

# JAMES HARRIS GALLERY

309A THIRD AVENUE SOUTH, SEATTLE, WA 98104  
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## PRESS RELEASE

James Harris Gallery, Seattle and Jill Newhouse, New York Present

*Junctions: Selected Drawings from Contemporary Artists and Modern Masters*

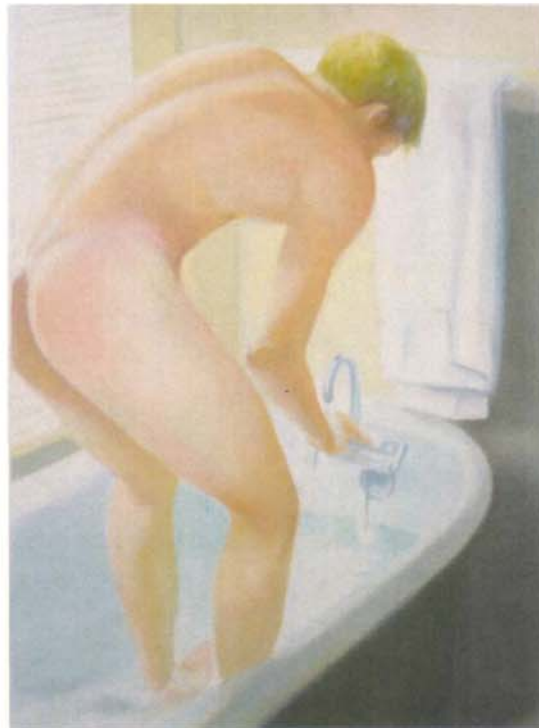
August 3 – 25, 2006

Reception: Thursday, Aug. 3, 6:00-8:00PM

James Harris Gallery, in association with Jill Newhouse, a private New York gallery specializing in European drawings and watercolors, is pleased to present *Junctions: Selected Drawings by Contemporary Artists and Modern Masters*.



In bringing together over two centuries of works on paper, this show looks at contemporary drawing by taking a step backward. Showcasing work from the past to illustrate and gain insight into the way drawing has always captured the hand of the artist, *Junctions* celebrates the seemingly simple but also utterly distinct and enduring act of making marks on a surface.



With mark and gesture – the traditional hallmarks of drawing – being at the center of this show, the difference between an artist's drawing from a hundred years ago and a contemporary work often disappears. The personalized mark of the artist and its powerful form of expression overwhelms any variation that might result because of historical context. Be it Pierre Bonnard's (b. 1867) masterful study of his wife, detailing her graceful figure standing against the bright, soft light of

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their tiled bathroom, or Marcelino Gonçalves' (b. 1969) soft but vivid drawing of a man testing the water in his bath, drawing guarantees an intimate aesthetic encounter, animated by the individual handwriting of the artist.

In bringing together such a diverse range of drawings, both in terms of style and content, not only is this highly personal act of drawing brought to a climax but a surprising consistency between the works also emerges. Whether the work is loose and abstract, tight and formal, the quality of line and draftsmanship is resolute while their personal, even heroic marks implicate the artist's own hand. As such, this show does not try to define a specific vocabulary for drawing but instead demonstrate how the successes of a wash, arabesque, sfumato, line, form and color are all present as an artist constructs a drawing.

From the soft-edged shapes of the Manet study to the black-and-white precision of Roy McMakin, or from the beautiful but unsettling studies of Delacroix to the sharp but romantic lines in Susan Russell Hall's drawing, each of these artists masterfully employs similar elements like crosshatching, burnishing, or the use of a contour line to achieve a balanced and ultimately graceful drawing.

Artists like McMakin and Collin Shutz replace the traditional gestures in Paul Klee's energized figure with a combination of precision and fluidity. McMakin's drawing engages with domestic and architectural forms but takes on none of the formal rigidity that one might find in a blueprint.

Other artists in the exhibition interrupt the traditional flow and composition of landscape painting by drafting unusual compositions. Claire Cowie's simplified landscapes evoke all the elements of a Master landscape painting without any of them being there while Shaun O'Dell's intricate, highly coded drawings, recall the mythology of the American frontier and the spirit of conquest evoked by the nineteenth-century expansionist doctrine.

With such a diverse range of works the drawings in *Junctions* are not meant to be compared against each other. The practice of drawing is the focus of the show not artistic movements, tendencies or influences. As such, whether artists adhered to traditional modes of expression or transformed them, the sculpture David Smith's judgment lies at the heart of this show: "Drawings remain the life force of the artist...Drawing is the most direct, closest to the true self, the most natural liberation of man."

Gallery hours are Wednesday through Saturday 11 to 5 and by appointment.

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## **Complete List of Artists and Images Available Upon Request**

### Modern Masters

Pierre Bonnard, Edward Coley Burne-Jones, Rodolphe Bresdin, Paul Cézanne, J-B-C Corot, Eugene Delacroix, J-A-D Ingres, Paul Klee, Edouard Manet, Emile Nolde, Camille Pissarro, Odilon Redon, Théodore Rousseau, Edouard Vuillard

### Contemporary Artists

Geoffrey Chadsey, Claire Cowie, Marcelino Gonçalves, Patrick Holderfield, Roy McMakin, Jeffry Mitchell, Shaun O'Dell, Mary Ann Peters, Meg Peterson, Susan Russell Hall, Collin Shutz, Keith Tilford, Laura Vandenburg