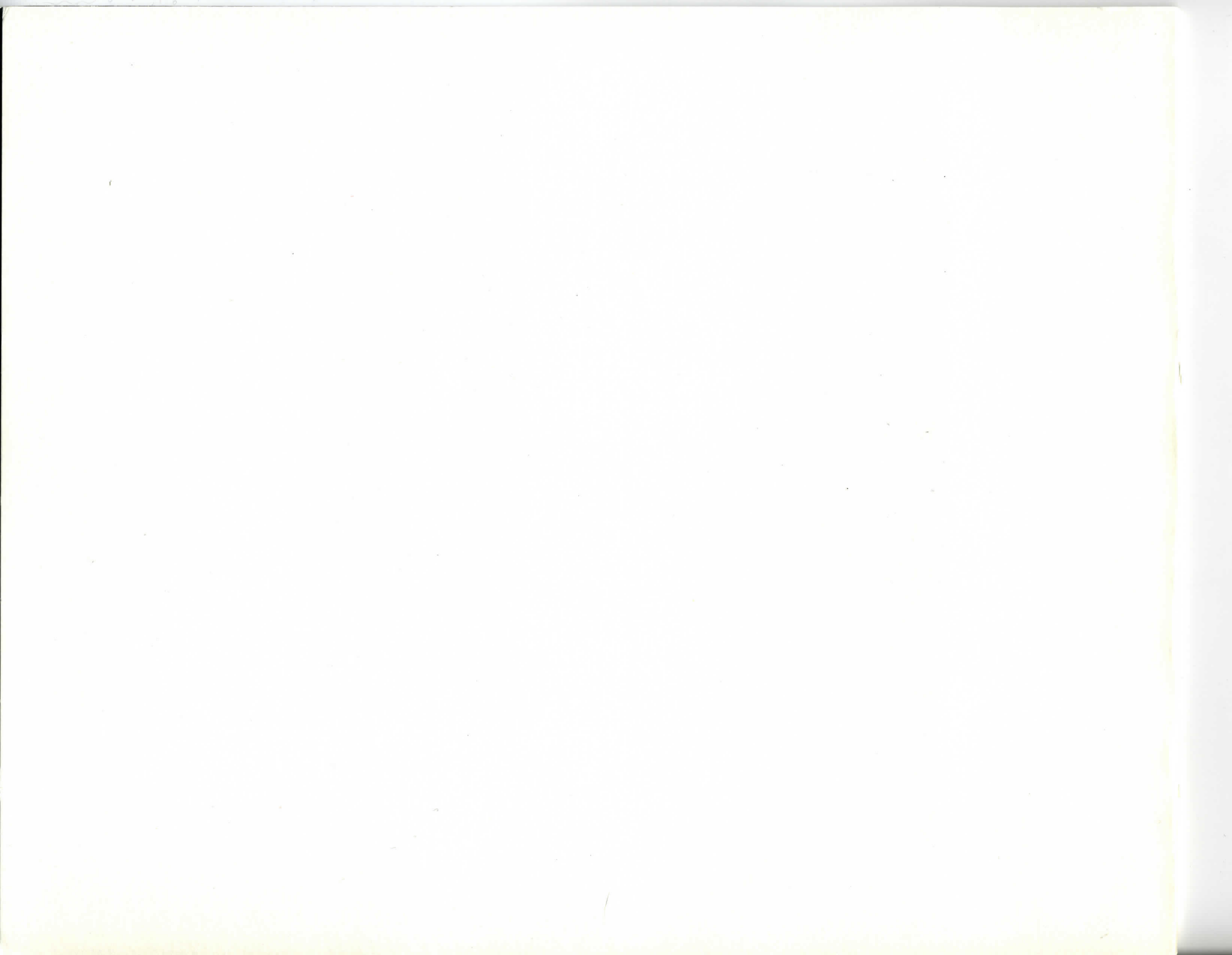




CHARLOTTE
WERNER



CHARLOTTE WERNER

Recent Drawings

Gallery 1.1.1.
School of Art
University of Manitoba

October 5 - October 27, 1982

Cover: Detail from *Purlieu 6*, 1982



Purlieu 6, 1982

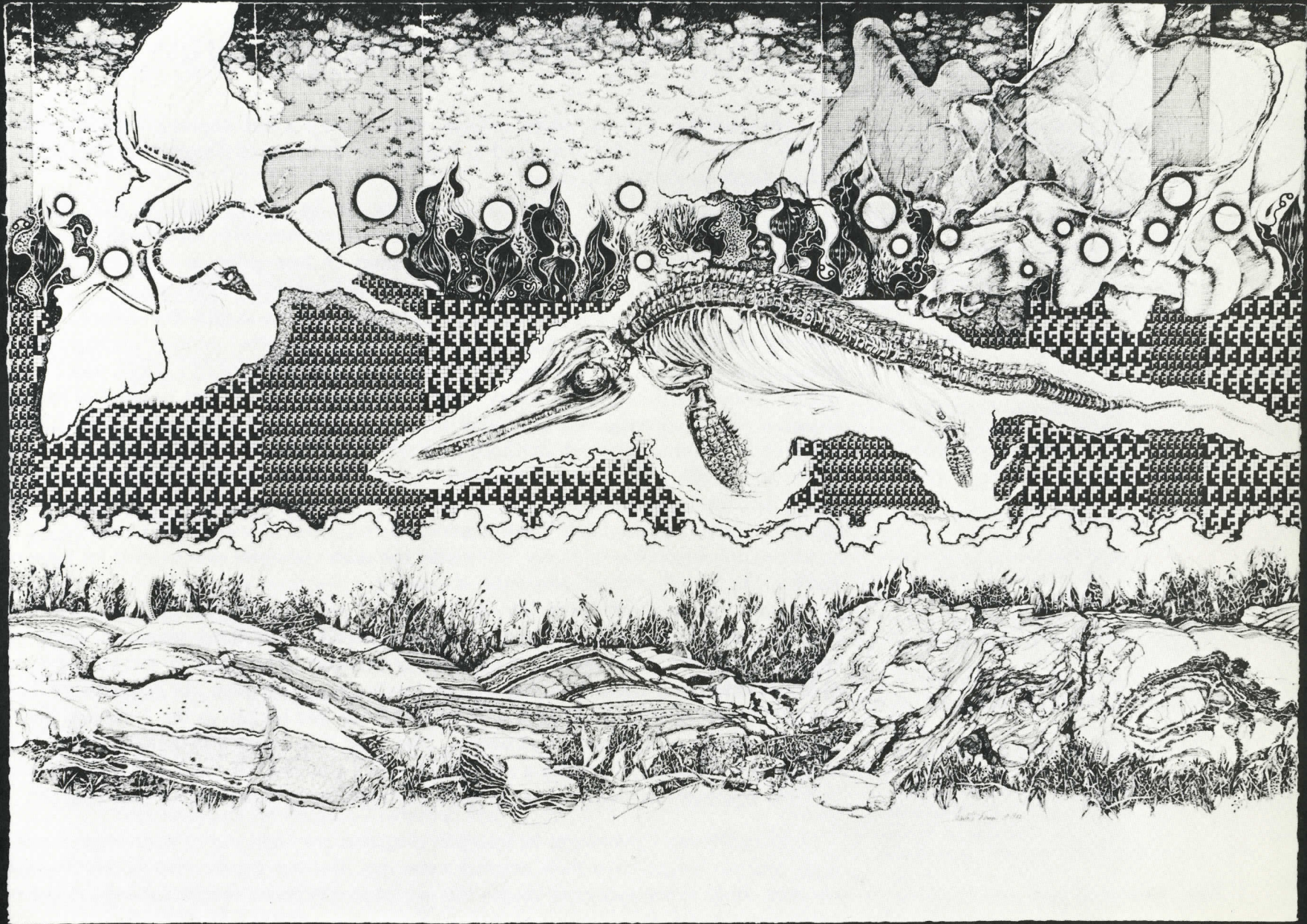
Charlotte Werner—Recent Drawings

Always black lines on white surfaces—this is one's initial impression of Charlotte Werner's work—controlled lines used to create a wide variety of disparate images drawn with meticulous attention to detail.

Werner is educated in both the visual arts and in science with an M.A. in the Psychology of Perception, as well as an M.A. in Fine Arts. She literally draws upon material from her understanding of the physiology of perception as well as from the traditions of world art for images to fuse into new and personal statements.

The vocabulary that she derives from the imaging systems used in the sciences varies from the microscopic to the macroscopic in scale: single-celled animals photographed through the microscope; cross sections of minerals; the structure of crystals; electronic circuits; computer print-outs of binary number sequences; fossils; and patterns of neural synapses. She compresses these images into intricate patterns that also include aerial views of land formations and architectural fragments. Many of these images are drawn from photographs which Werner has either taken herself or found in books, but some, particularly the trees, are drawn directly from life. It is interesting to note that when her source material is a two-dimensional graphic representation of scientific information such as a diagram of transistor circuitry, the marks she draws become simple units for pattern making. On the other hand, when she is drawing a tree from life or a landscape from a photograph her marks become very personal and sensitive. In the latter situation the conventions of European drawing prevail: lines overlap, describing planes receding in space; objects located lower on the page are understood to be closer to the viewer than objects located in a higher position, etc. A conflict arises between the conventions that pertain in two-dimensional pattern making and those that pertain in the European traditions for representing space in drawings. She uses this conflict inventively, selecting aspects of both conventions like a poet might select grammatical constructions from two different languages to create a unique syntax appropriate for carrying her meaning.

All of Werner's references to scientific diagrams are lifted out of their original contexts, and no longer have their original meanings. But the significance of the original contexts clings to the extracted images like a halo or marginal thought, adding rich cross associations to the drawings.



Visitation, 1982

