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A LUMINOUS LINE: Forty Years of Metalpoint Drawings by Susan Schwalb
at the Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR

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A LUMINOUS LINE:

FORTY YEARS OF METALPOINT DRAWINGS BY SUSAN SCHWALB
Plate 1. Illusion, 1978, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint on clay coated paper (Private Collection)
INTRODUCTION

SUSAN SCHWALB, SILVERPOINT, AND THE ARKANSAS ARTS CENTER

By Ann Prentice Wagner, PhD | Curator of Drawings, Arkansas Arts Center
The Arkansas Arts Center’s interest in the medium of metalpoint drawings goes back many years; the first metalpoint drawing entered the collection in 1983. Metalpoint drawings became a key component of the acclaimed drawing collection begun at the Arts Center in 1971 by Director Townsend Wolfe. Susan Schwalb’s abstract silverpoint drawing Icon was among the museum’s many early metalpoint acquisitions in the 1980s. Over thirty years later, the Arts Center has gathered one of America’s outstanding collections of modern and contemporary metalpoint drawings, including five drawings by Schwalb. Schwalb, as artist, historian, adviser, and teacher, plays an important role in the Arts Center’s exhibitions and acquisitions of drawings in metalpoint, as she does for collections throughout the United States and around the world.

The first silverpoint draftsman to attract Townsend Wolfe’s attention was the Wisconsin-based magic realist John Wilde. With characteristic directness, in November 1983, Wolfe wrote to the artist asking about what drawings he had available. Wilde eagerly replied and sent examples of his art. Wolfe selected an exquisite recent drawing by the artist, Lady Bird Series #9 (Emily Egret). In 1985, the AAC included Wilde’s drawing in The Fine Line: Drawing with Silver in America, organized by Norton Gallery & School of Art. This ground-breaking exhibition, assembled with the advice of Susan Schwalb, introduced the museum and its audience to an array of silverpoint artists working throughout the twentieth century. Soon, the Arts Center acquired three more works featured in The Fine Line, including a dynamic abstraction on parchment by Paula Gerard, who was an inspiration to Schwalb and her contemporaries. The AAC also acquired other works by artists highlighted in the exhibition, including Schwalb herself. Many of these acquisitions were contemporary works, but the Arts Center also purchased earlier drawings by modernists like John Storrs and Joseph Stella.

The AAC hosted three exhibitions of silverpoint and metalpoint between 1989 and 1992, showing a strong commitment to these often-neglected media. The museum continued to acquire metalpoint drawings, including Pennsylvania artist Charles Schmidt’s striking silverpoint and aluminumpoint Ludwig Stein the Painter, in 1991. 1995 brought the purchase of a spectacular goldpoint nude, Dana, by the little-known Oklahoma artist Dennis James Martin.

In 1999 the Arts Center organized the silverpoint exhibition, Victor Koulbak: Silverpoint Drawings, 1983 - 1997. The Russian-born artist Victor Koulbak had been among those shown in The Fine Line in 1985 and the Arts Center had acquired its first drawing by the artist the previous year. Arkansas collectors enthusiastically embraced Koulbak’s enigmatic portraits and still-lifes with their delicate watercolor tints. In association with the Koulbak exhibition, University of Arkansas professor Marjorie Williams-Smith led a series of silverpoint workshops around Arkansas. Professor Williams-Smith’s metalpoint renditions of roses and other flowers are well represented in the AAC collection. In 2015, the professor hosted Susan Schwalb’s popular metalpoint workshop.

In 2005, the Arts Center hosted its sixth exhibition featuring metalpoint drawings when Curator Brian Young invited Susan Schwalb to participate in the Museum’s 9th National Drawing Invitational. Her works in the exhibition included parts of the innovative series, Time Suspended, red/white/blue, Traces, and Strata. Different examples of these same series are included in the current exhibition. A 2005 exhibition at the AAC showed silverpoints by contemporary American artist Carol Prusa, a friend and colleague of Schwalb’s, complemented by other silverpoints from the permanent collection.

Silverpoint returned to Arkansas in 2015, when the National Silverpoint Invitational, including recent works by Schwalb on black and brightly colored grounds, appeared at Hearne Fine Art in Little Rock and at Greg Thompson Fine Art in North Little Rock. In that same year, Schwalb was one of a handful of contemporary artists featured in the magnificent history of metalpoint, Drawing in Silver and Gold, mounted by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., and the British Museum. Schwalb’s work in that exhibition was part of her serene, abstract Strata series. The Arkansas Arts Center was excited to purchase a related Strata image and to display it in the permanent collection.

Now, the Arts Center is proud to host a stunning retrospective of Schwalb’s important career in metalpoint. She is a leader of metalpoint as an artist and collector as well as mentor and inspiration for metalpoint artists around the world. Schwalb’s works are among the loveliest and most profound contemporary abstractions in any medium.
Plate 2. Memorial, 1978, 12 x 9 in., goldpoint on clay coated paper
One of the leading practitioners of metalpoint drawing in the United States, Susan Schwalb has pushed back the boundaries of the medium and substantially enriched its expressive vocabulary. In this, she has taken American drawing in innovative directions, boldly exploring new techniques, grounds, supports, materials, and styluses, as well as tonal and coloristic possibilities. Her example has been a major force encouraging other artists to work in metalpoint, and she herself has been a champion of the medium, even helping many artists to get started by supplying them with tools and commercially prepared paper. Her openness to new possibilities and the range of her influence have prompted the art historian Margaret Mathews-Berenson to dub her “the Pied Piper of silverpoint”—a fine compliment, but, if anything, rather too limiting, since Schwalb uses a dazzling arsenal of metals, including gold, brass, lead, copper, platinum, pewter, bronze, and aluminum in addition to silver.¹

