

# SUSAN SCHWALB

Music of Silence: Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings



GALERIE  
MOURLOT  
NEW YORK LOS ANGELES

# SUSAN SCHWALB

## MUSIC OF SILENCE

Over the past ten years, Susan Schwalb has employed a spare, minimal vocabulary of horizontal lines and bands, drawn across layered fields of color, to create several remarkably resonant and nuanced series of paintings and drawings. In contrast to the cool geometry of conventional Minimalism, the artist's work, based on process and the handmade, evoking nature and natural phenomena, repetition and time, perception and individual experience, suggests a feminist approach to modernism. Though essentially abstract in form Schwalb's work, small-scaled and intimate, refers to the real world.

The artist claims to “find the work” through the process and materials of its making. She begins by applying three or four layers of acrylic wash to a gessoed wood panel to produce a smooth surface which she breaks by sanding in lines, marks, or incisions, revealing various colors beneath. At various moments she introduces silverpoint, a medium the artist has used for over thirty years but has recently employed in new and unconventional ways. Instead of using a metal stylus to draw a fine, figurative line, in the tradition of such precursors as Albrecht Dürer and Leonardo da Vinci, Schwalb rubs thin pieces of metal across her paintings leaving softly-toned, horizontal bands of silver, or in some cases gold, copper, or bronze, on their surface. The finished work, at once layered and luminous, alludes to the earth's strata, as the title of an earlier series attests, while appearing to shimmer before our eyes.

Elusive things, such as remembered color and the quality of light, suffuse the artist's paintings and capture a sense of the places she has lived and worked. In *Music of Silence I* (2006), Schwalb conveys the cool, grey light of winter in the northeast through silvery tones marked by subtle traces of

red. Pale expanses of green and blue repeatedly traversed by undulating horizontal lines may recall moonlight reflected on the ocean near the New England shore in the triptych *Soundings* (2007). The sun and heat of the southwest seems to animate the painting *7:55 PM* (2007) in which a saturated ochre field is injected with deep reds and vibrating pinks at the horizon to describe a tremulous twilight. In these works, and others, the artist recalls aspects of the natural world in simple, poetic, often sensual terms.

The series' title, the Music of Silence, adapted from a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé, refers to another source of inspiration for the artist. The gentle rhythms of her modulated silverpoint bands, and evocation of sound waves in her wavering colored lines, suggest an affinity with music, as does the language she chooses to describe the “echoes” or “reverberations” of her work. It is interesting to note that her husband, Martin Boykan, is an accomplished composer and pianist, and author of a book of essays on music titled *Silence and Slow Time*.

Like the best abstract painting, Schwalb's work transcends technique and materials and aspires to the sublime. It is easy to lose oneself in her contemplative, quietly expressive work, and emerge richer for the experience.

