

# HEDWIGE JACOBS

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*IF I COULD, I WOULD COVER EVERYTHING WITH MY DRAWINGS*



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## WOMEN & THEIR WORK

JANUARY 19 - FEBRUARY 28, 2019

AUSTIN, TEXAS



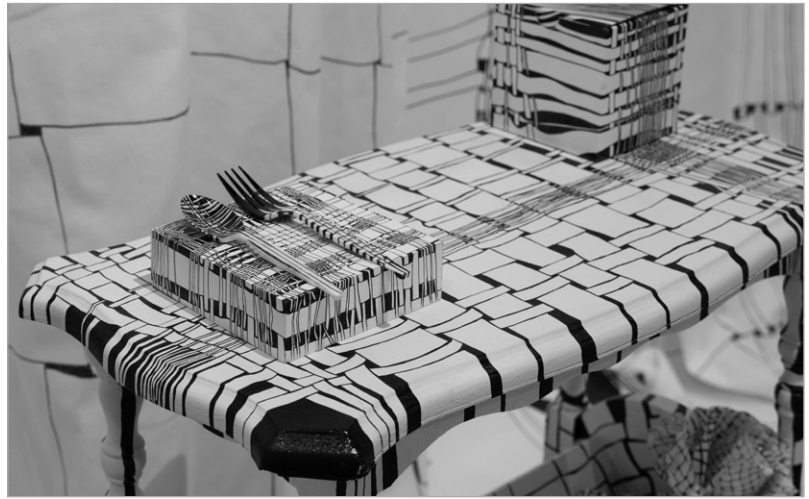
Above: *Inside of Envelopes*, 2018, mixed media drawings on the inside of approximately 100 collected found paper envelopes, various sizes

Cover Panel: *The Corner Room*, 2017-2018, pen, ink, acrylic, marker, fabric, paper, and drawings on collected objects, dimensions variable

## IN DETAIL

In Hedwige Jacobs' studio, she lays her *Tiny Drawings* on the floor to show me. They fall out of boxes, pile in stacks on every surface. I am surprised at how she is not precious with them. They are mostly unframed still, and we handle them with the hands of people looking and talking, not archiving or remembering. In that way, they are very much alive. In them, figures spill out, chase each other, make circles and piles and knots. They cry, sometimes, and sometimes they hold hands. They lean against one another, back to back, or follow one another in lines, walking to who-knows-where.

In all of Jacobs' surfaces, I find insistent touch, a mapping and re-mapping of things by covering them in lines, grids, and what she describes as "weaves." I am thinking here of her oddly welcoming yet uncanny living room installation, in which every surface is marked by attentive line-making and layering. Curtains marked with hand-drawn lines fall in piles to the floor. Behind them, drawings on paper peer through the gaps like a matching wallpaper. Hung on them are canvases of painted lines. Pillows, their white surfaces covered in black meandering patterns are piled on a similarly drawn-upon rocking chair. The artist's hands have covered and then re-covered every surface and, rather than a rigid grid, she has written an organic and moody one over them all. By tracing the contours of each thing, she marks it as existing, drawing it into another kind of being with her hands. In this *Corner Room*, she takes the measure of surface (down to the lightbulb inside the lamp), using drawing to understand the scope of minute details. We might become disoriented; indeed, it is rare to find this



*The Corner Room*, 2017-2018, (detail), pen, ink, acrylic, marker, fabric, paper, and drawings on collected objects, dimensions variable

careful attention paid to every surface surrounding us. That is to say, we are not used to being *inside* the intentionality of a drawing.

