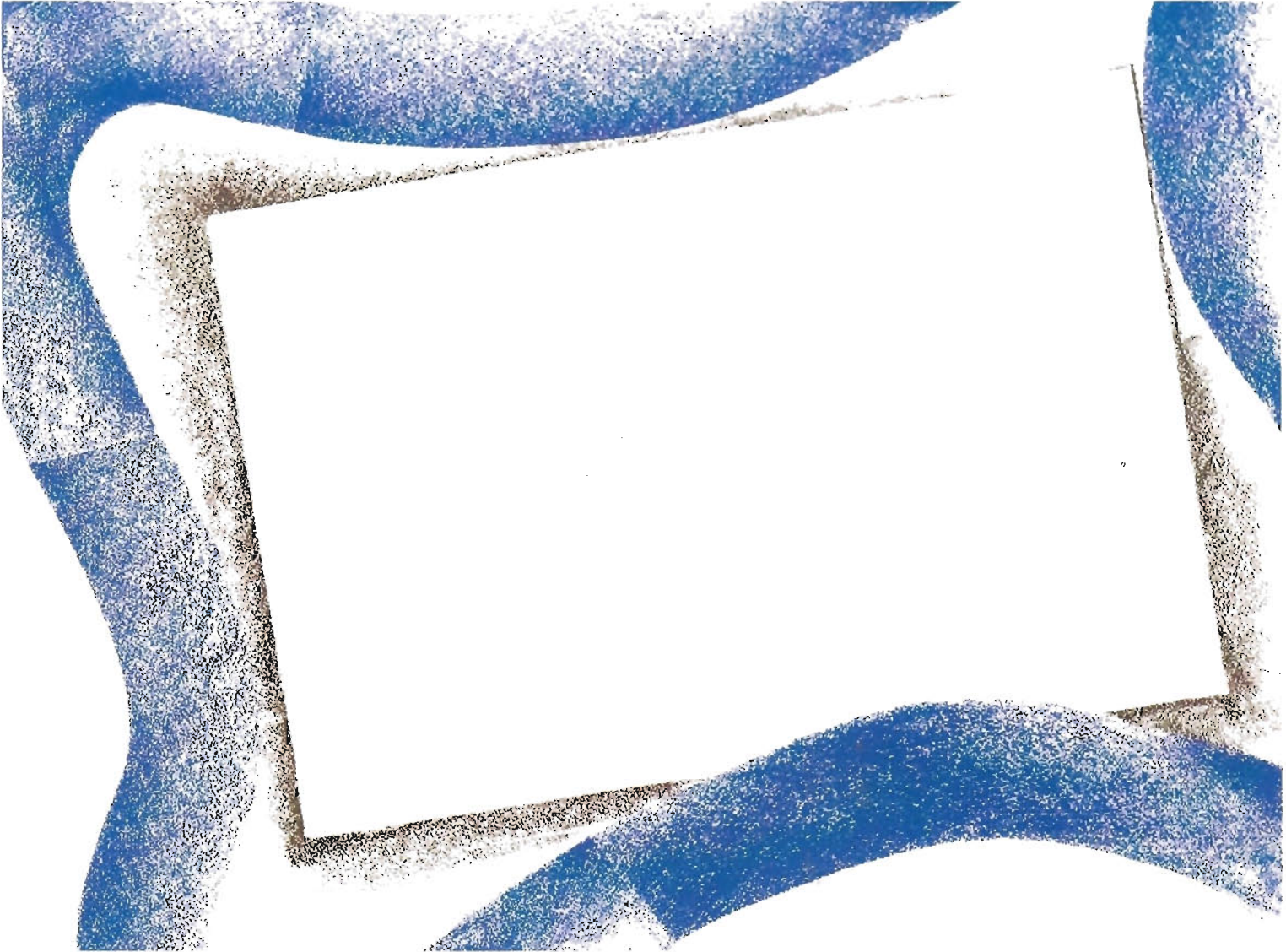


Gerald Hayes



DRAWINGS

after the arcade

1991 - 1996

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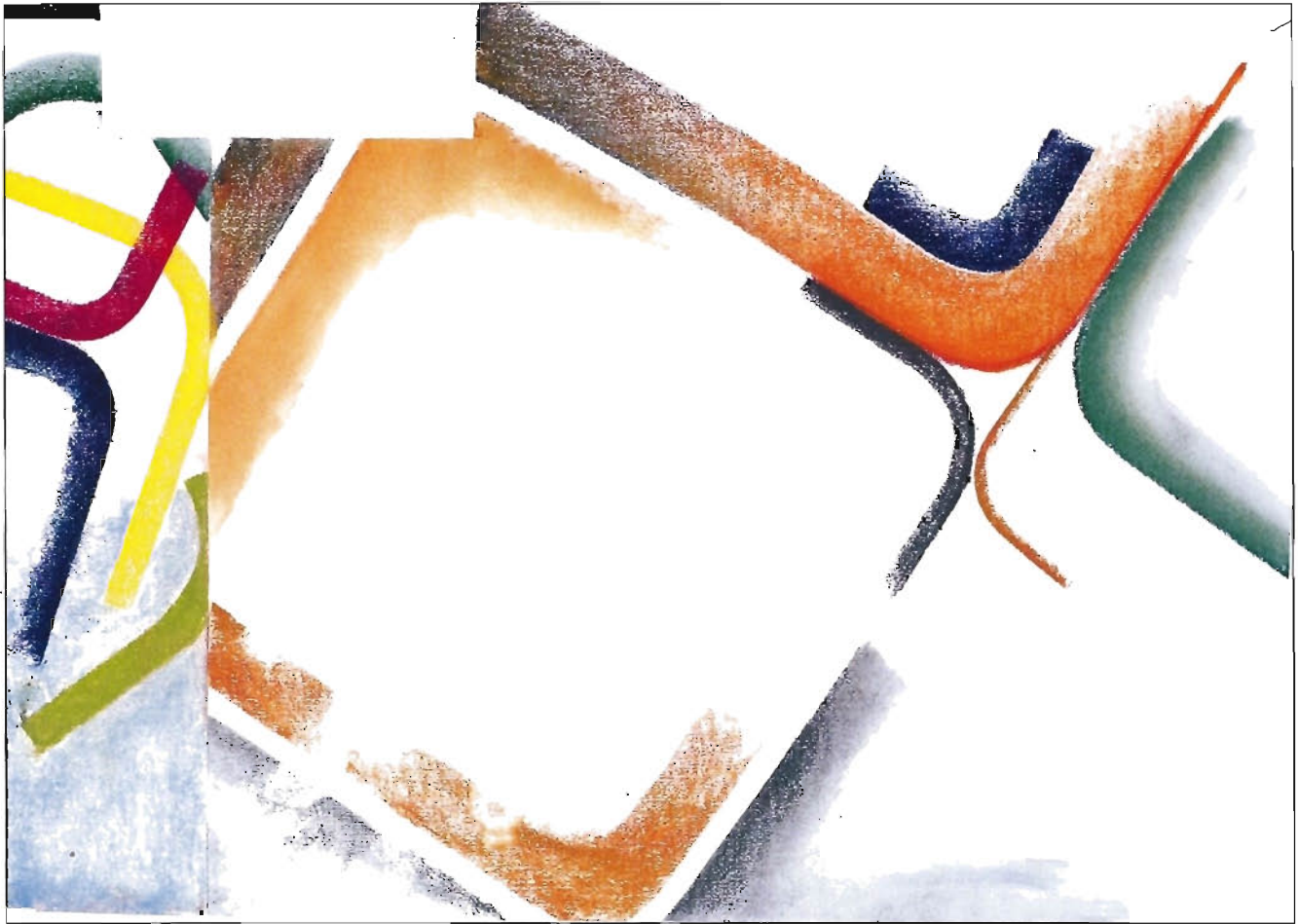
1991 - 1996

3 January - 14 February 1997

SOUTHERN CROSS UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM

We are pleased to present this exhibition of drawings by the American artist Gerald Hayes. In this work, produced between 1991 and 1996, we can see an artist carefully pursuing a series of intersecting and counterbalancing visual threads. Whilst scale and media in each piece are carefully contained, the range of expressive exploration is broad. It is through very simple means that territory is covered and goals are achieved. As we have framed and catalogued each of these works we have been quite conscious of the varying effects that they have upon us, notwithstanding the fact that they initially appear to constitute a deceptively straightforward set of studies in dry media on paper. They are direct, and yet they are evasive. They are evocative, and yet they are disturbing. I am certain that they change over time. They will linger in the memory.