Helaine Posner, New York

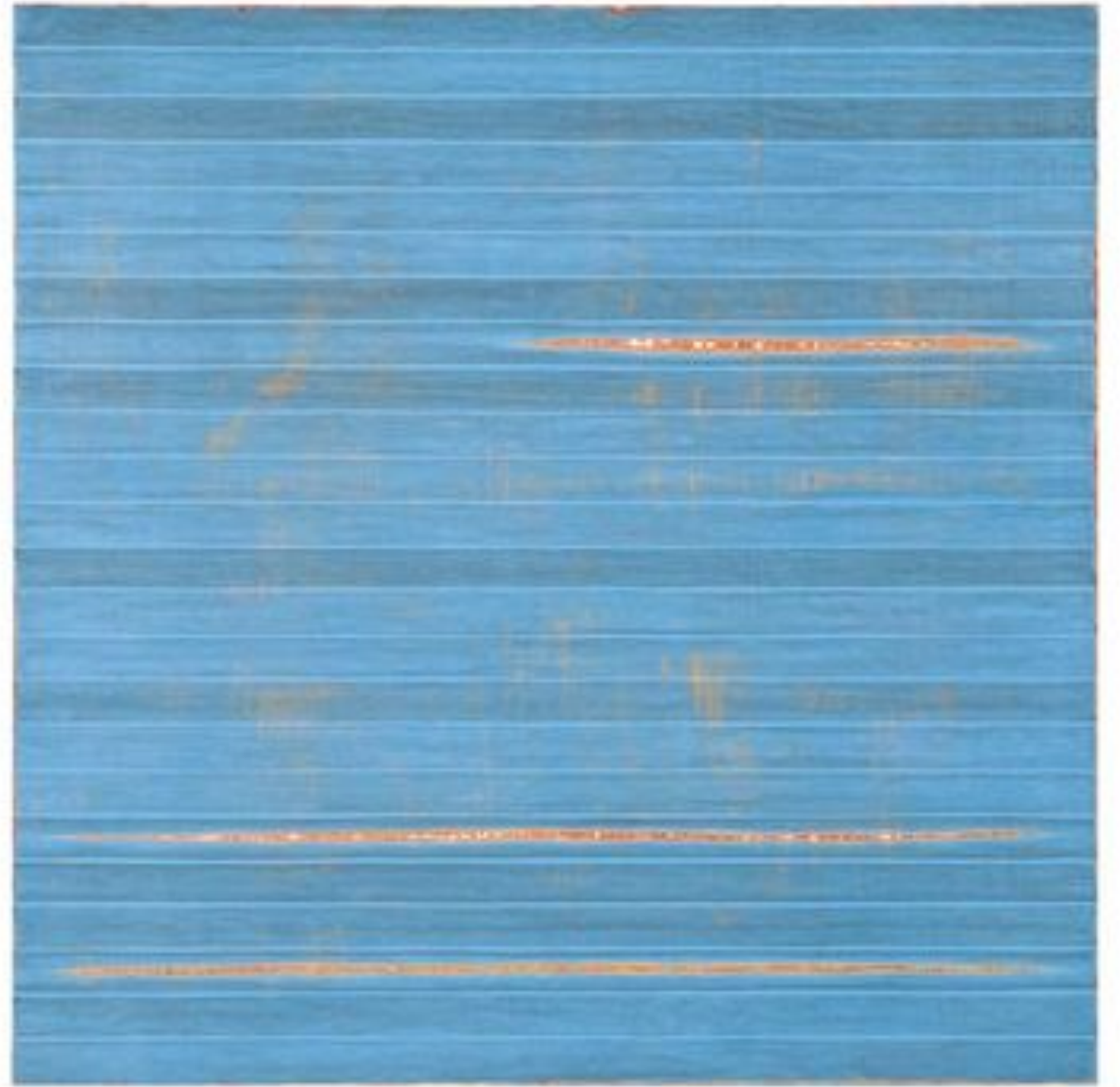
**HELAINÉ POSNER** is an independent curator and writer living in New York. From 1991-98, she was curator of the MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA. Posner is curator of the first mid-career survey of the work of Lorna Simpson organized by the AFA which traveled to the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, the Miami Art Museum, and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York in 2006-2007. She is the author of a monograph on the artist Kiki Smith (The Monacelli Press, 2005) and co-author of *After the Revolution: Women Who Transformed Contemporary Art* (Prestel, 2007).

SUSAN SCHWALB  
Music of Silence:  
Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings

