

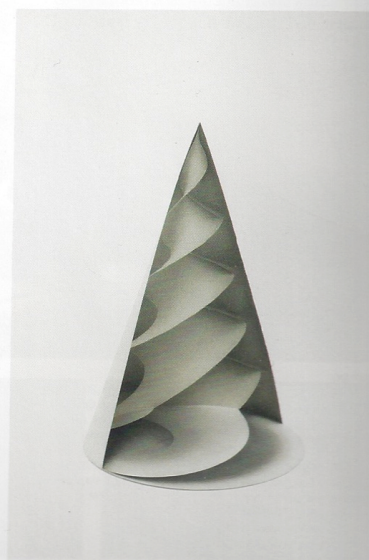
Art Review:

March 2013

Hilary Berseth

selected by Jonathan T.D. Neil

Drawing and sculpture share an inherent affinity, which at first glance has to do with their capacities for capturing space and holding it. Julio González synthesised this affinity in a single, and singular, practice. Artists such as Richard Serra cold-roll it. Hilary Berseth is peeling back a fold of that affinity, perhaps by desynthesising or decomposing it, and showing us new distillations and combinations, and how such an affinity may not be 'elective' after all. His electrochemical sculptures, in which copper and nickel grow tumorous organo-crystalline forms at their edges, hook sculpture's hard, dead materials – metal, plaster, concrete – back up to their élan vital. Think Brancusi's *Bird in Space* (1923) for an age whose main metaphor is no longer the machine but the network, the lattice and their infinite complexities. There is order in this chaos, however, as witnessed in Berseth's early *Programmed Hives* (2008), wherein honeycombs are built – by the bees, no less! – into complex geometries, at once regular and irregular. Berseth's drawings would then almost seem to belong to another artist entirely, until one takes note of their own complex aggregations: the image of a stairwell overlaid with one of a retina, replete with the halo of its optic disc (that is presumably doing the viewing); another of a diorama overlaid by the view one would see from its side of things. And then there are the mathematical models: perfect renderings in graphite on paper that are then backed by steel plating and mounted in three dimensions – model and copy in one. 'To draw in space' is how González described 'this new art' forged from 'points in the infinite' (he was speaking of stellar constellations). Berseth knows what he means. *JTDN*



from top:
Programmed Hive #6, 2008,
honeybee comb on board
mounted on hive super, wood,
polystyrene foam, wire, metal,
paint, 112 x 64 x 57 cm

Model II, 2010-11, graphite, fixative,
paper backed with steel, 43 x 31 cm

Plated Point 3, 2012, electroformed
copper on plaster base, 51 x 51 x
38 cm

All images: courtesy the artist
and Eleven Rivington, New York