

NEW YORK CITY March 3, 2010: The New York Studio School will present the exhibition, Dorothea Rockburne: Astronomy Drawings, the final venue of its national tour, from Thursday, March 18 to Saturday, May 1, 2010. The exhibition originated at the Beard Gallery, Wheaton College, Norton, Massachusetts, in March 2009, and was subsequently seen at the Black Mountain College Museum & Arts Center, Asheville, North Carolina. The exhibition surveys two decades of works on paper by Rockburne that explore the theme of astronomy. The New York Studio School show is augmented by significant recent works that extend her thinking in this area. Dorothea Rockburne is an internationally renowned abstract painter whose works have dealt with a broad range of themes derived from mathematics and physics, including set theory, the Golden Section, chaos theory, and sacred geometry.

Rockburne's interest in mathematics dates from her period of study at Black Mountain College from 1950 where she was a student of Max Dehn, the topologist, who was in turn a friend of Einstein's. Rockburne's painting teachers at Black Mountain included Franz Kline, Philip Guston and Jack Tworkov.

Dorothea Rockburne was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1932, where she attended the School of Fine Arts while still at high school. After Black Mountain she relocated to New York City where she supported herself and her young daughter as a bookkeeper at the Metropolitan Museum. She also helped catalog the Met's collection of Egyptian antiquities, beginning a long fascination with that subject that informed her Egyptian series of 1979-80. Dance and performance art were important activities for Rockburne in the early 1960s. At Black Mountain she had also come into contact with John Cage and Merce Cunningham.

Around 1990 Rockburne began to explore concepts of time and deep space and to study astronomy. During a four-month residency at the American Academy in Rome in 1991 these interests converged with her close study of a 17th-century frescoed ceiling sky chart, which provided a foundation for her ongoing series of Astronomy Drawings as well as her secco fresco wall murals for public places, including her recently completed commission for the American Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica. This monumental work, shown in Summer 2009 at Queens Museum where the mural was executed, charts the night sky over Jamaica on the night Secretary of State Colin Powell was born.

Dorothea Rockburne has been the subject of retrospective exhibitions at the Rose Art Museum, Brandeis University, in 1989, and the Guild Hall Museum, East Hampton, NY in 1995. She has exhibited extensively around the world and amassed numerous honors, including a Guggenheim fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts grant, and the 1999 Jimmy Ernst Lifetime Achievement Award in Art at the American Academy of Arts and Letters where she was elected an academician in 2001. She participated in Documenta V in 1972 and the Venice Biennales of 1973 and 1980.

Dorothea Rockburne will talk about her work with David Cohen, Gallery Director at the New York Studio School and publisher and editor of artcritical.com, on Wednesday, March 24 at 6.30pm. The exhibition is accompanied by an illustrated catalog with a conversation between the artist, the exhibition's curator, Anne H. Murray, who is professor of art history at Wheaton College and director of the Beard Gallery, and Bill Goldbloom Bloch, Professor of Mathematics at the College. A website, at <http://www.nyss.org/exhibitions/dorothea-rockburne>, features works from the show. For more information, images for reproduction or to arrange an interview with the artist, please contact Gallery David Cohen at 212 842 0212 or dcohen@nyss.org

The New York Studio School is located at 8 West 8 Street, between Fifth and Sixth Avenues, Telephone 212 673 6466. The gallery is open seven days, from 10 am to 10 pm, with free admission.