Mostyn Bramley-Moore
Head, Centre for Visual Arts
Southern Cross University

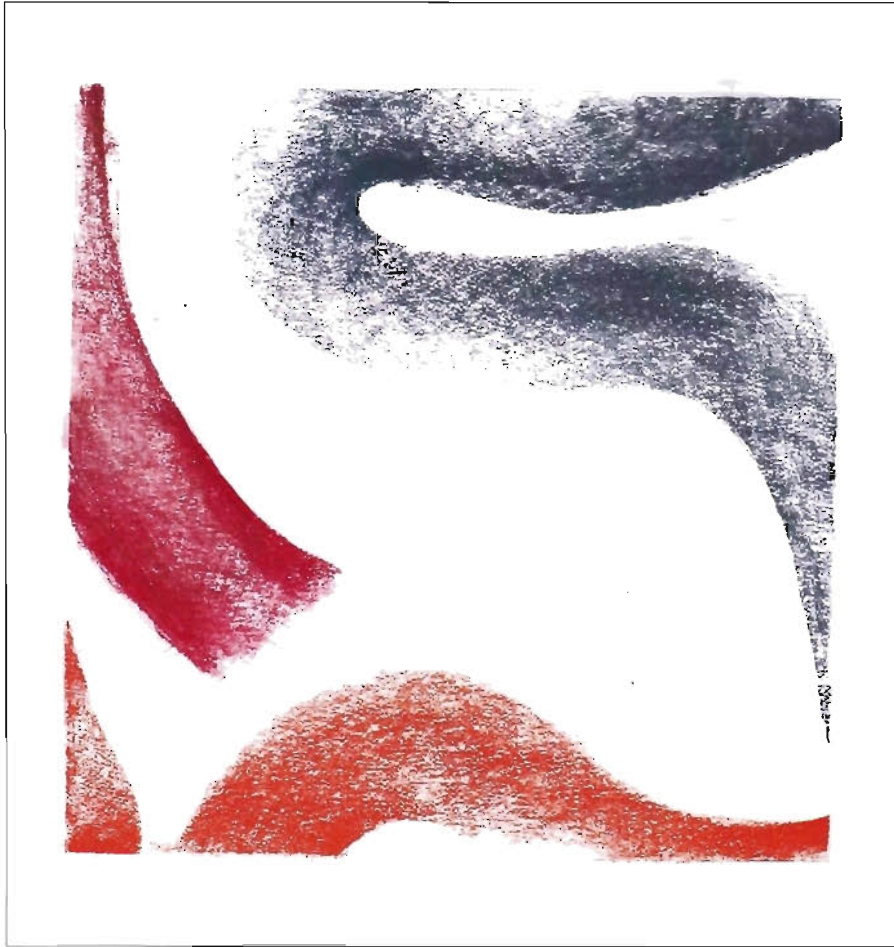


Next Frame, Open Centre 1.7.96
Catalogue No.30

after the arcade

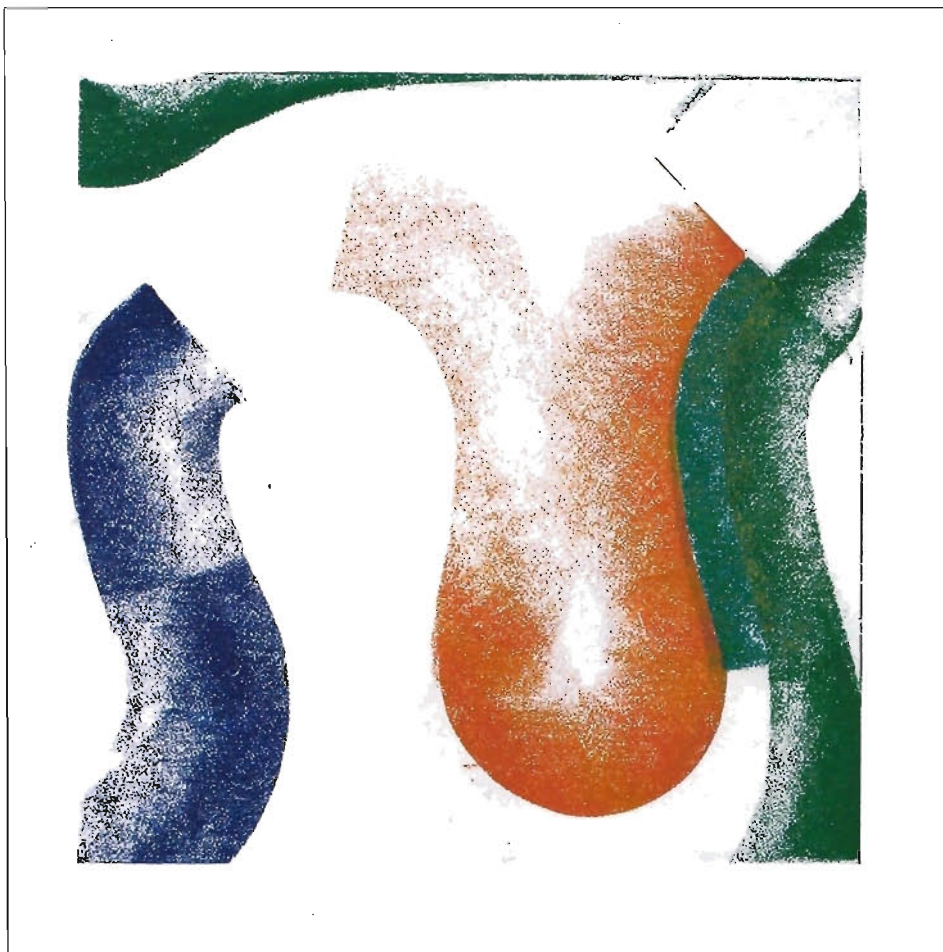
The paintings and drawings of an artist will often reveal diverse aspects of one vision. This is due, in part, to the peculiarities of each medium and how such peculiarities can define an artist's approach to working. The irony of Gerald Hayes' drawings is that they are often more painterly than his paintings. Hayes' paintings, after all, are plotted considerations of space, rhythm, texture and the nature of the art object itself; they are, if you will, investigations of the mechanics of pictorial structure. This may be why his oeuvre consists less of beautiful paintings than of two dimensional contraptions that tautly reconfigure the plastic elements of the medium.

If his paintings are stencilled, detached and graphic - in short, composed - Hayes' drawings are extemporaneous, sensual and open-ended. To make such an observation does not constitute a value judgment - if the modern eye will value Hayes' drawings for their spontaneity, it should not deny the curious vigour of his paintings. But because the drawings have a visual richness one associates with, say, oil painting - in the way, for instance, one colour is dragged over another and how that may yield a sense of light or space - they distinguish



