

LAURA
BRUCE

Sounds

That



Clouds

Make



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graphite on paper, 100 × 70 cm

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BACKYARD SPECTACULAR (REPRISE)

In complex and varied work largely accomplished over the past 20 years while she has lived as an American in Berlin, Laura Bruce has explored and excelled at paintings, sculptures, videos and performances. Over the past several years large black and white graphite drawings on paper have also become an important part of her oeuvre. Bruce's mesmerizing drawn suburban "snapshots" are based in part on her native suburban New Jersey and exurban Atlanta. In them you see houses, yards, people outside of those houses, and circumscribed nature (a few leafy trees, manicured lawns, small patches of forest) which is exceptionally powerful and majestic, but also threatening and unnerving. With their backyard wonderment and neighborhood sublimity, Bruce's 21st century drawings—which have been exhibited

widely to considerable acclaim—have echoes of 19th century European Romantic painting and Hudson River School painting in the U.S.

While intently focusing on drawing, Bruce has also expanded her oeuvre to include striking architectural installations/interventions. *Jane* (2010), one of her two works in the Fokus Lodz Biennial in Poland, was a stunning painting installation for which Bruce first restored and repaired the former restaurant/bar in a once grand, but later decrepit, building. Using special colors made by mixing fluorescent hues in white wall paint, she then painted the walls and ceiling blue, the floor a light green, cupboards pale purple, and lamps bright yellow, resulting in a highly mediated interior version of the outside at dusk, including the sky, clouds, grass, and stars. *Derelict* (2010), also

in Poland, featured a swirling charcoal drawing that climbed up one wall and angled across the ceiling, while a fluorescent pink painted form swept across the floor and spread up part of a neighboring wall. These installations led to *De Sepentrione ad Austrum* (2015) in Aschersleben, Germany, one of Bruce's signature projects: a permanent wall mural made of color pastel on green school board paint. Bruce's bedazzling and engrossing site-specific drawing is based on a 1649 map by Adam Olearius, an explorer and an illustrious citizen of Aschersleben who ventured to Persia and the Caspian Sea, among many other places. With its mesh of hand drawn lines and subdued yet vibrant colors, Bruce's work evokes distant, marvelous lands and also hints at the intricacies of Persian carpets.

Bruce has also expanded her approach to drawing, to include handwritten textual drawings, sculptures which seem in part like three-dimensional drawings, and a series of graphite and color pencil drawings (eventually there will be 79) based on Goya's print series *Los Caprichos* (1797–98). In Bruce's drawing *North* (2008), a man routinely walks his dog down the street, but the familiar environs have morphed unpredictably. Small trees and their cast shadows (and the small trees appear to be spinning like cyclones), huge leaning trees overhead, houses that are perhaps smoldering, a tumultuous sky overhead, and in the middle of it all what could easily be the funnel of a tornado make the whole scene at once awe-inspiring and dangerous. In the handwritten, yet visually eventful drawing *Follow the Train Tracks* (2016), a local excursion doubles as a complex and mysterious voyage of discovery. In *Rush* (2012), a sculptural tableau made of painted wood atop a wood sawhorse, a small human figure outdoors seems wary of, but also enchanted by curving and looming cloud-like or perhaps wave-like forms, one yellow and the other black. At once playful and severe, whimsical and alarming, this highly mediated version of a sublime experience in nature is altogether compelling. While accomplished

in different mediums and painstakingly made, Bruce's works function as transportive forces, conjuring moments of revelation and surprise when one's whole orientation is suddenly altered, challenged, and intensified.

