

Dean Smith was born in Oakland, California, in 1961. He received Bachelor of Arts degrees in Art Practice and History of Art from the University of California, Berkeley in 1984. He received a Master of Fine Arts degree from UC Berkeley in 1988. Smith lives and works in Berkeley.

Selected Recent Solo Exhibitions

2002

Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA

2001

Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

2000

"Drawings," Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

"Drawings," Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA

Selected Recent Group Exhibitions

2002

"Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore," Marvelli Gallery, New York, NY

"Fast Forward II," University of California, Berkeley Art Museum, Berkeley, CA

"Julia Fish, Pia Fries, David Ireland, Dean Smith: Works on Paper," Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

"Being There: 45 Oakland Artists," Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA

2001

"Different Strokes," IM n IL Gallery, Brooklyn, NY

1999

"Invitational Exhibition," Curt Marcus Gallery, New York, NY

1998

"Freie Sicht aufs Mittelmeer," Kunsthaus Zürich, Zürich, Switzerland and Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt, Germany

"Six Painters," Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco, CA

"Then and Now: Terrain's Tenth Anniversary Celebration," Terrain, San Francisco, CA

1997

"Città Aperta Ed. 1997," IDRIA Cultural Association, Città Sant'Angelo, Italy

"Entfernte Bekannte," Foundation Binz39, Zürich, Switzerland

Selected Recent Bibliography

Baker, Kenneth. "Sculptures with Delayed Punch Lines," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 6, 1999.

Bonetti, David. "There is a 'there' at Oakland show," *San Francisco Chronicle*, March 27, 2002.

Helfand, Glen. "Critic's Choice: Barry McGee/Dean Smith," *Artforum.com*, May 2002.

Johnson, Ken. "Art Guide, Galleries: SoHo," *The New York Times*, July 2, 1999.

Knight, Christopher. "Art Reviews: Adam Ross' Venturesome and Intricate Works," *Los Angeles Times*, May 12, 2000.

Martino, Adriana. "Spotlight: Città Aperta e La Bella Addormentata," *Flash Art (Italy Ed.)*, December/January 1998.

Shank, Will. "Greatest Hits, Local Luminaries," *Bay Area Reporter*, January 24, 2002.

Youens, Rachel. "Different Strokes @ IM n IL," *The Brooklyn Rail*, May/June 2001.

Work in MATRIX

Dean Smith

black hole sun #3 (x-ray vision), 2002

8 feet in diameter

Photocopy toner on acetate

Courtesy of the artist, Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, and Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco

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COVER:

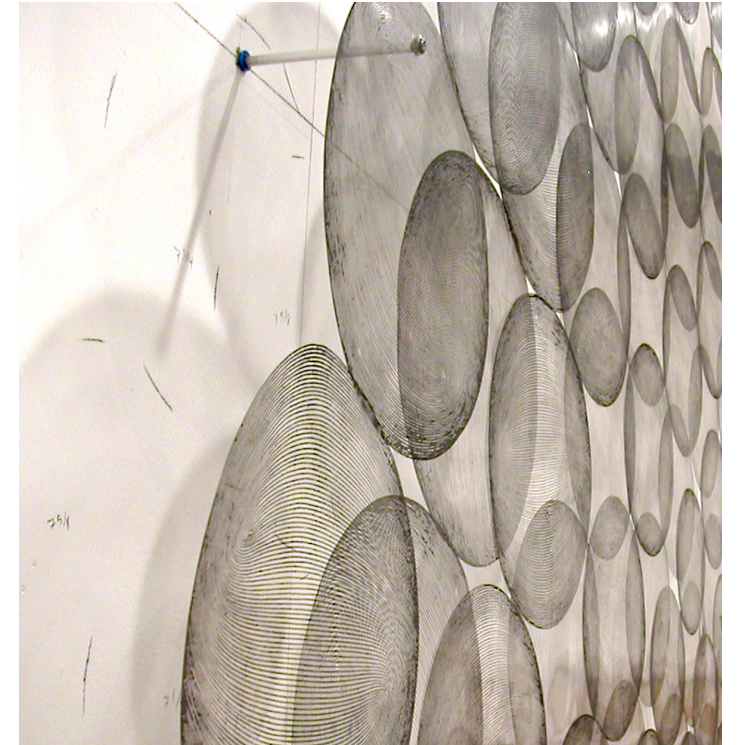
black hole sun #3 (x-ray vision), 2002 (detail); photocopy toner on acetate; 8 feet in diameter; courtesy of the artist, Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, and Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco.

