



Rosemarie Fiore

Catalog accompanying the exhibition:

Rosemarie Fiore

Artificiere

May 19 – July 9, 2011

Introduction written by Priska C. Juschka

Essay written by Marshall N. Price,
Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art,
National Academy Museum, New York, NY

Cover Image:

Rosemarie Fiore

Firework Drawing #67, 2011 (detail)

Lit firework residue on paper

66 x 89 in. (167 x 226 cm)

Catalog Design:

Aaron Simonton

Catalog © Priska C. Juschka Fine Art 2011

Firework Drawing and Smoke Dome Images © Rosemarie Fiore

Firework Drawing Process Images © Michael Ferris Jr. and Almagul Menlibayeva

Smoke Dome Process Images © Thomas Stevens

All images courtesy of Priska C. Juschka Fine Art

PRISKA C. JUSCHKA FINE ART

547 West 27th Street, 2nd floor, New York, NY 10001

T:212.244.4320/ 718.782.4100 F:212.594.5452

E: gallery@priskajuschkafineart.com

www.priskajuschkafineart.com

Rosemarie Fiore



Shroud your heaven, Zeus,
With cloudy vapors,
And do as you will, like the boy
That knocks the heads off thistles,
With oak-trees and mountain-tops;
Now you must leave alone
My Earth for Me,
And my hut, which you did not build,
And my hearth,
The glowing whereof
You envy me.

PROMETHEUS (first verse) 1789
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The first gunpowder and fireworks specialists were considered artful and inventive masters of a rare trade (*ars* the Latin noun for 'art and skill' and *ficere* or *facere* the Latin verbs for 'creating and making').

The artificer (English), a typically male mythological figure with exceptional powers, often in fantasy games, cartoons and animation, goes back in western mythology and refers to Fiore's determination to blur the gender lines traditionally implied with the term and the task. The perilous craft of controlling gunpowder and fireworks was highly regarded, first in battle, and then for celebratory occasions only entrusted to a few selected men who had proven their expertise beyond doubt.

By choosing this medium and making it entirely her own, Fiore has not only willfully blurred the gender lines but also demonstrated that the control of fireworks can be as "artificial" as the connotation of being fantastical, chimerical, hallucinatory and as it must have occurred to the spectators of the first fireworks, marveling over the magical touch of the artificiere or pyrotechnician and his imaginative display.

Priska C. Juschka, 2011



Installation view from *Artificiere* at Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York, 2011



Installation view from *Artificiere* at Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York, 2011

Incendiary Endeavors

Fireworks are not subtle. They explode, crackle, flash, spin, fizz, streak, buzz, and erupt with a ferocity that only combustibles can provide. In the hands of artist Rosemarie Fiore they are instruments of creation with limitless potential and allow her to employ a process-based paradigm balanced precariously between chance and choice. In any medium, and Fiore has worked in nearly all of them, the artist consistently challenges the boundaries of this diametrical relationship. She works collaboratively with a selected mechanism: a waffle iron, a video game, an amusement park ride, a lawnmower, a pinball machine, or fireworks, to create what are perhaps best described as “events.”¹ Descended from a lineage that includes Yves Klein, Carolee Schneemann, Cai Guo-Qiang, and others, Fiore combines performance with painting, drawing, and various other art-making strategies in a desire to engage directly with the forces of chaos and control. This results in works that confront these collaborative art-making processes. Created intuitively and deliberately to a point, the *Firework Drawings* nevertheless share an affinity with the dynamical systems of chaos theory in which small changes in conditions can yield widely divergent outcomes. In the creation of these works the forces involved ultimately, in the artist’s own words, “engage in combat.”

The genesis of the drawings occurred while Fiore was in residency in Roswell, New Mexico during 2001–2002. In an appropriately serendipitous moment, she witnessed the streak of a smoke bomb as it rolled across a concrete surface, leaving behind an unmistakable dotted line. Realizing that the firework could serve as semi-controlled mark-making device, Fiore began her investigation into the efficacy of the medium. Since that time, her arsenal of pyrotechnical implements has expanded to include Monster Balls, Smoke Crackers, Jumping Jacks, Dinosaur Eggs, Ground Blooms, and Magic Whips, among others and the drawings have become increasingly complex with the artist’s growing command of her materials. These incendiary instruments have provided her the perfect mix of predictable results combined with mercurial and meandering effects. In the most recent series included in *Artificere*, and seen most prominently in *Firework Drawing #61* and *Firework Drawing #74*, Fiore’s slicing into the paper adds another layer of topographical complexity, while folding the paper creates areas of Rorschach-like effect.

