Not in terms of working larger, but of being able to have more work around, living with it more.

NP Does the light in your upstate studio and the landscape in general play a part in the recent work?

TW I think what I'm most affected by is the relentless change in the weather—clouds, light, wind. And also the ceaseless activity of insects and animals. There's a lot of activity, a literal kind of

buzz, a pulse that happens. It happens in the city, too, and it's not that I think the city is any less alive and pulsing. But there's a lot less noise up there.

NP Maybe spending more time in a rural area has some relevance to one question I wanted to ask, which is: over the course of the three decades or so you've been painting, there seems to have been a development from organic space to conceptual space, or organic science to inorganic science as sources of metaphor. Does that sound right to you?

TW That's one way you could track it, but it hasn't really been the approach I've taken. My interest has been in architecture, how form reflects ideas about life. Those notions could be organic or not.

NP In your early paintings, there were often elements that were recognizable biological forms—cells, plant life.

TW I was surprised that the paintings

developed such clear imagery, that they had images, like plants and flowers.

NP There's been a lot of water under the bridge since that work. Is there still the same thread, the same tension, between describing things in the world and . . .

TW Yes, that's the tension, that's where the traction is. Between image and organizing principle.

NP As I understand it, one guiding concept for the new paintings is knot theory.

TW Knots are devices I use to develop folds in the surface—they become a series of abstract events. The paintings involve a family of knotted forms that have interested me, along with a wider range of topological structures or phase diagrams. [In simple examples, these diagrams chart the pressure and temperature conditions under which a basic substance like water changes states from gas to liquid to solid.—*ed.*] Just like in earlier work, I'm taking preexisting imagery and respecifying it through the painting process. I'm reluctant to reduce the subject to what the source materials or references are, because that's something I want to be as wide open as possible.

NP But these works have to do, in part, with the kinds of spaces that are described by science, or that are revealed by digital technology?

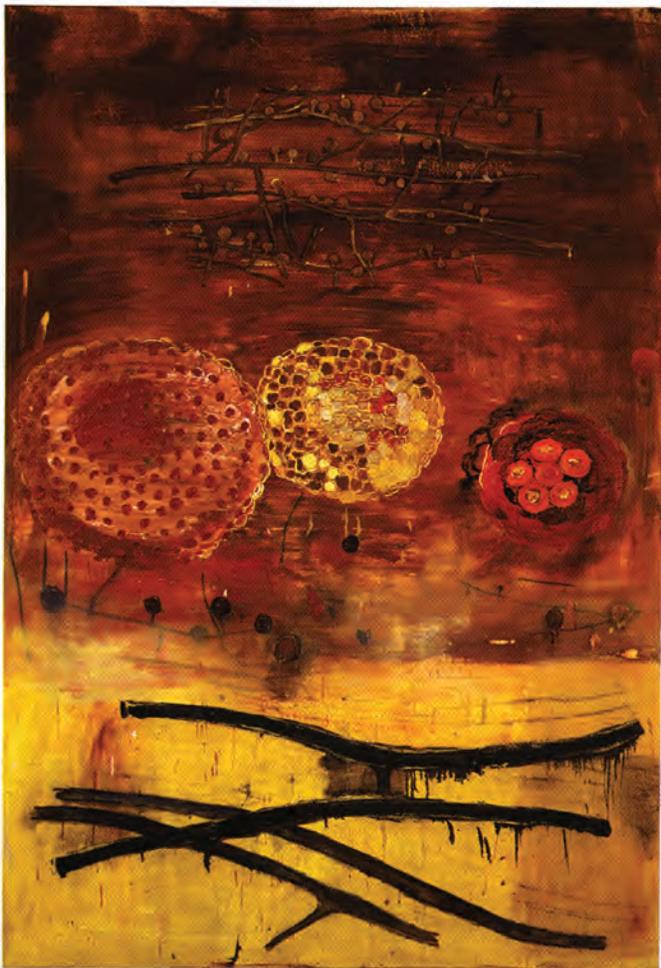
TW There's been a development in all the sciences of new spatial landscapes that are open to an investigation through painting. I was looking for a way to address an expanded idea of nature. That expanded idea includes the wide variety of spaces available through computer visualization.

NP In the catalogue essay for the show at Matthew Marks [by art historian Kathryn Tuma] there's a discussion of knot theory as having been developed in part as a way to describe the structure of an atom. Is there that kind of energy, that kind of engine-of-the-world thing inside of each of the units in those paintings?

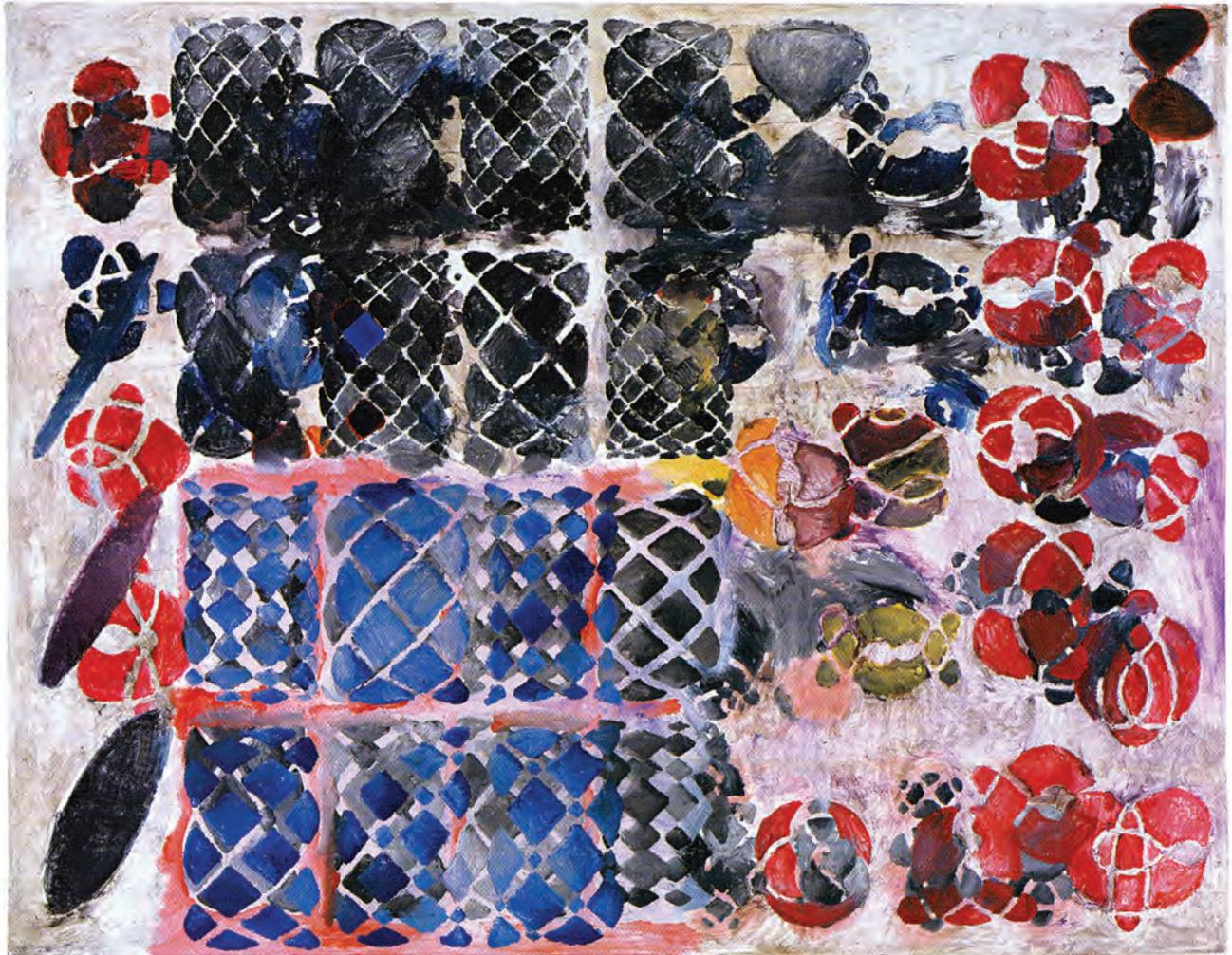
TW I hope so! I'm trying to build those qualities into my own work. But it's not as if I'm trying to paint a molecular painting, or illustrate that molecular phenomenon.

NP But are we invited to see the paintings that way?

TW Definitely—I would welcome it. But the scale isn't specific. I'd welcome a cosmological reading, or even a social reading. I'm interested in how the paintings open up to those different kinds of things. I'm trying to engineer them to the point where it's difficult to locate one meaning and they open up to other possibilities.



Point, 1985, oil on linen, 102 1/8 by 69 inches.
All photos this article, unless otherwise noted,
courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.



Knotted Graphs/1, 2008, oil on linen, 77 by 98 inches.

NP Who do you feel yourself to be in dialogue with, in terms of abstraction? The context you began painting in, 30 years ago, was very different from the one that exists now.

TW I grew up in New York and had a very classical art education—I took figure-drawing classes. But by the time I went to Pratt, the work that really interested me was being done by the so-called Post-Minimalists, and it focused on methods and materials. Most of that work wasn't painting. But of that group, Marden and Ryman both found ways to extend painting while still addressing some of those same concerns. How the paintings were made was very important. That's what I identified as being the most adventurous, experimental.

NP You're talking about work that was driven by process.

TW Yes, that pushed an idea about what abstraction was, in terms of its literalness, in terms of how material and

form were generated and even in terms of metaphor. In some way I wanted to connect process and picture-making. I wanted to figure out a way to reconcile those interests. And to figure out a way to paint pictures that didn't seem like a fallback to representational imagery.

