

laurence barker

paper artist and
print maker

Art Catalog

11/2006

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I don't know if there are any metaphysical dots to be connected here but papermaking is undeniably splash heaven. This is because while the medium is pulp, the vehicle is water. Thus, with so much pouring, dripping, squirting and hosing, I think in terms of water painting, water drawing and finally water shaping, through the use of protective stencils. The careful designing and cutting of these stencils provide just the corrective I often look for to complement the slop of pulp play. (Georges Braque's statement "I love the rule that corrects the emotion" comes to mind.)

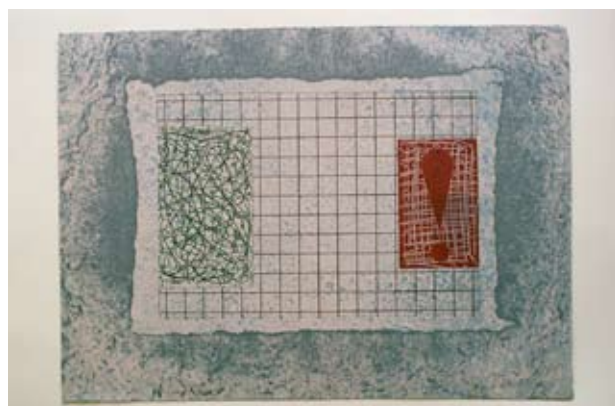
If one is willing to entertain the reciprocation or dialogue of printed images with exuberant paper, then the step from pulp painting to printmaking is small. The conventional rationale for quiet, uninflected white paper is to eliminate all distractions from the printed image. Against this irreproachable logic, however, lies the sheer theatricality of the composite image of print and paper which raises a novel set of esthetic considerations.

From Rutger's University art exhibit catalogue Paper Trail, 2000

Sarasota, Florida/ Barcelona, Spain

Laurence Barker was head of the printmaking department at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan from 1960 to 1970. He cites as a "key moment" in his life, when in 1962, a student gave him a piece of Douglass Howell's handmade paper. Barker recalled, "This wrinkled, semi-translucent paper discreetly proclaimed a life of its own." Barker attended (as the sole student) a two-week seminar at Howell's Long Island home and mill that summer. Upon returning to Cranbrook, Barker assembled the necessary equipment to establish a fine arts papermill, which opened in January 1963 as the first university-based papermaking program in America. Barker's program at Cranbrook ultimately served as the breeding ground for some of America's leading papermakers, including Walter Hamady of Perishable Press, John Koller of HMP Papers in Connecticut, Aris Koutroulis (who, in turn, taught Kathryn Clark of Twinrocker Papers), Winifred Lutz, and Roland Poska of Fishy Whale Press.

An eloquent apologist for the history and artistic potential of the handmade paper medium, Barker wrote that it is "precisely in the hyphen between support and medium, where ground becomes figure, that much untapped poetry resides, acting paper that is in turn acted upon.... Like a rheostat, paper can be easily dialed down, as it were, to the near-zero assertiveness of pure support –i.e., sheets that are white, smooth, and square



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– as it can be cranked up through stages to an intensity of activity that is pure medium.” His own artwork explores the full “rheostat” of paper possibilities, from custom handmade papers for printmaking to wet-sculpted, distressed and folded sheets with embedded materials, intaglio printing and hand-drawn crayon marks. For many years now he has been making shaped, perforated pulp paintings, which through their perforations, introduce a form of shadow play. As regards printmaking, Barker writes that “what I like so much is that after all the layers of pulp have been applied, the paper is just as absorbent as a blank sheet and equally receptive to printing ink. Its the combination of painting and printing that greatly appeals to me.”

In 1970, Barker moved to Barcelona, Spain - a region long associated with papermaking - and installed his studio and paper mill there. He headed the Smithsonian Institute Print Workshop in Barcelona in 1972, and in 1979-80, was visiting artist at the Cleveland Institute of Art. Barker was instrumental in establishing the Barcelona Paper Workshop in 1980. He has split his time between Spain and Sarasota, Florida since 1995. In addition to pursuing his own work in print and paper media, Barker has made paper for artists Roy Lichtenstein, Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Joan Miró, Mark Tobey, Antonio Tapiés, Eduardo Chillida, David Hockney, Kenneth Noland and others.

