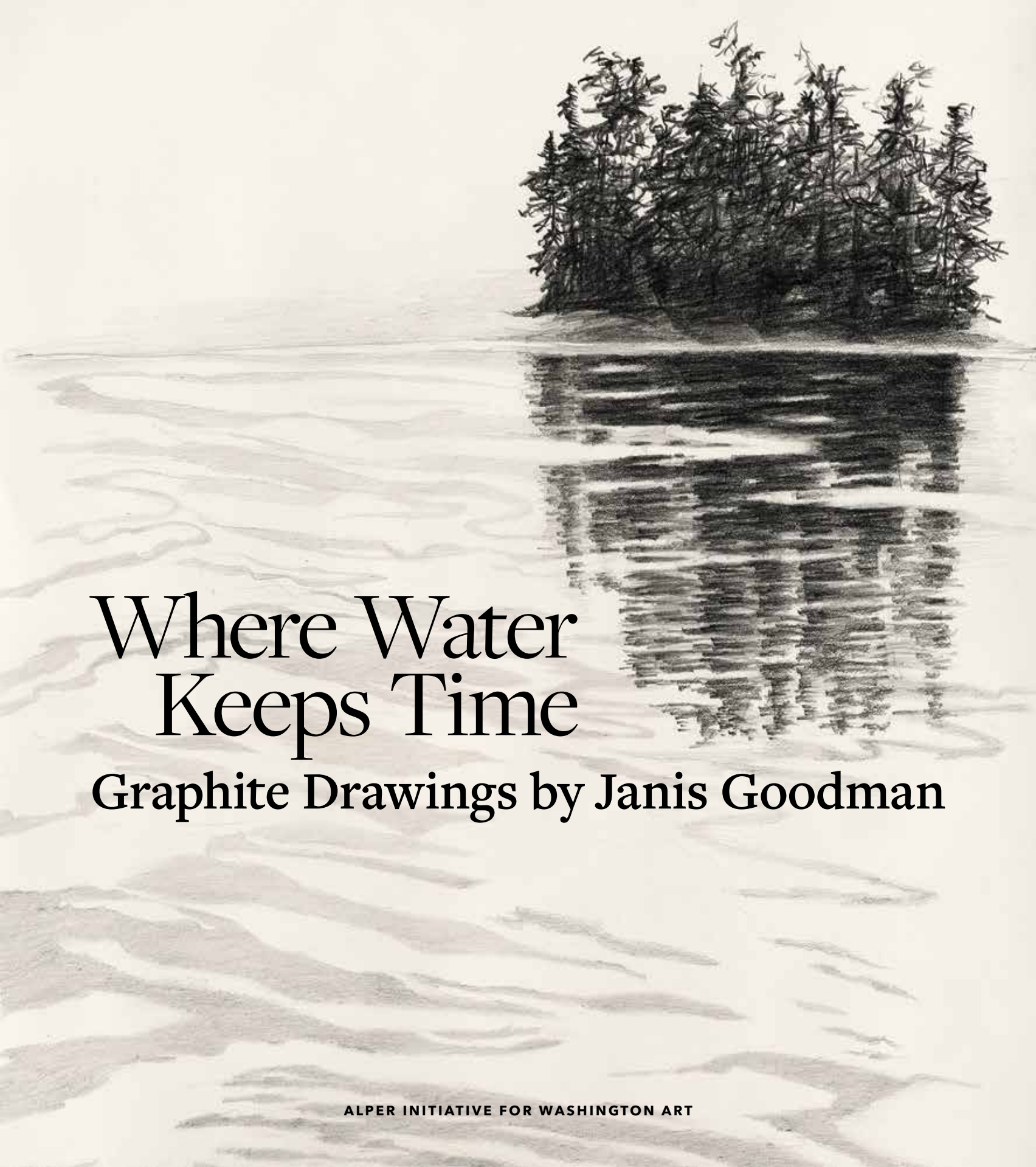

Where Water Keeps Time

Graphite Drawings by Janis Goodman

ALPER INITIATIVE FOR WASHINGTON ART

Where Water Keeps Time

Graphite Drawings by Janis Goodman

Curated by Laura Coyle

June 13 – August 9, 2026

American University Museum
at the Katzen Arts Center

Washington, DC

ALPER INITIATIVE FOR WASHINGTON ART

Foreword

JACK RASMUSSEN

C. Nicholas Keating and Carleen B. Keating Director
American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center

On behalf of the American University (AU) Museum's Alper Initiative for Washington Art, it is my pleasure to present *Where Water Keeps Time: Graphite Drawings by Janis Goodman*. Since it opened in 2005, the museum has exhibited many of the most significant Washington artists, several of whom share a quiet but persistent engagement with the landscape of Maine. Like Goodman, they treat landscape not simply as subject matter, but as a sustained inquiry into perception, memory, and structure. In this regard, her work finds affinity with Anne Truitt, William Christenberry, and Sam Gilliam.

Truitt distilled her experience of Maine into austere vertical forms that register light, edge, and memory with quiet intensity. Christenberry, by contrast, returned repeatedly to specific sites, allowing place to accrue meaning through time, material, and photographic and sculptural iteration. Gilliam's 1971 residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture seems to echo in *Close to Trees*, his 2011 installation at the AU Museum, where hundreds of feet of suspended painted canvas move close to the experience of the environment itself, transcribing space, light, and proximity.

Goodman also stands in active dialogue with her Washington contemporaries such as John Ruppert, William Willis, and Frederick Kellogg, who have likewise been shaped by Maine. All share a sensitivity to the region's atmosphere and shifting physicality. Ruppert often works with the dark viscosity of tidal mud. Willis explores the iconographic potential of moose antlers and animal skins. Kellogg brings his painterly attention to structure and light in the built and natural Maine environment.

Goodman's own account clarifies her position. She describes a practice formed less by direct influence than by sustained looking, over time, across disciplines, and in close observation of the natural world. Her drawings hold observation and invention in tension, where memory reshapes what is seen and structure emerges through repetition and revision. Like Truitt, Christenberry, and Gilliam, she distills lived experience rather than describes it, but does so with a heightened emphasis on flux, ambiguity, and what she calls a "quiet energy."

Her long engagement with Greenlaw Cove, filtered through memory and continual

Janis Goodman, *Glyph in Mudflats,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

reworking, situates her within this artistic lineage while underscoring the singularity of her vision.

Every museum exhibition depends on the collaboration of many dedicated individuals. I extend my deep appreciation to Janice Goodman and to the distinguished group of art historians, scholars, curators, and others who contributed to this catalog: Laura Coyle, David Gariff, Philip Jacks, Warren Lehrer, Luca Robadey, and Marguerite S. Shaffer. I also thank the staff of the American University Museum and the visionary artist and philanthropist Carolyn Alper, whose generosity established the Alper Initiative for Washington Art. Her friends, family, the Alper Advisory Committee, and the Alper Fellows continue to sustain and advance its mission.

Janis Goodman's work encourages us to see what we think we know—about light and water, and land and sea, in new and wonderful ways.

— Laura Coyle

Introduction

LAURA COYLE

As sure as the tides, Janis Goodman arrives at Greenlaw Cove on Deer Isle, Maine, in the season of the Buck Moon, in early July, and leaves in the season of the Sturgeon Moon, in late August, sometimes a little later. Her relationship with the cove is like that with an old friend: someone you might not see for a while, but, when you are together again, you pick up right where you left off. Janis brings to this relationship many of the traits that make friendships work: curiosity, attentiveness, affection, patience, and respect. Greenlaw Cove reciprocates by being a cove: a small, sheltered, saltwater recess in the shoreline, a fixed place in constant flux with an abundance of wildlife (fig. 1). This spot offers an open—though obviously unintentional—invitation to engage with all it has to offer. This catalog along with the exhibition it accompanies feature a selection of about thirty of Janis's drawings inspired by this cove. Without the strong relationship between Janis and Greenlaw Cove, these drawings would not, indeed could not, exist because they are records of her intimate encounters and adventures on the water, along the shore, among the pines, and on the granite outcrops of the cove.

Janis created most of these works over the past twenty-five years, and they include work she completed for the exhibition. She is a well-established Washington, DC-based artist and teacher best known for her evocative and colorful abstract paintings; this is the first exhibition and catalog devoted to her compelling body of work in graphite.

Each of the works presented here has its origin in the cove, as a drawing in the sand, a quick sketch on a pad, a snapshot, or memory, which embraces an idea to be explored and completed in her Maine and DC studios. The movement of light of the sun and moon on the water naturally captures her attention, but so do the marshes and mudflats, shore birds and shells, forests and fish. Each of these subjects requires a unique method of mark-making and Janis often devises special drawing tools to capture their form and essence, but limits her media to graphite, which in her hands is an unexpectedly varied creative tool.

For centuries, drawing has been the foundation of artistic practice, and artists often make drawings as notations or in preparation for a more finished work. Janis makes these kinds of

Pages 4–5: Janis Goodman, *Above and Below* (detail), 2025. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

drawings, but this exhibition and publication feature finished works, meant—and able—to stand strongly on their own. Some are small, detailed, and intimate investigations, while others, much larger, invite viewers to enter and move through the cove as the artist did. All are infused with a potent and personal sense of place. Janis's cove drawings show how returning to a familiar but ever-changing setting each summer invigorates her, not only during her stay in Maine but throughout the year.

The essays, music, poem, and *Portraitscape* (a visual poem) that follow in this publication offer various ways to understand and contextualize her work, and Janis and I are so grateful to our contributors for their insights: David Gariff, Phil Jacks, Warren Lehrer, Luca Robadey, and Marguerite S. "Peg" Shaffer. We also thank Laura Rostad for her photographs of Janis, Phyllis Hecht for her sensitive editing of the catalog texts, and Vida Russell for her graceful publication design. But I also urge readers to spend time just looking at the work, in person if you can, to appreciate the beauty, intentionality, and power of each drawing.

Fig. 1. Janis Goodman, *Approaching Little Campbell Island* (detail), 2025. Graphite on paper, 15 x 21 in. Private collection.

Where Water Keeps Time: Graphite Drawings

JANIS GOODMAN

It is hard to say how things began. I had already been drawing and painting references to the environment, but not quite landscapes. I found myself drawn to the pencil, the quiet measured stroke, the vibrant, effervescent gesture (fig. 2).

A meditation on nothingness, an impulse of fullness. I must be present: present to what I see, present to the chatter of the previous marks. At first, the drawings are snapshots, simple explorations of understanding, marveling, and note-taking. As time moves on the obvious disappears, the echoes start calling.

I begin my drawing journey at the source. I sit by and watch the cove, listening to the wind and water, following air currents, birds in flight, and constant flow of tide. The source is the same every day but changes every minute. The water can rise twelve feet during high tide and recede completely at low tide. Kayaking on its water, partially submerged in flow, I feel the pulse, the rhythm, and the calm, as well as the potential for danger.

There is always a process to get ready. Life jacket, ID, iPhone turned off in waterproof case, shoes, gloves, hat, water, snack, and paddle. Gently I lift my body into the kayak, push the rudder into position, and head out (fig. 3). The strokes are long; the hands twist and turn so as not to cramp. My eyes scan the water, the shore, and the sky. I have no mission. I am ready to accept what catches my eye, curiosity, and

Fig. 2. The artist working on a tondo splash drawing, 2025. Photo by Laura Rostad.

Fig. 3. The artist kayaking on Greenlaw Cove, 2012.

imagination. I clumsily take out the camera or phone to record bits and pieces of the moments, hoping to remember that which I cannot capture on camera.

Paddling back to the cabin I am struck how the wind has shifted, the tide has risen, and the sun now falls on my face at a different angle. Gently gliding in the boat and tying her up, I am back home. Reverse the procedure of removing gear, drying myself, and storing the paddles.

As I sit down to work, I look at the photos and begin making marks on the paper, filling large swatches of areas with soft graphite pencils, trying to let images, shapes, and content emerge. When stuck, I return to the deck and look again at the cove, the water, the formations. Slowly, the drawing will take form. I go back in with darker and lighter marks. I erase with vintage and modern erasers, electric and manual. The drawing develops its own personality. I yield to its wishes and work, days, weeks, and months to give it an existence (fig. 4).

When the drawing seems complete, I stand back and analyze, adjusting the value, the thickness of a mark, and the direction of a curve. Then the questions: how to edit, tear apart, manipulate, turn away, listen? I listen to the voice of the drawing, directing me forward. Finally, it is finished. It represents a period, as close to completion as possible. It is not absolute. It is flawed but it is done.

This selection of graphite drawings was completed in response to a place I have come to know and love for over thirty years: the cabin Sea Green Cottage on Greenlaw Cove on Deer Isle, Maine. The cove is a small tidal inlet bordering the cabin that I rent each summer (fig. 5).

Fig. 4. Janis Goodman, *Skipping Stones,* 2025. Graphite on paper, 41 x 42 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Fig. 5. View of Sea Green Cottage from Greenlaw Cove, 2020.

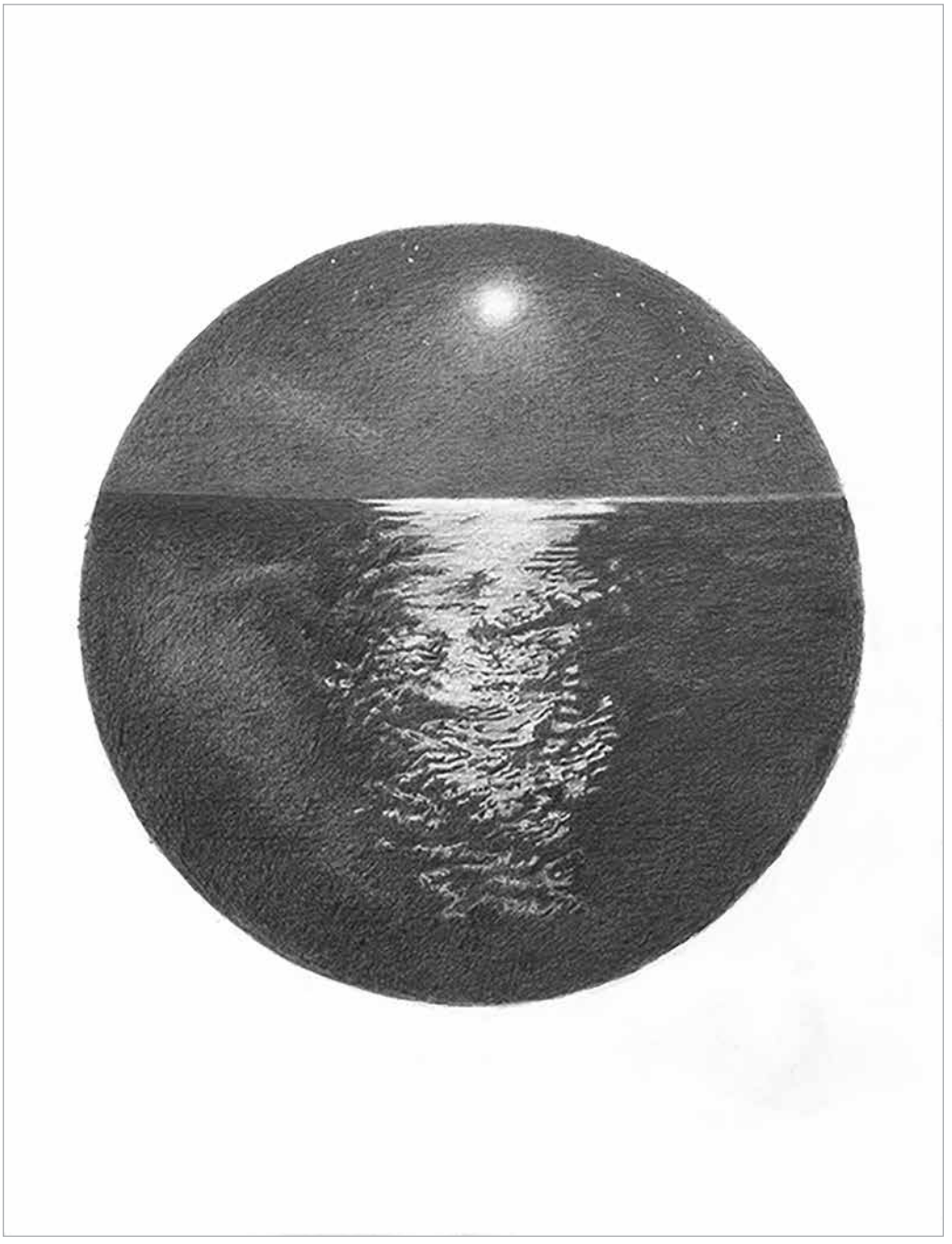

Fig. 6. Janis Goodman, *Moon over Cove,* 2024. Graphite, 30 x 22 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Over many years I have kayaked every bit of Greenlaw Cove, observed it day and night—from my studio, the kayak, and the seashore. The marshes at the far end of the cove and the ospreys gliding above the water give me cause for wonder and joy. The granite outcroppings girding the island, the varied, noisy sea birds flying overhead, the wake of shipping vessels, and the sun and moon reflecting on the water all get stored in my memory. These experiences are fundamental to understanding the cove and inspirational for starting a drawing. These drawings are a constant in my art practice, but they still change from year to year like the cove itself (fig. 6).