Intrinsically generative (to use another mathematical term), the *Firework Drawings* transcend conventional drawing and collage and achieve a seemingly contradictory state of where the ephemeral is indefinitely held in a state of suspension.² A cause and effect relationship is established between the artist and the medium—a methodology that has been similarly employed by John Cage in the late 1980s and 1990 when he created a series of watercolors

¹ In 2004 Fiore employed the use of a “Scrambler” amusement park ride to create monumental hypocycloid drawings. These were exhibited in *Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings* at Grand Arts, Kansas City, MO, and also at the Queens Museum, New York.

² Generative is a term that is usually reserved for digitally created art using a mathematical system, algorithm, or other type of randomized process, and is perfectly suited to the artist’s *modus operandi* of combining the clearly circumscribed with the wildly unpredictable.

and other works on paper. Chance was the defining characteristic of Cage's practice, and he relied heavily on the *I Ching*, or Chinese Book of Changes, an ancient divination text, to create his works. Fiore's approach is more intuitive and she eschews a rigorous formal framework in the creation of the *Firework Drawings*. Like Cage, however, during the creative process she embraces and even delights in the chance elements that may be beyond her control.

The foundation of these works is realized by initially drawing with the fireworks directly onto the paper, a balancing act of calculated manipulation and autonomous combustion. Circular and other shapes are collaged over the surface and the paper may also be folded, scored, or torn to achieve an expansive chromatic cosmos and inherently layered sculptural low relief. For Fiore, the work is just as much a means to an end as it is an end to a means and she pushes the limits of her control to the precipice as part of this creative process.³ The performative aspect of her work aligns her with predecessors such as Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, and others, but her art historical knowledge is broad and she has drawn inspiration from artists as varied as Ralph Albert Blakelock, Wolfgang Paalen, and Andrew Wyeth, nearly all of whom have informed her work in some way. While Fiore's insatiable appetite for experimentation assures that no mechanism is out-of-bounds for art making, her earnest visual curiosity also excludes no artist from considered study.

Filled with circular bursts, sweeping arcs, zigzags, and flashes of color, the *Firework Drawings* have an inherent ambiguity of scale that could suggest we are peering through a telescope witnessing history through a distant astronomical occurrence or observing the unpredictable movement of protozoa through a microscope.⁴ These works however are not representational in a conventional sense. It has been noted that Fiore's work, based as it is on collaborating with aggressive mechanisms, becomes a critical investigation into issues of gender, power, aggression and sexuality, but these are often merely byproducts of an all-consuming practice. The earliest firework drawings included brilliant chromatic displays of colorful circular shapes interspersed with scorched remnants of flammables and areas of white paper that share formal similarities with the early modernist works of Franz Kupka or Robert Delaunay. These gave way to considerably more dense and complex compositions that were significantly less restrained as Fiore has gained greater precision over the mercurial medium. The most recent series of the drawings are large-scale and have a more active engagement with the physical properties of the paper as the artist now slices, folds, and tears the support in a sculptural way. In her search to capture this effect in three-dimensions, Fiore has recently gone beyond the paper and begun to create firework sculptures in glass. In a process that resembles casting in reverse, the fireworks are inserted into molten glass, which expands under the pressure released from the device creating *Smoke Domes*.

³ Jonathan Stuhlman, "When Choice Meets Chance (The Two May Dance)" in *Rosemarie Fiore: Painting, Performance, Machines*. Exh. cat. (Charlottesville, VA: Second Street Gallery, 2008), n.p.

⁴ Stephen Maine has identified the ambiguity of scale that leads to the dual nature of the drawings. Stephen Maine, "Rosemarie Fiore," *artcritical.com*.

Fiore's creative process lies at the intersection of chance and choice and her insatiable appetite for experimentation and desire to direct forces that otherwise appear ungovernable are at the very root of her practice. For the artist, the action of making these works is an intoxicant, and that action, as critic Lilly Wei has noted, is a type of choreography as well as a private rite of exorcism.⁵ It is, in fact, action painting, but of a very different sort, and yet still reminiscent of the one Hans Namuth captured in his 1950 film of Jackson Pollock pouring paint in the studio. While Fiore shares an interest in automatism, these works emanate from another place in the artist's psyche. They come from a congenital urge to delve deeply into and experiment with an intricate collaborative process that constantly challenges the notion of control. Wrestling with these challenges are intrinsic to Fiore's incendiary endeavors.

