

## ***Unraveling and Liberating the Scribble***

As both artists and jurors, we are filling the Carter Burden Gallery space with ***“SCRIBBLES: Habits, Compulsions & Outpourings of the Doodling Mind,”*** this year’s Annual Juried Show, with the joyous artistry and inventive “scribbles” of our selected artists who explore just how their scribbling and doodling fit into the surprisingly timely context of this provocative subject within contemporary art.

Consider that unconscious scribbles, meanderings, jottings, and wanderings of thoughts, lines, marks, shapes, and colors were only thought of as marginal, unresolved, and tentative trial-runs for finished art until Cy Twombly, whose feverish fusions of texts and graffiti evoking the primitive, the poetical and classical mythological, erased that distinction and moved scribbling to the center stage. Scribbles are justifiably coming into their own with their technical mastery, wit, delight, whimsy, and terror, bridging the range from chaos to order and back again as validated, intimate, personal and experimental artistic expression.

Artists start with a mark either searching with intention and stated purpose or desiring just to play with no intent, open to intuition and accidents. We imagine “What if I do this ...or that” as explorations of theme and materials that often stray far afield from the initial thought into visual wonderments and delights, a game of hide and seek, a “try this, try that,” a celebration of this obsessive process of discovery, of skipping, stumbling, jumbling, scrambling, a visual form of chattering, allowing developments to take shape as *becomings*, appearing at times as completed statements to our 21st century eyes.

Simultaneously, we marvel at a wonderful show “GRIBOUILLAGE / SCARABOCCHIO: From Leonardo da Vinci to Cy Twombly,” exhibiting in Rome and Paris in 2022-2023. Great acknowledgements go to curators Francesca Alberti and Diane Bodart, who unravel new research, bringing original studies to a neglected facet of art making.

Our show modestly adds a continuum to the artistic legacy of art historical scribbling. It began with primal prehistoric cave art; later emerging as the subversive markings of hidden or not-to-be-seen art by Renaissance artists in caricatures venturing into satire, continuing today with an often playfully confrontational stance against traditional art. Freudian theories with the influence of children’s art, Surrealism, Jackson Pollock’s breakthrough “drip” automatism, and Cy Twombly’s elevation of the scribbled line have prompted the emergence of the “scribble” where word, image, emotion, formalism, and expression are all jumbled together to keep definitions and concepts interchangeably elastic and fluid. So many strong variations in so many innovative techniques and surprising materials answered our call for art, liberating the Scribble as a vibrantly living phenomenon.

— Lois Bender and Amy Cheng

“Scribbles” Jurors for the Carter Burden Gallery