

*RELAY DRAWINGS:*  
EYE, HAND, OTHER



LUCA BUVOLI

CHARLES GOLDMAN

JOHNNA MacARTHUR

GERHARD MAYER

FRANÇOIS MORELLI

JOYCE PENSATO

MARK DEAN VECA

SEAN WATSON

YUKINORI YANAGI

Curated by Stuart Horodner and Sara Kellner

**RELAY:**

DRAWN TO READYMADES

Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center  
2495 Main Street, Suite 425  
Buffalo, NY 14214

*April 4. 1998 – May 29. 1998*

**RELAY DRAWINGS:**

EYE, HAND, OTHER

Bucknell Art Gallery  
Bucknell University  
Lewisburg, PA 17873

*January 11. 1999 – February 19. 1999*



## RELAY Transcript

Stuart Horodner

*[Pressing PLAY and RECORD at the same time]*

**Stuart Horodner:** Thank you all for coming. Sara Kellner and I organized the Relay exhibitions by selecting nine artists that use strategies of repetition, abdication, restriction, and accumulation in order to make drawings. And if not drawings per se, works *about* drawing. Our early discussions centered on conceptual gestures, Readymades, and notions of relay.

Sol, you said that, "A work of art may be understood as a conductor from the artist's mind to the viewer's."

**Sol Lewitt:** But it may never reach the viewer, or it may never leave the artist's mind.

**Horodner:** And sometimes a few carefully placed lines... [looks at Duchamp]

**Marcel Duchamp:** What did I do with that "Mona Lisa?" Nothing. I drew a mustache and a beard, that's all.

**Horodner:** Oh, come on. You performed a sex change operation on the Da Vinci with a few strokes of a pencil... and a year later, *you* became a woman (Rose Sélavy).



Marcel Duchamp

"L.H.O.O.Q."

7 3/4" x 4 7/8"

1919

Rectified Readymade:  
pencil on a reproduction  
Private Collection, Paris



**Carolee Schneemann**  
 "Up To and Including  
 Her Limits"  
 1976  
 Performance view  
 Studiogalerie, Berlin

**Carolee Schneemann:** In my performance *Up To and Including Her Limits*, the movements and gestures which produce the strokes occur through the torsion of my body wound, balanced with the rope. My only thought is to be an extension of the rope itself. Until discomfort or loss of concentration, I function as a pencil.

**Horodner:** Can we discuss the role of chance? Like Yukinori Yanagi allowing the movements of an ant to dictate the lines he will draw.

**Duchamp:** The idea of "chance" which many people were thinking about at the time, struck me too. The intention consisted above all in forgetting the hand, since, fundamentally, even your hand is chance.

**Charles Simic:** My entire practice consists of submitting to chance only to cheat on it. I agree with Vincent Huidobro, who said long ago: "Chance is fine when you're dealt five aces or at least four queens. Otherwise, forget it."

**François Morelli :** My drawings have no trace of hand. I am stamping a mechanical representation. But I'd be the first one to talk about hand in them. Not as mark, but as decision, hand as placement, hand as construction. I distrust my own love of drawing and question it to see where it can go. You see what I mean?

**Charles Goldman:** Yes, I understand. It's something that I talk about a lot. Not just in relationship to this project, but I mistrust my own facility. This kind of doubting...

**Morelli:** Doubt, yeah. The relationship of doubt. We've gotten to the point of valuing the untrained hand and mistrusting the trained hand.

**Lewitt:** Banal ideas cannot be rescued by beautiful execution, and when an artist learns his craft too well he makes slick art.

**Philip Guston:** The worst thing in the world is to make judgements. What I always try to do is to eliminate, as much as possible, the time span between thinking and doing. The ideal is to think and to do at the same second.

**Sara Kellner:** What about erasure?

**Simic:** It was Octavio Paz, I believe, who told me the story about going to visit Andre Breton in Paris after World War II, being admitted and told to wait because the poet was engaged. Indeed he could see, from the living room where he was seated, Breton furiously writing in his study. After a while he came out, they greeted each other, and set out to have lunch in a nearby restaurant.

"What were you working on, *maître*?" Paz inquired as they were strolling to their destination.

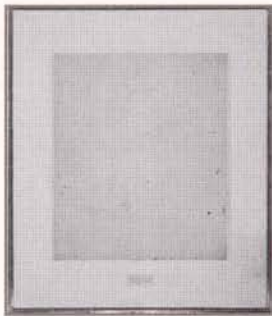
"I was doing some automatic writing," Breton replied.

"But," Paz exclaimed in astonishment, "I saw you erase repeatedly!"

"It wasn't automatic enough," Breton answered the young poet.

**Robert Rauschenberg:** I love drawing, and one of the things I wanted to try was an all-eraser drawing. I did drawings myself and erased them, but that seemed like fifty-fifty. So then I knew I had to pull back farther. If it was going to be an all-eraser drawing, it had to be art in the beginning, and I went to Bill de Kooning and told him about it. Even though he didn't approve of it, he didn't want to interfere with my work. He said, "Now, I'm going to give you one really hard to erase." And he was right. I think I spent nearly three weeks with no fewer than fifteen kinds of erasers. And that made it real.

**Joyce Pensato:** I really got into Mickey Mouse when I was living upstate and was working outside. I had this figure, he had no arms or legs. He was battered and really tiny, and I wanted to work really large, large scale. Living in the country, I



**Robert Rauschenberg**

"Erased de Kooning Drawing"  
25 1/4" x 21 3/4" x 1/2"  
1953

Traces of ink and crayon on  
paper, with mat and label  
hand-lettered in ink in  
gold leaf-frame  
Collection,  
Museum of Modern Art,  
San Francisco



Henri Matisse

"Nice-Cimiez, Hotel  
Regina"

1950

Photo © PARIS MATCH-  
Walter Caron

could back far away and I wanted to keep it simple, like an abstraction. So you could see it far away. And the more I did it, the more it became personal. I left the drawings outside in a hurricane. I just left them out there, so part of the earth incorporated with the drawing, it got all grungy and gray. I found when I erased it, the paper would break away and it had this wonderful light.