I regularly check the navigation charts for opportunities to kayak, swim, and physically interact with the cove. At low tide, it is possible to draw directly into the mudflats on the seabed floor (fig. 7). The flats perform like a blank sheet of paper, accepting line drawings and glyphs made with sticks, tree limbs, and shells. These notations in the mud will later be translated into graphite on paper.

At times, I experiment with constructing and improvising splashes made by tossing smooth pebbles, heaving hefty rocks, and throwing clamshells into the water (fig. 8, 9). These splashes create patterns and forms that dance up from the water in unexpected and delightful arrangements. The splash configurations often simulate the breaking of the water created by birds, skidding across or diving into the sea. I capture these movements with a camera

Fig. 7. The artist drawing in the mudflats at low tide, 2006. Photo by Dennis Weller.

Fig. 8. Artist tossing rocks into the cove, 2025. Photo by Laura Rostad.

because they disappear almost immediately. Skipping the rocks into the water brings back childhood delight and creates an intentional and purposeful feeling of participation, of engaging with the natural state of the cove.

The colors in and around the water—beautiful, varied, and seductive—do not escape my notice (fig. 10). I have made numerous paintings over time exploring the palette of the cove and region. It is the graphite drawings, however, that allow me to define and demonstrate the complexities and subtleties of the cove.

The initial marks of pencil must touch the paper while I am in Maine, while the cove is at my side. Sight pulls me in all directions, and I experience the sensation of scouring the sea. The drawings are intimate. They evolve slowly from a simple mark or gesture into a sustained rhythm of lines, values, and shapes and develop stylistically. The images live vividly, stored in both my brain and muscle. The work ranges from gestural and playful to methodical and somber (fig. 11).

As I develop them further, the drawings take on memory and history. The reference photographs can bring a specific reality I am incapable of remembering. You would think after decades of working from the same place there would be nothing new to behold. But nothing stays constant in life, and just as the cove changes, from year to year, so do I. Same source, different eyes.

The mood of the cove shifts organically, as it interacts with marine life, light, currents, pollutants, and time of day. The water is always changing, ebbing and flowing according to the hour and pulling of the moon, disturbed by air currents and fishing vessels. As the drawings

Fig. 9. Constructed splash, 2014.

Fig. 10. Sunset over marshes, 2018.

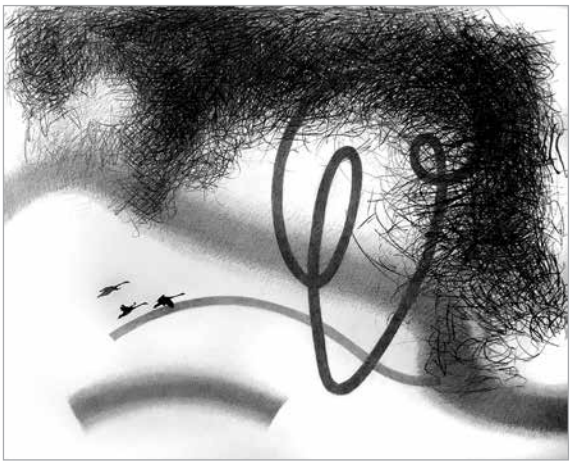

Fig. 11. Janis Goodman, *Geese Amongst Chaos,* 2014. Graphite on paper, 36 x 45 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

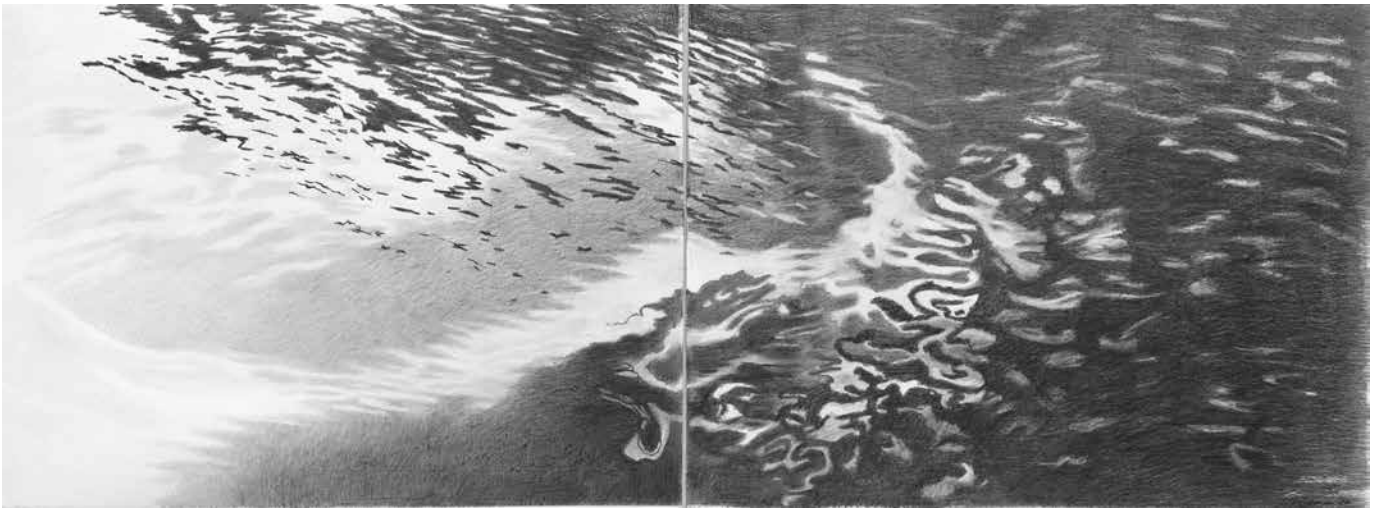

Fig. 12. Janis Goodman, *Incoming Tide,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 22 x 60 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

develop, instinct and impulse push the work in a variety of directions, uncharted until the pencil hits the paper (fig. 12).

Some of the drawings begun in Maine are completed in my Washington studio, while others will serve as studies or be adopted in other drawings or paintings. The raw, bare cinder block of my DC studio compels me to focus on the work with very different eyes that are less romantic and idealized and more analytical and critical. Collected memory and accumulated history will now figure more into completion. The distance from the source is a good, if at times a sobering, realization of what I have created in Maine. Sometimes it is "oh my god what was I thinking," other times, "that's not too bad."

The drawing materials are all graphite, some are thick, soft pencils making charcoal-like notations while others are thinner, hard pencils making fainter, ghost like and calligraphic marks. The drawings range in size from 17 x 11 inches to 50 x 38 inches and larger. The size varies as some are studies or detailed investigations and need to be intimate in scale (fig. 13). The larger ones invite the viewer to enter the drawing and experience the breadth of the area (fig. 14).

Fig. 13. Janis Goodman, *Cove Image,* 2010. Graphite on paper, 17 x 14 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

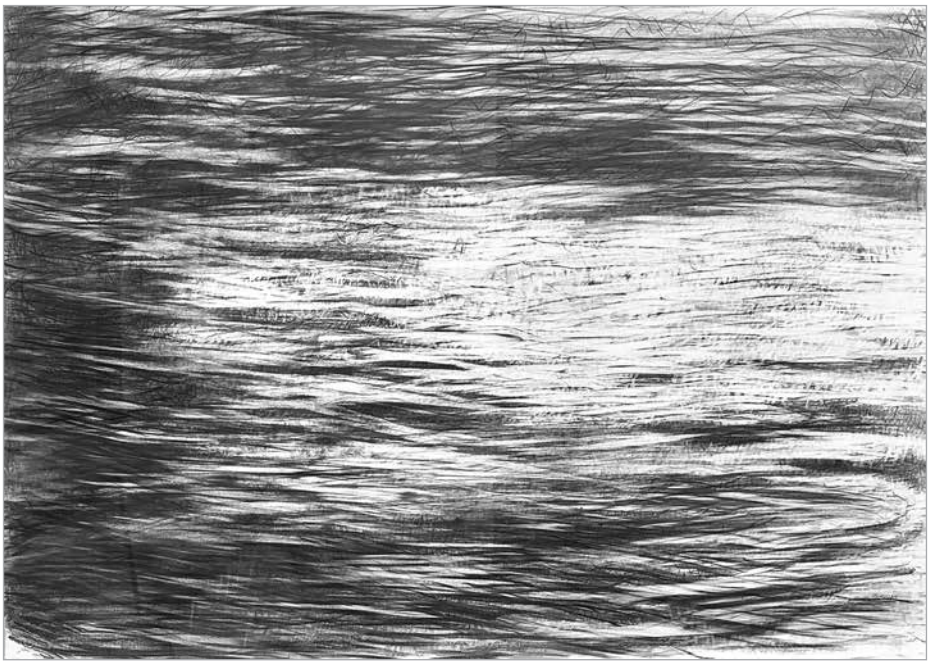

Fig. 14. Janis Goodman, *Shimmering,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 31 x 43 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

To expand my vocabulary of marks, textures, and surfaces, I have created unique drawing tools (fig. 15). With these tools I can suggest the quixotic surface of the cove floor, which is not smooth but ruptured by shell shards, debris, tree limbs, air bubbles, fish prints, and barely perceptible sea and plant life. I tether the pencils and graphite sticks with tape and glue to longer wooden sticks and metal rods. These implements create a more durable drawing device. These tools can be used more rigorously to pound the graphite onto the paper and create unique layers. With them, in my hand, I generate lines and rhythms and energy reminiscent of a percussionist beating a drum with sticks.

These drawings, mostly made over twenty-five years, have changed both stylistically and conceptually. As my life has taken twists and turns, so has my relationship to the cove. I started these works as a young woman; I finish them older and wiser (fig. 16).

Returning to the same location and cabin has been a source of rejuvenation (fig. 17). The shift from intense urban living to rural seclusion

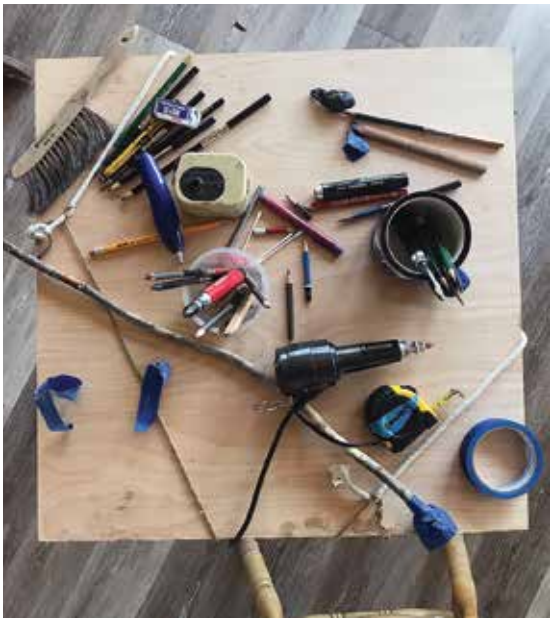

Fig. 15. The artist's studio drawing tools, 2025.

Fig. 17. Summer studio in Maine, 2025.

Fig. 16. The artist working on a tondo drawing, 2025.

heightens my senses. All five senses are engaged to accommodate minutiae and enormity. Working from the cove is like a meditation for me: repetitive, grounded in the present, and capable of pushing back the demons of health challenges and life's vicissitudes. Concentration on the cove creates a safe place to wander, to muse, and to slow down time. I understand that these drawings are not so much about what I have drawn but the how and why of experiencing the full environment. Much of this time I am by myself, in solitude accompanied by my thoughts, fears, and dreams. With these drawings I create at the cove, I am not dictating a specific story but marking time on this wondrous planet.

Greenlaw Cove: A Shallow Water Perspective

MARGUERITE S. SHAFFER

The boundary between sea and land is the most fleeting and transitory feature on earth.

— Rachel Carson
The Sea Around Us

Janis Goodman steps carefully over the worn place at the edge of solid ground and slides her blue kayak into the water. She straddles the boat and descends, balancing her paddle across her lap, tucking her feet into the cockpit, and pushing off in a single motion. Settling, she pulls the cord to drop the boat's rudder. With a series of strong strokes, she glides straight out across the mirrored surface reflecting the trees behind, the whole sky overhead, in a bright, glorious sphere of influence, the water having come in and risen enough for setting out into the cove (fig. 18).

As she moves with the rhythm of her paddle, her kayak parts the surface of the water—pushing aside a crab shell, a floating piece of seaweed, slicing through clouds of algae and particles of silt. Beneath her are patches of eel grass, broken shells, buried clams, rocks, and mud. Light skitters across tiny ripples, forming and unforming patterns on the seabed. Above, a Bald Eagle perches on its preferred branch in a large white pine, scanning broadly for signs of some quarry worth stealing. A harbor seal surfaces, lets out its breath, looks at Janis, then folds its body in a black wave and dives. A Belted Kingfisher flits ahead from snag to snag. A group of sandpipers and plovers step nimbly on an exposed rock ledge as Janis goes by. Two ospreys circle high above scanning for fish.

Who knows what will be encountered on this day's paddle? Perhaps things that are substantial, like the eagles and ospreys, with their sharp eyes, or the sturgeon, which occasionally arc out of the water as if seeking an eye-level view, or the schools of pogies that flap their fins on the surface. Or perhaps her sightings will be far more subtle, like a shift in the breeze, a shift of the light, a dispersal of fog, an unfolding change as Janis moves from *here* to *there* across the surface of the cove.

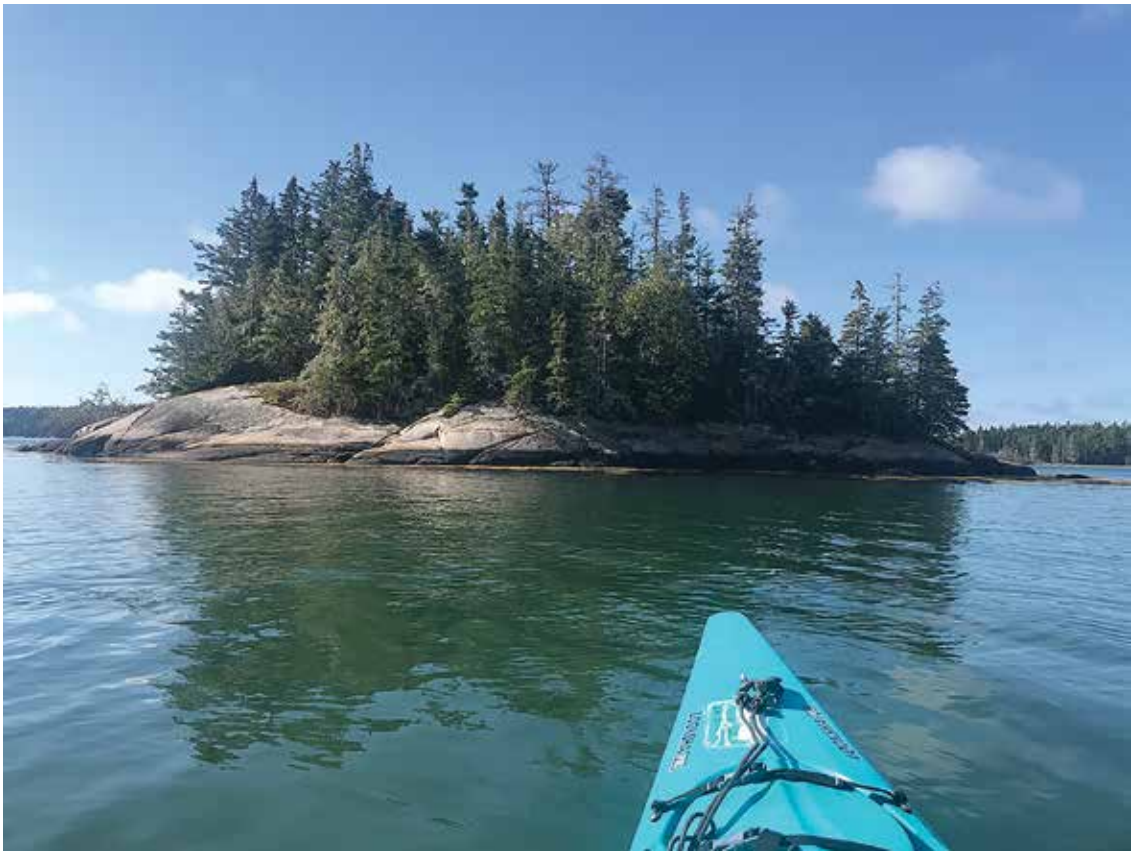

Fig. 18. Prow of the artist's kayak on Greenlaw Cove, 2022.