For more than a century, American artists have produced metalpoint drawings of exceptional beauty and remarkable craftsmanship. The medium has served as a vehicle for advancing individual artistic expression while reinvigorating the Renaissance tradition of exquisite draftsmanship. American artistic interest in metalpoint primarily involves silverpoint, and its modern use as a drawing medium in the United States dates from the mid-1890s. This was sparked, undoubtedly, by the great enthusiasm during this period for the art of the Renaissance, in addition to familiarity with contemporary British efforts in the medium. To this, add a growing passion among American artists for fine draftsmanship, which developed as an outgrowth of academic training abroad.
The Fine Line: Drawing with Silver in America that I curated in 1985 at the Norton Gallery of Art (now the Norton Museum of Art) and for which I wrote the catalog text, helped to stimulate and expand interest in metalpoint in this country. This show included Schwalb’s work and focused on efforts in the medium over a period of nearly one hundred years in this country. Consequently, it led to a number of exhibitions in museums and galleries celebrating contemporary efforts in the medium. Artists today can turn to the internet not only to learn the basics of metalpoint but also to purchase essential materials. They choose from an extensive catalog of traditional and modern materials, including handmade and machine-made papers. They experiment with an array of supports, including primed canvas, wood and Masonite panels, and even the painted walls of gallery spaces. As in times past, many of today’s artists are enraptured by the extremely fine and precise lines and the uncanny iridescence attainable with metalpoint. Contemporary enthusiasm for the medium inspired Thea Burns to write The Luminous Trace: Drawing and Writing in Metalpoint (2013), in which she concludes that the current enthusiasm is driven by a renewed interest among artists in precise draftsmanship, process, and careful mark making, as well as by the challenge of a discipline that is both painstaking and meditative.

A growing number of contemporary artists are creating abstract and highly conceptual imagery in silverpoint, sometimes in combination with additional metals or another medium. Schwalb, in company with Carol Prusa, Erika Winstone, Linda Hutchins, Ron Janowich, Marietta Hoferer, Natalie Loveless, and Shirazeh Houshiary, has in various ways sought to distill and amplify silverpoint’s unique qualities—its coloristic transformation over time, pale luminosity, linear precision, delicacy and subtlety of tone, inherent beauty, elegance, and sensuality.

Schwalb’s works include drawings on paper, artist books, and paintings on canvas or wood panel. Her efforts in metalpoint have evolved from works inspired by figuration to geometric abstraction. Frequently they allude to the human form, the natural landscape, flowers, and other elements of the natural world. At times, they suggest windows, crests, or atmospheric conditions. Schwalb works in series, a reflection of her desire to explore certain themes in depth. Her process is organic, with each work directly inspired by the piece or pieces she created immediately before it. As she herself says, new images “are inspired by an interaction with the ones that came before.”

With some exceptions, as in her Poplar and Interval series created during 1989-1995, Schwalb rarely executes preparatory studies for her pictures. Instead, she prefers to jot down ideas in a sketch book, and she often finds herself with many ideas and possibilities to choose from. New directions emerge from various sources, including discussions with fellow artists or inspiration from a body of work by a past or living artist. Many of her titles are derived from music, a development that coincided with her marriage to composer Martin Boykan, Professor Emeritus of Music at Brandeis University.

Like such American contemporaries as Marietta Hoferer, Sherry Camhy, Linda Hutchins, and Claudia Ravaschiere, Schwalb creates metalpoint drawings that are much larger than the majority of works created in the medium by early twentieth-century artists. Schwalb’s metalpoints are mostly 9, 12, or 18 inches square, though some are very small (3 inches square) and others quite large (2x6 foot triptychs). For her metalpoints, the artist usually coats the surface of her paper with Chinese white watercolor, casein, or gesso. She has, however, also worked with commercially prepared papers. Earlier in her career, she frequently employed Video Media paper (until it ceased production around 1985). More recently, she has favored Plike paper. Schwalb has also experimented with colored papers and grounds. As to format, she has tended toward the square since 1997.

As mentioned earlier, the artist uses a wide variety of metals to establish a varied scheme of tonal and coloristic relationships. The different metals enhance our perception of color, creating distinctive shimmers of light on the paper surface. Over time, some metalpoint lines undergo a transformation in color. Silver generally tarnishes to a warm brown, and copper and brass mutate to a yellowish-green, whereas aluminum, gold, platinum, and pewter tend to maintain their original color. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, she incorporated gold leaf into her work, combining it with silverpoint and acrylic paint. More recently, she has used metallic wool pads to create yet more coloristic effects and textures.
Susan Schwalb grew up in the Kingsbridge and Riverdale sections of the Bronx, and from the age of five dreamed of becoming an artist. Her mother was a semi-professional painter and public school art teacher. In junior high school, Schwalb studied with the painter Anna Meltzer, and at the High School of Music and Art (now the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts); her teachers included painter May Stevens and printmaker Gertrude Pferdt. She went on to Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where she majored in graphic design and painting while also taking classes in printmaking. At this institution, she was encouraged to pursue a career as an artist by etcher and lithographer Robert Earl Gardner.

After college, Schwalb returned to New York and for a brief period took jobs as a graphic designer, primarily in book publishing and advertising. Her earliest mentor in drawing was Isabel Bishop, whom her mother had met when the family moved from Kingsbridge to Riverdale. Schwalb regularly visited Bishop at her studio in Union Square, who was not only personally encouraging, but also wrote early letters of support for residencies in artist colonies. She even purchased a Schwalb drawing from one of her early exhibitions.