Laura Bruce is also an accomplished—and this is a first for me, in terms of the art world and artists—singer and soulful interpreter of American country music. She's the charismatic lead singer in the international band Dangerpony, which performs decidedly fresh takes on country music songs; this deep engagement with such music is also apparent in Bruce's art. Her drawing and sound installation *Goodbye is Half the Words You Know* (2008–12) consists of ten portraits of esteemed country singers coupled with Dangerpony songs (which you hear on headphones), with Bruce singing lead. You see a portrait of Dolly Parton, with cascading hair, penetrating eyes, and a wide smile, while you listen to an amazing, especially haunting and plaintive, version of Parton's famous song "Jolene." You are riveted by Bruce's portrait of a stern George Jones while you listen to a searing rendition of his song "A Good Year for the Roses", with Bruce's voice shifting from solemn speech to caterwauling ferocity. Each song is a radical reinvention of a classic, while the installation, akin to listening booths in a library, invites an intimate absorption with both songs and drawings.

American country music deals in raw and honest emotions, fraught local scenes, interpersonal dramas, hopefulness, and staggering sorrow, and it is a generative force (one among several) in Bruce's artworks. The 10 drawings in *Sounds That Clouds Make* (2012), each featuring curving and organic forms, some wispy light gray and others dense black, loosely evoke the ever-shifting shapes of passing clouds and channel them into an abstract musical score. These synesthetic drawings are at once serene and turbulent, graceful and ungainly, playful and severe, in a manner very similar to an excellent country song. They are also altogether enthralling.

