

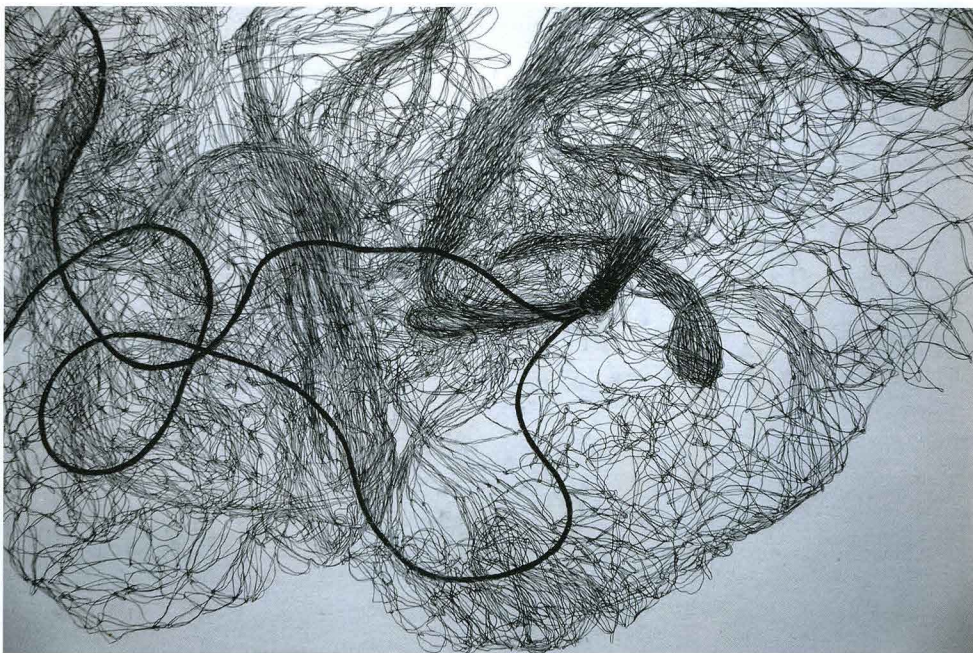
## Anne Allen and Elaine Taylor: Enduring Pattern

Gallery 414

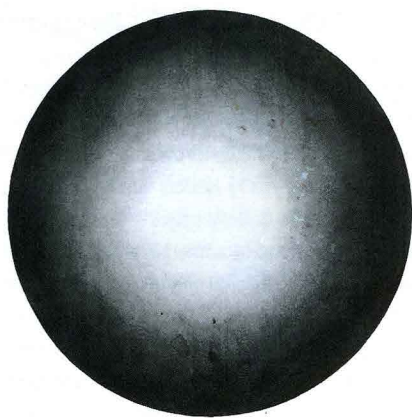
Elizabeth L. Delaney

Considering the organic versus the geometric, minced versus condensed, animated versus stable, *Enduring Pattern* explores the distinct and deliberate processes of two artists, both of whom are in pursuit of perfecting compelling work derived from rudimentary shapes and objects. Sizeable drawings in dark, rich pigment on pristine white backgrounds line the gallery's walls. Technique and mark-making play an important role for Anne Allen and Elaine Taylor as they travel on divergent paths toward what seems to be goals of personal yet infallible visual expression.

Drawing on a career-long interest in pattern and design, Allen explicitly addresses the intrinsic beauty and intimate detail of her subject matter. A group of drawings comprised of intricately woven lines inspired by hairnets initially suggests a free-form, organic process; however closer inspection reveals the resulting patterns are anything but random. In fact, they exist as a collection of very deliberate lines, which converge to form a cohesive design. These drawings emphasize the history and impact of each line as they meander across the surface, creating a web of positive and negative space. Each mark has been carefully—even



Anne Allen, *Hairnet (Fragment)*, detail, 2005  
Installation  
Pencil wall drawing



Elaine Taylor, *C15*, 2005  
Installation  
Charcoal wall drawing

painfully—delineated with precision and delicacy to form complex and elegant networks. *Hairnet (Fragment)*, presented as an installation, spans two walls as it travels into and out of a corner connecting two sides of the room. By transforming the wall into canvas, the piece not only shares common

physical space with the viewer but also becomes part of the gallery's structure.

Allen continues to explore the intrinsic beauty of common objects in her large drawings based on lace doilies. The paper yellowed and smudged, recalls the history of a once-cherished bit of handmade lace. These oversized works mimic photographic negatives—dark impressions that fill the space, lending a feeling of import to a now-common and disposable object.

Elaine Taylor examines the idea of geometrical perfection in a series of flawlessly rendered circles. Admittedly "obsessed" with the shape, the artist presents circles in numerous combinations of line and shade, creating patterns within each drawing that emanate from each piece. Both singular and concentric shapes offer a sense of drama born of contrast between heady charcoal and pristine white backgrounds. Though Taylor chooses a familiar universal shape as her muse, she extracts from it light, depth and, overall, hypnotic strength.

Perhaps the most ethereal and mesmerizing piece in the show, *C15*, fuses with the exhibition space. Like Allen's *Hairnet (Fragment)*, *C15* rests directly on the wall, which serves as both container

and canvas. Subtle and carefully shaded gradations of charcoal create a multidimensional, pulsating form that seems to hover between the flat wall and the air-filled space, unifying the object, its support and the viewer.

*C15*—a bright white nucleus staring out from a circular field of thick, dark pigment—conveys a similar sensation. Repetitive and deliberate marks build upon one another, like electrons swirling around an energy source. This simple design creates the optical illusion of depth and, once again, precise lines and the clean division of space result in a dynamic and striking image.

While Taylor's drawings capture attention by virtue of their dramatic physical presence and crisply rendered forms, Allen's pieces attract the viewer with highly elaborate, almost baffling matrices. Both artists use pattern to reveal process, thus providing a visual map to guide the viewer—literally and figuratively—through the viewing experience. This methodology reiterates that the creative process and journey to fruition can and should function as integral and obvious elements of finished work.