

INFRASTRUCTURES
JANE SOUTH

Published on the occasion of the exhibition

JANE SOUTH: INFRASTRUCTURES

Organized by Second Street Gallery

May 4 – 26, 2007

CURATOR

Leah Stoddard

EDITORS

Catherine Barber, Leah Stoddard

CATALOG DESIGN

Keith Damiani

PRINTING

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COVER IMAGE

Untitled (Cobalt Fragment), 2007
ink and acrylic on hand-cut and
folded paper, 12 × 23 × 13 inches
courtesy the artist and Spencer
Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

RIGHT

Untitled (cobalt fragment 2), 2007
ink and acrylic on handmade
paper, 9 × 12 inches paper
courtesy the artist and Spencer
Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

BACK COVER

Untitled (Black Skewed Box), 2006
ink and acrylic on hand-cut and
folded paper, 32 × 39 × 20 inches
courtesy the artist and Spencer
Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

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Second Street Gallery

115 Second Street SE

Charlottesville, VA 22902

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Second Street Gallery is one of the longest surviving nonprofit organizations in the country focused solely on the art and ideas of our time. Since its founding in 1973, SSG has served its surrounding community with continuous exhibition programming, and today is recognized as a leading nonprofit supporter of contemporary art in the Mid-Atlantic region. SSG receives funding from individuals, businesses, and corporations through its membership and major gifts programs, and through local and national grants. Second Street is a member of the Virginia Association of Museums (VAM) and the Piedmont Council of the Arts.

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EXHIBITION VENUES

Second Street Gallery

Charlottesville, VA
(May 4 – 26, 2007)

Weatherspoon Art Museum

University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, NC
(June 17 – September 23, 2007)



INFRASTRUCTURES

JANE SOUTH

INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
BY LEAH STODDARD

ESSAY BY FRANCES RICHARD

 second street gallery

INTRODUCTION & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

LEAH STODDARD

DIRECTOR, SECOND STREET GALLERY

In this time of hybrids, Jane South is in the thick of it. Her awe-inspiring wall and floor networks have a foot in both the sculpture and drawing camps, and since 2000, when she abandoned monumental concrete forms in favor of “a few pots of ink and paper,” South has explored where these previously separate worlds intersect. The results, as represented by the 15 works in this show, reveal an artist considering the fundamentals of both perception and presentation. She asks: “How much can you do with the fundamental vocabulary of drawing?” Her answer begins with using the wall as an integral part of the drawing and conflating multiple views of her industrial Brooklyn neighborhood. In the end, one just stands back, stunned, tracing knife cuts and hash marks, marveling at South’s meticulous approach. Second Street is proud to present a selection of brand new works on paper that serve as intimate counterpoints to the 3D assemblages, and to present the Mid-Atlantic debut of this important artist’s work.

First, I would like to thank artist Amy Yoes, who first introduced me to Jane South’s work at the New York Armory show a few years back. This show would not be possible without the generous support of Keith Damiani, whose last job before leaving the board after six years of

service was to create this exhibition catalog, and he (along with Mathias Tornqvist) must be thanked for the profound way he has transformed and branded this nonprofit. This organization will be forever in his debt.

The touring aspect of this show, which to my knowledge is the first time that Second Street has originated a show and toured it nationally, came from my determination to grow the organization in that direction. The next step was to seek out South’s graduate school alma mater, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and Xandra Eden, curator of exhibitions, from the Weatherspoon Art Museum there, jumped at the chance to show South’s work. We thank them for supporting the show and for contributing crating, which allowed these fragile objects to tour. Thanks, too, to Spencer Brownstone Gallery, who oversaw that crating process, and for framing the show’s new drawings. In addition, we must thank essayist Frances Richard for her compelling insights into the complex machinations of South’s drawing/sculptures.

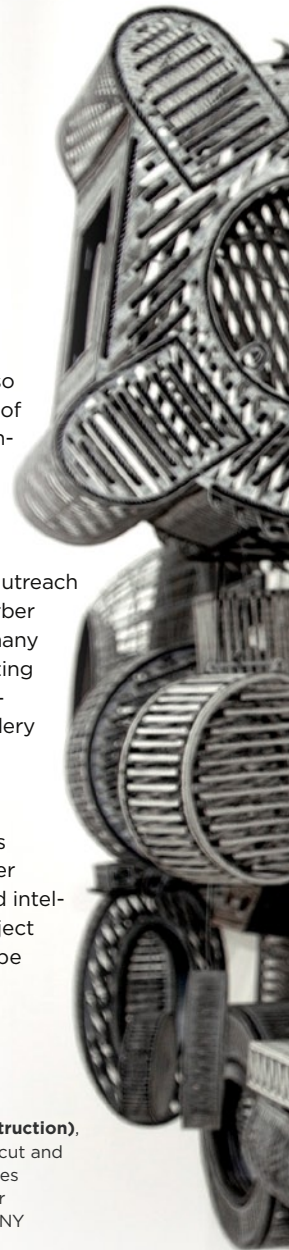
As with any Second Street publication, it is a group effort, and so thanks must be given to interns Alexandra Small, Aliya Reich, Cameron Thomas for compiling and verifying the bio-

