

Kevin Concannon, "Drawings by Sculptors," *Art New England*, December 1983, p. 23.

Museum School Gallery/Boston  
Drawings by Sculptors

*Drawings by Sculptors* highlights the Museum School's annual *Four Sculptors* lecture program; participating sculptors include James Biederman, Fritz Buehner, Donna Dennis, and Barbara Zucker.

The notion of "the edge," the show's original working title, is best manifested by the work of Chuck Holtzman and James Biederman. Holtzman, a Museum School alumnus, is well represented with five pieces. His drawings, rendered in an abstract cubist style, display not only the most purely sculptural sensibility but also work best as drawings. Executed on multiple panels, the images have an ambiguous spatial depth that is paralleled by the subtly-cut shaped paper upon which they are drawn. While Holtzman's sculptures are largely animated by their delicate coloring, the drawings' monochromism reveals their strongest quality: the tension between linear and atmospheric perspective.

Biederman's drawings, by contrast, are bursting with color. One of the drawings utilizes almost relieflike collage. Curiously, the better pieces are relatively flat, and the energizing device proves to be the incompletely drawn frames on the surface. The gush of flashy pastel, crayon, and gouache seems on the verge of streaming out through the opening in the false frame. It is as if one of his sculptures had been flattened, the color leaving only this narrow possibility of escape.

Faculty member Fritz Buehner is represented with one large charcoal drawing and three smaller compass pencil drawings. While the rigid patterning of the compass drawings informs his modular sculptures, the large charcoal work succeeds on its own merits; painterly application modulates an essentially geometric shape.

Working on another edge entirely are Michael Cook and Jim Roche, both conceptually oriented artists. Cook's *Working Drawing for a Stilted Performance* outlines his piece *Looking at Art History or a Revisionist Activity*. A person on stilts (to which are attached two video cameras) lopes through a room dominated by a large funnellike sculpture: the "art-historical model" through which "affirmation or denial" occurs. This piece offers charming humor at the risk of seeming overly dependent on clichéd dialectics. Roche's 1975 *Magna-calm-o-ray* serves as a working drawing for a park installation. These folksy-funky installations straddle the line between the hilarious and the eerie. The drawing effects the same reaction more succinctly.

The diversity of work as in this show presupposes familiarity with the artists' sculptural work, an assumption backed by a lack of supporting documentation. Donna Dennis's drawings, however, share none of the enigma of her installations. And Barbara Zucker's concern with sculpture as three-dimensional drawing seems tautological at best in this context. Had the original curatorial thesis not been burdened with the responsibility of institutional promotion, a good show might have been great.