Apart from the ambiguities created by the juxtaposition of such diverse images, there are also ambiguities and tensions related to the individual images themselves. When examined closely, and isolated from the larger context of the drawing, these passages retain their coherence. But when seen as part of the whole drawing, out of their usual contexts, their meanings shift and fade. We are forced to re-examine them, as they acquire new associations from their new contexts. The expected three-dimensional sensation of a cathedral nave is flattened out by the two-dimensional map-like structure upon which it is superimposed. The skeletal image of a leaf-bare tree is surrounded by a geometrically pure circle, but it breaks through this to blend with another ambiguous form which flows through and out beyond the drawing. Thus the eye communicates a familiar image to the brain—and then another familiar image, and another—but taken together they are unfamiliar and disquieting.

Werner makes her choices of source material and plots their configuration very slowly, over long periods of time. Her drawings are always created by an additive process. Once a line is drawn, it may be emphasized or hidden by adding more lines, but it has been accepted. She will not remove it. She spends many hours simply sitting in front of the drawings, imagining additions; rejecting the imagined additions, before actual ink marks are put on the paper. By this means, living through the drawing process, she finds that she eventually arrives at a final structure. Sometimes this structure involves a grid of patterned units; other drawings are organized like a map or aerial view of terrain. In two recent drawings, completed after a trip to England, she found that their overriding structure was exactly like a map of the English countryside. It seems that weeks of touring England by car had made a deep impression.

But always Werner's interest is in shapes—the shapes of the individual elements which make up her drawings, as well as the shapes created by the overall structure of the drawings. These are the white spaces formed sometimes by Werner's own sinuous or geometric lines, and sometimes by the arrangements of the dark elements which invite our eyes to create our own white shapes.

There is another quality of her drawings that is as consistent as her use of grid and map structures; the feeling of large, expansive, open space. The scattering of dark units of pattern over a white ground are like the scattered elements in a prairie landscape. The use of the grid and map structures also implies that we are looking at just a small section of a much larger pattern/landscape. Born and raised in Saskatchewan, she chooses to live and work on the great prairie. It is significant that she also chooses to engage the vastness of the