Gregory Volk

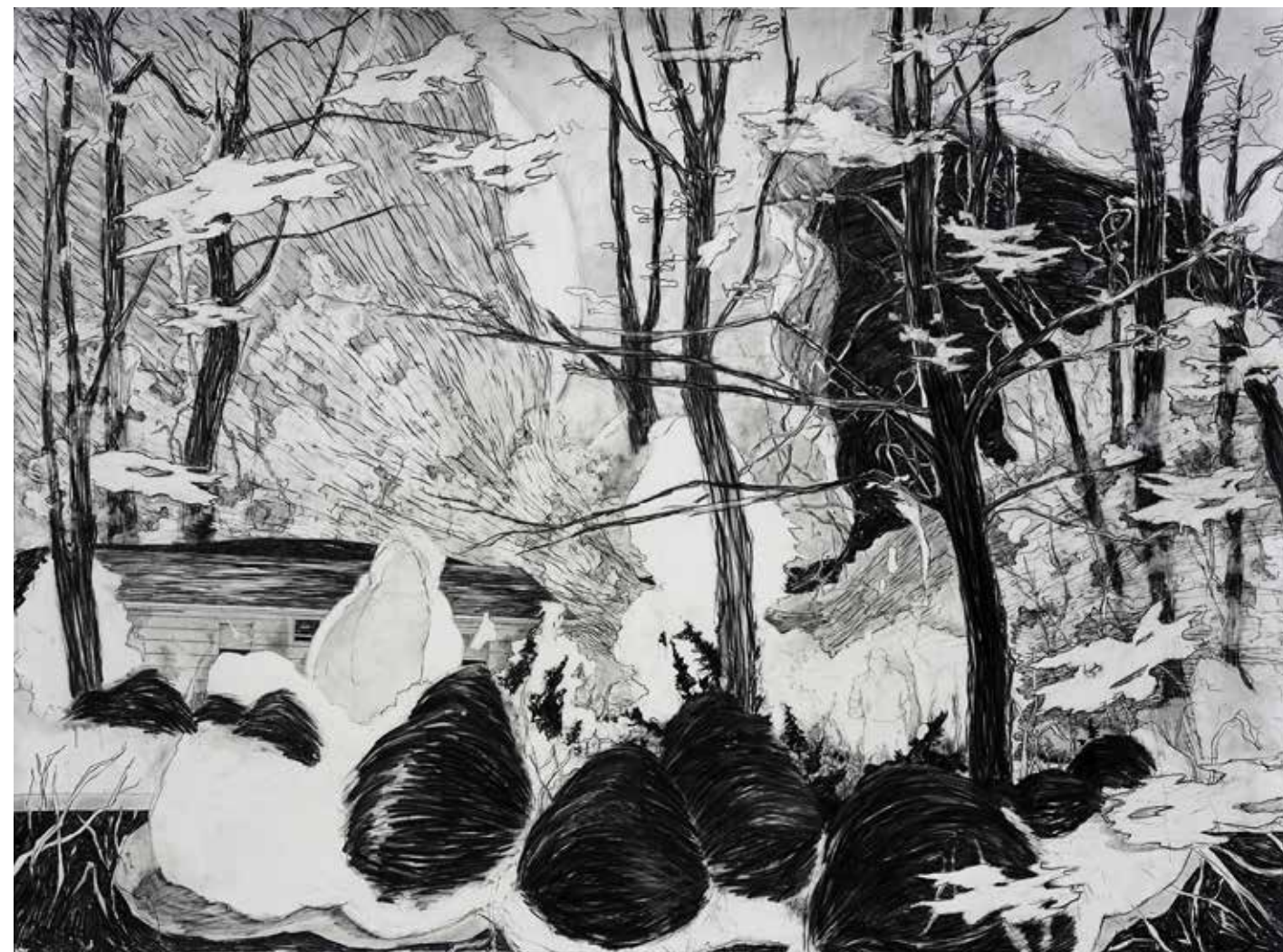


◀ GOODBYE IS HALF THE WORDS YOU KNOW, 2008–2012
drawing and sound installation
drawings each graphite on paper, 100 × 70 cm

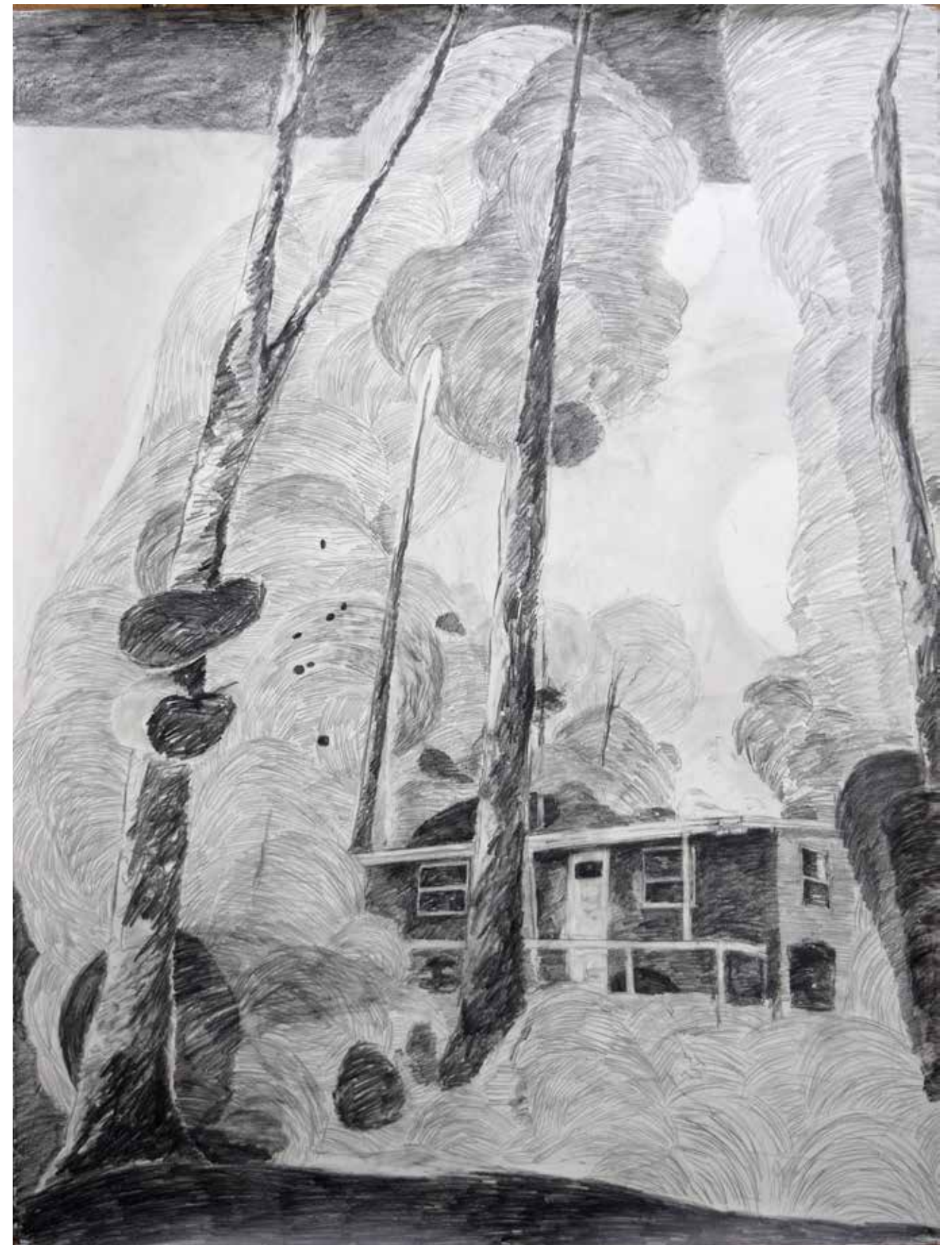
DANGERPONY VINYL PICTURE DISK, SIDE I AND II, 2012,
collection of 10 reinterpretations of classic country songs
part of the drawing / sound installation *Goodbye Is Half The Words
You Know*, 2008–2012, 30 cm in diameter ▶

