

It's a glorious achievement in all.

Boardman's lyrical *Totem* (1959) resembles stained glass, with splotches of rosy pinks and reds standing out from the squares of green and blue. Boardman sometimes hinted at nature, as in the dreamy *No. 22* (1962), with its blurred image of what might be viewed as a branch against a pale green background. Here the paint is as soft and fluid as watercolor. It's a delight to revisit the works of these artists, who eagerly and skillfully explored the potential of abstraction.

—Valerie Gladstone



Doug and Mike Starn, *Big Bambú*, 2010, installation view March 2010. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

UP NOW

Doug and Mike Starn

Metropolitan Museum of Art
Through October 31

Doug and Mike Starn, known for their botanical installations—not least their glass wall of silhouetted trees installed at the South Ferry subway stop in 2009—have taken over the Met's roof, which commands panoramic views of Central Park and the surrounding skyline, and covered it with real bamboo stalks, whole and in parts. Called *Big Bambú*, *You Can't, You Don't, and You Won't Stop*, the installation is essentially a vast scaffold lashed together from more than 3,000 bamboo poles and 30 miles of colored nylon cord. Each juncture is articulated by brightly colored knots to emphasize the construction. *Big Bambú* is the most ambitious roof project the Met has attempted to date. The bamboo, which is strong, light, and weather resistant, gives off a scent of exotic worlds—or environmentally endangered ones—and is beautiful, its color and luster shifting in response to climate conditions.

Part wild, part civilized, part habitat, part prototype, part fantasy, part sculpture, part 3-D drawing, this already enormous installation will occupy even more real estate over the course of its run, ris-

ing to the height of a four-story building and measuring 50 by 100 feet long by the end. Complete with elevated walkways, which visitors can ascend only under supervision, this labyrinthine tree house is not for the acrophobic. Lots of visitors are expected beyond the two-legged human variety. In fact, an avian celebrity, the hawk Pale Male, or perhaps an offspring, has been sighted investigating what surely rates as a five-star hotel for the feathered. A perfect show for summer—when art, artists, and art institutions can get playful—this instant crowd-pleaser confirms that, in New York, it's a jungle out there.

—Lilly Wei

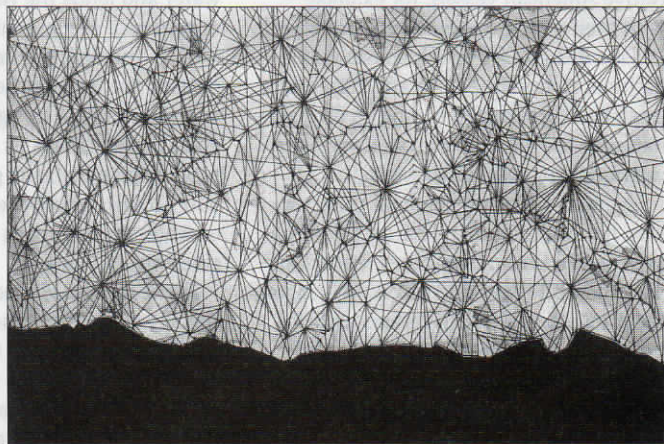
Victoria Burge

Steven Amedee

In this small, poetic show, some of Victoria Burge's drawings and prints were as quiet as snow, while others emitted a steady hum of activity. Antique maps are the artist's inspiration, and they often provide the surface she works on. Sometimes she inks over the old streets, rivers, and highways to create mystical geographies. Other times she makes

prints based on these. It is a world of tonal harmonies, of yellowed papers, and of blacks and whites that modulate to pewters and charcoal grays.

Viewed from above, Burge's cities are the circuit boards of civilization. Instead of people, we see systems, patterns, connections. Her states are stretches of land, long ago staked out by humans and covered in fine, nerverlike webbing. *Montana Day* (2009), a photopolymer intaglio, is a pale expanse of geography, crisscrossed with a myriad of black, threadlike lines that could be roads or tracings of a power grid. Burge reverses the image in *Montana Night* (2009), turning the landmass into a night sky as



Victoria Burge, *Montana Day*, 2009, photopolymer intaglio, 14" x 22". Steven Amedee.

it might be diagrammed by a mad astrologer. Skeletal creatures seem to scuttle across the Milky Way.

Some pieces, like *Chicago, Illinois* (2009), done with ink on an old map, suggest half-finished lace or macramé. Others could be the work of nature. The etching *Constellation IV* (2009) looks like something you might find under a microscope, while *Chicago in Winter* (2009) evokes ice crystals on a windowpane.

What is it about maps that compels Burge to explore the same territory over and over again? Whatever the reason, each slight shift brings with it an unexpected new perspective on a familiar vision.

—Mona Molarsky