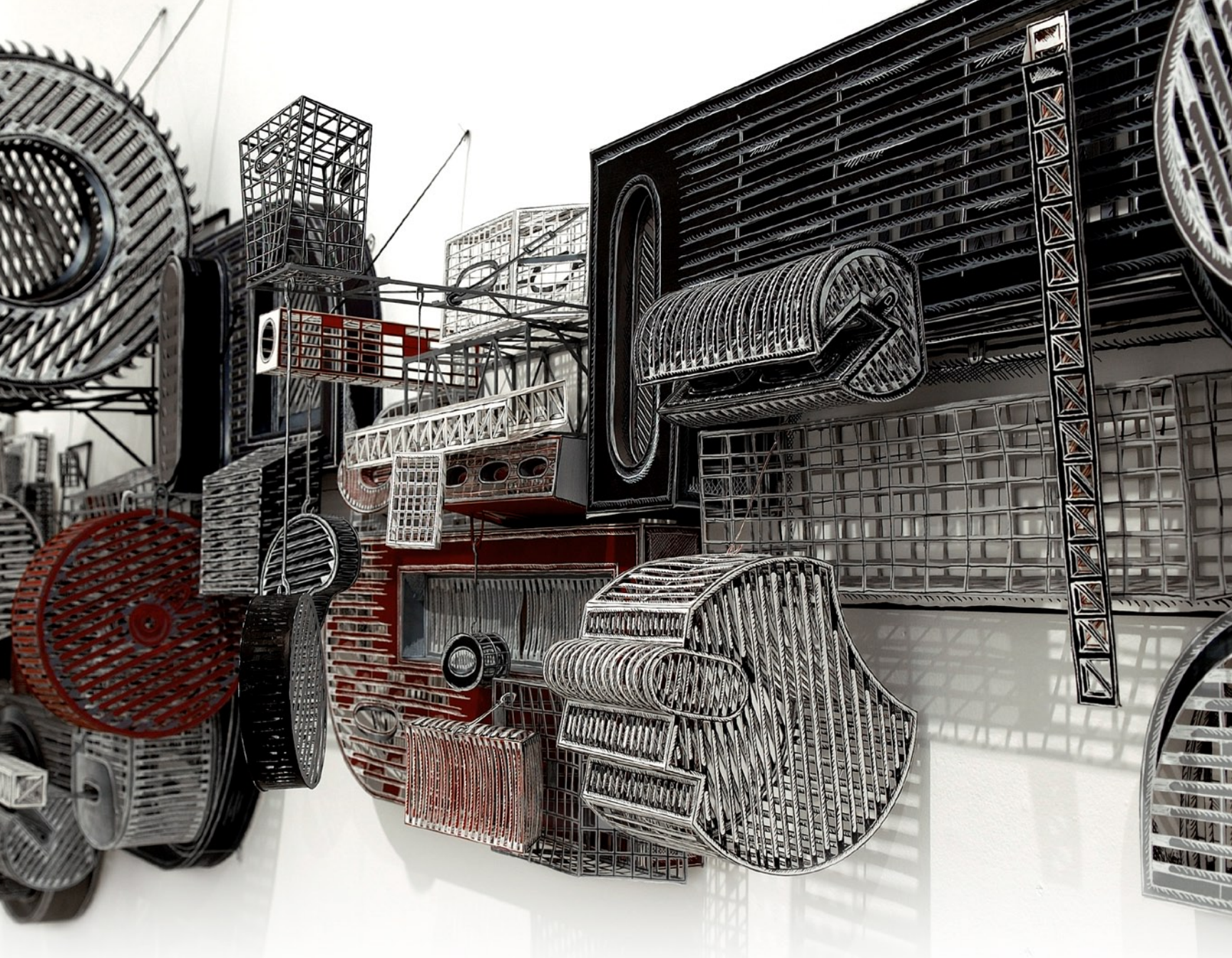
graphical information. I also acknowledge the support of our determined office manager Lauren Rosenthal for her persistence in helping everyone better grasp the computer age. Thanks also to Membership and Outreach Coordinator Catherine Barber for enabling me to wear many hats and for her eagle editing eye, which greatly contributes to everything this gallery publishes.