NP Speaking of materials, what exactly are Lake pigments? What role do they play in the new work?

TW They're transparent dyes that have been precipitated on an inert base, like white clay. Basically it's pigment that carries the coloring of a dye. They're transparent paints and they're very ancient. The Egyptians used them but they are still being synthesized.

NP You're working with a fairly limited palette, and the mixing goes on on the surface of the painting?

TW Yes, there are a number of Lake pigments but the three primaries give especially rich transparencies. I ended up using those as the key to develop-

ing these recent paintings. A lot of the mixing takes place right on the painting, either painting wet into wet or through glazing, the development of layers. Color plays a big role in these paintings. It's one of the variables that help determine the subject and meaning of the work. But the choices are intuitive and generally tied into my overall concerns at the moment. Right now I'm working on a group of paintings that use a big variety of color, the full spectrum.

NP What do you know when you're starting a painting? What do you have already established as a framework for the painting, and what happens on the surface?

TW Well, I start with a set of reference materials, in this case *topological* and *acoustic* imagery. I've determined the size of the paintings, plus the range of pigments. I'm setting up parameters

“THERE’S BEEN A DEVELOPMENT IN ALL THE SCIENCES OF NEW SPATIAL LANDSCAPES THAT ARE OPEN TO AN INVESTIGATION THROUGH PAINTING.”

within which to improvise. So I have a general notion of what form the painting will take but I’m pushing—or, really, following—the painting along to the point where it builds mass or takes on a meaning that gives it specificity.

NP Drawing and printmaking are still key to your practice. Do the drawings ever precede the paintings? Are there prints that are somehow generative for the paintings?

TW All three of those avenues are ways into the territory for me. Each is a different instrument that I utilize. They’re tools to experiment or explore and play, and each one influences or helps illuminate the other; there’s no hierarchy.

NP So the paintings can lead to the drawings, as well as the other way around?

TW Yes, absolutely.

NP Are you involved in any printmaking projects now?

TW Yes, I’m working on a group of etchings. And I’ve just finished a number of print projects that I had been working on for the past couple of years.

NP When you work in the studio you work alone?

TW Pretty much.

NP So is there a huge difference in how the work feels when you’re working in a printshop?

TW Not in terms of the difficulty for me to actually get something that feels acceptable! It’s just another level of energy that’s nice to have. To have input from other people who are also invested—printers tend to be very interested in how things are made. It’s nice to bounce ideas off other people. I appreciate their observations.

NP Are you doing other collaborations like the Ben Marcus project [a suite of 42 offset lithographs titled “Turbulence Skins,” 2004, its text-and-image composites the result of a series of exchanges between the artist and Marcus, a writer of experimental fiction], or the one with Trisha Brown [Winters designed sets and costumes for the dance *El Trilogía*, 1999/2000]?

TW No. Although this year I published a portfolio of relief prints called “In Blue” with Grenfell Press, and Eliot Weinberger contributed a text. Leslie Miller suggested Eliot, whose work I’ve admired. [Weinberger is an essayist and translator associated with Latin American liter-

ature.] We gave him a set of proofs and sometime later he delivered his text. It was a good fit. I’m not really thinking in terms of collaboration at the moment. There’s something going on with the new drawings and paintings, and I feel I need to spend a lot of time with them. The paintings in this show seem the beginning of another way that I could explore building these images.

NP How so?

TW Just in terms of being more declarative.

NP Wasn’t the computer used for developing some of the imagery in the work of the 1990s?

TW Yes, especially in the printmaking. And some of the source material comes from digital imagery.

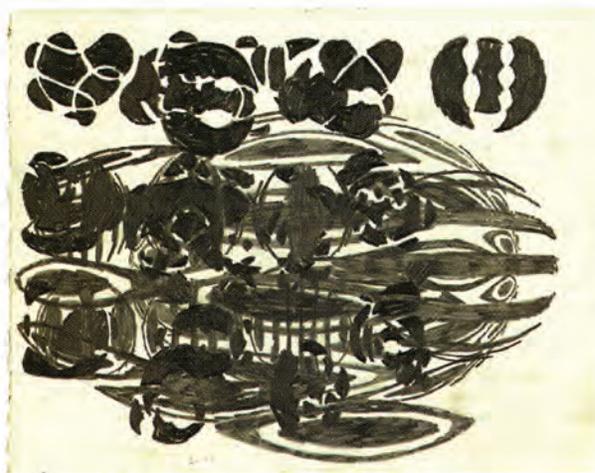
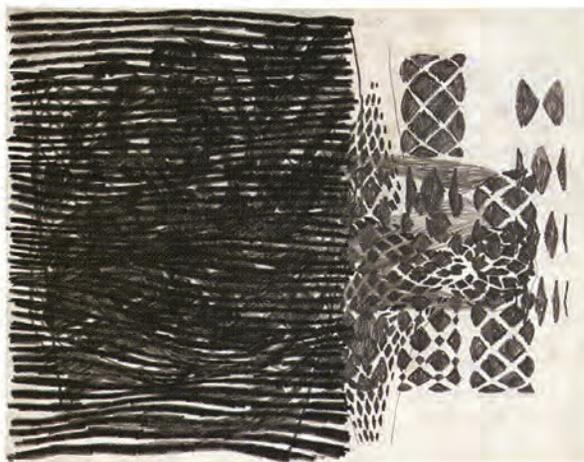
NP Are you still involved with computers in that way?

TW Yes, to some extent. It’s a huge source for reference material. And printmaking lends itself to using many of these digital technologies. The whole field has changed in terms of using computers to generate images. Painting shares those concerns, so it seems like a logical extension to address the mechanics of those media. I’m interested in how painting can make virtual places actual.

NP You’re working with a brush, and . . .

TW And with the logics of gesture and touch. And physical material. It’s very easy to see the paintings as raw material and bodily gesture, just in terms of how they’re made.

NP In the sense that a Brice Marden



Above, *Viewing Notation/2*, 2007-08, graphite on paper, 11 by 14 inches.

Left, *Viewing Notation/4*, 2007-08, graphite on paper, 11 by 14 inches.

Opposite, *Illustrated Set/1*, 2008, oil on linen, 55 by 42½ inches.

painting, for instance, is related to arm span and gesture?

TW Every painting is measured that way.

NP Do you start with drawing on the canvas?

TW My approach is through drawing. Painting has more dimensions, it's layered and the ground is constantly shifting. But my approach is very basic; it's like drawing and writing.

NP Is there a relationship between the mark of writing and the mark of depiction in the drawing?

TW I think so. There's something about the pragmatics of just getting something down. A nonesthetic directness of transcription. The abstraction of the pictures is a development of signs that are a kind of writing.

NP How long does each painting take, roughly, from beginning to end?

TW They each have their own life span, so there's no determining factor. They tend to be around a while in the studio before they're ready to leave. And I need to have them around to figure out whether I'm done with them—or whether they're done with me.

NP One thing that's been characteristic of your work from the beginning is that you've attracted some of the most interesting writers in the business, who have engaged in dialogues with you about an incredibly wide range of materials: Richard Shiff's analogy with basic physical elements in unstable states, John Rajchman's "brain city" and his concept of ungrounding. So how much does a viewer need to know?

TW Nothing! But at the same time, the more you bring to the experience the more you can get back. I'm grateful to have the benefit of any thoughtful take on my work.

NP Well, what would you like viewers to bring to the work, given that some of those ideas—topology, for instance . . .

TW I don't think any of that is necessary. The paintings come out of painting, my own connection to painting's story or history and a desire on my



part to paint. On one level, I think the paintings are self-evident. It's part of why I've embraced this notion of abstraction. Abstraction is a category of work and thought that is easily accessible to everybody now. Everybody understands abstract painting. Now that 20th-century painting is finally over, everybody gets it.

NP That's an optimistic thought! Do you believe that abstraction has a big, friendly audience?

TW I think it's run a certain course and become part of the lexicon of what it means to be contemporary. I'm interested in how that language can be extended, and distended or torqued to address something beyond

the rhetoric. To make something new, to project it into a new place.

NP Are you encouraged by what seems to be a renaissance of painting in the new generation?

TW Yes, absolutely. I think it's an exciting time for painting. Things have opened up in a number of ways, there's a very freestyle mixture of abstraction and representation going on now and it's helping to build a new pictorial narrative. ○

Terry Winters: Knotted Graphs was at Matthew Marks, New York, Nov. 6, 2008-Jan. 24, 2009.

The New York Times

WEEKEND Arts FINE ARTS LEISURE

The New York Times Art in Review

Terry Winters Knotted Graphs

Matthew Marks
522 West 22nd Street, Chelsea
Through Jan. 24

The latest paintings by Terry Winters have brains and beauty in abundance. Their twisted abstract forms derive from knot theory, a branch of topology, but their layers of translucent pigment are as sensual as they are scientific.

In the series "Knotted Graphs" Mr. Winters plays the modernist grid against a complex form that resembles a ball of string, a cluster of cells or a spinning atom. The most balanced shapes look as if they were made with a pendulum, while others appear dangerously irregular, like tumors. The brainteaser aspect of the knots is further explored in a series of graphite drawings.

Mr. Winters is evidently thinking about chemistry as well as about advanced math, testing the properties of different pigments. When he starts with blue, as in "Tangle," the painting has a sparkling, ice-crystal quality; when he establishes a base of zinc white, as in "Knotted Graphs/1," the results resemble dirty snow.

Left-brained viewers will appreciate that Mr. Winters bases his knots on the work of the mathematician Jules Henri Poincaré. The right-brained, mean-



TERRY WINTERS/MATTHEW MARKS GALLERY

Terry Winters's "Knotted Graphs/5" (2008), an oil painting at Matthew Marks, takes its inspiration from knot theory.

while, will find that the paintings' intense blues and intricate patterns more readily evoke Matisse in Morocco.

