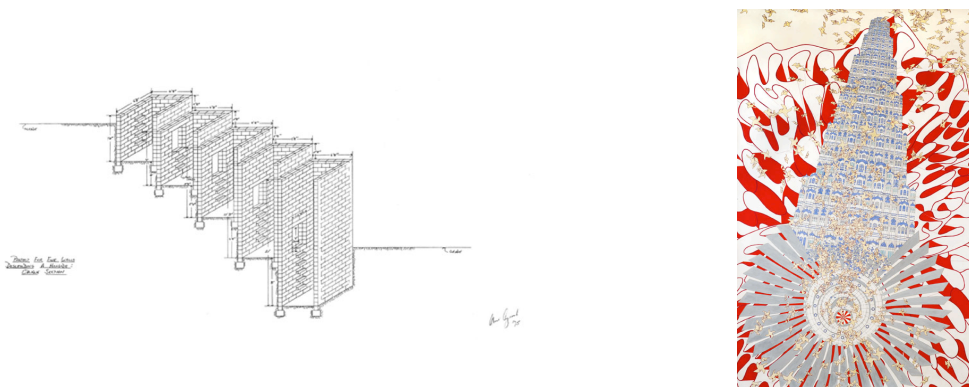


**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**THE PARRISH ART MUSEUM PRESENTS  
A MAJOR RETROSPECTIVE OF ALICE AYCOCK DRAWINGS,  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GREY ART GALLERY, NYU**

***Exhibition Includes More Than 100 Works from 1971 to the Present***



**WATER MILL, NY 4/15/2013** — The Parrish Art Museum is presenting *Alice Aycock Drawings: Some Stories Are Worth Repeating*, an exhibition in two venues, in partnership with the Grey Art Gallery, New York University's fine-arts museum. The first comprehensive exploration of this vital aspect of the renowned sculptor's creative process, the exhibition has been organized by Parrish Art Museum Adjunct Curator Jonathan Fineberg, Gutgsell Professor of Art History Emeritus at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. Opening at the Parrish Art Museum in Water Mill, NY on April 21, and at the Grey Art Gallery, NYU, on April 23, the exhibition traces Aycock's career from 1971 to the present, highlighting the major themes that have governed her artistic practice.

A fully illustrated catalogue, featuring an interpretive essay by Fineberg and an introduction by Parrish Art Museum Director Terrie Sultan, will accompany the exhibition. It is the first scholarly exploration of the pivotal, enormously productive role drawing has played in Aycock's career over the course of her 40 years as a professional artist. The catalogue is published by the Parrish Art Museum and distributed by Yale University Press. The exhibition will travel to Santa Barbara, where the two parts will be on view concurrently at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art and the Art, Design & Architecture Museum, UC Santa Barbara, from January 25 through April 19, 2014.

While Aycock is best known for her large-scale installations and outdoor sculptures, her drawings capture the full range of her ideas and sources. Consisting of approximately 100 works, the exhibition will be presented in two parts. The 55 works in the Parrish Art Museum's section (April 21–July 13) cover the years 1984 to the present, when Aycock developed an increasingly elaborate visual vocabulary, drawing upon a multitude of sources and facilitated in part by the use of computer programs. The Grey Art

Gallery's installation (April 23–July 13) focuses on the years 1971–1984 and features 48 works, including detailed architectural drawings, sculptural maquettes, and photo documentation for both realized and imagined architectural projects.

"Aycock is an artist who thinks on paper," writes Terrie Sultan in the catalogue introduction. "Her spectacular drawings are equal parts engineering plan and science-fiction imagining. As in all of her work, fantastic narrative writings weave in and out of her images, inspiring her production of sculptural objects, drawings, and installations."