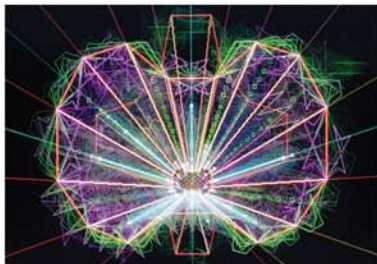
Marshall N. Price, New York, NY, June 2011



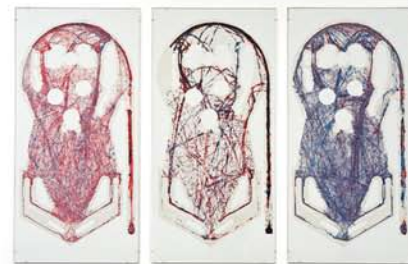
Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings, 2004
1964 Eli Bridge Scrambler ride, generator, compressor, bucket, acrylic on vinyl, video camera, 60 x 60 ft.
installation view from Grand Arts, Kansas City, MO.
photo: E.G.



Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings, 2004
acrylic on vinyl, video projections
installation view from the Queens Museum of Art, Flushing, NY
photo: Stefan Hagen



Tempest 1, 2001
digital c-print
4 x 6 ft.
long exposure from the video game Tempest



Evel Knievel Pinball Paintings, 2002
oil on vellum, size and shape of machine's playboard
installation view from Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA.
photo: Stacey Evans Photography

⁵ Lilly Wei, "Pyrotechnically Yours: Rosemarie Fiore draws with fireworks," *14 Art On Paper* September/October 2009, 20.

Firework Drawings



Firework Drawing #68, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 60¼ x 82½ in. (155 x 210 cm)



Firework Drawing #61, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 82 x 69¼ in. (208 x 177 cm)



Firework Drawing #69, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 42 x 32½ in. (107 x 83 cm)



Firework Drawing #70, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 44½ x 48 in. (113 x 123 cm)



Firework Drawing #67, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 66 x 89 in. (167 x 226 cm)



Firework Drawing #66, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 62½ x 83¼ in. (157 x 213 cm)



Firework Drawing #65, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 81½ x 65½ in. (207 x 166 cm)



Firework Drawing #74, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 48¼ x 59½ in. (122 x 151 cm)



Firework Drawing #77, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 31¼ x 29¼ in. (80.5 x 75.5 cm)



Firework Drawing #75, 2011, Lit firework residue on paper, 44½ x 41¼ in. (114 x 104 cm)



