

The Museum of Modern Art

50th Anniversary



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DOROTHEA ROCKBURNE SERIES ON VIEW AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Six etchings made between 1972 and 1975 by the Canadian-born artist Dorothea Rockburne will be on view from May 5 through July 7, 1981 in the Museum's Northeast Gallery. DOROTHEA ROCKBURNE: LOCUS will be directed by Riva Castleman, Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books.

"It's called the Locus series," Miss Rockburne points out, "because the generating point is in the center and the spines move around the center." The series consists of six sheets of heavy paper folded to a central point, indicated with a gray etched "X" and printed in white ink. Each completed unfolded sheet has passages of ink in areas on both sides which form angular planes of subtle texture and low relief.

From comments made in 1975, it is clear that Miss Rockburne was very conscious of the nature of the printmaking process, mechanical details and all, in working on the Locus series. "I was involved in an interaction between the paper, the ink, the plate, the bed and the roller," she said, "and how the weight of the bed and the weight of the roller caused the ink and the paper to interact with each other against the plate...Because the paper went through the press folded there are three different inking surfaces: one which is fully inked, one which is medium

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inked, one which is hardly inked." And, Miss Rockburne adds, "etching is tactile, obstinate and challenging."

According to art critic Carter Ratcliff in a discussion of the Locus series, the six prints can be said "to take vision as their subject matter... [but] in fact they are not of or about vision - they are for vision. They invite the gaze, focusing it and making it self-conscious...They challenge the viewer with a richness of detail that can only be seen."

Locus is a recent gift to the Museum in memory of Beth Lisa Feldman. Its exhibition is made possible in part by public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts.

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