KAREN ROSENBERG

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Art in America



Diehl, Carol. "Thinking, Mapping, Painting." *Art in America*, April 2005, pp. 110–15.

Thinking, Mapping, Painting

Over the last decade, Terry Winters has increasingly sought to translate systems of information—and the ways we think about them—into pictorial space.

BY CAROL DIEHL

When I first came across Terry Winters's paintings, in the early '80s at Sonnabend Gallery in New York, they were somber and dark, layered with accumulations of earth-toned gestural marks that seemed labored despite their lack of refinement. While the semi-abstract forms were derived from nature, it was nature in decay, depictions not of life but of the residue of life—dry husks, shells and bones—rendered in the melancholy hues of November, and laid out like specimens within the confines of the picture plane. These were slow paintings, especially for the fast, cocaine-driven era that also brought us graffiti, Prince, big-shouldered “power suits” and Schnabel's plate-encrusted canvases. Even now, without the contrast of glitter and bombast, Winters's work of this period comes across as sober, introspective and still.

So I was not prepared, one day in 1999, to walk into an exhibition by the same artist, this time at Matthew Marks Gallery, and be blasted by some of the most energetic paintings I'd ever seen. Titled “Graphic Primitives,” this group of nine oversize (75-by-108-inch) oil-and-alkyd paintings, with their color-filled surfaces, seemed to mark some heretofore uncharted midpoint between order and chaos—dense, convoluted layers of loosely painted webby grids and spirals that not only filled the canvas but suggested fields beyond its limits. Appearing to spring, geyserlike, from unseen depths, these networks erupted outward (or perhaps imploded; they could be seen both ways), implying worlds beneath and beyond.

Now 10 years of this work—Terry Winters's paintings, drawings and prints from 1994 to 2004—have been gathered in an exhibition that originated at the Addison Gallery in Andover, Mass., and is traveling to museums in San Diego and Houston. The overall impression is of an explosion of images by a mature artist who has overcome earlier inhibitions to the point that he can barely keep up with the ideas spewing forth, yet is eager to take on challenges that will push his work still further. Viewed with this in mind, his earlier canvases, revisited last winter in yet another exhibition at Matthew Marks (“Terry Winters 1981-1986”), reveal themselves as essential investigations by an earnest young painter—he was then in his 30s—thoroughly engaged in

Terry Winters: Computational Architecture, 1995, oil and alkyd resin on linen, 92 1/4 by 118 1/4 inches. Images this article courtesy Matthew Marks Gallery, New York.

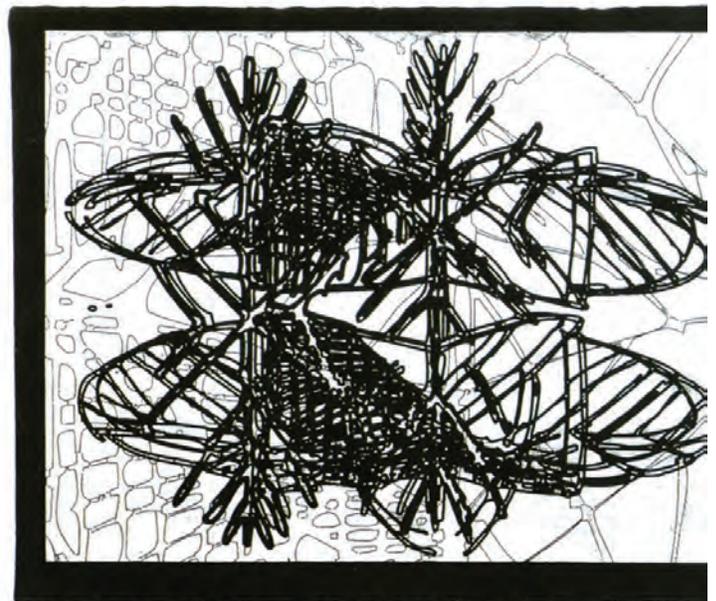




Good Government, 1984, oil on linen, 101 1/4 by 137 1/4 inches.

finding out what he could do with the physical properties of paint, and more concerned with the process of exploration than with making a definitive statement. Even now, when his statement has grown so much more powerful, it still seems as if his criterion for stopping work on any given piece is whether or not he's learned enough from it.

The works in the current exhibition are grouped according to the titles of the gallery shows in which some of them first appeared: "Foundations and Systems" (1994), "Computations and Chains" (1995-98), "Graphic Primitives" (1998), "Location Plan" (1999), "Set Diagram" (2000-02), "Meshworks" (1999-2002) and "Turbulence Skins" (2000-04). Separating them out this way, however, seems to be more a useful organizational exercise than a demarcation of specific series, since many of the same ideas spill over from one group to the next. All inhabit an uncanny territory between image and abstraction—they might be pictures or diagrams of something, or, then again, they might not—and hover so insistently in this middle ground that they stimulate a multiplicity of interpretations. But unlike a face seen in a cloud or an image in a Rorschach test, Winters's convoluted forms give rise to readings that do not allow the eye to rest on any single aspect, but that may be seen simultaneously. At any given moment, some or all of the following impressions may suggest themselves and then quickly fade, to be replaced by others: maps, blueprints, urban aerial photographs, steel girders, spiderwebs, X-rays, molecular structures, microscopic slides of protozoa, the warp and woof of gauzy fabric, tangles or balls of yarn, fishing nets, the interlace of wintry tree



Graphic Primitives, 8, 1998, from a portfolio of nine woodcuts on Japanese Kochi paper, 20 by 26 inches.

branches, magnified crystals, computer readouts or diagrams of the neurological circuits of the brain, perhaps on information overload. That we can never figure out whether what we're looking at depicts something organic or man-made only adds to the enigma.

Writing about Olafur Eliasson [*A.Z.A.*, Oct. '04]—whose work, although sculptural and often architectural in scale, is driven by an interest in surprisingly similar patterns in nature and mathematics—increased my awareness of art that flirts with beauty yet carries the viewer only to the brink of complete esthetic satisfaction. By refusing to go wholly into the realm of sublimity it claims our attention just that much longer. With Winters, we're caught in the ambiguity of the subject matter, but he also maintains our engagement by keeping his means obvious, again like Eliasson. Employing no sleight of hand or overly elaborate technique, Winters doesn't modify his brushstrokes but lets them remain as they were first laid down. With every pass at the canvas evident, it becomes, in his words, "a picture of all the events that went into the making of the painting."¹ This revelation of activity grounds us in the present, as well as adding to the sense of freshness and spontaneity these paintings engender.

For some painters, paint can be almost like a living thing, a willing tool but with inclinations of its own. Always of interest is how much the artist

In making prints, Winters uses the computer not only as inspiration, but also as a tool with which to transfer images to plates.

has agreed to collaborate with the medium, guiding it and allowing it to sing, rather than ignoring its potential or, the opposite, controlling it into complete submission. De Kooning, more than most, exalted in the expressiveness of paint, and this ardor contributes to the magnetism of Winters's work as well. Although the graphic impact is greatest from far away, no matter how close you get, there's always something rich to see.

After the surfeit of coolness and detachment that has characterized much art of the past several years, it's refreshing to encounter work that appears to spring from a real need on the part of the artist to make it. Often we find things that, while lovely to look at, show the artist operating within such narrow parameters, with so little at risk, that it's hard to imagine what drives him, how he manages to get up in the morning. In addition to his obvious love of his medium, Winters may seem to demonstrate the same kind of personal urgency that makes Pollock's and de Kooning's gestural abstraction so satisfying. Yet while he may have adopted something of

Graphics Tablet, 1998, oil and alkyd resin on linen, 96 by 120 inches. Collection Robert and Jane Meyerhoff, Phoenix, Md.



Winters's syncopated visions address the demands of a culture that requires us to assimilate many disparate sensations quickly.

their vocabulary, this is not work generated by an impulse to explore inner emotions and feelings, but originates instead from a need to navigate the more cerebral intersection between nature and technology. Indeed, Winters has described painting as "a method of thinking" and has said that he's interested in "the way space is generated through thought"² and "how information can be processed as pictorial imagery."