What would happen if we were to think of *place* or a *room* as a verb: something one does, something constantly in flux, something unable to be fully understood when we are simply standing there, or rocking in that chair, or watching television. *To place* might be to try to know somewhere infinitely unknowable because it is also perpetually in a state of change, just as we are. *To room* might mean to fill a contained space with our own, ongoing experiences inside it. Because it is always changing, these places and rooms require frequent return, an ongoing series of questions and movements, or perhaps a careful marking of their parameters before even their boundaries begin to shift around us. What if, in trying to understand the room, we traced its surface repeatedly with our fingers, insisting upon a spatial presence in this particular moment? This might be both a gesture of impossibility and a reiteration

of something's existence. By drawing over the surface of the thing, we remind ourselves: *here you are, here I am, and for now, we are here together*. Or, that is to say, *here we meet*.

In Jacobs' installation *Envelopes*, we might imagine an unknown world exploding itself out from the mundane collection of papers that arrive in our mailboxes. For the artist, an opened envelope becomes a patterned geography (often, in this case, with a window) from which tiny figures wander and dance, line up, climb ladders, collapse into each other, traipse through mazes, and huddle together in piles. Her characters make love and lean against each other, become shapeless silhouettes, disappear into houses. Jacobs tells me she is often struck by the vastness of human interactions, how unknowable the span of humanity is, how it is everywhere and yet, still, wildly inexplicable.

There is something to be said about the relationships between Jacobs' figures and her tracing of surfaces. She is interested, she says, in how we move through public

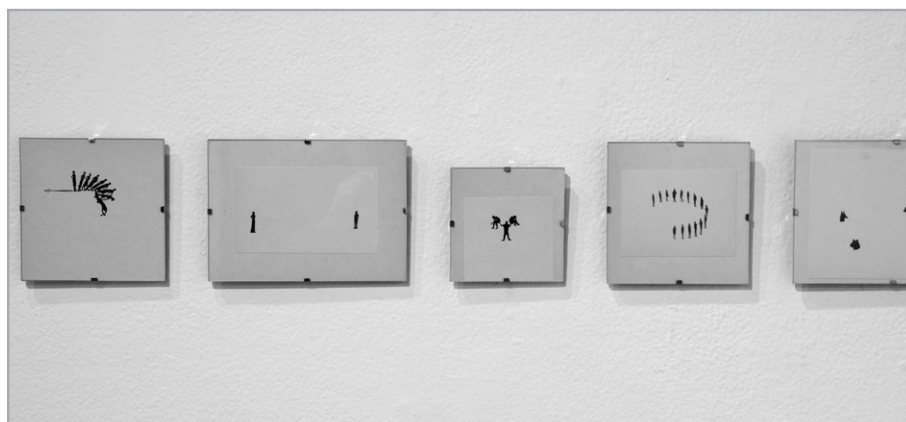
spaces in unpredictable ways, going on about our lives: she watches people as they walk. In walking, touch happens between the figure and the ground. We might imagine our paths as building an invisible weave over the surface of the entire world, our feet tracing idiosyncratic and interwoven patterns along the contours of our surroundings, making the moment of contact almost visible, giving places a particular patina from being walked through, over, around.

On the floor of the gallery, Jacobs has installed *Personal Space*, an animation that interacts with exhibition visitors. Her drawn figures scuttle across the projected ground, going about their days and movements. When an outsider enters Jacobs' world, the figures scurry away or walk around the intruder's feet and shadow. Disruption is one of the ways we find ourselves among others. That is, by entering the stream, we change its flow and direction, even if only for a moment.

In a corner of the exhibition, Jacobs has installed a group of child-size mannequins, their bodies covered in fabric that she has drawn over. They offer a counterpoint to the nearby child-size room, a little



*The Corner Room*, 2017-2018, (detail), pen, ink, acrylic, marker, fabric, paper, and drawings on collected objects, dimensions variable



*Tiny Drawings Series*, 2018, pen and ink on paper, various formats, 4" x 4" , 4" x 6" , 4" x 7"

rocking chair turned toward the wall where it faces a shelf of objects: a light bulb, a vase, a handkerchief, tiny figurines. Beside the chair, small slippers mirror the slippers and rocker in the adult-size version of the installation. Beside the small rocker, a lamp extends high, high above it, impossibly high. A curtain opens to a canvas of gridded weave, and it is all so tightly claustrophobic, we might imagine these small figures running away from the intensity of living in this particular drawing.