Language and architecture have informed Aycock's drawings in ever-more imaginative ways. At the Parrish Art Museum, *The Rosetta Stone City Intersected by the Celestial Alphabet* (1985) and *The Garden of Scripts (Villandry)* (1986), show how Aycock uses as architectural elements Egyptian hieroglyphics, Mesopotamian cuneiform, Native American pictographs, and Chinese and Sanskrit characters. Board games are another source of inspiration for the artist. *The Celestial City Game* (1988) is based on the heavenly city of Jerusalem, with snakes and ladders in a central checkerboard, surrounded by a city plan derived from an 8th-century illuminated manuscript. The deep whirlpool in the middle of *The Glass Bead Game: Circling 'Round the Ka' Ba* (1985) was inspired by a photograph of people whirling in a rapturous, hypnotic dance around Mecca's sacred site. Instead of the actual Ka' Ba, however, the black structure hovering above the center is a depiction of a wooden shanty the artist saw in Cairo's City of the Dead.

Both Aycock's built projects and her drawings achieved new complexity in the 1990s with the advent of computer graphics programs, which enable her to view forms from multiple perspectives, create mathematically perfect curves, generate precise construction drawings, reduce and enlarge at will, scale a piece perfectly in a site, and imagine points of view that are extraordinarily accurate. The way in which her several vocabularies of drawing mirror the multivalent simultaneity of her sources and trajectories of thought manifest both her conceptual clarity and her formal depth. But her drawing practice also anticipates how today's emerging artists are employing systems-based drawing as an increasingly important venue for cultural speculation.

A suite of seven drawings from 1993, *The Eaters of the Night (A Continuing Series)*, encapsulates many of Aycock's concerns, including cities, wars, mechanical movements, games, universe schemes, languages, and dances. These intricate drawings in white ink on black paper place various schemes—city plans, dance steps, game configurations, and mechanical movements—on canopies of stars. *Rock, Paper, Scissors (India '07)*, from 2012, was inspired by a visit to the Hawa Mahal in Jaipur. With a computer program, Aycock redrew the five-story structure repeatedly to produce a high tower of many stories, tapering to a peak. At its base a turbine or blade machine radiates from a central axle, while the structure is encircled by red and white curvilinear forms.

In another recent drawing in the exhibition, *From the Series Entitled "Sum Over Histories": Timescape #5 Over the Landscape of the Pacific Ocean* (2011), Aycock appropriates a topographic rendering of the Pacific Ocean floor from an old exhibition catalogue, scans it into a computer, and stretches it out horizontally, distorting it into a flat sheet floating in space. She then uses a computer program to superimpose on the map whirlwinds and spinning tops, ribbon-like pathways doubling back and wrapping around themselves, helices and circular blades, and other complex forms. According to

Fineberg, “This is the crux of Aycock’s work: peregrinations through unpredictable networks of meaning, in many directions at once, into the breathtaking landscape of a place you’ve never been before.”

Alice Aycock first produced working drawings for imaginary projects in the early 1970s, at the same time as she began creating site-specific structures on an architectural scale. The Grey Art Gallery’s installation includes a broad selection of drawings, ranging from conceptual idea-making to detailed working documents for the construction of intricate and challenging monumental installations, as well as photographic documentation of projects realized before 1984. Just as the early constructions choreographed the viewer through a mixture of psychological sensations, the early drawings from this period, among them *Project for a Vertical Maze* (1975) and *Project for Five Wells Descending a Hillside* (1975), depict imagined architectural constructions designed to elicit feelings ranging from comfort and security to anxiety and distress.

In the late 1970s, language began to figure more prominently in Aycock’s work, in the form of increasingly elaborate and allusive titles and narratives that reflected the many sources she mined for ideas—contemporary and obsolete science, philosophies and belief systems, mythology, fantastic architecture, archeology, family history, literature, and clinical psychology texts, especially those dealing with the language of schizophrenia. Several major drawings from this period are on view at the Grey. *Project Entitled: “A Shanty Town Whose Lunatic Charms...”* (*Project Entitled: “A Shanty Town Inhabited by Two Lunatics...”*), from 1978, depicts 36 different buildings and is accompanied by a 1,000-word “story” that mixes genres to create a faux film treatment complete with background music, characters, and action, all of which turn narrative conventions on their heads. *Project Entitled “The City of the Walls: A Narrow City, A Thin City...”* (1978) is complemented by a similarly disjunctive, free-ranging text set in the Middle Ages and referencing multiple sites such as Cairo’s City of the Dead; Bloomfield, Indiana; Sarajevo; and Reykjavik.