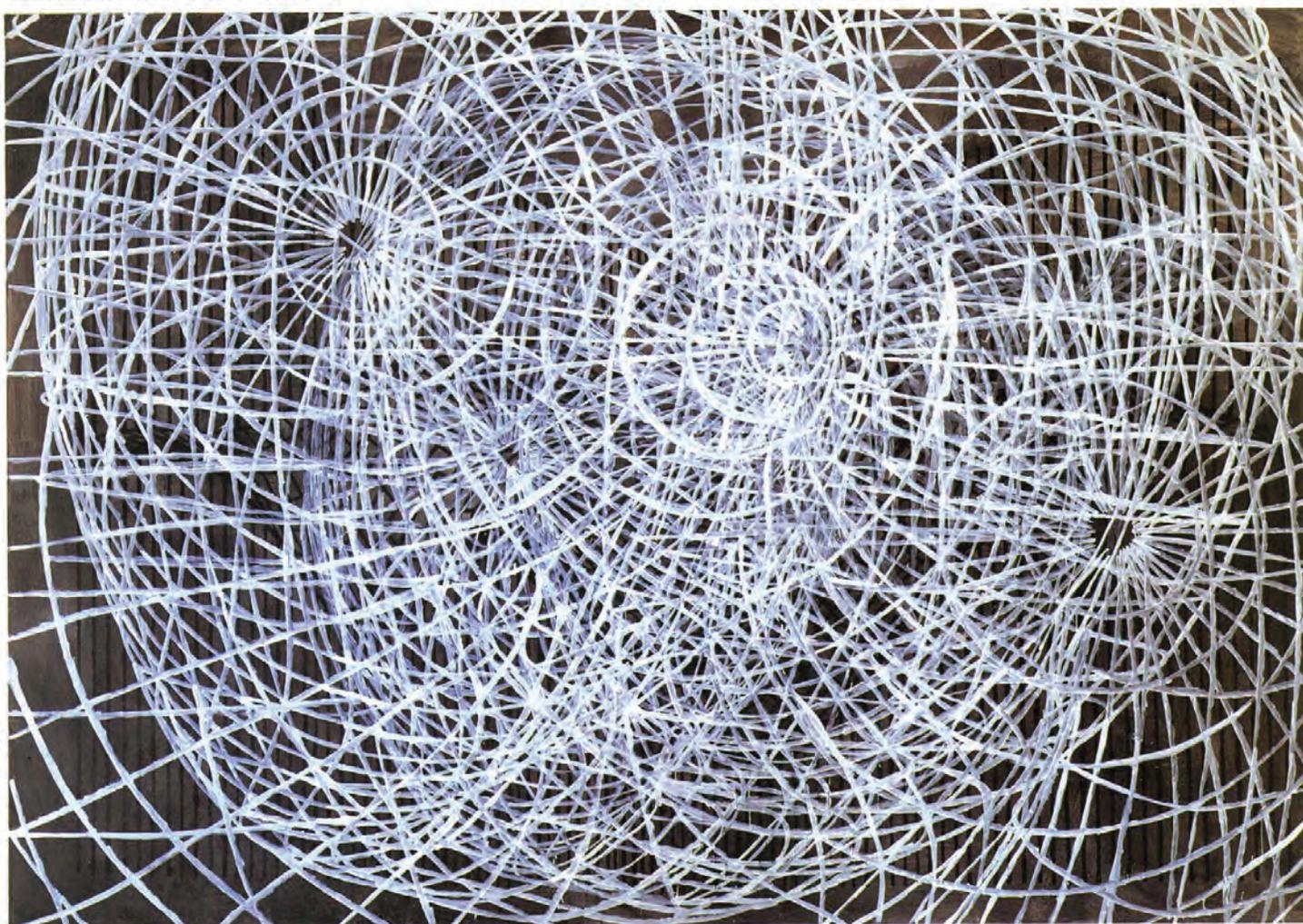
Next to Winters's work, even the most lyrical gestural abstraction can seem single-minded—a multiplicity of marks adding up to a single sensation. His syncopated visions, by contrast, seek to address the demands of a culture that requires us to assimilate many sensations quickly. That aim first became evident in *Computational Architecture* (1995). In primary colors hovering over white, Winters here laid down angry cross-hatchings interspersed with scrawled spirals, all of which appear to be spinning out of control. The foremost layer—a large open red grid, configured like the panes of a window and containing the floating red outlines of eight squares—may be read as an attempt to hold everything together. Winters seems to be documenting what it feels like to cope with the neurological shifts that are necessary to accommodate rapidly changing streams of information. His work has a lot to do with the com-

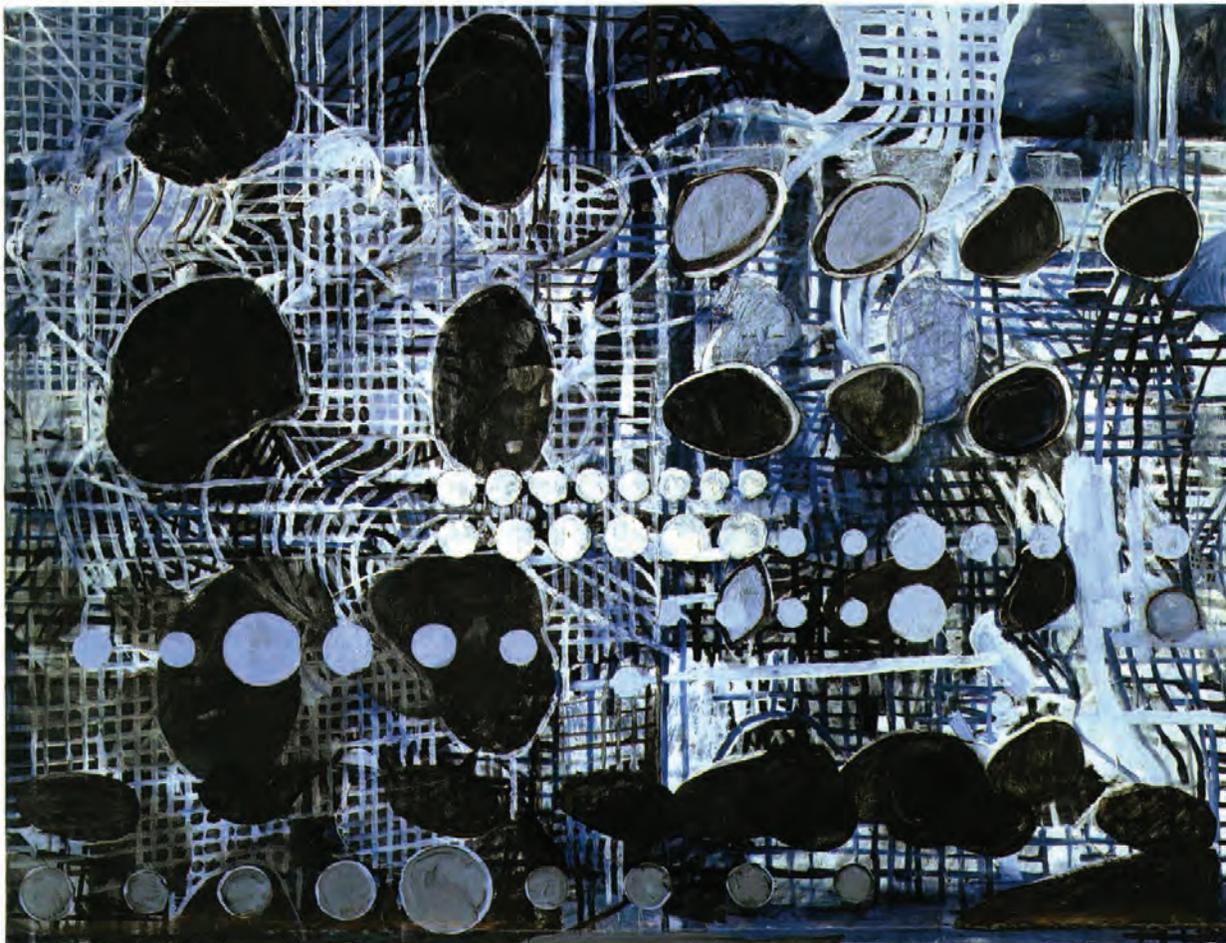
puter's influence on how we think and see, much as Mondrian, in his time, grappled with the impact of industrialization and urbanization.

Winters often uses computer-generated imagery—mathematics-based systems developed by others for other purposes—as reference or source material, which he then recasts in painting. What attracts him, he says, is "the seamless space that computers are able to create from disparate bits of information—not modernist collage, but a new and uninterrupted expanse." In making prints, Winters uses the computer not only as inspiration, but as a tool when he transfers images to plates, uses lasers to cut blocks or develops new pictures by stretching and playing with drawings on the screen. As with every technological advance, the computer, he says, "has forced us to consider what nature is, or what natural things are."

A New York kid who came to his vocation early, attending the High School for Art and Design and later Pratt Institute, where he also studied architecture and industrial design, Winters grew up in the context of the city's galleries and museums. There he developed his early enthusiasm, still clearly unabated, for the work not only of Mondrian but also of Newman, Pollock and de Kooning. "They invented a world to be explored, not to be moved away from," he says, "one that's not exhausted but barely begun, a stepping stone into a place we can't even imagine yet." Therefore, although he graduated from art school in 1971, Winters seems to have avoided the whole "painting is dead" *Sturm und Drang* of the '70s by sticking resolutely to his innermost interests—hence the dark paintings that seem not at all of their time—and coming out the other side better for it. Of his working

Luminance, 2002, oil on linen, 94 1/2 by 133 1/2 inches. Private collection.





Standardgraph/1, 2003, oil on linen, 76½ by 99 inches. Collection Harry W. and Mary Margaret Anderson.

method, he says, “I try to keep myself a bit off balance in order to achieve results that are unpredictable or unforeseen,” and adds, “it’s only through connection with intuitive or unconscious forces that we contact the fresh and new.”

Regardless, the transition from the nature-derived paintings to Winters’s present format was hardly sudden. In fact its inception might be found in one of his earliest pieces, a breathtakingly intense charcoal drawing titled *Dark Plant 1* (1982), which focuses on a beautiful, yet slightly sinister roselike shape of the blackest black, whose barely perceptible center seems to teem with the force of life. So while Winters’s more diagrammatic work coalesced in the aforementioned *Compositional Architecture*, it had been developing incrementally over a long period of time. In a series of paintings from the early ’90s, not extensively exhibited in this country, he began to work more abstractly and often in primary colors, gradually emphasizing and magnifying lines and patterns, superimposing one over the other until they became complex schemes that filled the entire canvas. This approach culminated in paintings such as *Graphics Tablet* (1998), which is so congested with activity that the fissure that appears to be opening down the center can be seen as representing a desire for breathing space. Then as now, Winters’s explorations were supported by extensive excursions into printmaking, mixed-medium works on paper, and ink or graphite drawings. It isn’t unusual for him to set himself to the task of making a series of 100 or so related images, leaving the impression that artistic growth, in his case, is often generated through sheer volume.