**Henri Matisse:** Once my emotive line has modeled the light of my white paper without destroying its precious whiteness, I can neither add nor take anything away. The page is written; no correction possible. Ingres said that drawing is like a basket: you cannot remove a cane without making a hole.

**Pensato:** I really look. I really connect. I have to have it in front of me. They have to be mine, my models. I take certain parts from different odd toys and then it all becomes one.

**Mark Dean Veca:** I've formed a mysterious creature using parts of Popeye—his arm and hat together. Repeating it and using it in every way that I could think of, it took on a life of its own. What I'm using now, are those kinds of shapes, the kinds of lines that come from cartoons. It's sort of once removed, like second generation. It's hard to pinpoint exactly what about those types of images draw me to them. It's just something that I grew up with and it was ingrained in me.

**Goldman:** Can I jump in at this point? Because I was thinking about this idea of a composite in terms of when I'm out on the street, waiting for people to come by. I just sit there with my sign, "Draw My Portrait. \$1 Donation Offered. I Pay You." The drawings are proof of my existence and proof of my interaction with these people. In a sense, the conversations and interactions are the most important things. My installation is a reverse composite. "Portrait Project (Buffalo)" ended up being 123 different images of myself. I guess what I'm really interested in, is how the drawings deviate from what is the ready-made (me), yet never hit it.

**Lewitt:** The artist cannot imagine his art, and cannot perceive it until it is complete.

**Horodner:** I remember a story about someone in art school who signed all the pages of his newsprint pad before making a single drawing.

*[everyone laughs]*

**Robert Motherwell:** Drawing can be as clear-cut as one's father's precepts. Drawing satisfies our sense of definition, even if we cannot define "drawing" itself.

**John Berger:** To draw is to look, examining the structure of appearances. A drawing of a tree shows not a tree, but a tree-being-looked-at.

*[everyone talks at once]*

**Matisse:** An old Chinese proverb: when you draw a tree, you must feel yourself gradually growing with it.

**Louise Bourgeois :** Drawings are "thought feathers," they are ideas that I seize in mid-flight and put down on paper.

**Lewitt:** Ideas alone can be works of art; they are in a chain of development that may eventually find some form. All ideas need not be made physical.

**Motherwell:** Drawing is a racing yacht, cutting through the ocean. Painting is the ocean itself.

**Jackson Pollock:** Most of the paint I use is liquid, flowing...the brushes are used

more as sticks and do not touch the surface...I'm able to be more free...and move about...with greater ease...it seems possible to control the flow of paint to a great extent... I deny the accident; I have a general notion of what I'm about and what the results will be...I approach painting in the same sense one approaches drawing, that is, it's direct...

**Luca Buvoli:** I have the need to recreate the physicality of comic book heroes, the apex of their action or non-action through this filter, this physical line. I find myself trying to reconstruct in materials which have other meanings — maybe things that I find in the street or that I buy from homeless people — a form which is evocative of the original drawings that inspired the mythology I believed in as a child. The ideal but also the relationship between the ideal and the inability to reach the ideal. The gap between this element of perfection and purity and the vulnerable presence that tries to represent this ideal.

**Alberto Giacometti:** I know that it is utterly impossible for me to model, paint or draw a head, for instance, as I see it, and still this is the only thing I am attempting to do. All that I will be able to make will only be a pale image of what I see and my success will always be less than my failure or, perhaps, the success will be equal to my failure. I do not know whether I work in order to make something or in order to know why I cannot make what I would like to make.

**Morelli:** We're questioning the notion of freedom and self-expression. At the end of this century, we're saying, "what is this expression?" A lot of us are showing the limitations, the circuitous patterns, like abdicating to the art or to the tools or the constraints, hitting those limitations constantly. Sometimes it's obvious at the beginning, sometimes at the end, sometimes it's historically mirrored back to us, sometimes existentially mirrored back.

**Gerhard Mayer:** I use two ready-mades. One the elliptic stencil—the hardware, and the other is, 8 rules—the software. This may be caused by the splitting of myself. One is the expressionist, the other is a bureaucrat. The expressionist is very punky, very flippy, can't do anything, wants too much. The other one, the bureaucrat says, "Oh no! That's not good." The stencil I used 20 years ago when I was cabinet making, and afterwards I created the rules. They are like walking. Walking and thinking about a philosophy of everything. And with each step you can have another intention. With the stencil I don't have to think about a hand written structure, I just walk. When I'm walking, I don't have to imagine, "left, right, left, right." I'm just walking. The stencil and the rules give me this possibility to walk or draw and have a place and capacity for many important things.

**Sean Watson:** My drawings relay back and forth between informing you that they may be a photograph, or some type of print, you might not automatically think they are drawings. And then, when people get closer and see that it's broken up, "oh, maybe it's a computer." You can approach them formally or emotionally. The drawings contextualize or bring together the two worlds that I work in, the digital and the visceral. The visceral being how I express myself, and the digital being how I bring in an income. They link with this inverted drawing that's enlarged. It changes everything. It's no longer just a journal page. No longer just a print. It becomes something that I have yet to define.

**Lewitt:** The artist may not necessarily understand his own art. His perception is neither better nor worse than that of others.