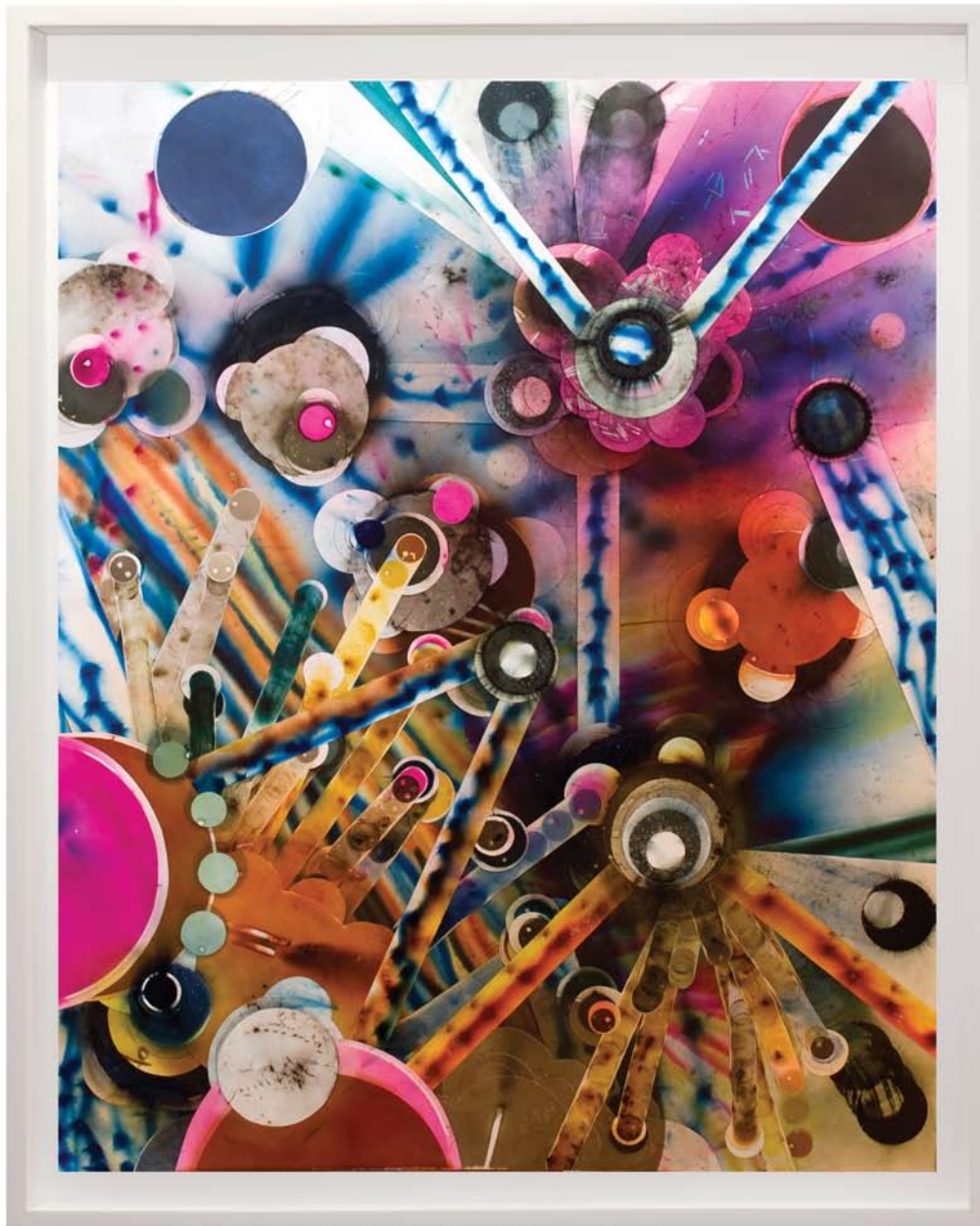
Firework Drawing #13, 2009, Lit firework residue on paper, 59¾ x 83¾ in. (152 x 210 cm)



Firework Drawing #57, 2009, Lit firework residue on paper, 30¼ x 44¼ in. (77 x 112 cm)



Firework Drawing #28, 2009, Lit firework residue on paper, 41½ x 62 in. (105 x 158 cm)



Firework Drawing #6, 2009, Lit firework residue on paper, 82¼ x 66 in. (209 x 167.5 cm)

Firework Drawing Process



Rosemarie Fiore at her studio in The Bronx, NY



Rosemarie Fiore at her studio in The Bronx, NY



Rosemarie Fiore at her studio in The Bronx, NY

Smoke Domes



Smoke Dome, 2011, Glass blown by smoke bombs, 4½ x 6½ x 10½ in. (11.5 x 16.5 x 27 cm)



Smoke Domes, 2011, Glass blown by smoke bombs, 4½ x 10 x 9½ in. (11.5 x 25.5 x 24 cm)



Smoke Dome, 2011, Glass blown by smoke bomb, 3½ x 7 x 7 in. (9 x 18 x 18 cm)

Smoke Dome Process



Rosemarie Fiore with gaffer Paul Elyseev at Hot Sand Glassblowing Studio in Ashbury Park, NJ

Rosemarie Fiore

Born in Mt. Kisco, NY
Lives and works in The Bronx, NY

Education

1999 MFA, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, IL
1994 BA, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
1993 Wimbledon School of Art, London, UK
Studio Art Centers International, Florence, Italy



Selected Solo Exhibitions

2011 *Artificiere*, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York, NY
2009 *Pyrotechnics*, Priska C. Juschka Fine Art, New York, NY
2008 *Painting, Performance and Machines*, Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA
2006 *House of Fiction*, Winkleman Gallery, New York, NY
2004 *The Good-Time Mix Machine: Scrambler Drawings*, Grand Arts, Kansas City, MO
Plus Ultra Gallery, Brooklyn, NY
ADA Gallery, Richmond, VA
Bodybuilder and Sportsman Gallery (Tony Wight Gallery), Chicago, IL