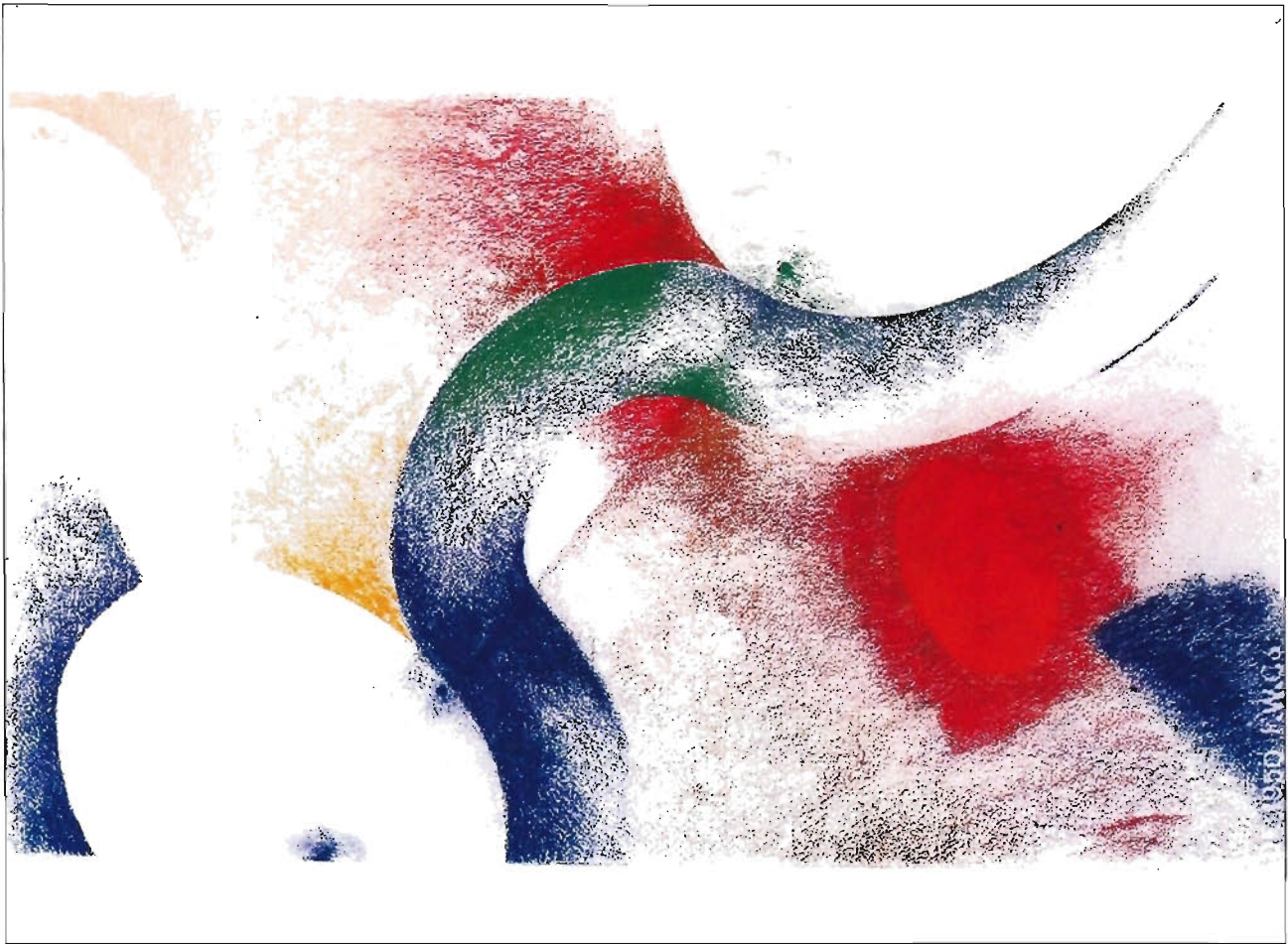
themselves as being more than preparatory studies. While he has based paintings on a few specific images, his drawings are independent works that retain an improvisatory flavour. Hayes' paintings and drawings explore similar motifs in dissimilar manners.

Hayes fashions his drawings by swiping the broad side of a pastel stick over a sheet of paper. In doing so, he creates forms that swoop across the page, delineating both the space of the drawing and themselves. These forms, which act as surrogate brushstrokes, encompass the paper in such a way that its unmarked portions emerge as the drawings focal point. For Hayes the white of the paper is an integral part of each image and his play of positive and negative space can be laconic and witty. In *Off the Edge* (1991) four passes of pastel - one black, the others rust brown and orange - shimmy into the pictorial field, locking into place. While these marks define the compositional limits of the page, the white of the paper nudges into them, establishing its formidable presence. Yet just as one feels that the drawing has set, it begins to move again - the rhythmic elegance of Hayes' marks remains undiminished. *Off the Edge* is simultaneously fixed and fluid, stationary and shifting. It has a vitality that is decidedly quirky and definitely Hayes.



Sometimes Hayes' sweep of the pastel stick asserts its autonomy. At first glance, *Untitled 5/19/91* - with its serpentine form nestled inside a ruled square - appears to be an exercise in form, asking the question: How does one shape fit inside another? (One can almost discern Hayes the teacher in this drawing.) But *Untitled 5/19/91* is also a study in character. The drawing's central form has its own unruly personality and an uncanny, almost sculptural, materiality. Here Hayes the sensualist comes to the fore. One senses his delight in the way the pastel stick catches on the tooth of the paper, creating unsuspected nuances in tone and texture; or how a swerve in gesture alters the density of the mark. Some critics decry formalist art as being cold and academic. But Hayes proves that it can be muscular and droll, too.