**Johnna MacArthur:** It's about the process of coming to clarity, understanding ideas, how to make art a creative process. That for me has become the art. The performative aspect of it, with the video acting as witness. So as viewer you have the perspective of the maker. You are going through the motions of this particular piece,

writing a statement, sending it out there. You know when you write something down it becomes very real. When you keep things in your head they almost don't exist. It does but it doesn't. It hasn't been seen, it hasn't been manifested in any form. Once it's out there, it's no longer yours. It's part of the symbolic world. This piece is about that horror of putting yourself out there and trying to get to erase it, take it out. As a viewer, you watch it, you see it, read it. You watch it go away, but it doesn't go away because you remember what's been written.

**Jasper Johns:** Not a drawing, not a speech, but if it were, all would be described and swallowed up by the drawing, the speech.

*[tape stops]*



**Robert Watts**

"Tree Working, Artist Resting"

6 7/8 x 10 3/4

1983

enlargement from

color Polaroid

Courtesy: Robert Watts

Studio Archive, NYC

## Notes

**John Berger's** comments were taken from "Drawn to that moment," *The Sense of Sight*, Vintage International, Random House, Inc., NY, 1985, p.150.

**Louise Bourgeois'** comments were taken from an interview with Marie-Laure Bernadac, *Pensée-plumes*, musée national d'art moderne, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1995, pp.73-81.

**Marcel Duchamp's** comments were taken from *Dialogues with Duchamp*, by Pierre Cabanne, originally published by Editions Belfond, London, 1979. Reprinted by Da Capo Press, Inc., NY., p. 46, p.62.

**Alberto Giacometti's** comments were taken from a statement in Paris, May 17, 1959, included in *New Images Of Man*, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1959, p. 68.

**Philip Guston's** comments were taken from "Philip Guston Talking," from *Philip Guston: Paintings 1969-80*, exhibition catalogue, edited by Nicolas Serota, Whitechapel Gallery, London, 1982, p.53.

**Jasper Johns'** comments were taken from *Writings, Sketchbook Notes, Interviews*, edited by Kirk Varnedoe, Museum of Modern Art, NY, 1996, pp. 49-54.

**Sol Lewitt's** comments were taken from "Sentences on Conceptual Art," *Six Years: The dematerialization of the art object*, compiled by Lucy Lippard, Praeger Publishers Inc., NY, 1973, pp.75-76.

**Henri Matisse's** comments were taken from *The Drawings of Henri Matisse*, by John Elderfield, Thames and Hudson Inc., NY, 1985, p. 117, p. 125.

**Robert Motherwell's** comments were taken from his catalog essay for *The Drawing Society National Exhibition 1970*, The Drawing Society, NY, 1970, p. 7.

**Jackson Pollock's** comments were taken from a handwritten note in the artist's files.

**Robert Rauschenberg's** comments were taken from *Painters Painting: A Candid History of the Modern Scene 1940-70*, by Emile De Antonio and Mitch Tuchman, Abbeville Press, NY, 1984, pp.91-92.

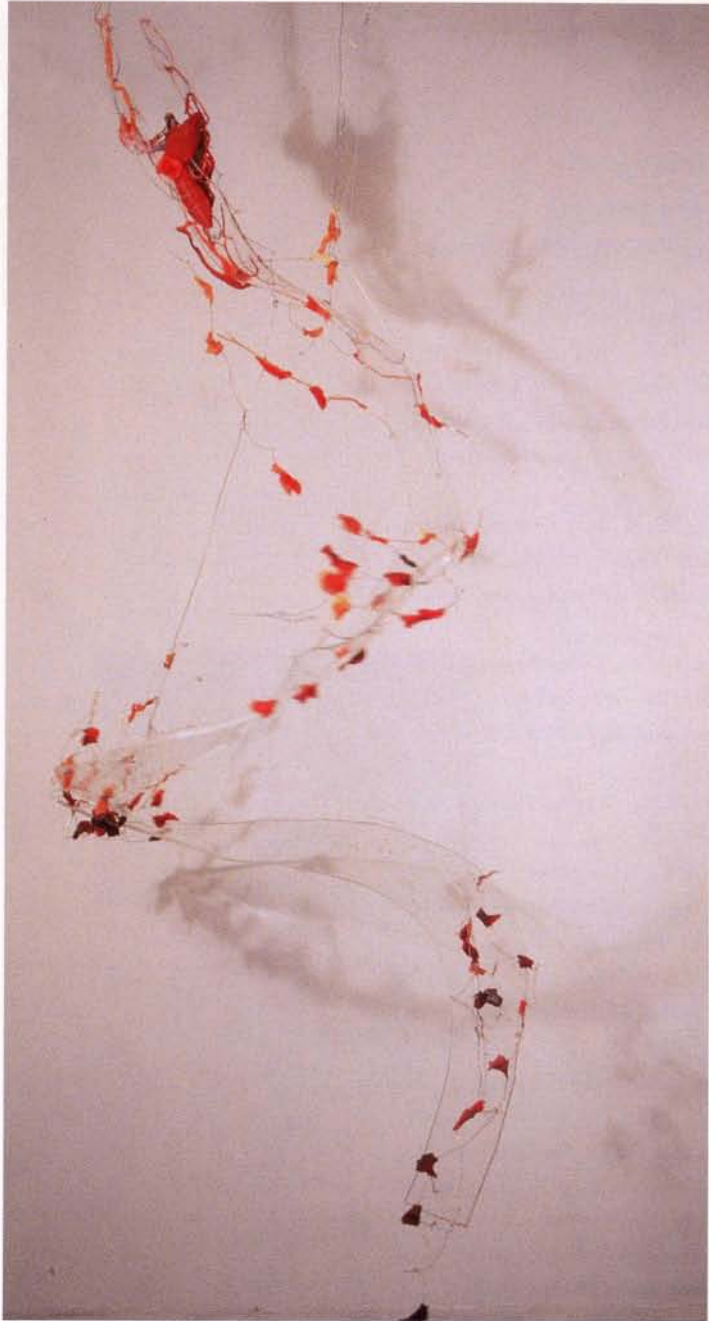
**Carolee Schneemann's** comments were taken from "Up To and Including Her Limits," *More Than Meat Joy: Performance Works and Selected Writings*, edited by Bruce R. McPherson, McPherson & Company, NY, 1997, p.231.