It was after one of these quiet solo paddles that Janis and I discussed the idea that each organism encountered—birds, fish, seals, trees, marsh grass, seaweed, even algae—possesses a point of view, perhaps a kind of consciousness. Though we might only grasp a sense of their nature, we can nevertheless recognize the existence of the other and fragmentarily imagine it. In contrast to the scenic gaze of established American landscape art, Janis's graphite drawings convey the possibilities of a nature-centered gaze (fig. 19). She asks us to question what, besides us, inhabits this place?

In the early nineteenth century, the American painter Thomas Cole set the standards for American landscape art. In his essay "American Scenery," he codified the wonders of American nature.[1] Celebrating wildness, Cole singled out dramatic natural places for their sublime, picturesque, and monumental qualities. His ideal of American scenery placed the human gaze at the center of the natural world. Following Cole's lead, artists transformed the nation's mountain peaks, dramatic waterfalls, pastoral valleys, and rocky coasts into iconic landscapes—timeless, unchanging places, easily

recognized, and sought after as extraordinary scenic views.

Tidal coves, coastal estuaries, saltwater marshes, intertidal zones—places that landscape historian John R. Stilgoe calls "the shallows"—were neglected in Cole's canonical list of iconic American scenery. As Stilgoe explains, these littoral landscapes lack fixed boundaries. In contrast to charismatic monumental scenery, they are places shaped by change. As tidal landscapes, they are neither land nor water, or they are both land and water. They are hard to navigate at high tide because of hidden shoals and nearly impossible to walk through at low tide because of soggy marsh lands and thick oozing mud. They are places where the aesthetic lexicon of scenery proves tricky.[2]

Greenlaw Cove on Deer Isle, Maine, is one of these littoral places. Located on the northeastern side of Deer Isle—a small island off the coast of Maine, twenty-five miles as the crow flies south of its more famous scenic neighbor, Acadia National Park—the inlet is shaped like an open lobster claw lined with crenelated molars (fig. 20). The north side of Greenlaw Cove is bounded by Fish Creek, which forms the movable finger of the claw. Greenlaw Cove itself is the palm and fixed finger, the meatier part of the crusher claw, which reaches into the island toward Long Cove. The entry to the cove is flanked by Oak Point to the north and Greenlaw Neck to the south. Campbell Island, a small uninhabited granite ledge, about a half mile wide, forested with fir and spruce, sits

Fig. 19. Janis Goodman, *Afternoon Reflection,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 30 x 22 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

in between these two points. Sunshine Road, which joins the mainland of Deer Isle to the town of Mountainville, crosses the end of the cove, forming a man-made barrier between the mudflats and rocky beach at the end of Greenlaw Cove and the salt marsh to the west in Long Cove. A small wooden sign identifies this dividing line as "Carrying Place," suggesting that before the road existed a waterlogged passageway connected these two bodies of water.

By the standards of American scenery, Greenlaw Cove is mundane. It is one small inlet among thousands of intertidal spaces scattered along the jagged, island-studded coast of the Gulf of Maine. Tucked away on the eastern edge

Fig. 20. Detail of USGS Topographical Map, Deer Isle, ME (1904. HTMC, 1940 ed.). United States Geological Survey. Deer Isle Quadrangle, Maine. Scale 1:62,500. Digital file. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1904 (HTMC, 1940 ed.). Public Domain.

of Penobscot Bay, just off Eggemoggin Reach, a celebrated sailing channel, it is derided by summer sailors as a "shallow water" place. The sailing pilot guide warns sailors away, describing the cove as a "narrow unmarked channel with shoals on both sides...suitable only for small craft with local knowledge."[3] Inaccessible to deep-keeled boats, Greenlaw Cove is a space best explored by kayak or rowboat or canoe at water level, where one can literally go with the flow and negotiate the mudflats, salt marsh, and rock ledges. To experience the cove from this shallow-water vantage is to understand this place as a product of monumental and minute forces, to gain a more local perspective, to transcend the one-way view of the scenic gaze, and to attend to the geological, ecological, and historical forces that have shaped this place.

From the long perspective of geological time, the landscape of Greenlaw Cove is both ancient and relatively recent. Carved out of granite bedrock formed over 400 million years ago, sculpted and filled with glacial marine mud deposited 14,000 years ago, Greenlaw Cove reflects the ancient action of plate tectonics in its granite ledges and the more recent impact of glacial retreat and sea level fluctuation in its thick glacial marine mudflats, scattered boulders, and glacial striations found along the shoreline. The mixture of Oak Point granite, with its pinks, greys, black, dark green, along with the brown green of glacial sediment, combined with seawater filled with billions of microscopic creatures makes for a complementary color palette that is enhanced by the spruce and fir forests that edge the shore.

The Maine Geological Survey Map of Coastal Marine Geologic Environments labels Greenlaw Cove as an intertidal environment; predominantly mudflats lined with granite ledges, algal flats, salt marsh, mussel bars, and a few slivers of rocky beach.[4] The shallow flats are punctuated by clusters of granite rocks exposed as the tide recedes as well as a handful of more substantial granite islands, named and unnamed, that have been colonized by spruce and fir. A deep tidal channel extending from Eggemoggin Reach forks around Campbell Island. Together this combination of ancient rock and glacial mud defines the landscape of the cove and shapes it as a distinct intertidal habitat.

The tide rules this place (fig. 21). Twice a day seawater flushes deep into the cove and then retreats, making this a landscape always

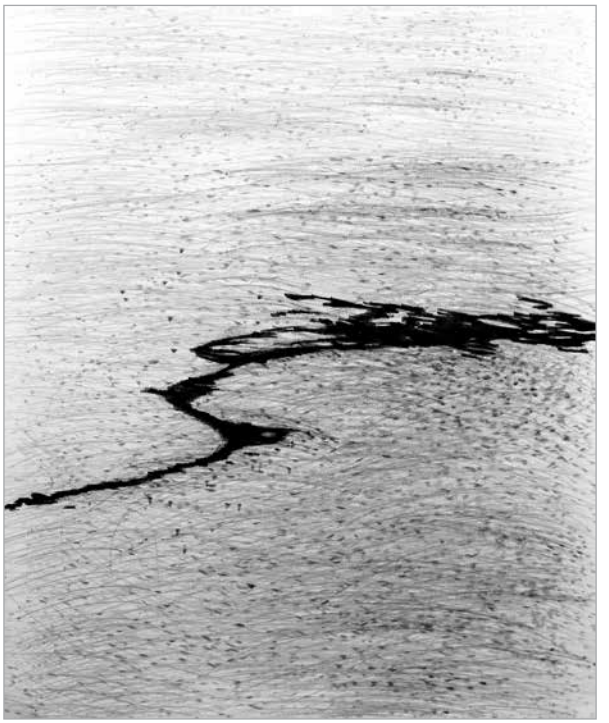

Fig. 21. Janis Goodman, *Cove Reflection,* 2010. Graphite on paper, 17 x 14 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

in flux. Each day the tidal cycle is different. Following the waxing and waning of the moon, the time and height of the tides shift incrementally. This fluid ebb and flow governs not only the changing landscape of the cove, but also the mix of birds, fish, and animals (including humans), that frequent the cove.

Tides in the cove are dramatic, ranging between nine and twelve feet. During one tidal cycle somewhere between one to two billion gallons of water move in and out of the cove. Estimates of coastal seawater densities in the Gulf of Maine suggest that there could be between 10 to 100 billion organisms in a single gallon of water flowing into the cove during

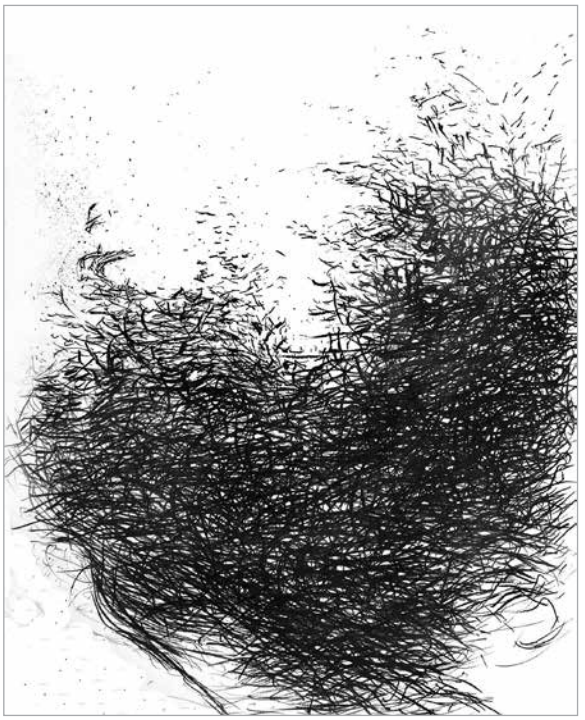

Fig. 22. Janis Goodman, *Moving Molecules,* 2006. Graphite on paper, 50 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

one tidal cycle. These range from the tiniest of organisms, bacteria, diatoms, microscopic algae—phytoplankton—to slightly larger krill, copepods, larvae, tiny shrimp—zooplankton—that drift with the currents and the tide. Fish, birds, and marine mammals follow this floating, nutrient-rich, microscopic menagerie. In addition to the water-bound species, more sedentary species thrive in the mudflats and seaweed-covered ledges: softshell clams, worms, mussels, barnacles, and the more mobile crabs and periwinkles exist among the organisms carried in and out on the tide. These in turn attract the birds that thrive on either the fish that follow the tide or the animals exposed in the mudflats.

In spring as dormant phytoplankton respond to the longer days and begin to reproduce, all the species in the marine food chain follow their lead. Clams, lobster, and scallops release millions of larvae; alewife, eels, herring, rainbow smelt, and mackerel return to spawn; migrating birds and marine mammals follow the abundant food sources. During the summer months the cove is teaming with life (fig. 22).

At high tide the shifting greens of the water reflect the many microscopic organisms transforming sunlight into nutrients for incrementally larger organisms that nourish the array of tiny fish, worms, crabs, periwinkles, mussels, and clams, among other small marine life. These organisms feed the many birds and larger fish and seals that follow the tidal channel, swimming deep into the cove as the water rises. Eagles, ospreys, and Common Terns wheel about the cove during high tide, darting in and out of the water catching pogies and mummichogs. Double-crested Cormorants sit on the exposed granite ledges drying their wings or swim about diving in and out of the water in pursuit of prey. Sometimes a harbor seal or two thrash about chasing schools of pogies. Herring, Ringed-billed, and Bonaparte's Gulls sit along the exposed granite ledges picking through seaweed, or resting, waiting for the tide to turn. Striped Bass, mackerel, even Atlantic Sturgeon come into the deepest part of the cove near Campbell Island, and one can see lobster buoys marking the colder waters of the deep tidal channel. At high tide the cove is fully contiguous with the Gulf of Maine, and one can sense its integral connection to this extensive marine ecosystem.

Fig. 23. Janis Goodman, *Traces* (detail), 2007. Graphite on paper, 50 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Low tide exposes the expansive mudflats of the cove (fig. 23). The western end empties of water and the color shifts from ocean green to a muddy grey. Instead of one smooth panorama of water, a more dynamic vista of flats lined with gullies of water, scattered with broken clam and mussel shells, ringed with exposed granite ledge fringed in rockweed emerges. The intricate tapestry of the shoreline becomes more visible, revealing marsh grass, sea lavender, rocky beach, and the muted pinks and grays and browns of ledge carpeted with barnacles and periwinkles. As the tide recedes, Great Blue Herons stalk the receding water's edge; gulls, plovers, and sandpipers flock to the newly exposed mudflats in search of clams and other mud-bound creatures. Although the cove floor might appear to be stable ground, it is really a rich thick sucking ooze that can immobilize you in its fine, pulsating, gray-green mud.

This is the habitat of the softshell clam, one of the cove's most valuable harvested marine species. Softshell clams are bivalves or filter feeders that thrive in marine sediment. Using their muscular foot, they burrow three to eight inches into the mud and then extend their syphons toward the surface to filter nutrients from the water. On a warm summer day, one clam can filter between three and seven quarts of water per hour. Small bubbling holes and occasional squirts of water reveal their clustered burrows dotting the mudflats. From early spring to late fall during low tide, a handful of clam diggers can usually be found dragging their skiffs across the flats, forking mounds of marine mud, filling their wooden clam baskets. Nearby, gulls harvest clams as well. They dig them up with their sharp curved beaks, fly into the air, and drop them onto the rocks to break their shells and gain access to the soft inner meat.

Evidence suggests that for thousands of years humans have followed the seals, gulls, eagles, and ospreys, coming to the cove at low or high tide to fish and harvest clams and other mud-bound marine species. Worked oyster shells found off the coast of Stinson Neck near Lazygut Islands, southeast of Greenlaw Cove, provide some of the earliest evidence of human presence on Deer Isle, dating back six thousand

years. Eggemoggin Reach, adjacent to the cove, translates from the Abenaki language into "fish weir place." A short list of remains recovered by archaeologists excavating Oak Point in the 1960s includes clams, sea urchins, seals, sturgeon, alewife, bass, deer, moose, raccoon, fox, ducks, and gulls.[5] The causeway linking Greenlaw Neck and Stinson Neck, just beyond the mouth of Greenlaw Cove, sits on a Native American stone fish trap. Archaeological evidence from nearby Scott's Landing also suggests Native Americans built wooden tending weirs to corral schools of fish migrating between Little Deer and Deer Isle.

More than just a place for seasonal fishing and clamming, Greenlaw Cove was also part of an extensive canoe route that ran from the Penobscot River south and east to the islands off the coast of Stonington. When the canoe reigned as the primary means of transportation in Deer Isle some 500 to 3000 years ago, Greenlaw Cove was a central thoroughfare. The route ran from the Bagaduce River through Walker Pond to a cove on the Reach called the Punch Bowl. From there it skirted in between Little Deer and Deer Isle along the western side of the island to Northwest Harbor, across the Haulover to Long Cove, past Deep Hole. At this point the route split: the eastern route crossed from Long Cove to Greenlaw Cove via the Carrying Place, which marked a shallow salt marsh that is now crossed by Sunshine Road; the southern route traversed Bray's Narrows to Southeast Harbor, with a short carry over into Webb's Cove and on to the islands south of Stonington. Given its position on the northeast side of the island, protected from the prevailing wind and weather, one could imagine that for those coming out of Penobscot Bay in the spring in pursuit of migrating fish, the Greenlaw Cove route offered a safe and reliable passage to the islands south of Stonington.[6]

Although Native Americans plied the cove thousands of years before Europeans arrived, the name Greenlaw Cove derives from the earliest European settlement of Deer Isle. Documents suggest that sometime between 1759 and 1761, the Greenlaw family landed on the northeastern side of Deer Isle. In a "Petition of the Inhabitants" to the Governor of Massachusetts Bay dated August 4, 1762, Jonathan, Ebenezer, Charles, Alexander, and William Greenlaw along with twenty-four others petitioned for the right to settle Deer Isle. Deeds reveal that William, Jonathan, Ebenezer, and Alexander once owned much of the land on the northwest side of the cove from Eggemoggin Reach around Fish Creek to the Carrying Place including what is now Oak Point. This section of land came to be known as the Greenlaw District, memorialized in the present-day Greenlaw District Road. Across the cove to the south, documents note that Charles Greenlaw improved one hundred acres, which is still known as Greenlaw Neck.[7]

For almost twenty years the Greenlaws farmed and fished the area and made homes for themselves along the cove. Then, during the Revolution, the Greenlaw family left Deer Isle because of their loyalist sympathies.[8] At the end of the Revolution in 1883, Jonathan Greenlaw, who had moved to Nova Scotia, sold some of the original Greenlaw tracts to Samuel Campbell. Old maps document this change of ownership, labeling what is now Oak Point as

Fig 24. Cormorants sunbathing.

Campbell's Neck, and marking what is now Grays Cove as Campbell's Cove. However, two of the Greenlaw brothers returned to Deer Isle around 1780, and Greenlaws continued to live on the cove until the 1930s.[9] The remnants of this colonial landscape carved out of forests of spruce, fir, red oak, and poplar by Greenlaws and Campbells and other early settlers can still be seen in the saltwater farms interspersed between the summer homes that hug the shoreline of Greenlaw Cove.

These days, during the summer months at mid- or high tide, you can find Janis kayaking on the cove or working at the cove's edge. For the past thirty years Janis has rented Sea Green Cottage at the northwest end of the cove from Mike and Eva Weed. For six weeks or more each summer, she has set up her equipment—drafting table, stools, easel, brushes, paints, and pencils on the porch—just a stone's throw from the marsh and mudflats at the end of the cove. Occasionally, she moves out to the deck and sketches *en plein air*. Following tidal clockwork, she heads out in her blue kayak once the tide is high enough to explore (fig. 24).

