

Nami Dunham  
Graduate Thesis  
Artist Statement

The series of drawings titled *Drawings from Gestural Study of My Rabbit* were just that. The image was derived from a wire sculpture I had made hoping to capture the gesture of my pet using a single line of wire, much the same way that artists from Titian to Degas have used charcoal and pencil to present studies of figures in space. The process of transferring the inherently three-dimensional quality of a sculpture, especially one of a tangle of wire, to a two dimensional pictorial plane was an interesting one. In previous explorations of this sort, I had drawn from the actual sculpture attempting to maintain the three-dimensional quality of the sculpture; not quite *trompe l'oeil* but certainly attempting to have the object appear physical on the page. For this series, I decided instead to concentrate on the surface of the drawing page rather than to attempt to capture any reality from the sculptural object itself. Working from a photocopy of my sculpture, I began methodically transferring the photocopied image, square by square from an imposed grid to the larger picture plane using nothing but pencil to draw row after row of short vertical lines. A consequence of this kind of mark making was a burnished quality with a modulated surface from the cheap paper warping from the continual pressure of the pencil. If the box on the grid in the photocopy contained a wire going through it, the line was erased out of the drawing before proceeding to the next square. In this way each drawing was built up, row by row and column by column until the picture plane was full.

What does a drawing derived from a photocopy derived from a sculpture derived from my impression of an animal have to do with anything? My drawings are my impressions of what I see; these are my interpretations of what a living rabbit once was. My drawings are my way of remaining connected with that which is now gone; the moments, the people and things that build up in our histories to become our lives.