**Charles Simic's** comments were taken from "The Little Venus of Eskimos," *The Return of the Cadavre Exquis*, The Drawing Center, NYC, 1993, pp. 26-27.

Comments by **Mark Dean Veca**, **Joyce Pensato**, **Charles Goldman**, **Luca Buvoli**, **François Morelli**, **Gerhard Mayer**, **Sean Watson**, and **Johnna MacArthur**, were taken from a taped group discussion at Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY, April 4, 1998.

**Sara Kellner's** and **Stuart Horodner's** comments were written by Stuart Horodner.

The story of the kid in art school who signed his newsprint pad was provided by Paul Romley.



Can't you see that  
I am Burning? (A comic figure), 1992



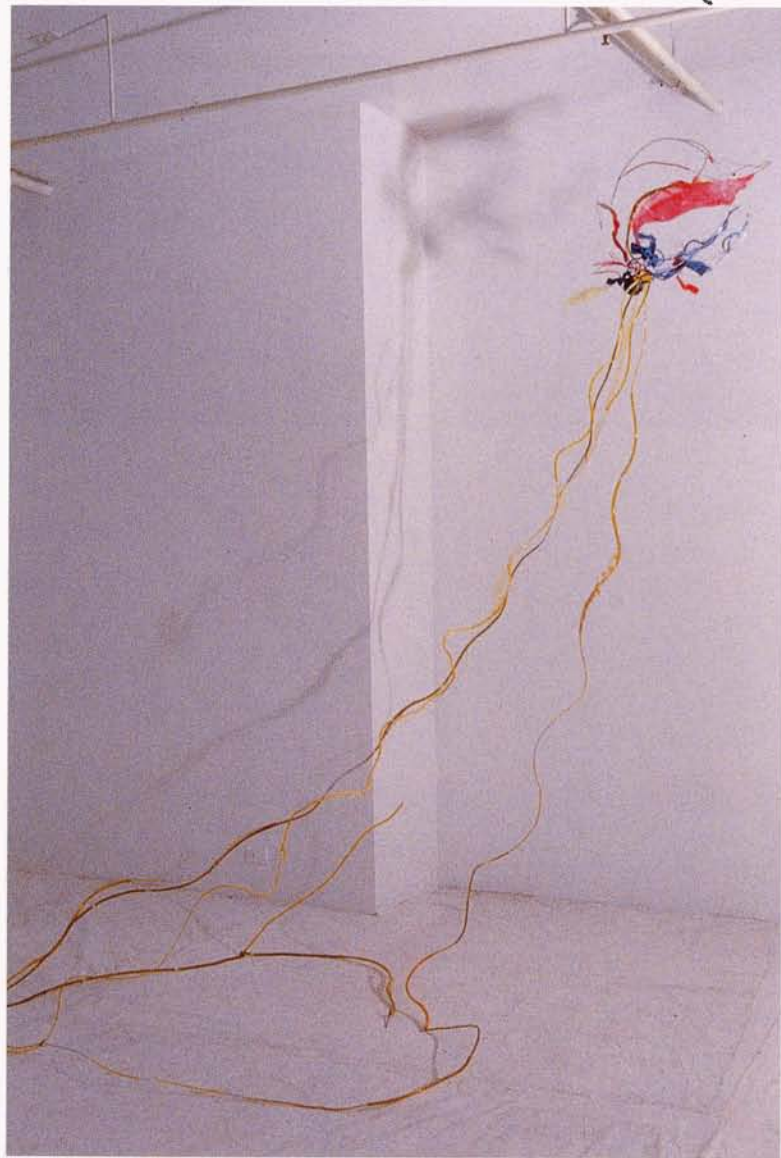
Comic Books and <sup>movie</sup> Posters (animated film!)  
for wherever you are Not

