

## Deborah Boardman Life Lines

Deborah Boardman, with her Porous Space installation, has chosen to pay homage to the artist's studio as an environment for meditation, a haven for the spirit, a place of contemplation and shared inspiration. In her commitment to teaching art as a practice of engagement, Boardman has offered a standing challenge to her students that they recognize and acknowledge their debt to art history and make the effort to understand the responsibility of art making as a conscious, social act. This dialogue, the exchange of ideas and points of view contribute directly to the conversation that is an integral part of all aspects of Boardman's art process. In her plan for an integration of the act of art making with the timeless concept of sanctuary and creative interaction, Boardman is seeking to liberate the artist from the all-to-familiar sense of isolation and egoism that is so prevalent in the contemporary art arena. The artist has, in her blog, acknowledged the long standing tradition of the artist's studio as

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Dear Mr. Boardman,

enclosed are two pieces of  
programmed marble, which are  
marked No. 1 and No. 2.  
Always keep the polished side of it up.

No. 1 is to be placed on the fault line  
as indicated on the sketch.

No. 2 is to be placed on the crossing  
of the fault and water line to  
distribute the energy evenly.  
Good luck,

Erica + friend

a source of inspiration, from Matisse and Morandi to Guston and Johns, and the modernist emphasis on the materiality of paint, from Manet to the present.

As part of her reflections on Romanesque churches, Boardman's conceived of the Heskin contemporary gallery as a continuous, fluid space, literally extending it's "content" beyond its viewable area to incorporate surrounding buildings, streets and underground waterways. The implication of the artist's studio as porous: susceptible to influence from within (people, artworks, recycled materials) and without (neighborhood structures and activity), open to the flow of ideas from history, contemporary culture and interaction with other artists, challenges the viewer to rethink and expand the notion of a one person show. The recycled cardboard flooring has been installed, based on dowsers' research, with the intention of giving the interior space a deeper connection to the fault and water lines beneath and surrounding the gallery.

With the activity of recording or documenting the process of drawing in the Line Video series, Boardman releases the spontaneous impulse of the individual within a limited set of criteria. Performed by visitors to the gallery, both artists and friends, the hand or signature of each participant is evident, enhancing the viewer's appreciation of freedom of expression within the action of painting a continuous line from one point to another. The inclusion of this video is Boardman's means of showing how unique and yet how universal that moment, the act of creation, can be.

Boardman's artist books are spontaneous notations of visual encounters, daily life and its exploration, gestural and iconographic, inclusive rather than hermetic. The artist's intention is clearly to avoid preconceived limitations or formal restrictions, to be responsive to what's around her, be it 11th century architectural details, layered color patterns, or some favored art work that inspires her to capture its vitality on paper. Her studio drawings and handmade books have not just the spontaneity and free spirit that most artists aspire to achieve, but also the content of the diary or journal of one artist's ongoing conversation with expanding modes of expression. The result is a rich visual documentation of the day to day reflections of the painter's impulse to give form to the imaginable.

The artist also offers an opportunity for the viewer to feel a sense of participation and discovery, as we experience her work, ongoing practice and reflections on artistic production and evolution. The Porous Space installation is another development in Boardman's ongoing dialogue with the nature of art creation and the energy that it requires and engenders. At a time when the visual arts need to reinvigorate its role in contemporary culture, Deborah Boardman is offering us the challenge of that process; by leaving ourselves open enough to change to be a part of its continuity.

Robert G. Edelman  
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