Personal Data

1930 Born November 20, Houston, Texas

1948-50 Attended Principia College, Elsah, Illinois

1951-53 Served in the United States Air Force

1954 Received B.A. degree from Principia College

1955 Received Master of Fine Arts degree from Cranbrook Academy of Art, Bloomfield Hills, Michigan

1956 Studied with Stanley William Hayter in Atelier 17, Paris

1957-60 Instructor, Art Department, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio

1960-70 Head of Printmaking Department, Cranbrook Academy of Art

1962 Studied hand papermaking with Douglass M. Howell in Westbury, Long Island, New York

1963 Installation of first university fine arts paper mill in the United States at Cranbrook Academy of Art.

1970 Moved to Barcelona and installed studio/paper mill

1972 Headed Smithsonian Institute Print Workshop, Barcelona

1979-80 Visiting Artist at Cleveland Institute of Art

1980 Establishment of Barcelona Paper Workshop

1995 Moved studio to Sarasota, FL



Individual Exhibitions

1973 Galería Nova Gráfica, Barcelona

1973 Galería Es Portal, Cadaqués, Spain

1973 Galería Gari de Sentmenat, Palamós, Spain

1974 Gallery 22, Bloomfield Hills, MI

1975 Galería Skira, Madrid

1977 Upstairs Gallery, Southampton, NY

1980 Sala Tiempo, Barcelona

1984 Edinburgh College of Art - Traveling Exhibition

1987 Galerie G, Helsingborg, Sweden

1989 Galerie Monells, Helsingborg, Sweden

2000 Dieu Donne Papermill, New York, NY



Group Exhibitions

1980 Faculty Exhibition, Cleveland Institute of Art

Handmade Paper Symposium, Edinburgh College of Art

1982 First Invitational Exhibition, Pyramid Prints and Paper Workshop, Baltimore

“Making Paper,” American Craft Museum, New York City

DuBose Galleries, Houston

1983 “Paper as Image,” An Arts Council of Great Britain Touring Exhibition

“Update: Cranbrook, A Survey Exhibition 1925-1983”, Robert L. Kidd Associates Gallery, Birmingham, Michigan

1984 “Paper Transformed,” A National Exhibition of Paper Art, Indiana State University, Terra Haute National Paper Invitational

“Surfaces and Structures,” Birmingham-Bloomfield Art Association, Birmingham, Michigan

1985 “Papper Konstverk, Papper Hantverk,” Grafikfestival, Liljevalchs Konsthall, Sweden

1986/1988 “Internationale Biennale der Papierkunst,” Leopold-Hoesch Museum, Düren, Germany

1989 “Mini-Exhibition,” Ibaraki-Ren, Japan

“Second Summer Invitational,” Santa Fe Community College, Gainesville, Florida

1992 “New Editions 1992,” Alice Simsar Gallery, Ann Arbor, Michigan

1993 “Selectie Monotypes uit het Frans Masereel Centrum 1989-1993,”Kasterlee, Belgium

1998 Papel ‘98, Bienal Latinoamericana de Arte con Papel en el Centro Cultural Recoleta, Buenos Aires, Argentina

2000 “Paper Trail,” Douglass Howell and Four Pioneers in American Handmade Paper: Laurence Barker, Walter Hamady, Clinton Hill, Golda Lewis, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey

2004 MAJDANEK VII International Art Triennale, Lublin, Poland

Statutory Award of the Ministry of Culture

2005 “DE LA LINEA A LA MATERIA” Universitat Politècnica de Valencia

Public Collections

Bibliotheque Nationale

Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Brooklyn Museum

Dayton Art Institute

Cincinnati Art Museum

Chicago Art Institute

Detroit Institute of Art

Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C.

Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid

Cleveland Museum of Art

Lectures/Paper Workshops

1983 Ruskin School of Art, Oxford University

Wimbledon School of Art

City Literary Institute, London

Kingston Polytechnic, London

1985 Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de la Nación
"Ernesto de la Cárcova," Buenos Aires

Concordia College, Montreal

State University of New York, Albany

1987 United States Information Agency sponsored tour of
paper workshops/lectures in Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina

"Papermanifestation," Jan van Eyck Akademy, Maastricht

1989 Santa Fe Community College, Gainesville, Florida

1990 York University, Toronto

Concordia College, Montreal

University of Iowa, Iowa City

University of Illinois, Urbana

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

California State University at Fullerton

1999 Instituto de Artes Gráficas de Oaxaca, Mexico

2001 Escuela de Arte y Oficios, Zaragoza, Spain

Tallers Art - Paper, Museu Molí Paperer de Capellades, Spain

2003 Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró, Mallorca, Spain

2006 VIII Fira del Paper, Sarrià de Ter, Girona, Spain

Published Reference Material

"The Revolution in Paper," a special section in *American Artist*, vol. 41, no. 421 (August 1977), pp. 33-49

"New Ways with Paper," Janet A. Flint, Curator, Department of Prints and Drawings, National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, 1978

"Papermaking," Jules Heller, Watson-Cuptill, 1978

"Papermaking in Spain (and America)," *Print News*, vol. 2, no. 3, June/July 1980, pp. 2-6

"Making Paper," American Craft Museum, 1982

"Paper as Image," Arts Council of Great Britain, 1983

"Laurence Barker – Barcelona Paper Workshop," *Artist Newsletter*, pp. v-vi of Special Papermaking Supplement, November 1983

Words on Paper, Num. 15, Summer 1988, *Newsletter of Papermakers in Australia*

"Interview with Laurence Barker," John Gerard, *Hand Papermaking*, Summer Issue 1988 "El Papel del Papel en el Arte," Ricardo Alberto Crivelli, Buenos Aires, Argentina 1988 "Reflections on Paper, Prints and Recent Work," Laurence Barker, *Arte Grafika*, Sept./Oct./Nov. 1989, pp.18-24 "A Journey from Westbury to Chillicothe," Laurence Barker, *Hand Papermaking*, vol. 12 Number 1, Summer Issue 1997, pp. 3-8

"Paper Trails, Douglass Howell, and How Paper Won Its Way Into Western Art" by Andrea Swanson Honoré (catalogue of Rutgers University art exhibit Paper Trail - Douglass Howell and Four Pioneers in American Handmade Paper: Laurence Barker, Walter Hamady, Clinton Hill, Golda Lewis, 2000) "I Dreamt I Schleppe Paper in My Summer Pajamas and Other Confessions," Laurence Barker, *Dieú Donné Pulp*, January through March 2001

Notes on Prints and Pulp Paintings

As both printmaker and papermaker my principle concern over the years has been to complement the printed image with esthetically active paper. Many years ago I made shaped paper for woodcuts and lithographs, but for a long time now I have been using different pulps as a way to add color and design to the printing paper. I have also turned this around by making printed images of a rather schematic nature to support and complement pulp imagery. A cardinal point, which is no less important for being obvious, is that the dual role of paper is never denied: it can perform as art medium and, never losing its historic function, simultaneously serve as support or substrate.



As no two printing papers will ever be alike, I consider each impression to be a variation. Thus, in a variable edition of twenty-five, for example, I accordingly sign each print “Var. I / XXV, Var. II / XXV... Var. XXV / XXV.” Titles are written on the back of all my art work, both prints and paintings. Due to the nature of the coloring of any particular paper, there may not be a clear space to write edition number, signature and date on the front. In these cases I sign a “B.” somewhere on the front and sign on the back variation number, title, signature and date.

The ability to shape paper is achieved in my case by the use of perforated protective stencils through and around which exposed pulp is washed away. But if a particular stencil is used two or more times should the work be treated as an edition? The shape is being repeated but the

painting or the coloring of the paper is unique from one interpretation to another.