INSIDE (LEFT TO RIGHT):

black hole sun #3 (x-ray vision), 2002; photocopy toner on acetate; 8 feet diameter; courtesy of the artist, Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica, and Gallery Paule Anglim, San Francisco.

topology #7 (portrait of my father's brain), 1999; ink on paper; 27 3/8 x 20 1/2 inches; photo courtesy of Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica.

apex/portal (for R.O.), 2000 (detail); ink on paper; 49 7/8 x 40 7/8 inches; photo courtesy of Christopher Grimes Gallery, Santa Monica.



Dean Smith/MATRIX 201b black hole sun #3 (x-ray vision)

October 20–November 17, 2002

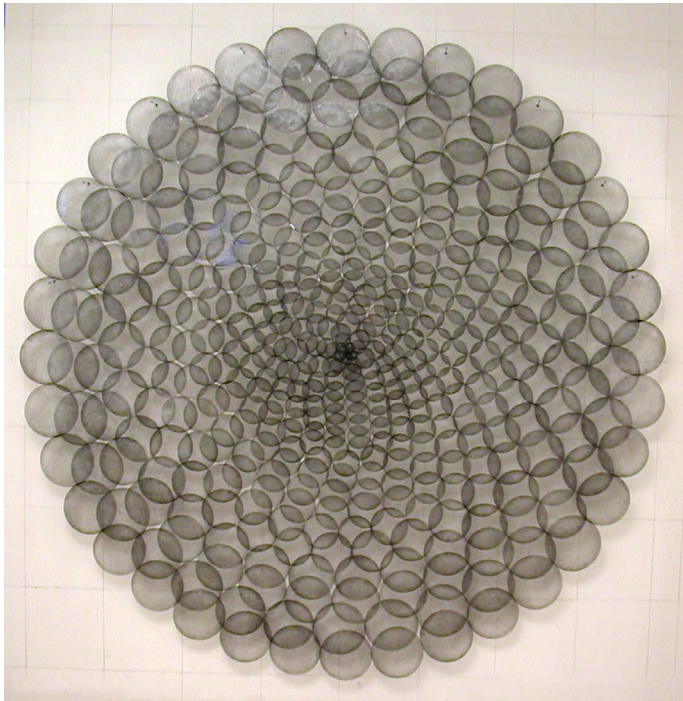
**University of California
Berkeley Art Museum**



ENCOUNTER CULTURE



Dean Smith/MATRIX 201b black hole sun #3 (x-ray



vision)

When describing his art, Dean Smith states, “I start out with a pattern based on a Fibonacci number series and, to my surprise, end up with the structure of a fractured mandala, or some seductively vulgar seventies design motif. How is that possible?” **black hole sun #3 (x-ray vision)**, the Berkeley-based artist’s large-scale, intricate, and meticulous photocopy toner-on-acetate drawing that vertiginously hangs in the Bancroft Way lobby, evokes both Op Art and botanical textbook illustrations. The choice of materials for this work is a departure from the graphite and metallic ink on paper that Smith usually uses, but like all of his work, **black hole sun # 3** is composed of thousands of minute marks, bristling rhythmically over the surface of the page, collectively forming shimmering patterns that seem to pulse with life.

