



Black Drawing 157, 2025, colored pencil and graphite on paper, 30.5 x 22.9 cm (12 x 9 in.)

Nancy Blum: *The Black Drawings*

12 December 2025 – 22 January 2026

Preview: Thursday 11 December, 6–9pm

19 East 66th Street, 4th and 5th Floors, New York, NY 10065

On view alongside *Robert Ryan: Another Time and Place*

Robilant+Voena is pleased to present a **solo exhibition of works by Brooklyn-based artist Nancy Blum**, entitled *The Black Drawings*. The exhibition brings together a selection of new works on paper that celebrate the **joys of making and of looking**.

The *Black Drawings* emerged as a decisive move by the artist to **push the limits of her practice**, to create something which was not dependent on external stimuli, rather coming from within. Within the simple parameter of a standard sheet of rectangular black paper, each piece begins with an instinctive mark by the artist, who then follows and builds further connected marks, resulting in organic forms that seem to dictate their own creation. This process of drawing in a **spontaneous and imaginative way** was a profound moment for the artist, explaining that **'it returned me to the early satisfaction of generating patterns as a child, an enlivening and formative process.'**

Visually, the *Black Drawings* consist of **sumptuous lines, patterns, and seemingly organic or biomorphic forms** that **evade a sense of scale**, while also questioning the relationship between matter and void, foreground and background. While the drawings might resemble widely contrasting entities – some marine creatures, others prisms or cosmic phenomena – each piece starts with the same **innate act of creation**. These mesmeric designs, executed in coloured pencil and graphite, co-exist and tussle within the confines of the rectangular paper sheet, a playful space that offers both boundaries and possibilities.



Cloud 1, 2024, colored pencil and graphite on paper, 96.5 x 71.1 cm (38 x 28 in.)



Black Drawing 255, 2025, colored pencil and graphite on paper, 30.5 x 22.9 cm (12 x 9 in.)

Some works – like the *Black Drawing 102* and *Cloud 1* – invite the viewer to **fixate upon what is often overlooked**, to read beneath the hubbub of colour and form. Here, individual lines pressed into the paper come together to form the whole, offering a reflection on the self and the other, a democracy of many voices.

Other pieces, such as *Black Drawing 113* and *Rainbow Light 3*, might suggest the **interdependency of things**, of people, of communities, of all living beings. The works invite a multiplicity of readings, just as any one line can be followed on a journey across the drawing, different to all its neighbours.

The exhibition conveys the **artist's meditative approach** to making and to looking, rooted in a profound **love of craft** that slows the mind and the body, demanding attention from both maker and viewer. This sense of ritual underpins much of her wider practice, which she describes as 'demanding repetition of the body and perpetual renewal in the realm of the imagination'.

For the artist, **drawing is both a means and an end**, an investigation and an offering. The slow, repetitive act of mark-making creates a visual embodiment of time that seeks to counteract the pace of modern society which allows no time for stillness. The quiet, creative gesture of her medium parallels the mending of our communities: as Blum puts it, 'patient, cumulative, and never complete'.

For Robilant+Voena's winter exhibition, Nancy Blum's drawings offer a **moment of calm and creative optimism** amidst the rush and demands of the holiday season.



Roaming Underfoot mosaic installation at 28th Street subway station

Nancy Blum (b. Champaign, IL) is a visual artist based in Brooklyn who creates works on paper that explore the interconnectivity of things, material and non-material. Her drawings present a view of life that pulses with curiosity and engagement, illuminating the world as she experiences it, through plants, geometry, science and devotional practices. Each drawing is a playful reflection of these elements as they are interpreted through her imagination.

Beginning with an interest in ceramics, her education at Cranbrook Academy of Art furthered her reverence for the values of craft, and deepened her interests in devotional imagery. Since then she has become known for her large scale botanical drawings and more experimental *Black Drawings*. The latter – an ongoing series of hundreds of semi-abstract coloured pencil drawings on paper – express the contingency of fixed representation, serving as a gateway to all the possible ways of not only *expressing* being, but proactively *being* in the process. More recently her meanderings have opened up investigations exploring consciousness.

Over the last thirty years, Blum has exhibited drawings and sculptures across the US, and has been especially committed to placing artworks permanently in spaces where they become a part of people's everyday life. This has led to a public art practice across two decades, which includes such projects as: 'City Light/City Bright' composed of over 100 hatchcovers of original design dispersed around Seattle (2001); West Bank Station that serves the Cedar-Riverside and University of Minnesota communities, reflecting immigration and migration (2014); 'Revival', a commission for San Francisco General Hospital's acute care unit comprising five sets of etched glass windows (2015); and 'Roaming Underfoot', a suite of large-scale botanically themed glass mosaics located at NYC's historical 29th St subway station (2019).

Blum's drawings and sculptures have been represented in numerous exhibitions at galleries and other venues across the US such as the Weatherspoon Art Museum, UNC Greensboro; the International Print Center, New York; and the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens. Her work is held several private and public collections internationally, including the World Ceramic Exposition Foundation in Icheon, South Korea; the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art; and the Boise Art Museum. Also among these project is a permanent installation at the residence of the American Ambassador to Belgium.

She has undertaken residencies at Bowdoin College, Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts, Ohio State University, Kansas City Art Institute, Atlantic Center for the Arts, Hunter College, University of Michigan School of Art, and the Banff Centre for the Arts, among many other institutions. Her work has also been recognized through fellowships from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Peter S. Reed Foundation, Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation, and New York's Lower East Side Printshop.

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Notes to editors

Robilant+Voena is a partnership of art dealers Edmondo di Robilant and Marco Voena. They launched R+V in London in 2004. Further gallery spaces were opened in Milan in 2009, and Paris and New York in 2020. R+V has distinguished itself as one of the leading international art dealers in Old Master paintings, as well as 20th-century Italian art. In recent years, the gallery's dual specialisms in European

Old Master paintings and 20th-century Italian art have been complemented by a carefully curated programme of contemporary projects, working with artists whose practices build upon the artistic inheritance of the past.

R+V is committed to excellence across all its activities. The gallery strives to create dynamic, thought-provoking exhibitions that juxtapose the old and the new, creating unexpected links between artists working across the centuries and drawing out eternal themes through art.

The gallery has sold paintings and works of art to many important private and royal collections and museums including the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Frick Collection, the Gallerie dell'Accademia Venice, the Louvre Abu Dhabi, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Musée d'Orsay, Paris, the National Gallery, London, the National Gallery of Stockholm, the Museum of Western Art Tokyo, and the Pinacoteca di Brera Milan. R+V is represented at the most prestigious fine art fairs in the world, and is committed to its active exhibitions program and the publication of books and scholarly catalogues.

Current and upcoming exhibitions

New York

Robert Ryan: Another Time and Place, 12 December – 22 January

London

Pascale Marthine Tayou, 16 October – 19 December

Milan

Philippe Pastor. North Pole, 2 December – 16 January