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ALAN SARET: GANG DRAWINGS

by Martha Schwendener

The gangs referred to in Alan Saret's "Gang Drawings," the first major show of his work since a 1990 retrospective at P.S. 1, are not what you might expect. Rather than Angels or Outlaws, Bloods or Crips, they are clutched fistfuls of colored pencils scraped, twirled or swept across the page.

The earliest examples are from the late 1960s and executed on graph paper pilfered from the Port Authority, where Mr. Saret worked briefly. Later he broke free of the grid, stretching out onto larger, sometimes colored sheets of paper. Even so, there is a continuity to the "Gang Drawings": they consistently fuse gesture with systems-based art, creating a copacetic marriage between Abstract Expressionism's set-up spontaneity and 1960s strains like Process Art, Post-Minimalism and what Robert Morris, Mr. Saret's friend and mentor, deemed "Anti-Form."

Mr. Saret is best known for his wire sculptures. The two here effectively complement his drawings. One, suspended from the ceiling, takes the clustered lines of the drawings and makes them appear as if they were scribbled three-dimensionally in space. The other, made with multicolored filaments, rests on the floor like a giant hairball or tuft of tumbleweed.

Titles are significant. Drawings like "Liquiacoriadance Entering" and "The Verg Integranxin Ensoulment" reveal Mr. Saret's spiritualist bent. But works like "Triple Cluster" and "Three Circles Ruled & Free Sweep" leave you free to contemplate his draftsmanship without pondering its possible metaphysical functions.