Tuesday, April 15 to  
Saturday, May 31, 2008

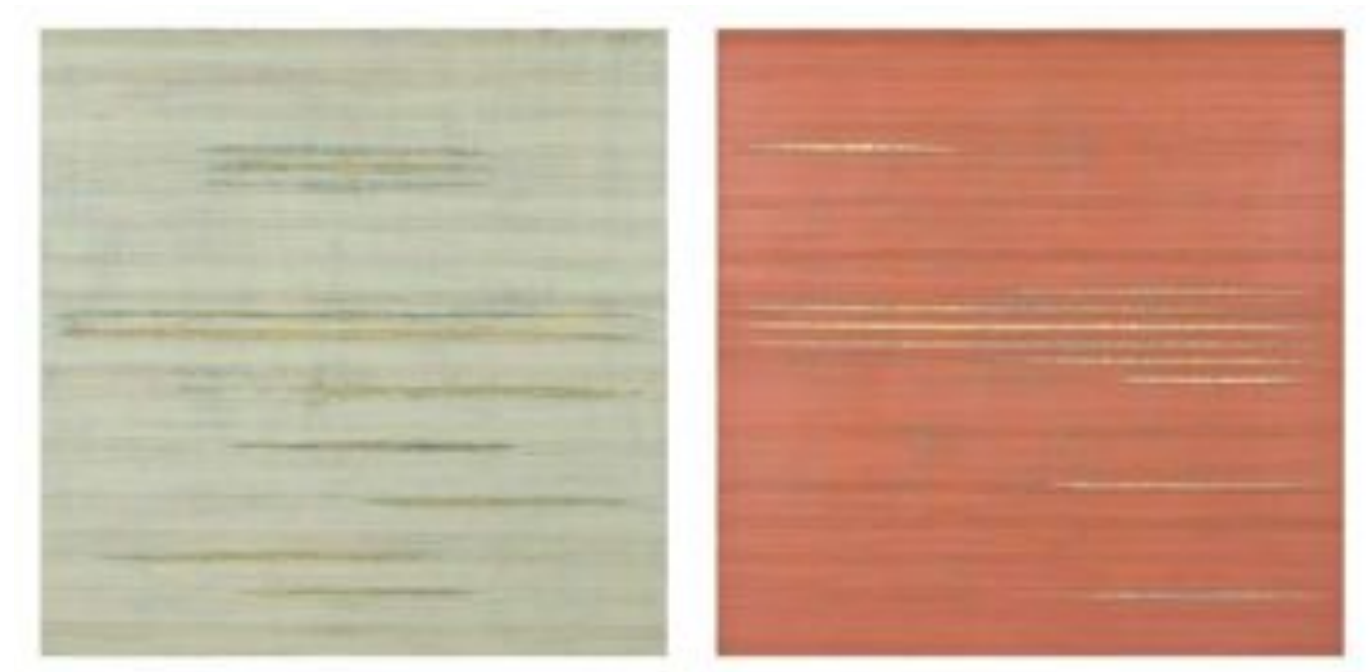
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**Music of Silence V**  
2007 silverpoint, acrylic on wood 24 x 24 x 2 inches



**Music of Silence IV**  
2007 silverpoint, acrylic on wood 24 x 24 x 2 inches





**Echoes Redoubled**

2007 diptych silverpoint, acrylic on museum mount board on wood  
30 x 63 x 2 inches Facing page: right panel

