

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

ART REVIEW

Drawings, Revealing Quirks
And Idiosyncracies

By WILLIAM ZIMMER

NATURE, Language, Symbol: the Poetics of Drawing," is a meditation on line being put through its paces. It sounds elementary and it is. The show at Henaine Miranda Contemporary Art Projects here is small with only 14 works, abstract and quite austere.

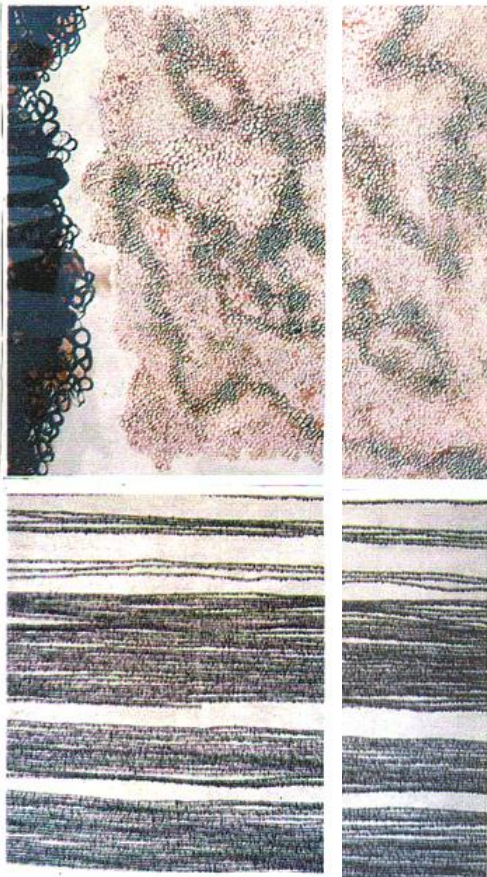
But it is not predictable. The four artists employ little tricks, quirks or idiosyncrasies to engage us. Katherine Jackson's pieces are the simplest, with graphite lines moving across white surfaces. "The Bridge: In Memoriam Hart Crane," presented on a long horizontal wood surface, is a bunching of long lines, each displaying irregular rhythms, like electrocardiograms. Since the work is dedicated to a poet who was deeply inspired by the Brooklyn Bridge, the lines might allude to the bridge's complex of cables.

But Ms. Jackson's peculiarity is that on close inspection the graphite lines are seen to be handwriting — words in the most minute of scales linked together and unreadable with the naked eye. Viewers will speculate whether they are taken from Crane's writing — or in the case of Ms. Jackson's other work, "Sebald's Silence," whether they are quotations from the enigmatic German writer.

Reyna Henaine, the gallery's co-director, says this isn't the case. The words are Ms. Jackson's own, and they are inscrutable on purpose. The perversity of her third smaller piece, "Lost Text II," is that the lines were written the normal way, in horizontal rows, but the piece is hung vertically.

William Holton will sometimes use his fingertips as a template, but because this practice isn't carried out in all his drawings here, it doesn't resonate, as Ms. Jackson's handwriting does in works paying homage to writers. Many artists have private rituals to get them started, and that's what the Holton tracings might be in "Breach." Clusters of these shapes are on two sides of a divide, but the florid clusters might ominously describe cells dividing wildly. When these clusters are repeated in "Locus" they are in miniature, so the point of the tracing is more elusive, and in a charcoal drawing, the clusters are gone — though the piece retains a botanical flavor. In a small, purposeful show like this, consistency in presentation is especially important.

