



Carolee Schneemann  
at her home and studio  
in New Paltz, NY.  
2017. Photo: Courtesy  
Bonnie Marranca.

# In the Beginning is Drawing

Carolee Schneemann in conversation with  
Bonnie Marranca and Claire MacDonald

At this sad occasion of the death of Carolee Schneemann on March 6, 2019, *PAJ* honors the life and legacy of one of the most important artists of our time. Schneemann has been an abiding voice, a luminous spirit, in the pages of *PAJ* where her work helped to expand the commentaries on art and performance over the years. When the London-based essayist, playwright, and now Unitarian minister Claire MacDonald and I were investigating performance and drawing for a future project, we spoke with Schneemann on this subject at her New Paltz home, on August 20, 2010. Our conversation was cut short when someone arrived to clean the chimney. That moment remains in our text as a link to Schneemann's own "What Matters," her long list of what it takes to get through the day to find time for the art, which follows our conversation.

Schneemann had been a friend for nearly four decades, an artist whose life exuded a roundedness that came from working its way through all the means and materials that characterize the last half-century of American art-making. She started with paintings, collages, constructions, drawings, and watercolors, then moved on to sound and movement pieces, happenings, "kinetic" theatre, added to the photography, performance, film, video, and installations. I have always valued the fierce intelligence and curiosity that informed the model of an artistic work ethic she leaves behind. Schneemann was also a beloved artist in the upstate community of the Hudson Valley where she had lived and worked since the sixties, at the same time forging a great public sense of sociability in multiple arts communities here and abroad.

Notwithstanding, while so much attention has been given to her prolific body of work, it has not been as steadfastly acknowledged that Schneemann was also one of the most brilliant artist-writers of her generation. Her voluminous journals, essays, letters, and performance scores elaborate a highly individualistic and poetic syntactical style that conveys a deep sense of engagement with ideas and the languages of art. She can truly be said to have developed a mode

of performance thinking and her own visual art vocabulary. Several of her distinctive handwritten, sprawling notes in bold flair-pen colors dancing across a page are in the *PAJ* archive. Her speaking voice had that same lilting quality and forward momentum.

At home, piles of books sat near her desk and beside her bed, filled with protruding papers bookmarking their pages for later reference. She was a life-long researcher around issues of censorship, sexuality, war, natural history, iconography. Her constancy was the emphasis on process, integrity of materials, the working out of problems in space, and dialogue between different modes of perception framing a personal history. Oh, her work goes beyond autobiography—it is really an *autobiology*. The womanly knowledge evolved from her long years of work and exploration, starting from her own body. Stretching the boundaries, making things with her hands, discovering new ways of understanding the world, loving the ecstasy of presence.

There was always something else about her that was not of New York City. I thought of it as an attribute from another era, a certain warmth and loveliness and empathic manner that charmed her personal relations, the naturalness of the country girl in her who loved the outdoors. Pruning trees led her to *Up To and Including Her Limits*. Mourning her special cat became the *Vesper's Pool* installation. This is the Carolee Schneemann who telephoned me one Sunday afternoon to ask if I could identify a certain yellow flower she had found in the garden. Her drive to understand species of desire for every part of the human body also extended to the lives of plants and animals. This worldly woman was a font of local knowledge. She will not be a stranger in any kind of paradise.

Carolee, Carolee, I will think of your legacy in preparing the groundwork for how to embody artistic freedom, how to carry in your heart the mysteries of human existence, how to dream of other ways of being. Yes, groundwork, foundations of thought, you, grounded, remembering you sinking into the soft mud, rising up from the dark waters of your pond like a creature of myth, digging, quickening your footsteps in woods and worn pathways. Moving, thinking, laughing, loving life. Now gone.

Bonnie Marranca

MARRANCA: The subject of performance drawing has not been so well-addressed as, for example, performances themselves. And even a lot of the documentation is less complete than the photography. I'd like to put more focus on the question of performance and drawing, so maybe a good place to start would be to ask how important is a drawing practice to your work. Perhaps, you can elaborate on that.

SCHNEEMANN: I don't have a practice, I'm not a dentist. I have a process, and I'm a painter, as you know—a painter who works with real-time space and real space and extended media. All of the kinetic images begin with drawing. There has never been any action or event or performative configuration that didn't begin with drawing. Drawing is the key and it's the beginning of translating the physical sensation into an image that then might be inhabited, or perhaps not. They can be done on a paper napkin or on a huge wall. Also, because they're often spontaneous I have to get it when it turns up so they're not usually cared for or meticulous or on nice paper necessarily, they're on the back of envelopes and written into books.

