



MATT RUGG

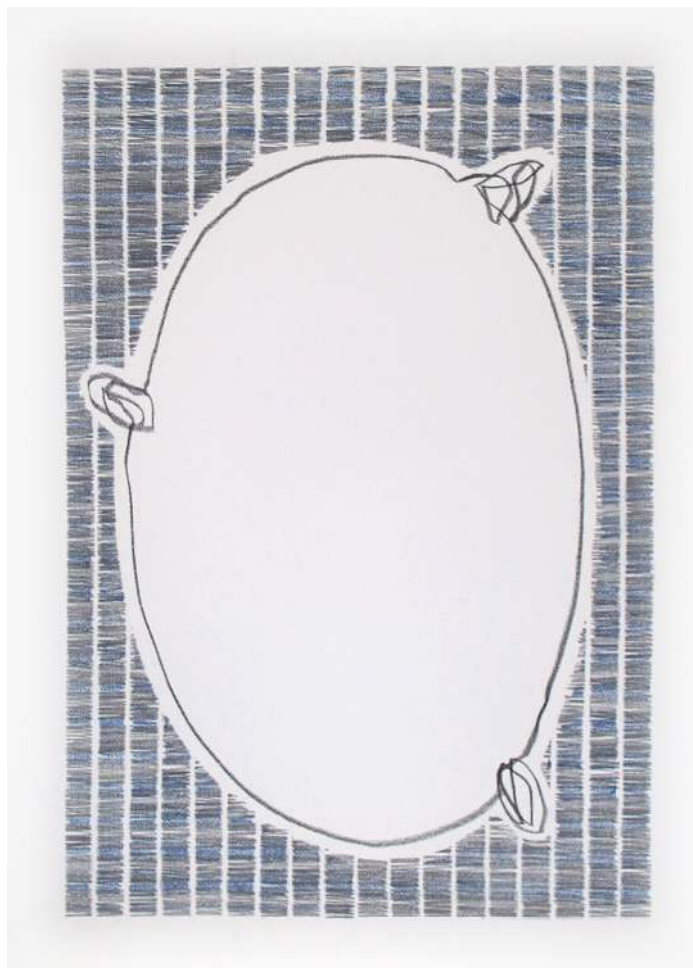
SILENT NOTATION



CHELSEAFUTURESPACE

May 17th - July 3rd 2011

Front Cover: Untitled, 2006, Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand made paper. **Back Cover:** Untitled, 2006, Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand-made paper. **Left:** Matt Rugg alongside, Anatomy I, 1999 - 2002, Galvanised Wire.



Untitled

2006

Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm

MATT RUGG

WITHIN AND WITHOUT

A PLACE WITHIN A SPACE

There are two places: in front and behind. The space has been squeezed. Where there should be a gap, another gridded surface presses uncompromisingly against a replica of itself. On which side of the space is this dense mesh of lines located? Is this an inside space striving to look outwards, or an outside space looking inwards?

However, there is nothing ambiguous about these drawings, collectively exhibited under the title of Silent Notation. The tough immediate marks of conte crayon and pastel evidence a direct, confident stroke. They indicate expediency, efficiency and economy. There is a job to be done. A job where a space must become a place and this burgeoning space as a place must be built, layer by layer.

DRAWINGS TO BE WRITTEN

The repetitive gestures of firm marks are rhythmic. Their confidence is more akin to handwriting where the build up of the script is methodical. When is enough enough? How dense should this drawn text be? Scrutinising the dark

layered interiors of these drawings is uncomfortable. The enmeshed striations are claustrophobic and imprisoning. But secreted within this mass are grids and these are more structural, minimal, stark and about themselves than emotionally directed. What is this need to disrupt and dislodge? The written marks all but cancel out the inherent order buried within. These solid masses of written drawing pull inwards and push outwards simultaneously: they are compelling and repelling, embracing both order and chaos in harmonic unity.