**Music of Silence I**  
2007 silverpoint, acrylic on wood 24 x 24 x 2 inches



**Music of Silence VI**  
2007 silverpoint, acrylic on wood 24 x 24 x 2 inches





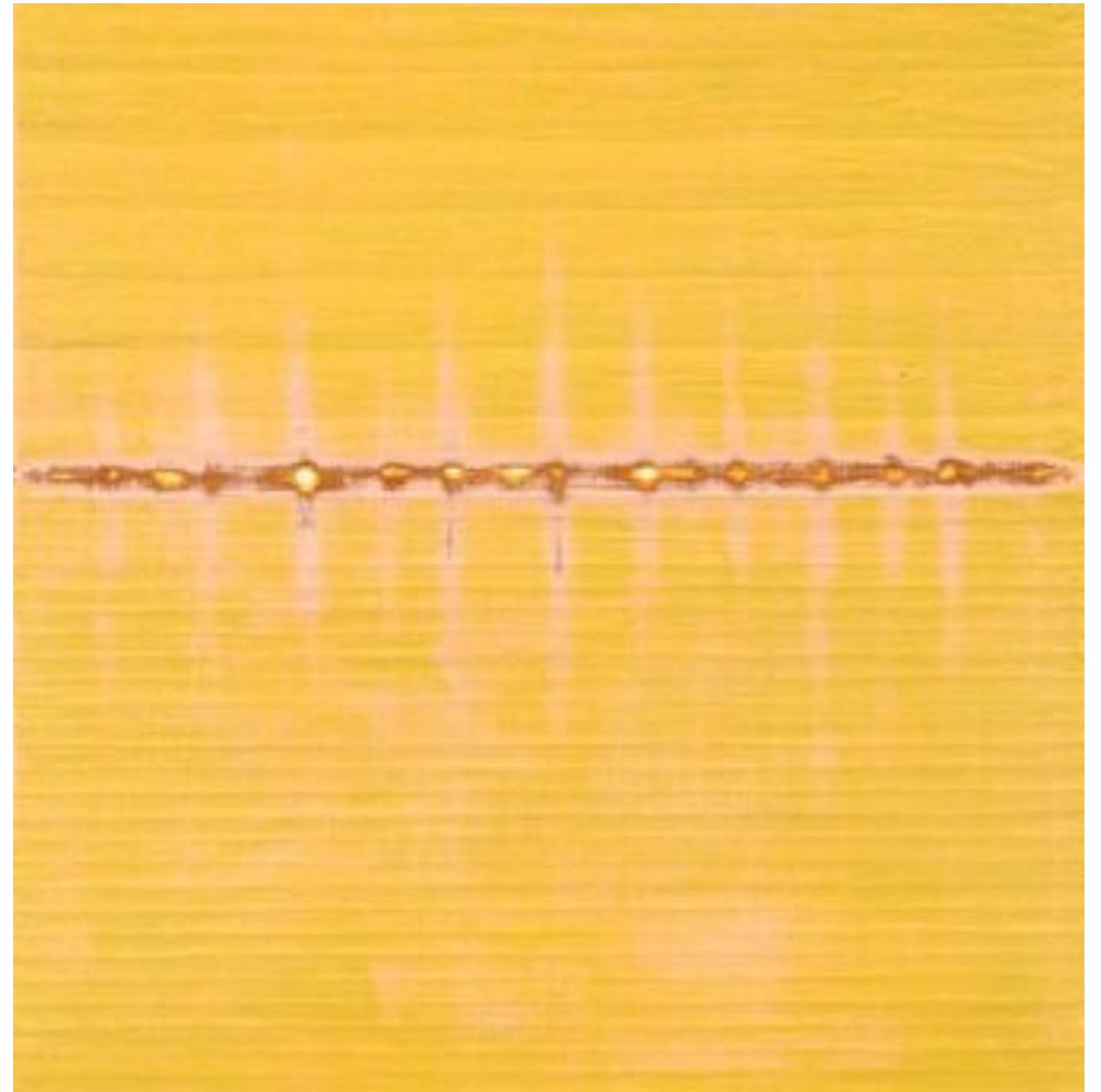
**Soundings**

2007 triptych silverpoint, acrylic on wood 16 x 52 x 1.5 inches

Facing page: right panel

**7:55 pm**

2007 silverpoint, acrylic on wood 24 x 24 x 2 inches





**Strata #452**  
2007 silverpoint, goldpoint on red Plika paper 18 x 18 inches



**Strata #445**  
2007 silverpoint, copperpoint, brasspoint on black Plika paper 12 x 12 inches

# SUSAN SCHWALB

## EDUCATION

BFA Carnegie-Mellon University, Pittsburgh, PA  
High School of Music and Art, New York, NY