Throughout history and despite notable exceptions the default format for the fine arts is, of course, the rectangle, that most stable and neutral of shapes that best serves almost all painting and drawing. The thought of editioning unique paintings on rectangular paper would strike most people as ludicrous. But what happens when the rectangle begins to be tampered with – funny corners here, perforations there? The quiet geometry of the rectangle is easily disturbed as it is altered on a sliding scale of distortion. The resulting gestalt rather quickly trumps that of the painted image, especially when the paper itself becomes pure line, pure drawing. Painting is then decidedly subservient to shape.

I very often title my pieces with thought to their shape and use the same title from one interpretation or variation to another. In order to indicate uniqueness I indicate the number of the variation after the title between parentheses. Thus, for example, “Persian Corners (two)” indicating a second version of that particular shape. Or (five) or (ten). As the spirit moves me I may pick up any one of my stencils to make further copies (of shape), new interpretations. “Open-ended with no particular commitment” probably best sums up my feeling in the matter.

Contact Information

Here is how to contact Laurence Barker if you are interested in lectures, workshops or purchasing his artwork:

Phone: **+34 93 430 6014 (Spain)**

Email: **laurencebarker@gmail.com**

Website: **www.laurencebarker.com**

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2001-01

Persian Corners No.2 (one)

pulp painting

2001

19.5 x 25.5 (49.5 x 65 cm)



1999-01

Question on the Right (three)

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 27.5 (50 x 70 cm)



1999-02

Cygnus (three)

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 27 (49,5 x 70 cm)

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2001-02

Edged Out (two)

pulp painting

2001

21 x 28 (53.5 x 71 cm)



2001-03

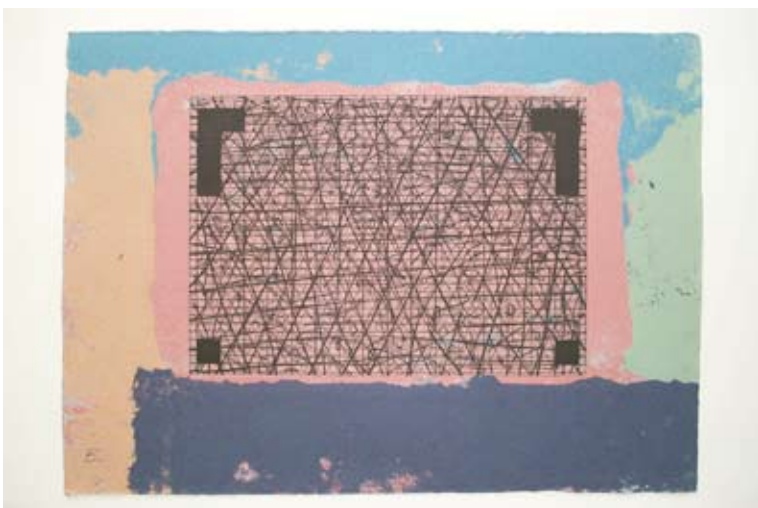
Jardín Botánico

Var. I / XXV

etching

2001

22.75 x 31 (58 x 79 cm)



2001-04

East of Suez

Var. II / XXV

etching

2001

22.75 x 31 (58 x 79 cm)

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2001-05

Memorial Day

Var.II / XXV

etching

2001

31 x 22.75 (79 x 58 cm)



2001-06

Cloud Nine

Var. II / XXV

etching

2001

22.75 x 31 (58 x 79 cm)



2001-07

Four Corners (one)

pulp painting

2001

21,5 x 29.5 (54 x 74.5 cm)



2000-01

Night in Tunisia

Var. I / XXV

etching

2000

22.75 x 31 (58 x 79 cm)



1998-01

Cleveland (one)

pulp painting

1998

19.25 x 29.5 (49 x 75.5 cm)



2001-08

Monte Albán (one)

pulp painting

2001

29 x 19.5 (74 x 49.5 cm)

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2000-02

Up in Dodo's Room

Var. I / XXV

etching

2000

31 x 22.5 (79 x 59 cm)



2001-09

The Biscuit Man (one)

pulp painting

2001

18.5 x 24.75 (47 x 63 cm)



