

TWO COATS OF PAINT

Award-winning blogazine, primarily about painting

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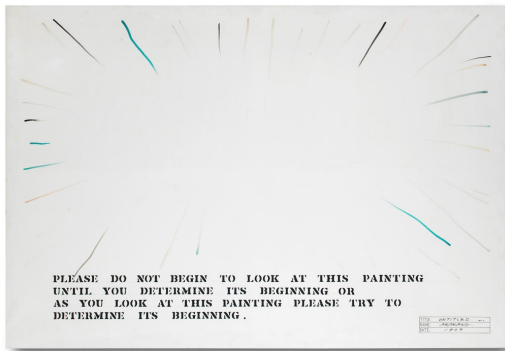
The art of the diagram

July 6, 2023 3:55 pm

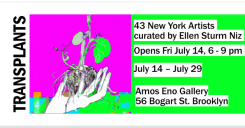
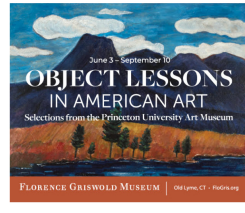
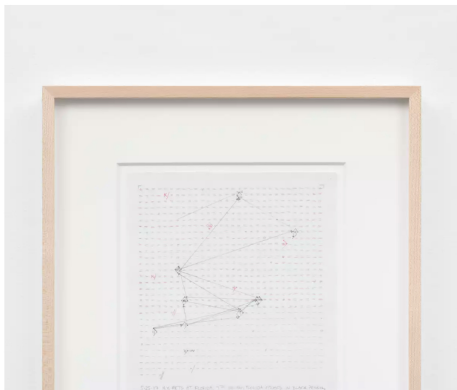


Marlborough Gallery: Schema: World as Diagram, 2023, Installation View 01

Contributed by David Carrier / Raphael Rubinstein, who co-curated "Schema: World as Diagram" at Marlborough with Heather Bause Rubinstein, observes in the catalogue that diagrams are important because they sometimes have much greater explanatory power than words. Rather than tell someone directions, which can be tricky, it might be better to draw a diagram. With work by more than fifty artists on two floors, "Schema" presents an extraordinarily full history of this form, reflecting how a diverse range of artists have collectively created and responded to an aesthetic tradition. Using diagrams, of course, is no guarantee of making sense. Indeed, in its preoccupation with thorough description as opposed to subtle evocation, it might suggest lonely, ruminative souls without audiences. But diagrams can also be a rich way of communicating, and this show focuses on that capacity.



Shusaku Arakawa, Untitled, No. 1, 1969, acrylic, felt tip, pen, and pencil on canvas, 125 x 183.8 cm 49 3/16 x 72 3/8 inches



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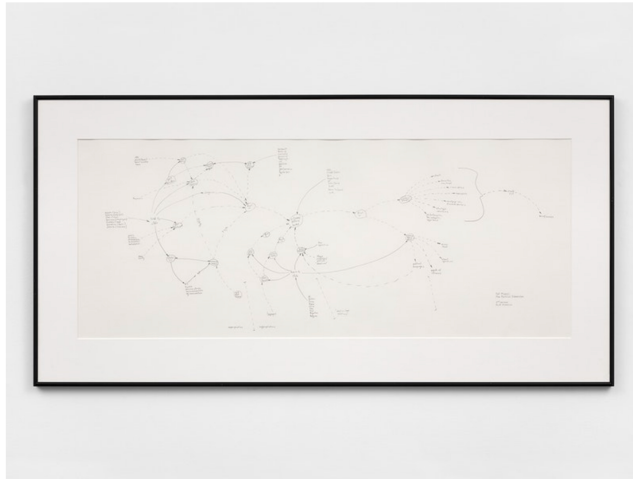
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Julian Schnabel, Shoeshine (for Vittorio De Sica), 1976, oil, wax, modeling paste on canvas, 120 x 120 inches



Mark Lombardi, Hot Money – The Political Dimension, 2nd Version, 1997. Pencil on paper, 24 1/2 x 48 1/4 inches. Courtesy Marlborough Gallery, New York. Photo: Olympia Shannon.