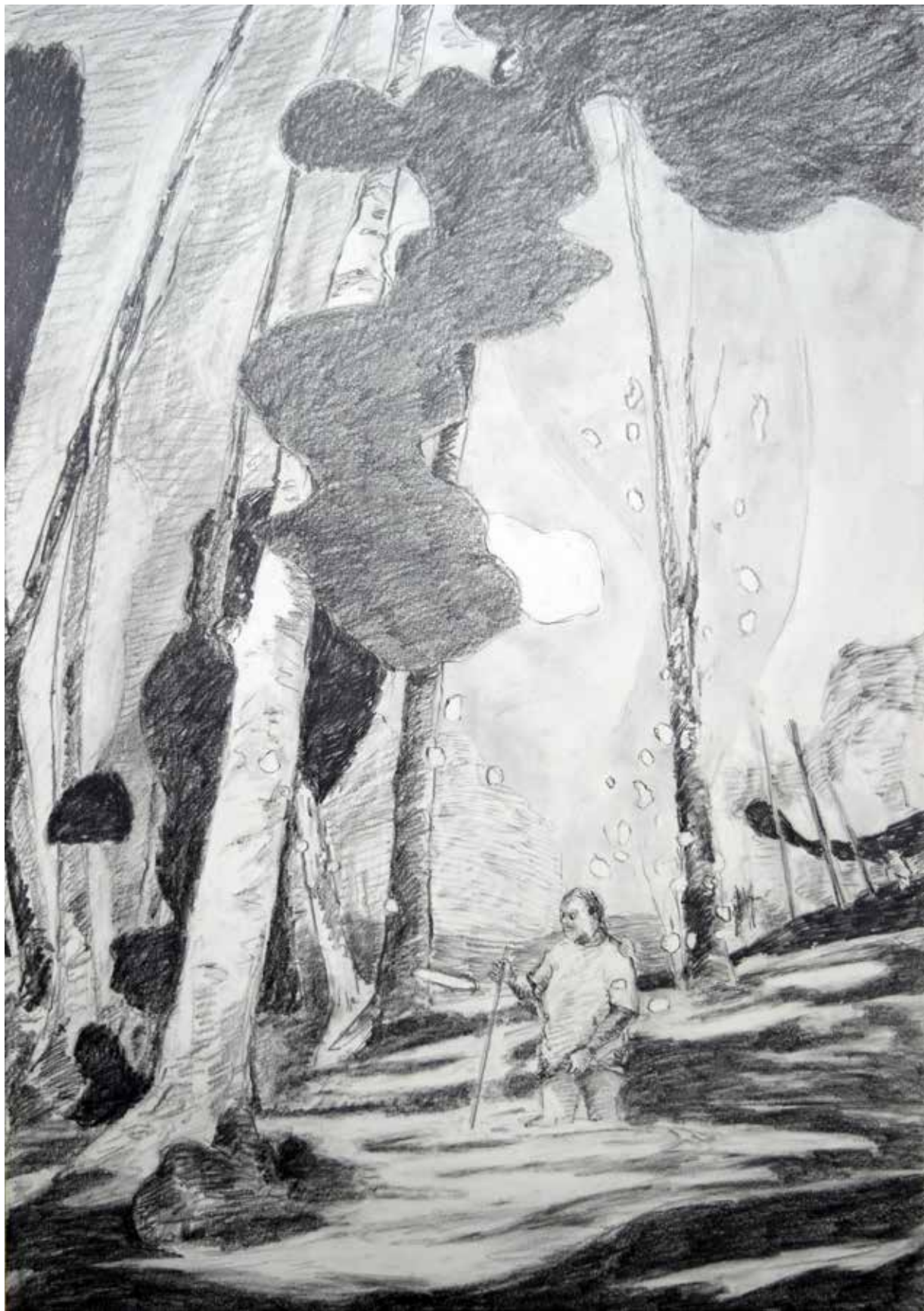


SNARE, 2010, graphite on paper, 113 × 155 cm



GROUNDED, 2017, graphite on paper, 155 × 113 cm





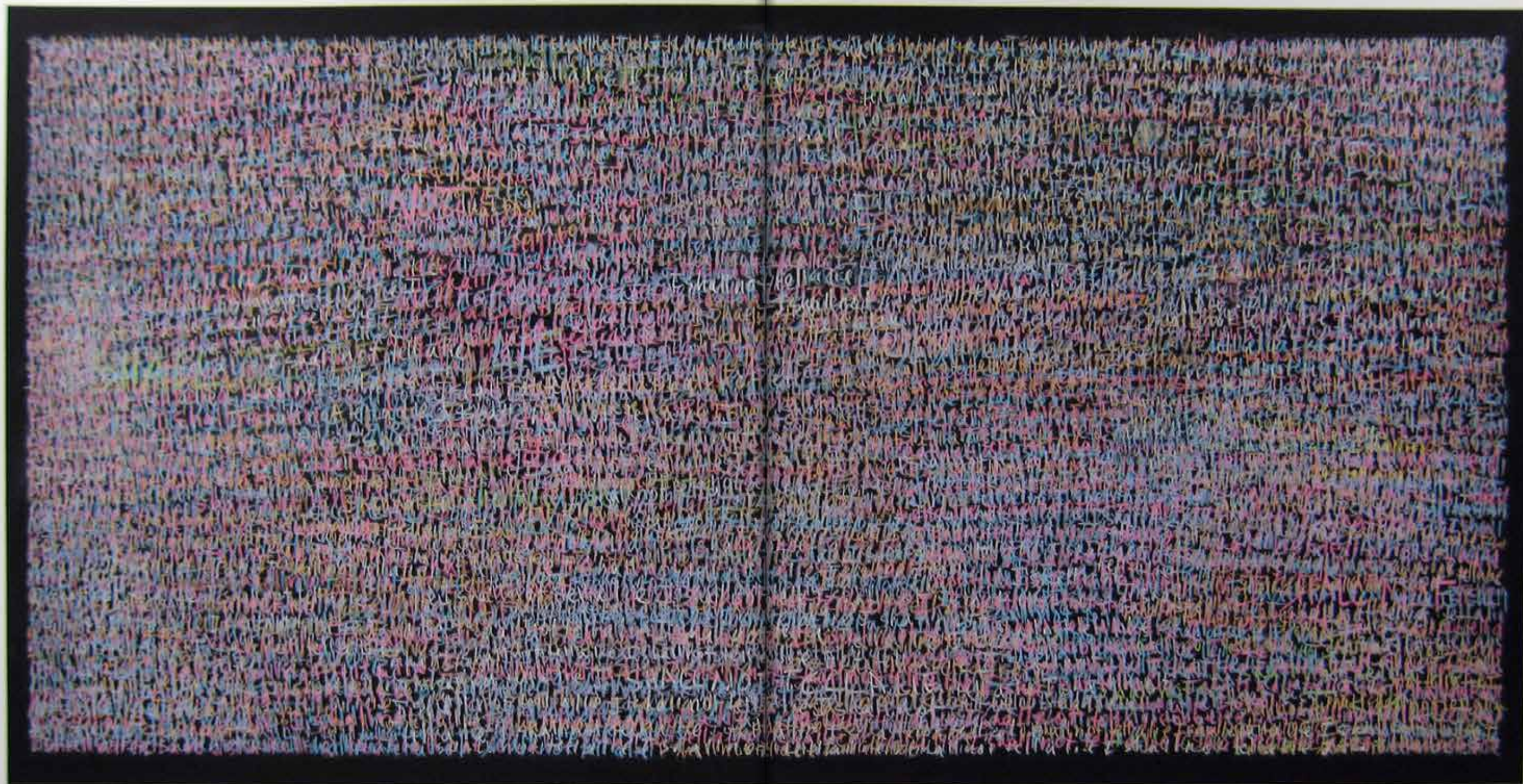
AFTER, 2017, graphite on paper, 100 x 70 cm