2001-10

Gothic Overhand

Var. I / XXV

etching

2001

22.75 x 31 (59 x 79 cm)

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1999-03

Boxed Overhand No. 2 (one)

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 27.5 (50 x 70 cm)



1999-04

Question on the Right (four)

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 27 (50 x 70 cm)



2000-03

Yellow Jacket

pulp painting

2000

20,5 x 30.25 (52 x 77 cm)

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2001-11

Criss-Cross (two)

pulp painting

2001

28 x 19.5 (71 x 49 cm)



1999-05

Palmetto

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 27.25 (49.5 x 69.5 cm)



1999-06

Noches de Oaxaca

pulp painting

1999

19.75 x 27.5 (50 x 70)

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2000-04

Split Page

pulp painting

2000

20.5 x 30.5 (52 x 77 cm)



1999-07

Top Lacing (three)

pulp painting

1999

21.5 x 30.5 (55 x 76.5 cm)



2000-05

Purple Bracket

Var. I / XXV

etching

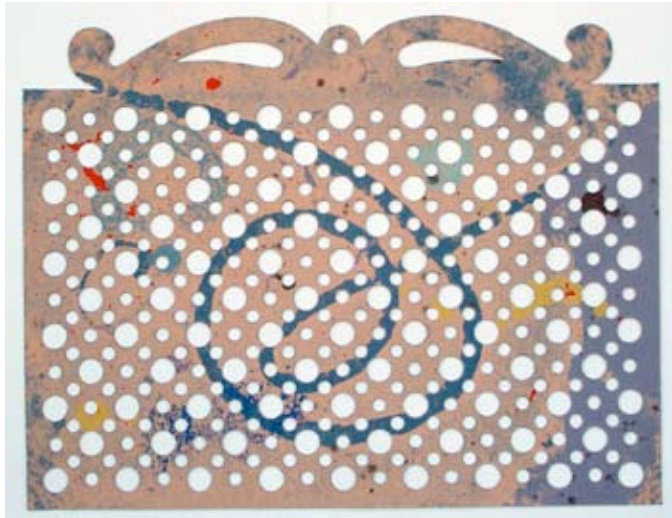
2000

22.75 x 31 (57 x 78 cm)

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1999-08

Point Pleasant (two)

pulp painting

1999

26.25 x 34.5 (67 x 88 cm)



2001-12

Open Page

Var. II / XXV

etching

2001

22.75 x 31 (58 x 79 cm)



1998-02

Two Ply Pulp Painting

pulp painting

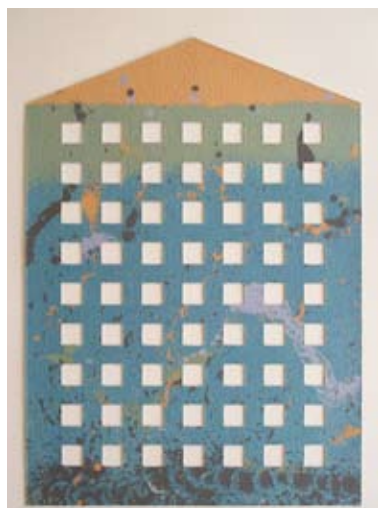
1998

31.5 x 49 (80 x 124 cm)

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2000-13

Factory (one)

pulp painting

2000

27.5 x 19.5 (69.5 x 49.5 cm)



2001-14

Persian Corners (one)

pulp painting

2001

19.5 x 25.5 (49.5 x 65 cm)



1999-09

Mexican Borders No.1 (three)