MARRANCA: Some of the drawings seemed to have text on them and writing so they're not only visual but they're also literary.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, they're not literary so much as they're . . .

MARRANCA: Textual.

SCHNEEMANN: . . . they're instructions. They're saying, "further down," or, "put lights up." It's a configuration of the image.

MACDONALD: Looking at your work, one of my impressions is that there are two approaches to drawing. One is very expressive to do with—I think you just said it—what you're being told, in a sense, what comes up. I'd love to hear more about that. And the other one seems to be when you are making drawings as plans, so there's a sense that there's a planning, plotting, executing. Are they two different aspects that occur at different times in the process?

SCHNEEMANN: I think so. I think you're right that they are actually different parts of conceptual mind, that once the spontaneous kinetic offering has appeared then usually it has to be structured and analyzed in terms of duration, position, lighting. "Is this really going to happen, and if so, how much time might it require, what kind of space, lighting, will there be sound?" So then it gets more developmental.

MACDONALD: And there's yet another kind of drawing. This third one, which seems to me to be where you're inhabiting a space through drawing, for instance, with *Trackings*, when you've talked about living in the space and almost inhabiting the space. Is that a different approach to drawing?

SCHNEEMANN: This is the sense of multidimensionality that you experience as a painter, especially as a landscape painter, where the surround is always so active and influenced and changing. I always say as a landscape painter, which is really where my discipline was concentrated, you can only fail because whatever you're looking at is completely changing. The light changes, the wind changes, the colors start drying too slowly, too fast, you have to pee, a storm might turn up. It's very exciting, invigorating, and enveloping. When I got into indoor space I wanted some aspect of that enveloping activity, and also, because of the dancers I began to choreograph with, their sense of space was already contained in their own bodies. It didn't have that risky extension. I mean, they would, of course, have propulsion and extension but it was always about how they contained that energy, rather than a sort of perceptual field where they were not the subject so much as the means to get this form and energy.

MACDONALD. When you've done that inhabiting, are you the means?

SCHNEEMANN: Am I, personally, or the artist?

MACDONALD: Yes, the artist or the performers. The means of drawing . . .

SCHNEEMANN: Oh, that's a good question. Say that again, Claire.

MACDONALD: Well, you were saying that when you're working with those dancers, inhabiting a space with them, they're quite contained. I know what you mean about that particular discipline and approach. Whereas you're getting them to think that they're also the means of making.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, that's so hard for them, even for the Judson people, which is why I had to stop choreographing for dancers, as such. I mean, they were wonderful and, particularly, with that exploding piece where they go like particles, *Lateral Splay*. I sent them out as fast as possible to crash into the wall. I'm really fond of the piece because they were propulsive. Their instruction is to explode themselves in space and if they contact each other or the wall then there's a collapse. But they're trained, you know, they practice over and over and over and over again.

MACDONALD: Do you consider that early work as part of drawing? That they are actually drawing, in a sense, in that space?

SCHNEEMANN: Yes. And that's interesting because then it all leads back to *Up To and Including Her Limits* where I can physicalize this time factor. I hadn't thought of that quite.

MACDONALD: So, *Tracking* is the early title?

SCHNEEMANN: Yes, the London version.

MACDONALD: It sounds as if what you're talking about is that the notion of tracking a space and marking a space really began very early with that contact improvisation work.

SCHNEEMANN: The thing that's crucial to me that's not part of general awareness has to do with this aspect of narcissism, as analyzed by Lou Andreas-Salomé, where she reconfigures Freud's theory of narcissism, and hers, which has always been debased and denied and ignored. It's very painterly. It's about perception that's so intensely focused that the self dissolves into what it perceives. It's not about enforcing a sense of *selfness*. Unless you are doing a self-portrait in painting, you're dissolved in what you're seeing if you are working from a subject. That has always been key for me. It's not about me, it's about getting rid of me. That's ecstatic, like, when I can dissolve into material or circumstance. It's like listening to a Bach cantata that takes you into a physicalized spirit dynamic.

MACDONALD: Then you are, if you like, to use that word, the "means" of making drawing in a space which is performance, in a sense. You are the material itself.

