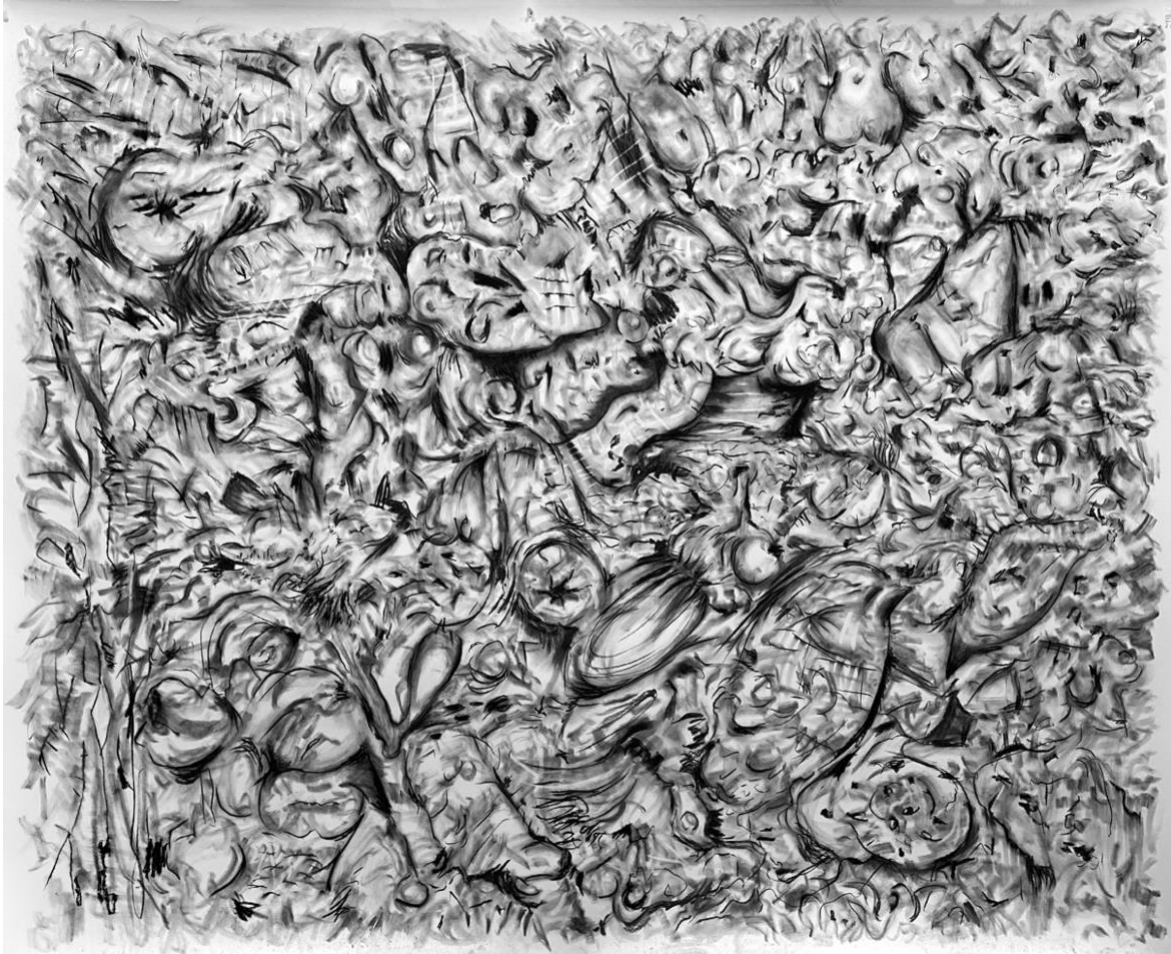


MODERNISM

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Gallery Exhibition Schedule

NAOMIE KREMER: *Drawn In*
March 9–April 24, 2021



Untitled Drawing I, 2021, charcoal on paper, 60 x 80 inches

Back in 2007, Naomie Kremer made a series of drawings that she chose to leave untitled. Monumental in scale, and rendered in lush layers of charcoal, her lyrical abstractions were far too complex to describe, let alone to name. Even today, the drawings surprise her, though some have hung in her home for years. “I can’t figure out what led me to do what I did,” she admits. From Kremer’s perspective, that means she did something right.

