## PETER KARKLINS



Untitled ("Forest") ::: 8/27/2002 ::: graphite on paper

The cover image comes courtesy of Chicago-based artist Peter Karklins. It's a graphite on paper drawing, measuring a diminutive  $67/8 \times 415/16$  inches, a size that belies the outsized intensity and detail of the wavy undulations meshing its surface. The piece is part of a larger

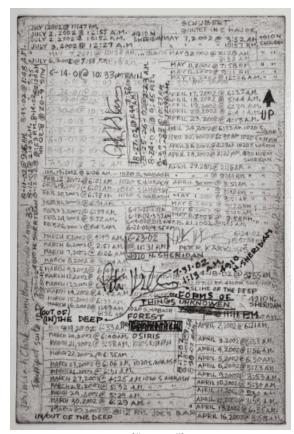
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series of drawings that was exhibited under the title "The Nature Drawings of Peter Karklins" (DePaul Art Museum, 2012).<sup>1</sup>

Is this gooey concatenation nature? So argues Sean Kirkland (see Interview, this issue). Not the neutered materiality of the nature of natural science, but rather that of a more protean flesh splitting the difference between nude and landscape. Kirkland edited the catalog accompanying the exhibition, which gathers together a selection of reproduced drawings followed by more than a dozen scholarly essays in the attempt to engage, if not explain, the surreal forms Karklins has placed before us (see Book Reviews, this issue).<sup>2</sup>

The image chosen for this issue's cover is untitled. There is a date of completion, 8/27/2002, but no label to give the viewer a sense of determinate encounter with some...thing. In conversations, the artist has called this particular drawing the "Forest" piece. The nickname refers to a handwritten note on the back side of the drawing, which, is a sight to behold in its own right. A runic maze of letters and numbers on the back, which Karklins recorded on the night watch working as a security guard, while he steadily built up the layers of involution on the front.

Why 'forest'? Perhaps it's the most descriptive. Karklins ventured to call the long vertical on the front a tree. If we were to reduce the tangled web to a representational image, a tree, a forest of trees, would do nicely. But it's a forest as one rarely encounters outside a dream. The snaking tendrils are more flesh than vegetal matter. The picture, as a work of art, invitingly folds us into this dense knot yet does not thereby reveal its secret. We merely linger a little closer and more attentively to a mystery.



Untitled ("Forest") Verso

To view more online selections from this series, visit <u>the gallery site</u>. Images courtesy of the artist and <u>the Packer Schopf Gallery</u>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "The Nature Drawings of Peter Karklins" (Depaul Art Museum, 2012)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> <u>"The Nature Drawings of Peter Karklins" (University of Chicago Press, 2012)</u>