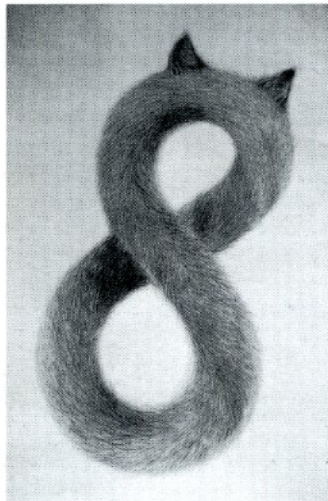


Machine Iteration: "Country Fair With Prize Tent,"  
pencil on wood and straw, ca. 26' x 10' x 24".



Margarita Gluzberg, *Moebius Cat*, 1999,  
pencil on paper, ca. 97% x 59%".

have been placed side by side against a gallery wall. But there are differences: Tyson has tried to create the effect that the workstations exist sixty seconds apart. The various clues are not immediately apparent, however. The only obvious indication of any discrepancy is the one-minute time difference on the LED clocks resting on each filing cabinet—the tiniest of cracks opening up before us, giving us a glimpse of private, out-of-sync, defiantly double lives.

—James Hall

## MARGARITA GLUZBERG

RICHARD SALMON

A cat is one of the first things we learn to draw. One circle placed on another, topped off with two inverted Vs: a body, a head, and a pair of ears. It is simple to produce and eminently readable as schema, caricature, and sign rolled into one. Alongside the rectangular house, with smoking chimney, four windows, and garden path leading to the central front door, it stands as evidence of a child's initiation into the realm of representation.

Margarita Gluzberg has drawn such a cat. It is a creature of fantasy. The two circles are provided by a figure eight, or infinity sign, and the ears stick out from one of the loops. Just as a cat should be, it is covered in soft fur. But Gluzberg's drawing technique is obsessive. Each of her innumerable marks reads as a hair, so that the overall shape of this cat is given in the marks' cumulative effect without a precise underlying form being quite graspable. What we cannot see, for example, is that beneath all that fur there must be a twist

in the loop, because this is a *Moebius Cat* (all works 1999), whose fur is on its inside and outside. Far from being an innocent cat, it is a worrying presence providing monstrous evidence of repressed fears.

*Moebius Cat* is part of the singular and very hairy menagerie on view in Gluzberg's recent show. There is a moth, a spider with an uncertain number of legs, a beard-cum-shaggy dog, and an animated cactus. They are all large and, with the exception of the cactus, are pinned only on their upper edges, so that the paper curls away from the wall at the bottom. The result might make for a series of brooding presences were it not for the fact that Gluzberg undercuts this seriousness with a number of cartoonlike touches. For instance, *Moth*, while it might not conform to any known species, is largely rendered in what would be thought of as an objective, observational manner, until, that is, one notices the upper-wing markings, which feature two eyes ringed with extra-long lashes in a deliberately exaggerated and ludicrous mismatch.

Nothing here, though, is too obvious. These drawings demand a lot of looking, and the overall effect, slowly arrived at, is of a barely submerged erotic charge. The spider in *Apex Predator* extends one appendage in a Betty Boop-style come-on, stands firmly on the flexed final segment of another, holds two akimbo, and kneels demurely on two more. While the long, flowing beard appearing as *Beard-God-Dog* is reminiscent of the one sported by Michelangelo's God on the Sistine ceiling, it also resembles a hair piece. Along with the large black gap between "beard" and "mustache" where the mouth should be, there is another, smaller graphite spot

a little lower down. So if that's an anus, maybe the mouth isn't a mouth at all. The cactus has mouth and eyes too, and so, somehow more strangely, does the body of the spider.

What is absorbing about this sense of perversity is that it is felt not at the margins of experience but as central to any question of identity. It is perversity as normality, a potential that, in working to constitute a self in relation to others, does so through tauntingly withholding any certainty of place or quality. A come-on is a camouflage tactic, gender wavers, and soft beauty might just as easily be taken for repulsive ugliness. Appearance is seriously jocular, and what is inside is laid bare. Boundaries are impossible to perceive here, and yet everything is absolutely precise, represented distinctly on a surface that then strives to fold into and substantiate itself, rolling into and encroaching inquisitively on our own space. It's all very weird and anxiety-inducing and wonderful.

—Michael Archer

## HALIFAX

### VITTORIO MESSINA

HENRY MOORE STUDIO,  
DEAN CLOUGH

The 1996 paperback edition of *Architecture and Utopia*, Manfredo Tafuri's important text on urban modernism and ideology originally published in 1973, features an arresting etching by the architect Aldo Rossi: *L'architecture assassinée*, 1975, depicts teetering buildings, collapsing pylons, fissured walls, and exposed brickwork—a modernist city on the point of disintegration. *A Village and Its Surroundings*, the outcome of Roman artist Vittorio Messina's 1998–99 residency at Dean Clough's Henry Moore Studio in Halifax, presents a comparable (equally ambivalent, equally thought-provoking) "assassination" of urban modernity.

Might the two be distantly related? Messina's installation work, with its deceptively simple, clean-cut methods of assembly and its recycling of basic everyday objects, is often aligned with Minimalism and *arte povera*. However, its distinctly narrative, even allegorical character and its diverse historical references set it at a certain distance from these two tendencies and remind us that Messina, a former student of architecture, has a particular interest in the modern movement—both its utopian ambitions and its authoritarian dimensions. His anthropocentric construc-