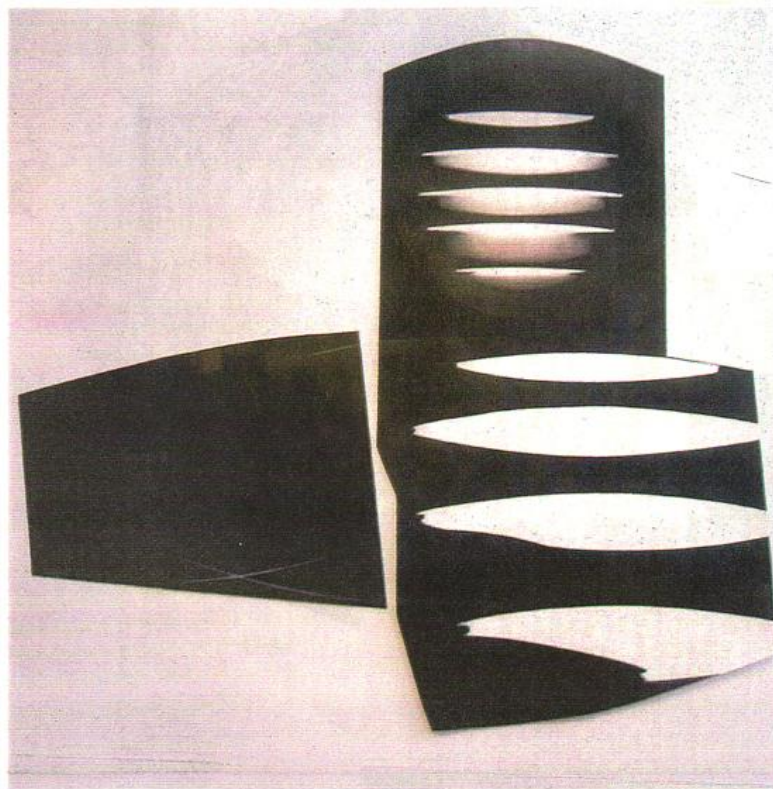
Apparently it's nothing like a simple worktable with pencils and inks for Serdar



Arat, who appears to be conjuring up an epic, at least as far as his drawings go. Two related drawings, on outside irregular paper constructions, hang opposite each other. The titles "The Long Wait" and "The Long Wait II" are deliberately ambiguous but the imagery provides clues. This is dramatic science fiction of movies like "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," now 25 years old.

"The Long Wait" contains the only color in the show, a red acrylic wash that has a few puddles. It probably indicates Mars.

"The Long Wait II" has action, or at least a sense of motion. A white disk appears to descend through an inky field. Here Mr. Arat gets to exercise a hallowed aspect of drawing: perspective. As the space ship, in successive stages, is portrayed making a land-



Serdar Arat's "Long Wait II," above; "Breach," top left, by William Holton; and "The Bridge" by Katherine Jackson, are at Henaine Miranda Contemporary Art Projects.

ing, more of its oblong-shaped surface is revealed.

Viewers are fooled until they get very close to the work of the final artist, Edith Chiara, who uses black thread to simulate an ink line. Generally, she uses her materials rather routinely, bunching many strands of thread to form a stripe and several stripes make a composition. This is collage rather than drawing. An exception is "Pods" in which short pieces of thread make arcs and near circles that seem to float or jump.

Henaine Miranda Contemporary Art Projects is a joint venture of Reyna Henaine and Patricia Miranda. Each woman has her own gallery in the loft building at 6 North Pearl Street. The galleries are almost adjacent, separated only by a large room that serves as a workroom-storage room and a studio for Ms. Miranda. When they do an exhibition together, the formal exhibition is in Ms. Miranda's gallery.

Ms. Henaine is more of a traditional dealer, working with a stable of artists whose work is featured in her gallery. Edith De

Chiara and Katherine Jackson are among them and viewers can get an extended look at their work.

Ms. Henaine's gallery hints at her origin in Mexico City (where she has another gallery) through her partiality to ripe, hot color. Elise Freda's geometric paintings feature bright red encaustic and Susan M. Speizer's abstract sculpture is taxicab yellow.

Mexico has a tradition of endearing awkward figurative painting. Igor Galv acknowledges this, but he is also very hip. His freewheeling, crowded painting "No 'Metas'" (Mind Your Own Business) contains among other diversions, boxers slugging out and a troop of penguins. It's fetching and involving; therefore it's hard to obey the rule.

"Nature, Art and Symbol: the Poetics of Drawing" is at Henaine Miranda Contemporary Art Projects, 6 North Pearl Street. Information: (914) 935-9362.