MARRANCA: Or maybe in a way a very exact autograph.

SCHNEEMANN: Maybe. I'm not sure how to describe it.

MACDONALD: Well, what about to go back to the idea of drawing as—I love that phrase—the "kinetic offering," which is a beautiful idea that you're suggesting. It doesn't come from inside you but you're the transmission?

SCHNEEMANN: The physicality of it is what drives it.

MARRANCA: At what point do the performances become ready? In other words, do you have a lot of drawings when you are working on something? Do you draw constantly until you think you are ready?

SCHNEEMANN: That's a good basic question. There won't be a performance unless there are very insistent drawings. I don't try to do it, the drawings kind of drive it, and they talk to me. They say, "Look, look. Look at all of us. Look at all this. Do something."

MARRANCA: How closely are the physical actions related then to the sequence of the performance?

SCHNEEMANN: Well, sometimes it's absolutely fantastic. There were drawings of *Meat Joy* of chopping fish and actions with the materials, and then I have photographs where spontaneously and in improvisation I got that exact image happening. I think that's so gratifying and thrilling. "Wow, how did that happen?" Because it's anticipatory, and they haven't been told, "You'll chop this way and then you'll throw it that way."

MARRANCA: At times you see that when you look at the drawings and then you look at a photograph and you can compare them, and then perhaps to the videotape. In terms of documentation, you can see how they sometimes connect.

SCHNEEMANN: It's a nice surprise.

MACDONALD: Another very practical question, your work often uses ink and watercolor together. I'm thinking about the relationship between materials. How important are the materials of drawing to you? You've used chalk, you've used watercolor, you've used crayon.

SCHNEEMANN: Sometimes it's just what's at hand, and other times I want it more wet, and other times more sticky.

MACDONALD: Is it part of the history of learning to draw?

SCHNEEMANN: Well, that's the rigor behind all this. I drew eight hours a day for three years when I was at Columbia, and I was quite obsessed that I had to learn to understand form and volume and dimension. That I really had to possess it through that exercise, through looking at it and addressing it over and over again. So, that's very crucial.

MARRANCA: Do you feel that your drawing as a way into the performances is also addressing the history of drawing? It has its own discourse.

SCHNEEMANN: Yes, it does, doesn't it? Whether I'm thinking about it or not, it will, because I've trained in a certain Western tradition and my influences are historical.

MARRANCA: Are you aware of what kinds of art-historical references have been the most valuable for your drawings to lead them into performance?

SCHNEEMANN: Yeah, but it's odd. I mean it's Cézanne, Cézanne's broken line, and he's not especially gestural once you pass the early expressionist things, but it's his rigorous analysis of dimensionality and space, and that's where I needed to have more discipline.

MACDONALD: You've talked many times about the way drawing emerged for you through childhood. What kind of drawing was that? Is it what we might call revelatory drawing or expressionist drawing?

SCHNEEMANN: No, no, no. They're very conceptual, they're funny. They're trying to understand the broken plane, you know, the ones with the staircase that's over and over again trying to analyze where does the body go between these fractures.

MACDONALD: This is an analysis of time and space with your very early conceptual drawings.

SCHNEEMANN: Yeah. And then a portrait of my brother in a bassinet. Did you see that one? It's extraordinary because it's depictive, it's a live study, a portrait, and he's throwing a toy. I know it's my brother and so that means I'm four years old or five. That's what I'm lecturing on, you know, I do that new lecture on childhood drawing, which is so much fun.

MARRANCA: Do you still have access to that childhood material? Can you still tap into childhood impulses?

SCHNEEMANN: Yeah, yeah. It's like finding a treasure that almost isn't mine, "Oh, what an odd treasure trove this is. Who did this?" "You did it." "Okay." "So, I did it." "What does it mean?" There's the filmic tablets where I would take fifteen pages to make an image. It's all about a kind of mistrust of time. How can I analyze time?

MACDONALD: And how is that related to film—the cutting up, the use of frames?

SCHNEEMANN: I think when I was four or five, I was more analytic than I have become. My editing now is more musical, it's more based on actual rhythmic counts and duration. The childhood stuff is very precise, it's very demanding.

MACDONALD: The relationship of drawing to music is something I wanted to ask you about, both in terms of it being marking time and your drawing being sequencing in time.



SCHNEEMANN: Energy phrasing, you could say.