“Turbulence Skins,” the most recent group of works in this exhibition, presages further shifts in Winters’s evolution, and here he incorporates

some of the language and concerns of his nature-oriented paintings to dynamic ends. In *Standardgraph/1* (2003), he limits himself to three colors: black, white and a predominant blue. The overcharged grid has become not an end in itself, but an animated terrain over which float a number of black, irregular ovoid shapes, which themselves serve as a ground for slightly more regular rows of smaller white and pale-blue disks that drift across the surface like leaves on water. The image adds to Winters’s lexicon of contradictions: if a painting can be at once active and peaceful, this one is.

“There’s nothing to do with painting,” Winters says, “except use it as a place of conjecture.” He describes his own images simply as “abstract pictures of the world,” but they can further be construed as maps of consciousness, charting human responses to an environment that increasingly requires the separation of instinct from intellect, where we’re confronted with such a barrage of information that we don’t even have time to process it. This visceral application of handmade marks to often technical subject matter has the effect of synthesizing otherwise contradictory aspects into a single statement: one that is simultaneously primitive and sophisticated, emotional and analytical, natural and technological, physical and intellectual—an emblem of our time that propels us into the future. □

1. Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are drawn from conversation with the artist.

2. Quoted in Peter Eleey, *The Brooklyn Rail*, October–November 2001, p. 12.

“Terry Winters: Paintings, Drawings, Prints, 1994–2004” appeared at the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Mass. [Sept. 18, 2004–Jan. 2, 2005], before traveling to the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego [Jan. 23–Apr. 17]. Later this month it moves to the Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston [Apr. 30–July 10].

Author: Carol Diehl is an artist who also writes about art.

ARTFORUM

TERRY WINTERS

ADDISON GALLERY OF AMERICAN ART, ANDOVER, MA

ERIC ROSENBERG

Terry Winters's achievement of the last ten years feels heroic in the old-fashioned sense of the word. His commitment to a grand tradition of painting superimposes a value on his work that accretes history as if its challenges demanded that a position be taken and held, whatever the cost. Yet there is also something terribly poignant about his project, as evidenced in "Terry Winters: Paintings, Drawings, Prints 1994–2004," a survey of 160 works curated by Adam Weinberg. This poignancy has to do with the self-conscious meeting of painting and cognition. For many today it is a trope to think of these two terms as complementary, but after painting's putative toppling by more conceptual strategies, the terms might also seem opposed. In either case, complement or contradiction is dependent on the degree to which history informs or even haunts the making of pictures. History, however, can be hard to gauge when divorced from narrative, which Winters's images seem to refuse. They appear to be less "about" something than simply and rigorously "of" it.

simultaneously hollow and dense, apparent and occluded. Thus it perhaps relates to Winters's recent interest in cyberspace, which like an echo seems simultaneously real and virtual, momentarily present yet not quite there. "Painting is a circuit, a feedback loop," Winters maintains, something like a hollow conduit, repeating, repeating.

Accordingly, the viewer looks constantly in Winters's paintings for that moment or passage that holds his place in what Rosalind Krauss has called the etiology of abstract painting. History becomes a kind of buffer zone between the real and the virtual, the computer generated and the hand drawn or marked. To continue to paint, Winters suggests, one can't simply intimate narrative in the way that it remains immanent in the work of Pollock, de Kooning, or even Johns. The story is now scrambled and can only appear so, if it can exist at all. And yet, countless moments of manual imagination—given form as brushstroke, bitten line, and smeared graphite on vellum—emerge as the shards of painting's once-sturdy theoretical armature and monumental tradition. Perhaps the most conspicuous of these fragments is Winters's insistence on the grid as an inescapable structuring principle of the visual field. This is not, however, the grid born of flatness, which throughout modernism's history famously asserted the tyranny or promise of the picture plane. Instead, the grid for Winters is space itself, constantly



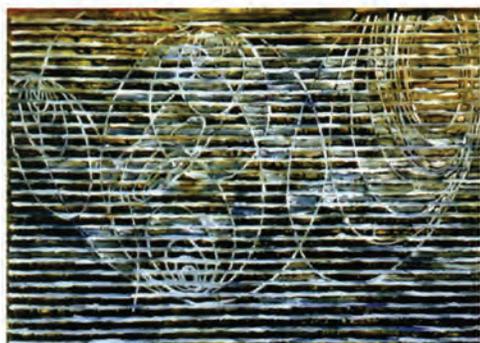
Clockwise from above: Terry Winters, *Graphics Tablet*, 1998, oil and alkyd resin on linen, 96 x 120". View of "Terry Winters: Paintings, Drawings, Prints 1994–2004," Addison Gallery of American Art, Andover, MA, 2004. Right: Terry Winters, *Standardgraph/3*, 2003. Terry Winters, *Untitled*, 1999, oil on linen, 57 1/2 x 82 1/2".

from early-twentieth-century Constructivism as he does from 1980s theoretical discourse. What is contemporary about his Constructivism is his abdication of the ruler, the straight edge that so sharply evinced ideological (and historical) control

what remains of a history of painting and abstraction, and, importantly, what does not. *Untitled*, 1999, puts the point nicely. An image is graphed onto and pushed into a surface while the stroke, drag, and punch of the brush assert a life for pigment irrespective of this system. The fiction of unity is rent asunder by an aesthetic that is only possible independent of plan, model, and diagram. A productive disconnect is evident between schema and material, between the virtual and the handmade. Nowhere is this more intensely felt than in *Graphics Tablet*, 1998. Here the vortex coughs up endless formal repetitions, almost the repetition compulsion of a traumatic cognitive state. What else might the meeting of painting and technology have produced in the last ten years if not materiality's willful refusal of the void, as well as an almost paradoxical encounter with the abyss by dint of its refusal? Perhaps, as Richard Shiff so ably argues in the exhibition's catalogue essay, we need Deleuze, cognitive science, and the computer to understand all of this, but it sounds like part of the longer history of modernism to me. □

"Terry Winters: Paintings, Drawings, Prints 1994–2004" travels to the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, Jan. 23–Apr. 17; Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston, Apr. 30–July 10.

Eric Rosenberg is associate professor of art history at Tufts University.



Refusal of narrative, even implied, leaves the viewer situated but hardly contained by the work. And it is here that the poignant rears its head most insistently. Paintings such as *Standardgraph/3*, 2003, have the quality of a muffled echo, since the foremost plane of the picture appears like a vibration cast forward from the receding field behind the grid. (In fact, these images can seem more auditory than visual.) This echo acts like a repository of the past (painting's recent past, for instance) that is

permeable while implying the accumulation of—or passage through—all matter. Winters's grid is part of a larger three-dimensional turning in space, cyber or otherwise, that is at once a denial of modernism's privileged forms and a tacit acceptance of them.

The artist's recent interest in theoretical constructions such as Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* speaks to such conditions. Still, Winters derives his formal-as-theoretical convictions as much

for a Lissitzky or a Malevich. Not that I want to imply that Winters leaves us with the organic, as opposed to the political or collective. History's road map to such positions—the possibility of Winters's politics, or of politics at all—is simply more elusive at the moment.

Winters's project assembles the component parts of a ruin; call it the mapping of the modernist cognitive in the face of its putative dissolution, the myth and reality of painting as thinking. He works with

The New York Times

An Energetic Imagist Who Dances With Chance

By JEFFREY KASTNER

TERRY WINTERS greets a guest at the door of his TriBeCa studio, apologizing for the din of the air-conditioner struggling to cool his large workspace. Inside, a few half-finished paintings lean against the walls, work on them temporarily suspended as Mr. Winters prepares for a trip to his second home, in Geneva. Just a few weeks earlier, the Metropolitan Museum of Art had opened a retrospective of his prints, organized by Nan Rosenthal. It was “a kick,” says Mr. Winters, an urbane New Yorker who as an art-loving boy from Brooklyn was a frequent visitor to the museum.

“I was there a while ago,” he continues, “in the shipping department, where they have all these photos of the Met over the years. There was a picture of the people waiting to see the ‘Mona Lisa,’ and I thought, ‘I was actually on one of those lines.’”

It’s an instance, perhaps, of what the contemplative Mr. Winters is getting at when he speaks of “collaborations with circumstance,” a concept he often invokes to express the balance between intention and serendipity that characterizes his creative process. Considered one of his generation’s most distinguished printmakers, Mr. Winters, 52, is probably best known as a painter, though he is also a prolific draftsman. If the show at the Met provides its own distinctive vantage on the artist’s process, it also represents a coming-full-circle of sorts

**A master of many mediums,
Terry Winters has a passion for
unending experimentation.**

for Mr. Winters. Because he has always kept his various artistic pursuits feeding one another, the prints offer important insights into the trajectory of a 20-year career devoted to open-ended experimentation. (Continuing until Sept. 30, the show includes some 90 prints from the museum’s collection.)

Determined to be an artist from his earliest days, Mr. Winters attended the High School of Art and Design in Manhattan in the mid-1960’s, spending his free time in the nearby 57th Street galleries. After graduating, he ended up in SoHo’s nascent artist community, while commuting back to Brooklyn to attend the Pratt Institute, where he studied fine art as well as architecture and industrial design. When he finished college, in 1971, Mr. Winters set to painting, supporting himself with odd jobs and producing work in a spare, graphic style often featuring simple structures sketched against cool, minimal grounds.

“Architecture is really where my interest in structures came from,” Mr. Winters says. “But my broader interest has always been in trying to describe immanent forces rather than transcendental forms. When I was at Pratt, I was involved with process art, and my own work was very process-oriented, focused on materials and procedures for laying on paint. I was trying to fuse my interest in painting with the concerns of that other art, to see what kind of paces I could put painting through. And so the focus became trying to find a way to cantilever that out to find a sort of subject matter.”