Schwalb began to find her way forward as a fine artist during residences in 1973 at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the MacDowell Colony. During this period, she was making ink and watercolor drawings based on dreams and imaginary landscapes. She was, she says, searching for the finest line she could draw. While visiting Long Island in the summer of 1974, Schwalb was introduced to silverpoint by a colleague who was dabbling with the medium. It was love at first sight. The artist was immediately attracted to the precise and sensual quality of the line, finding that the medium was particularly well suited to her choice of imagery. She returned to the city and started to experiment with metalpoint, advancing in the medium the way most true artists do, by trial and error. She soon discovered that metalpoint allowed her to achieve great exactitude and also provided a deeply meditative experience. Schwalb felt that her embrace of the medium paralleled her search for her own identity as a woman artist. That is, her experience with this often neglected medium emotionally correlated with the fact of being a woman artist. Schwalb also had a desire to identify herself with the Renaissance tradition of fine draftsmanship.

The artist’s first silverpoint drawings were of orchids (Plates 3, 6, 7), a subject that evolved out of youthful memories of dance dates (the boy giving her the flower) and of her own tradition of giving her mother an orchid on Mother’s Day; she viewed the subject as a symbol both of herself and of all women. Between 1974 and 1978, she created more than 100 drawings of the subject. The first year, she drew from one dried flower exclusively, seeing it from many points of view. She isolated and enlarged the flower to fill most of the paper. The voluptuous curving petals unfold to reveal the inner heart of the plant. The sharply drawn silverpoints have an erotic as well as a spiritual quality. On seeing the Orchid series, Isabel Bishop exclaimed, “You have bloomed.”
In her work of 1979-1984, Schwalb created metalpoint drawings that are abstract, conceptual, and evocative of ritual. Some allude to personal crisis and conflict. Initially, she made drawings of the shapes or areas that were behind the orchid (Plates 1, 2), using silverpoint and, occasionally, copperpoint to create patterns of closely-spaced curved, or diagonal lines, which radiate outward and upward. Next, she began to tear and scratch the image with her stylus and a utility blade and to burn the paper with matches or candles (Plates 8-13). The artist melted wax into drawings to create contrast with the sharp linearity of the metalpoint. She tore, gouged, or pounded the paper at or near the center of the images as a means of charting an uneven linear movement. Smoky lines of velvet black or gray blur the evenly drawn lines of silverpoint placed along the jagged edge. The smoky lines and surface, and the rough, fan-like shapes created by flame, also contrast with the metalpoint lines. Some works of this period resemble elaborate headdresses or evoke the idea of ancient texts that, although recovered, have been partially destroyed.

From 1985 to 1994, Schwalb cast a wider net for inspiration. She used line to create luminous and vibrating surfaces, and she moved the metalpoint medium in the direction of painting through various experiments, such as incorporating gold leaf, colored grounds, and erasures with sandpaper to expose the paint layers underneath. At the same time, she continued to seek contrast, playing the freely brushed gold leaf against the resolute line of silverpoint. Schwalb sometimes worked on a large scale, so that her art attained a new sense of monumentality.

Among the elements that moved her imagination during this period were the design and symbolism of the Sarajevo Haggadah, a fourteenth-century manuscript in the Sarajevo National Museum (Bosnia and Herzegovina), which was composed in Barcelona and carried into exile by a Jewish family expelled with Spain’s other Jews in 1492. From 1985 to 1990, she worked on her ambitious Creation series (Figure 2), inspired directly by illustrations in the Sarajevo Haggadah. As she explains, the series grew out of an interest in exploring where she, as a female artist, fit into Judaism. In the series, she remained close to the symbolic image of the Sarajevo manuscript, including her vividly colored circular images reminiscent of the sun, moon, and earth, and landscape elements symbolic of land, sea, and sky. The images and compositional designs found in the manuscript influenced other series of the late 1980s and early 1990s, including Interior Voices, Emblem, Spiritus Mundi, and White Night (Plate 14, 16, 15, 18).

The years 1989-1992 saw the creation of the Poplar series, which had its source in Claude Monet’s painting The Four Trees of 1891 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art). During the summer and fall of that year, the French Impressionist executed a group of views of poplars along the River Epte in Giverny. He painted some of his views from the riverbank, and others, including The Four Trees, from a boat outfitted with grooves to hold multiple canvases. The work had remained in Schwalb’s mind since 1975, when she made sketches of the painting during a visit to the museum. For the series created years later, she made preparatory sketches on pieces of coated paper. Poplar #13 (Plate 17) is executed in silverpoint, acrylic, and gold leaf. The artist divides the space into seven
areas of different proportions, and she juxtaposes the vertical column of gold leaf with the horizontal band composed of acrylic paint and silverpoint. The bright and boldly colored gold leaf is laid at the center of the composition, where it contrasts with the muted and hazy areas of silverpoint and acrylic paint beside it.

The Interval series (Plate 20 and 21) dates from 1992-1995. As with the Poplar series, Schwalb made preparatory drawings—in this case, many—and in the finished works contrasted carefully drawn sections of muted color with freely brushed areas of bright gold leaf. She hoped that the viewer would step back to visualize the whole work, but also be pulled in close enough to experience the complex play of spatial illusion. The gold leaf appears to advance in space while the silverpoint seems to recede. This effect is complicated by the shadows that have formed around the white lines and by the subtle details of toning.

The artist took a hiatus from metalpoint during 1994-1996 to devote her attention to painting. She enjoyed liberation from the intense discipline and time-consuming demands of metalpoint, and painted loose, exuberant images of swirling golden-hued galaxies and planetary nebulae, which appear to emerge out of the painterly ground (Plate 1). She returned to metalpoint after a solo show of metallic leaf paintings at Andrea Marquit Fine Arts in Boston.

