

GUILD GALLERY

UNSTILL WORLD

April 20 – May 27, 2023



Tara Geer, *Island*, 2023, charcoal on paper. Courtesy Guild Gallery.



Nagakura Kenichi, *Twist*, madake, bamboo. Courtesy TAI Modern.

Guild Gallery is pleased to present *Unstill World*, an exhibition spotlighting new and recent drawings by New York-based artist Tara Geer in conversation with sculptural pieces by four Japanese fiber artists, including Nagakura Kenichi, Monden Yuichi, Yufu Shohaku, and Tanabe Chikuunsai IV. The interplay of line and form between these artists' works from Geer's unraveling drawings to the twisting and binding linework present in the sculptural fiber works reveal a power not typically associated with these practices. These artists turn to simple, ubiquitous materials from charcoal to bamboo to create something beautiful that brims with new life, in turn creating a new dialogue around these often underrecognized mediums. As E. B. White wrote, "Before the seed there comes the thought of bloom."

Foregrounding the exhibition are a series of large-scale charcoal drawings by Geer, whose works can be found in numerous museum collections across the country, including the Morgan Library & Museum, the Parrish Museum, and the William Louis Dreyfus Foundation, among others. A prolific artist, Geer has worked ceaselessly for the past 25 years in her West Harlem studio creating unspooling monochromatic abstractions that have a sculptural quality to them. For Geer, drawing is not a means to an end, but rather it's her way of thinking and feeling through the world. As Geer states: "Drawings carry motion. They have a quality of being in the middle of doing. Even when finished and framed, drawings balance within the process of becoming. Alive enough not to be done. Delicate puffs of air and gale force winds rising." After graduating with an MFA from Columbia University, where she has been teaching art for the past decade, Geer's practice has evolved from one of observation and representation to one that is purely intuitive. Like a jazz pianist who becomes entranced by the music, Geer becomes fully immersed in her drawing process, attempting to catch a transient feeling that moves from the artist's arm and brush, through the paper, and back into the world.

Geer's idea for the work in this show emerged upon her return to New York City after the pandemic when she encountered what she calls a strange blooming—something that grows from nothing, from sheer will. This unsettling humming through the city captivated Geer, who began trying to reflect these feelings onto her drawings. As Geer states, “Drawing teaches me to look at these things that don't make sense, to linger on those things that I don't have words for...to wait to just feel something before I jump to recognize it.” The strange blooming started at the bottom of the page, growing from that no ground. Then, by spring, they started lifting up from the bottom of the page, unfurling like milkweed pods or something propagating in the air. Geer's works in this exhibition challenge our preconceived notions of the recognizable and what it means to really look at something. Following Geer's exhibition at Guild Gallery, she will have a solo exhibition at Duck Creek Art Center in East Hampton this summer.

Like Geer, who creates three-dimensional drawings using charcoal and pencil on paper, the Japanese fiber artists in this exhibition use often discarded or dead natural materials, consisting primarily of bamboo, to make intricate works that honor an ancient craft that has been practiced for thousands of years. Using a range of bamboo from tiger to madake and shinodake, these artists' work demonstrates the expressive qualities of this unique and demanding material of which mastery is a lifelong process. When viewed together, Geer and these artists' works are harbingers of spring, reminding us of the perseverance and awe of nature's ever-changing life cycle.

This exhibition is presented in collaboration with TAI Modern gallery.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Tara Geer (b. 1970, Boston, Massachusetts) is a New York-based artist whose primary medium is drawing. For Geer, drawing is not an intermediary process, but rather the seed of all making—raw beginning. Influenced by disparate artistic styles from traditional Chinese landscape painting and early Japanese calligraphy to Mexican retablos, Geer is interested in a kind of seeing—not of a world of known, knowable, sure things—but of a world brimming with information beyond her ability to hold down. Using mostly charcoal, pencil, and eraser on paper, Geer creates monumental abstract drawings that feel as though they are in a constant state of change.

Geer holds a BA and MFA from Columbia University where she had a full teaching fellowship and graduated Magna Cum Laude. Geer's works are held in several major public collections, including the Morgan Library & Museum, the Parrish Museum, and the William Louis Dreyfus Foundation, among others. Her work with the 6-woman activist collective, Victory Garden, is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The New York Historical Society, The Beinecke Library at Yale University, and The Canadian Museum. She's had solo shows in Los

Angeles and in New York, and exhibited at Jason McCoy, Tibor de Nagy, and Glenn Horowitz Gallery, among other galleries. Geer's work is featured in two books: "Carrying Silence: The Drawings of Tara Geer" and "New York Studio Conversations." In addition to being an artist, Geer has been teaching art for the past three decades. She currently teaches in the Art and Art Education program at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she has been on staff since 2012.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Guild Gallery, founded by Robin Standefer and Stephen Alesch, and designed by Roman and Williams, is a natural extension of Roman and Williams Guild. The gallery celebrates the millennia-long legacy of the decorative arts through exhibitions of contemporary masters of their respective media. With a focus on natural material such as clay, wood, and stone, Guild Gallery celebrates artists and valuing utility in exquisite craftsmanship and form. Guild Gallery provides a platform to expertly showcase ideas and artists, creating a new dialogue between ancient and modern, fine art and design.

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