As the decade went on, that subject matter increasingly tended toward generative organic structures: bulbs and seeds, hivelike or branching shapes typically rendered in oils and set in indeterminate compositional spaces like stylized botanical illustrations. Though exhibited infrequently, Mr. Winters’s work caught the eye of the New York dealer Ileana Sonnabend, who gave him his first solo exhibition in 1982. Another person intrigued by these initial efforts was Bill Goldston, who invited Mr. Winters to work at Universal Limited Art Editions, the Long Island-based print workshop.

Collaborating with Mr. Goldston and others, Mr. Winters first explored lithography, in which a design is essentially drawn on a stone or metal plate in a greasy medium that picks up ink, then transferred to paper. After a number of tentative starts, Mr. Goldston and Mr. Winters made a breakthrough with three lithographs that the artist called the “Morula” series, borrowing the

scientific term for the fertilized ova whose shapes they recalled.

Like Mr. Winters's paintings from the period, the images in the suite suggest a botanist's hallucination: dark vegetal pods that loom like magnified spores; ripe organic forms with latticework skeletons set in backgrounds dotted with gestural smudges; and bits of sketched marginalia. These "eggs" proved auspicious, for they inaugurated what would become a career-long engagement with printmaking.

The artist worked in lithography off and on over the next few years at Universal Limited, producing several single prints as well as "Folio" (1985-1986), his first set designed to be published as a group. Featuring a large geodesic sphere on its cover and demonstrating a growing freedom with color, the 11-print "Folio" announced Mr. Winters's command of his new medium and suggested the future direction of his printmaking investigations. He was going deeper into mechanics, presentation and the fundamental forms he had adopted as an artistic vocabulary.

Painting and drawing prolifically all the while, Mr. Winters was also adding to his technical repertory, producing etchings — in which a metal plate is incised with chemicals to create an image — both at Universal Limited and with the renowned Parisian intaglio printer Aldo Crommelynck. A set of woodcutting tools he found on a trip to Japan led to his first reliefs, in which an image is created by cutting into the surface of wooden or linoleum blocks.

Soon Mr. Winters was ranging freely among various types of printmaking. After producing a second portfolio of etchings with Crommelynck in 1992, he again returned to Universal Limited, where in 1994 he created "Models for Synthetic Pictures." With their bold use of primary colors and new level of formal complexity and compositional density, the "Models" intaglios marked a dramatic evolution in Mr. Winters's approach. No longer representationally suggestive of objects, these new prints — dynamic frame-filling skeins and sprawling webbed networks — were "really about depicting a kind of event space," he says.

"So much of the contemporary world is driven by abstract processes," he adds. "Whether it's developments in chaos and complexity theory or computers and scientific visualization, it all feeds new ideas about abstract imagery and the importance of the visual in conjunction with conceptual or computational developments. The old modernist oppositions between the retinal and the intellectual just really don't function anymore."

About the same time, Mr. Winters turned to his sketchbooks with a burst of energy. Over a six-month

period in 1995 and 1996 he produced a large number of drawing series, including “Computation of Chains,” a suite of 125 works in ink that he calls “a kind of gene pool,” which continued to feed aspects of both his painting and printmaking for years. The spatial, cartographic legacy of the “Computation” material remains vivid, for example, in Mr. Winters’s work from 1998: in “Graphic Primitives” — for which Mr. Winters manipulated drawings with a computer before having the designs laser-cut into blocks of cherry wood — and the etchings from “Set of Ten.”

“I’m trying to make a diagrammatic abstraction that allows for coordinates to be established within which an investigation takes place,” he says. “But the investigation is necessarily kind of hysterical because the process is so unpredictable. And that’s where the real discoveries happen — when you get pulled out of this space where you know what you’re doing and into some new territory you know less about.”

Today, Mr. Winters continues to seek fresh means of extending his artistic investigations, often in collaboration with others, a way of working he first encountered in the print studio. Among his just-completed print-related projects, in collaboration with the choreographer Trisha Brown, is the design for the backdrops, objects for the stage and costumes for “El Trilogy,” a jazz-related suite of dances that had its New York premiere this summer. And the most recent work in the Met show is also a product of collaboration, in this case with the Swiss literary critic Jean Starobinski. The two men had met during one of Mr. Winters’s frequent stays in Switzerland, the homeland of his wife, the art historian Hendel Teicher.

The men began their project in 1996, agreeing to produce responses to each other’s work. The finished book, “Perfection, Way, Origin” (Universal Limited Art Editions, 2001), includes 10 of Mr. Winters’s etchings from the time of their original correspondence, along with an



additional 28 he produced later. It also features an English translation of an essay by Mr. Starobinski, an erudite meditation on chance, intent and invention, on the aesthetic ideal and creative freedom.

“I picture to myself the various states of an engraving,” writes Mr. Starobinski, considering those collaborations with circumstance to which Mr. Winters often refers, “which of course are stages in the progress of a conception, but are also responses to problems connected with putting the engraving into circulation: the wear of the plate, inkings, papers, and so on. The engraver, because he is held by the strict material conditions of his work, must discover resources that permit him to exercise his inventive freedom by turning the technical constraint into an advantage.”

If the artist can do this, he will find “the happiness of remaining within a disciplined, regular order, but one perpetually starting over again,” Mr. Starobinski suggests, articulating what Mr. Winters’s first prints hinted at 20 years ago and what his works still aspire to today. In this way, Mr. Starobinski says, the artist creates opportunities for “the diverse and unforeseen to manifest itself every moment like an outcropping of the infinite.” □

art on
paper

Perfect Like a Hedgehog

The Printed Works of Terry Winters

by Nancy Princenthal

Ten years ago, Jean Starobinski, a Rousseau scholar, lapsed physician, and *éminence grise* of Swiss cultural life (he recently turned 80), and Terry Winters, himself an enlightened polymath of no mean distinction and a part-time resident of Geneva, entered into a dialogue. It took the form, at first, of a suite of etchings (they derived from a remarkably fertile group of 125 drawings made by Winters in 1995–96 called *Computation of Chains*) and a series of fragmentary texts by Starobinski. Slowly, the two bodies of work took shape independently, though dialogic structure continued to be examined closely in both. As Starobinski writes in the essay that ultimately resulted, “Once the two-term representative relation—that is, of perceived objects and their image, of face and mirror—is abolished, a space is cleared for the deployment of networks dependent only on their own systematic organization.”¹ At its best, Starobinski continues, such renunciation opens the way for “more moving analogies” between constructed and perceived realities—as also, presumably, between his text and Winters’ images.

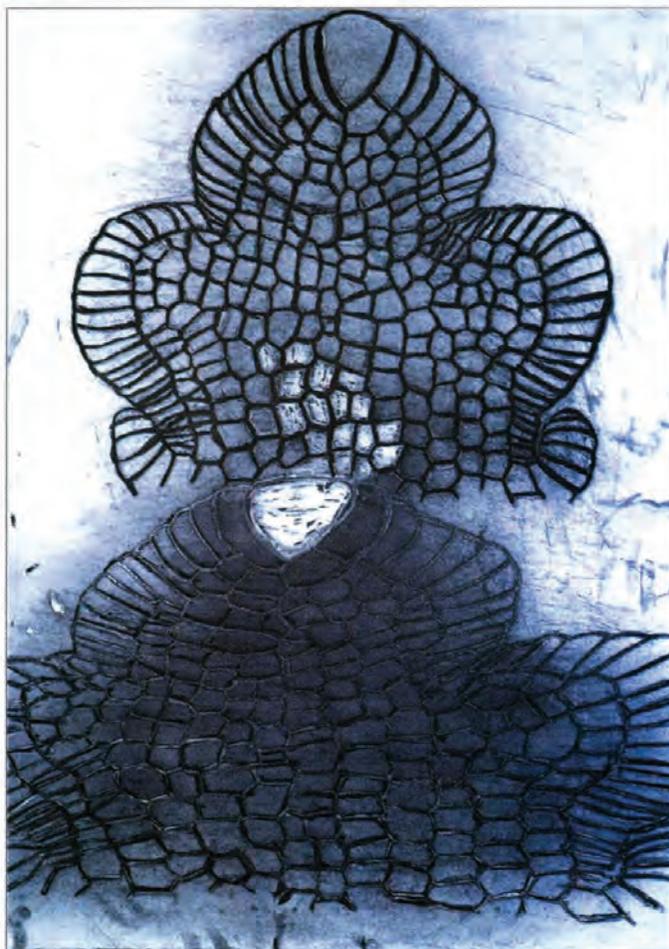
Published this year by Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) in a big, gorgeous book² included in the splendid survey of Winters’ prints now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (through September 30), Starobinski’s essay is called *Perfection, Way, Origin*. Winters says the title made him cringe a lit-

tle, and his discomfort is perfectly understandable; nothing could be more foreign to his habits of thought and work than its first and last terms. The middle one, though, gets to the heart of the matter for both artist and author: art as process and pathway, a means of passage through infinitely compounded networks of method and meaning. As posed by Starobinski, the question author and artist share is, “Would it not be more just to renounce the mirage of a final goal—perfection, the perfect object—and say, simply: ‘Every work is a way?’”³

In any event, Winters is not altogether opposed to portentousness, whether verbal or visual. His first print, a dense little lithograph made at ULAE in 1982, is called, rather auspiciously, *Ova*. It is not included in the show at the Met, which curator Nan Rosenthal opens instead with the even more propitious lithographs *Morula I, II, and III* (1983–84; unless otherwise indicated, all prints are printed and published by ULAE). Mechanical and biological reproduction come face-to-face in these grand, lush prints, named for the spherical mass of a fast-expanding, newly fertilized egg (the term derives from the Latin word for mulberry). In one, a vast, yeasty black sphere rises ominously toward the image’s upper limits; in another, a pale, ethereal sphere floats, wraith-like, in front of a darker, heavier globe. *Double Standard* (1984), a big, imposing vertical lithograph—it is printed in 22 colors, all



Terry Winters,
Morula III, lithograph,
(42x32-1/2 in.),
1983-84. All images
courtesy ULAE, Bay
Shore, unless other-
wise indicated.



