

lehman college art gallery

---



**Edith De Chiara**  
**Informed by Nature**

July 10 - October 16, 2001

Organized by Susan Hoeltzel



*Linescape, 2001*

**E**dith De Chiara's mixed media works probe the complexities of nature, the passage of time, and interior states of mind. This exhibition focuses on recent work—a series of collages, drawings, and works on canvas begun six years ago—in which she explores thread as a metaphor for line. De Chiara references nature as a source of imagery, creating a calligraphic, gestural line which physically describes the external world while evoking mood and alluding to the internal emotional life. These intimately scaled works hint at landscape, plants, rocks, microscopic organisms and the cosmos.

Among the earliest from this series, a group of works entitled *Bound /Unbound (1999)*, probes emotional and psychological territory in visual terms. Coinciding with De Chiara's retirement, these works explore a range of feelings—from the sense of disorientation one experiences when released from the constraints of schedules to a metaphorical look at the "push and pull" of human relationships. The surface is literally stitched in these works. The thread creates a forceful, controlled line, drawn with a needle in a classically feminine medium. Some of these lines are well ordered and regimented; and others burst free in literal "loose ends."

De Chiara's work throughout is involved with process and materials. She works primarily on paper which is often mounted on board or wood panel. The process begins with staining, using inks and watercolors to prepare the paper surface before the thread is introduced. The palette is earth toned. Encaustic or cheesecloth is added in some works to enrich and reinforce the ground. The latter imparts the look of a papyrus scroll or ancient parchment.

## Checklist

1. *Untitled #1, 2001* (01-06)  
thread, white pencil, watercolor, paper  
mounted on wood panel  
7" x 7"
2. *Untitled #2, 2001* (01-07)  
thread, white pencil, watercolor, paper  
mounted on wood panel  
7" x 7"
3. *Linescape 1, 2000* (00-15)  
thread, pencil, watercolor, encaustic, paper  
mounted on wood panel  
7" x 7"
4. *Marks of Nature, 2001* (01-12)  
thread on paper  
11" x 15"
5. *Thread Drawing #7, 1999* (99-40)  
thread, watercolor, encaustic on Okawara  
paper  
12 3/8" x 6 1/2"
6. *Continuum #2, 2000* (00-04)  
thread, watercolor on handmade Okawara  
paper  
16 3/8" x 12"
7. *Thread Drawing, 1999* (99-07)  
thread, watercolor, ink, encaustic on hand  
made Okawara paper  
17 7/8" x 10 1/8"
8. *Circular Pathways, 1999* (99-39)  
thread, watercolor, ink, encaustic on  
Okawara paper  
6" x 7 3/8"
9. *Linescape 3, 2000* (00-14)  
thread, watercolor, encaustic, paper  
mounted on wood panel  
7" x 7"
10. *Bound/Unbound, 1999* (99-43)  
thread, white pencil, watercolor, collage,  
encaustic on paper  
4 7/8" x 11 5/8"
11. *Bound/Unbound, 1999* (99-10)  
thread, white pencil, watercolor, collage,  
encaustic on paper  
7" x 11 1/2"
12. *Embroidered Drawing, 1999* (99-17)  
thread, watercolor, encaustic on handmade  
Okawara paper  
13" x 7 3/4"

13. *Linear Traces*, 2000 (00-42)  
thread on handmade Okawara paper  
14 3/4" x 19 1/4"
14. *Linear Traces*, 2000 (00-43)  
thread on handmade Okawara paper  
15 1/4" x 20"
15. *Marks of Nature*, 2001 (01-17)  
thread on handmade Okawara paper  
14 3/4" x 10 3/8"
16. *Of Memories*, 2001 (01-33)  
thread, jute cord, ink, watercolor, paper on  
wood panel  
9" x 9"
17. *Gestural Impulses*, 2001 (01-16)  
thread, watercolor, paper mounted on  
wood panel  
9" x 9"
18. *Untitled #6*, 2001 (01-20)  
thread, white pencil, watercolor paper on  
wood panel  
7" x 7"
19. *Untitled #8*, 2001 (01-36)  
thread, white pencil, watercolor paper on  
wood panel  
7" x 7"
20. *Botanic Echoes #1*, 2000 (00-40)  
thread on paper  
14" x 9 3/4"
21. *Linescape #1*, 2000 (00-17)  
thread, mixed media, pencil, encaustic on  
canvas  
10" x 10"
22. *Linescape #2*, 2000 (00-18)  
thread, mixed media, pencil, encaustic on  
canvas  
10" x 10"
23. *Linescape #4*, 2000 (00-20)  
thread, mixed media, pencil, encaustic on  
canvas  
10" x 10"
24. *Untitled*, 1999 (99-41)  
thread, watercolor, encaustic on  
gessobord  
8" x 10"
25. *Informed by Nature*, 2001 (01-23)  
thread, colored pencil, paper mounted wood  
panel  
7 7/8" x 11"

Sometimes the ground preparation includes rubbings from the surface texture of earlier works, physically connecting the new works to the series. This technique can be seen in the *Bound /Unbound* group and in works such as *Circular Pathways*, 1999. The white lines produced by the rubbings provide an indirect drawing methodology as well as a visual progression from earlier work.