Stroud Map, 1982

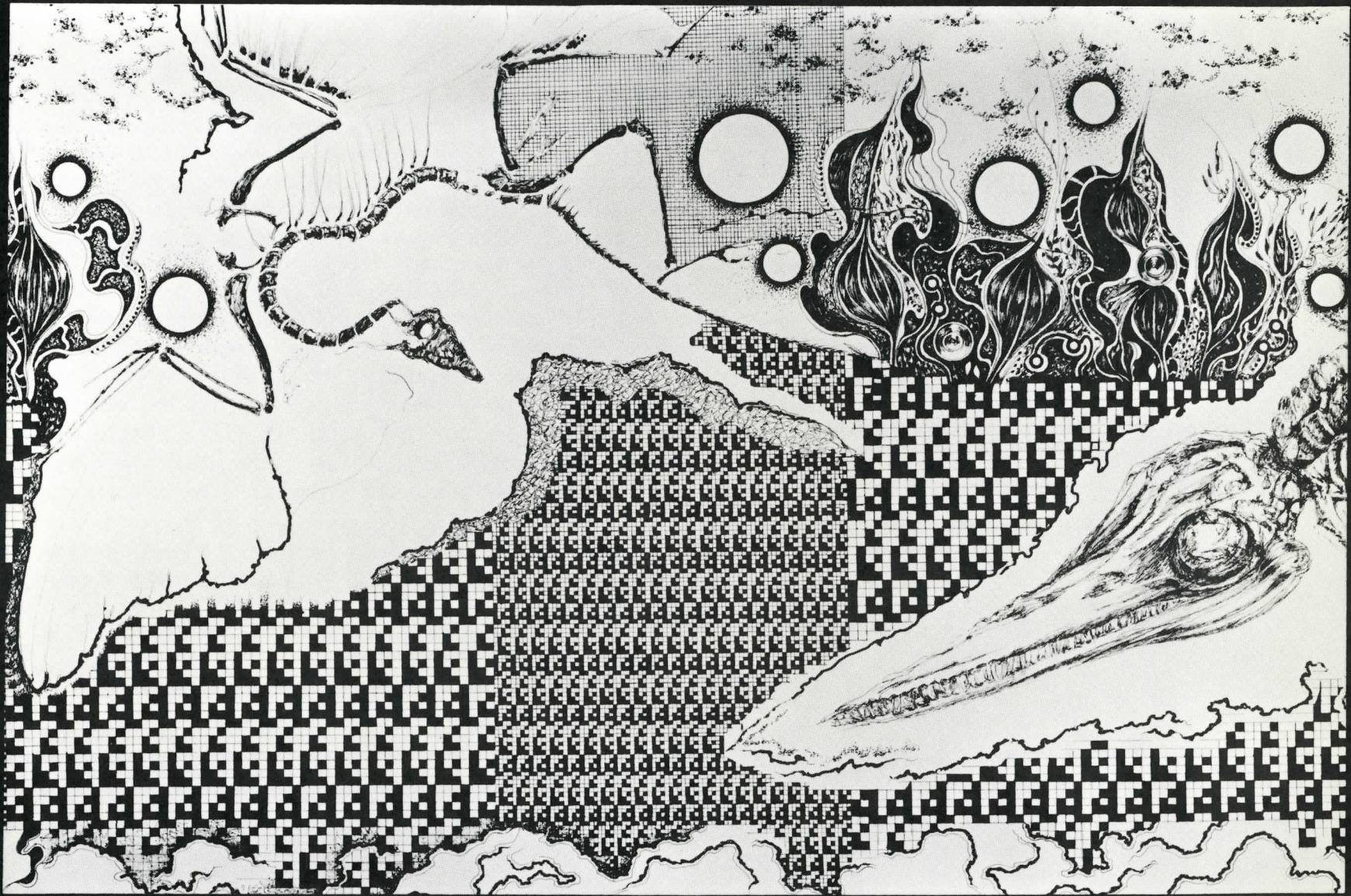
prairie landscape in her drawings without giving up any of the other subjects that interest her. This choice is consistent with her vision of the purposes of art. At the core Werner is a humanist who sees art as continuous with literature, music, and the sciences, inseparable from the fabric of culture.

Werner's is an ambitious programme that requires a very effective conceptual tool to give form to the complexities that struggle for attention in her work. Through using strict rules of order, she has come to focus on the most basic visual structuring principle of all: the tensions created between figure and ground, between the mark and its non-mark surround. It is here that visual elements are at work that are common to both the conventions of two-dimensional pattern formation and the "Western" conventions for symbolizing space in drawings. The intelligent use of figure/ground articulation permits Werner to address herself directly to reshaping the perceptual process through drawing. Perception is an active, creative process, by necessity selective. Perception cannot take place outside the framework of a structured language, in this case, the language of vision. That language too is selective and influences the content of the information perceived and inevitably its meaning.

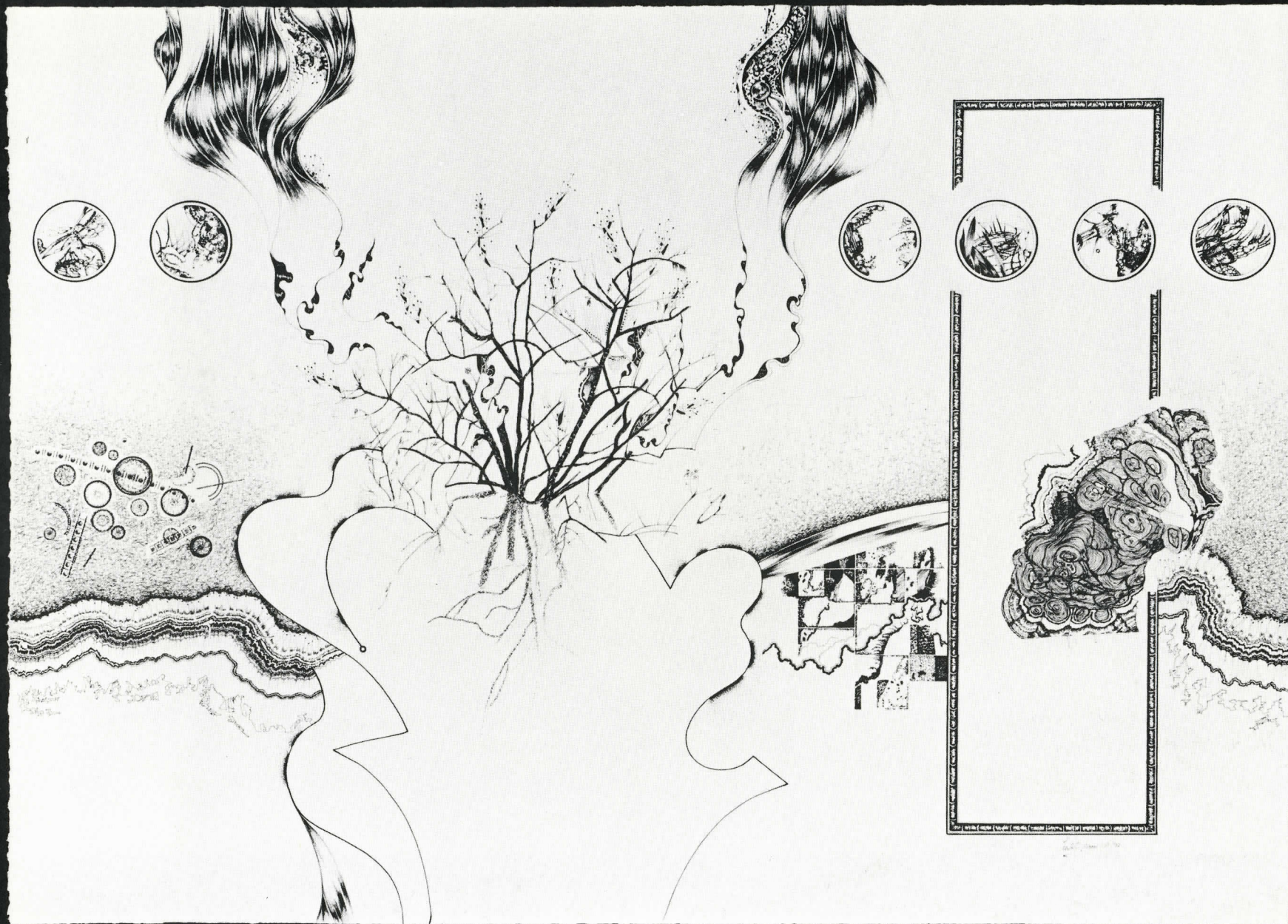
Visual perceptual language is able to form syntheses, compressions of meanings unique to the eye/brain system, meanings that cannot be reduced to the spoken or written word.