From 1997 to 2010, Schwalb worked on her Strata series (Plate 22-24, 26-27), employing an austere vocabulary of horizontal lines and bands placed in an intuitive but uniform manner to create a soft, ethereal glow. The lines and bands hover over the picture plane, appearing to vibrate gently. The artist radically expanded her approach and technique by rubbing or scraping small flat pieces or slivers of metal, including silver, copper, brass, steel, lead, aluminum, bronze, and pewter, across the prepared surface. She tinted the ground layer with delicate, muted colors, such as light yellow or soft green, and began to apply layers of paint of different colors, which she partially erased with sandpaper to expose the paint below. To darken the marks, she drew over some areas and juxtaposed the different tones and colors of the metals, seeking (as she writes) to “achieve a shimmering atmosphere reminiscent of the luminous transparency of watercolor.” The Strata drawings allude to geology and landscape as well as sound waves and musical scores.

In 2001, Schwalb completed Nocturne (Plate 25) in the Strata series (Plate 22-24, 26-28), which was her third collaboration with Martin Boykan. Produced in an edition of ten, Nocturne is designed in a scroll format mounted on a wooden reel with ribbon. The work features a CD with a portion of Boykan’s composition, Motet, along with drawings executed in a style reminiscent of musical notation. Motet is played by Judith Davidoff on a viola de gamba, a Renaissance stringed instrument that is an ancestor of the modern cello.

In response to the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Schwalb created her red/white/blue series (Plate 4). She was prompted to this work by the profusion of American flag images that appeared throughout New York in the weeks following the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center. The artist kept a diary of her trip to the city in late September and recorded that “Driving down I-95 I’m aware of all the flags everywhere on buildings, stores and cars but it did not prepare me for New York . . . . I see American flags everywhere, on buildings, on the fronts of fancy apartments, on stores.” Working on paper as well as wood, she applied layers of red, white, and blue paint, which she covered in a neutral gray. On top, she drew simple bands of tone with silverpoint, and then she erased part of the surface with sandpaper to expose under-layers of paint. The images evoke scars, gashes, and wounds.
In 2010, inspired by memories of light in places she has visited, Schwalb created two series of drawings, *Madrigal* and *Morning Mist*, which hark back to an idea she had explored some twenty years earlier with her *Solstice* series (Plate 19). The idea for the two new series originated during a month-long residency at the Virginia Center for Creative Arts, when she rose with the sun and watched the dawn shimmering through the trees outside her window. In *Madrigal #10* (Plate 29), she used metalpoint in combination with metallic wool pads to create horizontal bands of luminous color meant to suggest the filtered light of early morning mist or fog. In *Morning Mist* (Plate 5), she carved thin horizontal grooves into the surface of the wood panel. She then applied several layers of paint and sanded the surface to create ghostlike forms, which appear to emerge from the color underneath.

*Time Suspended: Fifty Quiet Moments* (Plate 30), which also dates from 2010, was prompted by a desire to create something very intimate. She made four versions of this set, two with 100 drawings and two with 50. They were drawn using flat pieces of silver, gold, copper, aluminum, platinum, brass, steel, or pewter on two different kinds of commercially prepared paper. The drawings, which evoke an aura of contemplation, were individually wrapped in glassine and placed in a carefully crafted leather box.

The years 2010 through 2016 saw the creation of the *Toccata* series. *Toccata #76* (Plate 31) is distinguished by its bold linear presence, achieved with the application of silver-, gold-, and copperpoint, plus the application of metal pads and fine lines of colored and dark black pencil. Toccata (from the Italian toccare, literally, “to touch”) is a virtuoso piece of music typically played on a keyboard or plucked-string instrument. Identified closely with the Baroque period, a toccata features fast-moving, lightly fingered virtuoso passages and emphasizes the superlative dexterity of the performer’s fingers. Thanks to the virtuoso management of her medium, the surface of the artist’s Toccata drawings vibrate, a visual correlative of the musical form to which the series title refers.

In 2011, Schwalb was inspired by the Jewish legend of Lamid Vav (and the 36 righteous Jews that are said to always be in the world) to create a series of works consisting of 36 squares, all but one of which were drawn in metalpoint. The empty square is always placed in a different area of the support. Schwalb favors including one vertically oriented square and one more densely covered square in each line of squares. Most of the works in this series have a ground of acrylic black gesso.

During the last several years, Susan Schwalb has been at work on her *Polyphony* and *Harmonizations* series. In the *Polyphony* pieces (Plates 32, 34), she layers squares on top of squares to create the illusion of depth, and she varies the type of lines (thick versus thin) to create a sensation of movement. She sometimes uses Holbein’s colored gesso, which has a slight tooth that holds the metalpoint much better than acrylic paint or traditional gesso with pigments, especially with works on wood panel. For the *Harmonizations* series (Plate 33), the artist first works out her ideas in sketches in order to decide the format and the number of squares she wants to use. She focuses her attention on the arrangement and layering of squares, and she draws them in patterns of vertical, horizontal, or diagonally oriented lines.

The *Polyphony* and *Harmonizations* series represent the culmination of the artist’s forty-year experience of working in metalpoint. She has described her new series as “a testament of how the abstract and straight line can create movement and a visual sound, simply through a variety of compositions. What I want the viewer to do when standing in front of my work is to notice all the subtle differences of surface and to experience the effect of an abstract universe composed of lines and reflections of light.”