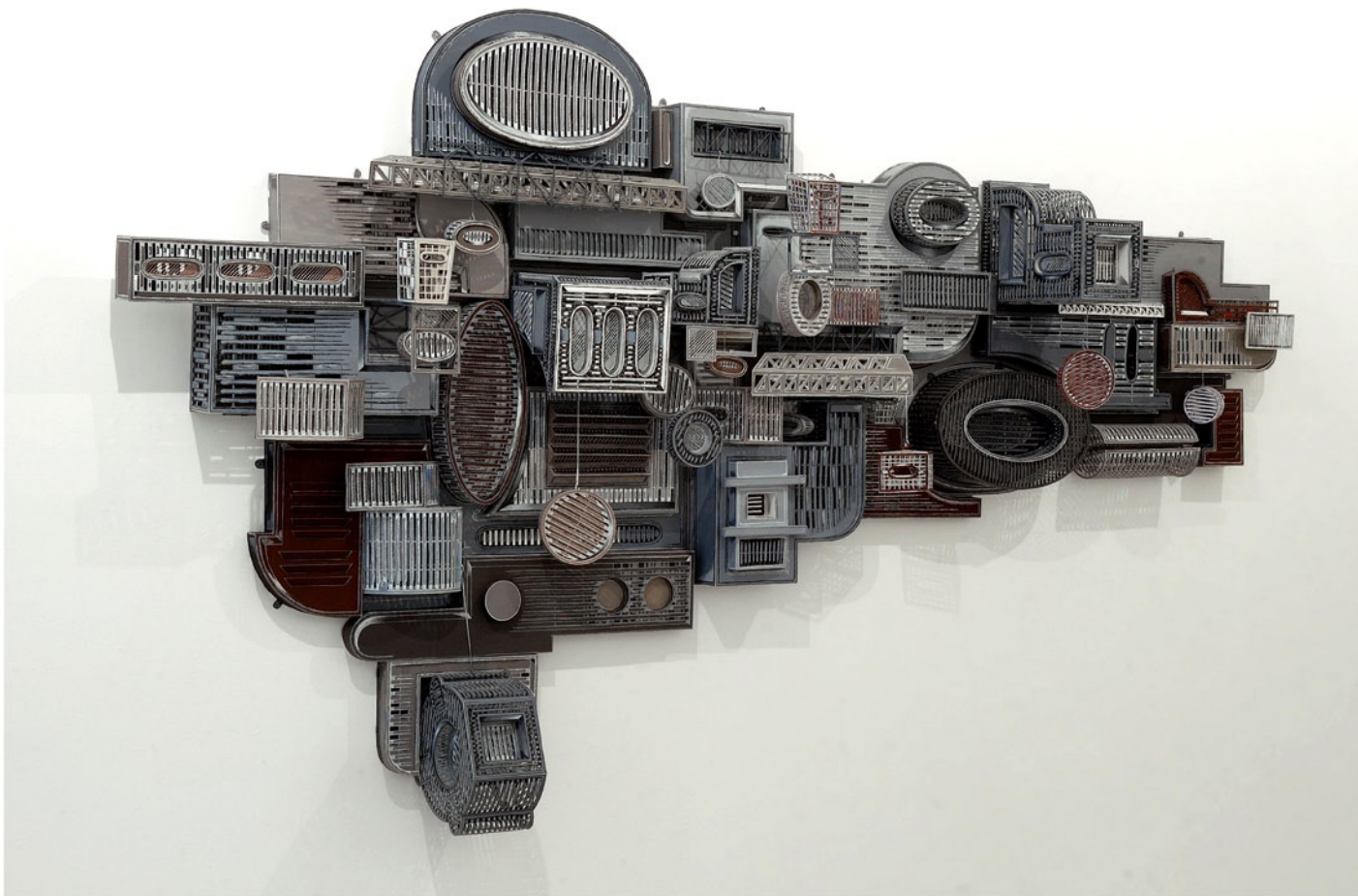
Finally, I can’t thank Jane enough for all that she has done for the exhibition. Her strength, good humor, and intelligence has made this project a pleasure, and I couldn’t be more thrilled to share her unique constructions with this region.

RIGHT

Untitled (Long Wheeled Construction). 2006, ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper, 54 × 168 × 19 inches courtesy the artist and Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY







ABOVE, DETAIL AT RIGHT

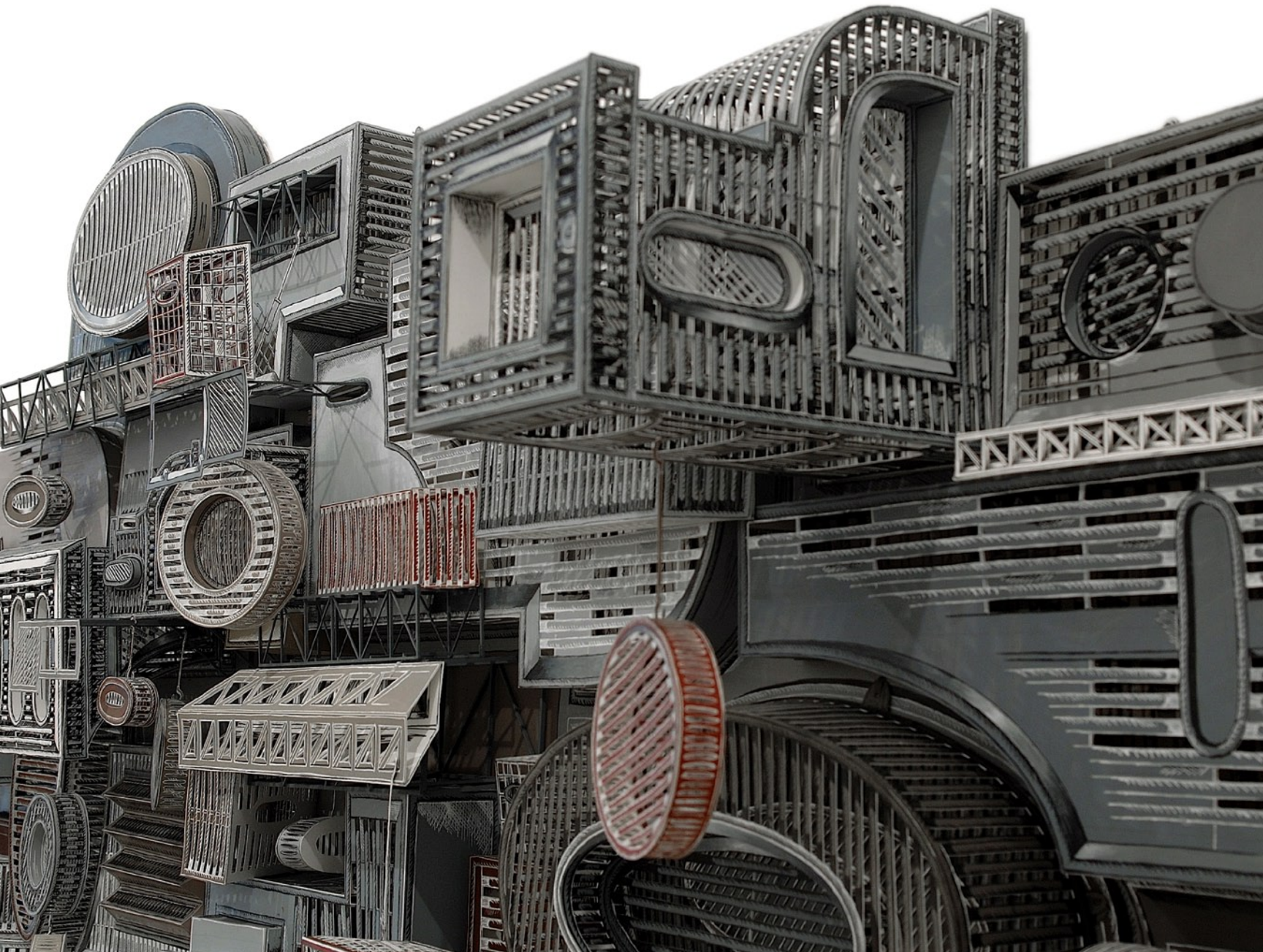
Untitled (Long Gray Construction), 2006

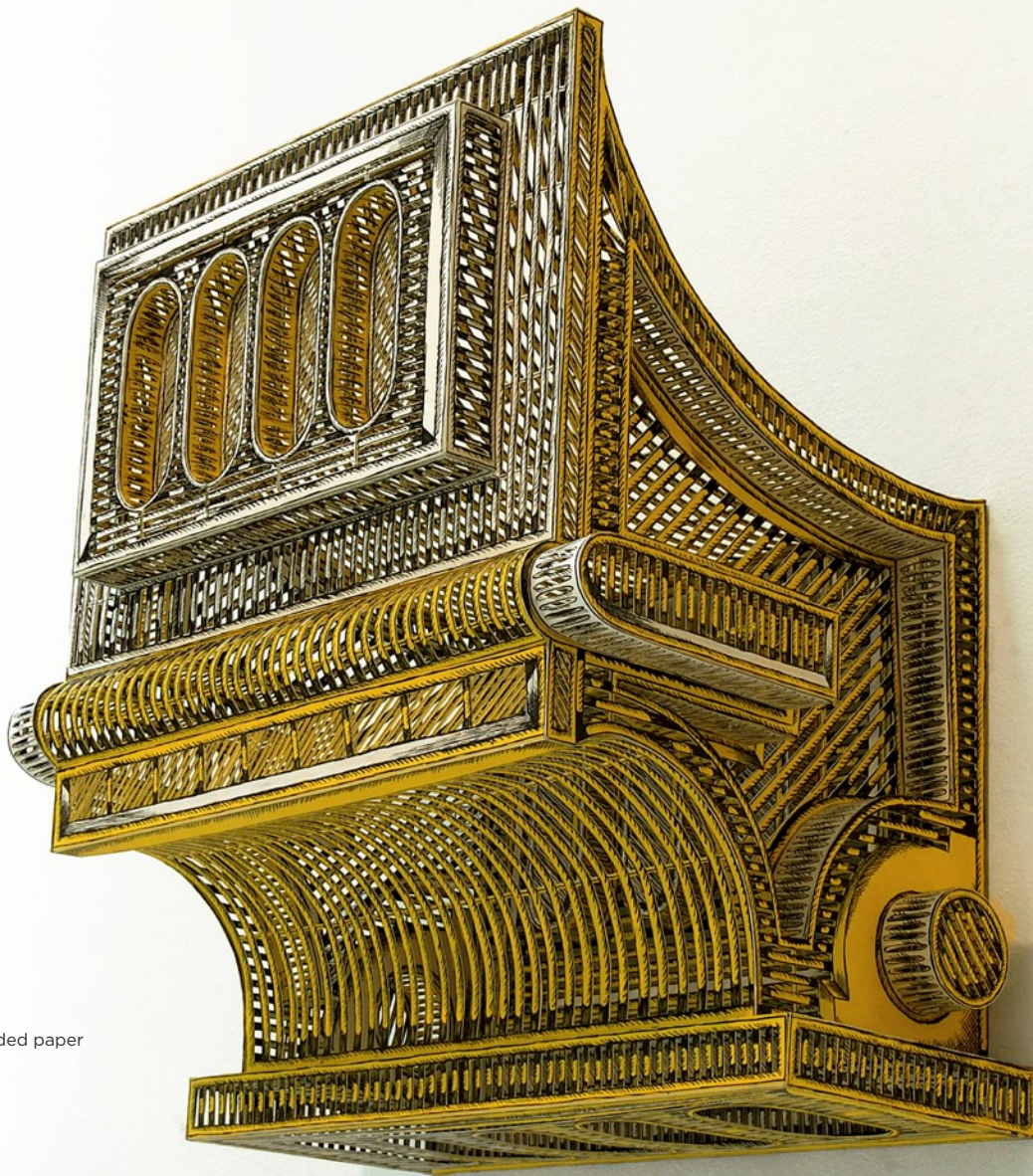
ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper

67 × 116 × 14 inches

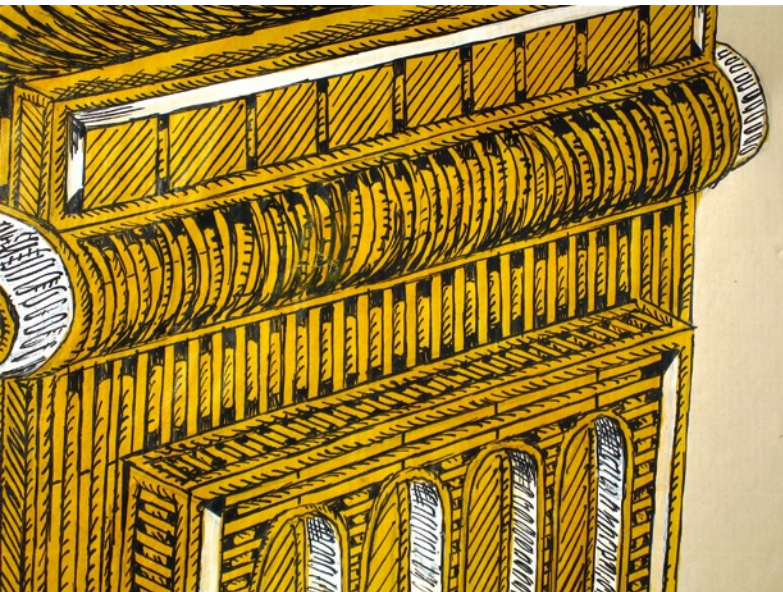
courtesy the artist and Spencer

Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY





Untitled (Yellow Fragment), 2005
ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper
20 × 18 × 14 inches
Collection David and Susan Marco,
New Jersey



Untitled (yellow fragment 1), detail, 2007
ink and acrylic on handmade paper,
8 1/2 x 11 inches paper
courtesy the artist and Spencer
Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY



Untitled (yellow fragment 2), 2007
ink and acrylic on handmade paper,
8 1/2 x 11 inches paper
courtesy the artist and Spencer
Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

SCRAP-HEAP ABSTRACTION

FRANCES RICHARD

A knife-edge equilibrium between studies in line and volume and play with grille and girder defines Jane South's work. Never turning entirely toward abstraction, she never completely admits figuration either. Thus our ideas about her objects slide along a catenary curve. At one pole stands appreciation of formal properties—mass, color, scale, positive and negative space, dimensional projection and recession. At the other pole hangs a hint of mimesis. South's constructions point beyond themselves into the world of air-conditioners, railway trestles, boiler rooms. But in this thought there is a kink, a loop-the-loop. We understand her fragile geometries as integrated elements conceived in the artist's imagination and made entirely by her hand. But they also call to mind spare parts and assemblage. They imply machines or buildings, iron and steel erected, destroyed, and scavenged in our minds. The kink is that, in order to give rise to the paper "salvage" we see before us, those "original" buildings and machines must be made not of steel and iron, but likewise of paper.

There are several ways in which these sculptures and drawings stretch beyond their limits to refer to things we can't see.

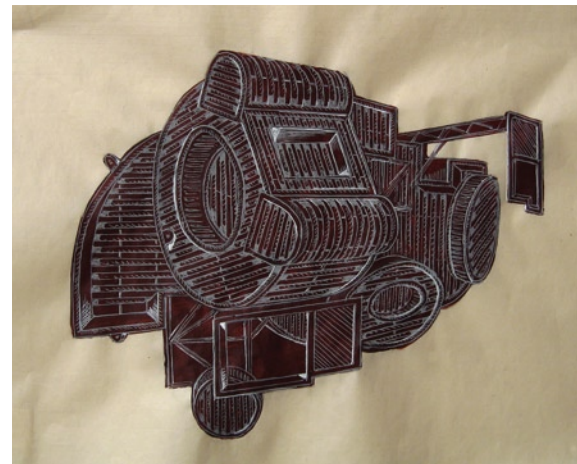
It is as if the inspiration for South's grids and gaskets was neither their own formal logic, nor the workaday waterfront outside her window. The works seem to come instead from the wreckage of a paper simulacrum, a sprawling rust belt flattened to a cartoon of itself, cut into pieces with an X-acto and repurposed.

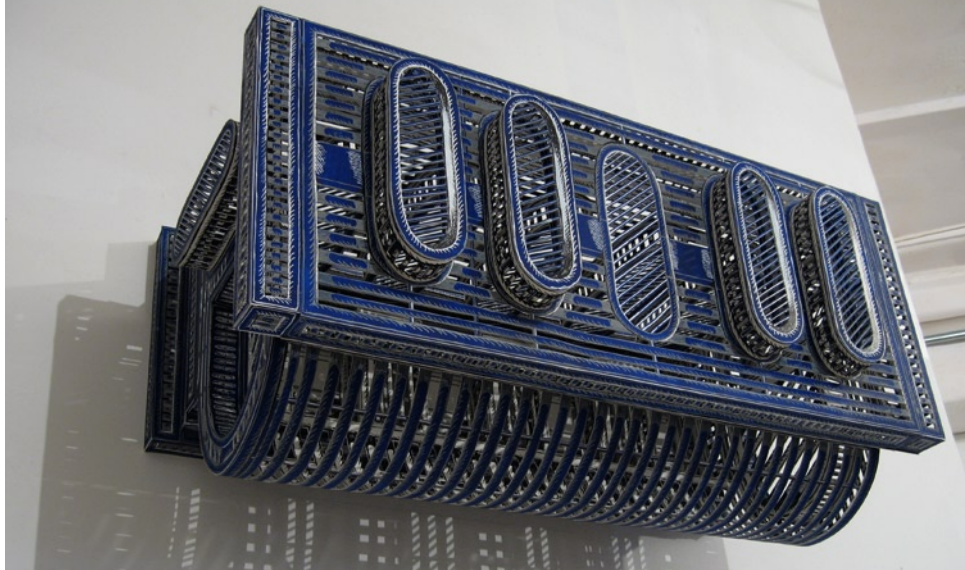
In other words, there are several ways in which these sculptures and drawings stretch beyond their limits to refer to things we can't see. As Rosalind Krauss observes, "logically speaking, the grid extends, in all directions, to infinity."¹ The rhythms of South's work elaborate this possibility. Recurring cruxes—junctures where two struts meet; a flicker as the eye scans rows of uprights; splashes of color; the patterning of angles set against circles and ovals—distribute attention across the complex tackle, jazzing up awareness and frustrating any urge to define a core. Each composition is internally poised. But the optical rest feels temporary. No single sight-line controls a given piece. No law of disc or cube decrees where concatenation should stop. Instead, unruly energies sing across the struc-