In this language of the thinking eye, a sinuous waving line is a neural dendrite, is moving water, blowing hair, is striated muscle tissue, is a hand-written urgent message from Charlotte Werner.

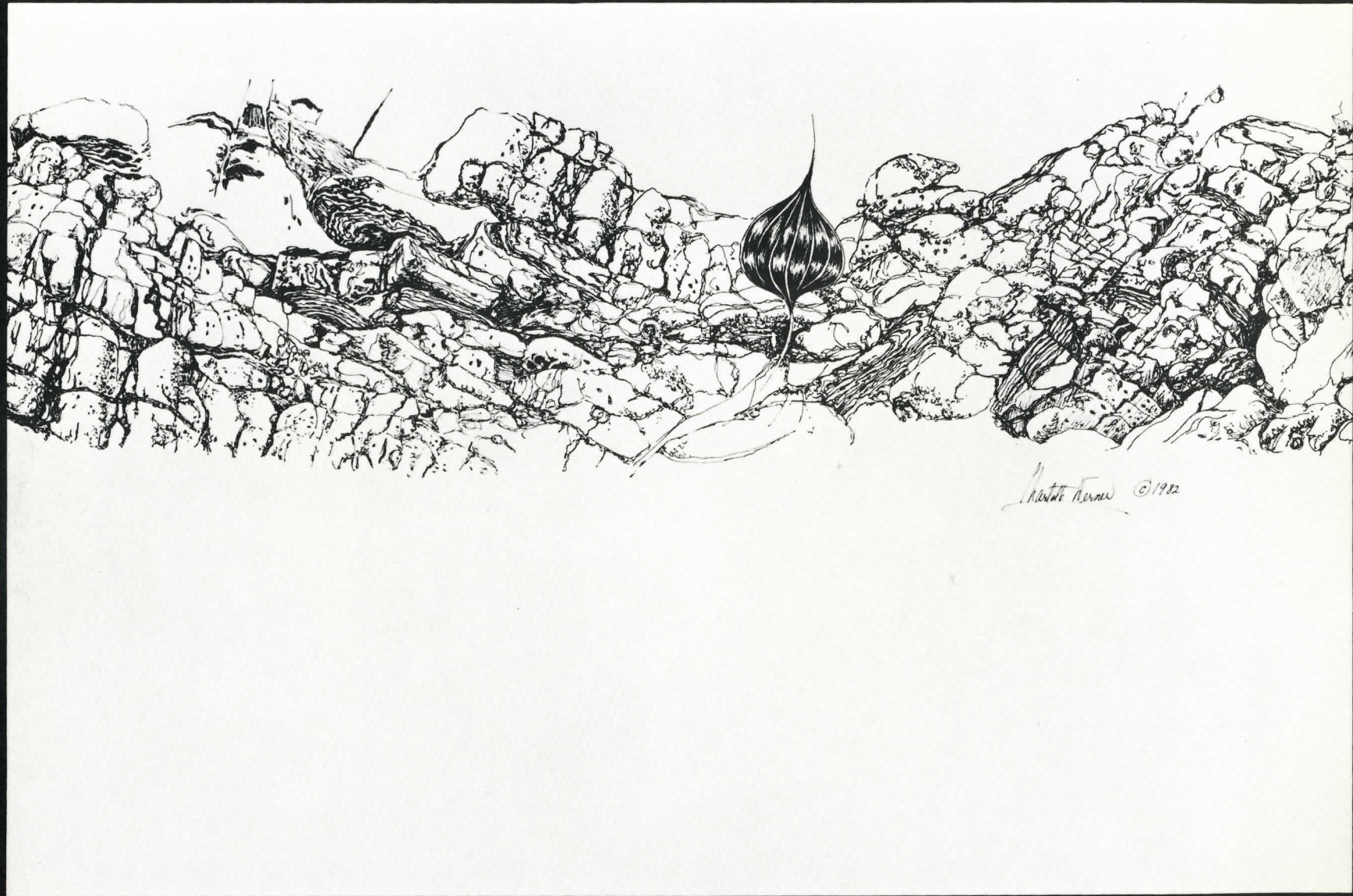
K. J. Butler,
in collaboration with Martin Reed
June 27, 1982



