

'Drawings'

Gallery Joe

Philadelphia

The drawings of Bruce Conner, Jacob El Hanani, and Mark Lombardi first appeared together in the Whitney Museum's rambling 2005 "Building and Breaking the Grid" exhibition. The works on paper here, mostly executed in the 1990s, resonated with one another while reflecting the distinctive interests of these three pivotal artists.

Conner, who came to prominence as a filmmaker and assemblage artist during the Beat era, showed vertical inkblot strands executed serially on accordion-folded paper, sometimes discreetly collaged. Not singular glyphs as in Rorschach blots, these works spread like dense fractal patterns. The repetitive, all-over designs and a speckled quality in some of them suggest Persian textiles.

A different kind of happenstance orders the work of the late Mark Lombardi. Essentially flowcharts, Lombardi's drawings record political scandals, off-shore banking operations, and similar activities documented in public sources like the *New York Times*. From a distance, the minimal, curved lines and names and dates at the points of intersection might represent structures or biological processes. Lombardi's occasional notations in red were the only spots of color in the show.

Each of Jacob El Hanani's drawings is a field of minuscule markings: circles smaller than champagne bubbles, thread-thin dashes, or minute Hebrew letters. One piece is composed of tiny fragile hatch marks, a Lilliputian emulation of Jasper Johns. Changes in density emerge to produce atmosphere and movement within El Hanani's aggregations.

The accident of spilled ink, unruly



Jacob El Hanani, *Circle NOF* (detail), 2005, ink on paper, 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ " x 15 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". Gallery Joe.

jumbles of facts, paradoxes of scale, and monotonous reiterations coalesce as elegant order in the works of this coolly harmonious trio.

—Robin Rice