(Above)
Terry Winters,
Novalis, etching,
open-bite etching,
and aquatint (42-
1/2x31 in.),
1983–89.

(Right)
Terry Winters,
Fourteen Etchings 4,
hand-drawn Mylar
gravure, spit-bite
aquatint, and photo-
gravure (18-
5/8x14-1/8 in.),
1983–89.

but one of them black—features a cluster of free-floating burgeoning things both sperm-like and ovoid. Some passages are a little smeary, as if seen under a microscope (the black margin on the left could be the slide mount), but others are fully rendered, even sculptural, suggesting an oscillation between physical and virtual presence, reduced, actual, and enlarged size that is characteristic of Winters' work. *Novalis* (1983–89), another early lithograph, is a Narcissus-like image in which a triple-lobed form, heavily traced in black, squats above its slightly warped and widened reflection, an image both immediate and aloof.

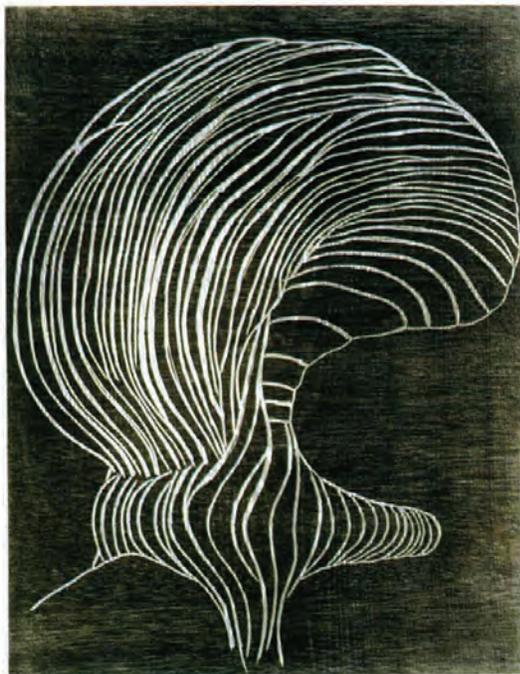
Important as these autonomous prints are, the exhibition favors portfolios (often the constituent prints are double-hung), a choice Winters supported. The preference for showing works in series is, in fact, not restricted to prints. In a recent exhibition at Matthew Marks Gallery in New York, Winters' drawings were shown in such daunting abundance that mentally grouping the images, by proximity or visual kinship, became an essential

perceptual maneuver. And for a concurrent painting exhibition at Lehmann Maupin in New York, Winters collaborated with architect Rem Koolhaas on an installation that involved, among other things, hanging canvases in an immense floor-to-ceiling grid; borrowing a lick from a Sidney Janis installation of work by Jackson Pollock, they even installed paintings on the ceiling.⁴ For Winters, profusion to the point of mayhem is not an ancillary, exhibition-related practice; it goes right to the heart of his work. The limits of the visual unit—the place where frames go, physically and conceptually, the brackets around what counts—are often kept deliberately indeterminate.⁵ Put another way, the formal tensions he keeps in play are not restricted to those between holding the surface and rupturing it illusionistically (the traditional split between abstraction and figuration), though these do apply. They extend further, to the opposition between placeless markings on an effectively substance-less surface (as in printed text, or a computer screen) and wholly materialized objects that call the ambient environment into play (the book as a doorstop, the PC as furniture). Within this unusually open kind of space, the portfolio—a single work of multiple parts—occupies a particularly important position.

Winters' first portfolio, printed in 1985–86 at ULAE, is called (again, rather ceremoniously) *Folio*. It reflects his early interest in a great variety of natural and manmade structural systems, from the Cartesian transformations of plant and animal



Terry Winters,
Furrows IV, woodcut
(26-1/2x21-1/4 in.),
1989. Courtesy Peter
Blum Edition, New
York.



forms posed by biologist D'Arcy Wentworth Thompson (1860–1948) to Buckminster Fuller's and Frei Otto's architectural experiments with organic structures;⁶ the visual conventions of illustrated natural histories (including especially the use of elaborate marginalia) play a large part, too. *Folio* begins with a brightly accented geodesic dome and ranges, in succeeding imagery, from what could be organic tissue viewed microscopically to a crowd of upstanding abstract figures bold as Stonehenge; the 23 colors of ink in single strokes that appear on the colophon replicate a printer's ink-testing "pulldowns."⁷ The more tightly focused portfolio *Fourteen Etchings*⁸ (1989) brings together medical imaging and imaginary views of the cosmos: each print in the suite pairs an X-ray of a human skeleton part—these are photogravures reproducing photogravures from a late 19th-century German anatomy book—with Winters' own, more fanciful imagery, the whole introduced by an alphabetic list of the constellations. *Furrows* (Peter Blum Edition, 1989, printed by François Lafranca in Verscio, Switzerland), Winters' first woodcut project, involved imagery derived from cross-sections of the brain. Using traditional Japanese woodworking tools, Winters first pulled

Terry Winters,
*Models for Synthetic
Pictures*, 9, open-bite
and soft-ground
etching; sugar-lift and
spit-bite aquatint (19-
3/8x22-1/4 in.),
1994.

the linear figure out of a mahogany block and inked its wood-grained ground; in a second run, the inked surface of an uncut oak woodblock was printed so its grain ran perpendicular to the first. The results are prints as elegant—their cool grays and fine "hand" and trim lines suggest bespoke haberdashery—as they are cerebral. No less refined are the 25 *Field Notes*, a suite of intaglio prints Winters made with Aldo Crommelynck in 1992. An extended, ruminative set of variations on organic and cosmological themes—cell and crystal, particle and wave—the *Field Notes* are, as Richard Axsom writes in the 1999 catalogue raisonné of Winters' prints, "as much an inventory of possible marks made with etching's processes as *Folio* was for lithography."⁹

With *Models for Synthetic Pictures* (1994), a distinct shift occurred. This suite of 12 intaglio prints is introduced by a dozen propositions that constitute a Borgesian taxonomy of such fundamentally incomparable operations and elements as "Surfaces, level," "Iterated functions, randomly chosen methods," and "Pictures, availability." The prints are similarly disparate, though they share elements novel to Winters' work, including high-wattage, high-contrast colors (mainly the primaries plus black), which support an inclination in the introductory statements toward the conceptual and visual language of electronics. The imagery, too, is of a new character, the lines more web-like, longer and stickier, and less descriptive of closed volumes than of perturbations within a field. Though stained glass, liquids under a microscope, and even laddered stockings are all brought to mind, the most striking (and newest) associations are to the micro-circuitry



of cyberspace. "I was beginning to think that the kinds of images I was building had, rather than a representational relationship to the world, a kind of isomorphic relation."¹⁰ Winters has said of this portfolio, a relation that has distinct parallels in digital modeling of the observable world.

Despite its manifest involvement with the technological present, there is a kind of temporal scrambling involved in the new imagery's style. It

and minor-key colors, even the slight nocturnal shiver of white between the black ground and the shadowy blue that runs across it, are all, somehow, evocative of the early 1960s.

In more recent prints, Winters delves deeper into a matrix where digital, mechanical, and organic reproductive processes cross paths. Double helixes and microchips, musical staffs and transit maps are among the sources that feed Winters' ever more

voracious sensibility. And, increasingly, the spatial indeterminacy that was mere backdrop in his earliest work has become its premise. It is the subject, for instance, of *Internal and External Values* (1998), in which a thick network of blues over blacks barely restrains the circular forms that surge behind it. *Multiple Visualization Technique* (1998), a slam dance to Mondrian's boogie-woogie, features at least two seemingly misregistered grids—one red, yellow, and blue, the other a nervous, thin-lipped black—that bounce around the contours of a spinning ovoid. The horizontally ruled *Linking Graphics* (2000) is the more Matissean performance, though its linear arabesques are full of tensile strength, as is the backlit, snakeskin twist of black mesh that curves through *Amplitude* (2000). In *Pattern* (2001), another horizontally ruled print that is the most recent to be shown at the Met, blots of color lurk behind a spinning helical form to create an image of great volatility and equal grace. Inkjet and offset lithography combine in this print, and also, there

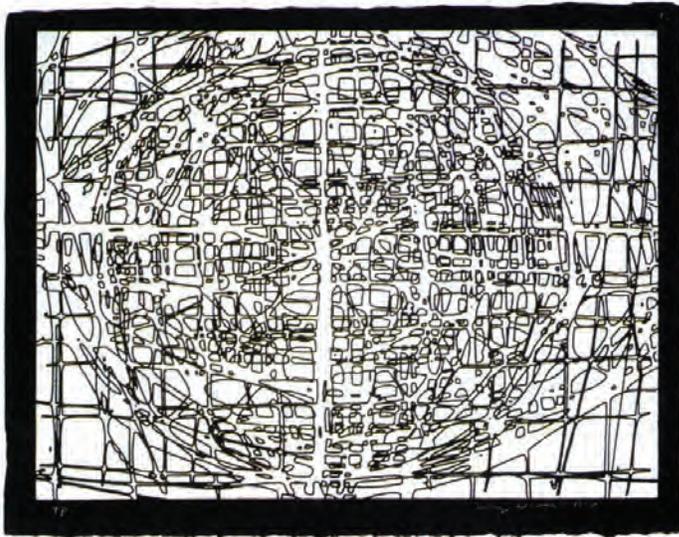


Terry Winters, *Glyphs, 6*, linocut (24-1/8x17-3/8 in.), 1995. Courtesy Grenfell Press, New York.