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

- 2008 Galerie Mourlot, NYC *Music of Silence: Recent Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings*
- 2006 Page Bond Gallery, Richmond, VA *Metalpoint Paintings*  
Winfisky Gallery, Salem State College, Salem, MA *Atmospheric Disturbances*  
Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ *Atmospheric Disturbances*
- 2005 Solomon Fine Art, Seattle, WA *Shards of Memory: Recent Metalpoint Paintings*  
Robert Steele Gallery, NYC *Drawn in Metal*
- 2004 Cervini Haas Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ *Red Mesa*
- 2003 Robert Steele Gallery, NYC *Afterimage: Recent Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings*  
Simon Gallery, Morristown, NJ *Recent Metalpoint Paintings and Drawings*
- 2002 Adair Margo Gallery, El Paso, TX *Let There Be Light*  
Cervini Haas Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ *Palimpsest: Recent Metalpoint Paintings*
- 2001 M.Y. Art Prospects, NYC *Palimpsest: Recent Metalpoint Paintings*
- 1999 Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA *Moments of Resonance: Recent Metalpoint Drawings and Paintings*
- 1998 Birke Art Gallery, Marshall University, Huntington, WV *Improvisations on Outer Space: Recent Metallic Works on Paper*
- 1997 Arthur B. Mazmanian Art Gallery, Framingham State College, Framingham, MA *Improvisations on Outer Space: Recent Metallic Paintings and Silverpoint Drawings*
- 1996 Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA *Galaxies & Other Matter: Recent Metallic Paintings*  
Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, MA *Intervals: Silverpoint Paintings*
- 1994 American Cultural Center, Jerusalem, Israel *Silverpoint Drawings*  
Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA *Intervals: Silverpoint Paintings*
- 1992 B'nai B'rith Klutznick National Jewish Museum, Washington, DC *The Creation Series*  
(tour: May Museum of Judaica, Lawrence, NY; Chase/Freedman Gallery, Greater Hartford JCC, West Hartford, CT; Robert I. Kahn Gallery, Congregation Emanu El, Houston, TX)
- 1990 Yeshiva University Museum, NYC *The Creation Series: 15 Years of Silverpoint*
- 1989 Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL *Silverpoint Drawings*  
SOHO 20 Gallery, Invitational Space, NYC *Silverpoint Drawings*
- 1986 Saint Peter's Church, NYC *Large-Scale Silverpoint Drawings*
- 1985 SOHO 20 Gallery, Invitational Space, NYC *Recent Silverpoint Drawings*  
Simmons College, Boston, MA *Recent Silverpoint Drawings*
- 1983 U.S. Embassy Exhibition Program, sponsored by the United States Information Agency,  
The American Center in Belgrade, Banja Luka, & Skopje, Yugoslavia *Silverpoint Drawings 1978-1982*
- 1978 Loyola University, Chicago, IL *Orchid Series/Silverpoint Drawings*
- 1977 Rutgers University, Newark, NJ *Orchid Series/Silverpoint Drawings*  
Douglass College, New Brunswick, NJ *Women Artists Series Year Seven, Orchid Series/Silverpoint Drawings*

## GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

- 2008 Soprafina Gallery, Boston MA *Equilibrium: Susan Schwalb & Nan Tull*  
OK Harris Gallery, New York, NY *Abstraction/Color*
- 2007 Gráficas Gallery, Tucson, NM *Control/Chance: Susan Schwalb, Valerie Constantino & Rainer Gross*  
Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery, Keene College, NH *In Residence: Artists and the MacDowell Colony Experience*  
(tour: The Art Gallery, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH)  
G.A.S.P. Gallery Artists Studio Projects, Brookline, MA *Abstraction Updated: Deborah Muirhead, Susan Schwalb & Suzanne Volmer*  
Michele Mosko Fine Art, Denver, CO *Red, Black and Red, All Over*
- 2006 Kentler International Drawing Space, Brooklyn, NY *Figure/Ground*  
Huntington Museum of Art, Huntington, WV *Never Done: Works by Women Artists from the Puzzuoli Miller Collection*  
Solomon Fine Art, Seattle, WA *Words to Live By*  
District of Columbia Art Center, Washington, DC *From Sea to Shining Sea*  
Telfair Museum of Art, Savannah, GA *The Luster of Silver: Contemporary Metalpoint Drawings*
- 2005 Erie Art Museum, Erie, PA *Boundaries: Book Arts Between the Traditional and the Experimental*
- 2004 Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR *National Drawing Invitational*  
Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA *New Faces: New Visions*  
The Art Store, Charleston, WV *Drawing Invitational*
- 2003 National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC *Insomnia: Landscapes of the Night*  
Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL *Visions of Passage*
- 2002 Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg, MA *A Nation Mourns & Artists Respond*  
Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX *Recent Acquisitions*  
Kenise Barnes Fine Art, Larchmont, NY *Ordinate/Coordinate*  
Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA *Recent Acquisitions of Contemporary Works on Paper, Part Two: Everywhere but California*
- 2001 Dorsky Gallery, NYC *At the Edge: The Horizon Line in Contemporary Art*  
Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL *Burn: Artists Play with Fire*  
Jim Kempner Fine Arts, NYC *Minimalennialism*
- 2000 The Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA *Visual Memoirs: Selected Paintings and Drawings*  
The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA *A Decade of Collecting: Recent Acquisitions of Prints and Drawings*
- 2000-01 College of Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM *Jewish Artists: On the Edge*  
Hebrew Union College, NYC *Living in the Moment: Contemporary Artists Celebrate Jewish Time*
- 1999 Fuller Museum of Art, Brockton, MA *Ninth Triennial*
- 1998 Margaret Thatcher Projects, NYC *Vibration*  
The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC *Book As Art X*  
Eich Space, NYC *Portfolio Series*  
Künstlerhaus, Vienna, Austria *Pierogi 2000 NY-Flatfiles*
- 1997 The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY *Current Undercurrent: Working in Brooklyn*  
Wynn Kramarsky Inc., NYC *Recent Acquisitions*  
Jeffery Coploff Fine Art Ltd., NYC *Sizzle and The Art Exchange*  
Boston Center for the Arts, Mills Gallery, Boston, MA *The Drawing Show*
- 1996 Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock, AR *Large Drawings and Objects: Structural Foundations of Clarity*  
Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ *25 Years of Feminism, 25 Years of Women's Art*
- 1994 Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA *Power, Pleasure, Pain: Contemporary Women Artists and the Female Body*  
Suffolk Community College, Selden, NY *Contemporary Metalpoint Drawing*
- 1993 Museum of Contemporary Religious Art, Saint Louis University, St Louis, MO *Sanctuaries: Recovering the Holy in Contemporary Art*  
Yeshiva University Museum, NYC *Aishet Hayil—Woman of Valor*
- 1992 Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR *Silverpoint Etcetera: Contemporary American Metalpoint Drawings*  
Pino Molica Gallery, NYC (tour: Rome, Italy *Europa-America: "360" E-VENTI*)
- 1991 Elaine Benson Gallery, Bridgehampton, NY *Drawings*  
Andrea Marquit Fine Arts, Boston, MA *Viewpoints*

1990 Watson Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, MA *Spirituality in Contemporary Art by Women*  
1989 Newport Art Museum, Newport, RI *Drawing: Line or Image*  
1988 The Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR *American Abstract Drawings 1930-1987*  
1987 Leslie Cecil Gallery, NYC *Contemporary Silverpoint Drawing*  
Brad Cooper Gallery, Tampa, FL *Four Artists*  
1986 DeCordova and Dana Museum and Park, Lincoln, MA *Saints and Sinners: Contemporary Responses to Religion*  
1985 The Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL *The Fine Line: Drawing with Silver in America*  
The Woman's Building, Los Angeles, CA *Artist as Shaman*  
1982 The Alternative Museum, NYC *Sacred Artifacts, Objects of Devotion*  
The Jewish Museum, NYC *Jewish Themes/Contemporary American Artists*  
1981 Roanoke Museum of Fine Arts, Roanoke, VA *Virginia Images*  
Pratt Manhattan Center, NYC *Religion Into Art*  
1980-83 The Portsmouth Community Arts Center, Portsmouth, VA (Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition) *American Drawings III*  
1980 Columbia College, Columbia, MO *National Exhibition Works on/of Paper, Paper in Particular*  
Art Colloquium, Salem, MA *Five Artists: Process and Product*  
Just Above Mid-Town/Downtown Gallery, NYC *Outlaw Esthetics*  
Rockland Center for the Arts, West Nyack, NY *Fire and Water/Paper as Art*  
Frank Marino Gallery, NYC *Aspects of Fire*  
1979 Centre Cultural Municipal Jacques Prévert, Villeparisis, France *8 Année Travaux sur Papier Objets*  
Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC *Drawing Invitational: Six Women*  
1978 Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, PA *Women Working in Art*  
Weatherspoon Art Gallery, University of North Carolina *Art on Paper*  
1975 The Brooklyn Museum, NYC *Works on Paper: Women Artists*