BEAM, 2017, graphite on paper, 100 x 70 cm

LISA, 2017, graphite on paper, 100 × 70 cm





◁ SWARM, (A Thousand Times I Shall not Tell a Lie), 2014,
colored chalk on black board paint, 250 × 400 cm,
installation view for the exhibition “Gossip”,
Trafo Center of Contemporary Art, Stettin, Poland

DE SEPTENTRIONE AD AUSTRUM, 2015, oil pastel on green
school board paint, 1000 × 600 cm, permanent public
mural for the City Aschersleben, Bestehornpark Building ▷



◁ DERELICT, 2010, charcoal, wall paint, fluorescent pigments, space 110 m², Fokus Lodz Biennale

Two of a Kind from PERPETUAL, 2017
graphite and colored pencil on paper, 29 × 21 cm ▷





There They Go Fleeced from PERPETUAL, 2017
graphite and colored pencil on paper, 29 × 21 cm



There is plenty to suck from PERPETUAL, 2017
graphite and colored pencil on paper, 29 × 21 cm



Love and Death from PERPETUAL, 2017
graphite and colored pencil on paper, 29 × 21 cm



Well Stretched from PERPETUAL, 2017
graphite and colored pencil on paper, 29 × 21 cm



PERPETUAL, 2017, a work of
79 drawings based on Goya's *Los Caprichos*,
each 29 × 21 cm, graphite and colored pencil on paper



BIOGRAPHY

BORN IN
EAST ORANGE, NEW JERSEY
SINCE 1990
LIVES AND WORKS IN BERLIN

1995–97
MFA sculpture:
The Slade School of
Fine Art, London, UK
1980–83
BFA painting: SUNY
New Paltz, NY
1980
Pratt Institute, BKLYN,
NY 1995–99
lived and worked in London
2008
founded the concept band
Dangerpony, lead singer

AWARDS, RESIDENCIES, AND GRANTS

2015
Residency Aschersleben
Summer
2012
Losito Kunstpreis
2010
Project grant Senate for
Cultural Activities, Berlin
2009
Residency Künstlerhaus
Schloss Balmoral, Bad Ems
2004
Catalog grant,
Kunstfonds, Bonn

PUBLIC ART WORKS

2015
De Septentrione ad Austrum
permanent mural,
Bestehornpark, Aschersleben,
DE, oil pastel on green school
board paint,
1000 × 600 cm

SOLO SHOWS

2018
Sounds that Clouds Make,
artloft, Berlin (cat.);
To Kiss or Kill, Galerie
Rompone, Cologne (cat.)
2016
New drawings, Alexander
Ochs Private @
paperpositions, Berlin
2015
Love and Other Machines,
New Art Projects, London;
BRUCE SILL, with Heidi Sill,
Kunsthaut Erfurt, Erfurt, DE
2011
Whippersnapper, Fahnmann
Projects, Berlin (cat.)