The demanding, traditionally austere medium of metalpoint continues to hold its grip on Susan Schwalb, who, in her latest series, stretches the creative boundaries of this intimate and exacting platform to evoke an entire “universe.”
Plate 5. *Morning Mist*, 2010, 16 x 52 x 1.75 in., silverpoint, acrylic on panel

Bruce Weber has served as a curator at various art museums and galleries, and has authored numerous publications on American art. In 1985, he organized the exhibition *The Fine Line: Drawing with Silver in America* at the Norton Museum of Art, and in 2015 he curated the 19th and 20th century section of the National Gallery of Art exhibition, *Drawing in Silver and Gold: From Leonardo to Jasper Johns*, while contributing an expanded version of his 1985 catalog essay. Dr. Weber recently authored the major publication *A Timeless Perfection: American Figurative Sculpture in the Classical Spirit - Gifts from Dr. Michael Nieland*.

4. Bishop response is quoted in an artist statement that Schwalb prepared for her *Orchid* series.
7. Schwalb is quoted in the press release for her exhibition *Luminous Trace* held in 2016 at the Garvey Simon Gallery in New York.
Plate 6. Orchid Transformation #1, 1978, 24 x 18 in., silver/copperpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 7. Orchid Transformation #2, 1978, 24 x 18in., silver/copperpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 8. Tablet #7, 1979, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint, fire, smoke, wax on clay coated paper
Plate 9. Headdress #2, 1979, 24 x 18 in., copperpoint, fire, smoke on clay coated paper
Plate 10. Parchment VI, 1981, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint, fire, smoke, wax on clay coated paper
Plate 11. Parchment XXII, 1982, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint, smoke, fire on clay coated paper
Plate 12. Triptych IIIa, 1981, 12 x 28 in., copper/silverpoint, fire, smoke on clay coated paper
Plate 13. **Triptych Ia**, 1981-82, 12 x 28 in., copper / silverpoint, smoke, fire on clay coated paper
Plate 14. Interior Voices, 1985, 40 x 30 in., silverpoint, tempera, acrylic on 5ply Bristol paper
Plate 15. *Spiritus Mundi #6*, 1987, 40 x 30 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic on 5ply plate Bristol paper
Plate 16. Emblem #2, 1989, 40 x 30 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic on 5ply Bristol paper
Plate 17. Poplar #13: Homage to Monet 1989, 29 x 23 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic gesso on 5ply Bristol Paper
Plate 18. White Night #7, 1988, 40.5 x 26 in., silverpoint, acrylic on Arches watercolor paper
Plate 19. Winter Solstice #12, 1990, 24 x 52 in., silverpoint, acrylic gesso on Arches watercolor paper
Plate 20. *Intervals XI*, 1994, 22 x 22 in., silverpoint, acrylic, gold leaf on Arches watercolor paper
Plate 21. Origins #2, 1992, 12 x 38 x 1.5 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic on masonite panel
Plate 23. **Strata #308**, 1998, 12 x 12 in., brass/copper/aluminum/point on clay coated paper
Plate 24. Strata XXXIX, 1999, 16 x 16 x 1.75 in., silver/gold/platinum/aluminum/brasspoint, acrylic gesso on paper on panel
Plate 25. Nocturne 8/10, 2001, 12.5 x 72 in., silver/gold/copper/aluminum/platinumpoint on clay coated paper, CD, cloth covered case
Plate 27. Traces #142, 2004, 18 x 12 in., silver/brass/copper/aluminum/goldpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 28. **Strata #446**, 2007, 18 x 18 in., silverpoint on red Plike paper
Plate 29. Madrigal #10, 2010, 12 x 12 in., copperpoint, bronze wool pad on white Plike paper
Plate 30. **Time Suspended #3: Fifty Quiet Moments**, 2010, drawings 3.5 x 3.5 in. each, mixed metalpoint on white Plike paper
Plate 31. Toccata #76, 2013, 14 x 14 in., silver/goldpoint, copper and aluminum wool pads, colored pencil, graphite on clay coated paper
Plate 32. *Polyphony #8*, 2013, 18 x 18 in., silver/goldpoint, red gesso on Arches watercolor paper (Private Collection)
Plate 33. Harmonizations #15, 2017, 18 x 18 in., gold/brass/copper /silver/aluminum/platinumpoint, black gesso on Arches watercolor paper
Plate 34. *Polyphony XIII*, 2016, 24 x 24 x 2 in., silver/gold/copperpoint, black gesso on paper on panel
Plate 35. *Convergence I*, 2017, 24 x 24 x 2 in., goldpoint, black gesso on paper on panel
SUSAN SCHWALB
American (b.1944)

