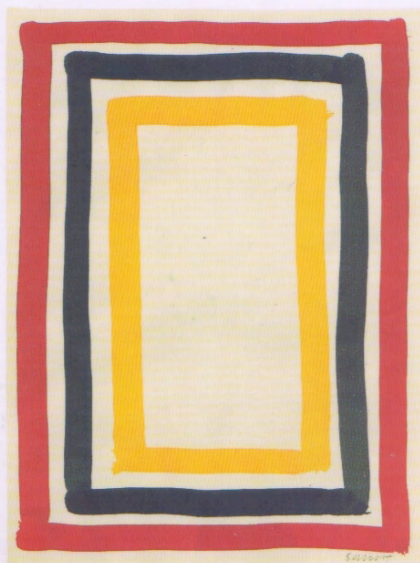
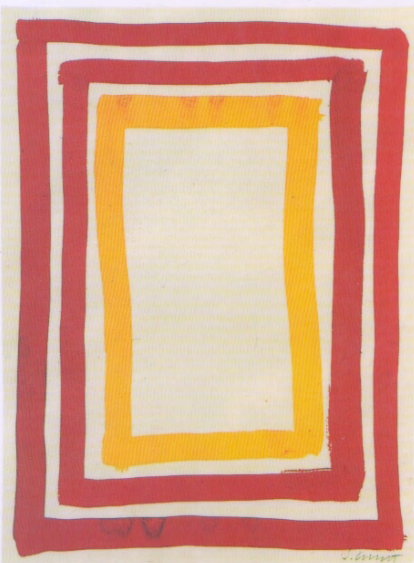


DRAWINGS **of** CHOICE
from a New York Collection



Lenders to the Exhibition

The Collector
The Museum of Modern Art, New York

Exhibition Schedule

KRANNERT ART MUSEUM, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
September 4 to November 3, 2002

ARKANSAS ARTS CENTER, Little Rock, Arkansas
November 14, 2002 to February 2, 2003

GEORGIA MUSEUM OF ART, University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia
February 11 to March 23, 2003

BOWDOIN COLLEGE MUSEUM OF ART, Brunswick, Maine
April 10 to June 8, 2003

CINCINNATI ART MUSEUM, Cincinnati, Ohio
August 22 to November 16, 2003

Funders to the Exhibition

Bank Illinois
Gay Roberts
Anne Slichter on behalf of the William H. G. FitzGerald Family Foundation
Illinois Arts Council
Research Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Sharon Louden

Born 1964, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, works in New York City

53, left

Pinch #4 (from the "Pinching Series"), 1995
Powdered graphite and acrylic matte medium on vellum
29 1/2 x 21 1/2 inches

54, right

Flaps, 1998
Gel medium on gridded mylar
24 x 18 inches

Sharon Louden describes her early works as abstractions of sexually engaged body parts.¹ In *Pinch #4* (1995) and *Flaps* (1998), Louden creates overlapping abstracted bodily forms that incite the viewer to feel physically connected to them. The delicate translucent forms in both works resemble cellular and bodily structures. If they evoke a sense of aggressive movement, they do so in slight, shivering motions like the gestures of nervous fingers or excited sexual organs.

Frenetic movement is a key aspect of Louden's work. In a 2000 installation entitled *Swells and Extensions* Louden shaped overlapping glowing strings into a large biomorphic cluster that seemed to "quiver" in what Alice Winn describes as, "dance dramas frozen in midair."² Similarly, in *Pinch #4* and *Flaps* the tight bunch of strokes overlap and press against each other. Their multidirectional positioning combined with their multilayered format gives the clusters the impression of frantic motion.

In *Flaps*, Louden complicates the viewer's perception of the drawing's two-dimensionality. The artist applies transparent black gel to translucent mylar graph paper, making the viewer aware of every stroke. Brushstrokes become darker and more opaque as they overlap. Because each subtle nuance is apparent, an illusion of shallow depth complicates our notion of dimensionality. The transparency of the medium against the translucent mylar makes the paper barely

visible. Because the dense bunch of strokes appears uniform behind the framed glass, the delicate cluster seems to float toward the upper left edge of the paper in three-dimensional space. The faint blue lines of the graph paper bring the viewer's attention back to the work's two-dimensionality.

Pinch #4 incorporates a similar cluster of forms that shift between two- and three-dimensionality in their exploration of more overtly bodily forms. The work is composed of several smudges of graphite on vellum that resemble vaginal forms. As in *Flaps*, the tiny strokes of paint seem to press against each other, forming a tight cluster that appears caught in a shivering frenzy of movement. In this work, too, the cluster seems to sustain itself without the interposition of the paper. However, subtle creases become apparent; the tension created by the application of numerous short strokes with the wet ink against the delicate paper causes the paper to gather slightly at the site of the cluster, creating the effect of a single contracting vaginal form. In these highly abstract works, Louden creates organic illusions that obscure the boundaries between lines on paper and living forms. ❖ KB

¹ Sharon Louden, artist's statement in exhibition brochure, *56th Exhibition of Central New York Artists*, (Utica, N.Y.: Museum of Modern Art, New York, 1995), 25.

² Alice Winn, "Taking Journeys at a New Gallery," *Pittsburgh City Paper*, 2-9 February 2000.

