

THE NEW YORKER

ART GALLERIES—CHELSEA

“Drawing Space: 1970-1983”

A group show of six sterling artists revisits a long-neglected period of ascetic mentalities and understated procedures in New York. Post-Minimalist, process-oriented, and abstract (of course!), these drawings incline to faintness of line and paleness of color (if any) and are saturated with aesthetic intelligence. There’s a held-breath integrity to the folded-paper works by Dorothea Rockburne, the graphed numbers and marks by Hanne Darboven, the subtly playful designs by Keith Sonnier, and the geometric sculptural imaginings by Fred Sandback and Barry Le Va. One small, scribbly sketch by Alan Saret, who made ineffable sculptures of jumbled wire, conveys the spirit of perhaps the era’s most sensitive talent. The rigor and hush of these artists is like illumination by moonlight. It could not survive the blinding glare of the neo-expressionist eighties that followed. This show prompts penitence.

— *Peter Schjeldahl*