

## WHY PEOPLE DRAW

**Interview with Cyrilla Mozenter by Carolina Pedraza  
June 2011**

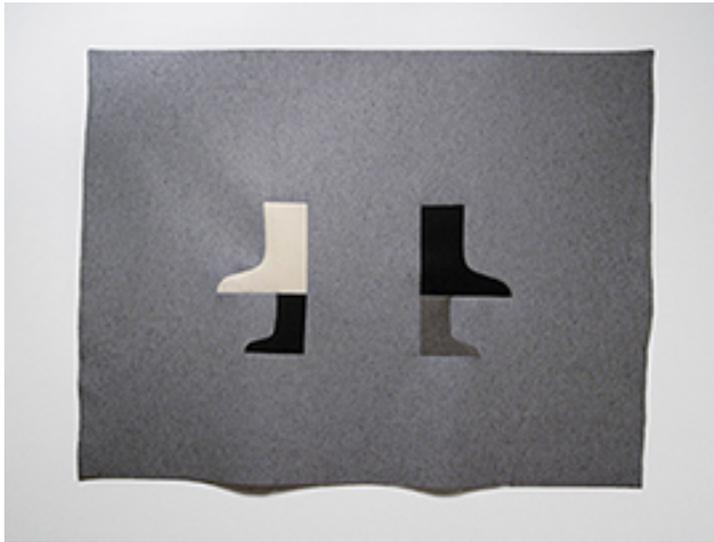
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*CP: What's your earliest memory of drawing (or being able to draw)?*

**CM:** I remember drawing with scissors when I was a toddler. Cutting animal shapes from construction paper. Plunging in and improvising... No turning back.

*CP: What does being able to draw mean to you?*

**CM:** Drawing means directness. Drawing means gathering and concentrating myself, making marks from this essential place. Drawing is not about facility; it's about daring and determination.



*CP: Do you currently keep a sketchbook? If so, do you find that you write or draw more in it, and what is its purpose?*

**CM:** Yes, I am drawing all the time—in sketchbooks, backs of envelopes, paper bags, napkins—anything at hand. I have a need to give concrete form to what's happening inside of me as it's happening, to empty out so as to enable continuous flow. It's a record that I can refer back to later as well.

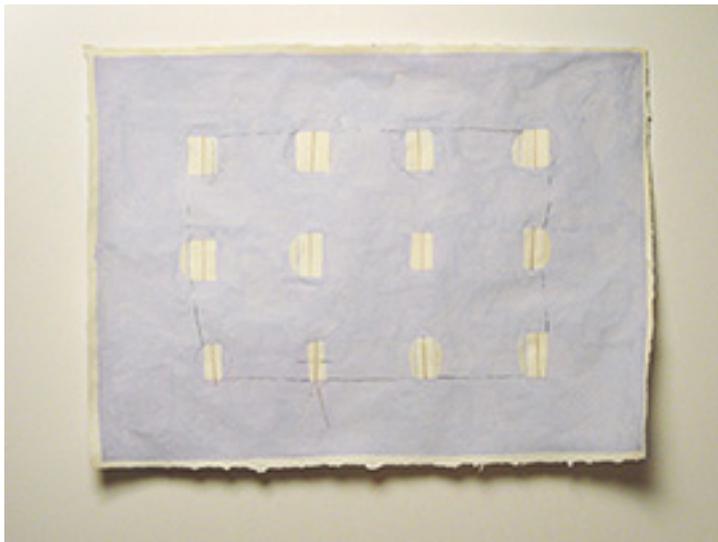
*CP: What role do words and phrases play in your creative process and in your drawings? And, do you see written language as drawing?*

**CM:** Certain words or phrases deliver. They give me a kick. I want to eat them. Incorporating them in a drawing or sculpture is how I do that. I experience such words or phrases as physical objects. Therefore they can be drawn (written) like anything else.



CP: *What is your definition of drawing? Has it changed over the years as you incorporate different materials, tools, techniques, and surfaces?*

CM: I am a contrary person. As soon as I draw a line around something (define it) I want to violate the boundary I've just established. I never thought of drawing as being limited to specific tools or materials. Drawing is mark-making. The handprints of cave painters: here I was.



CP: *Who are two contemporary artists whose work you enjoy? Why?*

CM: Anything ever made is contemporary if I can see and experience it in the present tense. I have been obsessed with Cycladic idols for 30 years. Yup'ik masks for ten. Cezanne, Myron Stout, Agnes Martin, Korean pots, nearly anything from Minoan Crete... etc etc. Works by these artists or from these cultures convey an essentiality. They correspond to and confirm something in me. In responding, I enable them to live.

CP: *How did you arrive at cutting and sewing or stitching as prominent elements in your process and of your work?*

CM: In the early 90s I stitched words into fabric or paper. I thought of the thread as a drawn line made concrete. Ten years later and some time after industrial felt entered my life, it occurred to me to build forms by cutting shapes and stitching them together. The low-

tech aspect appealed, while the laboriousness, the sitting still, continues to rankle. (Stitching thick industrial wool felt is particularly effortful.) Resistance is a necessary aspect of my art-making process. I need to overcome something. Stitching is persistence made manifest.

*CP: What gets your Hamster Wheel running? (What gets you itchy to draw or create?)*

*CM: The human condition. When I make art I feel less bound.*