ESCAPING THE GRID

Gridded structures appealed to Louise Bourgeois of which she is quoted as saying: “...everything has a place, everything is welcome.” Despite the clear differences of subject, content and form between Bourgeois and Rugg, this quote establishes a meeting point. But whereas Bourgeois’ grids contain and restrain, Rugg’s grids become foils for territorial disputes. The paper itself is the container from which all aspires to escape. There is a build up, literally so, of surface tension as the conte/pastel marks press upwards from the constraints of the territory prescribed by the paper. Again, the place generated by the spaces between the layers of marks is tight to the point of rupture. In some drawings, the grids which might hold everything together, are blurred into extinction whilst in others their presence

is a reminder of a previous order more often than not disrupted. Then there is nothing. The silence of the blank paper. These are the drawings where the centre has been emptied out. The pressure exerted by the grids on the dense spaces between each layer has imploded. A space is what remains which, despite its emptiness, is in fact full to the brim of itself. And the dynamic of what might have been.

FAST AND LOOSE

In their layered construction, the drawings represented in Silent Notation are evoking a sculptural language: they are demonstratively physical, holding space, and graspable. The 'looped' drawings in particular offer a sense of becoming. They are neither images nor possible objects. What are they? Are they flat? Are they a place mapped out and viewed from above? Or are they possible 'things', vast in scale? Some of them are uncompromisingly solid. They begin to resonate with an archaic, Palaeolithic formalism reminiscent of stone circles, henges and styles. That is their sculptural language arguing for precedence over their other more graphic and painterly characteristics. But, as with the grids, disruption, interruption and a restless refusal to favour a comfortable solution prevails. From the solidity of the intensely coloured 'loops', spontaneous drawings along the same 'loop' theme have erupted. The looseness

of these recent black conte drawings is an uncompromising reflection of the earlier versions but seemingly only possible as a rebellious act in contrast to those. These recent drawings are exhilarating in their speediness and freeness of execution. If notation is at the heart of this selection of drawings then these are a kind of summary of such a notation.

MAKING ITSELF

And so to the sculptures themselves. Rugg has described the obsessive winding of the wire around itself as a way in which these works 'make themselves'. If the drawings persistently strive to disrupt formal solutions, then so too do these two hanging works. In its industrial manufacture, wire is extruded, pulled through and stretched as part of its production process. These works seem to continue that process. Their absolute wiriness is what they are. Their subject is the stuff itself. Wire is coiled for convenience at the end of its production. In these works the coiling process is continued, but not for convenience. This is the action of the wire itself in a dream state. It is coiling around itself over and over again, wrestling itself into muscular tendons which semi-collapse, their weight making gravity as much a part of them as the wire itself. These nameless, robust, heavy, but paradoxically elegant and seemingly light and almost airborne structures defy categorisation. They

are drawings as well as 'things'; they are 'stuff' as well as air; they are crafted as well as making do; they are without movement as well as taut with potential energy.

SILENT NOTATION

And so Silent Notation offers a succession of contradictions. Scrutinising these works is to be lured into places where formal order is confidently constructed only to be subtly disrupted, blurred and dismantled. Rugg is a witness to his creative arguments, executing them with adroit cunning. We enter his world at our peril, seemingly charmed by the rich intensity of the work, its clarity, directness and simplicity, only to be pulled into its dark side of disruption, interruption, anti-form, near destruction and reconstruction. This is sculpture in the making.

