

DOROTHEA ROCKBURNE



Reinventing the Elements #11, 2001
Aquacryl, pencil, copper pencil on paper, 6 x 4 1/8 in



Elliptical Turn, 2008
watercolor and Caran d'Ache on Masonite board, 12 x 16 in

On view June 30 through July 25, 2011, The Drawing Room in East Hampton is pleased to present two exhibitions: *Bryan Hunt: Clay and Dorothea Rockburne*, a selection of works inspired by astronomy and mathematics. Concurrently, Bryan Hunt's earlier bronze sculpture is on view at Guild Hall and at the Parrish Art Museum, a Dorothea Rockburne retrospective.

Dorothea Rockburne's formative studies of the foundation of geometry and the mathematical discipline of topologies with Max Dehn (German, 1878-1952) at Black Mountain College propelled her to continue as an artist in spite of the temptation to pursue her gifts as a young scientist. Her lifelong fascination with astrophysics informs the works in the focused installation where two prints, eight watercolors and four paintings from the last decade are unified with one prescient collage from 1993. In particular, the circular and elliptical paths of astronomical matter captured her mind's eye in the making of these works. Each composition reflects Rockburne's gift of materializing an esoteric principle of nature in a range of media that includes collage, powdered pigments, watercolor, etching and silkscreen techniques.

Rockburne's paintings are individual performances that take us back to the origin of the universe and its forces that continue to surround us. In the watercolor paintings *Elliptical Turn* (2008) and *Prime Partition Five* (2006), a primal immediacy of materiality and Zen energy in her brush create layered collisions of pure pigment in celestial motion. *Ecstatic Absorption* (2007) resembles a detail in the night sky – a trajectory of stars or planets on parallel paths collecting matter in the form of watercolor wash as they swirl under a shower of hot vermillion.

For the postcard size series *Reinventing the Elements* (2001), Rockburne imagines a visual equivalent in watercolor of the invention of copper in the universe. Drawn on the scale of glass microscope slides that provide a geometric diagram and locus for the experiment, molecules of blue wash spread and converge with copper pencil, creating a splash of energy. Discovery exists and is prolonged in each work.

1st Thoughts on Tearful Sisters (1993) offers a graphic clue to its reference to the Pleiades: a magazine quality photograph of a starry night (possibly a galaxy taken from a satellite) is pasted to a piece of earthly cardboard behind which circular brushstrokes in midnight blues overlap and run off the edge into outer space. However, the cardboard collage and painted element is mounted on a sheet of Arches paper where Rockburne has brushed a perfect blue circle in a giant's gesture that seems to drag cosmic particles sweeping the collage into orbit.

Selected in the context of her retrospective show at the Parrish Art Museum, this combination of recent paintings, prints and drawings suggests that despite her lifelong study of science and the history of art, Rockburne discovers each image fresh, as though for the first time. Her work is included in numerous public collections, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday & Monday 11–6, Sunday 11-5.

For further information and reproductions, please contact Lindsay Reichart at 631.324.5016 or info@drawingroom-gallery.com.