tures like wind in a suspension bridge's rigging. One can nearly hear gears grind and cables creak; invisible workers might be scrambling across the balsa I-beams, shoring things up and getting jobs done. Glinting metallic highlights are painted on; brooding shadows are conventionalized crosshatches, as in any Gotham in a comic book. The correspondence of the drawings to the sculptures—in which two-dimensional images recapitulate three-dimensional counterparts—only underlines such unstable relations between depth and flatness, actual and imaginary spaces. And so, we arrive again at the far

Untitled (red/gray), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper, 8 1/2 × 11 inches paper
courtesy the artist and Spencer Brownstone Gallery,
New York, NY





Untitled (Cobalt Fragment), 2007

ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper, 12 × 23 × 13 inches
courtesy the artist and Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

shot through with grime, corrosion, stress, and comedy.

Each of South's sculptures is like a sentence written in this argot of built space. As lot adjoins lot and factory abuts house, as floor layers floor and door pierces wall, as clasp catches hasp and tab fits in slot, South sets part against part. Her forms—in good modernist fashion—are their function. The joke is that their functionality, practically speaking, doesn't work. The sentence is nonsense. Nor does it fail, however. Its use-value (like that of her art-historical forebears) is to offer aesthetic pleasure.

The gestalt of South's constructions is precarious absurdity. They are scrap-heap abstractions, an industrial sublime both madly dense and jury-rigged, unreal—but plucky, adaptable, self-generating.

¹ Rosalind Krauss, "Grids" (1978), *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), p. 18.

² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

FRANCES RICHARD teaches at Barnard College and the Rhode Island School of Design. She was a founding editor of *Fence Magazine* and is an editor-at-large at *Cabinet Magazine*. Her book of poems, *See Through*, was published by Four Way Books in 2003.

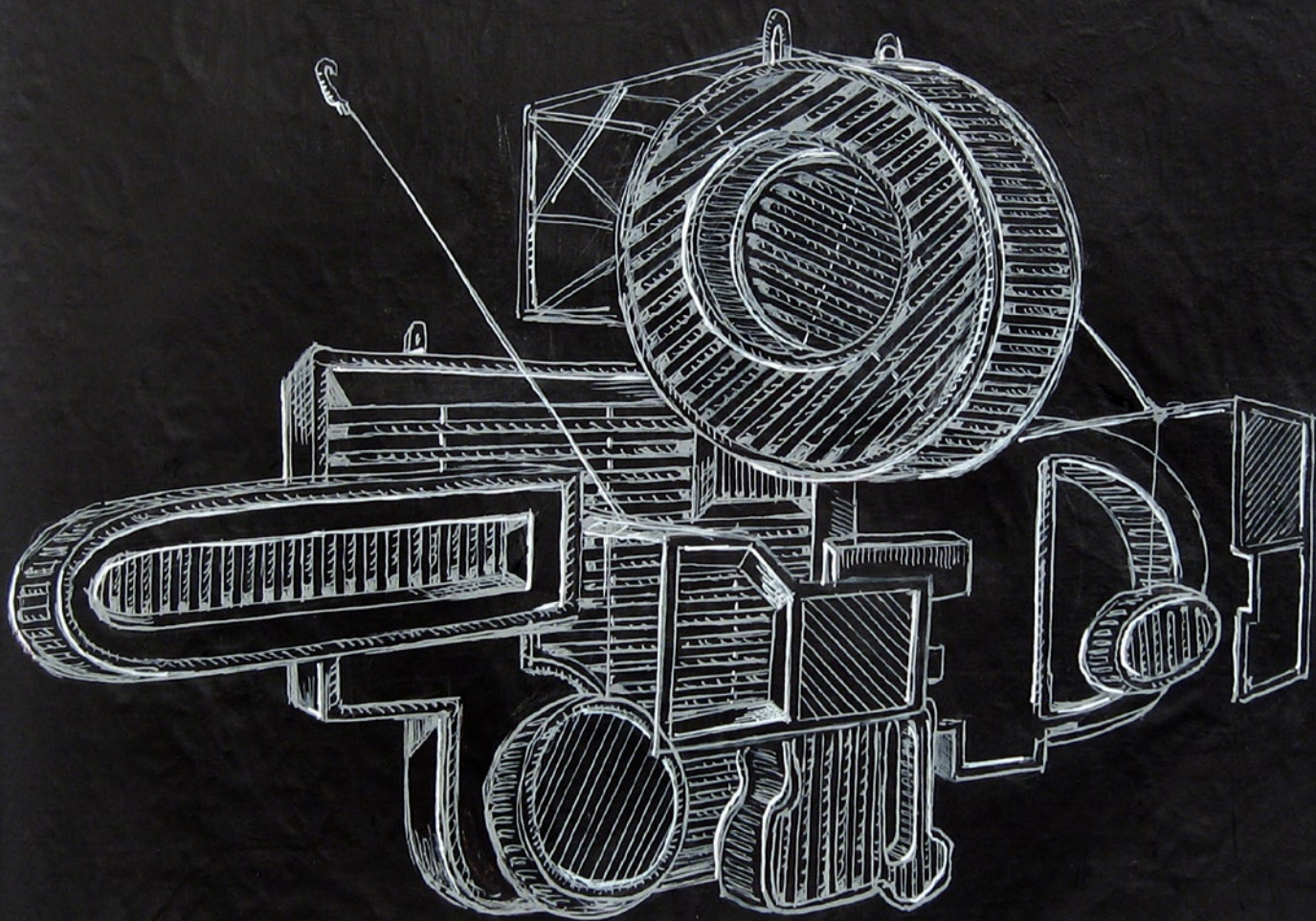
pole of mimetic representation, and are again tripped up in the loop. The loop draws taut when paper shapes refer to, say, the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Brooklyn Bridge, and also to Mondrians or Moholy-Nagys—but are always only made of paper, and in love with that fact.

