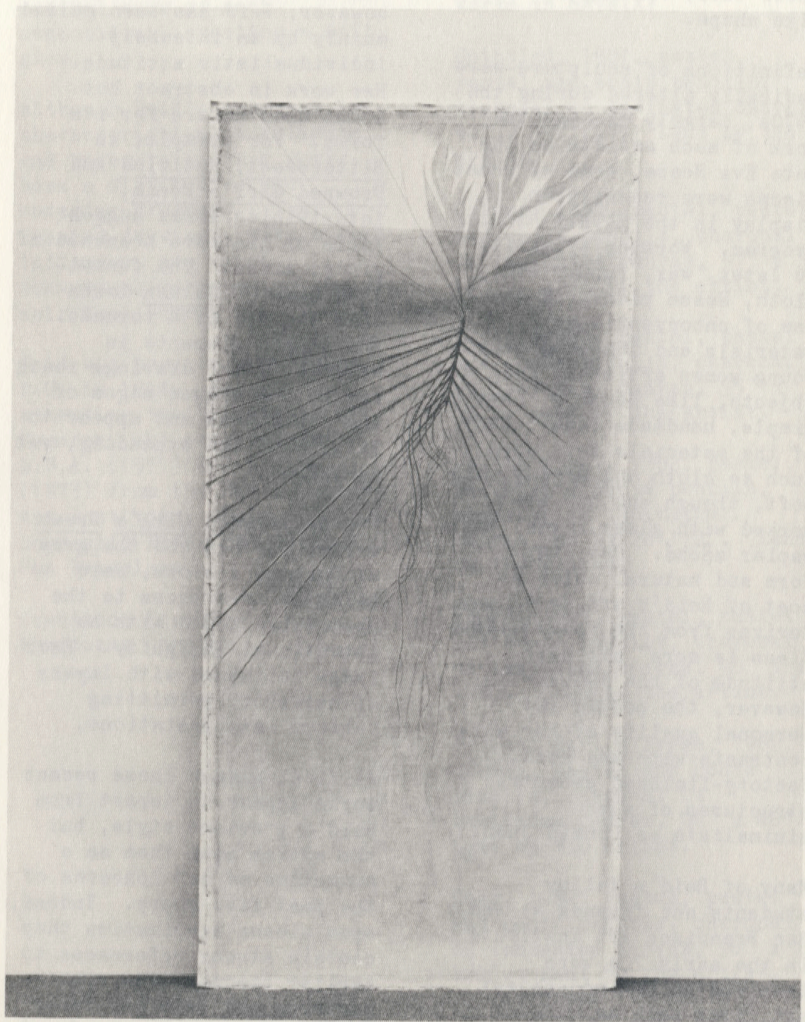


Dorothy Reid
MATRIX/BERKELEY 57

University Art Museum
Mid-December - January 1983

Drowned Girl's Dream, 1982



Dorothy Reid's new reinforced canvas works are neither strictly drawing nor sculpture. Though they lean against the wall, engaging the floor space in a sculptural way, the muslin-faced structures are two-dimensional surfaces on which the artist draws with pastel, colored pencil and charcoal. The seven pieces on view also have obvious architectural associations by virtue of their tall, rectangular slab-like shape.

Definitions of sculpture were radically altered during the 1970s, largely through the work of such artists as the late Eva Hesse, some of whose pieces were recently on display in the MATRIX program. Working primarily in latex, wax, rubber and cloth, Hesse pioneered the use of unconventional materials and inspired many young women artists. Reid's objects, like Hesse's, have a simple, handmade look. Many of the materials Reid uses, such as cloth and string, are soft, though she has also worked with glass, metal and papier mâché. The simple form and natural color of most of Reid's art up to now derives from the reductivist, "less is more" artistic attitude of the 1960s. However, the poetic and personal quality of her work contrasts with the hard, factory-finished geometric structures of such minimalists as Donald Judd.

Many of Reid's fellow students and friends at the San Francisco Art Institute in the early 70s were involved in new non-object art forms such as performance, video and sculptural installations designed for a specific space. Though she creates

objects, Reid has always concerned herself with the transformation of the environment through her art. Several of her earlier pieces are architectural metaphors for shelter; they allow the viewer to enter the work of art. While the current works retain architectural references, they introduce a new emphasis on drawing.

