

## Definition: Drawing

### Noun

1. An illustration that is drawn by hand and published in a book or magazine; "it is shown by the drawing in Fig. 7".
2. Picture produced by representing forms or objects on a surface by means of lines; "he did complicated pen-and-ink drawings like medieval miniatures".
3. The creation of artistic drawings; "he learned drawing from his father".

### ...Webster's Dictionary

Drawing has been around since the dawn of human existence. From the abstraction of ancient drawings to the extreme representational aspects of the classical work of the Renaissance era, drawing has been a way that human beings have expressed the experience of their world. Yet, most of us have a certain idea or definition of what drawing is. **Present Tense**, the drawing exhibition that is now hanging at **artSPACE@16**, is sure to challenge one's definition of drawing.

**Present Tense** is a juried exhibition of 125 drawings from various artists. What is so striking about this show is how each artist defines what drawing is. This is not just walls full of pencil sketches but an array of work ranging from materials such as pencil to crocheted yarn. While much of the work is two-dimensional in nature, other works such as Sara Hairston-Medice "Untitled III", "Small I", and "Untitled II" are more sculptural or fibrous.

Sara Hairston-Medice's work is vividly colored. The saturated colors draw the viewer in. The softness of the yarn almost begs to be touched. Hairston-Medice spoke a bit about her work. She acknowledged that her work could be taken as "fiber art" or sculpture. She does not consider her work as such. She considers it drawing. She commented on how she almost draws in the air as she is creating. After hearing her speak about her work, one can see just what she means by considering her work drawings. There are lines within her work that twist and turn in a very organic manner. The lines draw the eye in and out as if one was on a visual rollercoaster. The energy and movement that is contained in Hairston-Medice's work makes her pieces intriguing and powerful.

Line is extremely important to drawing. Whereas Hairston-Medice's lines reach out into the space around the work, other works, like "PT Cruiser" and "Grind" by Bernadette Murch, are made with intricate, illustrative lines. Murch's drawings are very complex. The more one looks at these drawings the more one sees. "PT Cruiser" is beautifully illustrated. The intricate markings bring the eye throughout the drawing. There is quite a sense of humor happening within this piece. Bernadette Murch spoke briefly about her work. She stated that this is the first time she had shown her drawings. During her battle with cancer, drawing became a source of catharsis for her. She spoke about starting with doodles and just letting go of the outcome and enjoying the process of drawing. Within "Pt Cruiser," Murch's courageous battle weaves through the lines. For this artist drawing was a source of survival. It all started with a doodle. Her other piece "Grind" is beautifully illustrated and is very geometric in form. The creature that is represented in this drawing is almost like a mechanical bird; at closer glance one can see the organic nature of the piece as well. The details in both of these works are breathtaking. The viewing of these pieces should not be rushed.

Some of the more typical materials that one may think of using with drawing usually are pencil, pen and ink, pastels, and conté crayon. In the contemporary art world this idea is challenged often. **Present Tense** is a shining example of that challenge. Works such as Kaz Naganuma's "Composed Walk" series use materials like polyester, steel wire, and drafting tape. Whether it is the graphite making the lines in these pieces or steel wire and tape, the lines take

the viewer on a journey. This journey twists and turns but then branches off into different areas and then stops abruptly. The drawing in these pieces is very delicate.

Much of the work in this show is important for its emotional content. Rick Fox's "My Dad Died Yesterday Series" creates a somber mood that is beautiful. The sentiment in these drawings is incredibly powerful. The ink wash process that is used throughout most of these pieces creates softness. The facial expressions, although indistinct, speak a thousand words about the experience that is portrayed within these works. These pieces are incredibly moving and bring the viewer into the private experience of the artist. W. James Herbert's "A Dangerous Game" effectively portrays the childish manner in which world leaders disrespect humanity in the name of ego and capital. The artist's point of view is very strong and "in your face" much like the war in Iraq itself. Looking at this drawing, it is difficult to ignore the catastrophe that is now in progress.

Only a handful of artists are spoken about in this article. There are so many more pieces to be viewed. Sand T has done a fabulous job as curator and owner of **artSPACE@16**. Heidi M. Marston had an exceedingly difficult task in front of her jurying a show with such a high volume of artists. This show is strong as well as moving. It is obvious that the artists in the exhibit put a great deal of spirit and time into their work.

On the other hand, because of the large volume of drawings, the show can feel a bit overwhelming. During the artist talk the crowd became overwhelming as well and at times drowned out the artist that was speaking. At one point one of the artists remarked that the audience was not interested in the making of her work. The audience did eventually simmer down and the artist was able to share her artistic process. Artists' insights are very important to the exhibition of their work. More organization of the artist talk could have made it run more smoothly.

The word "*drawing*" for many people means a certain action or visual experience. It brings up visions of pencil, chalk, and pen on paper. What drawing involves is line. Many amazing drawings are started with a simple doodle. Thanks to the artists, juror Heidi Marston, and curator Sand T, ***Present Tense*** at **artSPACE@16** pushes the boundaries of what is considered drawing. As one walks through this exhibition the denotation of drawing is almost sure to change.

*Present Tense is on view Saturdays 12:00-5:00 through July 29 or by appointment. Please visit [www.artspaceat16.com](http://www.artspaceat16.com) for more information, or call 781-321-8058 Voice Box \*3.*

- Pamela Sheridan

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