The work is derived from an illustration of an eye by seventeenth-century

Dutch scientist Anton van Leeuwenhoek, best known for discovering the richness of life in the microscopic world: bacteria, blood cells, sperm cells, and much more. By using an ambiguous spiral motif as source material, Smith makes the viewer pause and attentively look at the patterns. He hopes to create a sense of wonder and uncertainty, a site of reverie; he is less interested in having the viewer decipher the meaning of the work than he is in creating an experience of **not** understanding what one is seeing. At most, we understand that this is an experience similar to those felt by the gentleman scientists of van Leeuwenhoek’s milieu, who worked at the very birth of the Enlightenment. Smith explains that in van Leeuwenhoek’s era, science, philosophy, and theology were all mixed together, and goes on to note that, by “allowing myself to unfold meaning in multiple directions, what I achieve is something akin to emotional life. By this I mean, do we always feel the same, every changing minute? The imagery I make use of is complex, in the same way that dealing

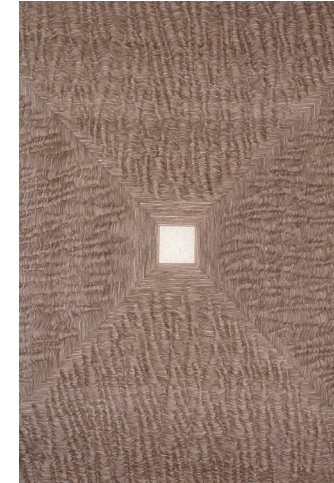


with another person is complex. Like a relationship, there is a constant readjustment of attitude, thoughts, and perceptions at each interaction with the image.”

The effects Smith achieves in **black hole sun #3 (x-ray vision)** are more emotional, more redolent of the shifting constellations of feeling, than those of many of the artist’s other, more figurative works. Smith’s monochromatic works on paper, built up from closely packed lines, dots, and other discrete elements, are like

a cloudy day, when the absence of color does much to reveal the landscape. His tight and precise lines make abstract claims about distance, process, and the ultimate limitations of artistic self-effacement. The lines argue that one can stay inside, that pencil or ink on the shelter of paper or acetate can stretch time and perception.

There are also specific references to the concept of interior space in Smith’s work. **topology #7** or **portrait of my father’s brain**, 1999, with its form and bilateral symmetry, offers the viewer a direct emotional contact with the artist.



Other drawings seem to open up— seem to have already opened—like a leaf or a book, along a spine. Smith’s **burst**, 1997, now in the UC Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive’s collection, demonstrates the meditative organic process Smith is continuing to explore in his current work. A large twisting form rests in the middle of the paper. The repetition of simple forms creates a vibrating effect, the sense of depth is exaggerated, and the intertwined structure moves in and out, a trick of visual perception on this two-dimensional

surface. When you give the work enough attention and time, careful repetitive lines that look like they could be

magnetized iron shavings form a mysterious, awe-inspiring shape:

is it intertwined spiders, enlarged bacteria, vegetation made of fur, tree veins, a piece of cast-iron garden furniture, a map of the Paris Metro with fur-tufted legs and hooves? It is safe to assume that this is not what the artist had in mind, of course, but Smith’s goal is for the viewer to get as much out of the piece as he or she is willing to bring to it. The lines are as controlled and thin as in a Dürer etching, yet the large shape softly swells as the eye wanders around it, playing a marvelous guessing game.

Kevin E. Consey

DIRECTOR

Danielle Peterson, MATRIX Curatorial Intern, contributed greatly to the research and preparation of this essay.

Dean Smith/MATRIX 201b is the second in a series of four miniMATRIX exhibitions. miniMATRIX is intended to highlight the prevalence of contemporary artists who are fascinated with the ephemeral, the transitory, and the temporary. Each miniMATRIX exhibition is comprised of a single work of art, mounted not in the MATRIX Gallery but in atypical viewing spaces.