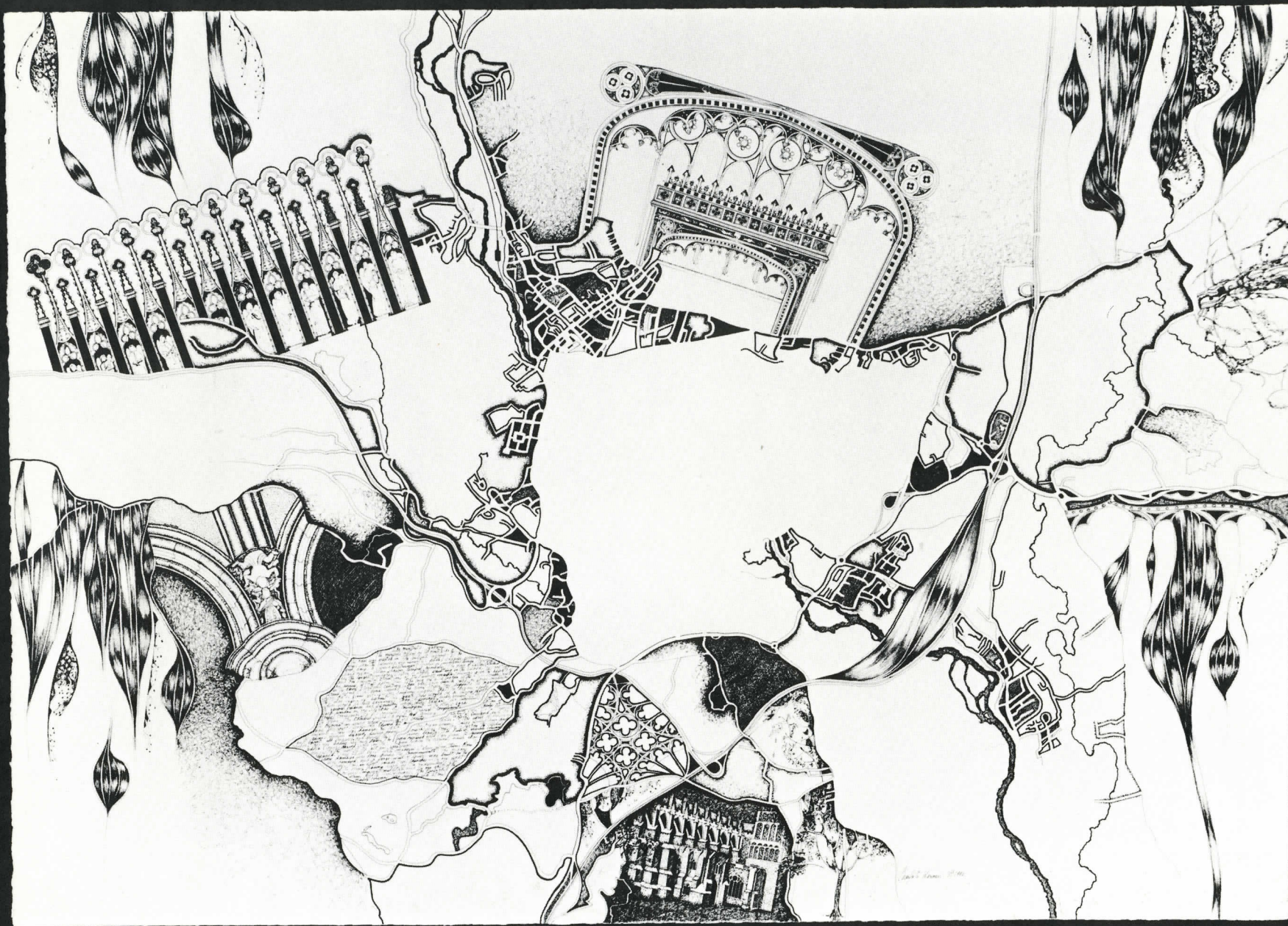
Detail from *Visitation*, 1982



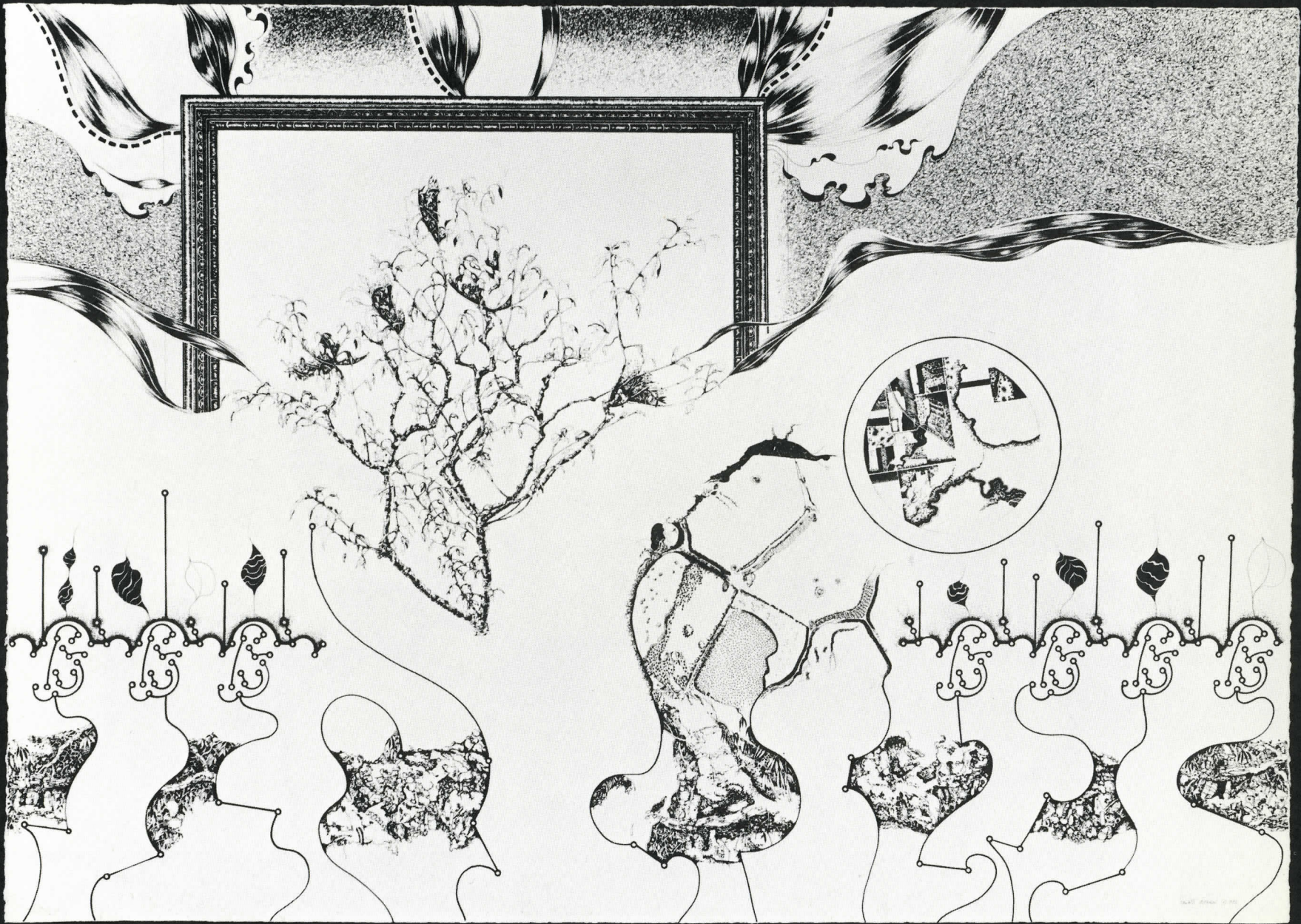
Purlieu 7, 1982



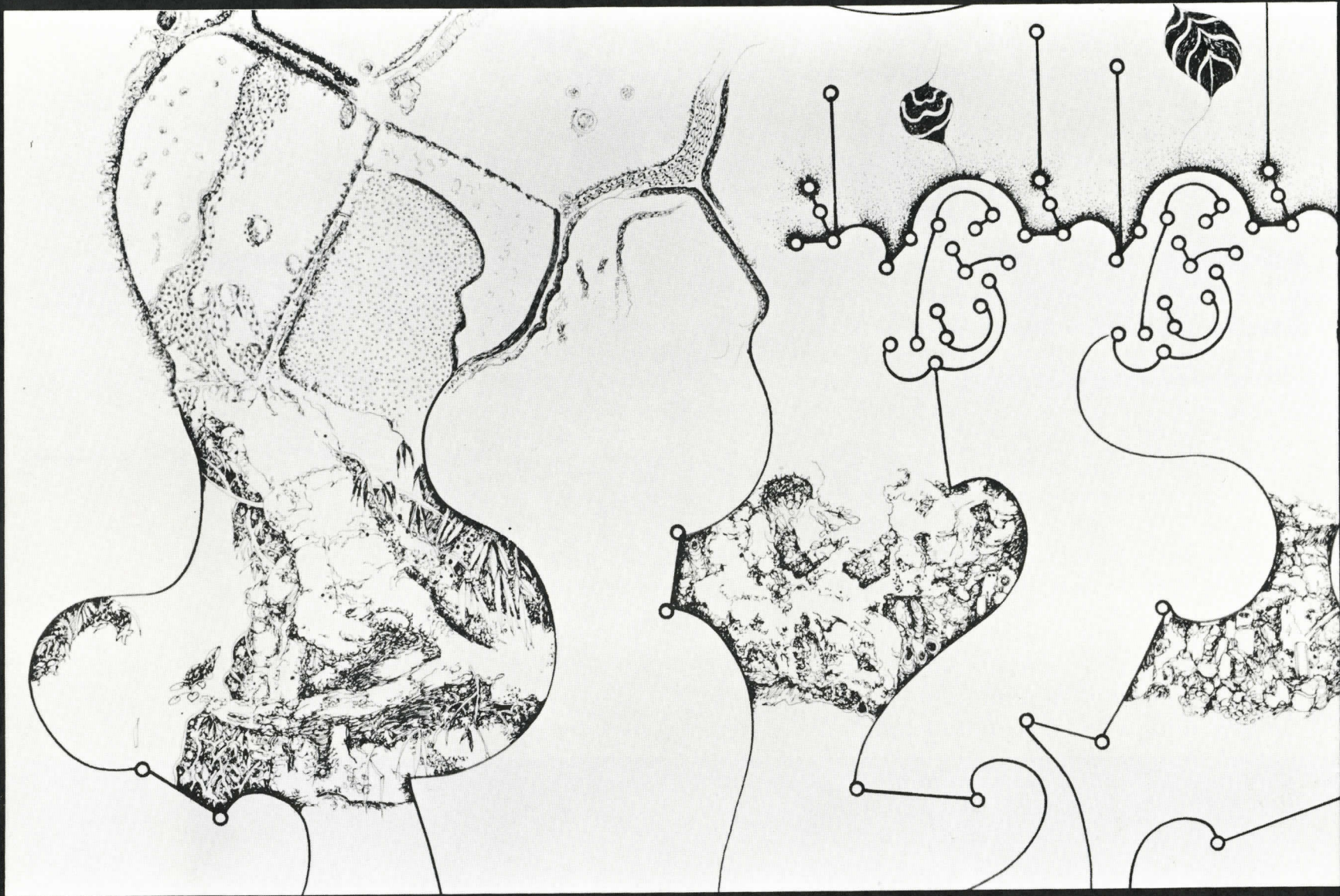
Detail from *Purlieu 6*, 1982



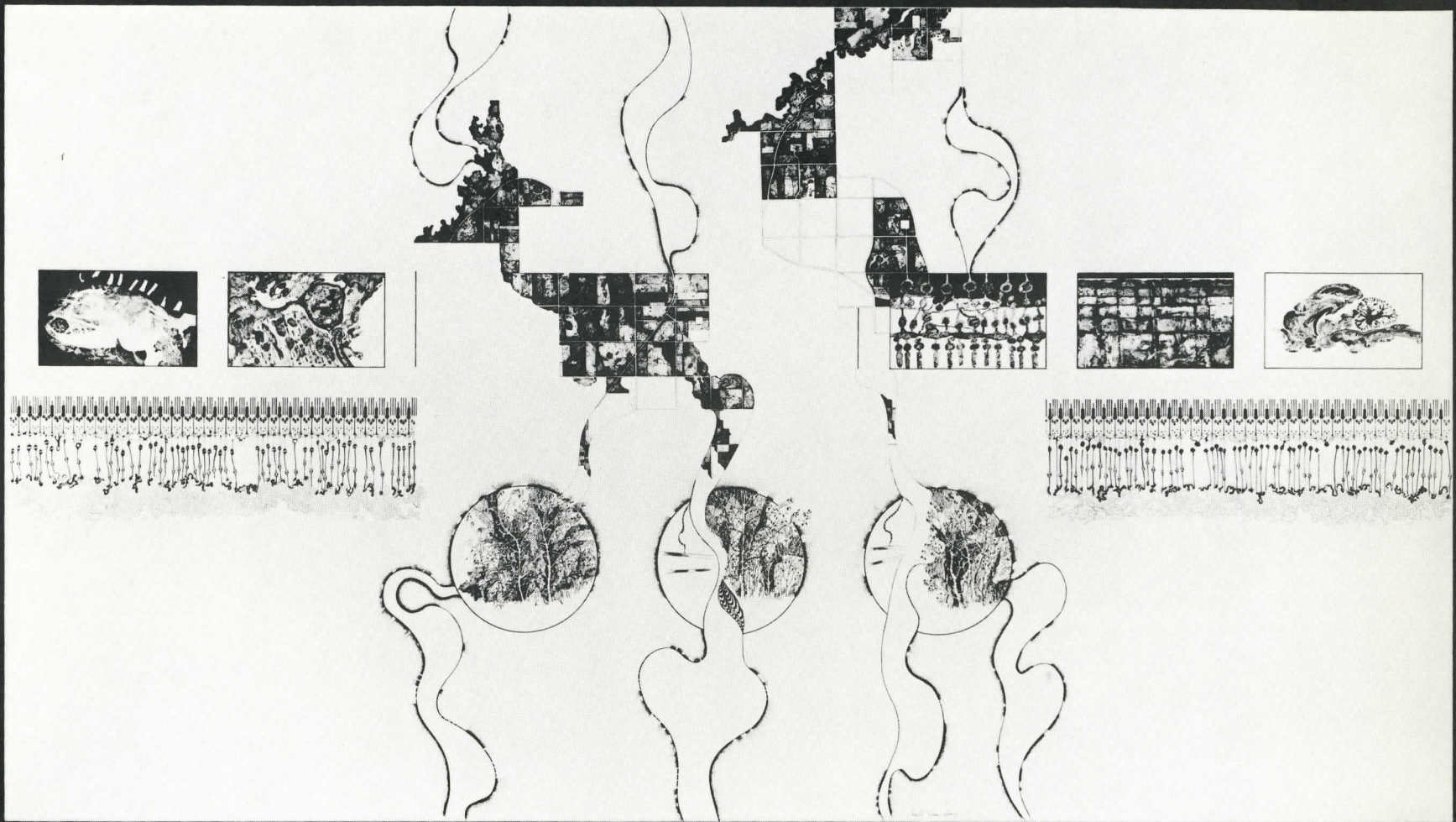
The Minstrels' Gallery—Exeter, 1982



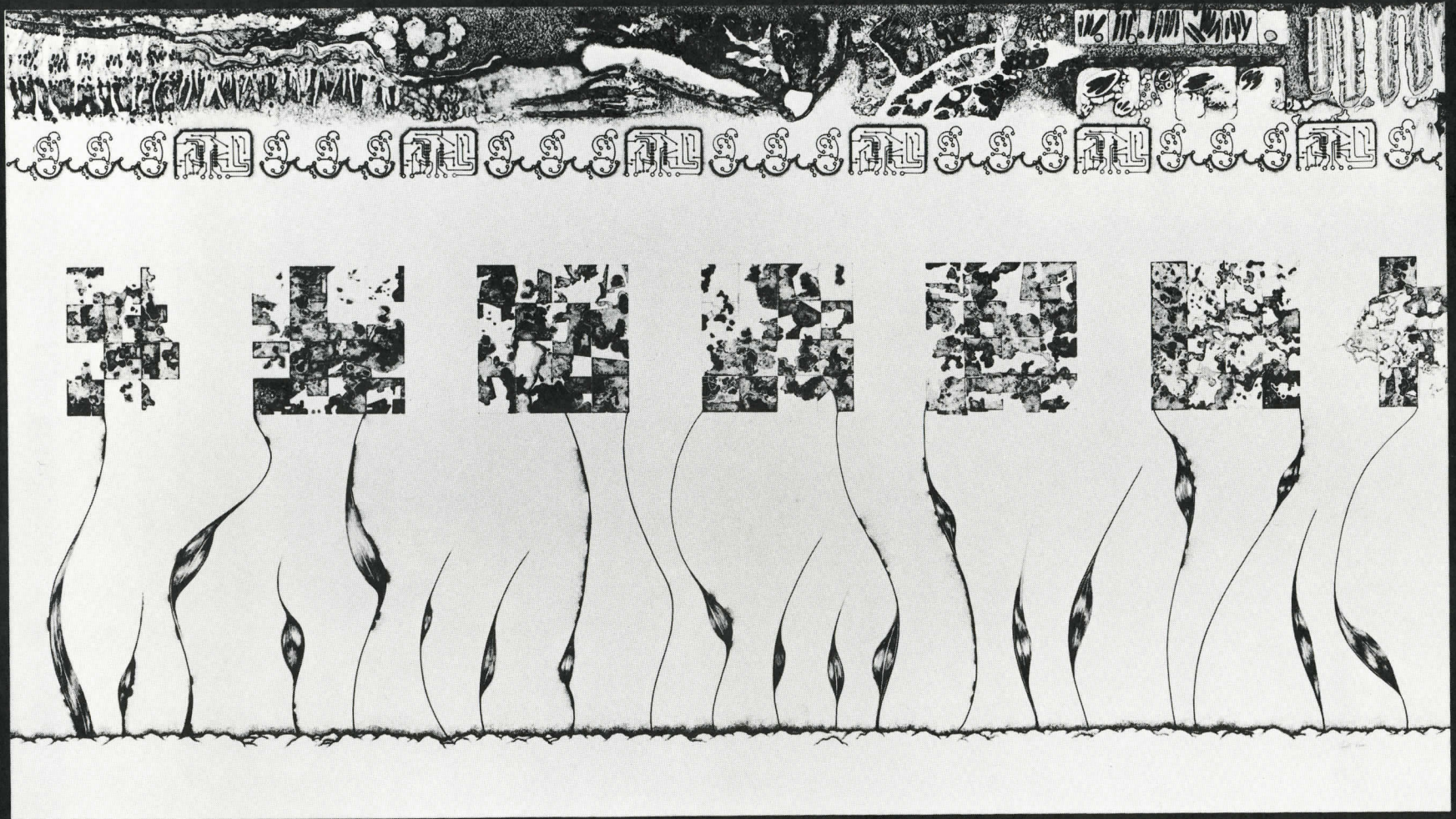
Purlieu 8, 1982



Detail from *Purlieu 8*, 1982



Environs, 1980-82



Environs 2, 1980-82



Works In The Exhibition

1. *ENVIRONS*, 1980-82
Ink and acrylic lacquer on aluminum
4' x 7'
(Collection: the Artist)
2. *ENVIRONS 2*, 1980-82
Ink and acrylic lacquer on aluminum
4' x 7'
(Collection: the Artist)
3. *VISITATION*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Private Collection)
4. *STROUD MAP*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)
5. *THE MINSTRELS' GALLERY—EXETER*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)
6. *PURLIEU 6*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)
7. *PURLIEU 7*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)
8. *PURLIEU 8*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)
- * 9. *STROUD MAP 2*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)
- *10. *LUNAR ECLIPSE*, 1982
Ink on paper
76 cm x 106 cm (30" x 42")
(Collection: the Artist)

*(these works are not shown in catalogue)
Dimensions given are approximate, height preceding width.