If there is a bit of wind, she might paddle up along the northern edge to Shore Acres Preserve, which offers public access to the granite ledges and salt marsh shoreline, then continue past the Hill family saltwater farm, whose hay fields extend right to the water's edge, suggesting what the cove might have looked like a century ago. From there she might head to the semi-submerged outcropping of rocks where the seals haul out or stop to examine Allison Melvin and Jesse Klein's Fish Creek Oyster Farm floats. Other days, it's a paddle around Campbell Island to spot the Bald Eagle's nest and admire the sailboats moored in the deep tidal channel that runs between Campbell Island and Greenlaw Neck. From there she might venture out to Bear Island or around the

bend to the Stinson Neck causeway in search of a glimpse of Atlantic Sturgeon, returning via the south side of the cove past the many summer cottages, including one designed by architect Emily Muir (1904–2003), on Greenlaw Neck.

Observing the cove up close at water level, Janis has come to know Greenlaw Cove in all its moods. Janis's drawings and paintings reflect her intimate relationship with this place in flux. She details the delicate ripple of wind across the water, the sunlight twinkling across gentle waves, the rings of fish rising to the surface, the splash of an osprey, the birds circling on air currents. Looking at her drawings, one gets the sense of the ocean breathing in and out on the cove, nourishing the myriads of organisms that live here. In showcasing the intricate forces of nature, the shifting of light, water, and species, Janis transforms the shallow waters and seemingly mundane spaces of the cove into monumental landscapes. But her drawings and paintings are much more than scenic views. Rather, her shallow water perspectives bear witness to all the life forces of Greenlaw Cove looking back at us.

I am grateful to Kelli Burnham, reference librarian at the Maine State Library, and Sherry Gross, assistant archivist at the Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society, for their assistance with historical documents about Deer Isle. I would also like to thank Marnie Crowell and Gordon Russell for sharing their knowledge about the ecology of Greenlaw Cove.

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3 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *United States Coast Pilot 1: Atlantic Coast—Eastport to Cape Cod*, 49th ed. (Washington, DC: Office of Coast Survey, National Ocean Service, NOAA, 2024), chap. 7, "Eggemoggin Reach and Approaches," Greenlaw Cove section, https://nauticalcharts.noaa.gov/publications/coast-pilot/files/cp1/CPB1_C07_WEB.pdf.

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6 For Native American history and archaeology on Deer Isle, see Haviland, *Indian History on Deer Isle* and William A. Haviland, *At the Place of the Lobsters and Crabs: Indian People of Deer Isle, Maine, 1605–2005* (Yarmouth, ME: Islandport Press, 2009).

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8 Bill Haviland, "Deer Isle in the Revolution: Patriots, Loyalists, and neutrals," parts 1 and 2, *Island Ad-Vantages*, May 2, 2019, 4; May 16, 2019, 4.

9 For historical maps of Deer Isle, see Deer Isle-Stonington Historical Society, Deer Isle, ME. See specifically Dr. B. Lake Noyes' annotated copy (April 1911) of the John Peters, Jr., *Map of the Proprietors' Lots in Deer Island, Maine* (c. 1798).

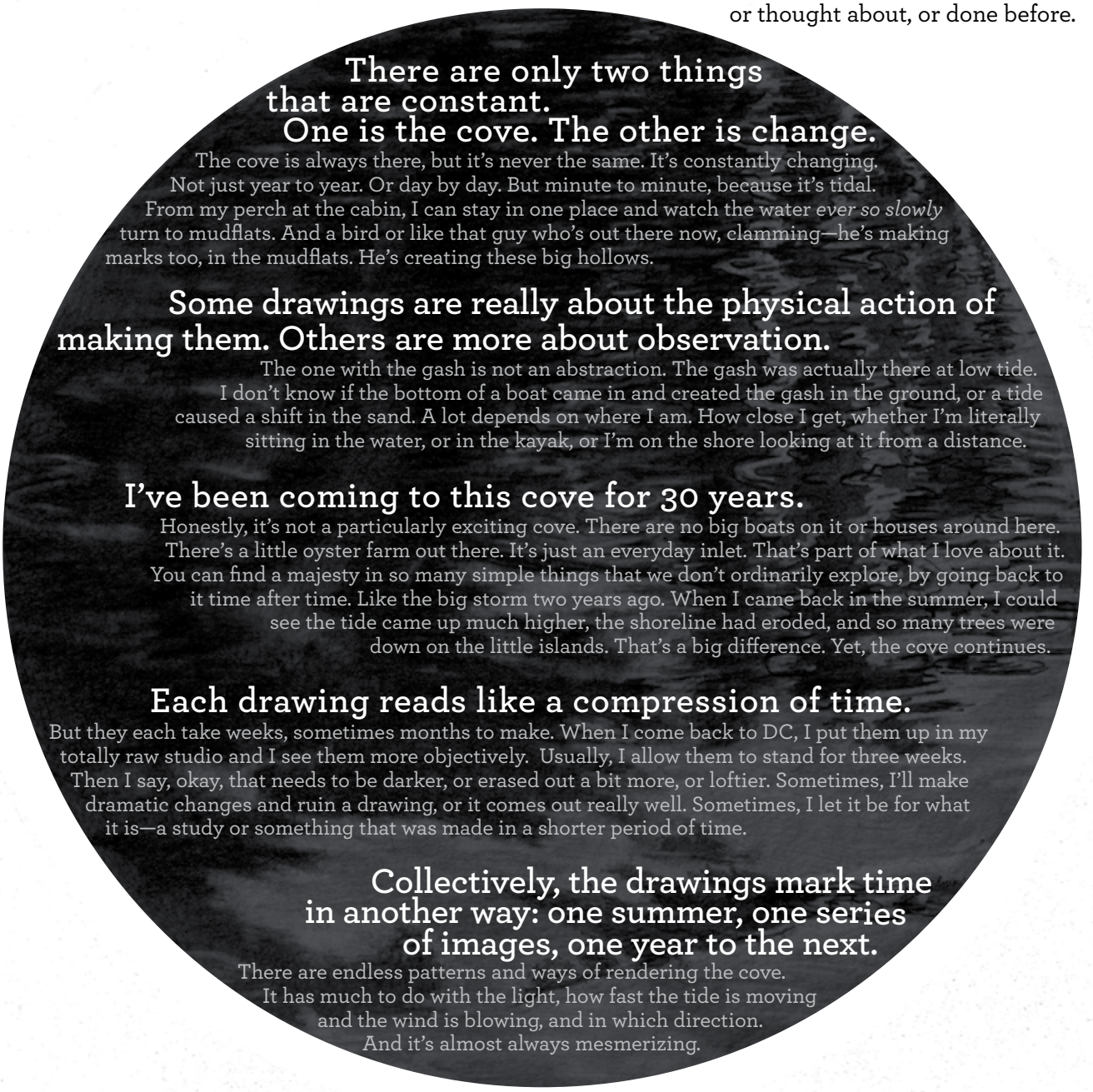
Portraitscape: In Two Tondos

WARREN LEHRER

BASED ON CONVERSATIONS WITH JANIS GOODMAN AT THE CABIN ON THE COVE

A pencil is the most immediate tool.
It starts as a kid.
You have a pencil in your hand and you scribble.
Growing up in a family with three brothers—I couldn't compete.
I didn't want to compete with them.
There's something about drawing that's quiet, but forceful.
It can be very powerful, especially in this era of flash and brightness.

I'm not that attached to the work in a funny sort of way.
I let it be, when I feel it's complete.
That lack of attachment keeps me going.
Always thinking the next piece is going to reveal something I hadn't seen,
or thought about, or done before.



There are only two things that are constant. One is the cove. The other is change.

The cove is always there, but it's never the same. It's constantly changing. Not just year to year. Or day by day. But minute to minute, because it's tidal. From my perch at the cabin, I can stay in one place and watch the water *ever so slowly* turn to mudflats. And a bird or like that guy who's out there now, clamming—he's making marks too, in the mudflats. He's creating these big hollows.

Some drawings are really about the physical action of making them. Others are more about observation.

The one with the gash is not an abstraction. The gash was actually there at low tide. I don't know if the bottom of a boat came in and created the gash in the ground, or a tide caused a shift in the sand. A lot depends on where I am. How close I get, whether I'm literally sitting in the water, or in the kayak, or I'm on the shore looking at it from a distance.

I've been coming to this cove for 30 years.

Honestly, it's not a particularly exciting cove. There are no big boats on it or houses around here. There's a little oyster farm out there. It's just an everyday inlet. That's part of what I love about it. You can find a majesty in so many simple things that we don't ordinarily explore, by going back to it time after time. Like the big storm two years ago. When I came back in the summer, I could see the tide came up much higher, the shoreline had eroded, and so many trees were down on the little islands. That's a big difference. Yet, the cove continues.

Each drawing reads like a compression of time.

But they each take weeks, sometimes months to make. When I come back to DC, I put them up in my totally raw studio and I see them more objectively. Usually, I allow them to stand for three weeks. Then I say, okay, that needs to be darker, or erased out a bit more, or loftier. Sometimes, I'll make dramatic changes and ruin a drawing, or it comes out really well. Sometimes, I let it be for what it is—a study or something that was made in a shorter period of time.

Collectively, the drawings mark time in another way: one summer, one series of images, one year to the next.

There are endless patterns and ways of rendering the cove.
It has much to do with the light, how fast the tide is moving
and the wind is blowing, and in which direction.
And it's almost always mesmerizing.

Letter to a Fisherman 11/15/25

JANIS GOODMAN

When you cast out your nets or drop your pots into the cove,
I too am dropping my line.

Mine is of light, shape, and movement.
Mine observes the tide and tackles the forms.

I share your water for a different bounty.
I too pull in creatures, seaweed, salt, and air.

When you rake the seabed for clams and mussels,
I use your hidden gestures to guide my own marks.
The scarred floor becomes a puzzle to assemble.

Your motors pull you out.
My paddles pull me in.

My eyes are fixed on the bubbles, splashes, and reflections,
while yours are seeking sunken treasures to be harvested.

At times I have felt guilty using your coast —
a frivolous act of scratching, pouncing, and erasing.
But then I remember: you nourish the body; I nourish the soul.

We are both romanticized.
We both know how hard we work and how hard the work is.
And we cannot stop,
and we cannot put our tools down
as we watch the sun rise and give light to our day,
knowing that tomorrow we will begin anew.

Janis Goodman, *Gathering Storm* (detail), 2005. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Views from the Cove
Drawings by Janis Goodman, 1985–2025

DAVID GARIFF

When in Some Cove I Lie

When in some cove I lie,
A placid lake at rest
Scanning the distant hills,
A murmur from the west,
And gleam of thousand rills
Which gently swell my breast,
Announce the friendly thought,
And in one wave sun-lit
I'm softly brought
Seaward with it.

— Henry David Thoreau

Any line drawn on a sheet of paper...
is like a rock thrown into a pond.

It upsets the repose, it mobilizes space.
Seeing is the perception of action.

— Rudolf Arnheim
Art and Visual Perception

Inherent in the statement below by Rudolf Arnheim and the poem by Henry David Thoreau are two differing portals to the understanding and appreciation of the drawings by Janis Goodman. We can call Arnheim's view analytic and Thoreau's romantic or subjective. On the Arnheim side of the ledger, questions related to vision, patterns, and dynamics are relevant. As described by Arnheim, "every visual pattern is dynamic," and Goodman's refined, economical, and, at times, explosive graphite drawings on the theme of water are very much about both the shifting nature of physical stimuli and visual perceptions (fig. 25).[1]

The drawings are also very much about the act and the art of mark-making. Goodman's dexterity with the pencil creates rhythms and tensions that are both abstract and naturalistic as well as seductive and combative. In combination, these elements attest to the focus and diligence of the artist's eye, mind, and hand—a synchronous exploration, dialogue, and translation of formal elements and forces.

The excitement of these drawings is in no small way generated by what Arnheim describes as the mobilization of space and "perception of action." This is accomplished despite one element absent from the drawings

presented in this exhibition: color. (Goodman has produced a rich body of work in oils and colored pencils associated with the same subjects and themes we see here.) Her assessment of the importance of her graphite drawings relates to her desire to focus on the visual complexities of her subjects. A long history exists of artists fascinated with the expressive potential of black and white, extending far back into the history of art.

Another important formal element of Goodman's drawings is composition, the spatial relationship of the paper surface to the graphite drawing, a dialogue between the light picture plane and dark marks of differing weights. The composition depends on deciding which parts of the surface to leave empty (a graphic version of what Cézanne called painting in reserve). There is no doubt that Goodman's compositions are intuitive. One can recreate in the mind's eye the iterative process and placement of almost every stroke (fig. 26). Her compositions are balanced but rarely symmetrical. The movements, rhythms, directions, shapes, densities, and contrasts of her marks claim our attention.

In the shifting waters of Greenlaw Cove in Maine—with its pools, eddies, and mudflats, and with the ebb and flow of its tides and currents—Goodman's years-long quest to reveal the many subtleties of water is wedded to original strategies, processes, and working methods. Few artists were as obsessed with the study of nature, especially water, as Leonardo da Vinci.

Fig. 25. Janis Goodman, *Reverberating Splash,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Fig. 26. Janis Goodman, *Horizontal Movement,* 2016. Graphite on paper, 38 x 47 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

In water Leonardo found the full range of paradox and mutability that seemed to characterize all nature. For Leonardo, water was to nature what blood was to the human body. Like Leonardo's investigations, Goodman's drawings attest to the continuing power and relevance of nature, time, and the creative impulse.

In discussing Goodman's close viewing, one should remember that the initial observations she makes are often taking place while she is *in a kayak on the water* (a gentler version of the myth of J. M. W. Turner tied to the mast of a ship to observe the effects of a storm). The intensity of that initial encounter is later given a more reflective interpretation, moving from the empirical to the subjective, from the material nature of things to their essence. Goodman explains:

> I was working with paintings of water—the tides and currents—how they ripple and move and are constantly changing. I'm trying to capture the instability of everything and the way we perceive and observe the world.[2]

And what of Thoreau? In Goodman's long fascination with the mudflats and shallow pools of Greenlaw Cove, her drawings evoke an impressive array of subjective emotions referring to the passage of time, tranquility, quiet, stillness, impermanence, and her deep connection to the natural world. We find in Goodman's work a concentrated transcription of sky, water, ripples, waves, splashes, light, and fleeting birds. Such imagery is often reinforced by spyglass, tondo-shaped supports (fig. 27). Goodman finds in Greenlaw Cove what Thoreau found—that water is "the most beautiful and expressive feature of the landscape."[3] Like Thoreau, Goodman's formal explorations are paralleled by a subjective sensitivity to nature. Thoreau describes Walden Pond as "a mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding Nature continually repairs…"[4] Here we enter a world where artist and writer wed a fascination with the material aspects and ever-changing physical manifestations of water to a vast array of aesthetic and philosophical concepts including beauty, purity, loneliness, and impermanence.

Goodman's drawings also call to mind the music of Philip Glass in their abstract, shifting patterns, and repetitive structures. In both cases each stroke (or phrase) builds on the previous one. Simple visual and musical elements move and undulate, alter and recombine, start, stop, and start again. In Goodman's desire "to capture the instability of everything and the way we perceive and observe the world," there is even something of the purposeless play of John Cage. In all cases, there is the expression of change over time—a continually evolving paradigm of the visual, musical, and conceptual. Glass writes:

> Openings and closings, beginnings and endings. Everything in between passes as quickly as the blink of an eye. An eternity precedes the opening and another, if not the same, follows the closing. Somehow everything that lies in between seems for a moment more vivid.[5]

Opposite: Fig. 27. Janis Goodman, *Shore Reflection* (detail), 2024. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Through a series of what we might call "interventions," Goodman interacts directly and actively with nature by either acting as the catalyst for a splash or directly drawing or imprinting into a mudflat (fig. 28). These actions are photographed or later simply recalled, reconfigured, and re-experienced in the studio. The "splash" series is complemented by the "imprint" series—quieter, more purely observational works related to the exploration of slow-moving water, fissures, crevices, and footprints in mudflats.

Many visual artists have been fascinated by the light and nature of earth, sea, and sky—from Leonardo to Caspar David Friedrich, Turner, John Constable, the American Luminists, Claude Monet and the French Impressionists, Georgia O'Keeffe, Cy Twombly, Helen Frankenthaler, Gerhard Richter, and Vija Celmins. Goodman follows that illustrious tradition.

