

# NELLIE RAKOVSKY

*Educator, Writer, Lecturer The Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, The Soviet Union  
Docent The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*

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## *GRAPHIC ABSTRACTIONS ON CONCRETE AND COSMIC THEMES*

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In the darkness it was impossible to see what would come out as the artist evidently tracked a dance performance. In any case, the activity of the pencil didn't contradict what was happening on the stage, its sensitive beak timidly wandering, circling and sliding on the page and then rushing back and forth, suddenly collapsing and afterwards energetically increasing tempo. The result seen in the light turned out to be a wrinkled web of scribbles, a drawing-like foetus in the spirit of Beuys, a thin slice cut from something which asked for the characteristic "untitled", but I saw it: the graphical scalp of Pina Bausch had been taken.

Silverish hairy heaps of lines with fragile and brittle plaitings, imbued with erotic overtones or ascetic arabesques, savory ink blots on luxurious handmade paper were the works seen later. They looked like precious paraphrases of the vortices of Pollock, like fantastic networks in the mechanisms of the twentieth century, or unintentional rapport with the rope constructions of Eva Hesse. What is certain: these works are the successions of the very intricate junctions in the dark and light, line and volume, engendered by the crystalline mass of New York City - successions one perceives as sophisticated chamber additions to its harsh urbanity.

*Movement of leaves of the tree seen from the window of apartment 12 on MacDougal Street in New York City in 1994* --- this title evokes the romanticism of Caspar David Friedrich, German painting of the 19th Century and generally the northern painting tradition, with its usual motif of the window through which the world - abyss - God are

contemplated. The drawing itself in the glowing white cosmos of the page is a soft mist, a many layered net of melancholic lines and troubled strokes of graphite, pulsing, beating, spiraling and clotting, increasing their flesh with a number of black epicenters. However this flesh remains pierced by a cool metaphysical light and when inside this chaos and especially at its edges, we discover the algorithm - we understand that here there is some hidden law. If Plato's idea that our lives are shadows is true, O'Hara draws shadows of these shadows looming before our eyes.

*Baklava maker Nedret Khan preparing a Turkish pastry on MacDougal Street on November 7, 1995*, an enigmatic strange arabesque, the cipher of another reality, is, nevertheless, a drawing made from nature and charged with the meaning of its title. The titles of O'Hara's works are kindred to Japanese poetry, but there is always a Cheshire Cat smile in them, an irony, or more precisely - perfidy. Where is the tree, the foliage, the Turkish baker with his baklava?

Morgan works not simply to forget herself, giving herself completely to the work, but consciously forgetting herself, trusting to her pencil and the lightning-like gesture, procuring from the subconscious the idea and essence of things. According to Jung, the power of the subconscious is God. That is why the pencil, touching the snowy virgin soil of the paper draws light-carried tracks, and in *Movement of insects on a summer night at the end of July in 1995 in Bergamo, Italy*, each line is filled with the night's blackness. Perhaps this is not God but the different insects in the measure of their force drag with their legs, the sombreness of the summer night; and the night dances its ornaments onto the Nepalese tonally warm and textured handmade paper. The *1002nd night*. At the same time, the impetuous flying phantoms, like the traces of breath on a window pane: *Edwina Horl's dress gently lifting and falling in the afternoon breeze in Scheifling, Austria, July 1995* and the journey of *Fire licks following Martin Dickinger's papier-maché sculpture burning as performance, July 1995*, in the same place, are generated by the sparkling stratum of flashing strokes. Such a mysterious, luminous fabric or irregular asymmetrical lace would look very fashionable today. The question is where do you go to find it, this primal cloth of the artistic image with its ethereal cellular structure

which is impossible even to define in words but which is the skeleton of figurative and abstract art.

In the jazz of Anthony Braxton the movement of his hands gives birth to seven graphical galaxies. They form in the white vacuum of the page, seven furious graphite staccatos - elongated, velvety like a bumble bee, woolly textured spots, embraced by the scaffold of thin elastic lines, each a graphic temple and in each the sacred service. The graphical herbs are boiling and the last vestiges of rococo, baroque and gothic, boil to marks and chiaroscuro - thicken into abstract expressions and unknown meanings which drift eternally in the endlessness of artistic space.

In Anthony Braxton's *Composition 193*, Morgan O'Hara, with her instruments, was a member of an orchestra sitting inside the hurricane music as Turner was in the sea tempest tied to the mast, each fixing another artistic event. These are true black fireworks, a squall of needle-like lines tightly knotted in bunches - zig-zags of black lightning - black bursts from which little clouds disperse to the periphery - and in the epicenter, sheaves of black rays rise and melt into the heart-core of graphite magma. The stormy movement of musical hands conduct the growing jazz mass and the pencils, not bearing the impetus, are wrenched from the hands of the artist, fall down and roll away. She tames them in a musical way, in each hand a row of organ-like little pipes which create the solemn graphical installation, unfolding the extensive image of the graphite shaft, fine and breakable, tightly tuned to the world in its eager loyalty to the tremolo of nature, not defended against fracture.

This drawing could serve as a musical score\* but it seized the artist and led her to turn toward an experimental field. She united these split forms into a single silhouette which became a powerful, nearly real burst of ink splashed on the wall. Actually, it became a monument to mutation of form, a sudden metamorphosis. Form is not so frequently indulgent with those who throw this challenge. The new formation, enlarged, is transferred to the wall without any loss of spontaneity.



The KEYBOARD STUDIES follow as a logical sequence. Movement is transposed to old Czechoslovakian score paper which, by its nature, attunes one to music. In addition, there are many aesthetic qualities: each page has a different tonality, proportion of staff lines with their different thicknesses and different spaces between. This is a true classic of minimalism or an echo of the striped serenities of Agnes Martin. However, here it is impossible to imagine how an artist sitting in the posture of Vermeer's lace maker habitually "weaves" her grey cloth with the only difference being that instead of bobbins - a battery of pencils is held in each hand. In these new permutations, Morgan O'Hara decisively, rather pitilessly, pours on three layers of ink, aspiring to the highly polished black finish of the grand piano and at the end produces very black formations with strong contours. Possibly just a playful moment? What happens if one generalizes? Briefly, this is again the teasing of form but this time in the quiet atmosphere of parallel

lines which are peacefully awaiting notation...a calm before the disaster? Suddenly this stillness contorts and yawns into hideous torn chasms, ready to engulf everything. One literally hears the ominous cracking. The musical flatnesses are ripped open and other non-musical limits of space appear.

Not less elemental are the images of THE SHAPE OF DISCOURSE: precisely, gesticulation at the podium in the auditorium of writers, philosophers and poets at work. There is here the same rational principle of generalization as in the KEYBOARD STUDIES. This series of splashes of black graphical plasma is an expressive embodiment of the gestures of orators, most dense clots of intellectual and emotional energy. Like some inner organs with all vessels derived from the organism for a new environment, condensing and gaining weight as chiseled bronzes, poured, but not by any hand. They distend and agitate the impeccable limitlessness of the page making it tempest-like. Leaving the power of titles, we suddenly see inside this cool cosmos the mysterious black holes where all worldly information and all emotional energy impetuously revolve for eternal storage and eternal transformation in the name of new universes.

*\*Note: To my great delight and satisfaction this actually happened in a fall concert in 1998. It happened to a perfect degree when a serious devoted young student turned the pages of these drawings as Anthony Braxton played from them as from an ordinary musical score. Tri-Centric Festival, September 24 - October 3, 1998, Greenwich House Music School, New York City.*

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