Phyllida Barlow



Top - Detail
Anatomy 2
 2008
Galvanised Wire
 305 x 90 cm



Bottom - Detail
Anatomy 3
 2008
Galvanised Wire
 305 x 85 cm



Anatomy I
1999 - 2002
Galvanised Wire
250 x 106 cm

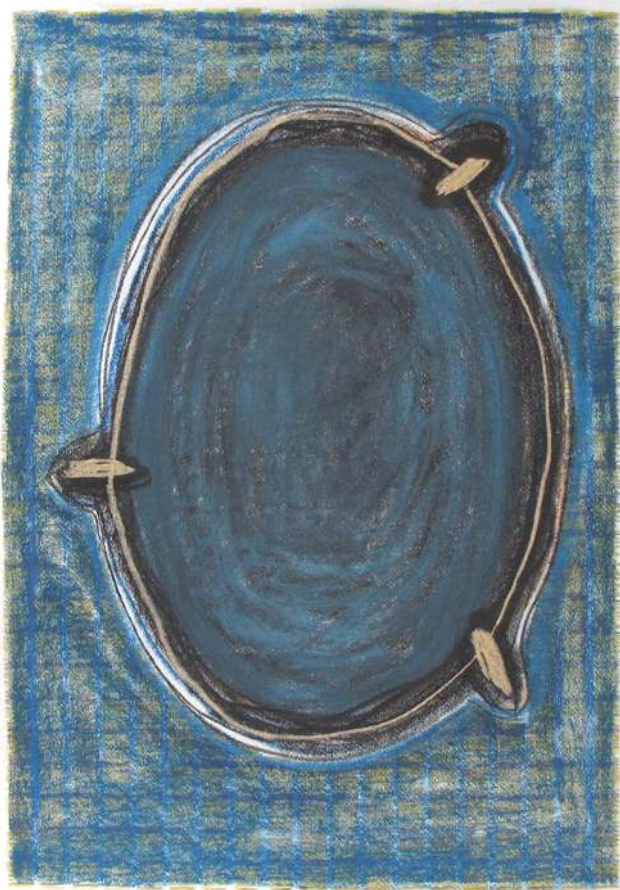


Untitled

2006

Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm

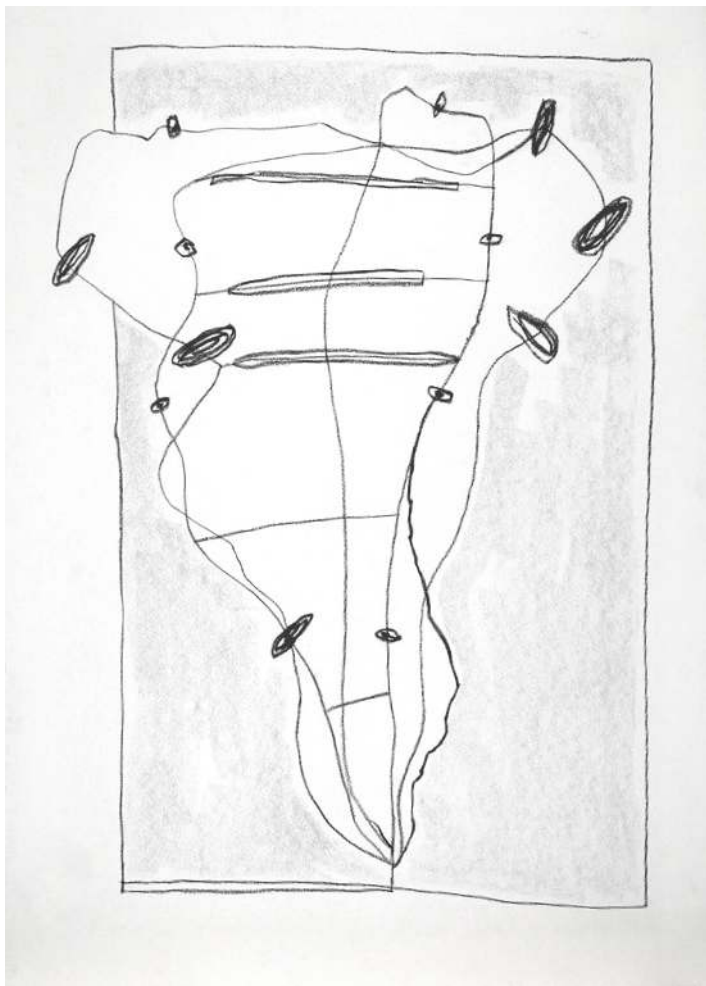


Untitled