Goodman's work has a particular affinity with that of Celmins. Like Celmins, Goodman's drawings can be read as either microscopic or macroscopic, intimate or expansive, often within the same drawing (fig. 29). Her graphic works also echo many of the obsessive concerns found in Celmins's paintings, graphite drawings, and prints. These include the obvious interest in nature and the movement of water, an absence of horizon lines or centered compositions, and the monochromatic grayscale from pure white to deep black devoid of the emotional distraction of color. Celmins's work is based on photographs, a practice Goodman sometimes follows, using graphite and erasers to reproduce photographs she takes herself. Again, like Celmins, Goodman's drawings capture the tension between vastness and intimacy. The former requires imagination, the latter close looking.

Goodman's thoughts about her methods and goals align with Celmins's well-known

Fig. 28. Janis Goodman, *Whimsical Pictograph,* 2006. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

artistic credo: "No composition. No gestures. No artificial color. No distortion. No ego."[6] Yet in both cases the artists are nonetheless present in their work. For Goodman, Thoreau, and Celmins, understanding the intricate and complex beauty of the natural world is the path towards self-understanding and a deeper appreciation of what it means to be human.

To chronicle the entire depth and breadth of Janis Goodman's life's work is beyond the scope of this brief essay. Her career exemplifies a committed exploration of the visual, formal, thematic, historical, and conceptual elements of art. It displays a serious engagement with a wide array of materials, processes, tools, and formats in historical and modern art. In a different context, one might also consider how her work in various media speaks to the abstraction of music, the lyricism of poetry, and the movement of dance—alongside the analytic and romantic elements that run through her work. To do justice to the broad arc of Goodman's artistic accomplishments would ultimately require a comprehensive museum retrospective documenting her decades-long career.

Fig. 29. Janis Goodman, *Rotating Tides,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 13.5 x 17.5 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Finally, recognition should be given to Goodman's contributions to and championing of the arts in Washington, DC. Through her long and inspirational teaching career at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design, her numerous civic and public commissions, and her role as a media spokesperson, Goodman has been a distinguished ambassador both nationally and internationally for the art and artists of DC.

ENDNOTES

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3 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Co.,1910), 247.

4 Thoreau, *Walden*, 250.

5 Philip Glass, *Words Without Music: A Memoir* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company, 2015), 390.

6 Vija Celmins, "A Conversation with Vija Celmins," interview by Susan Larsen, *Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art Journal* 20 (1978): 36–39; and "Vija Celmins, interview by Chuck Close (1991)," in *Vija Celmins*, ed. William S. Bartman (New York: A.R.T. Press, 1992), 8.

Interlude

LUCA ROBADEY

I was immediately drawn to the clarity and organic texture in Janis's work; the graphite, in particular, creates a tactile, grounded quality that really brings the drawings to life. I appreciate the sense of true calm and presence, which translates wonderfully into music. To mirror this in my piece *Incoming Tide,* I took specific inspiration from Janis's drawing of the same name, creating a work that acts as a musical tide—shifting, accumulating, and dissipating like waves crashing on a shore (fig. 30).

Scan this QR code to hear *Converge* (15 min), *The Depth of the Horizon* (11 min), and *Incoming Tide* (6 min) composed by Luca Robadey. The first two of these three works draw inspiration from the movement of water and the coastlines of Maine. *Incoming Tide* was written in honor of Janis Goodman's exhibition and inspired by her drawings of Greenlaw Cove.

Fig. 30. Janis Goodman, *Incoming Tide* (detail), 2024. Graphite on paper, 22 x 60 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis, Leonardo, and the Nature of the Medium

PHILIP JACKS

Fig. 31. Leonardo da Vinci, *Landscape of the Arno River and Castello di Monetlupe (Santa Maria Neve),* August 5, 1473. Sepia ink on paper, 7.5 x 11.25 in. Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe, Uffizi Galleries, by courtesy of the Italian Ministry of Culture–Uffizi Galleries.

Janis and I have been colleagues for over a decade. Of all our conversations over the years, the one that springs to mind in looking at her body of work has to do with Leonardo. Long before our first encounter at the Corcoran, I had been invited on to the Diane Rehm call-in show with a theologian from Georgetown to discuss Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code*. The experience only reinforced for me how much the life of this Renaissance genius is still largely misunderstood by modern audiences. Then, just a couple years ago, Janis was asked to join a roundtable discussion and peppered me with questions in preparation for the event. I don't remember the details, but in retrospect I realize her interest must have been less about art historical debates than with the very nature of seeing.

It's fair to say that by the standards of his time, Leonardo was not so much a practitioner of art—many of his "masterpieces" were left in *statu nascendi*—but rather an experimentalist. Janis, in many ways, fits that same description. In looking at her latest drawings of the flora and fauna around the cove that she haunts in Deer Isle, it reminded me at once of Leonardo's earliest work: a sepia sketch of the Valdarno and Castello di Montelupo, not far from the stone house where he grew up in the Tuscan hilltown of Vinci (fig. 31). The pen strokes don't define the forms of the landscape so much as simulate the effects of light shimmering on the river's

surface, the movement of rustling leaves and energized atmosphere. It is hardly a refined work by a trained hand. The lines are all different—from the rocky cliffs to rippling waves to trees shuddering in the coming storm. The date inscribed on the sheet, August 5, 1473, would put Leonardo at twenty-one, beyond the usual age of apprenticeship when soon to enter Verrocchio's shop. Here was a mind that instinctively questioned the very technical processes by which to render what he saw through his eyes and conveyed to his hand. The medium and the object were one and the same.

Throughout his life, Leonardo's fascination with the spontaneous patterns found in the natural world served as a guide to his own artistic composition. "Do not despise my opinion," he once advised his student, "when I remind you that it should not be hard for you to stop sometimes and look into the stains of walls, or the ashes of a fire, or clouds, or mud or like places, in which, if you consider them well, you may find really marvelous ideas."[1] It is but a short leap to the series of cloud studies by Alexander Cozens two centuries later, eventually systematized into his "New Method for Assisting the Invention in the Composition of Landscape."

At first glance, many of Janis's color studies would seem to follow in this genre. They are often round and cosmic-like. They are liminally representational—trace of clouds or foreground simply as reference points. As painting, they merge with drawing; strokes of color are the vehicles of mood and atmosphere. Here, also, the comparison to Leonardo is telling. From an early age, Leonardo understood drawing not as preparatory to painting, but as an autonomous medium—both striving to breathe life (*anima*) into the human form through light and texture.

Janis's drawings explore the delicate balance between abstract and figurative—perhaps not with the scientific probity of Leonardo, but with a similar intention, namely, to capture the fleeting patterns of nature. In one drawing, residues at the bottom of the cove at ebb tide suggest the language of ancient petroglyphs (fig. 32). Random fissures in mud flats seem to

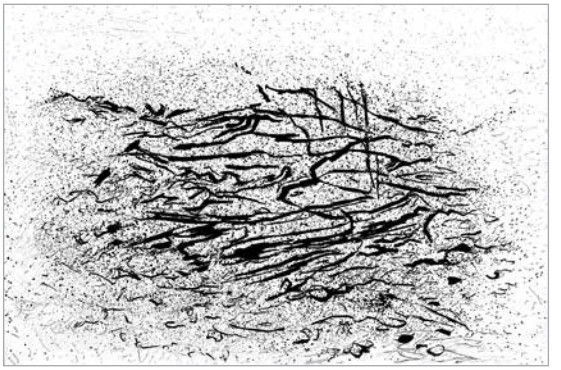


Fig. 32. Janis Goodman, *Glyph in Mudflats,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

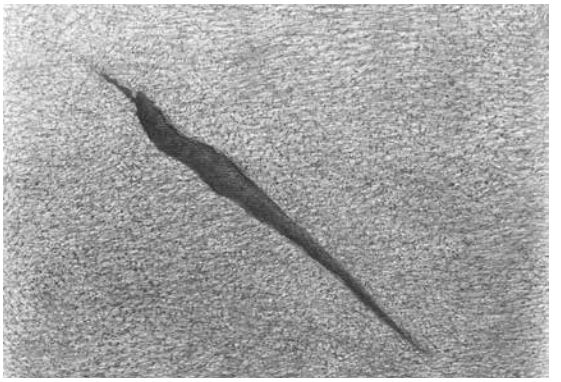


Fig. 33. Janis Goodman, *Wedge, Low Tide,* 2007. Graphite on paper, 38 x 50 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Fig. 34. Leonardo da Vinci, *Old Man and Studies of Swirling Water,* ca. 1513. Sepia ink on paper, 6 x 8.4 in. © Royal Collection Enterprises Limited 2026 | Royal Collection Trust.

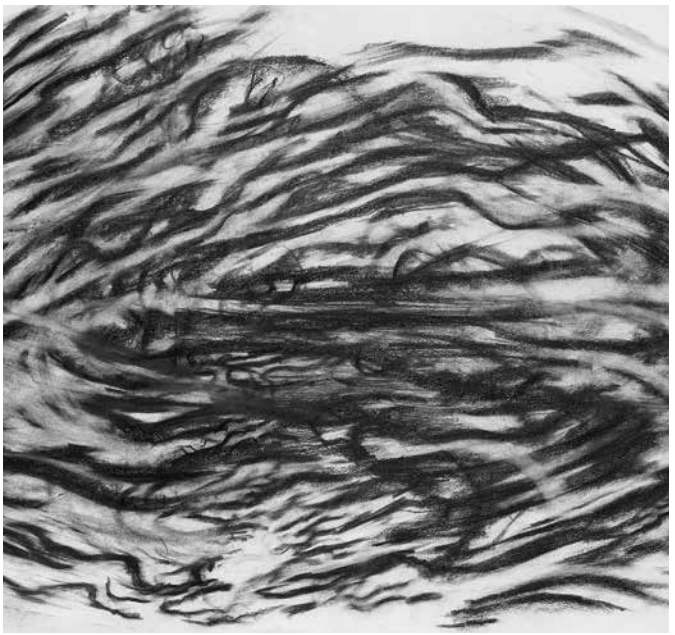


Fig. 35. Janis Goodman, *Random Movements* (detail), 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

convey cryptic messages, like the pseudo-Kufic script Italian Renaissance painters embroidered into the hems of the Virgin's robe. Through Janis's eyes, a wedge from the sun-baked shoreline evokes a gash or wound in the earth's skin (fig. 33). Such anthropomorphisms again bring me back to Leonardo, who saw a curious affinity between the fluid dynamics of a river current and the braids of Leda's tresses (fig. 34):

> Observe the motion of the surface of the water, which resembles that of hair, which has two motions, one of which depends on the weight of the hair, the other on the direction of the curls; thus the water forms turning eddies, one of which follows the impetus of the main course while the other follows that of incidence and reflection.[2]

For Leonardo, the disruption of the river's natural flow by a foreign obstacle resulting in divergent currents draws to mind the twist and pull of a woman's hair. In her drawing *Random Movements*, Janis observes a similar effect, though here the aqueous flagella-like forms give more the suggestion of biological organisms (fig. 35). Janis renders the opposing ripples from shifting tides by sinuous strokes of charcoal. These, in turn, generate nodal patterns as they intersect. By lightening her touch of the medium, less dense strokes bleed into the blurry background, as though submerged beneath the water's surface. There is a sense of turbulence, as if each of these marks is animated by an internal energy or life force.

Fig. 36. Janis Goodman, *Angry Waters,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 31 x 43 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Of course, for Leonardo, who spent years devising systems to deviate the Arno River, water was something to be harnessed. Ultimately, there was an ominous side to these studies, which he envisioned as the cataclysmic destruction of the world by deluge. For Janis, the stirring of the tides is not a premonition of things to come, but rather the momentary anger of the sea, like the mood swings of Mother Nature (fig. 36). Rather than a final scene, Janis has found the life cycles of the cove a source of nourishment and renewal.

ENDNOTES

[1] From Leonardo da Vinci Cod. Urbinatus Lat. 1270, fol. 66r, referenced in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, selected by Irma A. Richter, ed. Thereza Wells (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2025), 173-74.

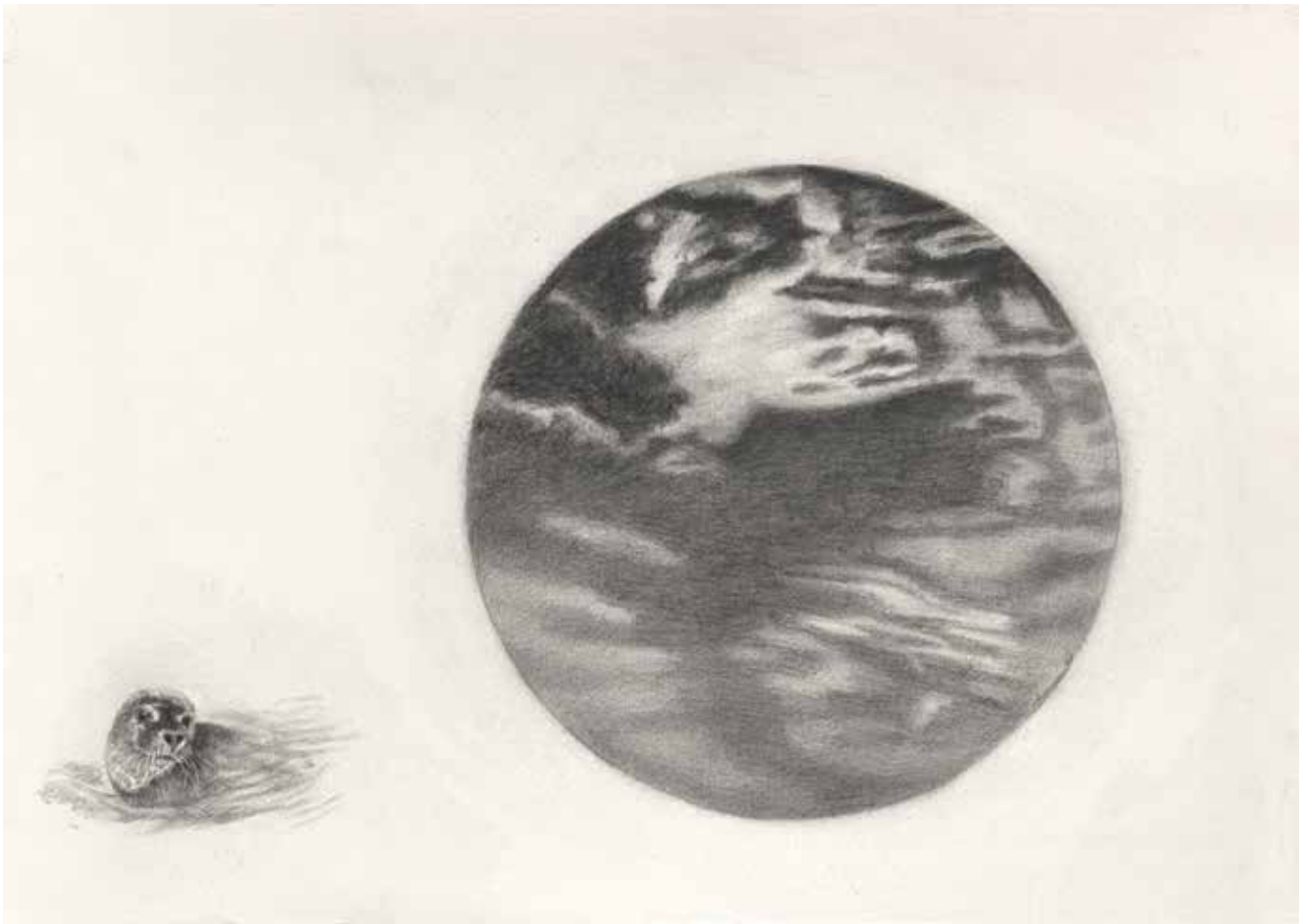
[2] From the Leonardo da Vince notebook at Windsor Castle, The Royal Library, 12579r, referenced in *The Notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Jean Paul Richter (Garden City, NY: Dover Publications, 1970), vol. I, 200, no. 389.

Where Water

Keeps Time

Graphite Drawings by Janis Goodman

Janis Goodman, *Skipping Stones,* 2025. Graphite on paper, 41 x 42 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



Janis Goodman, *Approaching Little Campbell Island,* 2025. Graphite on paper, 15 x 21 in. Private collection.

Janis Goodman, *The World Above,* 2025. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Above and Below,* 2025. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Summer Journey,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 31 x 43 in. Private Collection.

Janis Goodman, *Shore Reflection,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Afternoon Reflection,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 30 x 22 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.