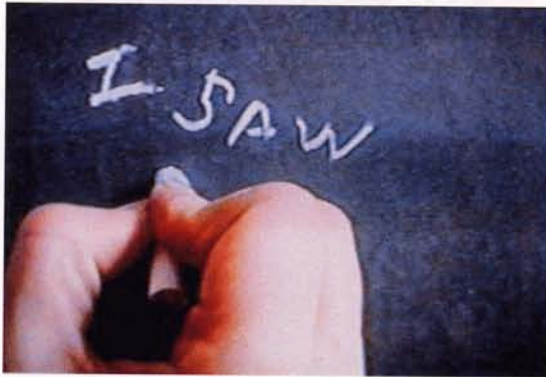


LUCA BUVOLI



Was it The  
-What About the  
Estrangement?  
(Action Figure).  
1996





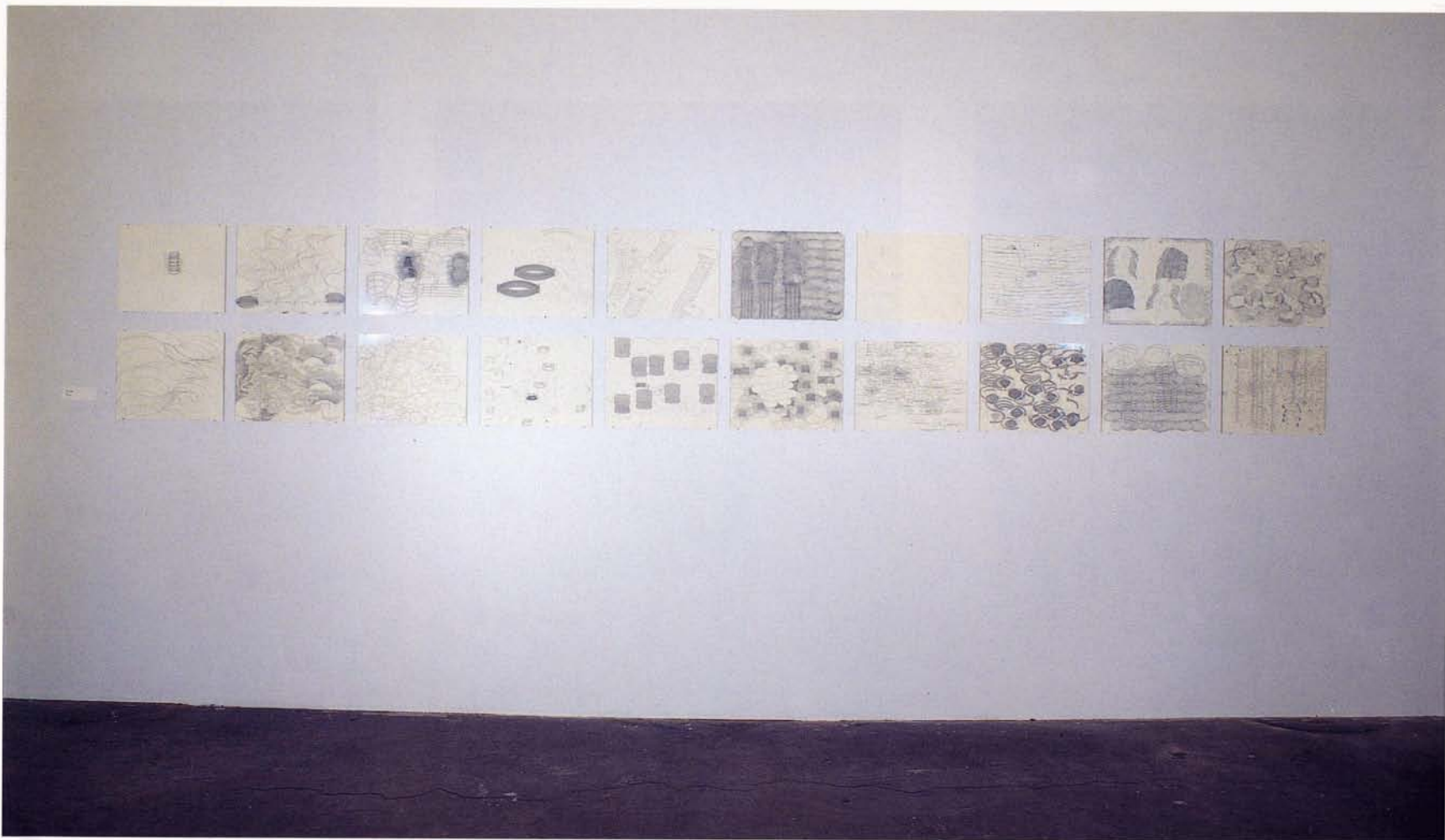
JOHNNA MacARTHUR

*Chalk Confessions*

1996

Video (16:41)





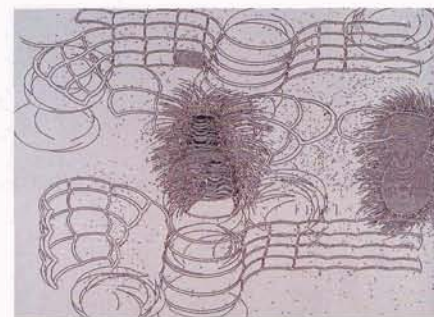
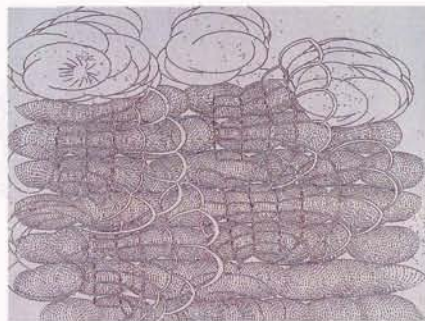
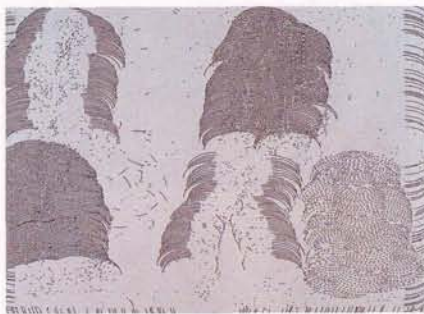
GERHARD MAYER