pulp painting

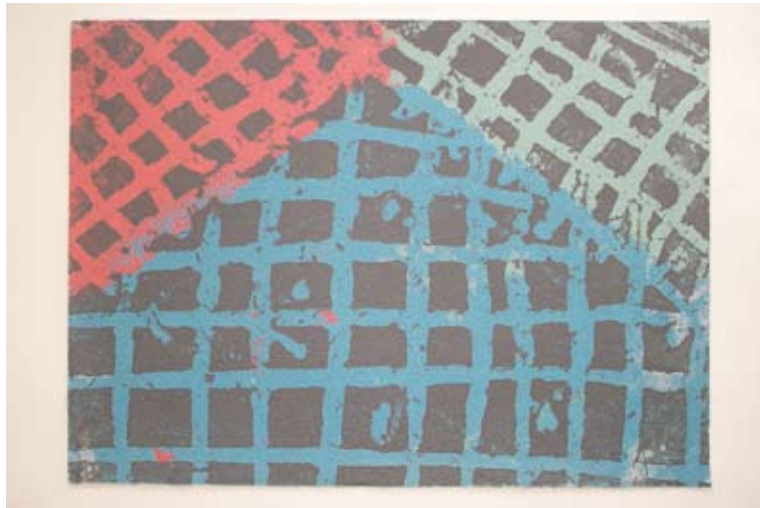
1999

19.5 x 25.5 (49.5 x 65 cm)

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2000-06

Block House

pulp painting

2000

22.5 x 31 (59 x 79 cm)



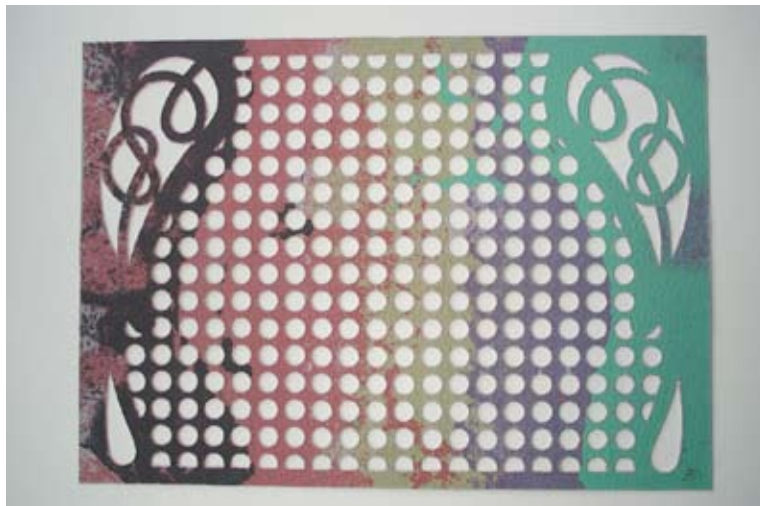
1999-10

Boxed Overhand (two)

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 27.5 (49.5 x 69.5 cm)



1999-11

Días de Oaxaca No. 2 (three)

pulp painting

1999

19.75 x 27.5 (50 x 70 cm)

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1999-12

Top Lacing (two)

pulp painting

1999

21.5 x 30 (55 x 76.5 cm)



2001-15

Sentinel

Var. III / XXV

etching

2001

31 x 22.75 (79 x 58 cm)



2000-07

Little Bang

Var. I / XXV

etching

31 x 22.75 (79 x 58 cm)

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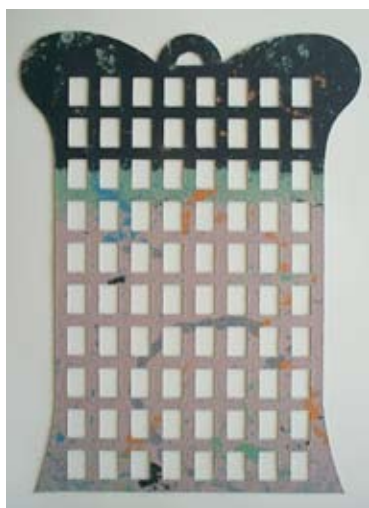
2001-16

Puerta de Viladrau (one)

pulp painting

2001

29.5 x 19 (75 x 48 cm)



2001-17

From My Window (two)

pulp painting

2001

28,25 x 21 (72 x 53 cm)



2001-18

Knot House (two)

pulp painting

2001

25.5 x 19.5 (64.5 x 49.5 cm)

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2000-08

Apex Dreaming -- Summer

pulp painting

2000

19.5 x 27.25 (49.5 x 69.5 cm)



