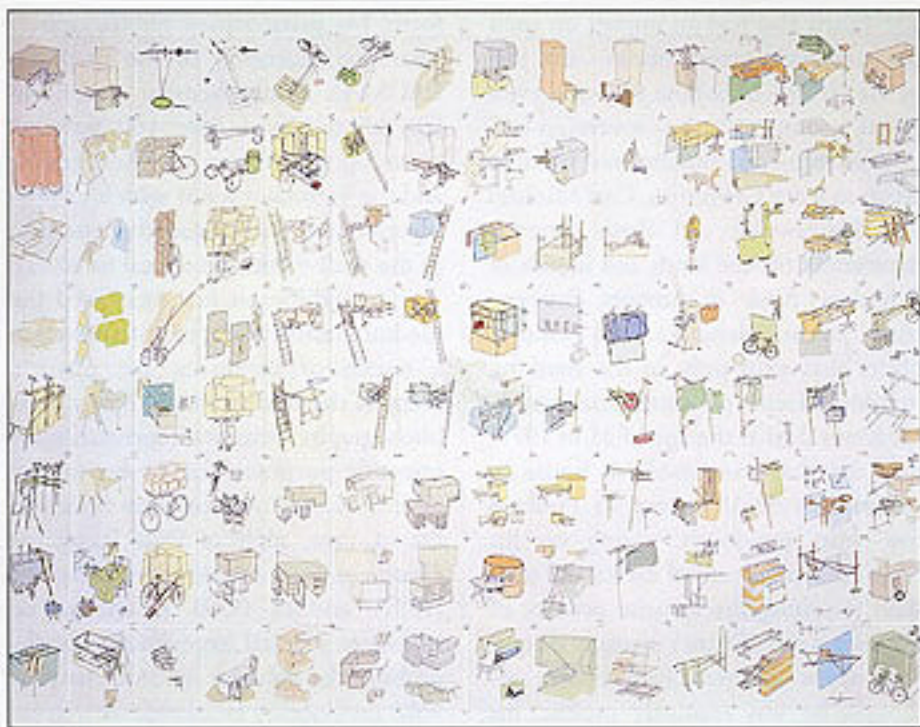


CRISTINEROSE

Gallery

Art On Paper

May-June 2000



(Above)
Jack Risley,
*A Sculpture in
Daily Installments*,
270 ink drawings
on Arches paper
(each sheet 8-1/2 x
11 in.), 1999-
2000. Courtesy
Cristinrose Gallery,
New York.

Cyber Drawings. Cristinrose Gallery, New York.

The title given to this winter show was accurate, though perhaps a bit overstated. True, each of the artists displayed here uses a computer in his or her art-making process. But most employ the computer without fanfare, much as they would any other artmaking tool. After everything has been clicked and dragged, most of the works here seemed fairly traditional in form and in content.

Elliott Green contributed the only work that isn't on paper—though his *Sketch Movie 1* did begin its life as a series of charcoal drawings that were then digitally animated by the artist. His odd caricatures move rapidly across the screen and morph, sprouting heads, limbs, hands. Pretty soon, however, the animation proves tiring. Green's a strong draftsman; the individual drawings are too tonally complicated to sustain this rapid-fire pace—and they beg to be looked at separately. Pauline Stella Sanchez's simple noodlings printed on shiny photo paper seem to thrive, however, as cyber creations. They feature some loopy abstract shapes (the sort you might doodle absentmindedly while on the phone) filled in here and there with color. That said, the coolness and mechanical precision of the computer (the crisply rendered lines, the allover color, and the luscious high gloss of the paper) nicely set off the works' whimsy, giving these otherwise simplistic images a weight and polish they wouldn't otherwise have.

Some pieces were downright retro in their appeal. Jack Risley's series of

weirdly juxtaposed domestic objects floating over soft fields of color have the look of screenprints printed just a bit off register. Tom Moody limits himself to cheap letter paper and his black-and-white images are created in "Paintbrush" program and saved as bitmap files before being printed with a standard laser printer (distinctly archaic by today's standards).

Only Marsha Cottrell breaks new theoretical ground. Her small-scale rectangular drawings composed of hundreds and hundreds of tiny lines and dots look like cities under construction or blasted plains after battle. They're as strong as any conventional pen and ink drawing, but knowing that they were created solely out of punctuation marks, slashes, commas, and colons—the result of the artist's working almost exclusively in a text-based computer program—makes them even better. Cottrell isn't simply making drawings with a new medium, she's using it as a kind of poetic device, creating pictorially compelling spaces out of the pauses within speech.

The gallery made a point of noting that all the works in this exhibition (except for Green's) were one-of-a-kind pieces. Yet, isn't one of the great strengths of computer-generated art its potential for mass-production without deterioration in the quality of the original image? An insignificant point, perhaps, when you consider the confidence with which these artists use their new media. Maybe it's connoisseurship, or even criticism, that is clinging to the past.

—Sarah Schmerler