Hayes' drawings flirt with the diagrammatic but they aren't dependent on formula or theory. Each piece comes into being on its own terms; it evolves, as it were, naturally. Hayes may begin a drawing by placing a squiggle on the page, which will then suggest another mark which will suggest a colour and so on, until the image seemingly resolves itself. But Hayes gauges each drawing carefully - economical pictures such as these are the result not of luck but of forbearance - so that the final image holds tautly. His debt to Cubism is evident in his



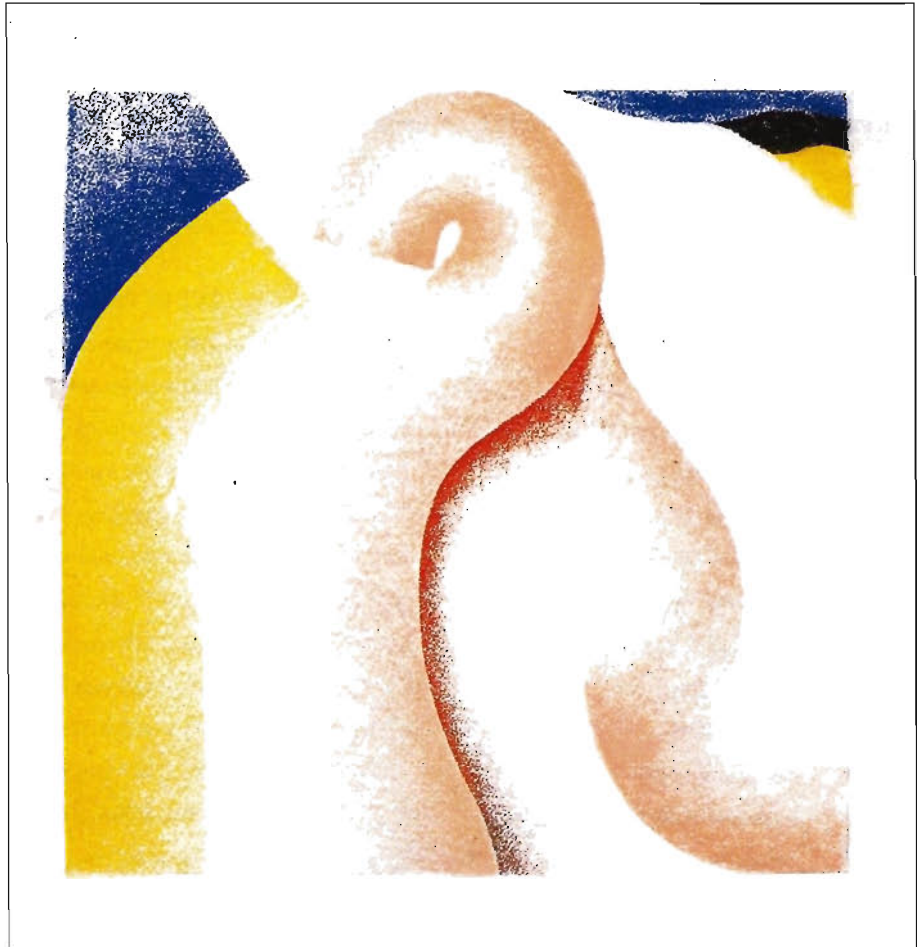
Open Infinity 7.20.94 Catalogue No.22

compositional stratagems and there's not a wasted moment in them. One can see the deliberation in how the space between two tubular shapes begins to suggest a head-like form in *Pipeline with Sky* (1991). Similarly, the pictorial rigor of five 'brushstrokes' occupying a circular frame in *Untitled 6/5/91* (1991) makes for a kind of sober slapstick, physical and comic but in a measured way. (Is it reading too much into his work to associate its fidgety energy and compacted space with the artist's adopted city, New York?) Hayes' drawings are those of an artist who spends more time in the studio looking than he does making.

One of the pleasures of the drawings is in seeing how an art of limited means can encompass a variety of experience and emotion. His drawings are fragile, tough, magical and even erotic. *Open Infinity* (1994) has an atmosphere that is downright sultry. And while Hayes is something of a pragmatist in his approach to making pictures, art's ability to take on its own life constantly perplexes him. One suspects that Hayes the artist thrives on such befuddlement.