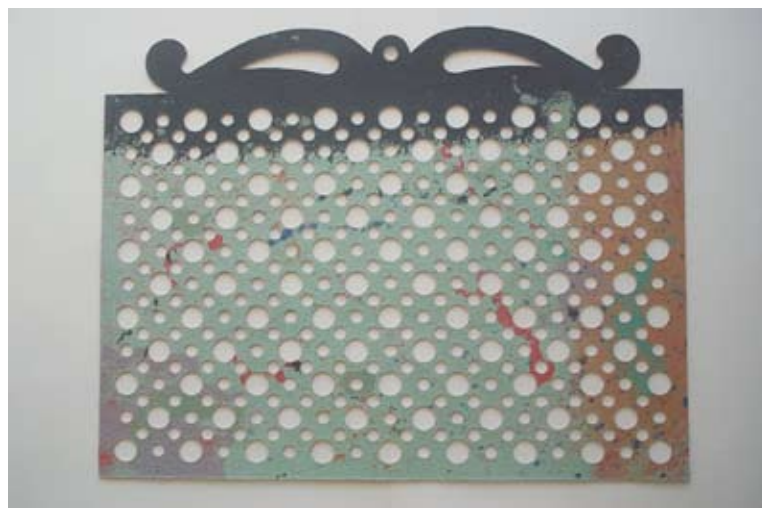
1999-13

Días de Oaxaca No. 3

pulp painting

1999

19.5 x 25 (50 x 63.5)



1999-14

Point Pleasant (one)

pulp painting

1999

26.25 x 34.5 (67 x 88 cm)



2001-19

Frontón

Var. I / XXV

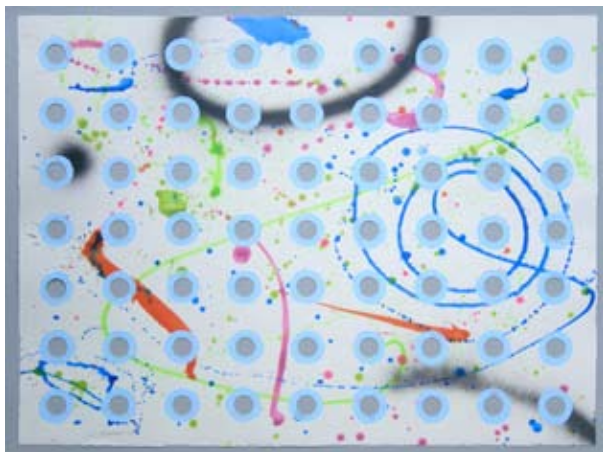
etching

22.75 x 31 (58 x 79 cm)

Recent Art

Perhaps the term “painted perforations” best describes my handmade paper compositions where a pre-cut stencil determines the shape of the art and the term “perforated paintings” my recent work on commercial paper where holes are cut last of all. Although there is shared protagonism in both cases, in the recent work there is more of a sense of dialogue wherein the perforations defer to the painting.

In either event, once the art is hung on the wall between two sheets of glass, the common denominator between these two approaches is one of shadow play behind the art. This opening up of the picture plane produces a spacial effect of double background akin to a visual hum that in turn becomes an important part of the composition.



2004-03

Blue Skies

perforated painting

2004

22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)

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2006-01
Permian Basin Green
perforated painting

2006
19.5 x 27
(50 x 70)



2006-2
Silver Zone
perforated painting

2006
19.5 x 27
(50 x 70)



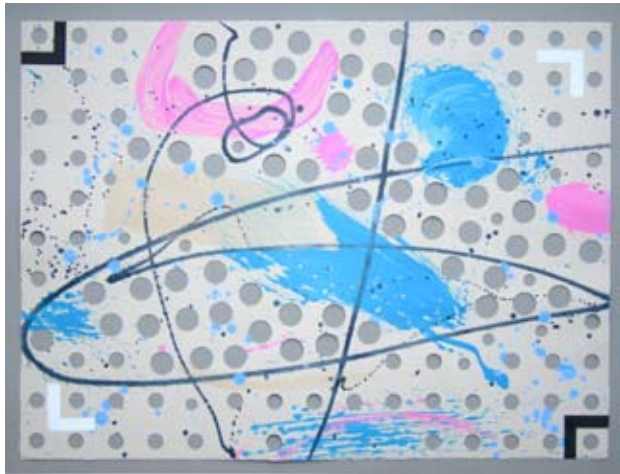
2006-03
Cornered Comma
perforated painting

