

# ART NEW ENGLAND

CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

## CHUCK HOLTZMAN: EVEN ODDS

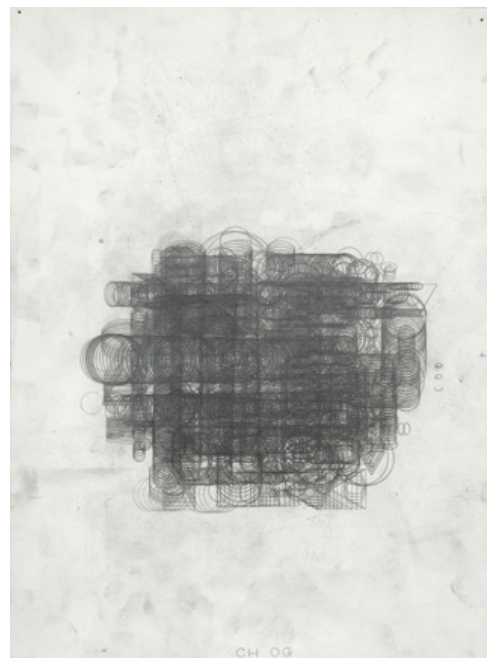
This is an extensive show of abstract drawings about drawing: marks, and shapes, and improvisation, and order. In the ongoing debate about the current state of drawing, this appears to be drawing as verb - not noun. That is, this is drawing that emerges out of process and a limited (focused) vocabulary of forms. On the other hand, this small exhibition of small drawings presents works that each feel complete and fully realized, rather than mere fragments of a process. And, did I say it yet? They're beautiful. Here, we have the exquisite quality of line repeated and rubbed and the extraordinary effort that is required to keep an abstract/improvisational method alive and responsive. We have the minute accumulation of obsessive marketing, tangles and webs of overlapping circles, lines, angles.

These drawings engage time, as the best of drawing-as-verb drawing does. One can sense the artist wandering in and staying all night under a single light as each line is laid down. A format is developed, followed and abandoned as the artist contemplates the ethics of staying with a plan or dropping it. Each of these drawings has the feel of a single, complete effort - one sitting. And in that sense, the viewer is invited to re-experience the sensation of concentrated attention. And then there are the slippages, the areas in the drawing where the marks become more random and misplaced; a bit of colored scumbling is introduced to this essentially black and white world.

The drawings range from fine, delicate pencil lines and marks, to

heavy, black charcoal shapes and gestures. An artist can find immense purpose and meaning in the simple and engaged act of laying down forms and observing their development, even more so when the development is contingent, as it must be in abstract-process drawing. What is being found is meaningful activity itself, and the drawings are compelling when this rich level of activity is manifestly evident. Finally, the fact that all expression here is contained within the method itself, rather than the artist, means that we viewers are allowed the pleasure of contemplating an evolutionary process, rather than a narrative (which is, of course, a narrative of its own).

-Craig Stockwell



*Untitled (#705) 2006*  
graphite on paper 12 1/4 x 9"