Every artist is influenced by others to some degree; however, Reid has been guided mainly by an intensely individualistic attitude. Her work is abstract but draws upon nature for its forms. For example, in Bittersweet, Untitled and Drowned Girl's Dream, intertwining lines suggest roots or the bare branches of winter trees. The funnel-like core of Column looks like the eye of a tornado. The linear elements in several of the drawings reach out to the ragged edges of the raw canvas and appear to be growing and expanding, yet contained.

Though Drowned Girl's Dream evokes the sea and the grey of Column, a storm, Reid balances references to the observable world with an intentional ambiguity. Each image is imbued with layers of metaphor, permitting various interpretations.

At first glance these recent works appear to depart from Reid's previous style, but the artist sees them as a summation of her concerns of the past five years. Indeed, upon closer examination they contain strong references to earlier pieces. The riblike patterns and twisting forms of Fallen Angel can be found in papier-mâché wall pieces Reid made a couple of years ago; the long, branching

lines of the leaning drawings relate to a 1981 installation she created in Alaska, in which drawn lines visually merged with lines of string; the zig-zag form in Column recalls Reid's earlier carved wood sculptures. An increasing use of color in the new pieces marks a change from Reid's usual monochromatic approach. Transparent, fresco-like colors stained into the muslin radiate from the central axis of each composition, creating a soft glow.

Although Reid's approach is characteristically delicate and understated, her works have a distinctive and enduring presence. The leaning drawings, like modern talismans, are quiet, nonaggressive repositories of spiritual energy.

Reid was born in Washington, D.C. in 1944. After attending the University of Houston, she received her B.F.A. (1971) and M.F.A. (1973) from the San Francisco Art Institute. Reid currently lives and works in San Francisco.

Constance Lewallen
Associate Curator

Works in MATRIX:

Untitled, 1981, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 90" x 35 1/2". Lent by the artist.

Column, 1982, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 97" x 35 1/2". Lent by the artist.

Bittersweet, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 95" x 32". Lent by the artist.

Fallen Angel, 1982, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 96" x 26 1/2". Lent by the artist.

Egypt, 1982, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 90" x 48 1/2". Lent by the artist.

Drowned Girl's Dream, 1982, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 96" x 46". Lent by the artist.

Song, 1982, pastel, pastel and conté pencils, charcoal on laminated canvas, 96" x 26 1/2". Lent by the artist.

One-person exhibitions:
de Saisset Art Gallery and
Museum, University of Santa
Clara, CA, '73; Site, S.F.,
'77; 80 Langton St., S.F.,
'81; Fiberworks, Berkeley,
CA, '81.

Selected group exhibitions:
San Francisco Art Institute,
Small Sculpture, '72; San
Francisco Art Institute,
Dorothy Reid, Kathy Goodell,
Lois Freeman, '74 (cat.
pub.); Fort Worth Art Museum,
Exchange DFW/SFO, Texas, '75
(traveled to San Francisco
Museum of Modern Art;
brochure pub.); Los Angeles
Institute of Contemporary
Art, 18 Bay Area Artists, '76
(traveled to University Art
Museum, UC Berkeley; cat.
pub.); University Art Museum,
UC Santa Barbara, Bay Area-
Contemporary Strengths, '79;
San Francisco Art Institute,
The Annual, '80 (cat. pub.);
Leah Levy Gallery, An
Invitational, S.F., '80; San
Diego Museum of Art,
Sculpture in California 1975-
80, '80 (cat. pub.); Visual
Arts Center of Alaska,
Anchorage, '81; L.A. Louver
Gallery, California: A Sense
of Individualism, Los
Angeles, '81 (cat. pub.).

Selected bibliography about Reid
(see also catalogues under
group exhibitions):

Albright, Thomas. "18
Bay Area Artists," San
Francisco Chronicle, Feb. 18,
'77.

Ratcliff, Carter.
"Report from San Francisco",
Art in America, May-June,
'77.

Albright, Thomas.
"Compressed Constructions,
Spider Web Sculptures," Art
News, Dec. '77.

Lorenz, Mindy. "Six
Counterformalists," Artweek
(Oakland, CA), Nov. 24, '79.

Curtis, Cathy. "Between
the Lines: Lightweight
Sculpture," Artweek
(Oakland, CA), Feb. 20, '82.

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