#### PUBLIC COLLECTIONS (SELECTED)

Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, CA  
Arkansas Arts Center, Little Rock, AR  
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  
Danforth Museum of Art, Framingham, MA  
The Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA  
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  
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, Texas  
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 Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL  
The Old Jail Art Center, Albany, TX  
The Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA  
Telfair Art Museum, Savannah, GA

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

#### COPORATE COLLECTIONS (SELECTED)

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  
Crown Plaza Ravinia Hotel, Atlanta, GA  
Fidelity Investments, Boston, MA  
Independence Investments Associates, Inc., Boston, MA  
The Liberty Hotel, Boston, MA  
Mass. Association of Community Development Corp. (MACDC), Boston, MA  
Mckee Nelson LLP, New York, NY  
Mount Auburn Hospital, Cambridge, MA  
Office Environments of New England, Boston, MA  
Pfizer Inc., New York, NY  
PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP, Florham Park, NJ  
The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common, Boston, MA  
Robinson & McElwee PLLC, Charleston, WV  
Sonesta International Hotels Corp., Boston, MA  
West Bay Lagoon Hotel, Doha, Qatar

#### FELLOWSHIPS/GRANTS

1994 Artist-in-Residence, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem, Israel  
Artist-in Residence, Tel Aviv Artists' Studios, Tel Aviv, Israel  
2007,'92,'73 The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Sweet Briar, VA  
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

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY (SELECTED)

Bard, Elin A. *Drawings at Benson*, Dan's Papers, 6/14/91  
Beck-Friedman, Tova *Susan Schwalb, Drawn in Metal*, The New York Art World 11/05  
Breslow, Stephen *Four Women Artists: Thompson/Schwalb/Pachner/Hirt*, Atlanta Art Papers, March/April '88  
Broude, Norma and Garrard, Mary (ed), *"The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact,"* Harry Abrams, 1994  
Cohen, Joyce *Galaxies and Other Matter and Intervals*, Art New England, August/September '96  
Dreishpoon, Douglas *The Fine Line: Drawing with Silver*, Arts Magazine, 9/85  
Earley, Sandra *Art: The Siren Song of Silverpoint*, The Wall Street Journal, 9/11/85  
Eshoo, Amy *560 Broadway- A New York Drawing Collection at Work, 1991-2006*, Yale University Press, 2007  
Faxon, Alicia *Susan Schwalb: Moments of Resonance*, Art New England, June/July '99  
Faxon, Alicia *Drawing: Line or Image*, New Art Examiner, 1/90  
Faxon, Alicia and Moore, Sylvia *Pilgrims and Pioneers: New England Women in the Arts*, Midmarch Arts Books, '87  
Faxon, Alicia *Susan Schwalb: Silverpoint Drawings*, Women Artists News, Winter '86

Franklin, Valerie *Drawing Invitational: Six Women*, The Arts Journal, 11/79

Glueck, Grace *Imagery from the Jewish Consciousness*, The New York Times, 6/6/82

Gregoricus, Jason *Female Artists Hang at the Fogg*, Cambridge Chronicle, 12/9/93

Harrison, Helen A. *Contemporary Metalpoint Drawings*, The New York Times, 4/3/94

Heller, Jules and Nancy G. *American Women Artists of the Twentieth Century*, Garland Publishing Co., '95

Hightower, Marvin *The Female Body as Seen by Its Inhabitants*, Harvard Gazette, 4/15/94