MACDONALD: Say a little bit about that relationship, too, if you can.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, rhythm structuring form as a rhythmic duration. Certainly, *Fuses* is edited that way, with mathematical counts between the cuts. Mathematical counts, let's say, a gesture. Hand goes up here, I cut it and I count fifteen, image, image, and then the hand comes back. So it's encapsulating a rhythmic duration.

MARRANCA: Is that why you may have used Bach so often? What is the connection?

SCHNEEMANN: It's a very deep connection. Bach is what I would listen to before I would work. That's immersive for me and very emotional. It takes me to a second place where I feel I need to get there.

MARRANCA: Is it, to some extent, driving the performance as well in terms of its structure?

SCHNEEMANN: I think it's a shadow by the time it is an actual performance, because otherwise I'd be literalizing my influences somehow, if that makes sense.

MARRANCA: Yes, because it's mixed in with pop music, perhaps the Supremes or Dusty Springfield.

SCHNEEMANN: I need a disjunctive aspect, otherwise I get sentimental or predictable, and I've got to watch it. That's why certain kinds of harsh technologies are very appealing to me to break up my own habits.

MACDONALD: I was also going to suggest that in the period of the fifties or sixties, when you were working with James Tenney, many composers were also experimenting with what the drawn field was.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, I'm listening to Tenney all day long. Ives is such a huge influence . . . simultaneities and the disjunctive cuts and layering and reoccurrences. Webern is in the house. He's practicing Feldman, Cage, Ives. That's a constant influence.

MACDONALD: Sometimes when we're naively thinking about drawing it can feel like a very organic, but you're describing the process of your work that's always been about joining and rejoining disjunctive juxtapositions. Is that true of the drawing as well, that drawing is sequence juxtaposed?

SCHNEEMANN: I think so. I'm not sure.

MACDONALD: Sorry, I'm putting words in your mouth. I'm doing the analysis here.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, that's what theory can do, take things to another step.

MARRANCA: But drawing is definitely related to thinking in the work and it becomes a certain kind of language. My question is, how is visual knowledge related to performance knowledge?

SCHNEEMANN: Whew. Ouch. I think we're gonna have to . . . DISCUSS.

MARRANCA: It's easier to ask the questions.

SCHNEEMANN: Ask it again.

MARRANCA: Well, I was saying, it very much seems that drawing and thinking are related. My question was, how are visual knowledge and performance knowledge related, as a matter of learning or thinking?

SCHNEEMANN: Well, drawing is so physicalized. For me, it's not thinking.

MACDONALD: It's related to the automatic. . .

SCHNEEMANN: No, it has nothing to do with surrealism. There's nothing automatic about it. It's really very confusing. For instance, this is an ape sitting here, so then the voice shows me and positions this figuration, and then it says "pink." And I say, "Okay, pink." It says "brown." "Okay." "Red heart." "Okay." That's not thinking, that's like being a receiver.

MACDONALD: It's transmission.

SCHNEEMANN: Transmission, that's it. And then I look at it and say, "Is this okay?" Or, it's crap, I'll throw it away. I love all the pink, it's good, it's good. Look at that figure, it seems to be raising something in the air. I don't know where it came from. That's clear transmission.

MARRANCA: But if you're saying drawing is not related to thinking then it's not related to meaning.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, of course, it's related to meaning but thinking is a superimposition that comes later. Let's agree with Claire's term and say there's a

transmission, and then you start to think about it. Because thinking is too specific and has predictive functions, like, "I think I'll think about this." But when the drawing is flowing and fluid, it's kind of crazy magic and it's so physical.

MARRANCA: What I was thinking about is consciousness or the subliminal, nothing so concrete.

SCHNEEMANN: Sure. It's all part of the brain stem.

MACDONALD: Do you think that in the world of your own context, drawing has been a very important path for other people as well? Do you think you're exceptional?

SCHNEEMANN: Well, Oldenberg, Dine. Look at all those drawings. The painters are different from the performers. The painters are not depicting themselves, they are not posing and confessing, except for the wonderful Dine psychological performance he did on psychoanalysis—confessional, radicalizing, a despised performance. But for the realm of the painters, it's transmission, it's tactile, it's saturating, it's spontaneous density of your elements extended into a larger space.

MACDONALD: And performance comes out of that, it seems, as I'm listening to you.