After a long hiatus from drawing—during which she focused on painting and video and stage design—Kremer has returned to charcoal, as well as graphite and pen and ink. Drawings old and new are the subject of her 17th exhibition at Modernism Gallery, opening on March 9. The show encompasses her monumental untitled charcoals, seven from 2006-7 and one more that Kremer created expressly for this exhibition, three smaller-scale *Feather River* series drawings from 2006, and, among other works, a selection of elegantly minimal crow quill drawings of flora that she composed earlier this year in response to the landscape she encountered in the South Pacific.

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When Kremer says that she can't figure out what led her to do what she did in her charcoals, she is describing a deliberate creative process based on her conviction that abstraction is a process of discovery, the product of practiced spontaneity built upon mastery of materials and composition. Laid atop this foundation, which Kremer holds in common with modern masters including Ellsworth Kelly and Brice Marden, is her recognition that any course her work takes is one of myriad possibilities. "After making a painting, I look back at the structure," she says, "and I realize that, starting with the same givens, it could have been something else." In fact, that recognition is the basis of her *Untitled* series from 2007, which emerged from a reengagement with paintings she'd made previously.

Kremer's process began by projecting each of the paintings onto a sheet of paper, rapidly tracing the forms with loose graphite, the work of a couple hours. These light gray marks, as faint as shadow, then served as the undergirding for a new work created in pencil and charcoal without additional reference to the original. By shifting from painting to drawing, and dropping out color, Kremer excavated structure, which she used to inform the development of new figures. The results often have formal overlaps with the original paintings, as can be seen in *Untitled I*, based on *Rudimentary Pixillation* (1999), and reveal how her paintings, like Joan Mitchell's, are drawn in a way, albeit with thick lines of paint.

With *Untitled* (2021), Kremer has re-engaged this process of observation and extrapolation, working from a 2016 painting called *Flock*. As was the case with her 2007 series, the process has led to a work that echoes its source, stands on its own, and evokes infinite alternatives. "While it is tempting to play a game of compare-and-contrast with these works," writes the art critic Jonathon Keats in an essay for the catalogue published to coincide with Kremer's Modernism exhibition, "there is nothing derivative about the drawings. They are as authoritative as the paintings, as autonomous. They are also as open to multiple viewings. They are as alive with possibility."

And Kremer does not expect their life to end with this exhibition. Every aspect of her work is open to observation and regeneration in other media. Kremer is already envisioning new permutations, including hybrid works. Projecting video onto paper, she plans to capture fugitive forms in charcoal. These works may be completed by illuminating their surface with loops of the original video.

"I'm very interested in the back-and-forth in a painting where I intend something and the painting gives me back something different," she says. Through the recombination of her many artistic practices, the multi-talented Naomie Kremer has begun a dialogue that will last for eternity.

Naomie Kremer's work has been exhibited widely in the U.S. and abroad. Her video-based set designs include the opera *Alcina*, by Handel, performed at the Crusader Fortress in Acre, Israel, *The Secret Garden* commissioned by the San Francisco Opera, and *Light Moves*, a collaboration with Margaret Jenkins Dance Company. Her exhibition *The Age of Entanglement* at the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art in 2015 was selected as one of the year's best by the publication *Square Cylinder*. *Rudimentary Moves*, a video piece by Kremer, was exhibited at the Berkeley Art Museum on their large-scale outdoor LED screen during the opening month of the new museum in February 2016. Kremer also has an ongoing nightly video installation at SF Jazz Center.

Her work is in many collections, including the Berkeley Art Museum; The Whitney Museum; the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco; the Magnes Museum, the United States Embassy in Beijing, China, and most recently the Arkansas Arts Center.

Kremer has taught painting and drawing at The San Francisco Art Institute, California College of the Arts, California State University at Hayward, and the Pont-Aven School of Contemporary Art in Brittany, France. She has lectured at the Ruskin School of Art at Oxford University, England, and at the Syracuse University program in Florence, Italy, among others. Naomie Kremer works in Berkeley, California, New York City, and Paris, France.

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