Horowitz, Stash *Arts Alive: World Series*, Back Bay Courant, 4/30/96

Katz, Sonia *Susan Schwalb*, The New Art Examiner, 11/78

Kohen, Helen L. *Silverpoint Makes for Golden Exhibit*, The Miami Herald, 4/21/85

Kurtis, Arlene *Norton Mounts First Exhibit of Silverpoint Art*, Palm Beach Jewish World, 3/29/85

Langdon, Ann *The Creation Series, Art New England*, December '92 / January '93

Langer, Cassandra *The Creation Series: 15 Years of Silverpoint*, Women Artists News, Fall '90

Lubell, Ellen *Pocket Art*, SOHO News, 12/28/78

Marter, Joan *Susan Schwalb*, Womanart, Winter '77-'78

Marxer, Donna *Illuminations*, Women Artists News, Fall '89

Mathews-Berenson, Margaret *The Light Touch*, American Artist Drawing, Spring, '04

McQuaid, Cate *Public Eyes; Light Grids; Gallery on the MBTA*, The Boston Globe, 3/4/99

McQuaid, Cate *Natural Deceptions; Rejoicing Stars*, The Boston Globe, 5/2/96

Miller, Lynn and Swenson, Sally *Lives and Works, Talks with Women Artists*, Scarecrow Press, '81

Moore, Sylvia *Evocative Images at NYC's Fordham University*, Women Artists News, 5/80

Orenstein, Gloria Feman *Evocative Images*, Arts Magazine, 5/80

Orenstein, Gloria Feman *The Reflowering of the Goddess*, The Athene Series, Pergamon Press, '90

Orenstein, Gloria Feman *Vision and Visibility: Contemporary Jewish Women Artists Visualize the Invisible*, Femspec, Vol.4 Issue 2, Lexington Press, '04

Ronnen, Meir *Something Out Of Nothing*, The Jerusalem Post, 4/29/94

Russell, Gloria *Subtlety of Silverpoint*, The Sunday Republican, 1/12/86

Schwendenwien, Jude *From Religious Symbols to Detailed Abstractions*, The Hartford Courant, 10/25/92

Soltes, Ori Z. *Fixing the World: Jewish American Painters in the Twentieth Century*, Brandeis University Press/University Press of New England, 2003

Soltes, Ori Z., *Heilige Zeichen*, Parthas Verlag, Berlin, Germany 2007

Stapen, Nancy *Exploring Feminine Identity*, The Boston Herald, 2/8/87

Taylor, Robert *'Saints and Sinners' Compelling*, The Boston Globe, 12/7/86

Temin, Christine *Drawing with a Loose Definition at the BCA*, The Boston Globe, 12/6/97

Temin, Christine *Cosmic Topics Land in Framingham*, The Boston Globe, 9/11/97

Temin, Christine *Our Art, Ourselves—Provocative Show Explores the Ways Women See Women*, The Boston Globe, 3/30/94

Temin, Christine *Silverpoint's Delicate Power*, The Boston Globe, 11/14/85

Tufts, Eleanor *American Women Artists, Past, and Present, A Selected Bibliography Guide*, Garland Publishing Company, 1984

VanKleeck, Richard *Art in Asheville, Fine Exhibit at WCU*, Asheville Citizen Times, 12/1/79

Valentini, Joseph *Susan Schwalb*, Abstract Art Online Vol. VI, No. 3 (www.abartonline.com), 12/4/03

Watkins, Eileen *Tweed Show Revives 'The Spiritual in Art'*, The Star-Ledger, 12/10/82

Waterman, Jill *Delicate Understandings*, ArtsMedia, 6/15- 7/15/00

Wolff, Theodore F. *Jewish Images of the '70s in American Art*, The Christian Science Monitor, 6/21/82

Zimmer, William *Aspects of Fire*, SOHO News, 11/5/80

Politika Express, Belgrade 8/5/83 *"Inflammable" Drawings by Susan Schwalb*

Photographs by Susan Byrne, Caroline Nolan

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