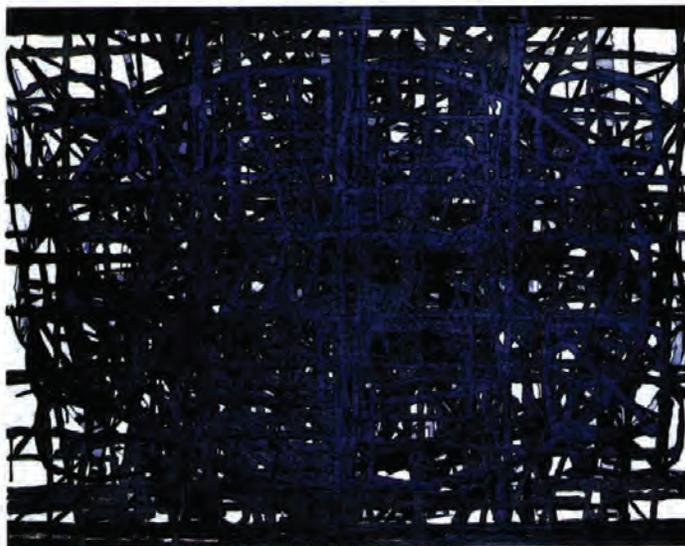
reflects what could be described as a slightly obsolete vision of the future—or a slightly tattered topography of our own time, come back to us from some society not yet known. This complicated historicism is more pronounced in *Glyphs*, made with Leslie Miller at Grenfell Press in New York in 1995. Attracted as always to unconventional technique, Winters made use in these prints of a "rinsed proof" linocut process Picasso had experimented with 40 years earlier. More distinctly than *Models for Synthetic Pictures*, the moody, indigo-washed *Glyphs* seem periodized: their syncopated rhythms

exists, as a grand, impossible subtext, the commitment to a democracy of imagery that both technologies have stood for.

Nan Rosenthal concludes her catalogue essay by referring to Abstract Expressionism, with ample reason, though not all of it self-evident. The organic imagery, intellectual sweep, and gestural abandon of Winters' work supports the association (as does, for instance, his invocation of Pollock in the ceiling-hung paintings at Lehmann Maupin). But the rhetoric of Abstract Expressionism has often seemed off-putting, tendentious and self-absorbed,



Terry Winters,
Graphic Primitives 1,
rinsed woodcut
(20x26 in.), 1998.
Courtesy Two Palms
Press, New York.



Terry Winters,
*Internal and External
Values*, sugar-lift
aquatint and open-
bite etching (42x49-
3/4 in.), 1998.

a largely defensive posture that has obscured the exploratory, reckless nature of the work itself and weakened its link to contemporary artists like Winters. Winters recaptures the freewheeling spirit of both the painting and much of the thinking behind it, the heedless plunge from syntax to syntax, space to space. Particularly in his inquiry into the nature of chaos—as a field of scientific investigation, a metaphorical wellspring, and an essential element of studio procedure—Winters is close to his postwar predecessors. “Nothing is left to chance, although hazard is persistently introduced by the artist in order to judge all the possible permutations of his form,” Thomas Hess wrote of de Kooning,¹¹ in what could just as well be a description of Winters.

Similarly, Winters shares the Abstract Expressionists’ fascination, however conflicted, with physical and behavioral science; though a now canonical “revisionist” position holds that the postwar painters “intended their ‘automatic’ hand-made works as a commentary on the dehumanizing developments intrinsic to the Age of Automation of 1945,”¹² there is today, at minimum, deep ambivalence in describing the unconscious (libidinous, free) as a source of creative processes that are automatic (robotic, programmed). In Winters’ work, the full paradox of the term “automatism” is recovered, facilitated by a culture that no longer simply vilifies science as the militaristic byproduct of a soulless, state-controlled mass culture (whether of the right or the left). Says media theorist Peter Lunenfeld of recent thinking about digital culture, “Post-’89 theory is wary of using nineteenth-century analyses of industrial capitalism to engage with the post-industrial, interconnected world, with new social formations like commodity camaraderie and the *TechnoVolksgeist*.”¹³ When Winters expresses interest in “all kinds of virtualities, some electronic, some biological, some inorganic,”¹⁴ he speaks as a member of the “post-’89” generation. And when he told Adam Fuss of his interest in an area “where the boundaries between the natural and the artificial aren’t so distinct, where the artificial and the technological are seen as newer orders of nature,”¹⁵ he was distantly echoing de Kooning’s wry quip, “Nothing is less clear than geometry.”¹⁶

Of course, these are not the only issues that frame Winters’ work, which by its nature causes sources and affiliations to proliferate. In a catalogue for an exhibition of paintings from the *Graphic Primitives* series (the 1998 woodcuts from this series, co-published by Two Palms Press, New York, and the artist, are on view at the Met), John Rajchman invokes the “city-brain consciousness”

advanced by Leo Steinberg in articulating the also relevant flatbed picture plane.¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's elaboration of the rhizome as a cultural paradigm often comes into discussions of Winters' work, too, with the artist's blessing. And Winters has himself become something of an auto-theorist, having published his own puzzling, provocative, lapidary observations not only in the portfolio *Models for Synthetic Pictures* (1994), but also in two artist's books, *Ocular Proofs* (Grenfell Press, 1996; currently being reprinted) and *Intersections + Animations* (Dome Editions, New York, 1999). In these books, their brief texts condensed from notebook entries, Winters uses words as he does graphic imagery, to plot vectors of thought rather than their destinations. Fragmentary and unpunctuated, Winters' prose is doubly partial, each entry an independent part of a larger whole, and also openly biased, even passionate, about its subject. In *Perfection, Way, Origin*, Starobinski writes of the Romantic philosophers' interest in the fragment: "These thinkers saw in the break an inverted sign of infinity and something like the mark of its bite. Through the play of opposites, the love of the whole seemed expressible to them only by the signs of lack, of void, of discontinuity, of disappointment." On this subject, Starobinski quotes aphorisms by Valéry—"I am worth what I lack"—and Friedrich Schlegel—"A fragment, the same as a brief work of art, can be isolated from the whole universe around it, perfect in itself like a hedgehog."¹⁸ A bristly, burrowing loner and an inseparable part of the whole blooming universe, the hedgehog is an irresistible figure for Winters' work, tunneling its labyrinthine way through the unseen world's depths to reveal just how spacious and fruitful they are.

¹⁷*Perfection, Way, Origin*, translated by Richard Pevear, p. 20. The publication includes a bound book with 28 etchings by Winters and comes in an aluminum box that also contains the *Set of Ten* etchings that comprise Winters' first contribution to the collaboration, as well as a bound copy of the original French text. (Universal Limited Art Editions, Bay Shore, New York, signed and numbered edition of 38, 2001.) For a recent review, see AOP 5/6, p. 65.

¹⁸The book is designed by the artist and Bruce Mau, with text blocks the same size as the *Set of Ten* etching plates. Each of the final images, which vary greatly in size, is printed alone on a page and positioned with great variety, some "cantilevered in" (in Winters' phrase), some functioning "like apertures." In imagery, too, they vary widely, from airy and open to quite rigid and dense.

¹⁹*Perfection, Way, Origin*, p. 23.

²⁰Press material from this show also refers to the installations of the Russian Constructivists, who similarly activated walls, ceilings, and unlikely conjunctions between them.

²¹A similar point was made early on by Prudence Carlson: "Winters' interest in the positive role of negative spaces is only one of many twists urged by an awareness that meaning resides, if not in any fixed form, then in the fluid intervals—in the degree and quality of difference—between two or more images." "Terry Winters' Earthly Anecdotes," *Artforum*, November 1984, p. 68.

²²References noted by Lisa Phillips in her essay for the catalogue (*Terry Winters*) accompanying a mid-career survey at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1992, p. 15.

²³The deliberate exploration of the components of the printing process parallels Winters' early practice of grinding his own pigments, and of illustrating, in paintings, the crystal structure of the minerals in those pigments.

²⁴Another ULAE undertaking, this project followed Winters' first intaglios: the 1988 portfolio *Album*, made with the legendary Parisian printer Aldo Crommelynck.

²⁵Nancy Sojka with the assistance of Nancy Watson Barr, *Terry Winters Prints 1982–1998: A Catalogue Raisonné*, essay by Richard H. Axsom (Detroit Institute of Arts, distributed by Hudson Hills Press, New York, 1999), p. 20.

²⁶Quoted in Nan Rosenthal, *Terry Winters: Printed Works*, exh. cat. (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2001), p. 23.

²⁷Thomas B. Hess, *Willem de Kooning* (New York, 1959), p. 31.

²⁸David Craven, "Abstract Expressionism, Automatism and the Age of Automation," in Francis Frascina, ed., *Pollock and After: The Critical Debate*, second edition (London and New York, 2000), p. 242.

²⁹Peter Lunenfeld, *Snap to Grid: A User's Guide to Digital Arts, Media, and Cultures* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, 2000), p. 11.

³⁰Conversation with the author, June 5, 2001.

³¹Interview with Adam Fuss in *Terry Winters: Computation of Chains*, exh. cat. (New York, Matthew Marks Gallery, 1997), p. 9.

³²Hess, p. 15.

³³John Rajchman, "Painting in the Brain-City," *Terry Winters: Graphic Primitives*, exh. cat. (New York, Matthew Marks Gallery, 1998).

³⁴*Perfection, Way, Origin*, p. 32.

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