As Jacobs writes, "The works are imbued with lively human interaction and with environments that are suggestive of an event or place, yet these are left as starting points, fragmented moments in an unending narrative." In every moment of *If I could I would cover everything in my drawings*, Jacobs seems to begin a dark fairy tale. "Once upon a time," these scenarios say, and then they go off the rails. Those child-size mannequins seem to have fled, finding solace in a shared corner. A small wooden birdhouse is inexplicably placed against the wall, on the other side of the small rocking chair installation. A grouping of eleven drawings in which figures are compressed into a black space in Boschian configurations is finished by a twelfth, an

animation in which the figures squirm and smoosh together. And yet, Jacobs denies us narrative at every turn. *What is happening here*, one wonders, as one is hooked into an unfathomable place, tracing its contours in perplexing, never-ending overlaps.

Imagine, Jacobs seems to say, imagine a world covered in drawings, mapped by a gridded weave made by hand, showing us the crevices we might never have noticed. Imagine covering every surface in meandering lines in order to see it anew, in order to touch it and understand how it has been formed and placed and organized. Imagine, then, if we could pay attention to those details, always, with such focus, as a story starts to unfold. If we could see these small spaces as infinitely interesting, surfaces inviting untold encounters. That is to say, what Jacobs invites us to do, is make everything around us come into being, entering into an always unpredictable, infinite web of relations, never knowing (as we never do) where it all might end.

**Laura August, PhD** is a writer and curator based in Guatemala City and Houston. She is a recipient of The Creative Capital | Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant for her writing in Central America.

## Hedwige Jacobs

### EDUCATION:

- 2004 MFA Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA  
1995 Post Graduate Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague, The Netherlands  
1994 BFA Royal Academy of Arts, The Hague, The Netherlands

### EXHIBITIONS:

- 2019 *If I could, I would cover everything with my drawings,*  
*Women & Their Work*, Austin, TX  
*Alternate Pathways*, The Union, Houston, TX  
2018 *The Big Show*, Lawndale Art Center, Houston, TX  
*Peeking Inside! Sharing Space? The Space Within*, Box 13  
ArtSpace, Houston, TX  
*Come Together*, Sawyer Yards, Houston, TX  
*Human Flow*, Nos Caves Vin, Houston, TX  
2017 *Connecting the Silos, An Artist INC-Houston Showcase*, Houston, TX  
*Art on the Avenue*, Winter Street, Houston, TX  
*AMoA Biennial 000: Architecture*, Amarillo Museum of Art,  
Amarillo, TX  
*Drawn to the Inside*, Tanks Space, 1824 Spring Street, Houston, TX  
*ONSET*, Forum 6, 1824 Spring Street, Houston, TX  
2016 *The Big Show*, Lawndale Art Center, Houston, TX  
2015 *Site Houston*, The Silos, Houston, TX  
*Luck of the Draw*, Diverse Works, Houston, TX  
2014 *Apocryphal Times*, Friedman Benda Gallery, New York, NY  
*The Intuitionist*, The Drawing Center, New York, NY  
*100th Feature A5 & Fred Lives Here*, Affordable Art Fair, Singapore  
*Luck of the Draw*, Diverse Works, Houston, TX  
2013 *Cliftons Art Prize 2013*, Finexis Building, Singapore  
2012 *Changing Rooms*, DAiS at Galeri Utama, Singapore  
*Chairity*, Red Dot Design Museum, Singapore  
*Redress*, ION Art Gallery, Singapore  
*Hollandsche Nieuwe*, DAiS at Artistry, Singapore  
2011 *Benefit v.11*, Inliquid Art + Design, Philadelphia, PA  
2010 *Swamp Short Films*, Fotofest 2010 Biennial, The Museum of Fine Arts,  
Houston, TX  
2009 *New Drawings*, CTRL Gallery, Houston, TX  
2008 *Outpost*, CTRL Gallery, Houston, TX  
*Houston Area Exhibition*, Blaffer Gallery, Houston, TX  
2007 *Aqua Art Miami 07*, CTRL Gallery, Miami, FL  
*Pushing the Envelope*, Williams Tower Gallery, Houston, TX  
*Year\_07 Art Projects*, CTRL Gallery, London, England