2008
The Hunt, fruehsorge
contemporary drawings (cat.)

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2017
Striche, Kreise, Landschaft,
Preise, Schaufenster,
Berlin; *small things: good
things*, Alexander Ochs
Private, Berlin; *Wir
nennen es Arbeit*, Galleria
Opere Scelte, Turin, IT
2016
Remix, Alexander Ochs
Private, Berlin; *Passion*.
Fan Behavior and Art,
Ludwig Museum, Budapest;
*Passion. Fan Behavior
and Art*, Stadtgalerie Kiel;
Moment und Dauer, Galerie
Parterre, Berlin (cat.)
2015
Paperworlds, Museum
Buchheim, DE; *Passion*.
Fan Behavior and Art,
Künstlerhaus Bethanien,
Berlin and Kunsthaut
Nuremberg, DE; *Wir
kommen auf den Hund*,
Kupferstichkabinett,
Berlin; *Du sollst dir kein
Bild machen*, curated by
Alexander Ochs, Berliner
Dome, Berlin (cat.)
2014
A Line is a Line is a Line,
Galerie Pankow, Berlin;
Paperworlds, Me Collectors
Room, Berlin (cat.);
2013
On Paper, Eigen & Art
LAB, Berlin; *Die Kunst der
Zeichnung*, Kunstverein
Ingelheim, DE (cat.);
Hinter den Dingen, Galerie
Heike Strelow, Frankfurt
2012
I Wish this Was a Song,
Museum of Contemporary
Art, Oslo (cat.); *Dies ist die
Nacht, die tausend Tagen*
Trotz kann sagen, Guardini
Galerie, Berlin; *Drawing
Biennale*, Kunstverein
Eislingen, DE, (cat.);
Regionale 12, “Kühllabor”,
Krakau Ebene, AT (cat.)
2011
On Paper, Fahnmann
Projects, Berlin; *Outdoor
Excursions*, Burlington Center
of the Arts, Vermont, USA
2010
Balmoral Blend, Arp
Museum, Rolandseck, DE;
Drawing II, Fahnmann

Projects, Berlin; *City Beats*,
BankArt, Yokahama, Japan;
km 500 2, Kunsthalle
Mainz, DE (cat.); *Fokus*
Lodz Biennale, Lodz, PL

2009
Hortus Apertus, Schloss
Balmoral, Bad Ems, DE
(cat.); *The Carnival Within*,
Uferhallen, Berlin (cat.)

2008
The Berliners, Loushy
Art & Projects, Tel Aviv,
IL; *Menschen und Orte*,
Kunstverein Konstanz, DE

2007
Drunk on Dreams,
fruehsorge contemporary
drawings, Berlin

2005
*Schönheit, Der Sprung
im Spiegel*, Städtische
Galerie, Traunstein, DE

2003
Pierogi Flatfiles, Carlsbad
Museum, New Mexico;
Expand, Volkart Stiftung,
Winterthur, CH (cat.)

2002
Wachsernde Identitäten,
Georg Kolbe Museum,
Berlin; *Thin Skin*, ICI
NY @ AXA Gallery, NYC
(cat.) and Scottsdale
Museum of Contemporary
Art, Scottsdale, AZ;
Gemeentemuseum Helmond,
HL; International Museum
of Art and Science,
McAllen, TX; Chicago
Cultural Center, IL; Boise
Art Museum, ID Texas

DANGERPONY CONCERTS

2016
KGB Sounds,
Heimathafen Berlin

2014
Podewil, Berlin

2013
NBK, Berlin

2012
I Wish This Was A Song,
Museum of Contemporary
Art, Oslo

2010
Picture disk vinyl release,
West Germany, Berlin

2009
The Carnival Within,
Uferhallen, Berlin

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Artothek, NBK, Berlin
Video-Forum, NBK, Berlin
Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin

Berlinische Galerie, Berlin
Landessammlung
Rheinland Pfalz, Mainz
Vattenfall Foundation, Berlin

BIBLIOGRAPHY

2018
“First Proof”, *BOMB*
magazine, NY, 142; “Portfolio
“Laura Bruce”, [https://
bombmagazine.org/articles/
portfolio-80/](https://bombmagazine.org/articles/portfolio-80/), To Kiss or Kill,
Galerie Rompone, Cologne

2017
Interview with Julia
Rosenbaum, Independent
Collectors, [https://
independent-collectors.com/
interviews/laura-bruce/](https://independent-collectors.com/interviews/laura-bruce/)

2016
Moment und Dauer, Galerie
Parterre, Berlin; *What
We Do For Love*, Studio
Barbara Krimm, Berlin

2015
Wir kommen auf den Hund,
Kupferstichkabinett Berlin;
Passion. Fan Behavior and Art,
Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin

2014
A Line is a Line is a Line,
Galerie Pankow, Berlin

2013
ungesehen und ungehört,
Sammlung Prinzhorn,
Heidelberg; *Die Kunst der
Zeichnung*, Kunstverein
Essenheim

2012
I Wish This Was A Song,
Museum of Contemporary Art,
Oslo; *Zeichnungsbienale*,
Kunstverein Eislingen

2011
Whippersnapper!!
Fahnmann Projects,
Berlin; *Outdoor Excursions*,
BCA, Burlington, VT

2010
*Laura Bruce: The Castle
Drawings; The First
Dimension*, Helmut Germer
and Thomas Neeser (eds.),
Basel: Birkhäuser, 2010

2009
The Carnival Within,
Uferhallen, Berlin

2008
The Hunt, fruehsorge
contemporary drawings

2007
Drunk on Dreams,
FUKT Magazine

2006
The Animation Issue, *FUKT*
Magazin; Landowners,
Galerie Pankow



SAD CLOUD, 2012
Oil paint, wood, steel
120 × 90 × 25 cm

IMPRINT

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Cover
STILLSTAND, 2016
graphite on paper
113 × 155 cm

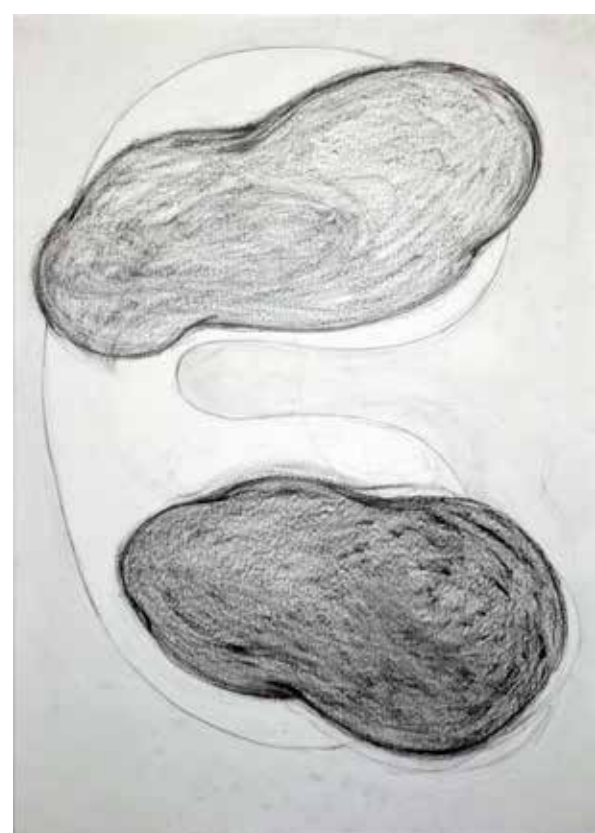
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Curator Tanya Berlinski





ISBN