



Untitled #27, 2009, conté crayon on Arches paper, 17 x 14 inches

Laurie Fendrich

Drawings from the South of France

November 4 - December 19, 2009

GARY SNYDER /Project Space

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PRESS RELEASE

Gary Snyder/Project Space is pleased to present an exhibition from a remarkable suite of drawings by Laurie Fendrich, opening November 4 and continuing through December 19.

The 33 abstract drawings were done by Ms. Fendrich while she was in residence on a Brown Foundation Fellowship, awarded through the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, at the Dora Maar House in Ménerbes—one of the “perched” villages in the south of France. The residence took place for five weeks in May and June, 2009. During that time, Ms. Fendrich worked in the one artist’s studio in the house to create this series of abstract drawings in the style characteristic of her paintings: vigorous, aggressive shapes, emphatic compositions, and bold use of dark and light. The drawings are done in that most difficult of media in which there’s no correcting or erasing and one false move can ruin an entire drawing—black conté crayon on stippled paper.

The house in which Ms. Fendrich created these drawings was given as a gift by Picasso to Dora Maar, an artist and photographer who was his companion in the late 1930s and 1940s. Dora Maar owned the house until her death in 1997, when a resident of both Ménerbes and Houston purchased and renovated the house; the residency Fellowships were established shortly afterwards.

“These were probably the best conditions for working I’ve ever experienced,” says Ms. Fendrich. “The studio was beautifully proportioned, the light was perfect—windows looking north toward the mountains, and east into the garden and its fountain—and there were no distractions or interruptions except for walks around the village. Somehow, the landscape and architecture deeply inspired me and it occurred to me early on that I just might be able to complete a drawing a day. In the end, I did, although when I was finished I felt like my hand might fall off.”

Ms. Fendrich began drawing with conté crayon in 1993, after seeing a Georges Seurat retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Her first exhibition of her abstract conté

crayon drawings was at the Jan Cicero Gallery (1993). The Hatton Gallery of Colorado State University (where she was also a visiting artist) exhibited a survey of the drawings in 2002. Ms. Fendrich's paintings have been exhibited previously at Gary Snyder Fine Art, as well as several other galleries in the United States. New York Times art critic Grace Glueck said about them:

"A salute to Russian Constructivism, a nod to Art Deco, a bow to 30's American Modernism, more than a dash of loony cartoony pop culture. But the combos actually work, forming crisp compositions whose bright toylike colors, suave matings of geometric with biomorphic forms, and skilled painting give the work a decorous pizzazz."

Ms. Fendrich's paintings and drawings will be the subject of a retrospective exhibition opening at the Ruth Chandler Williamson Gallery at Scripps College in Claremont, CA, in October, 2010. Noted critic Mark Stevens, coauthor with Annalyn Swan of the Pulitzer prize-winning biography, *de Kooning: An American Master*, is writing the catalog essay.

Laurie Fendrich graduated from Mount Holyoke College in Massachusetts with a B.A. degree in political science, and earned her M.F.A. degree in painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She is the recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts artist's fellowship. Ms. Fendrich is Professor of Fine Arts at Hofstra University in Hempstead New York and a frequent contributor of essays on the arts and related matters to *The Chronicle Review* in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. She blogs regularly on art and other matters for "Brainstorm," the blogsite for *The Chronicle Review*. She lives in New York City and is married to the painter and writer, Peter Plagens.