The sculptural or painterly grammar of edge, color, and juxtaposition shifts toward the orders of engineering and architecture. Neither pole pins the work in place. We're sliding back and forth along the string, and the urge to attach real-world names to the graphic modules seduces us into a game of "it looks like..." It would be fine to linger in pure realms of modernist nonobjectivity, where spiritual energies are harnessed by strong hues and clean lines. But the morphologies South favors bring us too close to whirring, clanking commodity-production. Okay, we think—then we will name the parts, and understand this art as cityscape, as still-life.

The grid, Krauss says, makes "statements about the infinite expansion of man-made sign systems."² So, as we read South's objects, we picture entropic post-industrial wastelands, chop shops and junkyards where resourceful fixer-uppers rummage, and recite:

cog, cam, duct, wheel, reel, derrick, hook, keel, chain, blade, crane, tube, tank, tack, gantry, cantilever, catwalk, scaffold, bracket, screw, drum, cage, vent, grate, pipe, filter, louver, tower, ladder, fan, valve, fixture, wire, winch, shaft, staple, pulley, truss—

Such names promise efficiency, accomplishment; the nouns imply verbs. But it's all song in the rigging, more pieces of a system that doesn't add up and never ends. They are sensual and interesting to inventory—and every text about South includes a similar list—but the words collapse into abstract sounds. The abstraction, in its turn, remains impure,



WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

dimensions are height precedes width precedes depth

all works courtesy the artist and Spencer Brownstone Gallery,
New York, NY, unless otherwise noted

CONSTRUCTIONS

Untitled (Cobalt Fragment), 2007

ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper
12 × 23 × 13 inches

Untitled (Black Skewed Box), 2006

ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper
32 × 39 × 20 inches

Untitled (Long Gray Construction), 2006

ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper
67 × 116 × 14 inches

Untitled (Long Wheeled Construction), 2006

ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper
54 × 168 × 19 inches

Untitled (Yellow Fragment), 2005

ink and acrylic on hand-cut and folded paper
20 × 18 × 14 inches
Collection David and Susan Marco, New Jersey

DRAWINGS

Untitled (blue/black), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (cobalt fragment 1), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (cobalt fragment 2), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
9 × 12 inches paper

Untitled (brown/white), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (gray/red), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (red/gray), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (red/white), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (white/brown), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (yellow fragment 1), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

Untitled (yellow fragment 2), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper

LEFT

Untitled (white/brown), 2007

ink and acrylic on handmade paper
8½ × 11 inches paper
courtesy the artist and Spencer Brown-
stone Gallery, New York, NY

JANE SOUTH

Born 1965, Manchester, England.
Lives and works in Brooklyn, NY

EDUCATION

MFA Painting & Sculpture, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC

BA Theater Set and Costume Design, Central (now Central/St. Martins) School of Art, London, UK

Fine Art Foundation Course, Kingston Polytechnic, Kingston, UK

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2006** Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

Savannah College of Art and Design, Lacoste Campus, France
- 2005** Susanne Vielmetter
Los Angeles Projects, CA
- 2004** Susanne Vielmetter
Los Angeles Projects, CA

Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY
- 2003** *All Nine*, Nassauischer Kunstverein, Weisbaden, Germany
- 2002** *Working Drawing*, Mass MoCA, North Adams, MA (site installation)
- 2001** Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2007** *New Directions in American Drawing*, Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA; Telfair Museum, Savannah, GA; Knoxville Museum, Knoxville, TN
- 2006** *Burgeoning Geometries: Uncommon Transformations*, Whitney Museum of American Art at ALTRIA, New York, NY

Collector's Gallery, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Technocraft, Wignall Museum/Gallery, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- 2005** *Odd Lots*, White Columns, New York, NY

Drawing Narratives, College of Wooster Art Museum, Wooster, OH

Solitude and Focus, Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, CT (site installation)

Constructed Worlds, f a projects, London, UK
- 2004** *Drawn and Quartered*, Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), Winston-Salem, NC (site installation)
- 2003** *Paper Chase*, Müller De Chiara Gallery, Berlin, Germany