Hayes refers to his drawing *Shell With Sky* (1991), for example, as 'my Georgia O'Keefe'. He says this sardonically - Hayes is no admirer of O'Keefe's illustrational mysticism - but looking at the drawing one knows exactly what he means. While its unfurling forms do recall O'Keefe's floral studies, it is the drawing's pale colours

Shell With Sky 7.28.91
Catalogue No.11



and wan light, set off by glimpses of deep blue, that link it with the older artist. *Shell With Sky* is something of a romantic drawing - or should I say romantic's drawing? The work's emotional timbre is summed up in the way the central stroke of the image pivots and snuggles around a blip of white paper. It is an amusing and tender detail in a drawing that O'Keefe - and one feels, even Redon - would have envied.

Ultimately, Hayes emerges an atypical formalist. His organic forms, snug compositions and commanding, but never impudent, marks link him with certain artists and schools - one detects a soupcon of de Kooning in Hayes' looping gestures and a Constructivist bent to this compositions - but the work defies easy categorisation. Which is as it should be. For in an era without any defining artistic orthodoxy - was there ever truly a time governed by such a conceit? - the art world is a jumble of styles and attitudes, confounding and exciting. Hayes' work suggests that the knotty tenor of the times is best met with humour, patience and a wry appreciation for complexity. His sharp and eccentric drawings distinguish him, very much, as an artist of the late 20th century.

Mario Naves is an artist and writer based in New York.
His criticism appears regularly in *New Art Examiner* and *The New Criterion*.

Gerald Hayes

Gerald Hayes was born in Los Angeles, California. He was educated at Auburn University, Alabama, and the University of Illinois at Urbana. Currently he lives and works in New York City, teaching at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn.

list of works

No.	TITLE	DATE	SIZE OF PAPER (Height x width)
1.	Untitled Study (1)	3.13.91	228 x 304mm (9 x 12")
2.	Untitled Study (2)	3.13.91	228 x 304mm (9 x 12")
3.	Untitled Study (3)	3.13.91	228 x 304mm (9 x 12")
4.	Untitled (blue)	5.19.91	495 x 466mm (19½ x 18¼")
5.	Untitled (grey & orange)	5.19.91	495 x 466mm (19½ x 18¼")
6.	Untitled (brown)	5.19.91	495 x 466mm (19½ x 18¼")
7.	Untitled (circular)	6.1.91	600 x 570mm (23¾ x 22¼")
8.	Untitled (circular)	6.5.91	600 x 570mm (23¾ x 22¼")
9.	Off the Edge	6.7.91	495 x 465mm (19½ x 18¼")
10.	Open Centre	6.9.91	495 x 465mm (19½ x 18¼")
11.	Shell with Sky	7.28.91	495 x 465mm (19½ x 18¼")
12.	Pipeline with Sky	7.30.91	495 x 465mm (19½ x 18¼")
13.	Shadow Arch	8.11.91	610 x 457mm (24 x 18")
14.	Solar Cuts	8.18.91	610 x 457mm (24 x 18")
15.	Double Script	4.19.92	558 x 565mm (22 x 22¼")
16.	Multi-facet	5.29.92	558 x 565mm (22 x 22¼")
17.	About Face	1993	478 x 565mm (18¾ x 22¼")
18.	In Vermont, Blue	4.22.93	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
19.	In Vermont, Orange Rising	4.23.93	465 x 565mm (18¼ x 22¼")
20.	In Vermont, Green Tee	4.23.93	460 x 565mm (18¼ x 22¼")
21.	Infinity	6.26.94	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
22.	Open Infinity	7.20.94	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
23.	Facing Casey	7.26.94	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
24.	Ribbons , Open Centre	8.24.94	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
25.	Ribbons , Float	8.24.94	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
26.	For RK	5.29.95	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
27.	Cap'n Jack's	7.27.95	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
28.	Square Space	9.1.95	466 x 623mm (18¼ x 24½")
29.	On Track, Open Centre	12.2.95	500 x 648mm (19¾ x 25½")
30.	Next Frame, Open Centre	1.7.96	500 x 653mm (19¾ x 25¾")

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