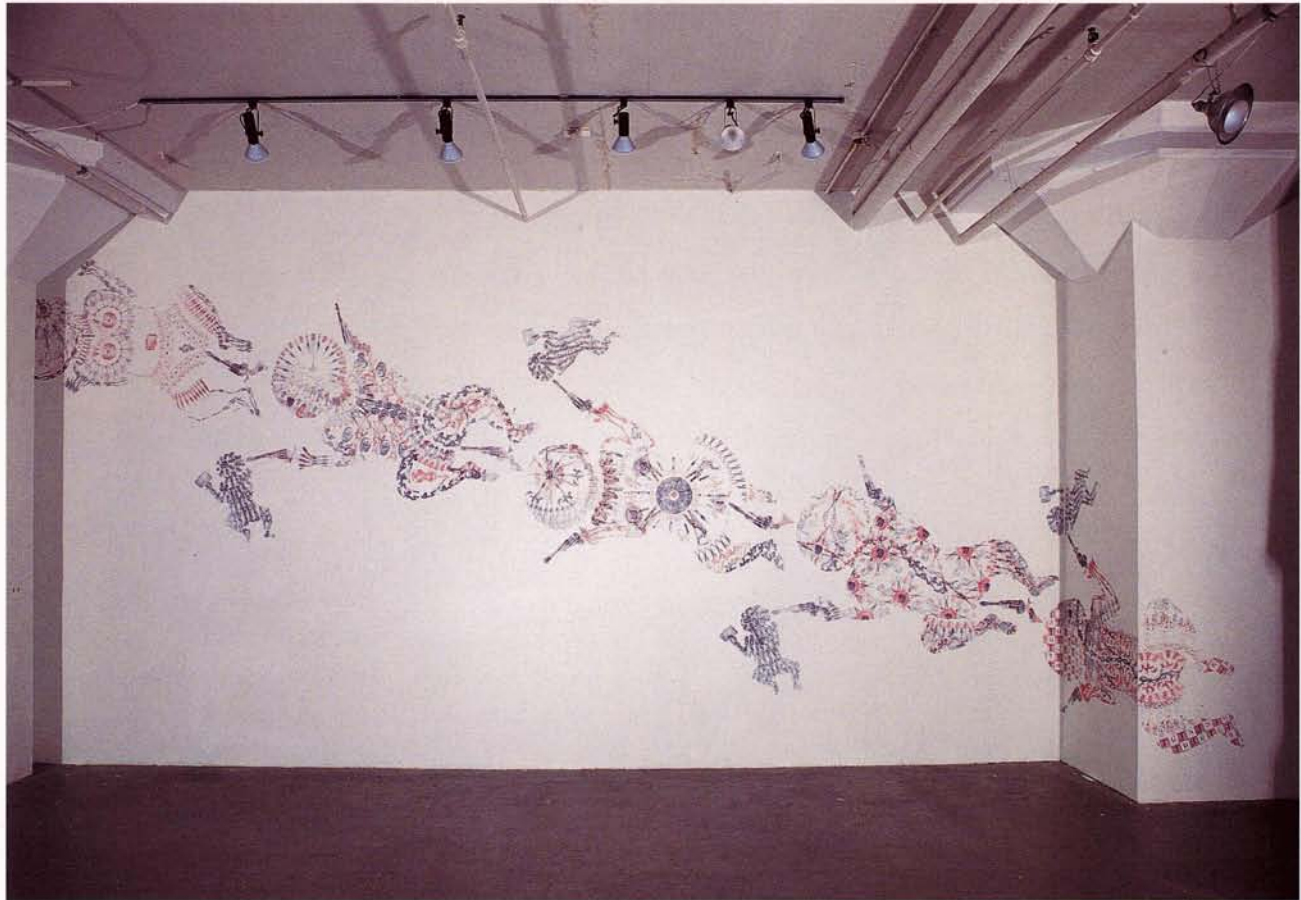
*Untitled Ink on paper. (20 drawings)*

1998

each 13.5 x 17 inches

1. Each drawing's paper measures 13.5 by 17 inches.
2. Each drawing may only be created using one size and form of stencil.
3. The ellipse must always be horizontal.
4. The lines may not cross the paper's edge.
5. A complete ellipse may not be drawn.
6. Three or more fragments are to be drawn in each position of the elliptic stencil.
7. No line may cross another; each should keep at a distance—however small—from the next.
8. No dots may appear; only lines are allowed.





FRANÇOIS MORELLI (HALLWALLS)

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow  
of death, I will fear no evil. Psalm 23*

1998

Ink on drywall, 156 x 252 inches



FRANÇOIS MORELLI (BUCKNELL)

*Massacre of the Innocents / May the Real Baby Jesus Please Stand / Who Left The Gun Sticking in the Baby's Ass?*

1998

Ink and tape on paper template (used to produce *Yea, though I walk...*), ink on column,  
60 x 368 x 78 inches



JOYCE PENSATO (HALLWALLS)

*Hallwalls Donald*

1998

Charcoal on drywall, 156 x 264 inches



JOYCE PENSATO (BUCKNELL)

*Untitled (Country Mess)*

1999

Charcoal on plywood, 127 x 240 inches



# DRAW MY PORTRAIT

CHARLES GOLDMAN

*NAME* \_\_\_\_\_

*DATE* \_\_\_\_\_

*PLACE* \_\_\_\_\_



MARK DEAN VECA (HALLWALLS)