Working it Through, Williams College Museum of Art, Williamstown, MA

Knockabout, Spencer Brownstone Gallery, New York, NY

Perforations, McKenzie Fine Art, New York, NY

Bits 'n' Pieces, Dumbo Arts Center, Brooklyn, NY

- 2002** *Art on Paper*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC

25th Anniversary Show, The Drawing Center, New York, NY

Outdoor Sculpture Exhibit, DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA
- 2001** *12 Views*, The Drawing Center, New York, NY
- 2000** Downtown Ithaca Sculpture Exhibit, Ithaca, NY
- 1999** *Art in Everyday Places*, Alfred University, Alfred, NY

Escape Velocity, Socrates Sculpture Park, Long Island City, NY

AWARDS, GRANTS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2007, 2006** Joan Mitchell Foundation Residency, Santa Fe Art Institute
- 2004** MacDowell Colony Residency
- 2003** Individual Artist Grant, Massachusetts Cultural Council

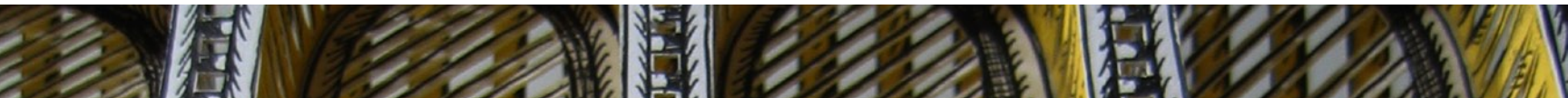
Individual Artist Grant, A.R.T. Resources Trust
- 2002** Equipment Grant, Williams College Center for Technology in the Arts & Humanities

Workspace Grant, Dieu Donn  Papermill

MacDowell Colony Residency

Yaddo Residency
- 2001** Individual Artist Grant, Pollock-Krasner Foundation

Yaddo Residency



CATALOGS

- 2007** DiQuinzio, Apsara. *Burgeoning Geometries: Constructed Abstractions*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art at ALTRIA, 2007.
- Wicks, Stephen. *New Directions in American Drawing*. Columbus, GA: Columbus Museum, 2007.
- 2006** DiQuinzio, Apsara. *Jane South*. New York: Spencer Brownstone Gallery, 2006.
- 2005** Kastner, Jeffrey, Sina Najafi, and Frances Richard, eds. *Odd Lots: Revisiting Gordon Matta-Clark's Fake Estates*. New York: White Columns, 2005.
- Klein, Richard. *Solitude and Focus: Recent Work by MacDowell Colony Fellows in the Visual Arts*. Ridgefield, CT: Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, 2005.
- Zurko, Kitty M. *Drawing Narrative*. Wooster, OH: The College of Wooster Art Museum, 2005.
- 2004** Venn, Beth. *Jane South*. New York: Spencer Brownstone Gallery, 2004.
- 2001** *Drawing Papers 22: 12 Views*. New York: The Drawing Center, 2001.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2007** Scott, Andrea K. "Burgeoning Geometries: Constructed Abstractions," *The New York Times* (January 5, 2007).
- May, Whitney. "Paper Industry," *NY Arts Magazine*, vol. 12, no. 1/2 (January/February 2007).

- 2006** Grosz, David. "Unfinished Business," *The New York Sun* (December 7, 2006): 18.
- Turvey, Lisa. Exhibition Review, *Artforum* (December 2006): 308.
- Cohen, David. Exhibition Review, *The New York Sun* (October 12, 2006): 18.
- Kino, Carol. "Teaming with the Artists to Buoy the Bottom Line," *The New York Times*, (March 29, 2006): Special Museums Section G, 10.
- Whitney, Kathleen. "Obsessed," *Sculpture Magazine*, vol. 25, no. 3 (April 2006): 46-47.
- "Jane, Femmer de Papier," *Atmospheres* (March 6, 2006): 2/2.
- "Jane South Expose au SCAD," *La Provence* (March 1, 2006).
- "Art Contemporain," *Figaro Magazine* (February 26, 2006).
- 2005** "Material Culture—Edition #4: Fake Estates," *WPSI Art Radio* (November 21, 2005).
- Ollman, Leah. Exhibition Review, *Los Angeles Times* (September 16, 2005).
- 2004** Roug, Louise. "The Arty Circuit," *Los Angeles Times* (June 24, 2004).
- Leffingwell, Ed. Exhibition Review, *Art in America* (September 2004).
- Mendelsohn, Meredith. Exhibition Review, *ARTNews* (June 2004).
- Johnson, Ken. Exhibition Review, *The New York Times* (March 5, 2004).

Levin, Kim. Exhibition Review, *The Village Voice* (February 25–March 2, 2004).

Wilson, Michael. Exhibition Review, *Frieze*, Issue 83 (2004).

Rosenberg, Karen. "Paper Tiger," *New York Magazine* (February 23, 2004).

Abrams, R.B. Exhibition Review, *Art for Real* (February 6, 2004).

2003 Newhall, Edith. "Talent," *New York Magazine* (July 28, 2003).

"Critic's Pick," *Time Out NY* (March 22, 2003).

Abrams, R.B. "Bits 'n' Pieces," *Art for Real* (February 24, 2003).

2001 Mendelsohn, Meredith. Exhibition Review, *Tema Celeste* (March/April 2001).

"Voice Choices," Exhibition Review, *The Village Voice* (December 16, 2001).

SELECTED COLLECTIONS

Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, NY

Eileen Norton, Los Angeles, CA

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, PA

Peter Norton, New York, NY

Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC





second street gallery

115 SECOND STREET SE CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA 22902
PH 434-977-7284 FAX 434-979-9793 www.secondstreetgallery.org

