

CARALI McCALL: SUBLIME ENDURANCE

By Helen Kauder

In Carali McCall's durational performance drawings, circular shapes are made with repeated sweeping movements, each line generated by the last one, a charcoal vortex of kinesthetic accumulation. The process is a mix of physical struggle, tenacity, and a dramatic race against time, a display of bravura tempered by the vulnerabilities of the body and the paper. The triangulating tension between the body, the paper, and time lends McCall's works their particular potency.

At first, the performance appears as a harmonious duet with the medium, then shifts to a rousing contrapuntal call and response, closing with a release and surrender. I think the idea of an *entanglement* holds these seemingly contradictory stances together. By the time that several hundreds of circles or lines have been inscribed, the marks are densely layered, and the paper's taut surfaces and fibers have begun to weaken. In the entanglement, the central question is: will the artist or the paper surrender first?

Set against variations around this central notion, the works represent the passage of time and chronicle the artist's outer limits of energy. They evoke a range of emotions, setting something free from within the paper and the body. The circle drawings work as an allegory for the inexorable march towards the unknown, aging, and perhaps even rotations around the sun. And in their sheer beauty, they embody the attainment of the sublime arrived through an intensely physical process.

The artist also asks us to contemplate how paper might be similar to a body, how it is a container, a surface, a source of tension, and how, with repeated manipulation, it yields and surrenders. The works introduce a tear, a perforation, a puncture, a piercing through of the plane, and bring to mind a bodily gash, a suture, even an orifice: this is paper made flesh.

In this series, experimentation with treating the surface of the paper with silver, gold and gouache, creasing it and exploiting its heft, structure, patina, and color create new sculptural forms, works that have a dimensionality of their own. The monochromatic, lustrous charcoal contrasts with the saturated, almost vibrating, reds and blues, creating a dynamic, pop optical effect.

In ambition, McCall borrows from Matthew Barney and Carolee Schneemann. Her visual language and gestural style is evocative of Linn Meyers, embracing chance and serendipity that recalls the work of conceptualist Sol LeWitt.

To carve, to score, to thrash, to burnish, to cut, to wound, to coax a foreground that emerges from the surface yet pulls us hypnotically to a deep, spiritual place: McCall offers us a thrilling combination of the visceral and the delicate. Through the physical traces of McCall's exertions and fatigue, these works offer allusion to our universal struggles and a heightened sensitivity to our own strengths and vulnerabilities.