EDUCATION
1965 BFA Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS
2018 A Luminous Line: Forty Years of Metalpoint Drawing by Susan Schwalb, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR
2017 Susan Schwalb: Metalpoint Paintings, Derfner Museum, Riverdale, NY
2016 Susan Schwalb: Luminous Trace, Garvey Simon Art Access, New York, NY
2013 Spatial Polyphonies: New Metalpoint Drawings, Garvey Simon Art Access, New York, NY
2011 Music of Silence: Recent Metalpoint Paintings, K. Imperial Gallery, San Francisco, CA
A Gathering Quiet, Galerie Mourlot, New York, NY
2009 Interior Voyages: Recent Silverpoint Paintings, Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ
2008 Music of Silence: Recent Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings, Garvey Simon Art Access, New York, NY
2006 Metalpoint Paintings, Page Bond Gallery, Richmond, VA
Atmospheric Disturbances, Winfisky Gallery, Salem State College, Salem, MA
Atmospheric Disturbances, Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ
2005 Shards of Memory: Recent Metalpoint Paintings, Solomon Fine Art, Seattle, WA
Drawn in Metal, Robert Steele Gallery, New York, NY
2004 Red Mesa, Cervini Haas Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
2003 Afterimage: Recent Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings, Robert Steele Gallery, New York, NY
Recent Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings, Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ
2002 Let There Be Light, Adair Margo Gallery, El Paso, TX
Palimpsest: Recent Metalpoint Paintings, Cervini Haas Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
2001 Palimpsest: Recent Metalpoint Paintings, Miyako Yoshinaga Art Prospects, New York, NY
1999 Moments of Resonance: Recent Metalpoint Drawings and Paintings, Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Improvisations on Outer Space: Recent Metallic Works on Paper, Birke Art Gallery, Marshall University, Huntington, WV
1997 Improvisations on Outer Space, Arthur B. Mazmanian Art Gallery, Framingham State College, Framingham, MA
1996 Galaxies & Other Matter: Recent Metallic Paintings, Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Intervals: Silverpoint Paintings, Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, MA
Intervals: Silverpoint Paintings, Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA
1992-94 The Creation Series, (tour: May Museum of Judaica, Lawrence, NY; Chase/Freedman Gallery,
Greater Hartford, CT; JCC, West Hartford, CT; Robert I. Kahn Gallery, Houston, TX; Congregation
Emanu El, Houston, TX), B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, Washington, DC
1990 The Creation Series: 15 Years of Silverpoint, Yeshiva University Museum, New York, NY
1989 Susan Schwalb: Silverpoint Drawings, Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL
Susan Schwalb: Silverpoint Drawings, SOHO 20 Gallery, Invitational Space, New York, NY
1986 Large-scale Silverpoint Drawings, Saint Peter's Church, New York, NY
1985 Susan Schwalb: Silverpoint Drawings, SOHO 20 Gallery, Invitational Space, New York, NY
Susan Schwalb: Silverpoint Drawings, Simmons College, Boston, MA
1983 U.S. Embassy Exhibition Program, sponsored by the United States Information Agency,
The American Center in Belgrade, Banja Luka, and Skopje, Yugoslavia
1978 Orchid Series: Gold and Silverpoint Drawings, Loyola University, Chicago, IL
1977 Orchid Series: Gold and Silverpoint Drawings, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
Orchid Series: Gold and Silverpoint Drawings, Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS
2018 Silver Linings: Contemporary Works in Silverpoint, Lauren Rogers Museum
of Art, Laurel, MI (traveling to Columbus State University, GA)
Transitions, Project: ARTspace, New York, NY
2017 Drawing on History: The National Drawing Invitational: A Retrospective Exhibition, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR
The Jewish Art Salon’s “Jerusalem Between Heaven and Earth,” for the Jerusalem Biennale, Hamachtarot Museum, Jerusalem, Israel

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Nearly Uniform: Contemporary Silverpoint Drawings, Dorsky Gallery Curatorial Programs, Long Island City, NY

Re-Action, Casal Solleric Museum, Mallorca, Spain

Drawing in Silver and Gold: From Leonardo to Jasper Johns, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC (traveling to the British Museum, London, United Kingdom)

Tarnished, ARTHOUSE1, London

Drawing with Metal, Patrick Heide Contemporary Art, London

Metalpoint Now!, Garvey|Simon Art Access, New York, NY

Musing Metallic, The Curator Gallery, New York, NY

Black, Space Gallery, Denver, CO

Line: Making the Mark, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

Material Grid: Christopher Adams, Marietta Hoferer, Tamiko Kawata, Michael Kukla, Susan Schwab and Guests, Garvey Simon Art Access, New York, NY


6 Biennale der Zeichnung (6th Biennial Show of Drawing), Kunstverein Eislingen, Eislingen, Germany

Re-Action: Geneology and Countercanon, Marjola Museum (Gijon) and Oviedo University, Sala Laudeo, Spain

46th Collector’s Show and Sale, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR

The Silverpoint Show, The National Arts Club, New York, NY

Lines of Liminality: Susan Schwab and Clifford Smith, Gerald Peters Gallery, Santa Fe, NM

Straight Lines in Five Directions: Kate Carr, Susie Rosmarin, Susan Schwab, James Siena, Dan Walsh, Garvey Simon Art Access, New York, NY

Working It Out, The Painting Center, New York, NY

Inside Out: Selections from the Kentler Flat Files, Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn, NY

Paperwork, Telfair Museum, Savannah, GA

New Prints 2011/2012 Benefit Exhibition & Silent Auction, International Print Center New York, NY

New Prints 2012/Summer, Selected by Shahzia Sikander, International Print Center New York, NY

Uncovered: Prints, Selected from the Kentler Flatfiles, Curator: Sallie Mize, Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn, NY

Group Silverpoint Exhibition, Sofia International Paper Art Biennial 2011, Tinney Contemporary Art

curated by Thalia Vrachopoulos, Sofia, Bulgaria, Nashville, TN

Drawings for the New Century, Minneapolis Museum of Art, MN

Recent Work by Gallery Artists, Etherington Fine Art, Marfa, TX

Luminous Lines: Contemporary Drawings in Metalpoint, Scripp College, Claremont, CA

Modern Drawings: Tracing 100 Years, Academy Art Museum, Easton, MD

The Primacy of Paper: Recent Works from the Collection, RISD Museum of Art, Providence, RI

Group Exhibition: Preview 2010, Blank Space Gallery, New York, NY

Some Things the World Gave: Jan Lhormer and Susan Schwab, Simmons College Boston, MA

The Luster of Silver, Evansville Museum of Arts and Sciences, Evansville, IN

Re-Inventing Silverpoint: An Ancient Technique for the 21st Century (tour: Cummings Arts Center, Connecticut College, New London, CT), Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn, NY

Artists and Books, The Art Complex Museum, Duxbury, MA

Equilibrium: Susan Schwab & Nan Tuli, Soprafina Gallery, Boston MA

No Chromophobia, OK Harris Gallery, New York, NY

Winter Group Show, Galerie Mourlot, Los Angeles, CA

Control/Chance: Susan Schwab, Valerie Constantino & Rainer Gross, Gráficas Gallery, Tucson, AZ