*Son of Gummi Grotto*

1998

Ink, vinyl, plaster, and casein on drywall, 156 x 264 inches

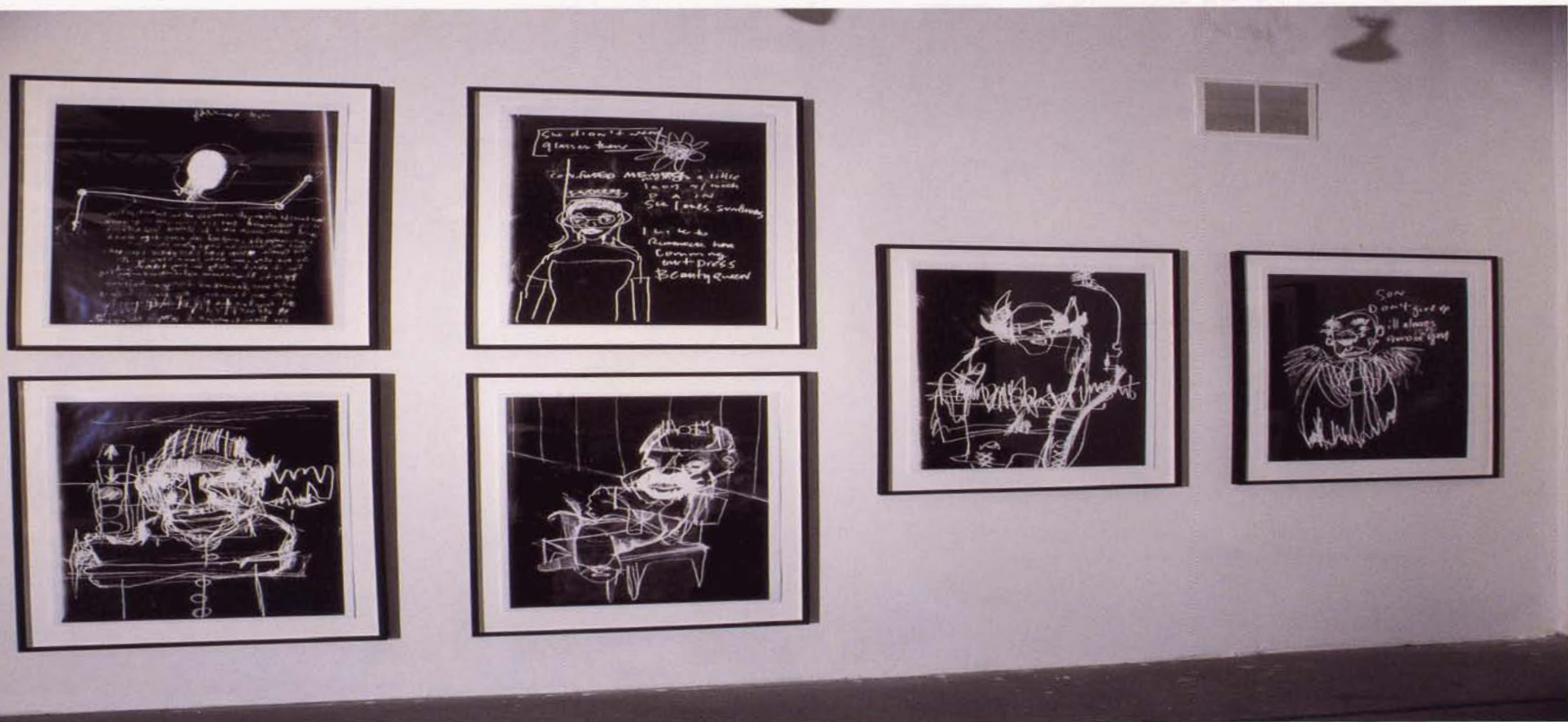


MARK DEAN VECA (BUCKNELL)

