

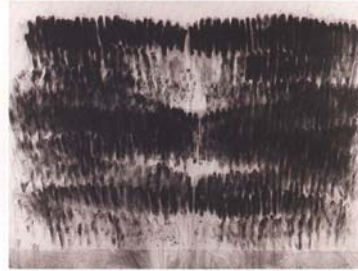
Joe Fyfe, *Robert Morris "Blind Time Drawings" at Haim Chanin Fine Arts*, Exhibition Reviews, *Art on Paper*, Vol. 8, No. 2, November-December 2003, p. 67.

Robert Morris, "Blind Time Drawings" at Haim Chanin Fine Arts

With Robert Morris's "Blind Time Drawings" (1973–2000) a genre was invented: expressionist conceptual art. To make them, the artist immersed the palm side of his fingers in combinations of printing oils and powdered graphite and quickly pressed them onto large white sheets of paper, then repeated the action, moving in predetermined directions. Initially, Morris simply closed his eyes when he worked; later he used a blindfold. In a number of these sheets, columns of smudged fingerprints rise sculpturally from the lower border, or the muscular smudges spread out across the entire surface.

Later, in a drawing from 1976, Morris worked with a Texas woman who was blind from birth, and directed her as she executed drawings in the same manner as the earlier works. Transcribed excerpts from tape recordings of their conversations during the working sessions accompanied these images in the catalogue of the show. It appears that, as in Method acting, Morris introduced motivations for the woman's actions, such as suggesting that she think of the marks she makes as areas of her desires.

In some of the later works, which



Robert Morris, *Blind Time I*, graphite on paper (35 x 46 in.), 1973. Courtesy Sonnabend Gallery, New York.

were executed on Mylar with ink, he wrote his own motivations on the bottom of the image. In *Blind Time V, Melancholia*, for example, Morris attempted to remember the folds of a blanket that was on a friend's deathbed as he moved his hands over the plastic surface. In these recent Mylar drawings, he has added geometric forms derived from Albrecht Dürer's famous engraving *Melancholia*, which depicts a blind angel.

Many of the drawings were taped off beforehand, so that when the tape is removed after the drawing action is completed, an interior frame is created. This imposes a specimen-like quality to the work and diminishes its raw power. In the best drawings here, the notion of a suffocating, answer-deprived world is clearly communicated, magnifying the overriding theme. To quote Morris: "Why should we have answers to questions about the self, the mind/body relation, consciousness, etc.? . . . We should be satisfied with our blindness about such questions. But of course we are not."

—Joe Fyfe