SCHNEEMANN: Within it. I mean most of us assemble a lot of stuff and then things happen with it. It's like you have your palette but it's larger and grosser and so suddenly there's smoke in the air or people are throwing fabrics through space or somebody's crawling under the table.

MACDONALD: Just so we take thinking out of it for a bit. I know exactly what you mean by it's not thinking. It's hard to find what the words might be, isn't it? Is it a mode of knowing, a mode of generating?

SCHNEEMANN: I like transmission, I like generating. And also, of course, then you go back to Artaud to try and get a foundation of this, and it's all so sensory and saturating. And then you think about it, "What was that about?" But if you think about it too much it's ruined.

SCHNEEMANN: You know, if you think about *Meat Joy*, that it belongs to Rouault or some kind of expressionist realm, then it's no good.

MACDONALD: It's not that you're doing the thinking, "Oh goodness me, what's that about?"

SCHNEEMANN: That's nice.

MACDONALD: It's doing it and it's thinking, if you like. It's process. Process is doing the doing.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, dreaming—dreaming.

MARRANCA: Since you mentioned earlier you drew on tablets, on walls—there seemed to be a constant sensational stream—take us through that process then of how something like *Meat Joy* originates in drawing and gets to the performance.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, the transformations are very demanding because to get the image in life, the life has to be changed radically. So that's why I was talking about the physical exercises that I had to invent to train people so that they could enter the realm of this sensory flow. That meant addressing every emotional, physical taboo that was overt in our culture, taboos of how things smell: feet, ears, hands, cunt, cock. How you touch somebody, how you drag them, how you grab them, how you hold them. I realized I could never do this directly. I could never address the sensory constraints head-on. I had to evolve very subtle and odd exercises and so that's when I began to perform because I have to be able to do it, see what does this accomplish, how does it feel.

So, grabs and falls is extremely important, where I line up my participants and big men have to knock down small women, small women have to knock down big men, so I have to teach them where their weights and balances give over, and are responsible for the other person's fall weight, misappropriate movements. It has to be very slow, it can't be overt and that's the way I teach. Perception also. I can't say, "You're not seeing clearly." I have to devise a process that's available and not intimidating that they can trace and follow. Once we start doing it, it's so gratifying and so exciting. That takes a couple of weeks. Then we can begin to address the movements of the work itself because then they can develop it.

MARRANCA: Going from something like *Meat Joy*, which is more spontaneous and random in terms of movements compared to, say, *Water Light/Water Needle*. Since you were talking about working with the performers' bodies, how did you then move to something that was much more specific and instructional? What role did the drawings play in that piece?

SCHNEEMANN: Oh, the drawings are very strict in *Water Light/Water Needle*. But, again, there's this physical discrepancy where I can draw all these wonderful figures moving around fluidly on the ropes. But we can't get up there and move

like that. It takes weeks. I didn't know you have to have calluses, you have to have muscle memory. You can't just float along there.

MACDONALD: Then the sequenced drawings in that case are not kinetic, they're instructional to others, an offering to others to document the way in which you want them to work.

SCHNEEMANN: No, they can't do it.

MARRANCA: Do they see the drawings as a form of rehearsal?

SCHNEEMANN: Oh, I see what you mean. The performers themselves? No, they don't see the drawings usually.

MACDONALD: Oh, they're for you?

SCHNEEMANN: Yeah, they're for me. I wouldn't extend the drawings to other people, to other performers or dancers, because the energy keys are not going to be there. It's not going to work for me and I don't want it to be realigned unless I can train the participants.

MACDONALD: With *Up To and Including Her Limits* there was a long process of making it through the earlier *Tracking*.

SCHNEEMANN: About ten years. I could still do it. It's good on the rope. As long as I'm not naked.

MACDONALD: I was thinking that the word "tracking" reminded me of animal trackings. Again, mapping and inhabiting a space. I was also interested in the way so much of that period of time relates to the film track.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, it was first done in a projected light at the London Co-op, but I didn't know what it was about, I hadn't a clue. Susan Hiller said, "Oh, this is really good work. This is important." I said, "Why? What am I doing?"

MACDONALD: That's interesting. Because, of course, so much of your work has related as well to the mark-making on film stock and other things. But this piece is another kind of mark-making, in the light of film almost.

SCHNEEMANN: Well, I just wanted to find a way to draw.

MARRANCA: It shows drawing related to writing because you also wrote, you could say, "poetry," on the walls.