Contemporary Metalpoint Drawing, Art Students League, New York, NY

Selections from the Kentler Flatfiles, Brooklyn Academy of Music, NY

In Residence: Artists and the MacDowell Colony Experience, Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, Keene College, NH (tour: The Art Gallery, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH)

Abstraction Updated: Deborah Muirhead, Susan Schwab & Suzanne Volmer, GASP Gallery Artists Studio Projects, Brookline, MA
2006

Chance and Necessity, Kentler International Drawings Space, Brooklyn, NY
Black and Red, All Over, Michele Mosko Fine Art, Denver, CO
Figure/Ground, Kentler International Drawings Space, Brooklyn, NY
Never Done: Works by Women Artists from the Puzzuoli Miller Collection, Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington, WV
Words to Live By, Solomon Fine Art, Seattle, WA
From Sea to Shining Sea, District of Columbia Art Center, Washington, D.C.
The Luster of Silver: Contemporary Metalpoint Drawings, Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA
Boundaries: Book Arts Between the Traditional and the Experimental, Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA
The Square, The Temporary Museum of Painting, Brooklyn, NY

2005

Drawing Show, Robert Steele Gallery, New York, NY
National Drawing Invitational, Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR
New Faces: New Visions, Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA

2004

Figure/Ground, Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn, NY
Insomnia: Landscapes of the Night, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC
Visions of Passage, Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL

2003

Recent Acquisitions, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
Ordinate/Coordinate, Kenise Barnes Fine Art, Larchmont, NY
Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Works on Paper, Part Two: Everywhere but California, Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA
Miami Art Fair, Miami, FL with M.Y. Art Prospects, New York, NY

2002

At the Edge: The Horizon Line in Contemporary Art, Dorsky Gallery, NY
Burn: Artists Play with Fire, Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL
Minimalennialism, Jim Kempner Fine Arts, New York, NY

2000

Basel Art Fair, Switzerland with Van Straaten Gallery, Chicago, IL
Visual Memoirs: Selected Paintings and Drawings, The Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA
Stockholm Art Fair 2000, Sweden; kunstKÖLN 2000, Germany, with M.Y. Art Prospects, New York, NY
A Decade of Collecting: Recent Acquisitions of Prints and Drawings, The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Group Exhibition, Robert Steele Gallery, New York, NY
Summer Paper, Catherine Moore Fine Art, New York, NY
Vernal Equinox, The Art Store, Charleston, WV
25th Annual National Invitational Drawing Exhibition, Norman R. Eppink Art Gallery, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS
Black and White, Spheris Gallery, Walpole, NH

1999

Jewish Artists: On the Edge (tour: Yeshiva University Museum, NY), College of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM
Living in the Moment: Contemporary Artists Celebrate Jewish Time, Hebrew Union College, New York, NY

1998

Ninth Triennial, Fuller Museum of Art, Brockton, MA
Vibration, Margaret Thatcher Projects, New York, NY
Book As Art X, The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC
Portfolio Series, Eich Space, New York, NY
Künstlerhaus, Vienna, Austria, Pierogi 2000 NY-Flatfiles (tour: Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY; Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, NY)

1997

Recent Acquisitions, Wynn Kramarsky Inc., New York, NY
Sizzle and The Art Exchange, Jeffery Coploff Fine Art Ltd., New York, NY
The Drawing Show, Boston Center for the Arts, Mills Gallery, Boston, MA

1996

Drawings from Boston: Selections from The Boston Public Library Collection, Harvard Club, Boston, MA
Large Drawings and Objects: Structural Foundations of Clarity, Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR
Viewpoints II, Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA
25 Years of Feminism, 25 Years of Women’s Art, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ

1994

Power, Pleasure, Pain: Contemporary Women and the Female Body, Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
Drawing, Discovery, and Diversity, Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL
Contemporary Metalpoint Drawing, Suffolk Community College, Selden, NY

1993

Sanctuaries: Recovering the Holy in Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, Saint Louis University, St Louis, MO
Extrapolation, Pino Molica Gallery, New York, NY
Small Works, 80 Washington Square East Galleries, New York University, New York, NY
Selections from The National Drawing Association, Thomas J. Walsh Art Gallery, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT
1993-98  *Aishet Hayil—Woman of Valor*, (tour: Skirball Museum, Cincinnati, OH; The Mizel Museum of Judaica, Denver, CO; Janice Charach Epstein Museum, West Bloomfield, MI; Plotkin Museum of Judaica, Phoenix, AZ; Kanner Heritage Museum, Ontario, Canada; Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem, Israel), Yeshiva University Museum, NY


1990  *Uncommon Ground*, Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL


1987  *Contemporary Silverpoint Drawing*, Leslie Cecil Gallery, New York, NY

1981  *Virginia Images*, Roanoke Museum of Fine Arts, Roanoke, VA

1980-83  *American Drawings III* (Smithsonian traveling exhibition), The Portsmouth Community Arts Center, Portsmouth, VA

1980  *Religion into Art* (tour: Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY; Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR), Pratt Manhattan Center, NY


1979  *8 Annee Travaux sur Papier Objets*, Centre Cultural Municipal Jacques Prévert, Villeparisis, France

1978  *Women Artists ’78*, Graduate Center, City University of New York, NY

1977  *Paper, Fabric, Glass*, Just Above Mid-Town Gallery, New York, NY


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**Fellowships and Grants**

2010, 07, 92, 73  The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Sweet Briar, VA

1994  Artist-in-Residence, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem, Israel

1991  Massachusetts Arts Lottery Grant

1989, 85, 77  Exhibitions Grant, Committee for the Visual Arts, Inc.—Artists Space, New York, NY

