

## Ways of Seeing: Three Takes on the Jack Shear Drawing Collection

### Take Two: Arlene Shechet

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New York, NY... For the second iteration of the three-part exhibition *Ways of Seeing: Three Takes on the Jack Shear Drawing Collection*, multidisciplinary artist Arlene Shechet takes an imaginative and personal approach to her installation of drawings selected from the expansive collection of artist, curator, and President of the Ellsworth Kelly Foundation, Jack Shear, whose holdings consist of nearly one thousand drawings dating from the sixteenth century to the present.

Shechet's interpretation of Jack Shear's collection is presented on the heels of Shear's own installation, in which he placed drawings alongside, directly on top of, or abutting other works on the basis of intuited visual affinities regardless of context or historical provenance. Taking an equally inventive approach, Shechet has chosen artworks by a diverse group of figures, some of whom featured in Shear's installation and many of whom did not, including Lee Bontecou, Edward Burne-Jones, Salvador Dalí, Elaine de Kooning, Robert Gober, Marsden Hartley, Lee Lozano, Agnes Martin, Henri Matisse, Elizabeth Murray, Jim Nutt, Odilon Redon, Georges Seurat, Al Taylor, and Joseph Yoakum, among many others.

Shechet's selection of drawings, all of which highlight connectivity and intimacy, compliment her careful consideration of the viewing environment. As a sculptor, Shechet addresses the physical space of The Drawing Center's galleries, installing four of her own hand-carved wooden benches to connect the center of the room with the walls hung with drawings. Her intervention creates a three-dimensional drawing in itself, within which visitors can gather for reflection and repose. Inspired by one of the works on view—*Natura morta* (1962) by Giorgio Morandi, whose still-lifes are meditations on the interrelationship of all things—Shechet hand-painted the walls with hues culled from the Italian artist's palette. The result is a dynamic communal space that embodies the idea that how we see art is fundamental to what we see.

Shechet's emphasis on the intimate relationship between object and viewer supplements the overarching theme of *Ways of Seeing*, namely, that interpretations of art are always impacted by both our own sensibilities and by the context in which objects are seen and received. Taken together, the exhibition's successive iterations—curated by Jack Shear, Arlene Shechet, and Jarret Earnest, respectively—offer a revealing experiment in connoisseurship and exhibition-making.

The exhibition will culminate with a third installation by curator Jarrett Earnest, on view from January 15 through February 20, 2022.

## Curatorial Biography

Arlene Shechet is a multidisciplinary sculptor living and working in New York City and the Hudson Valley. A critically-acclaimed twenty-year survey of the artist's work, *All At Once*, was on view at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston in 2015. Shechet has designed and curated exhibitions including *Porcelain, No Simple Matter: Arlene Shechet and the Arnhold Collection*, on view at The Frick Collection, New York (2016–17), and *From Here on Now* at The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC (2016–17). Her ambitious large-scale public project *Full Steam Ahead* featured monumental porcelain and mixed media sculptures installed in Madison Square Park, New York (2018–19). Shechet's first solo show at Pace Gallery, *Skirts*, opened in New York in February 2020. The monograph *Arlene Shechet: Skirts* (Pace Publishing, 2020) includes an essay by scholar Rachel Silveri and interviews with the artist by Deborah Solomon and Michaëla Mohrmann. Shechet currently has work on view in New York at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, The Jewish Museum, and the Museum of Arts and Design. Upcoming projects include exhibitions in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, as well as a historical and contemporary installation that Shechet has designed for the Harvard Art Museums and a permanent sculpture commission for the Stuart Collection at the University of California San Diego.

## Publication

The exhibition is accompanied by a special two-part publication. The first volume, *Ways of Seeing: Writings on Drawings from the Jack Shear Collection*, is co-edited by Claire Gilman and critic and writer Hilton Als, and consists of a foreword by Gilman, an introduction by Als, and short texts including poems, stories, and visual analyses by contributors Jennifer Krasinski, Ben Marcus, Nick Mauss, Charlie Porter, George Saunders, Clare Sestanovich, Brenda Shaughnessy, Tracy K. Smith, and Craig Morgan Teicher. The authors—comprising artists, fiction writers, and historians, as well as traditional critics—write about works of their choosing from the collection. The second volume, to be published upon the completion of the final installation, will include contributions by the three exhibition curators—Shear, Shechet, and Earnest—alongside installation views of their respective presentations.

## Credits

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## Images

Edward Burne-Jones, *A Head of a Knight from "The Briar Wood"*, 1874. White and black chalk on buff paper on canvas, 12 5/8 × 13 inches. Jack Shear Collection.

Giorgio Morandi, *Natura morta*, 1962. Watercolor on paper, 9 1/4 × 6 3/4 inches. Jack Shear Collection. © 2021 Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SIAE, Rome

Agnes Martin, *Untitled*, c. 1960s. Ink and graphite on paper, 8 1/16 × 8 15/16 inches. Jack Shear Collection. © Agnes Martin Foundation, New York / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

## About The Drawing Center

Founded in 1977 by curator Martha Beck (1938–2014), The Drawing Center is a museum in Manhattan's SoHo district that explores the medium of drawing as primary, dynamic, and relevant to contemporary culture, the future of art, and creative thought. Its activities are both multidisciplinary and broadly historical, and include exhibitions, public programs, publications, and a unique artist-run exhibition program aimed at the contemporary artists' community.