SCHNEEMANN: I was hoping for paranormal transmissions from being suspended so long in space, but then all I got was banalites. "Have to pee."

MARRANCA: "I'm hungry."

SCHNEEMANN: "Sound off."

MARRANCA: Were you aware of any of the gestures of writing coming out of certain movements? Were movement and drawing connected?

SCHNEEMANN: No, no. I don't know what I'm doing. I don't know anybody's in the space either. That was always fun. Every now and then I'd open my eyes and there'd be forty people there. It definitely wasn't a work that was addressed to an audience.

MACDONALD: The movement of the hand . . . You've said handwriting has been the thing to learn. You have a huge amount of handwriting in your archives. That drawing/writing relationship—do they come from the same place? You said you were hoping to have writing transmitted.

SCHNEEMANN: I don't know. You're making me remember when I was a kid and they still had pens. With ink.

MACDONALD: Old format, we call it.

SCHNEEMANN: The quill. They were teaching us to write with a quill pen. I mean it wasn't 1870, it was just something they thought we should do.

MACDONALD: We had to write at school as well, we had to dip our pen in an inkwell.

SCHNEEMANN: Yeah, wasn't it fun to have your own little inkwell?

MACDONALD: It was great, but I was always blotting it. You work in ink a lot and the wash of watercolor . . .

SCHNEEMANN: Well, because it's malleable. It's got to be able to smear and change.

MARRANCA: Do you know what was interesting for me to think about recently? Looking at the flyers and posters, they're not just about typography and fonts. Often, they're drawn and collaged, so they're not just typefaces. I noticed some of the iconography refers to movement, extending from *Water Light/Water Needle*

and a couple of other early posters, all the way to the images of the falling bodies in *Terminal Velocity*. You frequently drew falling bodies, bodies falling through space, that link from the sixties to the 9/11 work.

SCHNEEMANN: Shit, that's right, Bonnie. If you look at the little apes on the flyer *Water Light/Water Needle*, they're kind of hanging in space.

MARRANCA: Exactly. And then you look at the bodies jumping from the World Trade tower in *Terminal Velocity*. There's a clear line in the falling bodies.

SCHNEEMANN: That's so interesting.

MACDONALD: I know just how complex and controversial that's been, but perhaps as time moves on we can read it in some of those more formal ways as well because that stuck with me, too.

SCHNEEMANN: Anti-gravitational, and the way the building lines become a kind of American flag on its side behind them.

MACDONALD: And again, like the running film stock and the mark, the glyph of the body as it's making these gestures.

MARRANCA: One of the things that's striking is why, over a period of decades, with so many different shows that you've had, there have been far fewer drawings exhibited than perhaps there might have been. Was it the curators, the galleries, the museums that favored one medium over another? Did you just think of them as process studies for yourself, and more private?

SCHNEEMANN: I don't know the answer to that. I don't know the answer to why the work has been so neglected, so famous, so marginalized. It just happened to have a sufficient number of curators looking at anything.

MACDONALD: Is it that we didn't reflect enough about the role of visual thinking within performance? Because your work always referred to art history, to the gestural mark. It's always done that, it's not as if that hasn't been there in the work. Perhaps it has been a curatorial choice. I think it's a really important question and maybe one we'll have to keep asking. Why has drawing suddenly become an area that we want to think about?

SCHNEEMANN: Well, photography certainly began to dominate consciousness of image-making, and drawing became sort of a weak sister from a history of other materials. But I consider that I'm drawing and painting with my video now, and that's going to be hard to convince a lot of curators about, that it's painterly.

MARRANCA: Are you still learning from the drawing process?

SCHNEEMANN: Always, yeah. It's not like learning as learning, it's about entering this imagistic realm, it's just going there. It's like saying, "What did you learn from an acid trip?" You're in a transformative space.

MARRANCA: Well, then my question would be, are you in other transformative spaces now than four decades ago through drawing?

SCHNEEMANN: Yes. Yes, absolutely. But it's the same. It's like a staircase, you can't leave it and you don't know . . . Oh Christ, here's the chimney guys. The chimneys are being cleaned today.

MARRANCA: Smoke is also a form of drawing . . .

SCHNEEMANN: Yes . . . it is.





Meat Joy drawing. 1964. Photo: Courtesy the artist.



Pour Lyon. Preparatory drawing for Water Light/Water Needle. June 1965. Mixed-media drawing. 18" x 12". Courtesy the artist.