



JAN BALTZELL  
DRAWINGS

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November 7 – December 15, 2019

List Gallery, Swarthmore College

## Jan Baltzell: Drawings

—Andrea Packard, List Gallery Director

During the past forty years, Jan Baltzell has exhibited her vibrantly colored paintings in more than twenty solo exhibitions in the Philadelphia region, and her works have been featured in group exhibitions both regionally and nationally. Her masterful compositions reflect varied artistic influences, from the gestural abstractions of Joan Mitchell and Willem de Kooning to the structured geometries and soft surfaces of frescos by Piero della Francesca. Although she has been rightly celebrated for her compelling use of color, Baltzell's List Gallery exhibition calls attention to the way drawing has been fundamental to her creative practice. Comprised of ten drawings made during the past three years, the exhibition and accompanying catalog offer viewers a chance to understand the expressive immediacy and elasticity of Baltzell's drawing.

Baltzell's inventive vocabulary of marks and dynamic figure-ground relationships challenge our expectations. She often animates white, blank, or erased areas of her compositions in a way that dissolves differences between

foreground and background. Her forms and gestures are open and intertwine, simultaneously suggesting interconnection and dissolution. At times, her pictures reflect varied inspirations in nature such as the edge of a leaf, the curve of a table, arcing stems, or the uneven contours of a landscape. However, Baltzell usually eliminates narrative details and takes inspiration from her observations of ineffable phenomena, such as light or wind moving through space.

Baltzell also responds to the phenomena of her own materials and evolving compositions. Viewing one of her drawings, one imagines the charcoal pressing against the white cotton paper, zigzagging heavily in one place, then lightening, and lifting. Her inventive marks, forms, and harmonic variations revel in the myriad pauses and revisions that are intrinsic to drawing.



*Untitled, 2017*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



*Untitled, 2019*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



*Untitled, 2017*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



*Untitled, 2018*  
30 x 44 inches



*Untitled, 2018*  
30 x 44 inches, charcoal and pastel on paper



*Untitled, 2017*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



*Untitled, 2018*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



*Untitled, 2018*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



*Untitled, 2018*  
30 x 44 inches

## Biography

Born in Philadelphia, Baltzell's talents were nurtured by her mother, Jane Piper, an acclaimed American Modernist painter and student of Arthur B. Carles. She received a B.F.A. from the Philadelphia College of Art in 1971, where she studied with noted painters Gretna Cambell and Larry Day. Baltzell earned an M.F.A. from Miami University, Oxford, Ohio in 1976 and resettled in the Philadelphia area, where she has exhibited her work in more than 20 exhibitions during the past 38 years. She is currently represented by Schmidt Dean Gallery, Cherry Hill, NJ.

Baltzell's work has been collected by distinguished institutions including Philadelphia Museum of Art; The National Museum of Women in the Arts; The State Museum of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg; Woodmere Art Museum, Philadelphia; Bryn Mawr College; and the Gund Collection, Cambridge, Massachusetts. She has received fellowship awards from Hollins University, Roanoke, Virginia; Dorland Art Colony, Temecula, California; Virginia Center for the Creative Arts; Towson

State University, Maryland; and the Vermont Studio Center, where she also served as resident critic.

Baltzell has influenced generations of artists in the Philadelphia region. Since 1985, she has taught at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, where she has served in the B.F.A., M.F.A., and postbaccalaureate programs. She has also taught art as a visiting instructor or critic at diverse institutions, including Towson State University, Drexel University, and Art Institute of Philadelphia.

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*All drawings are charcoal on paper unless otherwise noted.*



*Untitled, 2018*  
29 ½ x 41 ½ inches