2006

Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm



Untitled

2005

Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm



Untitled

2005

Pastel on hand-made paper

56 x 72 cm

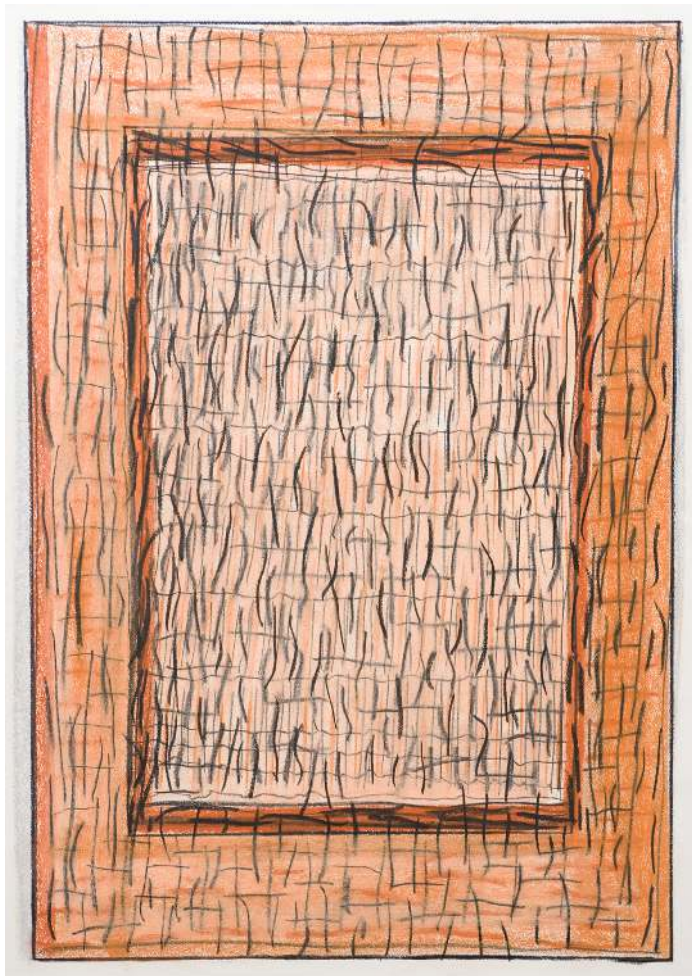


Untitled

2006

Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm

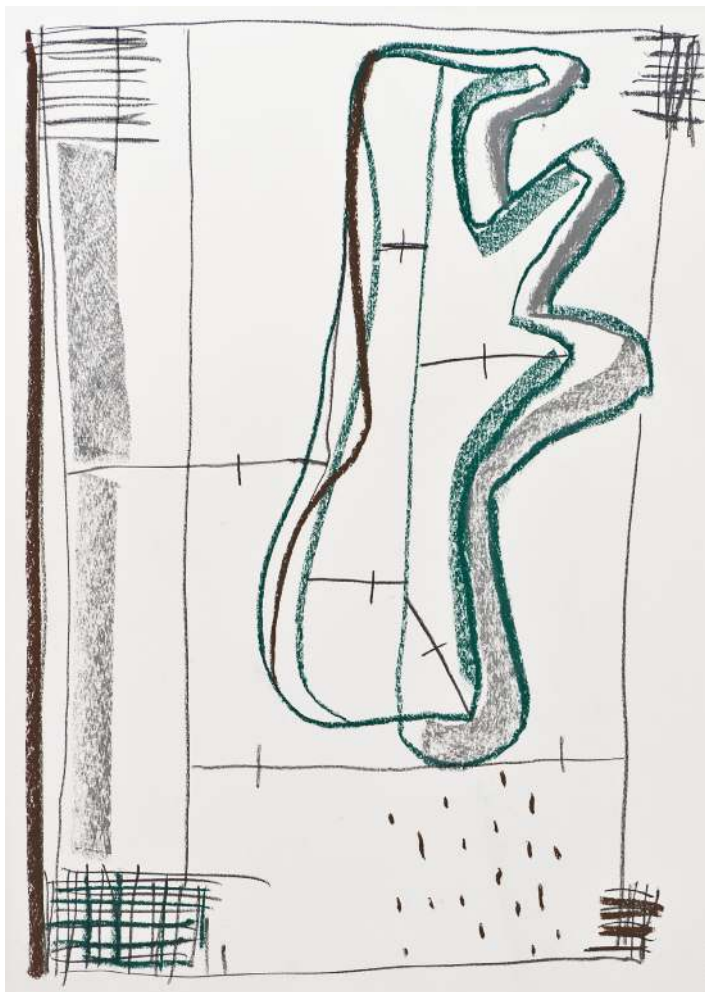


Untitled

2006

Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm

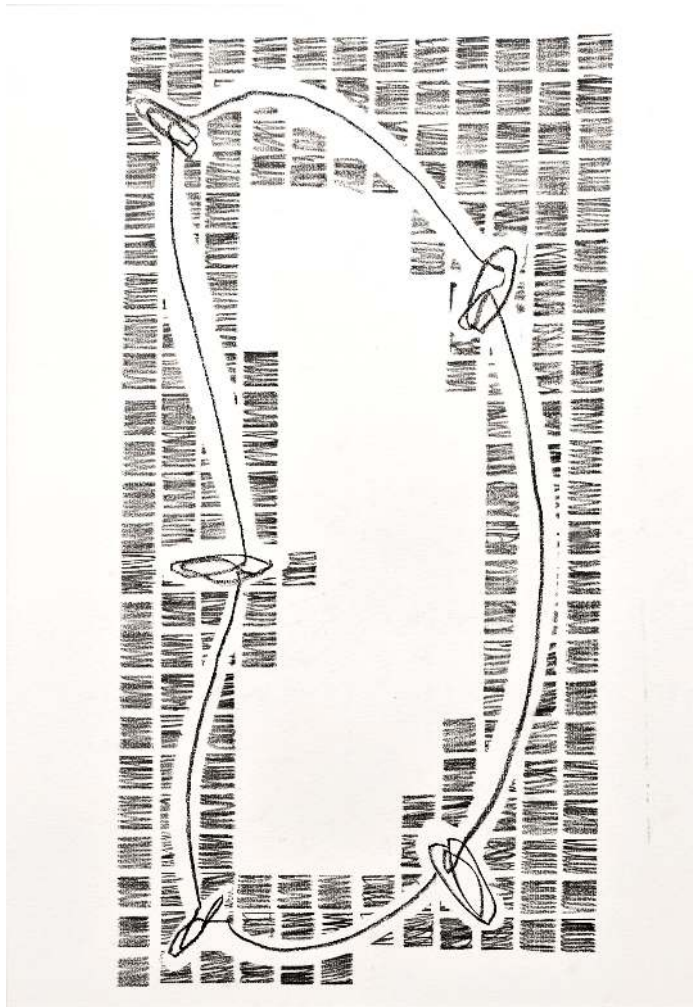


Untitled

2011

Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm

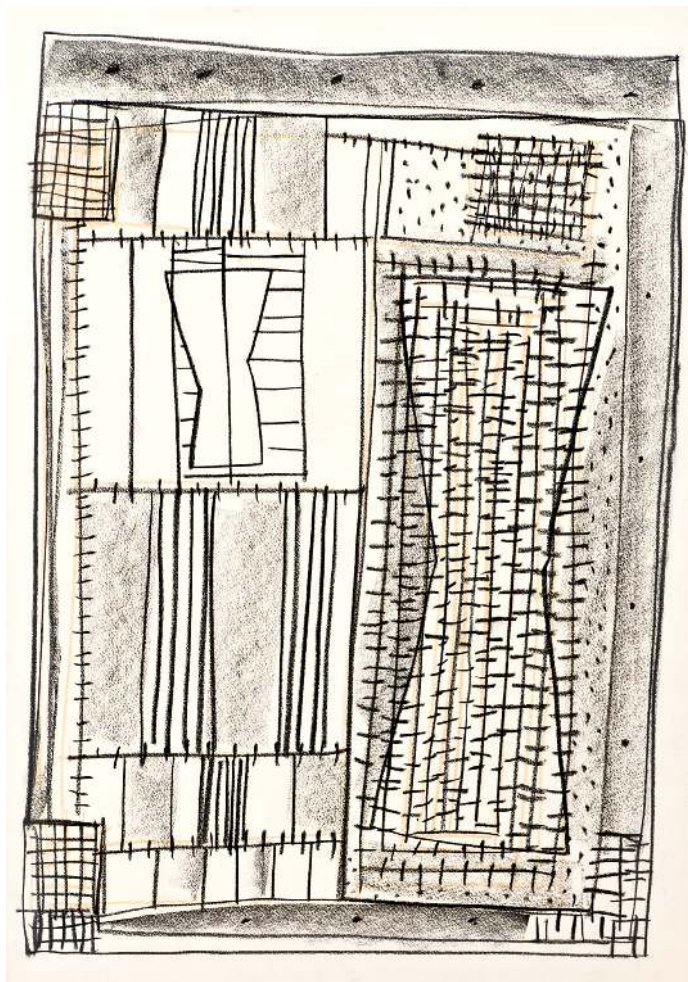


Untitled

2006

Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 76 cm

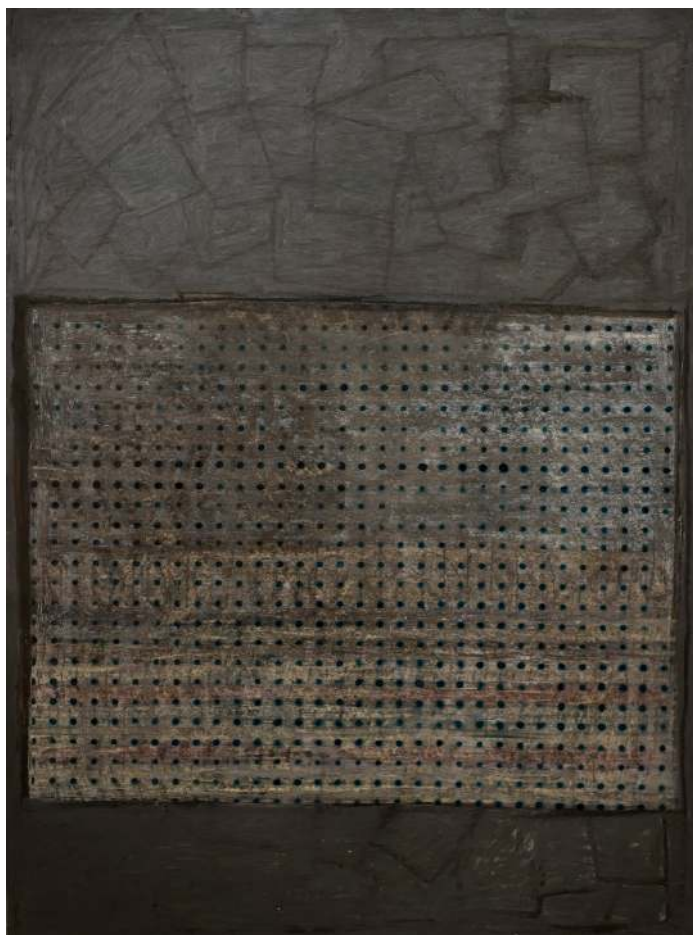


Untitled

2006

Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

56 x 82 cm



Untitled

2005

Pastel and Conté Crayon on hand-made paper

120 x 90 cm

MATT RUGG

SILENT NOTATION

Images © Matt Rugg
Text © Phyllida Barlow

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Detail

Anatomy I

1999 - 2002

Galvanised Wire

250 x 106 cm

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