

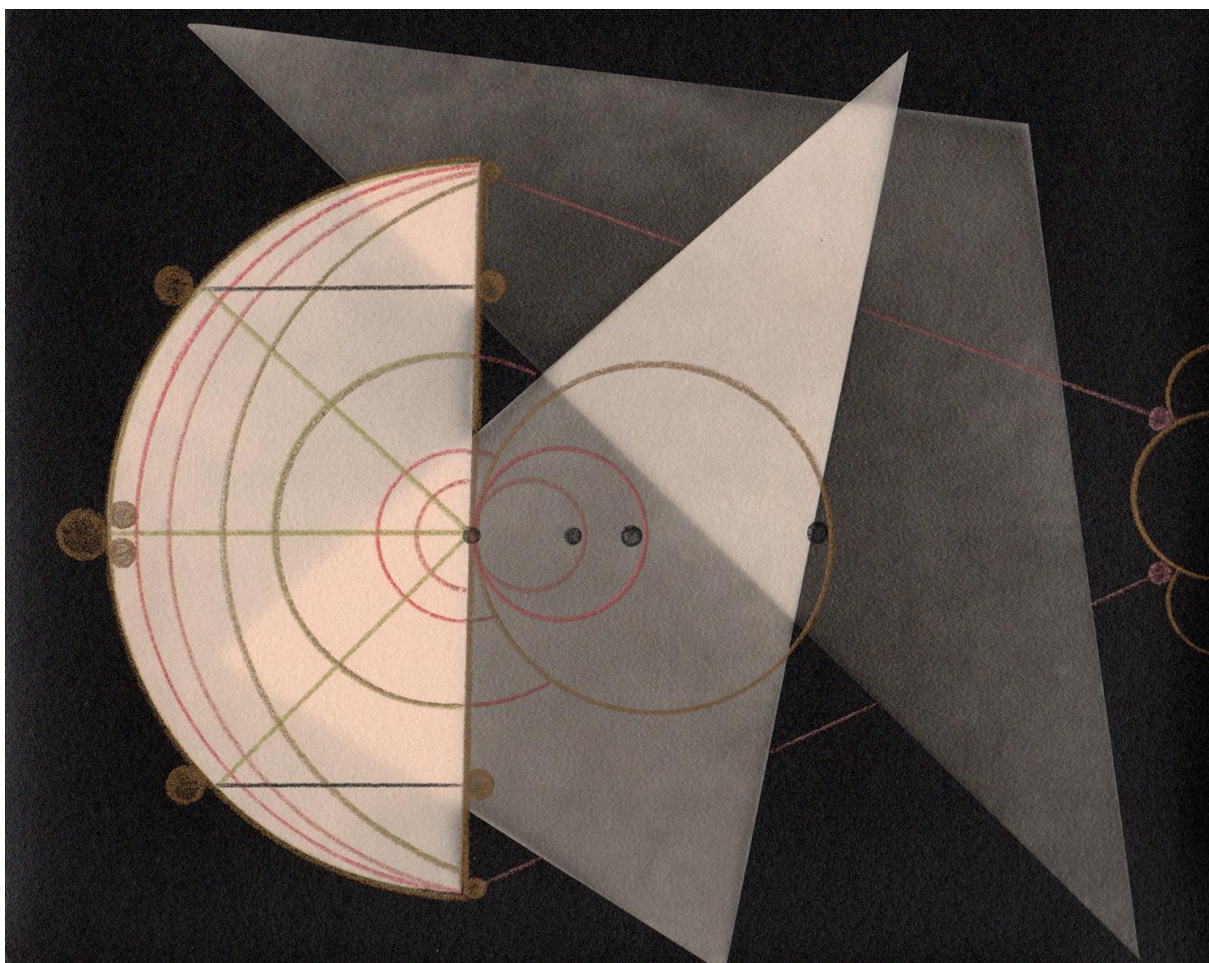
LAURENCE MILLER GALLERY

PATRICIA A. BENDER

*Cosmography*

February 6 - April 30, 2023

Online Exhibition



*Geometry 326, 2021*

Oxidized gelatin silver photogram with colored pencil (unique)

8 x 10 inches

*"There is geometry in the humming of the strings. There is music in the spacing of the spheres." – Pythagoras (569–490 BCE)*

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Patricia A. Bender uses the earliest processes and materials of darkroom photography as the basis for her enigmatic abstractions. The works are made without a camera, and in the tradition of artists using the photo enlarger as a light-based printing press, her non-objective images reside at an intriguing intersection of drawing, printmaking, and photography.