Rarely have I found an exhibition with a more useful or erudite **catalogue**. Rubinstein traces the roots of diagrammatic art to Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, discusses Alfred H. Barr Jr.'s famous diagram of modernism, and offers some surprising and illuminating notes about the use of diagrams by the Black American philosopher W. E. B. Du Bois and the Swedish painter Hilma af Klint. In tribute, Hilma's Ghost, the feminist artist collective established by Dannielle Tegender and Sharmistha Ray, has contributed *Shake off your chains! ...* (2023). Diagrams, Rubinstein comments, are both figurative and abstract. This means they can cover extremely varied visual content, as the works assembled here demonstrate. It is worth asking further why the diagram, rather scarce in pre-modern painting, has seduced so many contemporary artists. One possible reason is that a diagram can both elucidate a complex set of facts and express an obsession. This excellent show captures both qualities and more.



Marlborough Gallery: Schema: World as Diagram, 2023, Installation View 02

"Schema: World as Diagram," curated by Raphael Rubinstein and Heather Bause Rubinstein. Artists: Minjeong An, Shusaku Arakawa, Jennifer Bartlett, Gianfranco Baruchello, Forrest Bess, Joseph Beuys, Thomas Chimes, Mike Cloud, Janet Cohen, Alan Davie, Guy de Cointet, Agnes Denes, David Diaó, Lydia Dona, León Ferrari, Charles Gaines, Renee Gladman, Joanne Greenbaum, Lane Hagoood, Jane Hammond, Hilma's Ghost, Thomas Hirschhorn, Alfred Jensen, Christine Sun Kim, Karla Knight, Guillermo Kuitca, Paul Laffoley, Barry Le Va, Mark Lombardi, Chris Martin, Stephen Mueller, Matt Mullican, Loren Munk, Antoni Muntadas, Paul Pagk, Yulia Pinkusevich, Miguel Angel Ríos, Leslie Roberts, Heather Bause Rubinstein, Julian Schnabel, Amy Sillman, Wadada Leo Smith, Gael Stack, Tavares Strachan, Jimmy and Angie Tchooga, Dannielle Tegender, Bernar Venet, Ouattara Watts, Melvin Way, Trevor Winkfield. Marlborough, 545 West 25th Street, New York, NY. Through August 11, 2023.

About the author: David Carrier is a former professor at Carnegie Mellon University and Princeton University; a Getty Scholar; and a Clark Fellow. He has lectured in China, Europe, India, Japan, New Zealand, and North America. He has published catalogue essays for many museums and art criticism for *Apollo*, *artcritical*, *Artforum*, *Artus* and *Burlington Magazine*. He has also been a guest editor for *The Brooklyn Rail* and is a regular contributor to *Two Coats of Paint*.

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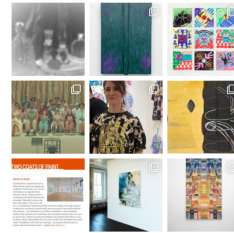
Cora Cohen (1943-2023) June 22, 2023
New York-based painter Cora Cohen died at a hospice in Brooklyn on June 22 at the age of 79. As Barry Schwabsky wrote in *ArtForum International* reviewing her 2022 exhibition at Morgan Presents, she was "one of the most underrated painters in New York."

Louise H. McCagg (1936-2020) June 21, 2023

Louise McCagg, a member of the A.I.R. gallery, exhibited widely, both in the United States and internationally. She also collaborated with a new generation of Hungarians on many projects, one of them being part of the Hungarian Pavilion of the 2009 Venice Biennale.

Two Coats on Instagram

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One Comment



Steven Baris

July 7, 2023 at 10:16 am

I can't wait to view this show and catalog, both because it brings together a diverse group of excellent artists under a compelling connective theme (not often the case with contemporary curation) and because I've dedicated several years thinking and writing about the interfaces of diagrams and art in my "Expanded Diagram Project." Although I've not yet seen the catalog essay, I would be surprised if what I've gleaned would counter it but rather supplement it. Because of the enormous range of definitions much less functions of conventional diagrams and the nearly similar range of "art diagrams," it's quite very challenging to draw meaningful connections between the two. Often artworks that look like conventional diagrams are only superficially related to the workings of diagrams and are simply diagrammatic motifs recruited for (for a lack of a better word) "decorative" impact. Whereas other artworks lacking obvious diagrammatic influence, upon deeper reflection, are indeed echoing similar functions. A key link running through my writings (and blog) is what I call "diagrammatic thinking." I'll stop here other than to say that my project lives on my web site (stevenbaris.com); a key page is <https://www.stevenbaris.com/diagrams-and-art>. (Note: if you view the blog, the most recent posting is an exception. It's NOT addressing diagrammatic thinking whereas the earlier ones do.) Thanks for the review of this exciting exhibition.

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