

Atkinson Gallery

An Adjacent Possible? Deborah Zlotsky's *LifeLike*

By Kerry Methner, PhD / CASA

EVER PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES to open students' and viewers' minds to new possibilities, the Atkinson Gallery, under the leadership of Gallery Director Sarah Cunningham, will host an exhibition by Deborah Zlotsky titled *LifeLike*. It is the first exhibition on the Atkinson's busy 2013-2014 schedule which opens with a reception on Friday, August 30th, from 5 to 7pm.

LifeLike is comprised of 28 powdered graphite drawings by Zlotsky who soon begins a new position at Rhode Island School of Design after 17 years at the College of St. Rose.

"In the drawing series, *LifeLike*, I manipulate powdered graphite on sheets of mylar through a process of documenting what I imagine I see as the velvety material is spread, painted, blown, erased, wiped and smudged. While the results are fictitious, the concreteness of the illusion I conjure up blurs boundaries between documenting nature and inventing nature," writes Zlotsky of her process.

The combination of drawing and painting that occurs with powdered graphite offers Zlotsky the opportunity to incorporate chance and uncertainty in her creative process.



Deborah Zlotsky

Deborah Zlotsky is a 2012 recipient of a New York Foundation for the Arts Fellowship in painting and is represented by Kathryn Markel Fine Arts in New York where she had a solo exhibition in 2011. Recently, Zlotsky exhibited her drawings at Pierogi Gallery as the "Artist of the Week" (2010 and 2013), and in *Unhinged* in 2013. Zlotsky received a BA in Art History from Yale University and an MFA in Painting and Drawing from the University of Connecticut.

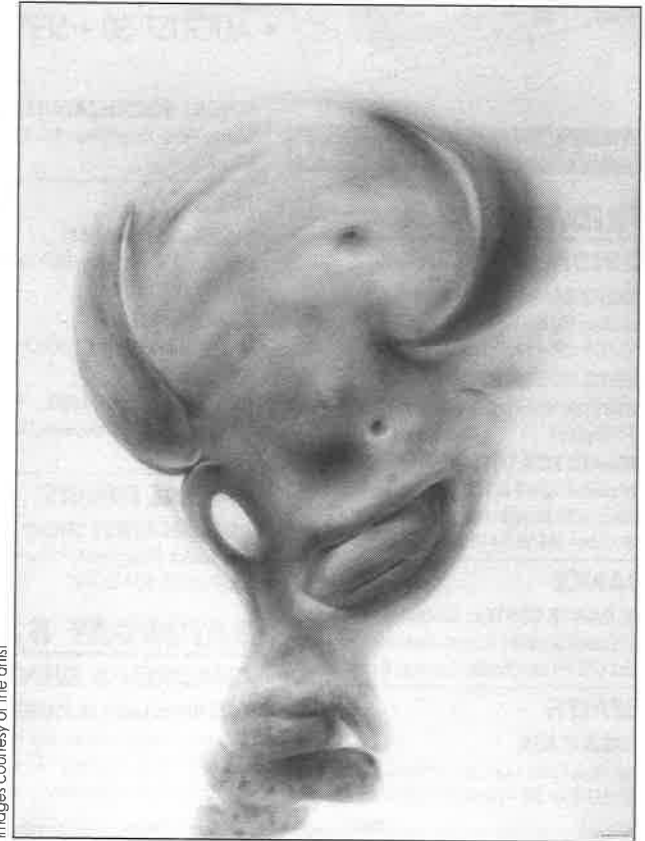
"As I work, stray marks begin to add up to create new sets of relationships," she explained via email. "When these new surfaces or forms emerge, I follow where they lead me."

Those new realities bear some resemblance to nature, yet also incorporate alternatives. "In both my drawings and paintings, I work responsively, constantly altering relationships in a process of accumulating, assembling and revising. In nature, the way organisms and systems seek alternative states of being by shifting slightly from a designated path is understood as the adjacent possible," the artist explained.

The drawings which are framed have a delicate, yet eerily powerful presence. "Powdered graphite... creates a beautifully subtle value range. Using the material on mylar, a surface which is endlessly forgiving, I'm able to rearrange relationships to go beyond a more predictable set of relationships. I usually get to a point where the relationships I describe are articulated, but there's very little life to them. At that point, I could throw the drawing away, but I usually stick with my pursuit, as there's nothing to lose," Zlotsky shared.

For Zlotsky, her work as an artist is similar to the work of a scientist. She observes the world and then works to communicate her observations. "The best artists bring their audience to a deeper understanding of the world and of being in the world," she noted. "It is liberating to know that roadblocks, screw-ups and wrong turns must be part of the process. For me, the pleasure of the pursuit is everything, and, while I'm never certain I'll find the final set of relationships, I'm confident in the process."

For more info on the artist visit www.deborahzlotsky.com
The Gallery is located in the West Campus Building 3, Rm 301 at Santa Barbara City College, 721 Cliff Drive and is open Mon-Thur: 10am-7pm and Fri & Sat: 10am-4pm. Or visit: galleriesbccc@sbcc.edu



Images courtesy of the artist

Vorlom, powdered graphite on yupo, 17x14", 2007, by **Deborah Zlotsky**.