



# The Washington Times

HIRSHHORN UNVEILS A WALL OF MEYERS WORK



A 400-foot long wall drawing is no simple feat. Since commencing February 29 District-based artist Linn Meyers had been working in-situ within the inner-ring gallery of the Hirshhorn's second floor, finally concluding her work the first week of May. For 65 days she remained inches from her drawing, concentrating on the arc of the line she placed on the wall, attentive to how it echoed the form of line beneath it. Since April 7, the official opening of the Irwin exhibition, she herself had also been on display: Walking up and down ladders, following the undulating forms of her work, and nearly oblivious to the patrons taking pictures of her work in process. "Almost every past wall drawing was completed in 15-hour-per-day chunks," Ms. Meyers reflected. Like past drawing installations at The Phillips Collection or The Katzen at American University, Ms. Meyers' drawing installations often consist of concentric circles growing out from several radii. Eventually the circles intersect, creating an organic junction that swirls away from the circular form — like a map of the wind.

Previously, the largest wall drawing she had completed, at The Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, took around 180 hours over 12 days, covering only a quarter of the wall space as her Hirshhorn drawing. For her new drawing, the artist undertook a mathematical projection based on her past installations. "The last thing you want to have happen is fall behind," she said. With 70 days to complete the new drawing, she finished five days ahead of schedule. Ms. Meyers was first approached by the Hirshhorn in the summer of 2015 to consider making a work that would fill the entire length of the wall in the inner ring gallery. "We thought of her art as the perfect work to be in dialogue with Robert Irwin," noted curator Stephane Aquin.

Anderson, John. 'Hirshhorn Unveils A Wall Of Meyers Artwork.' *The Washington Times*, May 15, 2016.

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Mr. Irwin, in the decades since the 1982 publication of Lawrence Weschler's book, "Seeing Is Forgetting the Name of the Thing One Sees," has been considered a sagelike Zen master of perception in the art world. Having abandoned abstraction, and eventually paint, Mr. Irwin's signature pieces — of discs that appear to float off the wall, and of scrim stretched across rooms — disrupt how people experience a space. Mr. Irwin's exhibition, which runs through Sept. 5, occupies the galleries of the outer ring on the second floor. The dialogue between the two artists is an apropos analysis, although Ms. Meyers would be quick to point out that Mr. Irwin moved away from drawing and painting decades ago. "I'm still fascinated by mark-making," she admits.

Ms. Meyers spent the better part of six months working through preparatory drawings and walking through the space to determine how the composition might flow for the site-specific piece. "Most people think of this as one continuous space," she said, "but there are architectural elements that break it up."

Eight of them to be precise: Four currently function as entrances to gallery spaces in the outer ring, and four recessed areas provide staff access to nonexhibition spaces. In an effort to connect the sections, she had the wall painted in two tones the length of the inner ring: a yellow parchment up top and a light gray beneath. An additional effort to unify the eight sections involves a symmetrical element placed on either side of the breaks in the wall. Each decision responds to the architecture in subtle ways, including how — in one location — the drawing quiets down to a sparse few strokes. It frames the entrance of Mr. Irwin's site-specific installation, "Square the Circle," which bisects the outer curve of the building with a floor-to-ceiling scrim that stretches more than 100 feet across. Whereas Mr. Irwin's installation calls attention to the hulking, spacious mass of building, Ms. Meyers' spare wall drawing is in a location where the hall of the interior ring narrows to an almost claustrophobic width.

Even the title of Ms. Meyers' drawing, "Our View From Here," supports the architectural elements of the building. The nature of the space prohibits the viewer from seeing the entire work at once, and the bends in the wall obliterate most opportunities to fully test the symmetry of adjacent sections. As such, the drawing forces the viewer to move alongside it, and to watch the lines rise and fall.

Unlike the preparatory studies, which were drawn with technical pens using strokes of the wrist, the resulting final work was drawn with thicker markers and strokes encompassing a broader sweep of the arm. "Scale changes the whole thing," Ms. Meyers declares. Each stroke radiates from a specified diameter, drawn on the wall with a compass, and then traced with a marker. But after tracing that first circle on the wall, there is no



telling how faithful each successive line will be to the line that preceded it.

As is typical with all of Ms. Meyers' works, the line breaks and bends with stops in the line, or when she adjusts her height on a ladder. Each successive line will continue that bend. From a few feet away, the line work on the wall begins to vibrate. At a greater distance, the ripples within the drawing betray the flatness of the wall, giving the illusion the surface has texture. The wall drawing by Ms. Meyers is the first in a series of inner-ring exhibitions featuring solo installations. While they are still in the process of planning how many artists will occupy the space in the future, the Hirshhorn will add to the series in June when Bettina Pousttchi's "World Time Clock" will be exhibited in the inner ring of the third floor.

Now, as she walks through the gallery, Ms. Meyers can see patrons pause for selfies in front of her work. "It's like an extension of memory," she said, accepting it as part of the paradigm. There was a time when Mr. Irwin prohibited his work from being photographed. But, for Ms. Meyers, it's almost impossible to get away from it now: Photographing is remembering the thing one sees — for now. By this time next year, the Hirshhorn will begin painting over her work, making way for something new.