

Burlington's SEVEN DAYS

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REVIEW: Bill Ramage: Drawings

FlynnDog Gallery, 208 Flynn Avenue Burlington, Vermont

<http://www.flynnDog.net/>

January 9 – February 28 2009

by Marc Awodey

In his solo exhibition at Burlington's FlynnDog Gallery Bill Ramage challenged



assumptions about drawing to include monumental works up to forty feet long.

He also skillfully integrated a broad range of media including oil sticks, graphite, colored pencil, and charcoal. His collection of several monumental installations was perfectly suited to the copious wall space of the FlynnDog. The Castleton State College professor's show, simply entitled "Drawings," married esoteric conceptual roots with his proven technical virtuosity. Ramage's nearly incomprehensible three page artist's statement, however, inadvertently suggested that the artist is as much a mystic as a brilliant technician. His 8 foot tall by 40 feet long *The Centripetal Gates of Kiev* was a remarkable abstract panorama of overlapping grids, crosses, and beautifully defined and colored circles. To Ramage centripetal "means to move or tend to move toward a center" which is indeed a simplified explanation of the concept of centripetal force in Newtonian physics. But how that force relates to the actual massive drawing is far from obvious. Like William Blake, Ramage's writings surely make perfect sense to himself, but don't need to be wholly understood by others in order to see the vitality of his visual art.

The David Bohm Quintet - five easy Holomovements was a group of five 84 x 84 inch mixed media drawings running along another forty foot expanse of gallery wall. They have rich backgrounds dominated by blue lines running



through deep red fields. Perfect white circles, each larger than the picture plane, swept across the five drawings unifying and enlivening them. Spheres containing measured cruciform elements and brightly hued squares containing organic forms were spaced across the entire installation. Ramage's mark making is highly diverse, and the varied pictorial elements of each drawing were executed in subtly varied ways. Ramage's stated concern for curving space in a manner that defies linear perspective is best seen in *The Appolonians, Raphael Giotto Pollack*. The 6 x 18 foot triptych, dated 2002, seemed to superimpose flat floral forms in three diamond oriented squares over a lower hemisphere defined by fine lines and a matrix of small blue crosses.

Ramage may be ultimately concerned with how large scale works effect perception. But whatever his concerns, they are beautifully manifested in a fascinating body of work.

Posted by marc awodey MFA at [9:50 AM](#)