2006
19.5 x 27
(50 x 70)

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2006-04

High Wing Sky

perforated painting

2006

22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)



2004-02

Even Steven

perforated painting

2004

22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)



2006-05

Paddle Ball

perforated painting

2006

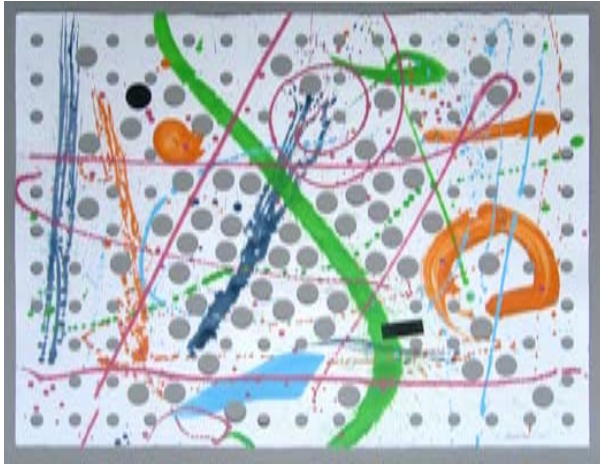
22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)

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laurence barker

paper artist and
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2005-02

Boa

perforated painting

2005

22.25 x 29.5

(57 x 75.5)



2006-06

Whipped Red

perforated painting

22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)



2006-07

Greenville

perforated painting

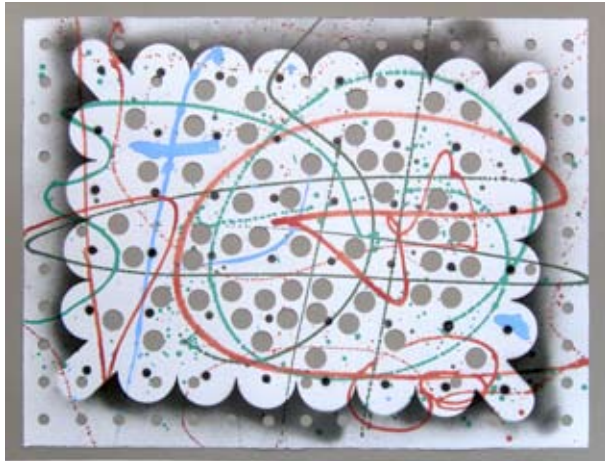
22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)

Art Catalog

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paper artist and
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2006-08

See Biscuit

perforated painting

2006

22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)



2006-09

The Gypsy In Me

perforated painting

2006

22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)



2004-01

Black Curl

perforated painting

2004

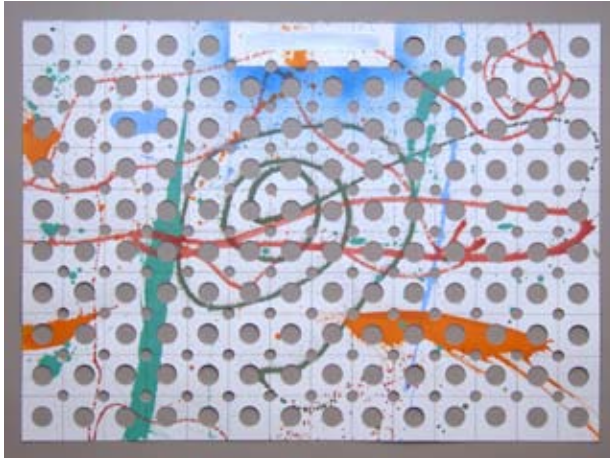
22 x 29.5

(56 x 75.5)

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2005-01

Silver Screen

perforated painting

2005

19.75 x 27

(50.5 x 70)

Laurence Barker and Framed Art

