



Works on Paper

From the Collection of the Sheldon Museum of Art

48

SKY PAPE

Canadian, born 1963

Unison (from the *Inklings* series), 2000
Sumi ink on handmade kozo paper
1321 × 775 mm (52 × 30½ in)
Signed, inscribed, and dated, on verso, upper
center, in graphite: *Sky Pape Unison 2000*
University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Olga N.
Sheldon Acquisition Trust and gift of the
June Kelly Gallery, U-6388.2013

Sky Pape's 1999 series *Inklings* constituted a seminal step on her journey to works on paper, now her primary medium. The gossamer, three-dimensional pieces are like snowflakes in a cold landscape. The Toronto-born Pape had been primarily a painter who used bright colors; however, her sorrow over the death and illness of close family members, followed by the loss of her studio and home through fire, led her to fresh beginnings in her art and a kind of healing through the embrace of new materials.

Familiar with the world of paper framing and conservation, she had had some experience with Japanese mulberry-based kozo paper, which provided the ground for her explorations in *Inklings*. Pape began by tearing the long-fibered, silky paper into strips of varying width; the medium's lightness and pliability belie its durability. The artist then attached the strips to one another in hinged layers resembling accordion folds or jalousies, using rice starch paste, which is valued for the reversibility of its gluing action. To these strips she applied sumi ink, made from what she calls "earthy elements like soot and ash," in various ways and at various junctures in the different works in the series.¹

One piece in the series, called *Drift*, is dotted with random spots and droplets of ink, while another, *Depth of Pines*, gives a furious impression of being saturated and striated with lines and lines of densely applied ink.² *Will*, *Inheritance*, and the Sheldon's *Unison* are more serene, almost meditative. They have a Zen-like feeling of order within randomness, or vice versa. Vertical in orientation and often measuring substantially over four feet high, these works contain vertical bands of subtle ink tones at the center or the sides. The darkened edges of *Unison*, for instance, leave a tabula rasa at the center—an open field for contemplation. The shaded areas are formed by tipping selected edges of the horizontal paper strips with ink, which emphasizes the work's structure. In all the pieces, there is the constant possibility of movement, as wind or handling can create ripples in the three-dimensional surfaces of what almost appear to be textiles or feather constructions.

In response to a question about her works being monochromatic, Pape referred to "the range of grays that many consider to have the breadth and expansiveness that color possesses."³ She continued, "I've only experienced the ink's wonder rather than bumping up against limitations." In more recent creations, the artist has returned to flat paper as a ground

for what at first glance seem more traditional—that is to say, less sculptural—drawings. Her methods continue to be highly innovative, though, as when she has blown ink through straw-like tools to create linear abstractions. Each series has a unique look, and Pape is always stretching the boundaries of the materials. "Drawing is a mindful practice," she has said.⁴ This has never been truer than in *Unison*, a highlight in the series that started her in the direction of drawings as fully realized works of art. CN

1. Sky Pape, e-mail correspondence with the author, January 4, 2014.
2. For further images and information on *Inklings*, see www.skypape.com, "Folio—Earlier Archives."
3. Pape, e-mail correspondence.
4. William Forrestal, "The Landscape Explored: An Interview with Sky Pape," in *Sky Pape: Selections from the Bellagio Suite*, exhibition catalog (Fredericton NB: Yellow Box Gallery, St. Thomas University, 2013).



WORKS ON PAPER

FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE
SHELDON MUSEUM OF ART

Edited by BRANDON K. RUUD *and* GREGORY NOSAN

With a director's message by WALLY MASON

and an introduction by JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO

Contributions by

LINDSAY N. ANDREWS

TIFFANY E. BARBER

JUDITH A. BARTER

CLAUDIA EINECKE

R. TRIPP EVANS

ELIZABETH FINCH

THYRZA NICHOLS GOODEVE

RANDALL R. GRIFFEY

ASHLEY HUSSMAN

PATRICK D. JONES

WENDY J. KATZ

SHARON L. KENNEDY

MICHAEL L. KRENN

VALERIE ANN LEEDS

LAUREN K. LESSING

ADRIAN LOCKE

CHRISTIN J. MAMIYA

ANNIKA MARIE

NANCY ROSE MARSHALL

WALLY MASON

MARY E. MURRAY

CYNTHIA NADELMAN

GREGORY NOSAN

WILLIAM KEYSE RUDOLPH

BRANDON K. RUUD

ALISON G. STEWART

MARTHA TEDESCHI

JORGE DANIEL VENECIANO

MARISSA VIGNEAULT

JONATHAN FREDERICK WALZ

MICHELLE WHITE

RAÚL ZAMUDIO

© 2016 by the Board of Regents of
the University of Nebraska

Acknowledgments for the use of copyrighted
material appear on pages 309–10, which
constitute an extension of the copyright page.

All rights reserved
Manufactured in China



Photo research by Ashley Hussman
and Jaclyn Siemers.

Photographs of works in the collection
of the Sheldon Museum of Art by
John Nollendorfs and John Spence,
coordinated by Genevieve Ellerbee.

Major support for the catalog provided by
the Sheldon Premier Anniversary Sponsors:
Assurity Life Insurance Company, Cooper
Foundation, Duncan Family Trust, Kathy and
Marc LeBaron, in honor of Beatrice “Mike”
Seacrest by the Seacrest family, James C.
and Rhonda Seacrest, Lisa and Tom Smith,
and the Wake Charitable Foundation.

Library of Congress
Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Sheldon Museum of Art, author.
Works on paper from the collection of the
Sheldon Museum of Art / Edited by Brandon
K. Ruud and Gregory Nosan; With a director’s
message by Wally Mason and an introduction
by Jorge Daniel Veneciano; Contributions
by Lindsay N. Andrews [and 31 others].
pages cm. —
(American transnationalism: perspectives
from the Sheldon Museum of Art)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8032-7883-7 (cloth: alk. paper)
1. Art, American—Catalogs. 2. Art—
Nebraska—Lincoln—Catalogs.
3. Sheldon Museum of Art—Catalogs.
I. Ruud, Brandon K., 1968— editor. II. Nosan,
Gregory, editor. III. Andrews, Lindsay N.
IV. Title.
N6505.S43 2016
709.73—dc23 2015034778
Set in Arno and Chalet.

front cover: Lee Bontecou.
Untitled, 1969 (cat. 41).

back cover: Laylah Ali. *Untitled (Black
and White)*; no. 3539, 2006–7 (cat. 46).

p. ii: Lesley Dill. *Poem Dress, “The Soul
Selects Her Own Society,”* 1993 (cat. 132).

p. vi: Linn Meyers. *Untitled*,
2011 (detail; cat. 51).

p. viii: Albrecht Dürer. *Hroswitha of
Gandersheim Presenting Her Comedies to
Emperor Otto I*, c. 1501 (detail; cat. 52).

p. x: Alma W. Thomas. *Winter
Pool*, 1966 (detail; cat. 38).

p. xii: Bruce Conner. *RETURN
TO GO*, 1967 (cat. 111).

p. xiv–1: George Bellows. *Tin Can Battle, San
Juan Hill, New York*, 1907 (detail; cat. 9).

p. 104–5: William Hogarth. *The Tête
à Tête*, 1745 (detail; cat. 59).

p. 306: Radcliffe Bailey.
Untitled, 2000 (cat. 44).