



Ruth Marten

The Moon's Mirror – Artist Statement

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Perhaps as a counterbalance to house quarantine, I found myself making pictures differently from my usual process.

No concept, no meaning, not even allowing for what it might inevitably look like. Literally starting bottom left and letting it develop by chance across the page, terrifying but exhilarating.

Being an Elder Human I've often plowed through the Fields of Meaning. Now I wonder at the trust and comfort I took from those easy explanations. Frank Zappa wrote a very pithy song in the 1960's, "It can't happen here", but clearly it can and it did. When one's understandings are turned on their heads, what do we save and what is discarded? These drawings are my investigation into that distinction.

Concurrent with embracing this work method was the desire to chop up my archive of old prints with which I've worked for 15 years. Old friends waiting patiently for their turn in the sun, parts of which I'd saved and savored, their original meaning long eclipsed by the science to come. Stripped of content they become eccentric linear concoctions, accessories to imagination. The antique prints were originally chosen as found objects. Now, through cutting up and fragmenting them, my inclinations for composition and energy are amplified many times over. Rather than a starting place for satire or absurd pastiche, the print pieces become a great source of curls, snaking lines, fabulous textures and mystery organs, all freed of their original meaning.

While living in enforced solitude, I nonetheless felt very connected to my community and the lives we had invented together. The phenomenon of connectivity played out in the drawings and I was surprised to see how the "devices" reminded me of perpetual motion machines. Also, some pictures are jammed with information while others are quite barren. I love these children equally and try to be sensitive to their hatching.

I'm interested in expanding my traditional approach to picture making and, perhaps, I was able to do that a little with these works which provide a break from illustrating and from dutiful labor. We don't need another voice to describe the world.

I just want a new world.

Ruth Marten, September 13, NYC