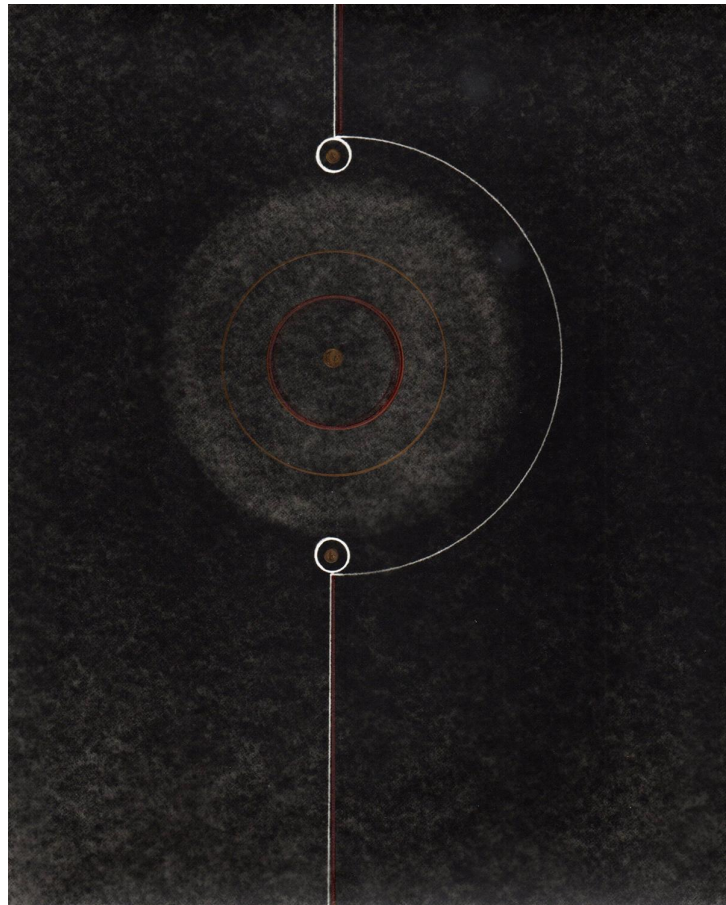


*Geometry 330, 2022*

Oxidized gelatin silver cliché-verre print with colored pencil (unique)

10 x 8 inches

Some of her works use a photogram method, with compositions formed by placing objects directly on the photo paper, which is then exposed to light—akin to monoprinting in printmaking. Many of her most compelling works employ a combination of paper negatives and the lesser known cliché-verre (glass plate) process. In her cliché-verre works, Bender creates drawings on a variety of different papers and uses them as a negative, exposing the drawings onto photo paper through glass sheets. There is an inhate elegance to the way this combines the already sensitive nature of drawing with nearly immaterial component of light.



*Geometry 287, 2020*

Oxidized gelatin silver cliché-verre print with colored pencil (unique)

10 x 8 inches

Photograms, paper negatives, and cliché-verre were all pioneered in the early 19th century by English scientist Henry Fox Talbot. Cliché-verre printing was briefly popularized amongst French graphic artists in the mid-1800s. While its usage didn't prove to be long lasting, for a period it served as an alternative means of printmaking by renowned French artists such as Corot, Delacroix, and Millet. Thus, Bender's practice exists in relation to a distinguished body of work that is specific to a period of time, when advances in the sciences enabled particular artistic developments. It's notable how these pieces visually convey this intersection of art and science, even without a knowledge of the historical specificities.

These works function as drawings and yet, thanks to the processing of the images, they are often a step removed from the hand. One of the appeals of cliché-verre is the atmospheric effects which can be achieved by diffusing the light cast through the drawn lines via glass plates or other semitransparent materials. Bender's work explores the expressive potential of this kind of mediated imagery, where forms and linework frequently bear the evidence of their transference in their softened appearance.

She creates contrast with diffused passages by drawing directly on top of the photo impressions with colored pencil and pastel. The application of color onto her prints evokes the hand-coloring of photographs, specifically the photo-crayotype process which used materials such as wax pastels to embellish black and white photo prints. The way these geometric drawings sit atop the foggier photographic effects resemble calculations diagrammed on a chalkboard, where the fresh chalk markings stand out in bold relief against the cloudy pentimento left from past erasures.

The precisely rendered drawing in her works brings to mind the tool-aided, yet hand-rendered, draftsmanship of cartographers, astronomers, and cosmographers working in former eras. As 21st century works they're an ode to the way that information on the fringes of human understanding was transcribed in past centuries: at once detailed and mysterious, meticulously depicted yet bearing an

intimacy of touch and materiality—drawings which sought to shine light in the darkest corners of our cosmos.

—Jacob Cartwright, 2023



*Geometry 325, 2021*

Oxidized gelatin silver cliché-verre print with colored pencil (unique)

10 x 8 inches