

This time it was the ride making the attractions. Rosemarie Fiore's recent exhibition, "Scrambler Drawings," excited viewers with its playful exploration of time, chance, choice, and fun. Fiore utilizes the Scrambler, a 60-foot wide circus ride, as her mark-making tool. The Scrambler, which rotates and spins in a movement similar to an enlarged gyroscope, was installed in a warehouse. A paint sprayer, somewhat like an airbrush, was filled with paint and attached to the bottom of one of the twelve seats. The palette, like the ride itself, consists solely of primary colors. Canvas, which had been taped to mark the edges, is placed underneath the ride. Fiore, with the help of a remote control, determines the paint output. After the spray, spin and scramble cycle, the tape is removed and the canvas cut to the display size. When Fiore exhibited her "Scrambler Drawings", she installed a video monitor and a projection piece along with the works in order to demonstrate the process of creation and the role of the machine.

The eight large individual drawings that lined the east wall of the gallery were divided in the middle by the video monitor, which serves as the axis of the work. Each drawing, splattered with paint resembling the marks

of action painters, is separated from the next by only inches. Like works of spin-art (that wonderful invention from the 80s) writ large: the works stretch some thirty feet along the wall, emphasizing the scope of the scrambler. They are hung, as they were placed on the floor.

The splattered, fuzzy marks suggest the powerful whirling motion of the machine. The machine is now the artist; the action of the paint, lost in the machine's movement. Fiore's hand has been removed from the work.

Fiore surprisingly captures a distinct moment, freezing the movement of time, and placing the viewer somewhere between art and circus culture. The surprise comes in how quiet and contemplative the individual drawings become, and the elegance of the outcome and the unlimited possibilities.

I found myself imagining the marks a Ferris wheel might make. What would look like if a sprayer was affixed to roller coaster or even on the feet of a trapeze artist? I was reminded of a trip to the circus as a boy; I think it was the Ringling Brothers. I remember the high wire act, the performer was thirty maybe forty feet above the ground, and like Fiore, he was not using a safety net. □

And the Circus Came To Town...

Ron Johnson