- Animated Drawings*, CTRL Gallery, Houston, TX  
*Five x Seven on the road*, Arthouse and Glasstire, Austin, TX  
*Carbon14 Gallery*, Philadelphia, PA  
*Second Impressions*, Tower Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
*Primed*, Washington Project for the Arts/Corcoran, Washington, DC  
2006 *Affair at the Jupiter Hotel*, Romo Gallery, Portland, OR  
*Deja Vu*, Art Alliance, Philadelphia, PA  
*Immersion*, Ice Box Project Space, Philadelphia, PA  
2005 *Exhibit 1*, In liquid at the Painted Bride Art Center Gallery,  
Philadelphia, PA  
*Philadelphia Cheek*, Seraphin Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
*Area*, Union Gallery University of Maryland, College Park, MD  
*Where I'm Calling From*, The Vacuum, Philadelphia, PA  
2004 *Naked*, June Fitzpatrick Gallery, Portland, ME  
*The Green Exhibition*, Esther M. Klein Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
*International Show*, Fraser Gallery, Washington, DC  
*Freeform*, Media Bureau Networks, Philadelphia, PA  
*Thesis Exhibition*, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts,  
Philadelphia, PA  
2003 *Night of 1000 Drawings*, Artists Space, New York, NY  
*Works on Paper*, Perkins Center for the Arts, Moorestown, NJ  
*Zomer expositie*, Ernst & Young, The Hague, The Netherlands  
2002 *MFA Exhibition*, 1301 Gallery, Philadelphia, PA  
2001 *International Voices*, Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL

### AWARDS:

- 2013 Finalist, Cliftons Art Prize, Singapore  
2010 Finalist, Hunting Art Prize, Houston, TX  
2007 Finalist, Hunting Art Prize, Houston, TX  
2004 The Fellowship Trust Prizes, Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine  
Arts, Philadelphia, PA  
2003 Juror Award, Works on Paper, Perkins Center for the Arts,  
Moorestown, NJ  
Dedalus Foundation Nominee, New York, NY

### COLLECTIONS:

- Lester Marks, Houston, TX  
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands Embassy, Singapore  
Wellington Management Company, Boston, MA  
Ernst & Young, The Hague, The Netherlands  
VSB, The Hague, The Netherlands  
Fortis, The Netherlands



*If I could, I would cover everything with my drawings*, 2019, (gallery view), pen, ink, acrylic, marker, fabric, paper, mixed media drawings, and interactive animated drawings

## Women & Their Work

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Known for its pioneering spirit, embrace of artistic innovation, and commitment to Texas audiences and artists, Women & Their Work is now celebrating its 40th anniversary. Presenting over 50 events a year in visual art, dance, theater, music, and film, the gallery features on-going exhibitions of Texas women artists and brings artists of national stature to Texas audiences. Since its founding, Women & Their Work has presented 1,906 artists in 319 visual art exhibitions, 128 music, dance and theater events, 16 film festivals, 30 literary readings and spoken word performances, and 670 workshops in programming that reflects the broad diversity of this region. Nationally recognized, Women & Their Work has been featured in Art in America, The New York Times, ArtForum, and on National Public Radio and was the first organization in Texas to receive a grant in visual art from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Women & Their Work reaches over 700 school children and teachers each year through gallery tours, gallery talks with exhibiting artists, participatory workshops, in-school performances, dance master classes, and teacher workshops.



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