During the early 1980s, Aycock’s interest in machinery and mechanics—cross-bred with imaginary science of the *Ghostbusters* variety—intensified, resulting in a series of works that are represented in the Grey’s installation by drawings and maquettes. These include *The Miraculating Machine in the Garden* (1980); *From the Series Entitled How to Catch and Manufacture Ghosts: “Collected Ghost Stories from the Workhouse”* (1980); *Rotary Lightning Express (An Apparatus for Determining the Effects of Mesmerism on Terrestrial Currents)* (1980); and *The Savage Sparkler* (1981). Commenting on *The Miraculating Machine in the Garden*, Fineberg writes, “It is a romantic scientific apparatus, like something from an old Frankenstein movie, seemingly capable of harnessing awesome natural forces.”

Born in 1946 and educated at Douglass College and Hunter College, Alice Aycock emerged in New York in the 1970s, and her approach to art exemplified the ways artists radically redefined the trajectory of art during that decade. Her work was exhibited widely during the seventies and eighties, from the Museum of Modern Art to Documenta. Aycock has also had a profound effect on succeeding generations of artists, both through the example of her new work and through her teaching at various institutions, chief among them the School of Visual Arts in New York, where she has taught since 1991. She also served on the Public Design Commission of the City of New York from 2003 to 2012, and is currently visiting artist at Mount Royal School of Art at Maryland Institute College of Art, Baltimore, MD.

Aycock's work is in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Brooklyn Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the National Gallery of Art, and the Parrish Art Museum, among many others. She has exhibited at galleries and museums throughout the world, and her permanent public art works are on display at locations throughout the United States, among them New York, Washington, D.C., Nashville, Sacramento, Tampa, Dallas, Kansas City, Ann Arbor, and at the Omi International Arts Center in Ghent, NY. Aycock's 1998 sculpture *Star Sifter* was recently reconfigured into a new version of the work, which is now featured prominently in the center of JFK International Airport's Terminal One Departure Hall in New York.

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by the generous support of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Eric and Fiona Rudin, Agnes Gund, The College of Fine and Applied Arts at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Eliza Gatfield, Henry S. McNeil, Joseph M. Cohen, James Salomon, and Beth Rudin DeWoody.

The Parrish Art Museum's programs are made possible, in part, by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, and the property taxpayers from the Southampton School District and the Tuckahoe Common School District.

Funding for the presentation at the Grey Art Gallery is provided by Martin C. Liu; the Grey's Director's Circle, Inter/National Council, and Friends; and the Abby Weed Grey Trust.

Image captions, left to right:

*Project for Five Wells Descending a Hillside—Oblique Section*, 1975. Pencil on vellum, 21 × 37½ inches. Collection of the artist

*Rock, Paper, Scissors (India '07)*, 2010. Watercolor and ink on paper, 95 11/16 x 59 ½ inches. Miami Art Museum. Gift of Jerry Lindzon

#### **About the Parrish Art Museum**

The Parrish Art Museum is the oldest cultural institution on the East End of Long Island, uniquely situated within one of the most concentrated creative communities in the United States. The Parrish is dedicated to the collection, preservation, interpretation, and dissemination of art from the nineteenth century to the present, with a particular focus on honoring the rich creative legacy of the East End, celebrating the region's enduring heritage as a vibrant art colony, telling the story of our area, our "sense of place," and its national—even global—impact on the world of art. The Parrish is committed to educational outreach, to serving as a dynamic cultural resource for its diverse community, and to celebrating artistic innovation for generations to come.

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