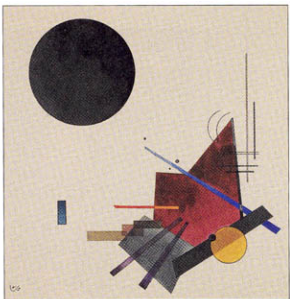


Exhibit of the week**On Line: Drawing Through the Twentieth Century**

Museum of Modern Art, New York
Through Feb. 7, 2011

MoMA's current definition of "drawing" might leave some viewers cold, said Jerry Saltz in *New York*. In this survey show, the work itself isn't the problem. In fact, it's often "wonderful": Far more female artists are included than in a typical MoMA exhibit, and their welcome contributions often remind us "how important dance and movement are to modernism." Kandinsky famously proposed that "line" is a point set in motion, and a prominently displayed 1890s film clip of burlesque dancer Loie Fuller establishes that idea as a theme of the exhibit. But for a show that promises to chart "an alternative history" of drawing in the 20th century, the surprise isn't that traditional, figurative drawings are scarce. It's that visitors eventually encounter so many explorations of "grids, systems, and performative procedures" that they might think it's still the 1970s.

But even the dreary grid gets a fresh workout here, said Holland Cotter in *The New York Times*. The Venezuelan artist Gego contributes "a small grid from jigsaw blades; Mona Hatoum a big one from barbed wire." At every turn a viewer



Vasily Kandinsky's *Black Relationship* (1924)

will find new reason to view On Line as speculative in spirit and eager to knock "old hierarchies off balance." Sure, the show begins with Picasso and his 1912 cut-cardboard guitars—which pushed line off the page and into a third dimension. Still, this is no "usual-suspects story of modernism." In Umberto Boccioni's drawing *State of Mind I: The Farewells*, lines become "emblems of technological speed." In a well-known 1973 per-

formance piece we see in a video, Carolee Schneemann creates wall-size crayon drawings "while swinging above the floor in a harness."

Despite all the inventiveness on display, the show "dramatically tracks a crisis" in art that developed during the century it surveys, said Peter Schjeldahl in *The New Yorker*. Marcel Duchamp is represented by a toolbox containing three meter-long "rulers"—each with an edge whose shape was determined "by the way dropped strings fell to the ground." With such works, Duchamp made art a game, and made it more important than ever what museums decided was art. The way many artists responded

was by abandoning art's Dionysian side; they became apostles of abstract concepts and tried to pare their work down to essences. One of the last "drawings" we see here is a thin line of trash mounted along the walls of one room near its floor. The piece, by Luis Camnitzer, "seems whipsmart while slightly pathetic." The pleasure isn't in beholding it, but in having just strolled through an exhibit that shows how and why "we've come to this."

Where to buy ...

a select exhibition in a private gallery

Wolf Kahn

Jerald Melberg
Gallery,
Charlotte, N.C.

Textbook histories present modern painting as a progression of pioneers

vying to one-up their forebears. But the true history is less linear. A student of celebrated abstract expressionist Hans Hofmann, Wolf Kahn let his peers play an esoteric minimalism game while he busied himself creating gorgeous landscapes steeped in a fascinating blend of early-modernist styles. This show focuses on the German-born artist's work from 1950 to 1970, when his shimmering paintings and lyrical pastels danced delicately upon the line between realism and abstraction. 625 South Sharon Amity Rd., (704) 365-3000. Through Feb. 5, 2011. Prices range from \$3,400 to \$105,000.



Blue Harbor (1965)

Exposed: Voyeurism, Surveillance, and the Camera Since 1870

San Francisco Museum of Modern Art
Through April 17, 2011

It's impossible to look away, said Sura Wood in *Edge San Francisco*. Like a gruesome car wreck on the side of a freeway, San Francisco MoMA's "exciting journey into the forbidden" world of hidden and veiled cameras is equal parts irresistible and repellent. More than 200 images and objects create a fascinating study of the human impulse to spy on one another. Some of the photos feel "subversive and thrilling." Others, especially the depictions of pain and violence, are "horrific." But from Horace Engle's seemingly benign 1888 snapshots of unsuspecting streetcar passengers to Bill Burke's harrowing 1990 photo of a "naked amputee lying exposed and dazed on a gurney" in a Cambodian hospital, "violation is the name of the game."

The unequal power relationships between shooters and subjects are what make the images so arresting, said Kenneth Baker in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. Indeed,



Garry Winogrand's *New York*, 1969

the exhibition could have been called "Leverage," since most every picture "tempts the viewer to imagine it as the stuff of extortion, espionage, intimidation." Some of the most resonant pieces here aren't very refined; more important is the thrill of seeing someone being robbed of their privacy—a thrill tinged with differing levels of discomfort. Old-timers will probably cringe, but the Facebook generation might not. With their "confidence in public amnesia," they are more likely to "study with curiosity, but without shock, the mounting assault on privacy" that this exhibition traces.