Arches
FRANCO

Janis Goodman, *Traces,* 2007. Graphite on paper, 50 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

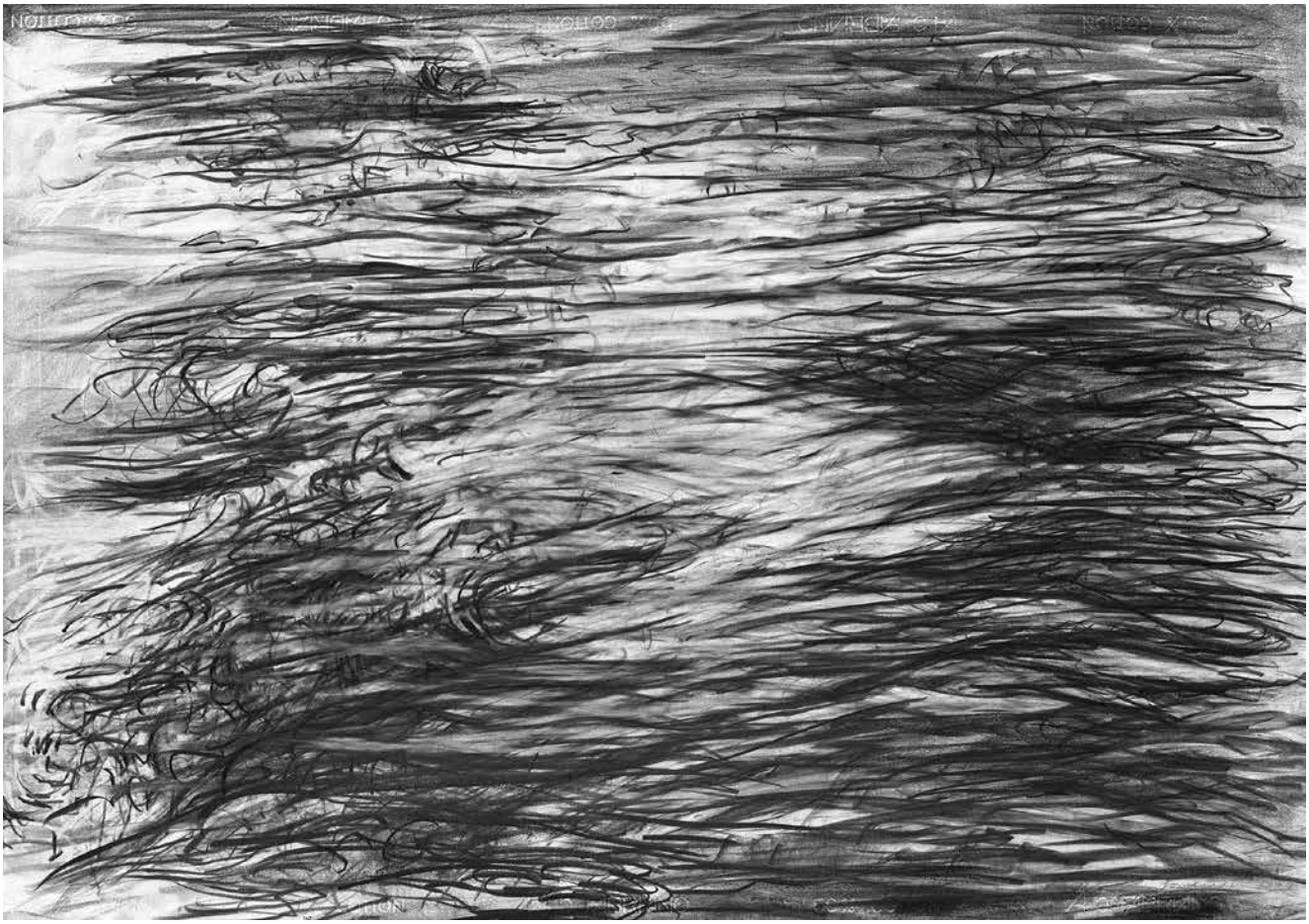
Pages 54–55: Janis Goodman, *Incoming Tide* (detail), 2024. Graphite on paper, 22 x 60 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown. See also fig. 12.

Janis Goodman, *Angry Waters,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 31 x 43 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Gathering Storm,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Clouds Above Cove,* 2004. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Moving Shadows,* 2004. Graphite on paper, 31 x 43 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

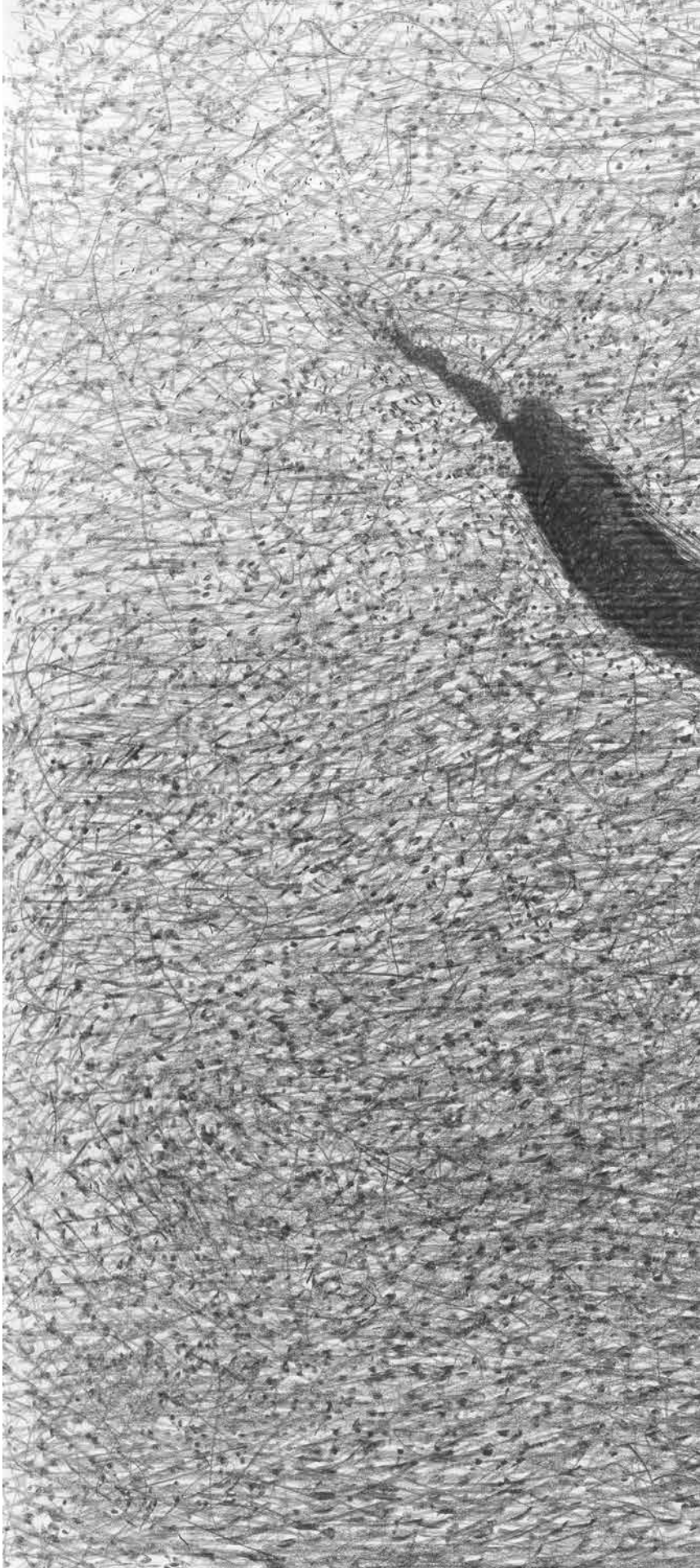


Janis Goodman, *Light and Shadow,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

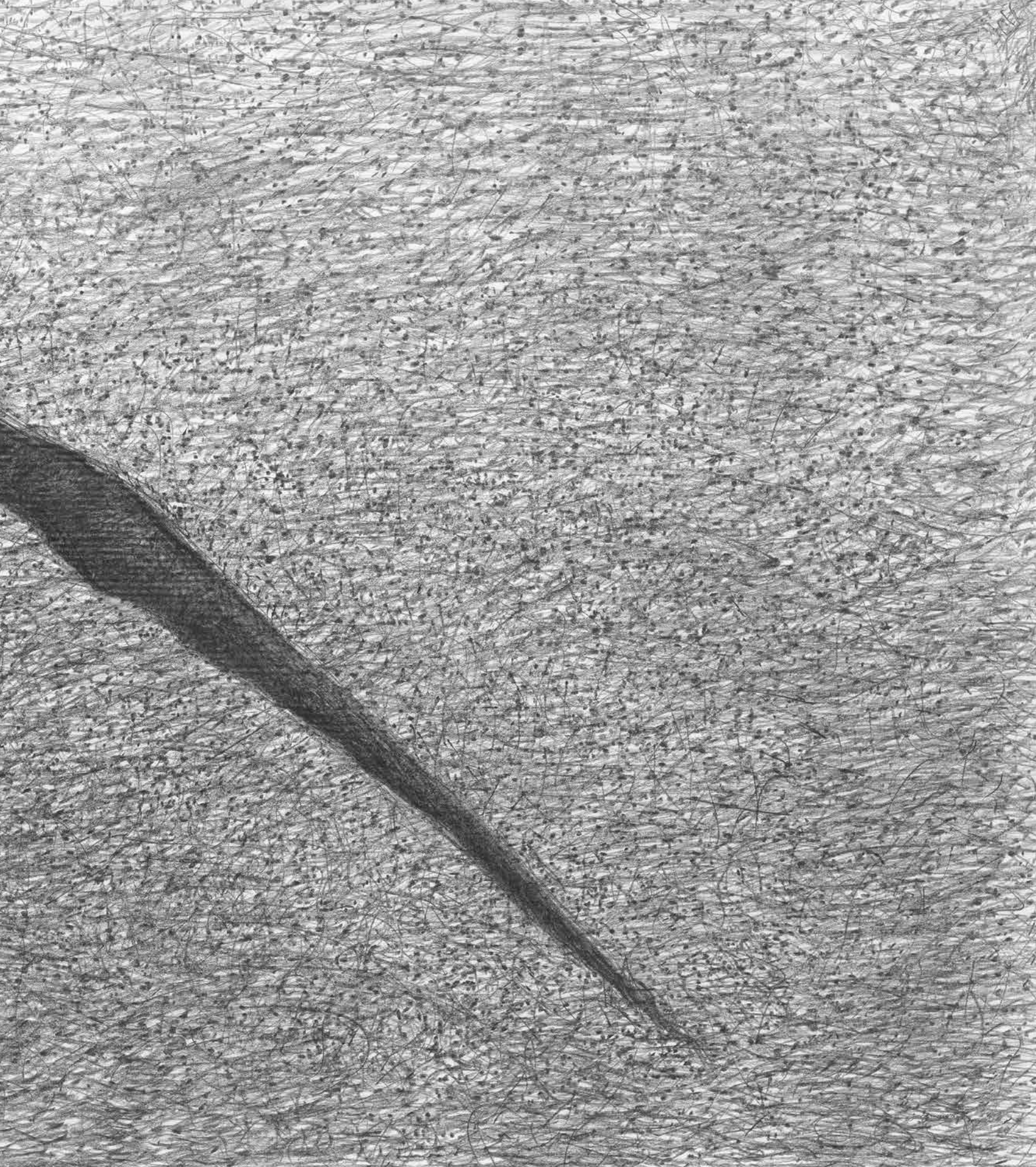
Janis Goodman, *Cove Reflection,* 2010. Graphite on paper, 17 x 14 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Cove Image,* 2010. Graphite on paper, 17 x 14 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

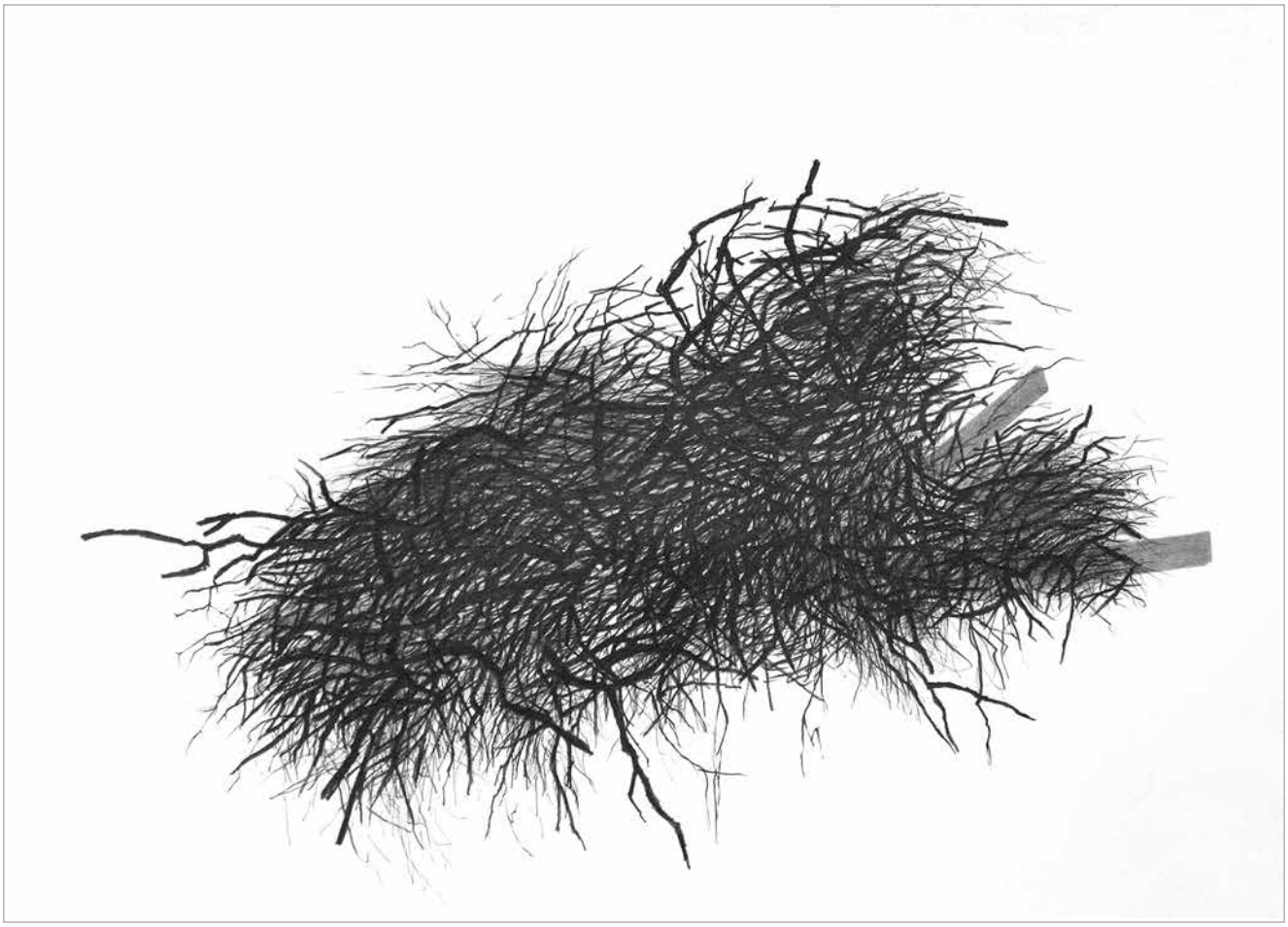
Janis Goodman, *Cove Shadow,* 2010. Graphite on paper, 17 x 14 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