Selected Group Exhibitions

2011 *Extreme Materials 2*, The Grand Gallery, Memorial Art Gallery, University of Rochester, NY
2010 *Art on Paper 2010 Biennial Exhibition*, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, NC
Fire Works, curated by Mary Birmingham, Hunterdon Art Museum, Clinton, NJ
2009 *Anthem*, Longwood Art Gallery @ Hostos, The Bronx, NY
2007 *Workspace Program 2001-07 Exhibition*, Dieu Donné Papermill, New York, NY
Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program 40th Anniversary Exhibition, Roswell Museum and Art Center, Roswell, NM
INTERSECTIONS: Collaborative Forces from the Artist-in-Residence Program, Abrons Art Center-Henry Street Settlement, New York, NY
2006 *The Spirit of Color*, Amy Simon Fine Art, Westport, CT
Permanent Adolescence, curated by Mauricio Laffitte-Soler, Cuchifritos, New York, NY
2005 *Sir Issac's Loft*, The Franklin Institute of Science, Philadelphia, PA
Adaptation Syndrome, curated by Dinah Ryan, The Hand Workshop, Richmond, VA
Blasts, curated by Paul Brewer, G Fine Art, Washington, D.C.

Awards / Residencies

- 2009 NYFA Fellowship in Printmaking/Drawing/Book Arts, New York, NY
BRIO (Bronx Recognizes Its Own) Grant, The Bronx, NY
- 2007 Yaddo Residency, Saratoga Springs, NY
Constance Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts Fellow, Ithaca, NY
Blue Mountain Center Residency, Blue Mountain Lake, NY
- 2005 Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Residency, Amherst, VA
- 2004 AIR Program, Abrons Art Center-The Henry Street Settlement, New York, NY (2003 – 2004)
- 2003 Marie Walsh Sharpe Studio Program, New York, NY (2002 – 2003)
The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH
- 2002 Special Editions Fellowship, The Lower East Side Print Shop, New York, NY
Roswell Foundation Grant, The Anderson Museum of Art, Roswell, NM
- 2001 Artist in the Marketplace (AIM) Program, The Bronx Museum, The Bronx, NY
Workspace Grant, Dieu Donné Papermill, New York, NY

Selected Bibliography

- 2012 Manco, Tristan. *Raw Materials*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2012.
- 2011 Price, Marshall. "Incendiary Endeavors." *Artificiere*, exhibition catalog, 2011.
Fallah, Amir. "Rosemarie Fiore's Firework Drawings." *Beautiful Decay*, April 27, 2011.
- 2010 Eden, Xandra. *Art on Paper 2010: The 41st Exhibition*, exhibition catalog, Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2010.
N. Bourquin, S. Ehmann, R. Klanten and T. Tossot (ed.). *Data Flow: Visualizing Information in Graphic Design 2*. Berlin: Gestalten, 2010.
étapes, no. 184, September 2010, 8-9.
- 2009 Wei, Lilly. "Pyrotechnically Yours: Rosemarie Fiore draws with fireworks." *Art On Paper*, September 2009, 18-21.
Maine, Stephen. "Stephen Maine on Rosemarie Fiore." *Artcritical.com*, May 8, 2009.
Shuster, Robert. "Rosemarie Fiore: Pyrotechnics." *Village Voice*, April 7, 2009.
- 2008 Maine, Stephen, "Report from Kansas City." *Art in America*, October 2008, 63.
Ryan, Paul. "Review: Rosemarie Fiore, Charlottesville, VA." *Art Papers*, July/August 2008, 55.
Hellige, H., S. Ehmann and R. Klanten (eds.). *The Upset - Young Contemporary Art*. Berlin: Gestalten, 2008.
C. Barber, L. Dyer and L. Stoddard (eds.). *Rosemarie Fiore: Painting, Performance, Machines*, exhibition catalog. Second Street Gallery, Charlottesville, VA, 2008.
- 2007 Sukop, Sylvia. "Rosemarie Fiore." *Flaunt Magazine*, no. 89, 2007, cover, 74-77.
Klanten, Robert (ed.). *Neo Geo: A New Edge to Abstraction*. Berlin: Gestalten, 2007.

Interview

- 2009 Rosemarie Fiore. "Interview with Will Corwin." *Art on Air*. www.artonair.org. 12 December 2009.

Selected Collections

- The Weatherspoon Art Museum, University of North Carolina, Greensboro, NC
The Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, Roswell, NM
Capital One, Richmond, VA
The Franklin Institute of Science, Philadelphia, PA
Neuberger Berman, New York, NY
Dieu Donné Papermill, New York, NY
Lower East Side Printshop, New York, NY