*Good Wil Grotto*

1999

Ink, chalk, and casein on plywood, 127 x 264 inches

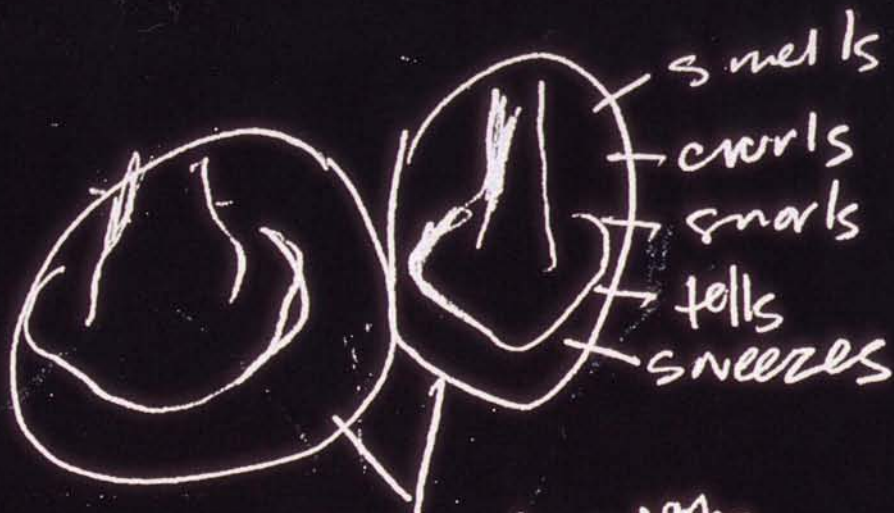


SEAN WATSON

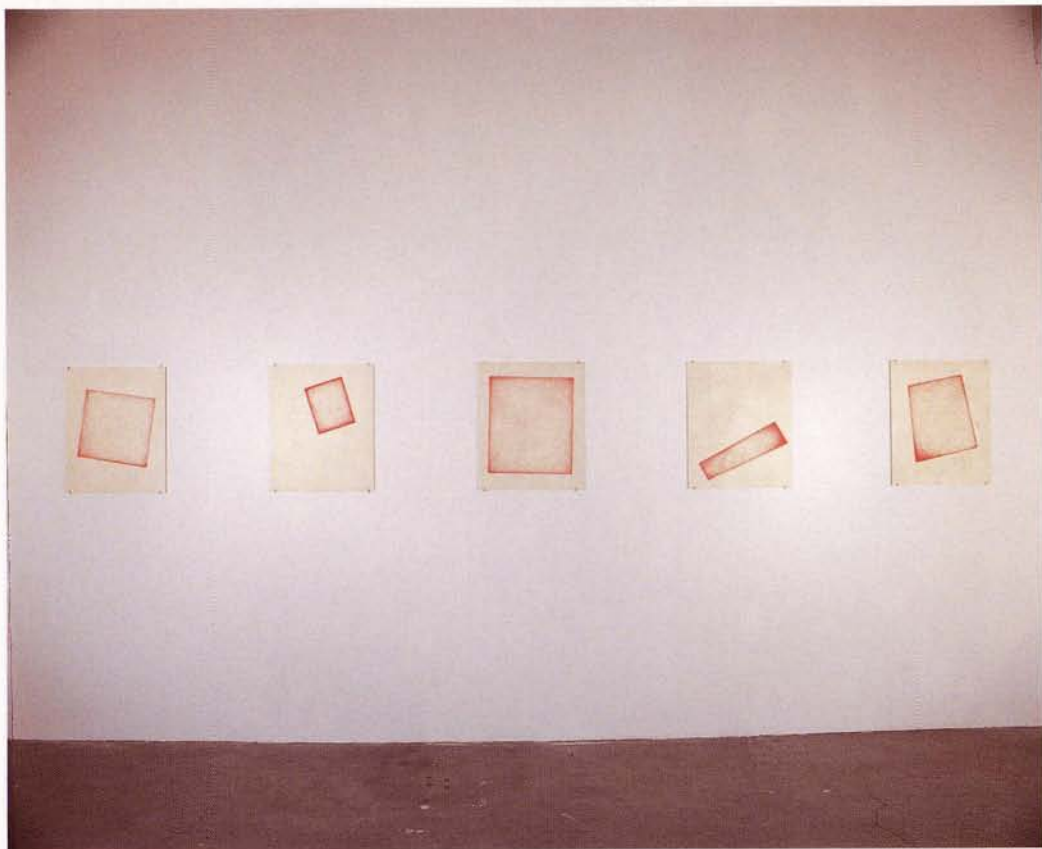
*From the possibly / maybe series*

1997

Novajet print on paper, each 39 x 28.5 inches



that Watson nose  
"can <sup>always</sup> tell a Watson by  
The Nose

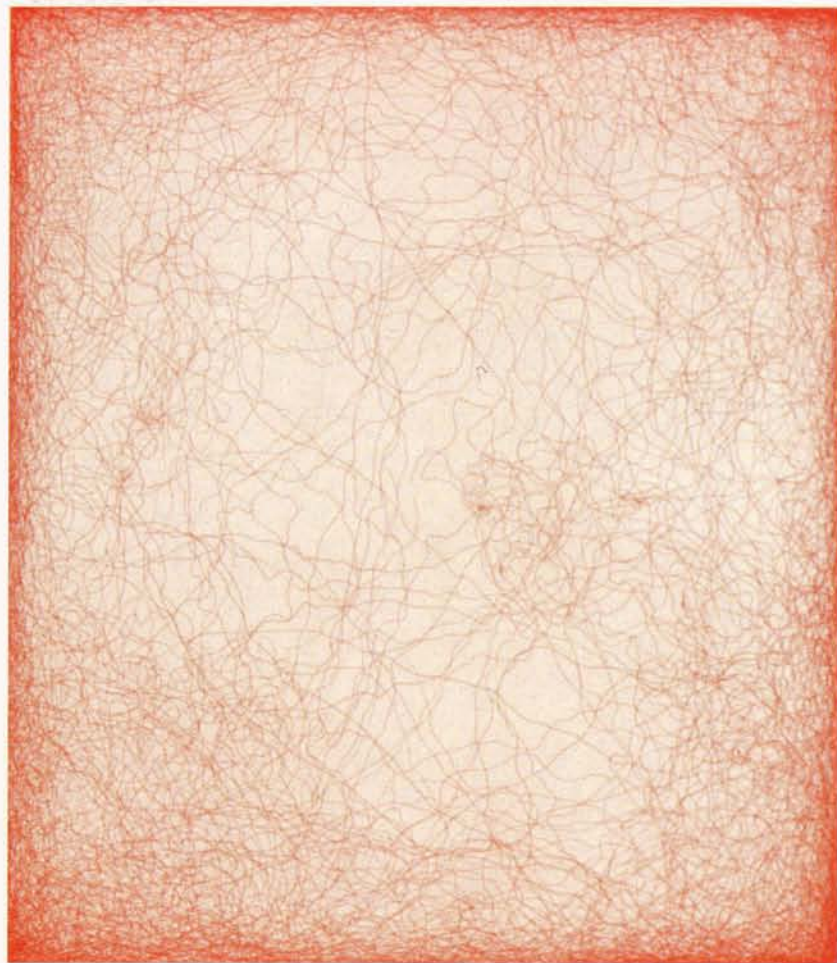


YUKINORI YANAGI

*Wandering Position*

1997

Portfolio of 5 line etchings, each 24 x 20 inches



## The Artists

**Luca Buvoli lives and works in New York City.**

**Charles Goldman lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.**

**Johnna MacArthur lives and works in New York City.**

**Gerhard Mayer lives and works in Nuremberg, Germany.**

**François Morelli lives and works in Montreal, Quebec, Canada.**

**Joyce Pensato lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.**

**Sean Watson lives and works in Los Angeles, California.**

**Mark Dean Veca lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.**

**Yukinori Yanagi lives and works in New York City.**

Artworks courtesy the artists.

Yukinori Yanagi's Wandering Position etchings courtesy Peter Blum Editions, NYC.

Installation photos:

Hallwalls-Charley Stiffler

Bucknell-Frank E. Hagenbuch

In the Relay exhibitions, Luca Buvoli presented mixed media sculptures, unique comic books, and movie poster drawings which promote his films. Charles Goldman presented the accumulated drawings made by passersby at various locations in Buffalo, and at the Susquehanna Valley Mall in Selinsgrove, PA.

In our attempt to use the catalog as an alternative site which continues the Relay ideas from exhibition to documentation, Luca designed his 2 page spread, and Charles invites readers to continue his Portrait Project by drawing him on the page provided.

Cover: Mark Dean Veca working on  
*Good Wil Grotto*  
Photo by Stuart Horodner

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