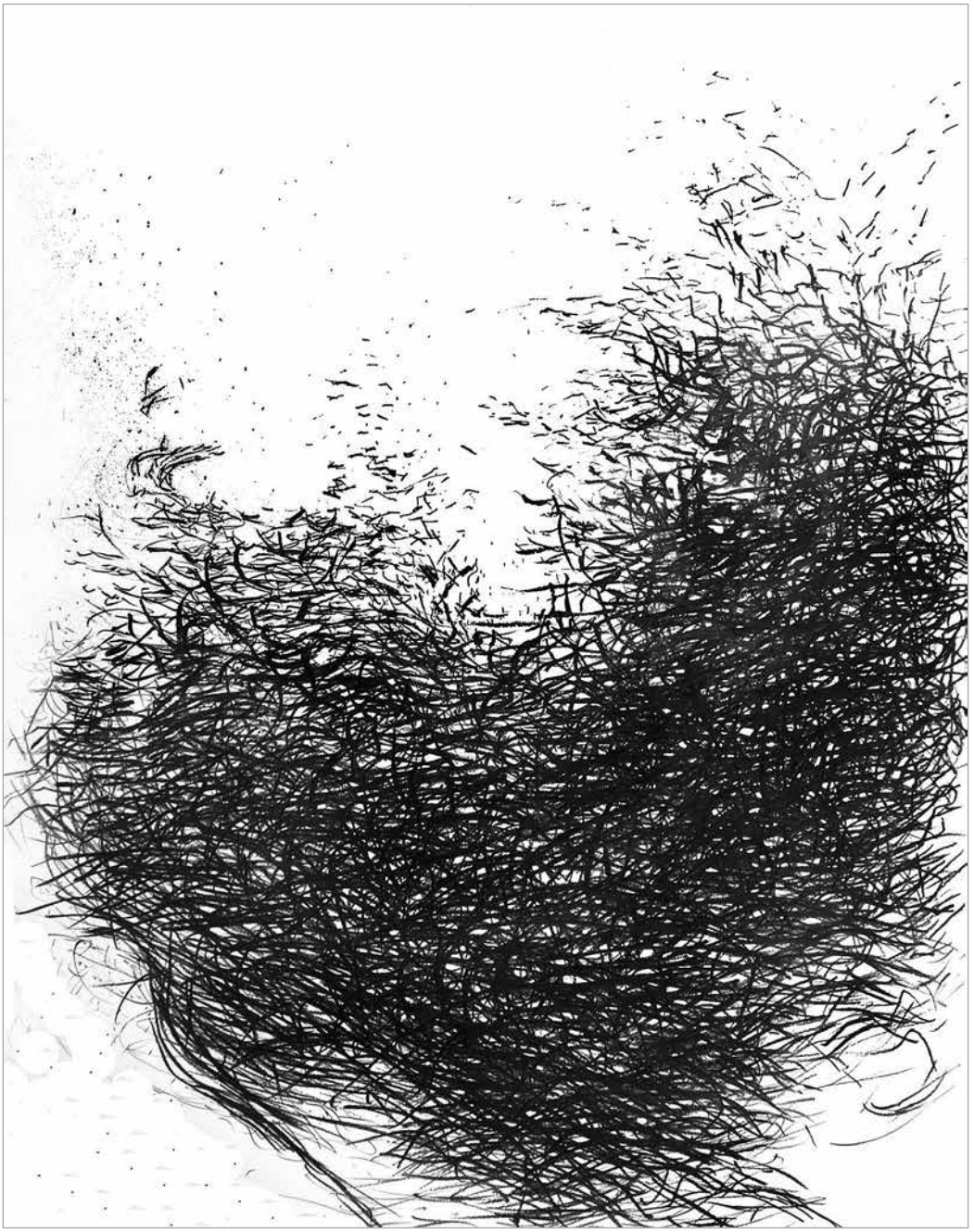
Janis Goodman, *Wedge, Low Tide,* 2007. Graphite on paper, 38 x 50 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



Janis Goodman, *Vertical Abstraction ,* 2013. Graphite on paper, 50 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



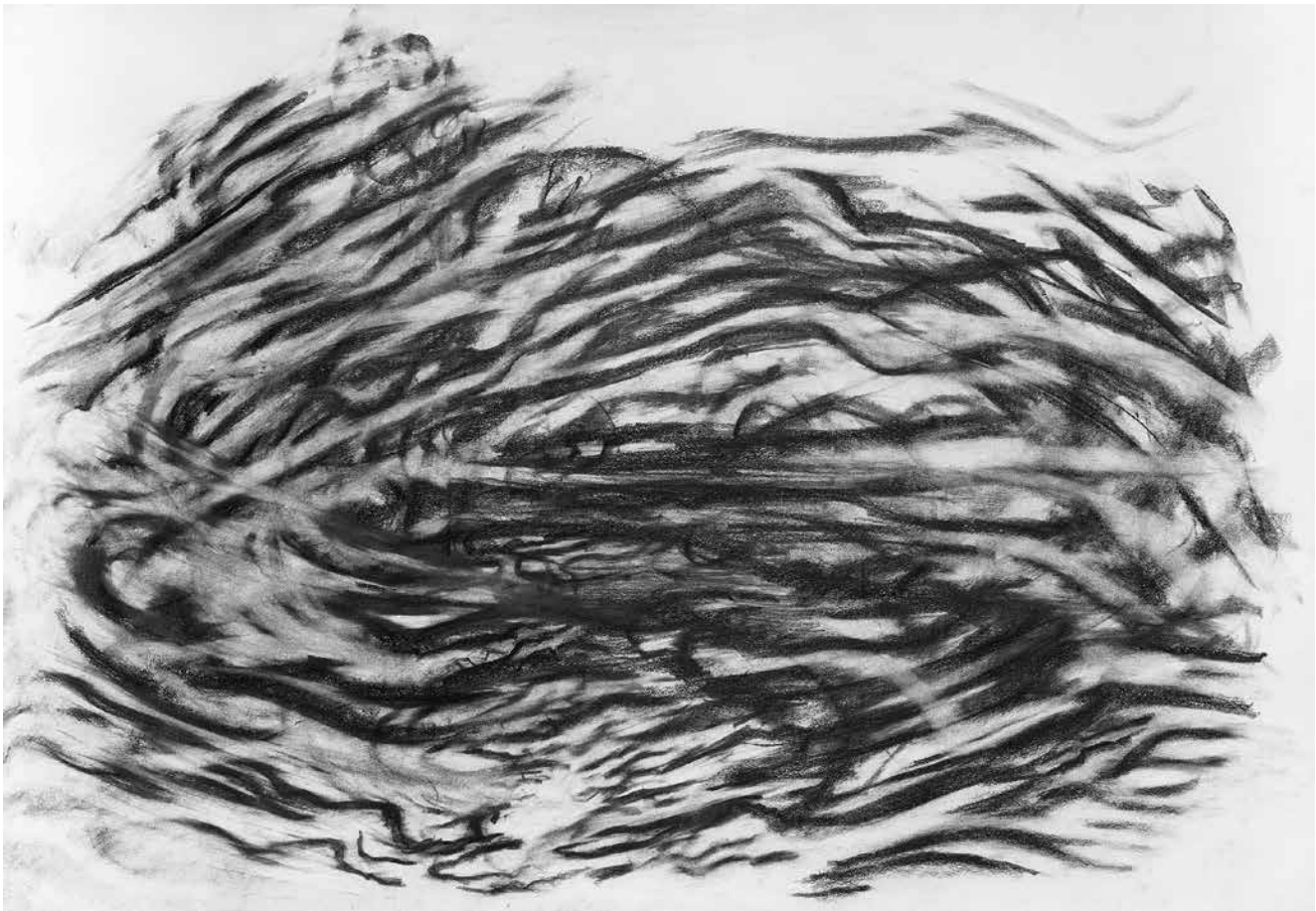
Janis Goodman, *Nest At Rest,* 2006. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



Janis Goodman, *Moving Molecules,* 2006. Graphite on paper, 50 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Whimsical Pictograph,* 2006. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

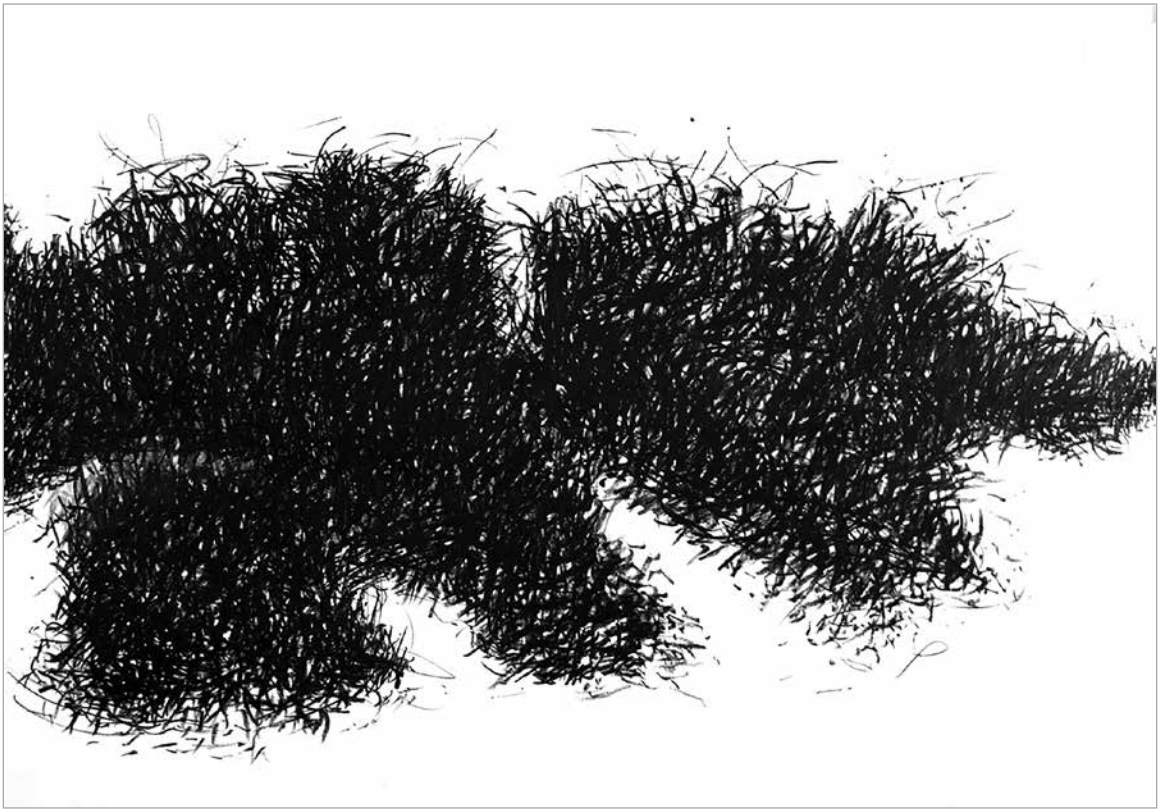
Janis Goodman, *Horizontal Movement,* 2016. Graphite on paper, 38 x 47 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



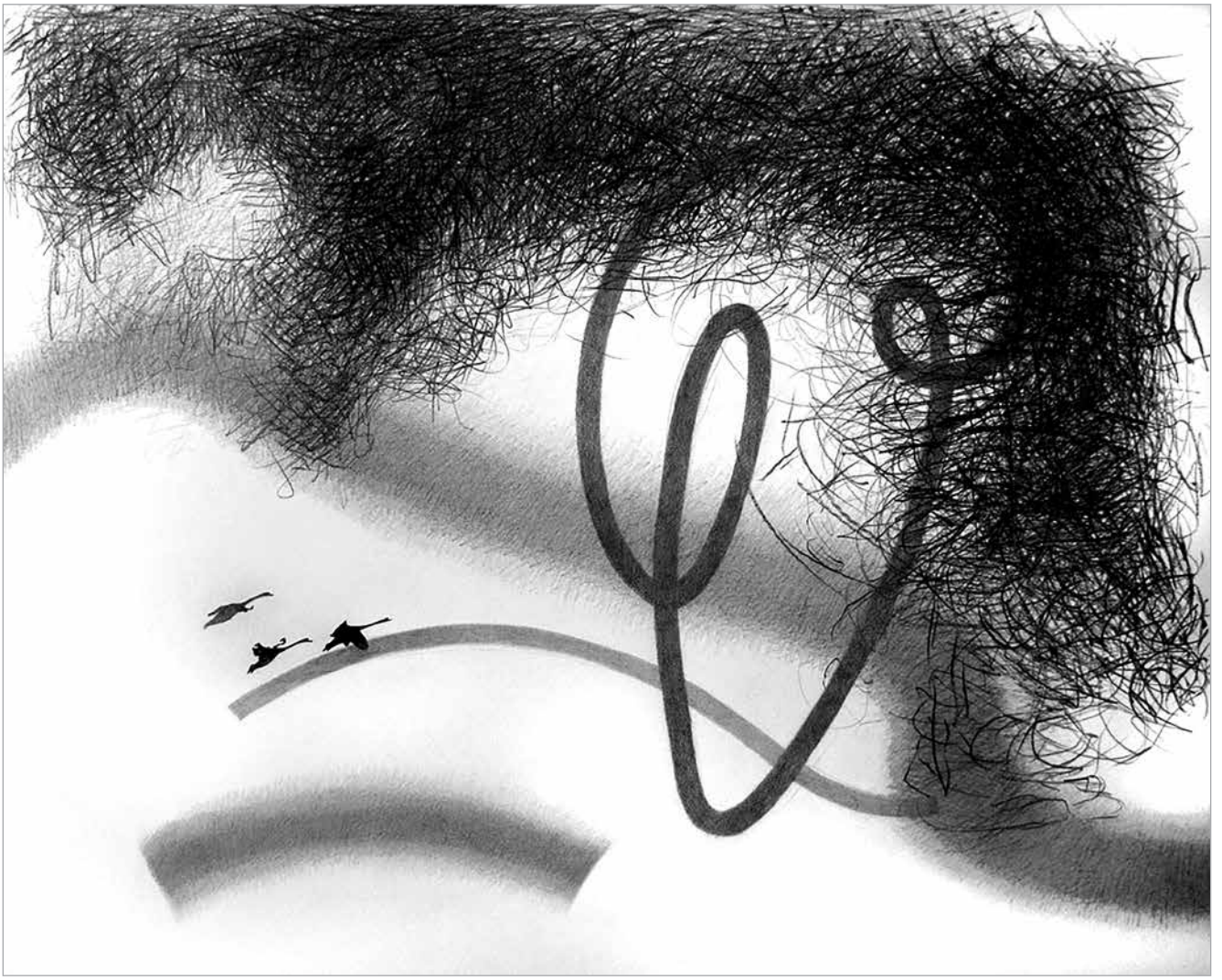
Janis Goodman, *Random Movements,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Swirling Tide,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 10.5 x 16 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Marsh Formations,* 2008. Charcoal pencil on paper, 28 x 39 in. Private collection.

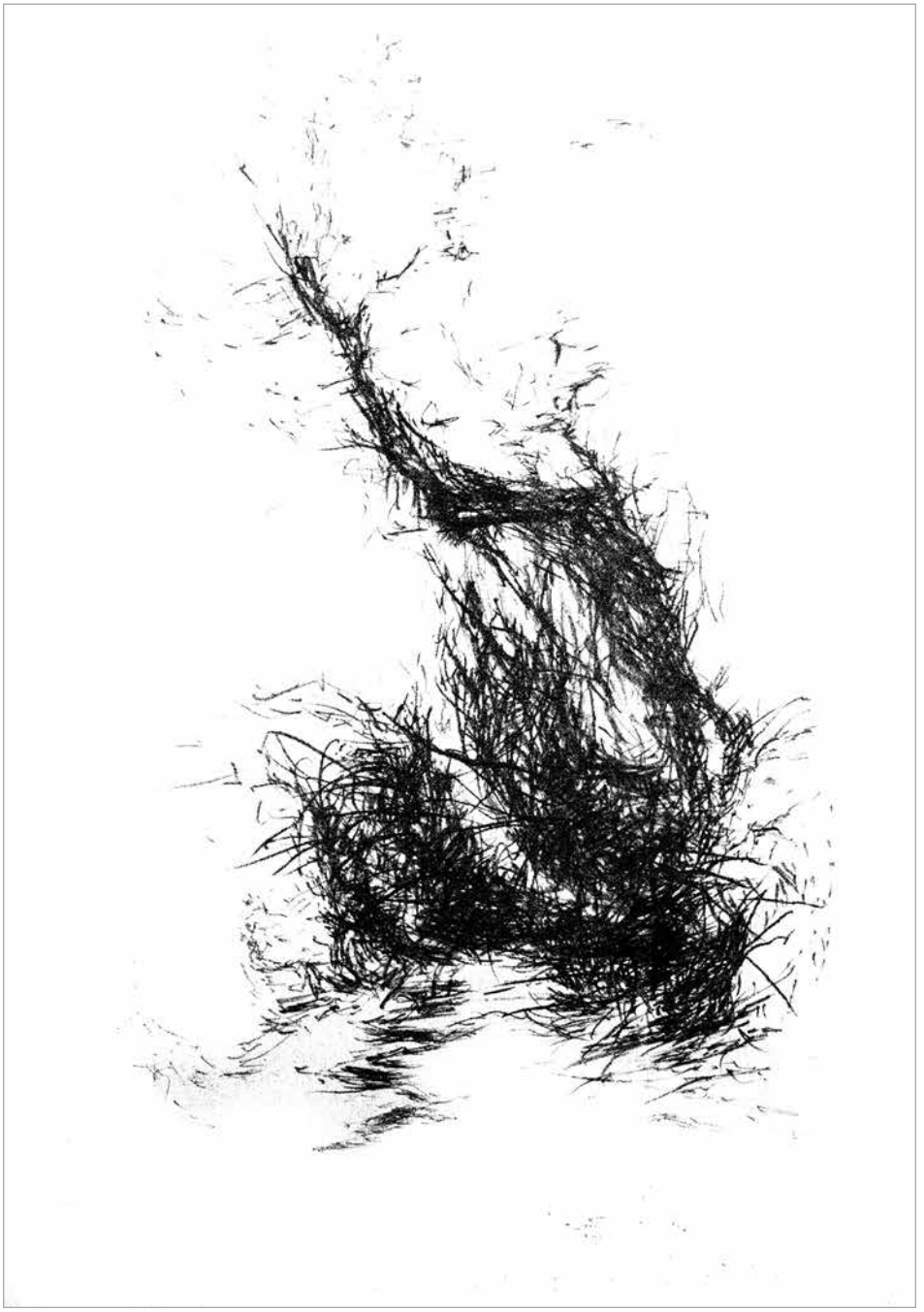


Janis Goodman, *Marsh Grasses,* 2008. Charcoal pencil on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



Janis Goodman, *Geese Amongst Chaos,* 2014. Graphite on paper, 36 x 45 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Rock Splash,* 2024. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.



