

Mia Rosenthal: *a little bit every day*

Drawing is one of the oldest activities in human history. Mia Rosenthal's large ambitious ink drawing: *Life on Earth*, spanning 38 x 55 inches, offers the rare opportunity for slow reflection on the history of the planet earth and its species – in particular, that of the human race. The drawing is akin to a spliced cross section of historical taxonomy in the form of a large spiral shaped drawing. The subject matter ranges from a single celled organism to a biogenetically engineered fruit fly (*Drosophila synthetica*, 2012).

Rosenthal's exhibition is a meta-reflection on the "every day", from her scaled drawings of mac iPhones to the large spiral-shaped *Life on Earth* drawing. What is fundamental about Rosenthal's work is how the drawn mark, like the spark of an idea of human imagination, drives this exhibition into motion. It's as if to suggest that the drawn mark takes on a life of its own and generates the entirety of the exhibition itself. In essence, the mark is absolutely fundamental in the artist's work – formally, individually, expansively, and conceptually.

Rosenthal's drawings utilize both form and inquiry – she is an artist whose practice is grounded in the idea as well as manipulating forms to discover the idea. Drawing from conceptual art she embraces the idea as the beginning of her art but finds value in the handcraft of art production itself. And because of the indifference of time, the artist can reflect on and reconsider the purist aspects of conceptual art, in which the earlier conceptualists in the 1960s and early 1970s challenged the value of traditional forms of art production by vanquishing the unique material form of aesthetic expression for the generic and the impersonal. Instead, Rosenthal sets out to re-engage the spectator with an "open inquiry" by presenting the spectator with her own practice, which incorporates both its avant-garde roots and traditional handcraft. Mia Rosenthal's *Life on Earth* is an affirmation of life itself, while also simultaneously emitting the symbol for entropy, reminding us that all things are subject to change. As a result, Rosenthal's exhibition offers the spectator multiple points of view ranging from the subject matter, to the construction of these drawings, and what they might mean in the larger context of aesthetic consideration.

– Todd Keyser



image: *iPhone (Kate)*, 2013, 4 1/2 x 2 1/4 inches, ink, pencil and gouache on paper,

front: *Life on Earth*[detail], 2013, 38 x 55 inches, ink on paper



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