

On Drawing:

*A Conversation with Werner H. Kramarsky,
Connie Butler, and Harry Cooper*



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mean paper training, that's what we do with puppies. People who want to make paper. And because paper is, of course, for somebody who collects drawings, of great interest, I have known them for a long time. They came to me and asked me to pick seven artists who would either have paper made for them at Dieu Donn e or participate in making paper art at the paper mill, and we would then jointly show that work. And, yes, a lot of that work came very close to three-dimensional. Certainly they are more than relief prints when you look at Richard Serra's 9-foot by 9-foot drawing, in which the surface comes four or five inches off the paper. They're still drawings. They're really, really still drawings. There's nothing sculptured about that. He doesn't see them as sculpture. He sees them as drawings, and to some extent the argument—what is a drawing and what isn't a drawing anymore—is becoming less meaningful and becoming more and more difficult to define.

PVK: We're talking about sculpture, and when you're talking about it, Wynn, I think you're talking about the notion of sculpture and it sounds like the notion of pre-installation art when the sculpture is an object. You say you're actually hearing from young artists that they want to do sculpture? Because it seems like there's such a predominance of installation art now that the idea of making a singular, self-contained sculptural piece seems, at least in some circles, to have fallen out of favor.

WK: But at what point is installation art no longer installation art—at what point is it a sculpture? Is the ephemeral aspect of installation art what is determinate? I don't know where it is, but there are works that I see which sit on the ground and are three-sided—three-dimensional—that you might call installation art and that somebody else might call sculpture. But people want to do outdoor pieces that relate to what they have been drawing and painting, that come out of that training and that practice that they now want to in some way go further with.

PVK: Sharon Louden would be a good example.

WK: Well, [she] is a classical example.

PVK: She did a beautiful outdoor piece at Connemara last year.

WK: Yes, and the drawing that's in the show. I've known Sharon now I think 10 years, 10, 12 years maybe even, and she was making work on paper this size and was afraid to go anywhere else. It's come a long way.

HC: I'm curious, Wynn, about painting, and Connie was starting to talk about this. It seems to me that there is, in fact, a close relation between drawing and sculpture in the collection even if it's not universal at all. What about painting? How many of your artists go back to the studio and put oil on canvas? I'm guessing it's rather few, and I'm developing a theory that in a way what defines contemporary drawing in your collection is a resistance to painting, a distinction from painting, which isn't at all true when it comes to sculpture. I'm just thinking that that whole huge history of oil on canvas and everything that it means is something which, when once thrown off, can be liberating and can lead to all these other kinds of two-dimensional practices.

WK: But you're not talking about the well-established artists now because if either Jasper or Ellsworth Kelly heard you say this they would object rather strenuously, but when you're talking about the younger people, they may be making paintings but they're not getting shown. The paintings aren't getting shown and they're lucky if they can sell drawings. So, you don't even really know. I see the work in the studio, and Sara Sosnowy, who has a couple of drawings here, is a painter who would love to make lots of paintings and sell lots of paintings then she wouldn't have to work as a receptionist in a law office. To some extent gallery economics become operative because the gallery in New York can't sell anything for under \$20,000 in order to make their rent. But these young artists can't get \$20,000 for a 3 by 4-foot