Janis Goodman, *Rising Splash,* 2008. Graphite on paper, 39 x 28 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Janis Goodman, *Reverberating Splash,* 2005. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

ARTIST'S STATEMENT

When asked to describe my influences,

I find it difficult to formulate a reply. My work has changed much over the years, and the artists I am attracted to have also changed. Teaching drawing and painting for thirty-five years at the Corcoran School of Art has expanded my already extensive knowledge of contemporary and historical art. As an arts reviewer for WETA TV, I have the opportunity to see a wide variety of visual and performing arts. Additionally, my travels and observations of nature have influenced my work throughout my career.

As a young artist, I gravitated to an observational and representational style of work as I developed my craft of drawing and painting (fig. 37). I was drawn to the still-life painting and realism of artists such as William Bailey, Giorgio Morandi, Charles Sheeler, Rachel Ruysch, and the Italian Renaissance masters. I found compelling the formats of fifteenth-century manuscripts that show multiple narratives on a single page.

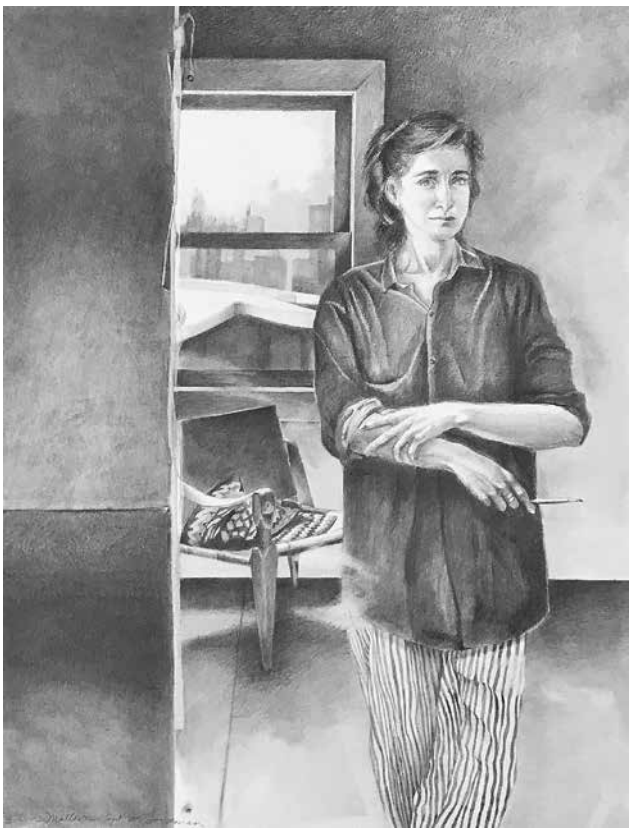


Fig. 37. Janis Goodman, *Self-portrait in New York City Studio*, 1985. Graphite on paper, 50 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist.

Early in my career, I also focused on the environment and depictions of nature. A series about trees in graphite while living in the Netherlands evokes the human figure and voices. These drawings drew me to Vincent Van Gogh, J. M. W. Turner, and Rembrandt. They inspired me to explore nature: its fragility, diversity, and soul. I also looked to contemporary artists such as William Kentridge and Bill Viola as I experimented with installations, creating more conceptual, transparent drawings on Mylar.

I have always been interested in artists who work fluidly like Frank Auerbach, Joan Mitchell, and Pat Steir. Moving the needle in a different direction, I studied the naturalism and subtle depictions of Jim Dine, Julie Mehretu, Vija Celmins, and Jenny Saville. They express a contagious and ambiguous quiet energy that I seek in my work (fig. 38).

I like the idea of selective inclusion and exclusion while creating myths that seem believable and at the same time remain mysterious.

— Janis Goodman

My work is both observational and invented. I see the real and the fantastic as working together, a quality I love in theater. I like the idea of selective inclusion and exclusion while creating myths that seem believable and at the same time remain mysterious. Like much literary, theatrical, and visual art, I lay out the visual information to be assembled by the viewer. This does not dictate an absolute narrative. The work becomes alive when seen, otherwise it is inert. I care deeply about traditional norms of line, grace, and value; palette, space, and movement. I wonder at the physical and extraterrestrial world. Years of hiking national parks, kayaking, travel and gardening, and observing the land, sea, and sky, has gifted me ideas for my work (fig. 39).

I absorb information constantly, remaining open to possibilities. Recently, for example, I have explored the tondo (circular) format to present ideas as if looking through a lens into worlds that are continuously expanding. The drawings and paintings pay homage to the laws of nature but are governed by my intuition and experience (fig. 40).

Greenlaw Cove on Deer Isle, Maine, where I have worked for twenty-five years, is the basis for the exhibitions on view in summer 2026 at the American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center; Gallery Neptune & Brown in Washington, DC; and The Turtle Gallery on Deer Isle, Maine. Observations and reflections of the cove represent my most intimate, longest-lasting relationship between a specific place and my work.

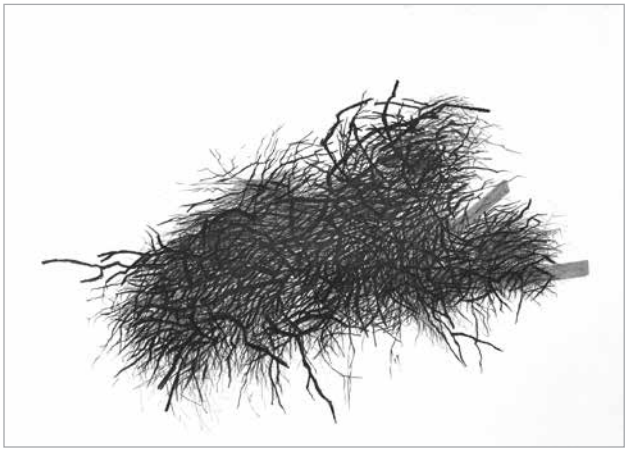


Fig. 38. Janis Goodman, *Nest At Rest,* 2006. Graphite on paper, 28 x 39 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Fig. 40. Janis Goodman, *The World Above,* 2025. Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

Fig. 39. Janis Goodman, *Diffused Light*, 2024. Graphite on paper, 38 x 29 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

BIOGRAPHIES

JANIS GOODMAN

Janis Goodman is a Washington, DC-based visual artist and educator whose work explores the dynamic relationship between the natural world and the built environment through painting, drawing, and printmaking (fig. 41). Born in New York City, she maintains studios in Mt. Rainier, Maryland, and Berkeley Springs, West Virginia; and a summer studio on Deer Isle, Maine. Goodman has had solo and group shows internationally, including Peru, The Netherlands, England, Korea, Italy, Russia, and Germany. In the United States she has exhibited work in numerous university galleries, foundations and private galleries in Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, Raleigh, Atlanta, and Nashville as well as in Ohio, Maryland, Maine, Virginia, and Iowa. Her work is in many private and public collections throughout the United States and abroad. She is Professor Emerita of Fine Arts at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design at George Washington University. She has also been an arts reviewer for WETA's TV program *Around Town* since 2001, and has reported on the visual and performing arts in the Washington, DC, area since 1993. Goodman has an MFA from George Washington University with additional studies at the Corcoran, UCLA, Pratt Graphics Center, CUNY at Queens College and in Italy.

www.janisgoodman.com

Fig. 41. Janis Goodman in her Washington, DC studio, 2022.

Janis Goodman uses graphite as a powerful medium to record her observations of a constantly changing environment. She brings a comprehensive understanding of Greenlaw Cove in Maine through her twenty-five years of exploring and focusing on this single subject.

— Susan Fisher Sterling
The Alice West Director
National Museum of Women in the Arts

LAURA COYLE

Laura Coyle is an art historian specializing in modern and contemporary art and photography. She is recently retired from the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC), where she served as Assistant Director for Cataloging and Digitization. At NMAAHC she co-edited *Double Exposure,* an eight-volume photography book series. She also published, "A Measure of Success: An African American Photograph Album from Turn-of-the-Twentieth-Century Connecticut," a digital project that includes a scholarly article and interactive features for the journal *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* (bit.ly/4l1tz2i). Previously, she was Curator of European Art at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, where she organized exhibitions and produced publications about the William A. Clark Collection, Joan Miró, Joan of Arc, and Amadeo de Souza Cardoso. Coyle holds a PhD in art history from Princeton University, an MA in Art History from Williams College, and a BA from Georgetown University.

DAVID GARIFF

David Gariff is senior lecturer at the National Gallery of Art. He is a specialist in modern art, the history of film, and the art of the Italian Renaissance. His book *The World's Most Influential Painters and the Artists They Inspired* (2008) explores the theme of influence and inspiration in Western painting. Gariff is currently guest curator for a retrospective on the art of the Washington, DC Color School painter Paul Reed (1919–2015) at the Oklahoma City Museum of Art. The exhibition includes a catalog, *Paul Reed: A Retrospective* (2025) exploring the art and legacy of this important American artist. Gariff received a PhD in Art History from the University of Maryland, and a BA and MA in Art History from Arizona State University.

PHILIP JACKS

Philip Jacks has taught art and architectural history at the University of Michigan, Yale University, and George Washington University. He is Professor Emeritus in the Art History program at the Corcoran School of the Arts & Design at George Washington University. Awarded the Trachtenberg Prize for undergraduate teaching, he served as founding member of the GW Academy of Distinguished Teachers. His books include *The Antiquarian and the Myth of Antiquity: The Origins of Rome in Renaissance Thought;* and with William Caferro, *The Spinelli of Florence: Fortunes of a Renaissance Merchant Family* (Italian edition, *Gli Spinelli di Firenze: Mercanti e Mecenati del Rinascimento*). He is the editor of *Vasari's Florence: Artists & Literati at the Medicean Court* and *Giorgio Vasari's Lives of the Most Excellent, Painters and Architects*. Jacks holds a PhD in Art History from the University of Chicago; an MArch and Certificate in Historic Preservation from the University of Maryland; and a BA in Painting & Art History from Cornell University.

WARREN LEHRER

Warren Lehrer is a writer/multimedia artist, known as a pioneer of visual literature and design authorship. The author of sixteen books, his work is acclaimed for its marriage of writing and typography and reuniting oral and pictorial traditions of storytelling in books, animations, and performance. Honors include: Ladislav Sutnar Lifetime Achievement Prize, Brendan Gill Prize, Center for Book Arts Honoree, NEA Fellow, NYFA Fellow, three AIGA Book Awards, and grants from the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations. Lehrer is a founding faculty member of the School of Visual Art's Designer as Author & Entrepreneur MFA program; Professor Emeritus, SUNY Purchase; and co-founder of EarSay, a non-profit arts organization in Queens, NY. He holds an MFA from Yale School of Art & Architecture and a BA from Queens College, CUNY.

warrenlehrer.com

A meditation on nothingness, an impulse of fullness. I must be present: present to what I see, present to the chatter of the previous marks. At first, the drawings are snapshots, simple explorations of understanding, marveling, and note-taking. As time moves on the obvious disappears, the echoes start calling.

— Janis Goodman

LUCA ROBADEY

Luca Robadey is a composer and producer based in San Francisco, California. Inspired by the wonder and vastness of the natural world, he creates immersive musical experiences that combine the textures and structures of contemporary classical music with the energy and emotional directness of pop and electronic dance music. His recent work includes *Dunes*, an EP for string quintet and electronics that musically maps five deserts around the world. He is currently pursuing an MA in Music Composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, where he studies with composer Mason Bates. He holds a BA in Music Composition from the Jacobs School of Music at Indiana University.

MARGUERITE S. SHAFFER

Marguerite S. Shaffer is an independent scholar and editorial consultant who lives in Portland, Maine, and summers on Greenlaw Cove, Deer Isle, Maine. She is Professor Emerita of American Studies and US Environmental History at Miami University. She is author of *See America First: Tourism and National Identity, 1880–1940*, editor of *Public Culture: Diversity, Democracy, and Community in the United States*, and co-editor, with Phoebe S. K. Young, of *Rendering Nature: Animals, Bodies, Places, Politics*. She has published articles on transnational wildlife tourism, tourism and national identity, national parks, scenery, popular environmentalism, and regional identity of the American West. Shaffer holds a PhD in the History of American Civilization from Harvard University, an MA in History from Harvard University, and a BA from the University of Pennsylvania.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For the drawings exhibition at the American University (AU) Museum at the Katzen Arts Center, my thanks go to Jack Rasmussen, C. Nicholas Keating and Carleen B. Keating Director, for offering me the Alper Initiative Art Gallery. At AU, I am also grateful to Kristin Howard in Marketing and Publications and the exhibition team in the Registrar's Office: Sarah Ernst, Kevin Runyon, and Beth Bright. Ken Ashton (of Frames by Rebecca) worked patiently with us to figure out the details of framing and delivery.

For this beautiful publication, I would like to acknowledge the Alper Initiative for Washington Art for covering the cost, Vida Russell for her handsome design, Phyllis Hecht for assisting in editing the text, Alex Jamison for photographing the recent drawings, and Laura Rostad for capturing me at play in Maine. I am so moved by the generosity and insights of the contributors to this catalog: David Gariff, Phil Jacks, Warren Lehrer, Luca Robadey, and Peg Shaffer. A special thanks to Mike and Eva Weed for renting me the charming cabin on Greenlaw Cove all these 25 years and allowing me to keep my kayak, art equipment, and art supplies in the big house. A special shout out to my partner Knut Rostad who has seen me through the many rough times. And lastly, I could not have been able to get it all together without the encouragement and assistance of my curator and dear friend Laura Coyle.

—Janis Goodman

Opposite: Detail of USGS Topographical Map, Deer Isle, ME (1904. HTMC, 1940 ed.). United States Geological Survey. Deer Isle Quadrangle, Maine. Scale 1:62,500. Digital file. Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1904 (HTMC, 1940 ed.). Public Domain.


Heart I.
Reach
Torry Is.
Little Babson I.
Babson I.
Northwest Harbor
Grays Cove
Fish Creek
Conary I.
Conary Head
Deer Isle
Campbell I.
Bear I.
Greenlaw Cove
The Havlover
White I.
Mountainville
Greenlaw Neck
Long Cove
Pickering Cove
Sunset
Pressey
Southeast Harbor
Sunshine
Warren Pt.
Inner Harbor
South Deer Isle
Oceanville
WHITMORE NECK
Whaleback
Deep Cove
Western Cove
Lazygut Is.
Little Sheep I.
Sheep I.
West Deer Isle
Eastern Mark I.
Shabby I.
Grog I.
Clam I.
Stonington
Dow Ledge
Bold I.
Shingle I.
Greens Head
Moose I.
Thurlow Knob
Two Bush Is.
Round I.
Russ I.
Little Camp I.
Camp I.
Devil I.
Millets I.
Saddleback I.
Phoebe I.
Andrews I.
Potato I.
Green I.
Crotch I.
Buckle I.
Enchanted I.
Thurlow Head
Rock I.
Spruce I.
Mark I.
Sand I.
Bare I.
Potato I.
Ram I.
St Helena I.
Johns I.
Georges Head I.
No Mans I.
Scraggy I.
Farrel I.
Wreck I.
Mc Glathery I.
Round I.
Gooseberry I.
Southern Mark I.
Sparrow I.
DEER I. THOROFARE LH.

ALPER INITIATIVE

First published in conjunction with the exhibition
Where Water Keeps Time: Graphite Drawings by Janis Goodman
June 13–August 9, 2026
Alper Initiative for Washington Art
American University Museum
at the Katzen Arts Center
Washington, DC
www.american.edu/cas/museum

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Photography of Maine by Janis Goodman, except where noted.

Design by Lloyd Greenberg Design, LLC
Vida Russell and Lloyd Greenberg, *Designers*

ISBN: 979-8-9998619-5-5
Library of Congress Control Number: 2026913222

Front cover: Janis Goodman, *Afternoon Reflection* (detail), 2024. Graphite on paper, 30 x 22 in. Collection of the Artist, Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.
Inside front cover: Janis Goodman, *Diving Wonder* (detail), 2025. Graphite on paper, 29 x 38 in. Collection of the Artist, Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.
Back cover: Janis Goodman, *Rising Splash*, 2008. Graphite on paper, 39 x 28 in. Collection of the Artist. Courtesy Gallery Neptune & Brown.

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