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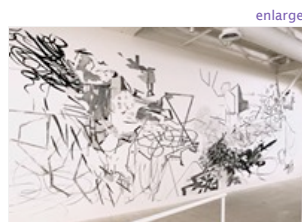
Artists line up at MOCA GA

Series of exhibitions experiment with lines

By [Deanna Sirlin](#)

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Artists who like making marks are constantly drawing, whether on fine acid-free paper, a napkin or an underpass. The artist's hand is compelled to doodle, to inscribe, to tag, to draw. The surrealists called this "automatic drawing," and saw it as a means of freeing the unconscious. The influence of surrealist automatic drawing is visible in the current exhibitions at MOCA GA, although each artist addresses it in her own way. Susan Cofer's process for *Absence of Certainty* most closely resembles the stream-of-consciousness approach. In *From Hatcher's Pond*, photographer Lucinda Bunnan frames natural subjects so that their forms seem like spontaneously drawn lines. Rocío Rodríguez addresses the tension between planned composition and impulsive gesture in the monumental wall drawing for *A Drawing Installation*.



Courtesy MOCA GA
Rocío Rodríguez's *A Drawing Installation*

From Hatcher's Pond is a suite of large-scale digitally printed photos. The photos show a dense, primeval blue-gray pond with lotus plants sticking out of its reflective surface. The forms emerging from the water suggest both Cy Twombly's painted marks and Andre Masson's automatic drawings. The linear black plants evoke the hand of a master calligrapher working in brush and ink. The effect is dreamy, and recalls surrealist painter Yves Tanguy's black biomorphic forms rising out of the primordial muck.

Bunnan's extreme close-ups of the pond — there are no shorelines or horizons — surround the viewer on all sides, creating an intimate, immersive experience. The works are meditative in the way Monet's water lilies are: Monet lived and painted for 43 years in the water garden of his home in Giverny, France, finding abstraction in close-ups of the lilies in his pond. Bunnan has found her Giverny in Hatcher's Pond.

Rodríguez's large drawing has been executed in charcoal directly on the horizontal wall of MOCA GA's education gallery. The work partakes of her characteristic imagery, which combines abstracted landscapes and cityscapes with cartography. The drawing suggests a catastrophic rumble of architectural and curvilinear forms exploding across the wall in her signature chaos. Rodríguez's scribbles coalesce into form as the drawing plays on the tension between planned and spontaneous composition. Although parts of the wall drawing look like automatic writing, Rodríguez planned the work in multiple studios. Ultimately, she took the characteristics of the wall itself into consideration, reacting to its bumps and fissures created by layers of paint.

Reis Birdwhistell's brilliant five-minute video of Rodríguez at work accompanies the drawing. Birdwhistell installed a camera to automatically photograph the artist, and created a five-minute animated time-lapse video from 3,000 still photos.

Also on view is Susan Cofer's *Absence of Certainty*, 10 drawings composed of repeated vertical lines on torn paper. At the exhibition's opening, Cofer could be seen moving her hand up and down like the slowed-down motion of a sewing machine to describe her process. Cofer's work literally is automatic: She does not know exactly where the movement will take her in each drawing.

At first glance, the three artists appear to have little in common. But their simultaneous exhibitions at MOCA GA make up a satisfying whole because of their shared passion for the line — whether drawn or photographed, discovered or invented, planned or spontaneous.

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