Charlotte Werner

Born: 1944, Canora, Saskatchewan

EDUCATION

1972-73: *M.A. Degree in Art, 1973*
University of North Dakota, Grand Forks

1972 Summer: Advanced course work in studio art
University of Minnesota, Minneapolis

1968-69: *M.A. Degree in Social Sciences, 1969*
(Psychology, emphasis on Perception)
North Dakota State University, Fargo

1967-68: Undergraduate major in Social Sciences
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

1961-65: *B.F.A. Degree in Art, 1965*
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

1974 to present: Assistant Professor, School of Art
(tenured since 1979)
University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Man.

1974: Instructor, Department of Art
(faculty replacement)
Moorhead State University, Moorhead, Minn.

1969-73: Instructor of Art
North Dakota State University, Fargo, N.D.

1965-66: Art Teacher
J. B. Mitchell Junior High School, Winnipeg

1963-65: Art Teacher (Saturdays), Children's
Supplementary Art Program, Transcona, Man.

AWARDS, GRANTS

1968: *Award for proficiency in scholarship,*
University of Arkansas

1968-69: *Board of Higher Education Scholarship,*
North Dakota State University

1973: *Top American entry—10th Manisphere International Jury*
Show, Moorhead, Minn./Winnipeg, Man.

1978: *Project Grant, Manitoba Arts Council*

1979: *Grant in Aid of Research, University of Manitoba*

1980: *Project Grant, Manitoba Arts Council*

1981-82: *Sabbatical Leave Research Grant,*
University of Manitoba

1981-82: *Major Arts Grant, Manitoba Arts Council*

ART EXHIBITIONS

1971: *12th Red River Annual, Moorhead, Minnesota*
8th Manisphere International Jury Show,
Moorhead, Minn./Winnipeg, Man.

1972: *1972 National Graphics Competition and Exhibition,*
Vermillion, S.D.
The Boston Printmakers 24th Annual Exhibition,
Waltham, Mass.
13th Red River Annual, Moorhead, Minn.
B & L Gallery Exhibition, Fargo, N.D.
9th Manisphere International Jury Show,
Moorhead, Minn./Winnipeg, Man.
Solo exhibition, North Dakota State University,
Fargo, N.D.
Group show, University Art Gallery, Grand Forks
Solo exhibition, Foyer Gallery, Red River Art Center,
Moorhead, Minn.

1973: *Images 73, Annual Print & Drawing Exhibition,*
Anoka-Ramsey, Minn.
10th Manisphere International Jury Show,
Moorhead, Minn./Winnipeg, Man.
*Award for top American entry
Solo M.A. Thesis show, University Art Gallery,
Grand Forks, N.D.
1st New Hampshire International Graphics Annual,
Nashua, N.H.

- 1974: *Solo exhibition*, Raugust Art Gallery, Jamestown, N.D.
Manisphere Group of Artists Four-Artist Invitational,
Winnipeg
Ball State 20th Annual Drawing and Small Sculpture Show,
Muncie, Indiana
11th Manisphere International Jury Show,
Moorhead, Minn./Winnipeg, Man.
Group show, Southern Alberta College of Art,
Calgary, Alberta
Faculty Show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
Exhibition of Contemporary Canadian Graphics,
Winnipeg Art Gallery
The Drawn Line, (contemporary Canadian drawings),
Winnipeg Art Gallery
- 1975: *Hadassah 9th Annual Exhibition and Auction of Canadian
Contemporary Art*, Winnipeg Convention Center
Group show, Link Gallery, Winnipeg
Solo exhibition, "Information Flow Systems,"
Plug-In Gallery, Winnipeg
Faculty show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
C.A.R. Exhibition & Sale of Miniatures, Plug-In Gallery,
Winnipeg
- 1976: *University of Manitoba School of Art Faculty Show—
25 Years*, Winnipeg Art Gallery
Spectrum Canada, National Jury Show (Royal Canadian
Academy of Arts), Exhibited at the Olympics, Montreal
Faculty Show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1977: *C.A.R. Exhibition and Sale of Miniatures*, Fleet Gallery,
Winnipeg
Children's House Exhibition & Auction, Winnipeg
Manitoba Holiday Festival of the Arts (*Group Show*),
Neepawa, Manitoba
Faculty Show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1978: *CARFAC Exhibition and Sale of Miniatures*,
Winnipeg Art Gallery
Faculty Show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
Five-Artist Show, Damkjar-Burton Gallery, Toronto

- 1979: *CARFAC Exhibition and Sale of Miniatures*, Archives Bldg.,
Winnipeg
Faculty Show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1980: *CARFAC Exhibition and Sale of Miniatures*,
Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain, Winnipeg
Faculty Show, Gallery 1.1.1., University of Manitoba,
Winnipeg
- 1981: *CARFAC Exhibition and Sale of Miniatures*,
Winnipeg Art Gallery

PUBLISHED WORK

- 1969: *"Anxiety, Field Dependence and Perceptual Preferences,"*
paper presented at the Rocky Mountain Psychological Asso-
ciation Conference, Albuquerque, N.M.
- 1974: Drawing on cover of *The River is Always Straight Ahead—
Poems by Grayce Ray*.
Dacotah Territory Press, Minn.
- 1975: Drawing for brochure and poster, Manisphere Jury Art
Show, Winnipeg
- 1976: *Dacotah Territory 12*, Cover photograph by
Dale Amundson and Charlotte Werner, Dacotah Territory
Press, Minn.

OTHER EXPERIENCE

- 1972-74: Member, Board of Directors
Chairperson, Policy Committee (1973-74),
Red River Art Center, Moorhead, Minn.
- 1973: Organized printmaking demonstrations and conducted
intaglio section, Red River Art Center, Moorhead, Minn.
- 1975-76: Member, Board of Representatives
University of Manitoba Faculty Association
- 1979: Chairperson, CARFAC committee to prepare brief submitted
to Cultural Policy Review Committee of the government of
Manitoba
- 1981: Interviewed on "People Matter More" show, Channel 13
T.V., Winnipeg, Man.

Catalogue designed by the artist

Photographed by R. B. Smythe

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Special thanks go to R. B. Smythe for the photography, and to K. J. (Jack) Butler and Martin Reed for their contributions to the catalogue. Thanks also to Charlotte Werner for the design of the catalogue, extra efforts in its production, and, of course, for the drawings.

Dale Amundson,
Director of Exhibitions

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