1989, 75, 74  The MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, NH

1981  Yaddo, Saratoga Springs, NY

1980  International Communications Agency Travel Grant, Copenhagen, Denmark
SELECTED PUBLIC COLLECTIONS
Academy Art Museum, Easton, MD
Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR
The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, England
Athenaeum Music and Arts Library, La Jolla, CA
B’nai B’rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, Washington, DC
The British Museum, London, England
The Brooklyn Museum of Art, Brooklyn, NY
Boston Public Library, Boston, MA
Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA
The Columbus Museum, Columbus, GA
Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA
Davis Museum and Cultural Center, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
Evansville Museum of Art and Science, Evansville, IN
The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
The Frances Lehman Loeb Art Center, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel
The Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA
The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel
Kupferstichkabinett - Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Germany
The Library of Congress, Washington, DC
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY
Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis, MN
Museum of Art/Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, RI
Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, St. Louis, MO
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX
The Museum of Modern Art, Belgrade, Serbia
The Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, NY
The National Gallery of Art, Washington DC
The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington DC
The National September 11 Memorial & Museum, New York, NY
The New York Public Library, New York, NY
New York Historical Society, New York, NY
The Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL
The Old Jail Art Center, Albany, TX
The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA
Simmons College, Boston, MA
Telfair Art Museum, Savannah, GA
Victoria and Albert Museum, London, England
Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Wesleyan University, Davison Art Center, Middletown, CT
West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, CT
Yeshiva University Museum, New York, NY

SELECTED CORPORATE COLLECTIONS
The Art Hotel, New York, NY
Beth Israel Hospital, Boston, MA
Bromberg & Sunstein, Boston, MA
Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, NY
C.S.C. Index, Chicago, IL
Coventry Capital Ltd, London, England
Crown Plaza Ravinia Hotel, Atlanta, GA
Dimock Community Health Center, Roxbury, MA
Fidelity Investments, Boston, MA
Grand Hyatt, New York, NY
Independence Investments Associates, Inc., Boston, MA
The Liberty Hotel, Boston, MA
McKee Nelson LLP, New York, NY
Mediation Works Inc., Boston, MA
Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, MA
Neponset Health Center, Dorchester, MA
Office Environments of New England, Boston, MA
Pfizer Inc., New York, NY
Price Waterhouse Coopers LLP, Florham Park, NJ
The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Commons, Boston, MA
Robinson & McElwee PLLC, Charleston, WV
Sonesta International Hotels Corp., Boston, MA
Volunteer Lawyers Project, Boston, MA
West Bay Lagoon Hotel, Doha, Qatar
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Faxon, Alicia. _Drawing: Line or Image_, New Art Examiner, 1/90
Faxon, Alicia. _The Narrated Earth_, Women Artists News, 6/87
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Katz, Sonia. _Susan Schwalb_, The New Art Examiner, 11/78
Kohen, Helen L. _Silverpoint Makes for Golden Exhibit_, The Miami Herald, 4/21/85
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Lighthill, Amy. _Massachusetts: State of the Artists_, Art New England, 10/84
Lubell, Ellen. _Pocket Art_, SOHO News, 12/28/78
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Plate 1. Illusion, 1978, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint on clay coated paper (Private Collection)
Plate 2. Memorial, 1978, 12 x 9 in., goldpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 3. Orchid Study (5/VI/77), 1977, 18 x 12 in., copperpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 4. red/white/blue #9, 2002, 18 x 18 in., silverpoint, acrylic on clay coated paper
Plate 5. Morning Mist, 2010, 16 x 52 in., silverpoint, acrylic on panel
Plate 6. Orchid Transformation #1, 1978, 24 x 18 in., silver/copperpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 7. Orchid Transformation #2, 1978, 24 x 18 in., silver/copperpoint on clay coated paper
Plate 8. Tablet #7, 1979, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint, fire, smoke, wax on clay coated paper
Plate 9. Headdress #2, 1979, 24 x 18 in., copperpoint, fire, smoke on clay coated paper
Plate 10. Parchment VI, 1981, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint, fire, smoke on wax on clay coated paper
Plate 11. Parchment XXII, 1982, 12 x 9 in., copperpoint, smoke, fire on clay coated paper
Plate 12. Triptych Illa, 1981, 12 x 28 in., copper/silverpoint, fire, smoke on clay coated paper
Plate 13. Triptych Ia, 1981-82, 12 x 28 in., copper/silverpoint, smoke, fire on clay coated paper
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Plate 15. Spiritus Mundi #6, 1987, 40 x 30 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic on 5ply Bristol paper
Plate 16. Emblem #2, 1989, 40 x 30 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic on 5ply Bristol paper
Plate 17. Poplar #13: Homage to Monet, 1989, 29 x 23 in., silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic gesso on 5ply Bristol paper
Plate 18. White Night #7, 1988, 40.5 x 26 in., silverpoint, acrylic on Arches watercolor paper
Plate 19. Winter Solstice #12, 1990, 24 x 52 in., silverpoint, acrylic on gesso Arches watercolor paper
Plate 20. Intervals XI, 1994, 22 x 22 in., silverpoint, acrylic, gold leaf on Arches watercolor paper
Plate 21. Origins #2, 1992, 12 x 38 in x 1.5, silverpoint, gold leaf, acrylic on masonite panel
Plate 24. Strata XXXIX, 1999, 16 x 16 x 1.75 in., silver/gold/platinum/aluminum/brasspoint, acrylic gesso on paper on panel
Plate 25. Nocturne 8/10, 2001, 12.5 x 72 in., silver/gold/copper/aluminum/platinumpoint on clay coated paper, CD, cloth covered case
Plate 26. Strata #317, 2001, 12 x 12 in., steel/copper/brasspoint on clay coated paper
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gold/brass/copper/silver/aluminum/platinumpoint,
black gesso on Arches watercolor paper