ADRIENNE JOY
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University Art Gallery
State University of New York at Binghamton
September 2 – October 2, 1983
cover:
Aftermath, no. 1  1982
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 19 × 27

All dimensions are format size given in inches; height precedes width.
All works are in the collection of the artist unless otherwise noted.

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I settled with drawing while waiting for drawing to prepare me for a serious medium. I waited too long and became inextricably involved in working with pencil and paper. It seems now that this was always my intention. Drawing is most naturally suited to the ambiguity of my visual experience: highly abstract and highly specific. It has the fragile quality of the moments I attempt to translate.

There is no choice other than abstraction in art. Drawing is an extreme form of abstraction. Graphite or charcoal and paper provide limited tangible qualities: a range of grays, a slight softness and gold tint. The result is very flat. Yet it is possible to indicate form, light, space, color, motion, and sound with these limited qualities. It is possible to do so with great precision.

The potential for evoking illusion is most successfully exploited through drawing. Its tangible substance does not call as much attention to itself as that of painting or sculpture. The sensuality of drawing is limited by modest materials; by restricted interactions and vibrations of line and value. This substance may tend to disappear, leaving illusion as the primary experience.

The illusion of literal reality is not, however, evocative of experience. It is at once not enough and too much. It can be translated verbally and it therefore not appropriate to drawing.

My work is to draw the medium between tentative implication and implicit deception. The suggestive illusion — that the images described are other than what they appear — emerges. I do not think of my drawings as realistic except in the sense that they most honestly express my visual experience.

My first memories, all my most vivid and enduring memories, are of visual moments that lift themselves out of context. These are not photographic, not impressionistic. They are specific in an evocative sense but inexplicable. They are not understood. The only certainty is that of recognition. I believe in an inherent content in forms that transcends psychology. The drawing provides a lens to focus the unfamiliar, that which is not directly associated.

The language of forms, values, and relationships I employ came naturally as a result of a lifetime receptivity to the apparently ordinary visual experience. The oddly intimate yet strange nature of objects enlarges their scale in my visual memory. I had a difficult time seeing the Grand Canyon. I looked at it. It is fixed in my memory as a postcard, 4 × 6".

I choose objects on the basis of an attraction that has little to do with their beauty or function. During much of the time I spend looking at them, they seem quite dull. But, over a period of time, they repeatedly assert a transient presence that is mysterious and startling.

I have worked most consistently with vessels — abstract, geometrical forms. They are the most receptive of objects. They hold light and space. They freeze an arrangement of gestural shapes that can be read in much the same way as sheet music.

The vessels are not the subjects of the drawings. They convey what is about to happen and what has just happened. The subject is the transitional moment in a dramatic sequence from another context. The other things I draw may be closer to portraiture in the staged tradition: portraiture that implies something about the life of the forms. The meticulous attention I devote to detail is misleading.

I retain the English term, "still life," as an appropriate classification for my work. I do not think of it as Webster defines it. The words carry an inherent ambiguity that makes them, perhaps, the most accurate verbal expression of the subject matter's potential.

Adrienne Joy
June 1983
Vessel Series V: Aria  1976
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 14½ x 19
Mixmaster III: Model 3002, no. 2  1983
Graphite/Stratmore; 27 × 21
Mixmaster III: Model 3002, no. 3  1983
Graphite/Stratmore; 27 × 21
Inkop, Eggshells 1981
Charcoal pencil & graphite/Arches cover; 12 x 10
Notions, Study  1983
Graphite/Stratmore; 14½ x 19
Project 1981
Charcoal pencil & graphite/Arches cover; 14 x 19
Mixmaster I: Universal Electric Mixabeater  1981
Graphite/Stratmore; 20½ x 16
Vessel Series I: Pandora's Box, no. 1  1976
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 14½ x 19
Vessel Series IV: Union  1976
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 14½ × 19
Vessel Series VIII: Masterbuilder  1977
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 18½ × 14½
Vessel Series XII: Pandora's Box, no. 2  1977
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 14 1/2 × 19
Coll: Quentin and Annabelle Joy
Mixmaster II: Sunbeam, no. 1  1982
Graphite/Stratmore; 29 × 21
Mixmaster II: Sunbeam, no. 2  1982
Graphite/Stratmore; 29 × 21
Couple  1977
Charcoal pencil & graphite/Arches cover; 12 x 10
Private Collection
Gathering  1983
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 20½ × 27
Rope II: Games
Graphite/Stratmore; 16 x 19
Rollerskates  1983
Graphite/Stratmore; 26 × 20
Vessel Series III: Poet  1976
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 14½ x 19
Vessel Series IX: Beacon 1983
Charcoal pencil/Arches cover; 14½ × 18
Self Portrait  1982
Graphite/Stratmore; 21 × 16

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Born: Oakland, California, 1950

Studied at: Santa Rosa Community College
           University of California, Davis
           State University of New York at Binghamton

Studied with: Wayne Thiebaud
              Don DeMauro