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REVIEWS: NEW YORK

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Robyn O'Neil. *Warescene*, 2014.  
graphite and oil pastel on paper, 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ ".

## ROBYN O'NEIL

SUSAN INGLETT  
SEPTEMBER 12 - OCTOBER 18

Robyn O'Neil's massive 2011 triptych *Hell* is populated by tens of thousands of minute graphite figures that roam the bleak recessional spaces of an apocalyptic landscape. Intimately scaled, O'Neil's newest drawings largely dispense with figures, focusing instead on moody depictions of the landscapes into which they might have disappeared.

O'Neil's fixation with drawing began in childhood, and her approach to content has remained as resolutely personal as her process remains hands-on. Clustered on adjacent gallery walls, the 17 drawings (all 2014) in this show "I Burned Waves" were marked by powerful densities of color and texture achieved by layering images in an obsessive process O'Neil describes as "finger-painting with pastels."

Inventing realities rather than describing aspects of nature, O'Neil's dreamlike vistas offer a potent combination of incorporated graphite collage elements so as to inject foreground detail into ambiguous and otherwise largely unmarked middle distances. When people or their structures do appear, they are very absent presences. *Crowd Scene I* contains a group of figures, their backs turned on the viewer as if in departure. O'Neil's most ethereal work, *The Unmoored*, intimates the reflection of a vanished community that shimmers just below a barely visible horizon line, a ghost lurking within nature's machine.

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