Found objects are also included. De Chiara at various times has included leaves, stems, and seeds. In *Silver Dollars #2*, 1999, she incorporates a seed pod from the lunaria plant found in her garden. In *Circular Pathway*, 1999, De Chiara has added lengths of crocheted thread. Their tight clusters and loosely formed loops create a meandering line, a reminder that destinations are not always plotted as the shortest distance between two points.

More recently a frayed satin coat lining offered a new material to explore. In works such as *Gestural Impulses*, 2001, skeins of lines are developed by ripping the fabric and applying it to the surface with jade glue. Illusions of space emerge. The structure is open and one loses a sense of the vertical and horizontal plane in a boundless space. This change allowed De Chiara an opportunity to draw without stitchery while maintaining the controlled line of the earlier works. In other works such as the *Linescape* series (2000), the thread which describes the growth and structure of plants, almost seems subject to the effects of sun, water, and gravity.

De Chiara's drawings are marked by the texture of the thread and their surface imagery records the physical process of their making. Built in successive layers, they bring to mind archeological strata and suggest the passage of time.

Edith De Chiara, well-known art educator and author, retired from Lehman College in 1996 where she taught for twenty-eight years.

Susan Hoeltzel

26. *Informed by Nature*, 2001 (01-34)  
thread, colored pencil, paper mounted wood  
panel  
9" x 9"
27. *Linear Study*, 1998 (98-02)  
thread drawing and embroidery on painted linen  
6 3/4" x 4 7/8"

28. *Bound/Unbound*, 1999 (99-09)  
thread, pencil, watercolor, ink, collage,  
encaustic on handmade Okawara paper  
11" x 15 1/4"
29. *Circular Pathways and...*, 1999 (99-08)  
thread, watercolor, ink on handmade  
Okawara paper  
15 5/8" x 12"
30. *Surface Marking #2*, 1998 (98-02)  
thread, acrylic paint on paper  
6" x 4 1/2"
31. *Silver Dollars #2*, 1999 (99-16)  
silver dollars, crocheted thread, watercolor,  
encaustic on handmade Okawara paper  
8" x 6"
32. *Untitled*, 2000 (00-02)  
thread, presstype letters, collage, encaustic  
on board  
10 1/8" x 10 1/8"
33. *Untitled*, 2000 (00-03)  
thread, presstype letters, collage, encaustic  
on board  
9" x 10 5/8"
34. *Traces of Nature*, 2001 (01-30)  
thread, colored pencil, ink, watercolor,  
paper on gessobord  
9" x 12"



*Untitled*, 1997, detail



*Informed by Nature*, 2001, detail

35. *Threadworks*, 1999 (99-05)  
thread, watercolor, ink, collage on  
handmade Okawara paper  
14 3/4" x 10 1/2"
36. *Threadwalk Scroll*, 2001 (01-45)  
thread on Okawara paper  
14" x 36"
37. *Threadwalk Scroll*, 2001 (01-46)  
thread on Okawara paper  
14" x 36"
38. *Linescape 2*, 2000 (00-16)  
thread, watercolor, encaustic, paper  
mounted on wood panel  
7" x 7"

*Lehman College Art Gallery exhibitions and education programs are made possible through the support of the Bronx Council on the Arts; the Institute of Museum and Library Services, a federal agency; the Institute of Museum and Library Services National Leadership Initiatives "Museums On-line" program; the National Endowment for the Arts; the National Endowment for the Humanities; the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs, Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer and the Bronx City Council Delegation; the NYC Partnerships for Arts and Education through the Annenberg Challenge for Arts Education; the New York State Council on the Arts; the New York State Council on the Arts Technology Initiative; The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation; the Greentree Foundation; Edith and Herbert Lehman Foundation; Robert Lehman Foundation, Inc.; JPMorgan Chase; and Friends of the Lehman College Art Gallery.*

Bedford Park Boulevard West  
Bronx, New York 10468  
(718) 960-8731 fax: (718) 960-6991

<http://ca80.lehman.cuny.edu/gallery/web/AG>